COMMENTATIONES

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

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G. Frame recently republished a rock inscription and relief of Sargon II[1], discovered in the Tang-i Var pass in Iran and originally published in Farsī in 1968[2]. The text mentions the rebellion of Iamani, 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 Iamani 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[3]. Lines 19-21 read as follows:

* 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.

[1] G. Frame, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 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, *Or* 68, 33, n. 2-5.

[3] Frame, ibid. 51; cf. H. Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study", *JCS* 12 (1958) 97. On the 12th of the month Abu Sennacherib ascended the throne.

> "(19) I (scil. Sargon) plundered the city of Ashdod. Iamani, its king, feared [my weapons] and ... He fled to the region of the land of Meluḫḫa and lived (there) stealthfully (literally: like a thief). (20) Shapataku' (Shabatka), king of the land of Meluḫḫa, heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Ashur, *Nabû*, (and) Marduk which *I had* [*demonstrated*] over all *lands*, ... (21) He put (Iamani) in manacles and handcuffs ... he had him brought captive into my presence."[4]

Shabatka's highest attested regnal year is year 3[5]. The estimates of the length of his reign vary between a minimum of three years[6] and a maximum of twelve years[7]. Proposals for his accession date have generally varied between 702 and 693 BC[8], dating the end of his reign to the accession of Taharqa in 690 BC[9].

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 Taharqa's texts from Kawa, Shabatka summoned his brothers – including Taharqa – to join him with an army to wage war in the North[10]. Kitchen argued that the policy of the Kushite kingdom towards Assyria changed from a neutral policy during Shabaka'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 expansionistic imperial titles[11].

[4] Frame, *Or* 68, 40.

[5] J. von Beckerath, "Die Nilstandsinschrift vom 3. Jahr Schebitkus am Kai von Karnak", *GM* 136 (1993) 7-9.

[6] L. Depuydt, "The Date of Piye's Egyptian Campaign and the Chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty", *JEA* 79 (1993) 270. According to Depuydt Shabatka reigned between 693-690 BC.

[7] 702-690 BC. K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)*, 2nd rev. ed. (Warminster 1986) 555-558, § 468-470; henceforth: *ThIP*. Cf. Redford, *Or* 68, 58.

[8] See notes 6, 7.

[9] Kitchen, *ThIP* 158-172.

[10] Cf. Kitchen, *ThIP* 154 ff.; idem, "Further Thoughts on Egyptian Chronology in the Third Intermediate Period", *RdE* 34 (1982-3) 65; idem, "Egypt, the Levant and Assyria in 701 BC", in: M. Görg (ed.), *Fontes atque Pontes*, Festschrift Hellmut Brunner (ÄUAT 5; Wiesbaden 1983) 245-246. Cf. A. F. Rainey, "Taharqa 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 (*ḫwn nfr*), a king's brother, pleasant of love. He came (8a) north to Thebes 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 for them from Nubia in order that the (Taharqa) might be (9a) there with him."

[11] Kitchen, *ThIP* 383; L. Török, in: T. Eide et al. (eds.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*, Vol. 1: *From the Eighth to the Mid-Fifth Century BC* (Bergen 1994) 125-127.

The Tang-i Var inscription allows us to identify with full certainty the Kushite king, whose armies opposed Sennacherib at the battle of Eltekeh in 701 BC as Shabatka[12].

In the following section I shall attempt to determine the *terminus post quem* for the accessions 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 Iamani to Sargon. This episode is also recorded several times in Sargon's inscriptions from Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad). According to the Great Display Inscription (Große Prunkinschrift) lines 95-112, and the Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV, lines 11-14, Iamani fled to Meluḫḫa (Kush). The King of Meluḫḫa (name not stated), subsequently overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of the gods Aššur, Nabû and Marduk, extradited Iamani to Sargon[13]. 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[14]. This means that Shabatka ascended the throne of Kush before Nisan (April) 706 BC[15].

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,

[12] Kitchen, *ThIP* 383-386. Cf. Herodotus II 141.

[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, "Šilkan(ḫe)ni, König von Muṣri, ein Zeitgenosse Sargons II.", *AfO* 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.

[14] 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) 27-47.

[15] We should also remember that several months elapsed between Iamani's extradition and his arrival at the Assyrian court and the recording of the event. Cf. Depuydt, *JEA* 79, 273.

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 Shabaka and Shabatka it would not allow us to determine the dates of Shabaka'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 between Shabaka and Shabatka

Kitchen suggested that Shabaka came to the throne in Kush in 717/6 BC and conquered Egypt in 716/5[16]. According to Kitchen's chronology, 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 Iamani of Ashdod rebelled against Assyria[17]. He attempted to muster support from local rulers and from Pir'u (Pharaoh), king of Egypt[18]. Nevertheless, when the Assyrians approached Ashdod in 712 BC, Iamani fled to Egypt, ending up at the border of Egypt with Kush[19]. He initially received asylum from the king of Kush, but was eventually sent back in shackles to Nineveh[20].

Spalinger noted that when Iamani fled to Egypt he did not meet "Pir'u of Egypt", whom he had contacted before, but went south to Upper

[16] K. A. Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy: Critical Studies in Old Testament Mythology, I", *JANES* 5 (1973) 225-233; idem, *ThIP* 143-144. The reason for preferring these dates is that in 716 BC Sargon, king of Assyria received a tribute of twelve horses from Shilkani (Osorkon), king of Egypt and not from Shabaka. According to Kitchen, Shabaka had not yet conquered Egypt in 716 BC.

[17] Tadmor, *JCS* 12, 79-84; idem, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule", *BA* 29 (1966) 94; A J. Spalinger, "The Year 712 BC and its Implications for Egyptian History", *JARCE* 10 (1973) 95-101. For the dating of these events to 711 BC cf. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften* 381-382; idem, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr.* (State Archives of Assyria Studies VIII; Helsinki 1998) 124-131; Frame, *Or* 68, 52-54.

[18] N. Na'aman, "Hezekiah and the Kings of Assyria", *Tel Aviv* 21 (1994) 239-240; cf. Fuchs, *Die Annalen* 73-74.

[19] *ana ité māt Muṣuri ša pāṭ māt Meluḫḫa innabitma* (Fuchs, *Die Inschriften* 220, l. 103). Kitchen, *ThIP* 583: "he (Iamani) fled to the border of Egypt of the territory of Meluḫḫa"; N. Na'aman, "The Brook of Egypt and Assyrian Policy on the Border of Egypt", *Tel Aviv* 6 (1979) 71-74. On line 19 of the Tang-i Var inscription Iamani fled to the region (*pāṭ*) of the land of Meluḫḫa.

[20] Kitchen, *ThIP* 379, n. 767. Shabaka issued a commemorative scarab to celebrate the suppression of a "revolt": "... He has slain those who rebelled against him in both South and North, and in every foreign land. The sand-dwellers (*ḫry.w-š*) [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 Iamani to Nubia. On the other hand, the scarab could conceivably "commemorate" the arrival of refugees from the Philistine Coast following the events of 720 BC.

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[21]. 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[22], 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**[23].

Kitchen, however, has pointed out that the Nubian rulers perceived themselves as legitimate Egyptian rulers from the beginning[24]. 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[25].

Redford[26] and Depuydt[27], moreover, have questioned the "anchor date", and have pointed out that Egypt was not yet entirely under Nubian

[21] Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 99-100. This conclusion can easily be refuted, since in 716 BC the ruling Dynast in the Delta, Osorkon IV, was on good terms with the Assyrian king and sent him a tribute of twelve horses (see below notes 42, 43). It would have been unwise of Iamani to flee from Sargon to an Egyptian king who had established good relations with Assyria. Cf. Jer. 26: 20-23.

[22] Shabaka ruled for at least fourteen full years. His last dated monument is from year 15, month of *Pa*i*ny* (*2 šmw*), day 11 i.e. eighty-four days before he completed fifteen full years. J. Černý, "Philological and Etymological Notes", *ASAE* 51 (1951) 441-446; J. Leclant, *Enquêtes sur les sacerdoces et les sanctuaires égyptiens à l'époque dite 'éthiopienne' (XXV^e Dynastie)* (BdE 17; Cairo 1964) 15-27.

[23] 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; Kitchen, *ThIP* xlii and 555-557; F. Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebitku", *Serapis* 6 (1980) 221-240. On pp. 228-229 Yurko suggests interpreting the figures given by three 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 ỉḫt 1* 701 until Shabaka's death in 698; cf. Kitchen's criticism (*ThIP* 554-555). The Manethonian evidence must now be refuted 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. Reford argues that Africanus' version (fourteen full years for Shabatka) is to be preferred to that of Eusebius (twelve years) and sets Shabatka's accession at 705 BC (ending his last full year in 691 BC). According to the Assyrian inscriptions Shabatka was king of Meluḫḫa in 706 BC at the latest, and thus ruled at least for fifteen full years.

[24] Kitchen, *ThIP* xlii.

[25] Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 100; idem, "Esarhaddon and Egypt: An Analysis of the First Invasion of Egypt", *Or* 43 (1974) 322-324. Cf. 2 Kings 18:21. Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is compared by Rab-shakeh with a splintered reed staff, though Pharaoh was actually Shabatka, king of Kush.

[26] Reford, *JARCE* 22, 5-9.

[27] Depuydt, *JEA* 79, 269-274. Cf. Kitchen, *ThIP* xxxix-xlii.

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[28], 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 3[29] 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 10[30] (*703! BC), and to year 15[31] (*698 BC) and originating from Thebes[32]. It is inconceivable that in a divided kingdom or during a co-regency, two rulers would simultaneously administer Thebes and use different dating methods.

[28] See n. 1.

[29] J. von Beckerath, *GM* 136, 7-9.

[30] P. Louvre 3228 e was written in Upper Egyptian abnormal hieratic script. Abd El-Mohsen Bakir, *Slavery in Pharaonic Egypt* (Cairo 1952) Pl. XIII-XIV; M. Malinine, *Choix de textes juridiques en hiératique "anormal" en démotique (XXV^e-XXVII^e dynasties)*, I (Paris 1953) 35-42; B. Menu, "Cessions de services et engagements pour dette sous les rois kouchites et saïtes", *RdE* 36 (1985) 76; J. Quaegebeur, "A propos de l'identification de la 'Kadytis' d'Hérodote avec la ville de Gaza", *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East*, Fs. E. Lipiński (OLA 65; 1995) 245-270.

[31] See note 22.

[32] Furthermore, Taharqa 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.

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 Taharqa, Piankhy's son. It states that:

> *[åst mwtå] m Tȝ sty m snt nswt bnr mrwt mwt nswt ('I-bȝ-rw) 'nḫ.tå ås grt ḥr.n.å ḥr.s(t) m ḥwn n 20 rnpt m åw n.å ḥn' ḥm.f r Tȝ mḥ.t*[33]
>
> "(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, Taharqa 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 Sennacherib's forces in 701 BC[34]. From this information we can deduce that Taharqa was born in the year 722/1 BC. Since Piankhy was the father of Taharqa[35], 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[36].

[33] My translation. Cf. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa* I 28; T. Eide et al., *Fontes* I 153-154.

[34] Kitchen, *RdE* 34 (above note 10) 65; F. J. Yurko, *Serapis* 6, 222-223, 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 at the latest. See also n. 10.

[35] Kitchen, *ThIP* 149, 165-166 and note 343. Kitchen does not agree that Taharqa was the youngest of the royal brothers (sons of Piankhy) as must be the case in this reconstruction.

[36] 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 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 *šmw* 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 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[37].

It was noted above that Piankhy 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 *Painy* (*2 šmw*), 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 Shabaka's accession to the year between 15th February 722 and 14th February 721. Shabaka 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[38]. 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 Shabaka's accession to 721[39]. The implications of this dating are as follows: between the end of November 707 and April 706 BC Shabaka 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.

[37] 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.

[38] See above note 34.

[39] 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. Cf. 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 (cf. E. F. Wente, "The Suppression of the High Priest Amenhotep", *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 Sargon[40].

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 Pir'u 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 substances[41]. Another inscription states that Shilkani (identified with Osorkon IV)[42], King of Muṣri (Egypt), gave Sargon a gift (*tāmartu*) of "12 great horses whose like did not exist in Assyria"[43]. Kitchen[44], Spalinger[45] and other scholars assumed that this event predated Shabaka's conquest, since it was Osorkon IV that dealt with the Assyrians and not Shabaka[46].

According to the chronology proposed in the present study, Osorkon IV gave Sargon the twelve great horses at the time when Shabaka was the recognized king of Egypt and monuments were being erected to him and dated to his reign in the Delta[47]. The phenomenon of a Kushite overlord with Egyptian vassal kings, however, is also documented in the reigns of Piankhy[48], Shabat-

[40] Frame, *Or* 68, 53.

[41] Tadmor, *JCS* 12, 78 notes a discrepancy of one year between the tribute of Shilkani (716 BC as preserved in VA 8424) and the tribute of Pir'u (715 BC in Khorsabad Ann. 123). Tadmor suggests that the scribe of the annals erred by one year in his dating. He identifies Pir'u with Shilkani and dates the tribute to 716 BC. Fuchs (*Die Annalen* 130-131) on the other hand, distinguishes between the two tributes and states that Shilkani paid tribute in 716 BC while Pir'u, who might be another ruler of Egypt, paid in 715 BC.

[42] W. F. Albright, "Further Synchronisms between Egypt and Asia in the Period 935-685 BC", *BASOR* 141 (1956) 24.

[43] Weidner, *AfO* 14, 40-53; Kitchen, *ThIP*, p. 376; Kitchen, *RdE* 34, 66, n. 38 (Pir'u is not identified with certainty, but probably was not Shabaka); I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th-5th Centuries B. C.* (Jerusalem 1982) 107-111, n. 371.

[44] Kitchen, *ThIP* 144.

[45] Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 97. 99.

[46] Kitchen, *ThIP* 144.

[47] Kitchen, *ThIP* 379. Year 2: Karnak, Pharbaitos; year 3: Sefeta/Zagazig (five kilometers south-west of Bubastis); year 6: Buto.

[48] T. Eide et al., *Fontes* I 59 (above note 11): Sandstone Stela of Piankhy from the Amun Temple at Napata lines 3-5. In the Wadi Gasus graffito the dates of two kings (without names) appear next to the names of the adoratress of the god, Amenirdis and God's-wife Shepenupet. The regnal dates are identified as Piankhy's and a king of the 23rd Dynasty. Cf. Kitchen, *ThIP* 544, 581; D. A. Aston - J. H. Taylor, "The Family of Takeloth III and the 'Theban' Twenty-third Dynasty, in: A. Leahy (ed.), *Libya and Egypt c. 1300-750 BC* (London 1990) 144-146. In the Piankhy Stela Nimlot was a vassal of Piankhy before the campaign in the Delta. After the conquest of Lower Egypt Peftjauy-Bastet, king of Heracleopolis, Osorkon IV of Bubastis and Iuput II of

ka[49] and Taharqa[50], 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' (*rmṯ ʿ-mḥty*) named *ârt.w-r-ṯ;y* in year 7 of Shabaka (715 BC)[52] (and again in years 2 and 6 of Taharqa). It has been argued that *ârt.w-r-ṯ;y* was a prisoner of war because of the absence of filiation in his name[53]. 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.

2 The year 720 BC

2.1 Shabaka's conquest of Egypt

At the end of Bocchoris'[54] fifth year the death of an Apis bull was commemorated on various stelae (*ḥ;t sp 5 ;bd 2 šmw, sw 29* = mid December)[55]. The interment of this bull seventy days later was commemorated at the beginning of Bocchoris' sixth year (*ḥ;t sp 6 tpy ;ḫt sw 6* = end February)[56]. According to Manetho, however, Shabaka took Bocchoris (*B;k-n-rn.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 Piankhy left Egypt, never to return. For kings in Hermopolis (Pedinemty/Pedi'anty) see further Kitchen, *ThIP* 583.

[49] Sennacherib explicitly mentions the sons of the Egyptian Delta rulers (*mārē šarrāni*) in the account of his war against the Egyptians and Kushites at Eltekeh. See Kitchen, *ThIP* 157.

[50] 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-sehetepibenre, Gemenefkhonsbak, Neferkare).

[51] M. Malinine, "Un jugement rendu à Thèbes sous la XXV^{e} dynastie", *RdE* 6 (1951) 157 ff.

[52] According to the chronology proposed in this article. This sale occurred several months after the Shilkani tribute affair.

[53] See Malinine, *RdE* 6, 165, n. 19; S. P. Vleeming, "The Sale of a Slave in the Time of Pharaoh *Py*", *OMRO* 61 (1980) 14, n. 45; Depuydt, *JEA* 79, 273.

[54] Bocchoris was the last king of the Saite 24th Dynasty; see Kitchen, *ThIP* 376-377.

[55] J. Vercoutter, "Une épitaphe royale inédite 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", *Kush* 8 [1960] 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 *ḥ;t sp 5 ;bd 2 šmw, sw 29* which in 720 BC would have fallen on 15 December 720. His interment would have fallen on *ḥ;t sp 6 tpy 3ḫt sw 6* = 25 February.

[56] M. Malinine - G. Posener - J. Vercoutter, *Catalogue des stèles du Sérapéum de Memphis* (Paris 1968) 84: No. 102. line 6; Redford, *JARCE* 22, 6-9; J. von Beckerath, *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten* (Mainz am Rhein 1997) 198-199.

bringing an end to the 24th Saite Dynasty[57]. 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[58].

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 Raphiah, 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'û* in Akkadian), whose flock had been stolen". The Egyptian army retreated, Raphiah was conquered and 9,033 of its inhabitants exiled, Hanun was captured and Gaza again became a vassal city[59].

It has been variously suggested that Re'u was either a commander of Osorkon IV of Tanis[60], of Tefnakht of Sais[61], of Piankhy king of Kush and Upper Egypt[62], or that the was a commander of a mercenary army[63], or Shabaka himself as commander of the army of Piankhy[64].

[57] W. G. Waddell (trans.), *Manetho* (London 1956) 165-169; Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 96; Kitchen, *ThIP* 376-377.

[58] Vercoutter, *Kush* 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 stelae 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.

[59] Annals, lines 23-57 (Fuchs, *Die Inschriften* 89-90, 314 f.). Cf. Tadmor, *JCS* 12, 38; idem *BA* 29, 91; C. J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud", *Iraq* 16 (1954) 179-180.

[60] Kitchen, *ThIP* 373, n. 743; Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 95. Spalinger identifies Re'u with "an army commander for a Delta princeling, a rather insignificant antagonist for Sargon".

[61] D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton 1992) 346 ff.

[62] N. Na'aman, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BC)", *Biblica* 71 (1990) 217-218.

[63] A. R. Schulman, "Kings, Chronicles and Egyptian Mercenaries", *BES* 5 (1983) 133.

[64] H. von Zeissl, *Äthiopen und Assyrer in Ägypten* (Glückstadt 1944) 19 ff.

The reliefs discovered in Room V of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad record the Assyrian campaign of 720 BC[65]. 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[66].

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[67] or Egyptians[68] (their features are pure Kushite), nor to view the reliefs as anachronistic[69].

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 Raphiah 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 (from P. E. Botta - E. Flandin, *Monument de Ninive* II [Paris 1849] pl. 88).

[65] J. E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716, and 715 BC: Evidence from the Sculptures", *JNES* 35 (1976) 101; see pl. 1.

[66] P. Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians in Assyrian Art", *BES* 4 (1982) 8; Reade, *JNES* 35, 95-104; Na'aman, *Biblica* 71, 218, n. 37; cf. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 347-348. Redford considers these reliefs to be anachronistic.

[67] See n. 63.

[68] See n. 1, 60, and 61.

[69] See n. 66.

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

In 722/1 BC Piankhy 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 Raphiah 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 Bubastis, 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, Shabatka 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 *Sw*, 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

tribute. But when the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was part of a conspiracy, for he had sent envoys to *Sw'* (סוא), 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[70], Cogan and Tadmor date it to 725 BC[71], whereas Na'aman[72], Christensen[73] and Spalinger[74] 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[75]. 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."[76] 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[77]. 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 Pi(ankh)y and the Kingship of Tefnakht

4.1 Tefnakht, Chief of the Meshwesh, opposes Piankhy, King of Nubia (734 BC)[78]

[70] Kitchen, *ThIP* xxxiv-xxxix; B. Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: an Historical and Archaeological Study* (Leiden 1992) 50-51; J. H. Hayes - J. K. Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria", *Biblica* 72 (1991) 161.

[71] M. Cogan - H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. II (The Anchor Bible 1988) 199.

[72] Na'aman, *Biblica* 71, 216.

[73] D. L. Christensen, "The Identity of 'King So' in Egypt (2 Kings XVII 4)", *VT* 39 (1989) 141.

[74] Spalinger, *JARCE* 10, 99.

[75] 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.

[76] Diodorus Siculus, *Diodorus on Egypt* (Murphy E. trans.), part II, 45.

[77] Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* 193-197.

[78] Dating the war between Piankhy and Tefnakht to 734 BC sets the accession of Piankhy in Nubia to 753 BC.

In 1862, during excavations of Gebel Barkal, near the fourth cataract of the Nile, a victory stela of the Kushite ruler Pi(ankh)y was unearthed[79]. The stela describes the campaign in the twentieth year of Pi(ankh)y's reign to conquer Northern Egypt and to stop the southward advance of Tefnakht, *Chief of the Me(shwesh).* Piankhy succeded in conquering Middle Egypt and arrived at Memphis at the Inundation of the Nile (between July and late September)[80]. According to Pi(ankh)y's own report, Tefnakht fled from Memphis before it was conquered in one day by the Kushite troops "like a cloudburst" (Piankhy Stela l. 89). Piankhy 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 (Piankhy Stela lines 129-130)[81]. Kitchen sums up the result of the struggle between Piankhy 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 Piankhy in person, but stayed proudly aloof in his own capital of Sais."[82]

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

According to Kitchen, Piankhy returned to distant Nubia shortly after the end of the campaign. Filling the power vacuum created by Piankhy's departure, Tefnakht proclaimed himself king and ruled in the Delta until his death[83].

A donation stela, presently in the Museum of Athens, is dated to Shepses-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[84]. Another stela bearing his name, now in the Michaïlides 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-

[79] On the reading of the king's name cf. J. Leclant, "Pi(anchi)", *LÄ* IV, 1045, n. 1.

[80] The Kushite troops arrived at Memphis at the inundation season and noticed that the Nile reached the walls (Piankhy Stela line 89; *Urk.* III 30.16) and conquered the city in a day. For the rise of the Nile see J. Baines - J. Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (New York 1980) 15; B. H. Stricker, *De Overstroming van de Nijl* (MVEOL 11; Leiden 1956) 5.

[81] M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* III (Berkeley 1980) 79; henceforth: *AEL.*

[82] Kitchen, *ThIP* 365.

[83] Kitchen, *ThIP* xxxv-xxxvi; cf. D. Kahn, "Did Tefnakht I rule as king?", *GM* 173 (1999) 123-125. Contra Christensen, *VT* 39, 146, 149 and Redford, *JARCE* 22, 11. For similar circumstances of a local ruler that found refuge in the marshes and returned to assume kingship cf. the case of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon. M. Liverani, "Appendix: The Case of Bel-Ibni", in: "Critique of Variants and the Titulary of Sennacherib", in: F. M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons* (Roma 1981) 252-257.

[84] 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.

ta[85]. 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.

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 as far as Gaza in 734 BC?

Na'aman 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[86]. There is no solid evidence of Egypt's active involvement in the anti-Assyrian coalition[87], 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[88]. Having failed, he eventually returned to his city and was reinstated as king under Assyrian vassalage[89].

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[90]. He founded a *bīt kāri* "customs station/harbor" for trade with Egypt[91], and records the send-

[85] J. Yoyotte, "Notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de Tanis", *Kémi* 21 (1971) 37-40.

[86] N. Na'aman, "Forced Participation in Alliances in the Course of the Assyrian Campaigns to the West", M. Cogan - I. Eph'al (eds.), *Ah Assyria... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (Jerusalem 1991) 92-93, notes 47, 51, 52. Cf. J. Begrich, "Der syrisch-ephraimitische Krieg und seine weltpolitischen Zusammenhänge", *ZDMG* 83 (1929) 218.

[87] 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 Tnephachthos (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 Asia. For another time-setting for this episode, see above, Part 3.

[88] 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 BCE Palestine: The Philistines and the Syro-Ephraimite War", *ZDPV* 107 (1991 [1992]) 55.

[89] 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 Piankhy 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.

[90] Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* 91. Cf. N. Na'aman, *Tel Aviv* 6, 68-94.

[91] D. J. Wiseman, "A Fragmentary Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III from Nimrud", *Iraq* 18 (1956) 126: ND 4301 + 4305 rev. 14'-16'. Cf. H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III King of Assyria* (Jerusalem 1994) 188-9: Summary Inscription rev. 13-16 "his (Hanun's) [... I turned] into an Assyrian emporium (*bīt kāri*)".

ing of envoys from Egypt(?) to the Assyrian court[92]. 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"[93]. The founding of the *bīt kāri* would have occured several weeks or months after Tiglath-pileser arrived at the border of Egypt, enabling Piankhy 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[94]. Kushite trade with Assyria would have been difficult (but not impossible) with Egypt as a hostile intermediary[95].

The Piankhy Stela complements the Assyrian records. Products of *Ḫ3rw* (Syria) and *T3 nṯr* (the coast of Phoenicia)[96] are referred to in the description of Piankhy's return to Kush: "Then the ships were loaded with silver, gold, copper and clothing; everything of Lower Egypt, every product of Syria (*Ḫ3rw*), and all plants of God's land (*T3 nṯr*)" (Piankhy Stela l. 154)[97]. This reference implies the existence of Kushite trade contacts with these lands under Assyrian domination at the end of 734 BC[98].

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[99]. Curiously enough, this prohibition dates almost certainly to the years **734-732 BC**[100], from the period when the Assyrian emporium (*bīt kāri*) 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

[92] Tadmor, *The Inscriptions* 190-191.

[93] Tadmor, *BA* 29, 88. Cf. B. Otzen, "Israel under the Assyrians: Reflections of Imperial Policy in Palestine", *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem* 11 (1978/9) 100-102. [94] J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists: A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the Eighth Century BC* (Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud I; 1971) 91-93; S. Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II", *Iraq* 47 (1985) 47.

[95] Kitchen, *ThIP* 354-355, 592, table *6 revised. Conventionally, it is assumed that Sheshonq V ruled in 732 from Bubastis and Tanis, while Tefnakht ruled the western Delta and expanded his hegemony to Memphis, and the hostile Kushite king Piankhy controlled the South.

[96] A. Saleh, "Notes on the ancient Egyptian *T3 Nṯr* 'God's-land'", *BIFAO* 81 (1981) 110-115.

[97] Trans. Lichtheim, *AEL* 80. These plants certainly refer also to the trees of the Lebanon.

[98] Before the return of Piankhy's fleet to Napata for the New Year celebrations of year 21.

[99] For this letter see H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952 - Part II", *Iraq* 17 (1955) 127-128. Saggs dated this letter between Tiglath-Pileser's assertion of control over the Lebanese coast in 738 BC and his action against Philistia in 734 BC.

[100] B. Oded, "The Phoenician Cities and the Assyrian Empire in the Time of Tiglath-pileser III", *ZDPV* 90 (1974) 48. Cf. Tadmor, *BA* 29, 88.

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	Death of Shabaka (year 15)
	Accession of Shabatka in Kush
	Extradition of Iamani to Sargon
701 BC	Shabatka summons Taharqa to fight against Sennacherib.

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