

CHRONOLOGY IN THE INSCRIPTIONS OF SHALMANESER III
AND IN THE EPONYM CHRONICLE
THE NUMBER OF THE CAMPAIGNS AGAINST QUE¹

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The chronology of the late part of the reign of Shalmaneser III has been subjected to discussion since a long time, and very recently by Sh. Yamada who has advanced some innovative suggestions.² The discussion mainly centers on to the fact that in two points there is no correspondence between (a) the numbering of Shalmaneser's *palûs*³ as given in his latest inscriptions, the "Black Obelisk" (BO from now on) and the "Kalhu Statue" (KS); (b) the targets of his military campaigns, and (c) the corresponding entries of the *limmu*-years in the so-called "Eponym Chronicle" (EC). These points are the following: (1) while the BO and the EC assign to Shalmaneser's 21st *palû* a campaign against Damascus, the EC has *two* campaigns; (2) while the BO and the KS assign to the 20th, 25th and 26th *palû* three campaigns against the Cilician state of Que, the EC has a total of *four* campaigns; these are grouped in a way that *three* campaigns correspond to the two campaigns of the 25th and 26th *palû*, the last of which is accompanied by the unparalleled note "the coming of the (statue of the) Great God of Dêr".⁴ My analysis will be focused on the number of the campaigns against Que, since this problem seems to be crucial for a better understanding

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² Yamada 2000.

³ The problem of the meaning of the term *palû* has been widely debated. The seminal work is Tadmor 1958; Reade 1978 put forward interesting suggestions (see below). Yamada 2000, pp. 66-67, takes for granted that it means "regnal year." However, he notes that it was "originally a non-calendaric concept signifying 'turnus'," and that it may have been subjected to loose usages or manipulations. Here I shall avoid any translation and any chronological definition; when the term *palû* is used, it must be understood as referring exclusively to the textual partitions as given in Shalmaneser's inscriptions. I shall return to this problem in a forthcoming contribution.

⁴ For the texts, see RIMA 3, p. 67, 100b-104a, pp. 68-69, 126b-141a (BO); p. 78, 143'b-162'a, and p. 80, line ?-227' (KS); Millard 1994, pp. 29-30, corresponding *limmu*-entries.

not only of the chronology in itself, but especially of the quality of the relations between the royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser and the "Eponym Chronicle." I am honored and extremely glad to offer this Assyro-Anatolian contribution in memory of Fiorella, while I still bear in my mind our talks on Assyrian-Anatolian relations in the first millennium BC and her constantly benign attention to my Cilician and Anatolian interests.

The major contribution to the problem was that of J.E. Reade.⁵ As regards points (1), he suggested the correct reading *Malahi* in the corrupt text of the EC. Noting that in Shalmaneser's texts this town is mentioned with the town of Danabi in connection with the 21st *palu* campaign against Damascus, he concluded that the editor(s) of Shalmaneser's texts had amalgamated two distinct military campaigns against Damascus in one single *palu*.⁶ As regards point (2), Reade suggested two different solutions. For the first, the scribes of the BO and the KS would have omitted to describe one of the three campaigns against Que mentioned in the EC, which should have been assigned to a *palu* following the 25th or 26th. For the second, they would have omitted a campaign against Dēr, which should have been assigned to the *palu* which followed the 27th (this latter solution being considered by him less probable).⁷ As regards point (1), Reade also attempted a general explanation, suggesting that, if the king remained "in the field, in campaign", for two successive years, his enterprises of both years would have been attributed to a single *palu*, thus implying that a *palu* might have been different from a *limmu* year. He also pointed out that, if the latter possibility is accepted, no omission or amalgamation could be ascribed to the scribes of Shalmaneser. Yamada has shared the chronological suggestions of Reade; however, he has stressed more intensely the responsibility of Shalmaneser's scribes in creating artificial reconstructions. He attributed both discrepancies to the activity of the editor(s) of the BO and the KS, arguing that he/they "conflated two years into a single *palu*, or suppressed one of them", in order to "present every year without interruption", and that the result was the creation of a "defective chronology".⁸

⁵ Reade 1978. For earlier and later bibliography, see in general Yamada 2000, *passim*.

⁶ Reade 1978, p. 254.

⁷ Reade 1978, p. 254.

⁸ Yamada 2000, p. 67.

It seems to me that there are good reasons for not agreeing with the lines of reasoning followed by Reade and Yamada. First, the attribution of "conflations" or "omissions" exclusively to the inscriptions of Shalmaneser only can be accepted only if one remains at the level of a neutral textual comparison, and does not attempt to establish any reciprocal hierarchy dictated by their chronological settings. If, however, we consider the relative chronological settings of the texts, it cannot be forgotten that the EC, in relation to the royal inscriptions, remains in any case a *secondary source*. The EC must be considered at his face value, that is a *late, learned / scientific reconstruction*, in which the historical events were elaborated on the basis of intermediary sources. On the contrary, even though they too may contain a certain degree of "reconstruction" of the past, the royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser must be considered *primary sources*, because of their chronological proximity to the events, in any case greater than that of the EC.

Second, I think that no cogent reason can be advanced for attributing *a priori* conflations or omissions to the scribes of Shalmaneser rather than amplifications or splits to the editor(s) of the EC. Such attribution might be justified only if some specific reasons be precisely individuated, and this has not been done convincingly so far. One of these reasons might be the suggestion of Reade that a *palu* might correspond to two *limmus* if the king remained "in campaign" for two consecutive years. However, Reade himself avoided to apply this kind of solution to the campaigns against Que, evidently because he could not figure that Shalmaneser remained "in campaign" against that country for two consecutive years; and this obviously undermines the general value of his suggestion.⁹ In my opinion, if a discrepancy exists between texts stemming from different periods, the first possibility to be considered is always that conflations or omissions should be assigned primarily to the *later* texts; only *secondarily* one should turn to the older ones. However, in all studies on this topic, the tendency has been that of "correcting" the royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser on the basis of the data stemming from the EC; the possibility of "correcting" the editor(s) of the EC has not even been taken into consideration.

In the following, I shall try to demonstrate that, at least as regards the campaigns against Que, the discrepancy between the EC and the late royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser (BO and KS) descends from the fact that the editor(s) of the EC subjected the texts of some royal inscriptions to a peculiar interpretation.

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⁹ Reade 1978, p. 254.

Exploring the reasons why the EC “split” one of the *palû* which bears a campaign against Que in two *limmu*-entries, the first question to be raised is: What originated this difference? The answers can be two: either a mistake in the written tradition (through intermediate school or archival copies), or some elements to be found in the very texts of Shalmaneser. The first answer is practically excluded if we consider that both the Black Obelisk and the Kalhu Statue were surely on display in Kalhu until the tragic end of the city:¹⁰ it is clear that the editor(s) of the EC could easily consult the text of both monuments on the spot.¹¹ Thus, it must be concluded that the different numbering may have been suggested by some element internal to the original inscriptions of Shalmaneser.¹²

In my opinion, such element is the statement of both the BO and the KS that in his 26th *palû* Shalmaneser marched against Que “for the fourth time”:

ina 26 BALA.MEŠ-*ia* 7-šú KUR.ḫa-ma-nu at-ta-bal-kát 4-šú
a-na URU.MEŠ šá¹ ka-ti-i KUR.qa-ú-a-a a-lík, “In my 26th
palû, for the seventh time I crossed the Amanus. For the
fourth time I went to the towns of Katî the Quean (king)”.¹³

I am convinced that the editor(s) of the EC, moved by their own specific problems of chronology, took this number “four” literally, *i.e.*, as meaning that four campaigns had been dedicated to Que, and consequently assigned four campaigns to four different *limmus*, grouping them as anticipated above. However, this suggestion originates a number of difficult problems, which deserve to be treated thoroughly.

¹⁰ The Obelisk is almost perfectly preserved (RIMA 3, p. 62), and this suggests that it remained in its original location, or that, if it was moved to other locations than the original one, it was carefully protected. For the statue, see Grayson’s introductory remarks *ibid.*, p. 72: it was dragged away from its original location in the sack of Kalhu, badly damaged and smashed, and finally thrown in a flat area at the foot of the Acropolis inside the walls’ perimeter. It might have stood in the Ninurta temple, as suggested by Laessøe 1958, p. 147 with fn. 1, however this is not proved (Grayson, *ibid.*).

¹¹ It cannot be excluded that other texts parallel to the BO and the KS were on display in other centers of the empire, such as Nineveh or Assur.

¹² In any case, if intermediate manuscripts were considered responsible for the introduction of the difference, it cannot be excluded that they derived the elements for such innovation from the original texts of Shalmaneser.

¹³ Text following the BO (RIMA 3, p. 68, 132-133). The KS (RIMA 3, p. 80, 216’-217’) has only the variant URU.MEŠ-*ni*.

The starting point is that the number “four” assigned in the BO and in the KS to the 26th *palû* appears to be in patent conflict with the fact that, in the preceding lines of both texts, only *two* previous campaigns against Que are explicitly mentioned (in the 20th and the 25th *palû*¹⁴). As anticipated, scholars have interpreted this statement as a decisive proof that something did not work in the BO and in the KS as regards the campaigns to Que. Contrasting the BO and the KS to the EC, they concluded that the BO and the KS either *omitted* to describe a campaign against Que, or *conflated* two campaigns in one of the two campaigns listed above.¹⁵ However, the number “four” given in the texts of the BO and of the KS can be explained differently. Actually, the counting of the campaigns to Que cannot be taken exclusively as if it included only those military campaigns which had Que as the *main declared target* of the corresponding *palû*, like in the narrations about the 20th, 25th and 26th *palû*. On the contrary, that counting may have included also *parts* of military campaigns in which Que, either mentioned *apertis verbis* or passed over in silence but logically implied, may have represented an *intermediary stage* or a *secondary target*. In other words, it is possible that the number assigned to that campaign were the product of a *logical inference* operated by the editor(s) of the text, rather than that of an “objective” mechanical selection of rigidly identical elements.

This possibility is suggested by the conditions in which the other counting operations appear in the texts of Shalmaneser. Excluding the counting of the *palûs*, the first is the counting of the (many) crossings of the Euphrates River; the second is that of the crossings of the Amanus Mountain.

The counting of the Euphrates crossings begins to be expressed through ordinal numbers (with the formula x-šú) not with the first crossing actually mentioned in the text, but much later on. The first crossing is mentioned both in the BO and in the KS in connection with the 1st *palû*, but is not numbered, as it happens with other following crossings. In both texts, the first numbered crossing, the 8th, is associated with the 10th *palû*.¹⁶ The same phenomenon happens as regards the Amanus crossings. Here too, the numbering through an

¹⁴ In the KS, the passage is broken away in a lacuna of ca. 13 lines; however, the surviving fragmentary passages regarding the 25th *palû* (RIMA 3, p. 80, ll. 215’-216’) are perfectly parallel to the text of the BO (RIMA 3, p. 68, ll. 130-131), so that it can easily be submitted that the whole passage was identical. In any case, the numbering of the previous and following *palûs* is identical in both texts.

¹⁵ See above.

¹⁶ BO: RIMA 3, p. 66, 85. The text of the KS has a small break at this point (RIMA 3, p. 76, 66’), however the group [8-šú] can easily be restored in the lacuna.

ordinal number begins late in the text, after other mentions of unnumbered crossings. The first (unnumbered) crossing is associated in the KS to the 20th *palû*; the first numbered crossing (the 7th) is associated with the 26th *palû*.¹⁷ Thus, it is clear that both in the BO and in the KS we should not expect that every occasion in which a specific event, which may recur many times in the text, be actually counted through an ordinal number. The ordinal numbering may begin in whatever point of the text, for reasons to be still explained. On the other hand, when the ordinal numbering appears, the ratios of the calculations made by the editor(s) may be not totally clear as we would expect when counting the campaigns according to their main headings as they are presented in the division by *palû*.

This is the case of the numbering of the Euphrates crossings: actually, it presents many anomalies which have been duly noted and discussed by many scholars. The problem is that, when the first ordinal numbering appears, it seems not to correspond to what we would assume to be the historical reality. The numbering is first adopted in the "16 years Annals" (following Yamada's classification);¹⁸ all other later texts accept and report the number given here, and this means that the number was always considered "correct." As anticipated, the ordinal numbering is "for the eighth time", referred to the 10th *palû*. However, that text actually mentions explicitly only *four* previous crossings. If we add them to the crossing of that same 10th *palû*, we obtain a total of *five*, not of *eight*. Scholars have variously interpreted this discrepancy, which has heavy consequences on the ordinal numbering assigned to later crossings in later texts of Shalmaneser. De Odorico suggested that the editor(s) were driven by the "desire of making match the crossings with the *palû*" (a fact which actually takes place with the 20th *palû* in the "20 years Annals" and later texts).¹⁹ Yamada, improving De Odorico's suggestion, has demonstrated, very brilliantly indeed, that, starting from the "Bull inscriptions", the numbers were manipulated in order to build a mathematical symmetry with the numbering of the *palûs* in the framework of urgent ideological aims.²⁰ However, the manipulation is clear for the crossings which have a number greater than 10 (the first manipulated number seems to be the "16th time" which is mentioned in

¹⁷ First crossing: KS, RIMA 3, p. 78, 145; the BO does not mention it. First numbered crossing: BO, RIMA 3, p. 68, 132. The text of the KS (RIMA 3, p. 80, 216) has a small break where [7-šû] can be easily restored.

¹⁸ For the names given to Shalmaneser's text I follow here Yamada 2000, pp. 11-27. For the texts, see the relevant discussion in Yamada 2000, pp. 335-337.

¹⁹ De Odorico 1995, p. 138.

²⁰ Yamada 2000, pp. 335-341.

the "Bull inscription"). For the first counting of the Euphrates crossings of the "16 Year Annals", instead, it is possible to demonstrate that the editor(s) reached this number by a specific calculation, which may not appear clear at first sight especially if we consider only the text of this inscription alone.

As stated by Yamada,²¹ in this inscription only four crossings are explicitly mentioned in the previous part of the text (for the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th *palû*), which, summed to that of the 10th *palû*, gives only "five". However, the editor(s) certainly could include in their calculation *three* additional crossings which they could deduce from previous texts:

(1) A first crossing is *explicitly mentioned* in the Balawat Gates inscriptions as effected in Shalmaneser's march to Chaldaea in the 9th *palû* campaign.²²

(2) A second crossing could be *inferred* from the wording of a passage of the Kurkh Monolith text which mentions building works of Shalmaneser in the Syrian town of Pitru in his 3rd *palû*, paralleled by other texts elliptical at this point.²³ This town is explicitly labeled as lying "on the other (*i.e.*, western) side of the Euphrates": it follows that the author(s) - in Yamada's words - assigned "the responsibility for all the construction works on both sides of the river (Euphrates)" to Shalmaneser, thus indirectly hinting to an Euphrates crossing.²⁴

(3) The third crossing could be obtained from a *rigidly formal reading* of the wording of a passage of the Kurkh Monolith. Here, a *double* crossing of the river in the same *palû* (the 6th) is mentioned with the sentence *ša šanūtēšu Puratta ina mēliša ēbir*, which must be understood (literally!), as correctly suggested by De Odorico, "I crossed the Euphrates at its flood for two times" or "I crossed the Euphrates at its flood for the second time (during this *palû*)."²⁵

All three crossings could be included in the counting because of ideological reasons. Crossing (1) could be included because, although

²¹ Yamada 2000, p. 337.

²² RIMA 3, p. 31, vi, 6. Yamada, p. 337, fn. 8, is aware of the existence of this crossing; however, since he does not take into account any other crossing, he thinks (correctly from this point of view) that the inclusion of this crossing would be irrelevant to his calculations.

²³ RIMA 3, p. 19, ii, 35-36: here the crucial sentence *ša šepē ammūte*, "on the other side," is lost in a lacuna, but it can be easily supplied comparing other parallel texts, *e.g.*, the BO, RIMA 3, p. 64, 38. The parallel texts are the "16 Year Annals" (RIMA 3, A.0.102.6), the "20 Year Annals" (RIMA 3, A.0.102.10), an inscription on a stone tablet from Assur (RIMA 3, A.0.102.15), the BO, and the KS, which all do not mention explicitly an Euphrates crossing.

²⁴ Yamada 2000, p. 129 fn. 187.

²⁵ RIMA 3, p. 23, ii, 82. De Odorico 1995, p. 137 fn. 96.

“southward”, it was considered pregnant as the other, “westward” crossings; its ideological significance is suggested by the mere fact that it is explicitly mentioned in the text. Crossing (2) could be counted because the editor(s) of the “16 Year Annals” were ready and willing to interpret Shalmaneser’s “building activity on both sides” as if it had implied a “real” crossing of the Euphrates. Similarly, the double crossing (3) could be counted as such because this would have contributed to the exaltation of the king’s *gestae*.²⁶

Yamada has denied the *reality* of crossing (2),²⁷ because of the importance he has given to a detailed historical-geographical reconstruction (Shalmaneser would have stayed in Til-Barsip and would not have participated to military operations west of the river), and because there is no *explicit* mention of the crossing itself in all texts containing this passage. Consequently, he did not even consider the possibility that the editor(s) of the “16 Year Annals” might have counted this crossing. As regards crossing (3), Yamada did not follow De Odorico and translated the sentence with a generic “for another time”, and excluded that a double crossing was meant since the ordinal number “second” would contrast to the mention of *three* previous crossings in the Monolith itself.²⁸ Consequently, he did not include this in his calculations as a double crossing.

These lines of reasoning can be seriously questioned. Actually, they imply, first, that the editor(s) of the “16th Year Annals” (and of all other inscriptions of Shalmaneser) *wished* to discriminate carefully between “true”, “dubious” and “false” crossings. Second, that they proceeded following *our* historical parameters (it is *we* who deduce that there was no crossing from *our* historical-geographical reconstruction and/or from *our* interpretation of the wording of the Kurkh Monolith text). Finally, that they counted only the crossings which were judged to be “true” after such careful discrimination. However, since the royal inscriptions were aimed at the exaltation of the king’s *gestae*, the scribes adopted a peculiar approach to the categories of “true”, “dubious” and “false”, because they were conditioned by underlying ideological needs requiring amplification and overestimation. The tendency thus was to consider “true” what might have appeared “dubious” (or even “false”, as can be seen frequently) on the condition that the result might have been

²⁶ I adopt here the terminology fittingly suggested by F.M. Fales, “Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Newer Horizons”, SAAB 13 (1999-2001), p. 130.

²⁷ See Yamada’s discussion of this campaign on pp. 120-129, and especially fn. 187 on p. 129.

²⁸ Yamada 2000, p. 337 fn. 6.

considered positive for the king. Thus, those crossings which were either only indirectly suggested or problematically mentioned could easily (and positively) be considered “true” and consequently included in the numbering calculations.

The total of “eight” attributed in the “16 Year Annals” to Shalmaneser’s Euphrates crossings up to, and included, his 10th *palû* should be considered the product of an ideologically oriented reading of the previous royal inscriptions by part of the editor(s) of the text. Yamada has attributed this numbering to a mechanical application of mathematical symmetry (“the editor ... counted four crossings up to the sixth *palû* and then applied this disparity between the number of the *palû* and that of the crossings to the tenth *palû*”²⁹). However, this proposal, even though formally reasonable, again implies that the editor(s) of the “16 Year Annals” decided to attach the number “four” to the crossing of the sixth *palû* following the discrimination mentioned above. They would have included only “true” crossings (those in the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th *palû*), excluding “historically improbable or doubtful” crossings such as that in the 3rd *palû*. As such, it seems not to take into account the background of the edition process of a royal inscription.

As for the counting of the Amanus crossings, as stated above, an ordinal numbering appears only with the BO and the KS, in connection with the 26th *palû*, when a “seventh” crossing is mentioned. Here too, it seems that this number was obtained through various kinds of calculations. Before the 26th *palû*, only *two* crossings, for the 20th and 25th *palû*s, are mentioned with the same sentence used for the 26th *palû* itself, which contains the verb *nabalkutu* (*Ḥamānu attabalkat*, “I crossed the Amanus”).³⁰ Even if we would consider that every crossing in western direction implied a second crossing in the opposite eastern direction, and thus that every “crossing” might be calculated as a “double crossing”, the total would be *four* (two in the 20th plus two in the 25th *palû*). This does not match the number seven of the “seventh time” for the 26th *palû* (“five” being needed). It may be suggested that the editor(s) of the BO and the KS took into account also those movements of Shalmaneser which were expressed through the verb *elû* (*ana Ḥamāni ēlî*, “I climbed the Amanus”), which we would be better inclined to consider merely “ascensions” and not “true” crossings. These

²⁹ Yamada 2000, pp. 337-338.

³⁰ 20th *palû*: RIMA 3, p. 78, 144’-145’ (KS); the BO omits the passage. 25th *palû*: RIMA 3, p. 68, 127-128 (BO); the KS is broken at this point.

“ascensions” are mentioned for three *palûs* (the 1st, 17th and 19th³¹). However, summing them to the two “true” *atabalkat*-crossings of the 20th and 25th *palûs*, we would reach a total of five, which again does not fit the number “seven”, “six” being instead required.³²

It is clear that a further Amanus crossing is required to have the final ordinal number appear as “seven.” Judging from the geographical extension of Shalmaneser’s campaigns, this crossing must be searched in the context of a campaign which involved the Anatolian regions. The candidates are only two, the 22nd and the 23rd *palûs*, which respectively had a campaign against Tabal and a campaign against Melid. In the 22nd *palû*, Shalmaneser, after passing through, or close to, Melid / Malatya, advanced westwards, and attacked Tabal, in the region around Kayseri. Then he crossed Mt. Tunni, to be searched in the mountain barrier south of Kayseri, and descended into the Anatolian *plateau*, in classical Lycaonia / Western Cappadocia, to the town of Hūbušna (classical Cybistra, modern Ereğli), and ascended Mt. Muli, which must be searched in the mountain range which separates *Cilicia campestris* from the *plateau*.³³ In the 23rd *palû*, Shalmaneser moved from Melid

³¹ 1st *palû*: RIMA 3, p. 51, 26-27 (BO); RIMA 3, p. 74, 10 (KS); 17th *palû*: RIMA 3, p. 54, iii, 39-40 (BO); the KS is broken at this point, however the text appears to be parallel to that of the BO, RIMA 3, p. 77, 117'; 19th *palû*: RIMA 3, p. 55, iv, 17 (BO); RIMA 3, p. 78, 138' (slightly damaged). Yamada 2000, p. 259, lists an ascension to the Amanus for timber cutting also for the 11th *palû*, which is mentioned in the “16th Year Annals” (RIMA 3, p. 38, ii, 71), in the Bull inscriptions (RIMA 3, p. 47, 36'), in the “20 Year Annals” (RIMA 3, p. 53, ii, 53-54), and in the KS (RIMA 3, p. 76, 73'-74'); the BO, which has a version shorter than that of the KS, omits this ascension. However, it is impossible that the editor(s) of the BO and of the KS might take this “ascension” into account, since this was not allowed by the text wording, which is, for all the quoted texts, *ši-di KUR.ḫa-ma-ni aš-bat KUR.ia-ra-qu at-ta-bal-kāt*, “I took (the road) at the flanks of Mount Amanus, and climbed Mount Iaraqu.” The locution *ina šiddi X* implies that there is no passage through X, but only a flanking (CAD Š/2, p. 407 s.v. *šiddi* 2b).

³² The total is not correct even if we sum the three *eli*-crossings to the four *atabalkat*-crossings which we would obtain taking into account a double crossing for each *atabalkat-palû*: we would obtain the number of seven crossings, and in the 26th *palû* an “eighth time” would be required.

³³ BO: RIMA 3, p. 67, 104b-107; KS: p. 79, 162'b-180'. Following the KS, Shalmaneser erected two statues of himself, the first in Hūbušna, the second in Mt. Muli. I follow here the restorations suggested by Yamada 2000, pp. 212-213 for line 177: “(I approached to Hūbušna) and” [r M]u-ia ù ṣa-[lam MAN-ti-ia ul/ú-še]-ziz, “I [ere]cted (there) [...] of my [na]me and [my royal ima]ge.” Perhaps the lacuna before M]U-ia may be supplied with something like [tanitt], “the glory (of my name)”. Grayson (p. 79) does not attempt a reconstruction of this passage. For all the well-known geographical identifications see Aro 1998, pp. 99-100, 107-108.

westwards to Tagarimmu/Til-garimmu,³⁴ and then to a region / town whose name has gone lost in the breaks of the text. At the end, the kings of Tabal went to him to pay their homage.³⁵ The crossing of mountains is mentioned for both *palûs*. In the 22nd *palû*, two mountains were crossed, Mt. [...]inzini between Hatti and Melid, and Mt. Timur between Melid and Tabal. In the 23rd, one mountain was crossed, Mt. Pala[...]: this must be located between Melid and an otherwise unknown town Uetaš, which however must have been east of Tagarimmu/Til-garimmu since it was conquered before the latter. Thus, no Amanus crossing can be deduced for the initial parts of both campaigns. We are thus forced to consider that the editor(s) took into account, and counted, an Amanus crossing which took place during the return towards the Assyrian territory. This assumption proves to be correct when we consider that, both in the BO and in the KS, an *eli*-ascension of the Amanus (for timber cutting) is mentioned for the 26th *palû*, on the *return* from Que at the close of the campaign (if numbered with an ordinal number, this crossing would be labeled as the “eighth”).³⁶ The choice is thus restricted to the final phase, the “return”, of one of the two Anatolian campaigns quoted above.

The geographical setting makes the Tabal campaign (22nd *palû*) the best candidate. As it has been correctly stressed by Yamada, it requires necessarily a descent from Mt. Muli to Tarsus / Adana and then a march eastwards, through classical *Cilicia campestris*. A return march from Mt. Muli avoiding Cilician territory would require, first, to descend again to the Anatolian *plateau* in the area of Hūbušna and/or Tuwanuwa/Tuhana/Tyana, and then another crossing of the Taurus mountain range north of Cilicia, in the Kayseri region, in the eastern direction of Malatya. Notwithstanding the length of some campaigns of Shalmaneser, this would seem an excessively long itinerary.³⁷ It is immediately clear that a return through Cilicia implies, as anticipated, a backward crossing of the Amanus. The description of the Melid campaign of the 23rd *palû*, instead, does not require a crossing of the Amanus during the return phase. The text of the BO has the kings of Tabal “coming” to pay homage and tribute to Shalmaneser immediately after his passage

³⁴ Here too I follow the restorations suggested by Yamada 2000, pp. 216-217: URU.ta-ga-ti-[im-mu]. See the discussion and the geographical reconstruction *ibid*.

³⁵ BO: RIMA 3, p. 67, 107b-110; KS: RIMA 3, pp. 79-80, 181'b-194'.

³⁶ BO: RIMA 3, p. 69, 140; KS: RIMA 3, pp. 80-81, 226'-227'.

³⁷ As suggested by Yamada 2000, p. 204 (“It seems that on the return march from Mts. Tunni and Muli, Shalmaneser marched peacefully through the Cilician plain with the consent of Kate”), cf. pp. 209-214.

through Tagarimmu/Til-garimmu.³⁸ This means that the advance into Tabal was not deep, and that the campaign was limited to the first part of the previous campaign against Tabal, *i.e.*, to the regions east of Kayseri and the surrounding Taurus mountains.

In conclusion, it seems that, *from the point of view of the very text of the BO and the KS*, the editor(s) of the BO and the KS obtained the Amanus crossing which gives the total of "seven" mentioned for the 26th *palû* from an "interpretation" of the itinerary of the 22nd *palû* campaign against Tabal and the Anatolian plateau, which hints to a crossing during the return phase of the campaign.

* * *

As regards the numbering of the campaigns against Que, the problem should be dealt with considering that the scribes tended to include in the counting all those events which might have been either (a) *found* in previous texts through a formalistic, but ideologically "correct" reading, or (b) "*deduced*" from the wording of previous editions, following the same ideological approach. Thus, it can be concluded that, in preparing the text of the BO and the KS, their editor(s) did not feel compelled to count and "number" in a final "counting statement of campaigns against a certain country" (Que) only those campaigns which might appear "totally dedicated" to that same country. Instead, they felt free to include also those campaigns which might have involved that country as an *intermediate* or *partial* target of larger military operations. All this, as we may easily guess, because: The larger the numbers (of campaigns, of booty items, of enemies killed, of POWs ...), the greater the reigning king's glory.

Let us now come back to the number of the campaigns to Que given in connection with the 26th *palû*. As seen, the number is four, including the campaign conducted in that same *palû*. Following the approach I have suggested above, we should conclude that the number "four" was not reached counting a campaign "totally dedicated" to Que which had not been recorded in the text of both the BO and the KS (either because "omitted" or because "conflated" in one of the others). The number "four" was instead reached counting a "passage" through Que which could be deduced from the inner logic of the text. As a matter of fact, such passage through Que is clearly implied by the seventh, "return" crossing of the Amanus which was deduced from the itinerary of the 22nd *palû* campaign, an itinerary which required a "passage" through Cilicia in the way back to Assyria.

³⁸ RIMA 3, p. 67, 109-110: "the kings of Tabal came to me and I received their homage". The text of the KS is broken at this point.

Admittedly, this solution may sound nothing more than a theoretical hypothesis. However, another text of Shalmaneser can be invoked in its support. It is a summary inscription³⁹ on a royal statue from Assur, which was composed after the 24th *palû*.⁴⁰ Here, an Anatolian campaign is described which has *both Tabal and Que* as its military targets. Following the text, the king first visited Mounts Tunni and Muli, where he erected statues of himself; then he turned against Tabal and Que, destroyed their lands, and finally shut the king of Que in his capital Pahlri. Then, the king of Que recognised Shalmaneser's superiority, brought his own daughter with her dowry to Kalhu and submitted to Shalmaneser.⁴¹ The first part of the itinerary given in the statue coincides perfectly with the itinerary of 22nd *palû* campaign against Tabal. However, neither the link between Tabal and Que in a *single* campaign, nor the second part of the narration (the mention of Pahlri and of the affair of the daughter of the king of Que) is to be found in any other Shalmaneser's text. Due to such uniqueness, this passage has been subjected to different interpretations. Some scholars linked it to the final campaign against Que in the 26th *palû*,⁴² or to the campaign against Tabal in the 22nd *palû*.⁴³ Yamada has considered it a "conflation" of parts of the 20th, 22nd and 23rd *palû*s campaigns (resp. against Que, Tabal, and Melid),⁴⁴ and has assigned the section about Pahlri and the "marriage affair" to the 20th *palû* campaign.

Such "conflation" of three campaigns cannot be excluded *a priori*. However, the inclusion of the 23rd *palû* (Melid) is arbitrary: no textual hint to Que can be found in the texts in this occasion, and the involvement of Que in the 26th *palû* cannot be inferred through

³⁹ I adopt here the terminology used by Yamada for the Shalmaneser texts, which however depends on the general statements on the classification of the Assyrian royal inscriptions put forward by Tadmor 1994, pp. 22-25.

⁴⁰ RIMA 3, A.0.102.40. For the date, see Yamada 2000, pp. 45-46.

⁴¹ RIMA 3, pp. 118-119, iii, 2b-8. I follow the correct translation of lines 7-8 suggested by Yamada 2000, p. 203, against Grayson's (p. 119), which has Shalmaneser taking away the king's daughter.

⁴² Schramm 1973, p. 84; Grayson, RIMA 3, p. 117.

⁴³ Bing 1969, pp. 44-45 and 179-180.

⁴⁴ Yamada 2000, p. 204, has excluded the 26th *palû* correctly. He noted that the text for the 26th *palû* has a detailed description of the removal of the king of Que in favor of his brother, and he stressed that this cannot be reconciled with the submission of the king of Que, accompanied by marriage agreements and sealed by his visit to Kalhu, as it is described in the Assur statue. The argument that, since the last campaign mentioned in the Assur statue is that against Namri (24th *palû*), the text should have been composed shortly after that campaign (pp. 45-46), and thus before the 26th *palû*, is attractive but remains unproved.

geographical considerations (see above). Thus, we are left with a "conflation" between the 20th and the 22nd *palû* only. However, the reasons adduced by Yamada for assigning the Paḥri and marriage stories to the 20th *palû* are not cogent and contradictory at a certain extent. On the one hand, he stresses that Que is not mentioned in this context either in the BO or in the KS. On the other hand, he himself is forced to admit that during the 22nd *palû* campaign *there was* a passage through Que (peaceful, in his opinion), which would have been omitted instead in all texts, the Assur statue included.⁴⁵ His ascription to the 20th *palû* thus seems dictated by other considerations, which consist in his basic belief in the correctness of the reconstruction offered by the EC.

However, the assignment of the Paḥri and marriage affairs of the Assur statue to the 22nd *palû* seems suggested by a series of elements. The first is admittedly an *argumentum e silentio*, which however has some validity if we consider that we are dealing with royal inscriptions. In the first of the inscriptions mentioning the 20th *palû* campaign against Que (the "20 Year Annals"), this is described in good detail, as expected since that inscription was composed shortly after its conclusion.⁴⁶ Even though one cannot be sure that it should have mentioned the marriage affair and the coming of the king of Que to Kalḥu (this may have happened later), we would in any case expect that the siege of the capital Paḥri would not have been passed over in silence. The second is the converging of three clues: the "missing" of an Amanus crossing from the counting (see above); the fact that the campaign against Tabal required a "peaceful" passage through Que requiring in its turn an "Amanus crossing;" and the fact that in the Assur statue there is a passage which links in some way the (22nd *palû*) campaign against Tabal with operations against Que. The third is the consideration that, if the Paḥri and marriage affairs are assigned to the 20th *palû*, the number of the campaigns against Que would be reduced to a total of three (20th, 25th and 26th *palû*). In this way, a circular reasoning would be completed: as it happened with Yamada and others, we would be forced to postulate either the "omission" of a campaign against Que both in the BO and in the KS, or a mistake in the counting of the last campaign (which is numbered 4-*šû*).

In my opinion, the counting of the campaigns against Que given in the BO and in the KS depended on calculations patterned like those of

the Euphrates and Amanus crossings. The editor(s) included in the counting not only those campaigns which he/they had deliberately chosen to describe as if they had been "totally dedicated" to Que (20th, 25th and 26th *palû*), but also parts of other campaigns which they labeled as mainly devoted to other countries, but which had involved Que. The best candidate for such inclusion, as seen, was, and is, the 22nd *palû* campaign against Tabal, which required both a "backward crossing" of the Amanus and the (peaceful or, *pace* Yamada, rather belligerent) passage through Que. Finally, I would suggest that the royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser contain *peculiar methods of counting* rather than omissions or conflations. Thus, I think that it cannot be firmly proved that the editor(s) of the BO and of the KS "omitted" the description of a whole campaign totally devoted to Que, or conflated two campaigns against Que in one *palû* only. If we limit our consideration to the texts of Shalmaneser alone, and exclude later, *secondary* texts such as the EC, such operations cannot be demonstrated for any other campaign and would thus remain isolated in the whole corpus of this king.

* * *

It is now time to draw some conclusions. The fact that the EC assigns four different "campaigns" against Que to four different *limmu*-years cannot be taken as a proof that the BO and the KS had "omitted" one of these campaigns or "conflated" two distinct campaigns against Que in one (corresponding to a *palû*). Such hypothesis can be submitted only if absolute priority is given to the editor(s) of the EC as regards reliability and historical knowledge, and consequently if the EC is treated as a *primary* source. However, there are no means to prove that the editor(s) of the EC had better knowledge of the events of Shalmaneser's reign than the Shalmaneser's scribes themselves. The only way to prove that, is to postulate the existence of other, however so far unknown, sources about Shalmaneser's reign which were accessible to the editor(s) of the EC, and that these sources were in contradiction with the data stemming from Shalmaneser's royal inscriptions. However, as far as it is known today, such kind of sources does not exist.

In my opinion, the sources for reconstructing the chronology and the development of the military events of the past were nothing else than the royal inscriptions of the previous kings, either in their "originals", or in their accessory and preparatory materials (drafts, school copies, exercises, etc.), perhaps supplemented with some elements stemming from parallel, contemporary materials, such as royal hymns or the so-called "epics". Actually, in the whole of the surviving parts of the EC there are no elements apparently stemming from different sources, and

⁴⁵ Yamada 2000, p. 204 fn. 437.

⁴⁶ Yamada 2000, pp. 19-20. The colophon gives the date of composition as the first of the month of Tašritu of the 20th *palû*. The formula (*li-mu* 20 BALA.MEŠ-a, "(in) the eponymy (of) my 20th *palû*") is rather peculiar and otherwise unattested.

this is especially true for Shalmaneser's III reign. Here, the only element which is not to be found in his inscriptions is the "coming of the Great God of Dēr" from his city, a still unclear information which might have been contained either in the broken sections of Shalmaneser's texts or in some retrospective statement in the inscriptions of some of his successors.

My final suggestion is that the number of consecutive campaigns "totally dedicated" to Que as given in the EC was different from that given in the BO and the KS because the editor(s) of the EC subjected to interpretation, rather than "literally quoted", the wording of the inscriptions of Shalmaneser. They found in both the BO and the KS the mention of three campaigns "totally dedicated" to Que (in the 20th, the 25th and the 26th *palûs*); however, they also found the counting statement "for the fourth time" attributed to the 26th *palû*. Since their work consisted in assigning only one campaign "totally dedicated to one country only" to each *limmu*-year (at least for Shalmaneser), they did not consider the text of the Assur statue, which had only a "partial" campaign against Que — which instead had been counted as "one" whole campaign by the scribes of Shalmaneser. In order to reach the total of "four" given in Shalmaneser's royal inscriptions, they instead added the missing campaign against Que, inserting it in one of the available "slots" of the *limmu* list. This operation was made in perfect parallelism with their "splitting" in two the campaign against Damascus, which, in Shalmaneser's inscriptions, was attributed to his 21st *palû* only: here too, another available "slot" of the *limmu*-list was evidently assigned to one of the campaigns labeled "against Malaḥi" and "against Danabi".

I shall deal in more detail with this problem in a forthcoming article. However, I would anticipate that the background of these "splitting" operations effected by the editor(s) of the EC is the fact that the chronology of Shalmaneser's *palûs* as given in his late inscriptions was, and is, not easily reconcilable with his early inscriptions and, over all, with the list of the *limmus* as available to them. For the moment, I would suggest that the scribes of the EC, faced with the same difficulties which also modern scholars have to face with when studying the chronology of Shalmaneser's reign in relation to the *limmu* list, needed to "add" two "full year-campaigns" to the total they had obtained from the *palû* list given in Shalmaneser's texts. This resulted finally in the "adding" of a campaign against Que and in the "splitting" of a campaign against Damascus in two.

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