

Chapter Four Battles in Naharin

Wiseman's Overview

By the end of the year 608 B.C. the balance of power in the Euphrates-Mediterranean corridor is reasonably well defined. Media and Babylon share domination of the lands east of the bend of the Euphrates; Egypt is sovereign over lands westward to the Mediterranean. There is some question about the allegiance of Carchemish, understandable in view of its location at the junction of lands controlled by the three powers. It appears to have remained loyal to Egypt.

According to the Chronicle, sometime late in 607 B.C., the 19th year of Nabopolassar, the Babylonian army crossed the Euphrates and lay siege to Kimuhu, a well fortified town an unknown distance south of Carchemish, on the west bank of the Euphrates. Although Egypt did not immediately respond, this act of aggression set the stage for a prolonged struggle for supremacy in the vicinity of Carchemish which lasted for over three years. The machinations of the opposing armies are not difficult to follow. Our intention in this chapter is to document the actions of the Babylonian and Egyptian armies year by year during this four year period (607/6-604/3 B.C.), using the Babylonian Chronicle as our guide. The resulting itinerary will then be compared, year by year, with the actions of the Egyptian army described in the Annals of Menkheperre Thutmose. We begin by citing, for the record, Wiseman's summary of the Chronicle for the four year period beginning in 607 B.C. (see table 5 below).

We shall have to be careful when describing the activities of these years. While the Chronicler dates several actions of the Babylonian army to a specific month, in a few instances his description is less specific, leaving us to speculate on the precise times when the events in question took place. In spite of this difficulty it is possible to reconstruct a probable sequence of events, a month by month timetable of the activities of Nabopolassar and Egypt for the years 607-604 B.C., based entirely on the Chronicle.

Table 5: Nabopolassar year 19 through Nebuchadrezzar year 1 (607-604 B.C.), based entirely on the Babylonian Chronicle.

607	Nabopolassar 18/19	Nabopolassar with Crown-Prince (Nebuchadrezzar) leads armies to mountains. Nabopolassar returns. Nebuchadrezzar continues operations in Za.... Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon. Nabopolassar goes to Kimuhu (on Euphrates). Nabopolassar captures Kimuhu.	Piankhi 31/32
606	Nabopolassar 19/20	Nabopolassar returns to Babylon. <i>Egyptian (re)capture Kimuhu after four-month siege.</i> Nabopolassar with army to Quramati. Captures Sunadiri, Elammu and Dahammu.	Piankhi 32/33
605	Nabopolassar 20/21	Nabopolassar returns to Babylon <i>Egyptians from Carchemish defeat Babylonians at Quramati</i>	Piankhi 33/34
		Events recorded by B.M. 21946	
605	Nabopolassar 21/22 (continued)	Nabopolassar stays in Babylonia. <i>Nebuchadrezzar and Babylonians defeat Egyptians at Battle of Carchemish. Pursuit to Hamath. Conquest of Hatti.</i> Nabopolassar dies after 21-year reign. (8 th Ab) Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon. (Elul) Nebuchadrezzar ascends throne at Babylon. (1 st Elul) Nebuchadrezzar returns to Syria.	Piankhi 33/34 (continued)
604	Nebuchadrezzar 'Accession year' Nebuchadrezzar I	Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon with tribute. Nebuchadrezzar takes the hands of Bel and Nabu and celebrates New Year Festival. Nebuchadrezzar and Babylonian army in Syria. Reception of tribute. Sack of Askelon.	Piankhi 34/35

There is a problem with Wiseman’s summary of the Chronicle as shown in table 5. It itemizes events according to the Julian year. But the actions of the Egyptian army portrayed in the Annals are referenced to the regnal years of Menkheperre. If our objective is to compare the movements of the Egyptian army in the Chronicle with those described in the Annals we need to re-section Wiseman’s data. Events need to be referenced to the year of king Nabopolassar, rather than the Julian year. This will be done year by year at the beginning of each section of our discussion. Although the years of Menkheperre began very early in March, and those of Nabopolassar likely began sometime after the middle of March, for convenience we assume throughout our discussion that their regnal years were synchronized. This simplification will not affect the argument.

The Siege of Kimuhu, Sept.-Nov. 607 B.C.

Table 6: The 19th year of Nabopolassar.
(Wiseman’s summary of the Babylonian Chronicle)

Nabopolassar 19 th Piankhi 32 rd	Mar/April 607 Apr/May 607 May/June 607 June/July 607 July/Aug 607 Aug/Sept 607 Sept/Oct 607 Oct/Nov 607 Nov/Dec 607 Dec 607/Jan 606 Jan/Feb 606 Feb/Mar 606	Nabopolassar crosses Euphrates and attacks Kimuhu Siege of Kimuhu ends successfully.
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According to the Chronicle

There is no need to refine our earlier comment regarding the attack on Kimuhu by Nabopolassar in his 19th year. It is not what the Chronicle says that is critical for this year. Rather it is the silence of the Chronicle that is important. Egypt is not mentioned. Apparently no Egyptian

campaign took place this year, the 32nd of Menkheperre, where one might otherwise be expected. After all, Kimuhu lies on the west bank of the Euphrates, in or adjacent to lands under Egyptian control. If an Egyptian army were resident in Syria we would have expected it to have responded immediately.

The fact that the Egyptian army was absent from Upper Retinu also explains what emboldened Nabopolassar to venture west of the Euphrates.

The account of the siege of Kimuhu is brief. It consists of a single line to set the stage, and a second to record the event.

In the month of Elul the prince [Nebuchadrezzar] returned to Babylon and in the month of Tisri the king of Akkad [Nabopolassar] mustered his army and went to Kimuhu which is on the bank of the River Euphrates.

He crossed the river and did battle against the city, and seized the city in the month of Kislev. (BM 22047 lines 12-14)

It is not stated in the Chronicle precisely when during the month Tishri (September/October) the siege began, nor when during the month Kislev (November/December) it ended. The entire assault may have lasted only slightly over one month. Menkheperre may have had no time to come to the defense of the city, assuming he were inclined to do so. In any case he remained in Egypt. The welfare of Kimuhu would await the beginning of his 33rd year. As we have noted several times already, Menkheperre typically began his campaigns in March/April, now only four months distant. There would be time then to retake the city.⁴⁹

⁴⁹It is not necessary to assume that Kimuhu was a vassal of Egypt, though it seems a reasonable assumption. Egypt was driven across the Euphrates in the immediate aftermath of the failed siege of Harran in 609 B.C. We can reasonably assume that the city of Carchemish was under its control at the time. There is no indication in the Chronicle that Nabopolassar either crossed the Euphrates in pursuit, or claimed sovereignty over lands west of the Euphrates. We agree with Wiseman that Carchemish might have housed a garrison of Egyptian troops from 609 B.C. through the battles in Naharin in 606-605 B.C.. The city may have come under Egyptian control as early as 616 B.C.

According to the Annals

At least in their mutual silence the Chronicle and the Annals are in agreement for the 19th year of Nabopolassar, the 32nd of Menkheperre. It is at least significant that the Egyptian king did not campaign this year. The Annals pass abruptly from the 7th campaign in year 31 of Menkheperre to the 8th campaign in year 33. It is rather in the 20th and 21st years of Nabopolassar that we will have opportunity to compare the records of the two documents. These years correspond to the 33rd and 34th years of Menkheperre, during which the Egyptian king launched his 8th and 9th campaigns. Our attention will therefore be focused on these two critical years, the last in the illustrious career of Nabopolassar, and the first in the lengthy kingship of his son and heir Nebuchadrezzar.

March/April 606 - March/April 605 B.C.

Table 7: The 20th year of Nabopolassar
(Wiseman Summary of the Babylonian Chronicle)

Nabopolassar 20 th Menkheperre Piankhi 33 rd 8 th campaign	Mar/April 606 Apr/May 606 May/June 606 June/July 606 July/Aug 606 Aug/Sept 606 Sept/Oct 606 Oct/Nov 606 Nov/Dec 606 Dec 606/Jan 605 Jan/Feb 605 Feb/Mar 605 Mar/April 605	Egyptian assault on Kimuhu begins <i>Egyptian army (re)captures Kimuhu after four-month siege.</i> Nabopolassar with army to Quramati. Assault on Sunadiri, Elammu and Dahammu begins. Assault ends successfully. Nabopolassar returns to Babylon <i>Egyptians from Carchemish defeat Babylonians at Quramati</i>
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According to the Chronicle

The 20th year of Nabopolassar is perhaps the most eventful year documented in the Chronicle, with the possible exception of the one

following, the year of his death. All of the activity takes place at the western bend of the Euphrates.

This year, 606-605 B.C., is dominated by three events - 1) the loss to Egypt of the city of Kimuhu which had been captured late in the previous year (May - August 606 B.C.); 2) Nabopolassar's capture of three towns across the Euphrates from Quramati, apparently in reaction to his loss of Kimuhu (September 606 B.C. - January 605 B.C.); and finally, 3) the loss of Quramati (and the associated loss of the three cities), as the Egyptian army responded in kind (February 605 B.C.). We reproduce the entire content of the Chronicle for this year, eleven brief lines of cuneiform text.

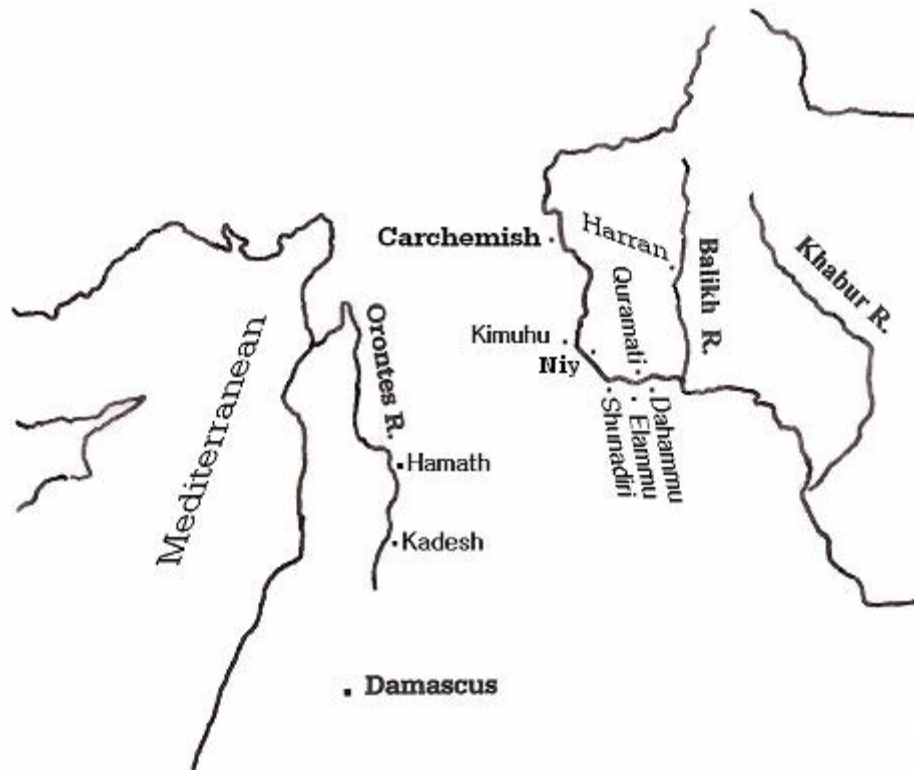
In the twentieth year the army of Egypt came to the city of *Kimuhu* against the garrison which the king of Akkad had set up within (it) and for four months they did battle against the city and then captured the city. They slew the garrison of (set there by) the king of Akkad.. In the month of Tisri (Sept/Oct) the king of Akkad mustered his army, marched along the bank of the Euphrates and pitched his camp at Quramati which is on the bank of the Euphrates. He sent his troops across the Euphrates and they seized the towns of *Šunadiri*, *Elammu* and *Dahammu* which are in the country across the river. Spoil from them they took. In the month of Sebat (Jan/Feb), the king of Akkad returned to his own country. The Egyptian army which had crossed the Euphrates at Carchemish came against the Babylonian army which was stationed at Quramati but the Babylonian army withdrew quickly and retreated. (B.M. 21946 lines 16-26)

There are several interpretive problems associated with this section of the Chronicle. In the first place the location of the cities Kimuhu and *Quramati* is not firmly established. The map below (figure 8) is essentially the one produced by Wiseman⁵⁰, who locates Kimuhu south of Carchemish and Quramati still further south and east, though we note that Wiseman discusses possible alternative locations of these cities. We have added the conjectured site of Niy concerning which there is considerable disagreement.⁵¹

⁵⁰Chronicle of Chaldaean Kings, p. 22. Wiseman's discussion on the location of the two cities is on p. 83.

⁵¹Some scholars locate Niy on the Euphrates, others on the Orontes River. We agree with the location in Naharin, but the substance of our argument would change very little if the city were located in Syria.

Figure 8: The Western Bend of the Euphrates in 606 B.C.



There is also a problem determining precisely when the “army of Egypt” arrived at the city of Kimuhu to begin its four month siege. We assume this siege ended only a short time before the Babylonian counteroffensive of the month Tisri (September/October). This would date its beginning sometime in May.

Finally there is the question: what portion of the Egyptian army was present at each event? Wiseman assumes that the defeat of Kimuhu was accomplished using only a residual Egyptian force, an opinion based in part on the extremely long time it took for the assault to succeed, four months compared with the two months or less that it had taken Nabopolassar to seize the city (from Egypt?) the previous year.

Throughout his discussion Wiseman assumes that Carchemish contains an Egyptian garrison, and that the city has been under Egyptian control since at least 609 B.C. It is Carchemish, he argues, which provided the troops to retake Kimuhu, and to capture Quramati early in 606 B.C. He is correct on all points save one. As we will soon see, the siege of Kimuhu was, as Wiseman suggests, the action of a small segment of the Egyptian army. But these troops did not originate in Carchemish.

We reproduce Wiseman's entire discussion here. We will have cause to comment on it as we proceed.

Kimuhu was a strategic site commanding a river crossing. Its capture by the Babylonians guarded against any Egyptian thrust down the river and gave a base from which the Egyptian line of communication from Hamath to Carchemish might be threatened. The importance of Kimuhu is further attested by the swift reaction of the Egyptians to its capture, for after Nabopolassar's departure, they marched to besiege the town. The Babylonian garrison would be limited in numbers, and as the siege lasted four months it is clear that the besiegers did not represent the full strength of the Egyptian army. At last the town fell, the Babylonian garrison being slain by the Egyptians. Nabopolassar at once called out his army and marched up the east bank of the Euphrates to camp at Quramati. He then sent detachments across the river to seize the towns of Šunadiri, Elammu and Dahammu. These places are otherwise unknown and were perhaps only small villages whose capture gave the Babylonians a bridgehead which served both to guard the river ford and also to hinder any possible outflanking movement by the Egyptians were they to try joining up with dissident forces in the Hindanu and Suhu regions down the river. The location of Quramati depends on that of Kimuhu which lay south of Carchemish and above Meskenah, where the river bends eastward. Quramati being south of Kimuhu ... CKK. 21,22

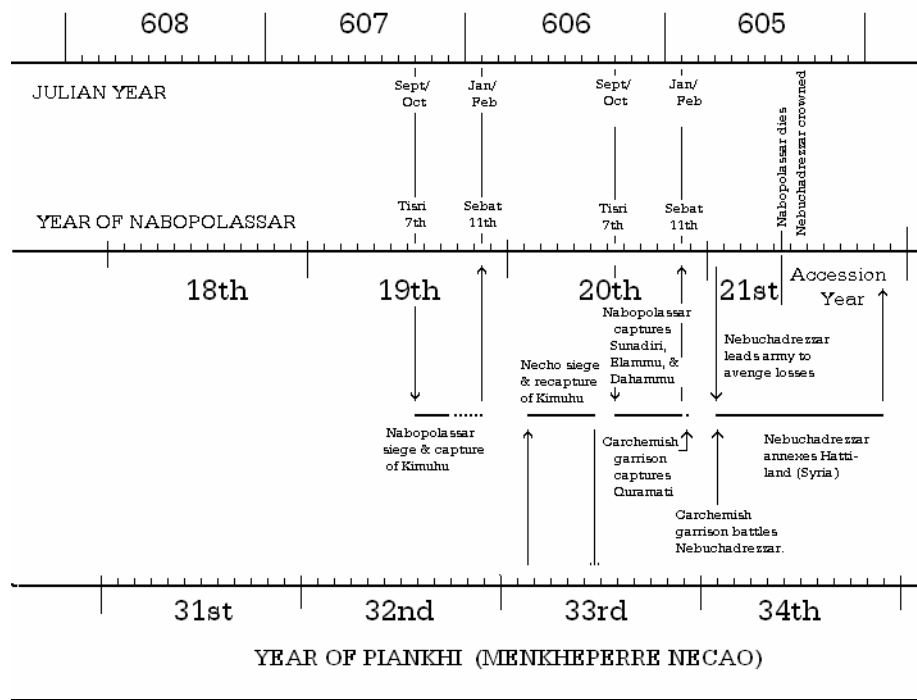
Wiseman goes on to discuss possible locations of Quramati further downriver from where he places it on the map. He then continues ...

Having disposed his troops in a defensive position, Nabopolassar returned to Babylon in Sebat (January/February 605 B.C.). This was the last time he was destined to lead his army in battle. Very soon afterwards, the Egyptian forces took the initiative, for they crossed the Euphrates at Carchemish and marched down the left bank towards the Babylonians at Quramati. The latter had already displayed their weakness by failing to advance upstream in order to recapture Kimuhu, and they now moved off before the enemy made contact with them. Their retreat may have been due, in part, to lack of leadership, for there is no record that the crown-prince remained with the army after Nabopolassar's return to Babylon. CKK. 22

This is the sum total of the Chronicle record for this year as interpreted by Wiseman. In view of the complexity of the Egyptian/Babylonian interaction we wonder how the Annals will compare.

Before we analyze the content of the Annals we need to provide some visual support for the reader. In our earlier book we briefly reviewed the Chronicle entries for the 18th year of Nabopolassar through to the accession year of Nebuchadrezzar and provided a timeline⁵² based on the Babylonian Chronicle data. We duplicate that chart here making only one change. The name of the Egyptian king was there assumed to be Wahemibre Neco. That name is now changed to Piankhi, alias Menkheperre Neco.

Figure 9: Timeline – Battles at the Euphrates



⁵²Nebuchadnezzar & the Egyptian Exile, figure 5, page 10.

According to the Annals.

It is significant that Menkheperre spent his entire 33rd year engaged in military activity at the bend of the Euphrates. That fact is self evident from even a cursory reading of the Annals of his 8th campaign. Egyptologists concur. The only question is whether the Annals and the Chronicle agree in their portrayal of events at this location.

We should note, before we begin to compare the two documents, that we must ignore completely the interpretation given the Annals for this year (and the next) by the current generation of scholars. When Breasted, whose opinion is representative, states that “in this year the king carries out the greatest campaign of his Asiatic wars, viz., the conquest of the Euphrates country”, he is clearly representing the 33rd year of Menkheperre as that king’s initial visit to region, one in which he encounters and defeats the city of Carchemish. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Annals say nothing about an Egyptian attack on Carchemish, either this year or the next. The belief that Menkheperre fought a battle with this city on his 8th campaign is derived from the tomb inscriptions of Amenemheb, on the assumption that this dignitary did not follow a chronological order as he reviewed his military career. And we have previously argued against this mistaken opinion. Amenemheb fought *in the land of* Carchemish (in league with Ashurballit against the Babylonian/Median coalition) on Menkheperre’s 5th campaign, not *against* Carchemish on the 8th campaign. Let us read the Annals to see what actually happened.

Year 33. Behold, his majesty was in the land of Retenu; [he] arrived ----- .
 [He set up a tablet] east of this water; he set up another beside the tablet of his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Okheperkere.
 Behold, his majesty went north capturing the towns and laying waste the settlements of that foe of wretched Naharin (*N-h-ry-n3*)
 — he [pursu]ed after them an iter (*ytr*) of sailing; not one looked behind him, but (they) fled, forsooth, like a [herd] of mountain goats; yea, the horses fled ----- .
 [List of the booty taken] among the whole army, consisting of; princes, 3; their wives, 30; men taken, 80; 606 slaves, male and female, with their children; those who surrendered (and) their wives, ----- (he) harvested their grain. His majesty arrived at the city of Niy (*Nyy*), going south-ward, when his majesty returned, having set up his tablet in Naharin (*N-h-ry-n3*), extending the boundaries of Egypt. ----- . BAR II 477-81

If the first line of this year's inscription is inconclusive, because the end of the line is damaged, the record is set straight from other documents which state that Menkheperre moved through Syria (Retenu) to the Euphrates, which he proceeded to cross. It was early in his 33rd year. According to the Barkal stele, en route to Naharin Menkheperre stopped at the Orontes River, while he still had access to timber, to construct makeshift boats with which to ferry his army across the Euphrates. Clearly he intended to embark on a trans-Euphrates campaign. Assuming that a month or so was occupied in this endeavor, and that he began his campaign as usual early in the spring, he must have arrived at Naharin near the end of the second month of his regnal year. This is consistent with the Chronicle, which states that the Egyptian siege of Kimuhu began early in Nabopolassar's (and thus Menkheperre's) regnal year.

We assume that Menkheperre began the siege of Kimuhu the moment he arrived at the Euphrates. Then, leaving a small contingent of his army to continue the siege (which explains its lengthy duration), he crossed the Euphrates near the city of Niy and headed north to conquer the lands between Carchemish and Harran, those lost by Amenemheb and a division of the Egyptian army, in alliance with Ashurballit, three years earlier. On this northern campaign Menkheperre set to flight that "foe of wretched Naharin", presumably a reference to the Medes who now controlled the area. There are also hints in the Annals for this year that he encountered the Kheta (the Hittites), though the encounter was not necessarily hostile. More will be said about the Hittites in a moment.

Menkheperre's trans-Euphrates campaign must have occupied considerable time, to judge from the size of the booty, and the fact that this is the only event in which he participated this year. We assume the campaign lasted four or five months. By the time of his return to Niy (the last action specifically mentioned in the Annals) the siege of Kimuhu had already ended. Either that or the return of the army precipitated its surrender. It was now the fall of the year, as once again we find the Egyptians harvesting the grain of the region.

The fact that the Egyptian king condensed five months of significant military activity into a few lines of text is not surprising. As we have seen in earlier sections of the Annals, Menkheperre is more concerned

with itemizing the tribute brought home to Amun than he is with any detailed description of how that tribute was obtained. The brevity of the record also explains why the assault of Kimuhu is not mentioned specifically. Since Menkheperre omits any details of his four months of war with the “foe of wretched Naharin”, we should not be perplexed at his omission of other specifics of his 8th campaign, in particular the siege of a single city.

We assume that Menkheperre returned to Egypt in September of 606 B.C., his authority in the Euphrates region re-established. A lacuna exists in the Annals immediately following the mention of his return to Niy. More than likely his exit from the region was recorded there. Apparently a garrison of troops was left at Carchemish to safeguard the area, a precaution necessitated by the threat of retaliation by the Medes and/or the Babylonians.

We obtain no additional specifics from the Annals. The balance of the inscription for the 8th campaign consists of a list of booty. This list is instructive but before we examine it in detail we need to supply the sequel to the events noted, based largely on the Chronicle. In September/October of the year, after Menkheperre returned to Egypt, Nabopolassar moved to recapture Kimuhu. Moving up the Euphrates to Quramati, a city already loyal to Babylon, he crossed the Euphrates and attacked and seized the towns of Sunadiri, Elammu, and Dahammu. These were not insignificant towns, in spite of Wiseman’s comment to the contrary. Their capture took the Babylonian king four months, from Tishri (September/October) to Shabat (January/February), thus into the Julian year 605 B.C., but still within Nabopolassar’s 20th year. According to the Chronicle, in a section quoted earlier:

In the month of Sebat, the king of Akkad returned to his own country. The Egyptian army which had crossed the Euphrates at Carchemish came against the Babylonian army which was stationed in Quramati but the Babylonian army withdrew quickly and retreated. (BM 21946 ll. 23-26)

There is no problem understanding why Nabopolassar returned home rather than attempt the recapture of Kimuhu. The siege of the three trans-Euphrates cities had taken longer than anticipated. And since he died six months later we can safely assume he was ill. Regardless, his

withdrawal from Quramati served as a signal for the Egyptian garrison at Carchemish to respond, putting an end to Babylon's intrusion into Egyptian territory. We have already noted Wiseman's opinion that the responsive attack on Quramati did not involve the Egyptian king, nor the bulk of the Egyptian army. He was correct. Menkheperre had long since departed for Egypt where he remained for the balance of his 33rd year.

According to the Chronicle the auxiliary force from Carchemish defeated the Babylonian garrison at Quramati immediately after the departure of Nabopolassar, either that same month or at the latest the next (Adar), since the Chronicle cites the event as the last incident in the 20th year of Nabopolassar. It is therefore still within the 33rd year of Menkheperre.

Tribute from the 8th Campaign.

We pick up the record of the Annals where we left it moments ago following Menkheperre's exit from Naharin. The inscription proceeds immediately with further lists of tribute. Since Menkheperre has already itemized the bounty he received on his four month campaign against the "foe of wretched Naharin", these further items must refer to material goods received by the army resident in Syria after his departure for Egypt.

The list begins with tribute received from "the chiefs of this country", presumably a reference to Naharin. It continues by itemizing tribute forthcoming from Zahi and Lebanon, isolating for special mention the important "gifts" from the Kheta and from the "chief of Shinar". The record for the year concludes with an account of the marvels derived from Egypt's Mediterranean trade (from the land of Punt) and from Wawat, south of Egypt.

We are particularly interested in the references to the Kheta and to the "chief of Shinar".

The tribute of the chief of Shinar (*š3-n-g-r*), real lapis lazuli, 4(+x) deben; artificial lapis lazuli, 24 deben; lapis lazuli of Babylon (*B-b-r3*) ----- of real lapis lazuli; a rem's head of real lapis lazuli; 15 kidet; and vessels -----.

The tribute of Kheta (*H-B*) the Great, in this year: 8 silver rings, making 401

deben, of white precious stone, a great block (*t3-gw-*) wood ---- [returning] to Egypt, at his coming from Naharin (*N-h-ry-n3*), extending the boundaries of Egypt. BAR II 485-486

The problematic nature of these two names for the traditional history is all but ignored by Breasted in his commentary on the Annals. His reflections are restricted to a single sentence, remarkable for its oversight.

Even far-off Babylon sends gifts, which, of course, the king calls tribute, and also the Hittites, who here make their first appearance in history. BAR II 476 P. 202

We are perplexed by this abbreviated comment, which entirely ignores the problem. Neither the Kheta nor the “chief of Shinar” belong in this list, at least on the assumption that the Annals belong in the 15th century B.C. The matter is sufficiently serious to warrant further comment. We begin with the Kheta.

Tribute from Hatti

In the traditional history the Hittites of the mid-2nd millennium B.C. were an emerging nation with homeland in central Anatolia.⁵³ By the mid 13th century B.C. this nation had expanded its sphere of influence to include almost all of Anatolia, save for the eastern shores of the Aegean, thus becoming, along with Mitanni, a dominant force in Asian politics. But in the 15th century, the time of the 18th dynasty Menkheperre Thutmose, the Kheta nation was still in its infancy. Its territorial expansion was yet a century in the future. Its sovereignty did not reach as far south as northern Syria nor eastward to the western bend of the Euphrates. Then how did Menkheperre come into contact with the Hittites near the western bend of the Euphrates during his 8th campaign? In the 15th century the Hittites should be several hundred miles north and west of this region.

On the other hand, on the assumption that Menkheperre belongs to the late 7th century, the mention of the Kheta is not only non-problematic, it is anticipated in any campaign in the vicinity of Carchemish. In the next book of our series we will demonstrate that the Hittite Empire reached its

⁵³The very existence of the Hittites was unknown to the scholarly world until the discovery of the Amarna correspondence and the excavations in north Syria and Anatolia late in the 19th century.

pinnacle under Suppiluliumas I and his immediate successors during the 9th century B.C. By the year 765 B.C. the Empire had run its course, replaced by the Phrygians in central Anatolia. But the end of the Hittite Empire did not mean the end of the Hittites, who continued to exist as a people, side by side with the Phrygians, down to the 2nd century B.C. During the Empire period, as early as the 9th century B.C., the Hittites controlled lands bordering the Euphrates north and west of Carchemish. In 9th century Assyrian texts these lands are repeatedly called the “Hatti lands.” That designation endured for centuries, and the Babylonian Chronicle of the late 7th century makes frequent use of the phrase when describing activity near the western bend of the Euphrates. Apparently the post Empire Hittite peoples are alive and well.⁵⁴ It is entirely expected that Menkheperre would have some dealings with this ethnic group in the course of his 8th campaign⁵⁵.

Tribute from Babylon

A similar problem is inherent in the assumed reference to tribute from Babylon. If the “chief of Shinar” is understood as a reference to the king of Babylon, we wonder why tribute would be forthcoming from such a remote location, 300 hundred miles distant from the Euphrates arena where the Egyptian king has just encountered the foe of Naharin. It is precisely the same argument we raised in relation to the mention of “far off Assyria” and Babylon following the first campaign. A response from the distant Babylonians in the 15th century B.C. is highly unlikely, and the interpretation provided by Breasted is accordingly suspect.

But the difficulty with tribute from the “chief of Shinar” does not end there. There is a more fundamental problem. The text does not actually refer to a “king of Babylon”. It mentions only a “chief of Shinar” who includes with his tribute “lapiz lazuli from Babylon”. The question needs

⁵⁴The reader will recall from our earlier book *Nebuchadnezzar*, that late in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, yet forty years in the future, Taharka conquered these same Kheta during the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s mania. (chapter 4, pp. 113-119). At the time they appear to be still living in the vicinity of Carchemish in Naharin, near the bend of the Euphrates.

⁵⁵It is, of course, possible that Menkheperre did engage the Hittites in battle. But in that case we should have expected this mention of tribute from the Hittites in the section of the Annals which precedes the departure of Menkheperre from the Euphrates region.

to be raised: Who is the “chief of Shinar” mentioned in this context?

When scholars first read this phrase in the Annals they were immediately confronted with a problem. This king is clearly accorded special mention by Menkheperre, as if he has played a significant role in the course of the 8th campaign. In context he must be located in the western Euphrates region, or bordering those lands, as were the Kheta. But no important city or city state by that name existed in the 15th century. The only name that came to the mind of scholars, both because it had had dealings with Egypt following the 1st campaign, and because the list of tribute mentioned “lapis-lazuli from Babylon”, was Babylon itself. Therefore, according to the understanding of early Egyptologists, Shinar(?) (*š3-n-g-r3*) must be a reference to the region of biblical Shinar in lower Mesopotamia, used here by metonymy for Babylon. Such at least was the identification proposed by Brugsch in the 19th century. Meyer argued around the same time that the name refers to “the Sanhar of the Amarna letters”, which led him ultimately to the same conclusion as Brugsch, since he identified Sanhar with Shinar. But these arguments are labored. Why such an oblique reference to a Babylonian king? We have a better solution.

With the 33rd year of Menkheperre identified with the 20th of Nabopolassar there is no problem with the references to the “chief of Shinar” or the “lapis-lazuli from Babylon”. The Egyptian army resident in Carchemish has just caused the Babylonian garrison to flee Quramati, thus freeing the cities of Sunadiri, Elammu, and Dahammu. In this scenario we do not expect either tribute or “gifts” to be forthcoming from Babylon to Egypt. But we do expect an expression of gratitude on the part of the three liberated cities. Since Sunadiri is mentioned first in the triumvirate, we expect it was the major city in the group. We assume that in appreciation for its liberation from Babylon the chief of Sunadiri, probably on behalf of the three cities, sent to Menkheperre gifts of lapis lazuli, some of which derived from the Babylonian conquerors, now departed. We note that the Annals actually record the city name as Shanagira (*š3-n-g-r3*). Only by a linguistic stretch were Brugsch and Meyer able to transcribe the name as Shinar, all but ignoring the third consonant. But Shunadiri and Shanagira are virtually identical, assuming only a variant “plosive” sound for the problematic third consonant. And if we remember that the annalist would have heard the name of the

remote and otherwise inconsequential city at second hand, we can tolerate the discrepancy.⁵⁶

Amenemheb Again

Before we move on to examine the eventful 21st year of Nabopolassar, the 34th of Menkheperre, we focus our attention one more time on the biographical inscriptions of Amenemheb. Thus far we have noted a striking correspondence between the memoirs of this military officer and the Annals of the king. There has been no need to assume that these memoirs are confused and non sequential. Rather, confusion has been introduced by Egyptologists into the interpretation of the Annals based on this errant assumption. But if the journal of Amenemheb is written in chronological order we expect that it may shed some light on Menkheperre's 33rd year. We pick up his tomb inscription where we left it in the last chapter.

I saw my lord in — — — — — in all his forms in the country of the ends of [the earth] — — — Ha — (*H3* —). Then I was raised to be the — — [— —] of the army, like — —.

Again I beheld his victory in the country of Tikhsi (*ty-h-sy*) the wretched, in the city of Mero— (*Mr-yw*—). I fought hand to hand therein before the king. I brought off Asiatics, 3 men, as living prisoners. Then my lord gave to me the god of honor; list thereof: 2 golden necklaces, 4 arm rings, 2 flies, a lion, a female slave, and a male slave.

Again [I beheld] another excellent deed which the Lord of the Two Lands did in Niy (*Nyy*). He hunted 120 elephants, for the sake of their tusks and [—]. I engaged the largest which was among them, which fought against his majesty; I cut off his hand while he was alive [before] his majesty, while I stood in the water between two rocks. Then my lord rewarded me with gold; [he] gave — — — and 3 changes of clothing.” BAR II 586-588

In the opinion of Breasted the three incidents recorded here belong in three different time periods. The first is supposedly a campaign in an unknown country for which no corresponding year in the Annals is given.

⁵⁶Albright anticipated one aspect of our conclusion in his 1928 discussion of the “Royal Stele of the New Empire from Galilee,” JEA 14 (1928). In this article he mentions the Annals reference to the “chief of Shinar” and interprets it correctly as a reference to a city on the banks of the Euphrates. But he relates it to “cuneiform Shanhar, south-east of the Khabur” (p283). The identification suffers the same criticisms applied to the Shinar interpretation.

The second, the battle in Tikhsi, is assumed to belong to the tenth campaign dated to the 35th year of the king, though the Annals for that campaign name no such country. Only the elephant hunt at Niy is assigned to the 33rd year, the only time Menkheperre is known to have visited that area. We argue instead that they all belong to the king's 33rd year.⁵⁷

The text of the first few lines is broken and uncertain, but sufficient remains to determine that a battle was fought in a “country of (at) the ends of the earth”. In context this can only be a reference to the region of Naharin. And the obscured reference to “Ha — (*H3* —)” may well refer to the Hittites, Amenemheb supplying the vowel omitted by the Annals.

The “country of Tikhsi (*ty-h-sy*), the wretched” is also a reference to the Naharin area. There is no clear indication to the contrary in any documentary source. The name occurs elsewhere notably in only two other inscriptions, and in each case it can be argued that the reference is to the area north and east of Carchemish.⁵⁸ It is likely that this is the name of a city or region occupied by the “wretched foe of Naharin”.

And finally, the concluding mention of an elephant hunt in the vicinity of Niy serves to confirm the interpretation given to the preceding references, which appear to belong together. We assume this sporting reprieve occurred at the end of Menkheperre's trans Euphrates campaign, immediately prior to his return to Egypt. Any other interpretation of this section of Amenemheb's tomb inscription is strained.

Menkheperre was at this moment on top of the world, literally and figuratively. The capture of the towns of Sunadiri, Elammu, and Dahammu by Nabopolassar, which followed by weeks the elephant hunt and the return of Menkheperre to Egypt, had been but a temporary

⁵⁷If Breasted is correct then Amenemheb's journal begins with three battles which took place in the year 33 [which we have placed in year 30 (sect. 581-584)], followed by the capture of Kadesh dated to the year 30 (sect. 585), then the campaign in the unknown country, left undated (586), and finally the battle in Tikhsi of year 35 (587). Only then does Amenemheb once again interject an incident from the year 33 campaign (588). The confusion attributed to Amenemheb should rather be credited to his interpreters.

⁵⁸The name Tikhsi occurs in reference to the 1st campaign of Amenhotop II (prior to his 3rd year) and on the chariot inscription of Thutmose IV. Both documents will be examined at the appropriate time.

setback, set right by the garrison from Carchemish when they defeated Quramati at year's end. At the conclusion of his 33rd year Menkheperre ruled the lands from "Yeraza to the marshes of the earth", the goal established in his 1st campaign of victory⁵⁹. But within months, much of this newly won territory would be lost.

Aakheperkare

Before moving on to the next eventful year a concluding remark is necessary. In the Annals for this year there is a reference to Menkheperre setting up a tablet in Naharin "beside the tablet of his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Okheperkare". Lest we be accused of avoiding the issue we need to intrude on our discussion and comment briefly on this genealogical reference.

In the traditional history Aakheperkare is typically, though not universally, identified as the *grandfather* of the 18th dynasty king Menkheperre Thutmose. The critic will therefore argue, with some merit, that an 18th dynasty *grandson* is much more likely to refer to Aakheperkare as his "father" than is a distant 25th dynasty pharaoh with only pretended connections to the Empire period. To that anticipated objection we say only two things at this time. In the first place we argue that the word translated "father" in this instance typically means no more than "ancestor". It is used frequently by Egyptian kings to refer to illustrious predecessors many generations removed, regardless of family connections. It is at least conceivable that Piankh *might have* used the term to refer to a predecessor of his 18th dynasty namesake.

In the second place we suggest a more plausible alternative. When Piankhi adopted the name of the 18th dynasty Menkheperre he did so for a good reason. It was not a random choice of names. That reason will become apparent in later chapters of this book. At that time we will see that Piankhi was not the only member of his extended family to borrow names from 18th dynasty pharaohs.⁶⁰ His father did the same, and the

⁵⁹BAR II 416

⁶⁰While we do not intend to "steal the thunder" of later discussions, we might at least mention the obvious at this time. Those who have read the introductory book of this series will realize that

name he used, as the reader might by this time have guessed, was Aakheperkare. If so, there can be no doubt that the Aakheperkare mentioned in the Annals for this year is in fact the 7th century father of Piankhi.⁶¹

March/April 605 - March/April 604 B.C.

Table 8: The 21st year of Nabopolassar / Accession Year of Nebuchadrezzar
(Wiseman Summary of the Babylonian Chronicle)

Nabopolassar 21 st / Nebuchadrezzar (acc. year) Piankhi 34 rd 9 th campaign	Mar/April 605 Apr/May 605 May/June 605 June/July 605 July/Aug 605 Aug/Sept 605 Sept/Oct 605 Oct/Nov 605 Nov/Dec 605 Dec 605/Jan 604 Jan/Feb 604 Feb/Mar 604 Mar/April 604	Nabopolassar stays in Babylon. Probably ill. <i>Nebuchadrezzar and Babylonians defeat Egyptians at Battle of Carchemish.</i> <i>Pursuit to Hamath. Conquest of the Hatti lands.</i> Nabopolassar dies after 21-year reign. (8 th Ab). Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon. Nebuchadrezzar ascends throne at Babylon. (1 st Elul) Nebuchadrezzar returns to Syria. Tour of the Hatti lands. Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon with heavy tribute.
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Piankhi's reign overlaps those of 22nd and 23rd dynasty kings with the prenomen Aakheper(u)re (Sheshonk V) and Aakheperre (Takeloth IV). These two kings are clearly namesakes of 18th dynasty pharaohs. And every student of Egyptian history is informed early in his studies that the new kingdom pharaohs of the 25th and 26th dynasties attempted to bring about a revival of the art and culture of the Empire period. It should surprise no-one that this renaissance movement included the adoption of names of illustrious 18th dynasty pharaohs.

⁶¹This mention of Piankhi and his father borrowing names of 18th dynasty kings reminds us of the confusion that exists regarding the succession of pharaohs in the 18th dynasty, a problem which has confounded scholars for centuries. According to our thesis, the confusion has resulted from the widespread use of 18th dynasty names by 25th dynasty pretenders. The matter will be discussed again at the appropriate time.

The Babylonian Chronicle. Nabopolassar's 21st year /
Nebuchadrezzar's Accession year.

According to the Chronicle, confirmed by Jewish historians, Egypt fought and lost a battle with Babylon in the year 605 B.C.. The encounter took place at or near the town of Carchemish. It is dated by the Chronicler early in Nabopolassar's 21st year. The Babylonian king was apparently ill, but the defeat at Quramati had to be avenged, so Nebuchadrezzar led the army in his father's stead.

In the twenty-first year the king of Akkad stayed in his own land, Nebuchadrezzar his eldest son, the crown-prince, mustered (the Babylonian army) and took command of his troops; he marched to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates, and crossed the river (to go) against the Egyptian army which lay in Carchemish, fought with each other and the Egyptian army withdrew before him. He accomplished their defeat and to non-existence [beat?] them. As for the rest of the Egyptian army which had escaped from the defeat (so quickly that) no weapon had reached them, in the district of Hamath the Babylonian troops overtook and defeated them so that not a single man [escaped] to his own country. At that time Nebuchadrezzar conquered the whole area of the Hatti-country. BM 21946 ll. 1-8

By the end of the month of Tammuz (June/July) Nebuchadrezzar occupied much of the trans-Euphrates region east of the anti-Lebanon range, including the upper reaches of the Orontes as far south as Hamath. Kadesh was not included in this initial foray. It is a moot point precisely what region the Chronicler has in mind in his use of the term "Hatti lands", but there is no good reason for assuming that the term refers to anything other than the classical "neo-Hittite" lands west and north of Carchemish. Since there is no mention of the Mediterranean, nor any towns in the coastal region, we can argue that Egypt continued to dominate this area, known to the ancients as Zahi. Nebuchadrezzar no doubt intended to extend his dominion to the coast, but time and circumstance dictated otherwise. Early in the month of Ab (July/August) his father died and he was forced to return to Babylon.

For twenty-one years Nabopolassar had been king of Babylon. On the 8th of the month of Ab he died (lit. 'the fates'); in the month of Elul he [Nebuchadrezzar] returned to Babylon and on the first day of the month of Elul he sat on the royal throne in Babylon. ll. 9-11.

Since the Babylonian year began in March/April, the entire action against the Egyptian army lasted at most four months, and probably much less. Unfortunately the Chronicle omits mention of the month when the crown-prince left his homeland to begin his battle at Carchemish. It states only when the operation ended.

In the Babylonian system of “accession year dating” the balance of Nabopolassar’s 21st year is referred to as the ‘accession year’ of his son Nebuchadrezzar, whose official 1st year would begin, as usual for Babylonian kings, in the month of Nisan (March/April) following (thus in 604 B.C.). Nebuchadrezzar spent little time in mourning. He returned quickly to resume his military operations in the Hatti lands, actions which lasted until the month of Shabat (or Sebat) (January/February), early in the year 604 B.C..

In the ‘accession year’ Nebuchadrezzar went back again to the Hatti-land and until the month of Sebat marched unopposed through the Hatti-land; in the month of Sebat he took the heavy tribute of the Hatti-territory to Babylon. In the month of Nisan he took the hands of Bel and the son of Bel and celebrated the akitu (New Year) festival. II. 12-14

The New Years festival which formally introduced Nebuchadrezzar’s 1st year took place roughly mid-March of 604 B.C. Since the rout of the Egyptian army at Carchemish in April or May of the preceding year there has been no mention of Egypt in the Chronicle. The Egyptian army next appears in the fourth year of Nebuchadrezzar. We wonder what happened to Menkheperre?

Before we examine the Annals for Menkheperre’s 34th year there is one further source of information that needs to be examined. Jewish historians had something to say concerning the defeat of the Egyptian army at Carchemish. We recall that Menkheperre Neco (Necho) was responsible for the death of Josiah at Megiddo, at least according to this revision. He was, in consequence, no friend of Israel. Josiah was revered by his Judean subjects. The Egyptian loss at Carchemish was therefore a source of joy in Jerusalem. The text of the 46th chapter of Jeremiah celebrates the Egyptian defeat in song. It is worth quoting.

This is the message against *the army of Pharaoh Neco* king of Egypt, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of

Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:
 Prepare your shield, both large and small, and march out for battle!
 Harness the horses, mount the steeds!
 Take your positions with helmets on!
 Polish your spears, put on your armor!
 What do I see? They are terrified, they are retreating their warriors are defeated.
 They flee in haste without looking back, and there is terror on every side, declares
 the Lord.
 The swift cannot flee nor the strong escape.
 In the north by the River Euphrates they stumble and fall.
 Who is this that rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters?
 Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters.
 She says, 'I will rise and cover the earth; I will destroy cities and their people.'
 Charge, O horses! Drive furiously, O charioteers!
 March on, O warriors – *men of Cush and Put* who carry shields, *men of Lydia*
 who draw the bow.
 But that day belongs to the Lord, the LORD Almighty — a day of vengeance, for
 vengeance on his foes.
 The sword will devour till it is satisfied, till it has quenched its thirst with blood.
 For the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will offer sacrifice in the land of the north by
 the River Euphrates.
 Go up to Gilead and get balm, O Virgin Daughter of Egypt.
 But you multiply remedies in vain; there is no healing for you.
 The nations will hear of your shame; your cries will fill the earth.
 One warrior will stumble over another; both will fall down together. Jer. 46:2-12
 (italics added)

When Wiseman examined the Chronicle he was of the opinion that Nebuchadrezzar's victory at Carchemish and in the Hatti lands following was not so comprehensive as many scholars suggest. He believed that the Egyptian army defeated at Carchemish was only a local garrison.

There is no direct indication in the Chronicle that Pharaoh Neco was himself with the Egyptian army. Indeed the apparent ease with which the Babylonians reached Carchemish through territory where they had been defeated by the Egyptians in the previous year makes it more likely that the Egyptian force consisted in the main of garrison troops.⁶²

It is not just the ease of conquest which suggests that Nebuchadrezzar fought against an inferior force based in Carchemish. The Chronicle states the fact specifically, noting that Nebuchadrezzar crossed the Euphrates and did battle with "*the Egyptian army which lay in*

⁶²CCK, p. 24.

Carchemish". This is clearly an army of occupation, a garrison of Egyptian troops left to safeguard Egyptian interests in the region of Naharin. The biblical text of Jeremiah echoes these sentiments. Its message is directed explicitly against "*the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt.*" Were Necho himself involved we would expect that fact to be acknowledged.

We note in passing the ethnological makeup of the Egyptian garrison based at Carchemish. According to the text of Jeremiah it consisted of troops from Cush, Put and Lydia. Native Egyptian troops are noticeably absent. This is a Nubian army, buttressed by troops from other regions dominated by Menkheperre. This ethnic makeup is surprising, to say the least, in an army of occupation from the 15th century B.C., but is totally consistent with our argument that Menkheperre belongs to the 25th Cushite dynasty of the 7th century B.C.. We leave the matter there and turn our attention to the Annals. What do they contribute to our understanding of the Battle of Carchemish?.

The Menkheperre Annals (Year 34) - the 9th Campaign.

It is of interest that Menkheperre, following the year of his greatest triumph, the conquest of the trans-Euphrates region, says no more about Naharin. No military action in or visit to this area is recorded in the text of his 34th year, nor for that matter, in the Annals for any subsequent year. Naharin is mentioned in the 10th campaign of his 35th year and again in the 17th campaign in his 42nd year, and in both instances the name occurs only because mercenaries from the Naharin area are assisting a rebellion in Zahi and in Syria. These references serve only to confirm that Egypt no longer controls the area. More significantly, no mention of tribute from Naharin is ever mentioned by Menkheperre after his 33rd year. What happened? Of course we know the answer.

The Annals for the 34th year do not mention the defeat at Carchemish, a fact consistent with the Annals elsewhere and therefore not unexpected. In the first place, as we have repeatedly stated, Menkheperre habitually ignores his losses. Secondly, he consistently mentions only the actions of the main army in which he is a participant. And the loss at Carchemish,

we have argued, was suffered by a garrison left behind to guard the eastern frontier. It is only from circumstantial evidence that we can verify the loss by Egypt of its Euphrates domains and much of Syria.

For his 34th year Menkheperre records only minor skirmishes in the region of Zahi, the Phoenician coastline. Perhaps the victories of Nebuchadrezzar had encouraged rebellion in this area which must now be suppressed. It is noteworthy that Egypt did not enter Retenu this year, a fact consistent with the Chronicle which claims that those lands were now controlled by Nebuchadrezzar. Instead he remained on the coast, securing his Mediterranean base. The Annals describe the fortification of key coastal cities, an action also consistent with the looming threat posed by the victories of Nebuchadrezzar. Menkheperre apparently anticipates that Babylon might advance toward the Sea.

While it is true that Menkheperre did not journey to Retenu this year, he did receive tribute from that area. We assume that these material goods had been sent to the coast of Zahi by the Syrian princes in the months prior to Tammuz (June/July) when Nebuchadrezzar defeated the garrison in Charchemish. How else would they have been obtained? As Breasted says, “The king confines himself this year to little more than a voyage of inspection to Zahi, receiving the surrender of submissive towns, and the tribute of Retenu, and Cyprus.” (BAR II 488) Apparently Zahi was a depository for tribute from both Retenu and Cyprus.

We should pause here to read the Annals for the 9th campaign. It is not a lengthy entry.

Year 34. Behold, his majesty was in the land of Zahi (*D3-hy*).
 ----- he surrendered fully to his majesty with [fear]. List of the towns captured in this year: 2 towns, (and) a town which surrendered in the district of Nuges (*3n-yw-g-s3*); total 3. Captives brought to his majesty ----- taken captive 90, those who surrendered, their wives and their children -----; 40 horses; 15 chariots, wrought with silver and gold; ... together with every fine wood of this country. Tribute of the chiefs of Retenu in this year: (*extensive list of tribute follows*). Behold, all the harbors of his majesty were supplied with every good thing of that [which] [his] majesty received [in] Zahi (*D3-hy*), consisting of Keftew ships, Byblos ships, and Sektu (*šk-tw*) ships of cedar laden with poles, and masts, together with great trees for the [—] of his majesty (*there follows a concluding list of tribute from Cyprus, Kush, and Wawat*). BAR II 490-92

On the whole the Annals for the 34th year comport well with the content of the Chronicle. Something has clearly happened to deprive Menkheperre of access to Retenu. Though the name of Retenu appears in the Annals for this year, it is the last such mention until 600 B.C. Every year since his initial conquest of the country in 616 B.C. Menkheperre has received tribute from Syria and Lebanon. But in 604 B.C. this source of revenue disappears. As we will soon see, the Annals next reference to Syria occurs during the 14th campaign in the king's 39th year, 600 B.C. Then, suddenly, the Egyptian army is again in Retenu and tribute from Retenu reappears. This four year interruption in the receipt of tribute from Retenu is inexplicable in a 15th century context. But in the late 7th century we understand perfectly what is happening.

For at least five years following 605 B.C., Menkheperre appears to be confined to the coastal area of Zahi. Egypt made its yearly visits to this Phoenician coastline via the Mediterranean. The increased emphasis on shipping which begins this year is precisely what is anticipated based on the record of the Chronicle. With the loss of tribute from Syria Menkheperre turned his attention to the lucrative Mediterranean market. As long as Egypt controlled the Phoenician coastline there remained access to coastal lumber and the considerable wealth which depended on Phoenician ships. It is significant that in 605-604 B.C. we notice in the Annals for the first time a reference to a fleet of ships and tribute from Cyprus.

We receive no assistance for this year from Amenemheb's journal, which moves directly from the elephant hunt of the previous year to the renewed conflict with Kadesh in the 42nd year of Menkheperre. The silence for this year is not entirely unexpected. Amenemheb was an important army officer. He would not be part of the Carchemish garrison which alone did battle with the Babylonians.

March/April 604 - March/April 603 B.C.

Nebuchadrezzar's 1st year /Menkheperre Annals (Year 35)
 - the 10th Campaign

Table 9: The 1st Year of Nebuchadrezzar
 (Wiseman Summary of the Babylonian Chronicle)

Nebuchadrezzar 1st Menkheperre Piankhi 35rd 10 th campaign	Mar/April 604	Nebuchadrezzar & army to Hatti lands in Sivan (May/June). Marched unopposed until Kislev (Nov/Dec). All kings of Hatti lands come before Nebuchadrezzar & bring tribute. “ “ Nebuchadrezzar moves south & plunders Ashkelon in Kislev. Its king is taken captive. Nebuchadrezzar returns to Babylon in Sebat (Jan/Feb).
	Apr/May 604	
	May/June 604	
	June/July 604	
	July/Aug 604	
	Aug/Sept 604	
	Sept/Oct 604	
	Oct/Nov 604	
	Nov/Dec 604	
	Dec 604/Jan 603	
	Jan/Feb 603	
Feb/Mar 603		

There is little to say regarding the year 604/3 B.C. According to the Chronicle Nebuchadrezzar spent most of his 1st official regnal year solidifying his hold on the Hatti lands, apparently marching about unopposed. It is apparent that he continued to control Syria, since in the fall of the year 604 B.C. he moved still further south to lay siege to the city of Ashkelon, near the border of Egypt. Perhaps the move was strategic. Ashkelon lies on the narrow land corridor leading from Egypt to Syria. Controlling this region would restrict altogether Egyptian land access to the Lebanon and Retenu. Ashkelon fell in the month Kislev (Nov/Dec). The city was ruthlessly sacked and looted. It was left a heap of rubble.

The Annals for this year record a 10th campaign for Menkheperre, restricted to the same Zahi region he occupied the previous year. In Zahi he was again forced to suppress rebellion, engaging an unnamed enemy in battle and carrying off loot in consequence.

It is imperative that we comment on this battle. It has been badly interpreted by Breasted and others, who consider the incident as

descriptive of a “revolt in Naharin” and an ensuing “battle in Naharin”. This is not the case. We should read the *Annals* carefully.

Year 35. Behold, his majesty was *in the land of Zahi* (*D³-hy*) on the tenth victorious campaign.

When his majesty arrived at the city of Araina (*3-r³-y³-n³*), behold, that wretched foe [of Nahar]in (*[N-h-r]y-n³*) had collected horses and people; [his] majesty — — — of the ends of the earth. They were numerous — — they were about to fight with his majesty.

Then his majesty advanced [to fight] with them; then the army of his majesty furnished an example of attack, in the matter of seizing and taking. Then his majesty prevailed against [these] barbarians by the souls of [his] f[ather] A[mon] ---- of Naharin (*N-h-r-n³*). They fled headlong, falling one over another, before his majesty.

The record proceeds to document a “list of booty which his majesty brought away from *these barbarians of [from] Naharin*”. The list consists of two items: two suits of armor and some bronze objects, whose description is obscured in the damaged text. This is followed by a “list of booty which the army of his majesty brought away from (*name illegible*)”. Breasted assumes this second list continues the first, and that the battle was fought in the Euphrates region. But this interpretation ignores the text of the *Annals*, which states clearly that the battle was fought at the city of Araina in the land of Zahi. Menkheperre is apparently putting down rebellion inland from the coast, as he had the year before.

The repeated introduction to the two lists of booty suggest how the *Annals* for this year should be interpreted. Araina, whose precise location is contested, is apparently situated in the extreme north-east of the coastal region still controlled by Egypt. Sensing the tenuous nature of Egyptian sovereignty in the area the prince of the city - referred to in the *Annals* as the “wretched foe of Araina (not Naharin as Breasted translates - both names have similar endings and the ending is all that is visible)” - has chosen the opportunity to secure his independence. In preparation for the anticipated retaliation by Egypt he has apparently solicited assistance from elsewhere - “horses and people (troops)” from “the ends of the earth”, the latter a reference to the region of Naharin, as we have previously noted. The Naharin mercenaries are almost certainly not a contingent of the Babylonian army, else the *Chronicle* would have made

note of the battle. Regardless of their ethnic make-up, or their reasons for lending assistance, the fact remains that they were ineffective. In the battle of Araina they “fled headlong, falling one over another”, leaving behind a few suits of armor and other objects. This cannot under any circumstances be a reference to the powerful “foe of wretched Naharin”, retreating in cowardly fashion before a superior Egyptian army. In context it can only refer to mercenary troops or “soldiers of fortune” assisting the town of Araina in its rebellion against Egyptian authority.

The Annals clearly distinguish the mercenaries and the citizens of the rebellious city. The Naharin soldiers, having no vested interest in the city, flee at the first hint of danger, leaving behind a few pieces of armor. In their absence, the citizenry of Araina, left to fend for themselves, suffered extensive losses.

When Breasted, and others in the last century, read the name of Naharin in the text of the Annals for this year, they mistakenly assumed that this battle was fought in the region of Naharin. Thus the history books record the details of the 10th campaign of Menkheperre. But they are clearly wrong. Menkheperre begins his Annals for his 35th year specifically noting that he is in Zahi, near the Mediterranean coast. In that region must be found the city of Araina, and near that city must be located the scene of the battle. The historians cannot be faulted for their error. The text of the Annals for this year is badly preserved. And the historians do not have the benefit of the Chronicle to assist their deliberations.

We should mention, in defense of this interpretation, that there is precedent for the use of mercenary troops by Syrian cities. In fact, as we will see later in the Annals, an identical situation prevails in the 42nd year of Menkheperre, when Egypt attempts to regain a foothold in Syria. There we find, as in this instance, that troops from “wretched Naharin” were employed in defense of Syrian cities. But in the later incident they are specifically identified as “auxiliaries among them”, and thus Egyptologists have correctly interpreted the situation.

One chapter remains to conclude our comparison of the Chronicle and the Annals through the balance of the military career of Menkheperre. Then

we will proceed to defend our thesis on other grounds. But before we move past the year 604/603 B.C. we should remark one more time on the implications of our thesis for the history of the Ancient Near East in the 15th century B.C. We are concerned one last time with the mention of the Mitanni, the Hittites, and the Aramaean Syrian princes in the Annals of Menkheperre.

The Mitanni Again

When Menkheperre crossed the Euphrates in 606 B.C. and fought the “wretched foe of Naharin” it was not specifically stated in the Annals that the reference was to the Mitanni. In fact, the Annals themselves never mention the Mitanni. The name is supplied instead by the Barkal granite stela and, among others, by a document we have not previously mentioned, a so-called “Hymn of Victory” contained on a black granite tablet almost two meters high discovered by Mariette in a chamber northwest of the main sanctuary room of Karnak. There we find an inscribed portrait of Menkheperre Thutmose bringing gifts to Amun, who responds in praise of the king:

Thou hast smitten the hordes of rebels according as I commanded thee
The earth in its length and breadth, Westerners and Easterners are subject to thee,
Thou tramplest all countries, thy heart glad;
None presents himself before thy majesty,
While I am thy leader, so that thou mayest reach them.
Thou hast crossed the water of the Great Bend of Naharin (*N-h-r-n*) with victory,
with might.

And ten lines later the eulogy continues

I have come, causing thee to smite those who are in their marshes,
The lands of Mitanni (*My-t-n*) tremble under fear of thee. BAR II 656-7

We have already stated our opinion that the lands of the Mitanni mentioned in the inscriptions from the time of Menkheperre are in reality references to lands controlled by the Median empire. The investigation of this claim is best left to the experts. Though we do not take credit for

the revelation⁶³, we are able to add some specifics which may assist, either in confirming this hypothesis or calling it into question. If we are right the Mitanni, allied with Babylon, sacked and destroyed the city of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and three years later, in 609 B.C., again in alliance with Babylon, drove Ashurballit from Harran and the Assyrian Empire into extinction. We assume that prior to 612 B.C. the Mitanni controlled lands much further north of the bend of the Euphrates, lands bordering Hittite territory on the eastern extremity of Anatolia, i.e. the “northern Mesopotamia” of the textbooks.⁶⁴ Only in 609 B.C. did the Mitanni acquire the lands between the Euphrates and the Balikh River, a region formerly controlled by Assyria. And in 606 B.C. those newly acquired lands were lost to Menkheperre. This provides a very narrow temporal window in which we expect to find mention of this otherwise remote nation.

In 1928 the preeminent linguist W.F. Albright examined a fragment of a royal stele recently discovered in Palestine in which Menkheperre boasts of having “repelled the foreigners of Mitanni (so that it has become) as one that never existed.”⁶⁵ The fragment does not bear the king’s name, but was assigned to Menkheperre on a variety of grounds, among them one of particular relevance to our discussion:

A clue to the date of our inscription is provided by the reference to Mitanni in line 3. *Nearly all the allusions to this country under its native name Mitanni occur in the inscriptions of Thuthmosis III.* The passages where the name Mtn occur in the inscriptions have been collected by Muller, *Asien und Europa*, 280 ff., and Burchardt, *Die altkanaanaischen Fremdworte*, No. 541 (emphasis mine)

We underscore Albright’s claim that references to Mitanni abound in the inscriptions of Menkheperre Thutmose (alias Piankhi), and are infrequent elsewhere. We believe that the majority of these references must date between 609 and 606 B.C. An analysis of the lists provided by Muller and Burchardt would prove instructive, but would necessitate some

⁶³Cf. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ramses II and His Time*, pp. 177-179.

⁶⁴In maps of the Ancient Near East depicting the geography of the Assyrian Empire, Media is shown occupying the region north of the headwaters of the Diyala tributary of the Tigris River and east of Lake Van. The Umman Manda *may* well have inhabited this region, but that is not to say they were restricted to this area.

⁶⁵W.F. Albright and Alan Rowe, “A Royal Stele of the New Empire From Galilee” *JEA* 14 (1928) 282

discussion related to the king's family, something we are not prepared to do at this time. The task is left for others.

The Hittites Again

When Breasted made the remark (quoted above in our discussion related to the 33rd year of Menkheperre) concerning the "*Hittites, who here make their first appearance in history*", he could not have been further from the truth. In the revised history the Empire period of the Hittites is long since past when the Annals were written. The time of Ramses II, and his famous battle at Kadesh with the Hittite king Hattusilis II, is ancient history. Far from being the first appearance of the Hittites in history, in 606 B.C. we are arguably nearing the end of the nation. In the next book in our series we will argue that the Empire phase of the nation ended around the year 765 B.C. Since then a Hittite remnant has persisted in the Hatti lands which lie between Carchemish and the Mediterranean. Another century or two and the Hittites all but disappear from history.

When scholars attempt to rewrite the history of the Hittites, as they must, they should look for links to the 9th and 8th centuries among the archives of the kings of the Empire period of this nation. An investigation of the Hittite inscriptions from the post-Empire period would also be interesting, but time consuming. Since it would detract from the task at hand, we leave the task to others. We are concerned here only to defend our proposal that the Hittites as a national entity existed in the late 7th century, precisely in the region designated as the Hatti lands in the Babylonian Chronicle.

The Aramaean Syrian States.

Throughout our discussion thus far we have said little regarding the ethnic make-up of the princes of Syria who inhabited the lands of Retenu and Lebanon and did battle with Menkheperre at Megiddo. We assume, based on a reference in the journal of Amenemheb mentioned earlier, and

another in the Annals⁶⁶ (which we have not previously mentioned), that they were Aramaeans, and if so, that they arrived in the area around the 10th/9th centuries B.C. Under no circumstances was this region of the country populated by Aramaeans in the 15th century B.C. The only historical source informing us of the ethnological and political make-up of Lebanon/Syria in the era from the 15th through the 7th century B.C. is the Hebrew Bible. According to Jewish historians, a political structure in which Aramaean city states existed in a loose confederation, uniting only for their mutual defense as in the battle of Qarqar in the mid 9th century, begins only after the time of David and Solomon. This evidence suggests that the Annals were written later than the 10th century.

On the negative side the evidence is equally compelling. In the 15th century B.C. the Hebrew Bible describes the occupants of Palestine and the Lebanon, at the time of the arrival of the Hebrews under Joshua, as a group of small ethnically divergent and semi-independent nations known as the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. (Joshua 3:10) The Hittites in this list are not inhabitants of Anatolia or northern Syria and, if related at all to the later national group, must be distant ancestors of the Anatolian kings. They are represented as dwelling in the Lebanon region, between the Euphrates and the Sea (Joshua 1:4). It is impossible to reconcile the testimony of the Hebrew Bible in this regard with the political situation described in the Annals of Menkheperre. Yet both supposedly describe 15th century Syria/Palestine. The date for the arrival of Joshua is based on internal chronological data. There is no good reason to doubt the validity of these references. The Annals are dated on the *assumption* that *they were authored by an early 18th dynasty king, and that this dynasty was founded at the beginning of the 15th century.* We challenge both of these assumptions.

The Annals and the Hebrew Bible cannot both be correct. Needless to say, Egyptologists have all too readily and far too glibly dismissed the evidence of the Jewish historians.

Is it possible at this late date to argue the case of the Syrian princes one

⁶⁶When the Annals discuss the aftermath of the Battle of Megiddo in which Menkheperre defeated the three resisting cities of Lebanon, it mentions among the list of tribute "38 lords ([m-r'-y-n'] of theirs". The entire area was apparently occupied by Arameans.

way or the other. The answer is a qualified yes. Archaeology might well save the day. What is needed is an archaeological site which spans the centuries between the 15th century as described in the Hebrew Bible and the 7th century as described in the Annals of Menkheperre. And such a site does exist. Megiddo. A brief word of explanation must suffice.

If we are correct in our revision of history then the history of Megiddo, as recorded in the standard textbooks, is seriously in error. According to the Annals, as interpreted by the traditional history, Megiddo in the 15th century B.C. was a well fortified city apparently allied with the Syrian princes. In dictionaries and textbooks where the city is mentioned it is noted that Megiddo first appears in history in the Annals of Menkheperre. In evaluating the ruins of the city, excavated a number of times over the last century, archaeologists have begun their analyses of the excavation records by attempting to establish which archaeological strata corresponds to the 15th century destruction of the city wrought by Menkheperre. Needless to say, the history of the site is badly written, since it begins with a faulty premise.

We do not doubt that Megiddo is an ancient site. Joshua defeated a king of that city during the Israelite occupation of the country in the 15th century B.C. (Joshua 12:21) At the time, and for several centuries after, the town was occupied by Canaanites (cf. Joshua 17:12; Judges 1:27) That situation prevailed throughout the period of the Judges. Deborah and Barak, for example, confronted the Canaanites at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo (Judges 5:19). It was not until the time of David that the city came under Israelite domination for the first time and ultimately became one of Solomon's administrative districts (1 Kings 4:12). But this biblical view of the city's history contrasts sharply with the statements of the Annals which compel us to believe that the city was occupied either by Aramaean Syrians or by Egypt in the 15th century. In the Annals the Canaanites are conspicuous by their absence.

This is neither the time nor the place to rewrite the history of Megiddo. We suggest that archaeologists reexamine the excavation records to determine whether the revised history or the traditional history best explains the evidence. In a later chapter we will look at only one critical phase of the city's occupation, a single anomaly in the archaeology of the

site that can be best understood on the assumption that the Annals belong in the late 7th century.

When, in chapter two, we discussed the famous battle of Megiddo and the seven month siege of the city which followed, we were concerned primarily with the political results, not with the destruction wrought on the city. In the third chapter, when we discussed Josiah confronting pharaoh Necho at Megiddo, our attention was focused exclusively on the time-line. By design we avoided asking the obvious question. Is it merely coincidental that Megiddo plays a central role in the two events, both of which are associated with the king Menkheperre Thutmose according to our revised history? In the traditional history the two incidents are separated by 800 years; in the revised history by only 7. Is it possible to find in the ruins of Megiddo evidence that a destruction of the city took place within the reign of Josiah?

Postscript

Throughout the first book of this series we noted the repeated intransigence of 20th century Egyptologists when confronted with evidence which contradicts long cherished views of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern history. If we seem to be belaboring the point when we devote four chapters of our book (inclusive of chapter five which follows) to a single theme, the reader should understand to whom we are speaking. The unbiased critic should already be convinced that the Annals of Menkheperre do not belong in the 15th century B.C. It is statistically near to impossible for the correspondences between the Annals and Chronicle, both temporal and political, to exist as they do unless the two documents are contemporary.