CHAPTER FOUR

KUSH UNDER THE TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY
(C. 760-656 BC)

“(And from that time on) the southerners have been sailing northwards, the northerners southwards, to the place where His Majesty is, with every good thing of South-land and every kind of provision of North-land.”

1. THE SOURCES

1.1. Textual evidence

The names of Alara’s (see Ch. III.4.1) successor on the throne of the united kingdom of Kush, Kashta, and of Alara’s and Kashta’s descendants (cf. Appendix) Piye,2 Shabaqo, Shebitqo, Taharqo,3 and Tanwetamani are recorded in Ancient History as kings of Egypt and the c. one century of their reign in Egypt is referred to as the period of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.4 While the political and cultural history of Kush

1 DS of Tanwetamani, lines 41f. (c. 664 BC), FHN I No. 29, transl. R.H. Pierce.
3 In this book the writing of the names Shabaqo, Shebitku, and Taharqo (instead of the conventional Shabaka, Shebitku, Taharka/Taharqa) follows the theoretical reconstruction of the Kushite name forms, cf. Priese 1978.
4 The Dynasty may also be termed “Nubian”, “Ethiopian”, or “Kushite”. O’Connor 1983 184; Kitchen 1986 Table 4 counts to the Dynasty the rulers from Alara to Tanwetamani. The Dynasty includes according to the late 4th-early 3rd cent. BC Egyptian historian Manetho (Waddell [ed.] 1940) Sabaco (= Shabaqo), Sebichos (= Shebitqo), and T ara(k)os (= Taharqo). The absence of Kashta, Piye, and Tanwetamani from Manetho’s list may be explained with his limited access of a “local” king-list containing only the names of rulers officially acknowledged in the particular area of Egypt that provided his source material: see Leahy 1990 179f. This may also be the reason of why Manetho did not normally list contemporaneous kings of the TIP.—Priese 1970
between c. 760-665 BC\(^5\) can only be discussed within the context of an empire extending over Kush and large parts of Egypt, the history of the Egyptian half of this empire is a special topic of Egyptological research. Accordingly, in the following we shall discuss Kush under the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty on the basis of a possibly concise overview of the evidence, while we present no detailed list of the Egyptian documents of the period. As to these, necessary reference will be made to recent studies on TIP Egypt with detailed analyses of the textual evidence.\(^6\)

The corpus of textual evidence of Kushite political history in the period is composed of the royal inscriptions in Egyptian hieroglyphic listed in Table A in Ch. II.1.1.1 above. The 11 documents include, besides a small fragment of a stela erected by Kashta at Elephantine (Table A 2) and small fragments from monuments of Piye (Table A 4) and Taharqo (ibid. 11), the longest preserved royal inscription written in Egyptian hieroglyphs (Great Triumpal Stela, Table A 5) consisting of a narrative of Piye’s Egyptian campaign and presenting a detailed record of the political geography of Egypt around 727 BC and longer documents of Taharqo and Tanwetamani (ibid. 6-10, 12) as well. While the early reign of Piye is documented by a stela fragment from Gebel Barkal (Table A 3), the reigns of Shabaqo and Shebitqo are not documented by inscriptions from Nubia. Royal building activity in Shabaqo’s reign is referred to on an inscribed column from Temple B at Kawa.\(^7\)

Kashta’s regnal dates are not known and his hypothetical regnal years were suggested on the basis of the well-known fact that he was Piye’s father and direct predecessor.\(^8\) Piye’s third,\(^9\) fourth,\(^10\) twenty-

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18ff. suggests that Manetho’s “Ammeris the Nubian”, the first king of his Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, is identical with Kashta (Kitchen 1986 146: Kushite vassal ruler of Sais under Shabaqo). As Twenty-Fifth Dynasty Zeiss 1955 lists the kings from Shabaqo through Tanwetamani and similar short lists omitting Kashta, or Kashta and Piye follow from the view that these kings were no actual rulers of Egypt.

\(^5\) I.e., the period of the reigns from Kashta through Tanwetamani in Kush. The beginning of Kashta’s authority in Upper Egypt is not precisely datable. Psamitik I, the first ruler of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, ascended to the throne in 664 BC, but Tanwetamani’s (by then nominal) reign in Upper Egypt ended only in 656 BC (cf. Ch. IV.2.5). The date of the end of his reign in Kush is unknown.


\(^7\) Macadam 1955 46, fig. 14, Pl. XLII/d; PM VII 184 (1).

\(^8\) Cf. the circumstantial evidence of the Nitocris Adoption Stela (Caminos 1964); and see the titulary of Peksater, dau. Kashta, w. Piye, Dunham–Macadam 1949 145 No. 54. For Piye’s sister-wives see LD V 7/c (Abar, m. Taharqo); Wenig 1990 338 (Peksater); Leclant–Yoyotte 1952 35 note 5 (Khefisa); Dunham–Macadam 1949 145