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Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria. Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary*. Second Printing with *addenda et corrigenda*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2007. Pp. xv + 318 + 60 plates + 1 acetate sheet.

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In the first half of the eighth century BC, Assyria found itself in a precarious situation. With the rise of Urartu in eastern Anatolia, Assyrian supremacy was no longer automatically accepted by its neighbors, especially the smaller kingdoms of Syria and Anatolia. The treaties binding these states to Assyria and guaranteeing their tribute for the Assyrian treasury were vulnerable as long as swearing allegiance to Urartu instead was a realistic alternative. At that time, Urartu's army was certainly Assyria's equal and in 754 BC, just when Aššur-nerari V had ascended to the Assyrian throne, Sarduri II, king of Urartu, defeated the Assyrian army in Northern Syria. This glorious achievement, celebrated in Sarduri's inscriptions, was quite clearly a disaster for Assyria: for the next years, the troops did not leave the kingdom's borders and only in 749 BC was a new expedition mounted—not against Urartu but instead to the border with Babylonia where Assyrian interests were now endangered as well.

In 746 BC, a rebellion against Aššur-nerari V took place in the main royal residence Kalhu and in the next year the man later known as Tiglath-pileser III seized the Assyrian throne. He had certainly supported the revolt, as had the governors of Assur and Kalhu who were among the very few high officials

remaining in power after the coup. Many other governors and magnates were subsequently replaced, probably having been executed when Tiglath-pileser's faction prevailed against those who remained loyal to Aššur-nerari, Tiglath-pileser's father according to the Assyrian Kinglist but never mentioned in this capacity in his successor's inscriptions.

Having established himself on the Assyrian throne, Tiglath-pileser first took the army to the south and decided the situation at the Babylonian frontier in his favor. He founded two new provinces, situated along the important trade route that we know as the Silk Route: Bit-Hamban, at the head waters of the Diyala River, and Parsua, further to the east in the Zagros mountains, were created in 744 BC. The news from Assyria, indicating a dramatic shift in the ailing state's fortunes, brought the Urartian army, still under the command of Sarduri II, to the Euphrates border and in 743 BC Assyria and Urartu met once again in battle in Arpad. This time, the Assyrian troops were victorious and pursued the Urartian army all the way back to the capital Tušpa.¹

It can be argued that it was the decade-long period of Assyrian vulnerability and impotence—during which it was eclipsed and threatened by Urartu and having lost its hold over Syria and Babylonia—that caused Tiglath-pileser to initiate the military campaigns in the West that marked the beginning of Assyria's expansion to the Mediterranean coast, deep into Anatolia and the Zagros mountain range and to the Persian Gulf.² Only now did Assyria outgrow its traditional boundaries and transform itself into what we today call the Assyrian Empire.

After defeating the Urartian troops in Arpad, Tiglath-pileser decided to discipline this kingdom that had provided Urartu with access to Syria and to Assyria's frontier. His army waged war in Arpad for three years until all resistance was crushed in 740 BC; Arpad's forces had been assisted not only by the Urartian army but also the troops of all its Syrian neighbors. When Arpad was ultimately defeated, the Assyrian army did not leave as in previous centuries: instead, two Assyrian provinces were established, and the country was transformed into a permanent part of Assyria. The dogged resistance that met the Assyrians in Arpad meant that the war could not end if the new Assyrian holdings were to be protected; although the alliance against Assyria had been driven out of Arpad, it remained in existence and was a powerful adversary. Next in line was therefore Arpad's close ally and neighbor to the west, the influential kingdom of Hamath on the Orontes River. Hamath's troops were first defeated in 738 BC, and its northwestern parts, reaching the Mediterranean Sea, were turned into Assyrian provinces. During this same campaign, Hamath's northern neighbor on the Mediterranean coast, the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Unqu, was conquered and incorporated into Assyria. But the state of Hamath did not collapse and the fight for its independence continued, assisted by its allies Damascus and Israel. This war was decided in Assyria's favor only six years later, in 732 BC, when the troops of Hamath and Damascus were defeated, the countries invaded and permanently annexed; at the same time, Israel was subjugated and the northern half of the kingdom was integrated as the Assyrian province of Megiddo.

During the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, the Assyrian army was transformed into a professional army,³ with specialized soldiers largely replacing the conscripts who provided military service during the summer months when the agricultural calendar permitted the absence of the farm workers. Soldiers

1. On the conflict between Assyria and Urartu see H. Tadmor, "Assyria at the Gates of Tushpa," in *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al*, eds. M. Cogan and D. Kahn (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008), 266–73.

2. The most recent summary of these is by S. Yamada, "Qurdi-Assur-lamur: His Letters and Career," in Cogan and Kahn, *Treasures on Camels' Humps*, 297–99.

3. On this topic see A. Fuchs, "War das Neuassyrische Reich ein Militärstaat?," in *Krieg - Gesellschaft - Institutionen: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Kriegsgeschichte*, eds. B. Meißner et al. (Berlin: Akademie, 2005), 51–55 and Y. Kaplan, "Recruitment of Foreign Soldiers into the Neo-Assyrian Army during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III," in Cogan and Kahn *Treasures on Camels' Humps*, 135–52.

from the defeated kingdoms of Arpad, Unqu, Hamath, Damascus, and Israel swelled the ranks of the Assyrian army, supplemented by mercenaries from Anatolia, the Zagros mountains and Babylonia where the Assyrian king had been active from the beginning of his reign onwards. He came to be the arch rival of Mukin-zeri, chief of the tribe of Bit-Amukani, who attempted to unite the politically fragmented region under his leadership and assumed the kingship of Babylon in 731 BC. Tiglath-pileser saw this as a provocation and a challenge of Assyria's primacy in the region: he repeatedly led the Assyrian army against Mukin-zeri and ultimately defeated him, taking the crown of Babylon for himself in 729 BC. For the remainder of his reign, Tiglath-pileser ruled as the king of both Assyria and Babylon.

Most of the income provided by Tiglath-pileser's conquests would appear to have been invested in the establishment of a professional army and of the new provinces. He certainly did not spend his revenue conspicuously in the Assyrian heartland where he apparently contented himself with building only a new palace in Kalhu, the so-called Central Palace: the decorated stone slabs that served as the wainscoting for the state quarters of this building provide us with Tiglath-pileser's accounts of his deeds, yet, since they were dismantled in the 670s in order to be recycled for an (unfinished) building project of his successor Esarhaddon, assembling the so-called Nimrud Annals has proven to be a difficult task for modern Assyriologists. The first to genuinely succeed in this regard, after decades of painstaking research, was Hayim Tadmor, the leading twentieth-century expert on Tiglath-pileser's written legacy.

The first edition of the book under review appeared in 1994 and was duly celebrated as the definitive edition of the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, including the Nimrud Annals. A historical narrative like the one attempted here would be impossible without Tadmor's publication, the contents of which, together with Tiglath-pileser's state correspondence⁴ and the relevant sections in the Assyrian Eponym Chronicles,⁵ constitute the key primary source material for this king's age.

Tadmor's 1994 book was universally well received and feted by all its reviewers.⁶ The corrections to the transliterations and translations suggested in some of these reviews, and privately by R. Borger and M. Cogan, have been collected by Tadmor's former pupil Shigeo Yamada and are the only addition (pp. 317–18) to this otherwise unchanged reprint of the 1994 edition: as Jacob Klein explains in his short preface to the second printing (p. x), the list was checked and approved by Tadmor himself who sadly passed away in 2005. No additional texts have been included in the second printing, but to my knowledge, only one further inscription of Tiglath-pileser III has since been recognized as such, incised on the fragment of a royal statue found in room a/4 of the Ninurta temple at Kalhu (and before misclassified as belonging to Shalmaneser III).⁷

It is a testament to the quality of Tadmor's original publication that the list of *addenda et corrigenda* is as short as it is. It could be argued that it may have been in the interest of the readers had these corrections, as well as those already offered in the first printing's list of *addenda et corrigenda* (pp. 316–17), been integrated into the book itself. However, to communicate the corrections in the form of a concise

4. Published by H. W. F. Saggs, *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*, CTN 5 (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001).

5. Last edited by A. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire, 910-612 BC*, SAAS 2 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994).

6. T. Boiy, *OLP* 29 (1998) 274–75; E. Cancik-Kirschbaum, *OLZ* 95 (2000) 377–86; K. J. Cathcart, *Booklist of the Society of Old Testament Studies* 1996, 127; W. Chrostowski, *Collectanea Theologica* 69 (1999) 199–203; S. Dalley, *PEQ* 129 (1997) 89; E. Frahm, *AfO* 44/45 (1997/98) 399–404; G. Frame, *BCSMS* 35 (2000) 93–95; A. R. George, *BSOAS* 60 (1997) 124–25; A. K. Grayson, *JAOS* 118 (1998) 280–81; L. K. Handy, *JBL* 116 (1997) 157–58; R. Jas, *BiOr* 55 (1998) 192–94; F. Joannès, *Transeuphratène* 13 (1997) 220–22; A. Millard, *BASOR* 308 (1997) 102–4; N. Na'aman, *Tel Aviv* 22 (1995) 268–78; B. Oded, *IEJ* 47 (1997) 104–10; J. Pečircová, *ArOr* 64 (1996) 283–84; W. Schramm, *Or* 68 (1999) 169–71; H. U. Steymans, *RB* 104 (1997) 299–301; M. P. Streck, *ZA* 89 (1999) 152–54.

7. For an edition of ND 5571 = IM 60497B see A. Fuchs, "Ein Inschriftenfragment Tiglatpilesers III.," in *Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume*, eds. A. Ben-Tor, I. Eph'al and P. Machinist. Eretz-Israel 27 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society in Cooperation with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel Museum, 2003), 49*–54*. For the provenance of this fragmentary royal statue see J. E. Reade, "The Ziggurat and Temples of Nimrud," *Iraq* 62 (2002) 178.

list has the advantage that the 1994 and 2007 editions can be used side by side and that those already in possession of a copy of the first printing will not feel the pressing need to replace it with the new edition as the corrections can easily enough be added. Like the first printing, which sold out quickly, the second printing is, at \$80, very reasonably priced, and fourteen years after its original publication, this beautifully produced book has lost none of its value. It is still the only comprehensive edition of Tiglath-pileser's Nimrud annals and his other inscriptions and no one working on the Neo-Assyrian Empire or the eighth century BC can afford to ignore it.