The Asiatic Campaigns of The King Thutmose I

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The subjugation of the Nubian province is now thoroughly done, and Thutmose I was able to give his attention to a similar task at the other extremity of his kingdom in Asia. Evidently the conquest of Amenhotep I, which had enabled Thutmose to claim the Euphrates as his northern boundary, had not been sufficient to ensure to the Pharaoh's treasury the regular tribute which he was now enjoying from Nubia, but the conditions in Syria-Palestine were very favorable for the pharaoh's part to extend his boundaries and power on the northern. 

The evidence for Thutmose I's Asiatic campaign is more extensive than for those of his predecessors, but the most detailed accounts come from the private reminiscences of his officers as following.

Doc.1

The most important documents recording Asiatic conquer is the Biographical statement of Ahmose son of Ebana. 

"After these things, one journeyed to Retenu (RTnw) to wash heart among the foreign countries. His majesty arrived at Naharin (N = rt2-y-rt1) his majesty found that foe when he was planning destruction; his majesty made it a slaughter among them. Numberless were the living prisoners, which his majesty brought off from his victories. Meanwhile I was at the head of our troops, and his majesty beheld my bravery. I brought off a chariot, its horses, and him who was upon it as a living prisoner, and took them to his majesty. One presented me with gold in double measure."

"His Majesty reached Naharin and found that the fallen one, had mustered his troops. Then His Majesty made a great slaughter among them, there was no end to the living captives. His Majesty took in his victory."

The researcher suggests: The mention of "Inverted Water or the up-stream river."

The words down stream xcl (i)

and up stream xnt (i)

It is well known to signify "fare downstream and sail upstream" respectively. That expression was found twice, on the Tombos stela by Thutmose I that dated 6 months after his coronation and the second text which makes reference to this by Ramses III

The statement "Mu-getnu-khett-m-khenti" (water that circles, returning, North & south) is given as the northern extents of his reign. This Tombos Stela is dated some 6 months after the coronation of Thutmose I, and the coronation decree of Thutmose I, at Wadi-Halfa, dated "year 1, 3rd month, 2nd season, day 21". So, when he came to the throne. His first exploit appears to have been to venture up the Nile, southward to Nubia & Kush.

- In the Tombos Stela read of the extents of his domain, this is where the "water that cycles, returning north & south" statement is Made.

Conventionally interpreted as meaning "inverted water" the Euphrates. This stela carries a date of "Year 2, 2nd Month., 1st season, day 15".

- This means his coronation was 4 month, 9 day (+5) short of the Year 2. The Tombos stela date adds another 1 month & 15 days, for a total of 6 months (5 month 29 days).

- From his inscription, as recorded at Tombos, he first ventured into Nubia and records some small details of this 'great' subjection in the South. This is his first campaign as proven by inscriptions of Ahmose son of Ebana & Ahmose-pen-Nekhbet.

- Ahmose-pen-Nekhbet provides in his biography that the campaign against Kush before the campaign in Naharin. Therefore one can make the conclusion that Thutmose I, following his coronation, descended south, then directed campaigns against Kush, Then traveled back up the Nile, across the Sinai, up through Retenu, subjecting princes & cities in Retenu, (no details) and across to Naharin (no details) and up to the Euphrates (no details), and back to Egypt, to commission and erect an obelisk and inscription, all in less than 6 months!!! how it comes!

- One may think in this is an incredibly short period of time for all these events to take place, considering it took Thutmose III, 8 successive campaigns, 8 years, to reach the same location, thought to be the Euphrates. It is ok that Thutmose I, did venture into Naharin, but surely it was later in his reign, not after 6 month from his coronation day !!

- it is always supposed that this campaign was the only Asiatic expedition of Thutmose I, but as the early inscription as mentioned before in Tombos Stela, speaks of the conquest of Asia as far as the Euphrates, before the Asiatic campaigns narrated by the two Ahmoses of el Kab, it must be suppose either, that Thutmose I had already made a still earlier campaign in Syria that unrecorded, or that his predecessors, Ahmose I and Amenhotep I, had achieved greater conquests in Asia for their reigns that unknown from available historical source would indicate so it is more probable to believe that Amenhotep I had previously extended the Egyptian Empire so that Thutmose I could claim it as his own so early in his reign before he actually journeyed to this region these opinion is accepted by great number of historians. 

Doc.2
The southern half of the middle colonnade of the Dier el-Bahri, above the large gap in the middle of the plate there is the top of several columns of texts and fragments of a cartouche which seems to be that of Thutmose I, it is properly refers to his campaign in Asia, towards Euphrates as far as a place called Nija where Thutmose III, his grandson left some inscriptions hunting elephants and killing a great number of them and telling about his grandfather Asian campaigns. 25

The stela of Nija showing elephant hunt. 26

"The power of king aA -khepekr (ka) re, 27 [.... in victory, [power and justification? ...] Elephants [....] horses [....] the country of Mitanni (?) ... The land of] Nija, 28 [....] His Majesty in [....] when he came from [....]." 29

Another translation:

"The glory of king Aakeherkare, the blessed, he has brought these elephant tusks, from his victories [in the southern and northern countries. His majesty hunted x] elephants [in the land of Nariah, being on a] horse carriage [after his majesty had set out in order to subdue Upper [Retenu] on [his x-the victorious campaign. His majesty reached the land] Ny [and found there these elephants. Never has anything similar occurred to earlier] kings. [These elephant tusks which his majesty brought from this land, he gave them to the House of his] father Amen, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, after returning home in [strength, in victory and in triumph, after overcoming his enemies.]. 30

Doc. 5
The Hatshepsut retrospective as following:...
"... as did my father (?), king of Upper and Lower Egypt Aakeherkare, on his first victorious enterprise;" 31 as did her victorious father, 31 the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Aakekerkare, who seized all lands.

The inscriptions of Hatshepsut's childhood, Mentions her father's (Thutmose I's) survivals among the chiefs of Retenu, 32 Thou shalt cut off the heads of the soldiers thou shalt seize, the chiefs of Retenu bearing the Sword the survivals of thy father. 33 Meaning those he had reached at this point.

Doc. 6
The Thutmose III retrospective as following, 34 ["... to the east of this stream (the Euphrates); he set up another beside the stela of his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, sOkheperkare. 35

Another translation:

"He placed another where was the tablet of his father the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperka'ara" ; and further, His majesty came to the city of Niy on his return. Then his majesty set up his tablet in Nariah to enlarge the frontiers of Kenu." 36 This points to the limits of the conquests of Thutmose I, having been about the district of Niy, which seems to have been on the Euphrates in the region of Alappe. 37

Doc. 7
The important military document Tombos stela as explained previus, 18 "His northern (frontier) is on that inverted stream which flows downstream in a southerly direction."

Another translation
"(his) northern as far as that inverted water, 19 (The Euphrates) which goes downstream in going upstream, 20 The like has not happened to other kings; his name has reached as far as the circuit of heaven, it has penetrated the two Lands as far as the nether world, 21 the oath is taken 22 by it (viz., his name) in all lands, because of the greatness of the fame of his majesty. 23 They (viz., the lands) were not seen in the archives of the ancestors since the worshipers of Horus."

Doc.8
Ring from Hamath bears the King’s name. 24

Doc.9
Property transfer of Senimose for his wife and children. "In the course of this legal wrangle which is dated to the 21st year of Thutmose III, one of the litigants has occasion to reproach Senimose by saying:

"You (?) are not like [w.] those [who] are in the town being one with you. I am a Nubian, you are a Human."

To this Senimose replies "I have been a guardian for the Palace since Akheperkare, living eternally, and I followed my lord."

The implication seems to be that Senimose was brought to Egypt under Thutmose I, and was forthwith enrolled among the pilace retainers among whom he lived out his life. That he was captured on the king’s Nubian campaign is a distinct probability, and since his wife 26 and one daughter 27,8 bear Semitic names, 27 it would seem that he was married at the time. Thutmose I’s Asiatic expedition having taken place roughly 40 years before his grandson’s 21st year, Senimose was probably around 60 years of age at the time the property transfer was drawn up.

Doc.10
Theban Tomb 343. 28 (Temple of Hatshepsut), the owner of this tomb was one Benya, who’s assumed name PA-RIKA-min ("the Ruler endures") is of the sort usually adopted by foreigners. His father was in all probability a Human, to judge from his name Artien, he had conceivably come to Egypt as a prisoner from the Asiatic campaign of Thutmose I. 29

The picture that is suggested from this scattered evidence is that of an expedition confined to Syria. Again starting probably from Byblos, Thutmose I would have made his way down the valley of the Orontes toward Nahrin where a set battle was fought against its chief and his army

The outcome went in favor of the Egyptians who took not a few captives and slew many, and pressed on to the Euphrates. Their Thutmose I, was able to erect a victory stela, possibly defining his northern frontier. 30 Perhaps some local rulers were bound by oath to their new conqueror, who was able thereafter unmolested to enjoy himself hunting elephants in Niyah on the return march.

The Dating of The Asiatic campaign:

The dating of Thutmose’s Asiatic campaign relative to the other events of his reign poses a slight problem, though less serious than the dating of Amenophis I’s foreign exploits. In the biographical statement of Ahmose son of Ebana, fullest account, two campaigns are described. In the first Thutmose I, sails upstream, past at least one cataract(4), 31,32,33 defeats and slays the enemy chieflain, and returns home with his corpse suspended from the mast. 34

The second finds Thutmose I in Asia, engaged in suppressing the chief of Naharin. Ahmose gives no date to either campaign, nor does he indicate in any way the point in the reign, early or late, when they took place. But the Tombos stela, which was set up presumably to commemorate Thutmose’s Nubian victories, bears a date in year 2, and the graffiti recording his return to Aswan are dated about 8 months later in year 3. The conclusion that the Nubian campaign was an extended affair occupying much of the second year, and entailing a slow return downstream to the first cataract, did Breasted arrive one at long ago? The corollary to this conclusion, That the order of the campaigns in Ahmose’s text is correct

The dated inscriptions for Thutmose’s first 4 years, if the Asiatic adventure is rife to postdate the Nubian campaign, constitute a meaningful sequence. The king acceded to the throne on the first year, Phamenoth (third month of the second season) winter, and day 21, a date marked by an encyclical to all high-ranking officers in the state; of these only Thure, the Nubian vice-roy, thought fit to commemorate the event by inscribing the king’s letter on his coronation stela. 35

The Asiatic campaign probably followed reasonably soon, by year 4 the court seems to have been residing in the general vicinity of Memphis, 36 possibly the "House of Akheperkare" which is mentioned later in the dynasty. A fragment of a shrine from Giza, bearing a text reminiscent of the "stela of royal diversion" from the same area under Amenophis II, Thutmose IV and others, tells us that in the 4th year the king’s eldest son and commander of his father’s armies, Amenemose, proceeded to take a stroll for diversion. 37

Although from the early 18th Dynasty it was the practice to assign the governance of Memphis to the crown prince, there can be little doubt that Amenemose, with his military function prominently displayed, was in the Memphis region for the purposes of a northern campaign. By year 8, however, Thutmose must have been back in Thebes. 38 A block from Karnak, now in Cairo, yields this date in the context of the king’s cartouche enclosed within a silted-trees. 39 If, as the iconography might suggest, a sed-festival were in the near future, the king’s presence in the south is virtually proved—The Asiatic campaign, therefore, may confidently be placed no earlier than year 4 and no later than year 8. 40

For the establishing of absolute dates for the early 18th Dynasty we are still reliant upon the two alternate choices for the accession of Thutmose I, 1504 or 1490, set almost twenty years ago by Parker. 41 Recently the evidence has seemed to tip the scales in favor of the higher date, and this would better suit the expected Memphis locale for the sightings associated
with the Ebers calendar. If, as argued elsewhere, Thutmose II reigned 10 years 6 months, Thutmose I, 12 years 6 months, and Amenophis I, 20 years 7 months, it should arrive at 1547 B.C. for the accession of Amenophis I (or 1549 if 12 years be assigned Thutmose II). On the basis, then, of what has been said above about the relative placement of the campaigns, Amenophis I's Asiatic campaign will have taken place sometime during the 1530, and Thutmose I's between 1524 and 1520 B.C. 

Unfortunately no detailed record of the cities or tribes subdued by him were survived, such as the later kings engraved, and cannot, therefore, gain a more exact geographicaI account for all Syrian area that occupied.

In short, these Asiatic campaigns of the early 18th Dynasty, and especially that of Thutmose I, appear to have been extended mazzias deep into Western Asia, which resulted in booty and some captives, but no permanent occupation, at least in hinterland Syria. Some attempt may occasionally have been made to bind selected foreign rulers by oath to the Egyptian sovereign, but compared to the completed treaty-making practiced by the Asiatic states of the time such attempts must have been juvenile and of little effect to some extent Pharaoh may have been aping his Asiatic counterpart, for the lightening raid, or deep penetration into alien, but sovereign, territory had become a widely-used tool of foreign policy in western Asia during the second quarter of the Second millennium 62 B.C. besides garnering booty, its chief aims seem to have been the show of force to intimidate a local population, and the effectual modification, by the immediate application of force, of the internal politics of the territory raided.

The fact is that Thutmose's attack caused scarcely more than a minor "shudder" in North Syria because it was not repeated. Administering an oath to Syrian princes in Pharaoh's name was no substitute for the threat of another campaign and the planting of garrisons; and although Thutmose may have left a garrison somewhere in Asia, it was not nearly enough to deter Mitanni.

In the forty years that followed Thutmose's isolated attack the period of Egypt's withdrawal from Asia Mitanni was free to continue its aggressive subversion of Syria and Mesopotamia. 70

Two pharaohs had now seen the Euphrates, the Syrian dynasts were fully impressed with the power of Egypt, and tribute, together with that of the Bedouins and other inhabitants of Palestine, began to flow regularly into the Egyptian treasury. Thus Thutmose I, was able to begin restoration of the temples of his ancestors so neglected since the time of Hyksos.

Most notably greatest campaigns against insurgent Hyksos tribes (Syrians) during his Asian campaigns in the Nile delta. He pursued the tribes all the way to the Euphrates river and crossed over into Naharin, the land of the two rivers, which belonged to the Mitanni. This expedition opened new horizons that led later to Egypt's important role in horse trade and diplomacy of the late bronze age near east. Thutmose I brought Egypt a sense of stability and his military campaigns healed the wounds of Thebans.

3 This phrase clearly that the Nubian campaign took place before the Asiatic campaign. The same order is observed in the biography of Ahmose-Pen-Nefkheper. The usual supposition that the Asiatic preceded the Nubian campaign is based on a false conclusion from the Tombos inscription; L.Habaeni, op.cit., Kau 5 (1957), p.20.
6 A pejorative reference to the king of Mitanni.
7 K. Sethe, op.cit., p.9.
9 D.B. Redford, A Gate Inscriptions From Karnak and Egyptian Involvement in Western Asia During the Early 18th Harmony, JNES,59, No.2 (Toronto,1979), p.275-280.
12 Showing clearly that the Asiatic campaign took place after the Nubian campaign.
16 Strangely Amenemhat followed this inscription with his titles and a statement of his early career under Ahmose and Amenophis I (whom he outlived). Although the king is not mentioned in this inscription, he can scarcely be Amenemhat. F.Bilbel, Geschichte Vorderasien and Egypten (Heidelberg, 1927), p.16, n. 2; since Amenemhat could only have been a very young man at the time. The remainder of his inscription (which is lengthy) is occupied by a description of his non-military service for Amenophis I; so that Thutmose I is the likely candidate for "His Majesty" in the present passage: E.Brunner, op.cit., 327; E. Hoenig, Untersuchungen zur
الحملات الآشورية الملكية تحتتم الأول
كان الملك تحتتم الأول من أوائل ملوك الآسرة الثالثة عشرة الذين أظهروا تعود سحاب البلاد جنوبا حتى الشام الثالث وشرقًا وشمالي حتى نهر الفرات وسوريا وليبيان، وذلك استكمالاً لإنجازات والده الملك ملوك الأسرة الثالثة الذي بدأ بتقوتها في سوريا والعراق.

ويوجد العديد من الوثائق والمستندات الدالة على وصوله إلى نهر دجلة والفرات، وحقق أشهرها السيرة الذاتية لكل من أحمد ابن أبيا واحمد بنخت باعتبارها أهم قواعد الحبشة في عصر الملك تحتتم الأول.

وأيضًا النقوش الجرمانية على حدود نهر الفرات، نحفه تحتتم الثالث والتي ذكرها فيها أن حدوت مملكته قد وصلت إلى نفطه أبعد من تلك التي وصل إليها جدته تحتتم الأول.

ويعد أنهن الملك من حملات الدنيا، وقاد إلى الفيل الثالث من Channel "ارتو"، عند استعداد حدود مملكته الشرقية بعد بناي الهكسوس في عصر جد الملك أحماس الأول، وانه تندفع الملك في الوصول للفرات. وقد استمرت حملاته الآشورية مرة أخرى في تشكيل.

وقد سجل كل من أحمد ابن أبيا وأحماس بنخت على جدران ملقاهم، ما حصلوا عليه من يغلمون وهدافيا من الملك وعدد الأسرة الذي حضر.

وأيضًا الملكة حتشبيسوت سيات على جدران معدها البحري وصول ونهاها إلى مدة "نيا" في سوريا قرب نهر الفرات وانتشاره في جميع الأقاليم في نفس المنطقة.

هذا إلى جانب لجنة جديدة تتموم الساهرة، التي دوتنا أهم حملات وانتصارات الملك تحتتم الأول، وعن حملاتهم الآشورية، والتي وصفت نهر الفرات بأنه نهر الذي يزود عروضات آثار العالم، من الشمال للجنوب، نظرًا لأن المصري الكثيف اعتاد على سيران النهر من النهر الفعلي إلى البحر، من الحضارة الآشورية إلى الآسرة الثالثة عشرة.

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