

= Osorkon IV =

Usermaatre Osorkon IV was an ancient Egyptian pharaoh during the late Third Intermediate Period . Traditionally considered the very last king of the 22nd Dynasty , he was de facto little more than ruler in Tanis and Bubastis , in Lower Egypt . He is generally ? though not universally ? identified with the King Shilkanni mentioned by Assyrian sources , and with the biblical So , King of Egypt from the Books of Kings .

Osorkon ruled during one of the most chaotic and politically fragmented periods of ancient Egypt , in which the Nile Delta was dotted with small Libyan kingdoms and principalities and Meshwesh dominions ; as the last heir of the Tanite rulers , he inherited the easternmost parts of these kingdoms , the most involved in all the political and military upheavals that soon would afflict the Near East . During his reign , he had to face the power , and ultimately submit himself ? to the Kushite King Piye during Piye 's conquest of Egypt . Osorkon IV also had to deal with the threatening Neo @-@ Assyrian Empire outside his eastern borders .

= = Reign = =

= = = Early years = = =

Osorkon IV ascended to the throne of Tanis in c . 730 BC , at the end of the long reign of his predecessor Shoshenq V of the 22nd Dynasty , who was possibly also his father . However , this somewhat traditional collocation was first challenged in 1970 by Karl @-@ Heinz Priese who preferred to place Osorkon IV in a lower ? Egyptian branch of the 23rd Dynasty , right after the reign of the shadowy pharaoh Pedubast II ; this placement found the support of a certain number of scholars . Osorkon 's mother , named on a electrum aegis of Sekhmet now in the Louvre , was Tadibast III . Osorkon IV 's realm was restricted only to the district of Tanis ( R? @-@ nfr ) and the territory of Bubastis , both in the eastern Nile Delta . His neighbors were Libyan princes and Meshwesh chiefs who ruled their small realms outside of his authority .

Around 729 / 28 BC , soon after his accession , Osorkon IV faced the crusade led by the Kushite pharaoh Piye of the Nubian 25th Dynasty . Along with other rulers of Lower and Middle Egypt ? mainly Nimlot of Hermopolis , Iuput II of Leontopolis and Peftjauawybast of Herakleopolis ? Osorkon IV joined the coalition led by the Chief of the West Tefnakht in order to oppose the Nubian . However , Piye 's advance was unstoppable and the opposing rulers surrendered one after another : Osorkon IV found it wise to reach the Temple of Ra at Heliopolis and pay homage to his new overlord Piye personally ? an action which was soon imitated by the other rulers . As reported on his Victory Stela , Piye accepted their submission , but Osorkon and most of the rulers were not allowed to enter the royal enclosure because they were not circumcised and had eaten fish , both abominations in the eyes of the Nubian . Nevertheless , Osorkon IV and the others were allowed to keep their former domains and authority .

= = = The Assyrian threat = = =

In 726 / 25 BC Hoshea , the last King of Israel , rebelled against the Assyrian King Shalmaneser V who demanded an annual tribute , and sought the support of So , King of Egypt ( 2 Kings 17 : 4 ) who , as already mentioned , was most likely Osorkon IV ( see below ) . For reasons which remained unknown ? possibly in order to remain neutral towards the powerful Neo @-@ Assyrian Empire , or simply because he didn 't have enough power or resources ? King So didn 't help Hoshea , who was subsequently defeated and deposed by Shalmaneser V. The Kingdom of Israel ceased to exist , and many Israelites were brought to Assyria as exiles .

In 720 BC , a revolt occurred in Palestine against the new Assyrian King Sargon II , led by King Hanno ( also Hanun and Hanuna ) of Gaza who sought the help of " Pir?u of Musri " , a term most probably meaning " Pharaoh of Egypt " and referring to Osorkon IV . Assyrian sources claim that this

time the Egyptian king did send a turtanu ( an army ? commander ) called Re?e or Re?u ( his Egyptian name was Raia , though in the past it was read Sib?e ) as well as troops in order to support his neighboring ally . However , the coalition was defeated in battle at Raphia . Re?e fled back to Egypt , Raphia and Gaza were looted and Hanno was burnt alive by the Assyrians . A different opinion came from Israeli scholar Dan 'el Kahn who proposed an earlier datation for the accession of Piye 's successor Shabaka : in his point of view , Shabaka was already ruling over the whole of Egypt before 720 BC , and Re?e was in fact a Nubian turtanu serving him rather than an Egyptian one serving Osorkon IV .

In 716 BC , Sargon II almost reached Egypt 's boundaries . Feeling directly threatened this time , Osorkon IV ( here called Shilkanni by Assyrian sources , see below ) was carefully diplomatic : he personally met the Assyrian king at the " Brook of Egypt " ( most likely el @-@ Arish ) and tributed him with a present which Sargon personally described as " twelve large horses of Egypt without equals in Assyria " . The Assyrian king appreciated his gifts and did not take action against Osorkon IV .

= = = End = = =

Shortly after , Osorkon IV and his dynasty vanished into obscurity . His death should have occurred between 715 and 713 BC , after 16 / 18 years of reign , as he was apparently gone when King Iamani of Ashdod sought refuge from Sargon II in Egypt around 712 BC or possibly later , only to be caught by a pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty who returned him to the Assyrians in chains . Kahn believed that this pharaoh was Shabaka , who might have previously deposed Osorkon IV , " guilty " for being too philo @-@ Assyrian . A few decades later a man called Gemenefkhonsbak , possibly a descendant of the now @-@ defunct dynasty , claimed for himself the pharaonic royal titles and ruled in Tanis as its prince .

= = Identification with Shilkanni and So = =

It is believed that Shilkanni is a rendering of ( U ) shilkan , which in turn is derived from ( O ) sorkon ? hence Osorkon IV ? as first proposed by William F. Albright in 1956 . This identification is accepted by several scholars while others remain uncertain or even skeptical . Shilkanni is reported by Assyrians as " King of Musri " : this location , once believed to be a country in northern Arabia by the orientalist Hans Alexander Winckler , is certainly to be identified with Egypt instead . In the same way , the " Pir 'u of Musri " to whom Hanno of Gaza asked for help in 720 BC could only have been Osorkon IV . The identity of the biblical King So is somewhat less definite . Generally , an abbreviation of ( O ) so ( rkon ) is again considered the most likely by several scholars , but the concurrent hypothesis which equates So with the city of Sais , hence with King Tefnakht , is supported by a certain number of scholars .

= = Attestations = =

Osorkon IV is attested by Assyrian documents ( as Shilkanni and other epithets ) and probably also by the Books of Kings ( as King So ) , while Manetho 's epitomes seem to have ignored him . He is undoubtedly attested by the well @-@ known Victory Stela of Piye on which he is depicted while prostrating in front of the owner of the stela along with other submitted rulers . Another finding almost certainly referring to him is the aforementioned aegis of Sekhmet , found at Bubastis and mentioning a King Osorkon son of queen Tadibast who ? as the name does not coincide with those of any of the other Osorkon kings ' mothers ? can only be Osorkon IV 's mother .

= = = About the throne name = = =

Osorkon 's throne name was thought to be Aakheperre Setepenamun from a few monuments naming a namesake pharaoh Osorkon , such as a faience seal and a relief ? block , both in the

Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden , but this attribution was questioned by Frederic Payraudeau in 2000 . According to him , these findings could rather be assigned to an earlier Aakheperre Osorkon ? i.e. , the distant predecessor Osorkon the Elder of the 21st Dynasty ? thus implying that Osorkon IV 's real throne name was unknown . Furthermore , in 2010 / 11 a French expedition discovered in the Temple of Mut at Tanis two blocks bearing a relief of a King Usermaa ( t ) re Osorkonu , depicted in a quite archaizing style , which at first were attributed to Osorkon III . In 2014 , on the basis of the style of both the relief and the royal name , Aidan Dodson rejected the identification of this king with both the already @-@ known kings Usermaatre Osorkon ( Osorkon II and III ) and stated that he was rather Osorkon IV with his true throne name . A long @-@ known , archaizing " glassy faience " statuette fragment from Memphis now exhibited at the Petrie Museum ( UC13128 ) which is inscribed for one King Usermaatre , had been tentatively attributed to several pharaohs from Piye to Rudamun of the Theban 23rd Dynasty and even to Amyrtaios of the 28th Dynasty , but may in fact represent Osorkon IV .