

**A Note on the Chronology of Dynasty 25  
and the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var**

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Lines 19 to 21 of the above inscription, with the new evidence they contain on matters Egyptian, will be of more than passing interest to scholars. It cannot now be doubted (a) that Shebitku (*Šá-pa-ta-ku-ʿu*<sup>11</sup>), as *šar Meluhha*, was known to Assyrian scribes before the accession of Sennacherib, and (b) that it was Shebitku, not Shabaka, that extradited Yamani to Assyria<sup>2</sup>. The death of Sargon II is now the *terminus ante quem* for the appearance of Shebitku with a title indicating the status of a head of state. Since the stela most probably was inscribed in Sargon's final year (see above), the extradition of Yamani could have taken place as late as 706-705 B.C.

In spite of scholarly activity in recent years in trying to resolve the outstanding issues, the chronology of the 24th and 25th Dynasties before Taharqa's accession remains problematical. In the virtual absence of dated texts from his reign, estimates of the accession date of Shebitku have ranged widely in the literature: 695 B.C.<sup>3</sup>, 699 B.C.<sup>4</sup>, 701 B.C.<sup>5</sup>, 702 B.C.<sup>6</sup>. The new information makes it possible to re-open the question of the trustworthiness of the versions of the *Epitome* of Manetho on Dyn. 25. It

<sup>1</sup> The reading, Dr. Frame assures me, is not in doubt. In later transmission the name *Št-bi-t-ki* has undergone a confusing garbling, becoming *Σεβτιχος* in Manetho (Waddell, *Manetho* [LCL 1940] 166), *Σεθός* in Herodotus (A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: A Commentary* [Leiden 1988] 100) and *בבדא* in Hebrew (Gen. 10:6, cf. M. Astour, "Sabta and Sabteca", *JBL* 84 [1965] 422-25). The Akkadian might suggest the Hebrew is close to the original pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> It has usually been assumed that Shabaka did this: cf. T. G. H. James, *CAH* III/2 (Cambridge 1991) 692.

<sup>3</sup> A. Burton, *Diodorus Siculus Book I: A Commentary* (Leiden 1972) 194.

<sup>4</sup> D. B. Redford, "Sais and the Kushite Invasions of the Eighth Century B.C.", *JARCE* 22 (1985) 13.

<sup>5</sup> J. Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXV<sup>e</sup> Dynastie dite éthiopienne* (Cairo 1965) xxv and n. 1 for references; A. B. Lloyd, op. cit. (note 1) 99; P. L. Shinnie, *Ancient Nubia* (London/New York 1996) 104.

<sup>6</sup> H. von Zeissl, *Aethiopen und Assyrer in Aegypten* (Glückstadt/Hamburg 1944) 27 (basing herself on Eusebius); K. A. Kitchen, "Egyptian Chronology in the Third Intermediate Period", *RdE* 34 (1982-83) 69; Leclant, "Schabataka", *LdA* V (1984) 514-20 and n. 1 ("une douzaine d'années"); M. Cogan, H. Tadmor, *II Kings* (Anchor Bible v. 11; New York 1988) 343; James, *CAH* III/2, 693; N. C. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford 1992) 344-46.

would now appear that, as in so many cases, Africanus's version (14 years) is to be preferred to that of Eusebius (12 years)<sup>7</sup>.

The as yet intractable problem in the chronology of the 25th Dynasty is the length of Shabaka's reign and, now in particular, the date of his death. Dated texts, almost all with an Egyptian provenience<sup>8</sup>, range from year 2 through years 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13 and 14, ending with the British Museum cube statue dated to year 15<sup>9</sup>. If Shabaka maintained the same sequence of regnal years from his accession, presumably on the death of Pi(ankh)y, and did not associate Shebitku with him as coregent, then the new evidence would oblige us to place his accession no later than 720 B.C., and possibly higher according as his reign exceeded 15 years. His conquest of Egypt, clearly accomplished by his year 2, and the consequent termination of the 24th Dynasty, could have fallen no later than 719 B.C. But this presents a major difficulty. For the decade preceding 713/12 B.C. the Assyrian and Biblical records contain several allusions to Egyptian rulers<sup>10</sup>, but none of them can be interpreted as allusion to a *Kushite* king ruling over *Egypt*. The individuals referred to must, in fact, be the ephemeral or otherwise unidentified rulers belonging to pre-25th Dynasty regimes. The implication, then, is that as late as 713 B.C., when Yamani sought aid from *Pir'u*, Shabaka's invasion had not yet taken place. It follows that Shabaka year 1 must fall in or after 713 B.C.<sup>11</sup>, and his 15th in or after 699 B.C.

One solution might be to resuscitate the old theory of a "coregency" between Shabaka and Shebitku, although in the past such a notion has won

<sup>7</sup> Counting back from 691 as his last full year. Africanus's "14" will have represented a rounding-down of a figure recording year total + calendric notation. The dependence of Eusebius on Africanus, and the generally inferior nature of his transmission, has long been known: cf. H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* (Leipzig 1898) II 23-24, 196-98.

<sup>8</sup> See J. Leclant, "Égypte et Koush: la XXV<sup>e</sup> dynastie dite 'éthiopienne' et la Ire dynastie de Napata", *Annuaire du Collège de France 1981-82* (Paris) 505; *ibid.* 1982-83, 529; J. Quaegebeur, "A propos de l'identification de la 'Kadytis' d'Hérodote avec la ville de Gaza", in: K. van Leberghe and A. Schoors (eds), *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 65 (Leuven 1995) 259-60.

<sup>9</sup> BM 24429: H. Gauthier, *Le livre des rois* IV, 14; J. Černý, "Philological and Etymological Notes, III. 6. Age of the Egyptian month names", *ASAE* 51 (1951) 441-42.

<sup>10</sup> On *So'* (II Kings 17:4; c. 724 B.C.), see now J. Gay, "The Problem of 'So King of Egypt' in 2 Kings xvii, 4", *VT* 42 (1992) 289-30; On *Silkanni* (c. 716 B.C.) see Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton 1992) 347; on *Pir'u šar Misrayim* (c. 713 B.C.), see N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on His Campaign to Judah", *BASOR* 214 (1974) 32 and n. 29 (sources). This last is clearly a reference to an *Egyptian* ruler: Assyrian scribes of the period distinguish clearly between Egyptian pharaohs (*Pir'u*) and kings of Kush (*šar Meluhha*): Spalinger, "The Year 712 B.C. and its Implications for Egyptian History", *JARCE* 10, (1976), 100 and n. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Redford, *JARCE* 22, 6-9. A date of 715 B.C. for Shabaka's conquest of Egypt, which is still encountered in some texts, is clearly impossible: cf. D. O'Connor, "New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, 1552-664 B.C.", in *Ancient Egypt: a Social History* (Cambridge 1983) 243; D. Valbelle, *L'état et les institutions en Égypte des premiers pharaons aux empereurs romains* (Paris 1992) 338.

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only half-hearted acceptance<sup>12</sup>. One is struck by the fact that, while Shabaka's dated texts (in the main private documents from the business community or the chancery, and therefore liable to date by the years of the regime in power) are relatively plentiful from the Thebaid to the Delta<sup>13</sup>, Shebitku's are conspicuous by their absence. Only the year 3 graffito from the Karnak quay<sup>14</sup> is a clearly attested text germane to the problem of a coregency<sup>15</sup>. It is conceivable that, with Shabaka's conquest of the lower Nile valley and the subsequent removal of the royal administration to Memphis, the conqueror had created the necessity of a bifurcation in the government of his vast dominion. While his own reign provided the dating scheme, Shabaka had, by his 8th year, realized the need to separate off the administration of the Kushite heartland; and this he assigned to his nephew Shebitku, complete with the trappings of kingship. One of the latter's initial acts would have been the extradition of Yamani who, as the text says, had fled *ana pāt Meluḥḥa*, and had been living there ever since.

The above is suggested with a diffidence born of the knowledge of how spotty is our historical record of the period in question. A number of other solutions are conceivable, and undoubtedly will be trotted out in due time. But it is difficult now to deny that already in 705 B.C. Shebitku was a power-holder whose name could be attached to as important a policy decision as extradition.

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<sup>12</sup> W. J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies* (Chicago 1977) 189-90; Redford, review of W. J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies*, *JEA* 69 (1983) 183; Kitchen, *RdE* 34, 67. The term as used to-day sometimes refers to parallel reigns with overlapping regnal years (rare), but also, confusingly, to the phenomenon of a second contemporary king with royal regalia and status. The latter is attested more commonly, and is tied in to legitimation: A. Schaefer, "Zur Entstehung der Mitregentschaft als Legitimationsprinzip von Herrschaft", *ZAS* 113 (1986) 44-55. The former kind of "coregency" constitutes one of the ongoing problems of the Middle Kingdom: see J. von Beckerath, "Die Chronologie der XII. Dynastie und das Problem der Behandlung gleichzeitiger Regierungen in der ägyptischen Überlieferung", *SAK* 4 (1976) 43 ff.; R. D. Delia, "Doubts about Double Dates and Coregencies", *BES* 4 (1982) 55-70; D. Lorton, "Terms of Coregency in the Middle Kingdom", *VA* 2 (1986) 113-20; C. Obsomer, *Sésostriis I<sup>er</sup>: étude chronologique et historique du règne* (Paris 1995) 137-47.

<sup>13</sup> Above, notes 8 and 9.

<sup>14</sup> J. von Beckerath, "The Nile Level Records at Karnak and their Importance for the History of the Libyan Period (Dynasties XXII-XXIII)", *JARCE* 5 (1965) 53 no. 33.

<sup>15</sup> If Shabaka passed away in 699 B.C., Shebitku would have enjoyed 9 years of sole rule, dying in his 10th, or the 15th since his elevation to authority in Kush. It has been claimed that a stela from Parbaethos (MMA 65.45; see F. Gomaa, *Die libyschen Fürstentümer des Deltas* [Wiesbaden 1974] 98 and n. 27) contains a date in year 10 (Leclant, *LdA* V, 515); but in fact that part of the stela where the date was carved is now broken.

## Zum Text des Taqagalayaš-Briefes: Aḥḥijawa-Frage und Textkritik \*

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### I.

Das aussagekräftigste Dokument im Corpus der hethitischen Texte betreffend Aḥḥijawa ist ohne jeden Zweifel der Taqagalayaš-Brief, den wir nach einer der wichtigsten in ihm vorkommenden Personen benennen. Der Informationsgehalt dieses Briefes, welchen, wie endlich klar ist, der hethitische König Ḫattušiliš III. um die Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts an seinen Widerpart in Aḥḥijawa schrieb, überbietet all das, was wir aus anderen Texten über Aḥḥijawa erfahren, das ja ein mykenischer Staat gewesen sein soll. Es überrascht also nicht, daß rund die Hälfte von Ferdinand Sommers Buch über die sogenannten Aḥḥijawa-Urkunden allein dem Taqagalayaš-Brief gewidmet ist<sup>1</sup>. Auch wenn Sommer in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit Emil Forrer in der Hauptsache wohl Unrecht hatte, so bleibt sein Buch trotz allem als Monument höchster philologischer Gelehrsamkeit bestehen. Sommers Verdienste um das Hethitische sind über jeden Zweifel erhaben, und wir tragen diesem Umstand Rechnung, indem wir noch heute nach seiner Edition der Aḥḥijawa-Texte zitieren.

\* Dieser Aufsatz stellt die überarbeitete Fassung eines Vortrages dar, den ich an den Universitäten Heidelberg und Göttingen zu Beginn des Jahres 1997 hielt. Ob ihrer hilfreichen Kommentare bin ich den Herren Prof. F. Gschnitzer, W.-D. Niemeier, K. Deller (Heidelberg) und G. A. Lehmann (Göttingen) sehr zu Dank verpflichtet. Der Vortrag seinerseits ging aus einer im Wintersemester 1994-95 am Heidelberger Seminar für Alte Geschichte abgehaltenen Lehrveranstaltung zur hethitischen Geschichte hervor. — Der sprachlichen Korrektur des Textes nahmen sich meine Freunde Dr. Wolfgang Blösel und Hilmar Klinkott, M.A., dankenswerterweise an. Verbleibende Fehler mögen aber mir allein zur Last gelegt werden.

<sup>1</sup> F. Sommer, *Die Aḥḥijawa-Urkunden* (ABAW, N.F. 6; 1932) bestritt vehement die von Forrer aufgestellte Gleichung von Aḥḥijawa mit dem mykenischen Griechenland (E. O. Forrer, "Vorhomerische Griechen in den Keilschrifttexten von Boghazköi", *MDOG* 63 [1924] 1-22; "Die Griechen in den Boghazköi-Texten", *OLZ* 27 (1924) 113-118). Die meisten Forscher sind heute eher geneigt, Forrers Gleichung — mit gewissen Einschränkungen — zu akzeptieren. Anders aber vor allem G. Steiner, "Die Aḥḥijawa-Frage heute", *Saeculum* 15 (1964) 365-392, und "Neue Überlegungen zur Aḥḥijawa-Frage", *Türk Tarih Kongressi* 10.2 (Ankara 1990) 523-530. Meinen eigenen Standpunkt habe ich an folgenden Orten dargetan: "Die Aḥḥijawa-Frage: Hethitisch-mykenische Beziehungen", im Band *Griechische Geschichte des Handbuchs der Altertumswissenschaften* (im Druck) und "Zu den Mykenäern in Westanatolien: Aḥḥijawa und (noch) kein Ende" (im Druck). Dort weitere Bibliographie. In aller Kürze: das hethitische Aḥḥijawa ist einer der mykenischen Staaten.