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Assyrian and biblical chronologies are they reliable¹ ?

Gérard Gertoux

Abstract: The Assyrian chronology of the 1st millennium BCE is well established, especially for the period 912-609 BCE (Pruzsinsky: 2009, 17), but it is difficult to determine whether there were overlapping reigns due to possible co-regencies (Hagens: 2005, 23-41). Assyriologists have assumed that there were no co-regencies among the Assyrian reigns. Based on this assumption, Edwin R. Thiele, in his 1943 thesis (published in 1951), established a chronology of the Hebrew kings, relying on the numerous synchronisms with the Assyrian kings. However, he encountered a difficulty because several of the required synchronisms exhibited gaps ranging from 10 to 45 years. He solved this problem by assuming the existence of nine co-regencies among the Hebrew reigns (Thiele: 1951, 173-177). Despite this arbitrary choice, which destroys the chronological coherence of the Hebrew reigns (Hughes: 1990, 264-266), Thiele's chronology still serves as a reference for scholars. However, a careful examination of these synchronisms between Assyrian and biblical chronologies shows that there were several co-regencies among the Assyrian reigns, which they have been correctly dated in the biblical chronology, such as those of Sennacherib and Tiglath-Pileser III. These kings played a crucial role in Israel's history during their co-regencies, such as Sennacherib's campaign in Judah (his 3rd) with the siege of Lachish and Jerusalem, which took place in 712 BCE during the 10th campaign of Sargon II (722-705) with whom he was co-regent during the years 715 to 705 BCE. This agrees exactly with the biblical account stating that all these events occurred during the 14th year of Judean King Hezekiah (726-697) also dated 712 BCE (2Ki 18:13-17; 2Ch 32:9; Is 20:1; 36:1). Similarly, the Israelite king Menahem (771-760) had to pay a tribute (in 765 BCE) to an Assyrian king Pul (2Ki 15:19-20). The Assyrian word *pulu*, from *apil/aplu*, means "the heir (i.e., crown prince)". King Pul(as) reigned 36 years, according to Josephus (Jewish Antiquities IX: 283-287), which corresponds exactly to the Assyrian king Pulu (co-regent) known by his Aramaic name Bar-Ga'yah "Son of the Majesty" who reigned from 782 to 746 BCE.

CHRONOLOGY OF ASSYRIAN REIGNS OVER THE PERIOD 912–609 BCE

Assyrian chronology may be reconstructed over the period 912–609 BCE using the list of Assyrian eponyms anchored on the total solar eclipse dated 15 June 763 BCE, which occurred on [30] Simanu (month III) in the eponymy of Bur-Sagale. The Assyrian period 912–648 BCE is dated based on its canonical eponyms (Parpola: 2007, 381–430) and the period 648–609 BCE by a prosopography of its eponyms (Parpola: 1998, XVIII-XX) but their ranking remains controversial (Novotny, Jeffers: 2018, 30-32). The chronological reconstruction of the Assyrian reigns based on eponyms is different from that given in the Assyrian King List (table below):

TABLE 1

BCE	ASSYRIAN KING	According to years of reign (AKL)				BABYLONIAN KING
630	Aššurbanipal	(669–627)	39			18 Kandalanu
629			40			19
628			41			20
627			42	0		21
626	Aššur-etel-ilâni	(627–626)	1	0	0	22
625	Sin-šar-iškun	(626–612)	1			1 Nabopolassar
624			2			2

BCE	ASSYRIAN KING	According to eponyms				BABYLONIAN KING
630	Aššurbanipal	<i>Salmu-šarri-iqbi?</i>	39	0		18 Kandalanu
629	Aššur-etel-ilâni	<i>Nabû-šarru-ušur?</i>	1	[40]		19
628		<i>Nur-salam-sarpi?</i>	2	[41]		20
627		<i>Marduk-šarru-ušur?</i>	3	[42]	0	21
626		<i>Iqbi-ilani? /Marduk-remanni?</i>	4	0	0	[1] Sin-šum-lišir
625	Sin-šar-iškun	<i>Sin-šarru-ušur?</i>	1			1 Nabopolassar
624		<i>Kanunai?</i>	2			2

The presence of co-regencies modifies the dating of synchronisms. For example, in the conventional Assyrian King List (AKL) there is a synchronism between Year 1 of the Assyrian king Aššur-etel-ilâni (627–626) and Year 22 of the Babylonian king Kandalanu in 626 BCE, but in fact this synchronism occurs between Year 1 of Aššur-etel-ilâni and Year 19 of Kandalanu in 629 BCE. The three years of co-regency between Aššur-etel-ilâni (630-626) and Aššurbanipal (669-627), according to the AKL, are therefore artificial (Aššurbanipal became senile or died in 631 BCE?), which modifies the dating of the synchronisms during this period. Consequently, King lists can be used to date synchronisms as long as the presence of co-regencies does not modify the chronology of the reigns.

¹ A short report of this paper was presented in Oxford, at Wolfson College, on Saturday 25 April 2015 in the Oxford Postgraduate Conference in Assyriology (<https://oxfordassyriology.wordpress.com/opca-2015-programme/>). An abstract has been published (<https://oxfordassyriology.wordpress.com/gerard-gertoux-university-of-lyon-2/>). ORCID <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5916-0445>

Josiah	640-609	31			2Ki 22:1
Jehoachaz	609-609	<i>3 m</i>			2Ch 36:2
Jehoiachim	609-598	11			2Ch 36:5
Jehoiachin	598-598	<i>3 m</i>			2Ch 36:9
Zedekiah	598- 587	11	390	King of Babylon	2Ch 36:11
Jehoiachin (exile)	598- 561	37		Evil-Merodach	2Ki 25:27-28
<i>Babylonian dominion</i>	609-539	70			Jr 25:11-12
<i>Temple desolation</i>	587-517	70			Zc 7:1-4

The dates in bold are those corresponding to the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies. Contrary to Thiele's claim, most of the synchronisms between conventional Assyrian chronology and biblical chronology, unmodified by hypothetical co-regencies, are in perfect agreement. For example, Jehoiachin (598–561) was released just before the first year of Evil-Merodach (Jr 52:31) in March **561 BCE**. The destruction of the Temple occurred when the Jews of the exile (Jr 25:8-12) came into Babylon in Year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar (Jr 52:29), in **587 BCE**. A 70-year period of desolation (Dn 9:6), without worship at the Temple (Mt 24:15), began in 587 BCE and ended in 517 BCE when the worship at the Temple started anew after the 4th year of Darius I (Zk 7:1-7), in **517 BCE**. King Josiah (640-609) died during the battle of Megiddo just before the fall of the city of Harran which took place in the last year of King Aššur-uballiṭ II (2Ki 23:29-34; La 4:18-20) which is dated to the 17th of Nabopolassar, in **609 BCE**, the year marking the end of the Assyrian empire. Babylon's world domination lasted exactly 70 years (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10; Is 23:13-17). It started in the beginning of the kingdom of Jehoiachim (Jr 27:1-7), in October 609 BCE, and ended when Cyrus subdued all nations in October **539 BCE** and freed the Jews (Is 45:1-7). King Hosea II (729-720) died in the fall of Samaria in Year 2 of Sargon II in **720 BCE** (Briend, Seux: 1977, 105-111). Tiglath-pileser III overthrew Peqah (*Pa-qa-ḥa*), king of Israel (Bīt Ḥumria), and replaced him by Hosea I, according to his annals when he annexed Hatarikka in **738 BCE** (Yamada: 2014, 31-50). According to the account of Šamši-Adad V (823-811), his brother Aššur-danin-pal was King of Nineveh during a short period of rebellion (824-823) after the death of Shalmaneser III, in **824 BCE**, exactly at the time when Jonah met the king of Nineveh (Jonah 3:6) at the beginning of Jeroboam II's reign (823-782) as King of Israel (2Ki 14:23-25). The mention of “king of Nineveh”, instead of “king of Assyria”, is unique in the Bible as well as in Assyrian records. The 390-year period (977–587), mentioned in Ezekiel 4:5-6, began with the wrongful division of the kingdom of Solomon (1017–977) in **977 BCE** and ended with the destruction of the kingdom of Zedekiah (598–587) in **587 BCE**.

The title “co-regent” does not exist in Assyrian, but Assyrian texts use the title: DUMU LUGAL (*mār šarri*), literally “[heir] son of the [titular] king”, translated as “crown prince”. Moreover, the crown prince is often represented on bas-reliefs identically to the king, except for the tiara, and facing him. The word LUGAL (*šarru* “king”) is used for the titular king while the word MAN (*šarru[šanu]* “[other] king”) is used for the king in office. The word MAN, written with two nail heads (◀◀ “20” that is “god Shamash”), is read *šarru* “king” in Neo-Assyrian. This word had a former meaning *šanû* “second/other” (Black /George /Postgate: 2000, 355-356), consequently this word MAN can also be understood as: king II, Viceroy or coregent. The literal translation “son of the king” for “crown prince” is misleading because, as successor of the king, he was above the *tartānu* > *turtānu* “commander-in-chief” (De Rider: 2020, 274-275), the second most important person in the state (*tardennu*). Paradoxically, his title and role rarely appear in Assyrian inscriptions. In fact, the Assyrian monumental art, which frequently depicts the crown prince, clearly indicates his role and power for all to see. For example, in Sargon II's palace at Dur-Sharrukin (opposite) he is easily identified by his tiara (*agû*). He appears facing his crown prince (Sennacherib) who has three characteristic royal attributes namely: he is depicted the same size as the king, he is depicted as a head above the other high officials and he wears the ornament/diadem (*tiqnu*) with rosette (arrow 3), also owned by the commander-in-chief, which indicated that he was the head of the armies and he wears the headband (*pitūtu*) with tassels (arrow 4), which symbolises royal filiation, the king being himself son of king (*mār šarru*), designated as heir (*apil/aplu*) to the throne (Kertai: 2017, 111–133). The crown prince was thus represented as identical to the king, but without the tiara. When Lachish was taken (in 712 BCE), the label above the head of Sennacherib (who is facing



Sargon), gives him the title of “[other] king (MAN)” (Russell: 1991, 206, 276–277), which corresponds to viceroy/co-regent, and does not name him “[titular] king (LUGAL)” because he has no tiara. From the time of king Aššurnasirpal II (884–859), Assyrian inscriptions (but not Babylonian inscriptions) used the Sumerian word MAN instead of LUGAL to designate kings in office (LUGAL was still used to designate Assyrian kings). In Hebrew, Assyrian king or Assyrian co-regent are referred to by the same word “king (*melekh*)”. Although the words MAN and LUGAL both mean “king” they do not have exactly the same meaning. It is noted that among the 16 bronze weights from the time of Shalmaneser V (727-722) that bear inscriptions in Assyrian and Aramaic, the Assyrian expression: weight “of the king (*šá* MAN)” is translated into Aramaic as: weight “of the king (*zy mlk*)” while the expression: weight “of the King (*šá* LUGAL)” is translated as: weight “of the land (*zy 'rq*)”, which shows that the word LUGAL had the meaning of “King [of the land of Assyria]” (Tadmor /Yamada: 2011, 171-186).

For Assyrians the crown prince was therefore a second king without a tiara. The narrative art from Tiglath-pileser’s reign consists of the reliefs that were made for his new palace at Kalḫu and probably some of the wall paintings found in the provincial palace at Til-Barsip. Both show numerous groups of people approaching the king. The crown prince is shown in his typical role of introducing groups to the king, but his presence is much more consistent. The crown prince seems to have monopolised this position on all known reliefs and wall paintings.

The oldest letter from Sennacherib as crown prince is dated 715 BCE (accession year, he was probably 20 years old) when the Urartians were defeated by the Cimmerians (Reade: 2013, XXV). That means he reigned 10 years as co-regent (715–705), then 24 years as king (705–681), and consequently his 3rd campaign as co-regent must be dated 712 BCE (= 715 - 3) and his 3rd campaign as king should be dated 702 BCE (= 705 - 3). According to most scholars there were two campaigns to Judah (Goldberg: 1999, 360-390): one in 712 BCE led by Sargon II and a second led by Sennacherib dated 701 BCE (Ussishkin: 1977, 28-60). This assertion: 701 instead of 702 BCE, is illogical: first because the capture of Lachish can be dated 712 BCE according to the annals of Sargon —and, therefore, during the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib as co-regent— but especially because of the detailed representations of the capture of Lachish depicted in the palace of Sennacherib which clearly show that it was him that led this campaign as co-regent (shown as king but without tiara) of King Sargon II (shown with his tiara). According to Assyrian annals (Briend, Seux: 1977, 113-121), the city of Ahsdod was captured by Sargon II during his 10th campaign and Lachish was taken by Sennacherib during his 3rd campaign into Judea, but there is a paradox. Whereas Sennacherib gives many details of his 3rd campaign into Judea he never mentions Lachish:

On my 3rd campaign, I marched to the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine). Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed Luḫi, the king of the city Sidon, and he fled afar into the midst of the sea. The awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed the cities Great Sidon, Lesser Sidon, Bīt-Zitti, Šarepta, Maḫalliba, Ušû, Akzibu, (and) Acco, his fortified cities (and) fortresses, an area of pasture(s) and water-place(s), resources upon which he relied, and they bowed down at my feet. I placed Tu-Ba’lu on his royal throne over them and imposed upon him tribute (and) payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (to be delivered) yearly (and) without interruption. As for Minuḫimmu of the city Samsimuruna, Tu-Ba’lu of the city Sidon, Abdi-Li’ti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod (...) and imposed upon him the payment of tribute (and) gifts (in recognition) of my overlordship so that he (now) pulls my yoke. In the course of my campaign, I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Bīt-Daganna, Joppa, Banayabarqa, (and) Azuru, the cities of Šidqâ that had not submitted to me quickly. (As for) the governors, the nobles, and the people of the city Ekron who had thrown Padî, their king who was bound by treaty and oaths to Assyria, into iron fetters and who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia), forces without number, and they came to their aid. In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of (the god) Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers (and) crown princes, together with the charioteers of the king of the land Meluḫḫa. I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Eltekeh (and) Tamnâ. I approached the city Ekron and I killed the governors (and) nobles who had committed crime(s) and hung their corpses on towers around the city; I counted the citizens who had committed the criminal acts as booty; (and) I commanded that the rest of them, (those) who were not guilty of crimes or wrongdoing, (to) whom no penalty was due, be allowed to go free. I brought out Padî, their king, from the city Jerusalem and placed (him) on the lordly throne over them, then I imposed upon him payment (in recognition) of my overlordship. (As for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities and small(er) settlements in their environs, which were without number, by having ramps trodden down and battering rams brought up, the assault of foot soldiers, sapping, breaching, and siege engines. I brought out of them 200,150 people, young (and) old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep and goats, which were without number, and I counted (them) as booty. As for him (Hezekiah), I confined him inside the city Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage. I set up blockades against him and made him dread exiting his city gate. I detached from his land the cities of his that I had plundered and I gave

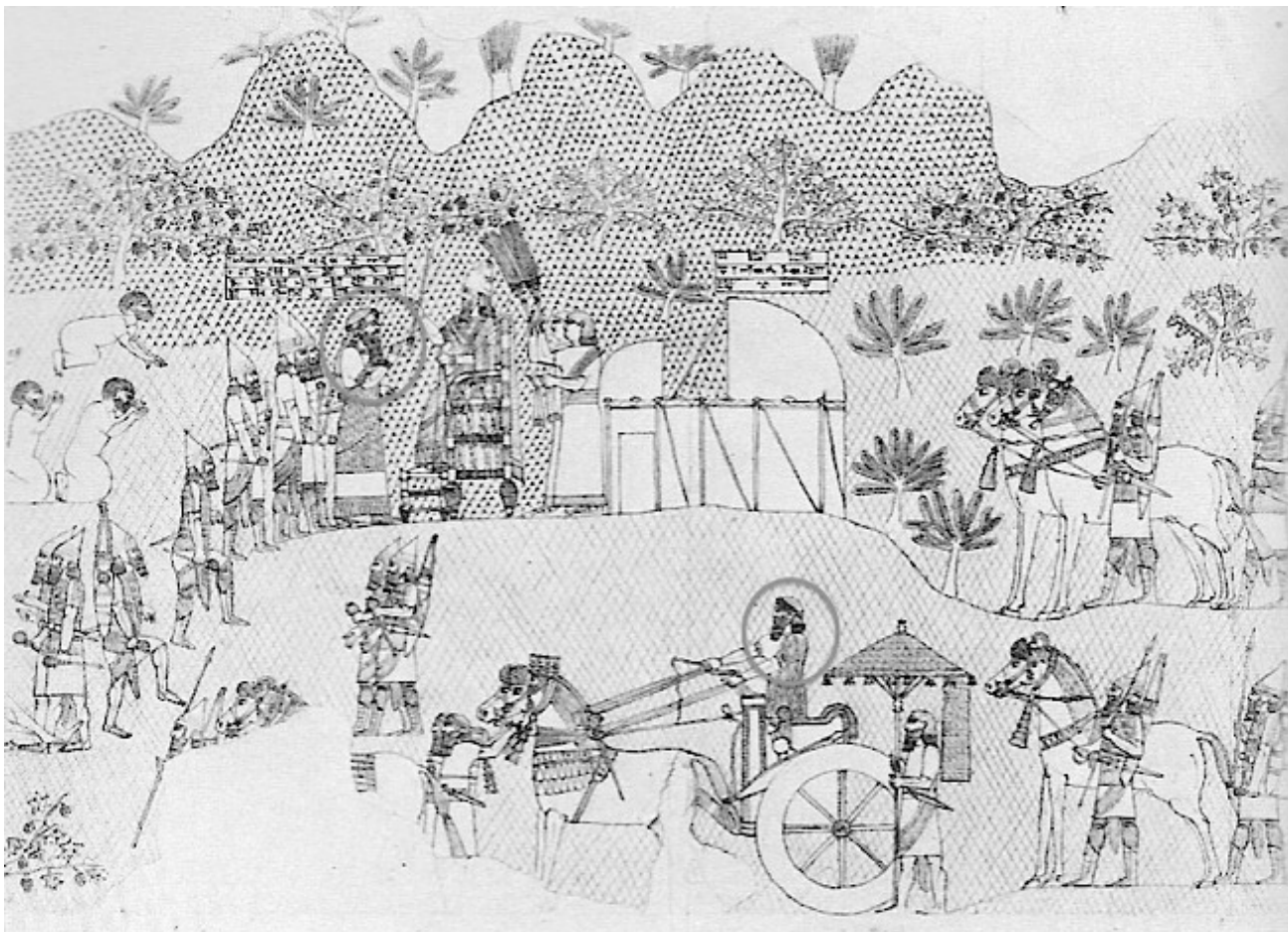
(them) to Mitinti, the king of the city Ashdod, and Pađi, the king of the city Ekron, (and) Šilli-Bēl, the king of the land Gaza, (and thereby) made his land smaller. To the former tribute, their annual giving, I added the payment (of) gifts (in recognition) of my overlordship and imposed (it) upon them. As for him, Hezekiah, fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him and, after my (departure), he had the auxiliary forces (and) his elite troops whom he had brought inside to strengthen the city Jerusalem, his royal city, thereby gaining reinforcements, (along with) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, ... (Grayson /Novotny: 2012, 114-116).

Consequently, the third campaign of Sennacherib thus coincided with the siege of Jerusalem, dated as the 14th year of Hezekiah, in 712 BCE, the conquest of Ashdod, dated as the 10th year of Sargon, in 712 BCE, and the Battle of Eltekeh (Jos 21:23) which can also be dated in 712 BCE. According to the two stelae of Kawa (Laming Macadam /Miles: 1949, 14-32; Török: 1997, 169-171), after the death of Shabaka, his successor Shabataka immediately summoned an army which he placed under the command of his brother Taharqa, a young son of Piye age 20 to repel an Assyrian attack which was threatening. In addition, Taharqa states explicitly on these stelae that he was designated as heir by Shabataka even though Shabataka had his other brothers and all their children. The campaign of Sennacherib thus corresponds to the first year of Shabataka, which is anchored to Sennacherib's 3rd campaign in 712 BCE. The more usual dating of this campaign in 702/701 BCE leads to several contradictions (Gallagher: 1999, 2-14). The inscription of Sargon II, found at Tang-i Var, requires dating this campaign as 712 BCE and not as 702/701 BCE. One reads along the lines 16-36 (Frame: 1999, 31-60):

- 16) I dispersed the army of the Elamite Ĥumbanigaš (*Ĥumba-nikaš*) (in 717 BCE). I destroyed the land of K[aral]la, the land of Šurda, the city of Ki[šes]im, the city of Ĥarĥar, [the Me]dian [land], (and) the land of Elli[pi (...)].
- 17) I laid waste to the land of Urartu (in 714 BCE), plundered the city of [Muša]r (and) the Mannean land, crushed the land[s]..
- 18) I conquered the rulers of the land of Amattu (Hamath), the city of Carche[mish, the city of Kammu]ĥi, (and) the land of Kammanu; over their lands [...] I se[t] officials.
- 19) I plundered the city of **Ashdod** (in 712 BCE). Iamani, its king, feared [my weapons] and ... He fled to the region of the land of Meluĥĥa (Nubia) and lived (there) stealthfully (literally: like a thief).
- 20) Šapataku' (**Shabataka**), king of the land of Meluĥĥa, heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Aššur, Nabu, (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.
- 22) [I depopulated] all the lands of Tabâlu, Kasku, (and) Ĥilakku; I took away settlements belonging to Metâ (Midas), king of the land of [Mu]sku, and reduced (the size of) his land.
- 23) At the city of Rapiĥu (Raphia) I defeated the vanguard of the army of Egypt and counted as booty the king of the city of Ĥâzutu (Gaza) who had not submitted to my [yo]ke.
- 24) I subdued 7 kings of the land of Iâ', a region of the l[and of] Iadnâna (Cyprus) — whose home is situated at a distance of... [in the mid]dle of the Western Sea.
- 25) Moreover, (in 710 BCE) I personally (literally: my great hands) defeated Marduk-apla-iddina (**Merodach-Baladan II**), king of the land of Chaldea, who dwelled on the shore of the sea (and) who ex[erc]ised kingship over Babylon against the wi[ll of the gods].
- 26) Moreover, all the land of Bît-Iakîn ... I fixed ...
- 27) Aĥundari, king of Dilmun [Upêri in the Annals], whose lair [is situated] at a distance of... leagues [in the middle] of the sea like that of a fish, heard of my [royal] mig[ht] and brought me (in 709 BCE) [his] gre[eting gift].
- 28) With the power and strength (granted me) by the great gods, (my) lords], who [raised up my weapons, I cut] down al[l my enemies].
- 29) From the land of Iadnâna (Cyprus), which is (situated) in the middle of the [Western] Sea, [as far as the border(s) of Egypt (and) the land of M]usk[u, the wide land of Amurru], the land of Ĥ[atti (in its entirety)],
- 30) all of the land of Gutium, the land of the distant Medes [by Mount Bikni, the land of El]lipi, (and) the land of Râši on the border [of the land of Elam,
- 31) those who (live) beside the Tigris river —the (tribes of) Itu'u, Ru[bu'u, Ĥatal]lu, labdudu, Ĥamranu, Ubulu, [Ru']ûa, (and) Li['tâu]—
- 32) those who (live) beside the the Surappu river (and) the Uqnû river —the (tribes of) Gam[bûlu], Ĥindaru, (and) Puqûdu— the Suteans, people of the steppe of the land of Iadburu, as many as [there are],
- 33) from the city of Sam'ûna as far as the city of Bubê (and) Til-Ĥumba(n), which are on the border of Elam,
- 34) the land of Karduniaš from the end to end, the land of Bît-Amukâni, Bît-Dakkûri, Bît-Šilani, Bît-Sa'alli,
- 35) all the land of Chaldea, as much as there is (of it), the land of Bît-Ia[k]în, which is situated on the shore of the sea, as far far as the territory of Dilmun,
- 36) I ruled (it) all. I s[et] eunuchs of mine as governors over them and I imposed my royal yoke upon them (in 709 BCE)

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- 45) I had a commemorative monument made and engraved upon it image(s) of the great gods, [my lords]. I placed before them my royal image [(in an attitude of) pr]aying to their great divine majesties.

The last inscription (line 45) refers to gods having been installed in the new city and an eponym chronicles states that that took place in 707 BCE (Frame: 1999, 51). This inscription, written in chronological order (Luckenbill: 1927, 1-25), situates the battle against Shabataka during the capture of Ashdod in 712 BCE, thus confirming the coincidence of Sennacherib's 3rd campaign and Sargon's 10th campaign. The two Assyrian kings thus campaigned together, but Sennacherib had his third campaign engraved only when he was king, after the death of his father, and not during his co-regency, which began in 715 BCE². On the carved relief (below) representing the siege of Lachish in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh (Russel: 1991, 3, 125, 143, 206-207), the central element is the king seated on his throne clearly identified by his tiara and sceptre and facing the crown prince, who is as tall as the king and wearing a turban with two ribbons behind his head, facing the king wearing the tiara, who also bore the two ribbons behind the head.



The siege of Lachish, drawing of Slabs 11-12, Room XXXVI, Southwest Palace, Nineveh

The identification of the two main characters —king and co-regent— is denied (Goldberg: 1999, 360-390). In the lower part (bottom right), Sennacherib (surrounded by a circle on the drawing above) is depicted driving his chariot as commander-in-chief. He is wearing only a diadem/turban on his head, and in the upper part (above left) he is depicted facing the king and is wearing two ribbons behind his head as co-regent, in addition to the diadem. It is noteworthy that the siege of Lachish is depicted with great accuracy but with very little text (one above Sennacherib and another above a tent). Indeed, the scene which depicted Sennacherib's victory had to be understood by as many people as possible because at that time very few high officials (except scribes) were able to read inscriptions. The main characters, king, co-regent, soldiers and commandant-in-chief were easily recognizable by virtue of a conventional representation. The character mounted on a war chariot arriving at Lachish (below) is Sennacherib as commander-in-chief (he has the army chief's diadem on his head). After conquering the city, he is

² Consequently, the first campaign of Sennacherib was in 714 BCE. Some authors have also noted an anomaly (underlined) in line 44 of the inscription: "They counted (them) as booty," although one would expect more logically from Sargon the sentence: "I have counted (them) as booty" (no anomaly with the co-regency). As the co-regency between Sargon and Sennacherib is not taken into account, some Egyptologists have suggested the following explanation (Kahn: 2001, 1-18): the inscription ending with the installation of the gods in the new city, dated 707 BCE, owing to the eponym of Sargon's Chronicle, the attack against Egypt had to have been shifted by error and should be dated 707 BCE instead of 712 BCE. This amazing assumption is unlikely, because the chronological order of the inscription is obvious, moreover, the dating is in perfect agreement with the 10 years of co-regency of Sennacherib.

represented in front of the king (Sargon II) to dedicate his victory to him and offer him the loot as indicated in the signpost above his head. The co-regent facing the king seated on the throne cannot be Ardu-Mulissu, because he was designated crown prince only from 699 BCE, three years after the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib as king (not co-regent) in 702 BCE. The absence of a tiara upon Sennacherib's head is obviously not an oversight because in other scenes he wears a tiara (as king) when he is depicted as driving his chariot (Slab 2, Room XLV).



Co-regent Sennacherib with his diadem of commander-in-chief



Co-regent Sennacherib (left) with royal two ribbons facing King Sargon II

On the throne the king wearing the tiara is Sargon II. In front of him stands the co-regent, represented with the same size, with on his head the diadem of the commander-in-chief of the armies as well as the two ribbons, symbol of royal power, this co-regent is therefore Sennacherib. Such representations are also found in the palace of Khorsabad (Caubet: 1995: 123, Fig.4, 15), where the co-regent Sennacherib is facing king Sargon. It is easy to see that this relief looks like the siege of Lachish. When Sargon took Ashdod (in 712 BCE) he was king and Sennacherib his son was his co-regent, whereas in 702/701 BCE Sennacherib was king but he had no co-regent. Consequently, the king sitting on the throne at Lachish is king Sargon facing Sennacherib. On the relief of the siege of Lachish, Sennacherib (as co-regent) is in front of Sargon (as king) as on the relief in the palace of Khorsabad³ (André-Salvini: 2012, 62). The epigraph of four lines over Sennacherib (Russel: 1991, 206, 276-277), in a label, confirms this identification because he is presented as co-regent (MAN) and not as King (LUGAL) and the other epigraph of three lines over the tent of Sennacherib describes him as king:

Epigraph over Sennacherib

md ³⁰ -PAP.MEŠ-SU MAN ŠU ₂ MAN KUR aš+šur ina GIŠ.GU.ZA ne ₂ -me-di u ₂ -šib-ma sal-la-at URU la-ki-su ma-ha-ar-šu e-ti-iq	Sennacherib, viceroy of the world, viceroy of Assyria. Sat in a pedestal-throne and the booty of Lachish passed in review before him [i.e. King Sargon].
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Epigraph over the tent of Sennacherib

za-ra-tum ša md ³⁰ -PAP.MEŠ-SU LUGAL KUR aš+šur	Tent of Sennacherib King of Assyria
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The word MAN is written on the label with two nail heads (« “20” that is “god Shamash”), is read *šarru* “king” in Neo-Assyrian. This word had a former meaning *šanû* “second/other” (Malbran-Labat: 1999, 211; Black, George, Postgate: 2000, 355-356), consequently the word MAN means “King II”, Viceroy or Co-regent. The usual word used for titular king is not MAN but LUGAL, literally “man-big” in Sumerian (both terms are used in Sennacherib's inscriptions). Sennacherib could not bear the title of King (LUGAL) during Sargon's lifetime, because the latter was considered to be “without rival”, but only the title of viceroy (double or replica of the king). In addition, the term *-ma* meaning “and” connects one who sits to the one passing booty reviewed (who was king Sargon). In the Biblical text the military campaigns of Sennacherib and Sargon are clearly identified as parallel and dated 712 BCE (2Ki 18:13-17; 2Ch 32:9, Is 20:1). When Sennacherib comes to Jerusalem, it is stated: “the kings (*malkhê*) of Assyria did to all the lands by devoting them to destruction” (2Ki 19:10-17), implying two kings: Sennacherib and Sargon. After Hezekiah had paid a tribute of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, Sennacherib sent his commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), chief officer (*rab-ša-reš*) and cupbearer (*rab-šaqu*) to accept his surrender. During the same time Sargon sent the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) to Ashdod before seizing it.

According to the annals of Sargon: In my 9th regnal year (*palû*) I marched to [the city Ashdod which is (situated) on the shore of the] great [s]ea. [... the city] Ashdod [...] Because of [the evil he (Azuri) had done ... I brought him out] from the city A[shdod], elevated Ahī-Mīti [...], his favorite brother, o[ver the people of the city Ashdod], and [set him on the throne of his father]. I established for him (the same) tribute, payment(s), [labor duty, (and) military service] as the kings, [my ancestors, had imposed]. However, [those] evil [Hittites] with/in ... [...] plotted evil [in their heart(s)] (so as) to no longer (have to) bring tribute (to me). [They made] an insurrection (and) up[rising against] their ruler, [and] drove him out [of the city Ashdod] as if he was one who had committed bloodshed. ... [...] They made] king over them Iāmānī, a member of the low[er class who had no right to the throne], (and) they sat [him on the throne] of his lord. [...] their city ... [...] of batt[le [... in] its environs [its/their] moats [... they dug] twenty cubits deep [until] they reached groundwater. <They sent> mendacious messages (and) malicious words to the ki[ngs] of the lands Philistia, Judah, Ed[om], (and) Moab, (as well as to) those who live on the sea(coast), (all) those who brought tribute [and] audience gift(s) to the god Aššur, my lord, in order to make (them) hostile to me. They took gift(s) to Pir'û (Pharaoh), king of Egypt, a ruler who could not save them, and they repeatedly asked him for (military) aid (Frame: 2020, 367-368).

According to the annals of Sennacherib: On my 3rd campaign (*palû*), I marched to the land Ḥatti (Syria-Palestine) (...) who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (...) As for Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities and small(er) settlements in their environs (...) As for him, Hezekiah, fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him and, after my (departure), he had the auxiliary forces (and) his elite troops whom he had brought inside to strengthen the city Jerusalem, his royal city, thereby gaining reinforcements, (along with) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver (Grayson /Novotny: 2012, 114-116)

³ On the relief of Khorsabad (British Museum ME 118822) the commander-in chief (*turtānu* Ninurta-ilāya?) is behind Sennacherib.

The presence of “the kings of Egypt and king of Ethiopia” must be located in 712 BCE, or before, when several pharaohs ruled in parallel with the Theban priests (Kitchen: 2004, 592-593). The tribute paid by Hezekiah during Sennacherib's 3rd campaign is almost identical to that of the Bible (2 Ki 18:14).

EGYPT	Reign	JUDAH	Reign	ISRAËL	Reign	ASSYRIA	Reign	BABYLONIA	Reign
Shabaka	730 -	Hezekiah	726 -	Hosea II	729 -	Shalmaneser V	727-722	Ulûlaiu	727-722
	-712		-712		-720	Sargon II	722 -	Merodach-	722 -
Shabataka	712 -					/Sennacherib	715 -	baladan II	-710
/Taharqa			-697			Sennacherib	-705	Sargon II	710-705
	-689	Manasseh	697 -					Sennacherib	705-703
Taharqa	689 -						-681	Sennacherib	689-681
	-663					Esarhaddon	681-669	Esarhaddon	681-669
Psamtik I	663-609		-642			Aššurbanipal	669-630	Šamaššumaukīn	668-648

An inscription of Sargon mentions his campaign against Hezekiah, king of Judah, along with the capture of Ekron and Azeqah (Galil: 1995, 321-329) near Lachish (Jr 34:7), which are all dated in 712 BCE. But as the capture of Lachish and Jerusalem are currently dated in 701 BCE that would imply a hypothetical second campaign around 688 BCE (Evans: 2009, 15-18) which leads to a new chronological impossibility (Becking: 2000, 46-72; Ben Zvi: 2000, 168-200). Similarly, the attempted alliance between Merodach-baladan II (722-710) and Hezekiah (726-697) is plausible only in 712 BCE because in 700 or in 703 BCE the Babylonian king was in a position of weakness (the only support mentioned in neo-Babylonian chronicles is that of the king of Elam) and Hezekiah had no interest to ally with him, whereas in 712 BCE Merodach-baladan II was in a position of strength and the purpose of his alliance with Hezekiah, which miraculously repelled Sennacherib's army, was to counterbalance Assyrian influence. Sargon's Chronicle supports this reconstruction because the king was perpetually at war against Merodach-baladan II except in 712 BCE (because of his campaign to Judah), but for no apparent reason⁴:

From the accession ye[ar of] Merodach-baladan until the 10th year [Assyria] was belligerent towards Merodach-baladan. The 10th year: Merodach-baladan ravaged Bit-[...]ri (and) plundered it. The 12th year of Merodach-baladan: Sargon went down [to Akkad] and did battle against [Merodach-bala]dan. Merodach-baladan [retreated] before [him] (and) fled to Elam. For 12 years [Merodach-balad]an ruled Babylon. Sargon ascended the throne in Babylon (...) The 2nd year [Sennacherib went down to Akkad and did battle against Merodach-baladan before him] Merodach-baladan retreated (and) fled to Guzummanu [...] he (Sennacherib) plundered his land [...] and took] Larak and Sarrabanu. When he withdrew he (Sennacherib) put Bel-ibni on the throne in Babylon. The 1st year of Bel-ibni [702 BCE]: Sennacherib ravaged Hirimma and Hararatum. The 3rd year of Bel-ibni: Sennacherib went down to Akkad and plundered Akkad (Grayson: 2000, 73-77).

Amalgams between the three campaigns of Sennacherib during his co-regency with Sargon (714-712) and those carried out at the beginning of his reign (704-702) cause the sequence of events to become deeply confused. An accurate chronological reconstitution of the reign of Sargon is impossible because the equation “campaign = year” is not always true, actually a campaign could take several years and a year could be without a campaign. Tadmor noted, for example, that the dating of these campaigns in the annals of Khorsabad is inconsistent with the data from the Nineveh fragmentary prisms (Tadmor: 1958, 22-40). Similarly, the annals of Sennacherib date the campaign against Merodach-baladan II during the accession year of Sennacherib (705 BCE) whereas the first campaign of Sennacherib is dated the eponymy of Nabu-le'u (702 BCE). Tadmor concludes that historians of Sargon had to have recounted his campaigns in Palestine and Egypt in geographical terms rather than in chronological order. The reign of Ashurbanipal has the same problems of chronology (Grayson: 1980, 227-245), the arrangement of campaigns is more geographical than chronological and differs from years of reign. Given that Sennacherib's earliest accounts of his first campaigns, from 1st to 3rd, waged against Merodach-baladan II and his southern Babylonian allies occurred in 704-702 BCE, there is no room for a campaign to Judah which was in the far west during this period. To solve this puzzle, most scholars assume that the chronological inconsistencies of the first campaigns of Sennacherib could be explained by the fact that the main goal of Assyrian records was ideological (Frahm: 2003, 129-164) rather than chronological (Van Rensburg: 2004, 560-579), but this explanation is unacceptable. Merodach-baladan, for example, was dethroned in 710 BCE, then would try to take back his throne in 703 BCE and again in 700 BCE, with a brief success. This unlikely event may have been distorted. It is possible that the vassal king Bel-ibni, who did not properly repulse Merodach-baladan's attacks for taking his throne back, was removed from office and replaced by his eldest son, Aššur-nadin-šumi II (Brinkman: 1973, 89-95). Anyway, the dating of the 2nd reign of Merodach-baladan creates an unsolvable problem (Levine: 1982, 28-58). In addition, the tribute brought by the Medes and received by Sennacherib during his 2nd campaign looked like the one

⁴ If Sennacherib's troops were decimated in 712 BCE, as confirmed by Herodotus (The Histories II:137,141) and Josephus (Jewish Antiquities X:21), one can assume that the following year Sargon was busy reorganizing his army.

received by Sargon during his 8th campaign. Concerning the failed capture of Jerusalem performed during the reign of his father and reported on briefly in his own annals (written during his reign) he only mentions the taking of a tribute. But the fact that Sennacherib did not capture Jerusalem remains incomprehensible and indirectly confirms the Biblical version. This chronological imbroglio comes from the mixing of Sennacherib's campaigns with those mentioned during the reign of Sargon. These first three campaigns of Sennacherib are placed before three other ones which are not detailed. Some reliefs of the first campaign recall details of the 4th campaign (Russel: 1991, 152-165). This mix up has been developed for the purpose of propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226).

Chronological reconstitution of the reigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib differ depending on official versions consulted. For example, according to a Neo-Babylonian chronicle (Glassner: 2004, 180-182), Sennacherib was king of Babylon during 704-703 BCE, then the following period 688-681 it would have been without a king, but according to the Canon of Ptolemy (Depuydt: 1995, 98), these two periods were without a king. This contradiction is surprising since the Babylonian reign of Sargon has been considered in the Canon of Ptolemy and, in the case of Sennacherib, there are at least two contracts dated Years 3 and 4 of his Babylonian reign during the period 688-681 (Brinkman, Kennedy: 1983, 14.). These disagreements show that the reigns of Sargon and Sennacherib were already subject to interpretations very early in the past. Moreover, some dating by eponyms differs from dating by years of reign. Levine tried to reconstruct the whole campaigns of Sennacherib while recognizing that the period 705-702 was particularly confusing. Indeed, according to a King list, the period 704-703 BCE is assigned to Sennacherib, then Marduk-zakir-šumi II reigned 1 month, Merodach-baladan II (Marduk-apla-iddina) reigned 9 months (without regnal year) and the years 702 to 700 BCE are assigned to Bel-ibni (Levine: 1982, 28-58).

The second rule of Merodach-baladan II is set during the first campaign, in 703 BCE, because the 2nd campaign is dated in the eponymy of Nabu-le'i in 702 BCE. According to a Babylonian chronicle, this campaign is assigned to the second year of Sennacherib in 703 BCE, but the canon of eponyms mentions the capture of Larak and Sarabanu under the eponym of Nabu-dîni-epuš in 704 BCE. And finally, in his various inscriptions Sennacherib put his first campaign "at the beginning of his kingship". All these facts are irreconcilable⁵. The first three campaigns mentioned at the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib, whose story was recorded in the palace of Khorsabad, during the eponyms dated 703 to 701 BCE, are regarded to be the first three years of his reign but this assumption leads to inconsistencies. The equivalence between the years of reign and number of campaigns is contradictory and the timeline of events is impossible to reconstruct exactly (Ford: 1969, 83-84). Several events occur identically. Moreover, information in letters is diametrically opposed to what one reads in royal inscriptions and the time required for the realization of all these events is impossible to enforce, mainly the duration between the 1st and 2nd campaigns (Parpola: 2001, XIV,XXII,XXXVI,LI notes 5,41). Prosopography of important characters, such as scribes and governors, allows one to dissociate two seemingly identical events, but as the duration between these events is relatively short (10 years) it is impossible to decide because the same characters appear at the end of Sargon's reign and the beginning of Sennacherib's (Dietrich: 2003, XVI-XXI).

BCE		[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]		
712	1	X	9	(2)	9	13	1	[26]	[A] Sargon II, King of Assyria (Is 20:1, 36:1)
	2	XI							[B] Sennacherib, Crown Prince (2Ki 18:13-17)
	3	XII							[C] Merodach-baladan II, King of Babylonia (Is 39:1)
	4	I	10	(3)	10	14	[D] Hezekiah, King of Judah		
	5	II					[E] Shabataka, King of Egypt		
	6	III					/Taharqa, Co-regent of Egypt (2Ki 19:8-9)		
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII							
	11	VIII							
	12	IX		[27]	[F] 65-year period (Is 7:8-9)				

Rezin (755-732), the powerful king of Damascus, formed a coalition to resist Tiglath-pileser III's attack, Pekah (758-738), the king of Israel, joined the coalition but not Jotham, the king of Judah:

Hosea (738-729) the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Pekah (758-738) the son of Remaliah, and he struck him and put him to death; and he became king in his place in the 20th year of Jotham (in 738 BCE) the son of Uzziah (2Ki 15:30). Now in the days of Ahaz (742-726) son of Jotham son of Uzziah, the king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, came up to wage war against Jerusalem, but he could not capture it (...) This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: It will not succeed, nor will it take place. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. Within just 65 years Ephraim will be completely shattered and cease to be a people. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah (Is 7:1,7-9).

⁵ For example, Levine chose to put the reigns of Marduk-zakir-šumi II and Merodach-baladan II in 703 BCE, but this solution is contradicted by the dates of economic contracts dated: 26/XI/00, 7/XII/00, 13/XII/00, 26/VI/02, 29/XI/02, 29/I/03. Contracts under Bel-ibni require placing the accession, not Year 1, of Bel-ibni in 703 BCE (at least on 26/XI/00) because he reigned 3 years. This new solution is contradicted once again by another contract (BM 17310) dated paradoxically [-]/III/19 under Sargon II, which is a posthumous date referring to 703 BCE. Likewise, another contract dated posthumously 11/IX/22 to Merodach-baladan II in 700 BCE.

Given that the head of Samaria (Ephraim/Israel) was Pekah who died in 738 BCE, the “shattering” of Ephraim (inhabitants of Samaria) had to have occurred in 673 BCE (= 738 - 65):

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]							
674	1	X	6		6		22	[64]	[A] Esarhaddon , King of Assyria						
	2	XI							[C] Esarhaddon , King of Babylonia						
	3	XII													
	4	I	7	(0)	7		23		[B] Sin-nâdin-apli , Crown Prince						
	5	II													
	6	III													
	7	IV													
	8	V													
	9	VI													
	10	VII													
	11	VIII													
	12	IX							[65]						
673	1	X							***				24		[A] Defeat in Egypt dated 05/XII/7 (ABC 1)
	2	XI													[A] Esarhaddon , King of Assyria (Ezr 4:2)
	3	XII													[B] Aššurbanipal Co-regent (Ezr 4:9,10)
	4	I	8	(1)	8		24		[E] Manasseh , King of Judah (2Ch 33:11)						
	5	II													
	6	III													
	7	IV													
	8	V													
	9	VI													
	10	VII													
	11	VIII													
	12	IX							***						
672	1	X							9	(0)	9	(0)	25		[A] Ešarra-hamat , <i>Esarhaddon's wife died</i>
	2	XI													[B] Aššurbanipal , Crown Prince (Assyrian)
	3	XII													[D] Šamaš-šuma-ukīn , Crown Prince (Babylonian)
	4	I													
	5	II													
	6	III													

Sargon II destroyed Samaria, the capital of Israel, in 720 BCE, but the “shattering” of Israel occurred later when Assyrian kings took into exile some nations and settled them in Samaria:

They immediately approached Zerubbabel and the heads of the paternal houses and said to them (in 538 BCE): Let us build along with you; for like you, we worship your God and we have been sacrificing to him since the days of King Esarhaddon of Assyria, who brought us here (...) and the rest of the nations that the great and honourable Asenappar (Aššurbanipal) took into exile and settled in the cities of Samaria, and the rest in the region Beyond the River (Ezr 4:2,10). In addition, regarding King Manasseh: So, Jehovah brought against them the (two) army chiefs of the king of Assyria, and they captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with two copper fetters and took him to Babylon. In his distress, he begged Jehovah his God for favour and kept humbling himself greatly before the God of his forefathers. He kept praying to Him, and He was moved by his entreaty and heard his request for favour, and He restored him to Jerusalem to his kingship (2Ch 33:11).

The harmonizing of all the information is consistent. Two Assyrian kings, King Esarhaddon (681-669) and his co-regent Aššurbanipal, came in 673 BCE to take into exile some foreigners to settle them in the cities of Samaria (Hasegawa, Levin, Radner: 2019, 105-117). They also brought back King Manasseh to put him in jail, but they released him rapidly. This version of events is confirmed by the annals of Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal. For example, the Prism B of Esarhaddon dated the eponym Atarilu, in 673 BCE (Briend, Seux: 1977, 99-102,128-129), which corresponds exactly to the biblical dating, reads:

I summoned the kings of Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine) and Across the River (Euphrates): Ba’alu, king of Tyre, Manasseh king of Judah (Me-na-si-i LUGAL URU.Ia-ú-di), Qa’uš-gabri, king of Edom, Musurī, king of Moab, Sil-Bēl, king of Gaza, Mitinti, king of Ashkelon, Ikausu, king of Ekron, Milki-ašapa, king of Byblos, Mattan-ba’al, king of Arvad (...) in total, **22 kings** of Ḫatti, the seashore and the islands (Leichty: 2011, 23)

The same events are dated the first campaign of Aššurbanipal (in 668 BCE) on the Rassam Cylinder:

On my fir[st campaign, I marched] to Makan (Egypt) [and Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia)]. Taharqa, the king of Eg[yp]t and Kush (Nubia)], whose defeat Esarhaddon — king of As[syria, the father who had engendered me] (...) He marched against the kings (and) off[icials], whom the father who had en[gendered me] had appointed inside Egypt, to kill (and) rob (them) and to take away Eg[yp]t (from them)]. He entered and resided in the city Mem[phis] (...) In the course of my campaign, Ba’alu, king of the land Tyre, Manasseh, king of the land Judah (Mi-in-se-e LUGAL KUR.Ia-ú-di), Qa’uš-gabri, king of the land Edom, Musurī, king of the land Moab, Sil-Bēl, king of the land Gaza, Mitinti, king of the land Ashkelon, Ikausu, king of the land Ekron, Milki-ašapa, king of the land Byblos, (...), Bušusu, king of the land Nūria — in total, 22 kings of the seacoast, the midst of

the sea, and dry land, [serva]nts who belonged to me, carried their substantial [audience] gift(s) [before me] and kissed my feet (Novotny /Jeffers: 2018, 25)

Given that the first campaign of Aššurbanipal (669-630) as King is dated 668 BCE, the events relate rather to his first campaign as a co-regent in 673 BCE. A cross-checking of all the documents concerning Aššurbanipal, Annals and Chronicles, shows that some have been modified. For example, an unknown son of Esarhaddon named Sin-nâdin-apli was appointed as crown prince in 674 BCE, then in 672 BCE two others were appointed as crown princes, respectively for Babylonia and Assyria: Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, his eldest son, and Aššurbanipal. On the other hand, Esarhaddon's Chronicles show that the campaign against Egypt is clearly dated 3/VII/10 (October 671 BCE), which corresponds to the first year of Aššurbanipal as co-regent but dated the 2nd year in his annals (Upper Egypt is dated to his 1st year). This 1-year discrepancy is troubling but could be explained by the fact that Sin-nâdin-apli "Sin has given the heir" and Aššur-bani-apli "Aššur has created the heir" were probably the same person (Villard: 2001, 760). The former name represented the prince's original name (birth name) and the second the throne name⁶, which could explain that Aššurbanipal was chosen twice, once in 674 BCE as crown prince and again in 672 BCE as crown prince but for Assyria only, however this point remains controversial (Novotny, Jeffers: 2018, 13 note 83). Unfortunately, Ashurbanipal's Chronicles for events of his Year 8 are broken at this location and his Year 9 was omitted. We just learned that Esarhaddon's first wife Ešarra-ḥamat died the 5/XII/8 (March 672 BCE) and there were seven substitute kings (a false king appointed to neutralize a bad omen) between 679 and 669 BCE. Clearly, Year 8 of Esarhaddon, in 672 BCE, when Manasseh was released, was damaging for the Assyrians but they did not give any reason why. On the contrary Year 10 of Esarhaddon is better known because of the victory over Taharqa in 671 BCE, commemorated on the Nahr El Kelb Stele, near Beirut. Lines 31-35 of the fragmentary inscription read as follows: "Ashkelon ... which Taharqa to their fortress ... Tyre ... **22 kings**" (Mitchell: 1992, 375-377), exactly the same expression of the Prism B of Esarhaddon dated 673 BCE.

CROWN PRINCE OR COREGENT?

The previous examples of Sennacherib and Aššurbanipal show that these crown princes functioned as kings to lead military campaigns but without the royal title. The title of crown prince, designating the approved successor of the king, is rarely mentioned in inscriptions and gives no indication of his role. On the other hand, iconographic representations on the occasion of the enthronement of the crown prince, or the presentation of the spoils of a campaign in honour of the king, clearly indicate his status as co-regent. For example, the text of an inscription from Calah (IM 65574) on various parts of the throne base above the scene below describes several events and campaigns of Shalmaneser III, the last of which is dated to Year 13, 846 BCE (Yamada: 2000, 32-34).



King Shalmaneser III (right) facing co-regent Aššur-danin-pal with royal two ribbons

The interpretation of this image is simple: the main character on the right of the scene (above), who wears a two-tiered conical tiara, is the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (859-824). He also wears a diadem, symbol of his military authority, and two ribbons at back, the second symbol of his royalty. In front of him there is a very similar figure but only without the tiara who is thus the coregent (Aššur-danin-pal in 846 BCE). Behind him there is a eunuch (his *turtānu* "commander-in-chief" Dayyan-Aššur, according to the list of eponyms) who is smaller than him (one head less) because his rank is just after him, but he wears a diadem, symbol of his military authority. Just

⁶ For example, the throne name of Esarhaddon (Aššur-aḥa-iddina "Aššur has given a brother") was Aššur-etel-ilāni-mukīn-apli "Aššur prince of the gods, is establishing an heir" but he never used it.

behind the commander-in-chief, according to the protocol rank, the first high official (bearded eunuch) is the chief cupbearer (*rab šāqê* Aššur-bunaya-ušur) and the next one is the palace herald (*nāgir ekalli* Abi-ina-ekalli-lilbur). The four figures on the left each carry a sword at their side to show that they are dedicating a military campaign (in 846 BCE according to the inscription) to the king. As the annals of the 13th year of Shalmaneser III's reign does not mention any military campaigns, the purpose of the engraving was to show that his son Aššur-danin-pal had been enthroned as crown prince. The official status of the crown prince: *mār šarri ša bēt rēdūti* “of the house of succession”, is not defined in inscriptions, apart from the fact that he is the designated successor to the throne and can conduct campaigns under the auspices of the king, as it is sufficiently explicit in the depictions engraved on the walls of the royal palaces. Indeed, diplomatic visitors and royal court staff who were invited to the royal palaces immediately saw the co-regent in front of the king, as this figure was the same height as the king and had two ribbons at back. Even illiterate visitors (of which there were many at the time) could immediately see it and identify it as a co-regent. For example, in the Palace of Assurnasirpal II (884-859) one can see the king (below left) with two servants wears a fez with conical top, and two ribbons at back and a crown prince (right) wearing diadem and two ribbons at back, followed by eunuch with diadem (commander-in-chief). All three also wear tassels as necklace counterweights (Reade: 2009, 249). As in 871 BCE the crown prince was Shalmaneser (III), the engraving represents his enthronement, and the commander-in-chief was *turtānu* Aššur-iddin.



King Assurnasirpal II (left) facing co-regent Shalmaneser (III) with royal two ribbons

Assyriologists generally refuse to identify the crown princes with coregents because no text explicitly says so, but this refusal is unreasonable because Assyrian and Babylonian representations were conventional so as to be understood by all: the gods were depicted first with an immense waist and wearing the divine tiara with horns, the kings were depicted second, one head below the gods and wearing the royal tiara, conical with two tiers for the Assyrian kings or conical and domed for the Babylonian kings, and finally the high court officials were depicted, one head below the kings. For example, the Babylonian king (below left) can be identified by his conical domed tiara and the Assyrian king by his conical two-tiered tiara. Both kings, wearing diadems, each with two ribbons at the back, are of the same height and are shown one head above their commander-in-chief.



Babylonian King Marduk-zakir-šumi I (left) facing Assyrian King Shalmaneser III

Although the representation does not include an explanatory text, the two kings are immediately identifiable iconographically thanks to the two conventional criteria of royalty: the tiara and the two ribbons at the back. It is noticeable that the eunuch behind the Babylonian king, Marduk-zakir-šumi I (855-819), wears the diadem of the command of armies but not the one behind the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III (859-824). The explanation is easy to see, the Assyrian king came to his aid, symbolised by the handshake with the Babylonian king, to support him against the revolt fomented by his brother, as the inscription on the Black Obelisk clearly explains:

In the 8th year of my reign (in 851 BCE), Marduk-bēl-ušati, the younger brother, revolted against Marduk-zākir-šumi, king of Karduniaš (Babylon), and they divided the land in its entirety. In order to avenge Marduk-zākir-šumi, I marched out and captured Mē-Turnat. In the 9th year of my reign (850 BCE), I marched against Akkad a second time. I besieged Ganannate. As for Marduk-bēl-ušati, the terrifying splendour of Aššur and Marduk overcame him and he went up into the mountains to save his life. I pursued him. I cut down with the sword Marduk-bēl-ušati and the rebel army officers who were with him (Black Obelisk, lines 73–84).

The conventional representation of crown princes as kings, except for their tiara, proves that they had a royal status of co-regent, but not king. Since the term co-regent does not exist in Hebrew, the literal translation of the Assyrian expression *mār šarri* as “son of the king” would have been misleading (Hussein: 2020, 59-88), since only one son of the king inherited a status equivalent to that of the king. The translation of *mār šarri* as “king” therefore corresponds to the function of the character and not to his official title of crown prince [of the house of succession]. The translation or transcription of the Assyrian titles in the Bible is therefore remarkably accurate:

In the 14th year of King Hezekiah (in 712 BCE), Sennacherib the king (*mār šarri*) of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. So King Hezekiah of Judah sent word to the king of Assyria at Lachish: I am at fault. Withdraw from against me, and I will give whatever you may impose on me. The king of Assyria imposed on King Hezekiah of Judah a fine of 300 silver talents and 30 gold talents (...) The king of Assyria then sent the Tartan (*turtānu*), the Rabsaris (*rab ša reš*), and the Rabshakeh (*rab šāqu*) with a vast army from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem (2Ki 18:13-17). In the year that King (*šarru*) Sargon of Assyria sent the Tartan to Ashdod (in 712 BCE), he fought against Ashdod and captured it (Is 20:1).

The translation of the two Assyrian terms *mār šarri* (co-regent) and *šarru* (king) into a single Hebrew word 'king' creates an ambiguity which is easily removed since the Bible gives the precise date of the events, making it possible to know whether it is a king or a co-regent. For example, Nabonidus (556-539) was king of Babylon, but in 553 BCE established his son Belshazzar (553-539) as co-regent before moving to the Syrian city of Teima. Although all the contracts dated to this period are in the name of Nabonidus, it was Belshazzar, as the Bible says, who was in Babylon when Cyrus took the city and installed Darius the Mede, his coregent, as king of Babylon (named Ugbaru in the Babylonian chronicles). For example:

In the 3rd year of the kingship of King (*mār šarri*) Belshazzar (in 550 BCE), a vision appeared to me, Daniel (...) As I raised my eyes, look! there was a ram standing before the watercourse, and it had two horns. The two horns were tall, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up later (...) The two-horned ram that you saw stands for the kings of Media (Astyages) and Persia (Cyrus II) (...) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and placed a gold necklace around his neck; and they heralded concerning him that he was to become the third ruler (*turtānu*) in the kingdom. That very night (11 October 539 BCE) Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom; he was about 62 years old. It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the whole kingdom (...) In the 1st year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus—a descendant of the Medes who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—in the 1st year of his reign (in 538 BCE) I, Daniel (Dn 8:1-3,20; 5:29-6:1; 7:1; 9:1-2).

According to Herodotus, Astyages the king of Media was defeated by Cyrus who thus became the king of Persia and Media, Harpagus (550-539), the new king of Media, becoming his co-regent (The Histories I:127-130, 162, 177-178). He is called “Lieutenant of Cyrus” by Strabo (Geography VI:1) or “Commandant of Cyrus” by Diodorus Siculus (Historical Library IX:31:1). When Harpagus, Cyrus' commander-in-chief, took Babylon, Cyrus became for the Babylonians “King of the Lands (Persia and Media)” and appointed Harpagus King of Babylon. This appointment posed a problem to the Babylonians because Harpagus had not been enthroned by Marduk during the festival of Akitu. In the Nabonidus Chronicle (BM 35382), Harpagus is called: Ugbaru, governor of Gutium (former name of Media) and the troops of Cyrus. According to this Chronicle, he ruled Babylon from October 539 BCE until his death in November 538 BCE, and was succeeded in January 537 BCE, by Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, who was enthroned as “King of Babylon”, Cyrus becoming “King of the Lands and Babylon”. Ugbaru was actually a king (coregent), as he appointed the governors of the new kingdom, which was a royal prerogative. In addition, when his wife died in March 537 BCE, the Chronicle states that she was the king (*šarru*)'s wife. Finally, he was replaced by Cambyses, who had appointed king (*šarru*) of Babylon. Ugbaru (not Gubaru “neck”) was a nickname because UG-ba-ru or PIRIG₃-ba-ru can be read *šar-bārû* “king of the diviner (Daniel?)” (Malbran-Labat: 1999, 43,97). Darius was probably a Persian throne name given to Harpagus by Cyrus, but this name was not used by the Babylonians. Harpagus is called Oibaras by Ctesias (Persica §13,36,45) and by Tzetzes (Chiliades I:93).

BIOGRAPHY OF KING TIGLATH-PILESER III (745-727), CO-REGENT UNDER THE NAME PULU (782-746)

Tiglath-pileser III is considered the true founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. His Assyrian name Tukultī-apil-Ešarra means “The heir of Ešarra (i.e., Ninurta: the representative of Aššur on earth) is my trust”. His advent in the 2nd month of the year 745 BCE, marked the end of a troubled period 783-745 BCE during the reigns of the three successors of Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). His accession to the throne coincided with a revolt in Kalhu, the Assyrian capital, and came about as a result of a coup (in 746 BCE) orchestrated by his predecessor's senior officials because they legitimately continued to serve the new king. Tiglath-pileser does not indicate his ancestry in his inscriptions (because he did not directly succeed his father), he sometimes states that he was appointed by the god Enlil, however, one brick clearly states that he was the son of Adad-nīrārī III (Tadmor / Yamada: 2011, 83,147-148).

As crown prince, Tiglath-pileser must have played an important role during the reigns of his three successive brothers, but we cannot confirm this because the Assyrian annals of this period have been lost.

For chronological reasons, the mysterious Assyrian king, named Bar Ga'yah (“Son of Majesty” in Aramaic) king of KTK, can be identified with Tiglath-pileser while he was crown prince (“Son of the King” in Assyrian).

The annals of Tiglath-pileser III are biased because they sometimes include ancient tributes of his predecessors. However, these annals can be completed and corrected by means of the eponymous Chronicle and some detailed (undated) inscriptions. For example, Hatarikka was annexed in 738 BCE (Yamada: 2014, 31-50). The Assyrian word *palû* (BALA) literally means “period of office” and could be translated by “period of reign” or “regnal year” but as Tiglath-pileser's accession took place at the beginning of the year, this would have allowed him to conduct a military campaign. Thus, it is preferable to translate *palû* by “campaign (*gerru*)”, because there is a difference of one year between the years of reign and the number of campaigns:

TABLE 2

BCE	year/ <i>palû</i>	Campaign according to: Eponym Chronicle	Annals of Tiglath-pileser III
745	0/ <i>palû</i> 1	To Mesopotamia	Campaign in northern and eastern Babylonia; defeat of the Aramean tribes near Dûr-Kurigalzu.
744	1/ <i>palû</i> 2	Against the land of Namri	First Median Campaign: Parsua and Bît-Hamban are annexed; the submission of the Maneans.
743	2/ <i>palû</i> 3	Urartu defeated in Arpad	Sarduri (II), king of Urartu, and his Anatolian allies are defeated (Puwal).
742	3/ <i>palû</i> 4	Against Arpad	Arpad besieged.
741	4/ <i>palû</i> 5	Against Arpad	Arpad besieged.
740	5/ <i>palû</i> 6	Against Arpad	Fall and annexation of Arpad.
739	6/ <i>palû</i> 7	Against the land of Ulluba	Campaign to Ulluba.
738	7/ <i>palû</i> 8	Kullani conquered	Unqi and Hatarikka annexed; tribute received from all vassal kings of the West, including Rezin (Raḫiānu) of Damascus and Menahem of Samaria (Meniḫimme Samerināia) .
737	8/ <i>palû</i> 9	Against the Medes	Second Median campaign deep into Media. Territories around Parsua and Bît-Humban are annexed.
736	9/ <i>palû</i> 10	To the foot of Mount Nal	-
735	10/ <i>palû</i> 11	Against Urartu	Campaign into the heart of Urartu as far as Turušpa.
734	11/ <i>palû</i> 12	Against Philistia	Campaign to Philistia and the Egyptian border.
733	12/ <i>palû</i> 13	Against Damascus	Siege of Damascus. Campaigns against the Arabs and to Gilead and Galilee.
732	13/ <i>palû</i> 14	Against Damascus	Conquest and annexation of Damascus. Campaigns against the Arabs and to Gilead, Galilee, and Transjordan.
731	14/ <i>palû</i> 15	Against Šapia	Defeat of the Chaldean tribes of central and southern Babylonia; siege of Šapia.
730	15/ <i>palû</i> 16	The king stayed in the land	-
729	16/ <i>palû</i> 17	The king took hand's Bel	Defeat of (Nabû-)Mukîn-zêri, king of Babylon. Tiglath-pileser III ascends the Babylonian throne (Pulu).
728	17/ <i>palû</i> 18	Hi[. was conquered]	Tiglath-pileser III on the Babylonian throne
727	18/ <i>palû</i> 19	Against [...]	Tiglath-pileser III dies in the month of Tebetu (X).

We notice that, during his 18-year reign, Tiglath-pileser III made many conquests and annexations and conducted many sieges, but that he received tributes only during his 8th campaign, in 738 BCE. According to this reconstruction, Menahem of Samaria (Israel) would have given a tribute to Tiglath-pileser III during his 8th campaign, or Year 7, in 738 BCE, but this conclusion ignores the context because the rest of the inscription reads:

I exercised authority over [..., ...] ..., which [...], the city Hatarikka, as far as Mount Sau[e, ...] (...) I annexed to Assyria [..., the city Kašpūna, which is on the shore of the Upper (text: “Lower”) Sea, the cities [...]nite,

Gil[ead, and] Abil-šitti, which are the border of the land Bīt-Ḥumri[a] (Israel), the extensive [land of Bīt-Ḥaza'i]li (Damascus) in [its] en[tirety, (and) I pla]ced [... eunuch]s of mine as provincial governors [over them]. (As for) Ḥanūnu of the city Gaza, [who] fle[d before] my weapons [and] escaped [to] Egypt — [I conquered] the city Gaza, [his royal city, (and) I carried off] his property (and) [his] gods (...) I re]ceived [gold], silver, multi-colored garments, linen garments (... As for) the land Bīt-Ḥumria (Israel), I brought [to] Assyria [..., its “au]xiliary [army” ...] (and) all of its people, [...]. [I/they] killed Peqah, their king, and I placed Hoshea [as king o]ver them. I received from them ten talents of gold, ... talents of silver, [together with] their [proper]ty, and [I brou]ght them [to Assyria] (Tadmor /Yamada: 2011, 105-106).

The receipt of tribute from the town of Hatarikka mentioned in the inscription must be dated during 738 BCE. Consequently, Tiglath-pileser III overthrew King Pekah (758-738) in 738 BCE and placed Hosea I (738-729) as king over the inhabitants of Samaria, which fits perfectly with the biblical text:

In the days of Pekah (758-738) the king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser (745-727) the king of Assyria came in and proceeded to take Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and to carry them into exile in Assyria. Finally, Hosea (738-729) the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah and struck him and put him to death; and he began to reign in place of him in the 20th year of Jotham (in 738 BCE) the son of Uzziah (2Ki 15:27-30).

Furthermore, in 738 BCE, the king of Judah was indeed Ahaz (742-726), written *Ia-ú-ḥa-zi* in Tiglath-pileser's Annals, and according to the biblical text (Mykytiuk: 2004, 167-169,209):

It was then that King Rezin (c.755-732) of Syria and Pekah (758-738) son of Remalah the king of Israel came up to wage war against Jerusalem. They laid siege against Ahaz (742-726) but were not able to capture the city. At that time King Rezin of Syria restored Elath to Edom, after which he drove the Jews out of Elath. And the Edomites entered Elath, and they have occupied it down to this day. So, Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser (745-727) of Assyria, saying: I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me. Ahaz then took the silver and the gold that was to be found at the house of Jehovah and in the treasuries of the king's house and sent the king of Assyria a bribe. The king of Assyria responded to his request, and he went up to Damascus and captured it and led its people into exile to Kir, and he put Rezin to death (in 732 BCE). Then King Ahaz went to meet King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria at Damascus (2Ki 16:5-10).

The chronological agreement between the annals of Tiglath and the biblical account is perfect with one major exception, for, while Tiglath-pileser III did indeed murder Pekah in 738 BCE, and replace him with Hosea, he could not at the same time have received a tribute from Menahem (771-760), a former king of Israel who had been dead for 22 years. In fact, the paradox is only apparent because the biblical text explains that Menahem actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser, not during Tiglath-pileser's reign, but when Tiglath-pileser was co-regent under the name Pulu, a hypocoristic use of the word *aplu* “the heir” (Villard: 2001, 850). Tiglath-pileser reused this name when he was co-regent or vice-regent of Babylon (729-727).

According to the Bible, the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria (1Ch 5:26). Pul the king of Assyria came into the land. Consequently, Menahem (771-760) gave Pul 1000 talents of silver, that his hand might prove to be with him to strengthen the kingdom in his own hand. So Menahem brought forth the silver at the expense of Israel, at the expense of all the valiant, mighty men, to give to the king of Assyria 50 silver shekels for each man. At that the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not stay there in the land (2Ki 15:19-20).

Academic studies refer to the biblical chronology calculated by Thiele who lowered the reign of Menahem from 771-760 BCE to 752-742 BCE, but two theses have shown that the biblical chronology, reconstructed solely from the chronological data of the Bible (Jones: 2005, Tetley: 2005), agrees with the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies. The case is made that the biblical accounts are historically accurate (Siddall: 2006, 93-106) and in complete accord with the Assyrian sources (Dubovský: 2006, 153-170).

Assyrian and biblical narratives during this period of great upheavals overlap perfectly and illuminate mutually. In 742 BCE, Rezin (c.755-732), the powerful king of Damascus, whose reign is well documented (Na'aman: 1995, 105-117; Bryce: 2012, 302-309), formed a coalition to resist Tiglath-pileser III's attack, Pekah (758-738), the king of Israel, joined the coalition but not Jotham (758-742), the king of Judah. This led to a retaliation against Jotham who died at the end of the year (2Ki 15:37-38). In 740 BCE, the kingdom of Bit-Agusi (Arpad) was defeated by Tiglath-pileser III during his 6th campaign in Syria and was definitively annexed to the Assyrian empire. In order to defeat Pekah, Ahaz (742-726), the new king of Judah: “asked the kings of Assyria (malkhê aššur) for help” (2Ch 28:16 NIV). The Assyrian “king (*melekh*)” accompanying Tiglath-pileser III (2Ch 18:20) must have been Shalmaneser V as co-regent.

Hosea I as vassal king of Israel formed a conspiracy against Pekah. He put him to death and began to reign in place of him (2Ki 15:27-30). In 734 BCE, Tiglath-pileser III invaded and immediately conquered the Philistine territories. The reconstruction of this troubled period highlights several synchronisms among the Assyrian, Israelite (Samaria) and Judean reigns.

BCE	month	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]							
742	4	I	3	(2)	6	16	16	[A] Tiglath-pileser III , King of Assyria					
	5	II						[B] Shalmaneser (V) , Crown prince (Vice-regent/co-regent)					
	6	III						[C] Nabû-nasir , King of Babylonia					
	7	IV						[D] Jotham , King of Judah (2Ki 15:32-33)					
	8	V											
	9	VI											
	10	VII							17	[E] Pekah , King of Israel against Jotham (2Ki 15:27,37-38)			
	11	VIII											
	12	IX											
	741	1						X			0	***	[D] Ahaz , King of Judah (2Ki 16:1)
		2						XI					
		3						XII					
4		I	4	(3)	7	1	[17]						
5		II											
6		III											
7		IV											
8		V											
9		VI											
10		VII							18	[A] Tiglath-pileser III , King of Assyria			
11		VIII								[B] Shalmaneser (V) , Crown prince (Vice-regent)			
12		IX											
740	1	X											
	2	XI											
	3	XII											
	4	I	5	(4)	8	2	[18]	[D] Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria (King Tiglath-pileser III and Co-regent Shalmaneser V) for them to help him (2Ch 28:16-20) and asked to be a vassal of Tiglath-pileser III (2Ki 16:7).					
	5	II											
	6	III											
	7	IV											
	8	V											
	9	VI											
	10	VII							19				
	11	VIII											
	12	IX											
739	1	X											
	2	XI											
	3	XII											
	4	I	6	(5)	9	(3)	[19]						
	5	II											
	6	III											
	7	IV											
	8	V											
	9	VI											
	10	VII							20	[E] Pekah , King of Israel died (2Ki 15:27)			
	11	VIII											
	12	IX											
738	1	X											
	2	XI											
	3	XII											
	4	I	7	(6)	10	(4)	[20]						
	5	II											
	6	III											
	7	IV							***	0	[E] Hosea I , King of Israel (2Ki 15:30) vassal of Tiglath-pileser III		
	8	V											
	9	VI											
	10	VII									[1]	[E] Beginning of the 65-year period (Is 7:8-9) until 673 BCE when Manasseh was freed by Esarhaddon (2Ch 33:10-13; Ezr 4:2)	
	11	VIII											
	12	IX											

The main purpose of the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, to annex Damascus in 733/732 BCE, was motivated primarily by greed rather than strategy. Listing the reigns in parallel helps one to understand a few chronological oddities in some reigns. For example, Hosea II became king in the 12th year of Ahaz the king of Judah, in 729 BCE, but he was already king from the 20th year of Jotham (2Ki 15:30) who only reigned 16 years (2Ki 15:32-33)! In fact, given that Hosea I was appointed by Tiglath-pileser III as his vassal in 738 BCE, consequently his reign became valid only after his anointing as king of Judah in 729 BCE. Similarly, Ahaz became the vassal of Tiglath-pileser III in 740 BCE until his departure in 732 BCE. Therefore, when Hosea I was appointed king in 738 BCE, which was the 4th year of Ahaz (742-726), the Hebrew scribe chose to count his reign from the 20th year of Jotham (758-742) because Jotham had been a legitimate king, although he was dead at that time (not a co-regent). The oddity of these double reigns stems from the absence of the word “co-regent” in Hebrew⁷, thus Hosea I became the vassal king (738-729) of Tiglath-pileser III before becoming legitimate king of Israel (729-720).

⁷ For example, High Priest Azariah (796-758) replaced King Uzziah (810-758) who had been afflicted with leprosy in the 14th year of his reign and was therefore no longer able to exercise his kingship. Tibni (930-925) was king at the same time as Omri (930-919); Jehoash (941-939) was the co-regent of Jehoahaz (856-839) before becoming king of Israel (839-823); Jehoram (893-885) was the co-regent of Josphat for two years (916-891) before becoming king of Judah; Ahaziah (886-885) was the co-regent of Jehoram (893-885) in his last year of reign.

BCE	month	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]							
730	4 I	15	(14)	2	12	[8]	[A] Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria						
	5 II						[B] Shalmaneser (V), Crown prince (co-regent)						
	6 III						[C] Nabû-mukîn-zêri, King of Babylonia						
	7 IV						[D] Ahaz, King of Judah						
	8 V												
	9 VI												
	10 VII												
	11 VIII												
	12 IX						[9]	[E] Hosea I, King of Israel (2Ki 15:30) vassal of Tiglath-pileser					
	729						1 X	16	(15)	3	13		
							2 XI						
							3 XII						
4 I													
5 II			[C] Pulu, King of Babylonia										
6 III			[E] Hosea II, King of Israel (2Ki 17:1)										
7 IV													
8 V													
9 VI													
10 VII													
11 VIII													
12 IX													

Very often Assyrian kings chose their co-regent a few years after the beginning of their reign, but Tiglath-pileser III (bottom right) chose his son Shalmaneser V (bottom left) as co-regent from the 1st year of his reign.



King Tiglath-pileser III (right) facing his co-regent Shalmaneser (V)

The wall panel (British Museum WA 118933) describes some of the campaigns of Tiglath Pileser III in Iran in 744 BCE. The inscription on this slab deals with Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns against Media. The Annals of the king report two campaigns against Media, one in his 2nd *palû*, the other in his 9th (Yamada: 2014, 31-50). According to Rost, the part of the inscription preserved on this slab belongs to the campaign of the 2nd *palû* (Rost: 1893, 1-7), in 744 BCE. This enthronement ceremony of Shalmaneser V is also shown in Til Barsip with two eunuchs behind Tiglath-pileser III (Villard: 2001, 312). It is interesting to note that this event took place shortly after Tiglath-pileser led a revolt (in 746 BCE) against his brother Aššur-nīrārī V (Siddall: 2013, 126). The reign of Tiglath-pileser III is extremely unusual in many ways. He was the 4th and youngest son of Aššur-nīrārī III and, from the bricks from Aššur, referred to himself as the son of Aššur-nīrārī III⁸ (Tadmor /Yamaha: 2011, 147-148). At the death of King Adad-nīrārī III, in 783 BCE, his eldest son (Shalmaneser IV) succeeded him on the throne, but what is paradoxical is that his youngest son, Tiglath-pileser, who was nevertheless the crown prince did not begin to rule, probably because of his young age. As he was only around 10 years old in 792 BCE, he was not invested with the command of the armies and therefore did not receive the ornament/diadem that the commander-in-chief already had. It is also worth noting that Šamšī-īlu, who had been appointed the commander-in-chief [of the West?] by Adad-nīrārī III around 800 BCE (Villard: 2001, 817-818), remained in place during the reigns of his three sons, while the privilege of appointing the commander-in-chief was a royal prerogative of the king in office⁹. There are three inscriptions which show that Tiglath-pileser was crown prince at least from 792 BCE (Kataja /Whiting: 1995, XII,10-15), so from years before Adad-nīrārī III's death:

[Adad-nerari (III), overseer (PA-*lum* = *waklum*), [son of Šamš]i-Adad (V), [over]seer, [son of Sha]lmanes[er (III), likewise, overseer] An estate [.. of x] hectar[es of land ... under the authority of] Bel-[ta]rsi-[ilum]ma, [pre]fect of Kalhu (797 BCE?), Adad-nerari (III), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, exempted (from taxes) and gave to [Nabû-d]ur-beliya, his eunuch. The corn taxes of this field shall not be collected, the straw taxes shall not be gathered. [The gov]ernor (and) the pr[efe]ct [shall not] e[x]ercise authority] over [them ..., eponym year of¹⁰].

Adad-nerari (III), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, overseer, son of Šamšī-Adad (V), king of Assyria, overseer, son of Shalmaneser (III), king of Assyria, overseer [...] And Bel-[Harran ...] from the king (LUGAL) and the crown prince (DUMU LUGAL) before the gods for [...] as a good deed and favour [has received] for future da[ys]. By Aššur, Šamaš and [Enlil], the Assyrian Ištar, Adad, Nergal, Ninurta and the Sebeti (Pleiades), all these gods of Assyria, a future prince shall not cast aside the wording of this document. Month Ab (V), 26th day, eponym year of Mušalli-Inurta (in 792 BCE).

Kid[... In the fu]ture, at any time, [neither] the descendents of Renti-[... nor] the men of the household of the crown prince (DUMU LUGAL) shall dispute anything with Abi-ul-idi, high priest, or his descendents. Future prince: do not cast aside the wording of this tablet. Month March[esvan (VIII) in 792-762 BCE]¹¹

Adad-nerari (III), overseer, [son of Šamš]i-Adad (V), [over]seer, [son of Sha]lmanes[er (III), likewise, overseer ...] [the cor]n taxes [of this village] shall not be collected, its [straw taxes] shall not be gathered. [... T]iglath-pileser ...] In the future, [of t]his vi[llage] and all of its possessions, nothing shall be taken away [f]rom Sabu son of Ahi-Nanaya and his [desc]endents. [By Ašš]ur, Adad, Ber and the Assyrian [Ištar]: Future prince: do not cast aside the wording of this tablet [... eponym year of] Tab-Bel [the governor of Bi]t Zamani (in 762 BCE).

These inscriptions mention the presence of a “son of the king” (DUMU LUGAL) in 792 BCE, whose name, Tiglath-pileser, appears in the inscription dated 762 BCE during Aššur-dân III's reign. In addition, the name of Tiglath-pileser is written TUKUL-ti-A-É.ŠĀR.RA *Tukulti-apil-éšarra* when he was crown prince, then TUKUL-ti-DUMU.UŠ-É.ŠĀR.RA *Tukulti-mār-éšarra* when he was king (LUGAL). The difference in meaning is minimal since -A- is read *apil* “heir” and DUMU is read *mār* “son”. Since Tiglath-pileser III died in 727 BCE and was probably 70-75 years old, he must have been born around 800 BCE. In this case he must have been around 10 years old when he was appointed as royal heir (in 792 BCE) and he must have been less than 20 years old when his father died (in 783 BCE). It was his young age that prevented him from exercising royal authority because he had to be able to lead military campaigns, which were then entrusted to the commander-in-chief. This unusual situation had

⁸ However, the edition of the Assyrian King List from Sargon II's reign, known as the SDAS List, ascribes his parentage to Aššur-nīrārī V instead of Aššur-nīrārī III. One must give preference to the contemporary brick inscriptions from Aššur over the later composed text of the SDAS edition of the Assyrian King List. Sargon II, who was the second son of Tiglath-pileser III, not the son of the previous king (Shalmaneser V), wanted to legitimize the reign of his father who had overthrown his own brother, Aššur-nīrārī V, through a normal father/son succession. The scribe wrote “son of Aššur-nīrārī V” instead of “brother of Aššur-nīrārī V” (Tadmor /Yamaha: 2011, 147).

⁹ Assyrian kings chose their commander-in-chief in the first year of their reign and then appointed him to the eponymy in the third year. If the commander-in-chief was chosen during the reign, he was named the following year. Since Nergal-ilāya (810-787) was the commander-in-chief who led the campaign against Namri in 797 BCE and Šamšī-īlu refers to himself as governor of Namri in his inscription of 774 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III must have appointed him to this position in 797 BCE (Younger: 2016, 355-362) as well as commander-in-chief [of the West].

¹⁰ Bel-tarši-ilumma, prefect of Kalhu, was eponym in 797 BCE.

¹¹ The eponym of this inscription is not legible, but as in 792 BCE, Tiglath-pileser is only mentioned as crown prince while he is designated by his name in 762 BCE, it can be assumed that this inscription which designates him as crown prince was written between these two dates.

already occurred with his father (Adad-nīrārī III) who had exercised his royal authority under the regency of his mother, Queen Semiramis (Sammu-ramāt), who had held the co-regency function for 5 years (Siddall: 2013, 13-17, 129-132). This complex situation created a paradox: the reigning king did not actually exercise royal authority. If Šamšī-Adad (V) was around 20 when he was appointed Crown Prince (827-824) his son Adad-nīrārī (III) had to have been around 17 in 810 BCE. Two objects — a carved container (below), found at Tarbiṣu (near Nineveh), autographed by the commander-in-chief Bēlū-lū-balaṭ (815-810), and a cylinder seal found at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), which belonged to a royal official of Adad-nīrārī III— shed light on the position of these two kings during this period (Reade: 2009, 252-254).

King Šamšī-Adad V with a tiara (right) facing his co-regent Adad-nīrārī (III) without a tiara



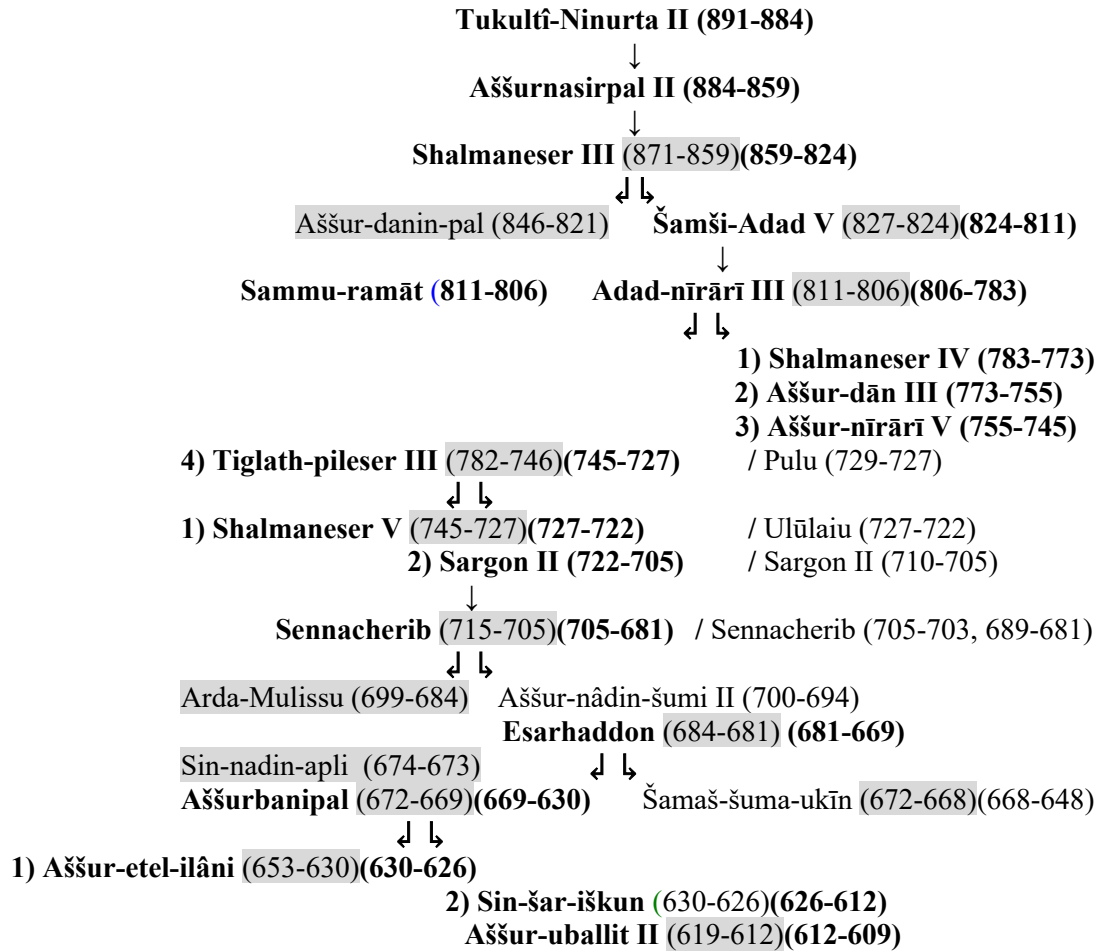
Queen Sammu-ramāt (left) facing the king before the co-regent (Adad-nīrārī III)

On the cylinder seal (opposite) there is a king (who wears the tiara with two royal ribbons in his back) kneeling before his co-regent (who wears a diadem with also two royal ribbons). As the object belonged to Bēlū-lū-balaṭ (815-810), the governor of Balīḫu, the anonymous king has to be Šamšī-Adad V (who had just died) and Crown Prince Adad-nīrārī III. The queen, with a 5-spike crown and two royal ribbons, faces the king (her husband), himself before the co-regent, beardless young man who wears the two royal ribbons¹². The Assyrian empire experienced several co-regencies that began at the same time as the king's reign, such as Sammu-ramāt/Adad-nīrārī III (811-806); Shalmaneser IV/Tiglath-pileser III (783-773); Tiglath-pileser III/ Shalmaneser V (745-727). Tiglath-pileser III did not become king at the death of Shalmaneser IV presumably because he had been appointed as co-regent by Adad-nīrārī III, next to his elder brother who was the natural successor to the throne. King Tiglath-pileser III's career is, therefore, in accordance with Middle Eastern protocol, which never gives the name of the co-regent in official royal inscriptions, but only his title as *mār šarri* ("son of the king"). The situation was different with vassal or foreign kingdoms since in this case the ruler had a royal status and could use the title of king. The two-headed leadership of the Assyrian empire caused a problem for the commander-in-chief and other chiefs of staff who were leading military campaigns on behalf of the king. The problem was solved in a simple way: military campaigns in the name of the king were registered in his name, those in the co-regent's name were registered in the name of the commander-in-chief, or in the name of the chief of staff, who led the campaign (or who completed the construction of a temple) giving the impression that these high-ranking officials had granted themselves royal powers. The office of the *turtānu* differed from the office of the other high officials in one very important respect: his role was primarily a military one, as he was the military commander of the Assyrian army for a long period, until the Assyrian kings divided the army into two: a provincial army commanded by the *turtānu* (commander-in-chief), and a central standing army (royal corps) commander by the *rab ša-rēšē* (Chief Eunuch). A *turtānu*'s army might have been partly recruited from the armies of local governors, vassals, and local population. The military role of Šamšī-ilu (c.797-747) to the west of the empire was counterbalanced by the military role of Chief Eunuch to the East (Dezső: 2012, 218-227). As Šamšī-ilu had played a key role in the military campaigns to the west when Tiglath-pileser III was co-regent (782-746), not when he was designated as royal heir (792-782). His death around 747 BCE caused a policy change in the Assyrian empire, as it was only the king (Aššur-nīrārī V) who appointed this key figure to head the army. This death pushed Tiglath-pileser III, who was the co-regent of Aššur-nīrārī V (Davenport: 2016, 38-39), to take power in order to appoint a new *turtānu*. Such a complex situation was not exceptional as shown by the genealogy of Assyrian kings (Kalimi, Richardson: 2014, 173-181; May: 2017, 153) given that it occurred (i.e., 2 successors ↓ ↘) with Adad-nīrārī III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal.



¹² This representation (Reade: 2009, 252-254) is doubly outstanding because it is the only depiction of an Assyrian queen and also the only depiction of a Crown Prince without a beard. However, it fits perfectly with the 5-year coregency of Sammu-ramāt (811-806) with his son Adad-nīrārī III who was around 20 years old in 806 BCE at the end of his coregency. Herodotus mentioned the existence of this exceptional queen (The Histories I:184). The representation of this queen on this royal seal being unique it is controversial (Gansell: 2018, 83), but as the seal belonged to Bēlū-lū-balaṭ (815-810), the governor of Balīḫu, it imposes the choice of Semiramis (811-807). Bēlū-lū-balaṭ, was commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) under Šamšī-Adad V (824-811) and was eponym in 814 BCE. The seal must be dated 811-810 BCE.

King of Assyria, Crown Prince/Co-regent, King of Babylon



Sennacherib appointed Aššur-nādin-šumi II (700-694) as king of Babylon, Arda-Mulissu (699-684) and later also Esarhaddon as Crown Prince (684-681). The succession of Ashurbanipal is poorly documented, but he seems to have appointed Aššur-etel-ilāni as Crown Prince¹³ in 653 BCE and the latter seized power in 630 BCE (Villard: 2001, 102-107). That would explain why his short reign (630-626) is not mentioned in the Babylonian King lists because the legitimate king remained Ashurbanipal (669-630). The case of Shalmaneser V is simpler: because of his short reign (727-722) he had no time to appoint a Crown Prince; consequently, when he died, one of his two brothers, later called Sargon (*Šarru-kīn* “the legitimate king”), took over the kingship. All these examples show that crown princes acted as co-regents (when they were over 20 years old). Previous chronological reconstructions show that all synchronisms between the Israelite and Assyrian reigns from Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon are in perfect agreement with absolute dates. According to the biblical text, Menahem (771-760) paid a tribute to Pûl (פּוּל), the Assyrian king who preceded Tiglath-pileser III. An inscription of Awarikku, King of the Danunites, referred to the rebellion of western states led by Mati'-El against Tiglath-Pileser III in the late 740's BCE. It reads:

This frontier region is the gift of Tiglath-Pileser, Puwal, King of Assyria (תַּכְלַת־אֶפְלַסֶּר פּוּאֵל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר) to the king and dynasty of the king of the Danunites (Kaufman: 2007, 7–26).

This inscription shows that Tiglath-pileser III was previously known as Pulu. According to Menander of Ephesus (c. 200 BCE), the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives in Phoenician (destroyed in 146 BCE) into the Greek language, the Assyrian king named Pul(as) reigned 36 years:

The king of Assyria invaded all Syria and Phoenicia in a hostile manner (in 773 BCE). The name of this king is also set down in the archives of Tyre, for he made an expedition against Tyre in the reign of Elulaios¹⁴. This is also attested by Menander, the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives into the Greek language, who has given the following account: And Elulaios (?), to whom they gave the name of Pulas, reigned 36 years; this king, upon the revolt of the Kiteis (Cyprians), put out to sea and again reduced them to a submission (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284). Given that Tiglath-pileser III revolted against his brother, Adad-nīrārī V, in 746 BCE, his effective co-regency must have begun 36 years earlier in 782 BCE, which fits exactly the time period

¹³ However, the crown prince was not named in 653 BCE and then never appeared on the sculptures (Reade: 1972, 93).

¹⁴ Luli I (775-755). This king of Tyre cannot be Luli II (729-694) because according to Assyrian records he was king of Sidon during the 3rd Sennacherib campaign (702 BCE) and fled from Tyre to Cyprus where he “died” shortly afterwards. This information is incompatible with the length of his reign, implying that he was already king in 736 BCE at the time of Hiram III (739-730).

(782-746). Since the Assyrian king who ruled during the reign of Menahem was Aššur-dān III, it was not this king, but an Assyrian vice-regent named Pulu in Assyrian (or “Son of Majesty” in Aramaic), which is in excellent agreement with the period during which the first three sons of Adad-nīrārī III reigned:

JUDAH	reign	ISRAEL	reign	KING OF ASSYRIA	reign	CO-REGENT	reign
Uzziah [Azariah]	810 - [796 -	Jeroboam II	823 - -782	Šamši-Adad V	824-811	Aššur-danin-pal	824-821
		Zechariah	782-771	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783	Sammu-ramāt	811-806
	-758	Menahem	771-760	Shalmaneser IV	783-773	Pulu	782 -
Jotham	758 - -742	Pekah	758 - -738	Aššur-dān III	773-755		-746
Ahaz	742 - -726	Hosea I	738-729	Tiglath-pileser III	745 -	Shalmaneser V	744 -
		Hosea II	729 -		-727	(Pulu)	-729
Hezekiah	726 -		-720	Shalmaneser V	727-722	(Ulūlaiu)	729-727
	-697			Sargon II	722-705	Sennacherib	727-722
Manasseh	697 - -642			Sennacherib	705 -		715-705
					-681	Arda-Mulissu	699-684
						Esarhaddon	684-681

As the Assyrian records before Tiglath-pileser III were lost, the events that took place during all this period (highlighted in gray) can be reconstructed from the Eponym List (Millard: 1994, 70–71) and by some inscriptions, especially the period of time between the reigns of Adad-nīrārī III and Tiglath-pileser III. The number assigned to the son indicates the order of succession. For example Sargon (son 2) succeeded Shalmaneser V, his elder brother.

King (at Nineveh)	Reign	Co-regent (at Kalhu)		Commander-in-chief	Period
Aššurnasirpal II	884-871			[Aššur-iddin]	883 -
	871-859	Shalmaneser III	son 1		-858
Shalmaneser III	859 -			Aššur-bēlu-ka’'in	858-854
	-846			Dayyan-Aššur	854 -
	846-821	Aššur-danin-pal	son 1		
	827-824	Šamši-Adad V	son 2		-824
Šamši-Adad V	824 -			Yaḥālu	824-815
	-811			Bēlu-lū-balāt	815-810
Adad-nīrārī III	811-806	Sammu-ramāt	mother	Nergal-ilāya	810 -
	806-792			Šamši-ilu [<i>of the West ?</i>]	[797 -
	792-783	Pulu (heir)			-787
Shalmaneser IV	783-773	(crown prince)	son 1		
Aššur-dān III	773-755		son 2		
Aššur-nīrārī V	755 -		son 3		-747
	-745		son 4	-	747-744
Tiglath-pileser III	745-744			Nabū-da’inanni	744 -
	744-727	Shalmaneser V	son 1		-726
Shalmaneser V	727-722		-	Ninurta-ilāya?	726 -
Sargon II (at Nineveh)	722-715		son 2		
	715-705	Sennacherib	son 1		-710
Sennacherib	705-699			Sennacherib	710-686
	699-684	Arda-Mulissu	son 1	Bēl-emuranni (<i>of the East</i>)	686 -
	684-681	Esarhaddon	son 2		-680
Esarhaddon	681-674			(Esarhaddon?)	680 -
	674-672	Sin-nādin-apli	son 1		
	672-669	Aššurbanipal			-669
Aššurbanipal	669-653			Mār-larīm (<i>of the West</i>)	669 -
	653-630	Aššur-etel-ilāni	son 1		-630
Aššur-etel-ilāni	630-626	Sin-šar-iškun	son 2	Šalam-šarru-iqbi (<i>West</i>)	630 -
Sin-šar-iškun	626-619				-615
	619-612	Aššur-uballit II?	son 2	Šamaš-šarru-iqbi	615-612
Aššur-uballit II	612-609			Nabū-mār-šarri-ušur	612-609

The co-regency of Tiglath-pileser III is, therefore, not exceptional, since 9 out of 16 Assyrian kings during the period 884-609 BCE had a period of co-regency before reigning. However, this time period (811-727 BCE) includes several oddities:

- Adad-nīrārī III started his reign with a 5-year co-regency with his mother, Semiramis (Sammu-ramāt “Heavens-beloved”). It was indeed a co-regency since Semiramis led a military campaign alongside her son (Siddall: 2013, 86-100). As the king had to be able to conduct military campaigns personally, as a soldier he had to be at least 20 years old (Herodotus I:136,209). As Adad-nīrārī III 's father was Šamši-Adad V (824-811), he was probably born around 825 BCE. When his father died in 811 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III was therefore 14 years old when he was enthroned, which obliged his mother, Semiramis, to assume the regency (811-806) until her son reached the age of 20, when he could personally lead military campaigns and found a dynasty.
- Instead of the usual transition father/son, four brothers succeeded one another on the throne of Assyria: 1) Shalmaneser IV, 2) Aššur-dān III, 3) Aššur-nīrārī V and 4) Tiglath-pileser III.
- Usually the *turtānu* “commander-in-chief” was chosen in the first year of the new Assyrian king, but since Nergal-ilāya (810-787) was the *turtānu* at that time (Younger: 2016, 355-362), Adad-nīrārī III must have appointed Šamši-ilu as *turtānu* [of the West] in 797 BCE, Nergal-ilāya being *turtānu* [of the East] from 797 to 787 BCE. Šamši-ilu was reappointed to office by the three successors of Adad-nīrārī III (in 780, 770 and 752 BCE).
- The eponym list for the reign of Aššur-dān III (773-755) is anomalous, as only the king himself and the commander-in-chief, in regnal years 2 and 3, are inserted to break the sequence of provincial governors, who otherwise continue on from the reign of the preceding king (Finkel, Reade: 1995, 167-172).

Kalhu (Nimrud) was one of the great neo-Assyrian capitals. The expansion of the city into becoming the capital was the result of the activity of Aššurnasirpal II (884-878) who started the works at the eponymy of Dagan-bēlu-ušur (*sic*, in fact Dagan-bēlu-nāšir), in 878 BCE. He began the construction of the 7.5 km long quadrangular defensive wall, probably completed by Shalmaneser III (859-824). The palace of Aššurnasirpal II remained an important royal building which was surpassed by the “Central Palace” built by Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). This royal palace, the residence of the Assyrian kings, was redesigned by Tiglath-pileser III. The governor of this city thus had a special relationship with the king, his superior next to the commander-in-chief. The archives of the governor's palace shed light on the relationship between all these high-ranking figures of the kingdom.

King (at Nineveh)		Co-regent (at Kalhu)	Governor of Kalhu	
Aššurnasirpal II	884-871			
	871-859	Shalmaneser III	Nergal-āpil-kūmūa	873 -
Shalmaneser III	859 -			-851
	-846		Šamaš-bēlu-ušur	851 -
	846-821	Aššur-danin-pal		844
	827-824	Šamši-Adad V		-?
Šamši-Adad V	824 -		Mušēzib-ninurta	? -
	-811			817
Aššur-nīrārī III	811-806	Šammu-ramāt		-808
	806-792		Bēl-tarši-iluma	808-791
	792-783	(Heir)	Aššur-bēlu-ušur	791 -
Shalmaneser IV	783-773			-772
Aššur-dān III	773-755	(The King my lord)	Šarru-dūrī	772 -
Aššur-nīrārī V	755 -	(Governor of the land)		-744
	-745			
Tiglath-pileser III	745-744		Bēl-dān	744 -
	744-727	Shalmaneser V		-728
Shalmaneser V	727-722		Marduk-rēmāni	728 -
Sargon II (at Nineveh)	722-715			-713
	715-705	Sennacherib	Aššur-bāni	713-705

Three important points should be noted: the governor of Kalhu often began his office in the year following the king's accession to the throne; he was an important figure because he is often eponym; among all these letters Šamši-ilu (c.797-747) is never cited by name but always by his title of *turtānu* “commander-in-chief” (Postgate: 1973, 8-11). When we place the co-regents in parallel with the kings, we notice that the reconstitution of the governors contains anomalies: either they seem to disappear, like those who officiated under Aššur-danin-pal and Šamši-Adad V (846-824 BCE) or the letters are no longer precisely dated, like those under Shalmaneser IV, Aššur-dān III and Aššur-nīrārī V (783-745 BCE). The most surprising period is during the governorate of Šarru-dūrī (772-744) because he did not hold the eponymy office and among the six letters, written c. 750 BCE according to script and phraseology, that the king addressed to him as Governor (LÚ.EN.NAM) Šarru-dūrī, he never presents himself by name, contrary to protocol, but only by the title of “King, my lord (LUGAL EN-ia)” in four letters (No. 185 to 187) or by the title of “Governor of the land, my lord (LÚ.GAR.KUR EN-ia read: *šakin māti belia*)” in two letters (No. 188 and 189). The latter title was only used by Governors of Assyria, because provincial governors, or

prefects, used the title *šakin tēmi*. In a letter (No. 201) Governor Bēl-dān mentions that “his family is from kings (*šar-e-e*) of Kalku” (Postgate: 1973, 11,22,199-200). These letters are difficult to decipher because according to official protocol there was only one king of Assyria wearing the tiara, but in practice there could be a co-regent, or vice-regent, who had the same power as the king without having either the title (LUGAL) or the tiara (MEN read: *agū*). So, the Assyrian scribes of Kalhu respected these contradictory requirements by mentioning an anonymous king (LUGAL) or by using a title reserved for the governor of Assyria (LÚ.GAR.KUR KUR AŠ), a sort of co-regent of the king of Assyria. The tomb of Queen Yabā, who was the (favourite) wife of Tiglath-pileser, and who was buried in Kulhu, confirms that her husband was co-regent. Queen Yabā probably died before 760 BCE¹⁵ when Šarru-dūrī (772-744) was Governor of Kalhu. The name of Yabā was inscribed on two gold bowls in the Tomb II. On two inscriptions and a stone funerary tablet read as follows:

ša₂ ^fia-ba-a MI₂.E₂.GAL al-ti ^mgiš^šTUKUL-A-E₂.ŠAR₂.RA MAN KUR AŠ

Belonging to Queen Yabā, wife of Tiglath-Pileser, Vice-regent of Assyria

ša₂ ^fia-ba-a MI₂.E₂.GAL ša₂ ^mTUKUL-A-E₂.ŠAR₂.RA MAN KUR AŠ

Belonging to Yabā, queen of Tiglath-Pileser, Vice-regent of Assyria

MU ^dUTU ^dereš-ki-gal ^da-nun-a-ki / DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ ša₂ KI-ti ^fia-ba-a / MI₂.E₂.GAL ina mu-te NAM ZI-ti 4/- /14.

By the command of Šamaš, Ereškigal and Anunnaki, the great gods of the netherworld, mortal destiny caught up with Queen Yabā in death

We notice that Tiglath-pileser's name is spelled with the word -A- (*aplu*) inside, when he was co-regent, not with the word -DUMU- (*māru*) when he was king (LUGAL), moreover, the title MAN “co-regent” is used instead of LUGAL “king”, as when Sennacherib was co-regent (MAN) of king (LUGAL) Sargon II. The study of Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns enables us to understand the aim of his conquests and his strategy (Garelli: 1991, 46-51). Under Shalmaneser IV and Aššur-dan III, military expeditions were directed to Damascus, but without great consequences, and twice against Hazrak (Hatarikka), a strategic position on the way to the river Orontes. But the kingdoms continued to exist. Assyria was then threatened by Urartu, whose power was then on the ascent, and its own interest dictated a comparatively moderate attitude towards the Aramaean kingdoms. The solution was to maintain Assyrian control of Arpad, the close neighbour who dominated the whole area between the land of Euphrates and the river Orontes. The best thing for this purpose was to induce this neighbour to conclude agreements with Assyrian Ruler Bar Ga'yah (“Son of Majesty” in Aramaic), who was king of KTK, an unknown kingdom (Fitzmyer: 1995, 167-174). Paradoxically, this powerful Assyrian ruler, who dominated the Levant during the period 785-745 BCE from a region located near the kingdom of Hamath, has still not been identified despite nearly 90 years of research (Na'aman: 1978, 220-239). Since 1931, there have been 17 attempts to identify this enigmatic “king of KTK”, all of which have failed (Younger: 2016, 538-546). An important chronological fact: we know that this powerful Assyrian ruler, king of KTK, imposed four treaties on Mati'-El, king of Arpad, during the period 783-754 BCE (Lemaire /Durand: 1984, 58). Assyrian domination depended on the respect of such treaties by independent sovereigns. The 746 coup changed the whole affair. Mati'-El was no longer bound by his oath of allegiance to Aššur-nīrārī V. Since the king had been eliminated and the commander-in-chief Šamšī-ilu (c.797-747) had disappeared, the attitude of the king of Arpad can be even better explained¹⁶. In short, until 738 BCE, Tiglath-pileser had adopted a flexible policy, which after all was not so new. When Shalmaneser III had started his Syrian campaigns in 858 BCE, he had annexed the territory of his closest neighbour, Bit-Adini, turning Til-Barsip into Kar-Shalmaneser, but he could not carry this annexation policy further because his opponents were too powerful, as the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE clearly showed. Tiglath-pileser III followed the same plans, but the balance of forces in his favour enabled him immediately to annex the territories adjoining Bit-Adini, where he posted permanent garrisons to launch faster counter strokes in case of need. This did not always prove possible because of the Medes and Urartu. That's why he unfolded his annexation plan of the Syro-Palestinian war: Rezin of Damascus, Pekah of Israel (2Ki 16:5-9) and the Philistine cities formed a coalition which Ahaz refused to join, calling Tiglath-pileser to his aid (2Ch 28:16-20). While no Aramaic inscriptions mention the existence of an Assyrian king named Pul (Tiglath-pileser), to whom Menahem (771-760) paid tribute, Zakkur King of Hamath (810-785) made an alliance (in 805 BCE) with an anonymous Assyrian king named Ba(r) Gawah “Son of Majesty”

¹⁵ In the Northwest Palace of Nimrud (Kalhu), there were recovered graves and objects of the queens Yabā (Tiglath-Pileser III), Banītu (Shalmaneser V) and Ataliya (Sargon II) in Tomb II. The skeletons of Yabā and Atalia were found in the same sarcophagus. Paleopathological work on the skeletons indicates that both women died at approximately the same age, that of 30 to 35. But they were not buried at the same time, as there were 20 to 50 years between the interments: “Hamā, Yabā - Banītu, and Ataliya” (Yamada /Yamada: 2017, 389-396). If Tiglath-pileser was born around 802 BCE and married at the age of 20, around 782 BCE to a princess aged around 15, this woman must have been born around 797 BCE and must have died around 765-760 BCE.

¹⁶ He joined the coalition formed by Sarduri II (753-735) of Urartu. Practically, all Northern Syria, from Arpad to Melitene, adhered to the coalition. It was utterly defeated, but Sarduri II was able to escape. Tiglath-pileser III annexed the territories between Arpad and the coast near Antioch and Hamath. All the others, including Sama'al, Carchemish, Damascus, Samaria and the Phoenician cities were left independent, though forced to pay tribute. In short, he annexed the nearest conquered territories, thus enabling him to cut off possible future enemies, and he imposed his authority on more remote sovereigns without deposing them.

in Aramaic, and Mati'-El King of Arpad (785-740) concluded four treaties of alliance over the period 783-754 BCE with another anonymous Assyrian king also named Bar Gayah "Son of Majesty". The chronology of the Aramaic kingdoms is based on the Assyrian chronology (Lipiński: 2000, 119-299; Younger: 2016, 390,497,548,653):

King of Arpad (Bīt-Agusi)	reign	King of Hamath	reign	King of Syria (Damascus)	reign	King of Assyria	reign
Gūš	890-860	Parita	885-860	Hazael	885 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Hadrām	860-830	Urḫilina	860-835	(Hazā-il)	-840	Shalmaneser III	859 -
Attaršumki I	830 -	Uratami	835 -	Bar-Hadad III	840 -		-824
			-810			Šamši-Adad V	824-811
	-800	Zakkur	810 -		-805	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
Bar-Hadad	800-796			Mari'	805 -		
Attaršumki II	796-785		-785	(Māri')	-780		-783
Mati'-El	785 -	[unknown]	785 -	Hezion II	780 -	/(Pulu)	782 -
			-745	(Ḥadiānu)	-754		-746
	-740	Eni-ilu	745 -	Rezin	754 -	Tiglath-pileser III	745 -
			-732	(Raḫiānu)	-732		-727

King of Judah	reign	King of Israel	reign	King of Ya'udi /Sam'al	reign	King of Assyria	reign
Athaliah	885-879	Jehu	885 -	Ḥayyānu	870 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Joash	879 -		-856		-855	Shalmaneser III	859 -
	-839	Jehoahaz	856-839	Ahabbu	855 -		-824
Amaziah	839 -	Jehoash	841-823		-820	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
	-810	Jeroboam II	823 -	Qarli	820 -	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
Uzziah [Azariah]	810 - [796 -		-782	Panamuwa I	790 -		-783
	-758	Zechariah	782-771		-750	/(Pulu /Bar Ga'yah)	782 -
Jotham	758-742	Menahem	771-760	Bar-Šūr	750-745		-746
Ahaz	742 -	Pekah	758 -	Azriau	745-738	Tiglath-pileser III	745 -
	-726	Hosea I	738 -729	Panamuwa II	738 -733		-727

The reign of Zakkur (810-785), king of Hamath, provides additional confirmations (Na'aman: 2005, 21-23) which are mentioned in the Antakya Stela and in the Zakkur Stela. Titulary of Hamathite kings (Bryce: 2012, 134-138) according to Luwian inscriptions and Assyrian inscriptions (Hawkins: 2016, 183-190):

King of Hamath	Reign	Titulary (Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions)	Inscription
Parita	885-860	?	CHLI I: IX
Urḫilina (Irḫuleni)	860-835	I (am) Urhilina, son of Parita, Hamathite King	CHLI I: IX
Uratami (Rudamu)	835-810	I (am) Uratamis, Urhilina'son, Hamathite King	CHLI I: IX
Zakkur	810 -	Zakkur, the Hamathite	Antakya Stela
	-785	Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu'ash (Luhuti)	Zakkur Stela
[unknown]	785-745	(Assyrian ruler, Bar Ga'yah king of Kittika, <i>turtānu</i> Šamši-ilu)	
Eni-ilu	745-732	vassal of Assyria (Tiglath-pileser III)	
Yaubîdi	732-720	vassal of Assyria	

According to this chronological reconstruction, the Assyrian ruler who imposed four oaths of loyalty on Mati'-El (c.785-740), king of Arpad, should also have imposed oaths of loyalty on the king of Hamath (c.785-745) because this kingdom was adjacent to the kingdom of Arpad, but there is no inscription mentioning Arpad during the period when Šamši-ilu (c.797-847) came to that region. André Lemaire and Jean-Marie Durand concluded that this powerful Assyrian ruler, who behaved like an Assyrian king, must have been Šamši-ilu and must have reigned over the kingdom of Hamath, under the pseudonym Bar Ga'yah, king of KTK. Lemaire and Durand refused to identify Bar Ga'yah with an Assyrian king, despite the undeniable appearances, for the following two reasons: the treaties of the Assyrian kings are always written in their name, never under a pseudonym, and these treaties have always had a cuneiform counterpart (Lemaire /Durand: 1984, 37-58). This objection is correct for Assyrian kings, but not for co-regents, because if the inscriptions mention only one king, those mentioning the co-regent, or the commander-in-chief, always state that they acted under the authority of the king in title, but not in their own name. For this reason, the Assyrian co-regent named Pulu (782-746), according to the biblical text and Tyrian records, is the same as the one called Bar Ga'yah. So, the Assyrian king who presented himself under the pseudonym of Bar-

Ga'yah (“son of majesty” in Aramaic) chose a noble name for the region he controlled (Bit Adini and Hamath), the enigmatic kingdom of KTK (in Aramaic). It is noteworthy that the word *kitti-ka* (written *ki-it-ti-ka* in the El-Amarna letters EA 198 and 246) means “your loyalty” in Akkadian and could be written KTK in Aramaic. This protocol usage was usual at that time because the Assyrians were calling Attar-šumki, the king of Arpad: Bar-Guš “son of Gush”, King of Bit-Agusi “the house [dynasty] of Gush”. Similarly, the son of Hazael, King of Damascus, was called Bar-Hadad (III) king of Aram (Syria). It was thus usual to name a king by his filiation with the founder of his dynasty like Guš, Hadad or “Majesty (Aššur-nīrārī III)”. However, Til Barsip, which was the capital of Bit-Adini “the house of Eden (Am 1:5)” in Aramaic, was no longer a vassal kingdom of Assyria but part of the Empire after the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. Tiglath-pileser III mentioned his parentage to his father (Aššur-nīrārī III) just once but used the Assyrian title *mār šarri* “son of the king (i.e., co-regent)” rather than his name. The expression: *mār šarri šar kitti-ka* “The son of the king (co-regent) is your loyal king” could be translated into Aramaic: *bar gayah melekh kittika* “The son of Majesty is king of Kittika”. For the Assyrians, the royal notion of loyalty or legitimacy was essential and for them there was only one titular king (LUGAL). The commander-in-chief, Šamšī-ilu (c.797-747), faithfully served the co-regent Tiglath-pileser, as well as the others Assyrian kings, until his death. For example, the Akkadian expression *zēr kittu* means “legitimate/loyal heir” and the name Sargon (*šar-kīnu*) means “legitimate king”. The study of the reign of Zakkur makes it possible to confirm the existence of Bar Ga'yah. The following event during Zakkur's reign (c.810-785) is described in the Antakya Stela:

Adad-nīrārī (III), great king, mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Šamši-Adad (V), mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Shalmaneser (III), king of the four quarters. The [bo]rder zone (i.e., land formerly belonging to Unqi), which Adad-nīrārī (III), king of Assyria (and) Šamši-ilu, [esta]blished between Zakkur of the Hamathite land [and] Ataršumki (I) [in Arpad], son of Adramu –the town of Naḥlasi with all its fields, gardens [and s]ettlements is (the property) of Ataršumki; the Orontes River (is situated) between them– they divided [equ]ally between them. That border-zone (actually: its Arpadian side) Adad-nīrārī, king of Assyria, (and) Šamši-ilu, the [comm]ander-in-chief, have given freely and clearly (of all obligations) to Ataršumki, son of Adramu, to his sons and his future [gr]andsons. Its (principal) city (and) its territories [...] to the territory of his (i.e., Ataršumki) land he made firm. By the name of Aššur, Adad, and Ber, the Assyrian Enlil, the Assyrian Ninlil, and the name Sin, who dwells in Harran, the great gods of Assyria: whoever afterwards speaks ill of the terms of this stela, and takes away by force this border from the possession of Ataršumki, his sons, or his grandsons, and destroys the written name and writes another name: may Aššur, Adad, and Ber, Sin who dwells in Harran, the great gods of Assyria whose names are recorded on this stela, not listen to his prayers (Wazana: 1996, 55-66).

The inscription reveals a situation when both kings of Hamath and Arpad were loyal subjects of Assyria. The fact that this inscription was written on Ataršumki's behalf (c.830-800), identifying Arpad's border with Hamath, attests Arpad's alliance with Assyria at the time. The settlement of this dispute should be dated to before 805–804 BCE, that is, to a time when Arpad was still a loyal subject of Assyria. The eponym chronicle notes that an Assyrian campaign was conducted in the west beginning in 805–804 BCE, with Arpad, which had rebelled against Assyrian hegemony, as its main target. On the other hand, the Antakya Stela cannot be dated earlier than 808–807 BCE, since the *turtānu* “commander-in-chief” at that time was Nergal-ilāya (810-787). The border dispute between Arpad (which was in rebellion against Assyria by 805/804 BCE) and Hamath (which remained loyal) indicates the beginning of friction between western pro- and anti-Assyrian kingdoms. The stela is dated in 796 BCE because Šamšī-ilu was commander-in-chief (c.797-747) and King Adad-nīrārī III (811-783) visited the region in 796 BCE during the campaign against Mansuate. The Zakkur Stela has significant gaps, but the central part refers to a major attack which had been fomented by Bar-Hadad III (840-805), the son of Hazael:

(Side A) The [st]ela which Zakkur, king of [Ha]math and Luash, set up for Iluwer, [his god.] I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luash. I was a man of low estate, but Baalshamayn [designated] me and he stood with me and Baalsham[ayn] made me king [in Ha]drach (Hatarikka). Then Bar-Hadad (III) the son of Hazael, the king of Aram, formed an alliance with s[eventeen?] kings: Bar-Hadad and his army, Bar-Gush and his army, the king of Kue and his army, the king of Umq and his army, the king of Gurgum and his army, the king of Sam'al and his army, the king of Miliz and his army, the king of [.. and his army, the king of ... and his army —that is, seve[n]teen of them with their armies. Then all these kings set up a siege ramp against Hadra[ch] and they raised up a wall higher than the wall of Hadrach and they dug a ditch deeper than [its m]oat. So I lifted my hands to Baalsha[ma]yn, and Baalshamayn answered me. And Baalshamayn [spoke] to me [by] means of seers and by means of messengers. Then Baalshamayn [said to me.]: “Do not be afraid for I have made [you king and I will sta]nd with you and I will deliver you from all [these kings who] have made a siege ramp against you.” And Baalshamayn said to [me “] all these kings who have made a siege ramp against you...” (Side B) I [enlarg]ed Hadrach and I adde[d to it] all of the surrounding district of [...] And I established it as [my] king[dom and I estab]lished [it] as [my] la[nd... (Green: 2010, 157-174; Nissinen, Ritner: 2003, 203-207).

The inscription's date is debated but it is usually placed between 800 and 775 BCE. Zakkur's account mentions providential help from Baalshamayn (“Lord of the Heavens”) who had successfully broken the siege. It is agreed

that in reality the siege was broken by means of some military intervention, which occurred in 805 BCE when Adad-nīrārī III led a campaign against Arpad. So, this major event had to have occurred before Zakkur's enthronement as king of Hamath and Luash. The primary purpose of this inscription is to prove that his reign was providential from the start and that he enjoyed the support of his deity and consequently of Assyria. Since the gods and kings are never anonymous in Semitic inscriptions (Margalit: 1994, 13-14), the name of the Assyrian king who helped or appointed Zakkur (810-785), must be named in the lacuna at the beginning of the inscription (Briquel-Chatonnet: 1992, 128). In fact, the name appears on the left of the stela (Hadrach is written Hazrak in Aramaic):

[c. 30 lines missing] Hazrak [...] for the chariotry [and] the cavalry [...] **its king in its midst**. I [rebuilt] Hazrak (Hatarikka), and [I] added [to it] the entire region of [Luash?] and [I] es[tabli]sh[ed] [my] reign [...] these strongholds throughout [my] territ[ory]. [Then I reb]uilt the temples of the gods in a[ll] my [territory], and I rebuilt [...] Apish and [...] the temple of [... And] I set up befo[re] Iluwer this stela, and [I] ins[cribed on] it the accomplishment of my hands. [Anyone at all] who removes the acc[omplish]ment of the hands of] Zakkur, king of Hama[th and Lu]ash, from this stela, and whoe[ver re]moves this stela from [befo]re Iluwer and takes it away fr[om] its [pla]ce, or whosoever sends [...] Baa]lshamayn and I[l]uwer [...] and Shamash and Shaha[r [...] and the go[ds] of heave[n and the god]s of the earth and Baal (Nissinen, Ritner: 2003, 203-207).

Although the text is not clear, Zakkur established his reign just after he had mentioned an anonymous king. In fact, the translation “its king in its midst (*mlkh bgwh*)” makes no sense. In contrast the translation: “its king Bi-Gawah” fits the context because during the years 796 to 755 BCE the Kingdom of Hamath-and-Luash was the ascending power in the West (Kahn: 2007, 66-89). The name Bi-Gawah (or Ba-Gayah) is a contracted form of Bar-Ga’wah¹⁷ “son of majesty” (Fitzmyer: 1995, 59-60), in the same way as Bi-dqar (2Ki 9:25) is a contracted form¹⁸ of Bar-Deqer (1Ki 4:9) “son of piercing”. Consequently, Zakkur would owe to the Assyrian king Bar-Ga’wah the rebuilding of his kingdom when Luash¹⁹ was incorporated into it at the time the Assyrians came to Cedar Mountain in 775 BCE. The war against the north Syrian alliance (including the kingdom of Hamath), in 805 BCE, is described in detail in the Pazarcik stele. In that text Sammu-ramāt (Semiramis) is said to have gone on campaign with Adad-nīrārī III, but she is absent from the campaign account in the two other texts. The inscription of Saba’a begins with the following text: “In the 5th year I solemnly ascended to the royal throne (Adad-nīrārī III) and mobilised the land. I commanded the extensive army of Assyria to march to Hatti.” Adad-nīrārī III defeated the coalition of Syrian kings against Zakkur the king of Hamath and eliminated Bar-Hadad III, the son of Hazael, the instigator of this revolt, who was replaced by King Mari' (Siddall: 2013, 37-46). The military campaign to support Zakkur in 805 BCE was, therefore, led by Queen Sammu-ramāt and Co-regent Adad-nīrārī III, the “son of Majesty (Šamši-Adad V)”, who had just been inducted in the 5th year of her reign.

BCE	KING OF ASSYRIA		campaign	KING OF HAMATH		KING OF SYRIA	
813	Šamši-Adad V	11		Uratami	22	Bar-Hadad III	27
812		12	against Chaldea		23	(the son of Hazael)	28
811	Sammu-ramāt	13	(0) against Babylon		24		29
810	/ Adad-nīrārī III	1	(1) no campaign		25		30
809		2	(2)	Zakkur (usurper)	1		31
808		3	(3) against Guzana		2		32
807		4	(4)		3		33
806		5	(5)		4		34
805	Adad-nīrārī III	6	against Arpad	(the Hamathite, Assyrian vassal)	5		35
804	(Bar-Ga’wah)	7			6	Mari’	1
803		8			7		2
802		9			8		3
801		10			9		4
800		11			10		5
799		12			11		6
798		13			12		7
797		14			13		8
796		15	against Mansuate	(KING OF LU’ASH/ LUHUTI)	14		9
795		16			15		10

¹⁷ The Hebrew word *ga’wah* means “majesty, pride” and the Aramaic word *gêwah* (Dn 4:34) means “pride”.

¹⁸ Other contracted forms: Birshah (Gn 14:2) instead of Bar-Resha “son of wickedness”; Bimhal (1Ch 7:33) for Bar-Mehal “son of circumcision”; Baalis (Jr 40:14) for Bar-Alis “son of exultation”; Bishlam (Ezr 4:7) for Bar-Shalam “son of peace”.

¹⁹ Hamath’s northernmost territory was the important land variously called Luash (Aramaic), Luhuti (Akkadian), Lugath (Luwian). It was located east of the Orontes river, and south of the kingdom of Patin, in the region formerly occupied by the Late Bronze Age Nuhashshi lands. Luash first appears in Assyrian records in 870 BCE, the year in which Ashurnasirpal II campaigned against the states of Syria and Palestine. After invading Patin and receiving submission of its king Lubarna, Ashurnasirpal used the Patinite city Aribua as his base for military operations against Luash, which lay to its south.

Although Sammu-ramāt had gone on campaign with Adad-nīrārī III, according to the Pazarcik stela, the Tell Sheikh Hamad stele ascribes to King Adad-nīrārī III the victory against the Syrian revolt.

[Adad-nīrārī (III), great king], strong [king], king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Šamši-Adad (V), [strong king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son] of Shalmaneser (III), king of the four quarter. I mustered [the chariots, the troops and] the camps. [I commanded them to march] to Hatti. I crossed the Euphrates as it was in flood. I went down to Paqirahubuna (Kummuh), Attar-šumki (I), [... and the kings] of Hatti who revolted, [...] the terrifying splendour of Aššur, my lord, [overwhelmed them. In] a single year (in 805 BCE), the land of Hatti [in its entirety(?), with the help of Aššur] my lord, I conquered. [I went to the sea of the west.] I erected my [lordly image] in Arwad, which is in the middle of the sea. I went up Mount Lebanon. I logged mighty beams of cedar (Siddall: 2013, 194-197).

Since this inscription was written after the victory in 805 BCE, Co-regent Adad-nīrārī III, who had just been enthroned, was still considered as Co-regent since Queen Sammu-ramāt (811-806) accompanied him during his military campaign in 805 BCE. The stela of Zakkur is, therefore, accurate when it mentions the co-regent rather than Queen Sammu-ramāt, but it does not mention the name of the co-regent (Adad-nīrārī III), according to the royal protocol, only his Assyrian title of crown prince (*mār šarri*). The literal translation of *mār šarri* 'son of the king' in Aramaic would have been *bar malka*, which would have been incomprehensible outside Assyria and, therefore, been translated into Aramaic as *bar ga'wah* 'son of the majesty' As the term 'majesty' usually refers to God in Hebrew or Aramaic, the expression 'son of the majesty' was understood as 'son of the king', not as 'son of the god', a good equivalent of *mār šarri*. The translation as 'second to the king' would have been incorrect for two reasons: in Assyrian this hierarchical position referred to the commander-in-chief (Lemaire /Durand: 1984, 39-43) and in Hebrew it referred to the king's prime minister (2Ch 28:7; Est 10:3) or to the commander-in-chief when there was no prime minister (2Ki 5:1-2; 16:16). The crown prince being above the commander-in-chief and almost at the level of the king, the translation of this title could have been: 'co-regent, viceroy or bi-king', but these words did not exist at that time, the Hebrew translation by 'king' or Aramaic 'son of the majesty' king of KTK (Assyrian province of Bit Adini) is a good translation. Consequently, the enigmatic Assyrian king called Bar-Ga'yah, in Mati'-El's treaties (in Aramaic) was the same Assyrian co-regent: Tiglath-pileser at that time (782-746). Some scholars prefer to identify the Assyrian king called Bar-Ga'yah (783-746) as being the powerful commander-in-chief Šamši-ilu (c.797-747). However, from a linguistic point of view this identification is unlikely (Crouch: 2014, 96-106) because the translation of the Aramaic name Bar-Ga'yah 'Son of the majesty' into Assyrian corresponds²⁰ neither to Šamši-ilu "My Sun is god", nor to Adad-nīrārī "Aššur is my help".

Mati'-El, King of Arpad, made four treaties of loyalty or allegiance at the beginning of the reign of each new Assyrian king (Villard: 2001, 818), three in Aramaic and one in Akkadian with Aššur-nīrārī V (755-745). The treaty of loyalty with Aššur-nīrārī V, which was written at the beginning of his reign (in 754 BCE), shows that the king of Arpad was a vassal of the Assyrian king. The Assyrian treaty in Aramaic with Bar-Ga'yah which was written at the beginning of Bar-Ga'yah's reign, shows that the king of Arpad was acting as a vassal of the king of KTK in the same way as other kings mentioned in the treaty, such as those of Mušri and Aram (Arnold /Beyer: 2002, 101-103). The other two loyalty treaties had to be concluded with Shalmaneser IV and Aššur-nīrārī V (in 754 BCE). Given that Bar-Ga'yah was King of KTK (instead of Assyria), this means that he was not the official king but only co-regent (thus he could lead military campaigns and ask for booty). The identification of the mysterious KTK has stirred up the imagination of linguists and epigraphists, whereas this city could only be Til Barsip, the military capital of the Assyrian kingdom of Bit Adini (from 856 BCE) for their westward expansion. As Mati'-El was a vassal of Bar-Ga'yah the latter was more powerful than the king of Arpad and as in this treaty several deities from the Assyrian pantheon are invoked (Mulissu, Marduk, Nabu, Nergal and Shamash), Bar Gay'ah should be an Assyrian king (Rollston: 2010, 56-57). Lemaire and Durand argued that Bar-Ga'yah should be understood as Šamši-ilu, who would have usurped the title of king because of the weakness of the Assyrian kings. This assumption is contradicted by the following facts (Dion: 1986, 510-512):

- All the inscriptions of Šamši-ilu mention his rank of commander-in-chief, never a title of king. In addition, the fact that he was reappointed as commander-in-chief by three successive Assyrian kings, as his eponymous years indicates (in 780, 770 and 752 BCE), proves that he was considered perfectly loyal.
- If Šamši-ilu had usurped the title of king (only with the king of Arpad), it would have given him only an honorary rank because he was already conducting military campaigns and, as a eunuch, he was not able to start a dynasty. However, if that was the case why would he have changed his name to glorify an unknown "son of majesty" (*bar ga'yah*)?
- Bar-Ga'yah began his treaty by this phrase: The treaty of Bar-Ga'yah, King of KTK, with Mati'-El son of Attaršumki, the king of Arpad; and the treaty of the sons of Bar-ga'yah with the sons of Mati'-El. According to this inscription, Šamši-ilu could not be a eunuch. To solve this problem, some scholars argue that the title of eunuch was only honorary, but we have at least four stelas, on which he is depicted beardless as true eunuch (Taşyürek:

²⁰ For example, Zakutu (701-668), a wife of Sennacherib was the Akkadian name "the pure one" of Naqia, a name meaning the same in Aramaic: "The pure one".

1975, 169-180; Reade: 1972, 89 n. 12). If Šamšī-īlu had been capable of growing a beard, why did he shave it off when the king of Assyria, his nominal superior or even rival, is always shown bearded (Lawrence: 1986, 121-132)? It should be noted that although Adad-it'i, governor (*šaknu*) of Guzāna (c.850-c.825) is called king (*mlk*) of Guzāna in the Aramaic version of the Akkadian/Aramaic bilingual statue inscription from Tell Fekheriyeh, he is also shown bearded (Abou-Assaf /Bordreuil /Millard: 1982, 13, 23-plates).

- One can see that Šamšī-īlu (character on the right) is represented beardless and bare-headed, facing to a god (left figure) who is wearing the cylindrical triple-horned helmet of divinity (Aššur). He is a typical Assyrian deity closely comparable with other well-known representations such as the god-glazed tile from Aššur or Khorsabad Palace painting, although the lotus in his hand (similar to the representations of the kings of Byblos) is unusual for a god. The beardless character on the bas-relief is Šamšī-īlu, not Tiglath-pileser III (Lemaire /Durand: 1984, 110-111). Usually, only kings were in front of gods, but as Šamšī-īlu was serving two Assyrian kings at the same time (a king and a co-regent) he would have to represent a dual king, which would have been incomprehensible for an Assyrian official (because an Assyrian king always has a tiara on his head). Last detail: if Šamšī-īlu was the Assyrian king Bar Ga'yah he would have represented himself larger, identifying himself as king and not as a high-ranking official.



- Since the Kittika area was controlled by the Assyrian king, Bar Gayah, and was adjoining the kingdom of Bit-Agusi, it had to have included the kingdom of Hamath (Novák: 2010, 43). In addition, the city of Tillima (Tl'ym), which had belonged to the kingdom of Bit Agusi, had been restored in Kittika (Bryce: 2009, 708). Lemaire and Durand suggested that KTK could be an ancient name of Til Barsip, capital of Bit-Adini, because when Shalmaneser III in his first regnal year (858 BCE) attacked three towns of Ahuni, coregent (*mār*) of Bit-Adini, one of them was called Ki-[x]-qa. However this suggestion can be dismissed for two reasons (Yamada: 1995, 24-25): the name Til Barsip appears (URU.Til'-bur'-si'-ip') in the inscription of Shalmaneser III (line 33 of the Kurkh Monolith) instead of Ki-[it-ti?]-qa. Secondly, from around 1000 BCE, Til-Barsip (Aramaic) was called Masuwari by the Hittites, not Kittika (Hawkins: 1983, 131-134); then from 856 BCE it was called Kar-Shalmaneser by the Assyrians. All these facts show that Šamšī-īlu (c.797-747) was actually a commander-in-chief in Til Barsip, not a king of KTK (Kittika). However, some scholars have suggested a new hypothesis: Bar Ga'yah could have been a pseudonym of the anonymous king of Hamath (785-745) who was an Assyrian vassal (Siddall: 2013, 120-121). This new hypothesis is contradicted by the following facts:

- If Bar Gayah had been a king of Hamath, who was a vassal of Assyria like the king of Arpad, one may wonder what would have been the goal of such a treaty of loyalty, because this kind of treaty had to be concluded solely between a king and his vassal and not between two vassals. For example, as King of Arpad Mati'-El had concluded several treaties of loyalty with successive Assyrian kings. For example, Tiglath-pileser III wrote (Iran Stele): In my 3rd palū [in 743 BCE], Mati'-il, [the son of A]ttar-šumqa (Attar-šumkī), fomented a rebellious insurrection against Assyria and violated (his loyalty oath). [He sent] hostile messages about Assyria [to] the kings who ... to the ... of the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine) (and) ... the land Urartu and (thus) caused en[mity] in all (of those) lands. Sarduri (II) of the land Urartu, [Sulum]al of the land Me[lid], (and) Tarqularu (Tarḫularu) of the land Gurgum [came] to [his] aid. [Between] the lands Kištan and Ḫalpi, districts of the land Kummuhu, [they] trusted in [one another's strength and] drew up a battle array.

- In Bar-Ga'yah's treaty several deities from the Assyrian pantheon are invoked (Mulissu, Marduk, Nabu, Nergal, Šamaš), which are significantly different (except Šamaš) from the Hamathite pantheon (Iluwer, Baalšamayn, Šamaš, Šahar and Baal) mentioned in the Zakkur inscription (Noegel: 2006, 307-311).

- Hamath's old name could not be Kittika (vocalized form of KTK). It is true that names of cities are different according to the languages, but the consonantal structure remains the same as can be seen in the names of the following cities: Hamath (Am 6:2), Hadrach (Zk 9:1) and the Cilician Plain:

Writing	Hamath	Hadrach	Cilician Plain
Aramaic / (Phoenician)	ḪMT	ḪZRK	(KW DNNYM)
Hittite	Amatuwana	?	Kizuwatna
Hebrew	ḪMT	ḪDRK	KLKYH?
Luwian hieroglyph	Imatu	Halpa	Katawatna
Assyrian/ Akkadian	Ḫamat	Ḫatarikka	Qawe Kisuatni/ Danuna

It is found that changes in the transcripts are of low amplitude (Woudhuizen: 2014, 112-114; Payne: 2010, 49-58): Hamat (Aramaic), Imatu (Luwian) or Amatuwana (Hittite). Consequently, the identification of Hamath with KTK is not possible. The anomalous career of Bēl-Ḥarran-bēli-ušur (Siddall: 2013, 126-128) is in line with the coregency of Tiglath-pileser with Shalmaneser IV. Although he was a palace herald²¹ (*nāgir ekalli*) of Shalmaneser IV, he supported Tiglath-pileser against Aššur-nīrārī V during the revolt of 746 BCE and was appointed as eponym of Tiglath-pileser III (*Tukulti-mār-ēšarra*) in 741 BCE. Curiously, Bēl-Ḥarran-bēli-ušur's name appears first in the text on a stone stele, probably in 780 BCE (campaign to Urartu), before the name of King (MAN) Shalmaneser IV, which was changed to Co-regent (MAN) *Tukulti-apil-ēšarra* (Grayson: 2002, 239-244), in addition, he mentioned in the text that he had founded a new city a city and named it after himself, which was a royal prerogative. The most logical explanation is to admit he was an officer (governor) of Bar Ga'yah who was co-regent during the reign of Shalmaneser IV. The reign of Bar-Ga'yah is not easy to fix because only sporadic information is available about the Aramaean states during the period 800-750. Only a few prominent kings are known like Mati'-El (785-740) the king of Arpad, Heziôn II (780-750) the king of Syria and Menahem (771-760) the king of Israel (Samaria). During this period the main features are as follows. The kingdom of Damascus, the most powerful of the time, resisted the Assyrian expansionism and encouraged several revolts. The kingdom of Hamath which had joined at first the revolt became afterward, from Zakkur (810-785), a vassal of Assyria in order to strengthen its influence in Syria. The Kingdom of Arpad which was a vassal of Assyria was eventually annexed in 740 BCE. According to the Eponym Chronicle there were six campaigns in Syria during Bar-Ga'yah's reign (783-746). The one of 773 BCE was clearly a war against the kingdom of Syria which brought a considerable booty from Damascus. The three campaigns "to Hatarikka", which belonged to Mati'-El's kingdom (whose capital was Arpad) and was close to the border with the kingdom of Hamath, may have been directed against the king of Hamath or, on the contrary, have been aimed at helping a loyal vassal of Assyria against enemies. And finally, Aššur-nīrārī V's campaign to Arpad, in 754 BCE, is certainly related to the vassalage treaty imposed by the Assyrian to Mati'-El as is the the same reason the same treaty during Aššur-dān III's campaign to Hatarikka (Hadrach), in 772 BCE (Lipiński: 2006, 220). The main difficulty over the period 785-745 BCE is to determine why the kingdom of Hamath, which was a vassal of the Assyrian empire, disappears from the inscriptions as well as from the Assyrian annals (Green: 2010, 157-174). The purpose of the first campaign in Syria in 775 BCE is unknown but it was led in order to conclude new treaties with some Aramaean kingdoms. Consequently, one can suppose that the treaty made by Aššur-nīrārī V with Mati'-El in 754 BCE was the fourth one. Chronological reconstruction of the period 785-745 BCE:

BCE	ASSYRIA (king)		campaign in SYRIA	BIT AGUSI	JUDAH	ISRAEL
786	25 Adad-nīrārī III			Attaršumki II	24 Azariah	37 Jeroboam II
785	26				25 (Uzziah)	38
784	27			Mati'-El	26	39
783	28				27	40
782	1 Shalmaneser IV	(0)	(Crown Prince)		28	41 2Ki 14:23
781	2	(1)	Pulu		29 2Ki 14:29	1 Zechariah I
780	3	(2)	(Tukulti-apil-ēšarra)		30	2
779	4	(3)			31	3
778	5	(4)			32	4
777	6	(5)			33	5
776	7	(6)	Bar-Ga'yah		34	6
775	8	(7)	To the Cedar Mountain	1st Treaty	35	7
774	9	(8)			36	8
773	10	(9)	To Damascus	2nd Treaty	37	[9] (vassal)
772	1 Aššur-dān III	(10)	To Hatarikka	3rd Treaty	38	[10] 2Ki 15:8-13
771	2	(11)			39 2Ki 15:17	[11] Shallum
770	3	(12)			40	1 Menahem
769	4	(13)			41	1
768	5	(14)			42	2
767	6	(15)			43	3
766	7	(16)			44	4
765	8	(17)	To Hatarikka		45 2Ki 15:19	5 tribute to Pūl
764	9	(18)			46	6
763	10 total solar eclipse	(19)	15 June 763 BCE		47	7
762	11	(20)	(Tukulti-apil-ēšarra)		48	8
761	12	(21)			49	9
760	13	(22)			50 2Ki 15:23	10 Pekayah
759	14	(23)			51	1 2Ki 15: 27
758	15	(24)			52 Jotham	2 Pekah
757	16	(25)			1 2Ki 15:32	1

²¹ According to the Eponym Lists, the palace herald was Bēl-lēšer during the reign of Shalmaneser IV, as a result, Bēl-Ḥarran-bēli-ušur probably exchanged his title of governor (of Guzana) for the more prestigious title of palace herald granted by Tiglath-pileser III.

756	17	(26)			2	2
755	18	(27)	To Hatarikka		3	3
754	1	(28)	To Arpad	4th Treaty	4	4
753	2	(29)	Assyrian army defeated by Sarduri II		5	5
752	3	(30)	(Urartu)		6	6
751	4	(31)			7	7
750	5	(32)			8	8
749	6	(33)			9	9
748	7	(34)			10	10
747	8	(35)			11	11
746	9	(36)	Revolt in Kalhu		12	12
745	10	0	(Tukulti-mār-ēšarra)		13	13
744	1	(1)	Puwal		14	14
743	2	(2)	To Arpad	Treaty broken	15	15
742	3	(3)	To Arpad		16	16
741	4	(4)	To Arpad		1 Ahaz 17	17 2Ki 16:1
740	5	(5)	To Arpad		2 18	18
739	6	(6)			[3](vassal) 19	19
738	7	(7)	Hatarikka annexed		[4] 2Ki 15:30	20 Hosea I
737	8	(8)			[5]	[1] (vassal)

Aramaic kingdoms in the 9th century BCE (Bryce: 2012, 46)



This chronological reconstruction shows that the annexation of the Aramean kingdoms by the powerful Assyrian kings began with Zakkur (810-785), the king of Hamath. Not so much is known about Zakkur. He is first mentioned in Assyrian sources in 808 BCE, at the time of Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). He appears to have been a native of 'Ana' (which may refer to the city of Hana/Terqa) on the Euphrates River, which was within the influence of Assyria. He was a usurper because, previously, Hamath was ruled by the kings with Luwian or neo-Hittite names and Zakkur, unlike his predecessors, never refers to his ancestors in his titulary. When Urutami (835-810) died, Zakkur seized power, but Bar-Hadad III (840-805), King of Syria, formed an alliance with 17 other kings of the region to oppose Assyrian vassalization, which prompted Zakkur to seek help from Adad-nīrārī III who, in 805 BCE, ordered his commander-in-chief, Nergal-ilāya (810-787), to quell the revolt. In his inscriptions, Zakkur thanks Baalshamayn “Lord of the Heavens” also King Bar Gawah (“Son of Majesty”), but not Adad-nīrārī III. This anomaly can be explained as follows: as Adad-nīrārī III's father was Šamši-Adad V (824-811), he was probably born around 825 BCE. His father died in 811 BCE. Adad-nīrārī III was, therefore, 14 years old when he was enthroned, which obliged his mother, Semiramis, to assume the regency until the he reached the age of 20, when her son could personally lead military campaigns. Consequently, in 805 BCE, the campaign against Arpad, which should have been legally attributed to Semiramis, the regent (811-806), was given to the co-regent, son of the Majesty (Šamši-Adad V). Moreover, to attribute a war to a queen would have been a disgrace for Zakkur. As a result, in 805 BCE, Zakkur, the king of Hamath, became a vassal of Adad-nīrārī III. In 796 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III asked Šamši-ilu (c.797-747), his new commander-in-chief, to intervene in support of Zakkur who was challenged by Bar-Hadad (800-796), king of Arpad (Bit Agusi). Following this military intervention, Zakkur became, in 796 BCE, king of Hamath and Luash (Luhati). Hadrach (Hatarikka for the Assyrians; modern Tell Afis) was the capital of Luash, a country with many cities and troops according to Assyrian inscriptions.

The regency exercised by Semiramis ceased when Adad-nīrārī III was able to found a dynasty by having children. Therefore, he probably had heirs from 805 BCE: Shalmaneser IV (c. 805 BCE); Aššur-dan III (c. 804 BCE); Aššur-nīrārī V (c. 803 BCE) and Tiglath-pileser III (c. 802 BCE). For some unknown reason, in 792 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III appointed his 10-year-old youngest son, Tiglath-pileser, as Crown Prince, rather than his eldest son, which was the usual custom (perhaps Adad-nīrārī III chose Tiglath-pileser because of his abilities or because of his mother's royal origins). This surprising choice was going to cause difficulties because when Adad-nīrārī III died in 783 BCE, Tiglath-pileser was less than 20 years old and was therefore not in a position to conduct military campaigns or found a dynasty. Shalmaneser IV, who was about 22 years old, will thus succeed his father, according

to the custom, but Tiglath-pileser was declared co-regent of the western part of the Assyrian empire (because he was Crown Prince). In order to enable him to conduct military campaigns, Shalmaneser IV chose not to appoint a new commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), as was the tradition, but to rename Šamšī-ilu, who had been chosen by Adad-nīrārī III and to authorize him to put himself at the service of Pulu (Tiglath-pileser). The western part of the Assyrian empire was controlled by Šamšī-ilu who resided in Til Barsip (Masuwari), the capital of Bit Adini (Younger: 2016, 365). Moreover, at the death of Zakkur, around 785 BCE, the kingdom of Hamath, which had become a vassal of the Assyrians, came under the authority of Pulu, who became the ruler of Hamath. Consequently, when Pulu declared himself king of KTK, this region of loyalty included the kingdoms of Bit Adini and Hamath. In order to extend his kingdom of loyalty (KTK), Tiglath-pileser (*pulu*) concluded, in 775 BCE, a first loyalty oath, or covenant, with Mati'-El, the king of Arpad (Bit Agusi). Analysis of these alliances shows that their content was not really a treaty of vassalage, but a request for military support. For example, some of the stipulations, which have been preserved in the 2nd covenant concluded in 773 BCE, when Šamšī-ilu came to Damascus, constrain Mati'-El to swear that he will not harbour Assyria's enemies, and will bring his entire army, "together with his magnates, his forces, and his chariotry" on campaign at Aššur-nīrārī's bidding (Beckman: 2017, 11-19). It is likely that Zechariah (782-771), the king of Israel, refused to sign this covenant and was deposed by Pulu. When Pulu returned in 772 BCE, as co-regent of Aššur-dān III, to campaign against Hatarikka and to conclude a new covenant (the third) with Mati'-El, Zechariah was again enthroned as king of Israel for 6 months before being assassinated by Shallum, who was himself assassinated by Mehaem (2Ki 15:8-17). When Pulu returned to campaign against Hatarikka, in 765 BCE, he presumably imposed an alliance on Menahem (771-760), who preferred to pay a heavy tribute to remain independent. The city of Hatarikka (Hadrach) had a central position in the triangle formed by the three capitals: Til Barsip (Bit Adini), Hama (Hamath) and Arpad (Bit Agusi).

With the enthronement of Aššur-nīrārī V (755-745) and the appointment of Šamšī-ilu, for the third time as commander-in-chief, events took a new turn. The first campaign against Arpad, in 754 BCE, led to the signing of a new covenant with Mati'-El (the fourth), but the following year, in 753 BCE, the Assyrian army was defeated by Sarduri II (753-735), king of Urartu²². The eponymous chronicles do not record any further campaigns after this date. The defeat of the Assyrian army could simply be explained by Šamšī-ilu's advanced age. This old commander-in-chief had been appointed to this prestigious position around 797 BCE, so he must have been over 20 years old at the time of his appointment and must have been over 65 years old in 753 BCE. Since the appointment of a new commander-in-chief was a royal prerogative, Pulu must have easily convinced senior officials to overthrow Aššur-nīrārī V (in 746 BCE) and to make him king (in 745 BCE). Tiglath-pileser III immediately appointed a new commander-in-chief, Nabû-da'inanni (744-726), and a new co-regent Shalmaneser V (744-727). After Zakkur's death, Pulu became, by default, the "governor (*bēl pāḫiti*)" of Hamath (781-745), a position he then entrusted to Eni-ilu (745-732), a vassal king. Tiglath-pileser III would quickly conquer the disputed territories: in 743 BCE, Saduri II, the king of Urartu was defeated, in 740 BCE, the kingdom of Arpad was annexed, and so on. After Tiglath-pileser III had defeated Sarduri II, the king of Urartu and his Anatolian allies, and after he had eliminated Mati'-El of Bit-Agūsi/Arpad, he was forced to suppress a revolt in 738 BCE led by Tutamuwa of Patina/Umq/Unqi. In his account concerning this revolt, Tiglath-pileser III mentions a leader whose name is Azriau (c.745-738), king of Ya'udi (Sam'al). We notice that among the 17 revolted kings, in 738 BCE, who must pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, mentioned in a detailed list (Iran Stela), the king of Hamath does not appear, but is added in a new updated list (Younger: 2016, 492-496). The absence of En-ilu in the first list (Iran Stela) and then its appearance in the updated list is difficult to explain (Kah-Jin Kuan: 2016, 146-157).

King of Tyre ²³	reign	King of Israel	reign	King of Assyria	reign	King of Urartu	reign
Hiram II	830-805	Jeroboam II	823 -	Šamšī-Adad V	824-811	Išpu'ini	828-810
Milkiram	805 -		-782	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783	Menua	810-785
	-775	Zechariah I	782-771	Pulu	782 -	Argišti I	785 -
Luli I	775 -	Menahem	771-760		773-765		
(Elulaios)	-755	Pekayah	760-758				-753
Ithobaal II	755 -	Pekah	758 -		-746	Sarduri II	753-743
(Tubail)	-738		-738	Tiglath-pileser III	745 -		743-735
Hiram III	738-730	Hosea I	738-729		-729	Rusa I	735 -
Mattan II	730-729	Hosea II	729 -	(Pulu)	729-727		
Luli II	729 -		-720	Shalmaneser V	727-722		
				Sargon II	722 -		-714
					-705	Argišti II	714 -
	-695			Sennacherib	705-681		-680

²² The chronology of the kings of Urartu is mainly based on synchronisms with the kings of Assyria (Chahin: 2001, 53-110)

²³ The kings of Tyre: Hiram II (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48) and Milkiram (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93) come from epigraphy. Luli I (Elulaios) was king of Tyre under Pulu (786-746), according to Josephus (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284). From Luli II (729-695) the succession of the kings of Tyre is uncertain.

	Iran Stela (738 BCE)	reign	Layard 50a + 50b + 67a (737 BCE)	reign
1	Kuštašpi the Kummuhite	c.750-730	Kuštašpi the Kummuhite	
2	Raḡyān the Ša-imērišu-ite (Rezin)	c.754-732	Ra'yān the Ša-imērišu-ite (Damascus)	
3	Menahem the Samarian	771-760	Menahem the Samarian	
4	Tubail the Tyrian (Ithobaal II)	c.750-738	[Hiram the] Tyrian (Hiram III)	738-730
5	Sipatbail the Byblian (Shipitbaal II)	c.740-728	Sipittibi'li the Byblian	
6	Urik the Queite (Awariku)	c.738-709	Urikki the Queite	
7	Pisiris the Carchemishite (Pisiri)	c.738-717	Pisiris the Carchemishite	
(18)	[-]	c.745-732	Enilu [the Hama]thian	
8	Panammu the Sama'lian [Azriau]	c.745-738	Pa[namm]u the Sama'lian (Panamuwa II)	738-733

These two lists of kings who paid tribute to Tiglath pileser III are almost identical but have five anomalies:

- 1) Azriau (c.745-738), the king of Sama'l and leader of the revolt is absent from the list because he was presumably killed in 738 BCE by Tiglath-pileser III and was replaced by Panamuwa II (c. 738-733). He was therefore unable to pay tribute, as was Pekah (758-738), the king of Israel, who was killed by Tiglath-pileser and replaced by Hosea I (738-729).
- 2) Tubail, the king of Tyre, was actually Ithobaal II (c. 755-738). He actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE, but as he died at the end of the year, the list of tributaries was updated and Tubail was replaced by Hiram III (c.738-730).
- 3) The absence of En-ilu (c. 745-732) can be explained because he was a vassal king of Assyria who had obviously not participated in the revolt, and therefore, had not paid tribute. In the updated list he has been added (in addition to the 17!) as vassal king of Assyria.
- 4) Menahem (771-760), the king of Israel, had obviously not participated in the revolt of 738 BCE, but as he had paid a tribute to Pulu (Bar Ga'yah in Aramaic), in 765 BCE, while he was a vassal king (2Ki 15:19), Tiglath-pileser III thus included him in the list of tributaries because he had to attribute his victories and tributes to the king in power (Aššur-dān III), which he had not done.
- 5) The Assyrian designation: *Me-ni-ḥi-im-me URU.Sa-me-ri-na-a-a*, which literally means "Menahem (from the Samarian city)", is anachronistic, because Samaria, i.e. the land of Israel, was referred to at that time by the expression Bīt-Ḥumria "House [dynasty] of Omri". For example, Shalmaneser III referred to Jehu, the king of Israel, by the expressions: *Ia-ú-a mār Ḥu-um-ri-i* "Jehu son of Omri" or *Ia-ú-a KUR.Ḥu-um-ri* "Jehu (from the) land of Omri". He used this expression rather than "House of David", as in the Stele of Dan, because Omri had founded Samaria, the new capital of Israel, after he became king (1Ki 16:23-24), but Jehu, who was the army chief of Joram, put an end to this dynasty when he became king (2Ki 9:2-13). Nergal-ereš, a powerful Assyrian governor (803-775) replaced the tribute, for imperialist propaganda, by *Ia-'a-su KUR.Sa-me-ri-na-a-a* "Jehoash of the Samarian land". Similarly, Tiglath-pileser III referred to Ahaz, the king of Judah, as *Ia-ú-ḥa-zi Ia-ú-da-a-a* "Ahaz the Judean", and to Pekah, the king of Israel, as *Pa-qa-ḥa KUR.Ḥu-um-ri-a* "Pekah (from the) land of Omri (Israel)". If Menahem, who was indeed a king of Israel, was a contemporary of Pekah (in 738 BCE), he would have been designated by the expression *Me-ni-ḥi-im-me KUR.Ḥu-um-ri-a* "Menahem (from the) land of Omri". Samaria actually referred to a geographical entity whereas Israel referred to a political entity, therefore the expression "Menahem the Samarian" should be translated "Menahem the Israelite (king)", not "Menahem (king from) Israel", as he was no longer king of Israel at the time.

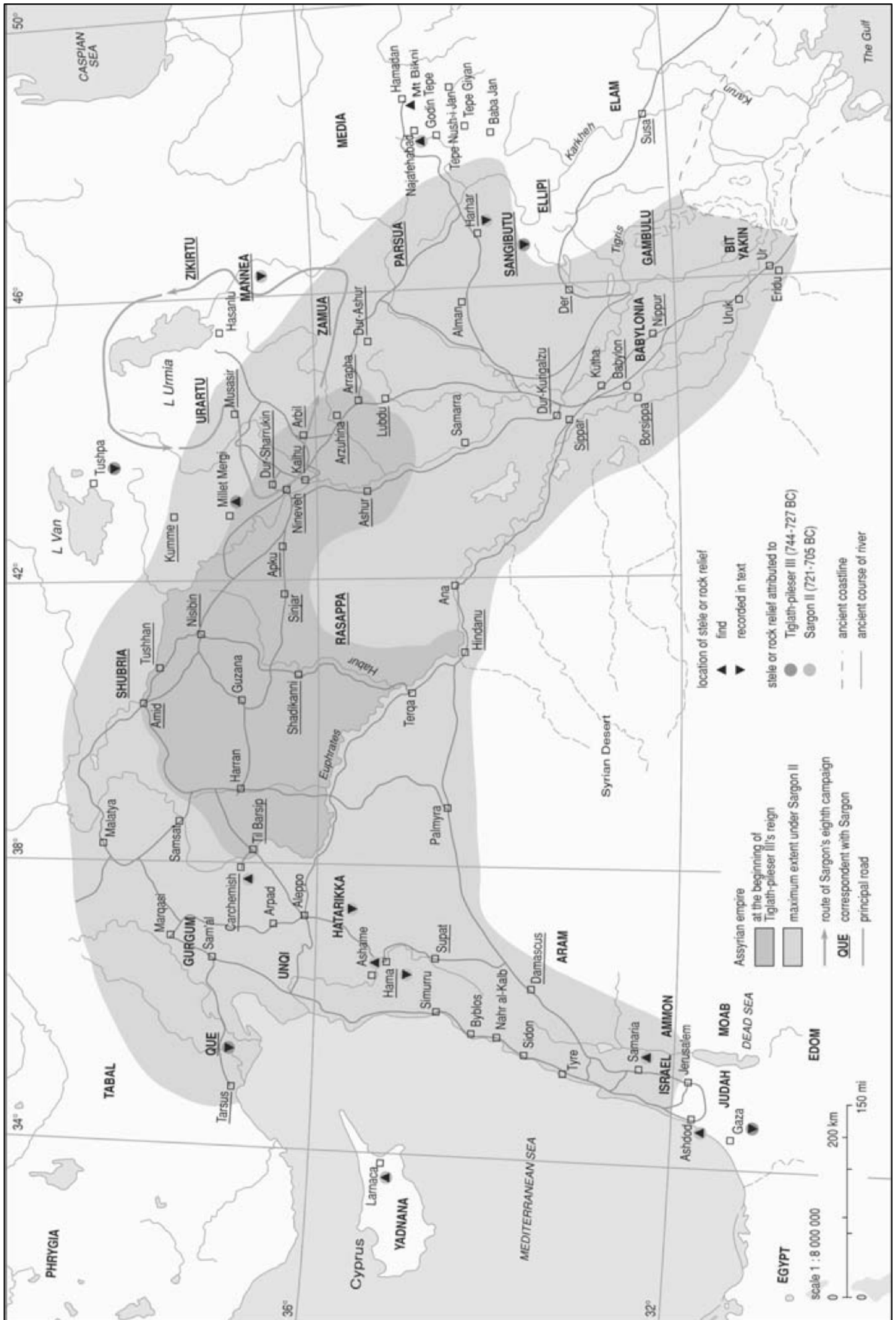
The purpose of the tributary lists was not to provide an accurate accounting for future historians but was a propaganda tool to display the wealth and power of the Assyrian kings. Tiglath-pileser III thus conformed to Assyrian ideology, which recognised only one king at a time (the co-regent is never designated by the title of king), and thus brought back the tribute paid by King Menahem in 765 BCE when he annexed Hatarikka in 738 BCE. Moreover, the Assyrian annals often relate the facts in an exaggerated way. For example, when Sargon II took the city of Ashdod in his 10th campaign (in 712 BCE), he had it written:

Sargon, the great king (...) who conquered the city Samaria (URU.*Sa-mir-i-na*) and all of the land of Israel (*ú gi-mir KUR.É-ḥu-um-ri-a*); who plundered the city Ashdod (URU.*as-du-di*); who caught the Ionians ...

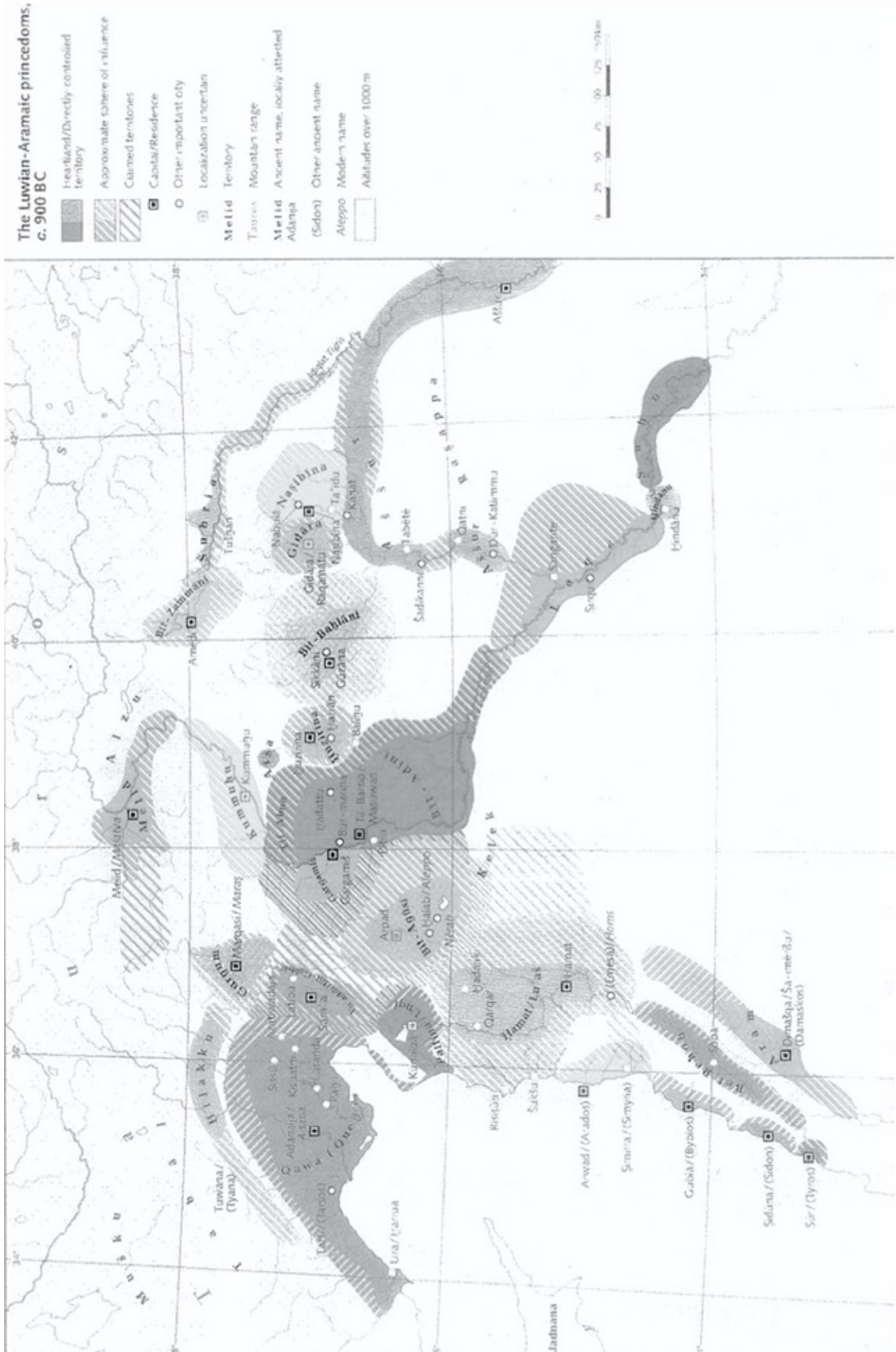
Similarly, when Sennacherib took 46 cities, including Lachish (not mentioned), from Hezekiah, king of Judah, in his 3rd campaign (in 712 BCE) and tried to take Jerusalem, he had it written:

On my 3rd campaign, I marched to the land Ḥatti (...) As for Menahem (of) the Samarian city (*Mi-nu-ḥi-im-mu URU.Sam-si-mu-ru-na-a-a*), Tu-Ba'lu (Ithobaal II) of the city Sidon, Abdi-Li'ti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod (...) they brought extensive gifts, four times (the normal amount), as their substantial audience gift before me and kissed my feet (...) As for him, I confined him inside the city Jerusalem, his royal city (URU.*ur-sa-li-im-ma URU LUGAL-ti-šú*), like a bird in a cage (...) Hezekiah of the land Judah (*Ha-za-qi-a-ú KUR.ia-ú-da-a-a*), I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities.

Sennacherib thus appropriated several tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III (highlighted in orange), such as that of Menahem the Samarian (in 765 BCE) *Me-ni-ḥi-im-me URU.Sa-me-ri-na-a-a* in Tiglath-pileser III's annals (in 738 BCE), which became in Sennacherib's annals: *Mi-nu-ḥi-im-mu URU.Sam-si-mu-ru-na-a-a* (in 712 BCE).



Assyrian empire from Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon II



The Luwian-Aramaic princedoms ca. 900 B.C., after Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak 2010: 43

LIST OF KINGS OF DAMASCUS ANCHORED ON HAZAEL'S REIGN: 885-840 BCE OR 842-800 BCE?

The chronology of the kings of Damascus (Syria) is based mainly on the chronological data of the biblical text (Lion: 2001, 218-220) and on two synchronisms with the Assyrian chronology: 1) the end of the reign of Rezin in Year 13 of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), in 732 BCE, and 2) the destruction of the army of Hazael in Year 18 of Shalmaneser III (859-824), in 841 BCE. The biblical chronology used by scholars comes from the thesis of Edwin R. Thiele (1951), who assumed that the synchronism with King Hazael corresponded to the beginning of his reign, which obliged him to shift Hazael's reign (885-840), calculated from the biblical text (BHS), by about 40 years and to arbitrarily assume nine co-regencies in the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah (Thiele: 1951, 61-138,217). The calculated reign of Hazael (842-800), according to Thiele (Freedman, Myers: 2000, 84), gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies: this chronology, which is used by scholars to calculate the chronology of the kings of Damascus, destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185; Jones: 2005, 105-197); the numerous inconsistencies making it unusable in establishing a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 182-232,264-266). Starting the reign of Hazael 40 years later implies to suppose that King Ben-Hadad III reigned at the same time under the name of Mari' "The lord" (Lion: 2001, 220), which is implausible. Thiele's hypothesis is based on a tenacious dogma that assumes an absence of co-regencies according to the Canon of Kings (by Claudius Ptolemy). Thiele's method of establishing the chronology of the kings of Damascus is erroneous, it is first necessary to establish an unmodified biblical chronology and then to check whether it agrees with the Assyrian or Babylonian synchronisms based on absolute dates (obtained by astronomy), and finally to establish the Syrian chronology according to all the synchronisms with the Israelite, Judean, Assyrian and Babylonian kings. The biblical chronology calculated from all the unmodified durations of the Masoretic text contains no chronological inconsistencies and agrees perfectly with all the absolute dates from the Babylonian and Assyrian chronologies. The chronology of the kings of Damascus (below) can be reconstructed using the synchronisms with the chronologies of the kings of Israel, the kings of Judah and the kings of Assyria. The names in bold are those that appear in Assyrian annals. Biblical synchronisms make it possible to fix the reign of Hazael (885-840). Therefore, the duration of Hazael's reign can be established to the nearest year (Jones: 2005, 197):

King of Syria	Reign	King of Judah	Reign	King of Israel	Reign	reference
Hadadezer /To'y	1040-1000	David	1057-1017			1Ch 18:3-9
Rezon (Ezron)	1000-975	Solomon	1017 - 977			1Ki 11:23-25
Hezion I	975-960	Rehoboam	977-960	Jeroboam I	977-955	1Rois 15:18
Tabrimmôn	960-950	Asa	957 -	Baasha	954-931	2Ch 16:2,3
Ben-Hadad I	950-920		-916	Omri	931-919	1Ki 16:23-29
Ben-Hadad II	920 -	Jehosaphat	916-891	Ahab	919-899	1Ki 20:1-2,34
/Hazael	-885	Jehoram son of J.	893-885	Joram son of A.	897-886	2Ki 3:1, 6:24
Hazael	885 -	Ahaziah	886-885	Jehu	885 -	2Ki 8:8-16
/Hadad-ezer	-840	Joash	879 -		-856	2Ki 10:31-32
			-839	Jehoachaz	856-839	2Ki 13:22
Ben-Hadad III	840-805	Amasiah	839-810	Jehoash	841-823	2Ki 13:23-25
Mari'	805-780	Uzziah	810 -	Jeroboam II	823-782	
Hezion II	780 -	[Azariah]	[796 -	Zechariah	782-771	
	-755		-758	Menahem	771-760	
Rezin	755 -	Jotham	758-742	Peqah	758- 738	
	-732	Ahaz	742-726	Hosea I	738-729	2Ki 16:5-9
		Hezekiah	726-697	Hosea II	729- 720	
		Manasseh	697-642			
		Amon	642-640			
		Josiah	640- 609			

King of Judah	Reign	King of Syria	reference	Reign	King of Assyria	Reign
Asa	957 -	Tabrimmôn	1Ki 15:18	960-950	Tiglath-pileser II	967 -
		Ben-Hadad I	1Ki 15:18-20	950 -		-935
				-920	Aššur-dan II	935-912
(Ahab)	-916	Ben-Hadad II	1Ki 20:1-21	920 -	Adad-nīrārī II	912 -
Jehosaphat	916-891	/Naaman	2Ki 5:1	910-890		-891
Jehoram (J)	893- 885	/Hazael	2Ki 8:7-13	-885	Tukulti-Ninurta II	891-884
Athaliah	885-879	Hazael	2Ki 8:15	885 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -
Joash	879 -	/Hadad-ezer		870 -		-859
				-845	Shalmaneser III	859 -
	-839			-840		841
Amaziah	839 -	Ben-Hadad III	2Ki 13:3	840 -		-824
	-810			-805	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Uzziah	810 -	Mari'		805-780	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783

[Azariah]		[796 - -758]	Hezion II		780 - -754	Shalmaneser IV Aššur-dan III	783-773 773-755
Jotham		758-742	Rezin		754 -	Aššur-nīrārī V	755-745
Ahaz		742 -		2Ki 16:5-6		Tiglath-pileser III	745 -
	0	738		2Ki 16:7-9	-732		738
		-726					-727
Hezekiah		726 - -697				Shalmaneser V Sargon II	727-722 722-705
Manasseh		697 -				Sennacherib	705-681
2Ch 33:13	65	673	Is 7:8-9	Ezr 4:2,10	674-669	Esarhaddon	681-669
		-642				Aššurbanipal	669 -
Amon		642-640					-630
Josiah		640 -				Aššur-etel-ilāni Sin-šar-iškun	630-626 626-612
2Ki 23:29		-609				Aššur-uballiṭ II	612-609

The period between Kings Ben-Hadad III (840-805) and Rezin (755-732) has synchronisms mainly with the Assyrian kings, some of which are precisely dated (dates in bold):

BCE	Events according to the biblical text	Events according to extra-biblical documents
950 - -930	King Asa (957-916) asked Ben-Hadad I the son of Tabrimmon (1Ki 15:18), to break his covenant with Baasha (954-931). Several cities of Israel were taken (2Ch 16:1-7).	We only know that, according to Shalmaneser III's Annals, there was already a powerful king of Aram (Syria) in Damascus at the time of Aššur-rabi II (1013-972).
920 - -885	Ben-Hadad II attacked Ahab (919-898), but was defeated (1Ki 20:1-34). Hazael was appointed as Army chief around 890 BCE (1Ki 19:15-17). In 885, he killed Ben-Hadad II and became King of Syria (2Ki 8:7-15), then he wounded Joram the son of Ahab (1Ki 8:25-29). Soon after Jehu slayed both Joram (897-886), and Ahaziah (886-885) to become King of Israel (1Ki 9:14-29). After Ahaziah's death Athaliah his mother ruled Judah during 6 years (2Ki 11:1-3).	According to the Tel Dan Stela (wrote by Hazael) ²⁴ : The king of I[s]rael penetrated into my father's land[. And] Hadad made me-myself-king. And Hadad went in front of me[, and] I departed from [...] of my kings. And I killed two [power]ful kin[gs], who harnessed two thou[sand cha]riots and two thousand horsemen. [I killed Jo]ram son of [Ahab] king of Israel, and I killed [Ahaz]yahu son of [Jehoram kin]g of the House of David. And I set [...] their land [...] other [... and Jehu ru]lled over Is[rael] (Lemaire: 1994, 87-93).
867 - -856	In the last part of the reign of Jehu (885-856), Hazael started to cut off all the territories of Israel (2Ki 10:31-34) as well as those of Joash, the king of Judah (2Ki 13:1-3). Hazael captured Gath, a capital of the Philistines and even went up against Jerusalem. After he received a heavy tribute in gold from Joash (879-839), he withdrew from Jerusalem (2Ki 12:17-19).	Two booty inscriptions read: that which Hadad gave to our lord Hazael (למראן הזואל) from 'Umq (Pattin) in the year that our lord crossed the River (Orontes?). An inscription on an ivory plaque reads: [that which H]adad of 'Imma [gave] to our lord Hazael in the year that Ha[lab? = Aleppo] was [cap]tured. These campaigns in Syria show that Hazael was a powerful conqueror in this region (Lipiński: 2000, 388-389)
856 848 845	From the 23rd year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, in 856 BCE, Hazael, then his son Ben-Hadad III, oppressed again Israel all the days of Jehoahaz (856-839).	In 856 , Shalmaneser annexed Bit-Adini. In 853 : Hadad-ezer (Adad-idri), the Damascene, (and) Irhulēnu, the Hamatite, together with 12 kings on the shore of the sea, trusting in their united forces, attacked me to wage war and battle. I fought with them. I put to the sword 25,000 of their fighting men (and) captured from them their chariotry, cavalry, (and) military equipment. To save their lives they ran away. In 848 : I fought with them (and) defeated them. I put to the sword 10,000 of their fighting men. I took from them their chariotry, cavalry, and military equipment. In 845 : I defeated Hadad-ezer, the Damascene, together with 12 princes who were his allies. I laid low like sheep 29,000 of his brave warriors (and) threw the remnant of his troops into the Orontes. They fled to save their lives. <u>Hadad-ezer passed away (and) Haza'el, son of a nobody (a former usurper), took the throne.</u> He mustered his numerous troops (and) moved against me to wage war and battle. I fought with him (and) defeated him (Grayson: 2002, 36-38, 118).
841	In my 18th regnal year I crossed the Euphrates for the 16th time. Hazael of Damascus, trusting in the might of his soldiers, carried out an extensive muster of his troops. He fortified Mount Saniru, the mountain peak, which is before Mount Lebanon. I fought with him (and) defeated him. I put to the sword 16,000 of his	

²⁴ Although this inscription is very fragmentary and Hazael's name does not appear, analysis of the historical and linguistic context shows that he is the author (Suriano, 2007, 163-176).

	fighting men (and) took away from him 1,121 of his chariots (and) 470 of his cavalry with his military camp. <u>To save his life he ran away</u> , I pursued him. I imprisoned him in Damascus, his royal city, (and) cut down his gardens (Grayson: 2002, 48).
840 839	Finally, <u>Hazael died and Ben-Hadad III began to reign in place of him</u> . Jehoash (839-823) the son of Jehoahaz proceeded to take back again from the hand of Ben-Hadad III the son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from the hand of Jehoahaz (856–839) his father (2Ki 13:1-9,22-25).
838	In my 21st regnal year I crossed the Euphrates for the 21st time (and) marched to the cities of Hazael of Damascus. I captured four cities (and) received tribute from the people of the lands Tyre, Sidon, (and) Byblos (Grayson: 2002, 67). <u>Shalmaneser III captured four cities but since he did not receive tribute from Damascus it was because Hazael was dead and therefore did not defend his city</u> .
805	Jehoash (839-823) the son of Jehoahaz took back again from Ben-Hadad III the cities that he had taken from Jehoahaz his father (2Ki 13:22-25). Likewise, Jeroboam II (823-782) recovered to Judah the land annexed to Damascus and Hamath (1Ki 14:28). The recovering of land from Hazael and Ben-Hadad III occurred a few years before 798 BCE (Am 1:1-5) because the quake in the days of Uzziah, the king of Judah, happened in the 27th year of Jeroboam II (2Ki 15:1-2), dated in 796 BCE, when King Uzziah had to be replaced by Azariah the high priest (2Ch 26:1-23).
	The Zakkur Stela: Then Bar-Hadad the son of <u>Hazael, the king of Aram, formed an alliance with sev[enteen] kings: Bir-Hadad and his army</u> (Machinist: 2003, 204-207). Zakkur's account mentions a providential help from Baalshamayn who had successfully broken the siege. It is generally agreed that in reality the siege was broken by means of some intervention, which occurred in 805 BCE when Adad-nîrârî III led a campaign against Arpad. Consequently Bar-Hadad III formed his alliance in 806 (and was defeated) because Adad-nîrârî III received in 805 a tribute from Mari' the king of Damascus, according to the Saba'a Stela (Hasegawa: 2008, 89-98).

Synchronisms with the Assyrian kings make it possible to fix more precisely the reign of Hazael: he was head of the army of Ben-Hadad II for a period of 5 years (890-885), then after the assassination of Ben-Hadad II he began to reign in 885 BCE and then appointed Hadad-ezer in c. 870 BCE as army chief (commander-in-chief). In the eyes of Shalmaneser III, Hadad-ezer was the co-regent of Hazael because he included him in the coalition of 12 kings who had united against him to fight him in 853 BCE, but in 845 BCE these 12 kings (MAN) are qualified as princes (*maliku*), which shows that Hadad-ezer, the leader of the coalition, had the function of a king without officially having the title. Similarly, Hazael, who had usurped the throne, is never referred to as king in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, but as “son of nobody” because he had usurped his title of king²⁵. Hazael must have been wounded during the battle in 841 BCE since he had to flee and died shortly afterwards, in c. 840 BCE.

King of Syria	Reign	Army chief	period	King of Assyria	Reign	King of Babylon	Reign
Ben-Hadad II	920 - -885	Naaman	910-890	Adad-nîrârî II	912-891	Nabû-šum-ukîn I	900-888
		Hazael	890-885	Tukulti-Ninurta II	891-884	Nabû-apla-iddina	888 - -855
Hazael (Ḥaza'ilu)	885 - -840	Hadad-ezer (Adad-Idri)	870 - -845	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859	Marduk-zâkiršumi I	855 - -819
Ben-Hadad III (Bar-Hadad)	840 - -805			Šamši-Adad V	824-811	Marduk-balâssuiqbi	819-813
Mari'	805-780			Adad-nîrârî III	811-783	Bâba-ah-iddina	813 ?
Hezion II (Ḥadiānu)	780 - -755			Shalmaneser IV	783-773	Marduk-apla-ušur	? -770
Rezin (Raḥiānu)	755 - -732			Aššur-dan III	773-755	Erîba-Marduk	770-761
				Aššur-nîrârî V	755-745	Nabû-šuma-iškun	761-748
				Tiglath-pileser III	745 - -727	Nabû-našir	748-734
						Nabû-nâdin-zêri	734-732
						Nabû-mukin-zêri	732-729

The reign of Hazael (885-840) can therefore be established precisely. Those who prefer to use Thiele's ideological chronology for the reign of Hazael (842-800), instead of the absolute chronology²⁶ based on synchronisms, and who assume that Ahab (919-898), a king of Israel, was Ahabbu (855-820), a king of Sam'al, do so in order to prove that the “biblical chronology is essentially mythical” (Hughes: 1990, 264-266), because Ahabbu was an Asrielite (*Sir-'a-la-a-a*), not an Israelite (*mār Ḥu-um-ri-i*). It is easy to verify that Asriel was in north-eastern Samaria (Nb 26:31) and therefore not Israel (Lemaire: 1973, 239-243).

²⁵ In the inscriptions found in Greece from a booty, Hazael is called “to our lord Hazael (למראן חזאל)” because they were probably Greek mercenaries serving in the Syrian army of Hazael, not Damascene soldiers.

²⁶ The Assyrian chronology is anchored on the total solar eclipse dated 15 June 763 BCE in Year 10, month III, of Aššur-dan III and the Babylonian chronology on the lunar eclipse dated 9 April 731 BCE in Year 1, month I, of Nabû-mukin-zêri (Stephenson: 1997, 122-127).

LIST OF KINGS OF TYRE ANCHORED ON BAAL-EZER II'S REIGN: 912-906 BCE OR 848-830 BCE ?

The chronology of the kings of Tyre is based mainly on the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus (c.200 BCE), a Greek historian, which was transmitted by Flavius Josephus (Against Apion I:106-127; Jewish Antiquities VIII:141-149, 316-324). This chronology has been supplemented by precise synchronisms with the biblical chronology and anchored on two synchronisms with the Assyrian annals: the end of the reign of Rezîn in Year 13 of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), in 732 BCE, and the destruction of the army of Hazael as well as the tribute of Ba'li-ma-AN-zêri, king of Tyre, in Year 18 of Shalmaneser III (859-824), in 841 BCE. The biblical chronology used comes from the thesis of Edwin R. Thiele (1951), who assumed that the synchronism with King Hazael corresponded to the beginning of his reign, which obliged him to shift the reign (885-840), calculated from the biblical text (BHS), by about 40 years and to arbitrarily assume nine co-regencies in the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah (Thiele: 1951, 61-138,217). The calculated reign of Hazael (842-800), according to Thiele's biblical chronology (Freedman /Myers: 2000, 84), gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies: this chronology completely destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185); the numerous inconsistencies make it unusable to establish a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 182-232,264-266) which is a crowning achievement since it is used to calculate the chronology of the kings of Damascus; the 40-year delay in the reign of Hazael obliges us to suppose that King Ben-Hadad III also reigned under the name of Mari' (Lion: 2001, 218-220), which is implausible. Thiele also assumed that King Ba'li-ma-AN-zêri had to be identified with Baal-ezer II, a king of Tyre, who obliged him to shift his reign (912-906), calculated from the chronological data of Menander, by about 65 years (Thiele: 1951, 86 n. 3). This calculated reign of Baal-ezer II (846-841) gave rise to several inconsistencies (Briquel-Chatonnet: 1992, 103-109) and was thus (arbitrarily) modified again to 848-830 BCE (Elayi: 2013, 324-325).

The chronology of the kings of Tyre has been initially reconstructed from the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus transmitted by Flavius Josephus (in the Laurentianus, the oldest manuscript); however, the duration of the reigns of Baal-ezer I (7 years) and Mattan (9 years) did not allow for a total of 155 years and 8 months between the beginning of the reign of Hiram and the 7th year of Pygmalion. To remedy this discrepancy, the length of Baal-ezer I's reign was corrected to 17 years, considering the data transmitted by Theophilus of Antioch (The Three Books to Autolytus III:22), a Patriarch of Antioch (169-183), and a duration of 20 years was arbitrarily granted to Baal-manzer (Bali-man-zêri) to agree with the total of 155 years (Barnes, 1991, 29-55). As this arbitrary correction of 20 years as well as the presence of a Baal-manzer is not based on any text, the critical editions prefer to correct the duration of Mattan's reign to 29 years, instead of 9 years, in accordance with the chronological data of Theophilus of Antioch (Flavius Josèphe: 2003, 23-25). Furthermore, the chronological data from Menander of Ephesus adds a synchronism with the chronological data from the Bible since it states that the construction of the temple in Jerusalem began in the 12th year of the reign of Hiram. According to the Bible this construction began in the 4th year of the reign of Solomon (1Ki 6:1).

King of Tyre	Phoenician name	age	length	reign		King of Israel	reign
Abibal	Abi-ba'al	(50)	-	1045-1025		David	1057 -
Hirôm	Hirôm		0	1025 -	0	Year 40 of David	-1017
Year 12 of Hirôm	<i>Building of the Temple</i>		12	1013		Solomon	1017 -
		53	34	-991		Year 4 of Solomon	1013
Baleazaros	Ba'al-azer I	43	17	991-974		Year 11 of Solomon	1006
Abdrastratos	'Abd-'Aštart	39	9	974-965			-977
Methusastartos	Methu-'Aštart	54	12	965-953			
Astharymos	'Aštart-rôm	58	9	953-944			
Phelletos	Pillēs	50	8 m.	944-944			
Ithobalos	Itho-ba'al	48	32	944-912		Ahab	919-899
Balezoros	Ba'al-azer II	45	6	912-906		Shalmaneser III	841
Mettenos [32]	Mattin	52*	[2]9	906-877			
Pygmalion	Pu'mmay-yaton		0	877 -			
Year 7 of Pygmalion	<i>Foundation of Carthage</i>		7	870	155		814
		58	47	-830			

This chronology of the kings of Tyre makes it possible to verify five additional synchronisms, three with the biblical chronology: 1) the 40th year of the reign of David (2Sa 5:11; 1Ch 14:1), in 1017 BCE, and 2) the 11th year of Solomon (1Ki 6:37-38), in 1006 BCE, must be included in the reign of Hiram (1025-991), and 3) Jezebel, the daughter of Ithobaal (944-912), was married to King Ahab (1Ki 16:29-31) at the beginning of his reign, in 819 BCE (consequently Jezebel was most likely born around 940 BCE), 4) a synchronism with the Assyrian

chronology: the tribute of Bali-man-zêri paid to Shalmaneser III in 841 BCE and 5) a synchronism with history: the foundation of Carthage in 814 BCE, according to the date proposed by Timaeus of Sicily (345-250). The present chronology of the kings of Tyre is based only on the last two synchronisms, using the chronology of Thiele, who likened “Baal-manzer” to Baal-ezer II and assumed a reign of 836-841 BCE instead of 912-906 (Liver: 1953, 113-121; Lipiński: 2006, 166-190). This academic chronology is triply aberrant since 1) the first three synchronisms with the biblical chronology are no longer respected, 2) the gap of 36 years (= 29 + 7) between the reign of Baal-manzer (836-841) and the foundation of Carthage is equal to 27 years (= 841 - 814) and 3) the date of 814 BCE has no historical basis since Greek and Roman historians have hesitated among many dates between 1218 BCE and 729 BCE²⁷. If only the most reliable historians are considered, the date of the foundation of Carthage oscillates around 870 BCE²⁸ at about 15 years. The main reason why scholars have kept the date 814 BCE, despite conflicting historical evidence (Gras /Rouillard /Teixidor: 1989, 198-238), is the absence of Phoenician archaeological remains dated before 800 BCE. Ironically this “strong argument” is wrong because some recent discoveries have shown that the Phoenician oldest layer should be dated to the period 900-750 BCE (Horn: 2007, 60-69). In fact, the carbon-14 dating is extremely difficult as the remains of the fifth layer of Carthage (Tanit 0) are almost non-existent (the oldest part of Carthage no longer exists since the Romans made it disappear when they razed it in depth), but a few measures have recently traced back to a period of 835-800 BCE (Sagona: 2008, 247,379). As a result, the traditional date of 814 BCE cannot be used to anchor the chronology of the kings of Tyre. The date of 870 BCE for the foundation of Carthage is in better agreement with the historical data transmitted by Thucydides and Herodotus, two historians of the 5th century BCE, as well as with the most recent archaeological data (since 2008). The only disagreement comes from the synchronism with Bali-man-zêri, in 839 BCE, equated with Baal-ezer II; however, this equation has the following anomalies:

- 1) The tribute of Bali-ma-AN-zêri (Baal-manzer), king of Tyre, appears only in 839 BCE during the campaign against Qu’e (Cilicia), then disappears without reason:

 - 1) A recension of this record (cuneiform tablets of Assyria), covering the period 858-842 BCE, mentions no tribute of Jehu.
 - 2) A second recension (bulls of Calah), covering the period 858-841 BCE, adds at the end: In those days (sic), I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu the son of Omri (Iu-ú-a mâr Hu-um-ri-i).
 - 3) A third recension (marble slab), which covers the period 858-839 BCE, adds at the end: I received the tribute of Baal-manzer (Bali-ma-AN-zêri), the Tyrian, and Jehu son of Omri (Ia-a-ú mâr Hu-um-ri-i).
 - 4) A fourth recension (Kurba’il statue), covering the period 858-838 BCE, adds at the end: I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu of the House [dynasty] of Omri (Ia-ú-a bît Hu-um-ri-i).
 - 5) A fifth recension (Black Obelisk), covering the period 858-838 BCE, adds at the end: I received the tribute of the Tyrians, the Sidonians and Byblians (Byblos), with five epigraphs:
I received (in 858 BCE) the tribute of Sua of Gilzanu (... description of the tribute)
I received (in 841 BCE) the tribute of Jehu of the House [dynasty] of Omri (... description of the tribute)
I received (in 853 BCE) the tribute of Egypt: (... description of the tribute)
I received the tribute of Marduk-apil-usur (= Sangara?) of Suhi (... description of the tribute)
I received (in 853 BCE) the tribute of Qalparunda (Halparuntiya II) of Patin (... description of the tribute)

- 6) A sixth recension very incomplete (basalt statue of Ashur), covering the period 858-833 BCE, gives only a little information on the campaigns of 853 and 841 BCE.

Assyrian inscriptions are only exceptionally dated with years of reign, unlike Babylonian documents which systematically used this dating system, sometimes using eponymous years (*limmu*), dated according to the name of a high official, but generally, Assyrian kings dated their reigns according to their number of campaigns, in knowing that they were leading a campaign (*palû*) each year (*šattu*), consequently most of the time: *palû* x = Year x (the word *palû* literally means “period of office” and could be translated by “year of reign”). However, the equivalence

²⁷ **1218 BCE** according to Philistus of Syracuse quoted by Eusebius (Year 798 of Abraham). **1213 BCE** according to Eudoxus of Cnidus (Scolie on Euripides, Trojans, 220), who dated it on Year 803 of Abraham. **1184 BCE** according to Virgil. At the epoch of the Trojan War (Eneid I). **846 BCE** according to Livy, 700 years before its destruction (Periochæ LI:3). **828 BCE** according to Cicero, 75 years before Rome (On the Republic II:23). **825 BCE** according to Pompeius Trogus quoted by Justinus, 72 years before Rome (History XVIII:6:9). **818 BCE** according to Velleius Paterculus, 65 years before Rome (Roman History I:6). **814 BCE** according to Timaeus of Sicily quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 38 years before the 1st Olympiad, (Roman Antiquities I:74:1). **752 BCE** according to Marcus Porcius Cato quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 432 years after the Trojan War (Roman Antiquities I:74:2). **748 BCE** according to Lucius Cincius quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1st year of the 8th Olympiad (Roman Antiquities I:74:1). **746 BCE** according to Cicero, 600 years before its destruction (On the Republic I:3). **729 BCE** according to Quintus Fabius quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 4th year of the 12th Olympiad (Roman Antiquities I:74:1).

²⁸ After **884 BCE** according to Thucydides, when the Greeks arrived in Sicily, three centuries after the Trojan War, usually dated in 1184 BCE (The Peloponnesian War VI:2). Around **876 BCE** according to Velleius Paterculus, when Lycurgus lived (Roman History I:6) and according to Tatian, when he legislated 100 years before the Olympics (Discourses to Greeks XLI). Before **860 BCE** according to Herodotus, when the Phoenicians settled on the Mediterranean coast, five generations before the Greek colonization, which started c. 700 BCE (The Histories II:44; V:46; VI:47), and three generations equal 100 years (The Histories II:142). Before **850 BCE** according to Strabo, when Phoenicians occupied Libya before Homer died (Geography III:2:14). Homer lived 400 years before Herodotus (The Histories IV:53), who wrote his histories around 450 BCE.

between the number of campaigns (years of office) and years of reign is not always rigorous as shown by a reconstruction of the reign of Shalmaneser III (Yamada: 2000, 64-67). For example, there were two campaigns lasting two years instead of one year (*palû* 21 = Years 21 and 22; *palû* 25 = Years 26 and 27). The Eponymous Chronicle gives an amount of relevant chronological and historical information; it shows that the main purpose of the Assyrian empire was to get booty by conquering new countries, hence the crucial role of its military. The most important character after the king (*šarru*) was the commander-in-chief (*turtânu*)²⁹. The governing body of Assyrian headquarters was called *ša-rēši* “one's head” and because the commander-in-chief was a true eunuch this word became a synonym of “high official (minister of the court)”, but to avoid any ambiguities, such members of the court were also designated by the following titles: *ša-rēši ziqni* “bearded eunuch (!)” or *manzāz pâni* “those who are in front”. Considering his crucial position in the kingdom, the commander in chief was always referred to, or shown on frescoes, just after the king up to Shalmaneser V (Finkel /Reade: 1995, 167-172). For example, Shalmaneser III is mentioned as eponym in Year 2 and his first commander-in-chief (Ashur-belu-ka'in) as eponym in Year 3; he is mentioned again in Year 32 and his second commander-in-chief (Dayyan-Ashur) in Year 33.

BCE	Regnal year	Eponym	Main military target(s)	Campaign dating in the Annals
859	0	Tab-belû	Hubushkia, Urartu	<i>šurrât sarrûtîya</i>
858	1	Sharru-balti-nishi	Mediterranean Sea	<i>palû 1</i>
857	2	Shalmaneser (III)	Bit-Adini, Carchemish	<i>palû 2</i>
856	3	Ashur-belu-ka'in (<i>turtânu</i>)	Bit-Adini, Urartu	<i>palû 3</i>
855	4	Ashur-bunaya-ušur (<i>rab šâqê</i>)	Bit-Adini, Mazamua	<i>palû 4</i>
854	5	Abi-ina-ekalli-lilbur	Shubria	<i>palû 5</i>
853	6	Dayyan-Ashur (<i>turtânu</i>)	Hamath	<i>palû 6</i>
852	7	Shamash-abua	Tib-abne, Tigris source	<i>palû 7</i>
851	8	Shamash-belû-ušur	Babylonia	<i>palû 8</i>
850	9	Bel-bunaya	Babylonia	<i>palû 9</i>
849	10	Hadi-lipushu	Carchemish, Bit-Agusi	<i>palû 10</i>
848	11	Nergal-alik-pani	Hamath	<i>palû 11</i>
847	12	Bur-Ramman	Paqarhubuni	<i>palû 12</i>
846	13	Ninurta-mukin-nishi	Matyati	<i>palû 13</i>
845	14	Ninurta-nadin-shumi	Central Syria	<i>palû 14</i>
844	15	Ashur-bunaya	Nairi, Euphrates source	<i>palû 15</i>
843	16	Tab-Ninurta	Namri	<i>palû 16</i>
842	17	Taklak-ana-sharri	Mt. Amanus	<i>palû 17</i>
841	18	Adad-remanni	Damascus	<i>palû 18</i>
840	19	Shamash-abua	Cedar Mountain/Mt. Amanus	<i>palû 19</i>
839	20	Shulmu-beli-lamur	Que	<i>palû 20</i>
838	21	Ninurta-kibsi-ušur	Malahi/Damascus	<i>palû 21</i>
837	22	Ninurta-ilaya	Danabi/Damascus	<i>palû 21</i>
836	23	Qurdi-Ashur	Tabal	<i>palû 22</i>
835	24	Shep-sharri	Melid	<i>palû 23</i>
834	25	Nergal-mudammiq	Namri	<i>palû 24</i>
833	26	Yahalu	Que	<i>palû [25]</i>
832	27	Ululaya	Que	<i>palû [25]</i>
831	28	Sharru-hatti-ipel	Que; Der(?)	<i>palû 26</i>
830	29	Nergal-ilaya	Urartu	<i>palû 27</i>
829	30	Hubayu	Unqi/Patin	<i>palû 28</i>
828	31	Ilu-mukin-ahi	Ulluba/Habhu	<i>palû 29</i>
827	32	Shalmaneser (III)	Mannai	<i>palû 30</i>
826	33	Dayyan-Ashur (<i>turtânu</i>)	Parsua, Namri; rebellion	<i>palû 31</i>
825	34	Ashur-bunaya-ušur (<i>rab šâqê</i>)	Rebellion	--
824	35	Yahalu [<i>turtânu ?</i>]	Rebellion; (the death of the king)	--

The six versions of the tributes paid to Shalmaneser III in his 18th year of reign contain several chronological anomalies. The tribute of Jehu (885-856), which appears for the first time in 841 BCE, when Shalmaneser III destroyed the army of Hazael (885-840) during his campaign against Damascus, is always placed at the end of the annals. The tribute of Byblos and Egypt, in 838 BCE, can only be related to the campaign of 853 BCE (Battle of Qarqar) as the tribute of Qalparunda (858-853). This tribute from Egypt probably comes from the King of Byblos, a client of Egypt, who received an Egyptian contingent (1000 soldiers) to defend himself against Assyria. The

²⁹ In the texts of Nuzi the word *tardennu* meant the second son in order of age. Because of his power, the commander-in-chief was a potential rival of the king and could oust him by a coup d'état. To avoid this possibility, Assyrian kings chose carefully this key character among the eunuchs of their headquarters. The fact that the commander-in-chief was a eunuch prevented him from founding a dynasty of his own and was, therefore, a deterrent from killing the king in order to take his place.

different versions of the same tributes paid to Shalmaneser III show that some versions of the annals have amalgamated earlier tributes.

- 2) The Assyrian transcription of Baal-ezer into Ba'li-ma-AN-zêri is aberrant, and it is not possible to explain the meaning of this name (Lipiński: 1970, 59-65). In general, Assyrian transcriptions of Phoenician names are quite close to Hebrew transcriptions:

Name	Greek (Josephus)	Greek (LXX)	Assyrian	Hebrew	meaning
Tyre	Tür	Tür	Şur	Şûr	<i>Rock</i>
Sidon	Sidon	Sidon	Şiduna	Şidon	<i>Fishery ?</i>
Samaria	Samareia	Samareia	Samirina	Somerôn	<i>Belonging to a clan</i>
Jerusalem	Ierousalem	Ierousalem	Ursalimu	Yerûšalaïm	<i>City of fullness</i>
Hiram	Eirom	Airam	Ĥirumu	Ĥîram	<i>Life is high ?</i>
Ithobaal	Ithobal	Iethebaal	[ʾ]Tuba'il	Ethba'al	<i>With him is Baal</i>
Baalezer	Balezor	Baalezer	Ba'li-ma-AN-zêri	Ba'al-ezer	<i>Baal is a helper</i>
Mattan	Metten	Maththan	Mitina	Mattan	<i>[Baal] has offered</i>

The name Ba'li-ma-AN-zêri is clearly an anomaly (the expected form is Ba'li-zêri without the word ma-AN), which could be explained by an erroneous comment on the tributaries. According to Menander, the king of Tyre at the time of Shalmaneser III (859-824) was Pygmalion (877-830), not Baal-ezer II (912-906).

- 3) Up to Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), Assyrian kings never mentioned the name of the kings of Tyre or Sidon in their annals (Pritchard: 1969, 274-301). The kings of Tyre mentioned in the biblical text or in Phoenician inscriptions were added in parallel to the Assyrian kings:

King of Assyria	Reign	BCE	Tribute paid by (according to Assyrian annals):
	c. 1350		Abimilki Prince of Tyre, Zimredda mayor of Sidon (EA 144)
Tiglath-pileser I	1115-1076		Sidon (<i>Şi-du-ni</i>)
	c. 1085		(? prince of) Tyre, Zakarbaal prince of Byblos (Wenamun II:9-11)
	(1025-991)		Hiram king of Tyre (1Ki 5:1), the Sidonians (1Ki 11:1-13)
	(944-912)		Ithobaal I king of the Sidonians (1Ki 16:31)
Aššurnāširpal II	884-859	867	The Tyrians (<i>şur-a-a-a</i>), the Sidonians (<i>şi-du-na-a-a</i>)
Shalmaneser III	859-824	841	The Tyrians, the Sidonians, Jehu son of Omri (<i>Ia-ú-a mār Hu-um-ri-i</i>)
		839	Baal-manzer (<i>Bali-ma-AN-zêri</i>) the Tyrian, Jehu son of Omri
		838	The Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Byblians, Jehu of the House of Omri
	c. 825		Hiram king of the Sidonians (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48)
Adad-nīrārī III	811-783	805	Tyre, Sidon, Land of Omri (<i>mat Hu-um-ri</i>)
	c. 800-750		Milkiram king of the Sidonians (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93)
(Pulu)	(782-746)	773	Luli (Elulaios) king of Tyre (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284)
Tiglath-pileser III	745-727	738	Ithobaal II (<i>Tu-ba-il</i>) the Tyrian
		737	Hiram III [<i>Ĥi-ru-um-mu</i>] the Tyrian
Sargon II	722-705	720	Samaria (<i>Sa-mir-i-na</i>), House of Omri (<i>Bīt Hu-um-ri-a</i>), Juda (<i>Ia-ú-du</i>)
		712	[Luli] king of Tyre, merchants of Sidon (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3)
		709	Shilta ("ruler") of the city of the Tyrians (Na'aman: 1998, 239-247)
Sennacherib	715-681	712	Luli king of Sidon, Ethba'al (<i>Tu-ba-lu</i>), king of Sidon
Esarhaddon	681-669	677	Abdimilkutte king of Sidon, Ba'lu king of Tyre
Ashurbanipal	669-630	666	Ba'il king of Tyre
Nebuchadnezzar	605-562	598	The king of Tyre; The king of Sidon

According to the archives of El Amarna, Sidon had pre-eminence over its rivals Byblos and Tyre, however, Akhenaten, King of Egypt, sent letters (c. 1350 BCE) to Abimilki, Prince of Tyre, and Zimredda, Mayor of Sidon. The Egyptian title "prince" corresponded to the title "king" in Canaan. As early as the 11th century BCE, the prestigious role of Sidon began to be eclipsed by that of Tyre, presumably because of its flourishing trade on the Mediterranean. When Wenamun arrived in Phoenicia to negotiate (c. 1085 BCE), he started with [the prince of] Tyre, then with Zakarbaal, the Prince of Byblos, without passing through Sidon (Report of Wenamun II:9-11). All the documents, up to Sennacherib, mention either the king of the Sidonians or the king of Tyre, but never the king of Sidon or the king of the Tyrians. The expression "the Tyrian" to designate a king of Tyre never appears in the Assyrian annals before 738 BCE. This coincidence is not fortuitous, since the same anomaly can be found in the biblical text: Ithobaal is "king of the Sidonians", not "king of Tyre", never "king of Sidon". In the Iliad and the Odyssey, as well as in the proverbs of Ahiqar, only the "Sidonians" are mentioned (Khreich: 2018, 373-376). Similarly, in an inscription, dated c. 800-750 BCE discovered in Cyprus, the "prefect of Carthage" is called "servant of Hiram, king of the Sidonians" (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93). The mention of Bali-ma-AN-zêri the Tyrian is therefore an anachronistic invention of an Assyrian engraver. This anomaly shows that the Assyrian annals are not

as reliable as the eponymous chronicles. Indeed, the purpose of the annals was to disseminate Assyrian propaganda to foreign prestigious visitors, whereas the eponymous chronicles were used in the archives of the Assyrian kings. For example, if we cross-check Sennacherib's annals with other historical documents, we can see that this Assyrian king reinterpreted his campaign in 712 BCE with that of Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE. As the chronology of the kings of Tyre is mainly reconstructed from the synchronisms mentioned in the Assyrian annals and put in parallel with those mentioned in the biblical text (Aubet: 2001, 54-60), it is important to check whether the historical data from these annals, as well as those from the Bible, are accurate. For example:

- 1) According to the annals of Sennacherib: On my 3rd campaign (in 712 BCE), I marched to the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine). Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed Lulī, the king of the city Sidon, and he fled afar into the midst of the sea and disappeared. The awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed the cities Great Sidon, Lesser Sidon, Bīt-Zitti, Šarepta, Maḥalliba, Ušū, Akzibu, (and) Acco, his fortified cities (and) fortresses, an area of pasture(s) and water-place(s), resources upon which he relied, and they bowed down at my feet. I placed Tu-Ba'lu (Ithobaal II) on the royal throne over them and imposed upon him tribute (and) payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (to be delivered) yearly (and) without interruption. As for Menahem of the Samarian city (Mi-in-ḫi-im-mu URU.Sam-si-mu-ru-na-a-a), Tu-Ba'lu (Ithobaal II) of the city Sidon, Abdi-Li'ti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod, Būdi-il of the city Bīt-Ammon, Kammūsu-nadbi of the land Moab, Aya-rāmu of the land Edom, all of the kings of the land Amurru, they brought extensive gifts, four times (the normal amount), as their substantial audience gift before me and kissed my feet (...) who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia), forces without number, and they came to their aid. In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of (the god) Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers (and) crown princes, together with the charioteers of the king of the land Meluḫḫa. I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Eltekeh (and) Tamnā (Grayson /Novotny: 2012, 114-116).
- 2) According to the annals of Sargon II: [In m[y] 11th [re]gnal year (in 711 BCE), (...) [I reorganized (the administration of) the people of the land Gurgum to its full extent], set [a eunuch of mine] as provincial governor over them, (and) [considered them] as people [of Assy]ria. Azūri, king of the city Ashdod, [pl]otted [...] (so as) to no longer (have to) de[liv]er [tribute (to me)] and sent (messages) [hostile to Assyria] to the kings in his enviro[ns]. Then, because of the e[vi]l that he had done, I di[d awa]y with [his lordship] o[ver the people of his land] and [se]t his favorite brother Aḫī-Mīti as king [over them] (Frame: 2020: 72,409)

These annals contain several glaring anachronisms. Although Sennacherib did indeed lay siege to Jerusalem during his 3rd campaign (in 712 BCE), when he was co-regent (715-705) of Sargon II, he did not succeed in subduing King Hezekiah (726-697). As Sennacherib's 3rd campaign ended in disaster, since his army was destroyed by an angel according to the biblical text (Is 37:36-37), by an army of rats according to Herodotus (The Histories II:141), he was obliged to falsify this disastrous campaign (Sargon's army was not destroyed since he was able to recapture Babylon in 710 BCE). He also claims to have replaced Luli, the king of Sidon, when he fled to Cyprus before dying, with Ethbaal (Ithobaal II). This remark contains two inconsistencies because, according to one of the present reconstructions (Elayi: 2013, 324-325), Ithobaal II, king of Tyre over the period 695-682 BCE, would have succeeded Luli (729-695), who therefore did not die in 712 BCE and was not king of Sidon but of Tyre. To be credible a lie must contain some truth, we can assume that Sennacherib probably wanted to impose a tribute on Luli II, the king of Tyre, who fled by boat to Cyprus with his treasure in order not to pay. In order to turn failure into victory, Sennacherib copied part of the annals of Tiglath-pileser III, who in 738 BCE had imposed a tribute on Ithobaal II (c.755-738), the king of Tyre, but as this king died in that year, Tiglath-pileser III replaced him with Hiram III (738-730). However, to increase his prestige, Tiglath-pileser III had added to the list of tributaries the name of Menahem (771-760), King of Samaria, who had paid him a heavy tribute (2Ki 15:19-20) in 765 BCE when he was co-regent under the name Pulu (782-746). This Assyrian king, who had reigned for 36 years, according to Menander of Ephesus, had previously imposed, in 773 BCE, a tribute on Luli I (c.775-755), king of Tyre. According to his annals, Sennacherib is said to have received gifts from Mitinti the king of Ashdod in his 3rd campaign, but Sargon states in his annals that he replaced Azūri, the king of Ashdod, with his brother Aḫī-Mīti in his 11th year of reign (in 711 BCE), which shows that Sennacherib attributed to himself (in 712 BCE) the tribute paid by Mitinti, king of the land of Ashkelon, to Tiglath-pileser III (in 738 BCE).

The king of Assyria invaded all Syria and Phoenicia in a hostile manner (in 773 BCE). The name of this king is also set down in the archives of Tyre, for he made an expedition against Tyre in the reign of Elulaios³⁰ (Luli

³⁰ This king of Tyre cannot be Luli II (729-694) because according to Assyrian records he was king of Sidon during the 3rd Sennacherib campaign (702 BCE) and fled from Tyre to Cyprus where he "died" shortly afterwards. This information is incompatible with the length of his reign, implying that he was already king in 736 BCE at the time of Hiram III (739-730).

I). This is also attested by Menander, the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives into the Greek language, who has given the following account: And Elulaios (?), to whom they gave the name of Pulas (Pulu), reigned 36 years (782-746); this king, upon the revolt of the Kitieis (Cyprians), put out to sea and again reduced them to a submission (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284).

Menahem actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser (or Tiglath-pul-esser), not during his reign in 738 BCE, but when he was co-regent under the name Pul (Pulu), a hypocoristic use of the word *aplu* “heir”.

Consequently, the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria (1Ch 5:26). Pul the king of Assyria came into the land. Consequently, Menahem (771-760) gave Pul 1000 talents of silver (in 765 BCE), that his hands might prove to be with him to strengthen the kingdom in his own hand. So Menahem brought forth the silver at the expense of Israel, at the expense of all the valiant, mighty men, to give to the king of Assyria 50 silver shekels for each man. At that the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not stay there in the land (2Ki 15:19-20).

We note that in the list of tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III, in 738 BCE, that of Menahem (771-760), King of Samaria, was added to that paid by Ithobaal II (c. 755-738), King of Tyre, whereas he had paid this tribute in 765 BCE. Sennacherib took over the tributes paid by these two former kings during his campaign in 712 BCE, thus creating a new anachronism with the biblical chronology. According to the biblical text, Luli II (c. 729-694) was indeed king of Tyre (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3) and not king of Sidon according to the annals of Sennacherib. However, the reconstruction of this chronological part of the kings of Tyre during Sennacherib's co-regency with Sargon (715-705) is still very hypothetical³¹. Considering the tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III when he was co-regent under the name Pulu, makes it possible to remove many chronological inconsistencies with the kings of Israel and the kings of Tyre, and thus to obtain an excellent chronological agreement among the synchronisms (dates in bold in the parts highlighted in grey). Nevertheless, the chronological reconstruction of some areas remains uncertain (highlighted in orange).

King of Ashdod		King of Israel	Reign	King of Tyre	Reign	King of Assyria	Reign
		Jehu	885 -	Mattan I	906-877	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -
				Pygmalion	877 -		-859
						Shalmaneser III	859 -
			-856	(Nora Stone)	814		841
		Jehoachaz	856-839				
		Jehoash	841-823		-830		-824
		Jeroboam II	823 -	Hiram II	830-805	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
			-782	Milkiram	805 -	Adad-nîrari III	811-783
		Zechariah	782-771		-775	Pulu	782 -
		Menahem	771-760	Luli I (Elulaios)	775-755		
		Peqah	758 -	Ithobaal II	755 -		-746
			-738	(Tubail)	-738	Tiglath-pileser III	745 -
Mitinti (Ashkelon)	740 -	Hosea I	738 -	Hiram III	738-730		-727
			-729	Mattan II	730-729		-727
Azūri		Hosea II	729-720	Luli II	729 -	Shalmaneser V	727-722
	-712					Sargon II	722 -
Aḥī-Mīti	712 -			(Šilta)	712-709		-705
		King of Sidon	Reign		-695	Sennacherib	705 -
		Abdimilkutte	695 -	Baal I	695 -		-681
		(Abd-Malqart)	-677	(Ba'lu)		Esarhaddon	681-669
		?		(Ba'il)	-666	Aššurbanipal	669 -
		King of Judah	Reign	Yahimilki ?	666-640		-630
		Josiah	640 -	Abdrastratos II ?	640 -	Aššur-etel-ilāni	630-626
			-609			Sin-šar-iškun	626-612
						Aššur-uballiṭ II	612- 609
		Jehoiachim	609-598		-597	Nebuchadnezzar II	605 -
		Zedekiah	598- 587	Ithobaal III	591 -		
		Jehoiachin (exile)	587 -		-573		
			-561	Baal II	573-563		-562

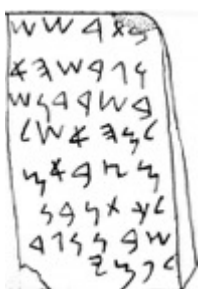
We note that all the chronological synchronisms with the kings of Assyria, Israel and Tyre are excellent (names in bold type), with one important exception: the tribute paid to King Shalmaneser III in 841 BCE by Jehu

³¹ It is possible that Sennacherib's attack on Tyre, in 712 BCE, then that of Sargon on Cyprus, in 709 BCE, against the ruler (šilta) of the city of the Tyrians (Na'aman: 1998, 239-247; Balogh: 2011, 124-125), led the inhabitants of Sidon to enthrone Abdimilkutte (Abd-Malqart?), king of Sidon, after the death of Luli II (c. 729-695), king of Tyre, according to Assyrian propaganda (Cannavò: 2011, 329-332). It would seem that after Nebuchadnezzar II's attack, in 598 BCE, the double kingship over Tyre and Sidon ceased and that after the siege of Tyre, which lasted 13 years, there was again only one king of Tyre /Sidonians (Elayi: 2006, 13-43).

(885-856) is not mentioned in the Bible and, more embarrassingly, is anachronistic by at least 15 years since Jehu had died on that date. The second embarrassing point concerns the dating of the Nora Stone, which is associated with the foundation of Carthage, in 870 BCE, according to Menander, but in 814 BCE according to the conventional chronology of the kings of Tyre based on the biblical chronology of Thiele. Menander's chronological data being perfectly cross-referenced with biblical data (not Thiele's data)³², especially with kings Hiram I (1025-991) and Ithobaal I (944-912), are therefore very reliable, especially as the foundation of Carthage being a major event in Phoenician history, it must have been preserved in the annals of Tyre and Carthage. Unfortunately, the annals of Tyre were destroyed by the army of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, and the annals of Carthage were destroyed by the Roman armies in 146 BCE. Justinus (c. 300 CE) was the only historian who has transmitted a romanticized history of Carthage in his book: *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* (Pompeius Trogus wrote his book in 9 CE). Although this story has been adapted to Greek mythology, it contains several historical elements that are authentically Phoenician:

Meanwhile their king Mutto (Mattan I) died at Tyre, appointing his son Pygmalion and his daughter Elissa, a maiden of extraordinary beauty, his heirs. But the people gave the throne to Pygmalion, who was quite a boy. Elissa married Acerbas, her uncle, who was priest of Hercules (Melqart), a dignity next to that of the king. Acerbas had great but concealed riches, having laid up his gold, for fear of the king, not in his house, but in the earth; a fact of which, though people had no certain knowledge of it, report was not silent (...) This city was founded 72 years before Rome (Philippic Histories 18:3-6).

Pompeius Trogus no longer had access to the annals of Carthage, which had been destroyed some 150 years earlier, so he transmitted an oral history by adapting it to Greek mythology. The account transmitted by Justinus (c. 200 CE?), despite its inaccuracies, remarkably confirms the chronological data transmitted by Menander³³: 1) the foundation of Carthage took place around 825 BCE; 2) when Elissa, Pygmalion's sister, married Acerbas. She was probably in her twenties, like her brother. According to Menander, Carthage was founded when Pygmalion was 18 years old. 3) Pygmalion had succeeded Mattan and had been enthroned when he was still a boy, at the age of 11 according to Menander. A second confirmation of the chronological accuracy of the kings of Tyre, transmitted by Menander, comes from several archaeological finds. The Nora Stone, considered to be the oldest Phoenician inscription ever found in Sardinia (dating back to the 9th century BCE), confirms the episode of Queen Elissa's flight to found Carthage, since we read:

	1. btršš	in Tarshish,
	2. wgrš h'	and he was driven
	3. bšrdn š	in Sardinia.
	4. lm h' šl	He is safe. Safe
	5. m šb' m	is the crew [army] of
	6. lkt nbn	the Queen. Structure
	7. š bn ngr	which the herald has built
	8. lpmy	for Pumay

The translation of this text is debated (Lipiński: 2004, 234-260), but Tarshish and Sardinia were areas inside the Phoenicians' zone of influence. This text refers to the Phoenician god Pumay, found in the name Pumay-yaton "Pumay has given", as well as the presence of a Phoenician queen (Elissa is the only known Phoenician queen). A king of Cyprus named Pumay-yaton (4th century BCE) is read Pygmalion in Diodorus' text (Historical Library XIX:79:4). The name Pygmalion written in Phoenician appears on a jewel called "Médaille de Carthage" (Gras/Rouillard/Teixidor: 1989, 158-165), dated around 650 BCE. The translation of this text is debated (Lipiński: 1995, 297-306) but it confirms the existence of a Phoenician king named Pygmalion (former Pumay-yaton) before 650 BCE. We notice that the name Pygmalion in this inscription is written PGMLYN in Phoenician instead of the supposed PMY-YTN form. This medal is dated c. 650 BCE by epigraphy (shape of the letters):

³² Until today (2020), all academic studies on the kings of Tyre (Katzenstein: 1997) date Hirom (c.969–929) and Hirom II (c.736–729) in accordance with Thiele's biblical chronology (Lemaire: 2015, 22-35).

³³ For example, "Acerbas the priest of Hercules" must have been "Zakarbaal the priest of Melqart (*Melek kart* "king of the city [of Tyre]"). However, the spelling of main proper names has generally been preserved: Pygmalion; Mutto (Mattan I); Elissa (Elisha "God is salvation") and Acerbas (Zakarbaal "Baal has remembered"). According to his account, Princess Elissa was the daughter of King Mattan [Mattan I]. When he died, the throne was jointly bequeathed to her and her brother, Pygmalion. She married her uncle Acerbas High Priest of Melqart, a man with both authority and wealth comparable to the king. Pygmalion was a tyrant, lover of both gold and intrigue, and coveted the authority and fortune enjoyed by Acerbas. Pygmalion assassinated Acerbas in the temple and managed to keep the misdeed concealed from his sister for a long time, deceiving her with lies about her husband's death. At the same time, the people of Tyre called for a single Sovereign, causing dissent within the royal family. After learning the truth, Elissa fled Tyre with her husband's gold, and managed to trick the Tyrian ships sent in pursuit of her fleet. When her ship was overtaken by the Tyrian ships, she threatened to throw the gold overboard and let the would-be captors face the wrath of her brother for failing in their mission. They opted to join her, and the extended fleet sailed on towards the West. Elissa eventually sailed to Africa after a brief stop at Cyprus. She requested land to establish a new city from the king of the Libyan tribe living near Byrsa and called the place *Qart-hadasht* meaning "New city" in Phoenician.



Douimès medallion

1.	l 'štr	[dedicated] to Astarte
2.	t lpgmlyn	[belonging] to Pygmalion
3.	yd' mlk bn	royal confident, son of / (or: "Yada'milk, son of")
4.	pdy hls	Paday, saved,
5.	'š hls	because she saved
6.	pgmlyn	Pygmalion

According to Justinus, King Pygmalion (877-830) must have been in financial trouble because Elissa had gone to her new city (Carthage) with the whole temple treasury. It is interesting to note that Ašurnasirpal II claims in his annals to have received a tribute from the kings of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos, around 870 BCE (Grayson: 1991, 212-219; Younger: 2016, 262,320-324), but as this tribute is not detailed, it is likely that it was the result of a plundering, the king of Tyre not having been able, or not wanting, to pay this probably very high tribute.

A way to check the date of the founding of Carthage (in 870 BCE) is using epigraphy on the Nora Stone, as this inscription is contemporary of King Pygmalion. All epigraphists agree to date the Nora Stone to the 9th century BCE, however, in order to refine this dating they use other inscriptions from this period by comparing the evolution of the shape of the letters. The main inscriptions used to specify the date are those of the kings of Byblos: Ahiiram, Abibaal, a contemporary of Shoshenq I, himself a contemporary of Rehoboam³⁴, Elibaal, a contemporary of Osorkon I, and Shipitbaal I, as well as the Mesha Stele, whose father was a contemporary of Omri. Since this conventional chronology is based on the biblical chronology calculated by Thiele, it is about 45 years behind the actual (unmodified) biblical chronology (BHS). The reigns of Omri (885-874) and Rehoboam (930-913) should therefore be replaced by their unmodified durations: 930-919 BCE and 977-960 BCE respectively. Similarly, the chronology of the 22nd dynasty should not be anchored on a hypothetical date in the reign of Shoshenq I but on an absolute date based on astronomy. A lunar eclipse dated on 25 Shemu IV of the 15th year of Takelot II mentioned in the *Osorkon Chronicle* can fix this reign by astronomy³⁵. Parker noticed that a lunar eclipse was described: *so that the sky will not swallow the moon the 16th lunar day [mspr] in the region of Heliopolis* and that the one dated IV Shemu 25 of the 15th year coincided with the total lunar eclipse of 13 March 851 BCE (Parker: 1953, 50). This eclipse thus fixes Takelot II's accession to 865 BCE. This Egyptian chronology, anchored on astronomy, is independent of the Biblical chronology and has several synchronisms with kings of Egypt such as Shoshenq I, written Shishak (1Ki 14:25) and Osorkon IV, written So (2Ki 17:6) or Segor (LXX).

- The city of Gezer was burned by Siamun (Kitchen: 2003, 108-110) 20 years after its construction (1Ki 9:10,16,17) which had begun in early Year 4 (1Ki 6:37-7:1), thus in Year 24 of Solomon, in 993 BCE.
- Flight of Jeroboam into Pharaoh Shoshenq I's country, in the last years of Solomon's reign (1Ki 11:40-42), or during the years 39 and 40 (978-977).
- Shoshenq I attacked Jerusalem in the 5th year of Rehoboam, in 972 BCE; he is called Shishaq in the Hebrew Bible (1Ki 14:25,26; 2Ch 12:2-9) and Sousakim in the Septuagint.
- Hosea II negotiated with Shalmaneser V and Osorkon IV (2Ki 17:1-6), in 723 BCE.

The admitted succession of the kings of Byblos is: Ahiiram, Ithobaal, Abibaal, Yehimilk, Elibaal and Shipitbaal (Moscato: 1968, 10-11). Abibaal was a contemporary of Shoshenq I (980-959) and Elibaal was a contemporary of Osorkon I (959-924) (Lemaire: 2006, 1697-1716).

³⁴ The usual chronology of the 22nd Dynasty comes from Kenneth Kitchen who assumed that the attack on Jerusalem by Shoshenq I, dated 5th year of Rehoboam (1Ki 14:25-26; 2Ch 12:2-9), coincided with the one mentioned on a stele dated 21st and final year of his reign. Based on Thiele's Biblical chronology, dating the reign of Rehoboam (930-913), Kitchen sets the 5th year of his reign in 925 BCE (= 930 - 5), assuming that the campaign had to be conducted the year before Year 21 of Shoshenq I, which would date his accession in 945 BCE (= 925 + 20). Although this Egyptian chronology is based on an erroneous biblical chronology, it is mostly accepted by Egyptologists to within 2 years (Hornung /Krauss /Warburton: 2006, 474).

³⁵ Camino published this chronicle but he doubted that the sentence: *in the regnal year 15, 4th month of Shemu, day 25(or 29), under the Majesty of his august father, the god who rules Thebes [Takelot II], the sky has not swallowed the moon*, could be understood as a lunar eclipse, because the expression was in the negative form (Camino: 1958, 88-90). In fact, by superstition, the Egyptians never mentioned the eclipses, except in the negative. As Parker noted, if the scribe recorded precisely the date of the revolt which was close to the lunar eclipse it was to note a coincidence with this bad omen rather than a lack of coincidence. The total lunar eclipse as coincidence has been noticed. The revolt (13 March) preceded the total lunar eclipse, dated 17 March 851 BCE, by a few days (which would have been the opposite if it had been a "normal" omen). Using the length of Osorkon II's reign of 44 years, instead of 24 years (Aston: 1989, 139-153). Year 1 of Shoshenq I (accession) has to be fixed in 980 BCE.

Assuming an average reign of 20 years of the kings of Byblos (like the one of Tyre from Mattan I to Mattan II), we obtain the following synchronisms (highlighted in grey):

King of Israel	Reign	King of Judah	Reign	King of Egypt	Reign	#	King of Byblos	Reign	#
		Solomon	1017 -	Amenemope	1018-1009	9	Ahiram	1020 -	20
				Osorkon A	1009-1003	6		-1000	
		(1Ki 9:16)	993	Siamun	1003-984	19	Ithobaal	1000 -	20
				Psusennes II	994-980	14		-980	
(1Ki 11:40)			-977	Shoshenq I	980 -	21	Abibaal	980 -	20
Jeroboam I	977-955	Rehoboam	977-960	(1Ki 14:25)	-959			-960	
Nadab	955-954			Osorkon I	959 -	35	Yehimilk	960 -	20
Baasha	954-931							-940	
Elah	931-930	King of Moab					Elibaal	940 -	20
Omri	930 -	Kemoshyat	930 -		-924			-920	
	-919			Shoshenq II	924-922	2			
Ahab	919-898	(2Ki 3:4-5)	-900	Takeot I	922-909	13	Shipitbaal I	920 -	20
Ahaziah	898-897	Mesha	900 -	Osorkon II	909 -	44		-900	
Jehoram (A)	897-886								
Ahaziah II	886-885								
Jehu	885 -		-870		-865				
	-856			Takeot II	865 -	25			
Jehoachaz	856-839				-840				
Jehoash	841-823	Amasiah	839-810	Shoshenq III	840 -	40			
Jeroboam II	823 -	Uzziah	810 -		-800				
	-782	[Azariah]	[796 -	Shoshenq IV	800-788	12			
				Pamy	788-782	6			
Zechariah	782-771			Shoshenq V	782 -	38			
Menahem	771-760		-758						
Peqah	758 -	Jotham	758-742		-745				
	-738	Ahaz	742 -	Pedubast II	745-741	5			
Hosea I	738-729		-726	Osorkon IV	741 -	?	Shipitbaal II	740 -	?
Hosea II	729-720	Hezekiah	726 -	(1Ki 17:1-4)				-720	
					-712		Uru-milki I	720 -	?
		(2Ki 19:9)	-697	Shabataka	712 -	23		-700	
		Manasseh	697 -	/Taharqa	-689				
				Taharqa	689-663	26	King of Persia	Reign	#
			-642	Psamtik I	663 -	54	[Cyrus 0] ?	660 -	25
		Amon	642-640					-635	
		Josiah	640-609	(2Ki 23:29)	-609		Teispes	635-610	25
		Jehoiachim	609-598	Necho II	609-594	16	Cyrus I	610 -	25
		Zedekiah	598- 587	Psamtik II	594-588	6		-585	
		Jehoiachin	587 -	Apries	588-569	19	Cambyses I	585 -	26
		(Jr 44:30)	-561	Amasis	569-567	44		-559	
				(Ezk 29:13-17)	567-526		Cyrus II	559-530	29
				Psamtik III	526- 525	2	Cambyses II	530-522	8

These chronologies are used to date the inscriptions accurately. According to the Mesha Stele, Moab was oppressed by Israel for 40 years since the reign of Omri, Kemoshyat reigned for 30 years, then Mesha (his son) liberated the country (Sprinkle: 1999, 247-270). This chronology put the 40 years from the reign of Omri in 930 BCE to the death of Jehoshaphat in 891 BCE. The text of 2Kings 3:4-7 situates the revolt of Mesha shortly after the death of Ahab (in 898 BCE). If Mesha reigned 30 years like his father, his stone must have been erected after 898 BCE and before 870 BCE, at the end of his reign. We notice that the letter W in the Mesha Stele still looks like the archaic form of the sarcophagus of Ahiram (1020-1000). The inscription of King Kilamuwa (840-815) has to be dated from the end of the reign of Shalmaneser III (859-824). The Fekherye inscription mentions that of Hadad-yis'i, son of Shamash-Nuri, who was an eponymous governor of Guzan in 866 BCE under Ashurnasirpal II. It is likely that the king Hadad-yis'i [Adad-rêmanni] was also eponym in 841 BCE under Shalmaneser III, which would date the Fekherye stele inscriptions around that date (Lipiński: 2000, 128-130, 239-242). Therefore, the reigns of the kings of Byblos can be used by epigraphers to date inscriptions in Palaeo-Hebrew (Rollston: 2008, 57-93): Ahiram (1020-1000); Abibaal (980-960); Yehimilk (960-940); Elibaal (940-920); Shipitbaal I (920-900); Mesha (900-870); Fekherye (870-840); Hazael (885-845); Kilamuwa (840-815). Epigraphers use the inscriptions of these kings dated according to the conventional chronology (Sass: 2005, 22-40), so it must be corrected by 20 years for the reigns of the kings of Byblos and 45 years for the Mesha Stele.

	Ger-baal arrow-head	Ruweish arrow-head	Kefar Veradim bowl	Tekke bowl	Eli-baal	Byblos spatula	Yahi-milk	Ahi-ram	Abi-baal	Šipib-baal	Abdo-sherd	Bord-reuil inscription	Fekheryeh	Kulamuwa orthostat	Kulamuwa gold ferrule	Dan	Hazael bronzes	Hazael ivories	Mesha
alep		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
bet	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
gimel	⚡				⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡			⚡
dalet	⚡	⚡			⚡		⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡		⚡
he							⚡	⚡			⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
waw					⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡			⚡
zayin					⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		?		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
het	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
tet							⚡			⚡		⚡							⚡
yod	⚡	⚡			⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
kap		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	?	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡			⚡
lamed	⚡			⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
mem			⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
nun	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
samek			⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡				⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
'ayin	⚡	⚡	⚡	?	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
pe			⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
šade	⚡	⚡		⚡			⚡		⚡			⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
qop							⚡			⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
resh	⚡				⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
shin			⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡
taw						⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡

⚡ *Eccentric* ⚡ Non-archaizino

According to this epigraphical study, the Nora Stone can be dated. The shape of the letter K (*kap* line 6) on the stele appears only from 890 BCE (Mesha), the letter M (*mem* lines 4, 5 and 8) is vertical before 840 BCE (Fekherye), then horizontal after that date. The letter M in the Dan stele (880-860) is horizontal, but sometimes vertical (line 8 fragment 1, lines 2 and 4 fragment 2). The letter L (*lamed* lines 4, 6 and 8) is rounded only after 890 BCE (Mesha) and angular before that date. According to these epigraphical criteria, the Nora Stone should be dated after 890 BCE and before 850 BCE (Dommelen: 1998, 72-73). This epigraphic dating confirms two points: the foundation of Carthage took place before 850 BCE and the reign of Pygmalion (877-830) given by Menander is in perfect agreement with this date. This also confirms that the king of Tyre named Bali-ma-AN-zêri, mentioned in the tribute of 839 BCE, never existed.

The tribute paid to Shalmaneser III by Jehu, king of Bît Omri (Israel), in 841 BCE, is attested in several Assyrian inscriptions and is even precisely represented on the famous Black Obelisk. The anachronism of this tribute, Jehu having died in 856 BCE, could be explained by a tribute received earlier when Shalmaneser III was co-regent (871-859) with Aššurnasirpal II. For example, Tiglath-pileser III mentioned in 738 BCE the tribute that King Menahem (771-760) had actually paid him (2Ki 15:19-20) in 765 BCE when he was co-regent under the name of Bar Ga'yah or Pulu (782-746). Similarly, Shalmaneser III's annals clearly have "arrangements" with the facts (Hallo /Younger: 2003, 261-272) and Aššurnasirpal II attributed to himself the actions of his predecessors (Grayson: 1980, 227-245). This explanation is problematic because the biblical text shows that the kingdom of Jehu was repeatedly attacked and plundered by Hazael, a powerful king of Damascus, but Assyria is never mentioned throughout this period. There are two possible solutions, either the biblical text has forgotten this tribute paid by Jehu to Shalmaneser when he was co-regent, or Shalmaneser III invented this famous tribute; but, in this case, for what purpose? Only a precise chronological reconstruction can provide an answer to this enigma. For a long time, the Assyrian annals were used as historical documents because of the many mentioned synchronisms with the Hittite and Aramaic kingdoms. However, the reconstruction of the chronology of these kingdoms from their own inscriptions has made it possible to compare it with the information contained in the Assyrian annals. Two points emerged: first, the Assyrian annals have grouped victories or tributes not according to a chronological distribution but according to an ideological arrangement (Green: 2010, 83-88), and several names of Luwian kings were replaced by completely different Assyrian names; the comparison of some better documented reigns shows that some kings do not correspond to their chronological place (highlighted in orange):

Chronological tables of the Aramaic and Mesopotamian kingdoms of the 1st millennium BCE

Sidonians (Tyre)	reign	Bīt-Agusi (Arpad)	reign	Hamath	reign	Assyria	reign
Mattan I	906-877	Gūš	890 -	Parita	885 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -
Pygmalion	877 -		-860		-860		-859
	-830	Hadrām	860-830	Urḫilina	860-835	Shalmaneser III	859- 841
Hiram II	830 -	Attaršumki I	830 -	Uratami	835 -		841-824
	-805		-800		-810	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
				Zakkur	810 -	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
Milkiram	805 -	Bar-Hadad	800-796		-785		-783
	-775	Attaršumki II	796-785				
		Mati'-El	785 -	[Bar Ga'yah]	782 -	/Pulu	782 -
Luli I	775-755				-746		-746
Ithobaal II	755-738		-740				

Judah	reign	Israel (Bīt-Ḥumria)	reign	Aram (Damascus)	reign	Assyria	reign
Athaliah	885 -879		885 -	Hazael	885 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Joash	879 -	Jehu	-856	/ Hadad-ezer		Shalmaneser III	859 -
	-839	Jehoahaz	856-839		-840		841
Amaziah	839 -	Jehoash	841-823	Bar-Hadad III	840 -		-824
	-810	Jeroboam II	823 -		-805	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Uzziah [Azariah]	810 -		-782	Mari'	805-780	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
	[796 -			Hezion II	780 -		-783
	-758	Zechariah	782-771		-754	/Pulu	782 -
Jotham	758-742	Menahem	771-760	Rezin	754-732		-746
		Peqah	758-738				

Bīt-Adīni (Til Barsip)	reign	Bīt Gabbāri (Y'adiya)	reign	Sam'al (Siri'laya)		Assyria	reign
Hamiyatas's father	890-880	Gabbār	900-880			Tukultī-Ninurta II	891-884
Hamiyatas	880 -	Bānihu	880-870			Aššurnasirpal II	884 -
/ Ahuni	-867	Ḥayyā(n)	870 -	Ḥayyānu	870 -		-859
Hamiyatas's son	867-856		-855		-855	Shalmaneser III	859 -
Ariyahinas's son	856- 853	Ša-īl	855 -	Ahabbu	855 -		853
			-840		-820		841
		Kilamuwa	840 -			Šamši-Adad V	824-811
			-815	Qarli	820 -	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
					-790		-783
				Panamuwa I	790 -		
					-750	/Pulu	782-746

The progressive conquest of Bīt Adani by the Assyrians is emblematic of this ideological presentation of victories and tributes. According to the so-called "Monolith Inscriptions" (from Kurkh) we have an annalistic report of the first year of Shalmaneser III (in 858 BCE) to his 4th year of reign (in 855 BCE):

At that time, in my accession year (and) in my 1st regnal year, after I nobly ascended the royal throne, I mustered my chariots and troops (...) On the 13th day of the month Iyyar I moved out from Nineveh, crossed the Tigris, traversed Mounts Ḥasamu and Diḥnunu, (and) approached the city La'la'tu, which belonged to Aḥuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini. Overwhelmed by fear of the radiance of Aššur, my lord, they fled upstream/higher to save their lives. I razed, destroyed, (and) burned the city. Moving on from the city La'la'tu I approached the city Tīl-Barsip, the fortified city of Aḥuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini. Trusting in the strength of his troops Aḥuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini, advanced aggressively to make war and battle. With the support of Assur and the great gods, my lords, I fought with him (and) defeated him. I confined him to his city. Moving on from the city Tīl-Barsip I approached the city Burmar'ina, which belonged to Aḥuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini. I besieged the city, captured (it), (and) felled 300 of their fighting men with the sword. I erected a tower of heads in front of his city ... (Grayson: 2002, 14-15).

In my 4th regnal year I [crossed] the Euphrates in flood (and) marched in pursuit of Aḥuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini. He had made as his stronghold Šitamrat, a mountain peak on the bank of the Euphrates. I besieged (and) captured the mountain peak. Aḥuni, together with his gods, [his] chariots, his horses, his sons, his daughters, (and) 22,000 of his troops I uprooted (and) brought to my city, Aššur... (Grayson: 2002, 74).

Although this annalistic report seems very factual, it nevertheless contains several major contradictions (Younger: 2016, 139-140): Ahuni's large army was defeated by Shalmaneser at the beginning of his campaign, but all the kings of the region then appealed to Ahuni to save their lives; according to the royal lists of Bīt Adini (Masuwari in Hittite) the king who reigned at that time was Hamiyatas; the name Ahuni never appears (Hawkins: 1980, 139-156). To explain this paradox, some scholars assume that this king was under Ahuni's control, but that the name of this ruler was not mentioned maybe because he was a usurper (Bunnens: 2009, 67-82) or because it was not his real name (Ahuni is not Luwian, but means "separately, individually" in Assyrian); Shalmaneser III had this victory over Ahuni engraved when he became co-regent of Aššurnasirpal II in 871 BCE, which contradicts the date of 858 BCE. The historical context helps to clarify this apparent paradox. A wall panel relief in the British Museum (number 124537, dated 865-860 BC on their website), shows Aššurnasirpal II who has dismounted from his chariot to review a procession of prisoners of war (below).



King Aššurnasirpal II facing co-regent Shalmaneser (III) with royal two ribbons (right)

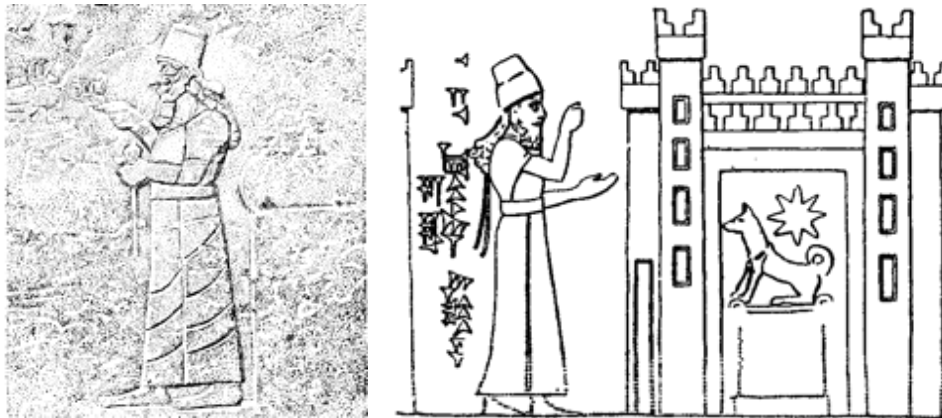
The co-regent opposite Aššurnasirpal II can only be his son Shalmaneser (III) and the defeated king can only be Ahuni, the man (*mār* "son") of Bīt-Adini, which was attacked around 870 BCE (Younger: 2016, 262,320). Some inscriptions prove that Ahuni had rendered tribute to Aššurnasirpal II. The following campaigns were directed against Urartu to the East (Winford Holloway: 2002, 126-130,395). The annexation of Bīt-Adini (former Masuwari) is dated Year 4 of Shalmaneser III, in 855 BCE!, but the defeat of Ahuni is dated in his 4th campaign, which is usually assimilated with his 4th year of reign, according to Shalmaneser III's annals:

Ahuni, son (*mār*) of Adini, who made obstinate resistance since the day of the fathers of Shalmaneser (...) In the beginning of my reign, the king confined him in his city, pulled up his harvest and cut down his orchards (...) Ahuni crossed the Euphrates to save his life (...) In another year (4th campaign), the king pursued Ahuni (...) The king carried off 17,500 soldiers of Ahuni, and brought Ahuni with his people, gods, chariots and horses into his presence (...) The king transferred them to the city of Ashur and counted them as the people of Assyria (Yamada: 2000, 133-135).

According to the annals of Aššurnasirpal II, Ahuni, the son (*sic*) of the Bīt-Adini, had to pay him a tribute, then was defeated, during several military campaigns which are dated between the eponymy of Dagan-bēla-ušur, in 878 BCE, and the eponymy of Šamaš-nūrī, in 867 BCE (Grayson: 1991, 212-219), likely around 870 BCE (Younger: 2016, 262,320). By crossing the annals of Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the 4th campaign of Shalmaneser III should be dated during his co-regency; consequently, his first campaign was in 870 BCE and his 4th campaign in 867 BCE. This chronological reconstruction is paradoxical because the king (REX) of Masuwari (Bīt Adini) was Hamiyatas (Hawkins: 2012, 224-248) whose reign is dated around 880-867 BCE, as the beginning of the reign of Hapatilas is located around 910 BCE (Bryce: 2012, 117-121).

Bīt Adini (Masuwari)	reign	Assyria (at Nineveh)	reign	Co-regent (at Kalhu)	reign
Hapatilas	910-900	Adad-nīrārī II	912 -		
Ariyahinas	900-890		-891		
Hamiyatas's father	890-880	Tukultī-Ninurta II	891-884		
Hamiyatas (Ahuni)	880 - -867	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -	Shalmaneser (III)	871 -
Hamiyatas's son	867 - -856	Shalmaneser III	-859 -		-859
Ariyahinas's son (Til Barsip)	856-853		-824	Aššur-danin-pal	846-821

King Hamiyatas was replaced by Ahuni in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III for the same reasons that King Hazael was replaced by Hadad-ezer, his army chief, who was considered a co-regent by the Assyrians. Among the kingdoms that opposed the Assyrian kings, some had a powerful army, such as the kingdoms of Bīt-Adini or Damascus (Aram/Syria). These mercenary armies were led by an army chief. The Assyrian inscriptions could have translated this title as *turtānu* (“commander-in-chief”), but the hierarchical position of this second person in the kingdom was different in Assyrian protocol, as the *turtānu* was not a co-regent while the army chief had a co-regent position. For example, Hazael had been army chief to King Bar-Hadad II before succeeding him (2Ki 8:7-8; 1Ki 19:15), similarly, Omri had been army chief to King Asa before succeeding him (1Ki 16:15-16). The word ‘co-regent’ does not exist, the Bible uses the word ‘king’ (*melekh*) as it only serves to convey the actual position of a royal person (Belshazzar, coregent of Nabonidus, was called 'king of Babylon' and Aššur-danin-pal, the coregent of Shalmaneser III, was called 'king of Nineveh'). The Assyrian kingdom being an empire, the protocol of its hierarchy is much more complex. Tiglath-Pileser I was known for his “wide-ranging military campaigns, his enthusiasm for building projects, and his interest in cuneiform tablet collections”. Under him, Assyria became the leading power of the Ancient Near East, he expanded Assyrian control into Anatolia and Syria, and to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The beginning of Tiglath-Pileser's reign, laid heavy involvement in military campaigns. The texts were believed to be “justification of war”. Although little literary text is available from his time, there is evidence to show that his reign inspired the act of recording information, including that of his military campaigns. Toward the end of Tiglath-Pileser's reign literary texts took the form of “summary texts” which served as a vessel for as much information about his reign as possible, with the intent to be handed down to his successor. As the founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (1076–609 BCE) he inspired conventional representations of Assyrian royalty. For example, he was the first Assyrian king to be depicted wearing the two-tiered conical tiara with its two ribbons on the back³⁶ (Reade: 2009, 242), similar to the papal tiara (below).



Assyrian inscriptions always begin with a prestigious “curriculum vitae”, which is instructive:

Tiglath-pileser, strong king (LUGAL), unrivalled king (LUGAL) of the universe, king (LUGAL) of the four quarters, king of all princes (LUGAL DŪ *mal-ki.MEŠ*), lord of lords (EN EN.MEŠ), chief herdsman, king of kings (MAN MAN.MEŠ), attentive purification priest (...) Son (A) of Aššur-rēša-iši (I), strong king (LUGAL), conqueror of enemy lands (...) Grandson (A A) of Mutakkil-Nusku (...) Legitimate heir (IBILA) of Aššur-dān (I), bearer of the holy sceptre (...) Aššurdān (I), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, son heir (DUMU) of Ninurta-apil-Ekur ... (Grayson: 1991, 13,27).

This curriculum vitae emphasises the legitimacy of the king. The word LUGAL (*šarru* “king”) is used for the titular king while the word MAN (*šarru[šanu]* “[other] king”) is used for the king in office. Tiglath-pileser I used the words LUGAL and MAN for kings, but his successors favoured the word MAN and no longer used the word LUGAL for foreign kings. The legitimacy of the king is expressed by the words: IBILA “legitimate heir”, DUMU “son heir” and A “son”. The rare expression DUMU LUGAL (*mār šarri*) “[heir] son of the [titular] king”, without mentioning the name of the king, designated the successor chosen by the titular king. This expression translated as “crown prince” should rather be translated as “successor of the titular king”. Iconographic representations of the “king's successor” clearly show that he had a co-regent position and could therefore be qualified as MAN (but not LUGAL). For example, at the capture of Lachish, Sennacherib appears as the king in office (MAN) before Sargon, the titular king (LUGAL) with his tiara. The Assyrian word *palû* (BALA) literally means “period of office” and could be translated by “period of reign” or “regnal year” but it is preferable to translate *palû* by “campaign (*gerru*)”, because the years of reign as co-regent were not counted in the length of the reign as king. Moreover, there was not systematically a campaign (*gerru*) every year of the reign (*palû*), a campaign could last two years, or a year of reign could be without campaign.

³⁶ These two ribbons do not appear on the representation of King Aššurnasirpal I (1050-1031) which was engraved on one side of the White Obelisk, but this engraving is not of good quality (Reade: 1975, 129-150).

Shalmaneser III conducted numerous and extensive military campaigns against Aramaic kingdoms in the first year of his reign, in 858 BCE, and their descriptions (Grayson: 2002, 8-12) indicate the hierarchical position of these rulers according to the Assyrian conception (Younger: 2016, 321-346).

Name of the ruler	Kingdom	Title of the ruler (in 858 BCE)	Title of the ruler (in 857 BCE)
^{man} <i>ka-a-ki</i> (Kāki)	Ḫubuškia	MAN URU <i>ḫu-bu-uš-ki-a</i>	
^{man} <i>a-ḫu-ni</i> (Aḫuni)	Til-Barsip (Bīt-Adini)	DUMU <i>a-di-ni</i> (in 870 BCE)	
^{man} <i>sa-an-ga-ra</i> (Sangara)	Carchemish	KUR/URU <i>gar-ga-miš-a-a</i>	URU <i>gar-ga-miš-a-a</i>
^{man} <i>sa-pa-lu-ul-me</i>	Patina (Unqi)	KUR <i>pa-ta-na-a-a</i>	KUR <i>pa-ta-na-a-a</i>
^{man} <i>ḫa-a-a-nu</i> (Hayyānu)	Sam'al (Bīt Gabbāri)	KUR <i>sa-am-'a-la-a-a</i>	DUMU <i>gab-ba-ri</i>
^{man} <i>ka-te-a</i> (Katiya)	Que (Adana)	KUR <i>qa-ú-a-a</i>	
^{man} <i>pi-ḫi-ri-im</i> (Piḫirim)	Ḫilukku (Cilicia)	KUR <i>ḫi-lu-ka-ḫu-a-a</i>	
^{man} <i>bur-a-na-te</i> (Bur-Anate)	Yasbuq	KUR <i>ia-as-bu-qa-a-a</i>	
^{man} <i>a-da-a-nu</i> (Adānu)	Yaḫanu	KUR <i>ia-ḫa-na-a-a</i>	
^{man} <i>a-ra-me</i> (Arame)	Bīt-Agūsi	DUMU ^{man} <i>gu-ú-si</i>	DUMU ^{man} <i>a-gu-ú-si</i>

This list of tributary kingdoms shows that they are mainly designated by their land (KUR) and sometimes by their city (URU). The title of the rulers is never mentioned, except for Kaki the first king (MAN) of the city Ḫubuškia, but only by their title of citizens of a land, like Sangara (from the) Carchemishian city (URU). Two rulers are designated by the title 'heir son of' (DUMU) and linked to the name of the founder of their dynasty. For example, Arame, called Hadrām (860-830), was indeed the heir son of Gūš (890-860), and Hayyānu (870-855) from the Sam'alian city is later called 'heir son' of Gabbār (900-880). In reality Hayyānu was the second son of Gabbār after Bāniḫu (Lipiński: 2000, 233-247). The title for Ahuni is an aberration because there is no king of Bīt-Adani who was called Adani since the name of that land was a geographical place called Bēt-'Eden 'Luxurious house' (Am 1:5). This king should have been called Ahuni 'king of the city (MAN URU) Bīt-Adini', but in this case Ahuni should have been replaced by Hamiyatas, the titular king. However, since Shalmaneser had defeated Ahuni, who was the coregent of Hamiyatas (880-867), in 870 BCE, he invented a genealogy for Ahuni using Assyrian terminology in order to designate him as coregent (DUMU LUGAL *mār šarri*): Ahuni "heir son of the king (*mār šarri*)" Bīt-Adini, which has been simplified to: Ahuni "heir son (*mār*)" of Adini.

A chronological reconstruction of the Assyrian reigns over the period 885-824 BCE allows us to verify whether Kings Jehu (885-856) and Pygmalion (877-830) had anything to do with Shalmaneser III.

- **885 BCE.** Hazael murdered Ben-Hadad II (920-885) and became king of Aram/Syria (Damascus). On the Tel Dan stele, he claims to have killed Jehoram (897-886), the king of Israel, and Ahaziah (886-885), the king of Judah (2Ch 22:5-6).
- **878 BCE.** Aššurnasirpal II (884-859) began a westward expansion. Through his powerful army, he began to extort money from Syrian kingdoms. During the following years he continued his westward expansion and reached the Great Sea (Mediterranean) and received the tribute of the seacoast from the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon (King Pygmalion), Byblos, Amurru and Arvad.
- **870 BCE.** Aššurnasirpal II required Tyre to pay a heavy tribute. Pygmalion (877-830), the king of Tyre, accepted and then would have decided to empty the treasure of Milqart's temple, according to Justinus, but as the high priest Zakarbaal, who was the husband of Elissa (Pygmalion's sister), refused, Pygmalion eliminated him. After the murder of her husband, Elissa decided to go into exile accompanied by the opponents of the policy of submission to Aššurnasirpal II, carrying with her much of the temple treasury and founded Carthage. As a result, it is unlikely that Coregent Shalmaneser (871-859), was able to receive any tribute in 870 BCE.
- **867 BCE.** In the last part of the reign of Jehu (885-856), Hazael (885-840) started to cut off all the territories of Israel (2Ki 10:31-34) as well as those of Joash (879-839), the king of Judah (2Ki 13:1-3). Hazael captured Gath, a capital of the Philistines and even went up against Jerusalem. After he received a heavy tribute in gold from Joash, he withdrew from Jerusalem (2Ki 12:17-19).
- **855 BCE.** Bīt-Adini was annexed to Assyria by Shalmaneser III.
- **853 BCE.** Dayyan-Aššur (854-823) the commander-in-chief was eponym. After the battle of Qarqar, among the eleven kings who revolted under the command of Hadad-ezer (870-845) the commander-in-chief, or coregent of Hazael, seven tributary kings, who were paying their tribute to Shalmaneser III, became vassal kings. All these kingdoms were annexed later.
- **841 BCE.** Shalmaneser III destroyed Hazael's army by killing 16,000 of his experienced soldiers with the sword, confiscated 1,121 chariots and 470 horses and plundered all his cities, some of which were very wealthy like Damascus and Hazor. However, as Hazael had disappeared for his life (and died shortly afterwards in 840 BCE?), Shalmaneser turned his (illegal) plunder into a (legal) tribute that would have been paid by Jehu. In fact, Shalmaneser appropriated the tribute that Joash had paid to Hazael (2Ki 12:17-19), in Damascus, as well as the plunder of several cities of Jehu (2Ki 10:32-34).

The main action of Shalmaneser III, after the annexation of Bît Adani, was to annex the Aramaic kingdoms federated by Hazael, the powerful Syrian king who had plundered the Israelite kingdom. The victory of Shalmaneser III and the annihilation of Hazael's army in 841 BCE as well as the looting of his capital could not be presented as a tribute paid by Hazael since this king had escaped from the battle. Shalmaneser therefore transformed a plunder of Hazael's capital, who had himself plundered the cities of Jehu, into a tribute paid indirectly by Jehu. The presentation of this tribute, at the end of the inscription, does not conform to protocol. The recension on the bulls of Calah, in 841 BCE, adds at the end: *In those days (sic)*, I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu the son of Omri (*Iu-ú-a mār Hu-um-ri-i*). Contrary to custom, the tribute has not been dated (“In those days”). Moreover, Jehu is not attached to his real dynasty, Bît Dawid, according to the Tel Dan stele, but to an ancestor who had not been a king but a chief general who had become king (1KI 16:16). In addition, Jehu was not the son of Omri, but of Jehoshaphat (2KI 9:14), and there were four kings between Omri and Jehu: Ahab (1KI 16:29), Ahaziah (1KI 22:52), Jehoram (2KI 3:1) and Ahaziah II (2KI 8:25). The next recension (marble slab), in 840 BCE, adds at the end another fictitious tribute: I received the tribute of Bali-ma-AN-zêri and Jehu son of Omri. The fictitious tribute of Bali-ma-AN-zêri disappeared in the next recension of 838 BCE, but that of “Jehu son of Omri” became the tribute of “Jehu of Bît Omri” and was depicted on the Black Obelisk. The events that took place during this year explain why the “tribute of Jehu” was magnified by the Assyrians.

In my 21st regnal year (in 838 BCE) I crossed the Euphrates for the 21st time (and) marched to the cities of Hazael of Damascus. I captured four cities (and) received tribute from the people of the lands Tyre, Sidon, (and) Byblos (...) Booty from the temple of the deity Šêru (Moon-god) of the city Malaḥa, a royal city of Hazael of Damascus, which Shalmaneser, son of Ashurnasirpal (II), king of Assyria, brought back inside the wall of Inner City (Aššur) (Grayson: 2002, 67,93).

The booty had to be significant because Malaḥa, the Aramaic name of Hazor (Lipiński: 2000, 350-352), was very wealthy (Block: 2008, 251-252). The remark “I marched against the towns of Hazael” instead of “I marched against Hazael”, in the annals of Shalmaneser, shows that Hazael was dead and that his successor Ben-Hadad (III) had not manifested himself to defend his towns. Damascus was captured (with Tyre, Sidon, Byblos) but did not pay tribute to Shalmaneser III. This new plundering of the towns of Hazael was again transformed by Dayyan-Aššur, the commander-in-chief of Shalmaneser III, and depicted on the Black Obelisk, into a tribute paid by Jehu of Bît Omri (Israel). It appears that these reliefs were intended primarily to illustrate exotic scenes of tribute-bearing and to demonstrate Shalmaneser's power over distant lands, rather than to record recent historical events. For example, the scenes of tribute-bearing of Egypt and Suhu do not contain any reference to these cases of tribute-bearing in Shalmaneser's inscriptions, nor to the king's visits to these countries (Yamada: 2000, 251-258). It is likely that diplomatic gifts given to the king of Assyria were transformed into tributes paid by vassal kings. The best proof that the tribute of Jehu engraved on the Black Obelisk is fictitious is provided by the representation itself.

First register



The first register describes, according to the conventional Assyrian representation, the king wearing his tiara (on the left) just ahead of his commander-in-chief with a sword (*turtānu*) and in front of his co-regent of the same size (right) also just ahead of the chief officer with a command stick (*rab ša-rēšē*). This scene is also identical with Shalmaneser's victory over Ahuni (in 870 BCE) when he became co-regent of Aššurnasirpal II (884-859). For the Assyrians the first register represented King Aššurnasirpal II (on the left) accompanied by his commander-in-chief

(Aššur-iddin) receiving (on the right) the submission of a king “Sua³⁷ of Gilzanu” who had been defeated by the co-regent Shalmaneser, accompanied by his chief officer (Miqti-adur?). As Dayyan-Aššur had never been to this remote region and was mainly familiar with the Aramaean kingdoms he had fought against, he represented this defeated king with an outfit identical to that of King Bar-rakib (c. 733-712) of Sam'al (below right), notably the bonnet with a hump (Lewis: 2019, 349-374).

Second register



The second register is modelled on the first register: the king with his tiara (on the left) just ahead of his commander-in-chief with a sword and in front of another commander-in-chief (right) also just ahead of the chief officer with a command stick. The king kneeling before the king is identical to the king in the first register but is named Jehu in the Assyrian text. For the Assyrians the second register represented King Shalmaneser III (on the left) accompanied by his commander-in-chief, Dayyan-Aššur, receiving the tribute of Jehu of the House of Omri. Three details from the scene show that Shalmaneser III never met Jehu: 1) unlike Hazael who had used an army chief (Hadad-ezer) to lead his battles (2Ki 4:13; 5:1), Jehu led them personally (2Ki 9:13-24); 2) in Israel eunuchs could not hold official positions (Dt 23:1), unlike the Assyrian commanders-in-chief who were always true eunuchs (beardless); 3) in Israel only the priests wore bonnets (Lv 8:13) but not the other Israelites. The only representation of a king who lived in Israel comes from the excavation of an archaeological site at Abel-beth-maacah (1Ki 15:20). The head of this earthenware figure (opposite) has been stratigraphically dated to the 9th century BCE (Yahalom-Mack /Panitz-Cohen /Mullins: 2018, 153-155). Although there is still much uncertainty as to the identification of this king, it confirms that he did not wear a bonnet on his head but a kind of diadem.

The five tribute bearers on the Black Obelisk are anachronistic, they were mainly intended to serve the propaganda that systematically presented the Mesopotamian kings as dominant over the “four corners (regions) of the world”. However, to be credible, propaganda must be based on known historical facts. The Black Obelisk confirms the existence of Jehu, a king of Israel, from the “Bit Dawid”, according to the Tel Dan stele. In fact, the primary purpose of Shalmaneser III’s campaigns was to accumulate as much loot as possible by conquering the wealthy kingdoms of Syria and Samaria. Therefore, the tribute paid by Ahabbu (855-820) from Asriel (a town in the north-east of Samaria) and the tribute paid by Jehu were in fact former lootings used to legitimise a future annexation of Samaria. These tributes have been falsified: evidence is found in an inscription written by Nergal-ereš, a powerful Assyrian governor (803-775), who replaced the tribute paid by “Jehu son of Omri (*Ia-a-ú mâr Hu-um-ri-i*)” by “Jehoash (from the) Samarian land (*Ia-’a-su KUR.Sa-me-ri-na-a-a*)”:

Bar-rakib



³⁷ It is evident that Asau/Asû of Gilzanu was deliberately selected for the annotated inscription and that his name was deliberately rendered Sua in order to form a pair with the name Jehu. Thus, the writing *su-ú-a* probably indicates that Jehu's name should be rendered *iú-ú-a*, rather than *ia-ú-a* (Na'aman: 1997-19).

To Adad, the greatest lord, hero of the gods, mighty one?, first-born son of Anu, who alone is fiery, the lofty irrigator of heaven and earth, who provides the rain that brings abundance, who dwells in Zamaḫi, the great lord, his lord: I, Adad-nirari (III) the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, heir of Shamshi-Adad (V) the king of the world, king of Assyria, heir of Shalmaneser (III) the king of the four regions, mobilised chariots, troops and camps, and ordered a campaign against the Hatti land. In first year (*ina ištēt šatti*) I made the land of Amurru and the Hatti land in its entirety kneel at my feet; I imposed tribute and regular tax for future days upon them. He (*sic*) received 2000 talents of silver, 1000 talents of copper, 2000 talents of iron, 3000 multi-coloured garments and (plain) linen garments as tribute from Mari' (*Ma-ri-'i*) of the land of Damascus. He received the tribute of Ia'asu the Samarian (*Ia-'a-su* KUR.*Sa-me-ri-na-a-a*), of the Tyrian (ruler) and of the Sidonian (ruler). I marched to the great sea (Mediterranean) where the sun sets and erected a stela ("image") of my royal self in the city of Arvad which is in the middle of the sea. I went up the Lebanon mountains and cut down timbers: 100 mature cedars, material needed for my palace and temples. He (*sic*) received tributes from all the kings of the Nairi land. At that time, I ordered Nergal-ereš, the governor of Rašapa, Lakê, Sirqu?, Anat, Suḫi and (...) a total of 331 towns of subject peoples which Nergal-ereš founded and built in the name of his lord. Whoever shall blot out a single name from among these names, may the great gods fiercely destroy him (Page: 1968, 139-153).

This inscription, contrary to what one might think, was not written by Adad-nirari III but by Nergal-ereš on behalf of Adad-nirari, because the inscription begins with "I" and afterward continues with "He". A chronological analysis shows that the tribute received by Adad-nirari III (811-783) from Mari', king of Damascus (805-780), is anachronistic. Adad-nirari III took tribute from Damascus in his 5th year, in 806 BCE, according to the Saba'a stela, but in his 1st year, in 810 BCE, according to the Rimah stela (Siddall: 2013, 120-21), the Calah slab gives no year. The reasons for thinking that each stela describes a different event seem trifling (that there are discrepancies in numerical quantities of tribute, and that the Rimah text mentions Ia'asu of Samaria whereas the Saba'a text does not), because Adad-nirari III stayed in the land (Assyria) in 810 BCE and led a campaign against Mannea in 806 BCE, according to the Eponymous Chronicle. Worse, Adad-nirari III never led any campaign against Damascus throughout his reign. One can assume: either the stelae relate fictitious campaigns or, more likely, they related the same celebrated event, which was the campaign of Shalmaneser III against Damascus in 841 BCE, mentioning the defeat of Hazael and the tribute from Jehu, in "making an update": Hazael (893-839) and Jehu (885-856) being replaced by Mari' (805-780) and Jehoash (841-823). Shalmaneser III's inscriptions unequivocally show that he was determined to conquer first Syria and then Samaria (Israel). His conquest of Syria was seriously hampered by a coalition of twelve kings led by Hadad-ezer (870-845), the commander-in-chief of Hazael, in 853 BCE, but he defeated and killed him in 845 BCE, then he defeated Hazael (885-840) and destroyed his army in 841 BCE. After that date all of northern Syria was practically under Assyrian control (Freu /Mazoyer: 2012, 88-90), which continued to repress recalcitrant kingdoms during several campaigns from 838 to 829 BCE.

Consequently, the inscription on the Black Obelisk of Dayyan-Aššur, the powerful commander-in-chief of Shalmaneser III, as well as the inscription of Nergal-ereš, the powerful governor of Adad-nirari III, are above all tools of Assyrian propaganda, and therefore, have little historical value apart from confirming the existence of the kings of Israel: Jehu and Jehoash. Likewise, the Assyrian annals, which mention several times the tributes paid by the kings of Tyre during certain campaigns in the Levant, confirm the existence of the (anonymous) kings of Tyre, but it is difficult to identify them, as the first known name is that of Luli I (c. 775-755) who had to pay tribute to Pulu (782-746) during the campaign of 773 BCE (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284). Between Pygmalion (877-830) and Luli I (775-755), Phoenician inscriptions have revealed the existence of two kings of Tyre during the period 830-775 BCE: Hiram II and Milkiram, who can only be dated by epigraphy:

Sidonians (Tyre)	reign	Bīt-Agusi (Arpad)	reign	Hamath	reign	Bīt Gabbāri (Y'adiya)	reign
Mattan I	906-877	Gūš	890 -	Parita	885 -	Gabbār	900-880
Pygmalion (Elissa)	877 -		-860		-860	Bānihu	880-870
	870	Hadrām	860 -	Urḫilina	860 -	Hayyā(n)	870 -
	-830		-830		-835	Sa-īl	850-840
Hiram II	830 -	Attaršumki I	830 -	Uratami	835 -	Kilamuwa	840 -
	-805		-800	Zakkur	810 -		-815
Milkiram	805 -	Bar-Hadad	800-796		-785	Assyria	reign
	-775	Attaršumki II	796-785				
Luli I (Elulaios)	775-755	Mati'-El	785 -	[Bar Ga'yah]	782 -	/Pulu	782 -
Ithobaal II (Tubail)	755-738		-740		-746		-746

Carthage is mentioned for the first time on two fragments of copper bowls found in Cyprus and the name of the king of Tyre is Hiram II:

[’b/hṭb] skn qrthdšt ‘bd ḥrm mlk sdnm ’z yth lb’l lbnn ’dny br’st nḥšt h[...]

[Ab/hṭōb, prefect of Carthage, servant of Ḥirōm, king of the Sidonians, gave this to Baal of Lebanon, his Lord, of the first field of copper from H[...]

According to palaeography, the writing shows no great development beyond that of the Kilamuwa (840-815) inscriptions. Especially, the shapes of *d* and *z* are typologically older than the corresponding letters of the Citium bowl, dated around 800 BCE (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48). After the death of Shalmaneser III and before the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, Tyre enjoyed a long period of prosperity and stability (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3), which must have allowed for a long duration of reigns. As there were eight kings between Ithobaal I (944-912) and Ithobaal II (755-738) the average duration of a reign was about 26 years (= [944 - 738]/8). The reign of Milkiram is more difficult to date because there are few Phoenician/Aramaic inscriptions from the period 800-750 BCE. Although it is difficult to date the ivory inscriptions found at Arslan Tash, comparison of the letters shows that the inscriptions of Zakkur, Hazael, Tel Dan and Tell Fekheriye belong to the same period (Puech: 1978, 163-169; Amadasi: 2018, 63-68). What is certain is that the four inscriptions, “(belonging) to Milkiram” and the one “(belonging) to Hilles, servant of Milkiram (lhls ‘bd mlkrn)”, are all dated before 740 BCE (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93). As the writing of these five inscriptions is similar to that of Bar-Hadad (800-796) and Zakkur (810-785), it is likely that the reign of Milkiram belonged to this period 800-750 BCE because the divergence of the Aramaic script from the Phoenician begins roughly from 750 BCE (Naveh: 1982, 78-82). The large number of inscriptions attributed to Milkiram (at least five) allows us to assume a rather long reign (30 years?). In conclusion, the reign of the king of Tyre: Baal-ezer II (912-906), calculated according to the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus, is in accordance with all the Assyrian and Israelite synchronisms.

The purpose of Shalmaneser III’s inscriptions, as well as those of other Assyrian kings, is not to provide historical records but above all to legitimize their wars and plunder by means of propaganda. For example, it is written on the Kurkh Monolith that during his 856 BCE campaign, Shalmaneser III departed and marched to Til-Barsip, a city that he renamed, Kar-Shalmaneser. When he entered the city of Pitru³⁸, which he recaptured, renamed Ana-Aššur-utēr-asbat and restored to Assyrian control “because” the city was seized by the land of Aram (Syria) at the time of Aššur-rabi II (1013-972). Thus, the propagandistic value is significant (Block: 2008, 223-256) looting is presented as a voluntary tribute (offered to get protection). To justify their conquest of the West, Assyrian kings all proceeded in the same way: first establishing a protectorate by making alliances, or claiming tribute for those who refused, then making vassal kingdoms and finally annexing them to the Assyrian empire. For example, the seven tributary kings of “the land of Hatti” who paid their tribute to Shalmaneser III in 856 BCE became vassal kings after the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. Shalmaneser III, therefore, included in his reign his victories and tributes received during his period of co-regency (871-859), particularly his first four campaigns (from 870 to 867 BCE) against Bīt-Adani and against Tyre and Sidon. These four campaigns were not dated by eponyms during the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, unlike the other campaigns (Grayson: 1991, 212-219), because they were carried out by his co-regent Shalmaneser, which modified the mentioned synchronisms with the kings of Tyre and Israel.

The Judean reigns from David (1057-1017) to Jehoiachin (598-561) are all known precisely, they include, moreover, 20 precise chronological synchronisms with the Israelite reigns, which are also all known precisely, they also include 5 long periods³⁹ which make it possible to check the exactitude of this biblical chronology, they include finally 19 precise chronological synchronisms with the Assyrian (6), Babylonian (4), Egyptian (6) and Tyrian (3) chronologies. The Judean reigns contain only 4 co-regencies⁴⁰ that do not, however, alter the chronology of these kings. In conclusion, the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah reconstituted from the biblical text (BHS) is reliable. There is therefore no need to add 9 arbitrary co-regencies as is the case in Thiele’s biblical chronology. The Assyrian chronology of the 1st millennium BCE is well established, especially for the period 912-648 BCE, however there is a major difference between the dates obtained by eponyms, which are very reliable, and those obtained by the years of reigns, which on the other hand are often ambiguous because several Assyrian kings included the tributes received when they were co-regents with those of their reigns. For example, Tiglath-pileser III mentioned the tribute paid by Menahem (771-760), in 765 BCE, when he was co-regent, as Pulu (782-746) in Assyrian or Bar Ga’yah in Aramaic, only in 738 BCE. Similarly, Sennacherib mentioned his capture of Lachish in his third year of rule, in 712 BCE, during his co-regency (715-705) with Sargon II. In 841 BCE, Shalmaneser III destroyed Hazael’s army and plundered all his cities, some of which were very wealthy like Damascus and Hazor but, as Hazael (885-840) had disappeared for his life, Shalmaneser turned his (illegal) plunder into a (legal) tribute that would have been paid by Jehu (885-856). Shalmaneser appropriated the tribute that Joash (879-839) had paid to Hazael (2Ki 12:17-19), in Damascus, as well as the plunder of several cities of Jehu (2Ki 10:32-34).

³⁸ Pitru, the biblical Pethor (Nb 22:5), was under the control of King Hadadezer (1040-1000), according to 2Samuel 8:5-12.

³⁹ 390 years (977-587); 65 years (738-673); 40 years (627-587); 70 years (609-539); 70 years (587-517).

⁴⁰ 1) Between David (1057-1017) in Hebron and Ishboshet (1057-1055) in Jerusalem (2Sa 2:10-11); 2) Between Jehoshapat (916-891) and Jehoram J. (893-885); 3) Between Jehoram J. (893-885) and Ahaziah (886-885); 4) Between Uzziah (810-758) and Azariah (796-758).

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