









Kamose
flourished 16th century BC

last king of the 17th dynasty (c. 1630–1540 BC) of Egypt, who opened hostilities with the Hyksos, the west Semitic invaders who had seized part of Egypt in the 17th century BC. Following the death of his father, Seqenenre, Kamose became ruler of the southernmost third of Egypt. In his third year the Hyksos-Egyptian border lay at Cusae, near modern Asyūṭ, in Middle Egypt, while a separate kingdom held Nubia south of the First Nile Cataract.

Although his kingdom had peaceful relations with the Hyksos, Kamose, dissatisfied with ruling only part of Egypt, decided on a war of liberation. With a fleet and desert tribal troops from Nubia, he made a surprise attack against the Hyksos' southernmost stronghold. Continuing his northward march, Kamose showed no mercy to Egyptians who had made accommodations with the enemy. He also claimed that his fleet captured Hyksos ships laden with weapons and that he sailed past the Hyksos capital itself, in the eastern Nile River delta, where he taunted and insulted the enemy king. About 100 miles (160 km) downstream from Cusae, he captured a Hyksos messenger en route to Cush (in the modern Sudan) who was carrying a missive urging the Kushite prince to attack Egypt from the rear. Completely undaunted, Kamose sent a detachment to seize the important Baḥrīyah Oasis and so thwarted his foes. As the campaign season ended, he returned jubilantly to Thebes, defeating rebels who had risen behind him.

Kamose's name appears in Nubia, at the Second Nile Cataract, beside that of his brother, Ahmose, who succeeded him. It is therefore possible that Kamose penetrated into Kushite territory. Little else is known about Kamose's reign. Most scholars agree that he did not rule for more than five years.

Kamose

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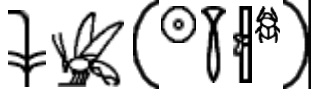

Kamose was the last king of the Theban Seventeenth Dynasty. He was a relative of Sekenenra Tao II and the uncle of Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty. His reign fell at the very end of the Second Intermediate Period. While it is uncertain when Kamose died, recent archaeological discoveries place his death around 1549 BC after a reign lasting about 5 years, rather than 3 years, as is traditionally assumed.^[2] His reign is important for the decisive military initiatives he took against the Hyksos, who had come to rule much of Ancient Egypt.^[3]

Over the years, the previous independent native princes in Thebes appear to have reached a practical *modus vivendi* with the later Hyksos rulers, which included transit rights through Hyksos-controlled Middle and Lower Egypt and pasturage rights in the fertile Delta. One text, *Carnarvon Tablet I*, found in Thebes, relates the misgivings of Kamose's council of advisors when the king proposed moving against the Hyksos, whom he claimed were a humiliating stain upon the holy fabric of Egypt. Kamose notes his dissatisfaction with the current situation when he comments: "I should like to know what serves this strength of mine, when a chieftain in Avaris, and another in Cush, and I sit united with an Asiatic and a Nubian, each in possession of his slice of Egypt, and I cannot pass by him as far as Memphis."^[4] His councillors, however, clearly did not wish to risk disturbing the status quo:

"Then spoke the grandees of his council, "See all are loyal as far as Cusae. We are tranquil in our part of Egypt. Elephantine [at the First Cataract] is strong, and the middle part (of the land) is with us as far as Cusae. Men till for us the finest of their lands. Our cattle pasture in the Papyrus marshes. Corn is sent for our swine. Our cattle are not taken away...He holds the land of the Asiatics; we hold Egypt..."^[5]

There is no evidence to support Pierre Montet's assertion that Kamose's move against the Hyksos was sponsored by the priesthood of Amun as an attack against the Seth-worshippers in the North (i.e., a religious motive for the war of liberation). The *Carnarvon Tablet* does state that Kamose went north to attack the Hyksos by the command of Amun, but this is simple hyperbole common to virtually all royal inscriptions of Egyptian history, and should not be understood as the specific command from this god. Kamose states his reasons for an attack on the Hyksos was nationalistic pride: in this same text he complains that he is hemmed in at Thebes between the Hyksos in the north and the Nubians of Kush in the south, each holding "his slice of Egypt, dividing up the land with me...My wish is to save Egypt and to smite the Asiatics!"

So it was that in his Third year, Kamose embarked on his military campaign against the Hyksos by sailing north from Thebes at the head of his army. He surprised and overran the southernmost Hyksos garrison at Nefrusy, just north of Cusae, and proceeded to march his army as far north as the Cynopolite nome which belonged to the Hyksos kingdom of Avaris, rather than the city of Avaris itself according to Egyptologist Kim Ryholt's latest scholarly research.^[6] The nome of Cynopolis included part of the Faiyum region of Middle Egypt and the important city of Sako. As Kamose states in his Year 3 stela: *I sent forth a strong troop which was in advance to lay waste Bahariya Oasis while I was in Sako to prevent any enemy from being behind me.*^[7]

Preceded by: Tao II the Brave	Pharaoh of Egypt <i>17th Dynasty</i>	Succeeded by: Ahmose I
Kamose		
Reign	1554 BC to 1549 BC	
Praenomen		
	Wadjkheperre ^[1]	
Nomen		
	Kamose ^[1]	
Horus name	Khahernesetef ^[1]	
Nebty name	Wehemmenu ^[1]	
Golden Horus	Sehertawy ^[1]	
Father	Tao II Seqenenre	
Mother	Ahhotep I	
Died	1549 BC	

A stela discovered at Thebes continues the account of the war from where the *Carnarvon Tablet* ends. His followers captured a courier bearing a message from the Hyksos king Aa-woser-ra Apopi at Avaris to his ally the ruler of Kush, requesting the latter's urgent support against Kamose. Kamose promptly ordered a detachment of his troops to occupy and destroy the Bahariya Oasis in the Western Desert, which controlled the north-south desert route. Kamose, called "the Strong" in this text, ordered this event to protect his rearguard. Kamose then sailed back up the Nile to Thebes for a joyous victory celebration after his military success against the Hyksos in pushing the boundaries of his kingdom northward from Cusae past Hermopolis through to Sako which now formed the new frontier between 17th Dynasty Thebes and the 15th Dynasty Hyksos state.^[8] Ryholt notes that Kamose never claims, in his second stela to attack anything *in Avaris* itself, only "anything belonging to Avaris (*nkt hwt-w'rt*, direct genitive) ie: the spoil [of war] which his army has carried off" as lines 7-8 and 15 of his stela--the only references to Avaris here--demonstrate:

Line 7-8: **"I placed the brave guard-flotilla to patrol as far as the desert-edge with the remainder (of the fleet) behind it, as if a kite were preying upon the territory of Avaris."**

Line 15: **"I have not overlooked anything belonging to Avaris, because it (the area which Kamose was plundering) is empty."**^[9]

The Second Stela of Kamose is well known for recounting that a messenger of Apophis was captured with a letter from Apophis while travelling through the western desert roads to Nubia. The final evidence that this king's military activities affected only the Cynopolite nome and not the city of Avaris itself is the fact that when Kamose returned the letter to Apophis, he dispatched it to Atfih which is many hundreds of miles south of Avaris. Furthermore, Kamose stresses that his objective here was for the Hyksos messenger to inform Apophis of the Theban king's victories **"in the area of Cynopolis which used to be in his possession"**.^[10] This information confirms that Kamose was still in this nome and never near Avaris itself.

Reign Length

His Year 3 is the only attested date for Kamose and was once thought to mark the length of his reign. However, it now appears certain that Kamose reigned for one or two more years beyond this date because he initiated a second campaign against the Nubians. That Kamose had started a first campaign against the Kushites is affirmed by the contents of Apophis' letter which Kamose's men had captured. Apophis' plea for aid from the Nubian king to counter Kamose's attacks is recounted in Kamose's Year 3 Second stela:

Do you see what Egypt has done to me? The ruler who is in it, Kamose-the-Brave, given life, is attacking me on my soil **although I have not attacked him in the manner of all he has done against you**. He is choosing these two lands to bring affliction upon them, my land and yours, and he has ravaged them."^[11]

Two separate rock-inscriptions found at Arminna and Toshka deep in Nubia give the prenomen and nomen of Kamose and Ahmose side by side and were inscribed at the same time—likely by the same draughtsman—according to epigraphic data.^[12] Ryholt observes that in both inscriptions "the names of Ahmose follow directly below those of Kamose and each king is given the epithet *di'nh* which was normally used only of ruling kings. This indicates that both Kamose and Ahmose were ruling when the inscription were cut and consequently that they were coregents."^[13] Since Kamose's name was recorded first, he would have been the senior coregent. However, no mention or reference to Ahmose as king appears in Kamose's Year 3 stela which indirectly records Kamose's first campaign against the Nubians; this can only mean that Kamose appointed the young Ahmose as his junior coregent sometime after his third year prior to launching a second military campaign against the Nubians.^[14] The target of Kamose's second Nubian campaign may have been the fortress at Buhen which the Nubians had recaptured from Kamose's forces since a stela bearing his cartouche was deliberately erased and there is fire damage in the fort itself.^[15]

Redford notes that Kamose's burial was very modest, in an ungilded coffin lacking even the royal uraeus. Ryholt estimates a reign of 5 years for Kamose in his 1997 book on the Second Intermediate Period and dates this king's time-line at 1554 BC to 1549 BC.^[16]

References

- [^] ^{*a b c d e*} Kamose (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/chronology/2interkings/kamose.html>) accessed October 6, 2006
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- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op.cit., p.273
- [^] Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 1961, reprint Oxford University Press, 1979, p.166
- [^] Gardiner, *Ibid.*, p.166
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op.cit., pp.172-175
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.173
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- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., pp.173-174
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.172
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.181
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.273
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.273
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.274
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., pp.181-182
- [^] Ryholt, Kim SB. op. cit., p.204

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Preceded by: Tao II the Brave	Pharaoh of Egypt <i>Seventeenth Dynasty</i>	Succeeded by: Ahmose I
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