

One Waded in their Blood as in Water: Egyptian warfare in the First Millennium BC



Third Intermediate Period Chronology (a mess!)

(end of the New Kingdom, Dynasty XX)

civil war apparently fomented by Panehesy, King's Son of Kush

Dynasty XXI:

largely based at Tanis

important kings:

Psusennes I

Osorkon the Elder

Psusennes II

Dynasty XXII:

from Bubastis (but some family relations to Dynasty XXI, and rule from Tanis)

important kings:

Sheshonq I-III

Osorkon I-III

Dynasty XXIII:

eastern Delta kinglets contemporary with late Dynasty XXII

Dynasty XXIV:

western Delta kinglets contemporary with late Dynasty XXII

Dynasty XV:

conquest of Egypt by Napatan kings of Nubia

Chronology (more mess!) of the Late Period

Dynasty 26 – the Saite Dynasty (from Sais) (664-525 BC)

some important kings

Psamtik (Psameticus) I

Psamtik II

Apries

Amasis (Ahmose II)

Dynasty 27 – the First Persian Period (525-404 BC)

all kings are Persian emperors

Dynasty 28 – 30 – renewed Egyptian independence (404-343 BC)

some Dynasty 30 kings of importance

Nectanebo I and II

Second Persian Period (343-332 BC)

332 BC: conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great



Head of Amasis

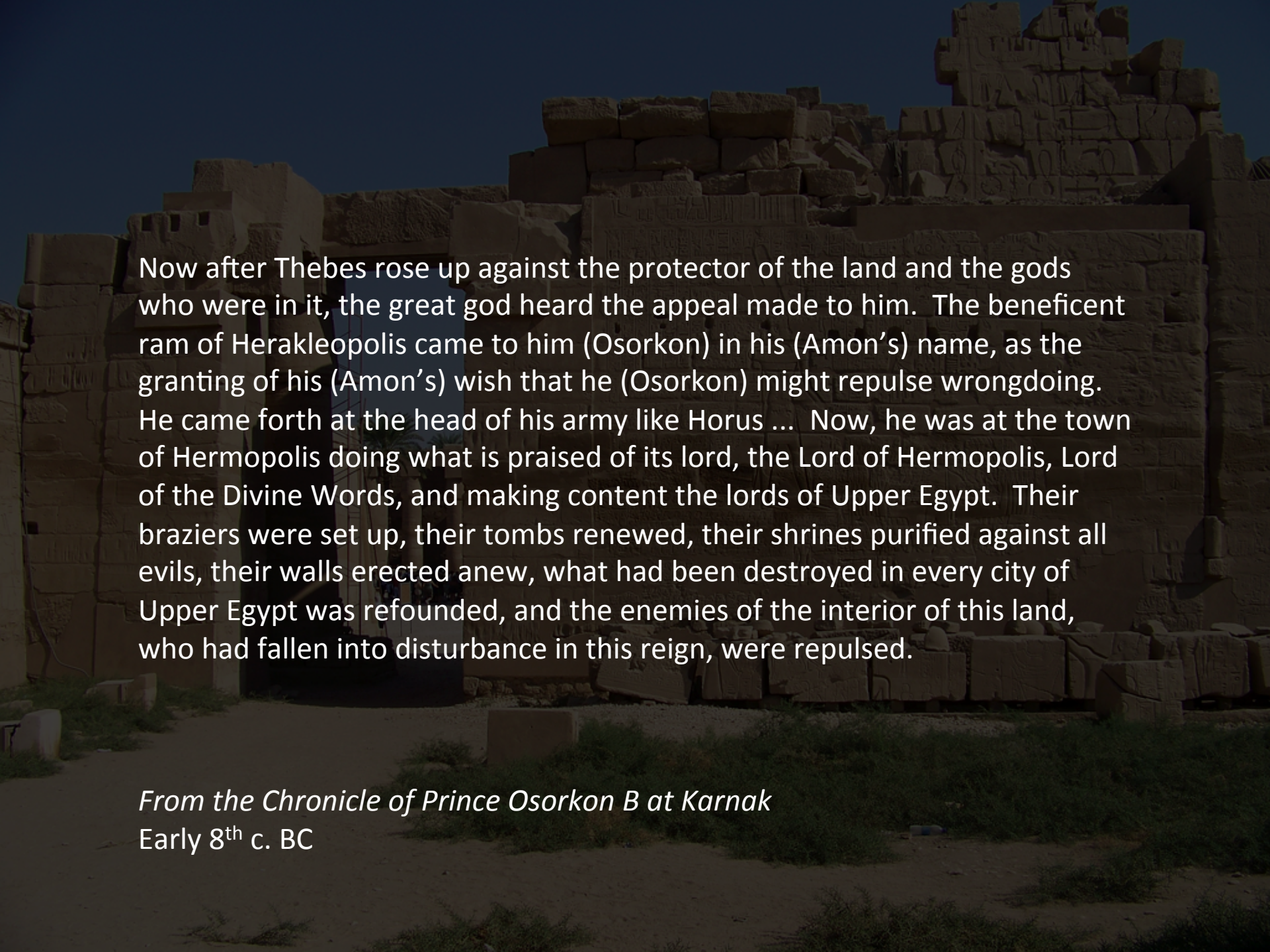


Sheshonq I at Karnak:
Captured Canaanite cities

2 Chronicles 12

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, because they had been unfaithful to the lord, Shishaq king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people were without number who came with him from Egypt—Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians. And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the lord, 'You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishaq.'" Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The lord is righteous." When the lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the lord came to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves. I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishaq. Nevertheless, they shall be servants to him, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

So Shishaq king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. He took away the treasures of the house of the lord and the treasures of the king's house. He took away everything. He also took away the shields of gold that Solomon had made, and King Rehoboam made in their place shields of bronze and committed them to the hands of the officers of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. And as often as the king went into the house of the lord, the guard came and carried them and brought them back to the guardroom. And when he humbled himself the wrath of the lord turned from him, so as not to make a complete destruction. Moreover, conditions were good in Judah.



Now after Thebes rose up against the protector of the land and the gods who were in it, the great god heard the appeal made to him. The beneficent ram of Herakleopolis came to him (Osorkon) in his (Amon's) name, as the granting of his (Amon's) wish that he (Osorkon) might repulse wrongdoing. He came forth at the head of his army like Horus ... Now, he was at the town of Hermopolis doing what is praised of its lord, the Lord of Hermopolis, Lord of the Divine Words, and making content the lords of Upper Egypt. Their braziers were set up, their tombs renewed, their shrines purified against all evils, their walls erected anew, what had been destroyed in every city of Upper Egypt was refounded, and the enemies of the interior of this land, who had fallen into disturbance in this reign, were repulsed.

From the Chronicle of Prince Osorkon B at Karnak
Early 8th c. BC

Dynasty 25 - The Napatan Period

Piye (Piankhi)

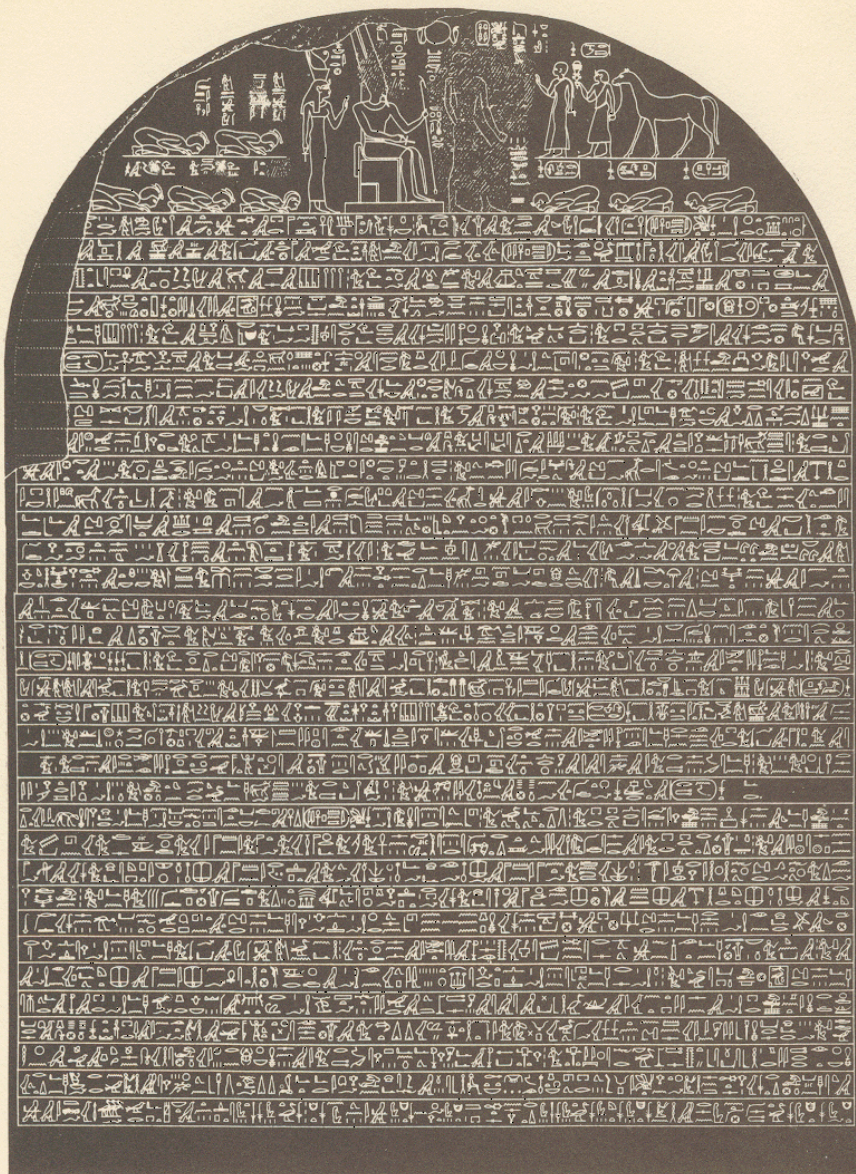
Shabaqo

Shabito

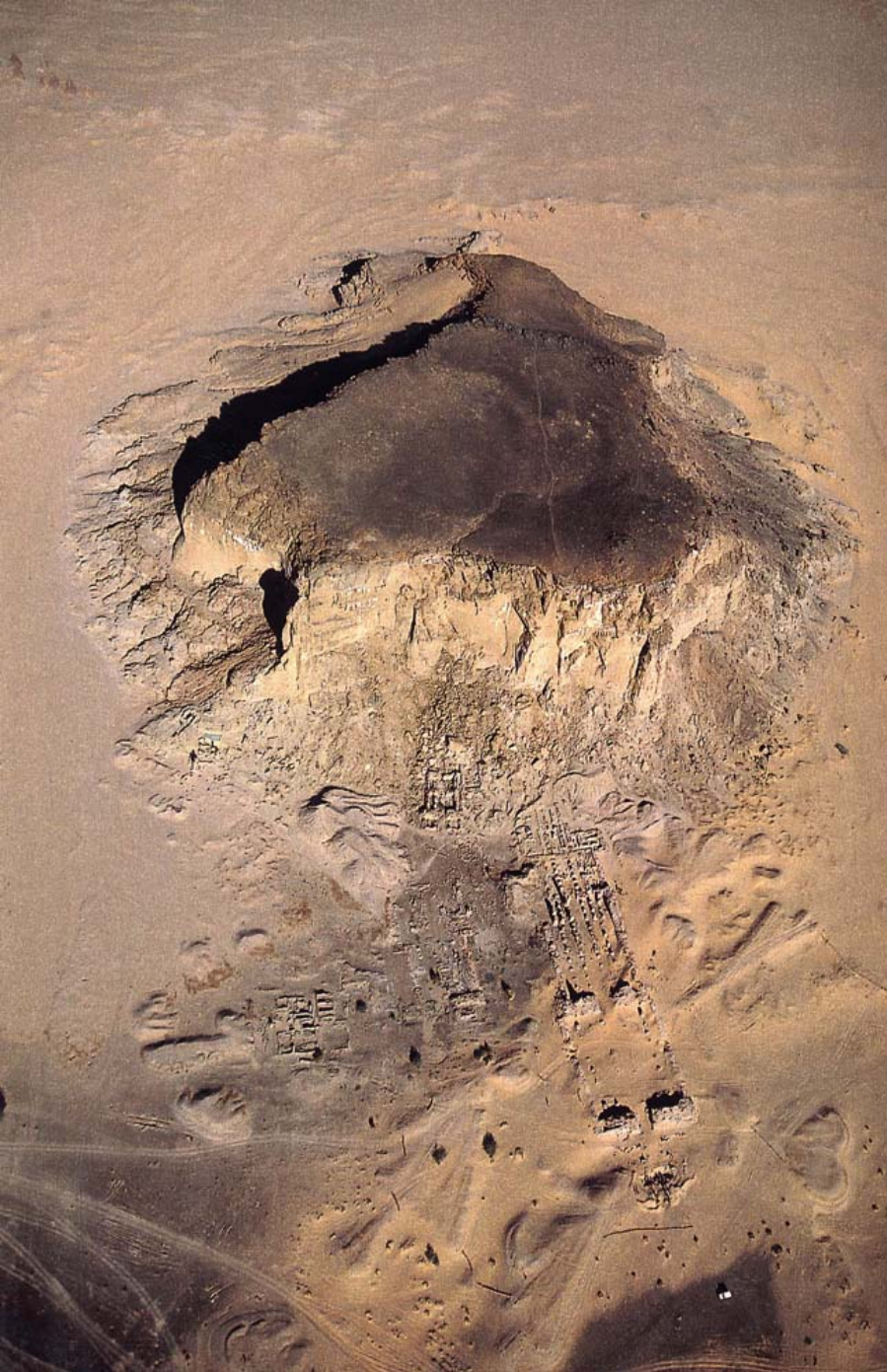
Taharqa

Tanwetamani





The Victory Stela of Piye (Piankhi) from Gebel Barkal



EGYPT AND NUBIA

Uneasy neighbors on the Nile

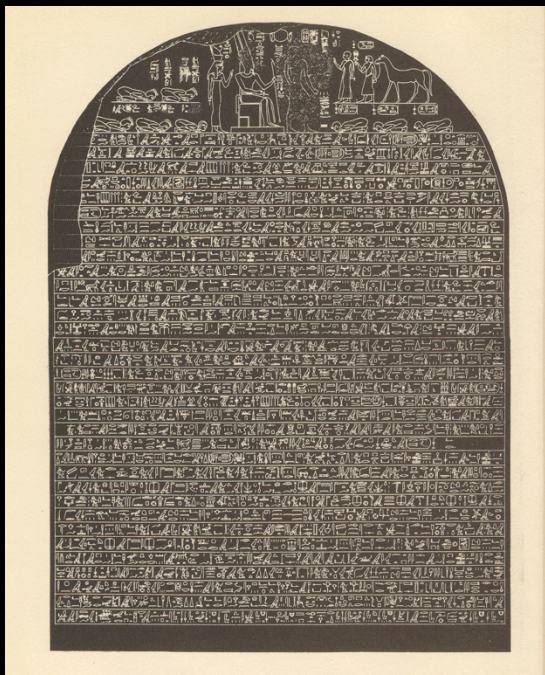
Corridor of conquest, the Nile connected Egypt with Nubia, or Kush, known for its gold and its trade with the African interior. To control this commerce, the Egyptians pressed south into Kush, reaching the Second Cataract by 2500 B.C. and the Fourth Cataract a thousand years later. For centuries caravans from the south continued to supply Egypt with exotic items such as elephant tusks and panther skins. The Kushites adopted the religion, styles, and customs of their Egyptian rulers.

After political decline in Egypt, Kushite kings conquered Egypt in the eighth century B.C. but were ousted after only six decades. In Nubia the Kushite kings perpetuated ancient Egyptian traditions for centuries.



- △ Royal Kushite tombs
- Major Kushite ruins
- Major Egyptian ruins in Nubia

NSC CARTOGRAPHIC DIVISION
PAINTING BY ROBERT HYNES



Piye Victory Stela

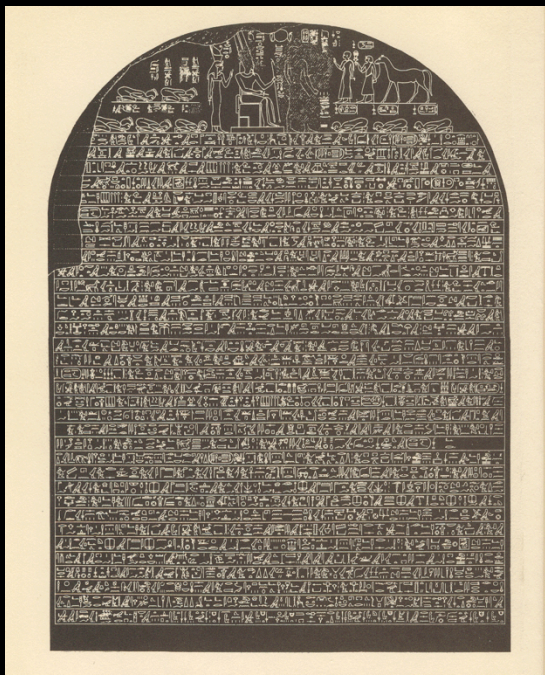
Year 21, first month of the first season, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Piye beloved of Amun, ever living. Command spoken by my majesty:

Hear what I did, exceeding the ancestors,
I the King, image of god,
Living likeness of Atum!

Who left the womb marked as ruler,
His father knew, his mother perceived:
He would be ruler from the egg,
The Good God, beloved of gods,
The son of Ra, who acts with his arms,
Piye, beloved of Amun.

...

Now he (Tefnakht) is besieging Hnes. He has encircled it completely, not letting goers go, not letting entrants enter, and fighting every day. He has measured it in its whole circuit. Every count knows his wall. He has made every man besiege his portion, to wit the counts and rulers of domains



Piye Victory Stela

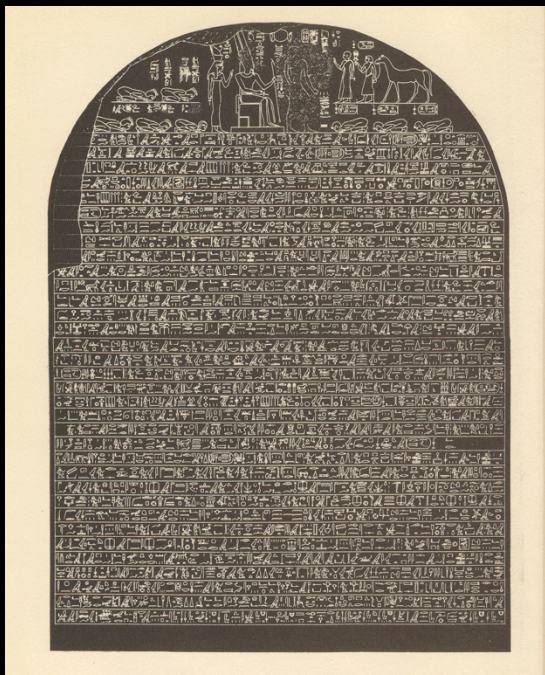
...capture its people, its cattle, its ships on the river! Let not the farmers go to the field, let not the plowmen plow...

...

Do not attack by night in the manner of game-playing; fight when one can see. Challenge him to battle from afar. If he proposes to await the infantry and chariotry of another town, then sit still until his troops come. Fight when he proposes.

...

...made a great slaughter of them, exceedingly great. Their ships on the river were captured. The remnant made a crossing and landed on the west side in the vicinity of Perpeg. At dawn of the next day the troops of his majesty crossed over against them and troops mingled with troops. They slew many of their men and countless horses. Terror befell the remnant and they fled to Lower Egypt from the blow that was great and exceedingly painful. List of the slaughter made of them. Men
(blank).



Piye Victory Stela

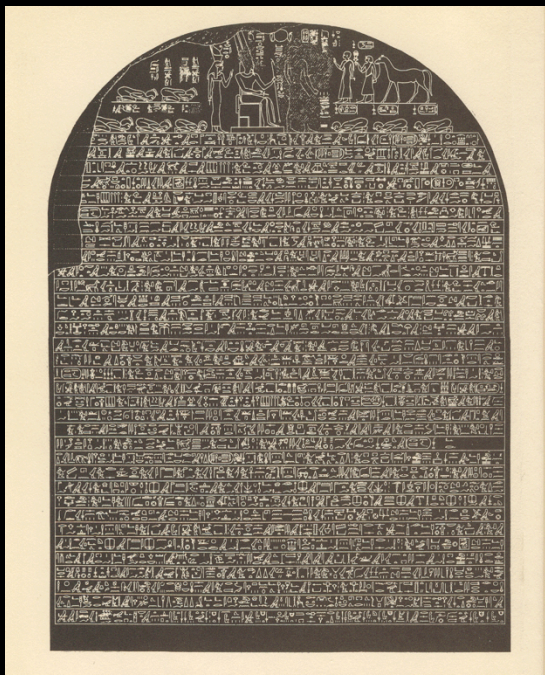
His majesty raged about it like a panther: 'Have they left a remnant of the army of Lower Egypt, so as to let some of them escape to report the campaign, instead of killing and destroying the last of them? I swear, as Ra loves me, as my father Amun favors me, I shall go north myself! I shall tear down his works. I shall make him abandon fighting forever!

...

He set up camp on the southwest of Khmun. He pressed against it every day. An embankment was made to enclose the wall. A siege tower was set up to elevate the archers as they shot, and the slingers as they hurled stones and killed people there each day. Days passed, and Un was a stench to the nose for lack of air to breathe. Then Un threw itself on its belly, to plead before the king.

...

Look to the nomes of the south. No one was slain there, except the rebels who had blasphemed god; the traitors were executed.



'I shall seize it like a cloudburst, for [Amun-Ra] has commanded me!' Then he sent his fleet and his troops to attack the harbor of Memphis. They brought him every ship, every ferry, every *shry*--boat, the bow rope fastened to its houses. [There was not] a common soldier who wept among all the troops of his majesty. ...His majesty commanded his troops: 'Forward against it! Mount the walls! Enter the houses over the river! When one of you enters the wall, no one shall stand in his vicinity, no troops shall repulse you! To pause is vile.

Piye Victory Stela



I had placed Upper Egypt on the right path
when the land was upside down

...

I subdued the rebels in the southern nomes

*From the autobiographical inscription of
Montuemhat at the Mut Temple, Karnak*

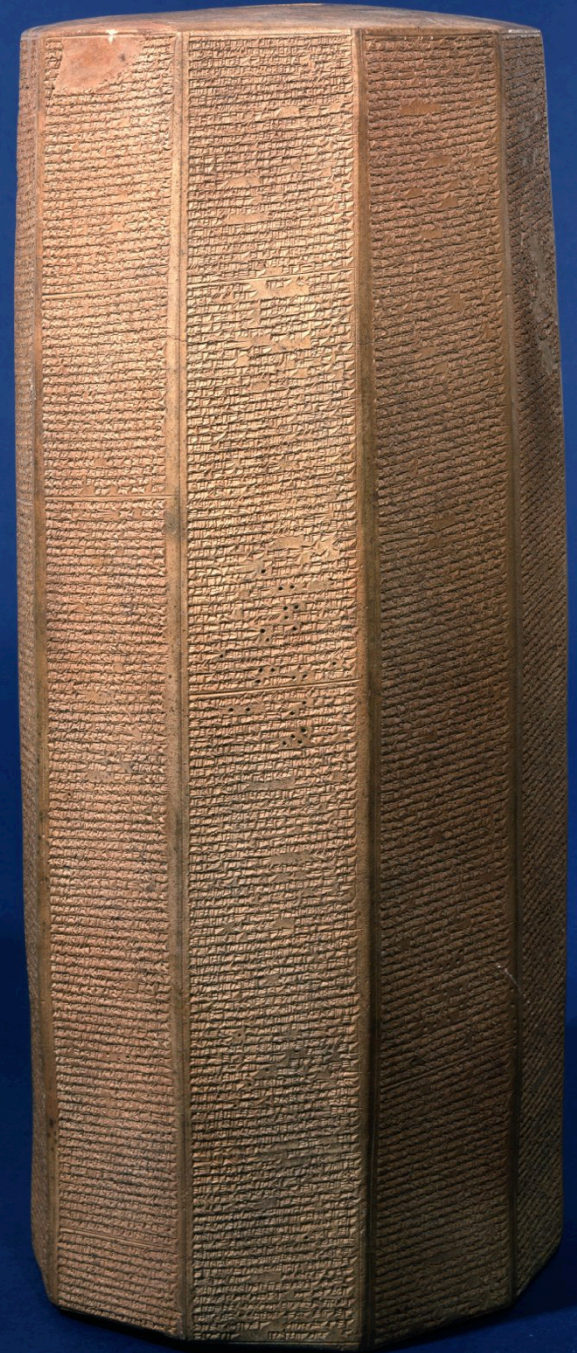
Esarhaddon defeats Taharqa:
Victory stela of Esarhaddon







Assyrian sources for the defeat of Tanwetamani:
Nineveh palace of Ashurbanipal relief; Rassam
Cylinder with annals of Ashurbanipal



Chronology of the Late Period

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some important kings

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Head of Amasis



Graffito in Greek on the leg of Rameses II at Abu Simbel:

When King Psammetichus came to Elephantine, this was written by those who sailed with Psammetichus the son of Theocles, and they came beyond Kerkis as far as the river permits. Those who spoke foreign tongues were led by Potasimto, the Egyptians by Amasis.

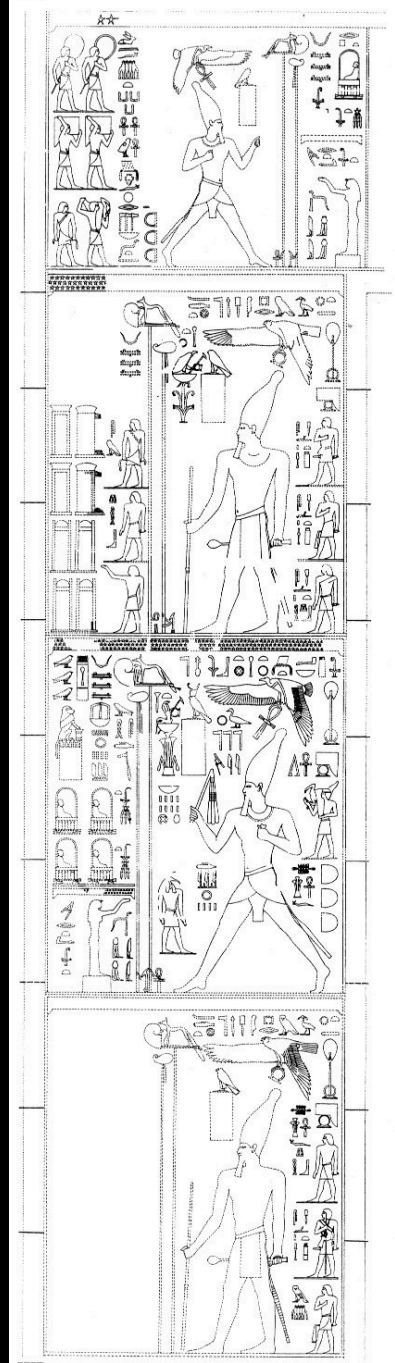
Victory Stela of Psamtek II from Shellal

Year 1, second month of summer, day 10 under the majesty of Horus: Menekhib; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Two Ladies: Mighty-of-arm; Gold-Horus who graces the Two Lands: Neferibre; Son of Ra, of his body: Psamtek ever-living; beloved of Khnum, lord of the cataract region, of Satis, lady of Yebu, of Anukis, presiding over Nubia. Good god, effective of counsel, valiant king, successful in deeds, strong-of-arm, who smites the Nine Bows.

His majesty was roaming the marshes at lake Neferibre, circling its inundated land, traversing its two islands, viewing the sycamores of god's land on its mud bank, his heart eager to see the goodness, like the Great God traversing the primeval water. Then one came to tell his majesty:

The troops your majesty sent to Nubia have reached the hill-country of Pnubs. It is a land lacking a battlefield, a place lacking horses. The Nubians of every hill-country rose up against him, their hearts full of rage against him. His attack took place, and it was misery for the rebels. His majesty has done a fighter's work. When the battle was joined the rebels turned their backs. The arrows did not stray from piercing them. The hand did not let loose. One waded in their blood as in water. Not one bound pair escaped of the 4200 captives. A successful deed has been done!'

Then the heart of his majesty was happy beyond anything. His majesty presented a great sacrifice of oxen and shorthorns to all the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt, and an offering to the gods of the palace in the palace chapel. May he be given all life, stability, dominion, all health and happiness like Ra forever!



The Palace of Apries
Memphis, 26th Dynasty

For you rescued me from an evil plight, from the mercenaries [Libyans], Greeks, Asiatics, and foreigners, who had it in their hearts to ---, and who had it in their hearts to go to Shas-heret (probably in Nubia, meaning they meant to defect). His majesty feared because of the evil which they did. I reestablished their heart in reason by advice, not permitting them to go to Nubia, but bringing them to the palace where his majesty was; and his majesty executed their [punishment].

From the statue of Nesuhor, reign of Apries



Graywacke heads from statues of Apries and Amasis

Victory Stela of Amasis

Year 3, second month of the third season, under the majesty of King Amasis, beloved of Khnum, lord of the Cataract, and Hathor, residing in Djeme, given all life, stability, satisfaction, like Re, forever....

One came to say to his majesty: 'Apries has sailed southward...ships of...while Greeks without number are coursing through the northland....They are wasting all Egypt; they have reached Malachite-Field, and those who are of your party flee because of them.'

Then his majesty caused the royal companions to be called and informed them of what had happened....

His majesty said 'You shall fight tomorrow! Every man to the front!' His majesty mustered his infantry and his cavalry.... His majesty mounted upon his chariot; he took arrows and bow in his hand, he reached Andropolis, the army jubilating and rejoicing on the road.

...

His majesty fought like a lion. He made a slaughter among them, whose number was unknown. Numerous ships took them, falling into the water, whom they saw sink as do the fish.

Year 3, third month of the first season, day 8, one came to say to his majesty: 'The enemy infest the ways, there are thousands there, invading the land; they cover every road. As for those who are in the ships, they bear hatred of you in their hearts without ceasing.'

then very broken

Amasis sends his army out, they rejoice. Ships taken, Apries killed. Amasis has him buried as befits a king, forgets his "abomination of the gods", and "founded divine offerings in great multitude" for his mortuary cult.

Herodotus II

161. The length of his (Apries') reign was 25 years, and in the course of it he marched an army to attack Sidon, and fought a battle with the king of Tyre by sea. When at length the time came that was fated to bring him woe, an occasion arose which I shall describe more fully in my Libyan history, only touching it very briefly here. An army despatched by Apries to attack Cyrene, having met with a terrible reverse, the Egyptians laid the blame on him, imagining that he had, of *malice perperse*, sent the troops into the jaws of destruction. They believed he had wished a vast number of them to be slain, in order that he himself might reign with more security over the rest of the Egyptians. Indignatn therefore at this usage, the soldiers who returned and the friends of the slain broke instantly into revolt.

162. Apries, on learning of these circumstances, sent Amasis to the rebels, to appease the tumult by persuasion. Upon his arrival, as he was seeking to restrain the malcontents by his exhortations, one of them, coming from behind him, put a helmet on his head, saying as he put it on, that he thereby crowned him king. Amasis was not altogether displeased at the action, as his conduct soon made manifest: for no sooner had the insurgents agreed to make him actually their king, than he prepared to march with them against Apries. That monarch, on tidings of these events reaching him, sent Patarbemis, one of his courtiers, a man of high rank, to Amasis, with orders to bring him alive into his presence. Patarbemis, on arriving at the place where Amasis was, called on him to come back with him to the king, whereupon Amasis broke a coarse jest and said "Prithee take that back to thy master." When the envoy, notwithstanding this reply, persisted in his request, exhorting Amasis to obey the summons of the king, he made answer "that this was exactly what he had long been intending to do; Apries would have no reason to complain of him on the score of delay; he would shortly come himself to the king and bring others with him." Patarbemis, upon this, comprehending the intention of Amasis, partly from his replies and partly from the preparations which he saw in progress, departed hastily, wishing to inform the king with all speed of what was going on. Apries, however, when he saw him approaching without Amasis, fell into a paroxysm of rage; and not giving himself time for reflection, commanded the nose and ears of Patarbemis to be cut off. Then the rest of the Egyptians, who had hitherto espoused the cause of Apries, when they saw a man of such note among them so shamefully outraged, without a moment's hesitation went over to the rebels and put themselves at the disposal of Amasis.

163. Apries, informed of this new calamity, armed his mercenaries, and led them against the Egyptians: this was a body of Carians and Ionians, numbering 30,000 men, which was no with him at Sais, where his palace stood – a vast building, well worthy of notice. The army of Apries marched out to attack the host of the Egyptians, while that of Amasis went forth to fight the strangers; and now both armies drew near the city of Momephis, and prepared for the coming fight.

169. When Apries, at the head of his mercenaries, and Amasis, in command of the whole native force of the Egyptians, encountered one another near the city of Momemphis, an engagement presently took place. The foreign troops fought bravely, but were overpowered by numbers, in which they fell very far short of their adversaries. It is said that Apries believed that there was not a god who could cast him down from his eminence, so firmly did he think that he had established himself in his kingdom. But at this time the battle went against him; and as his army being worsted, he fell into the enemy's hands, and was brought back a prisoner to Sais, where he was lodged in what had been his own house, but was now the palace of Amasis. Amasis treated him with kindness, and kept him in the palace for a while, but finding his conduct blamed by the Egyptians, who charged him with acting unjustly in preserving a man who had shown himself so bitter an enemy both to them and him, he gave Apries over into the hands of his former subjects, to deal with as they chose. Then the Egyptians took him and strangled him, but having so done they buried him in the sepulcher of his fathers.

We didn't get to the Persian invasion for real, so you are not responsible for the following stuff. But there are just a few more awesome Herodotus excerpts that might be of interest, and a hilarious Orientalist painting that depicts Cambyses as an evil irreligious bastard (the way he is portrayed in later parts of Herodotus) and an Egyptian private record from the period.

Dynasty 27: The First Persian Period



Herodotus on the Persian invasion of Cambyses:

III.1 The above mentioned Amasis was the Egyptian king against whom Cambyses, son of Cyrus, made his expedition; and with him went an army composed of the many nations under his rule, among them being included both Ionic and Aeolic Greeks. The reason of the invasion was the following. Cambyses, by the advice of a certain Egyptian who was angry with Amasis for having torn him from his wife and children, and given him over to the Persians, had sent a herald to Amasis to ask his daughter in marriage. His adviser was a physician, whom Amasis, when Cyrus had requested that he would send him the most skillful of all the Egyptian eye doctors, singled out as the best from the whole number. Therefore the Egyptian bore Amasis a grudge, and his reason for urging Cambyses to ask the hand of the king's daughter was, that if he complied, it might cause him annoyance; if he refused, it might make Cambyses his enemy. When the message came, Amasis, who much dreaded the power of the Persians, was greatly perplexed whether to give his daughter or no; for that Cambyses did not intend to make her his wife, but would only receive her as a concubine, he knew for certain. He therefore cast the matter in his mind and finally resolved what he would do.

There was a daughter of the late king Apries, named Nitetis, a tall and beautiful woman, the last survivor of that royal house. Amasis took this woman and, decking her out with gold and costly garments, sent her to Persia as if she had been his own child. Some time afterwards, Cambyses, as he gave her an embrace, happened to call her by her father's name, whereupon she said to him, 'I see, O king, thou knowest not how though hast been cheated by Amasis; who took me, and tricking me out with gauds, sent me to thee as his own daughter. But I am in truth the child of Apries, who was his lord and master, until he rebelled against him, together with the rest of the Egyptians, and put him to death.' It was this speech, and the cause of quarrel it disclosed, which roused the anger of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, and brought his arms upon Egypt. Such is the Persian story.

III.11

The Persians crossed the desert, and pitching their camp close to the Egyptians, made ready for battle. Hereupon the mercenaries in the pay of Psammenitus (the son of Amasis, who has since died naturally), who were Greeks and Carians, full of anger against Phanes for having brought a foreign army upon Egypt, bethought themselves of a mode whereby they might be revenged on him. Phanes had left sons in Egypt. The mercenaries took these, and leading them to the camp, displayed them before the eyes of their father; after which they brought out a bowl, and, placing it in the space between the two hosts, they led the sons of Phanes, one by one, to the vessel, and slew them over it. When the last was dead, water and wine were poured into the bowl, and all the soldiers tasted of the blood, and so they went to the battle. Stubborn was the fight which followed, and it was not till vast numbers had been slain upon both sides that the Egyptians turned and fled.

Paul-Marie Lenoir, *Cambyses catapulting cats at Pelusium*, 1872





Statua di Udja-Hor-res-ne, sacerdote della
dea Neith a Sais ("naoforo vaticano")

The Great Chief of all foreign lands, Cambyses, came to Egypt, and the foreign peoples of every foreign land were with him. When he had conquered this land in its entirety, they established themselves in it, and he was Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands.

...

I am a man who is good in his town. I rescued its inhabitants from the very great turmoil when it happened in the whole land, the like of which had not happened in this land.

From the statue of Udjahorresne.



Temple of Hibis, Kharga Oasis
Begun in the First Persian Period,
dedicated to the Theban triad



Cartouche of Darius I

The last period of Egyptian independence: Dynasties 28-30



Kiosk of Nectanebo I at Philae, first cataract (Dynasty 30)