

THE REVOLT OF 746 B.C. AND THE COMING OF TIGLATH-PILESER III TO THE THRONE

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The circumstances of Tiglath-pileser III's coming to the throne are practically known only from the description included in the Eponym Chronicle C^b 1¹. According to it, in 746 B.C. a revolt started in Calah and in 745 B.C. on the 13th day of the month of Ajāru, Tiglath-pileser took the throne of Assyria. So, according to this text, whether Tiglath-pileser was connected by blood relation to his predecessor or not, he took the throne in result of a *coup d'état*. The relation of the Eponym Chronicle was treated as a proof that Tiglath-pileser in person took part in the revolt which elevated him to the throne. Only lately P. Garelli in a short, however extremely interesting article took into account another possibility, according to which in 746 B.C. Aššur-nirāri V, the predecessor of Tiglath-pileser III "had been forced to separate from his *turtānu*, who would have fomented a rebellion, crushed by Tiglath-pileser"². According to that suggestion Tiglath-pileser is not responsible for the rebellion against his predecessor, even if his coming to the throne is a result of the rebellion started by Šamši-ilu, a "strong man" in Assyria, during the reigns of Shalmaneser IV, Aššur-dan III and Aššur-nirāri V.

However, although an unequivocal answer about the circumstances of Tiglath-pileser III's ascension to the throne is impossible, there are some data in the Eponym Chronicle in favour of the opinion that this rebellion started with Tiglath-pileser III's consent and knowledge. The exclusion of main officials of the central administration from the traditional order of eponyms at the beginning of Aššur-dan III's rule was probably ordered by the new king under the strong influence of Šamši-ilu. A few

¹) Cf. RIA 2, p. 430

²) P. Garelli, *The Achievement of Tiglath-pileser III: Novelty or Continuity?*, in M. Cogan - I. Eph'al (Eds.), *Ah, Assyria ... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, Jerusalem 1991, p. 48.

years later, after the death of Aššur-dan III, Aššur-nirāri V restored the old order, however still with Šamši-ilu as the *turtānu*, i.e. the first person after the king in the state. The restoration of the traditional order did not secure peace in the country and for the next four years (753-750 B.C.) the king stayed in the country and did not risk a campaign against the enemies. During the next two years (749-748 B.C.) he undertook two campaigns against Namri, which suggests that the first one did not bring any real success. The situation was constantly insecure and for the next year (747 B.C.) Aššur-nirāri V, for the fifth time during his reign, stayed in the country. The king's fear was fully justified: next year (746 B.C.) the revolt really started and deprived him of throne and life.

It means that the restoration of the traditional order of *limmu* did not satisfy the Assyrian nobles. The fact that after the success of the revolt not only Šamši-ilu disappeared, but also the *nāgir ēkalli*, the *rāb šāqê* and the *masennu*, three officials appointed by Aššur-nirāri V, suggests that all these people belonged to Šamši-ilu's adherents. The weak king had almost no chance to remove the power from his influential *turtānu*. However, in such a situation there was almost no chance for success of the revolt without the exact plan and leader. The eponym Chronicle suggests that Tiglath-pileser was the leader of the rebellion from its very beginning. An argument for such an interpretation lies in the fact that the revolt started in Calah, and that the next eponym after Tiglath-pileser III's ascension to the throne was Bēl-dān, governor of Calah. It should be noted that the sequence of *limmus*: Governor of Arrapha - Governor of Calah, observed again a few years later (735-734 B.C.) was adopted for the first time only after taking the throne by Tiglath-pileser III³. If Tiglath-pileser III decided to appoint the governor of Calah to be the eponym for the year 744 B.C., it seems to me that the governor of that city —most probably already Bēl-dān— was among his supporters and organizers of the revolt which started in his city. By changing the sequence of taking the post of *limmu*, Tiglath-pileser III probably wanted to reward the governor of Calah for his service during the fight against Šamši-ilu, his faction and the powerless Aššur-nirāri V.

³) In 810, the governor of Arrapha was followed by the governor of Māzāmua, in 802 by the governor of Arzuḫina, in 769 again by the governor of Māzāmua.