

Israelites and Judahites in Assyria and Babylonia According to the Cuneiform Sources

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PART 1

Israelites and Judahites in Neo-Assyrian Sources

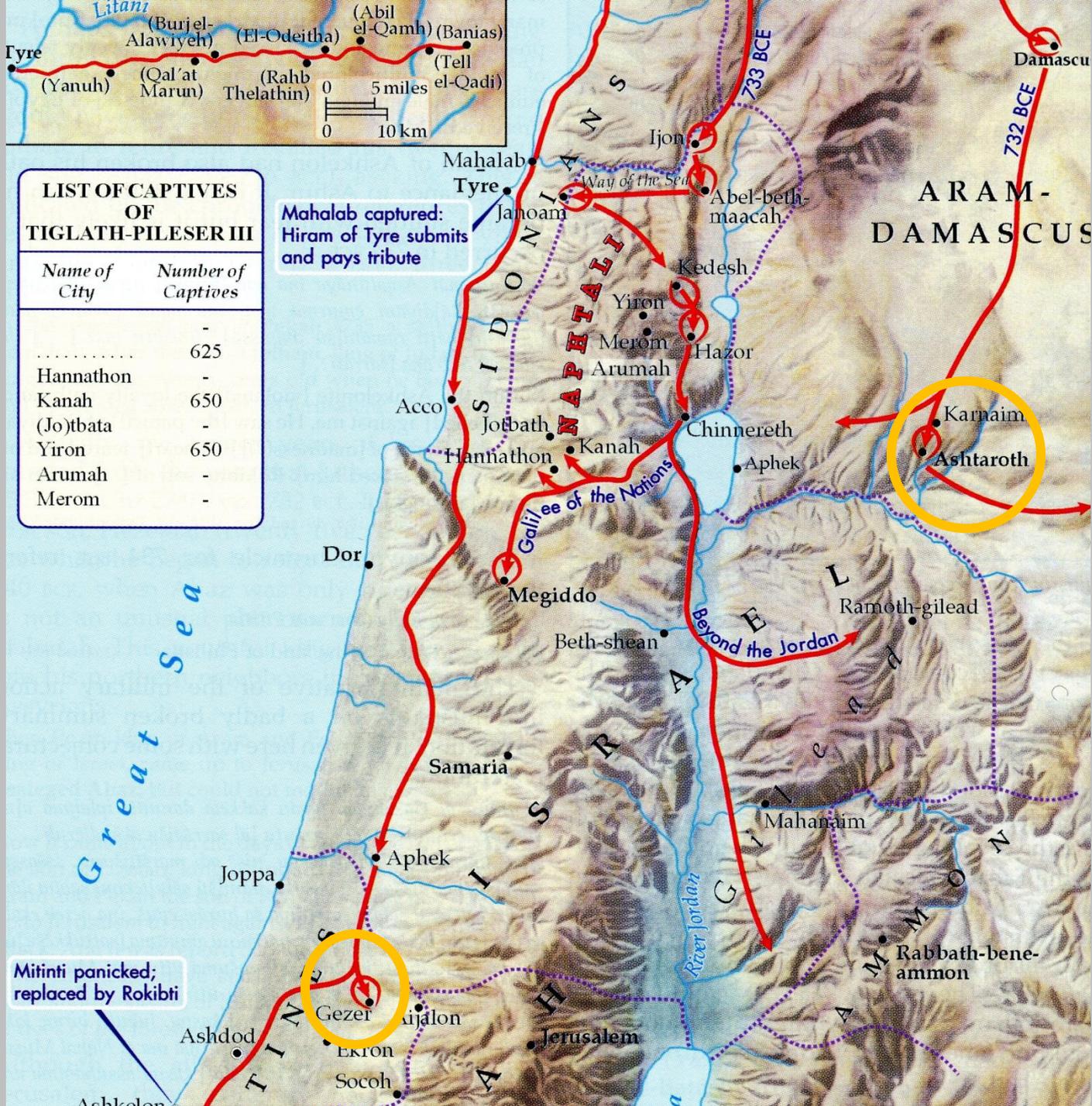
1a. The Israelite Deportations

Assyrian Kings Who Deported Israelites

1. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727)
2. Shalmaneser V (727-722)
3. Sargon II (722-705)



Tiglath-pileser III (745-727)



LIST OF CAPTIVES OF TIGLATH-PILESER III

Name of City	Number of Captives
.....	625
Hannathon	-
Kanah	650
(Jo)tata	-
Yiron	650
Arumah	-
Merom	-

Mahalab captured: Hiram of Tyre submits and pays tribute

Mitinti panicked; replaced by Rokibti

ARAM-DAMASCUS

Galilee of the Nations

Beyond the Jordan

Great Sea

Megiddo

Samaria

Joppa

Gezer

Jerusalem

Rabbath-bene-ammon

Mahana'im

Ramoth-gilead

Beth-shean

Acco

Mahalab

Tyre

Janoam

Ijon

Abel-beth-maacah

Kedesh

Yiron

Merom

Hazor

Arumah

Chinnereth

Aphek

Karnaim

Ashtaroth

Damascus

733 BCE

732 BCE

0 5 miles
0 10 km

Tyre

(Yanuh)

(Qal'at Marun)

(Thelathin)

(Rahb)

(Tell el-Qadi)

(Burjel-Alawiyeh)

(El-Odeitha)

(Abil el-Qamh)

(Banias)

SIDONIA

NAPHTALI

Hannathon

Kanah

Jobath

Aphek

Dor

Megiddo

Beth-shean

Samaria

Joppa

Aphek

Gezer

Jerusalem

Socoh

Ashkelon

Ashdod

Ekron

Jerusalem

Socoh

Ashkelon

Ashdod

Ekron

Jerusalem

Socoh

Ashkelon

Ashdod

Ekron

Jerusalem

Socoh

Ashkelon

ISRAEL

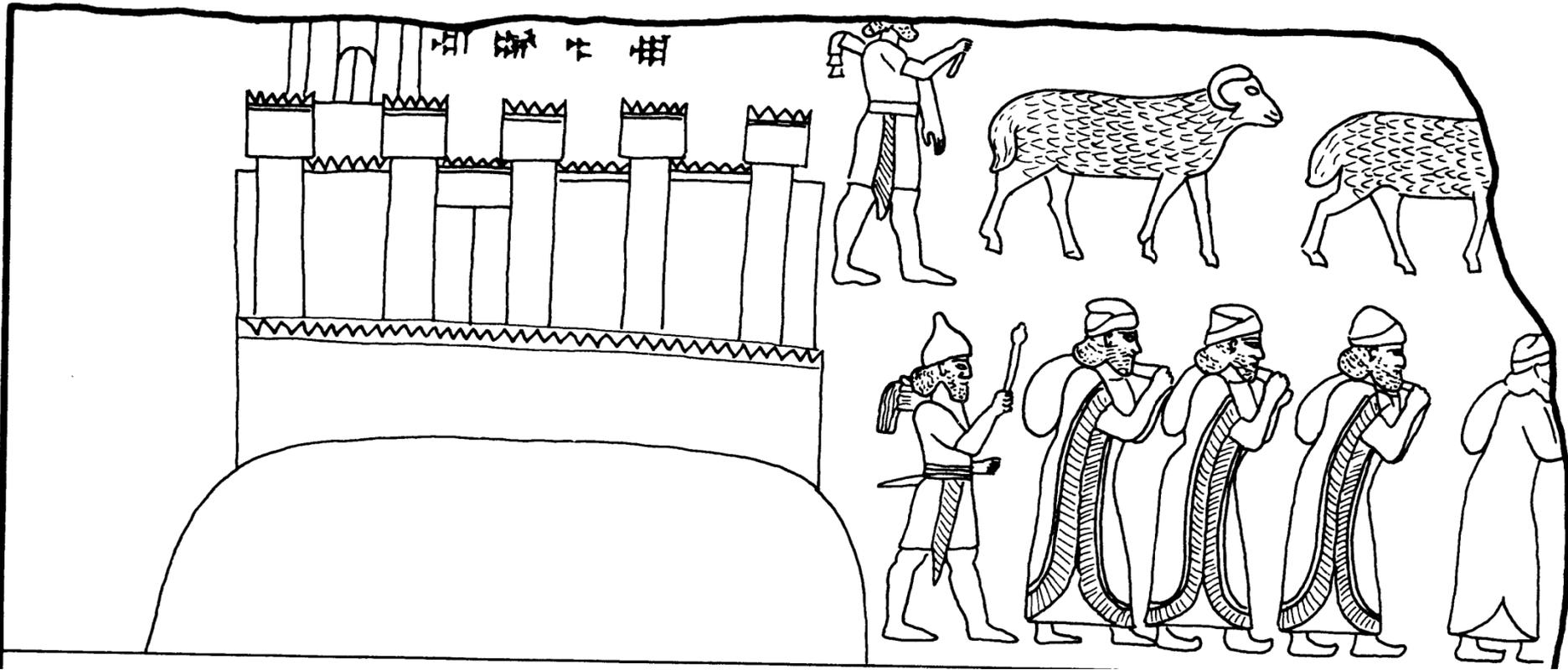
BEYOND THE JORDAN

AMMON

MOAB

Aštarot

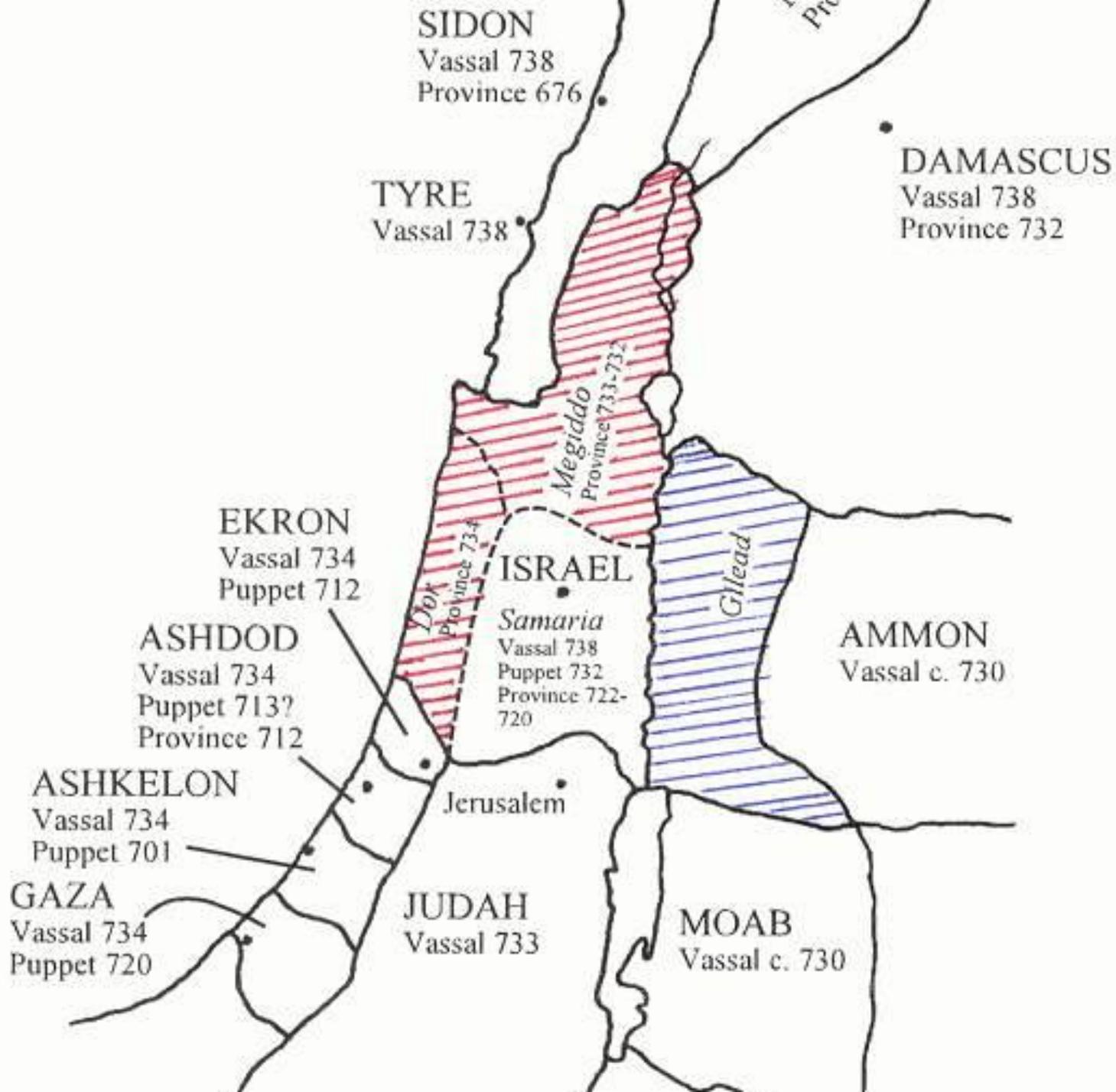
(URU.as-tara-tu)





Hieroglyphic text arranged in two columns below the relief. The characters are carved into the stone surface and represent ancient Egyptian script.

The evidence from Lower Galilee seems to indicate that this was a **unidirectional deportation**, that some of these areas of the northern kingdom were depopulated.



SHALMANESER V (726-722 BCE)

- Capture and destruction of Samaria in 722
– Babylonian Chronicle and 2 Kings 17





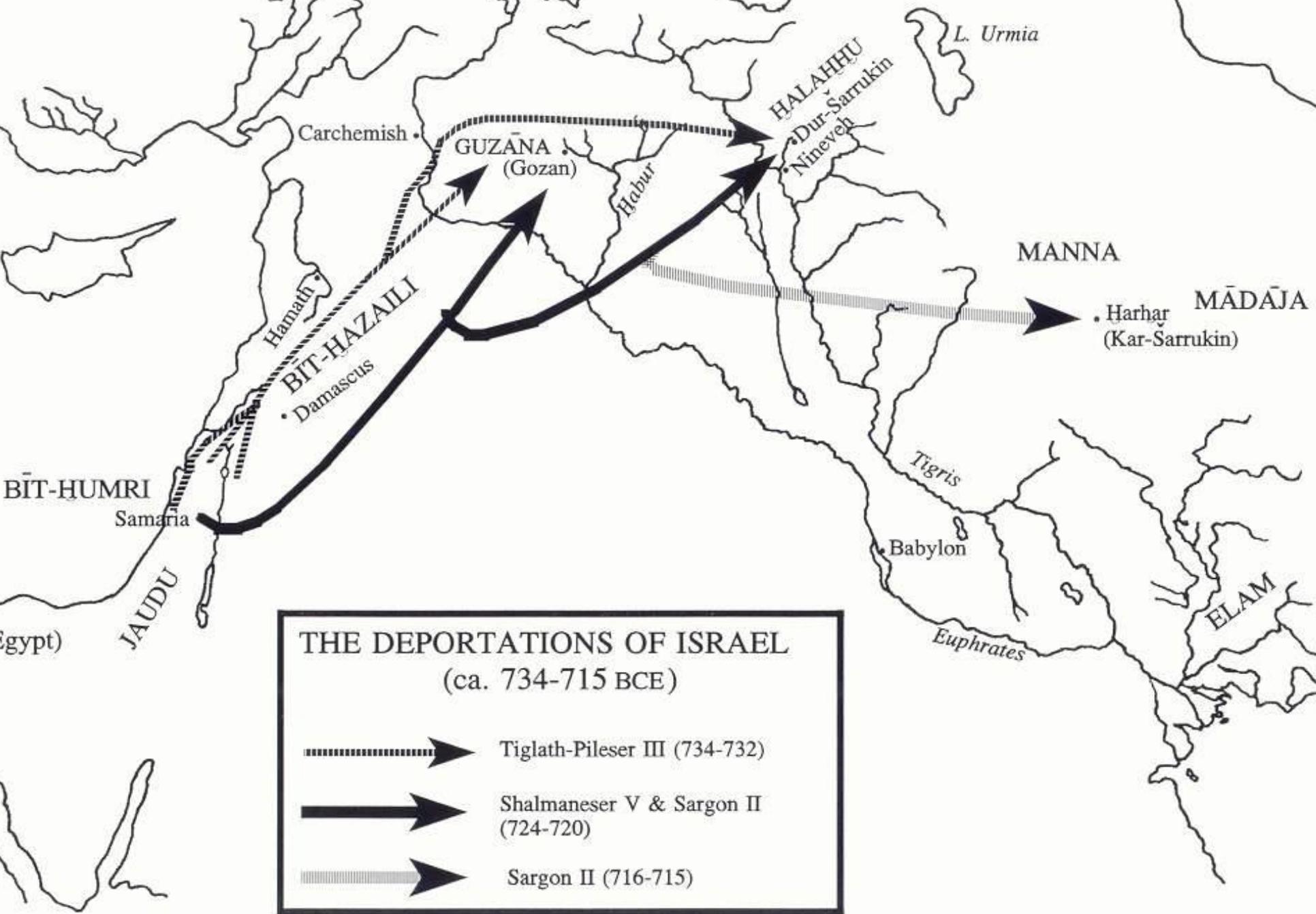
Sargon II (722-705)

- (The Nimrud Prisms D and E) [The inhabitants of Sa]merina, who agreed [and plotted] with a king [hostile to] me, not to do service and not to bring tribute [to Aššur] and who did battle, I fought against them with the power of the great gods, my lords. I counted as spoil 27,280 (error for 27,290) people, together with their chariots, and gods, in which they trusted. I formed a unit with 200 of [their] chariots for my royal force. I settled the rest of them in the midst of Assyria. I repopulated Samerina more than before. I brought into it people from countries conquered by my hands. I appointed my eunuch as governor over them. And I counted them as Assyrians.

- This was a rapid re-conquest of the city in 720 BCE
- A **bidirectional deportation** was implemented.

2 Kgs 17:6

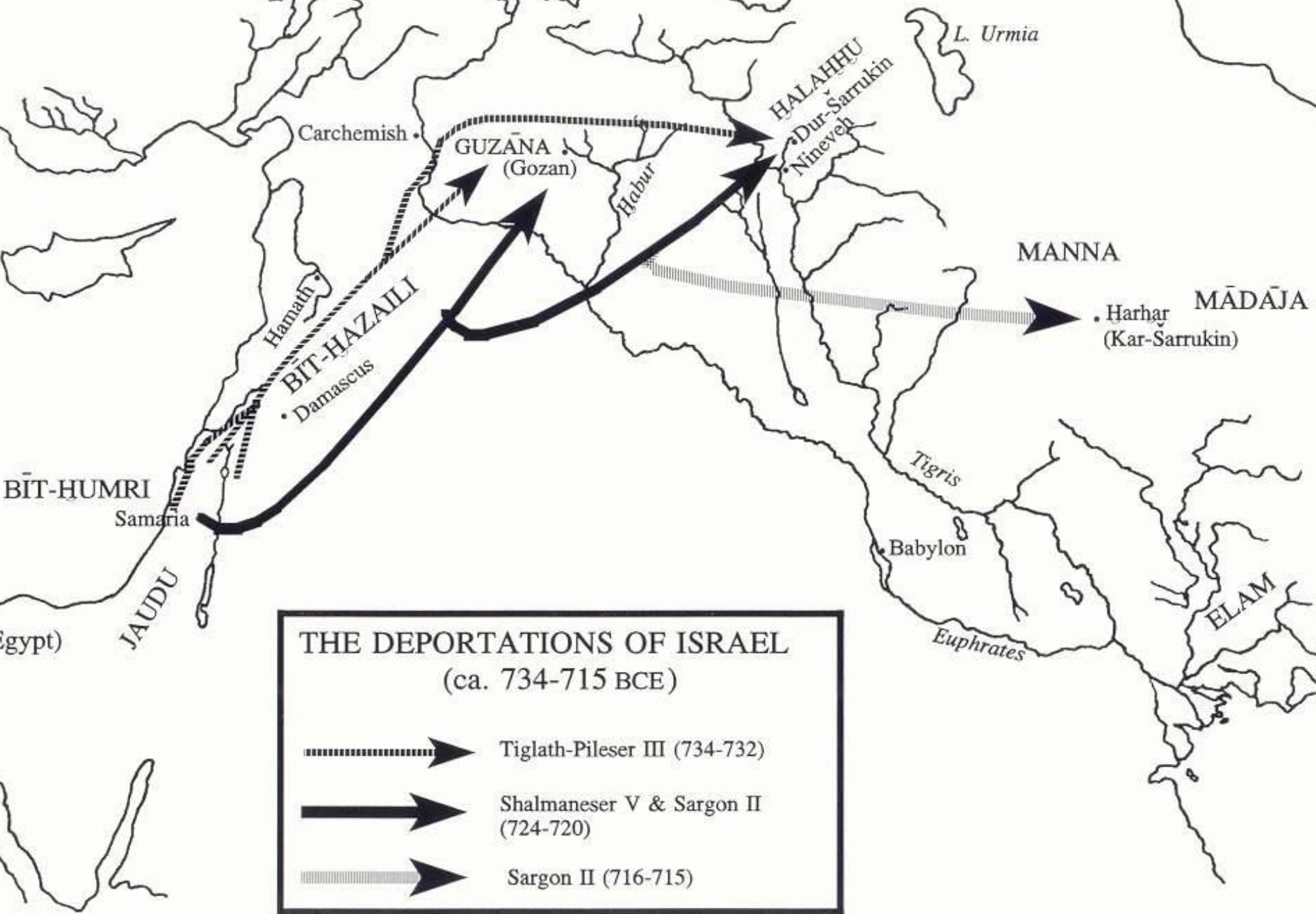
In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in **Halah**, on the Habur, the river of **Gozan** and in **the towns of the Medes**.



The Israelites were deported to three locations
(2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11):

1. Ḥalah (this was the Assyrian province of Ḥalahḥa)
2. Gōzān (this was Gūzāna in the Assyrian records, modern Tell Ḥalaf)
3. the cities of the Medes (city of Ḥarḥar and other towns)

— Medes were deported to the southern Levant – Tel Jemmeh Ostrakon



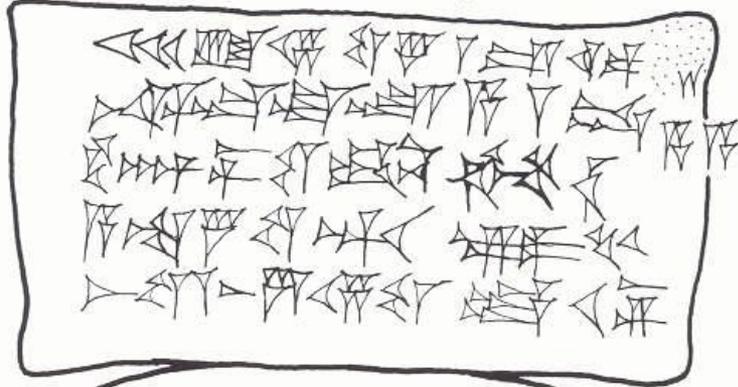
1b. The Identification of Hebrew Persons in Neo-Assyrian Sources

Tracing Israelites in the Assyrian Cuneiform Records

- Assyrian reliefs may give hints as to ethnicity through particular clothing
- the ethnicon “Samaritan” is used.
- a personal name may derive from a root only attested in Hebrew (e.g. Pekah).
- the predominate method for identifying Israelites (or Judahites) in the textual materials, is through the use of a form of the divine name, Yahweh, in the personal names.

Vs.

5

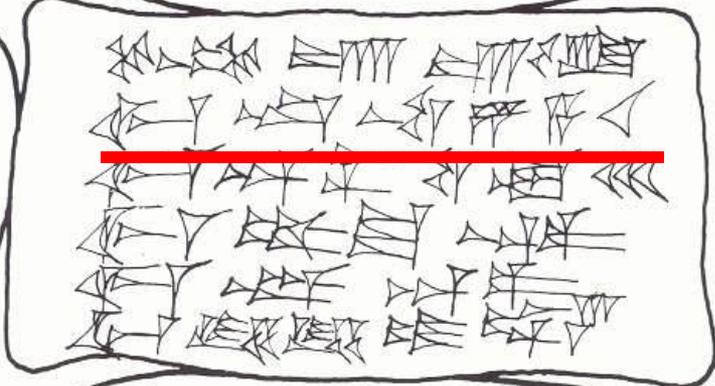
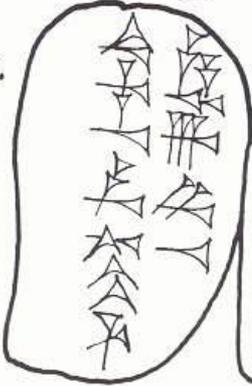


u.Rd.

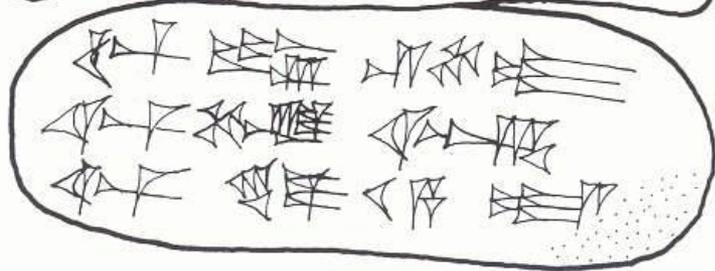
l.Rd.



Rs.
10



ob. Rd. 15



First Component

Second Component

ia-u/ú or *iu-u/ú-* – X

X – *-i-a-ú, -ia-u, -ia-a-u*

IGI M ba - na - ia - a - u

= Bana'-Yau (בְּנֵי־הוּ)

“Yahweh built or created”

1c. Israelites in Neo-Assyrian Sources

THE TYPES OF DEPORTEES

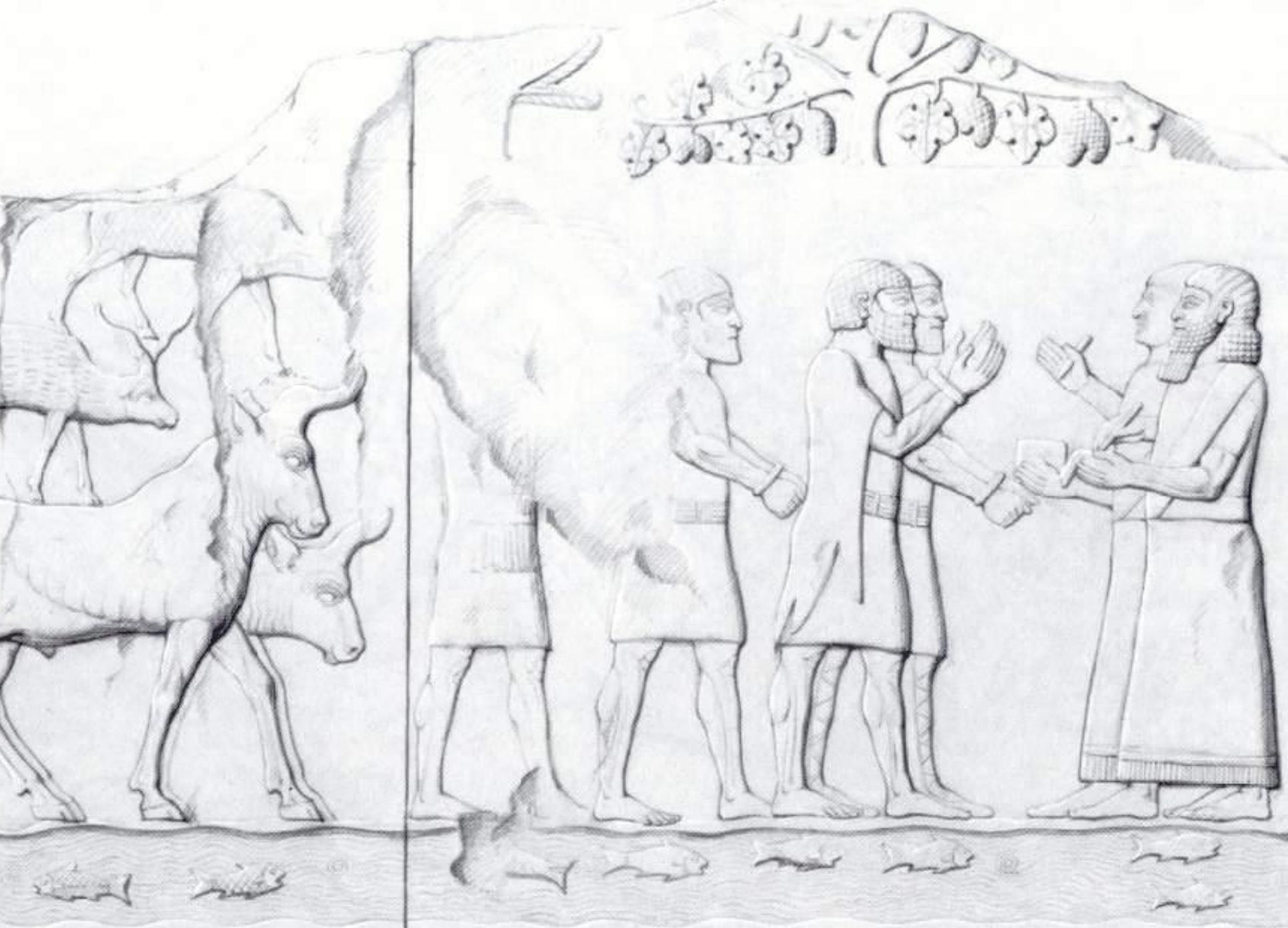
- those who received preferred or at least reasonable treatment (a relatively small number)
- those who received hardship and bare subsistence (a large number of the deportees).

THE FILTERING PROCESS

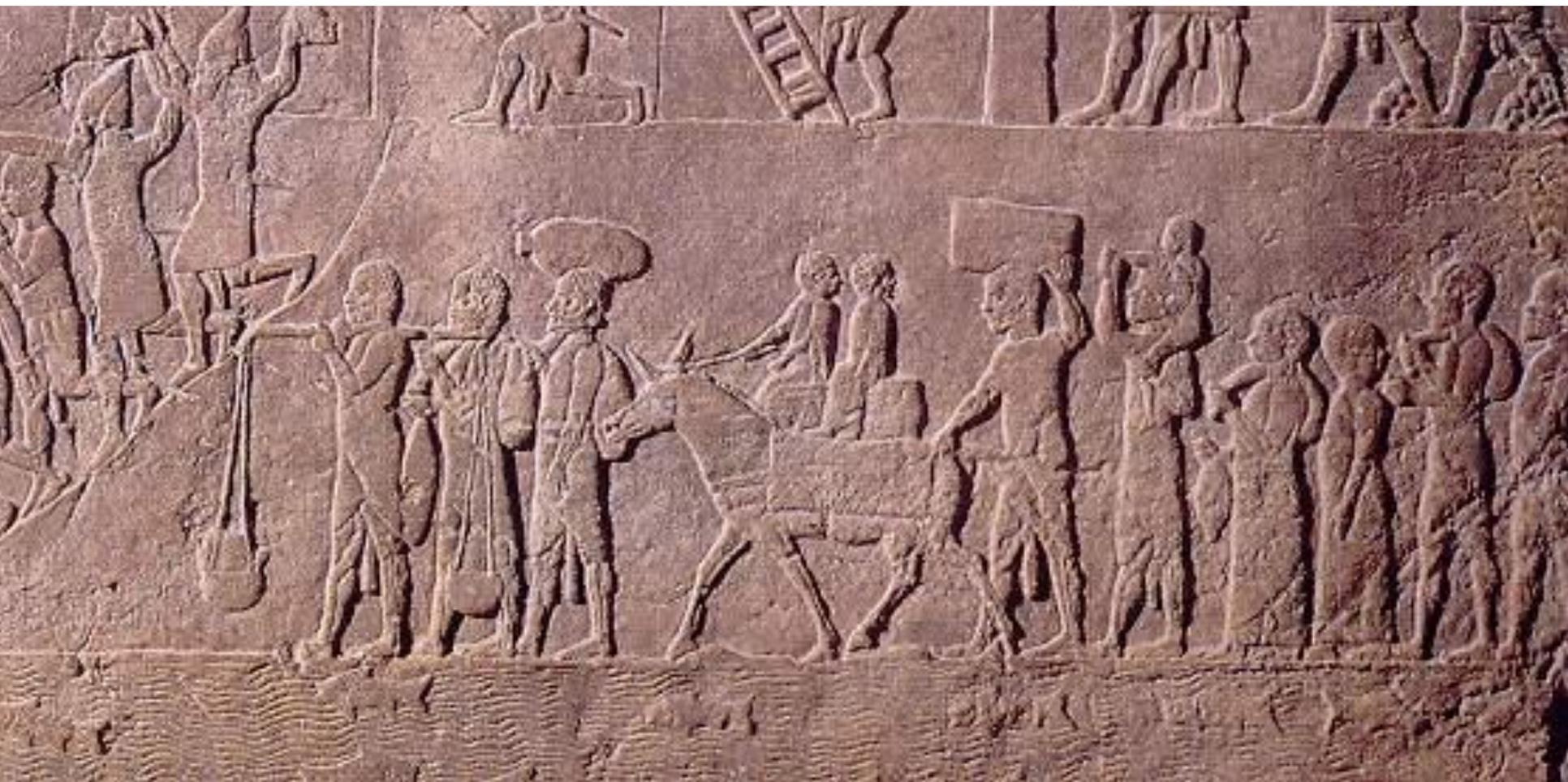
- By the individual deportee's prior status and skills as these matched the needs of the Assyrian administration.
- Assyrian reliefs' give evidence of the filtering process
- Emotional impact on uprooted individuals
- Generally nuclear families were kept intact; but extended familial ties were severed.
- Assyrian deportations were not "death marches." The Assyrians were concerned that the deportees arrived at their destinations relatively healthy.

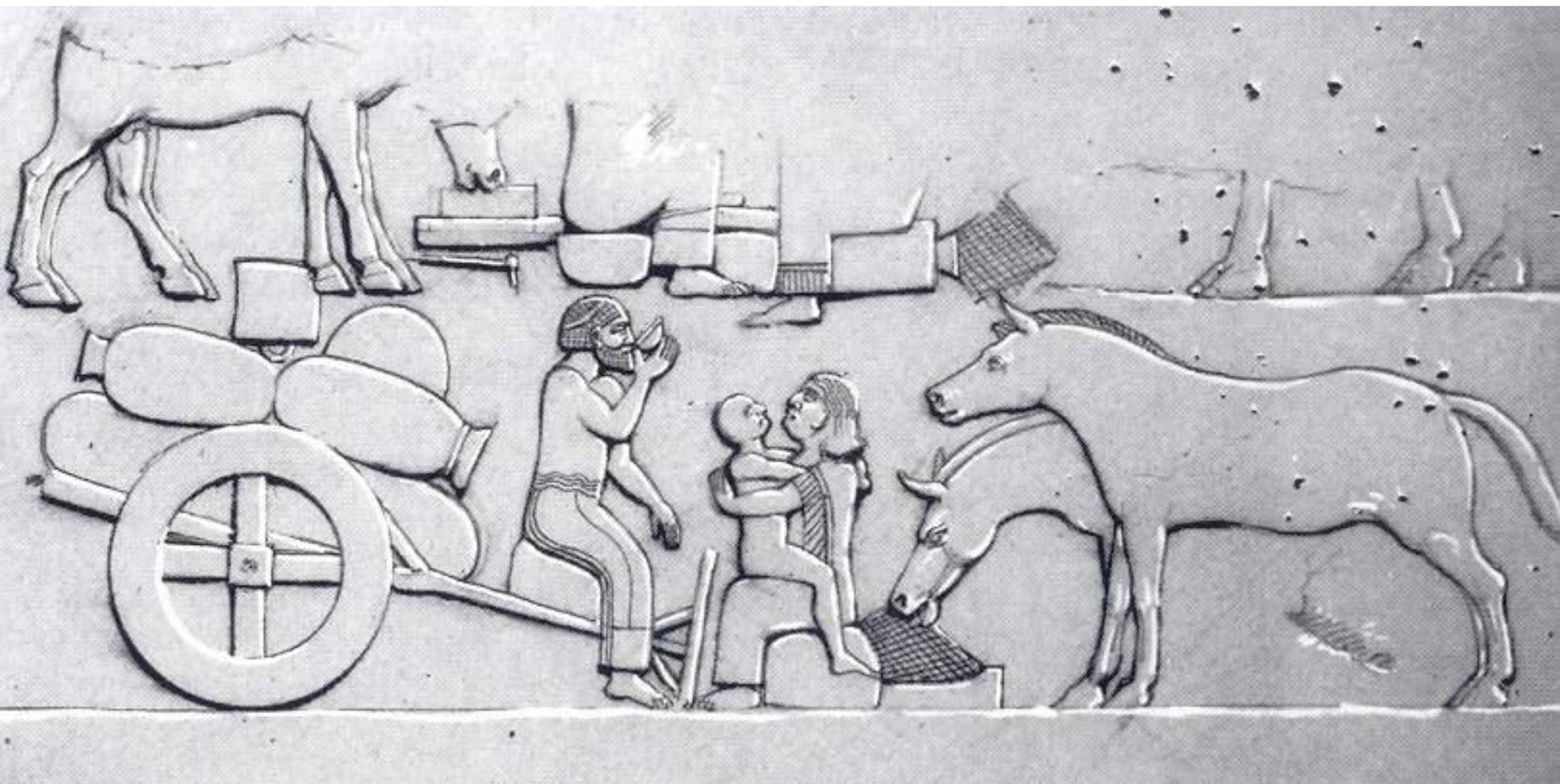
Letter (Tiglath-pileser III or Sargon II) – the king commands an official Aššur-rēmanni and a scribe Nabû-bēl-aḥḥēšu to be responsible with the captives that they are transporting and settling. They are even to oversee the care of the sick deportees! The king states:

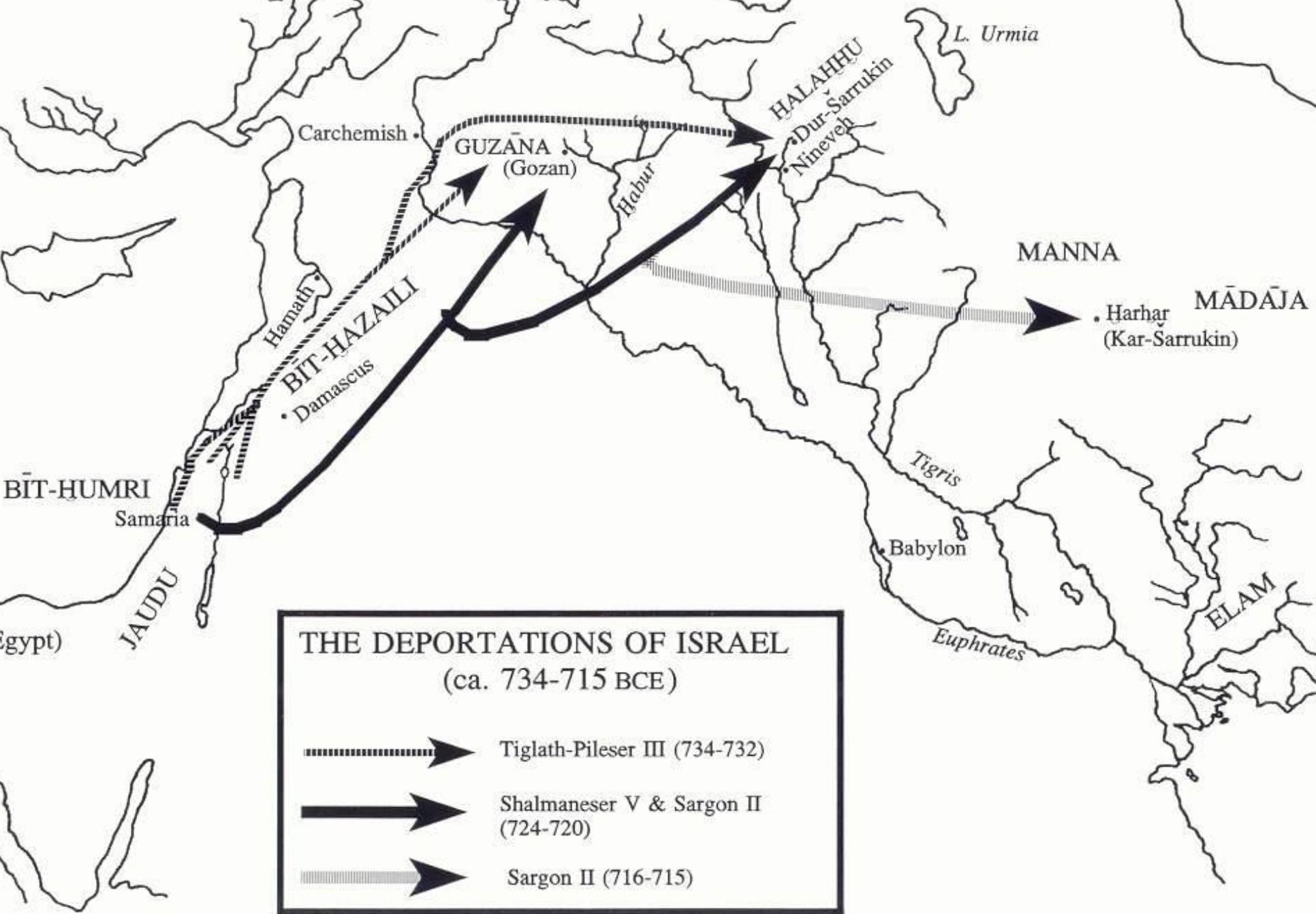
“Seven times over you shall not be careless; for that you would die. If there is anyone sick among the deportees whom they bring to you, you shall gather (them) together from among (the group). However many there are, they shall transport (them), (and) place them in your presence until they are fit.”











THOSE DEPORTEES WHO RECEIVED PREFERRED OR AT LEAST REASONABLE TREATMENT

A. Military Personnel

1. Tiglath-pileser III – Israelite auxiliary troops (Summary Inscip 4)

2. Sargon II – “Samaritan” charioteers (“Horse Lists” – TFS 99)

3. Individuals:

a. Nadbi-Yau (*ndbyhw* “Impelled by Yahweh):

a chariot driver

b. Azri-Yau (*zryhw* “Yahweh is my help”):

a cohort commander

c. Azri-Yau: a bodyguard from Nineveh

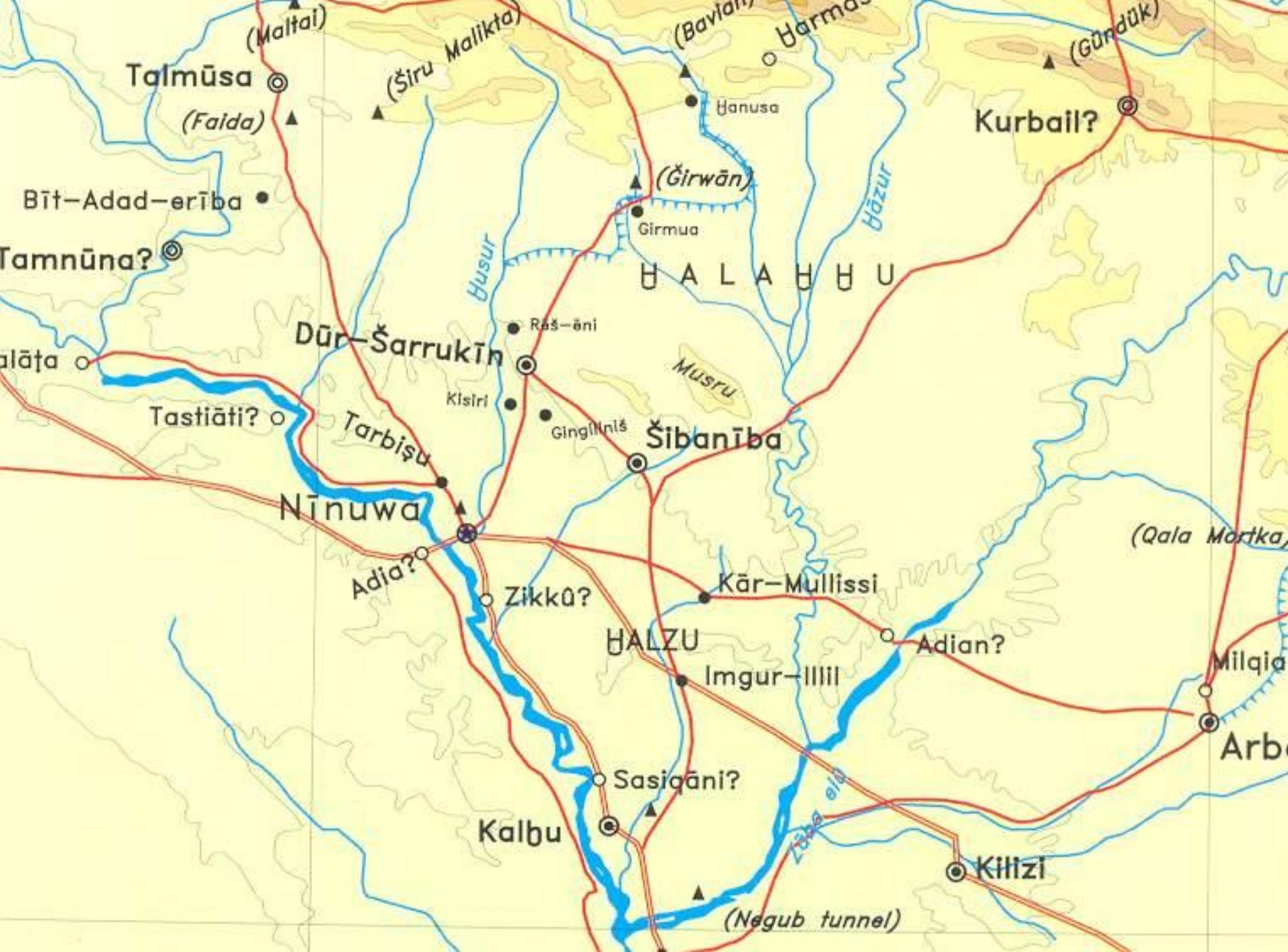
d. Aḥi-Yau (*’ḥyhw* “Yahweh is [my] brother”):

an archer



B. Officials

1. Palace personnel – Nimrud Wine List (see COS 3:278) (734 BCE) (the time of Tiglath-pileser III)
2. Neri-Yau (*nryhw*, “Yahweh is my light”) was the chief of accounts from Guzāna
3. Paṭi-Yau (*plṭyhw*, “My deliverance is Yahweh”) the servant of Neri-Yau
4. Yadi-Yau (*yd’y(h)w*, “Known by Yahweh”) was the chief of public works



(Maltai)

Talmūsa
(Faida)

(Širu Malikta)

(Bavian)

Harmas

(Gūndūk)

Kurbail?

Bīt-Adad-erība

Tamnūna?

Husur

(Ġirwān)

HALAHU

Hāzur

alāṭa

Dūr-Šarrukīn

Raš-āni

Musru

Tastiāti?

Tarbiṣu

Kisiri

Gingilnīs

Šibanība

Nīnuwa

Adia?

Zikkū?

Kār-Mullissi

(Qala Martka)

HALZU

Adian?

Imgur-III

Milqia

Arb

Sasiqāni?

Kalbu

Kilzi

(Negub tunnel)







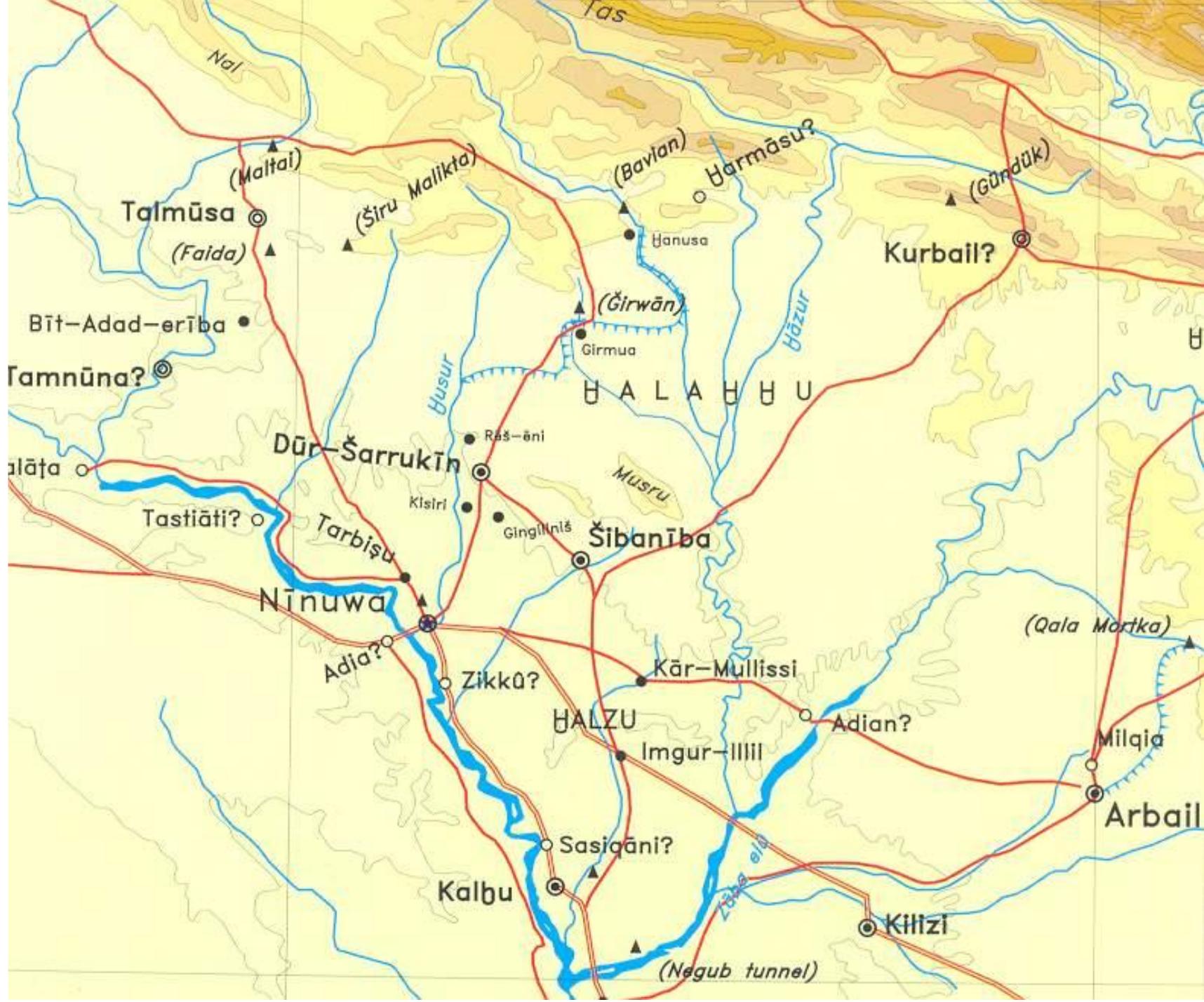
C. Priests

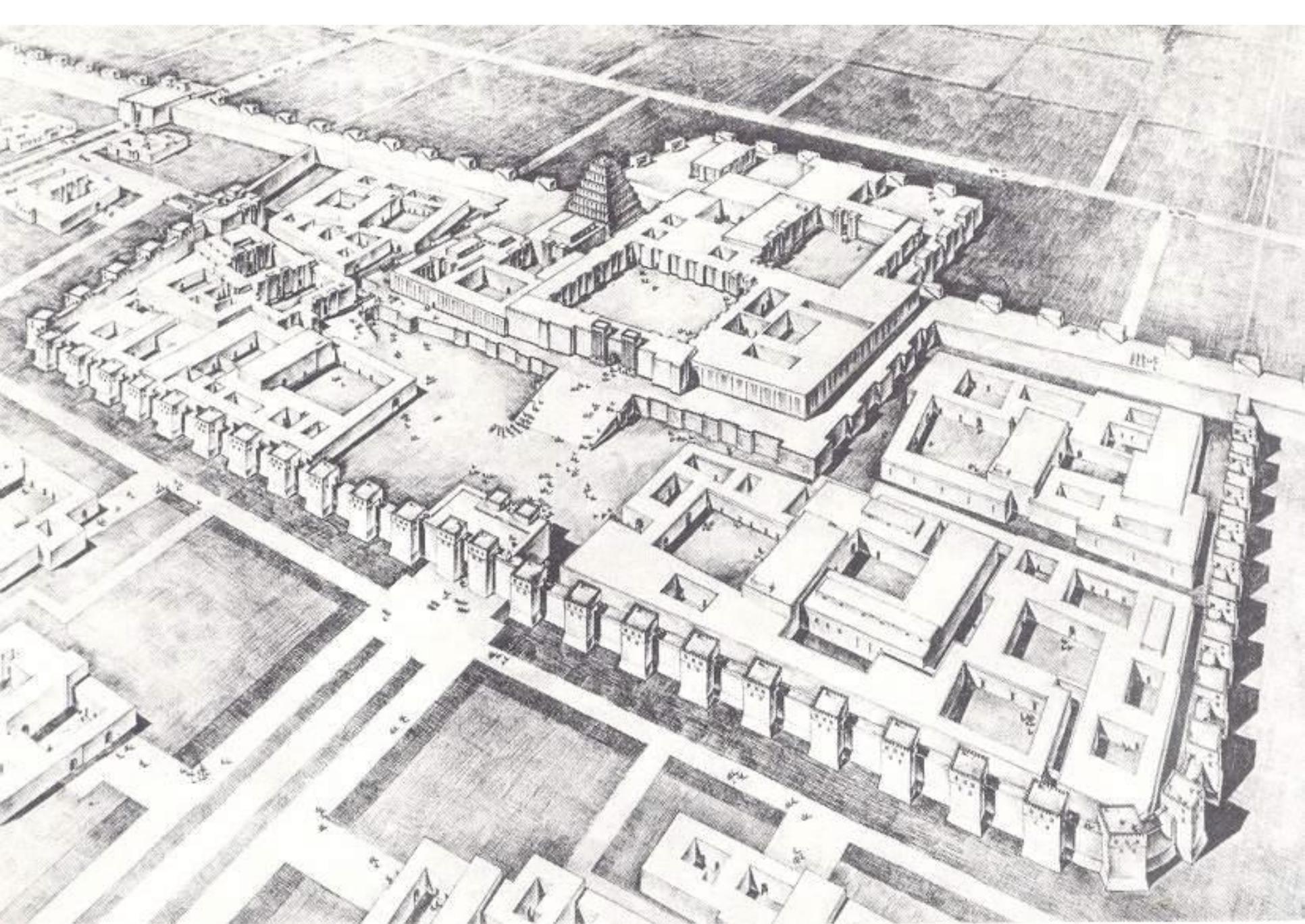
1. Wine rations to Samarian lamentation-priests (Nimrud Wine List: *TFS* 121)
2. Samarian priest returning to Samaria to instruct the deportees from the various nations now living in Samaria “the law of the god of the land” (2 Kings 17:24-41)
3. Priestly “singers”

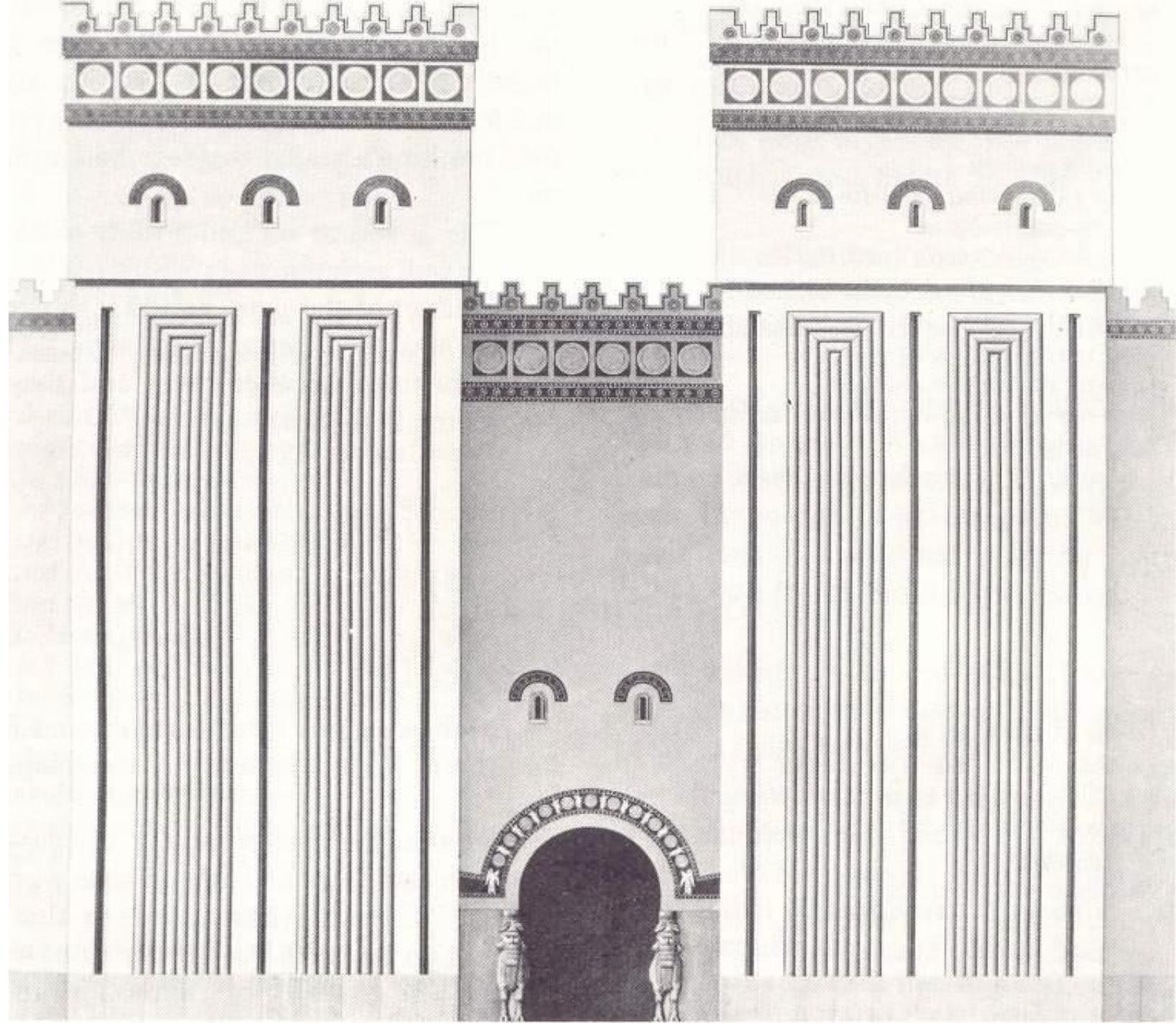


D. Skilled Laborers

1. Ḫalaḥ (this was the Assyrian province of Ḫalaḥḫa) where Sargon was building a new capital, Dūr-Šarrukin. Israelites were used to build the city (COS 3:246).
2. Ration Text – two units: one entitled to a 2-*qa* (liter) ration of barley, the other entitled to only a 1-*qa* (liter) ration — the absolute minimal daily ration.







E. Merchants

Il-Yau (*'lyhw*, “Yahweh is my God”), an Israelite, sells a slave girl to Akkullanu, the cohort commander of the crown prince in Nineveh.

F. Landowners

Hazaqi-Yau (*Ha-za-qi-iá-a-u*, *hzqyh/hzqyhw*, “Yahweh has strengthened,” Hezekiah) was a land-owner from Dūr-Katlimmu.

G. Witnesses

Israelites served as witnesses in over twenty legal documents from Assyria. It is clear from these, as well as other documents, that later generations of deportees adopted non-Israelite, specifically Assyrian, names. Thus there was a certain “Assyrianization” at work along “generational” lines.

THOSE DEPORTEES WHO RECEIVED HARDSHIP AND BARE SUBSISTENCE

A. Agricultural Workers



B. Forced Laborers

In the construction Dūr-Šarrukīn (Sargon's new capital), the bulk of the unskilled labor was deportees. These deportees would have received only a 1-*qa* (liter) ration — the minimal daily ration — for the unskilled laborers. Their plight must have been very grievous.



C. Front Line / Border Towns / Forts

1. The “cities of the Medes” (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11) would have been the area around the city of Ҥarḫar (renamed Kār-Šarrukin)

D. Slaves

1. An Israelite named Mannu-kī-Arbail, the son of Aḥi-Yau is the subject of a slave redemption (700 BCE) (COS 3:260).
2. Use'a (Hosea) and his two wives Badia and Me'sa were sold by Urad-Issar to Se-ma'di, the village manager of the crown prince (680 BCE).
3. An Israelite woman named Daiana (*dynh*, Dinah/Diana) was a female slave from Gozan (610 BCE)

E. Debtors

1. Ila-eriba, the son of Aṣal-Yau was from the city of Zanba, and contracted a debt with Inurta-šarru-usur (626 BCE).

1d. Judahites in Neo-Assyrian Sources

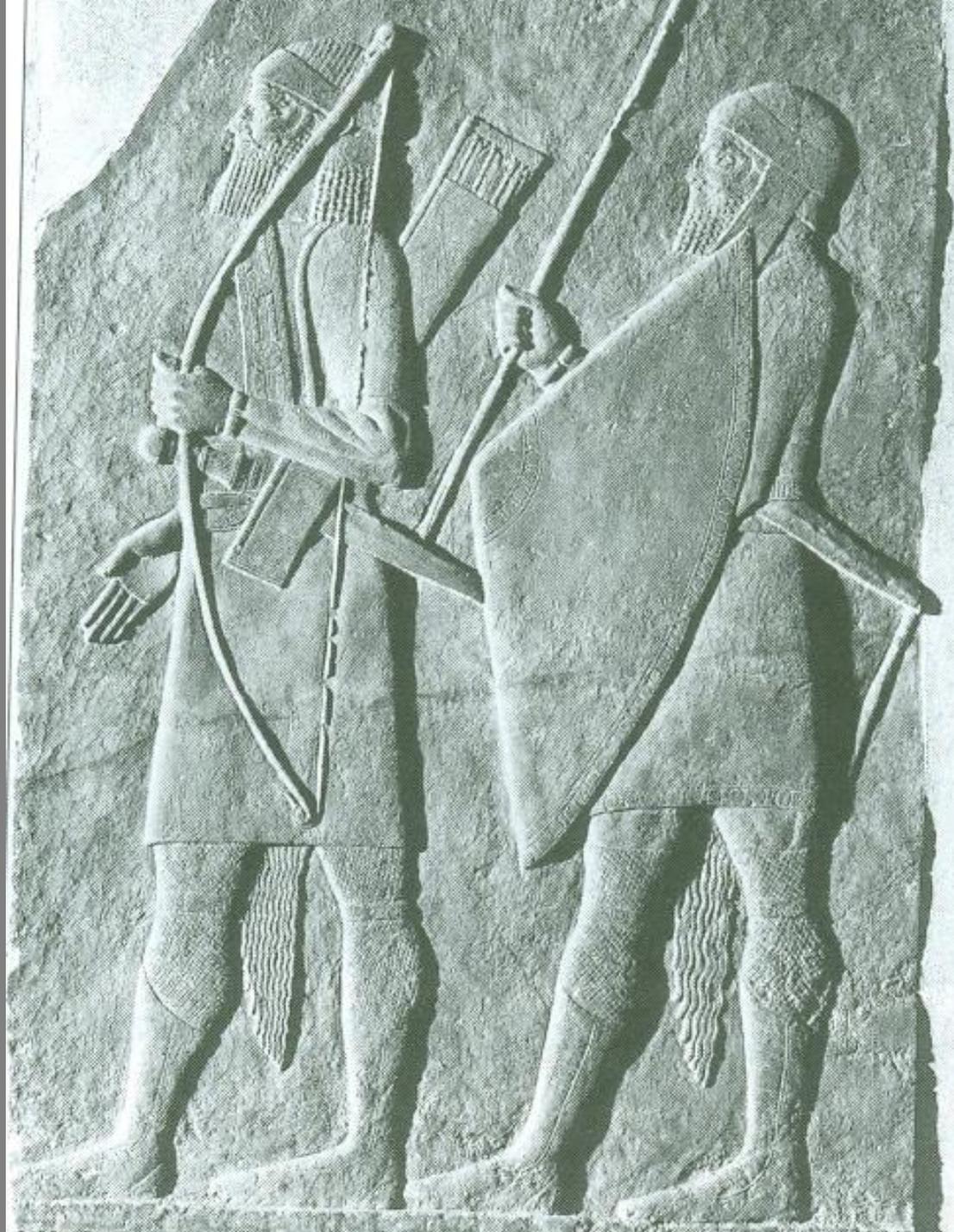
A tablet, dated to 660 BC, records the debt incurred by Attar-suri, who received from Adunīḫa (אֲדֻנִיחָא) three homers of wheat measured by the Judahite seah (*ina* GIŠ.BÁN ša KUR.*ia-ú-di*).

Seah \approx 7.3 liters





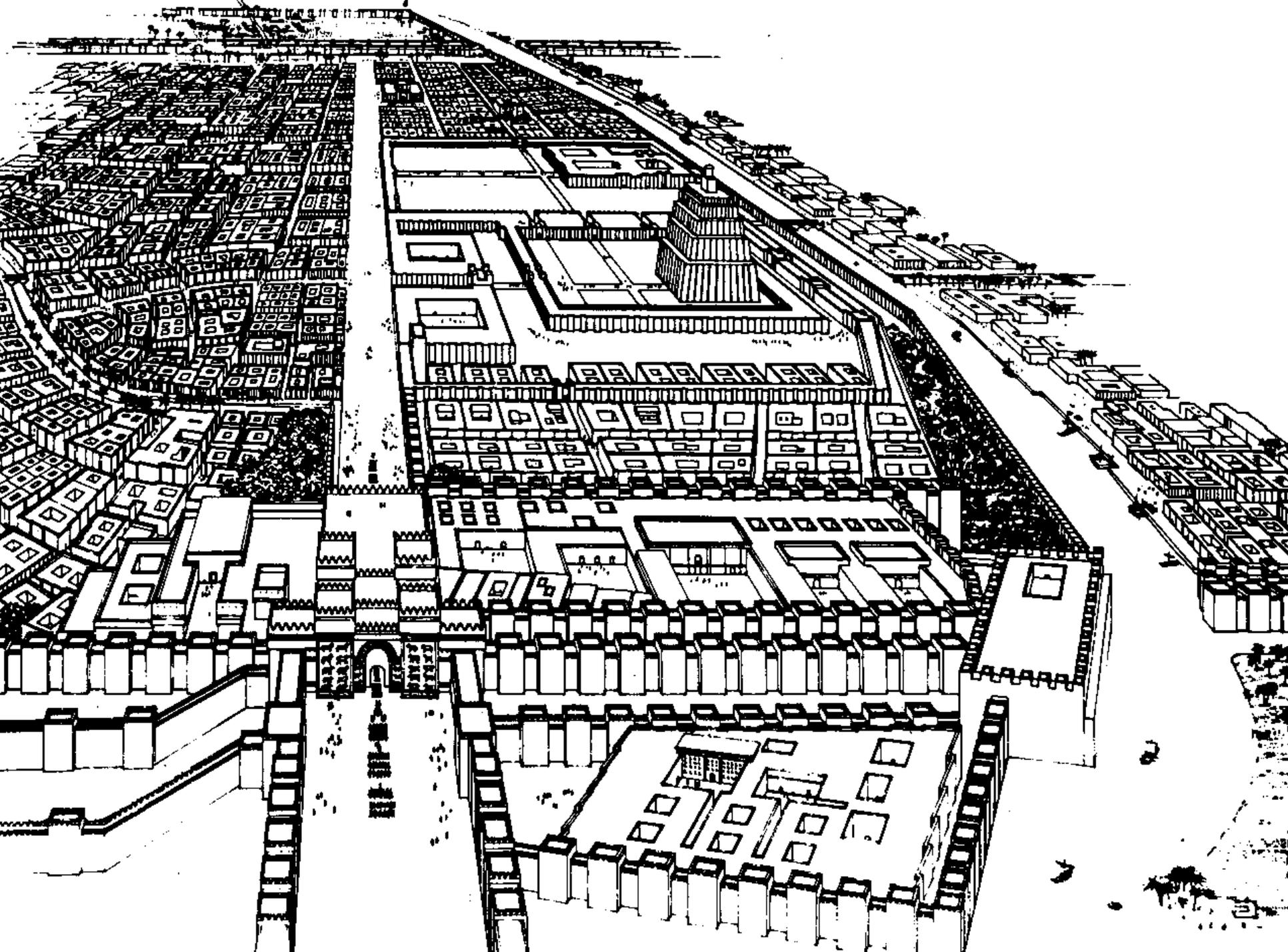




PART 2

Judahites in Neo-Babylonian Sources

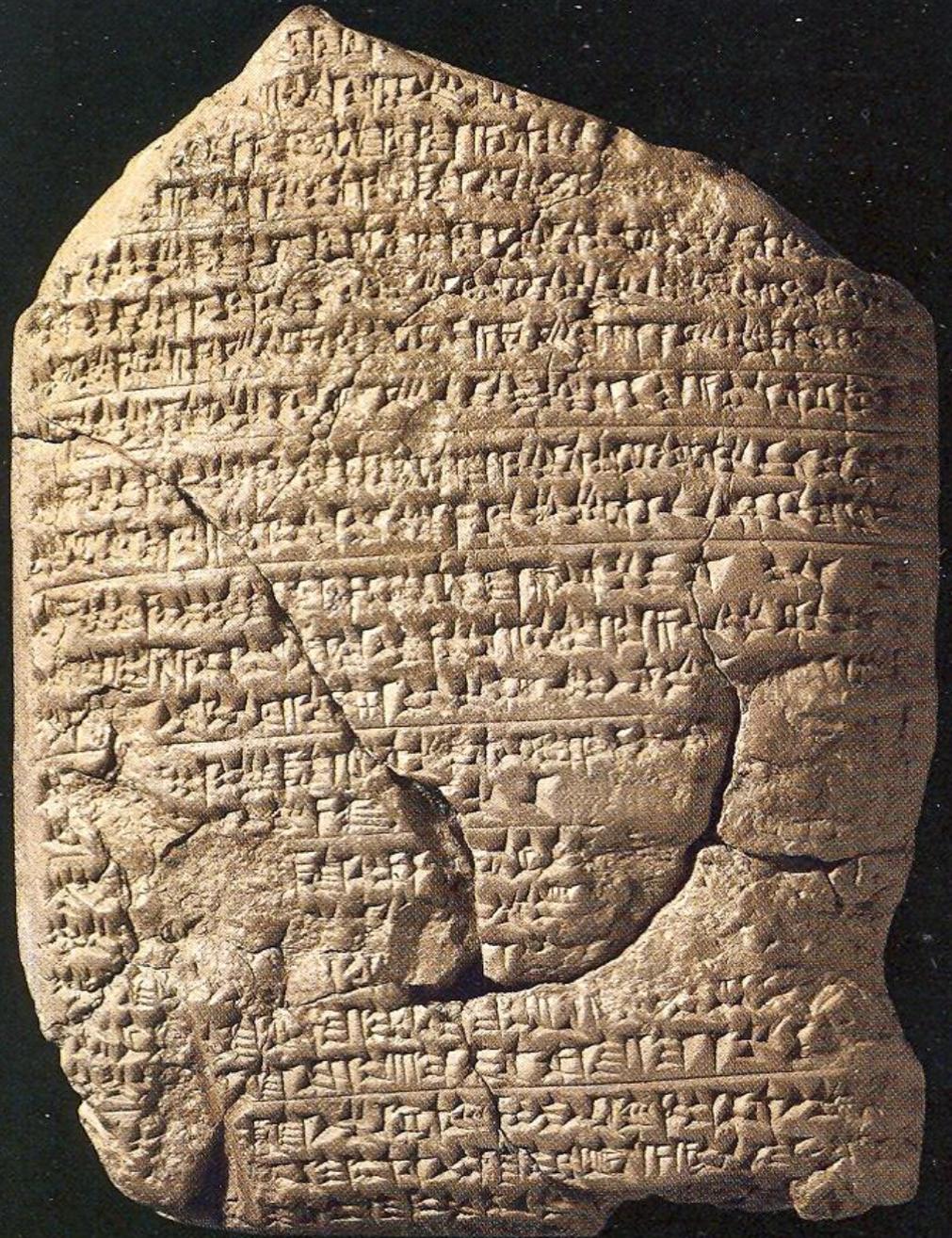




2a. The Judahite Deportations

- 605 Daniel and a small number of young elites (Dan 1:1-6). = Nebuchadnezzar's first year (Jer 25:1).
- 598/597 Jehoiachin, king of Judah, together with "the king's mother, the king's wives, his officials and the elite of the land" (2 Kgs 24:15) + 10,000 (2 Kgs 24:14) + 3,023 (Jer 52:28). Babylonian Chronicle is a source.
- 586 Fall of Jerusalem. Deportation of 832 persons (Jer 52:29); many others were summarily executed (2 Kgs 25:18-21).
- 582/581 Deportation of 745 Judahites (Jer 52:30). Perhaps a reprisal for the assassination of Gedaliah who had been appointed the governor of Babylonian administration of Judah after the fall Jerusalem.

Babylonian Chronicle



Bīt-Ṣurrāyya “House of the Tyrians”

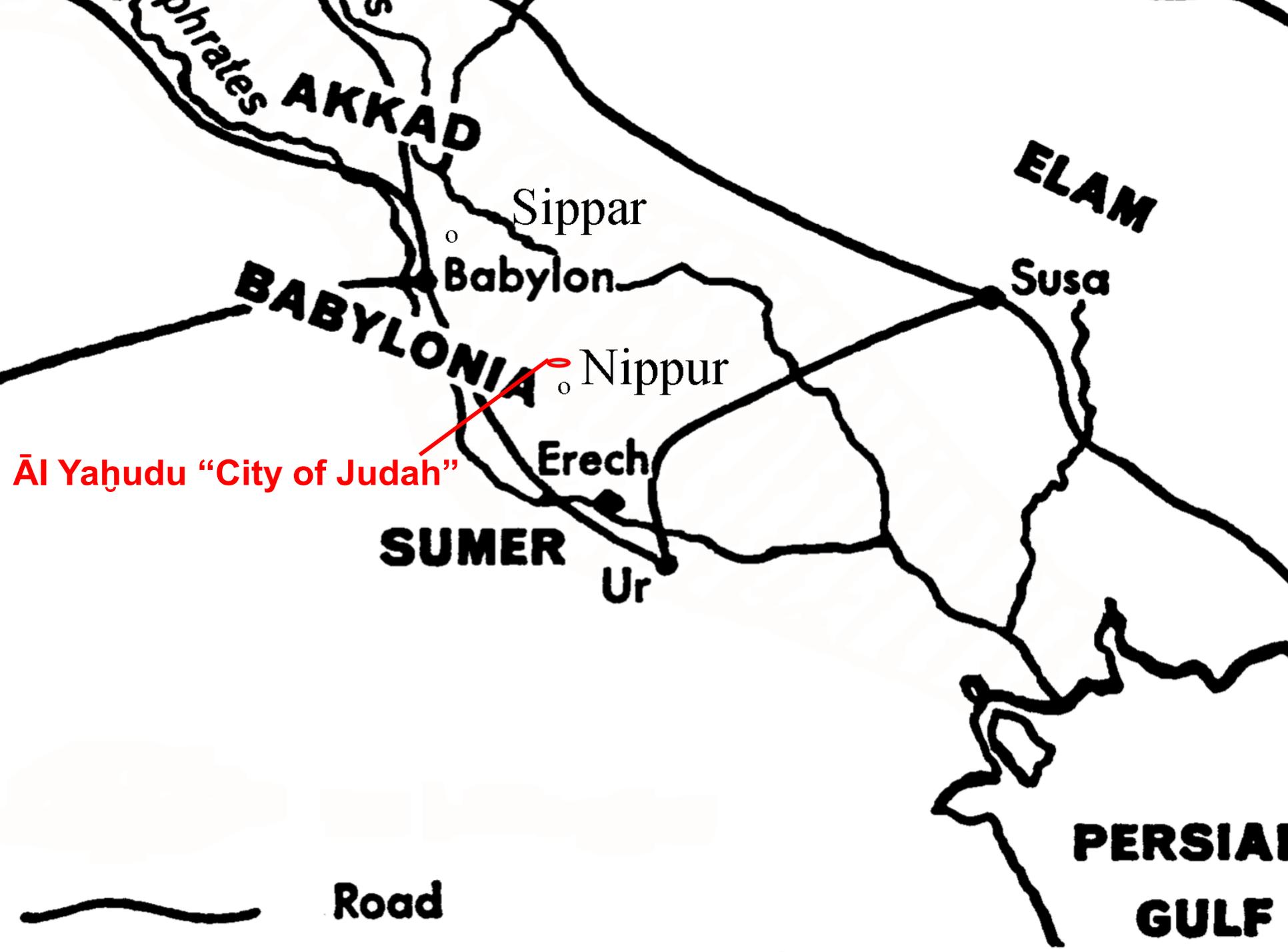
Sidon

Ashkelon

Bīt-Ḥamatāyya “House of the Hamathians”

Ālu ša Arbāyya “City of the Arabs”

Āl Yaḥudu “City of Judah”



Āl Yaḥudu "City of Judah"

Road

PERSIAN GULF

2b. The Identification of Judahite Persons in Neo-Babylonian Sources

First Component

Second Component

^(d)*ia*, *ia-'a/u*,

– X

ia-a-u-(u/ú), ^(d)*u-u*

X

– *-ia-a-ma*, *-ia-ma*,

Ci-am-ma, *Ca-('a)-ma*,

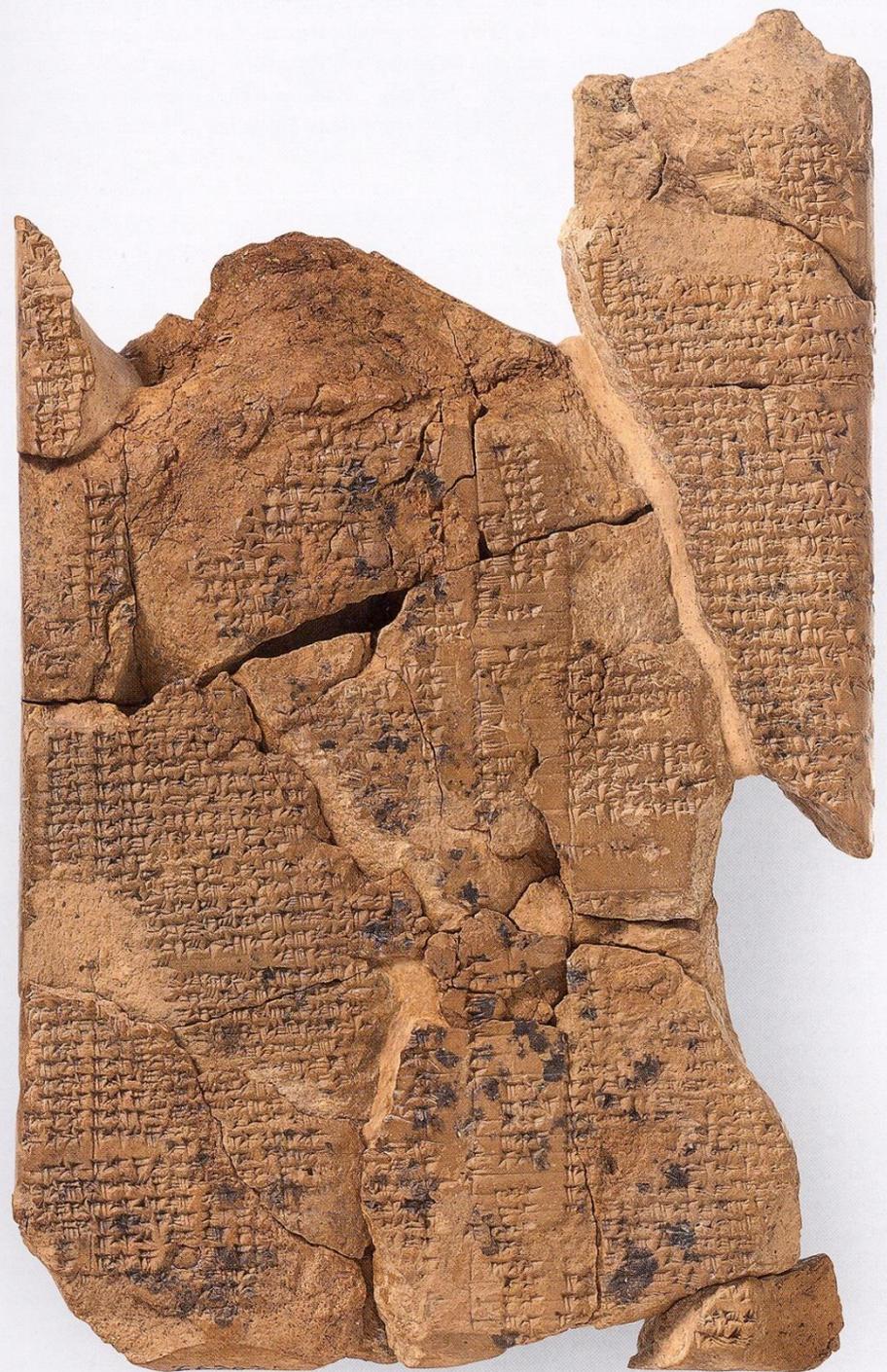
Ce-e-ma

C = a consonant

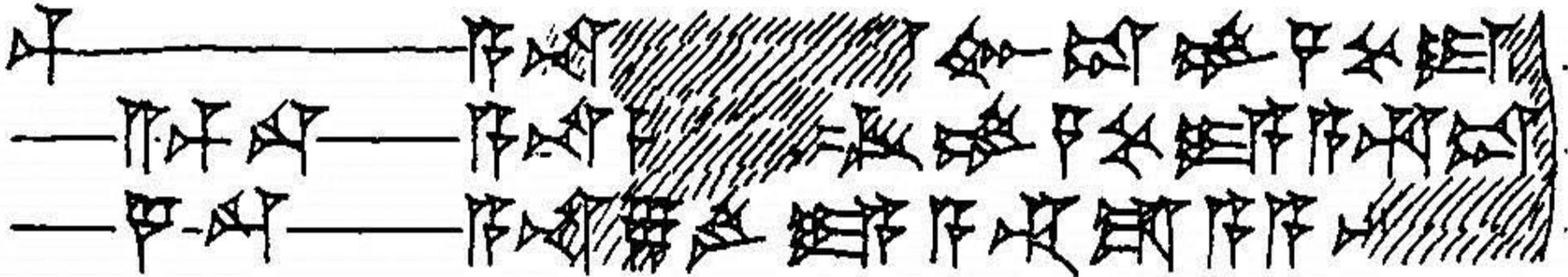
Aḥī-Yāma = Aḥî-Yahu = אַחִיָּהוּ

2c. Judahites in Neo-Babylonian Sources

Jehoiachin's Ration Text



Jehoiachin Ration Text from Babylon



(38) $\frac{1}{2}$ (PI?) *a-na* ^m*ia-^u*-DU(*kīnu*) LUGAL(*šar*) *šá* KUR(*māt*) *ia-[a-ḥu-du]*

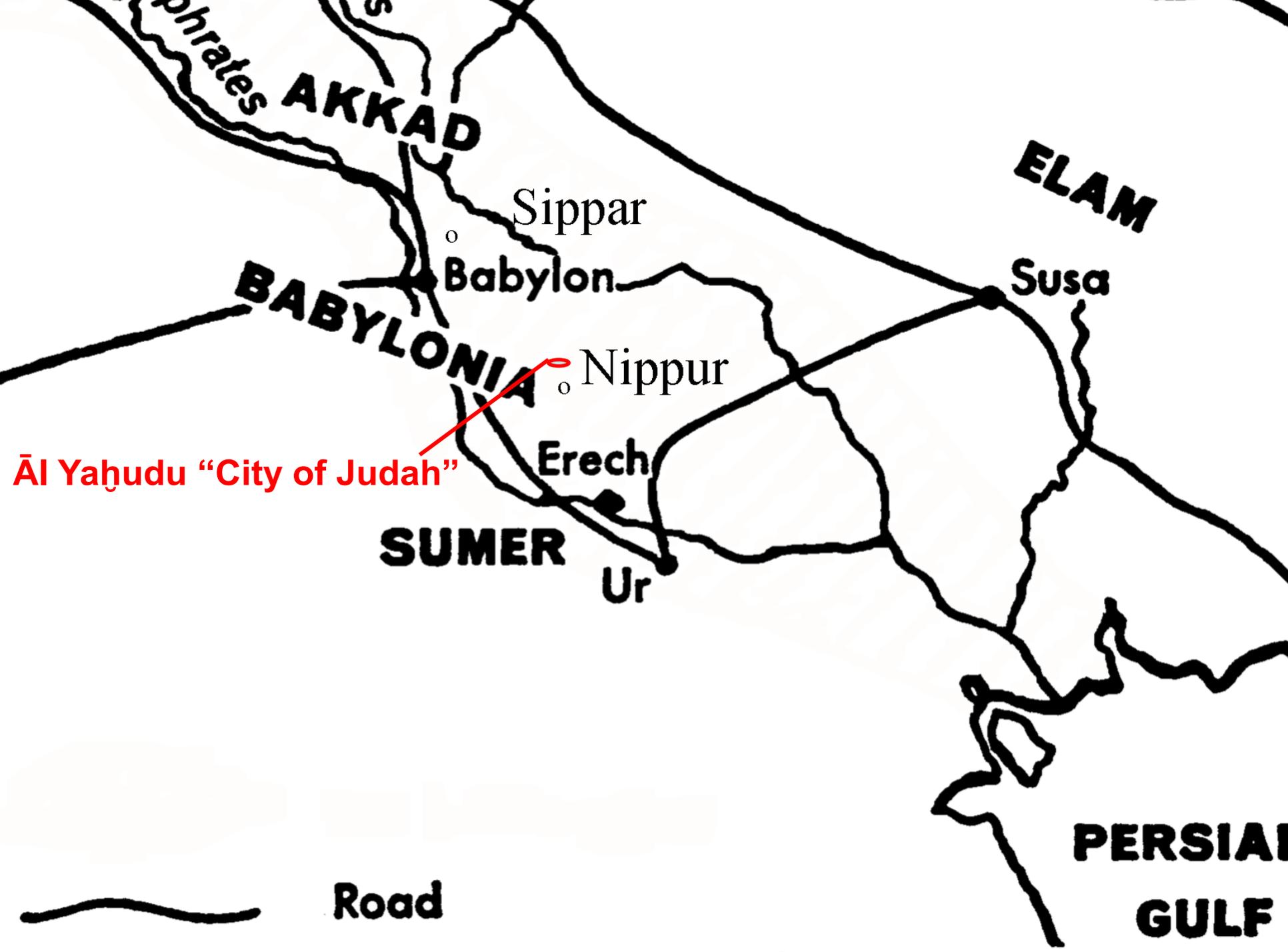
(39) $2\frac{1}{2}$ SILA₃(*qû*) *a-na* 2[+ 3 DUMU(*mārē*)].MEŠ LUGAL(*šarri*) *šá*
KUR(*māt*) *ia-a-ḥu-du* [...]

(40) 4 SILA₃(*qû*) *a-na* 8 LÚ(*amēl*) *ia-a-ḥu-da-a-a* $\frac{1}{2}$ [SILA₃^{àm}]

(38) 10 liters? (oil) for **Ya^u-kina**, king of the land of Judah (*Yaḥudu*).

(39) $2\frac{1}{2}$ liters (oil) for 5 sons of the king of Judah [...]

(40) 4 liters (oil) for 8 Judahite men; each $\frac{1}{2}$ liter (of wheat).



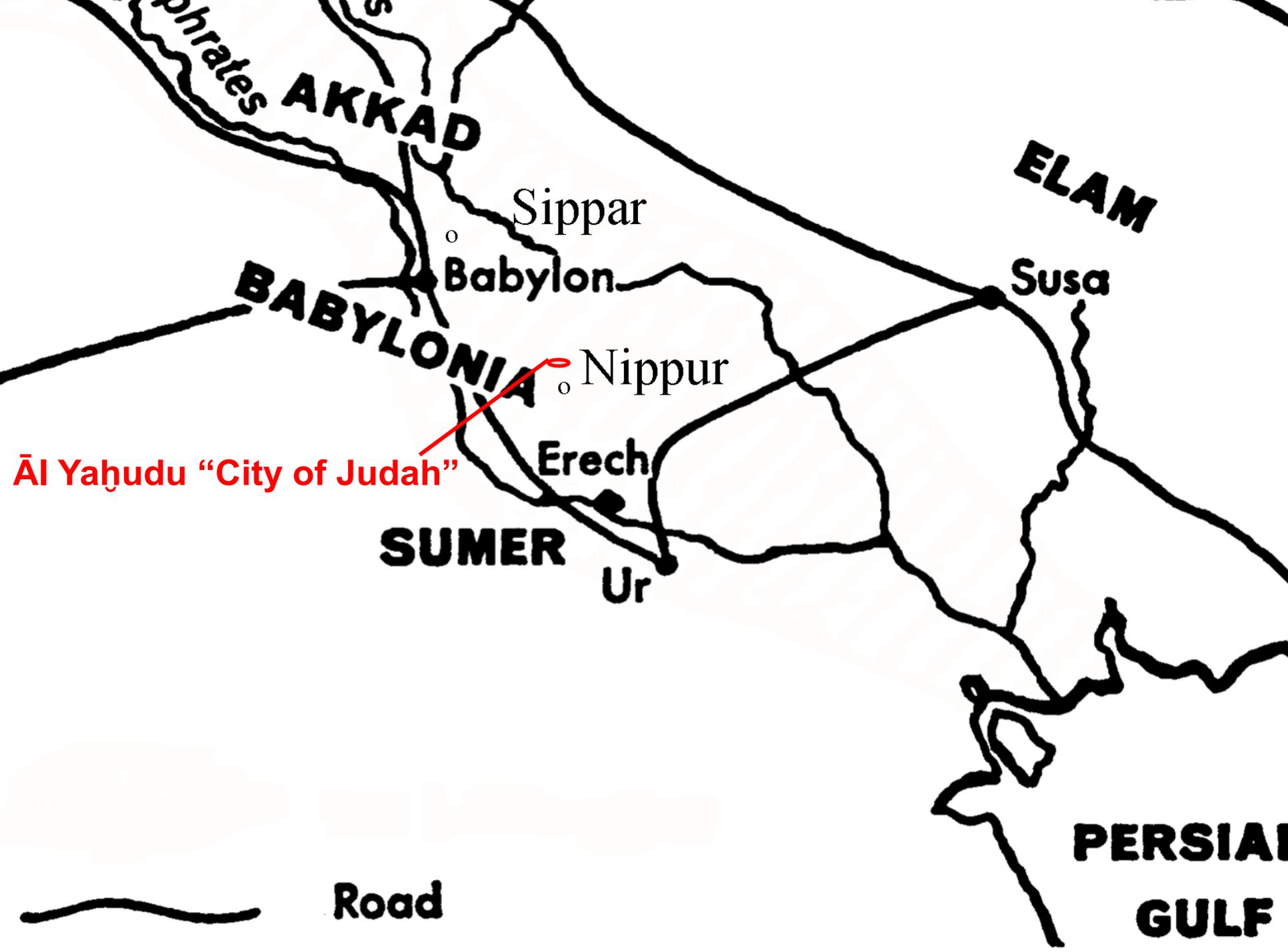
Āl Yaḥudu "City of Judah"

Road

PERSIAN
GULF

Murašu Business Firm (ca. 450)

Three generations of the family are attested in these documents. The family business was banking, in particular estate land management. The archive gives information on interaction and agreements with about 100 Jewish families. They leased plots of land owned by civil servants, high court officials and warriors. These Jewish families whose ancestors had been deported to Babylonia well over a century and a half earlier, held on to their distinctive Hebrew names, and at the same time, gave their children Babylonian names.

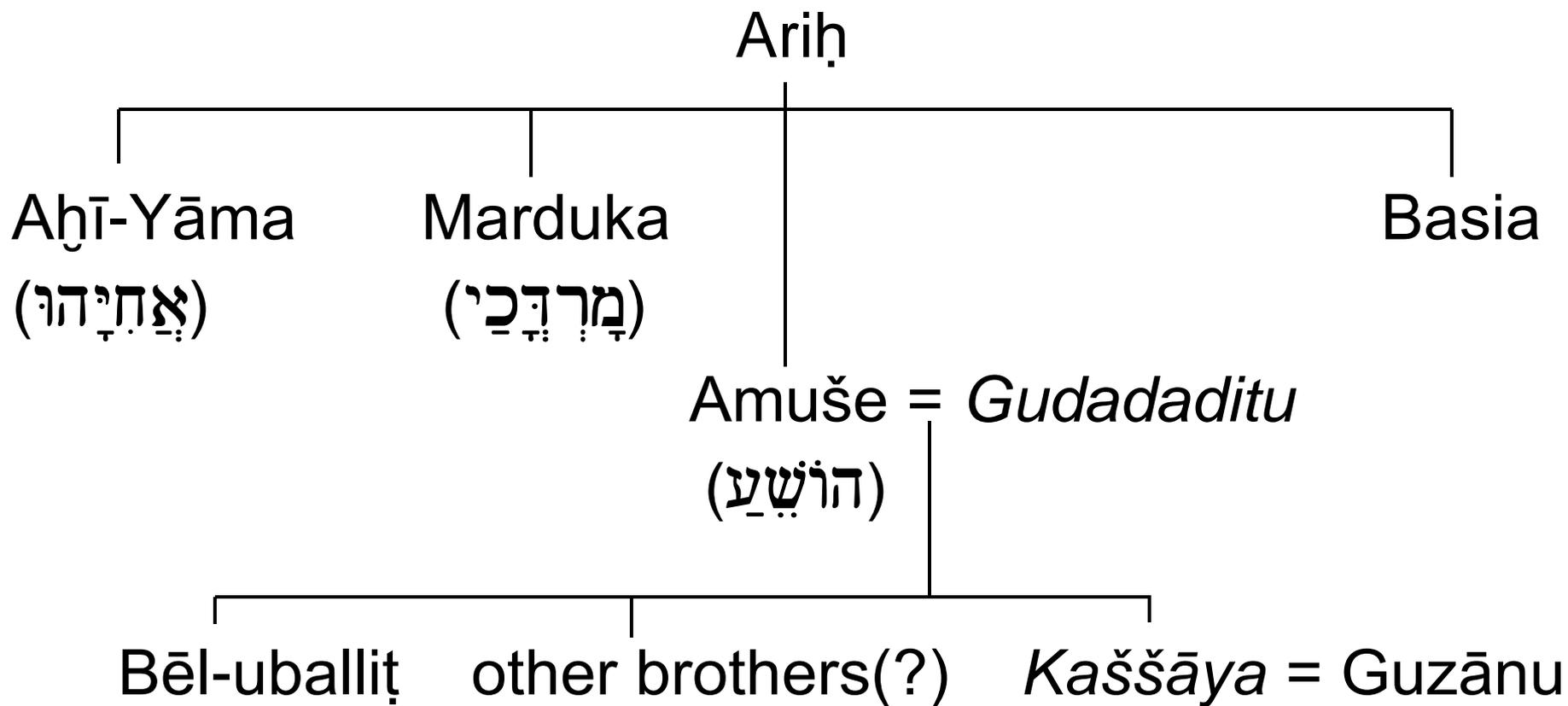


Āl Yaḥudu "City of Judah"

Road

PERSIAN GULF

A Sippar Family



Women in *italics*

New *āl Yaḥudu* Texts

Pearce, Laurie E. and Cornelia Wunsch

2015 *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*. Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 28. Bethesda: CDL.