

Edward Lipinski (orientalist)



Edward (Edouard) Lipiński (born 18 June 1930 in Lodz, Poland)

is a Belgian Biblical scholar and Orientalist.

His first major work, published in 1965, was a monumental monograph entitled *La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël*. In 1969, he was appointed professor at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he taught i.a. the comparative grammar of Semitic languages and history of ancient Near Eastern religions and institutions. He was head of the Department of Oriental and Slavonic studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from 1978 to 1984. He directed the publication of the *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique* (1992) and the *Studia Phoenicia* series (from 1983). He also published *Semitic Languages. Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (1997, 2001) and dealt extensively with Old Aramaic dialects and history, in particular in his *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics* (1975, 1994, 2010) and in *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (2000). Referring to the latter work a reviewer noted that it "embodies the accumulated insights of one of the greatest Semitic scholars of our time". Professor Edward Lipiński was awarded a doctorate honoris causa by the Lund University in 2003. Although he retired from KU Leuven in 1995, he continues teaching and doing research mainly in Aramaic and Phoenician studies.

The WorldCat database lists over a hundred publications by Edward Lipiński in his various fields of expertise.

A complete bibliography was published by The Enigma Press. Here is a short list of his major publications:

- *La Royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren, Jaarg. XXVII, Nr 55), Paleis der Academiën, Brussel 1965, 560 pp. ; second edition, Brussel 1968.
- *Le Poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX, 1-5.20-38* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 6), J. Gabalda et Cie, Paris 1967, 110 pp.
- *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics I –III* (Orient. Lov. An. 1, 57, 200), Leuven University Press, Peeters & Oriëntalistiek, Leuven 1975, 1994, 2010, 240 pp., 273 pp., XX + 308 pp.
- Author of volumes 1, 5 and 6 of *Studia Paulo Naster Oblata: Orientalia antiqua* published 1982 Peeters Publishers^[7]
- (Ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols, Turnhout 1992, XXII + 502 p., 14 colour pls.
- *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (Orient. Lov. An. 64; Studia Phoenicia XIV), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1995, 536 p.
- *Semitic languages: outline of a comparative grammar*, 2000. ISBN 978-90-429-0815-4
- *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (Orient. Lov. An. 80), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1997, 756 pp.; 2nd ed., Leuven 2001, 780 pp.
- *The Aramaeans: their ancient history, culture, religion*, 2001. ISBN 978-90-429-0859-8
- *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Orient. Lov. An. 100), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2000, 697 pp.
- *Itineraria Phoenicia* (Orient. Lov. An. 127; Studia Phoenicia XVIII), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2004, XXVI+ 622 pp.
- *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age. Historical and Topographical Researches* (Orient. Lov. An. 153), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2006, 484 pp.
- *Prawo bliskowschodnie w starożytności. Wprowadzenie historyczne* (The Near Eastern Law in Antiquity. A Historical Introduction; Studia historico-biblica 2), Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2009, 492 pp.
- *Resheph. A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (Orient. Lov. An. 181; Studia Phoenicia XIX), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2009, 297 pp.

CHAPTER XIII

ARAM-DAMASCUS

“Aram-Damascus” is the name used in some biblical texts to designate the principal Aramaean state of southern Syria during the 10th-8th centuries B.C., centred on Damascus, its capital¹. As such, this state is also referred to as Aram or Damascus. Damascus, the name of which does not appear to be Semitic², is situated under the eastward slopes of the Antilebanon, at the confines of the Syrian steppe. It stands on the main channel of the Barada river, at the northwestern edge of the oasis known as the Ġūṭah and surrounded by the Merğ, a wide area of pasture land. This area, and not the city itself³, was called *Ša-emāri-šu* by the Assyrians, i.e. “land of the donkey”⁴. The pronominal suffix *-šu* is to be understood here as an old device expressing determination⁵. It either implies that a particular breed of donkeys is meant⁶ or, more likely, simply marks species determination⁷. This appellation can be explained easily by the fact that the oasis of Damascus was the point of convergence of donkey caravans following various trade routes before the domestication of the dromedary. It is certainly anterior to its attestation in Neo-Assyrian texts and might go back to Old Assyrian, that uses phrases like *hurāšu ša abni-šu*, “reef gold”, and *hurāšu ša ma’i-šu*, “placer gold”. So far, however, no published Old Assyrian text mentions Damascus or its oasis. The city name appears thus for the first time as *T-m-ś-q* in the geographical list of Thutmose III⁸. Written sources from the Late Bronze Age and from Iron Age I convey no

¹ II Sam. 8, 5-6; I Chron. 18, 5-6.

² See the discussion in W.T. PITARD, *Ancient Damascus*, Winona Lake 1987, p. 7-10.

³ F. DELITZSCH, *Wo lag das Paradies?*, Leipzig 1881, p. 280.

⁴ E. HONIGMANN, *Damaskus*, in *RLA* II, Berlin-Leipzig 1938, p. 104.

⁵ LIPIŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 33.13. The same use of the feminine suffix *-ša/-ši*, written *-sa/-si* in Neo-Assyrian, seems to be attested by the place name *Damdammu-sa/si* (PARPOLA, *Toponyms*, p. 98), where *damdammu*, “mule”, is determined by a feminine suffix, probably because the mule was initially considered as a female breed.

⁶ J. LEWY, *Amurritica*, in *HUCA* 32 (1961), p. 31-74 (see p. 73-74).

⁷ LIPIŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 33.6.

⁸ List I, 13 in J. SIMONS, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists relating to Western Asia*, Leiden 1937. See also Y. AHARONI, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, London 1967, p. 147, No. 13.

information about Damascus and no large scale excavations have been undertaken to date at the site of the ancient city⁹. Thus nothing is known about the origins of the Aramaean presence there, which may go back to the 11th century B.C.¹⁰, and the account of I Kings 11, 23-25a is the sole explicit information about the events that led to the creation of the state of Aram-Damascus.

1. TERRITORY

The boundaries of Aram-Damascus in the early period of its existence are unknown, but nothing indicates that they extended initially beyond the fertile oasis and the surrounding pasture land. It is only when the United Kingdom of David and of Solomon had fallen apart, to be replaced by two rival states of second-rate importance, that the rulers of Damascus rapidly consolidated their position and extended the territory under their direct influence. Until the mid-9th century B.C., however, Hamath limited Damascus' northern expansion and the Beqa' Valley, to the west, remained generally free of Damascene control. The ruler of Damascus managed to extend his power only to the south, namely to the northern provinces of the kingdom of Israel (I Kings 15, 18-20; II Chron. 16, 2-4), that probably remained under his direct control until the reign of Omri in Israel (*ca.* 884-873 B.C.). While we have no certain knowledge of an action by Omri against the Aramaeans, an allusion to his embarking on the reconquest of the territory of Naphtali, in northern Galilee, might be assumed on the basis of traces in the first line of the Tell al-Qādi stela¹¹.

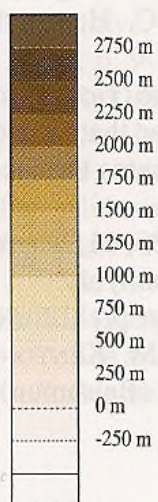
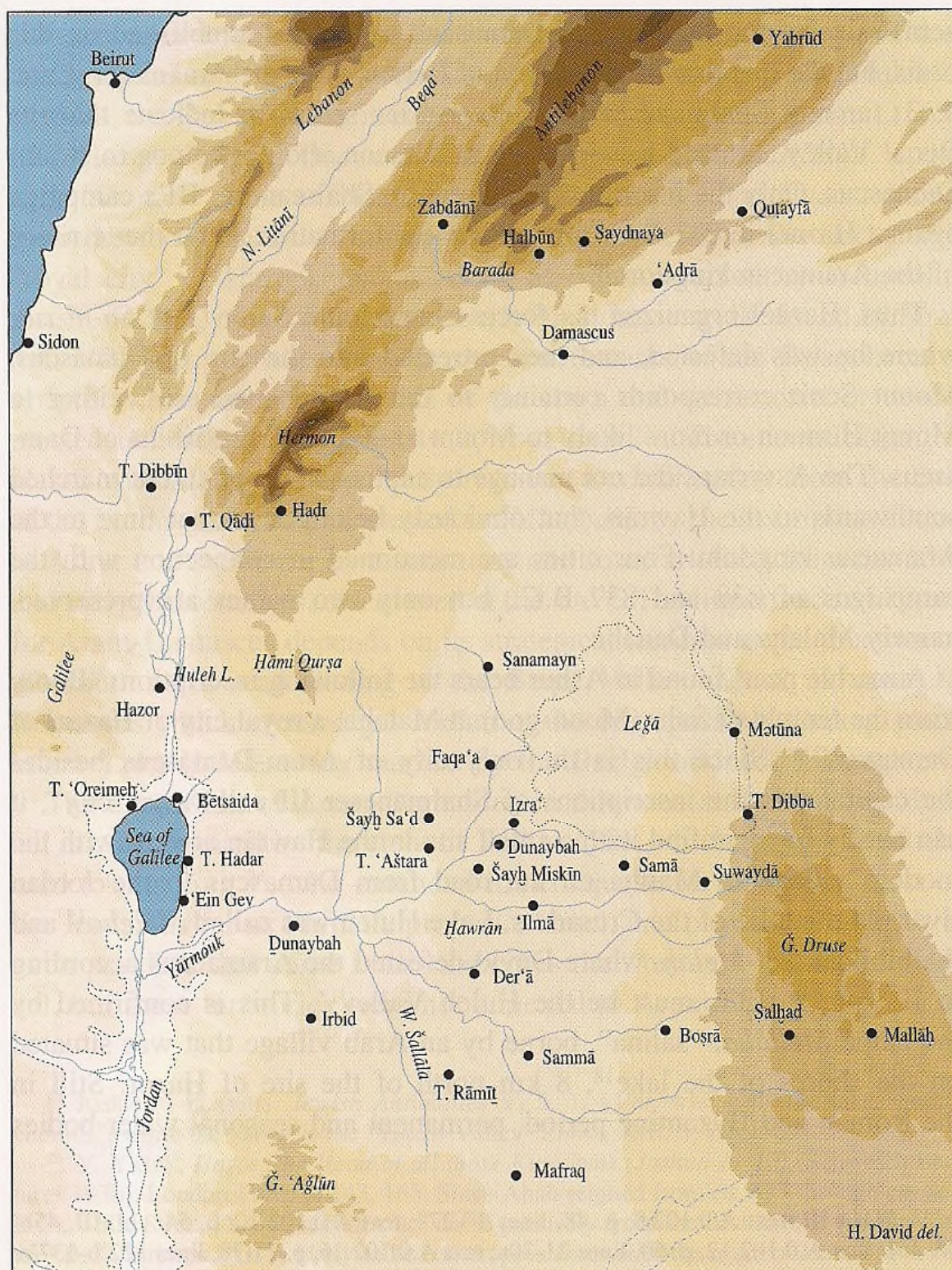
Ahab, Omri's successor, appears instead as an ally of Hadadezer (*Adad-idri*), king of Damascus, in the coalition of central and southern Syrian states that opposed Shalmaneser III at Qarqar, in 853 B.C.¹². Hadadezer, who contributed one thousand two hundred chariots, twenty thousand foot, and one thousand two hundred horsemen, is mentioned as first among Shalmaneser III's adversaries and appears as the most powerful ruler in the coalition, followed by Urhilina, king of Hamath. The

⁹ A survey of the available evidence is provided by E. WILL, *Damas antique*, in *Syria* 71 (1994), p. 1-44.

¹⁰ M. Görg's opinion (cf. here above, p. 32 with n. 46) that *P3-irm* in two Egyptian texts refers to the Aramaeans of the oasis of Damascus in the 14th century B.C. cannot be sustained. See here above, p. 32-34.

¹¹ Cf. here below, p. 373.

¹² *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.2, p. 23, lines 91-92.



relief basaltique

0 50 km



14. Aram-Damascus.

actual size of the kingdom of Damascus cannot be established on this basis, but the mention of Ba‘šā, son of Rehob, ruler of ‘Amānā (cf. Cant. 4, 3), among Shalmaneser III’s adversaries seems to indicate that the Beqa‘ Valley, situated west of the Antilebanon, did not belong to Aram-Damascus. Only the inscriptions recounting Shalmaneser III’s campaign against Hazael in 841 B.C. furnish some information about the territory of the Aramaean kingdom¹³.

Thus, Hazael organized his forces near Mount Senir (KUR *Sa-ni-ru*), where he was defeated, and then retreated into the city of Damascus. Mount Senir corresponds certainly to the Antilebanon area, either to Mount Hermon or more likely to Mount az-Zabdānī, northwest of Damascus. The Assyrians did not manage to capture the capital, but marched southwards to the Ḥawrān, that obviously belonged at that time to the Aramaean kingdom. Four cities are mentioned in connection with the campaigns of 838 and 837 B.C., but only two names are preserved, namely Malāḥa and Danabu.

A marble pearl found in Ashur bears the following inscription: “Booty from the temple of Šehr (Moon-god) at Malāḥa, a royal city of Hazael of Damascus”¹⁴. Since this is the only city of Aram-Damascus besides the capital that the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III call “royal city”, it can hardly be identified with a small site in the Ḥawrān area or with the modern village of Maliḥa on the road from Damascus to the Jordan river. At the time of the Crusaders, Lake Ḥuleh was called *Meleha*¹⁵ and the biblical *Gē’-Melaḥ*, where David defeated the Aramaeans according to II Sam. 8, 13¹⁶, must be the Ḥuleh Valley¹⁷. This is confirmed by the name *Mellāḥa*, “salina”, borne by an Arab village that was situated on the shores of the lake¹⁸, 8 km north of the site of Hazor. Still in the Roman and Byzantine period, permanent and seasonal water bodies

¹³ RIMA III, text A.0.102.8, p. 48, lines 1’-27’; text A.0.102.10, p. 54, col. III, 45b-IV, 15a; text A.0.102.12, p. 60, lines 21-30a; text A.0.102.16, p. 77-78, lines 122’b-137’a.

¹⁴ RIMA III, text A.0.102.92, p. 151.

¹⁵ WILLIAM OF TYRE, *Chronicon* XVIII, 13, 25 and 44, ed. by R.B.C. HUYGENS (CCCM 63-63A), Turnhout 1986, p. 829.

¹⁶ I Chron. 18, 12 reads “Edom” instead of “Aram” and attributes the victory to Abishay, the son of Zeruyah. But the immediate context makes it quite clear that David was the original subject of the verb. Also Ps. 60, 2 reads “Edom”, but attributes the victory to Joab, probably because of II Sam. 10, 7-14 and I Kings 11, 15-16.

¹⁷ Another *Gē’ ham-Melaḥ* is mentioned in II Kings 14, 7 and II Chron. 25, 11, where it is related to the Edomite territory. The word *mlḥ* appears frequently in toponymy.

¹⁸ DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, Map I, C2. The site was already occupied in prehistoric times: R. DE VAUX, *Histoire ancienne d’Israël* (I), Paris 1971, p. 40; K.M. KENYON, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 4th ed., London 1979, p. 20-21, see also p. 39 (Beisamun).

covered considerable parts of the Huleh Valley and, according to Flavius Josephus, Hazor was considered to be built above Lake Huleh¹⁹. Besides, the Huleh Valley is called τὸ πεδίον Ἀσώρ in I Macc. 11, 67, i.e. "Hazor Valley". One can assume therefore that *Mal(l)ahā* is the early Aramaic name of Hazor and that Stratum VIII at Hazor, dating from the second half of the 9th century B.C., preserves the traces of a "royal city" of Hazael, not of Ahab, as often assumed by archaeologists²⁰. In fact, none of the few inscriptions on jar so far found in Stratum VIII and published has the peculiar features of the Palaeohebrew script²¹, while the enlarged size of the town and its restored or newly erected buildings really point to a "royal city"²². The identification of Hazor with *Mal(l)ahā* apparently receives a confirmation from the cult of the Moon-god which is attested for *Mal(l)ahā* by the inscription found in Ashur and for Hazor by a sanctuary and some artefacts from the 13th and early 9th centuries, discovered at the site²³. The importance of Hazor for Aram-Damascus depends on its strategical location at the junction of the south-north road leading to the Beqa' Valley and of the route to Damascus which crossed the Jordan at the only possible fording place below Lake Huleh, today marked by the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters.

The expansion of Aram-Damascus in this area at the time of Hazael is corroborated by the stela of Tell al-Qādi which should be attributed to this king²⁴, who extended his conquests in the region west of the Jordan as far as Philistia proper²⁵, Israel, and probably Judah. It is even possible that some Philistine cities then became vassals to Hazael, but these territories were not annexed to Aram-Damascus.

¹⁹ JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS, *Jewish Antiquities* V, 5, 1, §199, who calls the lake "Sema-chonitis", while the valley is the "Hazor Valley": *ibid.*, XIII, 5, 7, §158.

²⁰ Y. YADIN, *Hazor, the Head of all those Kingdoms (Joshua 11:10)* (Schweich Lectures 1970), London 1972, p. 143, 165. Since Ahab reigned from ca. 873 through ca. 852 B.C., while Strata IXA-B at Hazor are dated precisely from the first half of the 9th century B.C., Stratum VIII is likely to be contemporaneous with the reign of Hazael. For the dating, see now I. FINKELSTEIN, *Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective*, in *BASOR* 314 (1999), p. 55-70, opposed by A. BEN-TOR, *BASOR* 317 (2000), p. 9-15. Cf. also below, p. 380-383.

²¹ R. DELAVAILLANT - A. LEMAIRE, *Les inscriptions phéniciennes de Palestine*, in *RSF* 7 (1979), p. 1-39 and Pl. I-XIV (see p. 6-8 and Pl. IV, Nos. 8-11).

²² Y. YADIN - A. BEN-TOR, *Hazor*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. II, p. 594-606. The solid wall, built in the 9th century B.C., doubled the size of the city; cf. A. BEN-TOR, *Tel Hazor*, 1994, in *IEJ* 45 (1995), p. 65-68 (see p. 66).

²³ A. SPYCKET, *Le culte du dieu-lune à Tell Keisan*, in *RB* 80 (1973), p. 384-395 and Pl. VII (see p. 386).

²⁴ See below, p. 378-379.

²⁵ See below, p. 386-387.

Danabu, the other city of Hazael mentioned in connection with the Assyrian campaigns of 838 and 837 B.C., has been identified with the modern town of Şaydnaya²⁶, some 20 km north of Damascus, and with the village of Ad-Dunaybah, situated between Şayḥ Miskīn and Izra'²⁷, some 70 km south of Damascus. The first identification is based on the presumed identity of Şaydnaya with classical Danaba²⁸. However, the Peutinger Table situates *Danoba* in the area of Mehin²⁹, some 30 km west from Al-Qaryatayn (Nazala), on the way from Damascus. As for the village near Şayḥ Miskīn, the mound on which it is built does not indicate so far that this was a "fortified city" at the time of Hazael, although the site certainly goes back to the Roman period³⁰. There is another settlement called Ad-Dunaybah, 15 km north of Irbid, in Gilead (Jordan). It overlooks the Wādī aš-Şallāla³¹, east of Tell Abila (Qwaylibā), which is an important settlement, defended on three sides by wādīs. It was occupied in the Iron Age, as shown by the significant number of sherds from that period, found at the site³². Since no other Iron Age site of relatively vast size has been discovered close to the modern village of Ad-Dunaybah³³, one might assume that Tell Abila corresponds to Hazael's "fortified city" and to the *Dnhbh/Δενναβα* of Gen. 36, 32 and I Chron. 1, 43. This was the alleged home town of Bela, son of Beor, most likely the very same person as Balaam, son of Beor³⁴.

²⁶ E. KRAELING, *Aram and Israel*, New York 1918, p. 80; E. HONIGMANN, *Danabi*, in *RLA* II, Berlin-Leipzig 1938, p. 116b. It is difficult to appreciate the value of the information given by J.L. PORTER, *Five Years in Damascus*, London 1855, vol. I, p. 346, who is quoted by W.T. PITARD, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 150, n. 11.

²⁷ SADER, *États araméens*, p. 266.

²⁸ PTOLEMY V, 14, 19, cf. E. HONIGMANN, *Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum*, in *ZDPV* 46 (1923), p. 149-193; 47 (1924), p. 1-64 (see p. 180, No. 152).

²⁹ DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, p. 264-266, 271; ID., *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (BAH 59), Paris 1955, p. 80, 82. B. MORITZ, *Zur antiken Topographie der Palmyrene* (offprint from the *Abhandlungen der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*), Berlin 1889, p. 12, had proposed to identify *Danoba* with Şadad, in the same area but more to the north.

³⁰ M. AVI-YONAH, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine* (Qedem 5), Jerusalem 1976, p. 51a and 105.

³¹ DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, p. 332.

³² W.H. MARE, *Abila of the Decapolis Excavations*, in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 208-214.

³³ W. ZWICKEL, *Eisenzeitliche Ortslagen im Ostjordanland* (BTAVO B/81), Wiesbaden 1990, p. 331-332 and Map 6.

³⁴ This has long been recognized by Th. NÖLDEKE, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments*, Kiel 1869, p. 87-88; E. MEYER, *Geschichte des Altertums* I, 2nd ed., Stuttgart-Berlin 1909, p. 376 ff. A. LEMAIRE, *Bala'am/Bela' fils de Be'ôr*, in *ZAW* 102 (1990), p. 180-187, especially p. 184, also proposes to correct "Edom" in "Aram" in the same verse.



Hazor, section A towards the end of the excavations in 1955-1958, under the direction of Yigael Yadin; in the upper centre, Stratum VIII with the store building from the 9th century B.C. (Archival photo).

Now, considering the link established by the tradition between Bela and Job³⁵, the same place should logically be identified also with the *Dennaba* of the *Itinerarium Egeriae* 13, 2³⁶, but the latter is explicitly identified in the account with Carneas, biblical Qarnaim and Assyrian Qarnina. This city is rightly located at Šayḥ Sa'd³⁷, 6 km south of Nawā and 10 km west of Šayḥ Miskīn, near the other Ad-Dunaybah. This place thus has a better chance of its being the site of Shalmaneser's Danabu, but further evidence is needed.

According to II Kings 10, 32-33, Hazael conquered the whole land of Gilead from Israel³⁸. The name Gilead originally referred to 'Aḡlūn, the

³⁵ This link was already established in the time of Origenes and S. Jerome: E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *Eusebius III/1. Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen* (GCS), Leipzig 1904, p. 76: 9-10 and 77: 14-15.

³⁶ *Itineraria et alia geographica* (CCSL 175), Turnhout 1965, p. 54, with the comments by Ch. CLERMONT-GANNEAU, *RAO* V, Paris 1903, p. 8-14. See also ID., *RAO* VI, Paris 1905, p. 128-144.

³⁷ ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 413-414; SAA VII, p. 236. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 335. B. Hrozný's findings at Šēḥ Sa'd from Graeco-Roman times and a few Westsemitic fragmentary inscriptions from the Persian and later periods will be published in J. BOUZEK (ed.), *Roman Sculpture from Syria and Asia Minor in Czech Collections*, Prague, forthcoming.

³⁸ Verse 33 of II Kings 10 is overloaded with Deuteronomistic glosses inspired by Deut. 3, 12-13.

mountainous plateau between the Yarmouk and the Yabboq river, the present-day Nahr az-Zarqā³⁹, but there was also a city called Gilead⁴⁰. The study of this region is only in its initial stages⁴¹ and Iron II remains prior to the Assyrian conquest in 732 B.C. (Iron IIA) are sparse. It should be stressed here that a large part of the concerned area belonged in the 8th century B.C. to Aram-Damascus, not to Israel⁴², and that this was the prevalent situation since the reign of Hazael, with only a short interval of Israelite occupation under Jeroboam II⁴³, in the second quarter of the 8th century⁴⁴.

Limited excavations have been conducted at Tell ar-Rāmīt, the site of biblical Ramoth Gilead⁴⁵, and at Irbid⁴⁶, usually identified with biblical

³⁹ The southerly location of Gilead, south of the Yabboq river, as proposed by R. DE VAUX, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 528, is based on some modern place names which may imply the extension of the name "Gilead" to an area south of the river.

⁴⁰ Judg. 10, 17; 12, 7 ("in his city, Gilead" according to the Septuagint and to the Latin version of S. Jerome); Hos. 6, 8; 12, 12. URU *Ga-al-['-a-di]* is mentioned also in *Tigl. III*, p. 138, line 6'; p. 186, line 3, where it is said to be "on the border" (*ša pāt*) of Israel; cf. above, p. 345.

⁴¹ J.A. SAUER, *Ammon, Moab and Edom*, in *Biblical Archaeology Today*, Jerusalem 1985, p. 206-214; ID., *Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages: A Critique of Glueck's Synthesis*, in *BASOR* 263 (1986), p. 1-26, especially p. 14-19 with bibliography. See also R.H. DORNEMANN, *The Archaeology of the Transjordan*, Milwaukee 1983, p. 65-164; B. DE VRIES, *Archaeology in Jordan*, in *AJA* 95 (1991), p. 253-280; the *Chronique archéologique. Jordanie*, in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 205-273; G.L. PETERMAN, *Archaeology in Jordan*, in *AJA* 98 (1994), p. 521-559; P.M. BIKAI - D. KOORING, *Archaeology in Jordan*, in *AJA* 99 (1995), p. 507-533; P.M. BIKAI - V. EGAN, *Archaeology in Jordan*, 100 (1996), p. 507-535; 101 (1997), p. 493-535; 102 (1998), p. 571-606.

⁴² S.A. IRVINE, *The Southern Border of Syria Reconstructed*, in *CBQ* 56 (1994), p. 21-41, where several questionable proposals occur concerning Tiglath-pileser III's texts.

⁴³ This expansion of Israel's territorial boundaries is alluded to in II Kings 14, 28; I Chron. 5, 16-17; Am. 6, 13-14. See here below, p. 401-404.

⁴⁴ This must have happened during the early or middle part of Jeroboam II's reign (cf. here above, p. 311-313, and below, p. 401). As for Peqah's alleged rival kingship in Transjordan, it is an hypothesis the aim of which is to accommodate the "twenty years" of Peqah's rule in II Kings 15, 27; cf. here below, p. 402-403.

⁴⁵ N. GLUECK, *Ramoth-Gilead*, in *BASOR* 92 (1943), p. 10-16; ID., *Explorations in Eastern Palestine II* (AASOR 25-28), New Haven 1945-49, p. 96-104; P.W. LAPP, *Tell er-Rumeith*, in *RB* 70 (1963), p. 406-411; 75 (1968), p. 98-105; ID., *Biblical Archaeology and History*, New York 1969, p. 118-119, Pl. 23; ID., *The Tale of the Tell*, Pittsburgh 1975, p. 111-119; J. BRIEND, *Ramoth-Gilead*, in *DBS IX*, Paris 1979, col. 1101-1104, 1113; N.L. LAPP, *Rumeith, Tell er-*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. IV, p. 1291-1293.

⁴⁶ The site was visited in the 19th century by S. MERRILL, *East of Jordan*, London 1881, p. 293-296, and G. SCHUMACHER, *Northern 'Ajlun, "Within the Decapolis"*, London 1890, p. 149-154; cf. also G. SCHUMACHER - C. STEUERNAGEL, *Der 'Adschlün*, in *ZDPV* 47 (1924), p. 191-240; 48 (1925), p. 1-144, 201-392; 49 (1926), p. 1-167 (see p. 84 ff.); F.M. ABEL, *Le circuit de Transjordanie*, in *RB* 37 (1928), p. 425-433 and 590-604 (see p. 427); W.F. ALBRIGHT, *New Israelite and Pre-Israelite Sites: The Spring Trip of 1929*, in *BASOR* 35 (1929), p. 1-14 (see p. 10); A. JIRKU, *Durch Palästina und Syrien*, in *ZDPV* 53 (1930), p. 136-165 (see p. 150). Limited excavations have been conducted by R.W. DAJANI, *Iron*

Bēt-Arbel (Hos. 10, 14)⁴⁷, that Eusebius situates on the territory of Pella⁴⁸. True, Eusebius proposes this identification for the enigmatic *hrblh* of Numb. 34, 11, but the Samaritan Pentateuch reads *h'rbhlh* there and this may be the same place as (*Byt-*)'*rb'l* in Hos. 10, 14. At any rate, Tell Irbid, which covered an intramural area of about 14 hectares, was a strategically located town, one of the largest in northern Transjordan. It was protected at a certain moment by a triple defense wall and it was occupied in the Bronze Age and in the Iron Age.

The large Tell al-Ḥiṣn, south of Irbid, was undoubtedly another important site of the Iron Age and it might correspond to the city of Gilead mentioned by Tiglath-pileser III⁴⁹. However, the biblical references to this city seem to point to the area of the Wādī al-Yābis, southwest of Tell al-Ḥiṣn, where important Iron II materials have been discovered at Ḥirbat Umm al-Hedamus⁵⁰. According to Judg. 10, 17, in fact, the Ammonites encamped at Gilead were facing the Israelites assembled at Mišpa, also called Mišpa of Gilead (Judg. 11, 29), which was the site of a cultic centre (Judg. 11, 11). Its location has not been identified with certainty, but its name is preserved apparently by the Tell al-Mašfa, 12 km northwest of Ğeraš, near Sūf⁵¹, and some 15 km south of Tell al-Ḥiṣn, while one would expect to find the Israelites to the north of the Ammonite camp. Tell al-Mašfa itself is not important strategically, but it is dominated to

Age Tombs from Irbid, in *ADAJ* 8-9 (1964), p. 99-101; Id., *Four Iron Age Tombs from Irbid*, in *ADAJ* 11 (1966), p. 88-101; C.J. LENZEN et al., *Excavations at Tell Irbid and Beit Ras*, 1985, in *ADAJ* 29 (1985), p. 151-159; C.J. LENZEN - E. A. KNAUF, *Irbid (Jordanie)*, in *RB* 95 (1988), p. 239-247. An aerial photograph of the mound is given by J.A. SAUER, *art. cit.* (n. 41), in *BASOR* 263 (1986), p. 7, Fig. 7. See also C.J. LENZEN - A.M. MCQUITTY, *The 1984 Survey of the Irbid / Beit Ras Region*, in *ADAJ* 32 (1988), p. 265-274.

⁴⁷ ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 267; Y. AHARONI, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 50, 110, 111. However, H.W. WOLFF, *Dodekapropheton I. Hosea* (Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament XIV/1), Neukirchen 1961, p. 243-244, and W. RUDOLPH, *Hosea* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament XIII/1), Gütersloh 1966, p. 206-207, express doubts about this location.

⁴⁸ E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 14: 19. Cf. M. AVI-YONAH, *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640). A Historical Geography*, Grand Rapids 1966, p. 175.

⁴⁹ *Tigl. III*, p. 138, line 6'; p. 186, line 3. The site was often identified with Ramoth Gilead, most recently by M. WEIPPERT, *Israélites, Araméens et Assyriens dans la Transjordanie septentrionale*, in *ZDPV* 113 (1997), p. 19-38 (see p. 32-33). It was occupied in the Iron Age, as shown by the survey of A. LEONARD, *The Jarash - Tell el-Ḥuṣn Highway Survey*, in *ADAJ* 31 (1987), p. 343-390, and the data referred to by W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 313, but Ramoth Gilead, Mišpa of Gilead, and 'Ari Gilead (Judg. 12, 7, to be compared with 'Ar Moab) are all distinct locations.

⁵⁰ J. MABRY - G. PALUMBO, *Wadi el-Yabis. The 1990 Excavations and Survey Season*, in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 218-220.

⁵¹ There is no basis whatsoever for identifying Mišpa with Ramoth Gilead or with Ramoth ha-Mišpa.

the west and to the north by the highest peaks of the Ġebel 'Aġlūn, namely the Umm ad-Daraġ (alt. 1,261 m) and the Ġebel Munīf (alt. 1,190 m). The Umm ad-Daraġ, to the west, bears the suggestive name of "Mother of stairs", as if its top was a major goal of pilgrims. In any case, it would be a very suitable location for Mišpa, the name of which means "watch point". Besides, Jephthah was buried at 'Ari Gilead (Judg. 12, 7) and Egeria venerated the grave of Getha, i.e. Jephthah, at Tishbe⁵², probably in the area of the Wādī al-Yābis⁵³.

The large scale excavations at Pella of the Decapolis (Ṭabaqat Faḥl), 4 km east of the Jordan river amid the foothills of the Gilead plateau, have revealed that the city's population had expanded in the 8th century B.C.⁵⁴. Significant habitation in the Iron Age was indicated also in the excavations at Abila of the Decapolis (Qwaylibā), 15 km north of Irbid⁵⁵, while a gap in the occupation characterizes Iron Age IIA-B at the nearby Tell al-Fuḥḥār, 10 km northeast of Irbid⁵⁶.

The mines of iron ore in the Aġlūn district of Gilead were an important factor in the development of this area, since their exploitation must go back to the early Iron Age. Smelting operations at Muġārat al-Warda, 3 km north of the Nahr az-Zarqā, have left impressive remains of metallurgy⁵⁷ and the excavations at Tell al-Mazār, three hours by foot from the mining site, have uncovered metal works dating back to Iron Age I⁵⁸.

Beside Tell al-Mazār and Pella, other Iron Age sites were discovered in the Jordan valley. At Tell Abū al-Ḥarūz, south of Pella, the Bronze Age

⁵² *Itinerarium Egeriae* XVI, 1; cf. *Itineraria et alia geographica* (CCSL CLXXV), Turnhout 1965, p. 56-57.

⁵³ The rather unconvincing archaeological remains at the traditionally proposed site of Lisdib (cf. ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 390 and 486) suggested a possible location at Ḥirbat Umm al-Hedamus: M. DEFOSSEZ, *Tishbé*, in *DEB*, Turnhout 1987, p. 1267.

⁵⁴ A synthesis based on the results of the first series of campaigns, with bibliography, is presented by R.H. SMITH, *Excavations at Pella of the Decapolis, 1979-1985*, in *National Geographic Research* 1 (1985), p. 470-489. Preliminary reports of the fourth and following seasons of excavation at Pella can be found in *ADAJ* 27 (1983), p. 325-373; 28 (1984), p. 55-86; 29 (1985), p. 181-210; 30 (1986), p. 155-198; 32 (1988), p. 115-150; 34 (1990), p. 57-94; 37 (1993), p. 165-240.

⁵⁵ See here above, p. 352 with n. 32.

⁵⁶ M. OTTOSSON, *Tell el-Fukhar in Northern Jordan. The First Season 1990*, in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 214-217.

⁵⁷ R.A. COUGHENOUR, *Preliminary Report on the Exploration and Excavation of Muġharat el Wardeh and Abu Thawab*, in *ADAJ* 21(1976), p. 71-78, 186-189; ID., *A Search for Mahanaim*, in *BASOR* 273 (1989), p. 57-66, especially p. 61-62; J.D. MUHL, in *RLA* VIII, Berlin 1993-97, p. 122.

⁵⁸ Mentioned by R.A. COUGHENOUR, *art. cit.* (n. 57), in *BASOR* 273 (1989), p. 62.



walls have been reused in the Iron Age and an ostrakon with a possible Aramaic inscription was found on the site⁵⁹, while a well-planned residential quarter from the 9th-8th centuries B.C. has been uncovered at Tell as-Sa'īdiyeh⁶⁰. The most important discovery in this region are the Aramaic inscriptions from Deir 'Allā, in particular the famous inscriptions on the plastered wall of a large building⁶¹. This structure was destroyed, certainly long before the Assyrian conquest of the region in 732 B.C., but this conquest marks the end of a period in Gilead, when Aram-Damascus was defeated by Tiglath-pileser III. In fact, fragmentary inscriptions of the Assyrian king locates the southern boundary of Aram in Gilead: "The wide [land of Bēt]-Hazeal in its entirety, from the Antilebanon as far as the city of Gilead and Abil-Mayin², which are on the border of the land of Bēt-Omri, I restored to the territory of Assyria"⁶².

Further information about an early Aramaean presence in this region may be provided by the so-called "Edomite king-list" of Gen. 36, 31-39 and I Chron. 1, 43-50. This list of "kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites" (Gen. 36, 31), has been submitted several times to detailed examination without being linked with early Aramaean history⁶³. Now, the two kings called "Hadad" bear a name which must be Aramaic instead of being Edomite, while Bela/Balaam, son of Beor, was brought from Aram according to Numb. 23, 7. If the list is composed of two groups of names, as J.R. Bartlett has argued following L. Desnoyers' original observation⁶⁴, the group indicating the place of rule or origin by the phrase "and the name of his

⁵⁹ P.M. BIKAI - V. EGAN, *art. cit.* (n. 41), in *AJA* 100 (1996), p. 520; 101 (1997), p. 508.

⁶⁰ J.B. PRITCHARD, *Tell es-Sa'īdiyeh: Excavations on the Tell, 1964-1966*, Philadelphia 1985, p. 4-59, 75-80; J. TUBB, *Tell es-Sa'īdiyeh. Preliminary Report on the First Three Seasons of Renewed Excavations*, in *Levant* 20 (1988), p. 23-88; ID., *Sa'īdiyeh, Tell es-*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. IV, p. 1295-1300; J.N. TUBB - P.G. DORRELL, *Tell es-Sa'īdiyeh: Interim Report on the Sixth Season of Excavations*, in *PEQ* 125 (1993), p. 50-74; ID. - ID., *Tell es-Sa'īdiyeh 1993: Interim Report on the Seventh Season of Excavations*, in *PEQ* 126 (1994), p. 52-67; ID. - ID. - F.J. COBBING, *Interim Report on the Eighth (1995) Season of Excavations at Tell es-Sa'īdiyeh*, in *PEQ* 128 (1996), p. 16-40.

⁶¹ A recent study with earlier literature can be found in *SAIO* II, p. 103-170.

⁶² *Tigl. III*, p. 186, lines 3-4; cf. p. 138, lines 6'-7'; p. 192, line 3. See above, p. 344, n. 136.

⁶³ An exception is the study by A. LEMAIRE, *art. cit.* (n. 34).

⁶⁴ L. DESNOYERS, *L'histoire du peuple hébreu des Juges à la captivité*, Paris 1922, p. 71, n. 2; J.R. BARLETT, *The Edomite King-List of Genesis XXXVI. 31-39 and I Chron. I. 43-50*, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 16 (1965), p. 301-314, especially p. 302-303. This conclusion is reached also by M. WEIPPERT, *Remarks on the History of Settlement in Southern Jordan during the Early Iron Age*, in A. HADIDI (ed.), *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan I*, Amman 1982, p. 153-162, especially p. 155.

city was....” lists Aramaean kings. Instead, the origin of the kings of the second group, characterized by the formula “x from y”, was in most cases unknown to the compiler of the list, since “the land of the meridional(s)” (*'ereṣ hat-tēmānī*), “east” (*mašrēqā*), and “the open spaces by the river” (*rəḥobōt han-nāhār*) are no proper names of towns or countries. Only “Yōbab from Boṣrā”, the first king of the second group, is connected with the Edomite capital⁶⁵, while no particular place is related to Baalḥanan. This was apparently the case also for Husham, Samla or Shalma⁶⁶, and Saul in the original list.

The quite obvious conclusion is that the compiler, who may have worked as late as the mid-first millennium⁶⁷, had a short list of Aramaean rulers at his disposal, where he misread *'dm* for *'rm* (Gen. 36, 32). He combined it with an Edomite list, in which only one place was mentioned, namely Boṣrā. This brief analysis gives the following picture of the compiler's “Aramaean” source:

“Before any king reigned over the Israelites, Bela son of Beor reigned in Aram, and his city was Danhabah. Bela died and Hadad son of Bedad reigned in his place. He defeated Midian in the Lowland of Moab. His city was 'Ammat(ā). Hadad died and Hadad reigned in his place. His city was Pe'ōr and his wife was called Mehetabel, daughter of Maṭred, daughter of Mē-Zahab.”

Several observations have to be made concerning the toponyms of this source of the king-list. Bela's town is called *Dennaba* in the Greek text. We identify it with Assyrian *Danabu* and vocalize the Hebrew form *Danhabā*⁶⁸. The Lowland of Moab is the area on the east bank of the Jordan river, opposite Jericho⁶⁹. This region could not get such a name

⁶⁵ Cf. also Is. 34, 6; 63, 1; Jer. 49, 13.22; Am. 1, 12.

⁶⁶ The reading Shalma is suggested by the *Codex Alexandrinus* of the Septuagint.

⁶⁷ The list of Gen. 36, 31-39, reproduced in I Chron. 1, 43-50, is by no means an old document. It looks like a later composition, perhaps going back to ca. 500 B.C. as proposed by E.A. KNAUF, *Alter und Herkunft der edomitischen Königsliste Gen. 36, 31-39*, in ZAW 97 (1985), p. 245-253. It opens with the name of a renown Transjordanian wise man, whose wisdom was considered as a “royal” quality.

⁶⁸ See here above, p. 352-353, and already A. LEMAIRE, *art. cit.* (n. 34), p. 185-186. The identifications proposed by Eusebius of Caesarea (E. KLOSTERMANN [ed.], *op. cit.* [n. 35], p. 76: 9-12) are not convincing: Δαννεά, corresponding to Ḥirbat ad-Denn (Moab), does not contain the final *b*, while Δαναβᾶ on Mount Pe'ōr, supported and identified with Ḥirbat al-Mḥatta by S. MITTMANN, *Danaba*, in ZDPV 87 (1971), p. 92-94, can hardly be considered as a place in Aram (Numb. 23, 7). The link established by the tradition between Bela and Job also suggests a northern location of Dennaba; cf. here above, p. 353.

⁶⁹ Elsewhere this area is called 'Arbōt Mō'āb: Numb. 22, 1; 25, 31, 12; 33, 48; 36, 13. Cf. F.-M. ABEL, *Exploration du sud-est de la vallée du Jourdain*, in RB 40 (1931), p. 214-226, 375-400, Pl. VI-IX, XI-XII, especially p. 223 ff; 41 (1932), p. 77-88, 237-257, Pl. I-VI, especially p. 78 ff.

before the 9th century B.C., since the Mesha inscription does not yet mention its annexation to Moab. Hadad's victory over Midianites coming from northwestern Arabia⁷⁰ implies in any case that his town was situated not far from the battlefield. The name of his city is spelt 'wyt or 'ywt in Hebrew⁷¹, while Greek Γιθθαμ or Γιθθαμ⁷² suggests that the translator had tried to extract a known place name by interverting the letters 'mt of his Hebrew text. In fact, the confusion yw/m is quite common in ancient Jewish script, as noticed already by Friedrich Delitzsch⁷³, and the place name 'mt corresponds perfectly to the Ἀμ(μ)αθοῦς of Flavius Josephus and Eusebius⁷⁴, the 'mtw of Talmudic literature⁷⁵, and the 'Amatā of Al-Idrisi⁷⁶. This place is located east of the Jordan river and it is rightly identified with Tell 'Amtā or 'Ammatā on the bank of Wādī ar-Rāḡib, northeast of the confluence of the Nahr az-Zarqā and of the Jordan river⁷⁷.

The city of the second Hadad of the list appears in Hebrew as P'w or P'y⁷⁸, but it should be P'wr (Φογωρ) according to the Greek version and to Eusebius of Caesarea⁷⁹. The name in the Hebrew manuscripts would suggest, at first sight, a relation with Tell Fā', 27 km southeast of Irbid. This is a mound about 90 m by 70 m large, occupied mainly in

⁷⁰ The location of Midian in northwestern Saudi Arabia, east of the Gulf of 'Aqaba, is quite well established, not only because of the itinerary referred to in I Kings 11, 18, but mainly because of its mention by PTOLEMY, *Geography* VI, 7, 27 and by Arab writers. Cf. E.A. KNAUF, *Midian*, Wiesbaden 1988. See also P.J. PARR, *Edom and Hejaz*, in P. BIENKOWSKI (ed.), *Early Edom and Moab*, Sheffield 1992, p. 41-46, with literature.

⁷¹ Gen. 36, 35: 'wyt; I Chron. 1, 46: 'ywt.

⁷² The *Codex Alexandrinus* has the reading Γιθθαμ, which seems to be closer to the Hebrew text, while Eusebius reads Γεθεμ: E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 62: 7.

⁷³ F. DELITZSCH, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament*, Berlin-Leipzig 1920, p. 120-121.

⁷⁴ FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, *Jewish Antiquities* XIII, 13, 3 and 5, § 356 and 374; XIV, 5, 4, § 91; XVII, 10, 6, § 277; *The Jewish War* I, 4, 2-3, § 86-89; I, 8, 5, § 170; E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 22: 24-25.

⁷⁵ Talmud Yerushalmi, *Shebi'ith* IX, 7, 38d. Cf. G. REEG, *Die Ortsnamen Israels nach der rabbinischen Literatur* (TAVO B/51), Wiesbaden 1989, p. 494-495, s.v. 'mtn (var. 'mtw).

⁷⁶ See J. GILDEMEISTER, *Beiträge zur Palästinakunde aus arabischen Quellen*. 5. *Idrisi*, in *ZDPV* 8 (1885), p. 117-145, especially p. 128.

⁷⁷ ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 242-243; N. GLUECK, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine* II (AASOR 15), New Haven 1935, p. 95 ff.; W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 263; G. SCHMITT, *Siedlungen Palästinas in griechisch-römischer Zeit* (BTAVO B/93), Wiesbaden 1995, p. 51-52.

⁷⁸ Gen. 36, 39: P'w; I Chron. 1, 50: P'y.

⁷⁹ E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 168: 7, but Eusebius also knows the reading P'w: *ibid.*, p. 170: 13. The final *r* was obviously lost in the Hebrew scribal tradition after the translation of the Book Genesis into Greek.

Iron Age II⁸⁰. Instead, if the reading of the Greek text is considered as genuine, *P'wr* should be the same place as Bēt-Pe'ōr, near Mount Pe'ōr that Eusebius situates about 10 km west of Ḥesbān⁸¹, where it overlooked the Lowland of Moab⁸². Since Bēt-Pe'ōr is supposed to be in a valley⁸³, most likely near the outlet of Wādī al-Ḥesbān, it can possibly be identified with Tell Iktānu, where surface finds include pottery of Late Bronze and Iron Age I date, while a walled Iron II settlement seems to have continued there into the Persian period⁸⁴. The wife of the second ruler called Hadad is said to be “daughter of Maṭred, daughter of Mē-Zahab”. *Mṭrd* may be a personal name meaning “hunter” like Arabic *muṭārid*⁸⁵, but Mē-Zahab is a place name “Golden Waters”⁸⁶. Since the Tulūl ad-Dahab on the bank of the Nahr az-Zarqā are located in the same general area, we assume that one of the two places is meant to be the home town of Hadad's wife⁸⁷.

The name and the patronymic of Bela son of Beor appear as North-Arabian rather than Aramaic⁸⁸, despite the fact that Balaam's prophecies

⁸⁰ W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 301 and Map 6.

⁸¹ E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 76: 12.

⁸² E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 12: 21-24.

⁸³ Deut. 3, 29; 4, 46; 34, 6; cf. Josh. 13, 20. This was the site of the shrine of *Ba'al-Pe'ōr*, whose cult spread later to Syria and to Rome. The god is called Βεελεφαρος in an inscription from Ḥalbūn (R. MOUTERDE, *Cultes antiques de la Coelé Syrie et de l'Hermon*, in *MUSJ* 36 [1959], p. 53-87 and Pl. VII-XII [see p. 57-60 and Pl. VII, 1]) and *Beellefarus* or *Beheleparus* in Rome (H. DESSAU, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, Berlin 1892-1916, Nos. 4342 and 4343). *Pe'ōr* was apparently pronounced 'ēp'ār in Aramaic, with a prosthetic vowel and without the change *ā > ō*. These late attestations of the cult are unknown to K. SPRONK, *Baal of Peor*, in *DDD*, Leiden 1995, col. 279-281. If the Syrian provenance of the cult attested in Rome does not raise any particular questions, its earlier implantation near Damascus may imply an ancient link between the Transjordanian shrine and Aram-Damascus. But this is a matter for speculations.

⁸⁴ K. PRAG, *The Excavations at Tell Iktanu, 1989-1990*, in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 269-271 with literature. The site has been identified in the past with Bēt-Haram, which should be located instead at Ar-Rāme: ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 273; W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 161-162. This was a significant population centre in the Iron Age.

⁸⁵ The Aramaic name should be a participle *pa'il muṭarrid > maṭārid*.

⁸⁶ The origin of a woman is normally expressed by the phrase *bt* “daughter” + place name; cf. *bat-Ṣor* (Ps. 45, 13), “daughter of Tyre”; *bənōt Yērūšālāim* (Cant. 1, 5; 2, 7; 3, 5.10; etc.); *bənōt Šilō* (Judg. 21, 21); etc. Similar place names are attested elsewhere, e.g. *Mayyā-qarīrē*, “Cold Waters” (cf. here above, p. 147) and *Mē ṭābūtī*, “Nice Waters” (SAA I, 104, 7).

⁸⁷ Tell ad-Dahab al-Ġarbī is often identified with Mahanaim; cf. R.L. GORDON - L. E. VILLERS, *Telul edh-Dhahab and Its Environs: Surveys of 1980 and 1982. A Preliminary Report*, in *ADAJ* 27 (1983), p. 275-289, Pl. 54-68; R.A. COUGHENOUR, *A Search for Mahanaim*, in *BASOR* 273 (1989), p. 57-66. However, this identification is uncertain and, in any case, there are two mounds on the site, on the right and left banks of the river; cf. also ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 373-374.

⁸⁸ SAIO II, p. 110-111.

of the Deir 'Allā text are written in a South-Aramaic dialect⁸⁹. In this prophetic composition Balaam does not bear the royal title. We can surmise therefore that his heading of the royal list in Gen. 36 had a particular aim: While Hebrew tradition described king Solomon as wiser than all men⁹⁰, "a man seeing the gods" reigned in Aram "before any king reigned over the Israelites"⁹¹. We can nevertheless assume that Balaam/Bela belongs to the 11th or 10th century B.C., like the two kings called Hadad. It is surprising that their name consists only of the theophorous element, but we find the very same situation in the tradition recorded by Nicholas of Damascus who speaks of ten successive kings of Damascus called Ἀδαδός, i.e. Hadad⁹². The first Hadad of our list has a patronymic Bedad, which can be an Aramaic name attested in Neo-Assyrian sources as *Bedadu*⁹³, possibly *Beddādu*, since *baddād* is used in the sense of "olive treader", "oil presser"⁹⁴. The second Hadad has a wife called *Māhētab-'El*, "El is a well-doer". The form *mhytb* corresponds perfectly to the expected Early Aramaic participle *haf'el* of *yṭb*, which is a typically Aramaic by-form of the Semitic root *ṭwb*, "to be good". This name confirms the Aramaean origin of the list.

If we do not take Bela, son of Beor, and his home town into account, the list refers to a restricted area bordered on the north by the Wādī al-Kafrīngī, on the west by the Jordan river, on the south by the Wādī al-Hesbān, and on the east by the Ammonite territory. The name of 'dry' from Mehola, mentioned in I Sam. 18, 19 and II Sam. 21, 8, reveals the presence of an Aramaic speaking community in the same area, after 1000 B.C.⁹⁵, since this spelling seems to imply a pronunciation 'Idrī-'El, with the interdental *d*. Adriel's Aramaean origin is confirmed by the ending *-ay* of his patronymic Barzillay (II Sam. 21, 8 ff.)⁹⁶, which may

⁸⁹ SAIO II, p. 168-170.

⁹⁰ M. NOTH, *Die Bewährung von Salomos' "Göttlicher Weisheit"*, in M. NOTH - D.W. THOMAS (eds.), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 3), Leiden 1955, p. 225-237; R.B.Y. SCOTT, *Solomon and the Beginning of Wisdom in Israel*, *ibid.*, p. 262-279; A. LEMAIRE, *Wisdom in Solomon's Historiography*, in J. DAY et al. (eds.), *Wisdom in Ancient Israel. Essays in Honour of J.A. Emerton*, Cambridge 1995, p. 106-118; S. WÄLCHLI, *Der weise König Salomo*, Stuttgart 1999.

⁹¹ Plaster Inscription I, 1; cf. SAIO II, p. 117.

⁹² FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, *Jewish Antiquities* VII, 5, 2, § 101-103. Cf. here below, p. 370.

⁹³ Genitive *Bi-da-di*: PNA I/2, p. 343a, with a less likely explanation.

⁹⁴ JASTROW, p. 139a.

⁹⁵ SAIO I, p. 17; SAIO II, p. 109.

⁹⁶ R. ZADOK, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy and Prosopography* (OLA 28), Leuven 1988, p. 172.

reveal a link with king Solomon's foundries in this part of the Jordan valley⁹⁷.

It does not appear that this entire area, with the Lowland of Moab, belonged to the kingdom of Damascus in the second half of the 9th and in the 8th century B.C., but the Aramaean presence in the eastern Jordan valley after 1000 B.C. may explain the confused souvenir of an Aramaean participation in David's wars against the Ammonites⁹⁸ and the solid Aramaean implantation at Deir 'Allā around 800 B.C. There could be a link also between Hadad in I Kings 11, 14-22.25b and Hadad in Gen. 36, 39 and I Chron. 1, 50⁹⁹. His flight to Egypt through Midian would then be much easier to explain.

A Tiglath-pileser III's fragmentary account of the fall of Aram-Damascus preserves the names of four cities. The first one is [uru^ux-(x)]-ḥa-a-da-ra, the home town of Rašyān (Raḍyān), the last king of the Aramaean state¹⁰⁰. It was identified tentatively either with modern 'Adrā, 22 km northeast of Damascus¹⁰¹, or with the *Adarin* of the Peutinger Table¹⁰², perhaps Al-Qutayfā, 18 km further to the northeast, or even with Ḥaḍr, 53 km southwest of Damascus¹⁰³. Since the beginning of the place name is missing, none of these locations has a chance of being correct. An indication may be provided by Am. 1, 3-5, where "the ruler from the Valley of Wickedness" (*yōšēb mib-Biq'at-'Āwen*), mentioned after Hazael and Bar-Hadad II, must be Rašyān. This is an obvious cacophemy which indicates that the original place name meant something like "Beautiful Valley". We may therefore restore the name of Rašyān's home town as [uru^uBi-qa]-ḥa-a-da-ra, reproducing Aramaic **Bq' hdr*('), "Valley of Beauty". Since the other cities mentioned in this passage seem to belong rather to the area south of Damascus, we might suggest tentatively that the village of Faqa'a, situated on the Wādī al-Ḥarīr, south of Aṣ-Ṣanamayn, preserves the first element of the ancient toponym.

⁹⁷ II Kings 7, 46; II Chron. 4, 17.

⁹⁸ Mainly II Sam. 10. For the analysis of these texts, see U. HÜBNER, *Die Ammoniter*, Wiesbaden 1992, p. 170-179.

⁹⁹ A.M. HONEYMAN, *The Evidence for Regnal Names among the Hebrews*, in *JBL* 67 (1948), p. 13-25, argued already that the second Hadad, whose name is correctly written *Hdd* in I Chron. 1, 50-51, is to be identified with Hadad "the Edomite" of I Kings 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 13'.

¹⁰¹ A. DUPONT-SOMMER, *Les Araméens*, Paris 1949, p. 72, n. 34.

¹⁰² E. KRAELING, *op. cit.* (n. 26), p. 118.

¹⁰³ E. FORRER, *Die Provinzeinteilung des assyrischen Reiches*, Leipzig 1920, p. 62. Cf. M. AVI-YONAH, *op. cit.* (n. 48), p. 164.

The second city, the name of which should probably be read ^{uru}*Qú-ru-uṣ-ša-a*¹⁰⁴, was identified with *Geroda/Ĝerūd*, some 50 km northeast of Damascus, and with Al-Braiqa, at the foot of Ḥāmi Qurṣu (alt. 1,198 m)¹⁰⁵, in the Golan. So far, no concrete evidence supports these locations, but Tell Qurṣ (Jordan), some 5 km north of Qwaylibā, covers an area of about 90 m by 140 m on top of a natural, steep and isolated hill¹⁰⁶. It was occupied in the Iron Age and, judging from its superficies, could have some 250-300 inhabitants. This figure fits quite well the number of 750 captives taken by Tiglath-pileser III from *Quruṣṣā* and *Samā*¹⁰⁷. However, a similar place name ^{uru}*Qu-ra-ši-ti* is mentioned in the annals of Ashurbanipal between Azalla and Damascus, thus northeast of the Syrian capital¹⁰⁸.

The third city is ^{uru}*Sa-ma-a-a*¹⁰⁹, which was identified with 'Ilmā¹¹⁰, 12 km southeast of Šayḥ Miskīn, because of the former reading *Ir-ma-a-a*. The corrected reading may suggest identifications with place names like Sammā, halfway between Izra' and As-Suwayda', or Sammā, about 15 km north of Al-Mafraq (Jordan)¹¹¹. However, if *Quruṣṣā* is localized at Tell Qurṣ, the hilltop of Kōm Samā (Jordan), some 6 km southwest of Qwaylibā, would be a better candidate: it yielded a large quantity of Iron Age I-II pottery¹¹², and would explain why the captives from *Quruṣṣā* and *Samā* are counted together in Tiglath-pileser's annals. At any rate, such possible locations should be confirmed by soundings or, at least, by a precise survey of the area.

The fourth city is ^{uru}*Me-tu-na*¹¹³; it probably corresponds to Al-Mēdān, 4 km north of Tell Irbid and 10 km south of Qwaylibā, at least

¹⁰⁴ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 15'. ZADOK, *WSB*, p. 206, follows the usual reading *Kuruṣṣā*, assuming a dissimilation of the first emphatic consonant *q* > *k*. The spelling with KU may also reflect the voiceless realization of the emphatic *q*, while a spelling with KUM = *qu* could have marked a voiced articulation. Compare C. RABIN, *Ancient West-Arabian*, London 1951, p. 125-126.

¹⁰⁵ The first localization was proposed by E. KRAELING, *op. cit.* (n. 26), p. 118; the second one by E. FORRER, *op. cit.* (n. 103), p. 62; cf. ABEL, *Géographie I*, Map VIII.

¹⁰⁶ W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 332 and Map 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Tigl. III*, p. 79, lines 15'-16'.

¹⁰⁸ M. STRECK, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's* (VAB 7), Leipzig 1916, vol. II, p. 72, col. VIII, 121; p. 206, col. VI, 41; R. BORGER, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, Wiesbaden 1996, p. 65 and 245, col. VIII, 121; p. 80, col. III, 59. Its exact location is unknown.

¹⁰⁹ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 16'.

¹¹⁰ ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 103, 241. For this place, see here above, p. 64.

¹¹¹ DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, Map II, A2 and A3.

¹¹² W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 323 and Map 6.

¹¹³ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 16'.

if we want to stay in the same area and look for settlements with a rather difficult access. Also Al-Mēdān is built on top of a hill; it yielded a large quantity of pottery fragments from Iron Age I-II, contains many cisterns, and is surrounded by grotts and graves¹¹⁴. The 550 captives taken by Tiglath-pileser III from Metuna¹¹⁵ may have corresponded to its population. Sure, other localizations have been proposed as well. Among them, in any case, preference should be given to modern Imtūna or Al-Mētūna, east of Al-Leḡā, on the road of the Wādī al-Liwā¹¹⁶, rather than to Imtān¹¹⁷, Roman *Mothana*, about 15 km southeast of Ṣalḥad. In fact, at least the Bronze Age is represented at Al-Mētūna, while an Iron Age fortress has been identified at Tell Dibba, further south on the same route.

Another city belonging certainly to the Aramaean kingdom of Damascus is biblical 'Aštaroṭh, which was identified convincingly with Tell 'Aštara, about 10 km west of Ṣayḥ Miskīn. The city is represented on a bas-relief from Tiglath-pileser III's palace at Calah, now in the British Museum¹¹⁸. The cuneiform inscription ^{uru}As-tar-tu is engraved above the town which sits on a hill and is surrounded by a double crenelated wall with turreted towers. To the right, Assyrian soldiers lead away the sheep and the inhabitants, who are dressed in the Syrian fashion and carry their belongings in bags over their shoulders. The two short archaeological campaigns in 1966 and 1967 confirm the existence of a double defence wall in the Iron Age, in which two levels could be distinguished¹¹⁹.

About 5 km north of Tell 'Aštara, Ṣayḥ Sa'd is most likely the site of biblical Qarnaim and Assyrian Qarnina¹²⁰, which is mentioned in

¹¹⁴ W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 324 and Map 6.

¹¹⁵ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 16'.

¹¹⁶ ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 103; cf. DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, Map II, B2; T. BAUZOU, *Les voies de communication dans le Hauran à l'époque romaine*, in J.-M. DENTZER (ed.), *Hauran I* (BAH 124), Paris 1985, p. 137-165 (see the map on p. 139 and p. 149).

¹¹⁷ E. FORRER, *op. cit.* (n. 103), p. 63.

¹¹⁸ BM. 118908; cf. *RLA I*, Pl. 37; *ANEP*, No. 366; *Tigl. III*, p. 210. For the identification of 'Aštaroṭh with Tell 'Aštara, see J.G. WETZSTEIN, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen*, Berlin 1860, p. 109-111; ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 255; M. ASTOUR, in L.R. FISHER (ed.), *Ras Shamra Parallels II* (AnOr 50), Rome 1975, p. 313-314; D. KELLERMANN, 'Aštārōt — 'Ašt'rōt Qarnayim — Qarnayim, in *ZDPV* 97 (1981), p. 45-61; S. AḤITUV, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents*, Jerusalem 1984, p. 72-73, 90-91.

¹¹⁹ A. ABOU ASSAF, *Tell 'Aschtara in Südsyrien. Erste Kampagne 1966*, in *AAS* 18 (1968), p. 103-106; ID., *Tell 'Aschtara. Zweite Kampagne 1967*, in *AAS* 19 (1969), p. 101-102; cf. SADER, *États araméens*, p. 268.

¹²⁰ ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 413-414; *SAA VII*, p. 236.



Wādī Salma.

Am. 6, 13 and became the capital of an Assyrian province after the annexation of the kingdom of Damascus by Tiglath-pileser III. This was undoubtedly a major town, where the unpublished excavations directed in 1924 by B. Hrozný have uncovered Bronze Age and Iron Age layers, as well as a portal lion in Neo-Hittite style¹²¹, now in the Damascus Museum.

Another important town in this area is biblical Edre'i, rightly identified with modern Der'ā, 23 km south of Šayḥ Miskīn. Called 'I-t-r-' in the topographical list of Thutmose III, *Hdr'y* in a text from Ugarit, Αδρα(α) in Greek, and 'Adri'a or 'Adra'a in mediaeval Arab writings, it bears a name which is based on the word *dra'*, "arm", with a prosthetic 'h, and probably means "stronghold" or the like. At the time of the Aramaean expansion, the city certainly belonged to the kingdom of Damascus, and large quantities of sherds from the Iron Age have been found on the slopes of its ancient mound¹²².

¹²¹ W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 335. Publications referring to these excavations are B. HROZNÝ, *Ve starozákonné zemi Basan*, in *Národní listy* 64/158 (8.6.1924), p. 9; ID., *Discoveries in the Land of Job: Relics of Hittite and Greek Art*, in *Illustrated London News*, 25 June 1927, p. 1162-1163. See also above, p. 353, n. 37.

¹²² ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 310. For the Egyptian attestation of List I, 91 in J. SIMONS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), and Y. AHARONI, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 150, see M. GÖRG, *Untersuchungen zur*

Evidence of the activities of the kings of Aram-Damascus in northern Syria is given by Hazael's booty inscriptions and by the inscription of Zakkūr, king of Ḥamath and Luḡath. The booty inscriptions record Hazael's military campaigns in 'Umq/Pattin, his crossing of the River, which is more likely the Orontes than the Euphrates, his capture of 'Imma (Yenişehir) and possibly of Aleppo or Ḥazāzu¹²³. The Zakkūr inscription recognizes the position of Bar-Hadad II, son of Hazael, as leader of the allied Aramaean and Neo-Hittite forces fighting against the king of Ḥamath and Luḡath¹²⁴. These texts, as well as the annals of Shalmaneser III, clearly show that from the mid-9th century B.C. on Aram-Damascus generally played the primary role among the Syrian states, but they do not prove that the other kingdoms were all Damascus' satellites and that the territory of Aram-Damascus extended to central and northern Syria. One should resist the temptation of overstating the power of the kingdom of Damascus because of the role it played in the relations between Aram and Israel.

2. HISTORY

It is only towards the end of the 10th century B.C. that Damascus becomes a significant political entity in the Levant as capital of an Aramaean state. Although native sources from Aram-Damascus itself are very rare, the general lines of its history may be drawn from the information provided by Assyrian sources and by ancient Hebrew literature. In the Bible, Aram-Damascus first appears in II Sam. 8, 5-6, in the frame of a redactional sketch that combines elements of different origin¹²⁵. The Aramaeans of Damascus, according to II Sam. 8, 5, sent troops to aid Hadadezer, and David, according to verse 6, appointed governors in Aram-Damascus after his victory over the Aramaeans. These two verses

hieroglyphischen Wiedergabe palästinischer Ortsnamen, Bonn 1974, p. 11-18; S. AḤITUV, *op. cit.* (n. 118), p. 90-91. The Ugaritian mention of the place name in KTU 1.108, 3 has been recognized by B. MARGULIS, *The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered*, in *Biblica* 51 (1970), p. 332-348 (see 344); ID., *A Ugaritic Psalm*, in *JBL* 89 (1970), p. 292-303 (see p. 293-294). References to Greek and Latin sources are collected in M. AVI-YONAH, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine* (Qedem 5), Jerusalem 1976, p. 53. The interpretation of Hdr'y in the sense of "Haddu-the-Shepherd", proposed by J.C. DE MOOR, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 2nd ed., Leuven 1997, p. 75, n. 204, and p. 126, does not suit a place name.

¹²³ SAIO II, p. 92-93; see also here above, p. 214, and here below, p. 389.

¹²⁴ See here above, p. 254, 309, and here below, p. 399-400.

¹²⁵ See here above, p. 337-338.

seem to be a variant of II Sam. 8, 13-14, where 'Ārām should be read in v. 14 like in v. 13, instead of 'Ēdōm that must result from the widespread confusion of *d/r*, especially in the names of Aram and Edom. The mention of David's victory in the *Gē'-Melah*, most likely the Huleh Valley¹²⁶, seems to indicate that the notice is based on a historical record, but I Chron. 18, 12 and Ps. 60, 2 apparently connect this event with the war against Aram of Šoba (II Sam. 10, 6-14), where Abishay (I Chron. 18, 12) and Joab (Ps. 60, 2) played an important role.

As for the qualification *Aram-Damascus* in II Sam. 8, 5-6, it lacks any support in a detailed narrative referring to this city, and the absence of any allusion to a Davidic control of Damascus in I Kings 11, 23-25a rather favours the view that the historical value of this information is at least doubtful. However, if "Edom" in I Kings 11, 14-16 is a corruption of "Aram", resulting from the frequent confusion *d/r*¹²⁷, then it is possible that the Israelite army commanded by Joab stayed for six months in Aram, probably Aram-Damascus, and slaughtered its male population before leaving the country. The history of the Aramaean royal house of Damascus would then begin with this massacre, the escape of the young prince Hadad, and his return from Egypt after the death of David and of Joab (I Kings 11, 17-22.25b).

The next episode would then be marked by the rise of Ezron, son of Elyada, whose name was changed in the Hebrew Bible into *razōn*, "prince", apparently by metathesis (I Kings 11, 23). The Greek transcriptions Εσρων/μ and Αζρων in III Kings 11, 14 fortunately preserve the original form of the name¹²⁸. It goes back to a well attested Aramaic anthroponym 'Edrān/'Edrōn or 'Idrān/'Idrōn¹²⁹, that occurs in ancient Aramaic¹³⁰ and in several Neo-Assyrian cuneiform texts: *Ed-ru-nu*¹³¹,

¹²⁶ See here above, p. 350.

¹²⁷ See the discussion by A. LEMAIRE, *Hadad l'Édomite ou Hadad l'Araméen*, in *BN* 43 (1988), p. 14-18. The question should be raised also in reference to Hadad in Gen. 36, 35-36 = I Chron. 1, 46-47.

¹²⁸ The emendation of *rẕwn* into *rşyn*, proposed by M. WEIPPERT in *RLA* V, Berlin 1976-80, p. 202a, lacks any textual basis, despite the contrary impression that the *RLA* might give.

¹²⁹ *SAIO* I, p. 138.

¹³⁰ D. HOMÈS-FREDERICQ - P. GARELLI - E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Archives d'un centre provincial de l'Empire assyrien*, Bruxelles, forthcoming, No. 55, 13.

¹³¹ BM. 123384, r. 8', edited by J.N. POSTGATE, *More 'Assyrian Deeds and Documents'*, in *Iraq* 32 (1970), p. 129-164 and Pl. XVIII-XXXI (see No. 9, p. 143 and Pl. XXIII). For the reading *ed* of the sign *id* in these names, one may consult F.M. FALES, *On Aramaic Onomastics in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, in *OA* 16 (1977), p. 41-68 (see p. 59).

*Ed-[ra]-a-nu*¹³², *Ed-ra-ni*¹³³, *Ed-ra-nu*¹³⁴. Elsewhere in the Septuagint, however, and in the *Jewish Antiquities* by Josephus Flavius, Εσρων, Εζρων, Εζερων transcribe the name *Heṣrōn*¹³⁵, which had therefore been considered as the *Vorlage* of Greek Εσρων/μ and Αζρων also in III Kings 11, 14¹³⁶. But this hypothesis fails explaining the *razōn* of the Hebrew text (I Kings 11, 23), while Εσρα(ς) and Εζρα(ς) appear in Greek as transcriptions of the parallel name 'Ezrā'.

The Ezron episode of I Kings 11, 23-25a appears at a different place in the Septuagint (III Kings 11, 14) and, in the Masoretic text, it interrupts the narrative regarding Hadad (I Kings 11, 14-22.25b). This indicates that it was a later insertion, explainable by the original link of the Hadad story with Aram, as still shown in I Kings 11, 25b: *wayyimlok 'al-'Ārām*, "and he became king over Aram". The name of Hadad is typical for Aramaic onomastics and, as we have suggested, a corruption of "Aram" into "Edom" had most likely taken place in I Kings 11, 14-16. Ezron would have fled not from Hadadezer, king of Šoba, as stated in I Kings 11, 23, but from Hadad, who had returned from Egypt but whose reign must have been limited in time, since Ezron is said to have been "an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon" (I Kings 11, 25a). He had gathered about him a band of warriors, much in the way David had done in his early days, and seized Damascus where he was declared king, usurping the throne of the earlier Aramaean dynasty. Ezron's capture of Damascus cannot be dated precisely, but it probably took place quite early in Solomon's reign, about 950 B.C.

This reconstruction of the events cannot be conciliated with the tradition preserved by Nicholas of Damascus (1st century B.C.), as quoted by Josephus Flavius. He refers to the wars between Damascus and Judah in the days of Adados (Hadad) and of David, as well as at the time of the successors of Adados whose dynasty would have lasted for ten generations¹³⁷:

¹³² CTN II, 120, 21; cf. F.M. FALES, *West Semitic Names from the Governor's Palace*, in *Annali di Ca' Foscari* 13 (1974), p. 179-188 (see p. 184, No. 18).

¹³³ S.U. 1952, 332, 8', unpublished, quoted by F.M. FALES, *art. cit.* (n. 79), p. 184.

¹³⁴ SAA XI, 201, I, 32; 213, III, 8.

¹³⁵ A. SCHLATTER, *Die hebräischen Namen bei Josephus*, Gütersloh 1913, p. 50; A. SCHALIT, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus*, Leiden 1968, p. 46.

¹³⁶ O. THENIUS, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1873.

¹³⁷ FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, *Jewish Antiquities* VII, 5, 2, § 101-103. Translation by R. MARCUS, *Josephus* V, London 1934, p. 413 and 415. The account of Nicholas of Damascus is nevertheless based on a cursory reading of a Greek version of the Books of Kings. His Adados is most likely Hadadezer and the defeat inflicted upon him by David on the Euphrates is the one of II Kings (LXX) 8, 3. The third Adados, who had besieged Samaria, is Benhadad of I Kings 20 and II Kings 6, 24.

“A long while after this, one of the natives, Adados by name, attained to great power and became ruler of Damascus and the rest of Syria, excepting Phoenicia. He waged war against David, king of Judaea, and, after trial in many battles, the last of which was fought beside the Euphrates, where he was defeated, he gained the reputation of being the most vigorous and courageous of kings ... Upon his death his posterity reigned for ten generations, each receiving from his father both his authority and his name, as did the Ptolemies in Egypt. The most powerful of these kings was the third, who, in his desire to make good his grandfather's defeat, marched against the Jews and sacked the country now called Samaritis”.

With the death of Solomon and the division of his kingdom into two small rival states of Israel and Judah began the political ascendancy of Damascus in southern Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. The sources of information for the time from the reign of Ezron to the usurpation of the throne of Damascus by Hazael *ca.* 843 B.C. remain sketchy, and the full history of Aram-Damascus for this period cannot be reconstructed so far.

The problem of the royal succession in Damascus during that time is difficult, owing to the scarcity of sources. If the reign of Ezron coincides with that of Solomon, the names of his immediate successors should appear in I Kings 15, 18 and II Chron. 16, 2, which introduce “Ben-Hadad, the son of Tāb-Rimmōn, the son of Ḥezyōn”, who had dealings with Asa of Judah (*ca.* 911-870 B.C.) and with Basha of Israel (*ca.* 909-886 B.C.). The hypothesis identifying Ḥezyōn with the *razōn* of I Kings 11, 23 complicates the question of the royal succession. Among its various shades¹³⁸, one can single out the opinion that considers *razōn* as a royal title and Ḥezyōn as the personal name of the king¹³⁹. In reality, however, there is no objective reason why the two persons should be identified.

Ḥezyōn, in Aramaic *Ḥadyān*, is a royal name borne again by a king of Damascus in the 8th century¹⁴⁰. It means “replica”, or the like, and derives from the verbal root *ḥḏw/y* which is attested in Arabic and in Job 8, 17: “its roots are entangled in a rocky patch, it resembles a stone house”. Ḥezyōn I was probably Ezron's immediate successor, but we do not know whether he was his son.

¹³⁸ See W.T. PITARD, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 100-104.

¹³⁹ S. ABRAMSKI, *The Resurrection of the Kingdom of Damascus and Its Historiographic Record* (in Hebrew), in Y. AVISHUR - J. BLAU (eds.), *Meḥqarīm bə-Miqrā' ū-bə-Mizrah ha-Qadmōn*, Jerusalem 1978, p. 17-43 (see p. 15-16).

¹⁴⁰ V. DONBAZ, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae in the Antakya and Kahramanmaraş Museums*, in *ARRIM* 8 (1990), p. 5-24, see the Kizkapanli (Pazarcık) stela, reverse = RIMA III, text A.O.105.1, p. 240, line 6. The name *Ḥa-di-a-ni* was borne by Kapara's father (cf. above, p. 131) and a *Ḥa-di-ia-a-ni* is mentioned also in the unpublished Babylonian document BM. 40548, line 8, from *ca.* 765 B.C., quoted by BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 280.



The Omayyad mosque in Damascus, built on the site of the great temple of Hadad.

Ṭab-Rimmōn, in Aramaic *Ṭāb-Rammān*, “Rammān is good”, bears a name with the characteristic epithet “Thunderer” of Hadad of Damascus (II Kings 5, 18). This widely used name of the Storm-god¹⁴¹ is already attested in Amorite anthroponomy¹⁴². As for Ben-Hadad, it is an Hebrew adaptation of Aramaic *Bar-Hadad*, “Son of Hadad”. This king, the first of the name, is usually referred to as Bar-Hadad I.

¹⁴¹ J.C. GREENFIELD, *The Aramean God Rammān/Rimmōn*, in *IEJ* 26 (1976), p. 195-198; ZADOK, *WSB*, p. 49-50; J.C. GREENFIELD, *Hadad*, in *DDD*, Leiden 1995, col. 716-726, in particular col. 720. See also below, p. 627-630.

¹⁴² Ch.-F. JEAN, *Contrats de Larsa* (TCL 10), Paris 1926, No. 133, line 153, where D. ARNAUD, *RA* 70 (1976), p. 89a, reads the name ^d*Ra-ma-nu-um-a-bi*.

The first concrete historical information about the kingdom of Damascus after Ezron concerns Bar-Hadad I who was involved in a boundary war between Israel and Judah (I Kings 15, 16-22; II Chron. 16, 1-6). He was first an ally of Basha, king of Israel, but then changed sides, enticed as he was by Asa's rich presents and by the desire of annexing Israelite territories to the kingdom of Damascus. In fact, he captured 'Iyyōn, Dan, Abel-Bēt-Maaka, and Kinneroth (I Kings 15, 20).

The name 'Iyyōn survives in the present Marḡ 'Iyyūn, situated in an upland plain between the Nahr al-Liṭānī and the Nahr al-Ḥaṣbānī (Lebanon). The ancient site has been located in the vicinity at Tell Dibbīn¹⁴³. Dan is generally believed to be Tell al-Qāḍi, on the main headwaters of the Jordan, but it rather corresponds to Abil al-Qamḥ, about 7 km to the west of Tell al-Qāḍi, while the latter is very likely Abil-Mayin, also called Abel-Bēt-Maaka¹⁴⁴. The destruction level of Bamah A (Stratum IV) at Tell al-Qāḍi, dated by archaeologists from the first quarter of the 9th century B.C.¹⁴⁵, may be connected with the Aramaean conquest of the area at the time of Bar-Hadad I. The main city on the road to Kinneroth was Hazor, which is not mentioned¹⁴⁶, while Kinneroth must be identified with Tell al-'Oreimeh¹⁴⁷. How long this area remained in Aramaean hands after Bar-Hadad I's expedition is unclear, since no information is available so far on this point.

¹⁴³ ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 352.

¹⁴⁴ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Studia z dziejów i kultury starożytnego Wschodu*, Warszawa, forthcoming. The water abundance suggested by the very name of Abil-Mayin and the vicinity of Mount ῬΑΠΙΣ (translation of *Širyōn*, a name of Mount Hermon) to ῬΑΒΕΛΜΑΟΨΜ/Λ, according to the Greek Testament of Levi 2, 5, point clearly to the site of Tell al-Qāḍi. The Greek transcription is based on *Abil-Mayim/n* read as *'blmwm/n* with the frequent confusion *y/w*. This has not been seen by G. SCHMITT, *op. cit.* (n. 77), p. 33-34.

¹⁴⁵ A. BIRAN, *Tell Dan — Five Years Later*, in *BA* 43 (1980), p. 168-182, in particular p. 175-176; ID., *Dan*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. I, p. 323-332 (see p. 327); ID., *Biblical Dan*, Jerusalem 1994, p. 181, 183.

¹⁴⁶ Stratum IXB or IXA might correspond to this period; cf. Y. YADIN et al., *Hazor I*, Jerusalem 1958, p. 22-23. The Aramaic epigraph found in Stratum IX may belong to Stratum IXA and witness the Aramaean occupation of the site. The doubts concerning the reading *zy*, expressed by B. DELAVAUULT - A. LEMAIRE, *art. cit.* (n. 21), p. 10, No. 14, do not seem to be justified and one should follow the reading proposed by J. NAVEH, *The Epigraphic Finds from Areas A and B*, in A. BEN-TOR (ed.), *Hazor III-IV. Text*, Jerusalem 1989, p. 346-347; *Hazor III-IV. Plates*, Jerusalem 1961, Pl. CCCLVII, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Stratum IV is dated from this period: V. FRITZ (ed.), *Kinneret: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell el-'Orēme am See Gennesaret, 1982-1985*, Wiesbaden 1990, p. 40-42; ID., *Kinneret: Excavations at Tell el-'Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot), 1982-1985 Seasons*, in *Tel Aviv* 20 (1993), p. 187-215; V. FRITZ - D. VIEWEGER, *Vorbericht über die Ausgrabungen in Kinneret (Tell el-'Orēme) 1994 und 1995*, in *ZDPV* 112 (1996), p. 81-99; V. FRITZ, *Kinneret: Excavations at Tell el-Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot). Preliminary Report on the 1994-1997 Seasons*, in *Tel Aviv* 26 (1999), p. 92-115.

After the account of Bar-Hadad I's campaign in Israel, the first event in the history of Aram-Damascus mentioned in the Bible is the death of king Hadadezer (*Adad-idri*) and the accession of Hazael, about 843 B.C. (II Kings 8, 7-15). Although the biblical narrative erroneously gives the name "Ben-Hadad" to the sick king of Aram-Damascus, the Assyrian sources leave no doubt about his identity: he was Hadadezer¹⁴⁸, probably the immediate successor of Bar-Hadad I and a contemporary of Omri (*ca.* 884-873 B.C.) and of Ahab (*ca.* 873-852 B.C.). No account is extant concerning the relations between Omri and the king of Damascus, but the initial fragmentary lines of the Tell al-Qāḍi inscription may allude to Omri's attack on Abīl (Tell al-Qāḍi) during Hadadezer's reign and to the recapture of its territory by the king of Israel¹⁴⁹.

If the first verb of the preserved part of line 1' may be reconstructed [*lš*]mr or the like¹⁵⁰, the following 'ain must belong to the subject of this verb, namely '[mry]', "Omri", the only known ruler of the region and of the period concerned whose name initiates with 'ain¹⁵¹. In this case, Omri is the king of Israel who fought the ruler of Aram-Damascus, whose death is reported in line 3' and who was Hadadezer:

1' [*lš*]mr. '[mry .]wgzr[]
 2' [. 'l]. 'by.ysq[. 'lwh.b']tlh^hm^h.b'b[y]l
 3' wyškb. 'by.yhk. 'l[. 'abhw]h.wy 'l.mlk y[š]
 4' r'l.qdm.b'r^q. 'by[l]¹⁵².

¹⁴⁸ RIMA III, text A.O.102.40, p. 118, lines 25-27a.

¹⁴⁹ The three discovered fragments of the stela are correctly placed by the editors: A. BIRAN - J. NAVEH, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment*, in *IEJ* 45 (1995), p. 1-18. However, as shown by the final juxtaposition of the fragments in the Israel Museum, three letters are missing in the middle of line 4', two in the middle of line 5', and five in the middle of line 6', where the upper tip of the second missing letter *n* is preserved. The reconstruction of the historical context in SAIO II, p. 83-90, which was based on the first fragment alone, has to be abandoned in favour of the previous studies of the author, as in E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Aram et Israël du Xe au VIIIe siècle av.n.è.*, in *ActAnt* 27 (1979 [1981]), p. 49-102, in particular p. 76-77. The literature on the subject has been collected by I. KOTTSIEPER, *Die Inschrift vom Tell Dan und die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Aram-Damaskus und Israel in der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrtausends vor Christus*, in M. DIETRICH - I. KOTTSIEPER (eds.), "Und Moses schrieb dieses Lied auf". *Festschrift für O. Loretz* (AOAT 250), Münster 1998, p. 475-500 (see p. 497-500). One should add A. LEMAIRE, *Les nouveaux fragments de la stèle araméenne de Tell Dan. Philologie et histoire*, in Chr.-B. AMPHOUX - A. FREY - U. SCHATTNER-RIESER (eds.), *Études sémitiques et samaritaines offertes à Jean Margain* (Histoire du texte biblique 4), Paris 1998, p. 41-52.

¹⁵⁰ The clause *wgzr*, "and he cut", of the additional fragment makes the restoration [wy']mr, "and he said", less probable.

¹⁵¹ SAIO II, p. 84; S. AHITUV, *Suzerain or Vassal? Notes on the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan*, in *IEJ* 43 (1993), p. 246-247.

¹⁵² The word *qdm* cannot be the direct object of the verb 'll, as proposed by I. KOTTSIEPER, *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 481, since 'll is used here with the preposition *b*. To

- 1' "[] O[mri did not ob]serve [] and he cut []
 2' [against] my father, so as to go up [against him when] he was fighting at Ab[īl].
 3' And my father lay down, so as to go to his [fathers]. And the king of I[s-]
 4' rael had entered afore into the land of Abī[ī] ..."

As suggested above¹⁵³, the story of II Sam. 10, 15-19a may refer in reality to another war waged by Hadadezer of Damascus against Israel during Omri's reign. It has long been noticed that the paragraph breaks the sequence of the narrative and must be from another source. There is little doubt that it was inserted by the Deuteronomistic redactor in an earlier edition of the History of David's Succession¹⁵⁴. Its present form cannot be dated before the late 8th century B.C., when the geographical appellation 'ēber hannāhār of the Syrian territories to the west of the Euphrates first appears in the available sources¹⁵⁵. The presence of David's name is a late feature as well: the original adversary of the Aramaeans in the text was Israel alone, i.e. the northern Hebrew kingdom, as can still be seen in II Sam. 10, 15a.18a.19a. The paragraph clearly refers to northern Transjordan since the Israelite army crosses the Jordan river and reaches the site of Hēlam, about 85 km south of Damascus¹⁵⁶. It decisively defeats the army of the Aramaeans under the leadership of the general Shobak, slaying seven hundred chariots and forty thousand horsemen (II Sam. 10, 18), that become seven thousand chariots and forty thousand footmen in the parallel text of I Chron. 19, 18. These enormous numbers are in line with similar exaggerations in other biblical texts, but the mention of chariots (*rkb*) and of horsemen (*prš*), as well as the reported killing of their commander-in-chief, parallel lines 6'-9' of the Tell al-Qāḍi inscription and may thus be based on a source that follows the same narrative scheme and goes back to the 9th century B.C.

make his suggestion apparently acceptable, Kottsieper must introduce a relative clause in his translation. Neither can it be a verb in this grammatical structure, as suggested by A. LEMAIRE and N. NA'AMAN (*IEJ* 50 [2000], p. 97). After line 3' *qdm* simply refers back to the events of line 2'. Further, the phrase "the land of my father" would have been unusual. Instead, there are many parallels to "the land of Abīl", e.g. "the land of Ataroth" (Mesha 10), "the land of Benjamin" (Judg. 22, 21), "the land of Gad" (I Sam. 13, 7), "the land of Shalisha" (I Sam. 9, 4), "the land of Shaalim" (I Sam. 9, 4), "the land of Šuph" (I Sam. 9, 5), etc.

¹⁵³ See p. 337-338.

¹⁵⁴ In fact, this passage is still missing in the edition as reconstructed by F. LANGLAMET, *David, fils de Jessé: une édition prédeutéronomiste de l'"Histoire de la succession"*, in *RB* 89 (1982), p. 5-47 (see p. 22).

¹⁵⁵ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Les Sémites selon Gen 10, 21-30 et 1 Chr 1, 17-23*, in *ZAH* 6 (1993), p. 193-215 (see p. 204).

¹⁵⁶ See here above, p. 64.

The name of the Aramaean commander-in-chief, called *Šōbak* in II Sam. 10, 16.18 and *Šōpak* in I Chron. 19, 16.18, raises a particular problem, for such a name does not seem to appear in Aramaic anthroponomy. Besides, the vocalization is questionable since the same name is spelt Σεβεκος or Σαβεκος by Josephus Flavius¹⁵⁷ and it appears as Σαβαχ in the *Codex Alexandrinus* of the Septuagint. The *mater lectionis* was thus missing in the name as written originally, i.e. *šbk* or *špk*. Now, such an anthroponym is attested in Nabataean (*Šbykw*)¹⁵⁸ and in Šafaitic (*S¹bk/S²bk*)¹⁵⁹. It is apparently related to the root *šbk*, “to interweave”, “to attach”. The original form of this North-Arabian name, borne by the commander-in-chief of the Aramaean army, might thus have been *Šabīk*. However, there must be a reason why *w* was later inserted in the name: *Šwbk/Šwpk*. If this spelling is the result of a change $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$, the name may instead have been *Šābik*, as suggested by Σαβεκος in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus Flavius.

The stories of I Kings 20 and 22 do not belong to the time of Ahab¹⁶⁰, who appears instead as an ally of Hadadezer in the royal inscription of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.). The chronology of the Bible and its use of older sources referring to this period are extremely problematical, but a plausible reconstruction of events is feasible thanks to Assyrian, Aramaic, and Moabite inscriptions, all dating from the 9th century B.C. In particular, one should discount the seven years (*ca.* 849-842 B.C.) of Athaliah's reign in Jerusalem (II Kings 11, 4), since in reality she was acting in Judah as queen regent for Jehoram, king both of Israel and of Judah after the death of his brother Ahaziah (*ca.* 851 B.C.) and of Jehoshaphat (*ca.* 849 B.C.), whose all sons have been killed (II Chron. 21, 2-4).

It was Shalmaneser III's ambition to expand much farther into Syria than his father Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.) did. Therefore, after his campaigns of 858-855 in the bend of the Euphrates¹⁶¹, he moved in 853 towards central Syria. In this move south he was to meet fierce opposition in the form of an alliance of twelve central and southern Syrian states the chiefs of which were Hadadezer of Damascus, Urhiliḫ of Hamath, and Ahab of Israel. According to the text of the Kurkh Mono-

¹⁵⁷ FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, *Jewish Antiquities* VII, 6, 3, § 127.

¹⁵⁸ A. NEGEV, *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm* (Qedem 32), Jerusalem 1991, p. 61, No. 1095.

¹⁵⁹ HARDING, *Arabian Names*, p. 309 and 339.

¹⁶⁰ See below, p. 378 and 397-399. A good synthesis of the discussion, with literature, is provided by F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, *Les relations entre les cités de la côte phénicienne et les royaumes d'Israël et de Juda* (OLA 46), Leuven 1992, p. 89-94.

¹⁶¹ See here above, p. 190-193.

lith, which was written shortly after the battle of Qarqar on the Orontes¹⁶², the allies had almost 4,000 chariots, 2,000 horsemen, 1,000 camels, and over 50,000 footmen. Although Shalmaneser III claims to have beaten them, the Assyrian army did not proceed further south but turned west to the Mediterranean¹⁶³, and it did not venture on a campaign in central Syria until 849 B.C. These are strong arguments in favour of the opinion that Shalmaneser III suffered a setback at Qarqar.

Shalmaneser III fought three further battles with the Damascus coalition headed by Hadadezer, one in each of 849, 848, and 845 B.C.¹⁶⁴. The descriptions of these battles are vague, they do not mention any taking of cities, except Aštamaku and eighty-nine villages¹⁶⁵, any submission of the adversary. It is clear that the coalition had then displayed sufficient strength to keep the Assyrians from winning any significant victory in central and southern Syria. The fact that Hadadezer is named as the leader of the alliance in every campaign indicates that he represented the most powerful force facing the Assyrians.

There is no further reference in Assyrian sources to hostile acts against Damascus until 841 B.C. But there had been a change of ruler in Damascus between 845 and 841, probably in 843 B.C. A text of Shalmaneser III mentions the death of Hadadezer and the rise of the usurper Hazael to the throne of Damascus: "Hadadezer died. Hazael, the son of a nobody, seized the throne"¹⁶⁶. "The son of a nobody" is the regular designation of a usurper, but there is nothing in this notice which signifies that Hazael murdered the king. This may be understood instead in II Kings 8, 7-15, where the name Ben-Hadad was given erroneously to the king of Aram

¹⁶² For the location of Qarqar, see here above, p. 264-266. A good synthesis of the discussions around this battle is provided by F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, *op. cit.* (n. 160), p. 79-89.

¹⁶³ RIMA III, text A.0.102.6, p. 37, line 33; text A.0.102.8, p. 46, line 19'a.

¹⁶⁴ RIMA III, text A.0.102.6, p. 37-38, lines 60b-67; p. 38, lines 1-10a; p. 39, lines 24-33; text A.0.102.8, p. 46-47, lines 32'b-34'a; p. 47, lines 37'b-39'a; p. 47, lines 44'b-47'a; text A.0.102.10, p. 53, col. II, 55-III, 5; p. 53-54, lines 14-25; text A.0.102.14, p. 66, lines 87b-89a; p. 66-67, lines 91b-92a; text A.0.102.16, p. 76, lines 74'b-81'; p. 77, lines 87'b-95'; text A.0.102.23, p. 95, lines 21-27; text A.0.102.24, p. 96, lines 14b-17; text A.0.102.29; p. 105, lines 12b-20; text A.0.102.30, p. 107, lines 22-28a (combination of the campaigns in 848 and 853 B.C.).

¹⁶⁵ RIMA III, text A.0.102.6, p. 38, lines 1b-3a; text A.0.102.10, p. 53, lines 56-57 (^{uru}Ab-ši-ma-ku); text A.0.102.14, p. 66, line 88; text A.0.102.16, p. 76, lines 75'b-77'a (^{uru}Ab-ta-ma-ku); cf. text A.0.102.82, p. 147.

¹⁶⁶ RIMA III, text A.0.102.40, p. 118, lines 25-26a. A careful analysis of sources referring to Hazael is provided by A. LEMAIRE, *Hazaël de Damas, roi d'Aram*, in D. CHARPIN - F. JOANNÈS (eds.), *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs. Études sur la civilisation mésopotamienne offertes à Paul Garelli*, Paris 1991, p. 91-108.

who was originally anonymous in the biblical story. Now, in the inscription of Tell al-Qāḍi, the author of which is Hazael himself, the latter presents his predecessor as his father¹⁶⁷. Moreover, the biblical account implies a very close relation between Hazael and the sick king. Therefore, one should not exclude the possibility that Hazael was a son of Hadadezer by an inferior wife or that he simply was no heir apparent to the throne. At any rate, the murder of a king by a son is attested later in the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Gurgum and in Assyria. Muwatalli, son of Tarḫulara of Gurgum, killed his father and seized the throne¹⁶⁸. In Assyria, Sennacherib, who had appointed his younger son Esarhaddon as heir to the throne, was murdered in 681 B.C. by two of his elder sons¹⁶⁹.

When Hazael rose to power in Damascus about 843 B.C., the political situation in central and southern Syria changed radically. The anti-Assyrian alliance headed by Hadadezer automatically dissolved, as it was a highly personal affair of the dead king. Moreover, the former allies of Damascus seem to have turned into its enemies, since the Tell al-Qāḍi stela indicates that Hazael first marched against Israel, supported by Judah, and waged battle against his southern neighbour. According to the Tell al-Qāḍi inscription the war was aimed at recovering the territory of Abīl, but its reason may have been deeper, since Israel disappears in 842 B.C. from the list of the enemies of Assyria in the edition of Shalmaneser III's annals issued in that year¹⁷⁰.

A battle between the two states took place near Ramoth Gilead, very likely in 842 B.C.¹⁷¹. It resulted in the killing of Jehoram of Israel and of

¹⁶⁷ A. BIRAN - J. NAVEH, *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 17-18. According to V. SASSON, *Murderers, Usurpers, or what? Hazael, Jehu, and the Tel Dan Old Aramaic Inscription*, in *UF* 28 (1996), p. 547-554, Hazael's royal descent can be admitted, "but not necessarily in line of succession to the throne of Aram-Damascus". Instead, Sasson ascribes little historical value to the source of II Kings 8, 7-15, since he considers that "the evidence appears too tenuous and too ambiguous to warrant such an accusation as that of murder".

¹⁶⁸ J.D. HAWKINS, *Muttallu*, in *RLA* VIII, Berlin 1993-97, p. 501-502 (see § 2).

¹⁶⁹ S. PARPOLA, *The Murderer of Sennacherib*, in *Death in Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamia 8), Copenhagen 1980, p. 171-182; M. STOL, *De moord op Sanherib*, in *Phoenix* 28 (1982 [1983]), p. 37-38; cf. R. BORGER, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfO, Beih. 6), Graz 1956, p. 40, lines 8-19.

¹⁷⁰ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *An Assyro-Israelite Alliance in 842/841 B.C.E.?*, in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* I, Jerusalem 1977, p. 273-278.

¹⁷¹ In earlier publications we have dated this battle to 841 B.C., especially in E. LIPÍŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 170), and *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 76-77. However, the information provided by the Tell al-Qāḍi stela seems to point to the siege of some Israelite cities by Hazael in the very same year of the battle of Ramoth Gilead and all these events can hardly be placed in the same year as Shalmaneser III's campaign against Damascus in 841 B.C. This means that the death of Jehoram and of Ahaziah, and Jehu's accession to the throne of the Omrides, must be dated to 842 B.C. The different historical context, proposed in

Ahaziah of Judah, who was not only his ally but also his son. This was one of the main battles in the history of the kingdom of Israel and it is referred to by Hazael himself in the Tell al-Qāḍi inscription, further in II Kings 8, 28 and 9, 14b, with a more detailed account in I Kings 22, 3-37 and II Chron. 18, 3-34, where the names of Ahab and of Jehoshaphat had been added to the original text that mentioned “the king of Israel” and “the king of Judah” without specifying their name¹⁷². The earliest account is obviously that of the Tell al-Qāḍi stela, which was erected shortly after the events, since its scattered pieces were already reused in a pavement and a wall dated by pottery to *ca.* 800 B.C.¹⁷³:

3' ... wy'l.mlk y[š]
 4' r'l.qdm.b'rq.'by[l.wy]hmlk.hdd.'[yty]
 5' 'nh.wyhk.hdd.qdmy[.wy]'pq.mn.šb.'[l.ysd']
 6' y.mlky.w'qtl.ml[kn.tqy],p,n.'sry.'[lpy.r]
 7' kb.w'lpy.prš.[qtl't.'yt.yhw]rm.br.'[h'b]
 8' mlk.yšr'l.wqtl[t.'yt.'h'z]yhw.br[h.ml]
 9' k.byt dwd.w'šm.[mšr.'l. qr]
 10' yt.'rq.hm.l[]

3' "... And the king of I[s-]
 4' rael had entered afore into the land of Abī[l, but] Hadad made me king¹⁷⁴,
 5' me in person, and Hadad went in front of me [and] overcame whomsoever
 had turned ag[ainst the foundations?]
 6' of my reign, and I killed [migh]ty kin[gs] who had harnessed thou[sands of
 cha-]
 7' riots and thousands of horsemen: [I killed Jeho]ram, son of [Ahab,]
 8' king of Israel, and [I] killed [Ahaz]iah¹⁷⁵, [his] son, [kin]¹⁷⁶

SAIO II, p. 83-85, on the basis of the first fragment of the Tell al-Qāḍi stela, cannot be sustained any more.

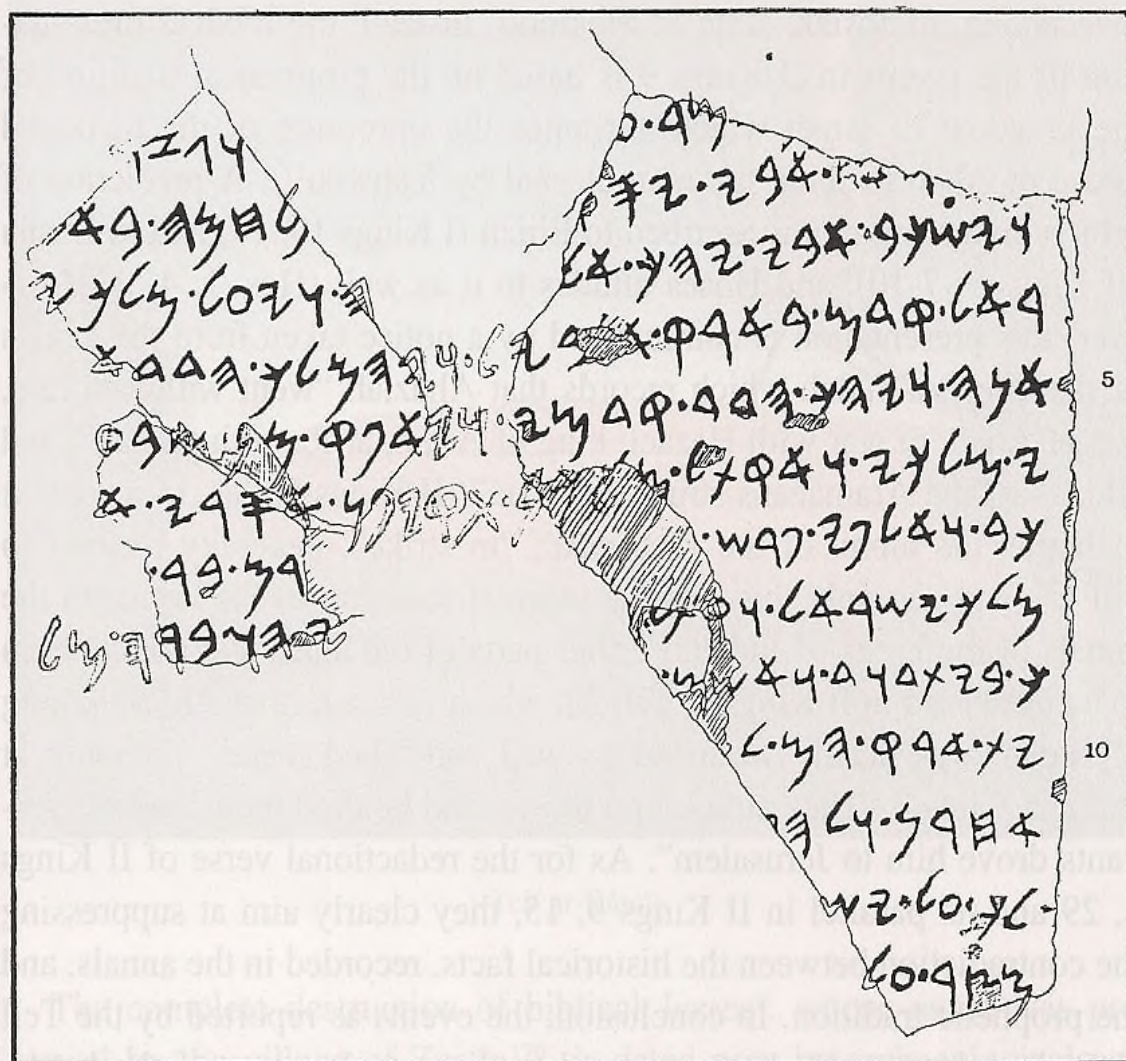
¹⁷² E. LIPŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 170), and *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 76-77. See also F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, *op. cit.* (n. 160), p. 90-94.

¹⁷³ A. BIRAN - J. NAVEH, *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 1-8.

¹⁷⁴ For the reading 'by[l] instead of 'by, "my father", see SAIO II, p. 85-86, confirmed by b'b[y]l in line 1. The originally long ī of the Semitic noun *abīl*, "meadow", is clearly indicated also in the name of the kingdom *Abīlum*, occasionally spelt *A-bi-ī-lī* in Mari documents; cf. J.-M. DURAND, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari II* (LAPO 17), Paris 1998, p. 651. Two signs are missing in line 5', where Hadad is the subject of [wy]'pk. A supplementary letter must be restored also in the middle of lines 4' and 6' (see here above, p. 373, n. 149).

¹⁷⁵ *Yhw* cannot stand for *Yhw'*, "Jehu", as proposed by DION, *Araméens*, p. 194-195; ID., *The Tel Dan Stele and Its Historical Significance*, in Y. AVISHUR - R. DEUTSCH (eds.), *Michael. Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. M. Heltzer*, Tel Aviv-Jaffa 1999, p. 145-156. The final -a' of Jehu's name is indicated also in Assyrian: *Ia-ū-a* (RIMA III, text A.0.102.8, p. 48, line 26'; text A.0.102.12, p. 60, line 29; text A.0.102.88, p. 149).

¹⁷⁶ The reconstruction *br[.yhwrm.ml]k* is certainly too long. There is only space for a dot and for three letters, most likely *br[h.ml]k*. This would mean that Ahaziah was a son



Facsimile of the Tell al-Qādi inscription (based on A. Yardeni's copy).

9' g of the House of David, and I led [siege to to-]
 10' wns of their land to []”.

Hazael ascribes the slaying of Jehoram and of Ahaziah to himself, while the picturesque narrative in II Kings 9 describes in detail how both kings were slain by Jehu. It was no exceptional event that a king was killed or mortally wounded on the battlefield, as shown by the examples of Panamuwa II, killed in the war against Damascus, of Sargon II, fallen

of Jehoram, king of Israel, who was the same person as Jehoram, king of Judah, as proposed by J. STRANGE, *Joram, King of Israel and Judah*, in VT 25 (1975), p. 191-201. However, considering the place left on the stela at the end of line 7', Jehoram would have been a son of Ahab (four letters), not of Jehoshaphat (six letters), contrary to Strange's opinion. Also II Chron. 21, 2-7 (cf. II Kings 8, 18-19) seems to reflect a source indicating that Jehoram did not belong to the House of David. — The phrase *mlk bytdwd* is paralleled in the Ammonite inscription from Tell Siran by the repeated *mlk bn 'mn*, “king of the sons of ‘Ammān”; cf. K.P. JACKSON, *The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age*, Chico 1983, p. 36. See also R. DEUTSCH - M. HELTZER, *West Semitic Epigraphic News of the 1st Millennium BCE*, Tel Aviv 1999, p. 53-55, No. 145.

in Anatolia, of Josiah, slain at Megiddo. Instead, the biblical presentation of the events in II Kings 9 is based on the prophetic tradition of the kingdom of Israel which attributes the uprooting of the ill-famed house of Ahab to Jehu, the man elected by Yahweh¹⁷⁷. A prediction of Jehu's divine mission is ascribed to Elijah (I Kings 19, 17) and to Elisha (II Kings 9, 7-10), and Hosea alludes to it as well (Hos. 1, 4-5). However, this presentation is contradicted by a notice taken from the annals of the kings of Judah which records that Ahaziah "went with Jehoram, son of Ahab, to war with Hazael, king of Aram, at Ramoth Gilead", and adds that "the Aramaeans struck Jehoram" (II Kings 8, 28). In a context of battle, the hiphil of the verb *nākā*, "to strike", generally means "to kill"¹⁷⁸, and certainly this was the original meaning of the notice in the annals of the kings of Judah. Further parts of the annalistic notice seem to be preserved in II Kings 9, 27b-28, which indicates that Ahaziah, king of Judah, was deadly wounded as well and "died there", probably at Ramoth Gilead: "They struck him too ... and he died there, and his servants drove him to Jerusalem". As for the redactional verse of II Kings 8, 29 and its parallel in II Kings 9, 15, they clearly aim at suppressing the contradiction between the historical facts, recorded in the annals, and the prophetic tradition. In conclusion, the events as reported by the Tell al-Qāḍi stela very likely correspond to the actual course of the battle, while the prophetic tradition adapts the facts to a theocentric vision of history. Besides, if Jehu would have really been the killer of the last Omride kings, the Assyrian inscriptions would probably not have called him "son of Omri".

The final lines of the Tell al-Qāḍi stela seem to allude to the siege and possibly the capture of some cities in Israel. They are very fragmentary, but the events referred to must have followed in the wake of the battle at Ramoth Gilead. In fact, lines 11'-12' seem to mention Jehu's accession in Israel, which took place in the very same year of the battle: *[wyhw'.m]lk. 'l.yš[r'l]*, "[and Jehu be]came king over Is[rael]" (lines 11'-12').

Probable traces of Hazael's offensive in northern Israel and of his seizing of several towns, after the Ramoth Gilead battle or a few years later, have been uncovered at Zer'in (Tel Jezreel), at Megiddo, at Tell Qaimūn (Tel Yoqne'am), at Ta'anach, at Bēt-shean and Tell aṣ-Ṣarim (Tel Rehov), possibly at Tell al-Ḥamma and Tell al-'Aṣi (Tel 'Amal).

¹⁷⁷ I Kings 19, 16-17; II Kings 9, 1-6.10b-14a.

¹⁷⁸ J. CONRAD, *nkh*, in *ThWAT* V, Stuttgart 1986, col. 445-454, especially col. 447-450.



Tell ar-Rāmīt.

The complete destruction of biblical Jezreel, whose name was preserved by the village of Zer'in¹⁷⁹, is dated now by archaeological evidence to the mid-9th century B.C.¹⁸⁰. The arrows found near the city gate and the tower indicate that Jezreel was seized by force¹⁸¹, possibly after a siege, that can best be linked with Hazael's invasion of northern Israel in 842 B.C.¹⁸². As for the biblical account in II Kings 9, 30-37, it must be evaluated in the same way as the entire chapter.

The recently proposed synchronism between the pottery of the destruction level at Jezreel and Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo¹⁸³, a site

¹⁷⁹ ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 364-365; D. USSISHKIN - J. WOODHEAD, *Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991: Preliminary Report*, in *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992), p. 3-56 (see p. 3-8).

¹⁸⁰ D. USSISHKIN - J. WOODHEAD, *art. cit.* (n. 79), especially p. 50-53; ID. - ID., *Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1992-1993: Second Preliminary Report*, in *Levant* 26 (1994), p. 1-48, especially p. 47; ID. - ID., *Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1994-1996: Third Preliminary Report*, in *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997), p. 6-72, especially p. 69-70.

¹⁸¹ ID. - ID., *art. cit.* (n. 180), in *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997), p. 64-66, 70.

¹⁸² N. NA'AMAN, *Historical and Literary Notes on the Excavations of Tel Jezreel*, in *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997), p. 122-128, especially p. 125-127.

¹⁸³ O. ZIMHONI, *The Iron Age Pottery from Tel Jezreel — An Interim Report*, in *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992), p. 57-70; EAD., *Clues from the Enclosure-Fills: Pre-Omridd Settlement at Tel Jezreel*, in *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997), p. 83-109, challenged by A. BEN-TOR, *BASOR* 317 (2000), p. 12-13. In Megiddo buildings 6000 and 2081, near the gate, a variety of pottery vessels was found smashed on the floors, evidence of a violent, immediate destruction. Cf. G. LOUD, *Megiddo II* (OIP 42), Chicago 1948, p. 45-46.

situated 14 km from Jezreel, seems to indicate that Megiddo was captured and destroyed at the same time as Jezreel, contrary to a previous opinion which identified this stratum with the Solomonic city and dated Stratum IVA to the 9th century¹⁸⁴. Also the fortified settlement of Stratum XIV at Tell Qaimūn (Tel Yoqne‘am)¹⁸⁵ may have been destroyed by the Aramaeans, while Stratum XIII, represented only by a few pits, would correspond to the period of the Aramaean domination in northern Israel¹⁸⁶. The destruction of the cultic structure of Period IIB at Ta‘anach¹⁸⁷, located halfway between Jezreel and Megiddo, can be attributed to the Aramaeans as well¹⁸⁸, and the heavy conflagrations which put an end to the flourishing city of Rehob and destroyed Stratum S-1 (Stratum Lower V) on the mound of Bēt-shean¹⁸⁹, may be related to the same chain of events¹⁹⁰. Since the typical storage jars and the calcite loom weights found in this destruction layer at Bēt-shean are very similar to those of Tell al-Ḥamma and of Tell al-‘Aṣi (Tel ‘Amal)¹⁹¹, both close to Bēt-shean, also these places are likely to have been destroyed by the Aramaeans in the same circumstances¹⁹².

The assignment of the destruction of Jezreel — and logically of other towns as well — to Jehu’s alleged rebellion¹⁹³ cannot be taken

¹⁸⁴ Y. YADIN, *Megiddo of the Kings of Israel*, in *BA* 33 (1970), p. 66-96; *Id.*, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 147-164; J. D. CURRID, *The Re-Stratification of Megiddo during the United Monarchy*, in *ZDPV* 107 (1991 [1992]), p. 28-38.

¹⁸⁵ A. BEN-TOR, *Jokneam*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. III, p. 805-811, with earlier literature. Only the final report of the later periods is published so far: A. BEN-TOR - M. AVISSAR - Y. PORTUGALI, *Yoqne‘am I* (Qedem Reports 3), Jerusalem 1996.

¹⁸⁶ N. NA‘AMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 182), p. 127.

¹⁸⁷ A.E. GLOCK, *Taanach*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. IV, p. 1428-1432, with earlier literature; I. FINKELSTEIN, *Notes on the Stratigraphy and Chronology of Iron Age Ta‘anach*, in *Tel Aviv* 25 (1998), p. 208-218.

¹⁸⁸ N. NA‘AMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 182), p. 127; cf. O. ZIMHONI, *art. cit.* (n. 183), in *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992), p. 69.

¹⁸⁹ A. MAZAR, *Beth Shean in the Iron Age: Preliminary Report and Conclusions of the 1990-1991 Excavations*, in *IEJ* 43 (1993), p. 201-229, especially p. 224-228; *Id.*, *Four Thousand Years of History at Tel Beth-Shean* (in Hebrew), in *Qadmoniot* 27 (1994), p. 66-83 (see p. 70, 81-82); *Id.*, *The 1997-1998 Excavations at Tel Rehov: Preliminary Report*, in *IEJ* 49 (1999), p. 1-42, where the full literature referring to A. Mazar’s excavations at Bēt-shean is also given on p. 1-2, n. 3.

¹⁹⁰ N. NA‘AMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 182), p. 127; A. MAZAR, *art. cit.* (n. 189), in *IEJ* 49 (1999), p. 42.

¹⁹¹ A. MAZAR, *art. cit.* (n. 189), p. 226; cf. S. LEVY - G. EDELSTEIN, *Cinq saisons de fouilles à Tel ‘Amal (Nir David)*, in *RB* 79 (1972), p. 325-367 and Pl. XVIII-XXVIII, especially p. 347, Fig. 8:5-10; J. CAHILL - D. TERLER - G. LIPOWITZ, *Tell el-Hammeh in the Tenth Century BCE* (in Hebrew), in *Qadmoniot* 22 (1989), p. 33-38 (see p. 36).

¹⁹² N. NA‘AMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 182), p. 127.

¹⁹³ D. USSISHKIN - J. WOODHEAD, *art. cit.* (n. 179), p. 53; cf. *Id.* - *Id.*, *art. cit.* (n. 180), in *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997), p. 70.



Tell Qaimūn (Tel Yoqne'am), excavated in 1977-1988 under the direction of Amnon Ben-Tor (Photo Courtesy Tel Yoqne'am Excavations).

seriously into account, because a king of Israel would not have razed fortified cities of his own realm¹⁹⁴. Also the attribution of these destructions to the Assyrians is very unlikely, since Jehu had paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in 841 B.C.¹⁹⁵. As for the widespread dating of the destruction of the above-mentioned sites to the Egyptian campaign led by pharaoh Sheshonq I *ca.* 925 B.C.¹⁹⁶, it cannot be sustained any more if there is synchronism between the pottery of Jezreel and that of Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo¹⁹⁷. It thus seems more probable that it was Megiddo Stratum VIA that got burned during the Egyptian campaign¹⁹⁸. But this subject goes beyond the general frame of the present work.

¹⁹⁴ N. NA'AMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 182), p. 125-126.

¹⁹⁵ See the references here below, p. 384, n. 199 and 202.

¹⁹⁶ Thus, still recently, N. NA'AMAN, *The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research*, in ZAW 107 (1995), p. 179-195 (see p. 188).

¹⁹⁷ See here above, p. 381, n. 183.

¹⁹⁸ The erection of a stela by the pharaoh at Megiddo seems however to indicate that the destruction of the city was only partial and that Sheshonq intended to keep hold of it; cf. D. USSISHKIN, *Notes on Megiddo, Gezer, Ashdod, and Tel Batash in the Tenth to Ninth Centuries B.C.*, in BASOR 277/278 (1990), p. 71-91 (see p. 71-74).

Jehu's rise to power did not reduce hostilities between Aram-Damascus and Israel, while the Assyrians were considering Jehu as a simple continuator of the Omride dynasty and called him "son of Omri"¹⁹⁹. However, Hazael was not able to exploit his victory over Israel fully, for Shalmaneser III once again turned against Damascus in 841 B.C.²⁰⁰. The former Damascus coalition was no more, the king of Ḥamath does not seem to have opposed any resistance to the advance of the Assyrian army, and Israel was ready to pay tribute to Shalmaneser III. Hazael stood thus alone in the face of the Assyrian advance. He took up a position at Mount Senir, on a summit in the foothills of the Antilebanon range, controlling the route that the Assyrian army was following from the northern Beqa' Valley, along the Barada river toward Damascus. The Assyrians gained the fortified position but Hazael managed to retreat into the city of Damascus, which Shalmaneser III besieged. He cut down the orchards of the oasis and burned the surrounding country, but Damascus did not fall. Shalmaneser III proceeded then to ravage the cities and villages in the Ḥawrān area, before moving westward through North Israel in order to reach the Mediterranean coast. He erected a stela "by the seaside, opposite Tyre", at a place called ^{kur}*Ba-'li-ra-'si*, "Baal of the Cape"²⁰¹, where he received tribute from Jehu of Israel and from the kings of Tyre and Sidon²⁰². This place corresponds most likely to Rās an-Nāqūra²⁰³, at the present Israeli-Lebanese frontier. From there, the Assyrian army marched northward along the Phoenician coast.

Damascus had survived and preserved its independence, but it had to face the Assyrian threat again in 838 and 837 according to the Eponym Chronicle²⁰⁴. Both campaigns are presented as a single one, in 838 B.C., in the annalistic inscriptions of Shalmaneser III²⁰⁵, which mentioned

¹⁹⁹ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.8, p. 48, lines 26'-27''; text A.0.102.10, p. 54, line 11; text A.0.102.11, p. 60, lines 29-30; text A.0.102.16, p. 78, line 135'; text A.0.102.88, p. 149.

²⁰⁰ Detailed accounts of this campaign are found in *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.8, p. 48, lines 1''-27''; text A.0.102.10, p. 54, col. III, 45a-IV, 15a; text A.0.102.12, p. 60, lines 20''-30''a; text A.0.102.16, p. 77-78, lines 122'b-137'a. Shorter versions are given in *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.9, p. 49, lines 1'-15'; text A.0.102.14, p. 67, lines 97b-99a; text A.0.102.40, p. 118, col. I, 27b-II, 1.

²⁰¹ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.10, p. 54, lines 8-9; text A.0.102.16, p. 78, line 133'.

²⁰² Jehu's tribute is represented on the "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III: *ANEP*, No. 353, upper register. Cf. *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.88, p. 149.

²⁰³ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Note de topographie historique: Ba'li-Ra'si et Ra'su Qudšu*, in *RB* 78 (1971), p. 84-92. See also *Id.*, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (OLA 64), Leuven 1995, p. 274-275.

²⁰⁴ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 29.

²⁰⁵ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.14, p. 67, lines 102b-104a; text A.0.102.16, p. 78-79, lines 154'-162'a.

four fortified cities of Hazael. Only two names are preserved, namely Danabu and Malaḥa, and the text suggests that the Assyrian army then marched to Phoenicia and followed the seacoast northwards, probably as far as Tell al-Kāzīl, where “Baal, the man of Simyra” (^{kur}[*Ṣi-mir-r*]a), as it seems, submitted and paid tribute.

In 838, in any case, the Assyrian army captured the city of Malaḥa, “a royal city of Hazael”. If Malaḥa is the Aramaic name of Hazor, as argued above²⁰⁶, Hazor is one of the cities of northern Israel that had fallen to Hazael in 842 B.C. Tell al-Qāḍi, situated about 30 km north of Hazor, was probably captured by the Assyrians during the same campaign of 838 B.C., and Hazael’s stela may have been smashed in these circumstances. The details of this expedition are uncertain, because the preserved accounts are short and fragmentary. Only a cylinder seal found at Ashur refers to booty taken from a temple of the Aramaean Moon-god Šehr at Malaḥa²⁰⁷. As for the campaign of 837 in the Damascus area, it reached the “fortified city” of Danabu, which can be located north of Irbid, as suggested above²⁰⁸. No circumstances of this campaign are known so far.

After this conflict with Aram-Damascus, Shalmaneser III never returned to central and southern Syria. His attention turned then farther west and north into Anatolia, where the main adversary of Assyria was Urartu. Besides, a political confusion increasingly marked the end of Shalmaneser III’s reign and continued during the first years of Shamshi-Adad V (823-811 B.C.). These are the reasons why more than thirty years past after Shalmaneser III’s campaign of 837 before an Assyrian army penetrated into the realm of Aram-Damascus again.

Once pressure from Assyria abated, Hazael developed an expansionist policy southward and northward, especially at Israel’s expense. The barbarities of his incursions into Israel are announced by Elisha who allegedly addresses Hazael as follows: “I know what you will do to the Israelites. You will send fire upon their strongholds, their young men you will slay with the sword, their little ones you will dash in pieces, and their pregnant women you will rip up” (II Kings 8, 12). A summary of the Israelite defeats at the hands of Hazael seems to indicate that the territories east of the Jordan had suffered particularly from his expansionist policy: “Hazael smote them in all the marches of Israel from the

²⁰⁶ See here above, p. 350-351.

²⁰⁷ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.92, p. 151. See here above, p. 350-351.

²⁰⁸ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.16, p. 79, line 157’. See here above, p. 352-353.

Jordan eastward with all the land of Gilead ... and Bashan”²⁰⁹. According to II Kings 13, 7, the king of Aram-Damascus was able to reduce Israel’s army to “fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen”. From the religious point of view, this was an expression of God’s anger: “The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael, the king of Aram, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, without intermission” (II Kings 13, 3). Some of the destructions mentioned above may have occurred not in 842 B.C. but a few years later, after 837. In particular, the final conquest of Gilead by Hazael probably was the result of several campaigns and possibly of alliances with the Ammonites and the Moabites²¹⁰. In the same period, indeed, Mesha conquered Israel’s possessions in southern Transjordan without major difficulties, as suggested by the inscription of his stela.

During the reign of Jehoahaz, Jehu’s son and successor, Hazael extended his incursions into the area west of the Jordan valley. The Lucianic manuscripts of the Septuagint refer to an Aramaean campaign in Philistia and contain a significantly larger version of II Kings 13, 22, which should probably be accepted as original material²¹¹: “Hazael, the king of Aram, oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz, and Hazael took the Philistine out of his hand from the Western Sea unto Apheq” (καὶ εἰλαβεν Ἀζαήλ τον αλλοφυλον εκ χειρος αυτου απο θαλασσης της καθ εσπεραν εως Αφεκ). Rahlfs’ drastic criticism of this reading points out that Philistine rule never extended to Apheq on the plateau at the southeastern end of the Sea of Galilee, and that Lucian misunderstood *yam ha-‘ārābā*, which refers generally to the Dead Sea, for exemple in II Kings 14, 25²¹². However, Lucianic “Western Sea” should translate Hebrew *yam mabō’ haššemeš* (cf. Josh. 1, 4), and Apheq must correspond here to Rās al-‘Ayn in the Sharon plain, 14 km east of the Mediterranean coast. The precise meaning of this sentence is not clear, but it seems to signify that the Sharon plain down to Apheq depended until then from the king of Israel but was inhabited by Philistines. Apheq was indeed a Philis-

²⁰⁹ II Kings 10, 32b-33. Verse 33 is expanded by a redactional gloss.

²¹⁰ A. LEMAIRE, *La stèle de Mésha et l’histoire d’Israël*, in D. GARRONE - F. ISRAEL (eds.), *Storia e tradizioni di Israele. Scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin*, Brescia 1991, p. 143-169, especially p. 158-160.

²¹¹ See the older opinions in J.A. MONTGOMERY - H.S. GEHMAN, *The Books of Kings* (ICC), Edinburgh 1951, p. 438.

²¹² A. RAHLFS, *Septuaginta-Studien* III. *Lucians Rezension der Königsbücher*, Stuttgart 1911, p. 289, followed by A. ŠANDA, *Die Bücher der Könige* II, Münster 1912, *ad loc.*

tine stronghold in the 11th century B.C.²¹³, but it may have become an Israelite dependency in the 10th century. In any case, Hazael pushed into Philistia proper as well, where he captured Gath according to II Kings 12, 18 (cf. Am. 6, 2). Philistia in Iron Age II was a group of individual city-states, rather than an organized Pentapolis acting in concert and following the same policy. Therefore, Hazael's attack on one of these city-states had no immediate bearing on the attitude and policy of the other cities.

On account of the placement of II Kings 12, 18 in the biblical text, Hazael's thrust to Philistia came in the latter part of his reign²¹⁴, probably ca. 810 B.C. Hazael seems to have moved down to the coastal plain, putting an end to the Israelite influence in its northern part (LXX Luc. II Kings 13, 22) and reaching Ashdod, where the destructions noticed in Stratum IX of the lower city²¹⁵ should be attributed to his campaign²¹⁶. The Judaeann annalist was of course interested mainly in the fate of Gath, where Hazael moved next, since Philistine Gath was a gateway to the Judaeann hills and thence to Jerusalem²¹⁷. Assuming that the city of the Philistine Pentapolis is meant here²¹⁸ and that it is to be located at Tell aṣ-Ṣāfi, on a spur of the Shephelah commanding the way to Jerusalem by the Wādī as-Sanṭ and the Wādī aṣ-Ṣarār²¹⁹, one can understand that Hazael turned from Gath to come up against Jerusalem. The general

²¹³ This results from the excavations, the findings of which are summarized by A. EITAN - P. BECK - M. KOCHAVI, *Aphek (in Sharon)*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. I, p. 62-72.

²¹⁴ C.S. EHRLICH, *The Philistines in Transition: A History from ca. 1000-730 B.C.E.* (Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 10), Leiden 1996, p. 72-74.

²¹⁵ Partial destruction of the fortifications was noticed in Area M: M. DOTHAN - Y. PORATH, *Ashdod IV* ('Atiqot. English Series 15), Jerusalem 1982, p. 55-56. Contemporary destruction traces were found also in Area D, including a small shrine: M. DOTHAN et al., *Ashdod II/III* ('Atiqot. English Series 9-10), Jerusalem 1971, p. 21. See now M. DOTHAN, *Ashdod*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. I, p. 93-102, especially p. 99, where the destruction of Stratum IX is attributed to Uzziah.

²¹⁶ Stratum IX goes back certainly to the 9th century, as shown by the pottery briefly presented by M. DOTHAN - Y. PORATH, *op. cit.* (n. 215), p. 25-26. The partial destruction of Stratum IX should be dated from the end of the same 9th century, not from the mid-8th century, as thought by the excavators.

²¹⁷ H. E. KASSIS, *Gath and the Structure of the "Philistine" Society*, in *JBL* 84 (1965), p. 259-271 (see p. 261).

²¹⁸ On the problem involved by the various identifications of this city, see A.F. RAINEY, *The Identification of Philistine Gath — A Problem in Source Analysis for Historical Geography*, in *Nelson Glueck Memorial Volume* (ErIs 12), Jerusalem 1975, p. 63*-76*. See also E. STERN, *Zafit, Tel*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. IV, p. 1522-1524; A.M. MAEIR - A.J. BOAS, *Tell es-Safi*, in *AJA* 102 (1998), p. 785-786.

²¹⁹ This strategic location of the site is rightly considered as an argument in favour of its identification with Gath by W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *The Geopolitical History of Philistine Gath*, in *BASOR* 309 (1998), p. 69-77.

destruction of Stratum IIb at Bēt-Shemesh (‘Ayn Šams), which should be dated around that period²²⁰, apparently indicates that Hazael followed the route of the Wādī aš-Šarār (Sorek Brook) and met stiff Judaeen resistance there. Recent excavations have shown in fact that Bēt-Shemesh was a strongly fortified place²²¹, which obviously had to protect Jerusalem from the west, but failed stopping Hazael’s march towards the city. But Joash, the king of Judah, sent the treasures of the temple and of the palace to Hazael, who was bought off from attacking the city by this move (II Kings 12, 18-19), which most likely implied that Joash then became a vassal to the king of Aram. According to II Chron. 24, 23-25, this event took place just before the death of Joash (cf. II Kings 12, 20-21), and thus towards the end of the reign of Hazael.

Hazael also expanded his influence in northern Syria, but the evidence is actually limited to Hazael’s ivory plaque discovered at Arslan Taş, and to two booty inscriptions on horse’s forehead ornaments, one of which was unearthed in Samos and the other at Eretria, in Euboea. In both booty inscriptions one reads *zy ntn Hdd lmr’n Hz’l mn ‘mq bšnt ‘dh mr’n nhr*²²², “that which Hadad gave to our lord Hazael from ‘Umq in the year that our lord crossed the River”. A similar inscription is engraved on the ivory plaque, where we reconstruct the following text: *[zy.ntn.H]dd. ‘m’.lmr’n.Hz’l.bšnt[.’h]zt.H[zz’]*²²³, “[that which H]adad

²²⁰ The discussion about the date of Stratum II is summarized by J.A. EMERTON, *Beth-Shemesh*, in D.W. THOMAS (ed.), *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, Oxford 1967, p. 197-206, especially p. 201-203. The recent excavations leave no doubt that Stratum IIb dates from the 10th-9th centuries and Stratum IIc from the 8th century B.C., since it contains jar handles stamped with *lmlk* seals. It was destroyed by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. Cf. S. BUNIMOWITZ - Z. LEDERMAN, *Beth-Shemesh*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. I, p. 249-253, especially p. 251-252; S.R. WOLFF, *Archaeology in Israel*, in *AJA* 97 (1993), p. 135-163 (see p. 146-147), and 98 (1994), p. 481-519 (see p. 498-500); S. BUNIMOWITZ - Z. LEDERMAN, *Six Seasons of Excavations at Tel Beth-Shemesh — A Border Town in Judah*, in *Qadmoniot* 30 (1997), p. 22-37 (in Hebrew).

²²¹ S. BUNIMOWITZ - Z. LEDERMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 220), in *NEAEHL*, p. 253, and mainly in *Qadmoniot*. See also S.R. WOLFF, *art. cit.* (n. 220), in *AJA* 98 (1994), p. 498-500.

²²² We follow the reading and the interpretation given by I. EPH‘AL - J. NAVEH, *Hazael’s Booty Inscriptions*, in *IEJ* 39 (1989), p. 192-200 and Pl. 24-25. The same reading and grammatical analysis have been proposed by F. BRON - A. LEMAIRE, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Hazaël*, in *RA* 83 (1989), p. 35-44. However, their attempt at considering Hadad as the name of a ruler of ‘Umq, known to have been governed in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. by Neo-Hittite kings (cf. A.M. JASINK, *Gli stati neo-ittiti. Analisi delle fonti scritte e sintesi storica* [Studia Mediterranea 10], Pavia 1995, p. 77-83), is improbable and the hypothesis of an Aramaean dynasty between Sasi (ca. 830 B.C.) and Tutamuwa (ca. 740 B.C.) is still weakened by the unusual form of an Aramaic personal name “Hadad” that would be reduced to the sole theophorous element.

²²³ *SAIO* II, p. 92-93.

of 'Imma [gave] to our lord Hazael in the year that Ḥa[zaz'] was [cap]tured".

These inscriptions not only attribute Hazael's victories to Hadad, who is conceived in the Tell al-Qādi inscription as the god "going in front" of Hazael²²⁴, but they also appear as the forerunners of the later Aramaic dedications in which a deity is said to honour a meritorious personality²²⁵. The ivory plaque apparently mentions [H]adad of 'Imma, a well-known city which is called Yenişehir nowadays and is located on strategic crossroads²²⁶, where a sanctuary of Hadad was certainly not out of place. It controlled the easiest and the most direct passage from central Syria and from Aleppo to ancient 'Umq and Antakya. There is therefore a link between this inscription and the booty inscriptions which mention 'Umq, obviously the Neo-Hittite kingdom which is also called Pattin²²⁷. However, Hadad's gifts to Hazael are dated from two different years and therefore imply at least two different campaigns conducted by the king in northern Syria. The main achievement of one campaign was "the crossing of the River". This River might be the Euphrates, but the mention of 'Umq rather suggests a crossing of the Orontes. The word *nāru*, "river", often occurs in Assyrian correspondence without any qualification and may designate any river, according to various contexts. Also in Hebrew "the River" must be identified sometimes with the Jordan, as in Numb. 22, 5. Therefore, there is no stringent reason why *nhr* should be the Euphrates in Hazael's inscriptions. The second campaign of the Aramaean king in northern Syria was apparently highlighted by the seizure of an important city, the name of which began with Ḥ. This might have been Aleppo (Ḥ[*lb*]), mainly in consideration of "Hadad of 'Imma", but one cannot exclude Ḥ[*zz*], Ḥ[*mt*], and Ḥ[*zrk*], which was to become Zakkūr's capital city.

These campaigns did certainly not lead to the creation of a united Aramaean empire, since the various Aramaean and Neo-Hittite states of central and northern Syria did not cease to exist. At the most, the kings of

²²⁴ Line 5'; see here above, p. 378.

²²⁵ This is the central subject of the work by J.T. MILIK, *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à l'époque romaine* (BAH 92), Paris 1972.

²²⁶ DUSSAUD, *Topographie*, p. 231-232.

²²⁷ There is not the slightest evidence that 'Amqi was a geographical name for Bēt-Reḥob, and the construction *ntn* - subject - *l+*complement - *mn*+complement perfectly corresponds to the use of *mn* in connection with verbal forms indicating acquisition and related concepts (DNWSI, p. 651), contrary to N. NA'AMAN, *Hazael of 'Amqi and Hadadezer of Beth-Rehob*, in *UF* 27 (1995), p. 381-394.

some of these states became vassals to Hazael, as was probably the case with the kings of Israel and of Judah. Only northern Transjordan, i.e. the Golan heights and Gilead, have been actually annexed to Hazael's kingdom, as indicated by II Kings 10, 33 and confirmed by Am. 1, 3-4; this was also the case of the cities in the "land of Abīl"²²⁸, in Upper Galilee, to which probably alludes II Kings 13, 25. Besides, the trading concessions in Samaria, mentioned in I Kings 20, 34, must date back to the reign of Hazael, the father of Bar-Hadad II who is the protagonist of the events described in I Kings 20²²⁹.

The exact date of Hazael's death is unknown, but the notice in II Kings 13, 22 suggests that Jehoahaz, the king of Israel, and Hazael died about the same time: "Hazael, the king of Aram, oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz". Now, the death of Jehoahaz is assigned to some time between 805 and 798 B.C.²³⁰. Some additional information is provided by Assyrian sources dating from the reign of Adad-nirari III, who attacked Damascus in 803 B.C. and received a considerable tribute from its king, whom the Assyrian inscriptions call *māri*', in Aramaic "lord", without specifying his proper name²³¹.

Since a proper name *māri*', "lord", is not attested in ancient Aramaic²³², the Assyrian *ma-ri-*' must go back to the Damascene royal title used in various Hazael's inscriptions²³³, on the jar handle stamped *lmr*'²³⁴, which parallels Hebrew *lmlk*, and certainly in the royal corre-

²²⁸ Tell al-Qāḍi stela, line 4'; see here above, p. 378.

²²⁹ See below, p. 397-399.

²³⁰ H. TADMOR, *Krōnōlōgya*, in *EM* IV, Jerusalem 1962, col. 245-310, especially the synoptic table in col. 261-262. G. GALIL, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, Leiden 1996, p. 74, dates the coregency of Joash with his father from 806 B.C. and his sole rule from 803 B.C. on.

²³¹ *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.6, p. 209, line 19; text A.0.104.7, p. 211, line 7; text A.0.104.8, p. 213, line 15. See also here below, p. 393.

²³² The Late Babylonian name *Ma-ri-e*, attested in H.V. HILPRECHT - A.T. CLAY, *BE* IX, Philadelphia 1898, No. 1, 1, and the later Jewish name *Mārī* (JASTROW, p. 842b) probably mean "fat", "well-fed", since descriptive proper names occur frequently in Semitic languages; cf. M. NOTH, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*, Stuttgart 1928, p. 224-229; J.J. STAMM, *Die akkadische Namengebung* (MVÄG 44), Leipzig 1939, p. 264-267.

²³³ Besides Hazael's title *mr'n*, which occurs in the booty inscriptions and on the ivory plaque (see above p. 388), one could mention the place name *Būr-Mar'īna* (*RIMA* III, text A.0.102.2, p. 15, line 36; cf. *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.81, p. 345-346), if its meaning was "the well of our lord", but this is not very likely; see here above, p. 175-176. One should add instead that *mry'/mr'* was the earlier title used for the ruler of Hatra: *DNWSI*, p. 687.

²³⁴ M. HELTZER, *An Old-Aramean Seal-Impression and Some Problems of the History of the Kingdom of Damascus*, in M. SOKOLOFF (ed.), *Arameans, Aramaic and the Aramaic Literary Tradition*, Ramat-Gan 1983, p. 9-13; N. AVIGAD - B. SASS, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, Jerusalem 1997, p. 303, No. 808. See also here below, p. 499, n. 64.

spondence, in which Hazael, as suzerain, may have been called even *mr' mlkn*, "lord of kings"²³⁵. The use of this title instead of the proper name of the Aramaean monarch in Assyrian inscriptions from the reign of Adad-nirari III can hardly be explained as a simple error made by Assyrian scribes who mistook the title of the Aramaean king for his name and wrote it with the determinative of proper names. The use of the royal title seems rather to reflect a doubt about the identity of the king of Damascus at the time of Adad-nirari III's campaign or at the time of writing down the first report on this campaign. This doubt may result from a coregency of the old king Hazael with his son Bar-Hadad II, or be caused by Hazael's death in the period concerned, or by both. The date of the campaign can thus provide a clue for the dating of Hazael's death.

The dating of this campaign to 796 B.C., when the Eponym Chronicle reports an expedition *ana Maṣuate*²³⁶, can easily be excluded. Since this campaign resulted in taking a rich tribute from Damascus, also from Samaria, Tyre, and Sidon, the Eponym Chronicle would have certainly indicated *ana Dimmašqa*, or a further located place, instead of mentioning a less known city situated about 200 km north of Damascus²³⁷. Important information is provided by the Saba'a²³⁸ and the Tell ar-Rimāḥ²³⁹ stelae, commissioned by Nergal-ēreš, governor of Rašappa, eponym in 803 B.C. and one of the most powerful men of the period. Both stelae mention ^{kur}*Hindānu* among the holdings of Nergal-ēreš. Since this region on the Middle Euphrates was added to his domain in 797 B.C. by royal decree²⁴⁰, both stelae must date no earlier than 797, but may postdate the campaign *ana Maṣuate* in 796 B.C. However, the Saba'a stela dates Adad-nirari III's decision of marching to Syria from his fifth year, i.e. 806 B.C.²⁴¹, and the Eponym Chronicle actually dates these western campaigns from the years 805, 804, 803, and possibly 802 B.C.²⁴². They are

²³⁵ In Adon's letter, the Pharaoh is addressed as *mr' mlkn*: TAD I, A1.1, 1.

²³⁶ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 35.

²³⁷ For its location, see here above, p. 304-310.

²³⁸ A new decipherment of the inscription was provided by H. TADMOR, *The Historical Inscriptions of Adad-Nirari III*, in *Iraq* 35 (1973), p. 141-150, especially p. 144-146 = *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.6, p. 207-209.

²³⁹ Published by S. PAGE (DALLEY), *A Stela of Adad-Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell al-Rimah*, in *Iraq* 30 (1968), p. 139-153 and Pl. XXXVIII-XLI = *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.7, p. 209-212.

²⁴⁰ SAA XII, 85 = *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.9, p. 213-216.

²⁴¹ The pertinent passage reads as follows: "In the fifth year I sat down solemnly on my royal throne and called up the country, ordering the numerous army of Assyria to march to the land of Ḫatti" (lines 11b-13a).

²⁴² MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 33-34. The discrepancy between the fifth year of the Saba'a stela and the sixth year of the Eponym Chronicle was explained by A. POEBEL, *The Assyrian*

followed by a series of northern and northeastern expeditions in the years 801-797 B.C.²⁴³. The campaigns of 805 and 804 to Arpad and to Ḥazāzu do not enter into account here, while the campaign of 802 *ana muḫḫi tāmtim* was apparently directed to the Sealand, in southern Babylonia, as the variant *ina ti-[amat]*, “in the Sea(land)”, may suggest²⁴⁴. In fact, the middle part of Adad-nirari III’s reign seems to be the likeliest time for his campaigns in Babylonia²⁴⁵, thus probably in 802 and in 795-794 B.C., when the king marched *a-na/ina* ^{uru}*De-e-ri*²⁴⁶. The campaign of 803 *a-na/ina* ^{uru}*Ba-’-li* must thus mark the year when Damascus was captured and tribute was paid by Joash of Samaria, and by Tyre and Sidon, according to the Tell ar-Rimāḥ stela²⁴⁷. This date is confirmed by the fact that the two stelae commissioned by Nergal-ēreš deal exclusively with Adad-nirari III’s western campaigns, especially with the defeat of Damascus in 803 B.C., the year when Nergal-ēreš was eponym²⁴⁸ and, as such, has played an important role in this event. The previous victory of Adad-nirari III over Arpad is not even mentioned²⁴⁹, probably because Nergal-ēreš did not participate in the campaigns of 805 and 804 B.C. The later career of Nergal-ēreš was oriented towards the territories of the Middle Euphrates area, as it results from his titles, while Syria became the influence sphere of the *turtānu* Shamshi-ilu. This appears also from the royal charter that grants Nergal-ēreš the province of Ḥindānu in 797 B.C. His activities were thus distracted from the West-Syrian area on the eve of the Assyrian campaign to Manṣuate in 796 B.C. The report on the campaign against Damascus in the Tell ar-Rimāḥ inscription even stresses that the conquest of Amurru was achieved “in a single year” (line 4), i.e. in 803 B.C. As for the Calah Slab, which refers to the same campaign, it reports

ian King List from Khorsabad, in *JNES* 2 (1943), p. 56-90 (see p. 82-83), by assuming that already at the end of 806 the king assembled the troops.

²⁴³ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 34-35.

²⁴⁴ The sea never appears in the Eponym Chronicle as the goal of an Assyrian campaign, while *Tāmtu* without preceding *KUR*, “land”, may designate the Sealand, as in the title *LUGAL tam-tim* of Marduk-apla-iddina II; cf. J.A. BRINKMAN, *Merodach-Baladan II*, in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim*, Chicago 1964, p. 6-53 (see p. 12, n. 36); ID., *PKB*, p. 217 with n. 1359; p. 262, n. 1676; A.R. MILLARD, rec. in *Or* 39 (1970), p. 448.

²⁴⁵ BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 216-217; W. SCHRAMM, *Einleitung in die assyrischen Königsinschriften* II, Leiden 1973, p. 116; A.K. GRAYSON, in *CAH* III/1, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1982, p. 273.

²⁴⁶ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 35; ID., in *Or* 39 (1970), p. 448.

²⁴⁷ Cf. here above, p. 391, n. 239; *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.7, p. 211, lines 6b-9.

²⁴⁸ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 34.

²⁴⁹ The historical narrative of the Saba’a stela, lines 11b-20 (cf. p. 391, n. 238), presents the western campaigns of 805-803 (802?) as if the defeat of Damascus was their single culminating achievement.

the subjugation of the Chaldaean chieftains (*šarrāni ša^{kur} Kaldi*) immediately after the tribute paid by Damascus²⁵⁰, thus suggesting that the campaign of 802 B.C. was directed against the Sealand.

The obvious conclusion is that Joash of Israel reigned already in 803 B.C. and that his father Jehoahaz was dead by that time. If the biblical statement that Hazael oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz (II Kings 13, 22) is taken at its face value, it suggests that he lived until *ca.* 803 B.C., but may have died in the same year, perhaps during the siege of Damascus or shortly after the capture of the city. In fact, nothing is said about his fate. This would explain the use of the royal title *māri* in Assyrian inscriptions instead of a proper name. The "ivory bed and couch" listed in the tribute received from the *māri*²⁵¹ must nevertheless be Hazael's bed, decorative pieces of which can be recognized among Hazael's ivories found at Arslan Taş and at Nimrud²⁵², and belonging most likely to the booty taken from Damascus in 803 B.C.²⁵³.

No details are given by the Assyrians concerning the siege and capture of Damascus, but there was an obvious feeling of pleasure in detailing the amount of the tribute received inside the palace of Damascus, although accuracy in numbers meant little indeed to scribes eager to align impressive figures, as shown in the following table:

	Tell ar-Rimāḥ	Saba'a	Calah Slab
gold	-	100 talents	20 talents
silver	2,000 talents	1,000 talents	2,300 talents
copper	1,000 talents	(?)	3,000 talents
iron	2,000 talents	-	5,000 talents
garments	3,000	-	unnumbered
ivory	-	-	bed & couch

²⁵⁰ Its new decipherment is provided by H. TADMOR, *art. cit.* (n. 238), p. 148-150 = *RIMA* III, text A.O.104.8, p. 213, lines 22-23a.

²⁵¹ The Calah Slab (*RIMA* III, text A.O.104.8, p. 212-213), line 20; cf. n. 250.

²⁵² The name of Hazael appears on the ivory plaquette from Arslan Taş, mentioned here above (cf. *SAIO* II, p. 92-93), and on an ivory from Nimrud with the inscription [*mr*]'n ḥz'l, published by M.E.L. MALLOWAN, *Nimrud and Its Remains* I, London 1966, p. 598-599, cf. p. 472.

²⁵³ Later datings of these and related pieces, as well as the groundless hypothesis about another king Hazael, can be dismissed safely. Cf. J. THIMME, *Phönizische Elfenbeine*, Karlsruhe 1973, p. XIII-XVI; I.J. WINTER, *Is there a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the Early First Millennium B.C.?*, in *Iraq* 43 (1981), p. 101-130 and Pl. VI-XVII, in particular p. 106, 121-122.

Also the political background of the events and the route of the Assyrian army, before and after the capture of Damascus, are not described. This is due to the nature of the available sources: annalistic texts are missing and our information comes largely from inscriptions of powerful governors whose main aim was to record their achievements and their holdings. There is no doubt, however, that an agreement had to be reached with Ḥamath before attacking Damascus. A side glimpse of such an agreement with Zakkūr, the new king of Ḥamath and Luḡath, may be perceived in the inscription of the Antakya stela²⁵⁴. The events following the capture of Damascus are not clear either, but it is remarkable that the oldest inscription — the one of Tell ar-Rimāḥ, as it seems — records the proper name of king Joash of Israel, but does not name the rulers of Tyre and Sidon. Besides, it calls Joash ^m*Ia-’-su* ^{kur}*Sa-me-ri-na-a-a*²⁵⁵, while Jehu was DUMU ^m*Hu-um-ri-i*²⁵⁶ and Israel is often called ^{kur}*Bēt-Hu-um-ri-a* even later, at the time of Tiglath-pileser III²⁵⁷. The particular link of king Joash with Samaria may thus have a factual basis. We propose to find it behind the events narrated in II Kings 6, 24 - 7, 20, where the terror-stricken troops of Bar-Hadad II, son of Hazael, are said to have fled from their camp around the besieged city of Samaria at the sound of an approaching army (II Kings 7, 6-7):

“The Lord had caused the camp of Aram to hear the sound of chariots, the sound of horses, the sound of a great army, and they said to one other: ‘Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to come against us’. So they rose and fled in the dusk and they abandoned their tents and their horses and their asses, the camp just as it was, and they fled for their life”.

The author attributes the dispersion of the Aramaean army and the lifting of the siege to divine intervention, as in II Kings 18, 13 - 19, 37. However, such popular stories generally have a factual background and the sudden panic caused by the rumor of an approaching army is likely to have a historical basis²⁵⁸. The syntagm *škr* ‘lynw, “he hired against us”, occurs also in the Phoenician Kilamuwa inscription of the

²⁵⁴ See here above, p. 282-284.

²⁵⁵ *RIMA* III, text A.0.104.7, p. 211, line 8.

²⁵⁶ *RIMA* III, text A.0.102.8, p. 48, lines 26”-27”; text A.0.102.10, p. 54, line 11; text A.0.102.12, p. 60, lines 29-30; text A.0.102.88, p. 149.

²⁵⁷ *Tigl. III*, p. 138, line 6’; p. 140, line 15’; p. 186, line 4; p. 188, line [9]; p. 202, line [17’].

²⁵⁸ This does not mean, of course, that the panic caused by the sound of an army was no literary topos in the 8th century B.C., as shown, for example, in *ANET*, p. 285a.

9th century B.C.²⁵⁹, and it must reflect the literary language of that period. The mention of the “kings of the Hittites”, i.e. Syrians²⁶⁰, and of the “kings of Egypt” should be understood as the stylistic device expressing the totality by mentioning two opposites, here practically “the kings of the north” and “the kings of the south”²⁶¹. At that time, the only deliverer could be the king of Assyria, and also the passage in II Kings 13, 5, without naming him, refers to a saviour: “Yahweh gave Israel a saviour and they went out from under the hand of Aram”. This reference to a deliverer is reminiscent of a similar sentence in II Kings 16, 7, where king Ahaz of Judah sends messengers to Tiglath-pileser III, asking him: “Come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram”.

The identity of the deliverer of Israel in the historical context of the period *ca.* 800 B.C. can hardly be a debatable question. Already H. Winckler suggested that this “saviour” was Adad-nirari III²⁶², who captured Damascus in 803 and received the tribute of Joash of Israel. No other date than 803 B.C. can reasonably be proposed for an Assyrian intervention near Samaria, which resulted in a panic among the Aramaean besiegers and in a tribute paid by Joash. The author of the story in II Kings 6, 24 - 7, 20 was certainly aware of the historical circumstances of the siege of Samaria by Bar-Hadad II and of its sudden lifting at the approach of the Assyrian army.

If the biblical story has any historical value, Winckler’s interpretation has wide-ranging implications. In fact, the siege of Samaria by Bar-Hadad II must date from the same year as the siege and capture of Damascus by Adad-nirari III in 803 B.C. If Bar-Hadad commanded the Aramaean troops around Samaria, the *māri’* besieged in Damascus had to be Hazael. In any case, the two events are connected and may have a political background, expressed in the available sources only by the mention of the tribute paid by Joash.

How far did the Assyrian army go south into Israel’s territory on its way from Damascus to the Mediterranean, we do not know. Does the farthest point it has reached, called ^{uru}*Ba’-li* in the Eponym Chronicle²⁶³,

²⁵⁹ KAI 24 = TSSI III, 7-8. Cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, *From Karatepe to Pyrgi. Middle Phoenician Miscellanea*, in *RSF* 2 (1974), p. 45-61 (see p. 50). Cf. also II Sam. 10, 6.

²⁶⁰ In the Neo-Assyrian period, the land of Ḫatti corresponds roughly to Syro-Phoenicia.

²⁶¹ This stylistic device occurs very often in ancient Near Eastern literature.

²⁶² H. WINCKLER, *Geschichte Israels in Einzeldarstellungen* I, Leipzig 1895, p. 154; ID., *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed., vol. I, *Geschichte und Geographie*, Berlin 1902, p. 260. He was followed by many authors.

²⁶³ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 34.

designate a city in northern Israel instead of a town on the Mediterranean coast? This is possible, but *Ba'li* is the first element of so many place names in Israel and in the Syro-Phoenician realm that it is difficult to link it with a specific geographic site, unless additional information is provided.

In any case, the location of ^{uru}*Ba'-li* depends on the march of the Assyrian army during the campaign of 803. Now, the siege and capture of Damascus were followed by the tribute paid by Joash of Israel, by Tyre, and Sidon. This means that the Assyrian army proceeded from Damascus to the southwest and crossed through the northern territories of Israel from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean, thus following a route similar to Shalmaneser III's in 841 B.C. *Ba'li* might thus correspond to Ibleam, modern Tell Bel'ame²⁶⁴, on the road from the Jezreel valley to Samaria, situated only 20 km south. The current name of the place, used already in Antiquity, was *Bil'ām* (I Chron. 6, 55)²⁶⁵, hence Βελ-μαιν/βαιμ in Judith 4, 4; 7, 3, and Βαλαμῶν in Judith 8, 3²⁶⁶. *Ba'li* would then derive by metathesis from *Bil'a-*, reshaped under the influence of the large number of toponyms beginning with *Ba'l*. This site at the southern extremity of the Jezreel valley, on an important trade route, could explain the passage of the Assyrian army through this area, *ina Ba'-li*, as well as the rumor that allegedly had reached the Aramaeans besieging Samaria. It was also a place where Joash of Samaria could have paid tribute to Adad-nirari III, while the kings of Tyre and Sidon would have done it in the coastal area. Therefore, another hypothesis has to be mentioned as well, namely that *Ba'-li* is a shortened form of ^{kur}*Ba'-li-ra'-si*, known from Shalmaneser III's annals²⁶⁷. This hypothesis has nevertheless been challenged because of the assumed but unusual alternation of the determinatives KUR/URU in relation to a mountain. The discovery of a nearby town bearing a similar name would furnish the easiest answer, but there are no indications so far that such a town existed

²⁶⁴ Tell Bel'ame is a large tell which guards the ascent to the valley of Dōtān/Δωθαίμ and to Samaria. It yielded sherds dating from the Early Bronze Age through the Iron Age. A rock-hewn tunnel, called Bīr as-Sengem, leads to a spring at the foot of the mound, like in other ancient cities of Canaan.

²⁶⁵ There is no reason why this form should be considered as corrupt. It is even preserved by the present-day name of the site.

²⁶⁶ These are various transcriptions of the same place name. According to Judith 8, 3, Manasses, Judith's husband, was buried "beside his ancestors in the field between Dothaim and Balamōn". Now, Eusebius locates Δωθαίμ 20 km north of Samaria/Sebaste; cf. E. KLOSTERMANN (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 76: 13-15. This confirms the identification of Βαλαμῶν with Ibleam. Instead, the relation to *Ba'al-hāmōn* in Cant. 8, 11 is not clear but no reason is given by ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 259, why he does not accept the identification.

²⁶⁷ We have proposed this identification in E. LIPÍŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 203), p. 88-91.

in that area, although the classical name of the Belos river, modern Nahr Na‘aman near Akko, preserves the souvenir of the cult of Baal in this region²⁶⁸, at the southern borders of the kingdom of Tyre. This area is also the most likely place where Tyre and Sidon paid tribute to the Assyrian king before his march northwards, in the direction of Arwad.

Adad-nirari III then erected a stela on the island of Arwad, “in the middle of the sea”, went to the Lebanon mountain to cut cedars²⁶⁹, and perhaps marched further to the north, as far as the mouth of the Orontes, before turning eastwards. This was the last Adad-nirari III’s campaign to the west, followed only in 796 B.C. by an expedition to central Syria, *ana Maṣuate*. This campaign obviously had a particular aim and ended on the territory of Ḥamath, without reaching the northern borders of Aram-Damascus²⁷⁰.

The battle accounts of I Kings 20 provide some information about the relations between Aram-Damascus and Israel in the same period. We have demonstrated elsewhere that the stories of I Kings 20, as well as II Kings 6, 24 - 7, 20, refer to the time of Joash of Israel²⁷¹. The battle narrated in I Kings 20, 1-21 is explicitly related in verse 1 to the siege laid to Samaria by Bar-Hadad II. Despite possible redactional retouches, there is hardly any ground for assuming that *sukkōt* in verses 12 and 16 is the town of Sukkoth in Transjordan rather than the noun “booths”, “tents”²⁷², and that Bar-Hadad had brought his army to this place, east of the Jordan river, for some unspecified reason. The unexpected way in which the Aramaeans have fled in panic at the first Israelite attack (v. 19-21) parallels the account of the panic that struck them at the sound of an army according to II Kings 7, 6-7. It is possible therefore that I Kings 20, 1-21 and II Kings 6, 24 - 7, 20 are two stories referring to the same historical event. It is hard to believe, in fact, that the Aramaeans besieging Samaria should have fled twice in panic at the first real or fancied move of the adversary.

If this interpretation of the background of both accounts is correct and if the biblical phrase “at the turn of the year” in I Kings 20, 22 is taken at its face value, the battle near Apheq, narrated in I Kings 20, 23-34,

²⁶⁸ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 203), p. 282-283. The location of ^{ur}Ba-il-ga-za-ra, mentioned by an epigraph of Sargon II’s reliefs, is unknown: *Sargon II*, p. 277, Rel. V, 15.

²⁶⁹ Tell ar-Rimāh stela: *RIMA III*, text A.0.104.7, p. 211, lines 9-12.

²⁷⁰ For this campaign, see here above, p. 304-311.

²⁷¹ E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Le Ben-Hadad II de la Bible et l’histoire*, in *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies I*, Jerusalem 1972, p. 157-173; *Id.*, *art. cit.* (n. 149), p. 80-93.

²⁷² This was the suggestion made by Y. YADIN, *Some Aspects of the Strategy of Ahab and David (I Kings 20; II Sam. 11)*, in *Biblica* 36 (1955), p. 332-351 (see p. 332-341).

has to be dated from the year 802 B.C. The same battle is referred to in the prophetic legend of II Kings 13, 14-19 (cf. v. 25), which shows clearly that the battle of Apheq was won by Joash. Apheq, the name of which means "source", is usually localized at Fīq, 6 km east of the Sea of Galilee, near the road from Damascus to Bēt-shean. However, no remains older than the Late Hellenistic period have been found at the site²⁷³, and the nearby Tel Soreg seems to be too small to be identified with Apheq²⁷⁴, described in the Bible as a major Aramaean stronghold. At 'Ein Gev (Hirbat al-'Ašiq), instead, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, a large fortified city of the 10th to 8th centuries B.C. has been discovered²⁷⁵. Its identification with Apheq has been suggested since it is distant only 6 km from Fīq where the name has survived. Despite the victory won by Joash, this area remained in Aramaean hands until the conquest of the kingdom of Aram-Damascus by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria in 732 B.C. The material culture of the region, the Aramaic inscriptions found at 'Ein Gev²⁷⁶, at Tel Hadar²⁷⁷, 7 km due north, and at Bētsaida²⁷⁸, further north, as well as the historical evidence, all points to

²⁷³ M. KOCHAVI, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. II, p. 412. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 333.

²⁷⁴ This identification was proposed by D. BEN-AMI, *The Battle of Aphek, an Israelite Preventive War within the Borders of the Kingdom of Aram* (in Hebrew), in *Eretz Golan* 58 (1981), p. 18-20. For the excavations of the site, cf. M. KOCHAVI, *The Land of Geshur Project*, in *IEJ* 39 (1989), p. 1-17 (see p. 6-9); 49 (1991), p. 180-184 (see p. 181); ID., *Land of Geshur — 1991/1992*, in *ESI* 13 (1995), p. 24-28 (see p. 28).

²⁷⁵ B. MAZAR - A. BIRAN - M. DOTHAN - I. DUNAYEVSKY, 'Ein Gev Excavations in 1961, in *IEJ* 14 (1964), p. 1-49; M. DOTHAN, *Aphek on the Israel-Aram Border and Aphek on the Amorite Border*, in *Nelson Glueck Memorial Volume* (ErIs 12), Jerusalem 1975, p. 63-65 (in Hebrew); O. BAR-YOSEF - B. MAZAR - M. KOCHAVI, 'En Gev, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. II, p. 409-412; M. KOCHAVI, *The Land of Geshur Project*, in *IEJ* 43 (1993), p. 185-190 (see p. 188-190); ID., *art. cit.* (n. 213), in *ESI* 13 (1995), p. 27-28; T. SUGIMOTO, *Iron Age Potteries from Tel En-Gev, Israel: Seasons 1990-1992*, in *Orient* 34 (1999), p. 1-21. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 333.

²⁷⁶ TSSI II, 3, on the shoulder of a store jar.

²⁷⁷ Incised on the shoulder of a store jar before firing: M. KOCHAVI, *art. cit.* (n. 275), in *IEJ* 43 (1993), p. 188a; in *ESI* 13 (1995), p. 27a.

²⁷⁸ R. ARAV - J. ROUSSEAU, *Bethsaïde, ville perdue et retrouvée*, in *RB* 100 (1993), p. 415-428 (see p. 422); R. ARAV, *Bethsaida*, in *Qadmoniot* 32 (1999), p. 78-91 (in Hebrew), especially p. 84 and 88. The inscription *lšm* + Egyptian 'nh sign on a pottery fragment is somewhat enigmatic. Instead, *Mky* (8th century B.C.), incised on a jar handle, is a well-known Aramaic proper name. For a first report on the identification of the city in the Iron Age, see R. ARAV - R. FREUND (eds.), *Bethsaida, A City by the Northern Shore of the Sea of Galilee I*, Kirksville 1995, p. 3-63, 193-201. The Iron Age II palace, built in the *bēt hīlāni* style (cf. R. ARAV - R. FREUND [eds.], *op. cit.*, vol. II, Kirksville 1999; R. ARAV - M. BERNETT, *The bīt hīlāni at Bethsaida*, in *IEJ* 50 [2000], p. 47-81), can hardly be dated to the 10th century B.C. on basis of pottery. It goes back rather to the time of Hadadezer or of Hazael, kings of Aram-Damascus in the 9th century B.C.

the mainly Aramaean control of the Golan heights and of the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.

The imitative magic and Elisha's prophecy in II Kings 13, 18 do not refer to three distinctive battles, as wrongly assumed by some authors²⁷⁹, but to a single efficient fight, signified by the sentence: "Three times²⁸⁰ did Joash strike him and he recovered the cities of Israel" (II Kings 13, 25). The additional verse in II Kings 13, 19 uses the numeric parallelism 5/6²⁸¹ and means that a complete defeat of Aram would have been possible, had Joash struck twice three times. This is apparently an allusion to the parity treaty made by Joash with Bar-Hadad II (I Kings 20, 32-34), who is called "brother" as in the phraseology used between princes of equal rank²⁸². Such an agreement did not imply a complete defeat of Aram-Damascus, although land taken from Jehoahaz by Hazael was to be returned to Israel and commercial concessions in Damascus were given to Joash, similar to those enjoyed by Aram in the city of Samaria.

According to I Kings 20, 1.16, Bar-Hadad II was accompanied by thirty-two kings when he besieged Samaria. This number is reminiscent of the sixteen kings brought by Bar-Hadad II to the siege of Ḥadarik, the capital of Zakkūr, most likely in 796 B.C.²⁸³. The evidence provided by the Zakkūr stela shows that Bar-Hadad was considered, still after the events of 803-802 B.C., as the chief ruler of Syria. The list of the kings who accompanied him, with the rulers of Arpad, Quwē, 'Umq, Gurgum, and Melid²⁸⁴, indicates that his influence extended then as far as the Neo-Hittite states of southeastern Anatolia, where he obviously had made an incursion with his army during one of his campaigns, probably between 802 and 796 B.C. The king of Kummuh, an ally of Assyria, is conspicuously absent from this list. Bar-Hadad II must nevertheless have reached his territory, since he seems to have taken, as booty, the boundary stela erected between Kummuh and Gurgum by Adad-nirari III. This stela was apparently recovered in Damascus by the *turtānu*

²⁷⁹ J.M. MILLER, *The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars*, in *JBL* 85 (1966), p. 441-454 (see p. 444); ID., *The Rest of the Acts of Jehoahaz (I Kings 20; 22, 1-38)*, in *ZAW* 80 (1968), p. 337-342 (see p. 337-338); W.T. PITARD, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 169.

²⁸⁰ For the idiomatic phrase "three times", see E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Trois hébraïsmes oubliés ou méconnus*, in *RSO* 44 (1969), p. 83-101 (see p. 93-101, especially p. 97-98).

²⁸¹ S. GEVIRTZ, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (SAOC 32), Chicago 1963, p. 18-21.

²⁸² J.M. MUNN-RANKIN, *Diplomacy in Western Asia in the Early Second Millennium B.C.*, in *Iraq* 18 (1956), p. 68-110 (see p. 76-80 and 84). The same phraseology was used in the first millennium B.C., for instance in I Kings 9, 13.

²⁸³ See here above, p. 309-310.

²⁸⁴ See here above, p. 254, A, lines 4-9.

Shamshi-ilu in 773 B.C.²⁸⁵ and relocated at its original site, at Kizkapanli (Pazarcık), with a complementary inscription confirming the boundary²⁸⁶.

Bar-Hadad II was certainly owing his prominent position to his father Hazael, but this situation did not last beyond the early part of Bar-Hadad's reign. Since the siege of Ḥadārik was most likely broken by the Assyrian forces which advanced in 796 until Maṣuātē²⁸⁷, a city in the southwestern part of the kingdom of Ḥamath, all the available sources for Bar-Hadad II's reign describe his defeats, in the south and in the north, and thus seem to point to a deteriorating political position of Aram-Damascus despite the absence of any known Assyrian interventions in central and southern Syria between 796 and 773 B.C.

In 773 B.C., towards the end of the reign of Shalmaneser IV (782-773 B.C.), the Assyrians commanded by the powerful *turtānu* Shamshi-ilu attacked Damascus again. The year of this campaign *a-na* ^{uru}*Di-maš-qa* is given by the Eponym Chronicle²⁸⁸, while the name of the ruler of Damascus, Ḥadyān II, and the booty taken from his palace are known thanks to the Kizkapanli (Pazarcık) stela, which was re-erected on the return of the Assyrian army from this expedition²⁸⁹:

“¹Shalmaneser, great king, king of Assyria, ²son of Adad-nirari, great king, king of the world, king of Assyria, ³son of Shamshi-Adad, king of the four rims (of the earth), ⁴Shamshi-ilu, commander-in-chief (*turtānu*). ⁵When they marched to Damascus (*māt Emārišu*), ¹⁰I received ⁶the tribute of Ḥadyān the Damascene: ⁷silver, gold, copper, his royal bed, ⁸his royal couch, his daughter ⁹with a rich dowry, ¹⁰goods of his palace beyond counting. ¹¹On my return, ¹³I gave (back) ¹¹this border stone ¹²to Shuppiluliuma (^m*Uš-pi-lu-lu-me*), king of Kummuh”²⁹⁰.

The inscription indicates quite clearly that Shamshi-ilu had led the army to Damascus and that he received tribute from its ruler who may have been the immediate successor of Bar-Hadad II, although his patronymic is not indicated²⁹¹. On the way back, Shamshi-ilu confirmed the boundary established in the reign of Adad-nirari III between the Neo-Hittite kingdoms of Kummuh and Gurgum. Shamshi-ilu's text is

²⁸⁵ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 39.

²⁸⁶ For the publication of the stela, see here above, p. 177 with n. 85. For the probable circumstances of its recovery, see A.M. JASINK, *op. cit.* (n. 222), p. 172.

²⁸⁷ See here above, p. 310.

²⁸⁸ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 39.

²⁸⁹ See here above, p. 370 with n. 140, for the publication of the stela and the explanation of the king's name ^m*Ha-di-a-ni*.

²⁹⁰ For this king, see A.M. JASINK, *op. cit.* (n. 222), p. 46-48.

²⁹¹ See here above, p. 400.

engraved on the reverse of the stela, while its obverse bears the text written under the reign of Adad-nirari III.

Another but very meagre source of information for the second quarter of the 8th century is a short notice in II Kings 14, 28, where Jeroboam II of Israel is said to "have pushed back Damascus and Hamath to his glory in Israel"²⁹². This sentence does certainly not mean that Aram-Damascus has been a vassal state of Jeroboam II. It only implies the recovery of some territories which had been seized by the Aramaeans in an earlier period. The notice of II Kings 14, 28 is somewhat complemented by I Chron. 5, 16-17 and Am. 6, 13-14, which apparently imply an Israelite military campaign in Gilead and Bashan, as well as an occupation of these areas by Israelites during the reign of Jeroboam II. Since Amos was active at the time of Jeroboam II, his parody and mocking rhetorical question in Am. 6, 13 must refer to a recent military incursion into that area, ruled by the king of Damascus: "You who rejoice over Lo-dabar, who boast: 'Have we not by our own strength captured Qarnaim for ourselves!'"'. The choice of the place names is intentional, as shown by the unusual vocalization *Lō'-dābār*, "No-thing", and by the meaning of *Qarnāyim*, "Double-horn", symbol of power and strength²⁹³. Yet, these towns must have been conquered really by Israelite troops, probably around 773-772 or 765 B.C., when Assyrian campaigns into Syria have taken place²⁹⁴. Qarnaim, which later became the capital of an Assyrian province, was an important town and Lodabar, still mentioned in other biblical texts²⁹⁵, should also be a city of a certain importance, at least from the military and strategic points of view.

Qarnaim is commonly located at Šayḥ Sa'd, near 'Aštaroṯ²⁹⁶, but the location of Lodabar is uncertain. Therefore, it is difficult to assess, whether there was one Israelite campaign through Lodabar to Qarnaim, or several expeditions organized by Jeroboam II in territories held by Damascus in Transjordan. Since Lodabar is mentioned with Mahanaim in Josh. 13, 26, biblical scholars look for a place near the supposed site of Mahanaim. Assuming that Mahanaim corresponds to Tulūl ad-

²⁹² For this king, see also S. TIMM, *König Hesion II. von Damaskus*, in WO 24 (1993), p. 55-84.

²⁹³ S.M. PAUL, *Amos*, Minneapolis 1991, p. 218-221.

²⁹⁴ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 58. See also here above, p. 312 and 399-400.

²⁹⁵ Josh. 13, 26 (*Ldbr*); II Sam. 9, 4,5 (*Lw-dbr*); 17, 27 (*L'-dbr*).

²⁹⁶ See here above, p. 353 and 365-366.

²⁹⁷ See here above, p. 361.

²⁹⁸ M. NOTH, *Das Buch Josua* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament I/7), Tübingen 1953, p. 82 and 147. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 260.

Dahab²⁹⁷ or to another mound of the same area, authors have pointed at the large Tell al-Muḡannīya²⁹⁸, 3 km to the northwest of Tulūl ad-Dahab, and to the much smaller Tell al-Ḥamma East, 4 km to the west of Tulūl²⁹⁹. However, the border description of Josh. 13, 26 does not imply that Lodabar is close to Mahanaim, and another location, based on toponymy and implying the spirantization $b > w$, has been suggested in an earlier research phase, namely Tell al-Mudawwar, formerly pronounced Umm ad-Dabar, which is located south of the Wādī al-‘Arab³⁰⁰. Another possible location is Ḥirbat ad-Duwēr³⁰¹, the name of which is very close to Lodabar. This mound at the confluence of the Yarmouk and the Jordan rivers, next to Ashdot Ya’akov, occupies a strategical position near the southeastern corner of the Sea of Galilee, on a branch of the *Via Maris* leading to the Bashan, to ‘Aštaroḥ, Qarnaim, and further to Damascus. The site was occupied in the Late Bronze Age and in Iron Age I-II, as well as in the Persian period, and massive basalt walls were still visible there some years ago. We would identify this site with Lodabar, since the territory described in Josh. 13, 26-27 reaches the Sea of Galilee and the text refers precisely to an area “from Mahanaim as far as the territory of Lodabar”, that should correspond to the plain situated between the lake, the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers, and the Golan heights.

In this hypothesis, Am. 6, 13 would allude only to one military campaign up to Qarnaim. The text gives no clue concerning the territorial extent and the duration of the Israelite presence in this region, while II Kings 14, 28 and I Chron. 5, 16-17 are only vague and general statements. The answer to this question depends partly from the validity of the hypothesis that Peqah of Israel had ruled first as a rival king in Transjordan, from 752 B.C. onwards³⁰². This theory was prompted by the desire of explaining the twenty years of Peqah’s reign according to II

²⁹⁹ M. METZGER, *Lodebar und der Tell el-Mghannije*, in ZDPV 76 (1960), p. 97-102, followed by H.W. WOLFF, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos* (Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament XIV/2), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969, p. 334-335; S.M. PAUL, *op. cit.* (n. 293), p. 219. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 250.

³⁰⁰ ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 304. Cf. W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 305.

³⁰¹ W. ZWICKEL, *op. cit.* (n. 33), p. 328. One should add to the bibliography: A. JIRKU, *art. cit.* (n. 46), p. 149, and ABEL, *Géographie II*, p. 19.

³⁰² This suggestion was first put forward by C. LEDERER, *Die biblische Zeitrechnung vom Auszuge aus Ägypten bis zum Beginne der babylonischen Gefangenschaft*, Speier 1888, p. 135-138. It was then developed with various arguments by H.J. COOK, *Pekah*, in VT 14 (1964), p. 121-135, who was followed by several biblical scholars. A basically positive assessment of the theory can also be found in J. KAH-JIN KUAN, *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*, Hong Kong 1995, p. 125-128 and 133.

Kings 15, 27, but it is contradicted by Peqah's function as *šālīš* in royal service (II Kings 15, 25)³⁰³. Peqah's reign was ephemeral, at most one year or two (*ca.* 734-733 B.C.)³⁰⁴, and there were obviously no annals extant from that period. The Deuteronomistic redactor of the Books of Kings used thus a "schematic round number"³⁰⁵ of twenty years for this short reign, while he was using the number "forty years" for long reigns, when the exact figure was unknown³⁰⁶. The fifty Gileadites who assisted Peqah in usurping the throne, according to II Kings 15, 25, were probably subjects of Rašyān, king of Damascus, who had managed to enter Samaria thanks to their North-Hebrew dialect. At that time, as it seems, Gilead was again under Aramaean rule, as suggested by Am. 1, 3-5, especially if Amos had completed his mission prior to 745 B.C.³⁰⁷. The "ruler from the Valley of Wickedness", mentioned in Am. 1, 5 after Hazael and Bar-Hadad II, must be Rašyān, the last king of Damascus, whose reign had begun around 750 B.C. and who apparently reconquered the whole area towards the end of Jeroboam II's reign or after the latter's death.

Jeroboam's reconquest of northern Galilee can be deduced quite safely from archaeological evidence and from II Kings 15, 29, suggesting that the region still belonged to Israel at the time of Tiglath-pileser III's invasion. At Tell al-Qāḍi, for example, the time of Jeroboam's reign is marked by considerable building activities which might be related to the recovery of this region by Israel. Jeroboam II's son, Zechariah, who ruled for only six months (II Kings 15, 8), has even been identified tentatively with *Zkryw*, whose name is stamped on a jar handle found in 1991 at Tell al-Qāḍi³⁰⁸. The site of Tell al-'Oreimeh,

³⁰³ K.-M. BEYSE, *šāloš*, in *ThWAT* VIII, Stuttgart 1995, col. 114-122, in particular col. 119-120.

³⁰⁴ Menahem's final year on throne was 737/6 B.C., he was followed by his son Peqahiah, who reigned two years (737/6-735/4 B.C.), and Peqah was removed from the throne at the latest in 733/2 B.C.

³⁰⁵ J. HUGHES, *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology*, Sheffield 1990, p. 201. The chronological equations in II Kings 15, 32 and 16, 1 depend from this round number and are deprived of any historical value.

³⁰⁶ Thus in the case of David, Solomon, Joash. "Forty years" are also used in the Mesha inscription, line 8, to qualify the long rule of the Omrides in Moab.

³⁰⁷ S.M. PAUL, *op. cit.* (n. 293), p. 1. However, the actual wording of the oracle may not correspond exactly to its original form. The text, as it is, seems to reflect the time of Tiglath-pileser III's intervention in the West.

³⁰⁸ A. BIRAN, *Tel Dan: Biblical Texts and Archaeological Data*, in M.D. COOGAN - J.C. EXUM - L.E. STAGER (eds.), *Scripture and Other Artifacts*, Louisville 1994, p. 1-17 (see p. 11-15).

ancient Kinneroth, was re-occupied in the early 8th century and a new fortified city was founded, which corresponds to Stratum II³⁰⁹. It appears therefore that Jeroboam's control of Galilee can be accepted with good archaeological arguments. The extent of his kingdom thus implies an Aramaean setback. As for the Sefire stelae, they do not contain any explicit reference to Aram-Damascus, except the mention of Lower-Aram on Sefire stela I, A, 5, as opposed to Upper-Aram which should designate the Aramaean states of northern Syria, especially the kingdom of Arpad³¹⁰.

A clear trend towards decline was observed in Assyria as early as the reign of Adad-nirari III and this decline continued until the accession of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.). The sources for this era are few and sketchy, but there is enough indication that Assyria's sphere of influence was diminishing in Syria. As a consequence, nothing more is known of the reign of Ḥadyān II in Damascus and little of the reign of the last king, Rašyān (*Radyān*)³¹¹, may be reconstructed, except for his final few years before the fall of Damascus.

The name of the last king of Damascus is transliterated ^m*Ra-ḥi-a-nu/ni* or ^m*Ra-qi-a-nu* in Neo-Assyrian³¹², and it was pronounced in a similar way in ancient Hebrew, as indicated by the spelling *Ršy'n* in the Qumrān manuscript 1QIs 9, 10. The traditional Hebrew vocalization *Rešīn*, which takes *yōd* as a vowel letter, may safely be disregarded. The etymology of the name is quite transparent, since the Semitic root *ršy* (*rđy*) means "to be satisfied", "to be content", and its spelling in ancient Aramaic was certainly *Rqyn*.

The date of Rašyān's accession to the throne of Damascus is unknown, but Tiglath-pileser III's qualification of the Syrian town [..]-*ḥa-a-da-ra* as "the ancestral home of Rašyān the Damascene, [the pl]ace where he was born"³¹³, seems to imply that he was no member of the royal house in Damascus. One may speculate whether he was somehow

³⁰⁹ V. FRITZ, *Kinneret: Excavations at Tell el-'Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot): 1982-1985 Seasons*, in *Tel Aviv* 20 (1993), p. 187-215, especially p. 197-201. Stratum II was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III, when also Stratum VA of Hazor came to an end; cf. V. FRITZ, *The Decline of Chinnereth after the Campaign of Tiglath-pileser III*, in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaften des Heiligen Landes* 5 (1997), p. 59-66.

³¹⁰ In Sefire I, B, 10, one should restore [^mq] instead of [*dmš*]q. Cf. here above, p. 226.

³¹¹ For the transcription *Rašyān* with the sign š, see E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 16.1 and 7-10.

³¹² *Tigl. III*, p. 292, index.

³¹³ *Tigl. III*, p. 80, line 13'.

related to the royal family or was a complete outsider. In any case, he already paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 739 or 738 B.C.³¹⁴.

During the next three years 737-735 B.C. Tiglath-pileser III had to fight in the north and east to secure the position of Assyria against Urartu³¹⁵. It was during this time that a new coalition of states, apparently headed by Rašyān, came into existence. It was made up at least of Rašyān of Damascus, Peqah of Israel, and Hiram II of Tyre³¹⁶. Rašyān and Peqah attacked Judah and besieged Jerusalem³¹⁷, probably because of Judah's refusal to take part in an anti-Assyrian alliance. Rašyān's and Peqah's aim was apparently to depose Ahaz of Judah and to replace him on the throne with "the son of Tāb'ēl" (Is. 7, 6), supposed to be favourable to an anti-Assyrian policy. This is the classical explanation of the origins of this conflict³¹⁸, which biblical scholars call "Syro-Ephraimite war". A different, purely regional motivation was also proposed³¹⁹: it is Rašyān's ambition to become the overlord of Palestine that would have prompted the campaign against Judah, supposedly aimed at placing a puppet king on the throne in Jerusalem. This explanation did not gain much acceptance, while Tiglath-pileser III's campaign of 734 appears as a typical Assyrian rescue operation aimed

³¹⁴ *Tigl. III*, p. 54, Ann. 21, lines 4'-6'; cf. p. 68, line 10; p. 106, line 4.

³¹⁵ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 44.

³¹⁶ *Tigl. III*, p. 186, line 5, with comments.

³¹⁷ II Kings 15, 37; 16, 5-9; Is. 7, 1-9; cf. II Chron. 28, 5-6.16-23. These and other biblical texts are taken into consideration by H. CAZELLES, *La guerre syro-ephraïmite dans le contexte de la politique internationale*, in D. GARRONE - F. ISRAEL (eds.), *Storia e tradizioni di Israele. Scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin*, Brescia 1991, p. 31-48, with former literature, anterior to the publication of *Tigl. III*. Also Is. 10, 27c-32; Hos. 8, 5; 9, 8-9; 10, 9 are related to these events by P.M. ARNOLD, *Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah*, in *CBQ* 50 (1988), p. 447-460.

³¹⁸ This classical reconstruction of the international background of the war was presented by J. BEGRICH, *Der syrisch-ephraimitische Krieg und seine weltpolitischen Zusammenhänge*, in *ZDMG* 83 (1929), p. 213-237, reprinted in J. BEGRICH, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, München 1964. Despite the critique by K. BUDDE, *Jesaja und Ahas*, in *ZDMG* 84 (1930), p. 125-138, who tried to minimize the influence of international politics on these events, J. Begrich's opinion was accepted by most authors. A selective list is given by R. BICKERT, *König Ahas und der Prophet Jesaja. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des syrisch-ephraimitischen Krieges*, in *ZAW* 99 (1987), p. 361-384 (see p. 362-363), who nevertheless concludes that this war did not take place at all. Instead, a restatement of Begrich's explanation is proposed by S.A. IRVINE, *Isaiah, Ahas, and the Syro-Ephraimite Crisis*, Atlanta 1990.

³¹⁹ Especially by B. ODED, *The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite War Reconsidered*, in *CBQ* 34 (1972), p. 153-165, who depends too much on the actual location of II Kings 15, 37, which is wrong, and on the erroneous identification of Azriyau, king of Ḥamath (see here above, p. 314-315), with Azariah, king of Judah.

at helping an Assyrians' loyal vassal³²⁰. The identity of the "son of Ṭāb'ēl" was the object of considerable speculation³²¹, but no certainty can yet be reached in this matter. In any case, the element *ṭāb* of his name, instead of Hebrew *ṭōb*, suggests that the man in question was of Aramaean descent.

In face of the danger, Ahaz appealed to Assyria, accompanying his request with a large tribute, paid probably in 734 B.C.³²². Tiglath-pileser III responded quickly, since this request fitted his own plans. After a campaign in 734 against the Philistines³²³, he concentrated on Damascus in 733 and 732³²⁴. The bare facts of the capture of the city and the execution of Rašyān are provided by II Kings 16, 9, but a fragment of Tiglath-pileser III's annals gives some information about a battle fought near Damascus in 733 B.C., the precipitous flight of the vanquished Aramaean king into his walled capital, a siege of Damascus which lasted for forty-five days, the capture and destruction of towns and villages within the territory of Aram-Damascus³²⁵. The account of the final siege of Damascus and of its capture is missing. A personal detail appears in the biography of Panamuwa II of Šam'al who perished while fighting for the Assyrians during the siege of Damascus³²⁶. Another king who seems to have fought for the Assyrians in these years is Shal(a)man, king of Moab, who may have become a vassal of Tiglath-pileser III already in 734 B.C.³²⁷ and who has rased Bēt-Arbel according to Hos. 10, 14³²⁸. If Bēt-Arbel is Irbid in Gilead, as commonly assumed³²⁹, this attack of a stronghold belonging at the time

³²⁰ Ahaz's request for aid has been compared convincingly with similar cases in the Kilamuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions; cf. S.J. PARKER, *Appeals for Military Intervention: Stories from Zinjirli and the Bible*, in BA 59 (1996), p. 213-224. See also N. NA'AMAN, *Forced Participation in Alliances in the Course of Assyrian Campaigns to the West*, in M. COGAN - I. EPH'AL (eds.), *Ah, Assyria ... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, Jerusalem 1991, p. 80-98, especially p. 92-94 and 97-98.

³²¹ Cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 271), p. 98-100. A background of Judaeen opposition to David's house is now detected by S.A. IRVINE, *Isaiah's She'ar-yashub and the Davidic House*, in *Biblische Zeitschrift* N.F. 37 (1993), p. 78-88.

³²² II Kings 16, 7-8; *Tigl. III*, p. 170, line 11'.

³²³ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 44; cf. II Chron. 28, 18.

³²⁴ MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 45.

³²⁵ *Tigl. III*, p. 78 and 80, lines 1'-17'.

³²⁶ KAI 215 = TSSI II, 14, 16-19.

³²⁷ *Tigl. III*, p. 170, line 10'.

³²⁸ Biblical commentaries of this historical notice are generally quite disappointing, even those by H.W. WOLFF, *op. cit.* (n. 47), p. 243-244, and W. RUDOLPH, *op. cit.* (n. 47), p. 206-207.

³²⁹ See here above, p. 354-355.

to the kingdom of Aram-Damascus can best be interpreted as a Moabite intervention on Assyrian side in the war against Rašyān³³⁰.

The capture of Damascus in 732 B.C. was the end of the state of Aram. The city itself was established as an Assyrian provincial capital, where Ahaz of Judah was able to visit Tiglath-pileser III (II Kings 16, 10). As for the two allies of Rašyān, Peqah of Israel was murdered by the followers of Hoshea, whom Tiglath-pileser recognized as ruler of Samaria³³¹, while Hiram II of Tyre submitted to the Assyrian king³³².

The campaign of Tiglath-pileser III against Damascus differed from those of his predecessors in that it was not a tribute-gathering expedition, but a permanent conquest. Instead of contenting himself with receiving tribute, he put an end to the existence of the Aramaean state and incorporated the whole land as province to the Assyrian empire, closing the list of the independent rulers of Damascus. The known kings of Aram-Damascus are thus the following:

Hadad (?)	mid-10th century
Ezron	third quarter of the 10th century
Ḥadyān I	fourth quarter of the 10th century
Tāb-Rammān	end of the 10th century
Bar-Hadad I	ca. 900-ca. 880 B.C.
Hadadezer	ca. 880-ca. 843 B.C.
Hazael	ca. 843-ca. 803 B.C.
Bar-Hadad II	ca. 803-ca. 775 B.C.
Ḥadyān II	ca. 775-ca. 750 B.C.
Rašyān	ca. 750-732 B.C.

³³⁰ This is one of the interpretations taken into consideration by C.J. LENZEN - E.A. KNAUF, *art. cit.* (n. 46), p. 245.

³³¹ II Kings 15, 30; *Tigl. III*, p. 140, lines 17'-18'; p. 188, line 10; p. 202, line 18'.

³³² *Tigl. III*, p. 186 and 188, lines 5-8.