

Appendix B

Dating *Dynasty XXVI*

The total time of Dynasty XXVI of Egypt can be dated as follows. Diodorus reports that Pharaoh Amasis (Ahmose II) “ended his days at the time when Cambyses, the king of the Persians, attacked Egypt, in the 3rd year of the 63rd Olympiad,”¹ i.e., between July of 526 and July of 525 B.C.E. If the Macedonian version of the calendar was used by Diodorus, this Olympiad would extend from about October of 526 until October of 525 B.C.E. Herodotus notes that Amasis died having reigned 44 years;² and, indeed, ancient records indicate that his 44th year was his last.³ More specifically, we are told that Amasis died while Cambyses II was on his march towards Egypt.⁴ Amasis was succeeded by his son, Psamtik III,⁵ who subsequently “encamped by the mouth of the Nile called Pelusian, awaiting Cambyses.”⁶ This river mouth and the fortress city of Pelusium were located on the northeastern border of Egypt.

Next, Psamtik III, not long after his father’s death, was defeated by the Persians at Pelusium. Polyaenus writes:

When Cambyses attacked Pelusium, which guarded the entrance into Egypt, the Egyptians defended it with great resolution. They advanced formidable engines against the besiegers, and hurled missiles, stones, and fire at them from their catapults. To counter this destructive barrage, Cambyses ranged before his front line dogs, sheep, cats, ibises, and whatever other animals the Egyptians hold sacred. The Egyptians immediately stopped their operations, out of fear of hurting the animals, which they hold in great veneration. Cambyses captured Pelusium, and thereby opened up for himself the route into Egypt.⁷

¹ Diodorus, 1:68.

² Herodotus, 3:10; cf. Manetho, frag. 68.

³ P. Rylands IX:21, 6–9, after Griffith, *Catalogue*, 3, p. 105; Paris BN 215, verso, col. C, lines 6f, and 10f; see DSDC, pp. 30f.

⁴ Herodotus, 3:10.

⁵ The statue inscription of Udjahorresne names Psamtik III as the successor of Amasis (LPDPE, pp. 6 & 7). Also see Manetho, frag. 68, “Psammekherites”; Herodotus, 3:10, 14f, “Psammenitos.”

⁶ Herodotus, 3:10.

⁷ Polyaenus, *Strata.*, 7:9.

Herodotus reports that, "The fight waxed hard, and many of both armies fell; but at length the Egyptians were routed."⁸ He adds, "After their rout in the battle, the Egyptians fled in disorder; and they were driven into Memphis."⁹ When Cambyses II arrived in Memphis, he besieged the city and "χρόνῳ παρέστησαν (*khrono parestesan*; in time, they [the Egyptians] surrendered)."¹⁰ According to Herodotus, 10 days after the city of Memphis surrendered to Cambyses II, Psamtik III had himself only ruled Egypt for 6 months following the death of his father.¹¹ The entire war, therefore, from the conquest of Pelusium to the overthrow of Memphis, could not have lasted any more than about 5 months,¹² placing the siege against Pelusium in about December of 526 B.C.E. Evidence reveals, as we shall demonstrate below, that the Persian king was still attacking Egypt during the springtime.¹³

Manetho, meanwhile, adds that Cambyses II became king of Egypt "in the 5th year of his kingship over the Persians."¹⁴ This statement indicates that his 5th year was calculated by the Persian year system (spring reckoning). Cambyses II, who was co-regent with his father, Cyrus the Great, before Cyrus' death, succeeded him to the throne of Persia by December of 530 B.C.E.¹⁵ Counting the reign of Cambyses II from his accession date, anniversary dating, the beginning of his 5th year would have extended from about December of 526 to December of 525 B.C.E. Using the non-accession-year system (NY), his 1st year would have extended from about December of 530 to April of 529 B.C.E., and the 5th year would have extended from April 526 to April 525 B.C.E. If we use the accession-year system (AY), which was the custom among the Persians, the 5th year extended from April of 525 to April of 524 B.C.E.

Both the accession-date system (anniversary dating) and the accession-year system (AY) accommodate a spring invasion in 525 B.C.E. The non-accession-year system (NY) is unlikely, since it would make the final conquest in the spring occur only in 526 B.C.E., outside the dates given by Diodorus. Limiting this system of dating even further, a papyrus fragment states that Cambyses II's war against Egypt began during his 4th year (Persian reckoning).¹⁶ Accordingly, Cambyses II began his march towards Egypt in the latter part of his 4th regnal year (AY). This detail eliminates anniversary dating, thereby leaving us only with the Persian AY system. In turn, it is clear that Cambyses II became king of Egypt in the mid-spring of 525 B.C.E. during his 5th regnal year over Persia, just as Manetho claimed.

⁸ Herodotus, 3:11.

⁹ Herodotus, 3:13.

¹⁰ Herodotus, 3:10–14.

¹¹ Manetho, frag. 68; Herodotus, 3:14.

¹² Some time was spent in Sais in the embalming and burial of Amasis (Herodotus, 3:10, 16).

¹³ Transeuphra., 25, pp. 26f, 30–34; SHWKS, p. 186, and its n. 38.

¹⁴ Manetho, frags. 70, 71a & b.

¹⁵ LBTAM, no. 123; cf. Herodotus, 1:208, 214; Xenophon, *Cyro.*, 8:7:11.

¹⁶ P. Baden 4, No. 59: v./A.D. (see VBP, Heft 4, no. 59); Waddell, *Manetho*, pp. 174f, n. 1.

Psamtik III of Egypt, meanwhile, reigned at least until his last documented date, sometime during the 5th month of his 2nd year,¹⁷ i.e., early May of 525 B.C.E., at which time Cambyses II defeated him at Memphis. Counting back from sometime in May, the 6-month period recorded for Psamtik III's sole reign brings us to the death of his father Amasis (Ahmose, Amosis, etc.), i.e., sometime in November of 526 B.C.E. The new Egyptian year in 525 B.C.E. began on January 2.¹⁸ As a result, the year 526 B.C.E. would have been the 44th and last regnal year of Amasis. This detail also proves that the 1st regnal year of Psamtik III was the same civil year as the last year of his father, Amasis. His 2nd regnal year, as a result, began on January 2, 525 B.C.E. and ended in the 5th month (May). The Egyptian records further demonstrate that, discounting all co-regencies, Psamtik III's predecessors reigned the following number of complete regnal years prior to Cambyses II's invasion: Amasis, 44 years; Hophra (Apries), 19 years; Psamtik II, 5 years; Nekau (Necho) II, 16 years; and Psamtik I, 54 years.¹⁹ The total of all these reigns for Dynasty XXVI is 138 years plus the 5 months allowed for Psamtik III until May of 525 B.C.E. This evidence dates the 1st year of Psamtik I to 663 B.C.E.,²⁰ which began on February 5th that year.²¹ Accordingly, the dating of the 1st year of Psamtik I is one year less than many recent scholars have assumed.²²

Manetho also provides the names and reigns for the first four kings of this dynasty who ruled prior to Psamtik I:²³

Ammeris the Ethiopian	12 years (var. 18 years) ²⁴
Stephimates (Greek for Tefnakht)	7 years
Nechepsos (Nekauba)	6 years
Necho	8 years

Necho I was placed in office during the 10th year of Esarhaddon (671 B.C.E.).²⁵ This date precisely fits the 8-year period given by Manetho, i.e., from 671–664 B.C.E. (NY). The dates for Nekauba (Nekau the wise), who was loyal to the Ethiopian monarch, accordingly, extend from 677–672 B.C.E. (NY) while those of Stephimates (Tefnakht), the second king of Sais who was known by this name,²⁶ covered the years from 684–678 B.C.E. (NY). Tefnakht was at first loyal to King Piye but in his 7th year revolted. Piye suppressed the revolt and placed Nechepsos on the throne in his father's place.²⁷ A papyrus from Tebtunis

¹⁷ SHWKS, 1, p. 187; GHDRV, no. 4.

¹⁸ HdO, p. 276.

¹⁹ ARE, 4, §§951–962, 974–979, 984–988, 1026–1029; cf. Kush, 8, pp. 72–76, Kush, 8, pp. 267–269; Kush, 6, pp. 121–130.

²⁰ CAW, p. 81; CAH, 3, p. 286; cf. above Chap. VI, p. 76, n. 8.

²¹ HdO, p. 272.

²² See App. C.

²³ Manetho, frags. 69a & b; Eusebius, *Chron.*, pp. 147, 148; Sec. Heir. Cod., p. 34; Sothis, nos. 78–81.

²⁴ Manetho, frags. 69a & b; Eusebius, *Chron.*, pp. 147, 148; Sec. Heir. Cod., p. 34.

²⁵ ABC, p. 127, Chron. 14, l. 25f; ARAB, 2, §§580f, 771, 774, 902–905.

²⁶ Tefnakht I was the father of Bakrenanef, the last king of Dynasty XXIV (e.g., Plutarch, *Isis*, 8; Diodorus, 1:45; Aelian, 12:3).

²⁷ See App. D.

ties these kings together when it speaks of "Na-k₃w s₃ T₃y=f-n₃t.t (Nechao, son of Tefnakhte)," i.e., Nechao I (Nekau I) was the son of Stephinates (Tefnakht II).²⁸ Therefore, it is highly probable that Nechepsos, who was loyal to Piye, was also a son of Tefnakht II who ruled prior to his brother being placed on the throne by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon.

According to several sources for Manetho, the first king of Dynasty XXVI at Sais was King "Ammeris the Ethiopian."²⁹ Interestingly, in the version of Manetho that was reported by Africanus, Dynasty XXVI starts with Stephinates (Tefnakht II), identified as the second king according to Eusebius, and not with Ammeris.³⁰ This detail is easily explained by Manetho himself, who calls Ammeris "an Ethiopian." Therefore, he was not part of the family representing the other kings who ruled this northwest Delta dynasty of Sais. The 12-year figure for the reign of Ammeris extended from 696 through 685 B.C.E. The alternate figure of 18 years extended from 696 through 679 B.C.E., until the 6th year of Stephinates (Tefnakht II). The true identity of the mysterious King Ammeris and his 6-year co-regency with Tefnakht II will be explained in Appendix D.



Fig. 6.
Image on Persian Seal (6th Century B.C.E.)
Cambyses II of Persia capturing Pharaoh Psamtik III.

²⁸ GM.B, 10, p. 124.

²⁹ Manetho, frags. 69a & b; Eusebius, *Chron.*, pp. 147, 148; Sec. Hier. Cod., p. 34; cf. Sothis no. 78.

³⁰ Manetho, frag. 68.