

Chapter 4 Invasion & Exile 570-543 B.C.

Rudamon to Shabataka

In 664 B.C. Ashurbanipal drove Rudamon, grandson of Osorkon III and nephew of Takeloth III, out of Thebes, presumably into Nubia. We assume he lived out his life in Nubia.¹⁴⁰

In 570 B.C. Taharka, the terminal 25th dynasty king, began his reign after the death of his brother Shabataka. This date is calculated by reducing his traditional dates by 121 years. In his seventh year (564 B.C.) he was driven from Egypt into Nubia where he remained until his death in 543 B.C.

The occupants of Egypt during the 100 years between the expulsions of Rudamon and Taharka are not the particular concern of this book. The purpose of our discussion here is to prove the historicity of the Egyptian exile, not to rewrite 25th dynasty history. But since Shabaka and Piankhi have already entered the picture some discussion of the 25th (Cushite) dynasty is inevitable. More will be said in the second book of our series, which is concerned exclusively with the history of the 7th and early 6th centuries.

Before we discuss the 25th dynasty we repeat our claim, made several times already, that Assyria retained its suzerainty over Egypt until 637 B.C., the 1st year of Piankhi. This opinion, which must remain undefended for the time being, is more than a common sense deduction. In our second book we will examine an inscription in which Piankhi documents the event. Meanwhile we depend on circumstantial evidence. The Assyrian annals, written as late as 636 B.C., provide no explicit statement indicating that Assyria has been expelled from Egypt, but the analyst seems to be familiar with the name of Shabaka. If our previous argument is correct, and Shabaka assisted Piankhi in expelling the Assyrians, this suggests that Egypt has only recently been lost. The fact that Piankhi dates his regnal years from 637 B.C. further suggests that the takeover of Egypt was a *fait accompli* by that date.

We assume therefore that the Assyrian domination of Egypt, following the expulsion of Rudamon, lasted 27 years (664-637 B.C.) The 25th dynasty ruled for the balance of the 100 year period under discussion, ending with the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar, thus for 73 years (637-564 B.C.) Our focus in this chapter lies almost exclusively on the last six years, i.e. the first six years of the reign of Taharka (569-564 B.C.). We will do no more than itemize the salient points concerning the reigns of Piankhi, Shabaka, and Shabataka

1) We begin by repeating, for the record, the revised dates for the 25th dynasty kings diagrammed earlier. These will change marginally as new information is added, here and in the sequel to this book.

¹⁴⁰ We must leave as an open question whether Urdamanie/Rudamon returned to Egypt soon after being driven from the country, or whether he continued to reside somewhere in Nubia.

Table 9: Revised Dates for the 25th Dynasty Kings

Name	Traditional History	Revised History ¹⁴¹
Piankhi		637-597 B.C.
Piankhi invasion	738 B.C. ¹⁴²	617 B.C.
Shabaka	721-706 B.C.	600-585 B.C.
Shabataka	706-690 B.C.	585-569 B.C.
Taharka (within Egypt)	690-664 B.C.	569-564 B.C.
Taharka (in Nubia)		564-543 B.C.

2) Egypt was throughout this period fragmented in much the same way as described in the Assyrian annals. Petrie's comment earlier¹⁴³ suggested as much. Piankhi expelled the Assyrians, but he left intact the system of administrator-kings.

3) Piankhi is known to have reigned at least 40 years. This would date his reign, minimally, in the years 637-597 B.C. That reign length will ultimately be increased, but this development must await the book that bears his name. Later in life Piankhi became less active, both politically and militarily. Increasingly the administrator-kings were summoned to assist in military actions. Their autonomy increased. Ultimately they acted independently of their Cushite overlord, and began to date their monuments

¹⁴¹ The revised dates were provided earlier and were diagrammed in figure 17 on page 96.

¹⁴² Note that the traditional history provides no date for the beginning of Piankhi's rule in Egypt. The great Piankhi stela provides the only known information about this king, namely, that he invaded Egypt to suppress a rebellion led by the nomarch Tefnakht from Sais. This invasion took place in his 21st year. The traditional history assumes that these 20 earlier years relate to Piankhi's rule in Nubia, not in Egypt. Whether Piankhi had control of Egypt prior to his invasion is seldom discussed, though the stela clearly indicates that he did, and this revision proceeds on the assumption that his regnal years began with his expulsion of the Assyrians. The dates for Piankhi are derived from Aston ("Takeloth II – A King of the 'Theban Twenty-Third Dynasty'?", JEA 75 (1989) 139-153) who dates the Tefnakht incident around 740/735 B.C. For purposes of this revision a median date (738 B.C.) is used, as earlier for all of Aston's dates. Subtracting 121 years placed Piankhi's invasion in 617 B.C. in the revised history. According to Kitchen "the one generally-accepted year-date of Piankhi is Year 21 on his great stela." (TIP 123) If the invasion occurred in Piankhi's 21st year his reign must have begun c.a. 637 B.C. This date must be accurate within a few years. We have already used the date several times in our discussion in chapter three.

¹⁴³ For Petrie see above, p. 84. Cf. the earlier discussion of this subject on p. 101

accordingly.

4) The genealogy of Shabaka must remain an open question. But whether or not he was a son of Rudamon he must have been born in Nubia, perhaps shortly after the expulsion of Rudamon from Egypt. The fact that he was ultimately buried in Napata suggests that this was his home. Perhaps he was summoned by Piankhi to assist in the expulsion of the Assyrians, bringing with him a contingent of the Nubian army

5) If Shabaka was the son of Rudamon and if he did assist Piankhi expel the Assyrians, multiple conclusions follow naturally. Following the 637 B.C. coup Shabaka must have remained in Egypt. He was probably installed as governor-king in Memphis by Piankhi, and as the most influential of the nomarchs (due to the prominence of Memphis and his family connection with Piankhi) became the *de facto* ruler of the north of Egypt. Thus Manetho credits him with founding a dynasty. But in fact, as a successor to Rudamon, along with other relatives of that king, he was merely perpetuating the 23rd dynasty.

6) In the traditional history Shabaka ruled only 15 years, or thereabouts. When we lowered his traditional dates, the revised dates fell at the beginning of the 6th century (see figure 17 and table 9). But if he did assist Piankhi in 637 B.C. and subsequently began to reign in Memphis, his dates must be extended back an additional 37 years. His reign length must have been an impressive 52 years. His dates (637-585 B.C.) parallel those of Piankhi. We wonder at the relatively few monuments that bear his name. A partial explanation can be found in the fact that for much of his "reign" he was a nomarch and army commander, not a pharaoh. There are other factors involved.

7) The military activity and lengthy reign of Shabaka has some documentary support. Herodotus claims "Egypt was invaded by Sabacos king of Ethiopia and a great army of Ethiopians" following which "the Ethiopians ruled Egypt for fifty years."¹⁴⁴ The "fifty years" must preserve the memory of Shabaka's extensive involvement in Egyptian affairs. But according to our version of history he ruled in conjunction with and subservient to Piankhi, and in a country fragmented into multiple political units. In modern terminology we would refer to Pefduawybast, Iuput, and Shabaka as nomarchs, rulers of quasi-independent states (nomes) within an Egyptian confederacy, at least from 637 through 600 B.C. In the next book of our series, which deals exclusively with the time period in question, we will flesh out the political situation that existed. Needless to say many surprises will emerge from our research.

8) At some stage in the life of the aging Piankhi, Shabaka became independent of his relative. He must have begun erecting and dating monuments from this point in time. We can't be far wrong in assuming this took place around 600 B.C. If Shabaka's emergence as pharaoh dates to this year, then the dates we have assigned to his independent reign (600-585 B.C.) must be reasonably accurate. They agree substantially with Manetho who credits him with 8 (Africanus) or 12 regnal years (Eusebius).

¹⁴⁴ Her. II.137.1

9) The fact that Shabaka's rule in Egypt lasted as late as 585 B.C. has independent corroboration. According to the monuments he had two throne names - Wahibre, and Neferibre.¹⁴⁵ In chapter one we quoted Jeremiah's prediction that the unnatural death or deposition of pharaoh Wahibre (Hophra) would be a sign to the Judaeans that Nebuchadnezzar would invade Egypt. Those comments were likely made soon after the 586 B.C. fall of Jerusalem and subsequent flight to Egypt of the refugees, very likely in 585 B.C. We assume that the prophecy received immediate authentication.¹⁴⁶

10) Piankhi and Shabaka were clearly of the same generation. In the traditional history they are considered to be brothers, or possibly father and son. Both possibilities remain, but only if we set aside the genealogy that makes Shabaka the son of Rudamon. That, in turn, would affect some of the dates and much of the discussion above. The question must remain open. It will be raised again in *Piankhi the Chameleon*, but only after the genealogy of Piankhi is developed. Assuming instead that Piankhi and Shabaka are only distantly related, and that the term "25th dynasty" should be used only in reference to the sequence of kings Shabaka, Shabataka, Taharka, and their near relatives, then technically Piankhi is not a 25th dynasty king. For the time being, however, we will continue to include him with this dynasty in keeping with the practice of the current generation of scholars. However, this does raise an intriguing question. If Piankhi is not a 25th dynasty king, then to what dynasty did he belong? And why does Manetho not mention him?

11) The dates for Piankhi and Shabaka, and the presence of Shabaka's seals in the ruins of the Kouyunyk palace in Nineveh, suggest that both kings were involved in the wars with Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar as described in the Babylonian Chronicle. One of these kings must be identified as the pharaoh Necho who is responsible for the death of Josiah, king of Judah. In due time we will explain the origins of the name Necho.

12) Shabataka reigned immediately after Shabaka and prior to Taharka. We have assigned him the dates 585-570 B.C. This agrees favorably with Manetho who assigns him either 12 or 14 years, though his year three is the highest known from the monuments. Early in his reign Shabataka is known to have summoned his brother

¹⁴⁵ Wahibre as an alternate throne name of Shabaka is based on the presence of the alternating throne names Neferkare and Wahibre on a cornice-fragment from Athribis and a sistrum-handle from Bubastis. Kitchen considers this as evidence of "an association between local kings", neither of which was Shabaka. However, he does admit the possibility of the alternate premen hypothesis. (TIP 124) If Wahibre was a king other than but contemporary with Shabaka it follows that this Wahibre rather than Shabaka was the victim of the civil strife of 585 B.C. The biblical prophecy must relate to this unknown king. Of some interest is the fact that the premen of Pefdjuawybast was Neferkare. Since Shabaka was a contemporary of this king we wonder if the name Neferkare refers to Pefdjuawybast and Wahibre to Shabaka.

¹⁴⁶ Apparently Ezekiel's reference was to Shabaka, not the 26th dynasty king Wahibre Ha'a'ibre (Apries). One by one the pillars that support the errant traditional history come down. Most are illusory correspondences of name and date.

Taharka to assist him in warding off some unknown threat to Egypt. In 585 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar was at the doorstep of Egypt. An invasion was a distinct possibility. Instead Nebuchadrezzar invested Tyre. The siege was prolonged due to the inaccessibility of the city. The invasion of Egypt was delayed. By the time it came, Taharka had succeeded his brother.

13) Taharka's kingship lasted from 569-543 B.C., but only from 569-564 B.C. was he resident in Egypt. Late in his 6th year he was driven from the Nile delta into the desert by the army of Nebuchadrezzar. He found his way to Thebes. Early in his seventh year he fled from Thebes into Nubia. Even there he was not safe. He died in exile. Egypt, during the final two decades of Taharka's life, had no resident king and a sparse population. Babylonian garrisons policed the country. The balance of this chapter provides documentation supporting these claims.

Taharka the Conqueror

Two series of 20th century excavations significantly influenced the current conception of the Ethiopian 25th dynasty. The first were those at Napata and vicinity, conducted by the Harvard Exploration Society under Reisner in the early years of the 20th century.¹⁴⁷ From the town site itself and from the associated cemeteries at Barkal, Kurru and Nuri, came considerable inscriptional material. More significant for the present discussion were the excavations at Kawa, north of Napata, in 1930-31, conducted by F. Ll. Griffith on behalf of Oxford University.¹⁴⁸ This site provided a wealth of information related to Taharka, the primary builder at the site. Of particular interest are a series of inscriptions that reveal details of the first ten years of his reign. Since we are compelled to date Taharka's reign in the years 569-543 B.C., and the Babylonian invasion around 564 B.C., in Taharka's 6th year, these first ten years are critically important.

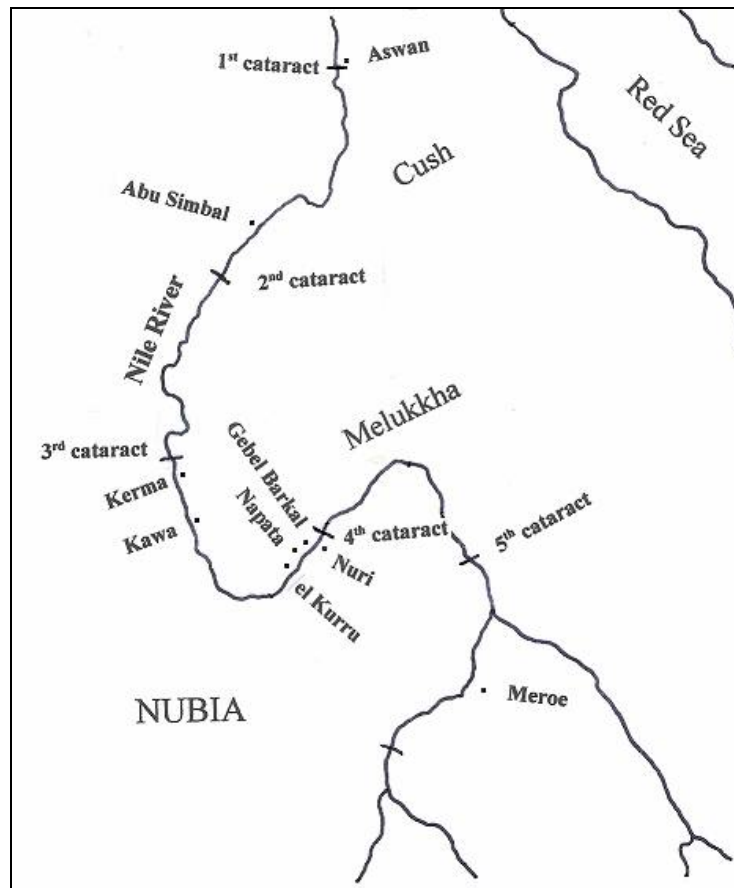
Our attention throughout this section is focused primarily on four stela inscriptions from Kawa, numbered III-VI by MacAdam. They relate to the years 2-8 (III), 6 (IV), 6 (V), and 8-10 (VI) of Taharka. Though primarily concerned with the construction and furnishing of a temple at the site of Kawa, these stelae are highly informative on other relevant matters. In the next few sections of this chapter we examine the inscriptions for evidence 1) that Taharka was militarily active in those regions of the Near East where he might antagonize Nebuchadnezzar and invite retaliation; 2) that Taharka's 6th year

¹⁴⁷ For a summary of the results of this work and a complete bibliography of earlier publications cf. G.A. Reisner, "The Meroitic Kingdom of Ethiopia: A Chronological Outline," *JEA* 9 (1923) 34-77.

¹⁴⁸ F. Ll. Griffith died shortly after these excavations were completed. The editing and publication of the results with commentary were left to his associate M.F. Laming MacAdam. They appear in *The Temples of Kawa I. The Inscriptions* (2 vols.) (1949).

witnessed an unusually high Nile during which “no foot of man or beast” could move within Egypt, and 3) that Taharka lost possession of Egypt and temporarily of Kawa itself shortly after this high Nile.

Figure 22: Map of Cush/Melukkha (7th Century B.C.)



Taharka's Empire

One stela from Kawa tells us that a youthful Taharka, at the time resident in Nubia, was summoned to Egypt by his brother Shabataka. En route he passed by the site of Kawa (ancient Gempaten) (IV:7-9), accompanied by “the army of His Majesty” (IV:10). In the

traditional history this incident has only one reasonable explanation. Auxiliary forces are being summoned by Shabataka to assist Hezekiah and relieve Jerusalem, at the time under siege by Sennacherib. The year would be 701 B.C. Since Taharka did not become king until 690 B.C., the assumption is made that he acted as General of the Army for at least these 11 years.

In the revised history Taharka is also bringing auxiliary forces to assist the Egyptian army at the request of Shabataka. But the threat is from Nebuchadrezzar. We don't know the precise year, though it must lie in the interval 585-569 B.C. We do know that Taharka was twenty years old when he left Nubia (V:17). It follows that his military career under the authority of his brother might have lasted a few years or over a decade. Some indeterminate time after Taharka's arrival in Lower Egypt, Shabataka died and Taharka assumed the throne. In his own words:

I came from Nubia in the company of the King's brothers, whom His Majesty had summoned, that I might be there with him, since he loved me more than all his brethren and all his children, and I was preferred to them by His Majesty, for I received the crown in Memphis after the Hawk (= Shabataka) had soared to heaven, and my father Amun commanded me to place every land and country beneath my feet, southward to Retehu-Qabet, northward to Qebh-Hor, eastward to the rising of the sun and westward to its setting. (V:13-16)

Taharka, at the outset of his reign, claims sovereignty over extensive territory eastward from the Egyptian border. This would imply that in the years in which he assisted Shabataka, or immediately after assuming the kingship, he was engaged in aggressive military activity in those regions he boasts of possessing. The passage quoted gives the impression that his influence extended at least as far as the Euphrates. This is hardly surprising. For decades there has been a contest between Babylon and Egypt for control of the eastern Mediterranean coastal area, including Israel, Phoenicia, and Syria north to the Euphrates. Around 609 B.C. Egyptians armies were active in the highlands of the Upper Euphrates, allied with the Assyrians in their struggle against the ascendant power of Babylon. In 605 B.C. the two nations engaged in battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Skirmishes in Syria were frequent. The kings of Judah from Josiah through Zedekiah, in the years 609-586 B.C., were all pawns in this power struggle between Babylon and Egypt. In the traditional history the opponents of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadrezzar are identified as the Saite dynasty kings Nechao, Psamtik II, and Apries. With the dynasties correctly positioned it is Piankhi, Shabaka, Shabataka and Taharka who contested with Babylon.

For most of his reign of 42 years Nebuchadrezzar (605-562 B.C.) prevailed in this struggle. But the Hebrew Bible informs us that he experienced a mental breakdown late in his life. His recovery took seven years, time enough for Egypt to reassert itself. In chapter one we dated Nebuchadrezzar's mania to the years 572-566 B.C., spanning the last few years of Shabataka and the first four years of Taharka's kingship. Taharka's boast is therefore well founded. First as military commander under his brother, then as

king, he re-established Egyptian sovereignty "over every land and country" eastward to the Euphrates and beyond into northern Mesopotamia, "to the rising of the sun". While Nebuchadrezzar languished in Babylon during his "mania", Egypt recovered the Assyrian domains of her former ally. It is not surprising that Nebuchadrezzar reacted in anger when his illness subsided.

But lest we be accused of reading too much into one boastful phrase, we should add that we are not speculating. Taharka has left a record of his military activity. It is not widely publicized, and where it is mentioned Egyptologists immediately discount it. The reader by now understands why. Taharka has been wrongly placed in an historical context 121 years too early, in the time of the powerful neo-Assyrian empire, coterminous with its most energetic and successful kings - Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal. Their detailed annals record no expansionist activity on Egypt's part, save for a possible political association with Phoenicia. But Taharka's claim is much more comprehensive.

Two inscriptions in particular add substance to Taharka's boast. Both are quickly glossed over and negatively evaluated by Flinders Petrie in his popular *History of Egypt*:

On the extent of Taharqa's power in Palestine we cannot judge. On his list of conquered towns, found in the great court of Karnak, he claims much of Palestine; but this list is a mere copy of Seti. Again, on his statuette is a long list of captured cities (MK 45a); but this is only a copy - with a few blunders - of the list on the colossus of Ramessu II (MK 38f) and Taharqa was as much ruler of Qadesh and Naharaina as George II was king of France, though officially so called. HE III 297

Petrie is not the only scholar who makes light of Taharka's lists of conquered territory. An equally colourful put down is provided by E.A. Wallis Budge, who scornfully describes how Taharka, "in commemoration of a campaign which he did not fight, in a country which he never entered", caused "a list of great peoples of Syria and Palestine to be cut on the base of his statue as nations which he had conquered." "In this list," according to Budge, "we find the names of Kadesh, Assur, Kheta, Neherin, and of many other Western Asiatic places together with the names of several districts of the Sudan."¹⁴⁹ It is the opinion of Budge that Taharka's boast was mere pretence.

These two sources - a wall inscription in the forecourt of the Amon temple in Karnak and a statue inscription from the temple of Mut¹⁵⁰ - specifically list Kadesh, Naharina (or Naharain), Hatti (Kheta) and Assur (Ashur) among the possessions of Taharka. Carchemish is included in the list. Kadesh is located on the Orontes River in northern Syria and Naharain is a common designation for the land mass bordering the western bend of the Euphrates on the east. Kheta must be the Hatti lands, a reference to northern

¹⁴⁹ E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Sudan* (1907) New Impression (1986) 2 vols. II 37-38

¹⁵⁰ For bibliography cf. J. Leclant, *Recherches sur Les Monuments Thebains de la XXVe Dynastie Dite Ethiopienne* (1965), D,1 p. 116

Syria. Carchemish is on the Euphrates itself. Petrie is correct. Taharka could not have controlled those territories in 690 B.C. Egypt was closeted in its own land by Esarhaddon.

If the conquest of Kadesh, the Hatti lands, Carchemish, and Naharain was unlikely, that of Assur was impossible. Assur, in the traditional history, can refer here only to the Assyrian homeland, ruled by Esarhaddon, then Ashurbanipal. Under no circumstance could Taharka have conquered Naharain and Assur in the days of the powerful Assyrian Empire. No wonder Egyptologists are in denial.

Taharka's claim to rule Assur in 690 B.C. could be safely discounted, but the identical claim in 572-566 B.C., during Nebuchadnezzar's mania, is another story. The Assyrian Empire has by this date run its course, though the land maintained its traditional name. After the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. Assur became a Babylonian province. Taharka's army could conceivably have ventured to the northern edge of Babylonia, establishing a symbolic presence in the homeland of its former ally.

The presence of several statues of Taharka, found in 1955 in the ruins of Nineveh, argue strongly that Taharka actually set up a temporary base of operations in the former Assyrian capital.¹⁵¹ Further confirmation is provided by a fragment of a Babylonian religious text that records military activity involving an Egyptian army. The heavily damaged fragment is dated in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar, thus in 568 B.C. The nature and provenance of the activity is unknown but the inscription is consistent with the presence of Taharka in the upper Tigris/Euphrates area.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ The first published reports indicate the presence of two damaged statues with multiple inscriptional fragments; cf. the correspondence by Simpson [Sumer 10 (1954)193-4], Naji al Asil [Sumer 11 (1955) 3-4; 129-30] and the article by Vladimir Vikentiev, "Quelques Considerations A Propos Des Statues De Taharqa Trouvees Dans Les Ruines Du Palais D'Esarhaddon" Sumer 11 (1955) 111-114. Commenting on one of these fragments Spalinger states: "The object appears to describe the goddess Anukis, usually associated with Elephantine, as being connected with a foreign locality. Unfortunately, the hieroglyphics cannot be interpreted and it is best not to hazard a conclusion too rashly." CdE 53 (1978) 28.

¹⁵² The 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar is 568/7 B.C., several years into the reign of Amasis in the traditional history. Based almost solely on this correspondence in date this cuneiform inscription is typically interpreted as pertaining to a military conflict between Nebuchadnezzar and Amasis, perhaps even to an aborted invasion of Egypt, the very invasion anticipated by Ezekiel and Jeremiah.. The only support for this view is the presence of the phrase "... [-a?-su, of Egypt" [ANET 308] in the text. To identify this badly damaged inscription with Amasis we must assume that Amasis name written in Akkadian would end in "-asu", that the "a" in "-asu" is actually in the text, and that the partially visible word is a king's name. Then we must assume the facts of the traditional history which make Amasis a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar. It is all very hypothetical. Even if we agree with Edel [GM 29 (1978) 14-15] that the phrase "of Egypt" should be read "king of Egypt" there is nothing to indicate that the word which preceded is a king's name. It has recently been determined that the place name Putuian in the text refers to Cyrene and not to an Egyptian town of that name invaded by Nebuchadnezzar and that Cyrene and the Egyptian

While scholars are in general agreement in rejecting Taharka's claims to foreign conquests, they are less than consistent in the specifics of their criticism. Gauthier¹⁵³ agrees with Petrie that the statuette inscription was copied from an ancient list of Ramses II. Leclant¹⁵⁴ is of the opinion that it was copied from an inscription of Horemheb. Leclant declines comment on the wall inscription from the Karnak forecourt. Since the Karnak list was no longer visible in 1965, the date of his comprehensive collection of 25th dynasty Theban monuments, he argues against Maspero and Petrie that it ever existed. He suggests instead that these notable 19th century Egyptologists, who actually read the inscription, mistakenly ascribed to Taharka another list left by the Ptolemies centuries later.¹⁵⁵ We understand the divergence of opinion. If the wall inscription did not exist we are spared the necessity of explaining its content.

On at least one point the scholars agreed - Taharka did not rule an empire that included Kadesh, the Hatti lands, Carchemish, Naharain, and Assur.

But discounting these two inscriptions does not eliminate the problem. They are not the only evidence of Taharka's widespread conquests. There has existed since classical times unequivocal testimony to Taharka's military prowess. Commenting on this tradition Budge has observed:

There must have been something attractive in his (Taharka's) personality, and his deeds appealed so strongly to the popular imagination, at all events in Greek times, that they were regarded as the exploits of a hero, and he had the reputation of being a great traveller as well as a great conqueror.¹⁵⁶

The reference cited by Budge is to Strabo, who, following Megasthenes, includes Taharka among a list of history's great conquerors. But Budge's explanation begs the question. Legends must have some historical foundation. The memory that passed into folklore was of military conquest. And the Taharka of the traditional history at most rallied a group of delta kinglets to rebel against a small Assyrian occupation force. And in that action he was thoroughly defeated. Of such deeds legends are not made.

Leclant, endeavouring to explain the legend of Taharka the conqueror, can do no better than Budge. He discounts the possibility, entertained by some critics, that the legend was initiated by Taharka himself, through the publication of fictitious claims such as that contained on the statue cited above. He argues, correctly, that the statue inscription was

localities mentioned are places from which the Egyptian king is raising his troops. [cf. Anthony Leahy, "The Earliest Dated Monument of Amasis and the End of the Reign of Apries," *JEA* 74 (1988) 191].

¹⁵³ Gauthier, *Le Livres des Rois de l'Egypte* V 36 n.3.

¹⁵⁴ J. Leclant, *Recherches*, p. 351

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Budge, *The Egyptian Sudan*, p. 41.

not intended as propaganda, since it was hidden away in the interior of the temple of Mut, where it would have limited exposure. Instead he argues that Taharka has become a celebrated conqueror only because his name emerged as a symbolic representative of the combined military exploits of all the 25th dynasty pharaohs. Other explanations are equally strained.¹⁵⁷

We suggest a better reason. Taharka was renowned as a great conqueror because he was a great conqueror. Granted, he benefited from Nebuchadrezzar's incapacity, but his domains, though short lived, were extensive. His inscriptions should be taken at face value. Why copy a list of conquered territories, knowingly false, only to bury them in a temple? Leclant's argument is well founded, but Leclant has missed the point.

The Great Flood

By 566 B.C. or 565 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar's illness passed. The prophet Daniel preserves a record of the king's reaction:

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Dan. 4:36

Within a year Nebuchadrezzar had re-established the borders of his former kingdom and prepared to avenge the humiliation suffered during his dementia. He prepared to invade Egypt. If our chronology is correct it was the summer of 564 B.C., the sixth year of Taharka's reign. Egypt was in flood.

In chapter one we quoted Ezekiel 29:11 as a reference to a Nile flood which preceded immediately the invasion of Egypt. "There will not pass over it a man's foot nor will any animal's foot pass over it; then, no one will inhabit it for forty years." If we are correct in our revision, there should be reference to a Nile flood of unusual dimensions in Taharka's sixth year. We are not disappointed.

For well over two hundred years records of inundation levels of the Nile were engraved periodically on the quay of the Karnak temple in Thebes. Legrain documented the forty-five inscriptions preserved on the quay late in the 19th century and Von Beckerath diagrammed their positions a half century later.¹⁵⁸ Of the recorded positions two stand

¹⁵⁷ G. Goossens, "Taharqa le conquerant," *CdE* 22 (1941) 244 suggests that though Taharqa did not intend to misrepresent himself to later generations (his pretended conquests were intended only to ingratiate himself to the gods in the temples), inscriptions such as the statuette inscription were taken factually by later generations.

¹⁵⁸ G. Legrain, "Textes graves sur le quai de Karnak," *ZAS* 34 (1896) 111-121; Jurgen Von

out above the rest. The second highest level occurred in the 3rd year of Osorkon II; the highest in the 6th year of Taharka.

The inscription recording the flood in the 3rd year of Osorkon merely records the king's name and the Nile level. But the flood of that year is also described in a hieratic inscription recorded on the inner wall, in the northwest corner of the hypostyle of the Luxor temple. It is a vivid reminder of the power and expansiveness of such a high flood:

Year 3, first month of the second season, day 12, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Usermare-Setepnamon, L.P.H.: Son of Re, Lord of Diadems, Osorkon (II)-Siese-Meriamon, given life forever. The flood came on, in this whole land; it invaded the two shores as in the beginning. This land was in his power like the sea, there was no dyke of the people to withstand its fury. All the people were like birds upon its [-], the tempest - his -, suspended - - like the heavens. All the temples of Thebes were like marshes. BAR IV 743

If Osorkon's flood was able to overrun the containing dikes and make islands of the temple sites, flooding the entire Nile valley, then that same situation must prevail in the even higher flood of Taharka's 6th year. Taharka's flood, like that of Osorkon 150 years earlier, was also sufficiently memorable to warrant inscriptional comment. The details are contained on one of the stela inscriptions from Kawa.

Wonders have come to pass in the time of His Majesty in the sixth year of his reign, the like whereof had not been seen since the time of those of old, so great did his father Amon Re' love him. His Majesty had been praying for an inundation from his father Amon-Re', Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, in order to prevent famine happening in his time. Now everything that issues through the lips of His Majesty, his father Amun grants it to happen forthwith, and when the season came for the flooding of the inundation it continued flooding abundantly each day and spent many days rising at a rate of one cubit every day. It penetrated the hills of Upper Egypt, it overtopped the mounds of Lower Egypt, and the land became a primordial ocean, an inert expanse, and there was no distinguishing the land from the river. It flooded to a height of 21 cubits, 1 palm and 2½ fingers at the quay of Thebes. His Majesty had the annals of the ancestors brought to him, in order to see the (kind of) inundation that had happened in their times, but the like thereof was not found there. Moreover the sky rained in Nubia, it made all the hills glisten. Every man of Nubia had abundance in everything, Egypt was in happy festival ... (V:5-9)

Beckerath, "The Nile Level Records at Karnak and their Importance for the History of the Libyan Period," JARCE 5 (1966) 43-55.

Taharka took the flood as an indication of Amun's favor. It was instead a sign of the imminent loss of his Egyptian kingdom. The Nile floods typically from June through August. Soon after the Nile subsided, Nebuchadnezzar invaded.

Taharka's Lament

We assume that by the time of the great Nile flood of 564 B.C. the upper Euphrates and the trans-Euphrates Hatti lands had been lost to Taharka, whose domains were by now restricted to the eastern Mediterranean coast, Syria and Lebanon, the territory known on the monuments as Khor. In the few months immediately following the flood, possibly in late August or September of 564 B.C., the army of Nebuchadnezzar moved toward Egypt. Khor was lost and Egypt was invaded. Memory of the ensuing holocaust is preserved in the writings of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Egyptian scribes, who might have preserved the memory of the event in Egypt, were removed into captivity. Taharka, driven from Memphis into the desert, ultimately made his way to Thebes. Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar consolidated his position. The Babylonian king was a seasoned military strategist. The four hundred mile journey of conquest upriver to Thebes was not to be hazarded without due preparation. The battle would be resumed months later. Meanwhile Taharka rested in Thebes, his spirit broken. In a lengthy inscription he lamented his loss.

Within the temple of Amon in Thebes, on the back of a wall attributed to Thutmose III, Taharka hastily composed an inscription, both penitent and pleading. The wall inscription, intact in the days of Lepsius, now broken apart, was pieced together and retranslated recently by Vernus.¹⁵⁹ It is a most unusual text. According to Spalinger:

From the first fifteen columns of the text, all that can be determined is that Taharqa contemplates a future action owing to some failure of his in the past. Future events are predicted: "You will repulse for me..." (col. 14) and "... the lands (??) which do not belong to me, place them under my domination" (col. 10) A two-fold logical reasoning can be determined from this poetical speech of Taharqa. A plan of his did not succeed as something went wrong. Amun cannot be (at) fault as he is good; therefore, it is the deed itself which was evil. ... Secondly, since the plans failed Amun must take charge in order to insure an eventual success. Hence, the passages: "... it is you who give the orders..." (col. 19) and "O Amun, there is no bad action in doing what you have done concerning he who will..." (col. 21)¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Pascal Vernus, "Inscriptions de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire," BIFAO 75 (1975) 1-66 & Plates I-V. The Lament inscription with translation and notes are on p.29f.

¹⁶⁰ Anthony Spalinger, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt Preceding the Assyrian Conquest," CDE 53 (1978) 30-31.

Something has gone terribly wrong. Taharka is confused. His first instinct is to question Amun, his patron deity.

It is readily evident that the importance of Amun in the world is paramount and that Taharqa is imploring his deity and master in terms surprisingly personal and factual for an Egyptian Pharaoh. Also, clearly, control of the Asiatic lands has, in some manner, been lost (whether or not these lands were directly controlled by Taharqa is not germane to this argument) and Taharqa is to blame. Taharqa asks Amun to aid him in the performance to the good end of a bad situation (col. 6) "Preserve me from unhappiness and preserve me from any bad action" is a further remark by Taharqa. The Pharaoh stresses the perseverance of his god Amun, who never abandons his son Horus (Taharqa) despite the latter's mistakes. Amun always completes his plans; and Taharqa's present situation seems (to him) quite incomplete (col. 5).¹⁶¹

What is the nature of the loss recently suffered by Taharka? The text is not entirely clear. It seems to Spalinger that "Taharka is purposely avoiding an explicit statement of what has gone wrong." Column 16 of the inscription specifically mentions the loss of the tribute (*inw*) of Khor (Syria-Palestine), but surely such losses were commonplace in the ebb and flow of political fortunes in the ancient world.

In essence, this powerfully written yet very indirect composition presents Taharqa's version of a debacle, the significance of which climaxes in the sixteenth column wherein the king announces to Amun that the territory of Khor no longer sends its tribute to Egypt. The previous fifteen columns set out Taharqa's explanation of this disaster: something went wrong abroad. As it could not have been Amun who caused the plans to fail, and as Taharqa is equally unwilling to implicate himself, then it must have been the fault of those plans themselves. Alternatively, Taharqa offers the suggestion that it is equally possible that, as Amun never fails in his acts, any setback - such as his present debacle - only shows that the entire sequence of events has not yet been completed. Hence, a dual analysis is at work here: namely, the acts leading up to the Asiatic debacle were at fault (and not the king); or else the entire episode is still to be resolved and any setback is temporary.¹⁶²

The question that confronts Taharka is clear. He has suffered a humiliating military defeat, resulting in the loss of the tribute of Khor. Should he continue to do battle or abandon the fight? But fight against whom? No specific enemy is named in the text. According to Vernus and Spalinger there is no question. Taharka ruled Egypt in the early decades of the 7th century. His adversary was Assyria. The inscription must date in the years immediately preceding Esarhaddon's failed battle against Taharka in 674 B.C. It is assumed that prior to this date Taharka engaged in a failed attempt to regain control

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 31

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 30

of Phoenicia for Egypt.¹⁶³ This "temporary counter-offensive" against Esarhaddon must, according to Spalinger, be what the Pharaoh alludes to in the Vernus text.¹⁶⁴ The Karnak inscription must therefore date to 675 B.C.

But this interpretation is strained. We wonder what great loss was suffered by Taharka in 675 B.C., or thereabouts, to evoke from him the atypical emotional outburst of the Karnak inscription. There is absolutely no evidence that Phoenicia around this time had been a vassal of Egypt, contributing substantial sums to the treasury of Amun in Thebes. And the emotional outburst of Taharka can hardly be attributed to a failed land-grab.

In the revised history there is no problem understanding Taharka's agony. Only a few years earlier he ruled over lands as far afield as the Hatti lands, Naharain and Assur. Those territories have been abandoned. The Karnak wall inscription specifically ascribed to him control of all of Syria/Palestine, the lands of Khor. This too is gone. But he has lost more than the tribute of Khor; he has lost all of Lower Egypt. The fact that he does not explicitly recount the loss of Lower Egypt is understandable. He has not yet accepted the fact. Clearly he hopes for a reversal of fortunes. His pleading appears intended to gain Amun's blessing on a counter-attack, though he equivocates, uncertain of the viability of such action.

In the traditional history Taharka's lament dates to his seventeenth year (Spalinger) or between years 14 and 17 (Vernus). If we are correct it must date to his 6th year, only months after the high Nile, and a century removed from the time of Esarhaddon.

The inscription itself contains no date. Following the initial lines of text containing the traditional praise to the deity, Taharka credits his control of Upper and Lower Egypt to Amun (col. 4). He reminds him that even before his coronation "a great flood" had been foretold for him, from which would follow blessing, not trouble (cols. 8-10) He pleads, apparently still referring to the flood and its consequences: "Deliver me from the pain, deliver me from every bad result" (col. 12) He asks instead that he might experience an abundance (that should result from such a flood) to make his heart happy (cols. 13,14). There follows immediately the lament concerning his territorial loss.

There is no doubt that the "great flood" of column 9 refers to that which occurred in Taharka's sixth year. Since the description of Taharka's territorial losses follows immediately the mention of the great flood it should follow that this loss of territory occurred immediately following the flood. No other explanation is reasonable. Taharka, only months earlier, had praised Amun for the great flood, construed as a token of divine favor, a source of multiple blessings. Instead there followed the unspeakable horrors of

¹⁶³ Cf. Vernus, p.46: "Notre texte serait donc a placer entre les annees 14 et 17 du roi."

¹⁶⁴ "In conclusion, this inscription from Taharqa's reign must have been written very soon after a debacle in Asia (most probably Palestine) but before another offensive: Taharqa directly indicates that he will resume his campaigns if Amun is willing. A date after his tenth year is indicated from the Egyptian evidence listed earlier. Spalinger, op.cit. p. 33

the Babylonian invasion, the humiliating loss of his Memphite capital, and the near loss of his life. Perplexed, he waits for Amun to turn defeat into victory. Instead, only further loss ensued. The Karnak inscription was barely finished when Taharka was driven out of Thebes.

Taharka in Nubia

Late in 564 B.C. or early in 563 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar extended his conquest southward to Thebes. The fact can be confirmed only circumstantially. There is evidence that building activity in Thebes ceased after Taharka's seventh year. There is also indication that later in his seventh year Nebuchadrezzar moved even further south into Nubia. The evidence can be otherwise interpreted, but in combination with what has already been stated it is at least corroborative.

Taharka the Builder

Scholars claim that Taharka was a prolific builder, and in comparison to his predecessors Shabataka and Shabaka the fact is uncontested. His building activity is restricted almost exclusively to the south of Egypt, primarily to Thebes and to numerous sites in Nubia, though some evidence of building in Memphis has been discovered. Confirmation of this extensive construction consists primarily of undated inscriptions and cartouches adorning walls and colonnades. There is no unequivocal evidence that these structures were conceived by and erected by Taharka. He does not claim to have built them. It could be argued that he merely adorned existing structures with his own inscriptions, as did Ramses II centuries earlier.

It is significant for the present revision that there is no inscription of Taharka dated beyond his 7th year, save for a single Karnak quay record confirming the height of the Nile flood in his 9th year.¹⁶⁵ Since we believe that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in Taharka's 7th year this absence of inscriptions of later date is of some significance. But it is clearly an argument from silence. Most of Taharka's inscriptions are undated. We cannot prove his constructions do not originate from later years, though Egyptologists date the majority to the first half of his reign. At least in one notable instance we are able to follow the progress of a physical construction clearly dated to the first decade of Taharka's reign. It is highly informative and warrants our attention. We refer, of course, to the Kawa temple in Nubia.

¹⁶⁵ The quay inscription does not imply Taharka was in the country. For loyal followers who endured the holocaust he remained a king of Egypt. Thebes was the seat of his administration. We assume the other nomarchs had been killed or exiled to Babylon. Taharka still claimed the title "king of Upper and Lower Egypt", though absent from the country.

The Kawa Temple Construction

It is well known that Taharka was the builder par excellence in Nubia. There he erected large temples in widely dispersed sites as far south as Meroe, 800 miles south of Thebes. Within a 500-mile stretch of the Nile, from 300 to 800 miles south of Thebes, he built at least five large temples, all clearly attributed to him. If nothing else, these massive constructions attest to his preoccupation with this southern region, if not to his permanent residence in the area. They are at least compatible with our thesis that Taharka was driven from Egypt early in his reign, and lived out the balance of his life in Nubia. But only in Kawa, ancient Gempaten, do we have sufficient dated inscriptional material to argue that this change in homeland dates from his seventh year.

We have observed already in one Kawa stela inscription how Taharka came north to join Shabataka at age 20, and how he was later crowned in Memphis. On this earlier journey north he passed by the site of the abandoned and partially sand covered remains of the Kawa temple. In the inscription Kawa IV he recalls his sadness at the sight of the Kawa ruins and his vow to one day restore the temple.

Now His Majesty had been in Nubia as a goodly youth, a king's brother, pleasant of love, and he came north to Thebes in the company of goodly youths whom His Majesty King Shebitku had sent to fetch from Nubia, in order that he might be there with him, since he loved him more than all his brethren. He passed to the nome of Amun of Gempaten that he might make obeisance at the temple door, with the army of His Majesty which had traveled north together with him. He found that this temple had been built in brick, but that its sand-hill had reached to its roof, it having been covered over with earth at a time of year when one feared the occurrence of rainfall. And his Majesty's heart grew sad at it until His Majesty appeared as King, crowned as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, (and) when the Double Diadem was established upon his head, and his name became Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth, in the first year of his reign.¹⁶⁶ Then His Majesty said to his courtiers, 'Lo, I desire to rebuild the temple of my father Amon-Re' of Gempaten, since it was built of brick (only) and covered over with soil, a thing not pleasant in the opinion of men'.

Temple construction began in Taharka's first year, though the king remained in Memphis.

¹⁶⁶ There is considerable controversy over how to punctuate and interpret this sentence. Did Taharka observe the deterioration of the Kawa temple years earlier, "in the first year of his reign", while en route to Egypt; or is the phrase "in the first year of his reign" a reference to his present situation. We agree with the second interpretation. Taharka, in the first year of his reign, while reflecting back on his earlier observation of the sand covered temple at Gempaten, decides to repair that temple.

‘And His Majesty caused his army to go to Gempaten together with numerous gangs and good craftsmen, innumerable, an architect being there with them to direct the work at this temple while His Majesty was in Memphis. Then this temple was built of good white sandstone, excellent, hard, made with enduring work, its face toward the west, the house being of gold, the columns of gold, the inlays(?) thereof being of silver. Its towers were built, its doors erected, it being inscribed with the Great Name of His Majesty. Its numerous trees were planted in the ground and its lakes dug, together with its House of Natron, it being filled with its implements of silver, gold, and bronze whereof the number is not known. And this God was made to rest within it, resplendent and glorious, for ever, the reward for this being life and welfare and the appearance upon the throne of Horus for ever.’ (Kawa IV: 7-27)

The inscription Kawa IV is dated in year 6 of Taharka. The text leaves no doubt that the temple was completed by this time. Even the landscaping was finished. In the final act of consecration, the (statue of the) god Amun was installed in his temple, “resplendent and glorious”.

Another stela, Kawa III, provides a year-by-year inventory of the gifts made to the Gempaten temple, from year 1 to year 7 inclusive. In meticulous detail the furnishings of the temple are described. They are made of the finest materials available. The durable goods are made exclusively of gold and silver. Following the listing of equipment donated in the seventh and final year, the inscription proudly announces the completion of the project:

‘He established the god’s revenues, stocked his altars and provided his magazine with men and maidservants, even the children of the chieftains of the Tjehenu. This temple was furnished, which he made for him anew, and he filled it with numerous chantresses, their sistra in their hands, to play before his beautiful face...’ Kawa III:22-23

Having finished the physical construction, this installation of temple personal signalled the end of the project. But something untoward happened later in that seventh year.

From yet another stela inscription, Kawa VI, which “continues the record of gifts begun with Kawa III,” we get the distinct impression that the temple is not finished. The new inscription provides a second list of temple donations from year 7 and adds listings for years 8 and 9. The excavators are confused. Kawa III provided unambiguous references to the installation of temple personal, the necessary and ultimate prelude to initiating temple operations. Kawa VI concludes its listing of year 9 items with equally unambiguous references to the installation of temple personal:

The columns were set up, overlaid in beautiful gold, their inlays (?) being of silver; its pylons were built, of good work; its doors were set up, of true cedar, the bolts being of Asiatic bronze; it was inscribed with the Great Name of His

Majesty by all sorts of skilful-fingered scribes and cut by good craftsmen who surpassed what the ancients had done; its store-house was stocked and its altars supplied. He filled it with drink-offering tables of silver, gold, Asiatic bronze, and every kind of real costly stone, innumerable; he filled (it) with numerous servants and he appointed maidservants to it, *wives of chieftains of Lower Egypt*. Wine is trodden from the vines of this city; it is more abundant than (that of) Djesdjes, and he appointed gardeners for them, good gardeners of the Mentiu of Asia. He filled this temple with priests, men who knew their spells, even the children of the great ones of every country. He filled his house with chantresses to play before his beautiful face. (italics added)

There can be no doubt from this inscription that the temple is just being completed in year nine. Any doubt is removed by yet another inscription, Kawa VII. This stela, says MacAdam, “records the official opening of the temple of Taharqa at Gempaten in his tenth year.” “It shows,” he adds, “that the previous accounts ... which seem to suggest that the temple was already finished by the years in which they were set up, mean no more than that operations were in progress.” But the language of this stela does not come close to the conclusive language of stelae IV and III. Taharka, on New Year’s Day of his tenth year, acknowledges his final act of “setting up; sprinkling; presenting a house to its owner.” He boasts, “My Majesty has (re-)made the house of my father Amun the Great.” But this was not the celebration of three years earlier. We wonder why Taharka had to rebuild a temple he had completed only a few years earlier.

MacAdam notes without comment that stela VI is “blackened by fire at the bottom”. We wonder whether the stone was retrieved from a fire-damaged temple and re-cut for the inscription of year 10. A fire would explain the few years’ delay. But why would Taharka not comment on the fact? A further observation provides a possible explanation. We noted that stela III concluded with a listing of temple equipment donated in year 7. All the items were made of gold and silver. We noted further that stela VI begins with a second list of items donated in year 7, almost certainly later in that year since it continues with donations in years 8 and 9. Without exception, every item donated in the later part of year 7, and several items as well in year 8, were made of bronze. This is in stark contrast with items from years one through 7 and year 9. What happened to Taharka’s gold and silver in year seven?

The reader knows our opinion on the matter. We believe Nebuchadrezzar invaded the Egyptian Delta late in year 6 of Taharka, moved south to Thebes later that same year, driving Taharka further south into Nubia. In year seven he sent a contingent of his army up the Nile at least as far as Kawa. We know from the Hebrew prophets that he invaded Egypt in search of wealth to pay his army. We can only conjecture that in the middle of year seven he overran the temple complex of Kawa, removed its gold, and destroyed at least some of the recent construction of Taharka, necessitating three more years of repair. We further conjecture that Taharka fled from the invading armies south to Napata where he established permanent residence. On the retreat of the Babylonian force he

renewed his interest in Kawa, and completed the temple. For the balance of his life, though officially king of Egypt, Taharka was in fact a strictly Nubian monarch. Most of his temple construction in Nubia likely post-dates his seventh year.

This invasion of Nubia by Nebuchadrezzar is not pure conjecture. The biblical prophets included Cush along with Egypt as future victims of Nebuchadrezzar. Ezekiel predicted that “Cush and Put, Lydia and all Arabia” (30:4), including Libya, would fall by the sword along with Egypt. There exist some scattered historical confirmation of such an extended campaign by Nebuchadrezzar. Strabo states on the authority of Megasthenes, who lived in the time of Seleucus Nicator, that Nebuchadrezzar conquered North Africa. Josephus claims, in support of Megasthenes, that Nebuchadrezzar also conquered Libya and Iberia. The apparent despoiling of the Kawa temple in Taharka’s seventh year is at least consistent with this tradition of Nebuchadrezzar’s extended campaigns. Having conquered Egypt he secured the country by means of permanent garrisons of troops, and with Egypt as a base of operations proceeded to conquer neighbouring African states.

Babylonian Garrisons

The Invasion

The Egyptian holocaust was thorough. Few survivors lived to describe its horrors; fewer still with the literary skills necessary to preserve its memory. Unknown numbers escaped to the western oases or into the eastern desert. Some fled to Thebes and ultimately into Nubia. The Kawa inscriptions reveal the presence of native Egyptians, “wives of chieftains of Lower Egypt” adopted as temple slaves in the reconstructed temple.¹⁶⁷ Were they survivors of the invasion?

When Nebuchadrezzar returned to Babylon there were relatively few survivors left in Egypt. Some refugees perhaps returned in the months immediately following, as happened also in Judah. We are certain that Nebuchadrezzar left behind at least one garrison of troops to secure his possession and continue to collect revenue, if not to act as a base of operations while extending his kingdom. The attack on the Kawa temple may have been a secondary action by these troops.

Freedom of movement in Egypt was severely restricted, if not prohibited. But we know that some activity persisted. The Nile level records registered at Karnak in the name of Taharka are a case in point. They were registered in years 8 and 9 of the Nubian king, and then they cease. In those years there may have been no Babylonian forces remaining in Thebes to preclude such intermittent and clandestine activity. The Amun temple had already been ransacked; its treasure removed.

¹⁶⁷ See the italicized text on p. 127 above.

Nebuchadrezzar died within a few years of the invasion, in 562 B.C. His immediate successors were not weak, but they quickly lost the kingdom. By 546 B.C. Cyrus had defeated Croesus of Lydia and Persia ruled Anatolia. Within a few years he claimed possession of most of the former domains of Nebuchadrezzar. By default if not by conquest he was king of Egypt in 543 B.C. When Babylon fell in 539 B.C., Cyrus ruled the Near Eastern world.

Persia was more benevolent than Babylon. Under Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius I, both the Judean and the Egyptian exiles ended by degrees. Rebuilding, retraining, restructuring began immediately. Psamtik arrived as governor to assume control of the Persian province.

The critic will ask for evidence that this is so. We begin by arguing the case for the garrisons. The restoration activity which began with the arrival of Psamtik I is documented in the next chapter. That same documentation includes testimony to the destructive results of the invasion.

Babylonian Garrisons

When Nebuchadrezzar retreated from Egypt in 563 B.C., he left behind not one, but several garrisons of troops to secure his possession. They were probably not large. For this claim there is only indirect evidence and the example of Babylonian policy elsewhere. Riblah on the Orontes, a known outpost of Babylonian troops, controlled the Hatti lands, including Judah. It was too remote from Egypt to be serviceable. Egypt required local troops, and because of its size, several contingents were necessary. The locations of the Babylonian garrisons follow from the reasonable assumption that the Persian rulers of Egypt, acting only two decades after the invasion, merely replaced Babylonian troops with their own, and in the same locations (or thereabouts). And in Persian times there were four such garrison towns.

Olmstead, in his *History of the Persian Empire*, describes how "Egypt was formed into the satrapy of Mudraya, with Memphis as the capital. Garrisons guarded the frontier at Daphne in the eastern Delta, at the White Wall of Memphis¹⁶⁸, and at Elephantine below the first cataract, where large numbers of Jewish mercenaries were colonized."¹⁶⁹ This was the state of affairs under Darius I. It is reasonable to assume the existence of the same sites, or minimally, locations nearby, under Nebuchadrezzar and his immediate successors.

¹⁶⁸ The garrison at this location is said to have been founded by Menes at the junction of the two Egypts, across the river from the capital at the site of Old Cairo. The Old Cairo site, in later times, was known as the Egyptian Babylon.

¹⁶⁹ A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (1948) p.89.

To these locations we can add Marea in the western Delta. According to Herodotus:

In the reign of Psammetichus there were garrisons posted at Elephantine on the side of Ethiopia, at Daphnae of Pelusium on the side of Arabia and Assyria, and at Marea on the side of Libya. And still in my time the Persians hold these posts as they were held in the days of Psammetichus; there are Persian guards at Elephantine and at Daphnae. Her. II:30

The pseudo-Herodotus, quoted here, mistakenly distinguishes between the rule of the Saite dynasty kings and the time of the Persians, as he does elsewhere. But he clearly dates the formation of garrisons at Elephantine, Marea, and Daphnae as early as the reign of Psamtik I, and suggests that these outposts continued up to his day, well into the Persian domination of the 5th century. We should be able to verify or modify these statements by checking the archaeological record at these sites. Of all the locations the site of Daphnae is most clearly articulated.

Daphnae

Daphnae we know about. It was the Tahpanhes to which the Jewish refugees fled in 586 B.C., following the destruction of Jerusalem. It was there that Jeremiah first predicted the invasion of Egypt and where the claim was made that Nebuchadnezzar would there set up his tent. According to Jeremiah it was the site of a palace belonging to the Egyptian king (lit. "house of Pharaoh"). (Jer.43:9) In the traditional history this Pharaoh would be Ha'a'ibre Wahibre (Apries), whose dates were 589-570 B.C. The state of repair of that residence is not specified in the writings of Jeremiah. But there is no indication that Pharaoh's house was occupied. The presence of Jewish refugees at Tahpanhes suggest instead it may have been an abandoned secondary residence, perhaps in disrepair. When Nebuchadnezzar arrived years later, he set up his "canopy" over the brick pavement at the entrance to the palace. If there was an intact palace at the site we wonder why he would not occupy it.

So much for the palace at Daphnae. What about the fortress at the site? There is certainly no mention of a fortress at Tahpanhes in the writings of Jeremiah, though according to Herodotus one must have existed, a garrison of troops being stationed there continuously from the days of Psamtik I through to the middle of the 5th century. Admittedly we have previously discounted the opinion of the Pseudo-Herodotus. But in this instance there is secondary confirmation that he is correct. Archaeological excavation confirms the existence of a fortress throughout the duration of the Saite dynasty. All Saite dynasty kings except Psamtik III have left inscriptional record of their presence. It is surprising that no mention is made of the Saite fortress by Jeremiah.

Something seems amiss in the statements of Jeremiah vis-à-vis the site of Daphne in the year 586 B.C. Clearly there is need to re-examine the archaeological record at that

location, to see if the evidence supports the traditional or the revised history at the site.

If the traditional history is correct, the fortress at Tahpanhes lasted from 664 B.C. till at minimum 405 B.C., thus through the Saite and Persian periods. If a Babylonian army did arrive in 564 B.C., in the days of Amasis (569-525 B.C.) as predicted by Jeremiah, it probably would have occupied that very fortress, though only for a matter of weeks or months, since according to scholars the invasion, if it occurred at all, was quickly aborted. Amasis would have reoccupied Tahpanhes after the withdrawal of the Babylonian army. The occupation of the fortress would have continued uninterrupted through the first Persian domination. Persian scholars such as Olmstead (quoted earlier) are adamant that Daphnae was a Persian outpost through the 5th century.

If this is true there should be clear indication at the site that the Daphnae fortress was occupied for the 139 year duration of the Saite dynasty and into the Persian period at least up to the time of Herodotus, if not through to the end. Archaeologically, there should be evidence of the presence of both dynasties – a Persian occupation layer overlying a Saite dynasty occupation layer.

If the revised history is correct the Daphnae site must be differently construed. When the Jewish refugees arrived in Tahpanhes in 586 B.C., the 25th dynasty king Shabaka (Wahibre/Hophra) was in the last year of his life. His death would authenticate the oracle which predicted the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar and the death and destruction that would follow. At the time Egypt was ruled by multiple nomarchs, of whom Shabaka was but one, albeit the first among equals. There was no single “Pharaoh” to whom the residence at Tahpanhes could be attributed. It was undoubtedly an abandoned relic from the past. As for the fortress at the site, the time of Psamtik I and the beginning of the Saite dynasty was forty years in the future. There was no fortress in Tahpanhes, since the fortress originated with Psamtik (a fact confirmed by the archaeological evidence and the testimony of Herodotus). When Nebuchadnezzar arrived in Egypt he would have had to house his army in quarters elsewhere in the eastern Delta, possibly at Migdol¹⁷⁰, one of the first cities he occupied on his invasion route. There a garrison would remain until the arrival of the Persians and of governor Psamtik in 543 B.C. Jeremiah’s remarks concerning the site of Tahpanhes suit these conditions much better than the hypothetical situation presented by the traditional history.

More importantly, from the perspective of the revised history we do not expect two separate periods of occupation of the Daphnae fortress. The Persian period began

¹⁷⁰ The Babylonian garrison established in the aftermath of Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion was certainly not situated at Tahpanhes. The Babylonian army remained in Egypt for twenty years. There is no record of their presence at the site of Daphne. Only in the Persian period is the claim made that Daphne was home to a fortress. Migdol was a fortress town; the very name means “fortress”. The Migdol site was systematically surveyed and excavated in 1972 by the Ben-Gurion University and the results published by Eliezer D. Oren, "Migdol: A New Fortress on the Edge of the Eastern Nile Delta," *BASOR* 256 (1984) 7-44.

twenty years after the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar. Psamtik's tenure as governor, and thus the Saite dynasty, began at the same time. The Persian and the Saite dynasties overlapped throughout their length. If the Persians wanted a fortress at Daphnae in order to house a garrison, then Psamtik I, the first governor-king, must have built the fortress for them. The Saite fortress and the Persian fortress were one and the same. Any archaeological remains at the site should confirm these facts. They should show clearly that the fortress at Daphnae was built and occupied by the Saite dynasty. There should not exist two separate and distinct strata, a Persian occupation layer overlying a Saite dynasty occupation layer. The Persian overlords were, for the most part, absent from the country. Their presence should not be attested at Daphnae. There should be only the Saite layer, showing evidence of occupation by Psamtik I and his descendants.

Which scenario best explains the archaeological evidence?

W.M. Flinders Petrie excavated the ruins at Tahpanhes late in the 19th century and the excavation results were published in the 4th memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund.¹⁷¹ The archaeological results indicated that the site had been occupied as early as Ramesside times. (Thus the abandoned and inhabitable "house of Pharaoh"?) The existing fort, however, contained foundation deposits of Psamtik I, confirming the claim by Herodotus that Psamtik fortified the site. Sundry artifacts in the remains of the fortress attested the presence of all of the Saite governor/kings through the reign of Amasis. Surprisingly, Petrie could find no evidence of occupation by the Persians!

And how did Petrie explain the contradiction between Herodotus and the excavation results from Daphnae? He argued that elsewhere Herodotus makes the claims that a Greek mercenary army, garrisoned at Daphne early in the days of Amasis, was moved to Naucratis in the western Delta. Thus the fortress at Daphnae was abandoned near the end of the Saite period. If the Persian's continued to use Tahpanhes to defend the eastern Delta, they must have built another fortress elsewhere on the site (or less likely elsewhere in the eastern Delta) But Petrie could find no evidence of Persian occupation anywhere at Tahpanhes. The site was otherwise denuded. He hypothesized that perhaps in antiquity the building had been dismantled and its materials used for construction elsewhere. Either that or modern fellahin had helped themselves to the brick and mortar. If the Persian fortification was located elsewhere, that secondary location has never been found. No explanation is forthcoming why the Persians would not have occupied the abandoned Saite fortress at Daphne. And if the garrison was moved elsewhere, why did tradition continue to maintain Daphnae as the site of a Persian garrison well into the first Persian domination? Why did Petrie believe Herodotus concerning the withdrawal of Greek mercenaries by Amasis (an incident which allegedly took place 150 years before the time of Herodotus) and not believe Herodotus when he claims that the Persians occupied Daphnae in the Persian period in which he lived?

¹⁷¹ *Nebeshah and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)* (1888)

There is no point continuing the argument. The archaeology clearly supports the revised history. The Saite/Persian army was the only occupant of the Daphne fortress. There is no need to search for a secondary fortification at Daphnae or elsewhere. Herodotus may have been correct when he stated that the Greek mercenaries at Daphnae were moved to Naucratis in the reign of Amasis (449-405 B.C.). But that statement does not conflict with his claim that *Persian guards* remained at Daphne to his day, nor with the likelihood that mercenaries of other nationalities remained as well.

Before we proceed to comment on the other garrison locations we should mention briefly an unfortunate consequence of the errant interpretation of the excavation record at Daphnae. As stated already, Petrie, who first excavated the site, found evidence that the fort was constructed by Psamtik and abandoned in the days of Amasis. He concluded, incorrectly as it turns out, that all Greek pottery found on the site belonged to the 7th/6th centuries B.C., and could be dated securely. In Petrie's estimation the Persian garrison that supplanted the Saite garrison was located elsewhere and left no characteristic pottery record in the Daphne fortress.¹⁷² Accordingly he boasts that Tahpanhes provides a unique opportunity to establish dates for Greek pottery within well-defined limits.

With regard to the age of the pottery, it seems certain that all Greek pottery from Defenneh must be included within just about a century. The fort was founded, and the Ionians settled here, about 665 B.C., and the Greeks were entirely removed by Aahmes about 565 B.C. Few sites can give such a well-defined period; but probably no large collection of painted fragments is so closely limited as is the bulk of the pottery here, which comes from chambers 18 and 29, as this may be dated between 595 and 565 B.C., with a probability which only some very clear exception could refute.¹⁷³

It is clear from this comment that Petrie had found significant amounts of Greek pottery in chambers otherwise dateable to the reigns of Psamtik II (595-589), Apries (589-570) and the early years of Ahmose-sa-Neith (570-526). The pottery he found was subsequently used to establish firm dates for a Greek pottery sequence that has remained a standard for over a century since. But Petrie was clearly mistaken. In the revised history the pottery he found must be dated to the years 474-444 B.C., 121 years later than he thought. If Amasis relocated the Greek mercenaries from Tahpanhes to Naucratis around his 6th year as Petrie believed, following Herodotus, then that move took place around the year 444 B.C. The fort may have remained vacant thereafter, though in all probability it remained lightly defended after the departure of the Greek contingent of the army, and was likely destroyed in 398 B.C. in an invasion to be documented in our final chapter.

We repeat our conclusion. The Greek pottery dated by Petrie with such confidence

¹⁷² W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Nebesheh and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)* (1888), p. 52.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.62.

originates from a time 121 years later than he thought.

It follows that Petrie's faulty chronology for the Psamtik fortress is at least partially responsible for a distortion in the standard dating of Greek pottery, since that pottery chronology was developed in large part from evidence at Tahpanhes. The Greek pottery sequence, as a partial consequence of the faulty chronology of the Daphnae fortress, is dated over a century earlier than it should be. The problem has not gone unnoticed.

In recent years "a series of studies by the late David Francis, a specialist in Persian-Greek relations, and Michael Vickers, Assistant Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, have challenged practically all the major criteria for dating Greek art and architecture even as late as the early 5th century B.C."¹⁷⁴ They have argued for a lowering of the dates for the Greek geometric ware chronology by upwards of 50 years in order to bring harmony into the archaeological record.

In step with their reduction of many of the 'fixed points' in Greek art history, Francis and Vickers have proposed a radical compression of Archaic pottery chronology. For example, they have offered a 'recalibration' of Greek ceramic chronology which would involve lowering dates presently given as 550-525 BC by some forty-five to seventy years, and those around 620-600 BC by as much as eighty years. The debate about the value of their revision is ongoing. Certainly some lowering of Archaic dates seems to be in order, but exactly how much remains a moot point. (CD 98)

Our re-evaluation of the Tahpanhes excavation solves two problems and establishes two facts. It explains the apparent incongruity of a Persian fort containing only evidence of Saite dynasty occupation; and further explains the anomalies that have caused Francis and Vickers to propose a lowering of dates for the chronology of Greek ceramics. On the other hand it eliminates Daphnae from consideration as a Babylonian garrison town during the period of occupation following the invasion, and more importantly, provides important validation of the reliability of our revised chronology.

The case for two of the remaining Persian garrisons is different. There is evidence that at least Memphis/Cairo and Elephantine were home to Babylonian troops from the years 564-543 B.C.

¹⁷⁴ Peter James, et. al., *Centuries of Darkness* (1990) p. 97.

Egyptian Babylon

The very name of the old Cairo garrison (near Memphis) mentioned by Olmstead argues for its Babylonian origin. It cannot be accidental that this location in antiquity was called "Babylon". There are disparate views on the age of this so-called "Egyptian Babylon". Diodorus Siculus "attributes its foundation to a colony of Babylonian prisoners in the reign of Sesostris (probably a mistake for Ramses II). He says that it occupied a strong position on the river, opposite to and slightly north of Memphis."¹⁷⁵ Josephus (Ant. 2.15.1) claims that Cambyses built the Egyptian Babylon after his arrival in Egypt in 525 B.C.. It is more than likely that Josephus is describing a refurbishing of the existing Babylonian fortification following the arrival of Cambyses.

Perhaps the most vivid testimony concerning Babylon on the Nile comes from John of Nikiu, Coptic bishop of Nikiu in the late 7th century A.D. His sources are clearly Roman. In his history of Egypt he writes:

And Trajan came to Egypt and built a fortress with a strong impregnable tower, and he brought water into it in abundance and he named it Babylon in Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar the king of the Magi and Persians was the first to build its foundations and to name it the fortress of Babylon. This was the epoch when he became its king by the ordinance of God, when he drove the Jews into exile after the destruction of Jerusalem, and also when they stoned to death a prophet of God at Thebes in Egypt, and added sin to sin. And Nebuchadnezzar came to Egypt with a numerous army and made a conquest of Egypt, because the Jews had revolted against him, and he named (the fortress) Babylon after the name of his own city. Chron.72:15-18

We must leave the matter there. No definitive evidence remains at the site.

Elephantine/Syene

The third Persian garrison, located on the island of Elephantine near Syene (modern Assuan), is well documented. Large quantities of papyri – referred to collectively as the Elephantine papyri - were discovered in excavations at the site. The documents date from the end of the 5th century. They reveal the fact that over a century after the arrival of Cambyses a large contingent of Babylonian troops was still employed there in the cause of Persia. It could be argued, of course, that these troops were recent arrivals and that they provide no certain indication of the nationality of those who occupied the site at the beginning of the Persian domination. But there is further evidence that the tradition of employing Babylonian troops in the area goes back to the time of Darius I, and probably earlier.

¹⁷⁵ G.T. Manley, "Babylon On The Nile," EQ 16 (1944) p.138

In 1944 in one of the galleries of the Ibis cemetery at Ashmunein were found eight Aramaic papyri, dating from the end of the 5th century, thus contemporary with the Elephantine papyri. The letters concern affairs in Syene, near Elephantine, and reveal, *inter alia*, "that temples of four Asiatic gods were located in Syene. These four gods were Nabu, Banit, Bethel, and the 'Queen of Heaven.'"¹⁷⁶ An argument, albeit circuitous, can be made that the existence of temples to these particular gods indicates a long-standing tradition of Babylonian troops in the area.

Siegfried Horn describes the salient features of the four gods. Two are Babylonian and for that reason significant.

"Nabu was the son of Marduk in Babylonian mythology and the chief god of Borsippa, a city south of Babylon. He was especially popular during the period of the neo-Babylonian empire, as attested by the many personal names of that time in which Nabu formed a component."¹⁷⁷ The presence at this late date of a temple dedicated to a neo-Babylonian god suggests a tradition of long standing. The temple itself must be old. But the temple to the goddess Banit is even more intriguing. In the estimation of Horn,

the existence of a temple dedicated to such an obscure goddess as Banit is difficult to explain. Banit appears in some texts as one of the many names of the Babylonian Ishtar but is otherwise rarely encountered in Akkadian texts. The name occurs mainly as a component of Akkadian personal names, of which some bearers were female slaves, so J.J. Stamm thinks that Banit was a deity of female slaves. But if slaves had carried this minor goddess to Egypt, would they have had the means to erect a temple or shrine to her. This question is easy to ask but impossible to answer. Since temples dedicated to her are not even known to have existed in ancient Mesopotamia, where her original home must have been, it is difficult to understand that a sanctuary was erected for her in faraway Egypt.¹⁷⁸

The difficulty is solved if we assume that Babylonian troops occupied the area for over twenty years at the beginning of the Egyptian exile. They would have the resources, access to conscript labour, and most of all the devotion to this particular deity to motivate the construction of a temple. The army troops would also have female slaves if garrisoned for extensive time periods.

On the assumption that the four temples in the same area argue for some historical connection among them, the third deity becomes extremely relevant. There is no direct connection between this goddess and Babylon, but in a secondary sense her connection with the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar is even more profound. We refer to the deity

¹⁷⁶ Siegfried H. Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," in *Studies In Honor of John A Wilson*, SAOC 35, p. 39

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* The name of Nebuchadrezzar (Nabu-kudurru-user) is but one prominent example.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.40

known only by the epithet "queen of heaven".

Mention of the "Queen of Heaven" immediately calls to mind the Babylonian period, for Jeremiah was particularly disturbed by the worship of this goddess by Jews living throughout Egypt, including Pathros, the area containing the Syene temples.

I will punish those who live in Egypt with the sword, famine and plague, as I punished Jerusalem. None of the remnant of Judah who has gone to live in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, to which they long to return and live; none will return except a few fugitives. Then all men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present - a large assembly - and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah. We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord. We will certainly do everything we said we would. We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven ... Jer 1:15-18

This goddess is singled out for particular attention in the Hebrew Bible only in the neo-Babylonian period. The temple in her name in the late 5th century must trace its roots back to the time of the Babylonian invasion.

We assume therefore that Babylonian garrisons at Egyptian Babylon (Old Cairo) and Elephantine/Syene existed in Egypt throughout the first half of the Egyptian exile. We are otherwise in the dark as to the means by which affairs within the country were administered, though we suspect that multiple governors were appointed, each with much the same authority as possessed by Gedaliah in Judah in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem. The only evidence for this administrative structure is dated twenty years after the invasion, for when Taharka died in exile in 543 B.C. his Nubian successor Tanuatamon immediately launched an invasion to retake the Delta. What he encountered in Egypt is instructive.

Tanuatamon

Taharka died in Napata, his Nubian capital, in his 27th year. This is one year longer than he is given in the traditional history. Explanation is forthcoming in chapter six. Taharka's reign spanned the years 569-543 B.C. He was succeeded by Tanuatamon, whose first year, 543 B.C., marks the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule. We don't know to which nation the garrison troops in Egypt are loyal at the moment. We assume it was Babylon. Perhaps they themselves are ambivalent, if indeed some or most have not already abandoned their strongholds. The country is only beginning to recover from the trauma of the invasion. The population is beginning to grow, regulated by an administration consisting of local "chiefs" appointed by or sanctioned by the Babylonian authorities. Temples still lie in ruin. The facilities for temple worship and priests to

regulate that worship are in short supply. There is a longing for former days.

Tanuatomon is the source of some of this information. His famous Dream Stela, "a grey granite round-topped stela 1.32 m. high and .72 m. wide, now in Cairo" was found at Napata, as was the Piankhi stela, in 1862.¹⁷⁹ It has been long studied but badly interpreted. In the traditional history its data were forced to fit the circumstance of an Assyrian occupation. It was not a good fit.

Early in the inscription Tanuatomon explains the motivation for his planned invasion of Egypt:

In the year 1, of his coronation as king - - his majesty saw a dream by night: two serpents, one upon his right, the other upon his left. Then his majesty awoke, and he found them not. His majesty said: "Wherefore [has] this [come] to me?" Then they answered him, saying: "Thine is the Southland; take for thyself(also) the North-land. The Two Goddesses shine upon thy brow, the land is given to thee, in its length and its breadth. [No] other divides it with thee." BAR IV 922

At the time when the dream occurred Tanuatomon resided south of Napata, likely in Meroe, not in Thebes, where he should be if he is the Urdamanie of the Assyrian annals. In Meroe he was crowned by the local authorities and from there he proceeded north to Napata to have his authority confirmed, accompanied by an army of "millions and hundreds of thousands". Making allowances for grossly inflated numbers we can accept that his military strength was considerable.

His majesty arrived at the temple of Amon of Napata, residing in the Pure Mountain. As for his majesty, his heart was glad when he saw his father, Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, residing in the Pure Mountain. Garlands for this god were brought to him; then his majesty brought forth in splendour Amon of Napata; and he made for him a great festival offering ... BAR IV 925

After days of feasting the army moved north. His first stop was Elephantine, the southernmost Babylonian garrison. He is apparently unopposed.¹⁸⁰ Here he takes some time to re-institute long dormant temple worship, as he will be requested to do elsewhere.

His majesty sailed down-stream toward the Northland, that he might behold Amon, whose name is hidden from the gods. His majesty arrived at

¹⁷⁹ *Breasted's Ancient Records* IV 919

¹⁸⁰ We conjecture that the garrison troops are intimidated by the size of Tanuatomon's army and have fled the scene. Critics will not complain about this rationalization. A similar problem confronts traditional historians when Tanuatomon encounters no opposition at Thebes, where an Assyrian army is supposedly present.

Elephantine; then his majesty sailed across to Elephantine, he arrived at the temple of Khnum-Re, lord of the cataract, and he caused this god to be brought forth in splendor. He made a great festival offering ... BAR IV 925

If Babylonian troops remained in the area they had long since vacated the island of Elephantine, no match for the massive army of Tanuatamon. The Nubian king sailed on toward Thebes.

Then his majesty sailed down-stream to the city Thebes of Amon. His majesty sailed to the frontier of Thebes (W's.t), and he entered the temple of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes. There came to his majesty the servant of the great ---, and the lay priests of the temple of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, and they brought to him garlands for Amon, whose name is (was?) hidden. He brought forth Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, in splendor, and there was celebrated a great feast in the whole land. BAR IV 926

The critic will no doubt point to the presence of priests in Thebes as a deficiency in our interpretation. But we have not argued the annihilation of the Egyptian priesthood, only that few priests survived the invasion. And only a few "lay priests" are on hand to greet Tanuatamon in this greatest of Egyptian temples. We note a reference to the name of Amun having been hidden, consistent with our thesis that there has been a period of dormancy in the Theban cultic tradition?

Once again a few days of feasting is all that is allowed. Tanuatamon is intent on liberating the whole of Egypt and uniting the crown. As he moved north he was welcomed as a liberator.

His majesty sailed down-stream to the Northland, while the west and the east made great jubilee, saying: "Welcome is thy coming, and welcome thy ka! To sustain alive the Two Lands; to erect the temples which have begun to fall to ruin; to set up their statues in their shrines; to give divine offerings to the gods and goddesses, and mortuary offerings to the glorified (dead); to put the priest in his place; to furnish all things of the sacred property." As for those who had fighting in their hearts, they became rejoicers. BAR IV 927

Hardly a word in this narrative does not fit the circumstances of the year 543 B.C. Temples are not beginning to fall to ruin, as Breasted claims, supplying an inceptive nuance to the verb. They are already in ruins. The temple statuary has been plundered; temple furnishing and ritual instruments alike taken as booty in the invasion twenty years earlier. Temple offerings have long since ceased. Particularly lamented by these survivors of the holocaust is the absence of mortuary offerings for the hundreds of thousands who died. Small wonder the jubilation at the arrival of Taharka's successor.

The narrative goes on to describe the ensuing recovery of Lower Egypt. Breasted, whose translation we follow throughout, sets the conflict in an Assyrian context:

He captured Memphis, perhaps slew Necho of Sais in battle, and, although unable to subdue the Delta dynasts, accepted what he construed as their submission, which they offered in person. He then ruled in Memphis as nominal king of all Egypt, and at this point the narrative of his stela closes. The presence of the Assyrians in the land is ignored throughout, and the inglorious conclusion of his reign in Egypt at the approach of Ashurbanipal's second great invasion ... is naturally not added at the end. BAR IV 920

Breasted's comments are based entirely on the assumption that Tanuatamon is Urdamanie, and that the invasion takes place in an Assyrian context. But there is absolutely nothing in the inscription to substantiate that interpretation. It is throughout a theoretical construct based on a chronology that is grossly in error. There is no reference to Necho, or Sais, or any hint that Tanuatamon is leading a rebellion against the Assyrians from within the city of Memphis. In fact when he arrives at Memphis, he is the one who does battle with "the children of rebellion." within, whom we identify as the remaining locals sympathetic with the Babylonian cause. If the critic replies that there is no specific reference to the Babylonians, we agree. Nor is there reference to the Assyrians, a fact acknowledged by Breasted. But that deficiency has at least some justification in the revised history at this transition stage between Babylonian and Persian rule in Egypt. A massive Egyptian army was approaching from the south. The army of Cyrus was threatening from the northeast. Egypt was clearly a lost cause. Any Babylonian troops would long since have abandoned their posts. Only those opportunistic sympathizers who had profited from the exile remained behind. Let the reader decide. We reproduce Breasted's translation of the ongoing saga.

When his majesty arrived at Memphis, there came forth the children of rebellion, to fight with his majesty. His majesty made a great slaughter among them; their number being unknown. His majesty took Memphis, and he entered into the temple of Ptah, "South-of-His-Wall;" he made a great festival oblation for Ptah-Sokar; he appeased Sekhmet, the great, who loves him.... Now after these things his majesty sailed north, to fight with the chiefs of the North. Then they entered their strongholds [as beasts crawl into] their holes. Then his majesty spent many days before them, (but) there came not forth one of them to fight with his majesty. Then his majesty sailed southward to Memphis. BAR IV 929-30

The relative ease with which Tanuatamon took Memphis can be attributed either to his great strength or to the weakness of the defenders. He proceeded into the Delta to subdue the local "chiefs", who at first retreated within city walls, then ultimately surrendered. These are not city kings or "dynasts" as Breasted claims. They are administrative officials, almost certainly Egyptian, but sanctioned by the ruling Babylonians. One of their number acted as spokesman.

Then the hereditary prince of Per-Soped, Pekrur (P'-krr), arose to speak, saying: "Thou slayest whom thou wilt; and lettest live whom thou wilt [---]." They

answered him with one accord, saying: "Give to us breath, O lord of life, without whom there is not life. Let us serve (*bk*) thee like the serfs who are subject to thee, as thou saidest at the first on the day when thou wert crowned as king." The heart of his majesty rejoiced when he heard this word, and he gave to them bread, beer, and every good thing. BAR IV 932

Tanuatomon accepted the fealty of the local chiefs and they were freed to return to their administrative duties, this time in service to Nubia.

Said they to his majesty: "Let us go to our cities, that we may command our peasant-serfs that we may bring (f 'y.n) our impost (*bk*) to the court." His majesty (*let*) them go to their cities, and they became [subjects]. BAR IV 933

It is clear that Pekrur is the spokesman for the group. He must be of equal or greater authority than the others.¹⁸¹ Yet he is called simply a hereditary prince (*rp'(ti)*) and a mayor (*h't-*) in the text. If this is the highest authority in Egypt, the country is indeed bankrupt. That Pekrur of Per-Soped in Tanuatomon's inscription is not the same as the Assyrian appointee of like sounding name goes without saying, even admitting the identity of the city he administered. Esarhaddon's king Pakruru was deposed and died before Rudamon instigated his revolt in the delta. There is no problem having two kings with the same name acting as chief of the same city a century apart. The name was hereditary in the region, as Breasted's translation suggests.¹⁸² The Assyrian Pakruru sided *with* Tarqu against the powerful Ashurbanipal in 666 B.C. and paid for his daring with his life. The second *opposed* the invasion of Tanuatomon and returned passively to his city, promising to forward tribute to the Nubian pharaoh. They are not the same person.

Tanuatomon adds a final paragraph to his inscription suggesting that he lived happily thereafter: "The Southerners went north, and the Northerners went south to the place where his majesty was, bearing every good thing of the Southland, and all provision of the Northland, to satisfy the heart of his majesty the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Bekere, Son of Re, Tanuatomon... BAR IV 934

According to Breasted Tanuatomon's brief reign had an "inglorious conclusion" as the Assyrians under Ashurbanipal arrived to drive him from the country. Unfortunately this sequel was omitted at end of the stela. This, of course, is pure speculation on Breasted's part, but as it turns out he is almost correct. There was an approaching army, but it belonged to Cyrus, not Ashurbanipal. And Breasted is correct in claiming that within the year Psamtik I would take the stage. But the year is 543 B.C., not 664 B.C. It may seem

¹⁸¹ Which leads us to enquire as to the whereabouts of Necho, who ought to be the leader of the delta "kinglets".

¹⁸² Steindorf over a century ago claimed that Pekrur is the Egyptian word *kr* (frog) with the article (*pa*).¹⁸² That opinion has prevailed. But the dream stela uses an usual determinative which may suggest otherwise.

strange to historians but it is a fact of history that by the end of Tanuatamon's initial year as king of Cush, Cyrus the Great was declaring himself king of Egypt.

Postscript

The complaint may be raised that much of this chapter has merely proposed a hypothetical sequence of events none of which can be proved beyond question. Lest the critic complain too loudly we remind him that the same criticism applies, and with even greater force, to the traditional history. The fact remains that all that the historian can do in recounting 25th dynasty history is demonstrate a correspondence between the evidence and an assumed chronology. And we have done precisely that.

Once again we wonder at the fact that history can be thrust into an entirely different chronological setting with so little disruption. With the 25th dynasty displaced by 121 years Taharka becomes a contemporary of Nebuchadrezzar rather than Ashurbanipal; the initial years of his reign synchronous with Nebuchadrezzar's mania; his 6th year, the year of the great flood and the lamented loss of territory which immediately followed, with the conjectured time of Nebuchadrezzar's invasion; and his 27th year with the time of transition between Babylonian and Persian dominion over Egypt. We are thus able to explain Taharka's claim to be ruler of Assur and his later reputation as a great conqueror. We can read between the lines of Taharka's lament inscription and explain the three-year delay in celebrating the completion of the Kawa temple. We can explain why the majority of Taharka's constructions date early in his reign and why Taharka was such a prolific builder in Nubia. Excavation details, otherwise unexplained, lose their mystique - the presence of a temple to Banit in Syene, the seeming lack of a Persian occupation level in the Tahpanhes excavations, statues of Taharka in Nineveh.

Almost incidentally our discussion has vindicated Ezekiel, whose words - "no foot of man or beast will walk there" - misconstrued by twentieth century critics, have been wrongly held to scorn. Taharka's character is likewise redeemed. His statuette is precisely what it claimed to be, a straightforward recitation of the extent of his kingdom. What needs to be questioned is not the essential reliability of the biblical text, but the unwarranted cynicism of contemporary scholars