

Gyges and Ashurbanipal

A Study in Literary Transmission

Mordechai COGAN – Beer-sheba
and
Hayim TADMOR – Jerusalem

From the earliest days of Assyriological research, the story of Gyges, king of Lydia — well known from the classical traditions — and his encounter with the Assyrian emperor Ashurbanipal attracted interest. The most complete account of the story narrated in Prism A (the so-called “Rassam Cylinder”), the latest recension of the Ashurbanipal historical prisms¹, often found its way into chrestomathies and textbooks². At the same time, however, the literary antecedents of Prism A, especially the earliest of them, the fragmentary Prism E, have received insufficient critical attention. It is the E prism which tells of the arrival of the foreign rider (*rakbū*) of unknown language at the court of Nineveh; a scene identified by George Smith in the first publication of K.1821 (designated by him as E), “as an account of the reception of the envoy of Gyges”³. In

¹ The Ashurbanipal historical inscriptions most frequently referred to in this study are cited according to the following editions:

Prism E: A. C. Piepkorn, *Historical Prism Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal I* (AS 5; Chicago 1933) 8-17.

H(arran) T(ablet): M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige* (VAB 7; Leipzig 1916) 158-175.

Prism B: Piepkorn, AS 5, 19-94.

D: Piepkorn, AS 5, 95-99.

K: Piepkorn, AS 5, 101-103.

C: T. Bauer, *Inscribenwerk Assurbanipals* (Leipzig 1933) 13-24. An up-to-date edition of C, incorporating the fragments published by E. Knudsen, *Iraq* 29 (1967) 49-69, is still wanting. We have utilized a preliminary edition prepared by R. Zadok for Tadmor's seminar on Ashurbanipal at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1969.

F: J.-M. Aynard, *Le Prisme du Louvre AO 19.939*, (Paris 1957).

A: Streck, VAB 7, 2-91.

I(shtar) T(ablet): R. C. Thompson, *AAA* 20 (1933) 71-127.

H: A. R. Millard, *Iraq* 30 (1968) 106-110.

² See, e.g., D. G. Lyon, *An Assyrian Manual* (Chicago 1886) 22f; L. W. King, *First Steps in Assyrian* (London 1898) 81-87.

³ George Smith, *History of Ashurbanipal* (London 1871) 78.

this, Smith has been followed by all scholars who subsequently have dealt with Prism E⁴.

Recently, new E fragments, greatly adding to our knowledge of the prism, became available with the publication by A. R. Millard of unedited Nineveh texts, unearthed by R. C. Thompson and now in the British Museum⁵. These new texts prompted the present inquiry into the literary development of the Gyges narrative, from its earliest recital in Prism E to its final recension in Prism A, a span of almost a quarter of a century⁶. In the course of our work, it soon became apparent that a fresh treatment of E had to proceed; for what up to now had been seen as a single E recension could no longer be sustained in the light of the new evidence. Section I discusses the division of Prism E into E₁ and E₂ recensions; Section II traces the later literary history of the Gyges narrative⁷. Throughout, it is well to bear in mind, that further text discoveries — filling in the gaps of these very fragmentary prisms — may call for modification of our sometimes bold suggestions. Given the present evidence, these proposals seem tenable.

I. The E Recensions

The text fragments customarily assigned to Prism E as a single recension embrace in fact two separate recensions; E₁ and E₂.

The key texts of E₁ recension are K.1821 and A 7920⁸. They represent the 4th, 5th and 6th columns of a 6-column prism. Col. IV, lines 1-10, relate the conclusion of the campaign to Qirbit in Media, and are followed by the passage, lines 11-14, whose opening is cast in the first person: []*anāku*,I; i.e., the king. A long break, whose contents remain unknown, completes the column. The top of col. V contains the rider (*rakbū*) episode (lines 1-18). The preserved lines offer no indication of the rider's homeland. In col. VI, a building dedication, the occasion for the prism's composition, concludes the text.

⁴ See, e.g., Piepkorn, AS 5, 8f; and Millard, *Iraq* 30 (1968) 102.

⁵ Millard, *Iraq* 30 (1968) 98-102.

⁶ The chronology of the Ashurbanipal prisms followed in this paper is that presented by H. Tadmor in *XXVth International Congress of Orientalists* (Moscow 1960), 240.

⁷ The classical traditions concerning Gyges are beyond the scope of our inquiry. They have nothing in common nor point of contact with the cuneiform story. This material was treated by K. F. Smith, "The Tales of Gyges and the King of Lydia", *Am. Jour. of Philology* 23 (1902), 261-282, 361-387; and Lehmann-Haupt, *P.-W.*, s.v. Gyges Vol 7, 1956-66; and more recently, in general, by Tom B. Jones, *Paths to the Ancient Past* (New York 1967) 70-96.

⁸ Edited by Piepkorn, AS 5, 14-17.

Prism E₁:
Reconstructed Prism
Distribution of Fragments

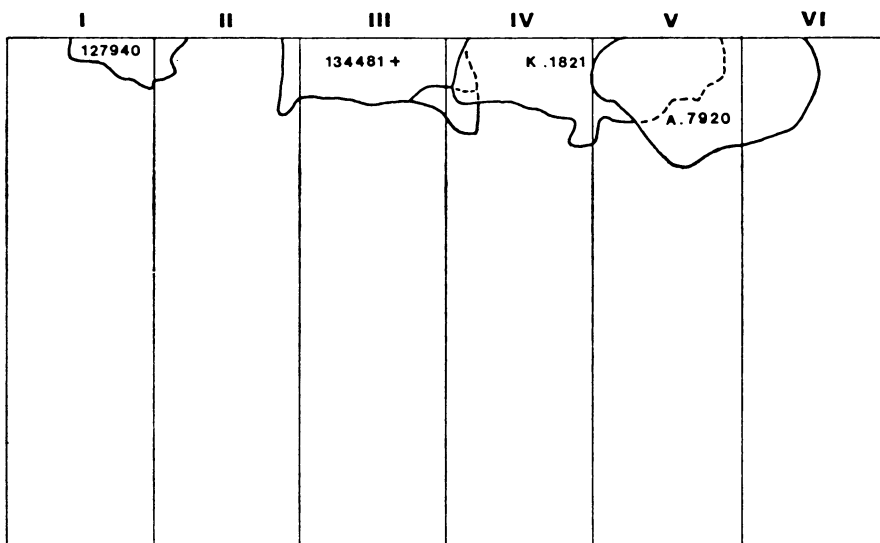


Fig. 1: Prism E₁

Additional fragments we assign to recension E₁ include:

127940 (Millard, Plate 19) —

The upper edges of 2 columns containing the prism's introductory material ⁹.

134481 (Millard, Plate 20) + 128305 (Millard, Plate 19) — ¹⁰

The upper edges of 2 columns. Col. III, lines 1-12, relates of matters in Egypt; col. IV, lines 1-13, concludes the Qirbit campaign. Line 14 begins a passage of unknown contents, apparently parallel to the first person address of the king noted above.

All that remains of what appears to be the earliest version of the Gūgu tale in E₁, is the vivid account of the arrival of a rider in Nineveh, whose strange language was incomprehensible at court ¹¹:

⁹ This fragment is not an exact duplicate of 134455 (*Iraq* 7, No. 23), which we assign to E₂. Millard's transcription (*Iraq* 30, 99-100) gives the impression that we deal with identical texts, though no overlapping of lines exists. Moreover, the introduction in 134455 has at least 2 additional lines; since 134455, col. B 3-6 correspond, line by line, to 127940, col. A 4-7.

¹⁰ This 'join' was made from the published text copies. Meanwhile, Millard had independently joined the fragments subsequent to their publication in *Iraq* 30.

¹¹ The following text, K. 1821, col. B (Bauer, *Assurbanipal* I, pl. 17) and A. 7920, col. A, (edited, without copy, by Piepkorn, AS 5, 16). Where

- K.1821 // A 7920
- 1 - [rak]būšu it[]
 - 2 - ana ša'āl šul[me]ya
 - 3 - iḥā ana mišir mātiya
 - 4 - nišē mātiya imurūšuma
 - 5 - mannumē atta aḥū iqbūšu
 - 6 - ša matēma rakbūkun
 - 7 - daraggu lā iškuna ana kisurri
 - 8 - ana Ninua āl bēlūtiya
 - 9 - []ūbilūniššu ina maḥriya
 - 10 - lišāne šīt šamši erēb šamši
 - 11 - ša Aššur umallū qatū'a
 - 12 - bēl lišānišu ul ibšima
 - 13 - lišān[šu] nakrātma
 - 14 - lā išemmu atmūšu
 - 15 - ultu mišir mātišu
 - 16 - [] ittišu ūbi[la]

Three additional lines; few signs.

"... his rider [set out] to inquire of my well-being. He reached the border of my country. My men spotted him, and asked him: "Who are you stranger, You, whose (country's) rider never travelled the road to the frontier?" They brought him [...] to Nineveh, my royal city, into my presence. (But of) all the languages of East and of West, over which the god Ashur has given me control, there was no interpreter of his tongue. His language was foreign, so that his words were not understood. From his territory ... he brought with him ..."

This episode, so far unique to the E₁ recension, is still an enigma. We must admit that nothing in the extant text indicates that this is indeed a part of the Gūgu tale, as rider-messengers appear at regular intervals in Ashurbanipal inscriptions. But in these other instances, the messenger is styled *mār šipri*¹², whereas only in the Gūgu tale is the uncommon *rakbū* (expressed by the pseudosumerogram RA.GAB(A)) consistently employed. Therefore, it is legitimate to assume, with George Smith (above, n. 3) that this episode describes Ashurbanipal's first contacts with Gyges.

differing from Piepkorn, reading is based upon collation of the Chicago fragment. (The numbering of lines follows A. 7920).

¹² Cf. Streck, VAB 7, 619, s.v. *šipru*.

Prism E₂:
Reconstructed Prism
Distribution of Fragments

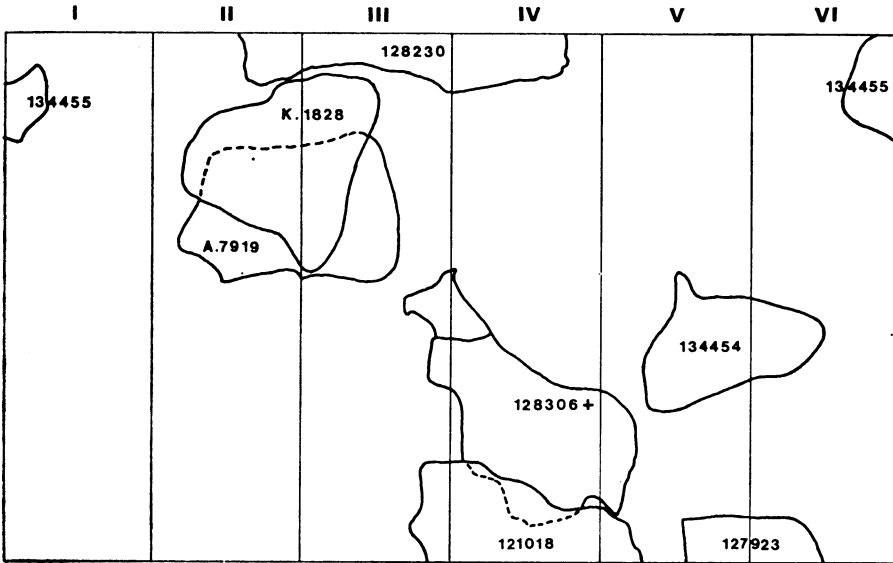


Fig. 2: Prism E₂

The main texts of the E₂ recension are: 127923 (Millard, Plate 20); 134454 (Millard, Plate 20); and 134455 (*Iraq* 7, No. 23). They represent the 1st, 5th and 6th columns of a 6-column prism. Col. V, lines 1-5, conclude the Qirbit campaign, and are followed directly by the introduction of Gūgu, king of Lydia. The account of the Cimmerian invasion of Lydia and the famous dream sequence continue through column end, and onto col. VI. A break separates the end of the tale from the building description¹³. Col. I, lines 1'-13', open the prism with the usual panegyric.

Additional fragments we have assigned to the E₂ recension include:

128306 (Millard, Plate 20) + 134445 (*Iraq* 7, No. 20) —¹⁴

Contain three columns; col. III relates to events in Egypt; col. IV offers the start of the Qirbit campaign; col. V, the Gūgu dream sequence¹⁵.

¹³ The lower part of col. VI on 127923 is blank, indicating that the building inscription on this text ended somewhere further up the column.

¹⁴ A new 'join', verified by collation in the British Museum.

¹⁵ This fragment may belong to the same copy as 134454, in view of the close small script on all three fragments.

121018 (*Iraq* 7, No. 21) —

An additional exemplar, the bottoms and base of three columns, corresponding in part to 128306 +. Col. III, Egypt; col. IV, Qirbit; col. V, the Gūgu dream sequence.

K.1828 (Piepkorn, 12-15) —

A two-column text. Col. II contains the end of the royal introduction (lines 1-3), and the opening of the Egyptian campaigns¹⁶. Col. III continues relating events in Egypt.

128230 (Millard, Plate 19) —

A three-column text, which parallels the distribution of episodes upon K.1828: Col. II, end of introduction and the opening of Egyptian matters¹⁷; col. III and IV continue the Egyptian campaigns¹⁸.

A.7919 (Piepkorn, 10-15) —

Two columns, cols. II and III, devoted wholly to Egyptian matters.

The text of the Gūgu tale of recension E₂ as we have reconstructed it from the extant fragments follows in transliteration and translation.

¹⁶ Collation of K.1828, col. A: 3-*ga*]-*ri!*-*e-a* A line is drawn on the tablet between lines 3 and 4, as on 128230, col. A.

¹⁷ A suggested reading of the last lines of the introduction to E₂ follows:
128230, col. A: 1 - *niqē ellāti* | *tašrihti maḥaršun* | [*aq*] - *qi* - *ma*
ušamḥira | [*hād*] - [*ra*] - [*a*] - *a*
(*ilāni*) *supē* | *tašliti* - *ia im-ḥur-u-ma*
nakiriya] *is-pu-nu*
inārū ga] - *ri-ia*

¹⁸ This fragment allows for the calculation of the approximate length of the columns in E₂.

128230, col. B, 1 reads: *šāšu ḥattu u puluhtu imqussuma*

col. C, 1 reads: *māmīt Aššur šar ilāni ikšu[ssunūtima]*.

These lines find their equivalent in HT, obv. 19-46. Since each line in HT represents 2 lines on the E₂ prisms, approximately 55 lines separate the two passages in 128230. Were E₂ to contain no additional material, then 55 line columns may be postulated.

But setting our E₂ manuscripts of col. IV alongside of the corresponding lines in HT gives the following results:

E ₂		HT	
128230, col. C	— 10 lines	Obv. 46-49	— 4 lines
[x	approx. 30 lines]	Obv. 50-65	— 16 lines
[x	approx. 4 lines]	Rev. 6-7	— 2 lines

128306, col. B + — 7 lines

134445, col. B — 21 lines

121018, col. B — 8 lines

(partially parallel to 134445)

Considering that E₂ listed the cities overwhelmed during the Qirbit campaign, a listing omitted in HT, a reasonable calculation sets the column length in E₂ at 80 lines per column.

If so, then col. III, which finds its equivalent in the 55 lines of HT, must have had additional material beyond that of HT. This most likely included the list of 20 Egyptian kings whose names are partially preserved in Prism C (II 89-94) and fully in Prism A (I 90-109). Our assumption also provides the source for this later listing in Prism A, presently unknown from the extant prisms.

134454

- col. A, 6' [^mGūgu] MAN KUR Lu-ud-[di]
 7' [ašru] ru-ú-qu
 8' [] pa-an KUR Aššur^{KI}
 9' [lā] [x]-tú-u né-su-u URU-šú
 10' [šarrāni a-l]i-kut mah-ri AD.MEŠ-ia
 11' [lā išmû] zi-kir MU-šú
 12' [da-ad-m]e rap-šá-tu-ma
 13' [xx l]a (?) šuk-lu-lu
 14' [i-šu-t]ú e-mu-qi
 15' [LU Gi-mi]r-ra-a-a LÚ.KÚR ak-šu
 16' [] [x] ina tam-ḥa-ri
 17' [] x ú-šam-qi-[tu]

Notes:

8': Perhaps either [ša la-]pa-an KUR Aššur or [ša] paraš KUR Aššur, but this depends on the verb in l. 9', [...]-[x]-tú-u, which is still undeciphered.

12': Conjectural restoration.

14': Conjectural restoration.

134445

col. C, (ll. 1'-15')

121018

col. C, (ll. 7'-15')

- 1' x []
 2' iṣ []
 3' ka []
 4' ši-ir KUR[]
 5' a-na paṭ gim-[ri]
 6' ^mAš-šur-DÙ.[IBILA MAN KUR Aššur^{KI}]
 7' ki-ma nu-ú-[ri]
 8' šu-pu-ma ku []
 9' ú-šá-an-ni-ma[]
 10' ina šat mu-ši [^dAššur ušabrannima]
 11' ki-a-am [iqtabi ana yāši]
 12' um-ma šá ^mAš-šur-[DÙ.IBILA MAN KUR Aššur^{KI}]
 13' ḥi-ši-ih-te Aš-šur [šar ilāni]
 14' GÌR¹¹ [EN]-[ú]-[ti-šu šabatma]
 15' a-na [e]-[pi]-[iṣ ardūti]

Notes:

The line count is identical in both fragments.

2'-3': Conjectural restoration:

[*kīma tibūt aribē*]

ka[tim māt Luddi kāliša]

Compare B IV, 47-48.

134455

col. A, (ll. 1-14)

127923

col. A, (ll. 2-8)

- 1 []-*ka*
 2 [*ta-ma*]-[*aḥ*]-[*ḥa*]-*'aṣ-ma*
 3 [*tu-ra-as*]-*sa-pá ina GIŠ.TUKUL*
 4 [*šuttam*] *aṭ-tu-la aḫ-laḫ-ma*
 5 []DIN]GIR'*ia ú-šal-li-ma*
 6 [*ú-šá-a*]n-na-a a-na LUGAL
 7 [*ultu u₄-m*]e an-ni-i
 8 [(*šat-ti-šam*] *l]a na-ḫar-ka-a*
 9 [(*na-šá-ku*] *k]a-bit-tú GUN*
 10 [*ú a*]-na *ši-ir LÚ.KÚR.MEŠ-šú*
 11 [*kayān*] *a-na-ku la-as-ma-ku*
 12 [*biltu ú*]-[*še*]-*bi-la am-ḫur*
 13 []an-n]a-a-te
 14 []-šú

Notes:

The line count follows 134455. [()] indicates restorations from 127923.

5: Conjectural restoration: [*paraš ili*]ya or [*qibit ili*]ya.

9, 11: *našáku, lasmāku* – stative. The use of the stative is common in the Assyrian dialect. For use in epistolary literature, see Ylvisaker, LSS V/6, 32, n.1. It is hardly found in the high literary SB prose of the Sargonid inscriptions.

10: Collation – A. Shaffer.

“His enemies” is understood as Ashur’s enemies, since Ashur is apparently referred to as “my god” in line 5. The verb *lasāmu* in NA letters regularly describes service as a military “runner”. See CAD L, 106. It appears here for the first time in a royal inscription.

134454

- col. B, 1' [] []
 2' LÚ A.[KIN]
 3' a-na a-mar[]

BM 134454 col. A

6'-7' [Gügu], king of Lydia, a distant [place],
 8' [who] of Assyria []
 9' [was not], far-away is his city.
 10' [The kings, who] preceded me, my ancestors,
 11' [had never heard] his name.
 12' [The(ir) country] is wide,
 13' [but] undeveloped.
 14' [lacking in] strength.
 15' [The Cim]merians, a dangerous enemy,
 16' [] in battle []
 17' [] they defeated []

BM 134445

121018

2' [like the onslaught of locusts]
 3' co[vering all of Lydia]
 4' against the country []
 5' the entire border []
 6' Ashurbanipal, [king of Assyria]
 7' as the light []
 8' appear []
 9' He related to me []
 10' "During the night [Ashur, the god, revealed to me (in a dream).]
 11' Thus [he said to me:]
 12'-14' 'Lay hold of the royal feet of Ashurbanipal, [king of As-
 syria,] beloved of Ashur, [king of the gods.]
 15' Acknowledge his [overlordship]

BM 134455

127923

1 [] your [enemies (?)]
 2 you shall defeat, and
 3 you shall overwhelm (them) in battle'.
 4 I was overawed by [the dream] I had.
 5 I fulfilled [the order of] my god,
 6 and now I am relating (it) to (my) sovereign.
 7 From that day on,
 8 yearly, without interruption,
 9 I do bear a heavy tribute.
 10 [And] against his (i.e. Ashur's) enemies
 11 I [constantly] rush forth."
 12 [] he sent to me, I received.

13 [] these [words (?)]
 14 [] his []

BM 134454 col. B

2' a messen[ger]
 3' to []

A synopsis of the Gūgu tale in the E₂ recension — though very fragmentary — can be tentatively suggested. Gūgu, king of distant Lydia, a land which had remained beyond the ken of Ashurbanipal's forefathers, is overrun by Cimmerian invaders. Apparently, a rider from Lydia has arrived in Nineveh, with a plea from Gūgu for Assyrian help against the enemy. After describing the devastating invasion, the rider relates the circumstances which brought him to the court of Ashurbanipal. His master, the Lydian king, had dreamed that the god Ashur himself revealed the formula for overcoming the Cimmerians: vassal submission to Ashurbanipal. Awe-struck, Gūgu, undertook a yearly tribute to Assyria.

Assuming the correctness of our restoration in 134455, 10, that it was [Ashur, the god] who revealed himself in the dream (as is the case in all succeeding recensions, see below, Part II, lines c, d), it is of special interest that Gūgu concludes his message of submission: *ana šēr nakirēka [kayān] anāku lasmāku* — thus designating the Cimmerians as his (i.e. Ashur's) enemies. As in the case of YHWH to Biblical Balaam, so here the Assyrian national god appeared to a distant and foreign dreamer. This apparition was sufficient to bring about the total submission of Lydia to the empire, submission which is expressed in readiness to bear tribute and arms on its behalf and on behalf of its god.

In editing E₂, the editor assumed that the actors in this drama spoke a mutually intelligible language, a fact which further commends the exclusion of the *rakbū* episode of E₁ from the E₂ recension.

II. The Later Literary History of the Gūgu Narrative

The detailed narrative concerning Ashur's nocturnal call upon Gūgu and the king's consequent submission to Ashurbanipal as presented in E₂ never became canonic. Indeed, both E recensions were superseded by a shorter, composite account of Ashurbanipal's early campaigns, available in the dedication text of the Sin Temple at Harran. The rewritten narrative of HT was adopted by the editors of later recensions — B, D, C, and F; the story line remained basically unchanged until edition A. The last known treatment of our subject comes from the text of the Ishtar Temple at Nineveh.

A composite text of the Gūgu narrative in its various recensions can be reconstructed ¹⁹:

HT	B	C	F	A	ITa	
						^m Gūgu šar māt Luddi nagû ša ¹ nēbirti tâmti
						b ašru rūqu ša šarrāni ² abbēya lā išmû zikir šumišu
						c nibīt šarrūtiya ³ ina šutti ušabrišuma
						d ^a Aššur ilu bānū'a
						e ⁴ umma ša ^m Aššurbānapli šar māt Aššur ⁴
						f hišihti ^a Aššur šar ilāni bēl gimri
						g ⁴ šēpā rubūtišu šabatma ⁴
						h šarrāssu pitluḥma šullā bēlūssu ša epēš ardūti
						i u nadīn mandatti lillikūš suppūka
						j ina zikir šumišu kušud nakrēka
						k ūmu šutta annīta ēmuru rakbūšu išpura ⁵
						l ana ša'al šulmeya ⁶
						m šuttu annītu ša ēmuru
						n ina qāt mār šiprišu išpuramma ušannā iāti
						o ultu libbi ūmi ša išbatu šēpē šarrūtiya
						p Gimirrāya
						q mudallipū nišē mātišu ⁷
						r nakru ekšu

¹⁹ Note, that this does not presuppose that such an *Urtext* ever existed.

Notes on text:

¹ HT omits.

² HT inserts *alikūt mahri*.

³ HT inserts *kabti*; A reads *šumiya*.

⁴ A re-arranges: *umma šēpē* ^{md}*Aššurbānapli šar māt Aššur šabatma*.

⁵ HT inserts *adi mahriya*.

⁶ HT moves up entire phrase to line k.

⁷ HT reads *mudallipūti mātišu*.

- a Gyges, king of Lydia, a district by the passes of the sea,
b a distant place, whose name the kings, my ancestors, had not heard,
c-d the god Ashur, my begetter, revealed word of my kingship (A: my name) to him in a dream:
e "Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria,
f the beloved of Ashur, king of the gods, lord of all —
g Lay hold of his princely feet!
h Revere his sovereignty, Implore his rule. As obeisance and tribute-bearing, let your prayers come before him.
i By invoking his name, conquer your enemies!"
j On the (very) day he had this dream, he dispatched his rider
k to inquire of my well-being.
l Through his messenger, he sent to relate to me the dream that he had.
m-n From the day he laid hold of my royal feet —
o the Cimmerians,
p (who) harass his countrymen,
q a wicked enemy,
r

HT B C F A IT

					s	<i>ša lā iptallahū abbēya u iāši</i> ⁸
					t	<i>lā iṣbatū šēpē šarrūtiya</i>
					u	<i>ina qerbi tamhāri balūssu</i>
					v	<i>ikšudā qātāšu</i> ⁹
					w	<i>ina tukulti</i> ^a <i>Aššur</i>
					x	^a <i>Marduk</i>
					y	^a <i>Ištar</i>
					z	<i>ilāni</i>
					aa	<i>bēlēya</i>
					bb	<i>ultu libbi bēl ālāni ša Gimirrāya ša ikšudu</i>
					cc	<i>2 bēl ālāni</i>
					dd	<i>ina šiṣši iṣ qāti parzilli</i> ¹⁰
					ee	<i>šigari</i> ¹¹ <i>birēti parzilli</i> ¹² <i>utammehma</i>
					ff	<i>itti tāmartišu kabitti</i>
					gg	<i>ana Ninua āl bēlūtia</i>
					hh	<i>ušēbilamma</i>
					ii	<i>adi mahriya</i>
					jj	<i>unaššiq šēpēya</i>
					kk	<i>ātammaru danān</i> ^a <i>Aššur</i> u ^a <i>Marduk</i>

Let us trace the main stages in the recensional development of the narrative.

⁸ C reads: *iāti*; F, A read: *attū'a*.

⁹ A reads *ikšud*; omits *qātāšu*.

¹⁰ B, C, F omit.

¹¹ A omits.

¹² B, C, F omit.

s	who had never honored my ancestors or me,
t	had never laid hold of my royal feet,
u-v	he captured alive in the midst of battle
w	with the aid of Ashur,
x	Marduk,
y	Ishtar,
z	the gods,
aa	my lords.
bb	Out of the Cimmerian village heads which he captured,
cc	two village heads,
dd-ee	he put in handcuffs, iron manacles, shackles and iron fetters,
ff	and together with his rich gifts,
gg	to Nineveh, my capital,
hh	he sent
ii	into my presence.
jj	He kissed my feet.
kk	(Thus) I experienced the might of Ashur and Marduk.

Stage 1: The treatment of Gūgu in HT is best described as a condensation and abridgement of the E recensions²⁰. The vivid messenger scene of E₂ was not taken over; court interpreters of the rider's barbaric tongue have been dismissed. In like manner, the lengthy and colloquial message of Gūgu to Ashurbanipal in E₂ was omitted. This effusiveness may not have suited the taste of the later editors²¹. Withal, though curtailed in dimension and detail, the dream apparition was retained in the HT edition for its significant expression of imperial ideology.

Stage 2: The HT version of the narrative persisted until the A recension; it appeared in all intervening editions. In recension B, some minor adjustments were introduced. The verbal message of Ashur to Gūgu was deleted, further curtailing one of the original elements of E. A new detail concerning the Lydian submission to Assyria amplified Gūgu's surrender: captive Cimmerians were sent as "trophies" to Nineveh.

Stage 3: About 643, i.e., some years after the destruction of Susa and the final defeat of Elam, the royal historiographers set out to present a complete and most eloquent account of Ashurbanipal's military achievements. While a study of the complex editorial work behind this recension — A (the Rassam cylinder) — is beyond the scope of this paper, the recensional development of the Gūgu narrative must concern us here²².

That the editor of A chose not to re-issue the Lydian account presented in F, the edition immediately preceding, is at once observable. Assyria's relations with Lydia had apparently taken a significant enough turn to prompt revision. Nor did A's editor choose merely to append a record of events since the publication of F to the F account²³. Rather, he undertook a re-working of the narrative, which included consulting previous editions, some reaching back a half-century. A comparison of the resemblances between A and the earlier editions shows that an edition of HT or a related text served as the main *Vorlage*. This *Vorlage*, though, was not slavishly copied; several passages were omitted (e.g., lines f, h, i, r, u, gg, jj), probably for stylistic reasons. Significantly, the utilization of E₂, one of our primary Gūgu texts, is manifest.

The presence of E₂ in A is clearest in lines m-n, which contain a double introduction of Lydian messengers: a *rakbû* who inquires of the king's

²⁰ One wonders whether the HT recension was not originally a draft intended for a historical prism, no longer extant.

²¹ See remarks above, BM 134455, notes to lines 9-11.

²² So far, only several episodes in A have been critically studied. The Arabian episodes: I. Eph'al, *The Nomads on the Border of Palestine in the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods* (Ph. D. thesis, Hebrew University; 1971) 103-23 [in Hebrew] and M. Weippert, *WO* 7 (1973) 39-85; the Egyptian episode: A. Spalinger, *JAS* 94 (1974) 316-28.

²³ As implied by Olmstead (*Historiography*, 8) in his description of Assyrian editorial method.

well-being; a *mār šipri* who relates the dream. All prior editions beginning with HT reported but a single mission to Nineveh, that of a *rakbû*. How is one to explain this sudden appearance of a second messenger in A, one of the latest recensions? By reference to the recensional history of the messenger episode, this novelty becomes explicable. Let us recall:

E₁ spoke of the arrival of a *rakbû* who spoke a barbaric tongue.

E₂ developed the dream sequence, and presented the messenger as an intelligible *mār šipri*.

HT reverted to the term *rakbû*, yet retained the dream sequence.

B through F followed HT without change.

It results that A made use of the two variant E traditions, conflating the text to include both a *rakbû* and a *mār šipri*. Had we not had in our possession the fragments of E₁ and E₂, we would nevertheless have been forced to posit the existence of a text "X", prior to HT, which served as the source for the editor of A. For to assume that A added lines, in free composition, as he did in telling of the Gūgu's son, is to leave unexplained the motivation for this addition of a second messenger. In themselves, these lines add little to the story. In fine, the A editor, borrowing from both E accounts, extended the tale (to the glory of the Assyrian monarch?) and thus created the impression of a double mission; one by a *rakbû*, the other by a *mār šipri*.

Further contact between A and E₂ is evidenced by the use of the verb *ušannâ* (line n), which had not been taken over in any of the intervening editions.

These editorial alterations did not affect the basic narrative as laid out in HT. One unique feature, however, may be discerned in the A recension. The earlier editors had spoken of recognizing Assyrian sovereignty as sufficient to bring victory over the Cimmerians (lines c, g-i). In A, victory was to be effected by invoking the name of Ashurbanipal (lines c, j)²⁴. The charm-like use of the monarch's name — the object of invocation — was all that was needed to scatter the enemy. How close the identity of the divine and royal realms has come!

Entirely specific to A is the story of Gūgu's neglect of his overlord, his violent death at the hands of the Cimmerians, and the re-submission of his son to Assyria²⁵ (A II 111-125):

²⁴ Oppenheim's involved explanation of Gūgu's knowledge of "enough cuneiform to be able to read the name of the Assyrian king" (*Dreambook*, 202), misses the point of this overpowering dream: Ashur's rule is worldwide, a perception which needs no mediation. Cf. too, the remarks of Cogan, *SBLMS* No. 19, p. 10, n. 9.

²⁵ The accepted date for the death of Gyges on the basis of the classical evidence is 652. But one must recall that edition B, composed 650/49, does

rakbūšu ša ana ša'al šulmeya kayān ištanaḫpara
ušaršā baḫiltu aššu ša amāt °Aššur ili bāniya
lā iṣṣuru ana emūq ramānišu ittakilma igpuš libbu
emūqīšu ana kitri Tušamilki šar māt Muṣur
ša islū nīr bēlūtiya iṣpurma anāku ašmēma
uṣalli °Aššur u °Ištar umma pān nakrēšu
paḡaršu linnadīma liššūni eṣmētīšu kī ša ana
°Aššur amḫuru išlimma
pān nakrēšu paḡaršu innadīma iššūni eṣmētīšu
Gimirrāya ša ina nibīt šumiya šaḡalšu ikbušū
itbūnimma ispunū gimir mātišu arkišu māršu
ūšib ina kussīšu
eṣṣēt lemutti ša ina nīš qātēya ilāni tikliya
ina pān abi bānišu ušaprikū ina qāt mār šiprišu
iṣpuramma iṣbata šēpē šarrūtiya umma
šarru ša ilu idūšu atta abū'a tārurma
lemuttu iššakin ina pānišu iāti ardu pālihka
kurbannima lašūṭa abšānka

"The riders which he constantly sent to inquire of my well-being broke off. I was informed that he had become unfaithful to the word of Ashur, the god, my begetter, and that he trusted in his own strength; he had become proud. He had sent troops to aid Psammetichus, king of Egypt, who had thrown off my yoke. I prayed to Ashur and Ishtar: "Let his corpse be cast before his enemy; his bones carried off (i.e. scattered about)." That which I implored of Ashur, came about. Before his enemies his corpse was cast; his bones were carried off. The Cimmerians, whom he had defeated by invoking my name, rose up and swept over his entire land. After his demise, his son inherited his throne. (As a result of) the harsh treatment which the gods, my support, had given his father, his begetter — in re-

not mention either the revolt of Gyges or his death. This was noted already 100 years ago by Gelzer, *Rh. Mus.* NF 30 (1875) 230 ff., and discussed fully by Lehmann-Haupt, *Klio* 17 (1921) 113-122, both of whom settled upon the date 652. Recent chronological treatments have not changed the picture in essentials. See, e.g. H. Kaletsch, "Zur Lydischen Chronologie", *Historia* 7 (1958) 1-47, esp. 25-34. The silence of B, however, signals caution with regard to the use of Assyrian sources for dating Lydian developments. Had Gūgu withheld tribute payments, and subsequently found his death at the hands of the Cimmerians, prior to the composition of B, the editor of B would most likely have concluded his Lydian chapter with a report of Gūgu's defeat, in moralizing tones typical of Assyrian royal inscriptions. One may therefore assume that the death of Gyges did not take place before 650, the closing date of edition B. Cf. the early remarks of Olmstead, *Anatolian Studies, Presented to W. M. Ramsay* (Manchester 1925) 296, n. 2. I. M. Diakonoff, *Istoria Mīdii* (Moscow-Leningrad 1956) 284ff., following V. V. Struwe, would date the fall of Sardis and the death of Gyges to 654, which seems too early.

sponse to my prayer — he sent his messenger, laid hold of my royal feet and said: “You are the king singled out by god. You cursed my father and so, misfortune befell him. Unto me, your reverent servant, be gracious, so that I may bear your yoke.”

Stage 4: The last re-working of the Gūgu narrative available is recorded on the limestone slabs from the Ishtar Temple at Nineveh. The full and rich embellishment which characterized Gūgu in the A recension — 30 lines of text — has disappeared; a bare outline — 4 lines in all — remains, just enough to convey the story’s essential features: in a dream to king Gūgu, the god Ashur reveals that submission to Ashurbanipal will bring victory to Lydia. A rider bringing greetings and gifts is immediately dispatched. Victory ensues IT 84-87.

This abridgement, one of several in IT, seems to have been occasioned by the need to tell of more recent matters. E.g., one hears that relations with Tabal, a rebellious state which had earlier submitted to Assyria, had taken a turn for the worse under the reign of [...]—ussi, son of Mugallu. [...]—ussi joined the nomadic chieftain Tugdamme²⁶ in an anti-Assyrian

²⁶ Tugdamme is variously styled; his epithets in the chronological order of the texts being:

- 1 - LUGAL *Ummanmanda tabnīt tiāmat tamšil* [gallē]
“King of the Ummanmanda, creature of Tiamat, the likeness of [a demon]”.
(Streck 280:20)
- 2 - LUGAL *Ummanmanda NUMUN* [halgatē]
“King of the Ummanmanda, [ruinous] breed”.
(Millard, *Iraq* 30, 111: 122616 +, 19)
- 3 - LUGAL NUMUN *hal-ga-te-i*; LUGAL *šad-da!-a-a-u Gu-tu-um*^{K1}
“King of the ruinous breed; king of the mountain folk, a marauding highlander (lit. ‘a Gutian’)”.
(IT 142-3; 146)
- 4 - *gal-l]u* NUMUN *halga[tē]*
“demon, ruinous breed”
(121027, 6)

Because of their general nature, none of the appellations listed allows us to establish the absolute identity of Tugdamme. *Ummanmanda* (Nos. 1 and 2) is the common term for northern barbarians in NA royal inscriptions. In NB historical literature, it specifically identifies the Medes (not so in NA texts). NUMUM *halgatē* (Nos. 2, 3, 4) describes the invading hordes in the “Cutha Legend of Naram Sin” (*AnSt* 5, 104, 130) and is used of the Cimmerians in ABL 1237, 15 (reign of Esarhaddon). The exact translation of *zēr halgatē* remains a crux. We have rendered the phrase, following in the main an early attempt of H. Güterbock, *ZA* 42 (1934) 73, n. 4, as “ruinous breed”, deriving from *halāqu*, D. This is preferable to the renderings of the Akkadian dictionaries: CAD Z, 87 “accursed, rebellious”; *AHW* 313, s.v. *halqu* 3, “nomad”.

The latest attempt is that of Landsberger, in B. Landsberger and H. Tadmor, “‘Sargon’s Sin’ and Sennacherib’s Testament”, *JNES* (forthcoming), Part III, 5, who derives *halgatē* from *hanigalbatē*, but leaves it untranslated. Similar metaphoric use of *hanigalbatū* in the sense “destroyer”, “vandal”, was noted by Tadmor, *Introductory Remarks to a New Edition of the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III*, 183, n. 60. In Babylonian King List A, Sennacherib’s reign in Babylon and that of Ashurnadinshumi, his son, is termed BAL *habigal* <*batū*>, “barbarous, vandal dynasty”. The third appellation was read by Thompson KUR *sak-a-a*, i.e. Scythian; and was followed by most later scholars. Presently, we prefer S. Smith’s suggestion (*JRAS* 1934, 576) to read *da* for

alliance, only to meet a fiery end at the hands of the god Ashur. Whereupon, his kinsmen and the Tabalite army surrender once again to Assyrian overlordship.

The motif employed with reference to Tabal is a familiar one, used in recension A when speaking of Gūgu (— but now epitomized —): political disaffection leads to punishment at the hands of the gods. The lesson to be learned by all on-lookers: re-submission to Assyria restores good fortune and success. This transfer of the motif from Lydia to Tabal marks the nadir as far as the cuneiform Gūgu traditions are concerned. Without additional sources, further comment remains highly speculative. In classical and biblical traditions, however, the historical Gyges lived on in fabled garb, long after the concealment of the Assyrian texts²⁷.

Appendix 1

Dating the E Recensions

Proceeding from the assumption that the reconstruction of the two E recensions presented above is essentially correct, a relative dating for their composition can be suggested. The latest item referred to in the Egyptian campaign is the reinstallation of Necho as king in Sais. HT carries the Egyptian narrative further, recounting the revolt of Tanoutamon (*Tān-da-ma-né-e*), which led to the sack of Thebes in 664/3 B.C.²⁸. On this basis, the E recensions antedate 664.

Additional supporting evidence for this date comes from the information available on the Qirbit affair. E₂ listed the names of the district towns taken during this campaign, details which were later omitted in HT. Apparently, the editor of HT resorted to this abridgement in order to make room for the report on developments on the Egyptian front which

sak (hardly so in the transcription). Moreover, in NA texts, Scythians are termed Ishguza. The Saka of the Persian texts, on the other hand, appear as Gimmiraya in the Babylonian translations. Cf. Weisbach, VAB 3, 153f. On Tugdamme = Lygdammis, see Lehman-Haupt, *P-W*, Vol. 11, 416-19 and Vol. 13, 2217, and Millard, *Iraq* 30, 109f.

²⁷ The extant portions of the H recension, the latest in the "annal" series, are characterized by brief historical passages, minus *girru*-numbering, similar to IT. It therefore seems reasonable to think that H, too, included a shortened Gūgu narrative. In one fragmentary H passage (*Afo* 7 [1931/2] 4:1-6), mention is made of a *rakbū* whose quest is a treaty with Assyria. But here, this key term is not sufficient to identify this passage as yet a further Gūgu tradition. Another *rakbū*, this time from Hudimīru, east of Elam is mentioned a few lines ahead (*ibid.*, 14-25). Once reserved for Gūgu, *rakbū* now signifies emissaries of any and/or all distant lands.

²⁸ Cf. Parker *MDAIK* 15 (1957) 209ff; *Kush* 81 (1960), 267ff.; K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (Warminster 1973) 391-395.

had become available since the publication of the E₂ edition. In later editions of the Ashurbanipal prisms, the Qirbit affair shrunk even further, with only the B and the C recensions including it at all. Now since Qirbit is most detailed in E₂ and is dated by the Bab. Chron. to 668²⁹, it stands to reason that E₂ was composed not long after this date; at the same time allowing sufficient interval for events in Egypt to develop, as they did, down to the reinstallation of Necho. Our suggested date for its composition is 665/4 ± 1 year.

E₁ preceded E₂ by a short time and may have been issued to commemorate the completion of a building project other than the one mentioned in E₂. A similar relation between two recensions exists between B and D³⁰. There is no way to determine the interval between E₁ and E₂, but from the close similarity of material, save for the Gūgu narrative, one gathers the impression that E₂ followed E₁ within a year, if not sooner.

Appendix 2

The sequence of campaigns in E₁ and E₂ with relation to the chronological notations in the historical prisms of Ashurbanipal

The phenomenon of alteration in the numbering system of Ashurbanipal's military campaigns as employed by the various editors of the historical prisms has often been noted³¹. (E.g., the campaign to Qirbit appears immediately after the Egyptian operations in the E recensions; while in B, Qirbit stands alone as a fourth campaign, far removed from Egypt. Beginning with F, Qirbit is completely omitted from the course of history.) Yet it has so far gone unnoted that in the earliest inscriptions — E₁, E₂ and HT — the numbering of military expeditions by *girru* — "campaign" was not at all in use. The editors of these recensions adopted the non-chronological arrangement of historical events, familiar to us from the Ninevite prisms of Esarhaddon³².

The editors of E₁ and E₂ preferred Egypt, the foremost concern of the empire at the accession of Ashurbanipal, to head the list of the king's military achievements, followed by Qirbit and Lydia. This presentation, set out by subject without *girru* numbering, was continued in HT, whose

²⁹ Bab. Chron. IV:35; Esarh. Chron. Rev. 15.

³⁰ Piepkorn, AS 5, 95.

³¹ Olmstead, *Historiography*, chpt. 7, *passim*; Aynard, *Le Prisme du Louvre*, 16 ff.

³² A small handful of Esarhaddon inscriptions were organized in *palû* sequence, after the fashion of Sargon's annals. E.g., Borger, *Asarh.*, § 76; *Iraq* 7, 95, No. 9 (= Borger, *Nin. D*), 80-7-19, 15 Col. I (= Borger, *Nin. E*).

editor updated events in Egypt, condensed the Qirbit and Lydian accounts and added brief notices concerning the submission of Mugallu of Tabal and Yakinlu of Arwad. It was not until the B recension that chronological notices were introduced in the numbering of Ashurbanipal's campaigns; at the same time, E's method of grouping by subject was retained. Accordingly, the editor of B grouped events as he found them in his sources, by subject; and by affixing chronological notations (*ina mahré girriya*, *ina šané girriya*, etc, "in my first campaign", "in my second campaign"), well attested in the annals of Sennacherib³³, he created a quasi-chronological sequence.

Most subsequent editors followed the lead of B, and numbered campaigns by *girru*³⁴. While the campaign sequence of B was retained, becoming the standard sequence of historical events³⁵, their numbering varied. Indeed, in no case did rigidity with regard to the use of the "chronological" notations persist. Later editors felt free to alter earlier *girru* sequences, as seen in Table 1, which presents a schematic tabulation of the campaign order in the historical prisms.

It results that the term "annals" as applied to the Ashurbanipal prisms is misleading. "Annals" should be reserved for historical narratives exhibiting strict chronological arrangement, e.g., those of Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-Pileser III, or even Sargon II³⁶. Though not "annals" in this restricted sense, the early recensions of the Ashurbanipal prisms are often of greater value as sources for historical reconstruction than the late and less credible A — Rassam cylinder, still traditionally favored by the modern historian.

A p p e n d i x 3

Assyria and Lydia in the days of Ashurbanipal: a chronological outline

The recensional study presented above allows for the refinement of the currently accepted chronology as regards events to the north and west

³³ The choice of numbering military expeditions by *girru*'s, preferred by Sennacherib's scribes, rather than by *palú*'s (lit., "turn of office", regnal year) has been discussed by Tadmor, *JCS* 12 (1958) 31-32.

³⁴ The latest inscriptions, IT and H, revert to the non-*girru* system of E and HT. It is still unclear whether the interchange between *girru* and non-*girru* arrangement reflects the practice of different scribal schools or simply the changes in editorial fashion within the same circle of court historiographers.

³⁵ Note that even the order of Phoenician states as set by B for a single campaign was retained. It should be noted, however, that in those cases where items could be updated, and this latest information deemed newsworthy, the traditional ordering of B was abandoned. In IT, Tabal's placement close to the end of the inscription exemplifies this kind of editorial revision.

³⁶ Doubts as to the appropriateness of the term "annals" were expressed by Streck, *VAB* 7, xvi f., ccxxxv f., who followed Tiele's cogent remarks (*Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*, 27-28; 31-33) and adopted the designation "war narratives" (*Kriegsgeschichten*).

of the Assyrian Empire, during the second third of the seventh century B.C. In outline, a tentative synopsis is offered.

1. Sometime between 668-665³⁷, Gyges of Lydia sought Assyrian (military?) support in his effort to fend off increasing Cimmerian pressures.
2. Other Anatolian states, including Tabal — a former rival of Esarhaddon³⁸ — joined the Assyrian camp by ca. 660, as the Cimmerian threat grew³⁹.
3. By the mid-650's, Gyges renounced Assyrian protection and allied himself with the Egyptian monarch Psammetichus I. Apparently the Cimmerian threat had eased somewhat; Ashurbanipal meanwhile was preoccupied with matters in Elam and Babylon.
4. The internal disruptions within Assyria prompted renewed Cimmerian movements. Ashurbanipal came to terms with Tugdamme, the Cimmerian chieftain; a non-aggression (*tūbe u sulummê*) pact being signed between them⁴⁰.
5. In ca. 650 Gyges met a violent death at the hands of Tugdamme, who overran Anatolia as far west as Ephesus⁴¹.
6. Cimmerian rule for the next half-dozen years occasioned several political re-alignments. Tabal joined Tugdamme in plotting against Assyria⁴²; while Ardys, the son of Gyges, recanted his father's former policy and sought Assyrian protection once again⁴³.
7. New disturbances broke out on Assyria's northern border in ca. 640. These incursions were soon repulsed without much effort. Following the unsightly demise of Tugdamme⁴⁴, his son, Shandakshatru, apparently sued for Assyrian support⁴⁵.

³⁷ The lowest date for the publication of E₁.

³⁸ Cf. Borger, *Asarh.* § 109, 675/4.

³⁹ Cf. HT Rev. 22-26; Knudtzon, *Gebete*, 54:3. On the date of HT, see above, Appendix 1, note 28, and Spalinger, *JAOs* 94 (1974) 317f.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Iraq* 30, 109, 17'. The policy displayed by this move purposed to hold the barbarians at bay, while the Empire directed its strength to other areas. A similar re-directing of pressure away from Assyria, paid for by abandoning former vassals, had been tried earlier by Esarhaddon, not to much benefit. Note, e.g., the marriage of Esarhaddon's daughter to Bartatua, the Scyth (*Išguza*). (See Knudtzon, *Gebete*, 29; Klauber, *PRT*, 16 and Diakonoff, *Istoria Mīdii*, 272-3).

⁴¹ Cf. above, note 25.

⁴² IT 141-143.

⁴³ A. II:120-125.

⁴⁴ See *Iraq* 30, 110: 28'-33'.

⁴⁵ Streck, VAB 7, 282:25.

Table 1: Sequence of campaigns in the historical inscriptions of Ashurbanipal ¹

Edition	Campaign									
E	Egypt Qirbit Lydia									
HT	Egypt Qirbit Lydia Tabal Arwad									
B	I Egypt	II Egypt	III Tyre, Arwad, Tabal, Cilicia, Lydia	IV Qirbit	V Mannai, Media	VI Elam	VII Elam	VIII Gambulu, Elam, Arabs		
D	I Egypt	II Egypt	III Tyre, Arwad, Tabal []	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
K	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
C	I Egypt	II Egypt	[] Tyre, Arwad, Tabal, Cilicia, Lydia	IV Qirbit	[] Mannai, Media	VI Elam	VII Elam	VIII Gambulu, Babylon, Elam	[]	[]
F	I Egypt	II Tyre, Arwad, Tabal, Cilicia, Lydia	III Mannai	IV Elam, Gambulu	V Elam	VI Elam				
A	I Egypt	II Egypt	III Tyre, Arwad, Tabal, Cilicia, Lydia	IV Mannai	V Elam, Gambulu	VI Babylon	VII Elam	VIII Elam	IX Arabs	
IT	Egypt Tyre Arwad Cilicia Lydia Mannai Elam Gambulu Babylon Arabs Parsumas Urartu Nabateans Dilmun Tabal Ummannanda									
H	Egypt Tyre Arwad [] Mannai Elam [] Parsumas [] Ummannanda									

¹ The order of presentation follows the chronology proposed by Tadmor, above, n. 6.