

6-1-1936

Political Contacts or the Hebrews with Assyria and Babylonia

Alex Heidel

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Recommended Citation

Heidel, Alex (1936) "Political Contacts or the Hebrews with Assyria and Babylonia," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 7 , Article 48.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol7/iss1/48>

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Daraus aber ergibt sich für den christlichen Prediger die Gewißheit, daß er in einem göttlichen Amt steht, das er nach den in der Schrift niedergelegten Anordnungen verwalten soll. Er ist Christi Diener und ein Haushalter über Gottes Geheimnisse. Allerdings betont der Apostel Paulus auch den Dienstcharakter des Amtes, 1 Kor. 3, 5; aber dadurch macht er die Prediger nicht zu Sklaven der Gemeinde, noch viel weniger deutet er an, daß Gemeinden ihre Diener am Wort wie Stuhhirten anstellen und entlassen dürfen. Mit Hinsicht auf die volle Würde des Amtes schreibt Luther: „So ist es wiederum für uns, die wir das Wort Gottes predigen, eine Ehre und Trost, daß wir gewiß sind, wir seien Gottes Werkzeug, unsere Zunge sei Gottes Zunge und unsere Stimme sei Gottes Stimme.“ (VII, 113.) Zu 1 Petr. 5, 2 bemerkt Luther: „Das ist, daß ein Seelsorger Lust dazu habe, dazu geneigt sei und tue es von Herzen gerne, lustig bleibe zu lehren, auch in Armut und Mangel, ganz umsonst, darum daß er weiß, daß er Gott daran ein Wohlgefallen tut und seinem Nächsten die höchsten Wohltaten erzeigt. Der sucht im Weiden Gottes nicht seine Ehre, der Schafe, die ihm befohlen sind, nicht seinen Gewinn und Ruh, wie Moses, Samuel und alle frommen Hirten getan haben und noch tun.“ (IX, 1277.) Endlich schreibt Luther zu Joh. 7, 16: „Das ist aber ein feiner Prediger, der die zwei Dinge hat, nämlich das Amt und das Wort. Denn ein Prediger soll diese drei Tugenden haben: Erstlich soll er können auftreten. Zum andern soll er nicht stille schweigen. Zum dritten soll er auch wieder aufhören können. Das erste, als Auftreten, ist, daß er ein Amt habe, gewiß sei, daß er berufen und gesandt sei, und was er tue, daß er's um seines Amtes willen tue. . . . Zum andern, so soll er auch gewiß sein, daß er Gottes Wort lehre und predige und nicht Menschenlehre oder Teufelslehre führe. Dann ist's recht, wenn ein Prediger erstlich gewiß ist, daß er nicht allein Gottes Wort, sondern daß er auch ein Amt habe.“ (VIII, 30.)

P. E. Kreckmann.

Political Contacts of the Hebrews with Assyria and Babylonia.

Ancient Palestine served as a bridge over which passed traders and armies from Egypt on the one hand and from Babylonia and Assyria on the other; and thus the Hebrews repeatedly came in contact with the peoples of the Nile and of the Tigris-Euphrates. These contacts were chiefly of a political, commercial, social, and religious nature. In the present paper it is not our aim to offer a comprehensive treatment of all of them; we shall rather turn aside from all the other phases and focus our attention on the political relations of God's chosen race with the people of Assyria and Babylonia.

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But before doing so, we shall give a very brief summary of some of the outstanding political developments preceding these contacts to gain a more adequate picture of the situation.

At the dawn of recorded extra-Biblical history, Babylonia, particularly the southern half of it, was inhabited by a non-Semitic race called the Sumerians. Approximately 2600 before the Christian era they were subjugated by the Semites of the northern half of Babylonia, headed by Sargon of Agáde (Sargon I); he united the north and the south and is the first Semitic ruler of the Tigro-Euphrates Valley, who asserts that he carried on warfare as far west as the Mediterranean Sea. The waning power of Sargon's successors was followed by a period of anarchy, after which the Sumerians once more gained the upper hand for a span of but twenty-six years. Their weak rule was displaced by that of the hordes of Gutium, to the north-east of the Tigris. For a century and a quarter Babylonia lay at their mercy, during which the country reached the depths of degradation. Finally the Gutis were expelled by the Sumerian Utuhegal. But soon Babylonia came under the control of the great Amorite lawgiver Hammurabi (ca. 2000). The empire built up by the mighty Hammurabi rapidly disintegrated in the hands of his successors, and the Kassites, from the mountains east of the Tigris, swept into the rich country and held it for five hundred and seventy-six years.

In the mean time Assyria appeared on the scene and, with short intervals of weakness and almost disaster, became the dominating power of the ancient Near East. Babylonia, the former power, was conquered and annexed by Tukulti Ninurta I, ca. 1250, and henceforth was, for the most time, the vassal of Assyria; only for short intervals was she able to throw off the yoke of Assyria and even to impose her will upon her oppressor.

In the long list of Assyria's kings we find the names of several monarchs who came in touch with the kings of Judah and Israel and who in their inscriptions record their relations with the Hebrews.

The first of these political contacts is recorded in the annals of Shalmaneser III (860—825), who followed his father's policy of extension northward and westward and of annexation of lands adjoining Assyria and whose reign represents the great period of incorporation. Thanks to the efforts of his father the foreign situation was rather encouraging, offering alluring opportunities for war. Assyria was at peace with Babylonia; the Aramean invasion of Mesopotamia had been checked; the Median tribes just appearing on the eastern horizon presented no real danger as yet; Syria promised much booty at little cost; the ephemeral glories of the Hebrews under David and Solomon had disappeared with the disruption of the kingdom; and Egypt was a mere broken reed.

The only country causing him serious concern was Urartu

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(occupying the greater part of Armenia), whence the Hebrews derived the form Ararat. The kings of Urartu were pursuing a rather active policy of lopping off some of Assyria's possessions. Shalmaneser's father had made Assyrian influence supreme in Western Mesopotamia, but the rapid growth and expansion of Urartu had seriously weakened Assyrian prestige, and once again the Euphrates bend had to be won by the sword. Shalmaneser went on an expedition against Urartu. But it was a failure. Shalmaneser realized that it would indeed be a difficult task to develop successes on this frontier and that the material returns might not meet the expense of equipping an army. Hence he decided to subdue all those regions where the influence of Urartu was strong before attacking Urartu proper. He therefore proceeded against Adini, east of Aleppo, and against wealthy Northern Syria, where not only the influence of Urartu was strong, but which was also known for its cedar and cypress; its gold, silver, iron, lead, and copper; its sheep, wool, and ivory. Northern Syria was ravaged, and a yearly tribute was laid upon it. And now Shalmaneser again marched against Urartu and this time met with more success than on his first campaign.

His successful warfare in Syria had paved his way for further advance to the South. At the end of this road lay the greatest prize yet to be won: Egypt, a country with a mighty past, a present wealth, and a future which at its best was most dubious. In spite of all her manifest weakness, Egypt still claimed a vague supremacy over the whole of Syria and Palestine, in memory of the days of Thutmose III and Ramses II, and did all in her power to postpone the day when Assyria should stand on the north side of the desert and look with desire to the Nile Valley. And we cannot blame her for that. Rather Syria and Palestine are to be blamed, who had been so blinded by the glorious past of Egypt as not to recognize the ever-lessening promise of the future and who were constantly looking to Egypt for help.

In 854 Shalmaneser was ready to take the next step southward. But a coalition had been brought together at Qarqar (Karkar), somewhat to the northwest of Hamath, to block his advance. Behind this confederacy stood Egypt. The Assyrians, however, knew that Egypt was but a broken reed, and list it far to the end of the record. She contributed a mere thousand men. In the annals of Shalmaneser the headship is assigned to the king of Damascus. His troops consisted of twelve hundred chariots, the same number of cavalry, and twenty thousand infantry. The king of Hamath comes next, with seven hundred chariots, seven hundred cavalry, and ten thousand foot-soldiers. The third place is taken by Ahab of Israel. This marks Israel's first political contact with Assyria, an incident not mentioned in Holy Writ. According to the Assyrian statistics he contributed

two thousand chariots and ten thousand soldiers. Even if these figures be exaggerated, they prove the relative position of Israel. Ahab ranked high in the coalition which gathered at Qarqar in 854. He is assigned the largest number of chariots. To these were added details from Cilicia, Phenicia, and Ammon. Judah, Edom, and Moab do not appear on Shalmaneser's Monolith Inscription which records the events of this campaign. They were Ahab's vassals, and their troops may have been included in his contingent, if they did at all participate in the battle.

On his Monolith Inscription, Shalmaneser naturally claims a complete victory. He says of the allies: "From Qarqar, as far as the city of Gilzau, I routed them. Fourteen hundred [?] of their warriors I slew with the sword. Like Adad [the storm god] I rained destruction upon them. I scattered their corpses far and wide; I covered the face of the desolate plain with their wide-spreading armies. With [my] weapons I made their blood to flow down the valleys of the land. The plain was too small to throw down their bodies; the wide countryside alone sufficed for their burial. Their bodies blocked the Orontes like a dam. In that battle I took from them their chariots, their cavalry, their horses, broken to the yoke." 1) The number of the slain naturally grew as time advanced and as the editions of the inscription increased. It grew from fourteen thousand to twenty thousand five hundred, then to twenty-five thousand, and finally to twenty-nine thousand.

Succeeding events seem to prove that the battle at Qarqar was a draw, if not an Assyrian defeat. What, then, shall we think of Shalmaneser's boast of a sweeping victory? A. T. Olmstead, one of the greatest living authorities on Assyrian history, says: "The Assyrian has been a very successful liar indeed, for his statements have been regularly accepted at face value. There is no excuse for the display of so touching, but childlike a faith on the part of the Orientalist; for the official Assyrian records demand as drastic a higher criticism as has ever been inflicted upon any part of the Old Testament. We may compare one record with another, one edition with an earlier, an Assyrian statement with that of a Hebrew, the pictorial with the written, and at every stage we shall have plentiful examples of untruth." 2)

In 849 Shalmaneser again visited the West. He captured certain cities belonging to Carchemish and reduced Hamath to subjection. The year 846 once more found the Assyrian waging war in Central Syria, the two greatest powers of which were Hamath and Damascus.

1) D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vol. I, p. 223.

2) A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 648.

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Shalmaneser crossed the Euphrates with a force of one hundred and twenty thousand men, an indication of the gravity of the situation. However, he did not succeed in crushing his enemies, and it was impossible to keep so large an army in the field. This was a serious check to Assyrian arms, and for a time the West was left in peace.

By 842 conditions had become more favorable for Shalmaneser. The alliance which had offered such determined resistance at Qarqar had broken up. Hazael did not occupy the surpassing position of his predecessors and was therefore unable to hold the alliance of the Syrian princes together.³⁾ Hamath had borne the brunt of previous campaigns and seems to have been exhausted. Ahab of Israel was dead; the king of Damascus had been smothered while ill, and Hazael had usurped the throne, 2 Kings 8, 7 ff. Then the war with Israel entered a more active phase with Jehoram's attempt to win back Ramoth-Gilead, and the Assyrian monarch on his advance west met with no opposition until he entered the territories of Damascus. There, under Mount Hermon, Hazael, without an ally, opposed him; but his fortified camp was stormed, the orchards filling the fertile plain were felled, and the Assyrians appeared before Damascus. But the walls were too strong for assault, and Shalmaneser did not have the patience for a formal siege. Hence he had to be satisfied with a plundering raid into the Hauran Mountains to the east and the south, whose rich volcanic soil made it the granary of the Syrian area.

Shalmaneser next turned to the coast, through the plain of Esdraelon. On a projecting cliff, which he calls "Baal's Head," at the mouth of the modern Nahr el-Kelb at Beirut, he affixed a stela. It was at this time that he received tribute from Tyre and Sidon. The Tyrians and Sidonians evidently sent their gifts in order that their commerce might not be impeded by war. And he also received tribute from "Iaua mar Humri," that is, from Jehu, the son of Omri. On Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk, which represents both in words and in pictures several peoples who paid him tribute, we read the following: "Tribute of Jehu, the son of Omri. Silver, gold, a bowl of gold, a beaker of gold, goblets of gold, pitchers of gold, lead, a staff for the hand of the king, javelins, I received from him."⁴⁾ The dynasty which Omri founded had gained such renown that the Assyrians called Israel by the name of "Bit Humri" (the house of Omri), even long after the line was ended.

"There is no Biblical or known Assyrian record of any defeat of Jehu by Shalmaneser, nor is there any evidence that he was merely paying the tribute of his predecessors on the throne. The dangerous approach of Shalmaneser and the invincible character of his army

3) Bruno Meissner, *Koenige Babyloniens und Assyriens*, p. 141.

4) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 243.

forewarned Jehu that his surest method of deliverance would be to dispatch his envoys, even if he himself did not go, and pay the price of submission." 5) So far no statement has appeared in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser that he had left the military highway and had actually invaded any territory of Israel. Jehu paid him tribute as a matter of precaution, but he probably never met the Assyrian army in battle.

Damascus was still unconquered. In 838 Shalmaneser made a last effort to reduce it to subjection, but failed.

After a few more campaigns in the West, against the men of Qu'e (or Ku'e, the later Cilician Plain), for having taken part in the battle at Qarqar, Tubal (Tabal), Tarsus (Tarzi) in Cilicia (known for its silver), and other places of little importance, Shalmaneser had to grapple with a serious revolt spread throughout his dominion. This revolt shook the empire to its foundations. All the country west of the Euphrates: Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor, all the lands so often raided beyond the Armenian Mountains, a great deal of the territory along the eastern frontier of Assyria, slipped away, and the greater part of it was not restored until the time of Tiglath-Pileser III. 6)

Because of these internal troubles and the weakness of the next king the Westland remained undisturbed by Assyria for approximately forty years, from the middle of the reign of Shalmaneser III to that of his grandson, Adadnirari III (812—782). This king again pushed westward, and by the middle of his reign the land of the Hittites, the entire Amurru land, Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom, and Philistia recognized the Assyrians as their masters. The subjection of Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom, and Philistia, which Adadnirari maintains to have accomplished, need only imply that representatives of those states paid him homage in Damascus as their new overlord. According to his own account, Adadnirari crushed Damascus, and Israel was thus released from the immediate presence of that dangerous rival, 2 Kings 13, 5. 7) Since the days of Shalmaneser's appearance in Syria in 854 Damascus, by its very location and strength, had been defiant and unconquered. But its allies were cut off one by one, its resources were crippled by successive invasions, and now the Assyrian army was in a position to reduce so powerful a stronghold to subjection. This disposed of the most formidable obstruction to Assyria's free course toward the southwest with all its small peoples and particularly to an open roadway to wealthy Egypt. The submission of Damascus meant not only relief for the Israelites, but freedom

5) Ira M. Price, *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, p. 275 f.

6) A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, pp. 110—157.

7) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 262 f.

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in the immediate future to extend their power and to increase their revenues.⁸⁾

Assyria's next three kings (Shalmaneser IV, Ashurdan III, and Ashurnirari V) spent their mediocre strength and their time chiefly in the vicinity of their capitals. The weakness of Assyria was such that her monarchs could barely hold their own in their capitals. Yet they continued to send expeditions against Syria; but Palestine and Urartu were left to their own devices and were thus given an opportunity to expand. This opportunity was utilized at once. Argishtish, king of Urartu, made his kingdom the first power in the Near East and imposed on the tribes beyond the Araxes River.

Jeroboam II, king of Israel, recovered the Israelitish territory which had fallen into the hands of Syria, and engaged in campaigns directly against her. His military success carried his arms almost to the banks of the Euphrates and to Hamath, in Central Syria. He conquered the Moabites and extended the bounds of his kingdom to the lower end of the Dead Sea. This gave Israel her largest realm and made possible for her the natural development of her resources. With territorial expansion came increased revenues, a larger influence over her neighbors, and a more abundant measure of leisure and luxury, so that Samaria could vie with Tyre and Damascus in the splendor of her buildings. The commercial and social conditions and their dreadful results are set forth in the books of Amos and Hosea.

Uzziah, king of Judah, likewise took advantage of Syria's decline and Assyria's absence. He conquered the Philistines and the peoples to the south and the southeast until he reached virtually the boundaries of the old Solomonic realm. He thoroughly organized this territory, established a large and well-trained standing army to meet all emergencies that might endanger his kingdom, and strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem. This period marks the culminating point of political and commercial prosperity of the dual kingdom, Israel and Judah, under Jeroboam II and Uzziah, respectively. Their combined territory was now almost coterminous with the Davidic and Solomonic realm. Their success, however, was due to the crippling of Syria by Assyria and to Assyria's absence from Palestine. And this prosperity, based upon the misfortune of neighboring peoples and not upon moral integrity, valor, or economic industry, contributed in no small measure to the decay of Judah and Israel.

With the accession of the great Tiglath-Pileser III (745—727), the dry bones of Assyria took on new flesh, new life and blood, and Assyria arose stronger than ever. The first two years of his reign were occupied in settling palace affairs, quelling rebellions, estab-

8) Ira M. Price, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

lishing his authority in Mesopotamia, even down to the south of Babylon, reorganizing the army, and making it the most perfect fighting instrument in the world of those days. From 743 to 740 he was engaged about Arpad, the key to Northern Syria, to annex Syria and to gain command of the highroad of commerce to the sea. When the Assyrians entered Syria, Menahem, king of Israel, hastened to gain the good will of Tiglath-Pileser to retain his throne, offering him a thousand talents of silver. "So the king of Assyria turned back and stayed not there in the land," 2 Kings 15, 19 f. In this passage Tiglath-Pileser is called Pul. By the name of Pulu he was known among the Babylonians.

With a vast amount of booty and guaranties of submission on the part of the western provinces of Phenicia, Syria, and Israel, Tiglath-Pileser returned to his capital on the Tigris. From there he carried campaigns over into Media (737) and added large portions of it to his domain.⁹⁾

In the days of the Judean king Ahaz, Israel and Syria, under Pekah and Rezin, respectively, made common cause against Judah, which had cast off the Israelite yoke and had expanded, thanks to the incapable rulers in the Northern Kingdom. In his distress Ahaz offered up his oldest son, the crown prince, in the fire unto Jehovah. On the failure of this sacrifice he stripped the gold and silver from palace and Temple and sent them to Tiglath-Pileser, saying: "I am thy servant and thy son; come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria and out of the hand of Israel, which rise against me," 2 Kings 16, 7.

The appeal of Ahaz fitted exactly into the schemes of Tiglath-Pileser: the reconquest and organization of the whole Westland and next the conquest of Egypt. Tiglath-Pileser came. In 732 Damascus was taken, Rezin killed, and the line of kings extinguished. The inhabitants were deported to Kir, and Central Syria became a definite dependency of Assyria.

The system of deportation was not original with Tiglath-Pileser III. Previous Assyrian monarchs had made use of it, but Tiglath-Pileser employed it on a larger scale. Especially people of prominence, influence, and leadership were violently removed from their homes to distant parts of the empire, and their place was occupied by people taken from other Assyrian dependencies. It was an administrative measure, designed to prevent further rebellions. Persons who had been influential at home among their own people would be powerless to foment trouble in the midst of strange surroundings and neighbors of an unfriendly race. Nationalism was thus blotted out, and with it went the chief support of a local culture.

9) Ira M. Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 268—291.

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Old customs and the language might survive among the silent masses; but the intelligent classes were welded into one international society. The deportation of captives resulted in an assimilation not so different from that of the American "melting-pot." A. T. Olmstead says: "We can form some conception of the immense amount of discomfort, if not of actual suffering, which resulted, the settlement of mountaineers in the hot plains, and *vice versa*, the deaths from the unwholesome surroundings or from the brutality of the military escort, the complete breakdown of the economic system when highly skilled bankers and artisans were placed in countries which afforded a bare existence and rude nomads took their place in the old culture lands." 10)

The anger of Tiglath-Pileser was next poured out on the Arabs in the desert land east and south of Damascus for having constantly harassed his troops during the siege of Damascus.¹¹⁾ Thereupon he turned against Pekah of Israel. The entire land north and east was detached from Israel and formed into three provinces: Hamath in the Lebanon district, Hauran, and Gilead. He then crossed the Jordan and took Galilee and made it a province ruled from Megiddo, which stood as an Assyrian guard post against an Israel confined to a few square miles about Samaria, 2 Kings 15, 29.¹²⁾ Pekah was not even permitted to retain this terribly decreased Israel. Hoshea conspired against him, killed him, and reigned in his stead, 2 Kings 15, 30. In a somewhat fragmentary inscription, Tiglath-Pileser says: "The land of Israel . . . all of its people, together with their goods, I carried off to Assyria. Pekah (Pakaha), their king, they deposed, and I placed Hoshea (Ausi) over them as king. Ten talents of gold, ten talents of silver, as their tribute I received from them, and to Assyria I carried them."¹³⁾ As a matter of fact, Hoshea presented the Assyrian monarch with this money from his tiny kingdom to gain recognition from him.¹⁴⁾

Tiglath-Pileser had indeed heard the cry of Ahaz, but in the ultimate analysis the king of Judah derived little benefit from it. We read in 2 Chron. 28, 20 f.: "Tilgath-Pilneser, king of Assyria, came unto him and distressed him, but strengthened him not. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord and out of the house of the king and of the princes and gave it unto the king of Assyria; but he helped him not." In addition to this he probably had to help support Tiglath-Pileser's army. Ahaz paid dearly for whatever help the Assyrian afforded him.

10) A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, pp. 509. 188.

11) Bruno Meissner, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

12) A. T. Olmstead, *History of Palestine and Syria*, p. 453.

13) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 293.

14) Bruno Meissner, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

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Disturbances in Babylonia necessitated Tiglath-Pileser's return (731), while his generals were busy on the western frontier, where the king of Tubal (Tabal) was deposed. The commander-in-chief then went on to Tyre, which won absolution for a temporary lukewarmness by the enormous sum of a hundred and fifty talents of gold (728). The following year the last embers of revolt were stamped out in Damascus. Syria and Palestine were now under the control of Assyria, and Egypt lay exposed to invasion.¹⁵⁾

Tiglath-Pileser III was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser V (728—722), who previously had been governor of the province of Simirra and had been given general oversight of all of North and Central Syria. In the Old Testament two distinct references to him and the role he played in the overthrow of Samaria are found. The king of Israel now was Hoshea. Shalmaneser's relation with him is thus summed up in 2 Kings 17, 3—6: "Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and put them in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." The next Biblical account is found in 2 Kings 18, 9—11, in connection with Hezekiah's reign, and is virtually the same as the preceding record.

As soon as Tiglath-Pileser III had died and his son Shalmaneser had left the Phœnician coast to receive the crown of Assyria, Sibü, or So, perhaps one of Egypt's Delta kings, began a series of intrigues in which Hoshea became involved and which resulted in the disaffection of Tyre, Sidon, Acco, and Samaria. The mere appearance of Shalmaneser was sufficient to induce Sidon and Acco to surrender. Tyre and Samaria, however, offered serious resistance. Shalmaneser's five-year siege of the former ended in failure. The latter resisted bravely for three years, thanks to its impregnable hill, but finally it was forced to render submission, in December of 722 or 723. About this time Shalmaneser died, perhaps at the hands of his successor.

We have now arrived at the much-debated question, Who took Samaria? 2 Kings 17, 3—6 and 18, 9—11 seem to state that the king who laid siege to Samaria also took it. But that credit is claimed by Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser V. In one of his inscriptions he says: "I besieged and captured Samaria, carrying off twenty-

15) A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, pp. 175—205.

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seven thousand two hundred and ninety of the people who dwelt therein. Fifty chariots I gathered from among them; I caused others to take their [the deported inhabitants'] portion; I set my officers over them and imposed upon them the tribute of the former king." 16) If his claim is justified, then the expression "the king of Assyria" of 2 Kings 17, 5 must be taken in the generic sense of the term, like in 2 Kings 18, 11.

But we are not ready to accept Sargon's claim at face value. One of the greatest authorities, A. T. Olmstead, raises the following objections: "Sargon claims the conquest of Samaria for himself. But according to his own admission this capture took place in the 'resh sharruti,' or part of his reign before his first New Year. This New Year began probably April 2, while he ascended the throne December 28. We have thus four months, in the worst part of the year, the rainy season. The Assyrians, as it would appear, rarely took the field in the winter, and a regular expedition at this time would be very difficult. While in Syria we saw something of the mud which can be found at the end of March. Taking into consideration the somewhat untrustworthy character of the annals and their allied documents as well as the fact that we have no reference to any capture of Samaria in Kouyunjik 1349 of year II or in the Nimrud inscription of year VI or thereabouts, the earlier documents, we may well doubt the accuracy of Sargon's statement. But to negative we may add positive evidence. 2 Kings 17, 1—6 is a good source, going back to practically contemporaneous records. There can be no doubt that the 'king of Assyria' of vv. 4—6 was intended by the author for the Shalmaneser of v. 3. There is here no reason why the Hebrew writer should not tell the truth; for it mattered nothing to him or to the fame of his people if Shalmaneser rather than Sargon took Samaria. Then either he made a mistake, which is hardly likely, or he told the truth.^{16a)} Further confirmation is found in the Babylonian Chronicle, I, 28, where the only event of Shalmaneser's reign is the capture of a certain Shamra'in (which Olmstead and others identify with Samaria; cp. the Hebrew שַׁמְרָיִן and the Aramaic שַׁמְרָיִן). . . . For the capture of Samaria by Sargon we have only his own claim, made in a late series of documents which have often been proved incorrect. Against it we have the silence of his own earlier accounts with the direct scription of the capture to Shalmaneser by two authorities, widely separated and unprejudiced, while a third, a native Assyrian, gives data which fit well into the scheme. It will therefore not be difficult to assume that Samaria was taken by Shalmaneser in 723."¹⁷⁾

16) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 26.

16 a) That he made a mistake is excluded by the fact of inspiration.

17) A. T. Olmstead, *Western Asia in the Days of Sargon of Assyria*, p. 46 f. This book was issued in 1908; but Professor Olmstead still accepts Shalmaneser as the captor of Samaria.

As we stated above, Shalmaneser V was followed by Sargon. He is known as Sargon II, Sargon of Assyria, and Sargon the Younger. Hitherto it was held that he was a usurper and that with him a new dynasty came to the Assyrian throne. But thanks to a recent discovery by Unger of the University of Berlin we know that he was the son of Tiglath-Pileser III and a legitimate brother of Shalmaneser V. On a peg (*sikkatu*) we read the following brief inscription: "Palace of Sargon, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world (*kishshatu*), king of Assyria, the son of Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria."¹⁸

The change in the occupants of the throne at Nineveh apparently brought about but slight disturbances in the realm. The armies of occupation and siege remained faithful at their posts, and the stability of the government was not endangered.

Soon after the fall of Samaria, Assyria withdrew its iron fist from the Westland for a while, and anon the nations of the West took heart again, and by 720 the whole country was once more in revolt, the centers being Gaza, under Hanno, and Hamath, under Iaubi'di (or Ilubi'di). But apparently it did not take Sargon long to become master of the situation. In a somewhat fragmentary inscription of his we read: "In my second year of reign, Ilubi'di of Hamath . . . mustered his numerous troops at Qarqar and . . . the cities of Arpad, Simirra, Damascus, and Samaria revolted against me. . . . Sib'u [of Egypt] ordered his prime minister to go to his [Hanno's] aid, and he came forth against me, offering battle and fight. At the command of Ashur, my lord, I defeated them, and Sib'u ran off alone like a shepherd whose sheep have been carried off, and he died. Hanno I seized with my own hand and took him to my city Ashur in chains." Again he says: "I plundered Samaria and the whole land of Israel (Bit Humria)."¹⁹ The coalition was defeated, and the rebel leader, the king of Hamath, was flayed alive. The cities which had not been implicated directly in the uprising were permitted to retain their autonomy under their local kings. Those, however, which had been, such as Damascus, Samaria, and others, were placed under Assyrian governors. It was at this time also that the gaps which had been caused in Samaria's population by the deportation of the twenty-seven thousand two hundred and ninety of the leading citizens were filled by deported captives from other Assyrian provinces, such as Babylon, Cutha, and Hamath.

Not long thereafter the Assyrian king was informed: "The nations which you deported and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the God of the land; therefore Jehovah has sent lions among them, and behold they are slaying them because

18) *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, Vol. IX, No. 17 (1933).

19) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 3. 40.

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they know not the law of the God of the land." Sargon then issued the command: "Carry there one of the priests whom I brought from there and let him go and dwell there and let him teach them the law of the God of the land." The priest was settled in Bethel, and there he taught the new colonists the cult carried on in Samaria before it was captured. But Jehovah was not the only and supreme God. Each nation made gods of its own and established them in the houses of the high places built by the Samaritans. "They feared Jehovah, but made priests for the high places from their own people to sacrifice for them on the high places; they did indeed fear Jehovah, but they also served their own gods after the manner of the nations from whose midst they had been carried away," 2 Kings 17, 24—33.

Those who had been deported from Samaria were but a fraction of the population; the others remained there and intermarried with the settlers whom Sargon brought in and so became the ancestors of the Samaritans. The unfortunate deported Israelites were distributed throughout the Assyrian domain and were assimilated with their neighbors. Price says: "Their captivities extended over many years of time, and their amalgamation with their nearest neighbors was rapid and probably complete. The literary fiction of the discovery of the 'lost ten tribes' has assumed great prominence in some circles. But any one who has acquainted himself with Assyria's methods of government, with the wide distribution and assimilation of the Israelitish captives, and the impossibility of preserving intact the identity of those tribes as a whole, will recognize the futility of any attempt to find them. That members of certain tribes, and many of them, took advantage of Cyrus's decree is certain. But there is no people or nation or tongue to-day who can be identified as 'the lost ten tribes.'" 20)

At the instigation of Egypt the Westland once again rose in rebellion. About 714 Ashdod withheld her tribute, and her example was followed by her neighbors. The revolt spread to Judah, Moab, and Ammon. How dangerous Sargon considered this outbreak is shown by the haste with which he acted. Suddenly the Assyrians appeared and soon were in possession of the cities of the Philistine plain and in control of the main routes. The captured towns were rebuilt and settled with loyal colonists. Sargon's sudden mastery of the situation and particularly the punishment inflicted on Ashdod made such an impression on the Syrians that they remained quiet and contributed nothing to political history for the next twelve years. Judah, Moab, and Ammon were left alone.²¹⁾

In 705 Sargon fell on the field of battle and was followed by his

20) Ira M. Price, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

21) A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, pp. 206—220.

son Sennacherib (705—681). Bruno Meissner, the great German Assyriologist, characterizes Sennacherib in the following terms: "*Sanherib ist in jeder Beziehung eine ungewoehnliche Natur. Er war ein acusserst begabter Mann, der fuer Sport, Kunst und Wissenschaft, besonders die Technik, begeistert war; aber alle diese Vorzuege wurden aufgehoben durch seine eigenwillige, jachzornige Gemuetsart, die, unbekuemmert um die Moeglichkeit der Ausfuehrung eines Vorsatzes, auf ein bestimmtes Ziel lossteuerte. Darum ist er gerade das Gegenteil eines guten Staatsmannes gewesen.*"²²⁾

The news that an Assyrian king had fallen on the field of battle filled the subject states with new hope and soon brought about another uprising. In reliance upon Egypt, which constantly fomented discontent and revolt among the Syro-Palestinians in order, if possible, to create a fringe of buffer states between her and the Assyrians, Hezekiah openly defied Assyria in spite of the threats of Isaiah, levied an army, introduced mercenary Arabs into Jerusalem, and renewed the alliance with Tyre, whose king was now the dominant personality in Southern Phoenicia. Under the leadership of Tyre, Phoenicia forgot commercial expediency and revolted in spite of the fact that throughout their entire history the Phoenicians willingly accepted a nominal foreign rule, provided it was not too expensive and provided it opened to them wider fields of trade. The Cappadocian province, so laboriously formed by Sargon, slipped away almost unnoticed. The defeat of the king of Urartu had laid open the northern and eastern frontiers to the invasion of the Cimmerians. Elam and Babylonia began negotiations to wage war on Assyria; and much of Assyria proper was infested by Aramean tribes.

Of all of these countries, Babylonia presented the most pressing danger. In 703 the Babylonians set up as their king a certain Mardukzakirshum. However, he had hardly occupied the throne when the forceful Merodach-Baladan reappeared on the scene. Upon the death of Shalmaneser V, Merodach-Baladan had been able to secure for himself the throne of Babylon; but after having enjoyed royal authority and dignity for twelve years, he had been ousted by Sargon in 709. Then, when Sargon left the land of the living and his place was taken by Sennacherib, he sent an embassy to the Elamites, east of the Tigris, who gave him full-hearted support, furnishing eighty thousand bowmen alone. With the aid of the Elamites he now reappeared, expelled Mardukzakirshum, and regained the throne from which he had been driven by Sargon. He knew quite well that he would not be permitted to remain in possession of Babylon without a serious struggle, and he at once began his preparations for the inevitable conflict with the Assyrian king. Elam was already on his side; and he now entered upon negotiations with powers yet

22) Bruno Meissner, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

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farther afield. He succeeded in gaining the support of the Arabian queen Yati'e. An embassy was sent to Hezekiah, king of Judah, to congratulate him on his recovery from a severe illness. Plainly enough the real motive was to stir up disaffection against Assyria and to lay the foundations for a rebellion in the Westland. The ambassadors were received most hospitably, Hezekiah "hearkened" to the Babylonian envoys, and showed them all the resources of his kingdom. Does that not mean that Hezekiah, too, promised to join the ranks of the rebels? Other nations probably were approached as well, and it may be that the rebellion which subsequently broke out in the Westland against Assyria was originally intended to synchronize with Merodach-Baladan's revolt in Babylonia.²³)

Isaiah severely reproached Hezekiah, telling him that Jehovah was the all-sufficient Strength for Judah and that alliance with foreign nations would merely tempt Him to wrath. "Hear the words of Jehovah: Behold, the days will come when all that is in thy house and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day shall be carried to Babylon, and thy sons that shall issue from thee, whom thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (Cp. 2 Kings 20 and Is. 39.)

Some scholars have placed the embassy of Merodach-Baladan in Sargon's reign. But the great objection to that is the fact that the current chronology does not permit Hezekiah to be placed back so far. Nor does it seem to be in harmony with 2 Kings 20.

For six months Merodach-Baladan was permitted to reign in peace. But then Sennacherib crushed the Babylonian army and made Bel-ibni viceroy of Babylonia. In 702 Sennacherib undertook a raid among the Kassites and into Ellipi and pacified the entire eastern section of his empire. And now he was prepared to meet the situation in the Westland.

The Lebanon region was the first part of the West to bow in submission, in 701. Then followed Sidon the Great, Little Sidon, Zarephath, Acco, and Ushu, under Mount Carmel. At Ushu there appeared the kings of Ammon, Moab, and Edom to kiss the royal feet of Sennacherib and to secure his grace and favor. The march was resumed, and the Assyrian army passed around Carmel and down the Plain of Sharon, and one city after the other was attacked and taken.

Judah and Jerusalem were the next objective. When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his advisers and decided to stop the waters of the fountains outside of the city and the brook that flowed through the midst

23) Sidney Smith, *The First Campaign of Sennacherib*, pp. 7-12. R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, p. 361.

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of the land, for they said: "Why should the king of Assyria come and find much water?" The city wall was repaired and strengthened. Shields and weapons were prepared in abundance. Perhaps it was at this time that Hezekiah made the pool and constructed the underground aqueduct which brought water into the city, 2 Chron. 32, 1-8; 2 Kings 20, 20.

Sennacherib advanced and laid siege to Lachish. It was a strong city and offered serious resistance; but it was all of no avail. Assyrian sculptures show the inhabitants standing on the battlements and towers and shooting down the men who attempt to raise scaling-ladders or hurling stones and lighted torches against the wicker shields and wooden sheds of the Assyrian soldiers, who try to extinguish the fire by pouring water on the sheds with long-handled ladles. There we see Jewish prisoners impaled alive or flung naked upon the ground to be flayed alive or have their heads struck off by the sword; and there we behold his majesty the Assyrian monarch receiving the spoil, the captive soldiers, and ox-drawn carts with captive women and children.²⁴⁾

When Lachish was besieged and Hezekiah realized the seriousness of the situation, he took steps to avert the approaching disaster and sent an embassy to the Assyrian king at Lachish, saying: "I have offended; return from me. That which thou puttest on me I will bear," 2 Kings 18, 14. The penalty was specified, and Hezekiah emptied the treasuries of the Temple and of the king's house and cut off the gold plate of the door-posts of the Temple and sent thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver to Sennacherib. Instead of being satisfied with this enormous sum of money, Sennacherib aspired to take possession of a city which could pour out on demand such a mass of gold and silver and sent a detachment of troops from Lachish to demand full surrender of Jerusalem.

He sent his tartan (turtanu), rabsaris, and rab-shakeh (three Assyrian officials whose functions have not yet been clearly defined) to Jerusalem, who took up their position by the aqueduct of the upper pool on the highway passing the fuller's field; and there they negotiated with the Judean ambassadors. In effect, the rab-shakeh told the Jews: "Say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria: In what dost thou trust? Is not thy strength for war but useless talk? In whom, then, dost thou trust that thou hast rebelled against me? Behold, thou trustest in Egypt, this staff of a shattered reed, which hath pierced the hand of him who leaned upon it. But if thou sayest, 'It is Jehovah, our God, in whom we trust,' is not that He whose high places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'Ye shall worship

24) A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 308.

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before this altar in Jerusalem! Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord, the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses if thou canst place riders upon them. How, then, wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants and put thy trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? In truth, it was by order of Jehovah Himself that I have come up against this land to destroy it."

Horrified at the claim of Jehovah's approval, the Jewish representatives told the rab-shakeh to continue in Aramaic, the diplomatic language, lest the men crowded on the wall might understand it. But he at once improved the opportunity and said, "Was it to your master and to you that my lord sent me? No, it was to these very men on the wall." Then, in a loud voice, he shouted to the men hanging over the battlements: "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria: Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he cannot deliver you, neither let him tell you that the Lord will deliver you, so that this city will not fall into the hands of the king. Make a treaty with me, and every man shall eat of his own vine and fig-tree and drink the water of his own cistern until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of grain and wine, of bread and vineyards, a land of oil and honey, that ye may live and not die. Let not Hezekiah deceive you by saying that the Lord will deliver you. Hath any of the gods of the other nations delivered his land from the hands of the Assyrian king? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hands? Which god of all these nations hath delivered his land out of my hand that your God should deliver Jerusalem out of my hands?"

The people held their peace and answered the rab-shakeh not a word, in conformity with Hezekiah's injunctions. But there may have been many among them to whom a peace treaty made a strong appeal. With rent garments the Jewish representatives went to the king, who, in turn, rent his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and entered the Temple in supplication. Eliakim, Shebna, and the priestly elders were sent to Isaiah, who told Hezekiah not to be afraid.

The rab-shakeh departed and found Sennacherib at Libnah, somewhat to the northeast of Lachish. About this time the army of the Egyptians and Ethiopians under Tirhaka arrived to aid the Jews and took up their position at Eltekeh. The situation grew more serious for the Assyrians, and Sennacherib, probably fearing that Jerusalem, if left alone, might swoop down on him while in the thick of the battle with Tirhaka, at once wrote a letter to Hezekiah and sent his rab-shakeh back to Jerusalem. Then the armies of Tirhaka and of Sennacherib joined battle at Eltekeh. The commander of the Egyptian chariotry, the sons of the Egyptian kings, the generals in charge of the Ethiopian chariots, all were

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taken alive, and the cities Eltekeh and Timnah fell into the hands of the Assyrians. Ekron, one of the five Philistine cities, was destroyed.

Hezekiah took the blasphemous letter of Sennacherib and spread it before the Lord and prayed. Thereupon Isaiah sent to the king of Judah with a wonderful promise of deliverance. (Cp. Is. 36 f.; 2 Kings 18, 17—37; 19; 2 Chron. 32, 9—20.)

This deliverance came through the angel of the Lord, who went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. Sennacherib's own record naturally makes no mention of a disaster to his own troops in the Southwest. But the Biblical account is supported in a number of ways. In the first place, we have the testimony of Herodotus. Centuries after the destruction of Sennacherib's army the Egyptians told Herodotus a rather curious story about the disaster the Assyrian army had met with. Herodotus writes: "The next king, I was told, was a priest of Vulcan, called Sethos. This monarch despised and neglected the warrior class of the Egyptians, as though he did not need their services. Among other indignities which he offered them, he took from them the lands which they had possessed under all the previous kings, consisting of twelve acres of choice land for each warrior. Afterwards, therefore, when Sanacharib, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched his vast army into Egypt, the warriors one and all refused to come to his aid. On this the monarch, greatly distressed, entered into the inner sanctuary and, before the image of the god, bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept, he fell asleep and dreamed that the god came and stood at his side, bidding him be of good cheer and go boldly forth to meet the Arabian host, which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who would help him. Sethos then, relying on the dream, collected such of the Egyptians as were willing to follow him, who were none of them warriors, but traders, artisans, and market people, and with these marched to Pelusium, which commands the entrance into Egypt, and there pitched his camp. As the two armies lay here opposite one another, there came in the night a multitude of field-mice, which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves. There stands to this day in the temple of Vulcan a stone statue of Sethos, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect: 'Look on me and learn to reverence the gods.'²⁵⁾ The story of the mice seems to point to a common and well-known pestilence in the Near East, the bubonic

25) Herodotus, II, 141; G. Rawlinson, *The History of Herodotus*, p. 131.

plague, which under the name of Black Death once swept over Europe and killed a quarter of the population. Barton says: "In modern times this plague first attacks rats and mice, which in their suffering swarm the dwellings of men and spread the disease."²⁶) It may well be that the angel of the Lord availed himself of this horrible pestilence to destroy the Assyrian army.

In the second place, Sennacherib subdued the entire coast-line of the Mediterranean Sea and maintains to have carried off an enormous amount of booty and levied tribute on the conquered peoples; yet there is no hint in his records that he ever again visited this region, although he still reigned for twenty more years. Nor does the Babylonian Chronicle of this period mention a second expedition of Sennacherib against the Westland. Some specter seems to have haunted the memory of the Assyrian monarch and chilled his ambition to conquer Egypt, which was constantly stirring up revolt among the peoples of Palestine and Syria. The cuneiform records seem to imply that there was something rotten in Denmark.

As we pointed out above, Sennacherib does not make mention of any disaster to his army. On the contrary, he boasts that he shut Hezekiah up in Jerusalem like a caged bird (which is most likely true); that he threw up earthworks against him; that to his former tribute he added a special gift, thirty talents of gold, eight hundred of silver, precious stones, stibium, lapis lazuli, couches and seats of ivory, elephant hide and raw ivory, ebony and boxwood, cloths and chitons of various colors, implements of various metals, all of which was brought by Hezekiah's ambassadors to Nineveh after the return of the Assyrian; and that Hezekiah's male and female musicians also were taken to Nineveh and his women were incorporated in the Assyrian harem.²⁷)

Oriental Institute, Chicago University.

ALEX. HEIDEL.

(To be concluded.)

Eine Gnadenzeit nach dem Tode, die Vernichtung aller Gottlosen und andere Irrlehren.*)

Durch seine im Lauf vieler Jahre erschienenen Schriften — Palästina-Beschreibungen, Predigtbücher, Erinnerungsbände — sowie durch seine Verbindung mit dem Syrischen Waisenhaus zu Jerusalem ist

26) G. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, p. 436 f.

27) D. D. Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 119 ff.

*) Was soll ich denn machen mit Jesus? Predigten von Advent bis Pfingsten. Von D. Ludwig Schneller. H. G. Wallmann, Leipzig. 1935. 420 Seiten 5×7½. In Leinen gebunden. Preis: M. 5.50. — Das ewige Gebet. Zehn Vaterunser-Predigten. Von D. Ludwig Schneller. H. G. Wallmann, Leipzig. 1935. 120 Seiten 5×7½. In Leinen gebunden. Preis: M. 2.80.