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Azariah of Judah and Tiglath-pileser III

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DID Azariah of Judah actually come into conflict with Tiglath-pileser III or not? This was formerly an open question, but it is so no longer, if one may judge by the expressions of the latest authorities. They subscribe, with practical unanimity, to the conclusions of Winckler,¹ who denies that the aforesaid monarchs ever had any dealings with each other, and explains the famous "Azrijâu" passages in Tiglath-pileser's "Annals," which seem to suggest that they did, as referring to an entirely different person from the king of Judah. Manifestly this newer theory of Winckler, as also the older one of Schrader, who identified "Azrijâu" with Azariah, must finally stand or fall by its harmony with the sanest interpretation of the Assyrian Inscriptions, and hence a fresh survey of the question from this standpoint seems permissible to the present writer.

I. *The Evidence of the Assyrian Inscriptions*

As is well known, Tiglath-pileser's "Annals" are in a fragmentary condition, and they are especially fragmentary where they speak of "Azrijâu," in the two inscriptions known as III R 9, No. 2, and III R 9, No. 3.² A duplicate of the latter has fortunately come to light, but none of the former. The transliteration of the two, as given by Schrader,³ is as follows :

(III R 9, No. 2)

- l. 3. . . . ja-a-u mât Ja-u-da-ai kima . . .
- l. 4. . . . šu(?)-ri-ja-u mât Ja-u-di . . .
- l. 10. . . . [j]a-a-u i-ki-mu u-dan-ni-nu-su-ma . . .

¹ First published in 1893.

² Rawlinson's Collection.

³ *KAT*,² 1883; Engl. transl., i. 209 ff.

(III B 9, No. 3)

- l. 23. . . . Az-ri-a-u . . . [u] şab-bit rab . . . [ka?]-ti-ja
 l. 31. (end) . . . Ša ina ħi-iṭ-ṭi-sun za-rar-ti ana
 Az-ri-ja-a-u i-ki-i-mu.

Observe here that in the first inscription the name of the person concerned occurs three times, each time imperfectly, but that of his country twice, completely, while in the second, on the contrary, the name of the individual occurs twice in full, but there is no mention of his country. Observe also that in line 4 of the first inscription the name is given more fully than in line 3, another sign toward the beginning of the name being preserved, and so much of the one before that, as to suggest what it was. The same man is meant in both these lines, since the "mât Ja-u-da-ai" of the first is admittedly identical with the "mât Ja-u-di" of the second. That he is, further, the king of the country, is the natural inference from the uniform practice of the "Annals," to name in the records of campaigns the kings of the opposition with the lands or cities of their rule.

But is this king of "Ja-u-di," of the first inscription, whose name can only be conjectured as it stands, the same man as the land-less "Az-ri-ja-a-u" of the second? If so, the former would find his name, and the latter, his country, and the equation: Azrijâu of Jaudi = Azarjâhu of Jehudhah would certainly appear plausible.

This identity of the two names Schrader endeavored to prove, his best argument being based on the fact already noted that the *country* of the "Azrijâu" of the second inscription is not given. Inasmuch as the context in line 31 is unbroken, this would naturally suggest that he had been mentioned *with* his country a little earlier, and make his identification with "şu(?)-ri-ja-u mât Ja-u-di" of the first inscription very probable. Of course the close sequence of the two inscriptions, also, would be here involved.

Schrader failed to convince all, however, though convinced fully himself. Wellhausen,⁴ *e.g.*, maintained that the first

⁴ *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, xx. p. 633.

inscription had "no intelligible connection with" the second, and that the two names were entirely different. The difficulties attaching to the identification from the Old Testament side loomed large to him, and to others, and thus matters stood, with perhaps the majority holding Schrader's position, until 1893, when the appearance of Rost's work on the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III⁶ led to two remarkable but contradictory developments.

1. Rost himself accepted Schrader's identification.⁶ He had secured for his work clearer reproductions of the original inscriptions than had been available for Schrader, and from them he argued that the sign in the personal name of the first inscription, which Schrader thought either "su" or "aš," was really "iz." Then there would be no need to prefix "A," as Schrader did, making "Ašurijâu," but the name would stand complete as "Iz-ri-jâ-u." As compared now, with the "Az-ri-jâ-u" of the second inscription, the difference would be only that between "az" and "iz," a difference paralleled by the writing of the name "Askelon" in the Assyrian inscriptions both "Aškaluna" and "Iškaluna."

This demonstration of the identity of the names was accepted generally as conclusive. Schrader, so far at least, was right, and his main contention, that this Azrijâu of Jaudi was none other than Azariah of Judah, as a result of this unexpected clearing away of difficulties, and Rost's support, seemed, also, all but certainly established.

2. But now came the other and most unexpected development from Rost's work. In the same year that it appeared, Winckler⁷ made its text the documentary basis, on the Assyrian side, of an entirely different theory as to the personality and habitat of "Azrijâu" or, as he preferred to call him, "Izrijâu." This theory is to-day so well known, that it need be only briefly given here.

It rests upon two of the North-Semitic inscriptions found at Zenjirli in Northwest Syria about the year 1890, in which there occurs the name of a kingdom or principality of

⁶ *Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-pileasers III.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. p. xxiii.

⁷ *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 1893, pp. 1 ff.

that region, which, transliterated into the familiar square character, reads "𐤏𐤍". Winckler was struck by this form "𐤏𐤍", and its general resemblance to the "Ja-u-di" of the puzzling "Azrijâu" inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, which date from practically the same time. He saw that this resemblance would become identity if the 𐤏 of "𐤏𐤍" could be read as a consonant, and vowelled with "u"; both forms would then = "Ja-u-di," and "Azrijâu mâṭ Ja-u-di," need not any longer be taken as "Azariah of Judah," but could equally well be "Azrijâu," or "Izrijâu," of "Ja-u-di," this little state of Northern Syria. For many reasons, chiefly relating to Old Testament history and chronology, Winckler supported this latter identification in preference to the older view of Schrader, and he has had great success in winning recruits to his standard.

But, granting the attractiveness of his solution, is not the real question, as between his view and Schrader's, one of evidence, the evidence of all the *Assyrian* inscriptions of the period, and not simply of these two Aramaic inscriptions, with their somewhat doubtful "Ja-u-di"?⁸ The Assyrian inscriptions do not support Winckler's theory very well. In only one passage,⁹ aside from that under discussion, can he claim with any confidence that they mean by "mât Ja-u-di" his North Syrian country, while the cases in which they uncontestedly refer to Judah by that term are numerous, and cover the considerable period between Tiglath-pileser III and Esarhaddon.

But the evidence in favor of Judah goes further. A look back at the transliteration of III R 9, No. 2, will show that after the personal name in line 4 there occurs, "mât Ja-u-di," but after that name in line 3, "mât Ja-u-da-ai." Now since Winckler so cordially follows Rost and Schrader in declaring the same man to be referred to in both lines, being especially taken with the former's determination of his name as "Iz-ri-jâ-u," he must surely admit the consequence — that the

⁸ G. A. Cooke, *e.g.* in his "North Semitic Inscriptions," 1903, differs sharply from Winckler, taking 𐤏 as quiescent, and reading "Ya'di."

⁹ *I.e.* Sargon's Nimrûd Inscription, l. 8. Cf. *KB*, ii. p. 100.

“mât Ja-u-da-ai” has just as much right to be considered in determining “Izrijâu’s” or “Azrijâu’s” habitat as the “mât Ja-u-di.” But even a cursory glance at the inscriptions of the period will show that “mât Ja-u-da-ai” occurs therein, as a designation of Judah, fully as frequently as “mât Ja-u-di.”¹⁰ It is both curious and significant that these two designations of Judah, found separately so often, should occur in succeeding lines of this mere fragment, so that, with all its tantalizing imperfection, it nevertheless gives a *double* indication of the mysterious “Izrijâu’s” country :

mât Ja-u-da-ai = Judah,
 mât Ja-u-di = Judah.

Consider the bearing of this double equation upon the question at issue a little further, since it is the main point upon which the present writer rests his case, and the one new factor he can claim to have brought forward. Here, then, is a country, named in a certain Assyrian inscription, whose identity cannot be conclusively established by the context. The passage which refers to it gives its name in two different, but closely related, forms. These two forms recur, separately, several times, in other Assyrian inscriptions of the same general period, where their respective contexts indisputably identify *each* with the *same* definitely known country. By the very law of probabilities, then, the argument for the identity of the two countries, the unknown and the known, must be admitted to be many times stronger than if only one name-form connected the two. And, this being so, the probability, also, that the better form of the personal name is “*Azrijâu*,” — in spite of Winckler’s preference for “*Izrijâu*,” — and that it corresponds to the Biblical “*Azarjâhu*” of Judah, is proportionately increased.

Such considerations might well give pause to too hasty an acceptance of Winckler’s theory. Indeed, one cannot help a feeling of surprise that one so keen for close distinctions as Winckler shows himself to be, *e.g.* in his careful treatment of the \aleph in “ \aleph ”, should have failed to note the form

¹⁰ *E.g.* Tigl.-pil. III, *Prunkinschrift*, II R 67, l. 61 ; Sennacherib’s Prism Inscription, col. ii. l. 72, and in other places.

“mât Ja-u-da-ai” as well as “mât Ja-u-di,” and to recognize its importance. The substantiation, through contemporary inscriptions, of its uniform reference to Judah elsewhere makes its value far greater, by the laws of evidence, for the determination of its reference as to Judah here also, than is the value of “𐤎” for fixing its reference as to another “mât Ja-u-di” in Northern Syria. And when it is remembered, further, that the 𐤎 in this word may not be used as a consonant, the greater strength of the older view, so far as its inscriptional basis is concerned, will have to be conceded. It might almost be said that it is “a condition, and not a theory,” which there obtains.

The strength of Winckler’s view, then, if the preceding argument is valid, must be rather negative than positive, and lie in the gravity of the objections to identifying “Azrijâu” with Azariah.

II. *The Objections to the Identification of “Azrijâu mât Jaudi” with Azariah of Judah*

As the objections concern both what “Azrijâu” is represented as doing, and when and where he did it, the statements of the Inscriptions on these points must first be examined. Here, owing to the broken condition of III R 9, No. 2, the sole dependence is III R 9, No. 3, and its duplicate, Layard 65. In this section of the “Annals” is described Tiglath-pileser’s subjugation to Assyria of a certain territory lying, apparently, in Northern Syria, between the mountains and the Mediterranean. A number of its localities are named, and then the account proceeds:¹¹ “Nineteen districts of the town Hamath, together with the towns in their circuit, which are situated on the coast of the Western Sea, which in their sin and wickedness sided¹² with Azrijâu I [*i. e.* Tiglath-pileser] turned into the territory of Assyria. My governor as administrator of the province I set over them, 30,300 of the inhabitants [I removed from]¹³ their towns and let them

¹¹ See Schrader and Rost, *l. c.*

¹² Most probable reading.

¹³ Text broken, Rost’s proposed reading.

have the circuit of the city Ku . . . ; 1228 of the inhabitants I settled in the district of the land of Ulluba." That is practically all there is concerning "Azrijâu" in the whole inscription; a mere passing allusion. If it were not for III R 9, No. 2, there would be no definite clew to his identity, and he would be set down simply as some king or prince in the general region under discussion, who was the leader of a considerable revolt against Tiglath-pileser, in which the "Nineteen districts of the town Hamath" had joined. But III R 9, No. 2, *seems* to connect him with *Judah*, and to suggest the possibility that he was Azariah, and "there's the rub."

As to the date of his activity there are very clear and explicit data. The inscriptions known as Layard 50 *a* and *b* and 67 *a* have been shown to continue Layard 65 (= III R 9, No. 3), and within their compass is found one of the few surviving dates of the "Annals." Some twenty-five lines beyond the allusion to "Azrijâu," Tiglath-pileser says:¹⁴ "In the ninth year of my reign, Aššur my lord inspired me with confidence and I made an expedition against the lands," etc. His ninth year is 737 B.C., and since this line marks the beginning of his account of the campaigns of that year, what precedes is, in the absence of another date, most naturally taken as referring to his eighth year, or 738 B.C.

Again, the Assyrian "Eponym List with Addenda" has this note for the year 739 B.C.: "To the land Ulluba, the city Birtu, conquests." But the "Azrijâu" passage says that Tiglath-pileser settled 1228 of those concerned in his rebellion "in the district of the land of Ulluba," and, as it seems only reasonable to infer that the conquest of Ulluba preceded the transportation thither of the conquered of other regions, it results that the "Azrijâu" revolt must have taken place *after* 739 B.C., or, at the earliest, in that year. From these two mutually independent data comes the general agreement of scholars that 738 B.C. was the year of "Azrijâu's" revolt. In the following discussion that year is accepted.

¹⁴ Rost, *op. cit.* I. 157.

What, then, are the objections to the supposition that Azariah of Judah promoted a revolt against Assyria in the year 738 B.C., in which some Syrian districts, apparently dependencies of Hamath, were involved? They are both chronological and historical.

1. The chronological objections may be thus stated: Azariah of Judah was either not alive in 738 B.C., or, if living, was so incapacitated through age and disease, that it would have been utterly impossible for him to lead a revolt against Tiglath-pileser, far beyond the boundaries of his kingdom. The second alternative of this proposition presents objections as much historical as chronological, and may be set aside for the present, but the first sets forth the chronological objection in its extreme form, and inasmuch as, if sustained, it is manifestly in itself sufficient to render all others superfluous, it must be considered before them. If it is indeed true that Azariah had died before 738 B.C., then, of course, it is impossible that the references in Tiglath-pileser's accounts of that year should be to him, and, in this impossibility, Winckler's theory would be a possible way out, though it would still seem as if *some king of Judah* were demanded by the double equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{mât Ja-u-di} &= \text{Judah,} \\ \text{mât Ja-u-da-ai} &= \text{Judah.} \end{aligned}$$

The two fixed data for computing the reigns of Judah's kings of this general period in years B.C. are, as is well known, supplied by the Assyrian Inscriptions in their mention of Jehu's presents to Shalmaneser II, 842 B.C., and of Ahaz's tribute to Tiglath-pileser, 734 B.C. It is generally assumed that these two propitiatory offerings to Assyria marked approximately the opening of the reigns of these kings, and hence it is substantially correct to take the number of years between the accessions of Athaliah (Jehu) and Ahaz as 842 - 734, or 108. Comparison, however, with the data supplied by the compiler of the book of Kings shows an excess therein for this same period of 35 years. In tracing this excess the accepted theory seems to be that it is to be assigned to the years given Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham.

If 796 B.C., accordingly, be taken as a fair mean date for the accession of Amaziah, there are available 796 – 734, or 62 years, to contain the Biblical 97, viz. 29 of Amaziah, 52 of Azariah, and 16 of Jotham. Manifestly, no absolutely certain distribution of the excess, as between the three reigns, is possible. The Biblical data, when appealed to, seem to justify the following propositions, which are helpful in estimating probabilities:

(1) Jehoash, or Joash, of Judah came to the throne by counter-revolution when very young, and reigned about forty years.¹⁶ (This is generally admitted, since the error in the chronology of Kings, as stated above, is placed *after* Joash in the current reconstructions.)

(2) Amaziah, son of Joash, met with a violent death after a reign of uncertain length.¹⁶ (The Biblical twenty-nine years is universally held to be an error.)

(3) Azariah, son of Amaziah, at the death of his father, was taken by the people and made king of Judah when but sixteen years of age.¹⁷ (It is to be observed that these facts are given, not in the compiler's formula, but from the earlier historical source.)

(4) Azariah, in the latter part of his reign and until his death, was afflicted with leprosy, so that he lived in more or less complete seclusion, and his son Jotham "was over the household, judging the people of the land."¹⁸

From these statements, what are the natural deductions? Do they fairly forbid the supposition that Azariah was alive in 738 B.C.?

To solve the chronological difficulty by taking most of the thirty-five years' excess from the long reign of Azariah, rather than from the shorter reigns of Amaziah and Jotham, is, perhaps, a natural first thought, but the data just given seem to the present writer to be against doing this. Joash's long reign would argue for a much shorter reign for Amaziah, if, as is the natural supposition, the latter was the first-born son and already of a mature age when he came to the throne. More-

¹⁶ 2 K. 11 20-12 1.

¹⁶ 2 K. 14 19.

¹⁷ 2 K. 14 21.

¹⁸ 2 K. 15 5.

over, Amaziah's death was not a natural but a violent one, and this circumstance, taken with his mature age at accession, strengthens the probability that his reign was comparatively short. Similarly, the fact that Azariah came to the throne when he was but sixteen would argue that his reign, in the ordinary course of nature, would be a long one, and his son Jotham's correspondingly short. And this last deduction is rendered the more probable by the leprosy of Azariah's later years, which makes very plausible the theory, suggested, indeed, by the statements of Kings, of a co-reign of Jotham with Azariah. Of course, the exact duration of this co-reign would remain uncertain, but in any event it would cut short Jotham's independent reign by some years.

Suppose, then, that the compiler of Kings was right for once, when he assigned to Azariah a reign of fifty-two years. That would give for his accession year, on the hypothesis that he is "Azrijâu," as the earliest possible, 738 + 52, or 790 B.C. Amaziah's reign would then be from 796 to 790 B.C., and Jotham's independent reign from 738 to 734 B.C., the whole excess coming out of their two reigns, rather than out of Azariah's.

This is apparently held by most Old Testament scholars to-day to be an untenable interpretation of the data. For example, Whitehouse declares¹⁹ that the chronological argument "tells decisively against" Azariah's coming into conflict with Tiglath-pileser in 738 B.C. What ground is there for such a positive statement? Is the above interpretation to be rejected simply because it makes possible what the most natural translation of "Azrijâu mâ't Jaudi" suggests? All the difference between it and the commonly accepted view would be that it makes Amaziah's reign and Jotham's independent reign shorter than the current chronological theories can allow, consistently with their general schemes, though they, too, admittedly shorten these reigns somewhat from the Biblical assignments. The present writer does not see why, even on the current chronological assumptions, it is

¹⁹ Article "Uzziah," in *Hastings's Dictionary*, 1902.

not entirely possible for Azariah of Judah to have been living in 788 B.C.

But, more than this, the fact that the chronological data given in Kings must always be compared with the superior data of the Assyrian Inscriptions and controlled thereby is in itself a weighty protest and argument against refusing to this particular datum from these inscriptions its most natural interpretation for reasons of Old Testament chronology. The vital question here concerns the actual meaning of the inscriptions, and, in the determination of this, considerations of chronology, from the very nature of the aforesaid relations between the inscriptions and the Old Testament, should be most carefully excluded. The double equation,

mât Ja-u-da-ai = Judah,

mât Ja-u-di = Judah,

points so strongly to *some* king of Judah's coming into collision with Tiglath-pileser, that simple justice to it would suggest as the fair chronological question not, "Does Azariah's collision with Tiglath-pileser III in 788 B.C. conflict with the particular scheme of Old Testament chronology that happens to be most in favor for the moment?" but, "Can that scheme be reconciled to this fixed date supplied by the inscriptions?" In short, whether the chronological objection be considered as to particulars or in its general aspects, there appears to be no compelling reason to deny that Azariah of Judah was living in 788 B.C.

2. The historical objections to the identification of "Azri-jâu" with Azariah are, strictly speaking, not in order, according to the general chronological argument just advanced, for they would reverse the usual rule, and subject what is apparently a doubly attested reference upon the Assyrian inscriptions to *some* king of Judah — from the name form most probably Azariah — to verification or rejection by Old Testament data. Still, as they are currently regarded, by Winckler and those who accept his theory, as conclusive against the older view, fairness demands that they be taken up. They are conveniently divided into: (a) Objections

based upon the insignificance of Azariah's kingdom and its distance from the scene of action in the revolt of "Azrijâu," and (b) objections based upon Azariah's physical condition in 738 B.C. In order to treat the questions thus raised adequately it is desirable first to see just what the facts are regarding Azariah's life and activities, as far as they are set forth in the Old Testament.

The account of Azariah or Uzziah is, so far as the book of Kings is concerned, exceedingly meager and unsatisfactory.²⁰ Aside from the regular editorial formulæ for the beginning and end of a Judean king's reign, which cannot be regarded as of independent historical value, it yields but three facts, or groups of facts:

(1) Azariah was made king by the people of Judah, after his father Amaziah's murder, when but sixteen years of age.

(2) He restored to Judah the Red Sea port of Elath, and rebuilt it, presumably for commercial and military reasons.

(3) He was afflicted with leprosy from an indeterminate point in his reign until his death, so that he was obliged to relinquish some part of his official duties,—most probably, from the terms employed, those connected with the public administration of justice,—to his son Jotham, and lived in at least partial seclusion.²¹

The book of Chronicles²² most unexpectedly fills out this all too brief contribution of the book of Kings with some statements regarding Azariah which are of the utmost importance to a proper estimate of his achievements and influence. It is notorious that the Chronicler's additions to the data he derives from Kings have to be thoroughly sifted, but in the present instance, when this is done, there remains a short section of his narrative²³ so sober and inherently credible in its statements, that to deny its historic trustworthiness appears to be hypercriticism.

This section yields the following facts regarding Azariah (Uzziah): (1) He won notable victories over the Philistines and Arabians. (2) He organized, equipped, and directed

²⁰ See 2 K. 14 21-22; 15 1-7.

²¹ 2 K. 15 5. The Hebrew is obscure.

²² See 2 Chr. 26.

²³ V. 6-12, 14-15 a.

his standing army in a manner so efficient as to call for special remark. (3) He put Jerusalem into a more defensible condition than it had previously enjoyed by erecting towers at certain points in the city wall. (4) He built other towers in outlying regions, as a protection to his large and numerous herds of cattle. (5) He stimulated greatly the prosperity of his kingdom by his marked attention to farming and vine culture, as well as stock raising. (6) He was so powerful that the Ammonites thought it wise to send him "presents," and "his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt."

The value of these data to a correct estimate of Azariah and his kingdom, must be apparent. They interpret admirably, *e.g.*, the bare hint given in the book of Kings as to his military successes. Where the latter simply mentions his conquest of Elath, they show that conquest to have been but one feature of a comprehensive campaign carried on to the east, south, and west of Judah, which undoubtedly issued in her becoming the dominant power in all the region to the south of Israel. Such successful campaigns abroad, taken with the statesman-like measures of internal policy also described, constitute Azariah a not unworthy compeer of David and Solomon in his military and commercial enterprises, and suggest the question whether the Chronicler has not here rescued a great name in Hebrew history from a position of undeserved mediocrity.

a. If now the historical objections to Azariah's coming into conflict with Tiglath-pileser in 738 B.C., which are based upon the insignificance of Judah and her distance from the scene of "Azriâu's" revolt, are looked at in the light of these statements from the book of Chronicles, they do not seem insuperable.

It is, *e.g.*, no longer pertinent to inquire scornfully what possible interest "little" Judah could have in the distant conquests of Tiglath-pileser, which were no concern of hers. If Azariah was such a man as the Chronicler suggests, and Kings also in part, a conqueror and statesman who throughout his long reign had been developing the military strength

of Judah until she was confessedly a power to be reckoned with in Canaan, then why could not he, as well as his subject Amos, read the signs of the times, and realize what the advance of Assyria, if unchecked, must mean to all the little states of the West? Where Amos had seen in the coming of the Assyrian the inevitable judgment of Jahweh, Azariah would see in it rather the summons to use the forces he had been consolidating for so long, to oppose Assyria, for the honor of Jahweh, and the preservation of the *status quo*. And inasmuch as, in 738 B.C., the great Jeroboam II no longer ruled in Israel, but the craven Menahem, proved by the Inscriptions to have been at this very time a truckler to Assyria, who would more naturally lead the states of the West which wished to oppose the arrogant Assyrian in the coalition of their forces, than Azariah, the one man of commanding genius left in that part of the world? That such a coalition was unsuccessful is not surprising, when Tiglath-pileser was the opponent. Even to attempt it, however, would require courage and ability of no mean order, and would be a fitting climax to Azariah's long and powerful reign.

Nor, again, to take up the other historical objection, based upon the alleged "weakness" of Judah at this time, can the mere inference from 2 K. 14, that Judah was but a vassal state to Israel all through Azariah's reign, be fairly urged as prohibiting the view of the history just outlined, in the face of the explicit testimony of Chronicles to Azariah's independent greatness. That the book of Kings, in this chapter, does describe an encounter between Jehoash of Israel and Amaziah of Judah, provoked by the latter, which left Judah completely at the mercy of Israel, is undeniable. And inasmuch as this defeat very probably occasioned the conspiracy in Judah by which Amaziah met his death, it is not impossible, further, that the youthful Azariah began his reign as the vassal of Israel. But this is by no means the equivalent of saying that he continued to be the vassal of Israel after he reached the maturity of his powers. Indeed, to maintain this in the patently fragmentary condition of the

narrative in Kings for that whole period, and with such independent testimony to the contrary at hand, is to assume a position that hardly seems critically defensible.²²

²² Perhaps it is not out of place at this point to inquire, in order to insure an impartial treatment of both theories, whether there are no objections of an historical character which might be urged, but for the great unanimity of scholarship in its favor, against Winckler's identification. To some minds such an objection would be found in the vagueness and indefiniteness attaching to Winckler's "Azriju" upon the Inscriptions. The proverb has it, indeed, that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," and that truth is perhaps brought home to Winckler in the present instance by the very troublesome facts that must be reckoned with in the life of Azariah, but that he nevertheless is dissatisfied to have his hero quite so minus a biography seems evident from the great pains he is at to deduce one for him. In doing this he is obliged to rely entirely upon the fragment from Tiglath-pileser's "Annals," already designated herein as III R 9, No. 2, since there is most unhappily no mention of "Azriju" in the Zenziri Inscriptions. It is true that III R 9, No. 2, is unanimously regarded by Assyriologists as a very puzzling inscription, owing to its imperfect state of preservation, and even Rost's edition, for the most part so highly satisfactory to Winckler, does not render it everywhere intelligible; but Winckler does not lose courage in the face of these difficulties. Space will not permit the insertion here of all his reconstructions and notes, but one or two may be cited to show their highly original and suggestive character. Thus at ll. 106-107 Rost translates the broken text: (106) ". . . without number to heaven he raises," (107) ". . . with eyes like as from heaven." This is surely sufficiently enigmatic, but Winckler, without attempting to compete with Rost's translation, clears up the whole situation admirably by the simple note: "Several words seem to refer to the cities in which Izriju sought refuge." Again, in ll. 112-114, where Rost can only recover such bits as: (112) ". . . like vines," (113) ". . . was difficult," (114) ". . . was shut-in (?) and high," Winckler throws out the illuminating hint: "Broken words, probably belonging to the description of a place of refuge hard to storm." Thus it must be admitted that Winckler really assembles quite a biography of his "Azriju," though unfortunately it seems to be confined almost entirely to his last days, and even then leaves one in distressing uncertainty as to his fate. All that Winckler can say *apropos* of the break between III R 9, No. 2, and III R 9, No. 3, which comes at the very climax of events, is: "Missing, the ending of the siege." Did poor "Azriju" escape with his life, or was he captured and killed? It would be a great relief to know, but in any event his career, as set forth by Winckler, possesses a romantic interest, and makes that of Azariah seem prosaic, indeed, by comparison.

An historical objection which is of a more serious import, attaches itself to Winckler's handling of Tiglath-pileser's "Annals" at the point where the first "Azriju" inscription (III R 9, No. 2) comes in.

His whole theory, be it observed, as to the order of events in this

b. The second class of historical objections to the identification of "Azrijâu" with Azariah comprises those based upon the latter's physical condition in 738 B.C., which, it is said, would make it impossible for him to lead a revolt against Tiglath-pileser far beyond the boundaries of his kingdom. Three things are here implied: (1) Azariah was a very old man in 738 B.C.; (2) his leprosy did not permit of his taking any part in public affairs; (3) he took the field in person against Tiglath-pileser. As to (1) it would surely be permissible to urge, even against so great an authority as Wellhausen, whose opinion is epigrammatically expressed in his phrase, "Azariah vegetates, Jotham reigns," that 68 is not always decrepitude, nor does it necessarily mean mental decay or inertia, especially when a man has such varied interests as Azariah would seem to have had. Rather, so far as his age is concerned, Azariah would be in the very ripeness of his political sagacity and military experience in 738 B.C. As to (2), the exact statement of Kings regarding Azariah's leprosy is:²⁸ "And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And

uprising, rests upon the supposition that the fragment of the "Annals" comprising lines 90-101 in Rost's text, and known as III R 9, No. 1, which describes Tutammû of Unki's refusal to pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser, and the consequent conquest of Unki, relates events of the same year as does the immediately following fragment, ll. 103-119, which is, of course, the first "Azrijâu" inscription (III R 9, No. 2), and has been seen to refer to the year 788 B.C. In fact, Winckler regards these two inscriptions as continuous, and is thus enabled to make Tiglath-pileser pass immediately from Unki to "Ja-u-di," which he has shown already by an elaborate argument to lie next to Unki. This line of march would be a natural one for Tiglath-pileser to follow, and thus Winckler builds up a very plausible theory of Tiglath-pileser's campaign of 788 B.C., and one entirely favorable to his own interpretation of "Azrijâu." But if Rost is right (*i.e.* II. *Introd.* pp. xxii ff.), there is a gap in the "Annals" at this point of at least two years, the fragment dealing with Tutammû being fixed by its reference to Arpad (l. 91) as relating to events not later than 740 B.C., when Arpad fell, while that dealing with "Azrijâu" is just as firmly tied up to 788 B.C. by its fellow-inscription III R 9, No. 3, as has been shown already. In view of the strong arguments Rost adduces in support of his position, it would seem as if Winckler must reconstruct his carefully built edifice of events, if it is to prove a safe habitation for his theory.

²⁸ 2 K. 15 s, *Engl. Rev.*, 1885.

Jotham the king's son was over the household, judging the people of the land." Some doubt attaches to the translation "several house," but the most satisfactory suggestion²⁴ upon the Hebrew phrase is that it points to a greater freedom being permitted Azariah than most in his condition. It is entirely within the rights of this passage to assert that it cannot fairly be made to mean that Azariah was totally incapacitated for rule by his disease. Its every legitimate requirement would seem to be satisfied by the supposition that Jotham simply took his father's place in those duties to the royal household and to the people at large which would require the king's personal presence, leaving to Azariah the direction of the foreign and domestic policies, and that more especially since it must be conceded that the exact nature and total progress of Azariah's "leprosy" cannot be certainly fixed. It is not said that he *died* of this disease, but, "he was a leper *unto* the day of his death," which may well mean something far less serious.

As to (3), if it is an inevitable conclusion, from impartial study of the "Azrijâu" Inscriptions, that "Azrijâu" took the field in person against Tiglath-pileser, then his identification with Azariah has received, beyond question, a body blow. It is true that the story of Naaman,²⁵ who was "captain of the host," though a "leper," shows that "leprosy" did not always keep men back from active warfare, but in Azariah's case the statements as to his seclusion seem fairly to preclude this.

But *is* such a personal, bodily share in the conflict a necessary inference from the accounts of "Azrijâu"? Of course it would appear so from Winckler's reconstruction of III R 9, No. 2, but it may well be doubted whether he is an altogether safe guide here, in view of the different position of Rost, as to both context and decipherable content. And in any event, to submit so strong an identification as is given in the double equation,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{mât Ja-u-da-ai} &= \text{Judah,} \\ \text{mât Ja-u-di} &= \text{Judah,} \end{aligned}$$

²⁴ Cf. Klostermann, cited by Burney, *ad loc.*

²⁵ 2 K. 5 1 z.

to the test of a purely conjectural restoration, is to show a rather startling devotion to a theory. The present writer would earnestly contend that, in view of this equation, it is just as legitimate, to say the least, to interpret "Azrijâu's" activities in the light of what the Old Testament says concerning Azariah, as it is to construct a theory for him which makes his identification with this king of Judah impossible.

Two possibilities as to the actual course of events suggest themselves, if Azariah's personal participation in the campaign against Tiglath-pileser be waived. If one be disposed to press the implications of Azariah's "leprosy" to the point of making him helpless both in mind and body at this time, then it is, of course, entirely compatible with the Biblical suggestion of a co-reign, that Jotham should have planned the great coalition against Tiglath-pileser, as well as taken the field in command of Judah's quota of troops. Azariah, as titular king, would still be given the credit of instigating the uprising in Tiglath-pileser's "Annals." There is no justification, as Schrader long ago pointed out, for disparaging Jotham, as to either character or ability. But, from the drift of the preceding discussion, it must be evident that the present writer inclines rather to a second possibility, — which commends itself to him as more consonant with the statements of the records in the case, whether Assyrian or Biblical, — which is, that it was Azariah himself, Judah's greatest king since David, in body leprous, but in mind alert and vigorous as ever, who in his last year planned the coalition of forces against Assyria mentioned by Tiglath-pileser in connection with "Azrijâu." His then, in fact as well as in record, would be the credit for the intrepid venture, even though he had to leave the actual command in the field to some one else.

Such a view of the course of events the present writer believes to be not a mere fancy, but an entirely possible interpretation of the Biblical and Assyrian data, and one which presents fully as strong a case as the theory of Winckler. He would, in all modesty, bespeak a reopening of the question.