

SECTION II

TIRHAQAH

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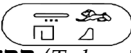
Nefertem Taharqa

*Part VII of the Sabbath and Jubilee
of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.*

Ultimately, the entire debate over whether there was one or two invasions against the kingdom of Judah by Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, can be reduced to a single issue: the scriptural mentioning of the intervention of a Kushite king named תרהקה (*T-r-r-h-q-ah*; Tirhaqah), Aramaic תרהק (*T-r-r-h-q*; Terhaq).¹ For our concerns, if there was a second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, then the Sabbath and Jubilee years which occurred in the days of King Hezekiah must, as a consequence, also be radically different. Therefore, it is paramount for our investigation that we uncover precisely who this particular Tirhaqah was. The presumption of many present-day scholars is that this king was Khu-Re' Nefertem Taharqa of Egypt's Dynasty XXV. The question arises, "Could Nefertem Taharqa have been old enough and seasoned enough to be in command of a powerful Ethiopian army during the time of Sennacherib's third campaign in early 701 B.C.E.?"

Popular Presumption

As discussed previously, in 701 B.C.E. King Tirhaqah of Kush led a military expedition against the Assyrian army of King Sennacherib. During Sennacherib's time, the kingdom of Kush laid just south of Egypt in the country that was later known as Nubia (southernmost Egypt and northern Sudan). While King Tirhaqah was advancing from Kush along a desert road towards the Assyrian army, Sennacherib was laying siege against the city of Pelusium, located on the northeasternmost border of Egypt. According to popular presumption—whether coming from the view held by those adhering to a two-invasion hypothesis or whether coming from the view held by those following the evidence of a single invasion—the Tirhaqah who came out of Kush to fight against Sennacherib is identified with Khu-Re' Nefertem Taharqa.² Nefertem Taharqa was a Kushite who ruled as the third pharaoh of

¹ The Egyptian/Ethiopian name  (*Taharqa*) is expressed in Hebrew as תרהקה (*Tirhaqah*; *Tirhakah*) and is found as תרהק (*Terhaq*, *Tirhak*, *Tirhaq*, etc.) in the Aramaic text of Targ. Jon. It is Θαρακὰ (*Tharaka*) in the LXX; Θαρθάκ (*Tharthak*) in the Lucian text; Θαρσίκην (*Tharsikēn*) in Josephus; and *Tharaca* in the Latin Vulgate. The name is rendered ܛܪܩܘ (*Tarku* or *Tarkû*) by the Assyrians, and *Eterarchos*, *Tarakos*, *Tearkos*, *Tearko*, and *Saracus* by a number of Greek and Latin writers (see CAH, 3, p. 279; HPM, p. 280; Manetho, frags. 66–68; Strabo, 15:1:6). The name is variously transcribed into English, e.g., AHOE, 3, p. 294, and TK, 1, p. 14, *Taharqa*; KK, p. 569, *Taharqo*; HE, 6, p. 142, *Taherq*, or *Taharqa*; EP, p. 450, *Taharka*; CAW, p. 81, *Taharqa*; and is also found as *Tirhaqah*, *Tirhakah*, *Tarku*, *Tarqu*, *Terhak*, *Tirhak*, *Tirhaq*, *Tarhaq*, and the like.

² Some writings have *Khu-Nefertem Re'* (TK, 1, p. 9, n. 2; TIP, p. 388, n. 834). Petrie gives *Nefer-Atmu-Khu-Ra* (AHOE, 3, p. 294). Breasted has *Nefertem-Khure* (ARE, 4, p. 452, §888; cf. TIP, p. 388). We shall follow the form "Khu-Re' Nefertem," used by F. M. Laming Macadam (TK, 1, p. 5, et al), and for the sake of brevity the short form "Nefertem," recognizing that the issue of just how this name is reproduced is not yet fully settled.

Egypt's Dynasty XXV (689–664 B.C.E.).³ All other discussions arise merely as an outgrowth of this single interpretation.

Nevertheless, the presumption held by both parties that there was only one Tirhaqah during this period, i.e., Khu-Re' Nefertem Taharqa, creates a dilemma for each construct. Nefertem Taharqa did not begin to rule in Egypt until 689 B.C.E.,⁴ far too late to be the king who opposed Sennacherib. It also means he would have been far too young to lead an expedition against the powerful Assyrian military machine in early 701 B.C.E. Those adhering to the strong evidence that there was only one invasion of Judah have been forced to manipulate the chronology for the Ethiopian kings during this period—not only the chronology of Kush but that of Egypt as well—in order to find a way around the contradiction. Meanwhile, the entire scenario for the two-invasion hypothesis rests upon this same chronological difficulty. For its advocates, since this Taharqa could not have been a king of Ethiopia or Egypt in 701 B.C.E., due to his young age, a second invasion of Judah was postulated and the evidence reorganized to explain his appearance in the story. At the same time, contrary to the argument that there had to be two invasions of Judah during this period is the fact that all the available records left to us accommodate only a single invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

There are a number of other contradictions that must also be addressed. For example, before Tirhaqah of Kush was able to arrive at Pelusium early in 701 B.C.E., the Assyrian army was struck with a plague. Weakened by this blow, the Assyrians were compelled to flee the field of battle and retreat to Jerusalem.⁵ Arriving at Jerusalem, Sennacherib planned to break into the city, seize control, and apparently then to man the walls with his Assyrian forces against the onslaught of the invading Kushites. Yet the plague ceased to spread among his soldiers. A new plague broke out while the Assyrians were just preparing to lay siege against Jerusalem. This second outbreak forced Sennacherib to abandon his eastern campaign altogether, resulting in his hasty return to his capital city of Nineveh. According to ancient inscriptions and classical writers, when Sennacherib retreated from Jerusalem, the political vacuum created by the collapse of the Assyrian army enabled Tirhaqah and his powerful Kushite military to form their own vast empire. This empire

³ Examples of this presumption from those adhering to two invasions are TK, 1, pp. 18ff, n. 30; CAW, p. 82; HE, 6, pp. 148f; BASOR, 130, pp. 4–9; CAH, 3, p. 74; AHI, pp. 297f; BS, 63, pp. 610f; AUSS, 4.1, pp. 1–11; AATB, p. 21. Examples from those adhering to only one invasion are AHOE, 3, p. 296; HI, p. 268; AHJP, pp. 143f; NOT, p. 55, n. 3; AOT, pp. 268f; TIP, pp. 157–172. Examples from those uncommitted to either view are SIP, p. 51; LAP, pp. 177f. George Adam Smith summarizes the two-invasion premise when he writes, "It is his [the compiler of 2 Kings] preservation of the name of Tirhaqah, who did not come to power over Egypt till 691, that enables us to separate the Second narrative and assign its different story to that second southern campaign of Sennacherib, which the Assyrian evidence gives us some ground to suppose took place between 691 and 689" (JTEH, 2, pp. 173f). One can conversely conclude that if it had not been for the unwarranted identification of the Tirhaqah of 2 Kings and Isaiah with Nefertem Taharqa there would have been no basis for the two-invasion hypothesis.

⁴ See App. B, C, F.

⁵ 2 Kings, 19:9–36; Isa., 37:9–37; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4f; Herodotus, 2:141; see above Parallel Corpora A, pp. 130–132.

stretched across North Africa, the Levant, and Asia Minor. Tirhaqah was even able to force the Assyrians and Babylonians to pay him tribute.⁶

Nevertheless, this great military conquest of Tirhaqah is not found in the records of Nefertem Taharqa, a person who was never wont to boast of his achievements. The most adventurous claim by Nefertem Taharqa is to “smite” the neighboring lands in Libya located next to Egypt and along the Phoenician coast. The only claim of rulership over the lands of Palestine, as we shall see, derived only from his continued occupation of those areas which had previously been conquered by his father, King Piye of Kush.

It is paramount for our investigation, therefore, that we correctly identify the king named Tirhaqah of Kush before whom Sennacherib fled. We begin to solve the dilemma created by the presumption of only “one Taharqa” by first addressing the likelihood of whether or not it was even possible that Nefertem Taharqa could have been the famous Tirhaqah who came out against Sennacherib. Our effort begins with an examination of the evidence regarding Nefertem Taharqa and whether he could have led a Kushite army against Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E.

Dating Nefertem Taharqa

Could Khu-Re’ Nefertem Taharqa of Egypt’s Dynasty XXV have been in command of an Ethiopian army as a Kushite king during the time of Sennacherib’s third campaign in early 701 B.C.E.? Nefertem Taharqa’s reign is dated by an Apis stela. This stela states that an Apis was installed in the 26th year of Khu-Re’ Nefertem Taharqa and died in the 20th year, 4th month of the 3rd season (i.e., 12th month of the year) of Pharaoh Psamtik I (Dynasty XXVI). The total life of this Apis bull is then rounded off to “21 years.”⁷ Installation of the Apis bull commonly occurred when the animal reached an age of maturity, at about 9 months old.⁸ The fact that they rounded off the bull’s age at 21 years demonstrates that, since the Apis died in the 12th month of the 20th year of Psamtik I, it was born in about the 12th month of the 25th year of Nefertem Taharqa. Therefore, this particular Apis was born during the last month or so of the 25th year of Nefertem Taharqa.⁹

In turn, the evidence from the records of the Apis bulls means that the 54-year reign of Psamtik I (Dynasty XXVI) would have immediately followed the 26th and highest known year for the reign of Nefertem Taharqa (Dynasty XXV). As a result, Nefertem Taharqa reigned only 26 full years and possibly a very small fraction of Year 27.¹⁰ Nevertheless, any partial 27th year would also

⁶ For a detailed discussion, see Chap. XII & App. H.

⁷ According to Stela Louvre 193, an Apis bull was installed on the 9th day of the 4th month of Peret (the 8th month of the year) in Year 26 of Nefertem Taharqa. It died in Year 20 of Psamtik I, on the 20th day of the 4th month of Shomu (the 12th month of the year), having lived 21 years (*Serapeum Stela*, Cat. no. 192, IM 3733; Kush, 8, pl. 38 to p. 268).

⁸ Kush, 8, p. 74.

⁹ Cf. TIP, pp. 161f §130. Keep in mind that popular dating for Taharqa is 1 year too far back than what the evidence proves, see above Chap. VI, n. 8.

¹⁰ AUSS, 4.1, pp. 4f.

have been counted as part of the 1st year of Pharaoh Psamtik I of Sais in Lower Egypt. In addition, ancient inscriptions prove that the five great kings of Dynasty XXVI of Egypt, beginning with Psamtik I, governed a total of 138 years and 5 months, ending in May of 525 B.C.E.¹¹ The 1st year of Psamtik I, accordingly, was the year 663 B.C.E.,¹² which for the Egyptians began that year on what the Julian calendar calls February 5th.¹³

This detail means that the 1st year of Nefertem Taharqa's 26-year reign was 689 B.C.E. Nefertem Taharqa came north from Kush to be associated with Shebitku on the throne of Egypt when he was 20 years old (689 B.C.E.).¹⁴ He ruled 26 full years.¹⁵ As a result, he was only 9 years old in 701 B.C.E., far too young to lead a powerful military force from Kush against the mighty Assyrian Empire. On this point, many critics are accurate.

On the other side of the chronological equation, Psamtik I of Dynasty XXVI, who is known to have reigned a full 54 years,¹⁶ succeeded his father, Nekau I, to the throne at Sais (i.e., in 663 B.C.E.).¹⁷ Nekau I was himself appointed to the throne of Sais in Lower Egypt by the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon during the autumn of the latter's 10th regnal year (671 B.C.E.), on the occasion of an Assyrian victory over Nefertem Taharqa.¹⁸ Nekau I is said to have continued to rule parts of Lower Egypt for 8 years (i.e., 671–664 B.C.E.).¹⁹ Using this scale, "Year 1" of Psamtik I, again would be 663 B.C.E. This year is confirmed as well by other records.²⁰ Nefertem Taharqa's 26th year, accordingly, still ends with

¹¹ See App. B.

¹² That this year was 663 B.C.E., see EP, p. 347; CAW, p. 81; CAH, 3, pp. 285, 288 & n. 1; and see App. B.

¹³ HdO, p. 272.

¹⁴ Kawa, V:13–20, IV:7–13; and cf. TK, 1, p. 18–20, n. 30, p. 32, ns. 50–52. Nefertem Taharqa was not crowned as sole monarch until his Year 6. His 26 years of reign were counted from his association on the throne with Shebitku, see CAW, pp. 81f; TK, 1, pp. 18f, ns. 30–31, p. 32, ns. 50–51. Kenneth Kitchen and others, who argue by means of speculation that Nefertem Taharqa might have been 20 years old in 701 B.C.E. (e.g., TIP, pp. 158f), are forced to distort the records of Manetho, pulling out of context the figures of 14 and 12 years for Shebitku and then making Nefertem Taharqa join him at the beginning of Shebitku's reign. For a further discussion, see App. F.

¹⁵ *Serapeum Stela*, Cat. no. 192; LSDM, iii, pl. 36; ARE, 4, §§959–962.

¹⁶ ARE, 4, §§974–979; Manetho, frag. 68; EP, p. 451; cf. MDAIK, 15, pp. 208–212; ZAS, 92, pp. 38f. He continued to reign at least into the early months of his 55th year (STEAN, 2, p. 675, 26.2.55; OLP, 22, p. 105, "he at least began a 55th year as king"; cf. BSFE, 105, pp. 24–26, for the earliest date for his successor, Nekau II).

¹⁷ Manetho, frags. 68 & 69; Herodotus, 2:152. That Nekau I ruled Memphis and Sais, see ANET, p. 294. Shabaqo murdered Nekau I in 663 B.C.E., well before he abandoned Egypt early in 656 B.C.E. (Herodotus, 2:152). Herodotus adds that Shabaqo "fled" Egypt because of an oracle that he was only to rule that country for 50 years, which time was "now fulfilled," so he departed Egypt for Ethiopia "of his own accord" (Herodotus, 2:139). This statement implies that Shabaqo left Egypt shortly after his son, Ta-Nuat-Amun, had reconquered Lower Egypt in 657 B.C.E. Ta-Nuat-Amun was pushed out of Lower Egypt by Nekau I of Dynasty XXVI in the year 656 B.C.E., and then, for a short time, they ruled jointly over Upper Egypt from Thebes (cf. App. J).

¹⁸ ARAB, 2, §§771, 774, 902–905, cf. §§554–558, 580, 582–585, 710; ANET, pp. 302f, iv, p. 303, 2 (rev.).

¹⁹ Manetho, frags. 68 & 69. The name Nekau (belonging to the Kau) is variously spelled Nekao, Necho, Neco, Necos, Nakao, and so forth.

²⁰ MDAIK, 15, pp. 208–212; ZAS, 92, pp. 38f. One must keep in mind that a 1-year error has been followed by many, but not all, chronologists with regard to Dynasty XXVI. This error is based upon the incorrect usage of Demotic Papyrus Berlin 13588 (see App. C).

the end of the year 664 B.C.E., the same year as the last full year of Nekau I. Nefertem Taharqa's 26-year reign, in turn, would still begin in 689 B.C.E. (the Egyptians reckoning from February 12th that year).

Two Calculations

There are two views regarding just how to calculate the age of Nefertem Taharqa at his death. Inscriptions found at Kawa, dated to the 6th year of Nefertem Taharqa, relate that, as a 20-year-old youth, Nefertem Taharqa was brought north from Nubia to Egypt by King Shebitku.²¹ As he proceeded northward through Kush towards Egypt, the young man beheld a temple of Amun in Gempaten (Gematen), i.e., in Kawa, which had fallen into a ruinous state.²² Nefertem Taharqa then provides a statement which, by the placement of a comma, can be translated and understood in one of two ways.²³ The first school of thought, led by M. F. Laming Macadam, renders this verse as follows:

Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth in the first year of his reign.

This translation is understood by F. M. Laming Macadam and those following him to mean that the temple was seen by Nefertem when he was 20 years old and that this event also occurred in the 1st year of his reign.²⁴ According to Macadam's reading, Shebitku died towards the end of the 6th year of his joint reign with Nefertem Taharqa.²⁵ This means that Nefertem was 20 years old at the time he began his 26-year reign as pharaoh (i.e., in 689 B.C.E.). If this view of his age is accurate, which it most certainly is, Nefertem Taharqa was born in 709 B.C.E. and would have died at the age of 46.²⁶ For those who date Nefertem's reign so that it began 1 year earlier, his birth would have been in about 710 B.C.E.²⁷ In either case, he would have only been about 9 or 10 years old in 701 B.C.E., an age hardly suitable for the leadership of a Kushite military expedition against a powerful Assyrian army.²⁸ It is also hard to believe that Sennacherib, despite the plague vexing his army, would have held much respect for such a youthful adversary.

²¹ TK, 1, pp. 15f, 23–28. Also see App. G.

²² TK, 1, p. 15, l. 9–11.

²³ TK, 1, p. 15, l. 12f; TIP, p. 166.

²⁴ E.g., TK, 1, p. 17, n. 17, pp. 18–20, ns. 30, 31; BASOR, 130, pp. 8f.

²⁵ TK, 1, pp. 18f, n. 30.

²⁶ TK, 1, pp. 18–20, n. 30; BASOR, 130, pp. 8f. These writers would have Nefertem come to power in 690 B.C.E., placing his birth in 710 B.C.E. In our text we merely correct their error by leaving out 1 year (see above ns. 17 & 20).

²⁷ See App. C for the arguments regarding the difference of 1 year in Dynasty XXVI.

²⁸ An excellent example of the age required for an Egyptian or Kushite king to lead a military expedition comes with the history of Thutmose III. Thutmose III ascended to the throne of Egypt in the last years of his father Thutmose II, being but a young boy. During his youth, Queen Hatshepsut proclaimed herself ruler and guardian of the child-king (e.g., CAH, 2.1, pp. 316f). Thutmose III did not lead an army against the Asiatics of Syria-Palestia until his 22nd regnal year (*Ibid.*, p. 318; ARE, 2, p. 179). Taharqa II, as another example, took the throne at age 20 (TK, 1, p. 17, n. 17, p. 18, n. 30; EnBS, p. 301, "He began his reign at the age of 20").

Even more puzzling, the Ethiopian king Shabaqo was still on the throne of Egypt during this period. If it was merely a matter of finding a suitable general for the Ethiopian army, would the Kushites have not simply handed over the command of the Kushite army to this proven and tested leader? The evidence suggests that Kush had another king standing in the wings, someone who possessed his own powerful army and who was capable of saving Shabaqo's kingdom in Egypt. Tirhaqah, the king of Kush, was coming to the aid of Shabaqo, whose own Egyptian and Kushite forces had just shortly before been defeated by the Assyrian army of Sennacherib in the battle at Eltekeh.²⁹ At the same time, it took at least 2 months for an Ethiopian army to march north from Napata in order to reach northern Egypt. This evidence indicates that Tirhaqah had already begun his march against the Assyrians well before Shabaqo's forces were defeated at Eltekeh. It suggests that Tirhaqah of Kush had marshaled his army and began his march north as soon as word reached him of the Assyrian attack on the Egyptian and Kushite client states in Phoenicia.

The second view of the verse at question, which is advanced by Jean Leclant, Jean Yoyotte, Kenneth Kitchen, and others,³⁰ would have it read:

Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth, in the first year of his reign.

This translation of the inscription is understood to mean that the temple which Nefertem Taharqa saw as a youth, interpreted to mean when he was 20 years old and coming north to Egypt to meet Shebitku, was called to mind later in the 1st year of his reign. The northward journey from Nubia for Nefertem Taharqa, as a result, is thought to have taken place sometime during the early reign of Pharaoh Shebitku. Many assume it was during Shebitku's accession year. The longest date known for the reign of Shebitku is found in Africanus' version of Manetho, 14 years.³¹ Disregarding any co-regencies, stacking the longest dates known from the different and varying sources, assuming Nefertem came north in the 1st year of Shebitku, and following the long chronology which begins Nefertem's reign in 690 B.C.E., the earliest that they could start Shebitku's reign would be 704 B.C.E. More recently, due to a misreading of the Tang-i Var inscription, this date has been pushed back even further to 707/706 B.C.E.³²

²⁹ For the battle at Eltekeh, see Chaps. III, pp. 40–45, & IV, p. 57, and see above *Parallel Corpora A*, p. 129.

³⁰ BIFAO, 51, pp. 15–29; TIP, pp. 161–172. Gardiner also does not accept the 6-year co-regency premise of F. M. Laming Macadam for Shebitku and Nefertem Taharqa (EP, pp. 345f, 450). Kenneth Kitchen gives Shebitku 13 years and ends his reign in 690 B.C.E. (TIP, p. 468). He, therefore, calculates the arrival of Tirhaqah in Egypt in 701 B.C.E., in time for the war with Sennacherib (TIP, pp. 165–171). For a rebuttal to this view, see AUSS, 4.1, pp. 1–11.

³¹ Manetho, frag. 66.

³² See App. F.

Using these interpretations, Kenneth Kitchen and others then make the claim that Nefertem might well have been 20 years of age by 701 B.C.E. Therefore, he could have been old enough to lead a military expedition,³³ a pharaoh not being considered capable of rulership until he was at least 20 years old.³⁴ Yet even at this age, as John Bright points out, it would still be highly unlikely since Taharqa at this age was described as an inexperienced youth,³⁵ especially when more seasoned kings, such as Shabaqo, and seasoned generals were available.

Kenneth Kitchen's understanding of the Year 6 inscription of Nefertem is better than F. M. Laming Macadam's only in the sense that the inscription does appear to mean that Taharqa saw the Temple at Kawa when "he passed to the nome of Amun of Gempaten," while he was being escorted by the army of Shebitku in their going "north to Thebes."³⁶ Nevertheless, when he saw the ruinous state of the temple, he became sad, for he remembered seeing the place in much better condition when he had been a young child.³⁷ Therefore, "in the 1st year of his reign," after being crowned as the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, he had the temple rebuilt.³⁸

In turn, Macadam is correct when he points out that it was in the same journey north to the court of Shebitku, yet before he arrived in Thebes, that Nefertem Taharqa saw the ruined temple. From Thebes he was taken further north to Memphis and crowned co-regent. Kitchen is also certainly wrong by claiming that Nefertem Taharqa and Shebitku were not co-regents for 6 years. This co-regency is easily demonstrated, as we shall see below, by comparing the words of the transmitters of Manetho with the data from the inscriptions.³⁹ Also, the "Year 6" texts of Nefertem certainly allows for a co-regency and exactly corresponds with the information from Manetho.⁴⁰ Neither can we

³³ TIP, pp. 161–172.

³⁴ See above n. 28, and App. E.

³⁵ AHI, p. 298, n. 9.

³⁶ Kawa, IV:12–27; TK, 1, pp. 15f, l. 12–27.

³⁷ Kawa, IV:11f; TK, 1, p. 15, l. 11f. Therefore, Nefertem Taharqa was not 20 years old as a youth when he originally saw the ruined temple. Rather, he saw it when he was a youth in good condition but now, as he was passing by while going north, saw that it had become ruined.

³⁸ Kawa, IV:12–27 (see TK, 1, pp. 15f, l. 12–27).

³⁹ Cf. Chart D. Also see the discussion in App. F.

⁴⁰ The highest regnal year for Shebitku is Year 3, which is found on Nile Level Text, no. 33 (ARE, 4, §887; CAW, p. 82). This 3-year reign is accounted for by Manetho's transmitters, Eusebius and Africanus. Africanus, starting from Shebitku's accession year, when he was associated with Shabaqo on the throne of Egypt, gives Shebitku 14 years. Eusebius, meanwhile, starting from the 1st year of Shebitku's reign as co-regent, gives Shebitku only 12 years (Manetho, frags. 66 & 67). Also see below n. 45. Kenneth Kitchen's attempt to overthrow the reading of the Egyptian inscription from the Nile Level Text is unconvincing (TIP, pp. 170f). His effort was to avoid any co-regency, thereby lengthening the chronology so that Nefertem Taharqa could be 20 years old in 701 B.C.E. Kitchen is forced to totally dismiss the information from Manetho (TIP, pp. 153f, n. 298, 448f, 452f). His reasons for holding this view are based upon the fact that Manetho's figures do not directly agree with the numbers found on the monuments and inscriptions. This view is unreasonable. Manetho's numbers are based upon an entirely different way of calculating the Egyptian reigns and can only be judged in the light of complimenting the known Egyptian inscriptions. Interestingly, the figures from Manetho, when compared with the inscriptions, actually confirm the fact that there was a co-regency for Shebitku and Nefertem Taharqa (see below n. 45, and see App. F and Chart D).

simply just stack the largest dates from different records, as Kenneth Kitchen and others have done. Each record must be considered within its own context.

A co-regency is likewise inherent in Eusebius' comment regarding how Nefertem Taharqa seized the throne of Dynasty XXV in Egypt for himself, i.e., "*hic ab Ethiopia duxit exercitium atque Sebiconem occidit ipseque regnavit Egiptiorum* (he led the army from Ethiopia to here and thus killed Shebitku and he himself ruled Egypt)."⁴¹ An early Demotic text even suggests that Shebitku was poisoned by Nefertem Taharqa.⁴² These words will not fit the events of a youthful Nefertem Taharqa being summoned to Egypt from Kush by King Shebitku and then being taken north under the escort of King Shebitku's army so that Nefertem "might be there with him."⁴³ Rather, the story indicates a later time, when Nefertem was in command of his own army (a right primarily retained by Egyptian and Kushite kings). Accordingly, nearly 150 years ago, after examining this verse, Georg Unger assumed that Nefertem Taharqa "already beforehand had possessed kingly power" before he murdered Shebitku.⁴⁴

Whatever the dispute, Nefertem Taharqa found it necessary to remove Shebitku from the throne, leaving himself as the only pharaoh at Memphis. Since the death of Shebitku is mentioned on the stela dealing with Nefertem's 6th year, and since Manetho's records show that there was a co-regency, the death of Shebitku must have occurred sometime well after Nefertem's 1st year, i.e., at the end of his 6th year, just as his inscription reports. Furthermore, Nefertem Taharqa's official reign was 26 years long. Yet Manetho only gives him 20 years, which further indicates that his co-regency with Shebitku ended with Nefertem Taharqa's 6th year.⁴⁵ Nefertem Taharqa is also known to have returned to Kush to dedicate gifts at the temple of Gempaten every year, from his 2nd to 8th year.⁴⁶ It must have been upon his return from the dedication made in Kush during his 6th year that the plot was hatched and carried out to overthrow Shebitku.

⁴¹ CM, p. 251.

⁴² CdE, 76, p. 35. Those who label this story a fairy tale have erred in that they try to interpret the *coup d'état* as an event which took place in Taharqa's 1st year of reign (e.g., CdE 76, p. 35; MittSAG, 16, p. 161). The revolt actually took place at the end of his 6th year of co-regency.

⁴³ TK, 1, p. 28, ℓ. 13f, and see App. G.

⁴⁴ CM, p. 251.

⁴⁵ CAW, pp. 81f; Manetho, frags. 67a & b; cf. Sothis, no. 77; Eusebius, *Inter. Arm.*, p. 9. Manetho gives 44 years for the total reigns of Sabakon (Shabaqo) (12 years), Sebikhos (Shebitku) (12 years), and Tarakos (Taharqa) (20 years) of Dynasty XXV. This number precisely matches the total years for the reigns of these same kings acting in their role as the chief pharaoh, i.e., 44 years: Shabaqo (Year 15, Limestone cube statue of Ity, BM EA 24429), Shebitku (Year 3, Karnak Nile Level Text, no. 33; see ARE, 4, §887; CAW, p. 82), and Taharqa II (Year 26, *Serapeum Stela*, Cat. no. 192, IM 3733); also see FHN, 1, pp. 123, p. 128; TIP, pp. 161f. Manetho's number of years for these kings determines their reigns by calculating from different points of co-regencies and sole reigns. Manetho's 12 years for Shebitku, for example, consist of the 3 years of co-regency with his father, Shabaqo, 3 years as chief pharaoh, and 6 years as co-regent with Nefertem Taharqa, until Shebitku died. Taharqa was made pharaoh after Shebitku due to the power of Piye, Nefertem Taharqa's father, who dominated Egypt at the time.

⁴⁶ TK, 1, pp. 4-9.

Setting aside for the moment the issue of co-regency, there is no evidence at all that Nefertem Taharqa came north from Nubia during Shebitku's early reign. Indeed, since the inscriptions of Nefertem Taharqa suggest that this request to come to Egypt was intended in order to associate Nefertem on the throne,⁴⁷ it is much more likely that it occurred towards a latter part of Shebitku's reign. Regardless, even if we did assume that Nefertem Taharqa's inscriptions intended to say that he was brought to Egypt at the beginning of Shebitku's reign,⁴⁸ the logic of Kitchen and those following him is still flawed.

First, Bright is correct when he concludes that it is very unlikely, "that an untried youth of twenty who by his own statement had never before left his home in Nubia, would have been placed in command of an expeditionary force in Palestine" in order to oppose the mighty Assyrian military machine.⁴⁹ This point is especially poignant since, as we have said, there were Kushite kings like Shabaqo still available for the task. Indeed, if Nefertem Taharqa was an untried youth who had never left his Nubian home until he was 20 years old, and then only to come to Egypt to join Shebitku, how can it be concluded that at that same age he could have led a powerful Kushite army against Sennacherib of Assyria?

Second, sidestepped is the aforesaid issue of co-regencies, which are demonstrated by the transmitters of Manetho. These co-regencies are realized when we compare the statements of the transmitters of Manetho with ancient Egyptian inscriptions. Manetho gives Shabaqo 12 years (variants 10 and 8 years), Shebitku 12 years (variant 14 years), and Taharqa 20 years (variant 18). Meanwhile, the inscriptions provide the highest known regnal years: Shabaqo 15 years, Shebitku 3 years, and Taharqa 26 years.⁵⁰ Laying these figures alongside one another, it is clearly revealed that these Ethiopian kings shared the throne with each other for certain periods of time.

Third, the alternate scenarios at times pass off the term מֶלֶךְ כּוּשׁ (*melek Kush*; king of Kush), which is used for the Tirhaqah who is mentioned in Scriptures, as either a gloss or an anachronism. Scriptures, Targum Jonathan, Josephus, and others all make it clear that it was the "king" of Kush named Tirhaqah who came out to oppose Sennacherib, not the king's *turtānu* or a lesser prince who would later become king. This reinterpretation of the words from Scriptures is wholly unwarranted.

Fourth, Nefertem Taharqa, as Gardiner points out, "was nothing loath to publicize his fortunes and his achievements."⁵¹ Yet in the various inscriptions proclaiming how Nefertem Taharqa came to power and the wondrous things of his reign, not once does he mention a victorious campaign against the region of the Assyrian empire, either before or after his rule began in Egypt.⁵²

⁴⁷ TK, 1, p. 15, l. 8f, pp. 17f, ns. 17, 30; p. 28, l. 13f.

⁴⁸ CAW, p. 82, also considers this possibility, but concludes that, either way, it leaves Nefertem Taharqa too young to lead an expedition against the Assyrians.

⁴⁹ AHI, p. 298, n. 9.

⁵⁰ See above n. 45.

⁵¹ EP, p. 344.

⁵² See inscriptions in TK, 1, pp. 4–44; ARE, 4, §§892–900, 918.

Indeed, nothing of such importance is even implied in his inscriptions, which recount the events of his first 6 years as pharaoh (i.e., 689–684 B.C.E.),⁵³ a time which would also encompass any possibility for the proposed hypothesis of a second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

Conclusion

All the available facts demonstrate conclusively that there is not one shred of evidence, nor is there even a realistic possibility, that Nefertem Taharqa was the same king called Tirhaqah of Kush mentioned in Scriptures. Neither is there any reason to doubt the veracity of the historical records which report that Tirhaqah was the name of “the king of Kush” who led this military expedition against Sennacherib and his Assyrian army. This being the state of the problem, we must now turn our attention elsewhere in order to discover the true identity of the Kushite king named Tirhaqah who came out to oppose Sennacherib. We shall begin to address the real question, one that is never asked, If Nefertem Taharqa of Egypt’s Dynasty XXV is not the correct King Tirhaqah, was there another king named ‘Tirhaqah, the king of Kush’ who came out of Kush and opposed Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E.?

⁵³ TK, 1, pp. 4–9, 14–16, 22–28; ARE, 4, §§892–896.