COMMENTATIONES

The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var
and the Chronology of Dynasty 25 *

Dan’el Kahn

G. Frame recently republished a rock inscription and relief of Sargon II*, discovered in the Tang-i Var pass in Iran and originally published in Farsi in 1968. The text mentions the rebellion of Lamani, king of Ashdod, against Sargon in the year 712 BC and his flight to the king of Kush. According to the inscription, king Shabatka (= Shebitku) extradited lamani to Sargon before the year 706 BC. In this article I shall attempt to rule out any assumed co-regency between Shabaka and Shabatka and the proposed division of the Egyptian and Kushite kingdoms between Shabaka and Shabatka, respectively. I date Shabaka’s reign to 721-707/6 BC and Shabatka’s reign to 707/6-690 BC. The historical implications of this chronology regarding foreign relations between Egypt and Kush during the years 716, 720, 726 and 734-732 BC will then be surveyed here.

The new information deriving from
Sargon’s Tang-i Var rock inscription

The inscription can be dated quite certainly to 706 BC, not long before the death in battle of Sargon II in the month of Abu (summer) 705 BC. Lines 19-21 read as follows:

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001 I would like to thank Professor I. Eph’al of the Hebrew University for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this paper. Special thanks go to Mr. E. Weissert of the Hebrew University for his comments and discussions on the Assyrian data. It is also my pleasure to thank R. Kudish and J. N. Ford of the Hebrew University for correcting my English. All errors are, however, my responsibility.

01 G. Frame, “The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var”, Ori 68 (1999) 31-57. His study is supplemented with an article by D. B. Redford, “A Note on the Chronology of Dynasty 25 and the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var”, ibid. 58-60. I would like to thank Dr. K. Donker van Heel of Leiden for bringing these articles to my attention.

2 Frame, Ori 68, 33, n. 2-5.


Orientalia – 1
“(19) I (scil. Sargon) plundered the city of Ashdod, lami: the king, feared [my weapons] and... He fled to the region of the land of Meluhha and lived (there) stealthfully (literally: like a thief). (20) Shapataku (Shabatka), king of the land of Meluhha, heard of the mig[h]t of the gods Ashur, Nabû, (and) Marduk which I had [demonstrated] over all lands,... (21) He put (la:mi) in manacles and handcuffs... he had him brought captive into my presence.”

Shabatka’s highest attested regnal year is year 3\(\text{e}^{5}\). The estimates of the length of his reign vary between a minimum of three years\(\text{b}\) and a maximum of twelve years\(\text{c}\). Proposals for his accession date have generally varied between 702 and 693 BC\(\text{d}\), dating the end of his reign to the accession of Tahrqa in 690 BC\(\text{e}\).

The Tang-i Var inscription indicates the year 706 BC as the terminus ante quem for the accession of Shabatka in Kush. This new date is at least four years earlier than has generally been thought.

Kitchen long ago postulated the possibility that Shabatka was elevated to be ruler of Kush before 701 BC. According to Tahrqa’s texts from Kawa, Shabatka summoned his brothers – including Tahrqa – to join him with an army to wage war in the North\(\text{f}\). Kitchen argued that the policy of the Kushite kingdom towards Assyria changed from a neutral policy during Shabatka’s reign (717-702 BC) to a hostile one in 701 BC. This aggressive policy toward Egypt’s neighbors would have signaled a change of ruler and was reflected by Shabatka’s adoption of expansionist imperial titles\(\text{g}\).

\(\text{a}\) Frame, Or 68, 40.
\(\text{c}\) L. Depuydt, “The Date of Pyre’s Egyptian Campaign and the Chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty”, JEA 79 (1993) 270. According to Depuydt Shabatka reigned between 693-690 BC.
\(\text{e}\) See notes 6, 7.
\(\text{f}\) Kitchen, ThIP 158-172.
\(\text{g}\) Cf. Kitchen, ThIP 154 ff.; idem, “Further Thoughts on Egyptian Chronology in the Third Intermediate Period,” RAe 34 (1982-3) 65; idem, “Egypt, the Levant and Assyria in 701 BC,” in: M. Görg (ed.), Fontes atque Pontes, Festschrift Hellmut Brunner (ÄAAT 5; Wiesbaden 1983) 245-246. Cf. A. F. Rainey, “Tahrqa and Syntax”, Tel Aviv 3 (1976) 38-39. Kawa stela IV lines 7-9: “(7)... Now his majesty was in Nubia as a goodly youth (hwa nfr), a king’s brother, pleasant of love. He came (8a) north to the Ebes in the company of the goodly youths: It was (9b) because he loved him more than all his brethren (8b) that his majesty, the late king Shabatka had sent them from Nubia in order that the (Tahrqa) might be (9a) there with him.”


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The Tang-i Var inscription allows us to identify with full certainty the Kushite king, whose armies opposed Sennacherib at the battle of Eltekhe in 701 BC as Shabatka\(\text{a}\).

In the following section I shall attempt to determine the terminus post quem for the ascensions of Shabaka and Shabatka. The evidence suggests that Shabaka ascended the throne of Kush in 722 or 721 BC and that Shabatka succeeded him between 24 November 707 and April 706 BC.

1 The accession date of Shabatka

From the Tang-i Var inscription we learn that Shabatka was already in power in 706 BC when he extradited lami: to Sargon. This episode is also recorded several times in Sargon’s inscriptions from Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad). According to the Great Display Inscription (Große Frunkinskript) lines 95-112, and the Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV, lines 11-14, lami: fled to Meluhha (Kush). The King of Meluhha (name not stated), subsequently overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of the gods Aššur, Nabû and Marduk, extradited lami: to Sargon\(\text{a}\). The Great Display Inscription and the Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV are dated to Sargon’s fifteenth year, i.e., Nisan 707 BC – Adar 706 BC\(\text{a}\). This means that Shabatka ascended the throne of Kush before Nisan (April) 706 BC\(\text{b}\).

Can the year Shabatka ascended the throne be determined? Any attempt to calculate the accession dates of Shabaka and Shabatka must address the following issues:

1. the co-regency between Shabaka and Shabatka, which some scholars have postulated,
2. the division of the Kingdoms of Kush and Egypt between Shabaka and Shabatka, respectively, also postulated by some,

\(\text{a}\) Kitchen, ThIP 383-386. Cf. Herodotus II 141.
\(\text{b}\) A. Fuchs, Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad (Göttingen 1994), Great Display Inscription, lines 95-112: pp. 219-222, 348-9; Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV, lines 11-14: pp. 76, 308. In the Annals lami’s flight is ignored altogether (Fuchs, ibid. 133, 326). In col. B of Prisma Fragment 81-7-23,3 from Nineveh lines 1-11 a version of the extradition of lami: survives; see E. F. Weidner, “Silkkat(h)ni, König von Musîr, ein Zentenose Sargons II.”, AJA 14 (1941-44) 49 ff. According to Weidner this fragment belongs to a Prism from 709 BC. This early date for Fragment 81-7-23,3 means that Shabatka came to power before 709 BC. This date would not allow fifteen years for Shabaka’s sole rule; cf. Fuchs, 387 (i). Fuchs dates this fragment to 707 or 706 BC.

\(\text{c}\) Fuchs, Die Inschriften 386 sub 5.d. For the dating of the beginning of the Assyrian year to approximately April see: R. A. Parker – W. Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology 626 BC – AD 75 (1956) 2747.

We should also remember that several months elapsed between lami:‘s extradition and his arrival at the Assyrian court and the recording of the event. Cf. Depuydt, JEA 79, 273.
“(19) I (sci. Sargon) plundered the city of Ashdod. Iamani, its king, feared [my weapons] and ... He fled to the region of the land of Meluhha and lived (there) stealthily (literally: like a thief). (20) Shapataku (Shabatka), king of the land of Meluhha, heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Ashur, Nabû, and Marduk which I had [demonstrated] over all lands, ... (21) He put (Ia-
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2. the division of the kingdoms of Kus and Egypt between Shabatka and Shabatka, respectively, also postulated by some.

13 A. Fuchs, Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad (Göttingen 1994), Great Display Inscription, lines 95-112, pp. 219-222, 348-9; Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV, lines 11-14, pp. 76, 308. In the Annals Iamani’s flight is ignored altogether (Fuchs, ibid. 133, 326). In col. B of Prisma Fragment 81-7-23-3 from Nineveh lines 1-11 a version of the extradition of Iamani survives; see E. F. Weidner, “Silkant(h)ini, König von Muṣiṣ, ein Zentenosiros Sargons II.”, AOJ 14 (1941-44) 49 ff. According to Weidner this fragment belongs to a prism from 709 BC. This early date for Fragment 81-7-23,3 means that Shabatka came to power before 709 BC. This date would not allow fifteen years for Shabatka’s sole rule; cf. Fuchs, 387 (f). Fuchs dates this fragment to 707 or 706 BC.
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3. the *terminus ante quem* for the accession date of Shabaka and the length of his reign.

If there had been a co-regency or a division of kingship between Shaba-
ka and Shabatka it would not allow us to determine the dates of Shaba-
ka's and Shabatka's accession to kingship or the length of their reigns as
sole rulers. By eliminating the postulated co-regency and split-kingdom
theory we can determine more accurately the possible years of accession
and lengths of reign for Shabaka and Shabatka.

1.1 The “Anchor date” of 712 bc and the postulated co-regency be-
tween Shabaka and Shabatka

Kitchen suggested that Shabaka came to the throne in Kush in
717/6 bc and conquered Egypt in 716/5 bc. According to Kitchen’s chronol-
ogy, Shabaka would have ruled as Pharaoh in Egypt and Kush until
702/1 bc and upon his death was succeeded by Shabatka in 702/1 bc.

In 713/2 or 712/1 bc Lamani of Ashdod rebelled against Assyria.
He attempted to muster support from local rulers and from Pir’u (Pharaoh),
king of Egypt. Nevertheless, when the Assyrians approached Ashdod in
712 bc, Lamani fled to Egypt, ending up at the border of Egypt with Kush.
He initially received asylum from the king of Kush, but was eventu-
ally sent back in shackles to Nineveh.

Spalinger noted that when Lamani fled to Egypt he did not meet
“The anchor of Egypt”, whom he had contacted before, but went south to Upper

8 K. A. Kitchen, “Late-Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy: Critical Studies in Old Testament Mythology,” JNES 5 (1973) 225-233. See also, “Medinet Habu Inscriptions,” JNES 3 (1944) 137-144. The reason for preferring these dates is that in 716 bc Sargon, king of Assyria received a tribute of twelve horses from Teshub (a son of Shalmaneser), king of Egypt and not from Shabaka. According to Kitchen, Shabaka had not yet conquered Egypt in 716 bc.

9 Tadmor, JCS 12, 74-84; idem, “Philistia under Assyrian Rule,” BA 29 (1966) 94; A J. Spalinger, “The Year 712 bc and its Implications for Egyptian History,” JARE 10 (1973) 95-101. For the dating of these events to 711 bc cf. Fuchs, Die Inschriften 381-382; idem, Die Anna-
len des Jahres 711 v Chr (State Archives of Assyria Studies VIII; Helsinki 1998) 124-131; Fra-
e, Or 68, 52-54.

10 N. Naaman, “Hezekiah and the Kings of Assyria,” Tel Aviv 21 (1994) 239-240; cf. Fuchs, Die Anna-
len 73-74.

11 ana iti: miž Mursi ša pār šam Meluhha innathima (Fuchs, Die Inschriften 220, l. 103). Kitchen, ThIP 583: “he (Lamani) fled to the border of Egypt of the territory of Meluzha”;


12 Kitchen, ThIP 379, n. 767. Shabaka issued a commemorative scarab to celebrate the sup-
pression of a “revolt”, “he has slain those who rebelled against him in both South and North,
and in every foreign land. The sand-dwellers (br/ n=1) (Asiatic semi-nomads) are faint because
of him, falling for (very) fear of him — they come of themselves as captives and each among
them seized his fellow...”. This might be a reflection of the events of 712 and the flight of Lamani
to Nubia. On the other hand, the scarab could conceivably “commemorate” the arrival of refuge-
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tribute of twelve horses (see below notes 42, 43). It would have been unwise of Lamani to flee
to Sargon from an Egyptian king who had established good relations with Assyria. Cf. Jer. 26: 20-
23.

21 Shabaka ruled for at least fourteen full years. His last dated monument is from year 15,
month of Pamy (2 iwm), day 11 i.e. eighty-four days before he completed fifteen full years.
J. Cerny, “Phthilological and Erythraean Notes”, ASSAE 51 (1951) 441-446; J. Leclant, Enqué-
tes sur les sacerdoces et les sanctuaires égyptiens à l'époque dite 'éthiopienne' (XXIV Dynastie)
(BDE 17; Cairo 1964) 15-27.

Century bc”, JARE 22 (1985) 13, n. 61; idem, Or 68, 59-60, n. 12; Kitchen, ThIP xlii and 555-
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versions of Manetho (Shabaka's and Shabatka's reign of twelve years) as a corroboration of his
thesis of a three-year co-regency between the two from 1 iyl 701 until Shabaka's death in 698;
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none of his dates for the Kushite reign is correct. Shabaka ruled in his fourteenth year, Shabatka
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that of Eusebius (twelve years) and sets Shabatka's accession at 705 bc (ending his last full year
in 691 bc). According to the Assyro-Egyptian inscriptions Shabaka was king of Meluzha in 706 bc
at the latest, and thus ruled at least for fifteen full years.

23 Kitchen, ThIP xlii.

24 Spalinger, JARE 10, 100; idem, “Esarhaddon and Egypt: An Analysis of the First Invasi-
one of Egypt”, Or 43 (1974) 322-324. Cf. 2 Kings 18: 21. Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is compared
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25 Redford, JARE 22, 54.

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Spalinger noted that when Lamani fled to Egypt he did not meet "Pir'u of Egypt", whom he had contacted before, but went south to Upper Egypt and finally met the king of Kush. Hence Spalinger concluded that the Delta king, who was ruling in 713 BC, had disappeared in 712 BC, and that Shabaka had by that time conquered the Delta in the second year of his reign. The year 712 was thus treated as an "anchor date" and the year 713 was regarded as the accession date of Shabaka. Since Shabaka reigned probably for fifteen years, it was assumed that he died in 698 BC. This overlap of approximately three years between the conjectured accession date of Shabatka (701/2) and the death of Shabaka (698) led Spalinger and other scholars to postulate a co-regency.

Kitchen, however, has pointed out that the Nubian rulers perceived themselves as legitimate Egyptian rulers from the beginning. The Assyrian distinction between the king of Egypt and the king of Kush is a propaganda motif which only appears half a century later in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, and was motivated by political considerations.

Redford and Depuydt, moreover, have questioned the "anchor date" and have pointed out that Egypt was not yet entirely under Nubian rule.

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24 Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 98: D. B. Redford, "Sais and the Kushite Invasions of the Eighth Century BC", *JARCE* 22 (1985) 13, n. 61; idem, Or 68, 59-60, n. 12; *ThIP* xlii and 555-557; F. Yurok, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebibu", *Assyriologica* 6 (1980) 221-240. On pp. 226-229 Yurok suggests interpreting the figures given by three versions of Manetho (Shabaka's and Shabatka's reign of twelve years) as a harmonisation of his thesis of a three-year co-regency between the two from 1 lul 1701 until Shabaka's death in 698; cf. King's criticism (THIP 554-555). The Manethonian evidence must now be refigured since none of his dates for the Kushite reign is correct. Shabaka ruled in his fourteenth year, Shabatka in his sixteenth and Taharqa reigned for twenty-six years in Memphis (with short intervals of Assyrian or Saite rule). For a different interpretation of Manethonian traditions cf. J. von Beckerath, "Ägypten und der Feldzug Sanheribs im Jahre 701 v. Chr.", *UF* 24 (1992) 6-7; Redford, Or 68, 59. Redford argues that Africans' version (fourteen full years for Shabatka) is to be preferred to that of Eusebius (twelve years) and sets Shabatka's ascension to 705 BC (ending his last full year in 691 BC). According to the Assyro-Egyptian inscriptions Shabaka was king of Meluhja in 706 BC at the latest, and thus ruled at least for fifteen full years.


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27 Redford, *JARCE* 22, 54.

control in 712 BC, the year therefore comprising the *terminus post quem* for the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka.

The Tang-i Var inscription clearly indicates that Shabatka was on the throne in 706 BC. If Shabaka ascended the throne in 713 BC or 712 BC, he would have ended up ruling together with Shabatka for eight years (706-698). But he left on the monuments no trace of double dating and joint rule or any reason for postulating a co-regency.

1.2 The postulated division of the Kingdoms of Kush and Egypt, ruled by Shabaka and Shabatka respectively

Redford, commenting on the Tang-i Var inscription, maintains the year 712 or early 711 as the date of Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt in his second year. Instead of eight years of co-regency between Shabaka (706-698), he now opts for a different solution. He suggests that in his eighth year Shabaka separated the administration and rule of Egypt from the Nubian heartland, assigning the latter to his nephew Shabatka. Thus, Shabaka would have ruled and administered Egypt, while Shabatka would have ruled Kush.

If this assumption were correct, we would not find monuments of both kings in the same administrative area from the period of the alleged division of power. Thus, Shabatka’s Karnak quay graffiti dating to his year 39 would indicate that his rule extended over a vast area from Kush to Thebes, leaving to the senior ruler, Shabaka, the rule over Middle Egypt and the Delta. Theoretically, this is possible. However, at the alleged time of this divided administration lasting from the eighth to fifteenth year of Shabaka, when we expect to find Shabatka as sole ruler at Thebes (c. 703 BC), we find monuments and papyri of Shabaka dating to year 10th (*7031* BC), and to year 15th (*698 BC*) and originating from Thebes.31 It is inconceivable that in a divided kingdom or during a co-regency, two rulers would simultaneously administer Thebes and use different dating methods.

30 See n. 1.
33 See note 22.
34 Furthermore, Shabatka was summoned in 701 BC by Shabatka to Thebes to join him: with an army. See Kawa IV, lines 7-8. M. F. L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*. I. *The Inscriptions* (London 1949) 15. See below n. 34.
36 *Kitchen, ReD* 34 (above note 10) 65; F. J. Yurko, *Serapis 6*, 622-223, 226 ff. He calculates the span of time needed by Taharqa to arrive in Thebes after being summoned, and comes to the conclusion that Taharqa left Napata in April of the latest. See also n. 10.
37 *Kitchen, ThIP* 149, 165-166 and note 343. Kitchen does not agree that Taharqa was the youngest of the royal brothers (sons of Pianky) as must be the case in this reconstruction.
38 Theoretically, it is possible that the imperialistic Kushite activity in the Levant started immediately after Sargon’s death in Abu (approximately August) 705 BC. Taharqa could have already been summoned by Shabatka to the Delta in late 705 BC or early 704 BC. Thus, he could have been twenty years old at 705/4, setting the *terminus post quem* of Pianky’s death to 724 BC. Accepting this scheme, we cannot prove that Pianky was still alive in 722/1 BC. Furthermore, Shabatka arrived at Thebes for the first time at the end of his third regnal year (1 Saw 5 = late October). If his arrival at Thebes should be connected with Sargon’s death, he could have ascended the throne as early as 707 BC if he immediately left for Thebes after hearing about Sargon’s death. For Shabatka’s third year in Thebes see von Becherer, *GM* 136, 7-9. Accepting these pro-
control in 712 bc, the year therefore comprising the terminus post quem for the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka.

The Tang-i Var inscription clearly indicates that Shabatka was on the throne in 706 bc. If Shabaka ascended the throne in 713 bc or 712 bc, he would have ended up ruling together with Shabatka for eight years (706-698). But he left on the monuments no trace of double dating and joint rule or any reason for postulating a co-regency.

1.2 The postulated division of the Kingdoms of Kush and Egypt, ruled by Shabaka and Shabatka respectively

Redford, commenting on the Tang-i Var inscription, maintains the year 712 or early 711 as the date of Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt in his second year. Instead of eight years of co-regency between Shabaka (706-698), he now opts for a different solution. He suggests that in his eighth year Shabaka separated the administration and rule of Egypt from the Nubian heartland, assigning the latter to his nephew Shabatka. Thus, Shabaka would have ruled and administered Egypt, while Shabatka would have ruled Kush.

If this assumption were correct we would not find monuments of both kings in the same administrative area from the period of the alleged division of power. Thus, Shabatka’s Karnak quay graffito dating to his year 30 would indicate that his rule extended over a vast area from Kush to Thebes, leaving to the senior ruler, Shabaka, the rule over Middle Egypt and the Delta. Theoretically, this is possible. However, at the alleged time of this divided administration lasting from the eighth to fifteenth year of Shabaka, when we expect to find Shabatka as sole ruler at Thebes (703 bc), we find monuments and papyri of Shabaka dating to the year 10th (*703! bc), and to year 15th (*698 bc) and originating from Thebes. It is inconceivable that in a divided kingdom or during a co-regency, two rulers would simultaneously administer Thebes and use different dating methods.

The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25

In the preceding sections it has been shown that:

— there is no basis for positing an eight-year co-regency between Shabaka and Shabatka, nor a divided kingdom, where both kings would have ruled in Thebes in the same year while dating documents according to different dating methods;
— the year 712 bc should not be treated as an anchor date for the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka.

1.3 The terminus ante quem for the accession date of Shabaka and the length of his reign

1.3.1 Indirect evidence for the accession of Shabaka: The last known datable evidence of Piankhy

The last known datable information about Shabaka’s predecessor and elder brother, Piankhy, is a paragraph in a stela from the Amun temple at Kawa, erected by Taharaqa, Piankhy’s son. It states that:

[jst mwµt] m Tī sỳ m snw nswt bnr mw[t nswt (l-h-b.ru) nµh.tā às gtr h.n.h bšt(t) m hwn n 20 rapt m āw nā hē hmr f r Tī mît .t

"(16) ... Now, my mother was] in Nubia, namely the king’s sister, pleasant of love, the king’s mother Abar, may she live. Moreover, (17) I had departed from her as a recruit of twenty years when I came with his majesty (scil. Shabatka) to Lower Egypt” (Kawa Stela V, lines 16-18).

According to Kawa V 17, Taharaqa was twenty years old when he was summoned to the North. The only known occasion for which Shabatka might have mustered his forces would be the campaign against Senacherib’s forces in 701 bc. From this information we can deduce that Taharaqa was born in the year 722/1 bc. Since Piankhy was the father of Taharaqa, we must conclude that Piankhy was still alive and one the throne of Kush in 722 bc. Shabaka thus came to power after the beginning of the Egyptian year that started on 15 February 721 bc.

30 See n. 1.
31 J. von Beckerath, ‘The terminus ante quem for the accession date of Shabaka and the length of his reign’

32 See note 22.
33 Furthermore, Taharaqa was summoned in 701 bc by Shabatka to Thebes to join him: with an army. See Kawa IV, lines 7-8. M. F. L. Macadam, The Temples of Kawa. I. The Inscriptions (London 1949) 15. See below n. 34.

35 Kitchen, RâD 34 (above note 10) 65; F. J. Yurko, Serapis 6, 222-223, 226 ff. He calculates the span of time needed by Taharaqa to arrive in Thebes after being summoned, and comes to the conclusion that Taharaqa left Napata in April at the latest. See also n. 10.
36 Kitchen, THIP 149, 165-166 and note 343. Kitchen does not agree that Taharaqa was the youngest of the royal brothers (sons of Piankhy) as must be the case in this reconstruction.
37 Theoretically, it is possible that the imperialistic Kushite activity in the Levant started immediately after Sargon’s death in Abu (approximately August) 705 bc. Taharaqa could have already been summoned by Shabatka to the Delta in late 705 bc or early 704 bc. Thus, he could have been twenty years old at 705/4, setting the terminus post quem of Piankhy’s death to 724 bc. Adopting this scheme, we cannot prove that Piankhy was still alive in 722/1 bc. Furthermore, Shabatka arrived at Thebes for the first time at the end of his third regnal year (I Sow 2 = late October). If his arrival at Thebes should be connected with Sargon’s death, he could have ascended the throne as early as 707 bc if he immediately left for Thebes after hearing about Sargon’s death. For Shabatka’s third year in Thebes see von Beckerath, GM 136, 7-9. Accepting these pro-
1.3.2 The length of the reign of Shabaka and the accession of Shabatka

According to line 20 of the Tang-i Var inscription and the inscriptions from Khorsabad, Shabatka ascended the throne of Kush no later than April 706 BC (the end of the Assyrian year 707/6). He must have ascended the throne, in fact, at least a few months prior to that date since Iamani’s arrival at the Assyrian court is included in the records of the events of 707/6 BC.39

It was noted above that Piankh was still alive in 722 BC. Shabaka ascended the throne of Kush as sole ruler after the beginning of the Egyptian year that started on 15 February 721. His last dated monument is from year 15, month of Pânty (2 šmary), day 11. I propose dating this inscription to 24 November 707. If I date this inscription to an earlier year, in particular 24 November 708, this would oblige me to date Shabatka’s accession to the year between 15th February 722 and 14th February 721. Shabatka would, then, have reigned approximately sixteen years. This postulated date would coincide with the information given by Taharqa that he was twenty years old when Shabatka summoned him to the North, most certainly in 701.40 Thus, Taharqa would be twenty-one years old at that time and therefore his statement about his age would be false. I prefer to accept Taharqa’s own statement and date Shabatka’s accession to 721.40 The implications of this dating are as follows: between the end of November 707 and April 706 BC Shabatka died, Shabatka ascended the throne of Egypt and Kush, and extradited Iamani to Sargon, who recorded the event before the end of his fifteenth year (April 706 BC).

This succession of events was very swift. In less than five months the political relations between Assyria and Kush changed drastically from hostility — and the accordance of political asylum to Iamani — to friendly relations, evidenced by the dispatch of messengers to the Assyrian court “in

posed dates would make it difficult to explain the course of events between 734-720 BC on historical grounds.

39 Fuchs, Die Annalen 129. Fuchs does not rule out that the extradition of Iamani could have occurred in the year 708 BC. His assumptions are not based on any textual evidence.

40 See above note 34.

41 See note 22. The date 24th November 707 BC is admittedly very late in the year. For Taharqa’s age in 701 BC see previous paragraph, Cfr. Yurco, Serapis 6, 226-227, n. 46. When commenting on an earlier draft of this article, Wente suggested that it is possible that Taharqa was actually nineteen when he stated that he was twenty years old, since sometimes Egyptians have a tendency to state an interval of time between two given dates as a comprise between the two extremes (c.f. E. F. Wente, “The Suppression of the High Priest Amenhoptep”, JNES 15 [1966] 82, n. 24) although, in the case of stating one’s age, one does not calculate an interval between two given dates.

order to inquire about Sargon’s well-being” and the extradition of Iamani to Sargon40.

1.4 The events of 716 BC: The problem of Shilkani

It must be noted that this reconstruction of Kushite and Egyptian chronology creates an apparent difficulty. In the Assyrian records it is stated that in 716 BC the Assyrian forces marched towards the Philistine coast, subdued the local Arabs, and opened the “sealed-off harbor of Egypt” and mingled Assyrians and Egyptians to encourage trade between them. It is further reported that Pîru’s king of Egypt, together with Samsi queen of the Arabs, and It'amra the Sabaean sent Sargon a tribute of gold, precious stones, ivory, willow seeds and aromatic substances41. Another inscription states that Shilkani (identified with Osorkon IV)42, King of Musri (Egypt), gave Sargon a gift (tâmarru) of “12 great horses whose like did not exist in Assyria”43. Kitchen44, Spalinger44 and other scholars assumed that this event predated Shabatka’s conquest, since it was Osorkon IV that dealt with the Assyrians and not Shabatka44.

According to the chronology proposed in the present study, Osorkon IV gave Sargon the twelve great horses at the time when Shabatka was the recognized king of Egypt and monuments were being erected to him and dated to his reign in the Delta44. The phenomenon of a Kushite overlord with Egyptian vassal kings, however, is also documented in the reigns of Piankh44, Shabat-
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This succession of events was very swift. In less than five months the political relations between Assyria and Kush changed drastically from hostility and the accordance of political asylum to Iamani to friendly relations, evidenced by the dispatch of messengers to the Assyrian court in order to inquire about Sargon’s well-being and the extradition of Iamani to Sargon.

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K. Weidner, 4Q1 14, 40-53; Kitchen, TAP 379. Year 2: Karnak, Pharaohs; year 3: Sefata/Zagazig (five kilometers south-west of Babastis); year 6: Buto.

T. Eide et al., Foentor I 59 (above note 11); Sandstone Stela of Piankh from the Amun Temple at Napata lines 3-5. In the Wadi Gausus graffito the dates of two kings (without names) appear next to the names of the adoratress of the god, Amenirdis and God’s wife Shepenepet. The regnal dates are identified as Piankh’s and a king of the 23rd Dynasty. Cf. Kitchen, TAP 544, 581; D. A. Aston – J. H. Taylor, “The Family of Takoeloth III and the ‘Theban’ Twenty-third Dynasty”, in: A. Lebby (ed.), Libya and Egypt c. (300-750 bc) (London 1990) 144-146. In the Piankh Stela Nimlot was a vassal of Piankh before the campaign in the Delta. After the conquest of Lower Egypt Pejuja-Bastet, king of Heracleopolis, Osorkon IV of Babastis and Iuput II of
The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25

 desarrollo del poder y autoridad entre los egipcios, los reyes de la dinastía 25.

2 The year 720 BC

2.1 Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt

At the end of Bocchoris’s fifth year the death of an Apis bull was commemorated on several stelae (hit sp 5 tbd 2 smw, sw 29 = mid December)38. The interment of this bull seventy days later was commemorated at the beginning of Bocchoris’ sixth year (hit sp 6 tpy iht sw 6 = end February)39. According to Manetho, however, Shabaka took Bocchoris (Bik-n- rm.f) captive and burnt him alive, in the latter’s sixth year of reign thereby

Leontopolis stayed in power in their kingdoms. It is true that Piankhly left Egypt, never to return. For kings in Hermopolis (Pedinomyt/Pedi’anty) see further Kitchen, THIP 583.

Sennacherib explicitly mentions the sons of the Egyptian Delta rulers (mardī šarrān) in the account of his war against the Egyptians and Kushites at Eltekeh. See Kitchen, THIP 157.

J. A. Spalinger, Or 43, 317. For other local “kings” see Kitchen, THIP 145-147. For a local Tanite dynasty see Kitchen, THIP xxvi-xxvii (Pedubast-sehetepibenne, Gemenefkhonsbak, Neferkare).


38 According to the chronology proposed in this article. This sale occurred several months after the Shilkaní tribute affair.


39 Bocchoris was the last king of the Saite 24th Dynasty; see Kitchen, THIP 376-377.

40 J. Vercoutter, “L’ingénieuse royale indépendante du Sérapéum”, MDAIK 16 (1958) 341. The month and day can be determined with precision. The dating of the year is uncertain. According to Vercoutter the interment of the Apis bull occurred in 710/9 (J. Vercoutter, “The Napatan Kings and Apis Worship”, Kho 8 (1966) 65-68). Cf. Redford, JARCE 22, 7-9. Redford dates the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka to February 711 BC. According to the chronology proposed in this paper, the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka occurred in February 720 BC. The death of the Apis bull occurred on hit sp 5 tbd 2 smw, sw 29 which in 720 BC would have fallen on 15 December 720. His interment would have fallen on hit sp 5 tpy iht sw 6 = 25 February.


bringing an end to the 24th Saite Dynasty. As noted by Vercoutter, this is confirmed by the fact that the same Apis burial was also commemorated in a text dated to year 2 of Shabaka. The inclusion of such a text shows that Shabaka must have held authority in Memphis before the burial chamber was sealed, i.e., shortly after Bocchoris’ inscriptions commemorating the same event were written.

We can thus determine that Shabaka conquered Egypt in his second year of reign (720 BC) and with greater precision even date the conquest of Memphis to February 720 or shortly before 25 February 720 BC. Shabaka ruled fourteen years over Egypt as sole ruler.

2.2 The war between Sargon II and Re’u “the Tartan of Egypt” in 720 BC

At the end of 722 or early 721 BC, Sargon II usurped the throne of Assyria. Hanun, king of Gaza, joined a Syro-Palestinian rebellion headed by the king of Hamath and supported by Egypt. The Assyrian documents state that the Egyptian king sent Re’u, his Tartan to help Hanun. By late spring or summer 720 BC Sargon II crushed the coalition and turned south towards Raphia, where he fought the Egyptian officer in a pitched battle. The Assyrian account sarcastically claims, that the defeated Re’u “fled like a shepherd (rē’ū in Akkadian), whose flock had been stolen”. The Egyptian army retreated, Raphia was conquered and 9,033 of its inhabitants exiled, Hanun was captured and Gaza again became a vassal city.

It has been variously suggested that Re’u was either a commander of Osorkon IV of Tanis, of Tefnakht of Sais, of Piankhly king of Kush and Upper Egypt, or that he was a commander of a mercenary army, or Shabaka himself as commander of the army of Piankhly.


38 Vercoutter, Kho 8, 65-68. Cf. Redford, JARCE 22, 7-9. Redford dates the conquest of Egypt by Shabaka to February 711 BC. He points out that in the stela erected in Bocchoris’ sixth year, the year date is abruptly inserted in the text, or added hastily as an afterthought. Other stelae from the same burial lack both date and reference to the king.


40 Kitchen, THIP 373, n. 743; Spalinger, JARCE 10, 95. Spalinger identifies Re’u with “an army commander for a Delta princecling, a rather insignificant antagonist for Sargon”.


44 H. von Zeisl, Athiopen und Assyrier in Agypten (Glickstadt 1944) 19 ff.
ka\(^6\) and Tajaran\(^{26}\), although the division of power and authority between the Kushite and the Egyptian kings remains to be explained.

Possible indirect testimony to the events of 716 bc in Egypt can cautiously be inferred from papyrus Louvre E. 3228c, originating from Thebes\(^{51}\). It pertains to the sale of 'a man of the north' (rm[t \_m-hty] named \(\text{drt.w-r-\text{ty}}\) in year 7 of Shabaka (715 bc)\(^3\) (and again in years 2 and 6 of Tahrirqa). It has been argued that \(\text{drt.w-r-\text{ty}}\) was a prisoner of war because of the absence of filiation in his name\(^{51}\). If this observation is correct, it might be interpreted as evidence for a punitive campaign against Shilkani, who deviated from the anti-Assyrian policy of his overlord. Shilkani (Osorkon IV) disappeared from view and was probably deposed from kingship.

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\(^{26}\) J. A. Spalinger, \(\text{Or 43, 317}\). For other local ‘kings’ see Kitchen, \(\text{THIP 143-147}\). For a local Tanite dynasty see Kitchen, \(\text{THIP xxvi-xxvii}\) (Pedubast-sehetepibre, Gemenefkhonsbak, Neferekare).\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) M. Malinine, “\text{Un jugement rendu \text{\`a} Thèbes sous la XXVI\text{\`e} dynastie},” \(\text{RdE 6 (1951) 157 ff.}\)

\(^{17}\) According to the chronology proposed in this article. This sale occurred several months after the Shilkani tribute affair.

\(^{18}\) See Malamine, \(\text{RdE 6, 165, n. 19, S. P. Vereyng}, \\text{\"The Salse of a Slave in the Time of Pharaoh \text{\`P}.\text{\`}}, \) \(\text{OMRO 61 (1980) 14, n. 45; Depuydt, JEA 79, 273}\).

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\(^{18}\) M. Malinine – J. Vercocher, \(\text{Catalogue des \text{\`et\`el\`e}s du \text{\`htrp\`em} de Memphis}\) (Paris 1968) 84; No. 102. line 6; Redford, \(\text{JARC 22, 6-9}\).

\(^{18}\) J. von Beckerath, \(\text{Chronologie des pharaonischen \text{\`e}gypten}\) (Mainz am Rhein 1997) 198-199.

The first conquest of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25 bringing an end to the 24th Saite Dynasty\(^{57}\). As noted by Vercocher, this is confirmed by the fact that the same Apis burial was also commemorated in a text dated to year 2 of Shabaka. The inclusion of such a text shows that Shabaka must have held authority in Memphis before the burial chamber was sealed, i.e., shortly after Bocchoris’ inscriptions commemorating the same event were written\(^{28}\).

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\(^{57}\) W. G. Waddell (trans.), \(\text{Manetho (London 1956) 165-169};\) Spalinger, \(\text{JARC 10. 96};\) Kitchen, \(\text{THIP 376-377}\).

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\(^{29}\) Annals, lines 23-57 (Fuchs, \\text{Die Inschriften 89-90, 314 ff}). Cf. Tadmor, JCS 12, 38; idem \(\text{BA 29, 91};\) C. J. Gadd, “\text{\text{\`I}nscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud},” \(\text{Iraq 16 (1954) 179-180}\).

\(^{30}\) Kitchen, \(\text{THIP 375, n. 743};\) Spalinger, \(\text{JARC 10, 95}\). Spalinger identifies Re’u with “an army commander for a Delta princecling, a rather insignificant antagonist for Sargon”.

\(^{31}\) D. B. Redford, \(\text{Egyp, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times}\) (Princeton 1992) 346 ff.

\(^{62}\) N. Naaman, “\text{The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 bc)},” \(\text{Biblica 71 (1990) 217-218}\).

\(^{33}\) A. R. Schluinman, “\text{Kings, Chronicles and Egyptian Mercenaries},” \(\text{BES 5 (1983) 133}\).

\(^{34}\) H. von Zeist, \(\text{"Ahiyen and Assyryr in \text{\`e}gypten}\) (Gie\text{\`nstadt 1944) 19 ff.}\)
The reliefs discovered in Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad record the Assyrian campaign of 720 BC. One of the reliefs shows foreign infantry soldiers in retreat from the Assyrian cavalry. Although the reliefs are damaged, one foe has retained facial features which art historians identify as Upper Nile Nubian: a beardless face with a broad, blunt nose and small tight curls covering the head.

According to the chronological scheme proposed here, there is no need to identify the Kushite soldiers that appear on the battlefield in Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad as either mercenaries or Egyptians (their features are pure Kushite), nor to view the reliefs as anachronistic.

Accepting February 720 as the date of Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt (see above, 2.1), we must identify Re’u, the Tartan of Egypt, who fought against Sargon II at Raphia in summer 720 BC, with Shabaka’s commander.

Fig. 1 - Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad, Slab 4, lower register:
The Brook of Egypt and the pitched battle between Kushites and Assyrians

The discussion in Parts 1 and 2 suggest the following reconstruction of the historical and political events of the period:

In 722/1 BC Pianky died after a reign of about thirty-three years. His younger brother Shabaka succeeded him on the throne of Kush and conquered Egypt in February 720 BC by the beginning of his second year of reign. In the spring of 720 BC his commander-in-chief, Re’u, fought a pitched battle against the Assyrian army near Raphia and according to the Assyrian accounts was defeated. Shabaka maintained a hostile policy towards Assyria until his death. In 716 BC Osorkon IV, king of Babasitis, contacted Sargon II and strengthened his political and economic ties with him. At this point, it is not clear if Osorkon’s actions were made possible by Shabaka’s being weakened as a result of the defeat in 720 or took place with the latter’s (tacit) consent. It seems to me that Osorkon IV looked for help from Sargon, and was immediately punished by Shabaka and deposed. In any case, in 712 Iamani’s revolt against Assyria failed and he fled to Sargon’s opponent, Shabaka, not to Sargon’s ally, Osorkon IV. Iamani received asylum from Shabaka until the latter’s death, which occurred shortly after the 24th of November 707 BC. Within months of his ascension to the throne, Shabaka changed his predecessor’s hostile policy towards Assyria and, as a gesture of good will, extradited Iamani to Sargon. The sudden death of Sargon in battle (705 BC) ignited a massive revolt throughout the entire Assyrian empire. Shabatka took advantage of this situation and attempted to gain power in the Levant. When Sennacherib, Sargon’s heir to the throne of Assyria, was finally able in 701 BC to turn his attention to the revolt in the West, he opposed Shabatka’s forces in battle at Eltekeh. The inconclusive results of this battle preserved the status quo between the two Empires in the region.

In the following parts we will discuss the influence of the proposed chronology on our understanding of earlier contacts between Egypt and the Levant.

3 The year 726 BC and Hoshea’s appeal to Swi, king of Egypt

Dating the fall of the 24th Dynasty to the beginning of 720 BC would mean that according to the predating system, Bocchoris ascended the Saite throne between 20 February 725 and 19 February 724 BC. In the book of II Kings 17 we hear of an embassy sent to Egypt by the last king of Samaria to seek aid against the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (727-722 BC):

“(3) Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against him (scil. Hoshea, king of Israel 732/1-724 BC), and Hoshea became his vassal and rendered him...
The reliefs discovered in Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad record the Assyrian campaign of 720 BC. One of the reliefs shows foreign infantry soldiers in retreat from the Assyrian cavalry. Although the reliefs are damaged, one foe has retained facial features which art historians identify as Upper Nile Nubian: a beardless face with a broad, blunt nose and small tight curls covering the head.

According to the chronological scheme proposed here, there is no need to identify the Kushite soldiers that appear on the battlefield in Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad as either mercenaries or Egyptians (their features are pure Kushite), nor to view the reliefs as anachronistic.

Accepting February 720 as the date of Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt (see above, 2.1), we must identify Re’u, the Tartan of Egypt, who fought against Sargon II at Raphia in summer 720 BC, with Shabaka’s commander.

Fig. 1 - Room V of Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad, Slab 4, lower register:
The Brook of Egypt and the pitched battle between Kushites and Assyrians

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“(3) Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against him (scil. Hoshea, king of Israel 732/1-724 BC), and Hoshea became his vassal and rendered him
tribute. But when the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was part of a conspiracy, for he had sent envoys to Sw' (ܢܐ) king of Egypt and withheld the yearly tribute to the king of Assyria, the king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison" (II Kings 17: 3-4).

There is no scholarly consensus about the date of Hoshea's embassy to Sw' king of Egypt. Kitchen, Hayes and Kuan date this event to 726-725 BC,67 Cogan and Tadmor date it to 725 BC,68 whereas Na'aman,69 Christiansen70 and Spalinger71 propose 724 BC. Much has been written on the identity of the Egyptian king, Sw' is a proper name and Egyptian sources provide no likely candidates.72 If we accept the year 726 or the beginning of 725 as the date of Hoshea's appeal for aid, we should identify on historical grounds Sw' with Tefnakht, ruler of Sais and father (?) and predecessor of Bocchoris, and date the embassy by Hoshea to his last year of reign, or to the first year of Bocchoris' reign.

Diodorus reports that: "Tnephachthos (father of Bocchoris the wise) was king and had marched to Arabia, where provisions failed him in the rough and desolate terrain, he was forced by necessity to sup one day at the extremely poor abode of some ordinary common citizens."73 In classical sources Arabia designates the area stretching east of the Nile, from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, the northern Sinai and parts of southern Palestine. If the identification of Tefnakht with Sw' is correct, Diodorus' account may possibly refer to an unsuccessful attempt by the Egyptian king to respond to Hoshea's appeal.

4 The events of 734-733 BC:
The conquest of Egypt by Pt(ankh)y and the Kingship of Tefnakht

4.1 Tefnakht, Chief of the Meshwesh, opposes Piankh, King of Nubia (734 BC)74

The inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25

In 1862, during excavations of Gebel Barkal, near the fourth cataract of the Nile, a victory stela of the Kushite ruler Pt(ankh)y was unearthed.75 The stela describes the campaign in the twentieth year of Pt(ankh)y's reign to conquer Northern Egypt and to stop the southward advance of Tefnakht, Chief of the Meshwesh. Piankh succeeded in conquering Middle Egypt and arrived at Memphis in the inundation of the Nile (between July and late September).76 According to Pt(ankh)y's own report, Tefnakht fled from Memphis before it was conquered in one day by the Kushite troops "like a cloudburst" (Piankh Stela 1. 89). Piankh finally subdued the Eastern Delta, but he failed to defeat Tefnakht decisively. Tefnakht found refuge on an island in the marshes of the Delta or the Mediterranean Sea (Piankh Stela lines 129-130).77 Kitchen sums up the result of the struggle between Piankh and Tefnakht as follows: "Tefnakht had to admit defeat, and sent a messenger to announce his submission. In sharp contrast to all the rest (of the Egyptian rulers D.K.), he did not come and submit to Piankh in person, but stayed proudly aloof in his own capital of Sais."78

4.2 The kingship of Tefnakht, king of Sais (733-726/5 BC)

According to Kitchen, Piankh returned to distant Nubia shortly after the end of the campaign. Filling the power vacuum created by Piankh's departure, Tefnakht proclaimed himself king and ruled in the Delta until his death.79

A donation stela, presently in the Museum of Athens, is dated to Shespes-Re Tefnakht's year 8, indicating at least seven full years of reign. Thus, it is possible to set Tefnakht's accession in 733 BC. Another stela bearing his name, now in the Michalides Collection, mentions a donation of fields at the eastern edge of the Delta, approximately nine km. northeast of Bubastis. This suggests that Tefnakht ruled as king over the entire Del-

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69 Na'aman, Biblica 71, 216.
70 D. L. Christiansen, "The Identity of 'King So' in Egypt (2 Kings XVII 4)", VT 39 (1989) 141.
71 Spalinger, JANACE 10, 99.
72 For the most recent study on the subject see A. R. W. Green, "The Identity of King So of Egypt - An Alternative Interpretation", JNES 52 (1993) 99-108 and earlier bibliography cited there.
73 Diodorus Siculus, Diodorus on Egypt (Murphy E. trans.), part II, 45.
74 Epit'ah, The Ancient Arabs 193-197.
75 Kitchen, ThIP 365.
77 For dating the end of Tefnakht's reign and the accession of Bocchoris at 725 BC see above part 3. For Tefnakht's adoption of royal titles see D. Kahn, GM 173, 123-125.
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4.3 The contacts between Assyria and Nubia in 734 bc

According to the Eponym Chronicle, Tiglath-pileser conducted a campaign against the coast of Philistia most probably by late spring or summer 734 bc. Why did Tiglath-pileser move so far as Gaza in 734 bc?

Na'amah believes that Tiglath-pileser campaigned to the Egyptian border in order to block the possible advance of Egyptian troops to the coast of Philistia to come to the aid of an anti-Assyrian alliance of Damascus, Tyre, Israel, Gaza and the Arabs. There is no solid evidence of Egypt's active involvement in the anti-Assyrian coalition, but it can be deduced from changes in Assyrian policy towards Egypt. Several of Tiglath-pileser's summary inscriptions mention a campaign against Gaza that resulted in the flight of Hanun, king of Gaza, to Egypt. Having failed, he eventually returned to his city and was reinstated as king under Assyrian vassalage.

Tiglath-pileser advanced south and set up a stela to mark the southernmost limit of his empire establishing a border with Egypt at the "Brook of Egypt", conventionally identified with Wadi el-Arish. He founded a bit kārī customs station/harbor for trade with Egypt, and records the sending of envoy from Egypt(?!) to the Assyrian court. Thus, Tadmor conjectured that the first campaign to Philistia in 734 was largely motivated by the Assyrian aim of dominating the Mediterranean seaports and gaining control over their commerce. The founding of the bit kārī would have occurred several weeks or months after Tiglath-pileser arrived at the border of Egypt, enabling Pianky to defeat Tefnakht, subdue the Eastern Delta and initiate trade contacts with Assyria. This would explain how Kushites were mentioned as early as c. 732 bc in Assyrian administrative records as receiving wine rations at the royal capital. Dalley suggests that these Kushites were involved in horse trade. Kushite trade with Assyria would have been difficult (but not impossible) with Egypt as a hostile intermediary.

The Pianky Stela complements the Assyrian records. Products of Ḥīrw (Syria) and Ṭi nṯr (the coast of Phoenicia) are referred to in the description of Pianky's return to Kush: "Then the ships were loaded with silver, gold, copper and clothing; everything of Lower Egypt, every product of Syria (Ḥīrw), and all plants of God's land (Ṭi nṯr)" (Pianky Stela 1. 154). This reference implies the existence of Kushite trade contacts with these lands under Assyrian domination at the end of 734 bc.

A letter to the Assyrian king from the Assyrian high official Qurdi-Ashur-lamur (ND 2715 obv. 26-27), records the orders given by the high official to the inhabitants of Sidon not to sell timber from the Lebanon to the Egyptians and Philistines. Curiously enough, this prohibition dates almost certainly to the years 734-732 bc, from the period when the Assyrian emporium (bit kārī) was established at the border of Egypt, and Egyptians and Assyrians were supposed to trade freely. It can be explained as an Assyrian embargo or supervision on the trade in strategic commodities, but I prefer to explain it as a reaction to the sudden return to power in the

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47 We can find only circumstantial and indirect evidence for a possible Egyptian involvement in the rebellion of 734 bc. According to Diodorus Siculus II, 45 Thespisidhos (probably a corruption of Tefnakht) marched into Arabia, where provisions failed him in the rough and desolate terrain. This might suggest that Tefnakht was involved in Arabia. For another time-setting for this episode, see above, Part 3.
48 One can interpret Hanun's flight to Egypt as a sign of Egyptian involvement in an anti-Assyrian coalition. However this is not necessarily so. It is possible that Hanun fled to Egypt only to save his skin. Cf. C. S. Ehrlich, "Coalition Politics in Eighth Century ace Palestine: The Philistines and the Syro-Ephraimitic War", ZDPV 107 (1991) 55.
49 According to the chronology proposed in this study, Hanun fled to Tefnakht's court at the advance of the Assyrian army in late spring 734 bc, several months before Piankyh conquered Memphis (between July and late September), subdued the Delta and defeated Tefnakht. When Hanun realized that his protector was about to be defeated, he returned to Gaza.

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Orientalia – 2
ta. In contrast to Kitchen’s chronology, however, I propose dating Piankhy’s campaign to 734 BC, thus the ensuing reign of Tefnakht lasted until 726/5.

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* Eph’al, The Ancient Arabs 91. CF. N. Na’aman, Tel Aviv 6, 68-94.
Delta of the anti-Assyrian Tefnakht after the Kushite ally Piankhy returned to his homeland.

Conclusion

The new information preserved in line 20 of the Tang-i Var inscription of Sargon II allows us to reconsider the relations between Kush, Egypt and Assyria between the years 734-701 BC and to reconstruct the course of events as follows:

753 BC Accession of Piankhy in Kush
734 BC Tefnakht involved(?) in anti-Assyrian coalition
Piankhy’s campaign against Tefnakht starts in February
Tiglath-pileser’s campaign against Philistia in late spring or summer
Defeat of Tefnakht by Piankhy in late summer or autumn
The establishment of an Assyrian trading post with Egypt at the Brook of Egypt

733 BC Tefnakht assumes royal titles and reigns for eight years
Assyrian embargo on trade with Philistia and Egypt

726/5 BC Death of Tefnakht (year 8)
Accession of Bocchoris (year 1)
Embassy of Hoshea King of Israel to “Sw’ king of Egypt”

721 BC Death of Piankhy
Accession of Shabaka to the throne of Kush

720 BC Year 6 of Bocchoris = Year 2 of Shabaka
February 720: Shabaka’s conquest of Egypt
Late spring/summer 720: Sargon II defeats Re’u the tartan of Egypt

716 BC Shilkani, king of Egypt (Osorkon IV) sends tribute to Sargon II
712 BC The flight of Iamani, king of Ashdod, to the border of Kush

707/6 BC Accession of Shabatka in Kush
Extradition of Iamani to Sargon

701 BC Shabatka summons Taharqa to fight against Sennacherib.

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Der Assur-Katalog der Serie enūma anu enil (EAE)*

Jeanette C. Fincke


Bei der fraglichen Tafel handelt es sich um einen in neuassyrischem Duktus geschriebenen Katalog, der sich in den erhaltenen Passagen auf die astrologische Omenserie enūma anu enil “Als Anu (und) Enil ...” (EAE) und auf die terrestriache Omenserie summa ālu ina mêlé šakin “Wenn eine Stadt auf einer Anhöhe errichtet ist, ...” (kurz: summa ālu) bezieht. Der Katalog beginnt in der ersten Kolumne mit dem Zitat der Incipits der einzelnen Tafeln der Serie EAE zusammen mit ihren Tafelnnummern und schließt daran die Incipits der serienfremden Tafeln (IM,GID,DA,MES BAR,MEŠ) astrologischen Inhalts an2. Diese Liste wird in


