

Obliterating Historical Complexity as Academic Practice: Historiographical Maps of 7th c. BCE Egypt

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Abstract This contribution focuses on the interdependence between map production and map usage including adaption and re-circulation, which can be witnessed by a historiographical approach to mapping. Case study are the maps displaying the history of 7th c. BCE Egypt, which date from the later 20th and early 21st c. AD. Key observation is the loss of specialised cartographic and even historiographical knowledge in the process of its dissemination. Though the case study presents a very specific example and, in addition, one that is based on a rather small corpus of sources, the author assumes that the detectable mechanisms are in operation on a much larger scale, though maybe less visible.

1 Introduction

Historiographical mapping is a rather recent phenomenon in the studies of the ancient Near East and Egypt: major projects did not come into being before the late 1960s. Within these, 7th c. BCE Egypt provides a very stimulating case study for discussing the dissemination of cartographic knowledge: Atlases, which aim at telling ancient history by a series of historiographical maps (in contrast to maps illustrating historical issues presented in text format) do exist, but not specifically for Egypt. Nevertheless, Egypt is included in several such historiographical atlases on the wider Eastern Mediterranean and Near East. All of them cover a large time span in addition to their (often very broad) geographical scope. Therefore, they are heavily dependent on close cooperation within a wide field of specialisations for the basic data as well as their display in thematic maps.

Regarding the visualisation of 7th c. BCE Egypt, all these works are characterised by a strong focus on political maps and a condensation of the first half of the 1st millennium BCE to very few maps. More specifically, they tend to visualise the perspective of the most powerful ruler in the area of academic specialisation,

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thereby obliterating not only the political diversity underlying the (claimed) official unity, but also the impact of the subsequent regional and cross-regional strategies on the social and material history. On an institutional level, this is paralleled by a marginalisation of the social and transcultural history of ancient Egypt and the Near East in the wider Eastern Mediterranean Area of Connectivity (see Wasmuth 2016: vi–ix).

On the basis of a dissection of the existing historiographical maps on 7th c. BCE Egypt and their reception, I will focus on the following questions: Why is it easier to detect the academic background of the cartographer than information on ancient historical complexity? Why is the widest reception achieved by the most oversimplifying maps? And how may historiographical mapping contribute to shifting the paradigm from obliterating historical complexity to opening up major research foci in a transdisciplinary environment?

1.1 Outline of the Historical Setting

The example of 7th c. BCE Egypt is exceptionally productive for a study of the dissemination of cartographic knowledge due to its historical events and their reconstruction within the current academic structure. While Egypt is widely associated with cultural stability and a strong regionally focused kingship, this was much more fluctuating in ancient reality. One of the periods, in which struggles for local, regional and cross-regional power become easily visible in the ancient records, is the later 8th and 7th c. BCE: In the 8th c., Egypt—the Nile delta and valley up to the 1st cataract near modern Assuan—is ruled by a number of rather local dynasties (22nd to 24th dynasties; see Moje 2014; Kitchen 2015/1986). This changes in the late 8th c., when Egypt becomes part of the political agenda of the Kushite kingdom with its roots in the Gebel Barkal region around the 4th Nile cataract. At least the southern Nile valley and temporarily even parts of the eastern delta are actually controlled by the Kushite kings, who are accepted as Egyptian pharaohs (of the 25th dynasty) between c. 740 and 656 (for an introduction to chronological issues regarding the 25th dynasty see Zibelius-Chen 2006; Gautschy 2015: especially 90). The other cross-regional power with expansion politics towards Egypt is the Assyrian empire with its centre in the northern Tigris region in the wider area around modern-day Mossul. Whether Assyria was actually aiming at including Egypt into their empire or to establish it as a buffer state between themselves and the Kushites, is open to discussion and needs some further cross-disciplinary research (for an introduction see Kahn 2006). In any case they strengthened the local kingdom of Sais in the western delta, whose kings were allies and became vassals under the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon (681–669) and Assurbanipal (669–c. 630), who led successful military campaigns into Egypt up to the Kushite-ruled centre of Thebes (671, 667, 664/663). This Assyrian interference results in the 670–650s in a major power shift in Egypt towards the Saitic dynasty, which will end up controlling all of Egypt with military forays into the remaining Kushite area of

power in the south and into the Levantine territories claimed by the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. Whether the Saitic king Psammetichus I, who had become an Assyrian vassal under Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal was at some time officially released from this vassaldom, cannot be ascertained: currently, no actual source stating the release or the upholding is known. Given his political actions, one has to assume that he actually ruled Egypt at least from 656, possibly even from 664/663, without Assyrian interference [see also Kahn 2006; Manley 1996: 121 (see Fig. 2b); Kessler and Schlaich 1991 (see Fig. 2a)].

1.2 *The Corpus of Sources*

The partial lack of preserved sources and the tendency of all cultural traditions involved to display history as successful events controlled by their kings with the help of their gods is occasionally vexing for the historian. However, it triggers an exceptionally powerful corpus of sources to study the academic minds responsible for the creation of historiographical maps of these times. Cartographic choices become more easily detectable, when history has obviously been a highly complex affair, but the available sources and the academic structure are deficient to reveal this complexity.

This I will illustrate by an examination of the available historiographical atlases, which focus on the history of Egypt or of a wider area including Egypt. The venture which aimed at the highest degree of complexity is (still) the Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO). In a large interdisciplinary project running from the early 1970s to the mid 1990s, both natural and cultural history were plotted for the area of connectivity contextualising the Levant and Mesopotamia. With its four maps featuring Egypt in the 7th c. BCE (B IV 1, 3, 8, 13; Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993; Zibelius and Haas 1981; Kessler and Schlaich 1991; Wittke et al. 1993), it provides the pivotal point for this contribution. The maps quite clearly represent four different perspectives, which can be shown to reflect the academic background of the authors.

The examination of this prominent case study will be embedded into an example (Guthe 1911) of earlier historiographical atlases, which are common in Bible Studies at least since the early twentieth century. The second major part of this contribution analyses to which extent and why the cartographic as well as some of its underlying historiographical knowledge displayed in the TAVO got lost in the later, more widely circulated atlases published between 1990 and 2016 (Roaf 1998/1990; Manley 1996; McEvedy 2002; Birken 2004; Haywood 2005; Wittke et al. 2007; Bryce and Birkett-Rees 2016).

2 Forerunners

While Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Egyptology discovered the potential of historiographical atlases only in the mid- to later 20th c., they have been used long before in Bible Studies for illustrating the historical events to be gleaned from the Old Testament. As Assyria and Egypt are prominent players in the cross-regional history of the times, featuring as enemies and as allies, Egypt tends to be included in maps visualising the history of the 7th c. BCE.

2.1 *Guthe Atlas*

A very revealing example for studying the background of cartographic choices is the so-called Guthe Atlas, the *Bibelatlas in 20 Haupt- und 26 Nebenkarten* by Guthe, which was first published in 1911. Characteristically, the underlying historical sources to be deduced from the cartographic display are the Old Testament and the Assyrian royal inscriptions: Accordingly, Egypt is visualised as absolutely ruled by the Assyrians and Babylonians in the 7th c. BCE (see Fig. 1a). Unsurprisingly, these sources do not provide information on the borders of the supposedly ruled territory: In fact, the actual extent of Assyrian control over Egypt was probably limited to some military campaigns against the Kushites reaching into southern Egypt (up to Thebes), and a certain amount of influence over the rulers of the principality of Sais in the western delta.

Apart from these cartographic characteristics, which reveal the academic background of the author, the Guthe Atlas shows a general feature of the contemporary *zeitgeist*. Though the western border of Egypt as part of the Assyrian Empire is left undefined, the southern border is given. In accordance with political maps of contemporary Africa, which are still reflected in various borderlines of modern states including Egypt, the borders were drawn with the ruler without reference to geophysical features or locally perceived boundaries. Quite obviously, this provided the input for drawing the southern border of 7th c. BCE Egypt: the straight line of contemporary Egypt was plotted through the southern-most border post traditionally associated with Egypt and featuring a garrison including a Jewish community, i.e. Elephantine.

3 The Complex Venture of the Tübinger Atlas der Vorderen Orients (TAVO)

As already indicated, historiographical mapping of the wider region, was only launched in the 1960s. The interdisciplinary research project *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft as

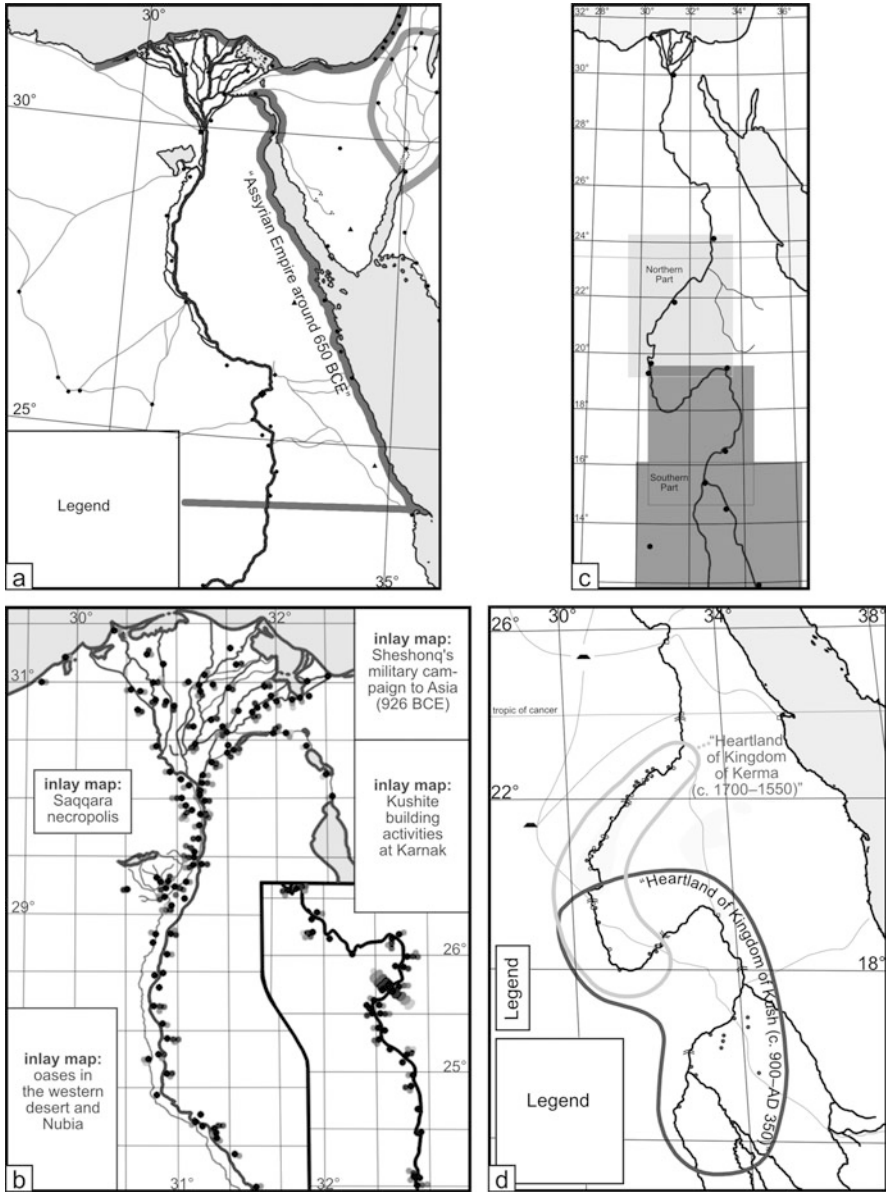


Fig. 1 The history of 1st millennium BCE Egypt respectively Nubia in a nutshell according to (a) Guthe 1911: 5 [8th–7th c. BCE], (b) Gamer-Wallert and Scheffer 1993 [1089–332 BCE], (c) Zibelius and Haas 1981 [c. 1st millennium BCE to c. 350 AD; location maps], (d) Haywood 2005: 67 [c. 1700 BCE to 350 AD] (schematized drawings by the author)

Sonderforschungsbereich 19 between 1975 and 1993; see <http://d-nb.info/gnd/2116341-8>, last accessed 14 Jan 2017) features both, a geographical and a historiographical section. In addition, it aimed at illustrating historical complexity by presenting various perspectives to be found in the ancient sources throughout the area.

Concerning 7th c. BCE Egypt four maps are to be discussed: B IV 1 ‘Ägypten in der Spätzeit (21. bis sogenannte 31. Dynastie)/*Egypt in the end of the epoch (21st to so-called 31st dynasty)*’ (Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993), B IV 3 ‘Nubien und Sudan. Von der 25. Dynastie bis in die Ptolemäisch-Römische Zeit/*Nubia and Sudan. From the 25th Dynasty to Ptolemaic Times*’ (northern and southern part on separate sheets; Zibelius and Haas 1981), B IV 8 ‘Östlicher Mittelmeerraum und Mesopotamien um 700 v. Chr./*Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia around 700 B.C.*’ (Wittke et al. 1993), and B IV 13 ‘Das Neuassyrische Reich der Sargoniden (720–612 v. Chr.) und das Neubabylonische Reich (612–539 v. Chr.)/*The Neoassyrian Empire (720–612 BC) and the Neobabylonian Empire (612–539 BC)*’ (Kessler and Schlaich 1991).

As can be shown, they provide so far the highest degree of historical complexity visualised in historiographical maps. Nevertheless, they reflect predominantly the (still prevalent) academic structure for studying the past of the area and period in question: Egyptology, Nubian Studies (with its strong Egyptological roots), Classics/Ancient History, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

3.1 TAVO B IV 1

TAVO B IV 1 (Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993; see Fig. 1b) presents a map, which is very characteristic for Egyptology, regarding cartographic as well as historiographical issues. Typically, the potential of historiographical mapping is reduced to topographical issues, based on very rough indications of geophysical features. Demographic, political, economic and administrative issues (to cite only some major possibilities) are not attempted to be displayed. This is enhanced by the still prevalent focus on sources dealt with in Egyptology, where archaeology is strongly reduced to epigraphics of the elite. The plotted sources supposedly representing all available archaeological data (‘Archäologisch nachweisbare Reste/Remains according to archaeological evidence’) are differentiated into seven categories indicated by different symbols (cited from Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993: legend): ‘royal palace, temporarily royal residence’, ‘fort-like construction, fortified city’, ‘sacral building activity’, ‘royal necropolis, remains of royal burial’, ‘private necropolis’, ‘animal cemetery’ and ‘stele’.

The legend features a quite diversified overview of the dynasties ruling parts of Egypt as kings/pharaohs. It clearly indicates the partial overlap of rule of the 22nd to 25th dynasties as well as of the end of the 25th and the beginning of the 26th dynasties by providing their dates of rulership and their power centres.

Unfortunately, a substantial part of this information is lost in the cartographic display, for which the information provided is reduced to four colour-coded time periods (dates in brackets taken from additional chronological overview): the local 21st to 24th dynasties (1089–715 BCE), the Kushite 25th dynasty (760–656 BCE), the local 26th and 28th to 30th dynasties [664–656 (this is a mistake: this is only the time of overlap with the 25th dynasty and potential direct influence by the Assyrians on the Saitic rulers; the 26th dynasty is in place until 525, when Cambyses conquers Egypt and integrates it into the Persian Empire); 404–343 BCE], and the Persian 27th and 31st dynasties, under which also the 7th c. evidence for Assyrian conquests are subsumed according to the more detailed chronological overview (671, 667–665, 525–404, 343–332 BCE).

Key issue is obviously a differentiation of perceived indigenous versus foreign rule, which obliterates the social and political complexity of the period depicted, which includes 7th c. Egypt. Similarly, the complexity of 8th c. delta and lower Nile valley politics could have been indicated—if wished for—by separating the contemporary dynasties in the cartographic display. Nevertheless, the map still provides the most complex cartographic visualisation of the available sources as well as indications in inlay maps on special issues, e.g. an outlook of the major sites of 8th and 7th c. Nubia.

3.2 TAVO B IV 3

For the 8th and 7th c. BCE, the TAVO maps B IV 1 (Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993; see Fig. 1b) and 3 (Zibelius and Haas 1981; equally focused upon topography; see Fig. 1c) have to be merged into one, as one prominent feature of the later 8th and earlier 7th c. BCE is the Kushite rule (and probable actual control) over the vast area between at least the 5th Nile cataract and the Mediterranean coast along the central and eastern delta. For this specific time period a differentiation into Egypt (north of the 1st Nile cataract; B IV 1) and Nubia/Sudan (south of the 1st Nile cataract; B IV 3) is therefore highly artificial and misleading, though adequate concerning the much longer time span visualized in both maps.

Nevertheless, the cartographic choice closely reflects academic practice, which is still prevalent in the cartographic display of the Kushite kingdom (see below). Characteristically, Kushite rule over the lower Nile area is not displayed as part of Kush (this could easily have been indicated by a small inlay map similar to the indication on the map of Egypt, see Fig. 1b). It also reflects that the subject area of Nubian Studies is largely defined by negation, i.e. what is not part of Egyptology. The two other principal roots, which can equally be gleaned from the set-up of the legend, are the rescue excavations in the wake of damming the Nile, most prominently due to the Assuan High Dam, and the study of the Meroitic language.

In contrast to the epigraphic focus of B IV 1 reflecting the Egyptological perspective, B IV 3 (Zibelius and Haas 1981: legend) categorises the archaeological sources more generally: into ‘settlement’, ‘fort/fortified settlement’, ‘sanctuary’,

(unspecified) ‘building’, ‘single tomb/cemetery’ and ‘important single find(s)’. The archaeological focus is also present in the colour-coded categories, which are not defined as periodisation, but as ‘Kulturkreise/Classification (cultural stage)’. The earlier phase is called ‘Napatan’ indicating its centre around Napata at the Gebel Barkal in the 4th Nile cataract region. This category includes the Kushite kingdom, whose kings rule over (parts of) Egypt as Egyptian pharaohs of the 25th dynasty (c. 740–656 BCE). The sources grouped into this category may date to any time between c. 1000 and 300 BCE. The second category marked by colour-coding is ‘Meroitic’ indicating the new centre at Meroe north of the 6th Nile cataract and the emergence of the Meroitic script. The kingdom of Meroe is dated roughly between 400 BCE and 350 AD. The last category is ‘Ptolemaic-Roman’, which indicates the contemporary Mediterranean-influenced finds.

The origin in Meroitic language studies is presented in the additional section of ‘*Philologischer Beleg/Epigraphical record*’, which categorises place names according to their degree of certainty and whether they are known from sources in Egyptian or in Meroitic.

As in the case of B IV 1, B IV 3 still provides the most comprehensive plotting of known sources (though newer excavation results are to be added by now). Nevertheless, for a study of the political and social history of the 7th c. BCE, it is primarily an indicator of potential source locations—as any solely topographical map with a large chronological frame, which is grouped into only a few sections. As indicated by the contemporary categories of Meroitic and Ptolemaic-Roman finds, an attempt at visualising historical complexity is possible, if wished for.

3.3 TAVO B IV 8

While B IV 1 and 3 concentrate on topographical issues, though with different focus as the legends illustrate, B IV 8 and B IV 13 add a thematic layer of political history to their maps. Concerning political history, the map including the highest degree of complexity of actual rule and local power is B IV 8 (Wittke et al. 1993; see Fig. 2c). Though hardly visible when looking at the map sheet as a whole, three different areas of control are indicated by slight hatching: according to the authors, in 700 BCE the Nile delta is divided into the principality of Sais in the far west (mainly west of the still existing Bolbitine/Saitic/Rosette branch), the smaller principalities of Mendes, Sebennytyos and Bousiris along the (still existing) Bucolic/Phatnitic/Damiette branch, and (partially interrupted by those smaller principalities) the major part of the delta east of the Bolbitine branch, which is under Kushite control.

Despite this (in the printed map nearly invisible, but nevertheless) indicated degree of local political complexity, the map is clearly created from a Classics perspective. The Eastern Mediterranean is defined rather widely in order to include the whole of the Black Sea region with its exceedingly close contacts with the Aegean. On the other hand, Egypt is reduced to the Nile delta. According to this

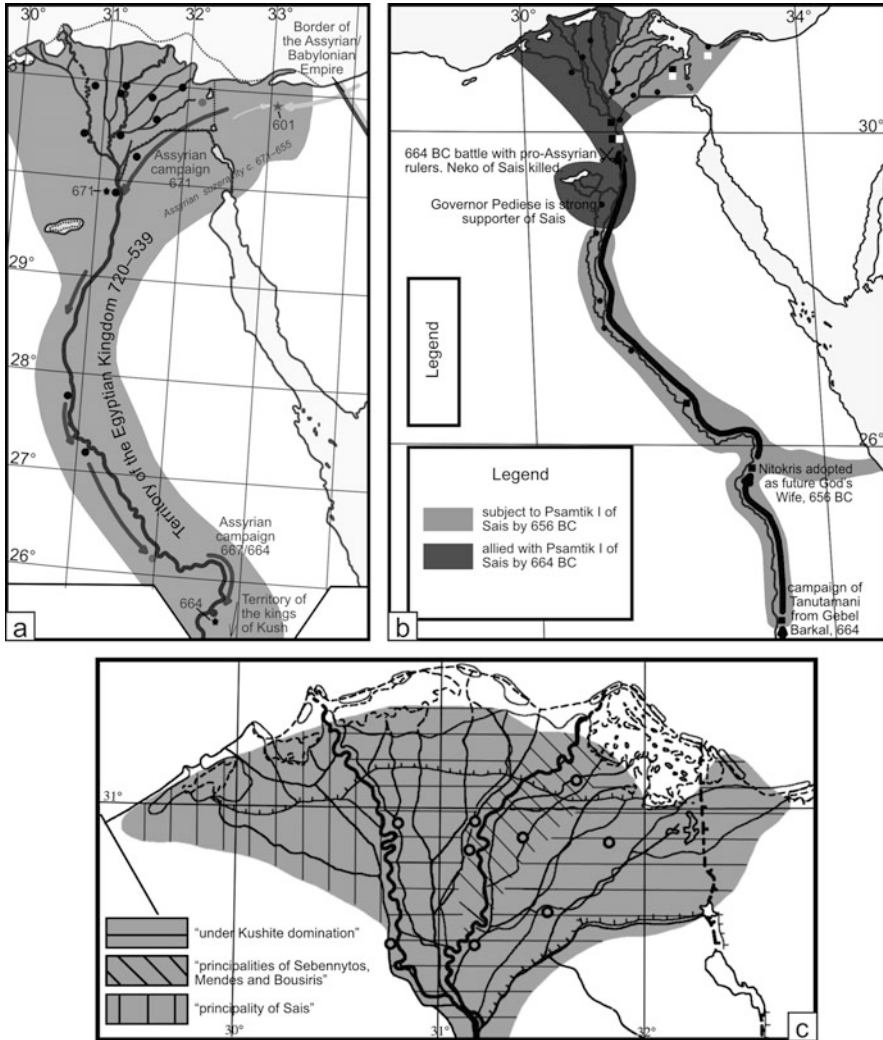


Fig. 2 7th c. Egypt in a nutshell, display of (partial) Egyptian rule according to (a) Kessler and Schlaich 1991, (b) Manley 1996: 121, (c) Wittke et al. 1993 (schematized drawings by the author)

cartographic visualisation, Egypt is rather obviously perceived as the area of Greek settlers in the delta region.

3.4 TAVO B IV 13

The fourth map in the TAVO providing information on 7th c. Egypt is B IV 13 (Kessler and Schlaich 1991; see Fig. 2a). In many respects, it is a very typical

Ancient Near Eastern Studies presentation of history. The focus is on royal epigraphics and on Assyrian and Babylonian ancient historiography. Also characteristically, Kushite rule over Egypt is negated in the cartographic display. It is not depicted at all and by textual means even relegated to somewhere far south of Thebes.

However, in contrast to the later Ancient Near Eastern Studies creations of historiographical maps to be discussed below, the paradigm of presenting history as indicated (or wished for) in the Assyrian royal inscriptions is countered in the display of 7th c. Egypt. Though no local political complexity is indicated, Egypt is also not depicted as actually controlled by the Assyrian kings, but as invaded. The information of Assyrian rule between 671 and 655 BCE is added only in small print and in a phrasing that may imply actual or only nominal control: ‘Assyrische Oberhoheit ca. 671–655’.

Conclusions

To sum up: though the TAVO obviously presents a complex venture of high potential, it markedly reflects the academic structure of Ancient Studies. It is actually easier to extract information on the academic background of the cartographer(s) than on the historical complexity of 7th c. BCE Egypt. In addition, complexity is lost, especially in B IV 1 and 3, by squeezing too much information (through the use of too large a chronological framework) into one map. Nevertheless, a certain degree of complexity is achieved by presenting different perspectives of the same area and time period. Furthermore, each map provides a specific unprecedented and (as will be seen below) unrivalled scope of data.

4 The Loss of Information Between the 1990s and 2016

With one exception to be discussed separately below, the historiographical thematic atlases, which include 7th c. BCE Egypt in their studies and were produced in the very final phase of or after the TAVO, share a key characteristic: their much higher potential for circulation and wider reception correlates with a massive cartographic oversimplification of (even the political) history of the period in question. Different versions of the presentation of oversimplified, one-sided, or conflicting historical information can be traced through the process of dissemination, going as far as the complete negation of its relevance of display.

4.1 Presentation of One-sided Oversimplified Information

The first and probably most influential example for the display of exceedingly oversimplified history regarding 7th c. Egypt is to be found in the *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* by Roaf (1998/1990: 191; see Fig. 3a).

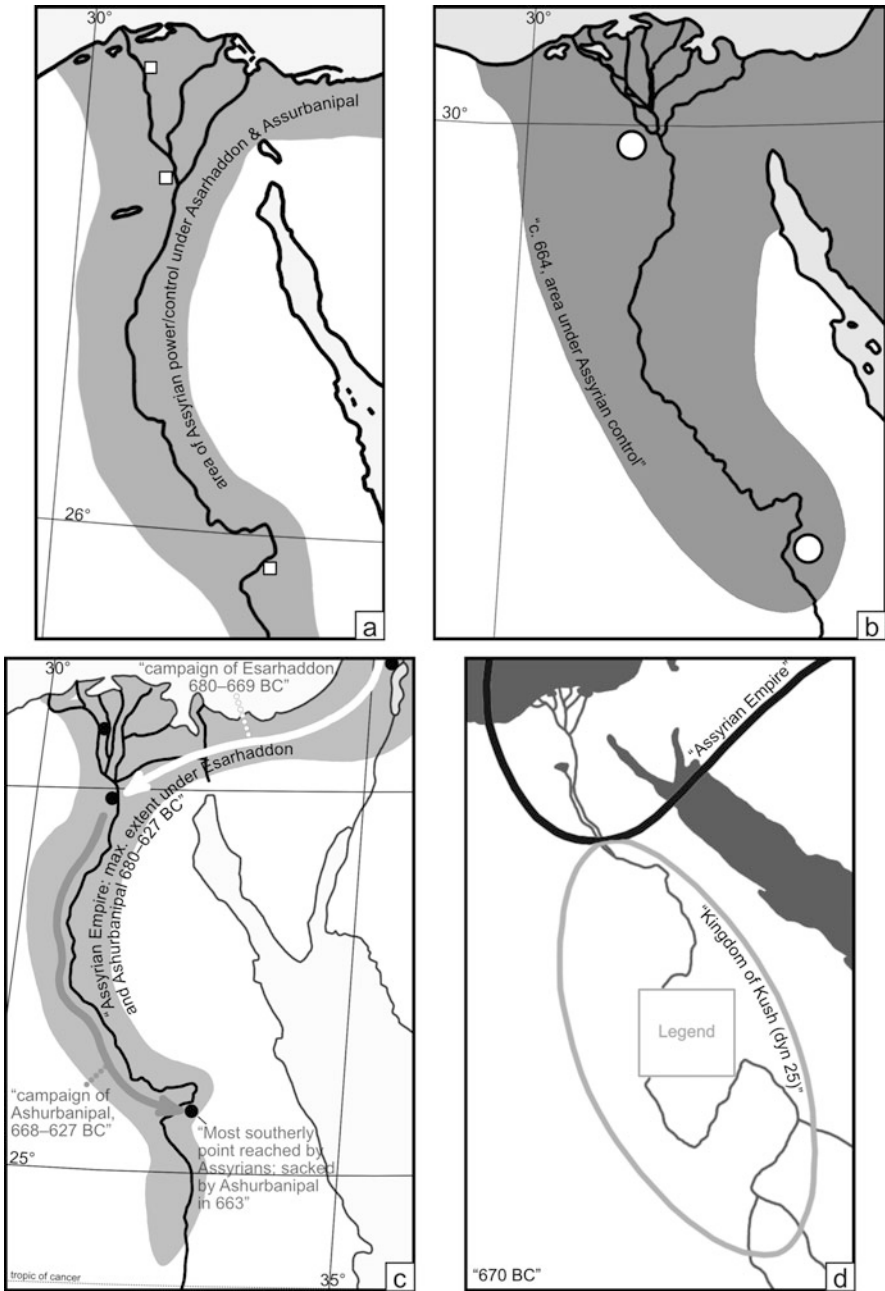


Fig. 3 7th c. Egypt in a nutshell, display of Assyrian control according to (a) Roaf 1998/1990: 191, (b) Manley 1996: 119, (c) Haywood 2005: 47, (d) McEvedy 2002: 53 (schematized drawings by the author)

According to the title/legend, the map displays the maximum extent of Assyrian power as including the wider Nile delta and valley substantially beyond Thebes. The presentation of a monolithic block of absolute Assyrian control may adequately represent the ancient Assyrian claim of control in their historiographical accounts, i.e. Assyrian royal history construction. Its display as a modern historiographical view of the history of Egypt at the time, presenting the actual degree of power and control of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, is misleading however (see above).

As will be seen below, this had fatal impact on the map's use for cartographic re-circulation (an impact that can be assumed by the obvious similarity of display to Roaf 1998/1990: 191 in the maps to be discussed, none of which state their sources for their cartographic information). In addition, the display obliterates the need of researching the cross-regional impact on local history from the various available perspectives (for an introduction to the Eastern Mediterranean Area of Connectivity at the times and some urgent research issues to be tackled for understanding the impact of this cross-regional connectivity on the social history of the times see Wasmuth 2016). Nevertheless, it achieved something vital, which the complex venture of the TAVO never did: a wide circulation of the importance of the cross-regional history of that period and of the role the Assyrian kings played in that history.

4.2 *Presentation of Oversimplified, Yet Conflicting Information*

Quite obviously influenced by Roaf and equally problematic, though successful, is the presentation of 7th c BCE Egypt in the *Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Egypt* by Manley (1996: 119, 121; see Figs. 2b and 3b). Without offering a solution for the conflicting display, Egypt is depicted as absolutely ruled by the Assyrian kings on the one side (see Fig. 3b) and by the local Egyptian king on the other side (see Fig. 2b) of two adjoining double pages. Once more, the mode of presentation has high potential. What is missing however is a more sensitised terminology of what is displayed, which is not the history of Egypt at the time, since it cannot be both absolutely controlled by the Assyrian and by the Egyptian king. It is a display of the Assyrian and the Saitic history constructions, which both deny the limitation of power due to the presence of the other. In all probability, the Assyrian king has not much more than nominal power over Egypt, which is effectively ruled by 664/656 by the Saitic king Psammetichus I, though he is nominally a vassal of Assyria since 671 (see above; for a suggestion of displaying this historical complexity and further references see Wasmuth 2017).

4.3 *Re-circulation of Oversimplification: Copy of Display*

As already indicated above, the cartographic display of the Assyrian empire presented in Roaf 1998/1990: 191 achieved substantial circulation and re-circulation. Copies or at least exceedingly similar modes of display can be seen e.g. in Manley (1996: 119; see above and Fig. 3b), Birken (2004) and Haywood (2005: 47). The map of 7th c. Egypt in the digital atlas on the history of the ancient Near East by Birken (2004) provides one of the few displays of Kushite rule over Egypt. This is interrupted by an exceedingly Roaf-like display of the area of (doubtful) Assyrian absolute control up to the Theban area. Similarly, a ‘copy’ of the display of absolute Assyrian control can be found, e.g., in the *Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Civilisations* by Haywood (2005: 47, see Fig. 3c). To this territorial depiction, two routes of military campaigns are added, the earlier to Memphis, and the later one to Thebes.

4.4 *Re-circulation of Oversimplification: Copy of Concept*

Though the borders are drawn much more schematically, also the display in the *New Penguin Atlas of Ancient History* by McEvedy (2002: 53; see Fig. 3d) is likely to be influenced by the cartographic presentation in Roaf 1998/1990: 191 or its re-circulations. Once more, Egypt up to Thebes is depicted as absolutely controlled by Assyria, south of Thebes under control of the kings of Kush. No indication is provided, that both cross-regional super-powers actually fight in Egypt against each other and try to involve the local Egyptian powers in their strategies of keeping the major cross-regional foe at bay. Though there is no actual copy of display, we can observe a ‘copy’ of concept.

In addition, McEvedy (2002: 53) is a good example of the much wider practice of displaying (political) entities as adjoining each other without indications of potential overlaps, conflicting claims or fuzzy borders.

4.5 *Negation of Relevance: Partial Omission*

Similarly effective as the oversimplified display of Assyrian power is the lack of presenting Kushite rule, even though (substantial parts of) Egypt were under actual political control of Kushite kings for at least 80 years in the later 8th and earlier 7th c. BCE. Though included in the topographic map on late period Egypt (TAVO B IV 1, Gamer-Wallert and Schefter 1993, Fig. 1b), this political control is visualised in none of the regionally specialised atlases of Egypt and the Ancient Near East. In TAVO B IV 13 (Kessler and Schlaich 1991, Fig. 2a) it is even explicitly negated, by relegating Kushite rule to south of the area displayed on the map. By not explicating

the depiction as reflecting Assyrian and Saitic history constructions, the depictions in Roaf (1998/1990: 191; Fig. 3a) and Manley (1996: 119, 121; Figs. 2b and 3b) equally negate Kushite rule.

It is therefore not surprising that it does not enter cartographic display in works with a wider chronological and geographical frame as for example Haywood (2005). Though Haywood (2005: 67; see Fig. 1d) indicates geographically overlapping areas of Nubian kingship in two different periods and could easily have added a similar line to depict, e.g., the maximal extent of Kushite power, this is not done.

4.6 *Negation of Relevance: Complete Omission*

Most drastically, the very recent *Atlas of the Ancient Near East* by Bryce and Birkett-Rees (2016) exemplifies the potential outcome of mapping history either only topographically or in a highly oversimplified way, yet presenting conflicting information. Though Egypt is displayed as part of the maximum extent of the Assyrian empire in the chapter on Assyria (Bryce and Birkett-Rees 2016: 168–169), the section on ‘Egypt in the Third Intermediate and Saite Periods (1069–525 BC)’ (ibidem: 195–196) does not include a single thematic map, only a very rough physical/topographical one for the whole period (ibidem: 196). The Kushite 25th dynasty is not mentioned at all in the historiographical overview of the section.

5 The Potential of the Complex Venture of NP Suppl. 3

A team of researchers overlapping with that of TAVO map B IV 8 (Wittke et al. 1993; see Fig. 2c) completed a second complex venture of mapping in 2007: the *Historischer Atlas der antiken Welt*, which was published as Supplement 3 of *Der Neue Pauly* (Wittke et al. 2007). Instead of a large box of loose map sheets like the TAVO, the maps are bound into a book and each map page is accompanied by a page of historiographical comment. Once more, the complex history of 7th c. BCE Mesopotamia and adjoining areas including Egypt is spread over four maps, which cover the area up to the first Nile cataract (see Fig. 4a–d): On p. 53 the maps on c. 710–661 and c. 660–631 BCE are grouped together, p. 55 shows the same areas in 631–606 and 605–539/525 BCE.

Though the southern centre of the Kushite kingdom is not displayed due to the choice of area to be mapped, at least for what is traditionally perceived as Egypt (also in ancient times), some complexity is achieved. The choice of periodisation allows to start the series with a map predominantly visualising Egypt as Kushite-ruled territory. By marking the domain of power of the local Saitic rulers, which are specified in the legend as the ruling kings of Egypt in the latest phase displayed on the map, a certain amount of power struggle also in the earlier phase is implied. The

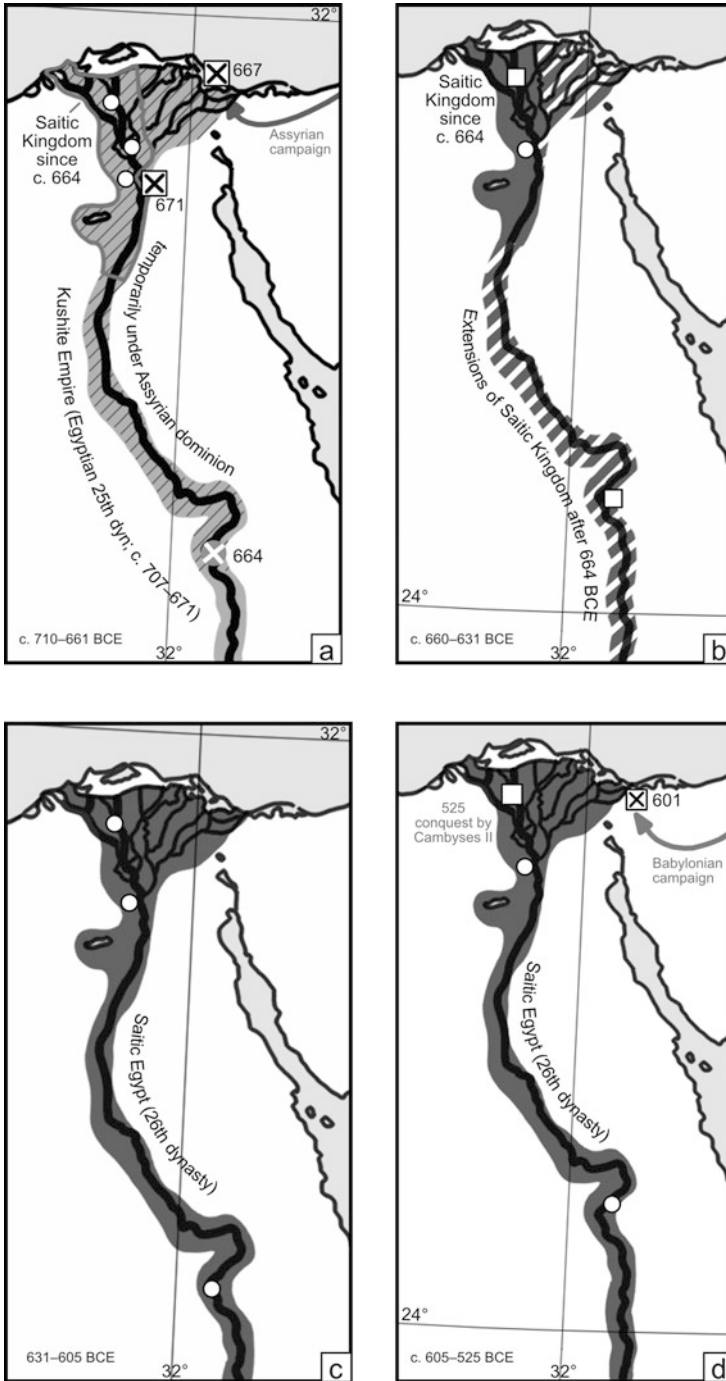


Fig. 4 The history of 7th c. Egypt in four maps according to Wittke et al. 2007 (a) 53 above, (b) 53 below, (c) 55 above, (d) 55 below (schematized drawings by the author)

same is achieved by the indications of major battles and slight hatching used—according to the legend—for temporary control by the Assyrians. What is unfortunately not indicated is the relationship between Assyria and the local rulers of Sais, who were deliberately promoted by Assyria as an allied buffer against the Kushite kingdom.

By different colour-coding, the dynastic change between the Kushite 25th dynasty and the Saitic 26th dynasty of Egyptian pharaohs is depicted. For the second map, the periodisation is obviously due to non-Egyptian events. The shift of power to the Saitic dynasty was likely to be much faster than the display implies. However, this distortion allows the depiction of, on the one hand, the struggle between Assyria and Kush (see Fig. 4a) and, on the other hand, the expanding politics of the delta kingdom of Sais (see Fig. 4b), which, as displayed, likely happened without further Assyrian interference.

The last two maps (p. 55 above and below; see Fig. 4c–d) indicate the on-going stability of the Egyptian kingdom under the Saitic rulers until their defeat against the Persian army under Cambyses. Once more, temporary control is indicated by slight hatching in the third map (beyond the section selected in Fig. 4c), this time of Egyptian thrusts into the Levant and beyond, i.e., into predominantly Assyrian-controlled territory.

6 Conclusions

With the exception of the last discussed venture (Wittke et al. 2007), the historiographical maps of Egypt presented above provide at least as much information on the academic background of their authors as on ancient historical complexity. Given the rather clear borders between the major subject areas of the traditional academic setup, this is not surprising. Though a strong regional specialisation is required for understanding local developments, it defies the study of cross-regional impact on these developments. For this, an additional teaching and research focus with a cross-regional outlook as well as closely interwoven cross-disciplinary research teams are needed. This is a major challenge in the humanities, and certainly in antiquity studies, due to the strong focus on one-person publications and the financial *cum* personal setup of the various subject areas, which often feature just one permanent position per regional specialisation.

Though the reflection of the academic structure in the mapping ventures and their display of Egypt can easily be explained, this is—at least to the author—much more difficult for the question of why the widest reception is achieved by the most oversimplifying maps. As life is a complex venture, this is to be assumed for the past as well. How therefore, can a simple or linear explanation of events or their display be deemed satisfactory? As this is not the place for a philosophic discussion, the question will be reduced to (a) why the TAVO failed its potential to open up research questions and to push harder for diversified research on 7th c. BCE Egypt, and (b) what can be learned from the observed processes for the dissemination of knowledge.

In the author's experience, the TAVO does not play any significant role in teaching either in Egyptology or in Ancient Near Studies. Most students encountered up to PhD level did not even know of its existence. Having been introduced to the atlas very early on in my studies in Tübingen this was at first surprising, but considering its format, it may be something to be expected. The format of the sheets is much too small to use as a teaching instrument for more than four to six students. The only way to achieve this would be through digitalisation, but various maps are still too densely marked and lacking contrast for successful beamer presentation. The format of rather large single sheets is obviously meant for poring on it by a single viewer or to hang on a wall for closer inspection. In addition, the TAVO is mainly found in university libraries to be used under special conditions due to the format. They are therefore never likely to achieve high circulation in their current print format.

Considering the fact that also the much more easily accessible *Neue Pauly Suppl. 3* atlas (Wittke et al. 2007) did not find reception e.g. in Bryce and Birkett-Rees (2016), it has to be asked whether this is only due to the format (e.g., printed maps, works in German) or also due to the aim of visualising historical complexity. If we as scientists analysing the past wish to uncover and present (ancient) historical complexity, we obviously have to change our strategies. Our staff resources do not allow for letting already achieved historical and cartographic knowledge go lost in the process of dissemination. An important step would be to make the already existing detailed maps more easily accessible, ideally digitally and with the possibility to interlink information from various mapping projects. In addition, the above survey clearly indicates that we have to strive for avoiding undue oversimplification though still keeping the maps readable. The perception of what is undue or necessary simplification undoubtedly depends on the context, the author and the reader. However, the survey clearly indicates the danger as well as the potential of mapping as a tool for opening up or obliterating research questions. In order to avoid subsequent loss of cartographic and historical knowledge in the process of dissemination, much more attention should be paid to explicate what is actually visualised, especially in the case of easy accessibility (which is to be aimed for).

Given these caveats, the combination of much smaller chronological scopes and the creation of more diversified thematic maps reflecting the different ancient (and/or modern) perceptions of history as well as different historical aspects (in addition to cross-regional politics) could be a powerful tool to open up new research questions, to illustrate their importance, and to make historical complexity palpable.

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