

Chapter Two

The Piankhi Inscriptions: 616-610 B.C.

The Babylonian Chronicle

It is good fortune, some would call it providence, that the Babylonian Chronicle opens with the 10th year of Nabopolassar, 616 B.C. in the conventional chronology. If we are correct, it is the 23rd year of Piankhi, only slightly over two years after he erected his victory stela celebrating the successful suppression of the Tefnakht rebellion.

As the Chronicle opens, Nabopolassar is challenging Assyria for control of the upper Euphrates, the continuation of a power struggle which began almost a decade earlier. In the year 616 B.C., according to the Chronicle, battles were waged, cities were conquered, and captives were taken by the Babylonian army. At long last Nabopolassar was poised to conquer the strategic western fringe of the Assyrian empire. That is, until

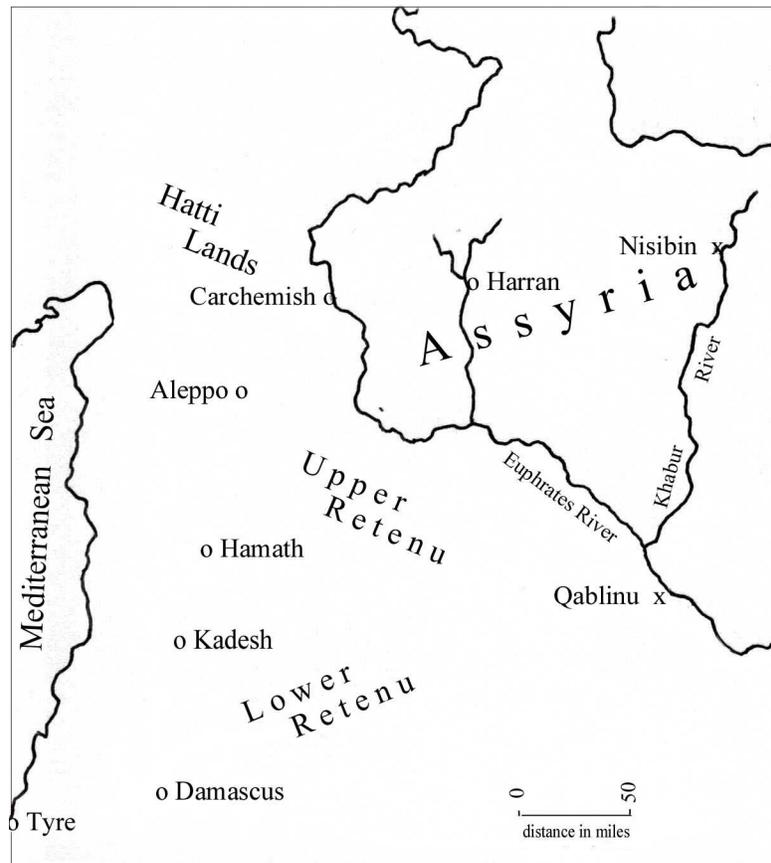
In the month of Tisri [September/October] the Egyptian army and the Assyrian army marched after the king of Akkad (Nabopolassar) as far as the town Qablinu, but did not overtake the king of Akkad and then went back¹⁵

It was a revelation to Egyptologists and Assyriologists alike when the Chronicle was read for the first time in the middle of the 20th century. An Egyptian army ranging the headwaters of the Upper Euphrates, seven to eight hundred miles from home and in league with the Assyrians, was not to be expected in the late 7th century B.C., when Egypt was supposedly ruled by an aged Saïte dynasty king named Psamtik (I) (664-610 B.C.), by now probably in his 80's. For the traditional historian there was no alternative but to accept the fact. Saïte dynasty dates were well established. And so the history books dutifully record the adventures of Psamtik, based entirely on an assumed correspondence in dates. But as we have already explained at length in *Nebuchadnezzar & the Egyptian Exile*, there is not the slightest hint in the monuments that Psamtik was militarily active beyond the borders of Egypt. And we have argued that

¹⁵D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicle of Chaldaean Kings*, p. 55 (B.M. 21901 line 10)

this Saite dynasty patriarch reigned as a puppet king of the Persian Empire in the early days of the first Persian domination of Egypt, in the second half of the 6th century B.C. and the first decade of the 5th century. We have no intention of summarizing the book length argument here.

Figure 3 Eastern Euphrates Region in 616 B.C.



But if not Psamtik then who was the pharaoh whose army acted in concert with Assyria in the next to last decade of the 7th century? If Piankhi, as we claim, then the fact must be supported by means others than a chronological synchronism, the sole argument in the case of Psamtik, though for Piankhi we can at least argue the possibility of such an adventure. For him such far ranging conquests were not atypical.. He

was already that same distance from Napata by the time he re-conquered the Egyptian Delta in his 20th year. Like the young Alexander three centuries later, one conquest might well have served to invite another. But we need more than speculation. What is required in the case of Piankhi is precisely what was absent in the case of Psamtik - monumental evidence. It is inconceivable that an Egyptian pharaoh could participate in the life and death struggles of the Assyrian empire and leave no record of the fact.

Our search for the missing monuments of Piankhi is guided by several clearly defined criteria. The inscriptions we seek should constitute a sequel to what is already preserved on the Piankhi stela, i.e. they should begin by describing conquests beyond the borders of Egypt soon after the 21st year of the king. And these military enterprises should correspond precisely with the recorded activity of the Egyptian army preserved in the Babylonian Chronicles of Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadrezzar. It is imperative, therefore, that we examine the Babylonian Chronicle.

The Chronicle History

We will not quote extensively from the narrative of the Babylonian Chronicle, save where absolutely necessary. D.J. Wiseman, its first editor, provides a summary in his *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings* (henceforth CCK). We simply reproduce that summary, eliminating from consideration extraneous matters. This should be sufficient for our purposes.

The details of the Chronicle are dated by the years of Nabopolassar. We have cross referenced these to the years of Piankhi on the assumption, yet to be proved, that the Egyptian army mentioned in several contexts belongs to him. It is not essential that we identify the year 616 B.C. as Piankhi's 23rd year. There is, as previously stated, some flexibility in the method by which the Piankhi years were determined from the data provided by Aston. But as it turns out, the date is correct.

When we begin the search for Piankhi's missing historiography we look for inscriptions which begin in his 23rd year (or late in his 22nd year), and

continue year by year in parallel with the records provided by the Babylonian Chronicle. If Piankhi's 23rd year corresponds to the 10th year of Nabopolassar, his 24th must correspond to Nabopolassar's 11th and so on until the death of the Babylonian king in his 21st year, the 34th of Piankhi. The parallels should continue into the reign of Nebuchadrezzar, Nabopolassar's son and successor. The comparison should not be difficult. How decisive it will be, remains to be seen. In view of the length of the Chronicle, it seems best to divide the time into manageable units, beginning with the account of the years 10-15 of Nabopolassar. Wiseman's summary for these years is reproduced in table 1 below. The Egyptian years of Piankhi are added for reference purposes.

According to the Chronicle, as previously noted, an Egyptian army fought with Sinsharishkun (the successor of Ashurbanipal) in defense of his Assyrian kingdom in the year 616 B.C. When first mentioned the two armies are acting in league in the vicinity of Qablinu, an Assyrian town on the upper Euphrates, several hundred miles east of the great bend which marked the western extremity of the Assyrian Empire.

We are uninformed concerning the nature of the alliance that existed between Egypt and Assyria, but we may safely conclude from the Qablinu incident two facts, readily conceded by scholars. For Egypt to be militarily active so far east of the Euphrates it must already control the lands which lie between Egypt and the Euphrates, possibly (though not certainly) including the area referred to in the *Chronicle* as the Hattilands¹⁶. This is the equivalent of modern day Syria and Lebanon. We must also assume that Assyria had forfeited any claim over this same territory as part of an alliance forged between the two nations. The precise nature of the alliance is unknown, but the fact of its existence has already been argued in *Nebuchadnezzar*, and evidence was therein produced that Shabaka, a subordinate king within Egypt under Piankhi, was an active participant in its execution.

¹⁶For discussion related to the Hittites and the Hatti lands see below pp. 92-3 & 110.

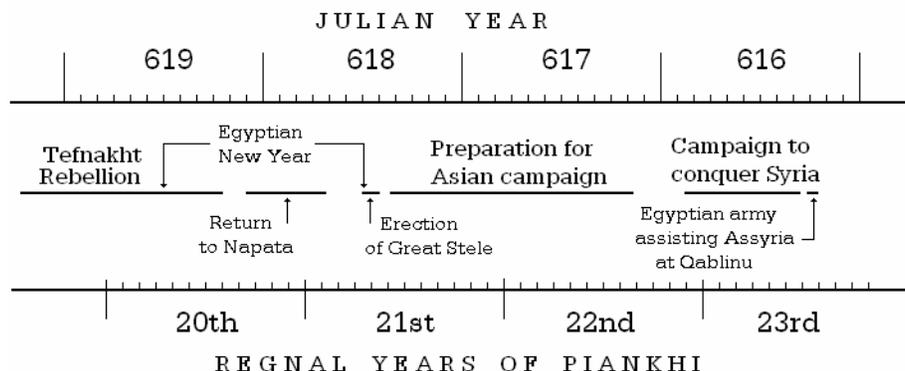
Table 1: Nabopolassar years 10-15 (616-611 B.C.)

Julian Year B.C.	Babylonian Date	Events recorded by B.M.21901	Egyptian Date
616	Nabopolassar 9/10	Suhu and Hindanu submit to Nabopolassar. Assyrian army reported <i>Nebuchadrezzar</i> in Qablinu. Assyrians withdraw and are beaten by Babylonians. Mannaean auxiliaries and Assyrian nobles captured. Babylonian expedition against Mane, Sahiru and Balihu. Return to Babylon. Hindanu plundered on the way. <i>Assyrian and Egyptian armies pursue as far as Qablinu and then withdraw.</i>	Piankhi 22/23
615	Nabopolassar 10/11	Babylonians begin siege of Assur. Unsuccessful attack on the city which is relieved by Assyrian mobilization. Babylonians retreat down Tigris to Takrit. Assyrian unsuccessful siege of Takrit for 10 days. Assyrians withdraw after retreat. Nabopolassar returns home. Medes raid Arraphu.	Piankhi 23/24
614	Nabopolassar 11/12	Medes march against Nineveh. Capture (?) Of Tarbisu. March down Tigris to besiege Assur. Assur captured and plundered by Medes. Nabopolassar meets Kyaxares and makes alliance. Both forces return home.	Piankhi 24/25
613	Nabopolassar 12/13	Revolt of Suhu. Nabopolassar captures Rahilu. Unsuccessful Babylonian siege of 'Ana. Approach of Assyrian army forces Babylonians to withdraw.	Piankhi 25/26
612	Nabopolassar 13/14	Babylonians march north. Join with Umman-manda against Nineveh. Siege of Nineveh. Fall of Nineveh. Death of Sin-šar-iškun. City and temples plundered and destroyed. Some defenders escape. Departure of Kyaxares and Medes. Nabopolassar marches as far as Nisibin. Receives booty from Rusapu at Nineveh. Assur-uballit assumes rule of Assyria in Harran.	Piankhi 26/27
611	Nabopolassar 14/15	Nabopolassar in Nineveh then returns home(?) Babylonian expedition to Upper Euphrates (Assyria). Two areas subdued. Capture of Rugguliti	Piankhi 27/28

We notice in the *Chronicle* that no military assistance for Assyria is documented for the critical years following 616 B.C., those which precede and overlap the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.. Even the year 611 B.C. makes no mention of Egypt. Only in 610 B.C. do we again hear of further dialogue between Assyria and her ally. Where was the Egyptian army during these critical years? We must assume that it was preoccupied elsewhere, possibly maintaining its hold over its Syrian possessions. If our time-line is accurate those lands had been conquered only months before the Qablinu affair.

We can conjecture a tentative timetable for the years leading up to and including the first year of Piankhi's Asian campaign. Late in 619 B.C., around the middle of Piankhi's 20th year, he concluded his suppression of the Tefnakht rebellion which began a year or so earlier. Late in his 20th year he retired to Napata, where his Great Stela was erected in the first month of the Egyptian year, in his 21st year. For the balance of his 21st year, and through almost the whole of his 22nd year, thus through the years 618 and 617 B.C., he prepared for his Asian campaign, which was launched early in 616 B.C. (in the last weeks of his 22nd year). We assume, since his army appears in Qablinu, allied with the Assyrians, in October of that year (now his 23rd), that Piankhi's conquest of Syria occupied only seven or eight months. This hypothetical timetable is represented in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Hypothetical timeline for Piankhi's military activity following the Tefnakht Rebellion



If we are correct, the assistance offered to Assyria by Piankhi was no act of altruism. The Babylonians were as much a threat to Piankhi's recently acquired and tentative hold on Syria as they were to the territorial possessions of Assyria. Egypt and Assyria formed an alliance of mutual defense. Following the Qablinu incident, Egypt's energies were apparently absorbed in maintaining its hold on Syria.

We expect, in light of this discussion, that the monuments of Piankhi, if they exist, will confirm the essential features of this proposed historical outline. We anticipate that they will identify Piankhi's 23rd year as the time when he began his warfare in the region of Syria/Palestine, and further, that later in this campaign his armies were in the vicinity of the upper Euphrates. More importantly, the inscriptions should provide evidence of an early alliance with Assyria, and perhaps even mention Babylon as an antagonist of Egypt. Furthermore, they should confirm our suspicion that the 23rd through 28th years of Piankhi consisted of a sequence of expeditions through the regions of Syria/Lebanon to gather tribute and discourage revolt.

It is time to examine the Egyptian monuments in search of a parallel to this hypothetical construct.

Menkheperre Thutmose

We do not have to search far and wide for the Piankhi monuments. They were inscribed - predictably for a king noted for his piety and devotion to the god Amun - in the easternmost extremity of the Amun temple in Thebes. There, surrounding the shrine of his patron deity, as if in gratitude for all that the god had given him, Piankhi constructed, or reconstructed, enclosure walls on the north, west and south, the eastern wall of the temple serving to complete the enclosure. On the face of the newly renovated walls, beginning on the eastern extremity of the north wall and circling counter-clockwise through the western and southern walls, he composed his Annals. *They begin, as expected, with a Syrian campaign initiated in the final weeks of his 22nd year!*

It goes without saying that the name of Piankhi is absent from the

inscriptions. Instead they are credited to a king Menkheperre Thutmose, whose prenomen and nomen occur frequently. The name is well known to historians as the epithet of an 18th dynasty king, whose reign is typically dated to the 15th century B.C., and in consequence the inscription, in its entirety, has been dated in that time frame. In order not to prejudice our cause we will say little more at this time about the 15th century Menkheperre, known to historians as Thutmose III. In a later chapter, in our discussion of the evidence forthcoming from the Barkal temple at Napata, we will have cause to elaborate. Sufficient here to note that Thutmose III is known to history as a great military leader, indeed, as the greatest native military figure in the entire span of Egyptian history, a reputation based largely on the content of the Annals we are about to read. Needless to say, if we are correct, and the Annals belong instead to the 7th century Piankhi, the life story of Thutmose III as preserved in the standard textbooks is a fiction. Indeed, the entire history of the 18th dynasty, and of the ancient Near Eastern context in which that dynasty is placed, is seriously in error, and will be dramatically affected by the changes we are about to recommend. It is no small matter with which we are about to deal. We must proceed with caution.

The critic should be assured at the outset that we have no intention of dethroning the earlier king. We do not deny the existence of an 18th dynasty Menkheperre Thutmose. We argue only that Piankhi adopted the names of this earlier king as his own and that centuries of scholarship have wrongly proceeded on the assumption that every inscription which bears this name was authored by the 15th century king. But the scholars are wrong, and the consequences of their error for both the history of the 18th and of the 25th dynasties have been dramatic. When the record is set straight it will be necessary to radically rewrite the histories of both dynasties. Indeed, all of Egyptian dynastic history will be significantly affected.

In the first chapter of this book we outlined our agenda - first to find inscriptions which clearly parallel the actions of the Egyptian army in the late 7th century B.C. as described in the Babylonian Chronicle and in the Hebrew Bible. And then to demonstrate that the inscriptions in all likelihood belong to Piankhi. The first objective will require four chapters, as we demonstrate not only that the Menkheperre Annals fit

perfectly in the suggested late 7th century context, but also that their traditional 15th century milieu is untenable. A necessary corollary of this argument is that the king Menkheppere Thutmose named in the Annals cannot be the 15th century king by that name. And if he is not Piankhi, then who is he?

Only in the sixth and following chapters of this book do we proceed to provide an historical context for this king Menkheperre, proving the reasonableness of our hypothesis that Menkheperre Thutmose was but another epithet of Piankhi. But that agenda needs to be emended ever so slightly. It will be an enormous and unnecessary burden on the reader to ask him/her to continue reading without some further support for our claim that Piankhi was known to his contemporaries by the name Menkheperre Thutmose. The argument need not be long, since it will be taken up again in later chapters.

Duplicate Regnal Names

To appreciate the argument which follows the reader needs to know that Egyptian kings, at the time of their coronation, typically adopted four names, which, in combination with their birth name (nomen), constituted a five-fold titulary unique to that king. The adopted names are known to scholars as the “horus”, “two ladies”(or “nebtj”), “golden horus” and “nsw-byty” names, the later often referred to as the “throne name” or “prenomen” of the king. Of these five names only two, the prenomen and nomen, typically appear on the monuments, each enclosed in a cartouche, as is the case in the annals of Menkheperre Thutmose, alias Piankhi

It has been acknowledged since the early days of the 20th century that Piankhi, at least on one of his Napatan monuments, adopted as his own the “horus”, “two ladies:” and “golden horus” names of Menkheperre Thutmose. When the Harvard Egyptologist Harry Reisner excavated at the Barkal temple, in the early decades of the last century, he uncovered, near the spot where the great Piankhi stela had been found a half century earlier, another stela, this one made of sandstone, bearing the five fold titulary of a Napatan king. Unfortunately the prenomen and nomen of the

king had been “savagely chiseled”¹⁷ out by an unfriendly successor. Fortunately, the “horus”, “two ladies” and “golden horus” names remained intact. The name of Piankhy had been added to one of the damaged cartouches by an unknown third party, suggestive of the fact that Piankhy was the author of this damaged stela. Indeed Reisner, after examining an undamaged area within one cartouche, was able to read “confidently the name Mery-[Amun]-P’i-‘nkhy.” In Reisner’s opinion “the general appearance, the language, the script, all point to the early Ethiopian period”, leaving little doubt that the stela originated from the time of Piankhi, thus securing the identification. But there was a problem. The horus, neby and golden horus names on this stela were not typical of the titulary names on other Piankhi inscriptions within the Barkal temple, nor of those found elsewhere in Nubia. In the words of Reisner these three names belong to “the usual titulary of Thumosis III.” But now Piankhi was using them as his own.¹⁸

Nearby the sandstone stela Reisner unearthed another monument bearing the identical three names, this time with the two additional cartouche names intact. But here the cartouche names are those of Menkheperre Thutmose and the stela, which contained an abbreviated account of the major incidents in this king’s life, with many duplications from the Theban temple Annals, was clearly the work of the same king who authored those Annals. There was for Reisner no entertaining the notion that this third Barkal stele *and* the Theban temple Annals belonged to Piankhi. The question would never have been raised. For him the Thutmose stela served only to provide an explanation for the presence of Thutmose’s horus, golden horus, and neby names on Piankhi’s sandstone stela. “Written on the granite stela which was on view at Napata, the titulary stood ready to be imitated by any of the Ethiopian kings; and **we know they copied many of their names from the older names of Egyptian kings**” (emphasis added).

Needless to say, we disagree with Reisner’s explanation (though we do

¹⁷G.A. Reisner, “Inscribed monuments from Gebel Barkal” ZAS 66 (1931) 93. All of the quotes related to the sandstone stele are taken from pages of this article, s.v “The Sandstone Stela of Piankhy, No. 26,” on pp. 86-100.

¹⁸There remains a distinct possibility that Piankhi did not in fact copy the three non-cartouche names of the titulary of Thutmose III. They may have been uniquely his. To date I am aware of any document which uses these names that cannot be attributed to Piankhi.

agree with the emphasized sentiment). We wonder, as he no doubt wondered, how and why an 800 year old monument of an 18th dynasty pharaoh, weighing multiple tons, came to lie side by side with Piankhi's sandstone stela **in a temple built by Piankhi!** But there they sat, within a few meters of one another, both bearing the identical three titulary names. It is irrelevant whether the obliterated cartouche names on the sandstone stela also originally read Menkheperre Thutmose (as seems likely) or Meryamun Piankhi (as restored by some later scribe). At minimum the sandstone stela serves to confirm the fact that Piankhi, at least once in his life, adopted as his own three of the five titulary names of Thutmose III, a titulary which, in Reisner's stated opinion, is "used by no other Egyptian king."

The excavations at Barkal also established beyond doubt that Piankhi was ambivalent regarding his first cartouche name, his prenomen. On several monuments in the Barkal temple he employed as his own the prenomen of Ramses II (Usermaatre), on others the prenomen of a 5th dynasty pharaoh Seneferu. He seemed to have adopted each name to suit some specific purpose, now unknown, like a chameleon adapts his colors on an ad hoc basis to suit his environment. More often than not, he used no personal name at all in his first cartouche, choosing instead as his prenomen the identical name (Piankhi) he employed as his nomen. And as we will see in chapter six, Piankhi is not even a personal name, but rather a title, with indeterminate meaning, but more than likely a designation of rank. The fact that it may simply be the Nubian word for "king", a proposal first raised by F. Laming McAdam, the excavator of the Kawa temple (whose work was discussed briefly in *Nebuchadnezzar*), remains a distinct possibility. But if Piankhi is not a name, and is only a title, then what were the cartouche names of the 25th dynasty patriarch? We cannot be faulted for suggesting that they were "Menkheperre Thutmose". It is not a guess. At least in one instance, in the opinion of a majority of Egyptologists, he did adopt the prenomen Menkheperre.

A stela known to Egyptologists from early in the 19th century, now in the Louvre (C 100), bearing a double cartouche and containing a poetical eulogy of a king's daughter named Mutirdis, has been the subject of much discussion over several centuries. The author identifies himself by his prenomen Menkheperre, but the second cartouche name is damaged,

beginning with a hieroglyphic sign variously read as “ra” or “kh” or “set” or “p”, and ending with a clearly articulated “y”. The intermediate sign is completely obliterated. Both the provenance of the stela and internal criteria have convinced scholars that it originates from the area of Hermopolis, and that it dates to the Ethiopian period. The name was variously read by early scholars as ra-men-y or kh-men-y (cf. Petrie HE III 292-293) but by the middle of the twentieth century was assigned to Pi-ankh-y by no less an authority than Von Beckerath¹⁹. Even Kenneth Kitchen, the last holdout among Egyptologists specializing in the 3rd Intermediate Period, in the supplement to the 2nd edition of his influential *3rd Intermediate Period* (1986), has advised that we should “delete the supposed local king Menkheperre Khmuny rather, one should read Menkheperre Pi(ankh)y on the famous stela Louvre C.100 (i.e. Piankhy himself).”²⁰ This is no small admission considering the nature of the inscription. For in the body of the text Piankhy appears to identify himself solely by the name Menkheperre, as if that name was sufficient to identify the author. We quote Petrie’s translation of the extant portion of the stela:

A sweet of love, the prophetess of Hathor, Mutardus
 A sweet of love unto the king, Menkheperre
 A sweet of love unto all men,
 A lovely one to all women, is this royal daughter,
 A sweet of love, the beautiful of women;
 A damsel of whom thou hast not seen the like;
 Black is her hair more than the blackness of night,
 More than the fruit of the sloe;
 Red is her cheek more than the pebble of jasper,
 More than the crushing of henna;
 Her bosom is more captivating than her arms, ... HE III 293-4.

It is no serious objection that this is the only document linking the name Menkheperre unambiguously with Piankhi. As we have stated earlier, Piankhi is a Nubian title, and as such would have little meaning in an Egyptian context. This stela, erected in honor of an esteemed daughter, perhaps established as a priestess of Hathor in Hermopolis after the conquest of that city, is one of the few Egyptian inscriptions in which the Nubian title was maintained and the only one which preserves Piankhi’s

¹⁹MDAIK 24 (1969) 58-62

²⁰TIP 525

prenomen. It is noteworthy therefore that the prenomen used was Menkheperre. We cannot help but suspect that this was the name he used most frequently.

At minimum we have established that Piankhi, at least once in his life, adopted as his own four of the five titulary names of Thutmose III. It is not a large step to assume that he employed the fifth name (Thutmose) as well. To argue that he did not would be a begging of the question, since hundreds of monuments attest the presence of both names. It is only because Egyptologists insist on identifying all of these monuments as the property of an 18th dynasty king that the claim can be made that Piankhi did not employ all five names as his own. In light of this there can be no strong objection to our proceeding. As we will soon see, it is not the name which constitutes the difficulty in the identification we propose. But the name was clearly the first hurdle to be overcome.

In passing we mention one other reason for suggesting that scholars should not object strenuously to our proposal that two pharaohs bore the name Menkheperre Thutmose. It is not without precedent, particularly in the late 22nd dynasty time frame in which Piankhi lived, for a king to bear both the throne name and personal name of an illustrious predecessor. We have noted, both in *Nebuchadrezzar & the Egyptian Exile*, and in some of our responses to criticism of that book, the serious confusion which has arisen because of the assumed existence of two Egyptian kings bearing the name Hedjkheperre Sheshonk, two kings bearing the name Hedjkheperre Takeloth, and two kings bearing the names Usimare Setepenamun Osorkon Meryamun. It should surprise no one to find that there were two kings bearing the name Menkheperre Thutmose. It is the contents of the Annals, not the name of the king named therein, that should inform us whether we are dealing with a 15th century or a 7th century pharaoh.

Before we examine the Annals we cannot help but comment on our good fortune. When, in the first book of our *Displaced Dynasties* series, we reduced the dates of dynasties 22-26 by 121 years, the 25th dynasty patriarch Piankhi became the only viable candidate for the role of Egyptian ally to Sinsharishkun and Assuruballit, the terminal kings of the Assyrian Empire. When we search the Amun temple for historiography

which resembles the actions of Egypt during those critical years, as portrayed in the Babylonian Chronicle and the Hebrew Bible, we find a remarkable parallel in only one instance, the Annals of Menkheperre Thutmose. Is it merely by chance that the only Egyptian king other than Thutmose III of the 18th dynasty who could possibly have authored the Annals, because he is the only other king known to have used Thutmose's names, is this same Piankhi?

The Annals of Menkheperre

The Annals of Menkheperre, alias Piankhi, have been widely publicized and extensively analyzed since the days of Lepsius. The Egyptologist James Henry Breasted, whose influential five volume publication of the *Ancient Records of Egypt* provided the translation of the Piankhi stela used earlier (BAR IV) also contains a translation and discussion of the Annals (BAR II 391-540). His initial remarks serve as an appropriate introduction to the inscription.

This document, containing no less than 223 lines, is the longest and most important historical inscription in Egypt, and forms the most complete account of the military achievements of any Egyptian king. It demonstrates the injustice of the criticism that the Egyptians were incapable of giving a clear and succinct account of a military campaign, for it shows plainly that at least in this reign careful, systematic records were made and preserved in the royal archives, giving a detailed account of each invasion in language indicating the strategic operations of the army in each of its many campaigns. BAR II 391

The Annals, according to Breasted, "are in a very bad state of preservation, the upper courses having mostly disappeared, and with them the upper parts of the vertical lines of the inscription."²¹ They are composed in sections corresponding to the separate campaigns of the king, and the numbering of each confirms the fact that Menkheperre undertook seventeen distinct campaigns, the last taking place in his 42nd year. Most, but not all of these, are documented sequentially on the walls surrounding the holy of holies of the god Amun. Though several sections are so badly preserved as to be unreadable, sufficient is preserved to serve our purposes.

²¹BAR II, p.164, note a.

The period under review, which includes the years 23-28 of Piankhi, encompasses the first four campaigns, but only the first two are documented in the shrine inscription. The third was inscribed elsewhere in the Amun temple and the fourth, covering years 26-28 (the time of the fall of Nineveh), is lost. Assuming it was recorded at all (there being some suspicion it was not) it must have been inscribed elsewhere in the temple, where it was subsequently destroyed. The descriptions of the first three campaigns are translated by Breasted in sections 408-453 of his *Ancient Records* (BAR II). The first, and arguably the most significant campaign, that which began late in the king's 22nd year, and continued through the first eight months of his 23rd year, is preserved almost intact.

The First Campaign

According to Breasted, the initial and by all accounts the most important of Menkheperre's campaigns in Asia is also the most fully documented. It begins with a description of one of the most famous military encounters in antiquity, known to historians as the "Battle of Megiddo".

Late in his 22nd year the king set out from Tharu on the eastern border of Egypt with intent to conquer domains stretching from Judea to the Euphrates. He had not traveled far before encountering a coalition of Syrian kings ("practically all Syria" to use Breasted's phraseology) assembled against him at the site of ancient Megiddo, near the Jezreel valley in Palestine. Apparently they had gathered specifically to oppose his northward advance. At the end of the ten day trek from Tharu to Gaza, en route to Megiddo, the king celebrated an anniversary of his coronation, and events are thereafter assigned to his 23rd year. But the Julian year remains unchanged. It is early March of 616 B.C.

Year 22, fourth month of the second season (eighth month), on the twenty-fifth day [his majesty was in] Tharu (*T3-rw*) on the first victorious expedition to [extend] the boundaries of Egypt with might ---.

Now, (at) that period [the Asiatics had fallen into] disagreement, each man [fighting] against [his neighbor] ----- Now, it happened that the tribes ---- the people, who were there in the city of Sharuhen (*Š3-r3-ḥ3-n*); behold, *from Yeraza (Y-r3-d3) to the marshes of the earth*, (they) had begun to revolt against his majesty.

Year 23, first (month) of the third season (ninth month), on the fourth day, the

day of the feast of the king's coronation, (he arrived) at the city, the possession of the ruler, Gaza (*G3- \dot{q} 3-tw*).

[Year 23] first month of the third season (ninth month), on the fifth day; departure from this place in might, — — in power, and in triumph, to overthrow that wretched foe, to extend the boundaries of Egypt, according as his father, Amon-Re, [had commanded — —] that he seize.

Year 23, first month of the third season (ninth month), on the sixteenth day, (he arrived) at the city of Yehem (*Y- \dot{h} m*). BAR II 415-419 (italics added)

From the itinerary and the few added comments we glean a considerable amount of information. Apparently this Syrian campaign was undertaken by Menkheperre to recover domains which had previously been conquered, but were now in revolt, much the same situation that had prevailed during the Tefnakht rebellion. As for the datelines, they are critical in proving our case. On the one hand they enable us to establish the approximate date when Piankhi's regnal years began and ended. On the other, they provide us with the precise date when the assault on the city of Megiddo began, which, in conjunction with information from elsewhere describing the duration of the assault, tells us when the assault ended. We will comment on the specifics momentarily.

The Annals at this point begin to tell the story of the Megiddo battle, a narrative which occupies almost the whole of the balance of the space dedicated to the first campaign. The battle occurs in two stages, beginning with open warfare between the two sides in the near vicinity of Megiddo, but outside its fortified walls. This stage of the assault began on the 21st day of the ninth month, only five days after the army departed Yehem. It lasted only a few days. Piankhi was victorious, but his armies, as they had during the course of the Tefnakht rebellion, failed to capitalize on the advantage. Rather than pursue the Syrians in flight, they scrambled to seize material goods abandoned on the battlefield. Piankhi's army was effective, but badly disciplined.

The leaders of the Syrian league, and the remnant of their combined armies, seized the opportunity and sought sanctuary within the walls of Megiddo. Piankhi was compelled to renew the battle. A prolonged assault of the city was initiated. Piankhi could only lament the unnecessary extension of the conflict as he ordered the siege of Megiddo.

Then spake his majesty on hearing the words of his army, saying: “Had ye captured [this city] afterward, behold, I would have given — Re this day; because every chief of every country that has revolted is within it; and because *it is the capture of a thousand cities, this capture of Megiddo (My-k-ty)*. Capture ye mightily, mightily ... BAR II 432 (italics added)

In the seventh month after the siege began it ended successfully. The Annals record the outcome, they do not discuss its duration. For that bit of information we are dependant on a stela inscription not available to Breasted when he wrote his *Ancient Records*. We refer to the granite stela of Menkheperre Thutmose discovered several decades later by Reisner in his 1915/16 excavations at the Barkal temple in Napata, a stela already mentioned in our discussion of Piankhi’s names. [Henceforth we will refer to this monument as the granite stele to distinguish it from Piankhi’s Great Stele and his sandstone stele.] There, in the first court of the temple of Amun, the identical location where the Great Stele of Piankhi was discovered in 1862, Reisner unearthed from the debris the sequel to Piankhi’s story. But this second monument was inscribed with the name Menkheperre, not Piankhi, and it was erected in the king’s 43rd year, over two decades after the suppression of the Tefnakht rebellion, and at the end of the military career of the great warrior king. It is not the case that Piankhi had changed his name between his 21st and his 43rd years. As we will see in the second half of this book, the name Menkheperre Thutmose was adopted at the beginning of his kingship.

The Barkal stela, made of grey granite, is even taller, though not so wide, as the “Great Stela” of Piankhi. According to Reisner “the slab is 173 cm. high, 97 cm. wide, and about 15 cm thick.” We will have cause to return to its inscription several times in the course of our investigation. Here we are concerned to note only the important reference to the battle at Megiddo.

Now I relate to you further (deeds). Hear ye, O people. He [Amun] commanded (i.e. granted) to me the foreign lands of Retenuw in the first campaign, when they came to contend with My Majesty with millions of men, hundreds of thousands of the foremost of all foreign lands, and stood on their chariots, being 330 chiefs, each at the head of his army. (line 19)

Now they were in the valley of Kina, encamped indeed in a trap (?), (and) I had a great success among them. My majesty attacked them and they fled at once, falling down in heaps of slain. (line 20)

They entered Megiddo, and My Majesty besieged it for a period of seven months

without their coming forth (i.e. until they came forth) beseeching My Majesty, saying: Give us thy breath, O our Lord, (for) the foreigners of Retenuw will never again be rebellious.” (line 21)²²

It is clear from the granite stele (and from the description of the battle of Megiddo in the Annals) that the leader of the coalition which opposed Menkheperre was the “chief of Kadesh”, a city in north central Syria. When the battle ended, and the Syrian chiefs acknowledged Piankhi’s sovereignty, it was the chief of Kadesh who acted as their spokesman.

Then that fallen one (the chief of Kadesh) together with the chiefs who were with him, sent forth to My Majesty all their people (?) bearing many gifts of gold and silver, all their horses and that which belonged to them, their great chariots of gold and silver and those which were painted, all their battle armor, their bows, their arrows, all their weapons of war. These it was which they came from afar to fight against My Majesty, and now they brought them as gifts to My Majesty. Meanwhile they were standing on their walls and were giving praise (obeisance) to My Majesty, seeking that the breath of life be given to them. (lines 22,23)

Then My Majesty caused them to swear an oath, saying: We will never again act evilly against Menkheperre, may he live forever, our Lord, in our life-time (as long as we live), for we have seen his glory. Let him give to us breath as he wishes. His father (?) it is who has (done it (for him), Amon-Ra Lord of Karnak), not indeed the power of man.” (line 24)

Then My Majesty let them take the road to their cities, and they departed all of them (riding) on donkeys, for I was in possession of (I took) their horse-chariots. I carried off the citizens thereof as booty to Egypt, and their chattels likewise.” (line 25)²³

It is noteworthy that Menkheperre and Piankhi share the same intense, almost passionate devotion to the god Amon. It is also significant that the only tribute worthy of mention by Menkheperre are the horses of the Syrian chieftains (not “horse-chariots” as Reisner translates²⁴). If the two pharaohs lived over 800 years apart, it is intriguing that they share the same passions. Apparently Amun has not lost his preeminence over that extreme duration! But that is an issue for another time.

²²G.A. Reisner and M.B. Reisner, “Inscribed monuments from Gebel Barkal: Part 2,” ZAS 69 (1933) 31-2. The comments in round brackets () belong to Reisner. Any additions by myself, here or elsewhere, are enclosed in square brackets [].

²³Ibid, p. 32-3.

²⁴There is no mention of chariots in the inscription. The text refers only to htrw-sn “their horses” and even adds the ideograph for horses, for good measure.

It appears, at first glance, that the subject of most interest to us, Piankhi's subsequent tour of conquest in Syria, and his brief liaison with the Assyrians, is not discussed in the granite Stela and is all but overlooked in the brief sequel recorded in the Annals. The later, having devoted most of its space to the details of the Megiddo incident, concludes with only a few hints of subsequent events, contained in a brief description of plunder taken during the first campaign.

List of that which was afterward taken by the king, of the household goods of that foe who was in the [the city of] Yenoam (*Y-nw-ꜥ3-mw*), in Nuges (*Yn-yw-g-s3*), and in Herenkeru (*Hw-r-n-k3-rw*), *together with all the goods of those cities which submitted themselves*, which were brought to [his majesty: 474] —; 38 lords (*[m-r3-y-}n3*) of theirs, 87 children of that foe and of the chiefs who were with him, 5 lords of theirs, 1,796 male and female slaves with their children, non-combatants who surrendered because of famine with that foe, 103 men; total, 2503. BAR II 436 (italics added)

There follows a brief description of the physical treasure looted from the Syrian cities. Then the record ends and the annalist begins an account of the second campaign.

The Extent of the 1st Campaign

We might be tempted, on reading the Annals, to minimize the scope of Menkheperre's tour of conquest following the battle of Megiddo. Only three cities are singled out for attention - Yenoam, Nuges, Herenkeru. Were it not for inscriptions located elsewhere in the Karnak temple, we might have difficulty proving our case. For it follows from what has been said thus far that if Menkheperre did not advance to the Euphrates following the Battle of Megiddo, and there act in league with Assyria in driving back the army of Nabopolassar at Qablinu, then our identification is in error. Our hypothesis must be incorrect. Fortunately the sequel to the assault on Megiddo can be determined from sundry details in the Annals themselves, and from inscriptions elsewhere in the Theban temple of Amun.

The additional inscriptions alluded to consist of two distinct lists of cities conquered by Menkheperre in the course of his first campaign. The first

list, preserved in triplicate²⁵ lists 119 cities conquered by the Egyptian king. Breasted describes these cities as occupying the region “from the northern limits of Palestine southward an uncertain distance into Judea, as well as Damascus and its district”. But this description is inaccurate. In Breasted’s own words, one of the lists of conquered cities is introduced by a title “*which would indicate that some of the places belong farther north*”. This introductory “title” specifically states that the conquered cities occupied “*all inaccessible lands of the marshes of Asia*”, lands which “*had never been trodden by the other kings, beside his majesty*.”²⁶ The phrase “marshes of Asia” mentioned in this heading is almost certainly the same area alluded to in the introductory lines of the Annals, a passage quoted earlier. In those opening lines, in the introduction to his first campaign, it was Menkheperre’s stated objective to recover for Egypt lands stretching “from Yeraza (*Y-r3-d3*) to the marshes of the earth”, a phrase to which Breasted adds an explanatory footnote: “that is, from northwestern Judea to beyond the Euphrates.”²⁷ Surely Menkheperre did not boast of setting out to conquer all of Syria, to the waters of the Euphrates, only to settle for territories largely south of the Lebanon.²⁸

But if this list of cities, duplicated elsewhere, hints at the fact that Menkheperre crossed the Euphrates in his first campaign, a second list, longer than the first, is even more suggestive. According to Breasted, basing his comments on an earlier analysis of the list by Müller:

The second list²⁹ embraced 248 names (of which many are lost) of cities in northern Syria and also perhaps as far east as the Chaboras River, but our geographical knowledge of this region is too meager as yet to identify any number of the places included. BAR II 403

The Chaboras River (Khabur River) is a tributary of the Euphrates, lying

²⁵One copy is inscribed on the north end of the 6th pylon, accompanying the list of feasts and offerings, and the other two are found on the north and south sides respectively of the 8th pylon. Cf. BAR II 402 note a.

²⁶BAR II 402 (italics added)

²⁷BAR II 416 note d.

²⁸Breasted is forced to ignore the mention of Kadesh at the head of the list of conquered cities. In the context of the balance of the Annals, this can only refer to Kadesh on the Orontes, only a few hundred miles from the Euphrates.

²⁹This list, according to Breasted, is inscribed “on the 8th pylon at Karnak, acting as an appendix to the third copy of the first list”. BAR II 403 (p.171) note b.

entirely east of its western bend. It enters the Euphrates not far from the city of Qablinu (see figure 3, p. 23). According to Müller the conquests of Menkheperre extended that far. But the critic may argue, with some justification, that these Euphrates territories may have been conquered in later campaigns. Arguments based on the second list cannot be pressed too far. But the second list is unnecessary to prove our point.

The shorter list of conquered cities, in all three versions, begins with the name of Kadesh, the city of the rebel leader, as if to underscore its strategic importance. There can be no doubt that the first campaign extended at least that far north. And as can be seen from any map of the area, Kadesh lies at approximately the same latitude as Qablinu. Advancing that far, Piankhi would have ready access to the Euphrates where his forces could join ranks with the Assyrian army.

But we anticipate an objection from the critic. Why did Menkheperre omit any mention of the conquest of Syria (other than the inclusion of the name of Kadesh), both in the Annals and in the Barkal stele. Why does he single out for mention only three insignificant Lebanese towns, if he truly advanced as far as central Syria? And how did he conquer all of Lebanon and Syria in such a short time? The latter objection will surely be voiced most strenuously. The siege of Megiddo began on the 21st day of the 9th Egyptian month, thus late in March 616 B.C.³⁰ According to the Barkal stela it ended seven months later, probably mid to late October. The Babylonian Chronicle dates the actions of the Egyptian/Assyrian coalition in the month Tashritu, at latest mid to late October. Menkheperre must have conquered the whole of this vast territory in a few days, certainly less than a week. How was this possible?

Far from being a serious objection to our thesis, the time-line actually serves to confirm its accuracy by suggesting a common answer to all

³⁰Throughout this book we assume as a given that the Egyptian year at this time in history began very early in July. The 1st season of the Egyptian calendar was called Akhat (the inundation) for a reason. The Nile floods in Egypt typically begin at the beginning of our summer season, thus early in July. The floods last into September. Thus the beginning of the Egyptian year is deemed to begin with the inundation of the Nile, in early July. Two facts follow from this assumption. Piankhi's coronation is dated in the Annals to the 4th day of the 9th month. This assumes that his regnal years began and ended around the beginning of March. Additionally the Annals date the beginning of the assault on the city of Megiddo to the 21st day of the 9th month, thus late in March in the Julian year.

questions. It is transparent from our earlier comments regarding the battle of Megiddo that all the chief cities of Syria were aligned against Menkheperre on the plains near Megiddo. According to the Barkal stele there “came to contend with My Majesty ... millions of men, hundreds of thousands of the foremost of all foreign lands, and stood on their chariots, being 330 chiefs, each at the head of his army.” When the fighting ended on the field of battle and the Syrian chiefs sought sanctuary within the city, Menkheperre correctly appraised the situation. By taking Megiddo he would in effect become ruler of Syria, *without having to conquer a single Syrian city*.³¹ Piankhi’s words at the time, quoted earlier from the Annals, bear repeating.

Then spake his majesty on hearing the words of his army, saying: “Had ye captured [this city] afterward, behold, I would have given — Re this day; because every chief of every country that has revolted is within it; and because *it is the capture of a thousand cities, this capture of Megiddo* (My-k-ty). Capture ye mightily, mightily ... BAR II 432

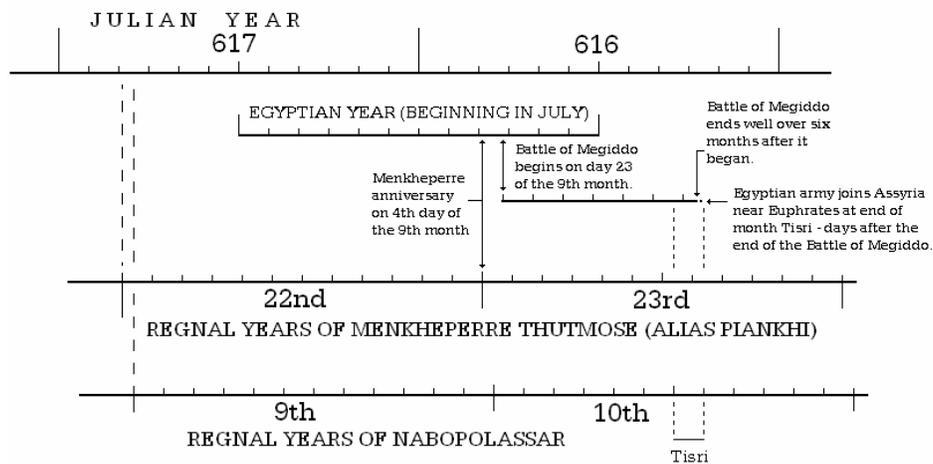
When Megiddo fell to the Egyptian army in the seventh month of the siege, all that was required for Menkheperre was a brief tour of the lands over which he was now sovereign. There was no need for further conflict. According to the Barkal stele the princes who formerly ruled these city states surrendered their authority to the Egyptian king at the conclusion of the battle of Megiddo. Piankhi could proceed northward without opposition. All of Syria belonged to Egypt. Apparently in his northward tour of victory three cities in Lebanon had a change of heart and resisted his advance. Thus their inclusion in the Annals. But from the lists of conquered cities we can surmise that Menkheperre/Piankhi now ruled the whole of lower and upper Retenu - all the Lebanon and much of Syria. It is no great stretch to assume that a portion of the Egyptian army, no longer needed following the fall of Megiddo, might be reassigned to assist Assyria in repelling the Babylonian threat, now looming. A few days march would take them to the Euphrates.

Figure 5 below summarizes the data from the Babylonian Chronicle, the Karnak Annals, and the granite stele at Barkal related to the siege of Megiddo. This data needs to be compared with the right hand section of

³¹On the assumption that Menkheperre is Piankhi we can see a parallel between Megiddo and Memphis, where several years earlier he had conquered the delta by capturing Memphis.

our hypothetical timeline for the actions of Piankhi (figure 4) introduced earlier (p. 27). They are, of course, identical. All that needs to be done is to add a few dates to the earlier figure.

Figure 5: Timeline summarizing the data from the Babylonian Chronicle, the Karnak Annals, and the granite stele at Barkal related to the siege of Megiddo.³²



³²When we compare the dates recorded on the Chronicle with those provided by the Annals we are dealing with two disparate calendrical schemes. The Babylonian year, composed of lunar months, began and ended at the time of the new moon in March/April of the Julian year. As a consequence its beginning (Nisan 1) within the Julian solar year varied somewhat from year to year. The years of the king began and ended on Nisan 1. The Egyptian situation is quite different. From the Annals we can determine that the years of Menkheperre are numbered from the time of his coronation on the 4th day of the 9th month. What we do not know is precisely when the 1st month of the Egyptian year began in the Julian calendar. Breasted dates the first day of the new year (Thoth 1) in the fall of the year. But this dating assumes that Menkheperre belongs to the 15th century B.C., and it presumes the reliability of the sothic dating system, which we totally reject. In the 7th century, according to several recent studies, the Egyptian year began around mid-December. But these studies also depend on the sothic dating system and are similarly flawed. Instead we assume that the Egyptian year began early in July (cf. note 29 above), the time of the annual Nile flood. The first four month season of the Egyptian year is called Akhat, meaning Inundation. The implication is that the Egyptian year began at the beginning of the Nile flood. If the beginning of the year has drifted slightly from this date, it cannot have moved significantly. And if the 1st Egyptian month began early in July, then the 9th month began early in March. On this basis we conclude that the years of Menkheperre, which began on the anniversary of his coronation on the 4th day of that month, are dated from early in the month of March. This is reflected in our figure 5.

We need to comment on only a single feature of our figure 5. As shown, the length of the siege of Megiddo is closer to 6.5 months than the 7 months cited on the granite Barkal stele. But that stele number may be nothing more than a rounding off of the actual length of the siege. Additionally, there is room in the figure for some fine tuning. We have assumed, for the sake of convenience, that the Egyptian year began on July 1. If it began earlier, the time lines for the Egyptian year and the beginning of Menkheperre's reign, would move correspondingly to the left, increasing the length of the Megiddo siege in the diagram. We have also assumed that the reign of Nabopolassar began precisely in the middle of March, an dating based entirely on expediency. If the lunar month of Nissan actually began slightly later in the 10th year of Nabopolassar (a distinct probability), then the timeline for that king would move correspondingly to the right, moving the month of Tisri later in the Julian year, thereby also increasing the length of the Megiddo assault in the diagram. At minimum, the data accords well with the hypothetical timeline assumed in figure 4 on page 27. There is every reason to believe that the earlier hypothetical timeline for Piankhi, and the timeline for the military activity of king Menkheperre Thutmose, are identical, and for an obvious reason. Piankhi and Menkheperre are epithets for the same king.

Assistance to Assyria

If Menkheperre/Piankhi did in fact lend his army to assist Sinsharishkun in repelling the advances of Nabopolassar in 616 B.C., after having first conquered the whole of Syria and Palestine, what evidence is there to confirm the fact? Surely this alliance would deserve mention in the Annals. Once again we are not disappointed. We did not expect the Euphrates incident to be included in the description of the first campaign. Piankhi likely returned to Egypt long before the fall of Megiddo, leaving the conduct of the siege to his subordinates. For him the campaign was over. The army, or a portion of it, was delegated to assist Assyria and secure the Syrian lands. A record of its activities should be found instead in the Annals for the next year.

The Annals conclude their description of the first campaign with a description of the three resisting cities followed by a list of tribute. The

inscription proceeds without pause to detail Menkheperre's second campaign, undertaken the year following, his 24th year. It was apparently a tour to revisit the territories conquered the year before; perhaps to put down any insurrection, or to deter any threatened insurrection. It was certainly intended to collect tribute. The inscription begins:

[List of the tribute of Assur and of] the chiefs of Retenu in the year 24.
The tribute of the chief of Assur (*Ys-sw-r3*): genuine lapis lazuli, a large block, making 20 deben, 9 kidet; genuine lapis lazuli 2 blocks; total 3; and pieces, [making] 30 deben; total, 50 deben; total 50 deben and 9 kidet; fine lapis lazuli from Babylon (*Bb-r3*); vessels of Assur (*Ys-sw-r3*) of (*hrtt*-)stone in colors, — — — — very many. BAR II 446

Later, following a list of tribute from the chiefs of Retenu, an addendum is added detailing further "tribute" from Assur:

Year 24. List of the tribute brought to the fame of his majesty in the country of Retenu. Tribute of the chief of Assur (*Ys-sw-r3*): h[orses] —. A [—] of skin of the *m-h3-w* as the protection of a chariot, of the finest of — wood; 190 wagons --- --- — wood, *nhb* wood, 343 pieces; carob wood, 50 pieces; *mrw* wood, 190 pieces; *nby* and *k3nk* wood, 206 pieces; [olive wood], Bar III 449

Concerning these items Breasted makes the following brief but interesting remark.

Far-off Assyria also, which had now heard of the great victory of the preceding year, sent gifts, which the scribe calls "tribute" (*ymw*) like that of Syria. BAR II 444

We understand the motivation for this comment, but the reader should not pass it by unchallenged. It is a most troublesome addition to Breasted's commentary, though in fairness to the famed Egyptologist his explanation of the Assyrian tribute has not been improved on over the intervening century. But the statement makes no sense whatever. In the 15th century, when Menkheperre is said to have lived, Assyria was not the great nation that existed in the 7th century B.C., where we have dated these incidents. Its territories did not border on the western fringes of the Euphrates, but were concentrated around the upper Tigris three hundred miles to the east. Between Assyria and the Euphrates, as may be seen in any 15th century map of the Ancient Near East, lay the territory of Mitanni, ruled by powerful chiefs not overly friendly to Assyria. Then why, we ask, did the

“far-away” kingdom of Assur respond so favorably to the victories of Menkheperre, showering the Egyptian pharaoh with such a voluminous quantity of “gifts” - 190 wagons full of wood, hundreds of pounds of precious lapis lazuli, and perhaps most valuable of all, horses? The question is even more pertinent (or impertinent) if the victories of Menkheperre are limited, as Breasted suggests, to a battle in southern Palestine and a few cities in south-central Lebanon. Why send such valuable merchandise so far afield to appease a foreign dignitary who poses no threat to your security. The idea borders on the absurd. And to call this tribute “gifts” is a linguistic stretch.

And how, we enquire further, were these “gifts” securely transported over such a tremendous distance, through “unfriendly” territory? Why did the Mitanni overlords not intervene to confiscate this treasure? Why, in fact, were no “gifts” forthcoming from Mitanni to Menkheperre? The Mitanni are not even mentioned in the Annals until shortly after the 4th campaign. Later we will explain why.

The vision of 190 wagons laden with wood, of hundreds of pound of lapis lazuli, more precious by weight than gold, and unnumbered horses, toiling through the mountainous highlands wherein lie the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates, all to appease a foreign dignitary who has never ventured further north than the Lebanon, is difficult to accept. But it need not be accepted. With the Menkheperre Annals placed in a 7th century context the difficulty disappears entirely.

The tribute of Assur did not consist of gifts, freely given. Assyria had received from Egypt the previous year the ultimate gift - military aid which served to prolong the nation’s life. The scribe is not mistaken. The materials sent by way of compensation were probably a negotiated settlement for the assistance rendered by Egypt. What else to call it but tribute.

And the proffered treasure did not require a lengthy and arduous journey to reach its destination. Assyria bordered the Syrian territories recently defeated by Egypt. The wagons needed only to cross the Euphrates and journey the several miles to meet with emissaries sent by Piankhi. The tribute of Assur is the surest proof of the accuracy of our claim.

Menkheperre/Piankhi had indeed reached the marshes of Asia in his 23rd year.

Assyrian Adversaries

But there are yet further indications that the campaigns of Menkheperre belong in the 7th, not in the 15th century B.C. We notice that the tribute of the 2nd campaign included, in addition to “gifts” from Assyria, “fine lapis lazuli from Babylon (*Bb-r3*)”. Is this simply another coincidence - two identical situations, Babylon and Assyria having dealings with an Egyptian pharaoh who, at least in our interpretation of events, has recently employed his army in the vicinity of Qablinu, described both in the 15th century B.C. Annals of Menkheperre Thutmose and also in the 7th century Babylonian Chronicle of Nabopolassar. Or are the two documents, the Annals and the Chronicle, in error placed in time periods 800 years apart? Are they not actually describing the same events from different points of view? The circumstances are remarkably similar. The Egyptian king in both instances has the identical throne name Menkheperre and arguably the same five fold titulary. The events take place in the 23rd year of Piankhi according to calculations arrived at independently earlier in this chapter. It is the 23rd year of Menkheperre according to his Karnak temple Annals.

The reference to Babylon in the Annals of Menkheperre is for other reasons problematic for the traditional history. Babylon was a city, not the designation of a people or nation (as appears to be the case here) in the 15th century B.C.. And the “fine lapis lazuli from Babylon (*Bb-r3*)” is treated, as are all items in this section of the annals, as “tribute”. Breasted wisely refrains from attempting to explain why the city of Babylon would pay tribute, or send “gifts” to an Egyptian king of no consequence. There is no palatable explanation. Babylon in the 15th century is even more distant than Assyria and thus even less likely to attempt the establishment of diplomatic relations. But by the 7th century the situation has changed dramatically. Babylon is now a nation, rivaling Assyria for control of the Upper Euphrates. It has only recently received a setback at Qablinu. Perhaps the Egyptian army acquired the lapis lazuli from Babylonian casualties in the brief skirmish at Qablinu. Or a token

“gift” might well have been sent to the Egyptian king, now the sovereign of neighboring Syria, to buy his favor. After all, Nabopolassar’s quarrel was with Assyria, not with Egypt.

But the critic might intrude at this point and press the issue of the Mitanni. After all, we mentioned the existence of this nation in our discussion of the tribute from Assyria. It might be asked: If 15th century B.C. documents, including the Annals of Menkheperre Thutmose (in its descriptions of later campaigns), allude to the presence of a nation called Mitanni inhabiting the lands near the bend of the Euphrates, and if the Annals actually belong to the late 7th century B.C. as we argue, then why are the Mitanni not mentioned in the Babylonian Chronicle? The answer is simple - they are mentioned.

The Annals do not allude to the Mitanni until after the 4th campaign of Menkheperre, i.e. after 610 B.C. According to the Chronicle, in the year 609 B.C. the Assyrians were displaced in the Euphrates region by the combined forces of Babylon and Media. After this date the Medians inhabited part of the northern reaches of the Euphrates formerly ruled by Assyria. It follows that the Mitanni of the Annals and the Median allies of Nabopolassar are one and the same nation. We are not the first historical revisionists to argue this fact. We will comment further on the matter in the next chapter.

Clearly the history of three nations - Babylon, Assyria, and Mitanni - have been wrongly informed by the misdated Annals of Menkheperre. When the error is corrected we anticipate finding that none of these nations existed, as described in the traditional history, in the 15th century B.C. In particular the Mitanni have been badly misrepresented. If our argument is correct this 15th century nation will prove to be a total fiction, a fact argued by Immanuel Velikovsky in the middle of the twentieth century.

The 2nd & 3rd Campaigns

The 2nd campaign, during which Menkheperre received tribute from Retenu, Assyria and Babylon, occupied the whole of his 24th year, the 11th

of Nabopolassar (615 B.C.). The record for that year has already been reviewed. As Breasted notes, “this campaign seems to have been only a circuitous march through Palestine and southern Syria to receive the submission and tribute of the dynasts.” (BAR IV 444)

The 3rd campaign, which occupied the king’s 25th year (614 B.C.) was even more benign, so much so that the documentation for this year was inscribed elsewhere in the Theban temple. Apparently Piankhi’s attention had turned to horticulture. We let Breasted explain.

The Annals contain no account of the third campaign which was evidently a peaceful tour of inspection. The record of its results required more room than the wall of the Annals afforded, hence it was transferred to a chamber in the rear of the temple, and recorded in a long series of reliefs representing the flora and fauna of Syria, brought back from this campaign. BAR IV 450

These reliefs and inscriptions, found on the walls of a rear sanctuary of the temple, do provide some additional support for our contention that the 1st campaign ventured into the region of North Syria. In them Menkheperre expressly states that the biological specimens retrieved at this time originated from “Upper Retenu”.

Year 25, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperre, living forever. Plants which his majesty found in the land of Retenu. All plants that [grow], all flowers that are in God’s Land [which were found by] his majesty when his majesty proceeded to Upper Retenu, to subdue [all] the countrie[s,] according to the command of his father, Amon ... BAR IV 451

The 4th Campaign.

The annals for the 4th campaign, which must have occupied some part of the years 26-28 of Menkheperre, are missing. According to Breasted “the account of this campaign, if any existed, is lost; it was not recorded on the wall of the Annals, and may have been put elsewhere, like the third.” (BAR IV 453) It is only because the Annals continue without pause from the depiction of the 2nd campaign in the king’s 24th year to a description of the 5th campaign in his 29th year, and because the 3rd campaign is registered to the 25th year, that we know a 4th campaign must have taken place in the stated interval. The silence is both intriguing and

foreboding. It is also most regrettable. The years 26-28 of Menkheperre must correspond, according to the revised chronology, to the years 613-611 B.C. on the Julian calendar. These are pivotal years in the history of the Ancient Near East.

When first we looked at the *Babylonian Chronicle* an Egyptian army was lending assistance to Assyria in driving back the advancing armies of Nabopolassar at Qablinu. The year was 616 B.C. The Chronicle makes no further mention of Egypt through the year 611 B.C. Only in 610 B.C. does Egypt again enter the picture. In the interval between 616 B.C. and 610 B.C. the *Chronicle* describes an alliance forged between Babylon and a northern neighbor referred to as the Umman-Manda, universally acknowledged to be the Median empire. In 614 B.C. the armies of the two nations combined to sack and pillage the city of Assur, and two years later laid siege to and destroyed Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. In the battle Sinshariskun, successor to Ashurbanipal, lost his kingdom and probably his life.

Following the loss of Nineveh and the death of Sinsharishkun in July/August of 612 B.C., the Assyrians withdrew to their last remaining sanctuary, the walled city of Harran on the Balikh River, near the western bend of the Euphrates. According to the Chronicle, at the end of the fourteenth year of Nabopolassar, thus early in 611 B.C., "Ashuruballit ... in the city of Harran sat on the throne as king of Assyria."

Throughout these crucial three years (614-612 B.C.), as Assur, then Nineveh fell victim to Media/Babylon, the Chronicle is silent concerning the activities of Egypt. The Annals for Menkheperre's years 26-28, which correspond to these same three years, might have filled this historical vacuum. Unfortunately they are missing. Apparently Menkheperre did not lend his army to assist his Assyrian ally, else the *Chronicle* would have made note of the fact. Assur and Nineveh are 300 miles distant from the bend of the Euphrates, already five hundred miles removed from Egypt. The threat was too remote, and the danger too great, to risk the Egyptian army. Menkheperre apparently kept his distance. But as we have noted elsewhere, in the opening chapter of *Nebuchadnezzar*, the presence of Egypt in Syria did at least serve to delay the ultimate fall of Assyria. Media and Babylon did not immediately pursue their advantage by

continuing west to devastate the remnant army of Assurballit, now resident in Harran. In that earlier book we argued that the delay is likely attributable to the proximity of Harran to Upper Retenu, which belonged to Egypt. The Egyptian army, assisting the fledgling king Assurballit, was a threat to be reckoned with. Over two years would pass following the destruction of Nineveh, before Media and Babylon would attempt to take Harran and eliminate completely the Assyrian threat. That story is reserved for the next chapter.

Postscript

When we began our revision in the first book of this series we were concerned only with proving the historicity of the 565 B.C. invasion and destruction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The solution turned out to be straightforward. The Saite dynasty needed to be moved forward in time by precisely 121 years, dragging behind it three other dynasties. We had no control over the consequences of this move, but we were encouraged to find that dynasties 22-26 fit perfectly in their new historical context, insofar as that context was investigated in our earlier book.. In particular we found a perfect match between the 6th year of Taharka and the 565 B.C. invasion. The reign of Taharka must have begun in 570 B.C. Of that fact we were entirely convinced. Working backward from that date we determined that the reign of Shabataka lasted from 585-570 B.C. and that Shabaka's dates were approximately 600-585 B.C. Those two date ranges were approximations only, as was the date 617 B.C. for the year 21 stele of Piankhi, the predecessor of Shabaka, an enigmatic figure regarded by Egyptologists as the patriarch of the 25th dynasty.

The reader needs to understand that we are not beginning anew in the present book. The dates mentioned in the preceding paragraph were supported by the detailed argument of eleven chapters of the earlier book. The fact that the 617 date for Piankhi's 21st year has needed to be moved back by only a single year (to 618 B.C.), and that, based on that date alone, were able to show in chapter two a remarkable series of correspondent elements between his assumed 23rd year, the Babylonian Chronicle for Napopolassar's 10th year, and the Karnak Annals for the

23rd year of Menkheperre Thutmose, is nothing short of remarkable. Such parallels do not come about by accident.