

Hazael's Booty Inscriptions*

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A TRAPEZE-SHAPED cast bronze relief depicting four figures of naked goddesses with an engraved Aramaic inscription has recently been unearthed in Samos.¹ The relief (23.3 x 17.5 cm.), which was a horse's forehead ornament (see Pl. 24:A), was discovered in an early sixth century B.C.E. debris layer in the Heraion of Samos. Its iconographic features clearly indicate that it is of North Syrian origin,² and its inscription points to a date in the ninth century B.C.E. The inscription was inscribed in continuous script, with no division between words. A lion's head, almost touching the left margin-frieze, caused the engraver to interrupt the inscription and to continue it after a short space. The inscription was read and translated by Röllig as follows:

zy ntn hdr lmr'n hz'l mn 'mq bšn t'rh mr'n nhr

(Das ist es,) was HDR gab unserem Herrn Haza'el von der Ebene von Basan.

'Stirnbedeckung' unseres erhabenen Herrn.³

Charbonnet recently published a pair of blinkers from the Apollo Daphnephoros temple at Eretria in Euboeia: one had been unearthed a short while ago in a late eighth century B.C.E. layer (Eretria Museum, No. B 273), whereas the other was discovered at the beginning of this century and its stratigraphic context is unknown (it is now in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, No. 15070). On the latter there is a poorly-preserved inscription, which Charbonnet read and translated as follows (Fig. 1; Pl. 25:A):

š ntn hrb k[m]tnṯ l'lmn'mq bšnt b'rhgmr'mn hr

Ce qu'a donné HRB en don (?) aux Dieux Bons ... en l'année 10 (?) de ... (la perfection d'Amon Hor?).⁴

* We are indebted to Profs. A. Charbonnet, H. Kyrieleis and W. Röllig, as well as Mme Hélène Lozachmeur and Dr. F. Bianchi, who kindly and promptly supplied various photographs and offprints needed for the writing of this article, and to Ada Yardeni, who drew Fig. 2.

¹ H. Kyrieleis and W. Röllig: Ein altorientalischer Pferdeschmuck aus dem Heraion von Samos, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 103 (1988), pp. 37-75, Pls. 9-15.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 45-50.

³ W. Röllig: Die aramäische Inschrift für Haza'el und ihr Duplikat, *ibid.*, pp. 62-75.

⁴ A. Charbonnet: Le dieu aux lions d'Eretrie, *Annali del Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico, Sezione di Archeologia e Storia Antica* (Napoli) 8 (1986), pp. 117-156, Pls. 33-41; the inscription is discussed on pp. 140-144. It should be noted that the inscription cannot be seen on the photograph reproduced there as Pl. 39, and here as Pl. 25:A. Charbonnet's reading is based on a radiograph of which he kindly sent us a copy.

While the reading of this short text seems to be certain, there are *prima facie* some difficulties in its exact interpretation. Nevertheless, regardless of any interpretation one may suggest, there can be hardly any doubt that the object was granted 'to our lord Hazael in the year that our lord (Hazael) crossed the river'.

Short inscriptions opening with *zy*, without indicating the object inscribed, have been found on the fifth century B.C.E inscribed bowls from Tell el-Maskhuta in Wadi Ṭumilāt; e.g. *zy qrb šh' br 'bd'mrw lhn't* 'That which Šeḥo son of 'Abd'amru offered to Han-Ilāt'.⁷ The verb *ntn* is in the perfect. In later Aramaic this verb occurs generally in the imperfect and infinitive, whereas *yhb* is used for the perfect and participle.⁸ However, this distinction does not seem to apply in Old Aramaic.⁹

Since in the epigraphic material known so far there is no example of a deity giving an object either to a king or to another person, it may be argued that *hdd* should be a personal name; cf. Gen. 36:35-36; 1 Kings 11:14-25. One may even read *zy ntnhdd* 'of Natanhadad', i.e. '(donated) by Natanhadad'.¹⁰ In Old Aramaic, however, Hadad should first of all be considered as a divine name.

As the national deity played an important role in wars fought by the kings in antiquity (both in the Bible and in ancient Near Eastern sources), it appears that booty taken by Hazael from 'Umqi was considered as a gift of Hadad. Two biblical verses corroborate this assumption: Deuteronomy 20:14 reads:

רק הנשים והטף והבהמה וכל אשר יהיה בעיר כל שללה תבו לך ואכלת את שלל איביך אשר נתן ה' אלהיך לך

You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, the livestock and everything in the town — all its spoil — and enjoy the use of the spoil of your enemy which the Lord your God has given you.

The last words *לך נתן ה' אלהיך* parallel exactly *לך נתן הדרד למראן חזאל* of our inscription. Moreover, 1 Samuel 30:23, when dealing with booty, uses the expression *לנו אשר נתן ה' לנו* 'what the Lord has given us', instead of the word *שלל* which occurs in verses 20, 22 and 26. Similarly, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, referring to the enlargement of the great armoury (*ekal māšarti*) at Nineveh, state that it was used for storing battle equipment as well as *šallat nakiri kabittu ša ušatlima dAššur*,

⁷ I. Rabinowitz: Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E. from a North-Arab Shrine in Egypt, *JNES* 15 (1956), pp. 1-9; Gibson (above, n. 6), pp. 122-123.

⁸ See F. Rosenthal: *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, Wiesbaden, 1968, §§118, 129; T. Nöldeke: *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, London, 1904, §183 (6). For some exceptional occurrences of *yhb* in the imperfect, in Syriac, Nabataean and Palestinian Jewish Aramaic, see J. Naveh: *On Stone and Mosaic*, Jerusalem, 1978, p. 10, n. 39 and p. 99 (Hebrew).

⁹ For the participle of *ntn* see the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription, ll. 2, 3, and for its perfect — the Sam'alian Hadad inscription (*KAI* 214: 8, 13). An imperfect form of *yhb* occurs in Sefire IB:38 (*KAI* 222).

¹⁰ This could have been compared with the short Hebrew votive inscription on a stone basin from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, *l'bdyw bn 'dnh brk h' lyhw*, 'By 'Obadyau son of 'Adnah. May he be blessed by Yahweh'; see J. Naveh: *Graffiti and Dedications*, *BASOR* 235 (1979), p. 28.

'the enemy's heavy booty which Aššur handed over to me' (Sennacherib, Nebi Yunus Slab, ll. 67-68);¹¹ and *šallat nākiri gimir mimma šumšu ša dAššur šar ilāni ana esqi šarrūtiya išruka*, 'the enemy's booty, of all sorts, which Aššur, king of the gods, granted me as the share due to me as king' (Esarhaddon, Borger, Nin. A v 44-45).¹²

In the West Semitic texts known so far, the land 'mq occurs only in the Zakur inscription (see below). In the ninth and eighth century Assyrian records, however, kur *Pattin* and kur *Unqi* are frequently attested.¹³ The fact that *nhr* is not determined is normal in Old Aramaic, where the determined state has not yet fully developed. The noun *nhr* itself may be of a self-determined character.¹⁴

Following the reference to booty from 'Umqi one would expect that the river crossed by Hazael was the Orontes. We should bear in mind, however, that the designation 'the River' in ancient Near Eastern sources is usually applied to the Euphrates.¹⁵ Moreover, the phrase 'in the year that our lord crossed the River' gives the impression that the Aramaean recorders considered such an operation significant enough to be commemorated by a special date formula.¹⁶ We thus prefer to identify 'the River' here with the Euphrates rather than with the Orontes.¹⁷ A formula referring to similar circumstances occurs in 2 Samuel 8:3: ויך דוד את הנהר, 'David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, who was then on his way to restore his monument at the River';¹⁸ cf. 1 Chron. 18:3: ...בלכתו להציב ידו בנהר פרת.

¹¹ D.D. Luckenbill: *The Annals of Sennacherib*, Chicago, 1924, p. 132 (we owe this reference to Mrs. Ada Shavit).

¹² R. Borger: *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, König von Assyrien*, Graz, 1956, p. 59.

¹³ On the Assyrian references to the kingdom of Pattin-Unqi see S. Parpola: *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970, p. 158, s.v. *Ḥattina* (the name Pattin was formerly read Ḥattin), p. 368, s.v. *Unqi*. On its history see J.D. Hawkins: *Ḥattin, Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (henceforth *RLA*), 4, Berlin-New York, 1972-1975, pp. 160-162; idem, *Assyrians and Hittites, Iraq* 36 (1974), pp. 81-83.

¹⁴ See R. Degen: *Altaramäische Grammatik*, Wiesbaden, 1969, p. 83; S.A. Kaufman: Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh, *Maarav* 3/2 (1982), pp. 148-149.

¹⁵ Cf. הנהר, 'the river' 1 Kings 14:15; 2 Chron. 9:26 (as well as Gen. 31:21; Ex. 23:31; Num. 22:5; 1 Kings 5:1); עבר הנהר, 'beyond the River' Josh. 24:2-3, 14-15; 2 Sam. 10:16; 1 Kings 5:4; Ezra 8:36; Neh. 2:7 etc.; and CAD N/I, pp. 373-374, s.v. *nāru* 1, k, l'; E, p. 8, s.v. *eber nāri*.

¹⁶ The date formula under discussion should not be considered as an indication of the regular year-reckoning system of the kingdom of Damascus. Its function was rather historiographical, i.e. the commemoration of events of special significance by applying them, inconsecutively, to certain dates. For a similar practice in Judah, cf. Isa. 6:1; 14:28; 20:1.

¹⁷ Crossing the Orontes River, compared to the Euphrates, was not a real military challenge. The water flow in the Euphrates is 250-5000 m.³/sec., whereas that of the Orontes, which is almost steady, is 30 m.³/sec. (See E. Wirth: *Syrien*, Darmstadt, 1971, pp. 109-110). For the sake of comparison, one should remember that the water flow in the Jordan River in the 1930s and early 1940s, before the massive use of its water for irrigation in Israel and Jordan, was 20-700 m.³/sec.

¹⁸ On this translation see P.K. McCarter: *II Samuel* (Anchor Bible), Garden City, N.Y., 1974, pp. 247-248. On יד 'monument, stele', cf. 1 Sam. 15:12; 2 Sam. 18:18.

his way to set up his monument at the Euphrates River'. The *qēre* פרת בנהר in 2 Sam. 8:3 and numerous textual witnesses to such a version do not preclude the good sense of the *kēfiv* בנהר.

The setting up of a royal monument on the eastern side of the Euphrates does not necessarily imply that the king who set up that monument actually had control over that region. Thus, for example, we learn from the inscription of Tuthmosis III on his eighth campaign (in his 33rd regnal year) that he had crossed the Euphrates, attacked and looted settlements on its eastern bank, set up a monument next to that of his predecessor, Tuthmosis I, and returned to the western side of the river without gaining any foothold in the territory of Naharina.¹⁹ Several kings set up monuments in regions which undoubtedly were not included in their realm, cf. for example the large monument which Shishaq I of Egypt left in Megiddo in the course of his campaign (c. 925 B.C.E.);²⁰ or the image of Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria which was set up in front of Turušpa, the capital of the kingdom of Urartu, during his siege of the city (735 B.C.E.).²¹ Likewise, Shalmaneser III, in his campaign in southern Syria and northern Palestine (841 B.C.E.), set up his image in Mt. Ba'ali-ra'si, and another one in Mt. Lebanon, next to the image of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.E.), whose campaign in that region was intended to collect nothing but booty.²² It seems, then, that the crossing of the Euphrates should first of all be considered as a display of power, with no necessary long-term territorial consequences.

The inscription under discussion refers, then, to two issues related to Hazael: (1) taking booty from the kingdom of 'Umqi; (2) crossing 'the River' (most likely the Euphrates).

Inscriptions on objects taken as booty have not been previously identified in the West Semitic epigraphic material. Such inscriptions, however, are known in Assyria. One of them actually refers to Hazael; its translation is as follows:

Booty from the Šeri-temple of Malaḥa, the royal city of Hazael of Damascus,

¹⁹ Cf. J.A. Wilson, in J.B. Pritchard: *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.), Princeton, 1969, pp. 239-240. On Tuthmosis III's eighth campaign see, in detail, W. Helck: *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*,² Wiesbaden, 1971, pp. 138-153.

²⁰ On a fragment of this monument discovered at Megiddo, see B. Porter and R.L.B. Moss: *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings, 7: Nubia, the Deserts and Outside Egypt*, Oxford, 1952, p. 381; and *Inscriptions Revealed* (Israel Museum), Jerusalem, 1973, No. 44.

²¹ P. Rost: *Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-Pileasers*, Leipzig, 1893, 46:24.

²² Cf. E. Michel: *Die Assur-Texte Salmanassars III. (858-824)*. 6. Fortsetzung, *Die Welt des Orients* 2 (1954-1959), 38 iv 7-15; cf. also A.L. Oppenheim in Pritchard (above, n. 19), p. 280. Setting up monuments in territories which were not part of the realm of the kings whose monuments are under discussion is a feature which deserves special discussion. In any case, it is clear that once the army of the kings who set up their monuments had left the country, the monuments were not always destroyed by local rulers and populations.

which Šalmaneser (III) the son of Aššurnasirpal (II), king of Assyria, has brought inside the wall of Aššur.²³

The words *lmrn . ḫz' l . bšnt* 'to our lord Hazael in the year' in the Arslan-Tash ivory inscription bear clear resemblance to the Samos inscription dealt with here.²⁴ Another find relevant to our discussion is an ivory fragment from Nimrud inscribed []*n ḫz' l*, which has been rightly reconstructed [*lmr*]*n ḫz' l* '[to] our [lord] Hazael'.²⁵ Among the Nimrud ivories were also a piece inscribed *ḫmt* 'Hamath' and a horse's head decoration with a nude goddess carved in relief, on the back of which is engraved *l'š*, 'Lu'ash'²⁶ (these two cities remind us of Zakur who was king of Hamath and Lu'ash close to the end of the ninth century B.C.E.), and an ivory pyxis, on the rim of which is written *byt gš* 'Beth Gush', the designation of the kingdom of Arpad.²⁷

Röllig, when dealing with the two ivory pieces from Arslan-Tash and Nimrud bearing the name of Hazael, reasonably assumed that both reached Assyria as tribute or were taken as booty from Damascus following its conquest by Tiglath-pileser III in 733/2 B.C.E.²⁸ Elsewhere, in a general discussion on the ivory inscriptions he asked whether 'handelt es sich um Registrierungen der Beute bzw. von Tributlieferungen an den assyrischen König?'.²⁹ It seems likely that it was the Aramaean administration of Hazael king of Damascus, rather than that of the Assyrian king, which inscribed the ivory pieces. Presumably, it was Hazael's registrar who either marked the place of origin on the object, or wrote a longer description of how the object came 'to our lord Hazael'. This registration also applies

²³ O. Schroeder: Zwei historische Assurtexte nach Abschrift Friedrich Delitzschs, *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung* 2 (1924-1925), pp. 70-71; E. Michel: Die Assur-Texte Salmanassars III. (858-824). 3. Fortsetzung, *Die Welt des Orients* 1 (1947-1952), pp. 269-270 and recently H.D. Galter: On Beads and Curses, *Annual Review of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project* 5 (1987), p. 19; A.L. Oppenheim (above, n. 19), p. 281. For other inscriptions of this type on alabaster vessels which were discovered in Assur, see W. von Bissing: Ägyptische und ägyptisierende Alabastergefäße aus den Deutschen Ausgrabungen in Assur, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 46, N.F. 12 (1940), p. 159 (No. 8, from the reign of Esarhaddon) and p. 175 (No. 32, Adad-nirari I).

²⁴ See above, n. 6 as well as W. Röllig: Alte und neue Elfenbeininschriften, *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik*, 2, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 39. The Arslan-Tash ivory inscription is generally read and reconstructed as follows: [...]*zt. ḫ[qq...]*²*b[.]* 'm'. *lmr'n. ḫz' l. bšnt* [...] 'This ... has ... son of 'Ammā en[graved] for our lord Hazael in the year ...' (see Gibson [above, n. 6]). This reconstruction is difficult, because no other dedication to the king is known in West Semitic epigraphy. A different reconstruction has been offered by E. Puech: L'ivoire inscrit d'Arslan-Tash et les rois de Damas, *RB* 88 (1981), pp. 544-562: ['r's': zy .q]²*b*. 'm'. *lmr'n. ḫz' l. bšnt*['. ḫ]zt. ḫ[wrn?]' '[Le lit qu'a o]ffert la troupe à notre maître, Hazaël, l'année de l[annex]ion du Ha[uran?]'. It is impossible to substantiate this reconstruction.

²⁵ M.E.L. Mallowan: *Nimrud and Its Remains*, 2, London, 1966, p. 598; Röllig (above, n. 24), p. 48.

²⁶ A.R. Millard: Alphabetic Inscriptions on Ivories from Nimrud, *Iraq* 24 (1962), p. 42; Mallowan (above, n. 25), p. 582; Röllig (above, n. 24), pp. 47-48.

²⁷ E. Puech: Un ivoire de Bit-Guši (Arpad) à Nimrud, *Syria* 55 (1978), pp. 163-169.

²⁸ Röllig (above, n. 3), p. 72.

²⁹ Röllig (above, n. 24), p. 38.

to the decorated bronze objects. However, as the bronze object discovered at Samos bears a clear and complete text saying that the object from 'Umqi had been given by Hadad, there can hardly be any doubt that this text deals with booty.

If our reading and interpretation of the Samos inscription are correct, we could then offer the following remarks about its historical significance:

1. The Assyrian military activity in northern and southern Syria which characterized most of the reign of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.E.), came to an end towards his last years.³⁰ The Assyrian royal inscriptions do not record any Assyrian military operation west of the Euphrates in the years 830-806 B.C.E. There are two fragmentary inscriptions of Adad-nirari III (810-783 B.C.E.), from which one can deduce that 'the rulers of the Euph[rates]' (*bēlēmēš šá nār Pu[ratti]*) — or perhaps 'the rulers whose [lands were bounded by] the Euph[rates]' (*bēlēmēš šá nār Pu[ratti mišir mātātešunu*), rebelled against Šamši-Adad V, king of Assyria (823-811 B.C.E.). These bear witness to the decline of Assyrian influence in the region.³¹ Resuming Assyrian activity west of the Euphrates, Adad-nirari III had to devote his efforts in 805-803 B.C.E. to the restoration of Assyrian power over the North Syrian kingdoms.³²

2. There is no indication of Damascene sovereignty or even political influence in northern Syria prior to 853 B.C.E.³³ It also seems unlikely that Hazael (who usurped the throne in 842 B.C.E.) could act in that region when Shalmaneser III campaigned against Damascus in 841 and 838 B.C.E.³⁴ Indeed, the capital did not fall in the course of these campaigns, but various settlements within the kingdom of Damascus were conquered by the Assyrian army and booty was taken.³⁵

3. While Assyrian control and military activity west of the Euphrates ceased in 830-806 B.C.E., the kingdom of Damascus regained strength. Hazael conquered the Israelite Transjordan (2 Kings 10:32-33). Concerning his achievements in western

³⁰ The last western campaign of Shalmaneser III took place in his 28th regnal year (831 B.C.E.). It was conducted against the kingdom of Unqi, after hearing that its king, Lubarna, had been murdered and replaced by the usurper Surri. The *turtan* Dayyan-Aššur, at the head of the Assyrian army, arrived in Kinalua, the capital of Unqi, and installed Sāsi of Kurāṣṣā, cf. Eponym Canon, *RLA*, II, 433:12; Black Obelisk, ll. 145-156; Michel (above, n. 22), 8. Fortsetzung, pp. 224-226.

³¹ One of these inscriptions, the stele BM 131124, has been published, with a detailed discussion of its historical significance, by A.R. Millard and H. Tadmor: Adad-nirari III in Syria, *Iraq* 35 (1973), pp. 57-61. The other inscription was initially published by V. Scheil: Notules, xxxv. Fragment d'une inscription de Salmanasar, fils d'Aššurnaširpal, *Revue d'Assyriologie* 14 (1917), pp. 159-160. For its ascription to Adad-nirari III and an evaluation of its historical implications, see Millard and Tadmor, *ibid.*, p. 61.

³² See Millard and Tadmor, *ibid.*, pp. 61-64.

³³ Compare B. Mazar: The Aramaean Empire and its Relation with Israel, in D.N. Freedman and E.F. Campbell (eds.): *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, 2, Garden City, N.Y., 1964, pp. 136-137.

³⁴ On these campaigns see Michel (above, n. 23), pp. 57-58: i 26; pp. 265-266:1-20; idem (above, n. 22), p. 38:iii 45 — iv 7; p. 152:96-97; p. 154:102-103; cf. Oppenheim (above, n. 22), p. 280.

³⁵ In addition to the sources listed above (n. 34), see also the inscription on a marble(?) cylinder stating that it was taken as booty by Shalmaneser III from Hazael of Damascus (above, n. 23).

Palestine, we read: 'At that time (וַאֲ) king Hazael of Aram came up and attacked Gath and captured it; and Hazael proceeded to march on Jerusalem. Thereupon king Joash of Judah took all the objects that had been consecrated by his fathers, kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah of Judah, and by himself, and all the gold that there was in the treasuries of the Temple of the Lord and in the royal palace, and he sent them to king Hazael of Aram, who then turned back from his march on Jerusalem' (*ibid.* 12:18-19).³⁶ The supremacy of Damascus was felt all over Palestine during the reign of Hazael and of his son and successor Barhadad (cf. also *ibid.* 13:3, 22). This political reality is demonstrated in the Adad-nirari III inscriptions, which refer to tribute from the kingdom of Israel as well as from Philistia and Edom (although the Assyrian army did not reach these countries), along with the accounts of the Assyrian king's campaign against *Mari'* (= Barhadad) king of Damascus and the heavy booty taken from him.³⁷

From the Samos inscription we learn that Hazael's military activity extended northwards as well: he conducted a campaign in North Syria in the course of which he took booty from 'Umqi (and perhaps also from other kingdoms in the region), and probably crossed the Euphrates.

4. According to the Zakur inscription, written in about 800 B.C.E., Barhadad son of Hazael king of Aram had organized a coalition of North Syrian and South Anatolian rulers (among whom were the kings of Arpad, Que, 'Umqi, Gurgum, Sam'al, and Melid) against Zakur king of Hamath and Lu'ash. This coalition laid siege to the city of Hazrak.³⁸ Any information about the circumstances and the time by which the king of Damascus gained such a prominent position in the north has so far eluded us. Thus, having no clear evidence of any military operation undertaken by Hazael and Barhadad in central and northern Syria, one could argue that the theories concerning Damascene hegemony over that region during the second

³⁶ The accurate date of Hazael's campaign cannot be determined, since וַאֲ, 'at that time', in v. 18 is an editorial term with little chronological significance; see J.A. Montgomery: Archival Data in the Book of Kings, *JBL* 53 (1934), pp. 46-52; H. Tadmor and M. Cogan: Ahaz and Tiglath-Pileser in the Book of Kings: Historiographic Considerations, *Biblica* 60 (1979), pp. 493-499.

³⁷ Cf. the Calah Slab, ll. 12-24; see H. Tadmor: The Historical Inscriptions of Adad-nirari III, *Iraq* 35 (1973), pp. 148-149.

³⁸ The expression *whwħd 'ly*, 'and he united against me' (Zakur inscription, l. 4) reflects Barhadad's sovereignty over the other members of the coalition. Their position was similar to that of the 'allied kings' (מַלְכֵי עוֹד), who accompanied Ben-Hadad king of Aram in his advance against Samaria in I Kings 20: 1,12,16. Such a situation was typical of the political structure of Syria-Palestine in the ninth to mid-eighth centuries B.C.E. It was characterized by the struggle between the great local powers (Aram, Hamath, Israel and Judah) resulting in wars which gave one of them temporary hegemony over the entire region. On this political structure, see A. Alt: Die syrische Staatenwelt vor dem Einbruch der Assyrer, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 3, Munich, 1959, pp. 221-224 (initially published in 1934); A. Jepsen: Israel und Damaskus, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 14 (1941-1944), pp. 153-172; H. Tadmor: Azriyau of Yaudi, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (1961), pp. 239-248; Mazar (above, n. 33), pp. 136-151.

half of the ninth century B.C.E. are based on nothing but circumstantial evidence.³⁹ The significance of the Samos inscription lies in the fact that it explicitly indicates that Damascus' power was manifested in northern Syria already during the reign of Hazael.⁴⁰ The practical significance of Hazael's policy, as well as the military influence of his son Barhadad in this region, are reflected in the Zakur inscription.

Besides the inscribed objects from Samos and Eretria, similar uninscribed blinkers were discovered at these sites. One of them was unearthed in a clear stratigraphical context, dated to the last quarter of the eighth century B.C.E., which permits us to date the arrival of these objects in Greece not later than that time.⁴¹ Various inscribed objects, then, in which the name of Hazael occurs, were already scattered close to the end of the eighth century, from Assyria to Greece. However, while objects coming from Damascus and found in centres of the Assyrian empire (such as Nimrud and Arslan-Tash) can be explained as trophies, such an explanation does not apply to the objects found in the Greek temples of Samos and Eretria. It seems, then, that they did not reach Greece directly as booty, but rather as valuable objects acquired somehow by trade.

³⁹ On the theories on Damascene hegemony over Syria see Jepsen (above, n. 38), pp. 159-172; Mazar (above, n. 37). For arguments against such theories see W.T. Pitard: *Ancient Damascus*, Winona Lake, 1987, pp. 152-158.

⁴⁰ At one time the *lmr'n ḥz'l* ivory from Arslan-Tash was taken as evidence for Hazael's domination east of the Euphrates. Later, however, following the discovery of a similar inscription at Nimrud, as well as the dating of the building in which the Arslan-Tash ivory was found to the Late Assyrian period, it became clear that this ivory was part of the booty taken from Damascus in the eighth century B.C.E. and has no value in determining the northern extent of Hazael's realm. See G. Turner: The Palace and the Bâtiment aux Ivoires at Arslan Tash: A Reappraisal, *Iraq* 30 (1968), pp. 62-68; Pitard (above, n. 39), pp. 155-156.

⁴¹ See Charbonnet (above, n. 4), pp. 117-125.



A: Horse's forehead ornament with inscription, from Samos (courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens [Neg. No. 88/1022]).

HAZAEI'S BOOTY INSCRIPTIONS

A: Inscribed blinker, from Eretria (courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens).

