Shishak/Shoshenq's Travels — Again!

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"There is an elusive quality about 'Shishak'." That is the first line of my original paper "Shishak/Shoshenq's Travels" (JSOT, 86, 1999: 3-23) and I had no idea at the time how elusive he really was. To put the most positive spin on the reception of my paper, it received a very lukewarm response. (One scholar claimed my arguments and interpretations were "bizarre"! Needless to say, he is not on my Christmas list) Nevertheless, I believe more than ever, my main arguments were valid.

My main arguments were as follows: the general interpretation of the list makes unwarranted assumptions that Shoshenq went to the Transjordan across the highlands past Gibeon; it is not legitimate to pick and choose names from different rows in the inscription in order to "interpret" particular routes; Shoshenq did not conquer various cities creating layers of destruction, including more locations than can be listed on the list; and, Jerusalem probably is not on the list.

Since 1999, more information is available about Shoshenq I, about his regnal term, his age, and when it may have been suitable for him to invade Asia. In addition, more information is available about various locations on the list which requires a very different route than the ones chosen by many scholars.

SHOSHENQ

We know very little that is certain about Shoshenq I. Kenneth Kitchen (1996: 58-60) argued that Shoshenq came to power in 945 BCE, Troy Sagrillo (2006: x) suggested 944-43 BCE, Aidan Dodson believed his first year was 949-48 BCE (2000) and David Aston (2009) provided one option of about 951 BCE, but Thomas Schneider (2010: 403) believes 962 BCE is a better option. At the present moment, there is no agreement on the date for Shosheng. In addition, there is uncertainty about the length of his reign. Kitchen and older scholars believed he had a reign of about 21-22 years. However, many scholars suggest a much longer reign perhaps 30 to 34 years (Sagrillo, 2006: xi; 2012b; Kaper, 2009: 157-8; Brockman, 2011:49; Wente, 1976:278). It is clear that he was a mature adult when he became pharaoh ("middle-aged" according to Redford, 1973: 8, n. 38). It is possible that he was co-regent with Psusennes II for about 5 years (Dodson, 1993: 268) although Dodson also suggests Shosheng was a junior co-regent with Pasebkhanut II, king in the Thebes region (2009: 110). His eldest son, the future Osorkon I, held high offices in the military before Shosheng became ruler (Sagrillo, 2012a). Shosheng may have been granted control over Upper Egypt, including Thebes, and another son, luput A, was made High Priest and given command of the armed forces in that area early in his career - at least before Shosheng's 10th year (Dodson 2009:108-110) and possible before his 5th year (Redford, 1973:8, n. 38). Dodson (2009: 108-9) also seems to suggest that luputA may have been made High Priest in Thebes before Shosheng became pharaoh. His daughter was married to the previous ruler, Psusennes II, and so on. In other words, it is likely he was about 40-50 when he became pharaoh. If he ruled over 30 years and invaded Asia at the end of his reign, then he would be the warrior pharaoh at an advanced age of about 70-85 years old. Such an age is not impossible but it seems unlikely. However, if he had a period of co-regency, then his regnal years would start then and the "sed fesival" would be celebrate his entire reign and not just his sole reign. In which case, his sole reign would be reduced by five or so years and he could be about 65-70 when he died. Nevertheless, it seems the advent of his reign must be pushed back a number of years.

Recently, scholars (Krauss, 2006) have used certain lunar festivals to date the first years of Takeloth I and Shosheng III and then worked back to discover the first year of Shosheng in 944-43 BCE. However, there are some problems. Kitchen (2009: 167) scornfullv dismissed the claim that these dates were connected to certain lunar festivals. Also, they assumed Shosheng only had 21-22-year reign instead of 30-34 years. Also, it assumes the regnal years for Osorkon I are fixed at 34-5 years. If the certain years for Shosheng are far more than 21-22 years, then it is possible the certain years for Osorkon are fewer than the actual total. There is also the problems of possible co-regencies for Shosheng.

Still, Kitchen and others have a major problem. If we accept 945 as the first year, then a 34-year reign would end in 911 BCE and his son Osorkon would begin his reign in 911 and end in 876 BCE. In other words, all the dates for the various pharaohs would be adjusted down 11-13 years. The result would be that Osorkon IV, the last of the 22nd dynasty, would not be on the throne when Pive invaded the north sometime in 728-734 BCE (Schneider, 2010:378; Kahn, 2001: 18). It is more likely that years would have to be taken away from later pharaohs (a very difficult enterprise) or Shosheng's reign would have start earlier - say about 957-56 BCE (using Kitchen's chronology) or 756-754 BCE based the lunar eclipse theory. This date is very close to the time espoused by Thomas Schneider, i.e. 962 BCE.

ASIA

In addition, we do not know when he traveled in Asia. Kitchen claimed he arrived in the last couple of years of his 21-22-year reign - in other words, about 925-23 BCE. However Aidan Dodson (2000b: 8) and Redford (1973: 10) claim it was early in his reign. In other words, depending on your view of the reign of Shosheng, he may have invaded Asia as early as 960 BCE and as late as 916 or 907 (depending on the length of his reign). Adding to the chronological problems, we have the problem of archaeological layers of destruction. If an archaeologist dates a layer of destruction to a certain date plus or minus 20-25 years, then it is possible that a layer of destruction that occurred in 980 BCE is attributed to Shosheng and another that should be dated to 895 BCE is attributed to him as well. It all depends on how you look at the information about Shosheng.

Many scholars view the list of names as a list of conquered cities. However, it is a list of cities that offered tribute or gifts to Amun in one fashion or another. There is no need to assume any city on the list was destroyed. Instead, we should assume there was no layer of destruction in the 55 or so cities that may be attributed to Shoshenq (Ussishkin, 1990, 72-3, 76). Israel Finkelstein demonstrated that Shosheng did not destroy Tel Rehov (2009: 268) and did not destroy a number of places in the south (2006: 19, 26-28; 2008: 36-7). Instead, it seems Shosheng may have introduced a period of prosperity (2006: 21; 2008: 37). The only possible evidence of destruction attributed to the armies of Shosheng maybe in the Faynan region in southern Jordan (Levy, et. al. 2008: Finkelstein, Lipschits, 2011: 148). It is unlikely that the towns in the Judean Shephelah would have any resources to resist the army of Shosheng. Aside from the Philistine cities, it seems that in the Iron I and early Iron IIA "the Shephelah was settled by a small rural groups that only occupied a few sites with a modest settlement hierarchy" (Lehmann and Niemann, 2014:77). In my opinion, we should place ourselves in the minds of a city leader in Gibeon: we know Shosheng is coming north with a large army, we know we do not have the means to offer any resistance, we do not know what plans Shosheng has - loot, reestablishing the Egyptian empire, and so on. What we do know is that we want to be on his good side. So we gather as many gifts as possible and toddle off to Beth-Horon or Aijalon (both on the list) and offer up the gifts. These are recorded by the scribes and later on, Gibeon turns up on the list even though not a single Egyptian soldier was near the gates of Gibeon. I believe we should assume the same attitude was found in all the cities - they opened the gates, welcomed him, offered gifts, and then prayed hard that he would move on quickly. Without further evidence, we should not assume any layer of destruction involving the first 55 names on the list involved Shoshenq.

Clearly we do not know when Shoshenq came to power and we do not know when he invaded Asia. He came to power probably sometime between 940 and 962 BCE. Also, he invaded Asia possibly between 960 and 905 BCE. In addition, it is more and more obvious that Shoshenq did not conduct wide spread destruction.

5 ROWS OF NAME RINGS

Shoshenq invaded Asia with an army consisting of three parts which probably split up near Gaza. Shoshenq probably marched north toward Megiddo while the other two wings marched east toward Beersheba, Arad, and so on along the various trade routes. There may have been well over 150 name rings in the inscription at Karnak. However, only about 55 names belong to the northern part of the list and, of these, only about 44 whole or partly damaged names remain. It is this part of the inscription that interests me as it seems most likely that Shoshenq would accompany this section of his army.

The name rings are found in three basic groups: name rings 11-65 in 5 rows for the northern section of the list; then name rings 66 to about 150 in 5 long lines for the Beer-Sheba valley, Negav highlands and perhaps other nearby regions: then, finally, names on a badly damaged row for the southern coast road (Kitchen, 1986: 432-3). Most scholars assume "the toponyms which have been safely identified represent the following regions ...: the Jezreel Vallev... the Sharon Plain, the area of Gibeon in the highlands, the area of Penuel and Mahaniam in Transjordan... Other important regions are missing... the highlands of Judah... northern Samaria, the Shephelah, the Galileee and the northern Valley, the central and northern coastal plain... the Gilead. Moab and Ammon" (Finkelstein, 2002: 109-10).

However, it seems that many names "safely identified" must be re-identified and placed elsewhere. Scholars have seen a number of names that they claim are cities in the central Transjordan region: Row 5 - #53 Penuel, #56 Adamah, # 55 "One of Succoth"; Row 2 - # 22 Mahainam. Because of those names, scholars assumed Shosheng went across the hill region past Gibeon and perhaps Jerusalem. Some suggest that number 59 in row 5 may be "Tirzah". However, there is a major problem concerning these names. Lucas Petit (2012) looked at the archaeological reports about the various sites in the region where these names are supposed to be located. He points out that almost all the sites show evidence they were abandoned or showed minimal and mostly temporary occupancy. "The only settlement that remained occupied was Tell Damiyah, close to the perennial waters of the River Jordan" (p. 202). If there was nothing there in the region, why would Shoshenq go there – as Petit asked? And why would their names be on the list of cities offering tribute?

There are additional problems with the selection of names. It is unusual for a geographically grouped cities to be separated in the list. Picking one name from row 2 and others in row 5 is a bit but not improbable. odd However. the identification of the names by scholars seems exceptionally selective. There are two locations for the name "Penuel" in the Biblical texts: the more famous location in the Transjordan, and another in the Judean foot hills. According to 1 Chronicles 4:4. Penuel is the father of "Gedor". The location for this Penuel is not known but it certainly is not in the Transjordan but in the Judean foothills region somewhere. This second site is close to the route Shosheng had to take on his way north. Surprisingly, all scholars completely ignore the second site. As there seems to be no occupied site for the Transjordan city, it is time for scholars to consider the second.

There are a number of places called "camp" or "camps" and there is no need to restrict ourselves to the one Mahanaim in the Transjordan. In addition, the name (#22) is located in row 2 (not in row 5), in a group of names a long way from the Transjordan: # 19 Adullam (possibly Adoram), #23 Gibeon, # 24 Beth Horon, #25 *qdtm*, and, #26 Aijalon. Given the location of the other names, it is quite likely that Mahanaim belongs in the same general region – not in the Transjordan.

It is odd that the next name beginning row 3 is #27 *mkdy* which usually is translated as "Megiddo". There is no reason to separate this name ring from the previous name rings and, in so doing, return to the north again. It is possible that the usual interpretation is correct, but I have argued the name should be grouped with the previous names, i. e., in the northern Judean

Shephelah. I argued it may be "Makkedah" and I still see no better option. There is no evidence that the Philistine cities were targets for Shoshenq, or indeed, any coastal city. Quite possibly, they were allies. It is quite possible that Megiddo was not on the list because it too was an ally.

As for "One of Sukkoth", this is a very odd name for a city. There is a name in row 5, no. 55 ("*pnds-k*") which has been translated as "One of Succoth" by Kitchen. However, he had to rearrange the order of the hieroglyphs and give an unusual translation of one of them in order to divine the name. It seems that, under the influence of the names on either side of this name, and under the influence of the Biblical story of Jeroboam and the belief that Shoshenq was trying to punish him, scholars have been too eager to find Succoth as well.

There are additional problems about sites in the Sharon Plain which are supposed to be on the list. Numbers 38 and 39 in row 3 are identified as Shocoh and Beth Tappuah. The problem here is very simple - there is no known site in the Sharon Plain that in ancient days had the name "Beth Tappuah" or "Tappuah". This name should be located in a different region. Next, there is a mound that had the name "Shocoh" or "Socah". However, surface surveys indicate that the site probably was not occupied when Shosheng was in the area (Miller, 2000). In other words, the Shocoh on the list must be found elsewhere. There are two places where we find both Socah and Tappuah: in the Judean foothills (Joshua 15: 34-5) next to the route probably used by Shosheng, and in the southern foothill region or south of Hebron (Joshua 15: 48, 53). In Josh. 15: 53, the name is "Beth-Tappuah" just as it is in Shosheng's list. While it is possible Shosheng went up into the southern Judean hill, I believe the more reasonable location for these two names is in the Judean foothill region.

In row one, three names are not identified: they are either damaged (#11, #12) or unknown (#13 Rubuti).

It is clear some names in row 2 are safely identified in the Jezreel valley: #14 Taanach, #15 Shunem, #16 Beth-Shean, #17 Rehov. After those names. The route favoured by scholars begins to unravel. The next group of identified names in row 2 are the following: #22 Mahanaim, #23 Gibeon, #24 Beth-Horon, #25 kdtm, and, #26 Aijalon. #20 is badly damaged. The other three numbers are not safely identified in my opinion: #18 hprl, #19 drmm, and #21 swdv[...]. It seems that these four names (#18-#21) should be connected to either the Jezreel valley names or the names located in the Beth-Horon/Aijalon region. Of course, a third locality is an option as they have not been identified properly.

In row 3, most of the names have not been identified properly. The first name, #27 mkdy, has been identified by most scholars as "Megiddo". I identified it possibly as "Makkedah". It seemed to me that it seemed so distant from the Jezreel names and so close to the Beth-Horon/Aijalon group that Makkadeh was a better option. Also, as Ussishkin (1990) pointed out, it seems Megiddo was not destroyed by Shosheng. Instead, he or the city set up a stele to commemorate the event. It seems more likely that Megiddo was an ally and should not be on the list just as the Philistine cities are not on the list possibly because they too were allies. Of course, I could be wrong but then why is the famed city of Megiddo not at the beginning of the list?

Row 3 ends with the names #38 Socoh and #39 Beth-Tappuah. Because of this bracketing of names, row three is often seen as a list of names along the international road in the Megiddo-Sharon Plain region. However, as I pointed out, Socoh and Beth-Tappuah cannot be located in the Sharon Plain region. The more reasonable suggestion is the northern Shephelah where we do find the two names as neighbours. Another possibility may be the southern Judah Highlands.

Once Sokoh and Beth-Tappuah are removed from the Sharon Plain, then it may be possible to identify the other names in the list using other locations.

Row 4 is very badly damaged.

Row 5 begins with #53 Penuel, #54 hdst or "New Town", #55 *p-nds-k* which has been translated as "One of Succoth", #56 Adam, and, #57 d[?]rm. Numbers 58 to 64 are partially damaged and may not be safely identified. Clearly, number 53, Penuel, cannot be located in the Trans-Jordan and may be located in the Judean foothills. Number 55 should not be identified as "Succoth" in any way. Number 54, "New Town" has been identified as "Qodesh" (Mazar, 1957: 60) and "Kadesh" (Aharoni, 1979: 325) but it is unlikely that we should look for these names in the Trans-Jordan. I suggested "Hadashah" (Joshua 15:37) located near Lachish (15:39). Scholars translate number 57 as "Zemaraim", a mountain north of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 13:4) or a place near Bethel (Joshua 18: 22), but this seems out of place on the list. It should be near the name Gibeon (#23 row 2). Also, the second sign is missing and scholars insist on adding the letter "m" to the name.

Clearly there are not as many areas in the list as Finkelstein suggested. There are no names in the Trans-Jordan. Two names that are associated with the Sharon Plain are located elsewhere. However, the other names in that row may be located in the Sharon Plain but, at this point, such identification is very tenuous. They may be names north of Megiddo somewhere (see: Ahlstrom, 1993) but again that would be speculation. What we have are names that seem to exist along the Judean Shephelah and the Jezreel valley. No other names have been "safely identified".

REHOBOAM'S 5TH YEAR

The fifth year of Rehoboam has played a major part in the Shishak/Shosheng story (1 Kings 14:25 and 2 Chronicles 12: 1-12). In certain ways, this date has both helped some scholars to determine the dates of the reign of Shesheng and the time he came to Asia, but, also, to constrain the the chronological opportunities. Many Egyptologists (Kitchen, 2009: 167: Krauss, 2006: 411; Manning, 2006:350-1; Jansen-Winkeln, 2006:264) continues to use Rehoboam's 5th year, said to be about 726-725 BCE, as a chronological marker. A major problem for him and some Biblical scholars has been the efforts of Edwin Thiele (1983) to construct an historically sound chronology using the material in the book of Kings. Others have added their efforts as well. Most scholars believe the 5th year was between 917 and 926 BCE. However, these dates use the chronological information damaged by redactors - particularly, the Jehu rebellion story added by the DtrHistorian. The redaction forces at least 153 regnal years (Jehoash 40, Amaziah 29, Azariah 52, Jotham 16 and Ahaz 16 years) into only 118 years (840 to 722 BCE). If we try to remove the texts added by the redactors and repair the damage to the original chronological structure, then it is more likely that the 5th year was closer to 937 BCE (5th year as king over the United Monarchy, Clancy, forthcoming - if I don't die first!). We may see this calculation in Ezekiel 4:4-7 where Ezekiel was told to lie on his side 390 days for the sins of Israel and then 40 days for the sins of Judah (390 – 40 = 350, and 586 BCE plus 350 = 936). This would be the date the two kingdoms separated and Rehoboam began his 17 years as king of Judah alone.

However, the 5th year may have been chosen by someone who had the work of Manetho or the epitome before him. Despite the fact that the Biblical story had no historical substance, there is no reason to assume that the reference to the 5th year had no basis in fact. It is quite likely that this date was chosen deliberately and was based on some representation of the list of pharaohs. There were numerous demotic stories, Herodotus mentions him, Diodorus (Historical Library 1:94. 3-4) mentions him, and so on, so a late scribe easily may learn about his foray into Asia. All that he would have to do was discover when he ruled Egypt. If we count up all the regnal years for Manetho (Waddell, 1964: Africanus version) starting in 664 BCE (including Necho I, Nekauba, and Stephinates), then Shosheng had 21 years between 937 and 916 BCE. (Note that Taharkah would be pharaoh in 701 BCE - 2 Kings 19:9; Isaiah 37:9. Also, Bocchoris at Sais would reign from 732 to 726 BCE – a better option for Pharaoh "So", 2 Kings 17:4). Syncellus, or someone before him (quite possibly Africanus himself), seems to have counted up all the regnal years as one line - in other words, the dynasties would not overlap. There is a note (possibly by a later Christian writer - Jansen-Winkeln, 2006: 247) for Petubates of the 23rd dynasty that the first Olympics (776 BCE) were celebrated in his reign. However, this can be done only if we count up all the regnal years from the Persian invasion by Cambyses. In the epitome, Necho II's regnal term probably suffered a scribal error and is given only 6 years instead of a probable 16 years. Once that error occurred, then Petubates had his regnal term in 811 to 771 BCE and the Olympics occurred in his reign. As it stands today, Pedubastet I probably ruled between 835/824 to 810/799 BCE, and Pedubastet II had a 6–10-year reign somewhere in 743-731 BCE. So, in reality, neither one would be a pharaoh for the first Olympics in 776 BCE.

May I point out that if we make a few small corrections to the chronology of Manetho, we reach 937 BCE for the first year of Shosheng: 16 years instead of 6 years for Necho II, and, 28 years instead of 18 for Taharga. The total would be 664 BCE plus 22 years for Necho I, 6 for Nekauba, 8 years for Stephinates, add 40 years for the 25th dynasty, 6 for Bocchoris, 89 years for Dynasty II and 116 years for Dynasty 22 = 937 BCE for the first year of Shosheng. This date matches the date I suggest was the original date for the 5th year of Rehoboam. This may be a coincidence but it may suggest someone was using the epitome as a source and who did not realize that the dynasties overlapped. However, if the original book of Kings was written first, then the Jewish editor of the epitome may have adjusted Manetho to be more in line with the Jewish text. In either case, it may have been believed that the first thing Shosheng should do is deal with God's plan for Judah and Israel. We have the same basic idea for Cyrus - it was God's plan so the first thing Cyrus did was end the exile and help start rebuilding the temple.

The problem with the date is that it probably was chosen for ideological reasons and not historical ones. For example, David finally rules all of Israel in his third year after the death of Saul's son, Ishbaal. 40 years later, Solomon begins to build the temple in his 4th year. Another 40 years and Shishak turns up in Rehoboam's 5th year to take away all the temple goods and treasures. It seems clear we have an ideological construction and not one based on history.

Any number of scholars insist that Shoshenq was involved with Jerusalem. Andre Lemaire (2009) suggests Jerusalem is not found on the list because of its "fragmentary character" (pp.173-4) and argues the MT text of 1 Kgs. 14: 25-6 should be read that Shoshenq entered and looted the city. Nadav Na'aman (1999: 5-6) claimed a heavy tribute was paid and the source

of the information must have been some text, perhaps a chronicle, before him. He adds "This is clear evidence that writing had reached the court of Jerusalem in the late-tenth century". There is no doubt that Jerusalem is not on the list as it is and probably was not on the list when it was collected originally. You would expect to find the name of Jerusalem mentioned in one of three places: had it been the centre of an important geo-political entity, it should be at or near the beginning of the list as it would be on any list for Thutmose III: the other option would be to see it on row 2 where we find the names of Gibeon, etc. Even if we accept the name Zemaraim in row five, we may see a place for Jerusalem there as well. However, the name Jerusalem is not found in any of these places so, despite the damage, I believe it is unlikely that Shosheng bothered with Jerusalem so it would not be the centre of an important geo-political entity. The absence of Jerusalem on the list may suggest the site was unoccupied at the time aside from temporary occupants of various sorts.

As far as dating archaeological stratum is concerned, Shoshenq, at the present moment, is useless. The time span that the theories about Shosheng allow are far too great to date any archaeological evidence. In addition, the list of localities does not support any claims about a geo-political entity centred on Jerusalem. In addition, it does not support any claims that Jerusalem was occupied at the time. The traditional interpretation of the list of ringnames needs to be set aside and a new look and interpretation is needed, and not one based on or using the Biblical stories of David - Jeroboam. It seems to me that the best explanation is the one I originally promoted – a route along the Judean foothills and then to Megiddo and the southern Jezreel Valley, and then home. Simple!

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