TIGLATH-PILESER III,
FOUNDER OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

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TIGLATH-PILESER III, FOUNDER OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Josette Elayi

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Contents

Abbreviations ix
Chronology of Tiglath-pileser III's Reign xv

Introduction 1

1. The Kingdom of Assyria in 745 BCE 11
   1.1. Previous Attempts to Build the Empire 11
   1.2. The Crises of 826–746 15
   1.3. The Weakness of Assyria in 745 18

2. Was Tiglath-pileser III a Usurper? 25
   2.1. His Name and Family 25
   2.2. His Physical Portrait 29
   2.3. His Personality 31
   2.4. Royal Propaganda 41

3. Tiglath-pileser III's Ascent to the Throne 43
   3.1. The Revolt of Nimrud 43
   3.2. The Circumstances Surrounding Tiglath-pileser III's Ascent to the Throne 46

4. The Neutralization of High Dignitaries 49
   4.1. The Powerful High Dignitaries 49
   4.2. Restoring the Royal Power 57
   4.3. The Reforms for Neutralizing the High Dignitaries 58

5. The Strategy of Conquest 61
   5.1. Tiglath-pileser III's Objectives 61
   5.2. A Careful Preparation of Strategy 64
   5.3. The Place of the West in Tiglath-pileser III's Strategy 68

SBL Press

6. The First Phase of the Campaigns (745–744) 71
6.1. The Campaign against Babylonia and the Aramean Tribes 71
6.2. The Campaign in the Central Zagros and Media 79
6.3. The Creation of New Provinces 85
6.4. A New Deportation Policy 92

7. The Second Phase of the Campaigns (743–738) 97
7.1. The Campaigns against the Coalition of Syria and Urartu 97
7.2. The Fall of Arpad and Its Consequences 103
7.3. The Campaign against Ulluba 105
7.4. The Second Campaign to the West 107
7.5. Treaties and Loyalty Oaths 114

8. The Third Phase of the Campaigns (737–735) 117
8.1. A Second Campaign against Media 117
8.2. The Campaign to the Urartian Border 121
8.3. The Campaign into the Heart of Urartu 122

9. The Fourth Phase of the Campaigns (734–732) 129
9.1. The Campaign against the Phoenician Cities 130
9.2. The Campaign against the Philistine Cities 135
9.3. The Campaign against Israel and Judah 138
9.4. The Campaign against Damascus 146
9.5. The Campaign against the Arabs 149

10. The Fifth Phase of the Campaigns (731–727) 153
10.1. The Campaign against the Aramean and Chaldean Tribes 153
10.2. The Conquest of Babylon 161

11. The King Is Dead! Long Live the King! 165
11.1. The Mysterious End of Tiglath-pileser's Reign 165
11.2. Anticipating the Succession 166

12. Building Activities 173
12.1. Tiglath-pileser's Limited Interest in Building Activities 173
12.2. The Building of the Palace in Nimrud 174
12.3. Tiglath-pileser's Other Building Activities 178

13. Conclusion: Assessment of Tiglath-pileser III's Reign 183

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Selected Bibliography....189
Index of Ancient Sources....199
Index of Modern Authors....201
Index of Personal Names....207

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHL	*Ancient History of Lebanon*
AHw	Soden, Wolfram von. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981.
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
ANES	*Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ARAB	Luckenbill, Daniel David. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927. Repr., New York: Greenwood, 1068.
BaF	Baghdader Forschungen
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
Bib	*Biblica*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BM	Tablets in the British Museum
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006.
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

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CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CRIR	Culture and Religion in International Relations
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
CTU	Salvini, Mirjo. *Corpus dei testi urartei*. Vols. 1–4. Rome: CNR, 2008–2012; Vol. 5. Paris: CNR, 2018.
DFI	*Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran*
ErIs	*Eretz-Israel*
HANE/S	History of the Ancient Near East/Studies
HchI	King, F. W. *Handbuch der Chaldischen Inschriften*. AfO 8. Graz: self-published, 1955.
HIMA	*Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*
HSAO	*Heidelberg Studien zum Alten Orient*
HW	History of Warfare
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JA	*Journal Asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JESHO	*Journal for the Study of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KAI	Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, Vols. 1–3. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969.
KASKAL	*KASKAL: Rivista di storia, ambiente e culture del vicino oriente antico*
MVÄG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatische Ägyptischen Gesellschaft
NABU	*Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*
ND	Nimrud
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	Stern, Ephraim, ed. *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 5 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993–2008.
NMC	Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications

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OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OPSNKF	Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund
OrAnt	*Oriens Antiquus*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PNA	Baker, Heather D., and Karen Radner ed. *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. 3 vols. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998–2011.
PRU	Nougayrol, Jean, and Charles Virolleaud. *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*. Vols. 2–6. Paris, 1955–1970.
PUF	Presses Universitaires de France
Qad	*Qadmoniot*
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale*
RAI	Rencontres Assyriologiques Internationales
RGTC	Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes
RIMA 2	Grayson, Albert Kirk, ed. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC)*. RIMA 2. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
RIMA 3	Grayson, Albert Kirk, ed. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC)*. RIMA 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
RINAP 1	Tadmor, Hayim, and Shigeo Yamada. *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
RlA	*Reallexicon der Assyriologie*
SAA 2	Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. SAA 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998.
SAA 5	Lanfranchi, Giovanni Battista, and Simo Parpola. *The Correspondence of Sargon II*. Part 2. SAA 5. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1990.
SAA 6	Kwasman, Theodore, and Simo Parpola. *Tiglath-pileser III through Esarhaddon*. Part 1 of *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh*. SAA 6. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1991.
SAA 11	Fales, Frederick Mario, and John Nicholas Postgate. *Imperial Administrative Records*. Part 2. SAA 11. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995.

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SAA 12	Kataja, Laura, and Robert Whiting. *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period*. SAA 12. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995.
SAA 15	Fuchs, Andreas, and Simo Parpola. *Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*. Part 3 of *The Neo-Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon II*. SAA 15. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2001.
SAA 19	Luukko, Mikko. *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud*. SAA 19. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2012.
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAAS 2	Millard, Alan R. *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire (910–612 BC)*. SAAS 2. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994.
SANTAG	SANTAG: Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde
SEL	*Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico*
Sir	*Studia Iranica*
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
Trans	*Transeuphratène*
UKN	Melikišvili, G.A. *Urartskie Klinoobraznye Nadpisi*. Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960.
WdO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAR	*Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte*
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDVP	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

Key to Transliterated Words

Kibrāt	Akkadian words are indicated by italics.
DINGIR	Sumerian word signs are indicated by capital letters

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Explanation of Symbols

[ ] single brackets enclose restorations.

( ) parentheses enclose additions in the English translation.

… a row of dots indicates gaps in the text or untranslatable words.

When personal names are not presented in transcription or transliteration, their spelling is simplified for convenience, for example, *sh* instead of š or šš and h instead of ḫ.

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Chronology of Tiglath-pileser III's Reign

Dates (BCE)	Year of Reign	Campaigns and Activities
745	Accession year (first *palû*)	Accession to the throne on the thirteenth day of Ayyâru (May). Measure of the *andurâru*. Campaign against Babylonia and Aramean tribes. New policy of deportations.
744	Year 1 (second *palû*)	Campaign to Central Zagros. First Median campaign. Parsua and Bît-Hamban annexed. Submission of Iranzu, king of Mannea.
743	Year 2 (third *palû*)	Campaign against the coalition of Mati'-ilu of Arpad and Sarduri II of Urartu. Defeat in the kingdom of Kummuhu. Arpad besieged.
742	Year 3 (fourth *palû*)	Arpad besieged.
741	Year 4 (fifth *palû*)	Arpad besieged.
740	Year 5 (sixth *palû*)	Fall and annexation of Arpad. Allegiance of several western rulers.
739	Year 6 (seventh *palû*)	Campaign against Ulluba. The fortress was seized. Foundation of Ashur-iqîsha.
738	Year 7 (eighth *palû*)	Revolt of Tutammû of Unqi. Capture of Kullania. Annexation of Unqi, Hatarikka, and Simirra. Tribute sent by all the western rulers.
737	Year 8 (ninth *palû*)	Second campaign against Media. Creation of the provinces of Parsua and Bît-Hamban.
736	Year 9 (tenth *palû*)	Campaign to the foot of Mount Nal on the Urartian border. Capture of some Urartian fortresses.
735	Year 10 (eleventh *palû*)	Campaign into the heart of Urartu after the failure of diplomatic negotiations. Sarduri was enclosed in his capital Turushpa, which was not captured.

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734	Year 11 (twelfth *palû*)	Campaign against the Phoenician cities. Annexation of Kashpûna. Submission of Mattanbaʿal II of Arwad. Tribute of Hiram of Tyre. Capture of Gezer. Campaign against the Philistine cities. Submission of Hanunu of Gaza.
733	Year 12 (thirteenth *palû*)	Submission of Mitinti of Ashkelon. Loyalty of Ashdod. Syro-Ephraimite war. Tiglath-pileser's aid in Ahaz's defense of Judah. Devastation of Israel. Siege of Damascus. Defeat of Samsi, queen of the Arabs.
732	Year 13 (fourteenth *palû*)	Siege and fall of Damascus. Conquest of Galilee and of a part of Israel. Allegiance of Ahaz of Judah. Submission of the Arab tribes.
731	Year 14 (fifteenth *palû*)	Campaign against Aramean and Chaldean tribes of central and southern Babylonia. Attack of the tribes of Bît-Shilâni, Bît-Shaʾalli, and Bît-Amukkâni. Siege of Shapîya.
730	Year 15 (sixteenth *palû*)	Preparation of the campaign against Babylonia.
729	Year 16 (seventeenth *palû*)	Defeat of Mukîn-zêri, king of Babylon. The king "took the hands of Bêl," meaning he ascended the Babylonian throne under the name of Pulû.
728	Year 17 (eighteenth *palû*)	Tiglath-pileser participated in the *akîtu*-festival. Campaign against the city Ḫi[…
727	Year 18 (nineteenth *palû*)	Campaign against the city […. Death of Tiglath-pileser III in the month of Tebêtu (January). Shalmaneser V ascended the throne.

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Introduction

Tiglath-pileser III reigned over Assyria for eighteen years, from 745 to 727 BCE. He is considered by most modern historians as the true founder of the Assyrian Empire. He was the first Assyrian king to be mentioned in the Bible, although a contemporary Assyrian inscription mentions King Shalmaneser III as the one who led his army into battle in 853 against a coalition of Levantine states, including Israel's king Ahab.[1] Tiglath-pileser is mentioned in 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles under both his Assyrian name and his Babylonian name. Pulû (*pwl*) appears in 2 Kgs 15:19, and Tiglath-pileser (*tglt pl'sr*) appears in 2 Kgs 15:29, 16:7, 10. There is an intrusive *n* in 1 Chr 5:6 and 2 Chr 28:20 (*tglt pln'sr*).[2] Pulû and Tiglath-pileser were viewed as references to two different kings in 1 Chr 5:26. The biblical references, although inconsistent, are not surprising. Both Israel and Judah were impacted geopolitically by Assyrian expansionist policies in the eighth century BCE. While Ahaz, the king of Judah who had voluntarily allied himself with the Assyrians, was allowed to keep his throne, much of Israel's former territory was transformed into the Assyrian provinces of Dor, Megiddo, and Gilead, with Israel becoming a puppet kingdom of Assyria.[3] The contemporary Aramaic and Phoenician inscriptions of Sam'al (Zincirli) also mention Tiglath-pileser. Again, this is not surprising. Sam'al's King Panamuwa II was Tiglath-pileser's vassal ruler who paid Assyria tribute, while Panamuwa's son Bar-Rakib was ceremonially installed on Sam'al's throne by

1. RIMA 3:23, A.0.102.2, ii.91.

2. Alan R. Millard, "Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 21 (1976): 7, 10. The intrusive *n* may be treated as an inner-Hebrew variation.

3. Susan Ackerman, "Assyria and the Bible," in *Assyrian Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II: A Cultural Biography*, ed. Ada Cohen and Steven E. Kangas (Hanover: Hood Museum of Art, 2010), 129–31. See below, chapter 6, n. 119.

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the king of Assyria.[4] The inscriptions of Sarduri II, king of Urartu, relate not only his victory against Ashur-nârârî V but also his confrontation with Tiglath-pileser in 743, including an interpretation of the outcome that is quite different from that of the royal Assyrian inscriptions.[5] Babylonia was more directly concerned with Assyrian expansionism. Therefore, the Babylonian Chronicles briefly mention several previous Assyrian kings, such as Ashur-bêl-kala, Adad-nârârî III, Tukultî-Ninurta II, Ashurnasirpal II, and Shalmaneser III.[6] Yet as many as twenty-six lines of Chronicle 1 are devoted to the reign of Tiglath-pileser. The Babylonian King List A also refers to two years of Pulû's reign over Babylon.[7] The Ptolemaic Canon mentions five years of reign by Poros or Pulû.[8] Tiglath-pileser is absent from classical sources, which mention only Ninus (a mythic figure), Sardanapalus, Semiramis, and Sennacherib. Berossus, the Babylonian priest who published the *Babyloniaca* during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus I, cites a Chaldean king named Phulos or Pulû.[9] Berossus refers to him only as king of Babylon, not as king of Assyria.

Unlike the reign of his predecessor Ashur-nârârî V, about which there is virtually no information, the Assyrian inscriptions related to the history of Tiglath-pileser's reign are numerous and even overabundant. Most of them are housed in the museum collections such as those in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, the British Museum in London, and the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin. Still others are scattered across Europe and the United States in various museums, such as the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Hamburg Museum, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the Archäologisches Institut der Universität Zürich, Yale Babylonian

4. *KAI* 224, 215.15; 233, 216.2; 234, 217.2; Trevor Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 169–75.

5. UKN 155–156; Mirjo Salvini, "Assyrie-Urartu: guerres sans conquêtes," in *Guerre et conquête dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, ed. Leila Nehmé (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1999), 55–59.

6. Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 70–72, Chronicle 1; 183, Chronicle 24.

7. Albert Kirk Grayson, "Konigslisten und Chroniken (B. Akkadisch)," *RlA* 6 (1980): 90–96, §3.3; RINAP 1:15, A2.

8. Grayson, "Konigslisten und Chroniken," 201, §3.8; RINAP 1:16, A3.

9. Stanley Meyer Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), 23, D1; Robert Rollinger, "Assyria in Classical Sources," in *A Companion to Assyria*, ed. Eckart Frahm (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 571–82.

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Museum in New Haven, the Detroit Institute of the Arts, the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, the Israel Museum, the Aleppo Museum, and the Raqqa Museum, and there are others held in private collections. Several inscriptions are still unpublished. Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions can be divided into two categories: royal and nonroyal. The so-called Kalhu Annals were written near the end of his reign on sculpted slabs that decorated the rooms and corridors in his palace at Nimrud (Kalhu).[10] Series A of the Kalhu Annals was etched on seven lines, between the upper and lower registers of the slabs, and Series B in twelve lines. Series C was written across the sculpted figures of the slabs. Since many slabs were destroyed or removed from their original positions in antiquity, the text that has survived represents barely one third, if not less, of the full textual corpus. The annals are complemented by other annalistic-style texts, such as those inscribed on a stone stela originating from western Iran, a rock inscription from Mila Mergi in Iraqi Kurdistan (the earliest annalistic account), and a statue from Nimrud. There are also summary inscriptions preserved on pavement slabs and clay tablets and miscellaneous fragmentary texts that could be regarded as display inscriptions. In 1851, Austen Henry Layard was the first to publish Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions.[11] Following the publications by Henry Rawlinson, Edwin Norris, George Smith, and Eberhard Schrader, Paul Rost published a book in 1893, which for many decades served as the standard for the study of this king.[12] The first modern, comprehensive edition is that of Hayim Tadmor published in 1994; it was followed by the revised and expanded edition of Tadmor and Shigeo Yamada in 2011.[13] All of these royal inscriptions generally provide detailed accounts of Tiglath-pileser's military campaigns presented in chronological order and of his building

10. Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III King of Assyria* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994); RINAP 1:4–11.

11. Austen Henry Layard, *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character from Assyrian Monuments* (London: Harrison & Son, 1851).

12. RINAP 1:3; Paul Rost, *Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-Pilesers III* (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1893); *ARAB* 1.761–826 (translation in English).

13. Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*; Hayim Tadmor and Shigeo Yamada, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Simonetta Ponchia, review of *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III King of Assyria*, by Hayim Tadmor, *ZA* 106 (2016): 112–13.

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operations. Allusions can also be found to Tiglath-pileser's reign in the royal inscriptions of his successors.[14]

Two problems are associated with Tiglath-pileser's royal inscriptions: dating and propaganda. The annals are reconstructed from four or five different versions.[15] The largest gaps extend over several years: the fourth and fifth *palû*s (742–741), the seventh *palû* (739), the tenth *palû* (736), the twelfth *palû* (734), and the fourteenth *palû* (732) are totally missing. Numerous smaller gaps occur in the account covering certain years. However, most of the gaps can be supplemented by combining the different sources, and the chronology of the reign can be established on the basis of information preserved in the Assyrian Eponym List.[16] The summary inscriptions generally follow a geographical arrangement, without exact year distinctions. Propaganda is the second problem that the historian has to address when analyzing the different sources in order to identify distorted information.[17] Such information has to be extracted from its ideological and literary frame. This is very difficult, especially when an event is attested in one source only.

The nonroyal inscriptions are much less distorted by propaganda, but they are often undated. The stela from Tell Abta on the Wadi Tharthar, engraved by the palace herald Bêl-Harrân-bêlu-usur, mentions Tiglath-pileser's name.[18] Some chronographic texts, such as the Eponym List, the Assyrian King Lists, the Babylonian King List, and two Babylonian Chronicles, are useful for dating events.[19] There are also administrative documents, land grants, an inscribed duck weight, and royal correspondence sent to the king by state officials, spies, and other correspondents. These items were discovered in Nimrud, in the so-called North-West Palace, the Governor's Palace, and the Burnt Pal-

14. *PNA* 3.2:1330 (with bibliography).

15. Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, 27–39.

16. SAAS 2:43–46 and 59; Heather D. Baker, "Tiglatpileser III," *RlA* 14 (2014): 21–23.

17. Frederick Mario Fales, "Tiglath-pileser III tra annalistica reale ed epistolografia quotidiana," in *Narrare gli eventi*, ed. Franca Pecchioli Daddi and Maria Cristina Guidotti (Rome: Herder, 2005), 163–92.

18. RIMA 3:241–42, A.0.105.2.

19. SAAS 2:43–46 and 59; Grayson, "Konigslisten und Chroniken," 101–15, §3.9; 90–96, §3.3; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 70–72, Chronicle 1; 183, Chronicle 24.

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ace.[20] A few letters written after Tiglath-pileser's death allude to events from his reign.[21]

Nonwritten documentation dating from Tiglath-pileser's reign is also historically important. Information is provided by the reliefs from his palace in Nimrud, the so-called Central Palace, which included a "cedar palace" and "a *bīt-ḫilāni*, a replica of a palace of the land of Hatti."[22] The reliefs are partly representations of the Assyrian king's conquests, focusing on spectacular actions and occasionally accompanied by an epigraph, similar to our modern-day comics.[23] The Central Palace was discovered in November 1845 and was then excavated in 1845–1847 and again in 1849–1851 by Layard. Sir Stratford Canning paid for the first excavations at Nimrud. Hormuzd Rassam, who had been Layard's assistant in his excavations, worked at Nimrud in 1853–1854 and made some finds in the center of the mound: "In the … Center Palace, I discovered heaps upon heaps of all kinds of sculptures."[24] The Central Palace was then excavated by William Kennett Loftus in 1854 and again in 1878–1879 by Rassam. Excavations were carried out in this palace in 1975–1976 by a Polish expedition conducted by Kazimierz Michalowski.

Several modern scholarly works, large and small, mention Tiglath-pileser III. Every general history of Assyria or Mesopotamia includes short studies, the last one being the useful book written by Eckart Frahm.[25] The first one was Abraham S. Anspacher's *Tiglath Pileser III*, published

20. SAA 12:15–16, 13–16; 82, 75; SAA 6:4–6, 1–5; SAA 19:4–151, 1–151; John Nicholas Postgate, *The Governor's Palace Archive* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1973); Stephanie Dalley and John Nicholas Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1984); Henry William Frederick Saggs, *The Nimrud Letters* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001); John Oates and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), 88.

21. *PNA* 3.2:1331 (with bibliography).

22. RINAP 1:67, 25.1′; 123, 47.17′; Julian E. Reade, "The Palace of Tiglath-pileser III," *Iraq* 30 (1968): 69–73.

23. Richard D. Barnett and Margarete Falkner, *The Sculptures of Aššur-naṣir-apli II (883–859 B.C.), Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud* (London: British Museum, 1962), 34–46; John Nicholas Postgate and Julian E. Reade, "Kalḫu," *RlA* 5 (1976–1980): 304–15 (with bibliography).

24. Barnett and Falkner, *Sculptures*, 4.

25. Eckart Frahm, *A Companion to Assyria* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2017).

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in New York in 1912; this succinct account, based on Rost's first publication of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions, gives an overview of some of his military campaigns. Most of the works, for example those of Michael Astour, Stephanie Dalley, Stefan Zawadski, Jacob Kaplan, and Sajjad Alibaigi,[26] were related to a specific historical feature of Tiglath-pileser's reign, such as his ascent to the throne, the Assyrian army, and military expeditions. Several other works, such as those of Albrecht Alt, Ernst Vogt, Mordechai Cogan, Nadav Na'aman, Gershon Galil, and Luis Robert Siddall,[27] focused on expeditions to Israel and Judah. Works by Richard D. Barnett and Julian E. Reade focused on Tiglath-pileser's palace in Nimrud.[28]

My specific aim in this book is to study, for the first time, the history of Tiglath-pileser's reign, which was fertile in events, in all its facets—political, military, economic, social, ideological, religious, technical, and artistic—knowing that some aspects are considerably more documented than others. However, just like the history of Sargon's reign, that of Tiglath-pileser is poorly documented with respect to his family background, his youth, and the period before he ascended the throne. Hence it is difficult to propose a comprehensive assessment of the psychological factors that shaped his character and how, in turn, those factors influenced his approach to politics.

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26. Michael Astour, "The Arena of Tiglath-pileser III's Campaign against Sarduri II (743 B.C.)," *Assur* 2 (1979): 69–88; Stephanie Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II," *Iraq* 47 (1985): 31–48; Stefan Zawadski, "The Revolt of 746 BC and the Coming of Tiglath-pileser III to the Throne," *SAAB* 6 (1992): 21–33; Jacob Kaplan, "Recruitment of Foreign Soldiers into the Neo-Assyrian Army during the Reign of Tiglath-pileser III," in *Treasures on Camel's Humps, Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Dan'el Kahn (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008), 135–52; Sajjad Alibaigi, "The Location of the Second Stele Commemorating Tiglath-pileser III's Campaign to the East in 737 BC," *SAAB* 23 (2017): 47–53.

27. Albrecht Alt, "Tiglatpileser III, erster Feldzug nach Palästina," in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1953), 150–62; Ernst Vogt, "Die Texte Tiglat-pilesers III. über die Eroberung Palästinas," *Bib* 45 (1964): 348–54; Hayim Tadmor and Mordechai Cogan, "Ahaz and Tiglathpileser in the Book of Kings: Historiographic Considerations," *Bib* 60 (1979): 491–508; Nadav Na'aman, "Tiglath-pileser III's Campaigns against Tyre and Israel (734–732 B.C.E.)," *Tel Aviv* 22 (1995): 268–78; Na'aman, "Tiglath-pileser III's Annexations According to the Iran Stele (II B)," *NABU* (1998): 16, no. 14; Gershon Galil, "A New Look at the Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III," *Bib* 81 (2000): 511–20; Luis Robert Siddall, "Tiglath-pileser III's Aid to Ahaz," *ANES* 46 (2009): 93–106.

28. Barnett and Falkner, *Sculptures*; Reade, "Palace of Tiglath-pileser III," 1–42.

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The history of Tiglath-pileser's reign belongs to a trilogy, along with that of Sargon II and that of Sennacherib, that is, grandfather, father, and son.[29] The present book provides an understanding of the course of Tiglath-pileser's reign in relation to his personal choices and the context of his time. Several issues are raised and answered whenever possible: Was Tiglath-pileser a usurper? In what circumstances did he ascend to the throne? What were his qualities and skills? What were his shortcomings? What did he attempt to achieve, and how did he go about fulfilling his objectives? Did he have a clear plan or program at the beginning of his reign? Can he be considered the true founder of the Assyrian Empire? How did he manage to build the empire? Did he think it was more important to expand or to embellish the empire? Was he more a conqueror or an administrator? Was he more a reformer or a conservative? Were his achievements more novelty or continuity? What can be said of his personal evolution during his reign? In what areas did he succeed or, conversely, fail?

Concerning my conception of history, my methodology consists in adapting to the specific topic of the book and to the available sources.[30] My approach is multidisciplinary: political, strategic, economic, geographic, and ethnographic, along with text studies and onomastic analyses when necessary. I always adhere closely to the documents available, because only then is it possible to move on to a historical synthesis, which I provide in a partial summary at the end of each chapter. The progression of the present book is built around decisive events and determining facts. I was forced to make choices from a mass of overabundant data that to me appeared fundamental and relevant for the topic. Some facts and minor features had to be omitted because of the limited framework of the book. Among the different scholarly explanations, I have selected those which, in my opinion, offer the most plausible interpretations. However, different interpretations are also mentioned and sometimes discussed. In a few cases, given the current state of research, I have been unable to choose between several interpretations.

In order to determine whether Tiglath-pileser was the true founder of the Assyrian Empire, chapter 1, "The Kingdom of Assyria in 745 BCE," first

29. Josette Elayi, *Sargon II, King of Assyria*, ABS 22 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017); Elayi, *Sennacherib, King of Assyria*, ABS 24 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018).

30. Josette Elayi, "Être historienne de la Phénicie ici et maintenant," *Trans* 31 (2006): 41–54.

SBL Press

must determine what constituted the state of Assyria and what condition it was in when he ascended the throne. To be able to answer this question, we need to compare the Assyria of 745 with that of 727. Chapter 2, "Was Tiglath-pileser III a Usurper?," investigates the question of Tiglath-pileser's legitimacy because his ascent to the throne is far from clear. This in itself poses several problems. This chapter encompasses the study of Tiglath-pileser's name, his family, his youth, his previous function, his physical portrait, and his personality, based on inscriptions, even if distorted by royal propaganda. Chapter 3, "Tiglath-pileser III's Ascent to the Throne," examines the difficult historical context of Tiglath-pileser's early regnal years and the first measures he adopted to solidify his position. Chapter 4, "The Neutralization of High Dignitaries," explains how high dignitaries such as Shamshî-ilu had become powerful and how Tiglath-pileser proceeded to restore royal power. Chapter 5, "The Strategy of Conquest," investigates the king's objectives, his careful preparation of military strategy, and the place of the West in his strategy. In chapters 6–10, the book follows a chronological order, mainly based on the various texts of the annals. Chapter 6, "The First Phase of the Campaigns (745–744)," analyzes Tiglath-pileser's priority campaigns, the creation of new provinces, and the new measure of deportation of populations. Chapter 7, "The Second Phase of the Campaigns (743–738)," analyzes the subsequent campaigns conducted against the coalition of Syria and Urartu, with the creation of new western provinces. Chapter 8, "The Third Phase of the Campaigns (737–735)," analyzes the campaigns against Media and Urartu and the creation of the new buffer-state concept. Chapter 9, "The Fourth Phase of the Campaigns (734–732)," covers the different campaigns toward the western states of Damascus, the Phoenician and Philistine cities, Israel, and Judah. Chapter 10, "The Fifth Phase of the Campaigns (731–727)," deals with the campaigns against Chaldean and Aramean tribes, concluding with the conquest of Babylonia. Chapter 11, "The King Is Dead! Long Live the King!," focuses on the mysterious death of Tiglath-pileser and the designation of a crown prince, Shalmaneser V. Chapter 12, "Building Activities," examines the building projects initiated by the king. Finally, "Conclusion: Assessment of Tiglath-pileser III's Reign," offers an assessment of Tiglath-pileser's reign, his contribution to the transformation of the kingdom of Assyria into the Assyrian Empire, and the positive and negative consequences of his decisions and actions.

At the end of the book, readers will find research aids: a selected bibliography for each chapter; an index of ancient texts used; an index of the

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personal names cited, followed by brief comments and dates of reign for situating them both in a diachronic and synchronic perspective; and an index of modern authors cited. Three maps locating the geographical references in the book are provided within the body of the book, together with a chronology of Tiglath-pileser's reign on pages xv–xvi.

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