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Neo-Assyrian and Syro-Palestinian Texts I

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I. Neo-Assyrian Texts I

A. *Adad-nirari II* (Melville)

At the turn of the second millennium BC Assyria, like so much of the Near East, suffered grievously from Aramean incursions and repeated attacks of other nomadic peoples. During this period, Assyrian territories shrank drastically and formidable enemies bordered the country on all sides. In the tenth century BC, Ashur-dan II set about restoring Assyria's sphere of influence; consequently historians attribute the start of the Neo-Assyrian period to the reign of this king. Ashur-dan's son, Adad-nirari II, who ruled Assyria for 21 years, successfully continued his father's efforts to reassert Assyria's control of the areas to the west and north. A vigorous campaigner, Adad-nirari also succeeded in extending Assyrian hegemony south toward Babylonia. Few inscriptions belonging to Adad-nirari have survived, but one nearly intact text (translated here) and two fragmentary copies found at Ashur, narrate the campaigns of his first 18 years (Grayson 1991: 142).

Our text begins with an invocation of the most important deities and continues with a section of self-praise, followed by a long, grammatically inconsistent summary of military achievements, a year-by-year campaign narrative, an account of hunting exploits, the restoration of the Gula temple at Ashur, and finally, blessings and curses, and the date of the text (893 BC). In general, the content and structure of the text are in keeping with the early tradition of Assyrian annals developed by Adad-nirari's predecessors, in which we find the fundamental portrait of the ideal Assyrian king – the virile military leader, mighty hunter, shepherd of his people, and pious devotee of the gods, who is concerned with public works and temple building. This ideal representation of the king persists (with some latitude for variation) in Assyrian royal inscriptions, and develops its most sophisticated form under

the Sargonid kings (721–612 BC). In his royal inscriptions, Adad-nirari established himself as a legitimate Assyrian king, who fulfilled the requirements of his job, not just adequately, but better than former kings. Hence he was careful to point out that he had been able to reconquer territory lost by Tiglath-pileser II and reimpose tribute on peoples who had withheld it since the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Although his self-praise seems extravagant, exaggerated, and hyperbolic, he essentially had to earn the right to use his epithets and was careful to substantiate his claim to them by detailed accounts of his exploits.

The main military narrative of the text gives a full account of Adad-nirari's campaigns from 901 to 894 BC, carefully dating each one by the year's eponym. Adad-nirari's military strategy was aimed primarily at the subjugation of the Habhu and the Nairi lands to the north, the Aramean tribes to the west in Hanigalbat (the Syrian Jezirah), and the extension of Assyrian influence south (Grayson 1982: 249). The king campaigned eight times against the Arameans in Hanigalbat and finally penetrated across the Balikh River into the territory of Bit-Adini, from which tribe he received the exotic present of two apes. Adad-nirari's tenacious pursuit of success against the Arameans eventually brought victory, and the Assyrians were able to make a triumphant and unopposed sweep through the region in 894 BC to display their might and collect their due. The campaigns to the Nairi lands and into Babylonia are not narrated in great detail in this text, perhaps because they were not quite as fruitful.

Aside from making territorial gains, Adad-nirari's army successfully executed at least one new siege tactic when they encircled the enemy fortifications with their own defensive works, although exactly what form these took is not at all clear and, consequently, we cannot be sure that modern military terms such as "bulwark" or "redoubt" accurately describe the Assyrian innovation. In any case, the king's new tactic seems to have been a success. Adad-nirari was also adept at military logistics, for he designated a series of supply depots, which enabled him to move his army swiftly through the new territory without need of constant foraging for supplies (Grayson 1991: 142). Here we see not only the basis for the later Assyrian provincial system, but one of the primary reasons for Assyrian military success – the ability to field an army for long periods and supply it with adequate food and gear. Adad-nirari was also acutely aware of the strategic importance of certain areas and took care to promote an Assyrian presence in them. For example, he rebuilt the ancient city Apku, which lay to the north of Assyria, and "built palaces in the districts of my land," presumably as administrative centers and supply depots.

In addition to his obvious interest in Assyrian military achievements, Adad-nirari, like most other Assyrian kings, expressed a fascination for exotic fauna. Success in the hunt was one of the requirements of Assyrian kingship and Adad-nirari took care to play his part to the hilt. He not only killed a wide range and vast number of animals, but he collected live specimens and took them to Ashur, perhaps for display in one of the world's first zoos. Lastly, Adad-nirari, as the dutiful custodian of Assyria's temples and public

works, restored the Gula temple and the quay wall at Ashur (the latter is described in another text). Adad-nirari II's rule helped lay the foundation of the Neo-Assyrian empire and brought the country closer to realizing its imperial goals.

118. Text

[The gods Ashur . . . Enlil . . . Sin] lord of radiance, [Shamash, judge of] heaven and the underworld, ruler of everything, Marduk, sage of the gods, lord of omens, Ninurta [warrior of] the Igigu- and Amunaku-gods, Nergal, perfect king of battle, Nusku, the one who carries the pure scepter, deliberate god, Ninlil, wife of Enlil, mother of the great gods, Ishtar, pre-eminent in heaven and the underworld, who is perfect in the rites of combat:¹

The great gods, who finalize decisions, who decree (fate), they righteously created me, Adad-nirari, reverent prince, [. . .]. They changed my physique to lordly physique; they properly made my outward appearance perfect and filled my lordly body with wisdom. After the great gods decreed (my fate) and filled my hand with the scepter which constantly tends the people, raised me above those crowned kings, crowned me with royal radiance, they made my illustrious name greater than (those of) all lords, they called me the significant name Adad-nirari, king of Assyria. Strong king, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters, sun of all the people am I. Son of Ashur-dan, appointee of Enlil, viceroy of Ashur, who conquered all his enemies, son of Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, pure progeny of Ashur-resha-ishi, aggressive king, who tramples evildoers. At that time, at the command of the great gods, my kingship and lordship were revealed; they called me to plunder the property of all the lands. I am king, I am lord, I am powerful, I am important, I am splendid, I am strong, I am all-powerful, I am exceedingly radiant, I am a hero, I am a warrior, I am a potent lion, I am first, I am supreme, I am very fierce.

Adad-nirari, strong king, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters, the one who conquers his enemies, I, the king, powerful in battle, flattener of cities, the one who burns the mountains of the lands, I, manly hero, the one who encircles his opponents, inflamed against the villainous and evil, like the god Girru I burn, I destroy like the flood [. . .], I have no subduer, I am aggressive like [. . .], I smite the wicked like a furious dagger, I blow like the assault of winds, I am ferocious like a tempest, like a [. . .] of skin, I tear out (my enemies), I envelop like a battle net, I encase like a bird-snare. At the mention of my powerful name, the princes of the four quarters bend like reeds in a storm; at the start of my campaign their weapons melt as if in a kiln; heroic man who marched with the aid of Ashur his lord from the opposite bank of the lower Zab, the district of the lands of Lullumu, Habhu, Zamua to the passes of the land of Namru, and subjugated the wide land of Qumanu, to the lands of Mehru, Salua and Uratri; (who) ruled over the entire district of Katmuhu and returned it to the border of his land; conqueror of the entire district of Karduniash; who accomplished the defeat of Shamash-mudammig, king of Karduniash from Mt. Ialman to the river Turan, (the area) from the city Lahiru to Ugar-sallu was included in the boundaries of Assyria; I conquered the entire district of the city of Der; I returned the cities Arrapha, Lubdu, the forts of the land of Karduniash (Babylonia), to the territory of Assyria, and marched a fourth time to the Nairi lands and conquered the interior of Habhu, the cities Nahur and Ashmaku; and (who) constantly crossed the great mountains; (who) conquered the cities of the land of Natbu and verily I (who) overwhelmed Alzi in its

entirety like ruin hills of the flood; I (who) seized hostages from them and imposed tribute and tax on them; I (who) accomplished the defeat of the ground troops of the land of Ahlamu, land of the Arameans; I (who) received tribute of the Suhur; (who) brought into the borders of his land the cities Idu and Zaqu, forts of Assyria (and) the cities Arinu, Turhu, Zaduru conquests which Shubria had torn away from Assyria; the old city Apku which kings who went before me built, had become run-down and turned into ruin heaps. I rebuilt that city anew and I constructed it from its foundation to its parapet. I made (it) perfect, I made (it) appropriately splendid (and) I made (it) better than before. Inside, I built my supreme lordly palace.

In the eponymy of Dur-mati-Ashur I marched to the wide land of Hanigalbat. Nur-Adad, the Temannite, mustered his troops (and) we drew up our battle lines at the city Pauza at the foot of Mt. Kashiari; we fought with each other. I accomplished his defeat from the city Pauza to the city Nasibina. I destroyed his many chariots.

In the eponymy of Ili-emuqaia, I marched against Hanigalbat for the second time. I fought with him at Nasipina. I dyed the ground red with the blood of his warriors. I entered the city Iaredu. I harvested the crops of his land; I considered the city Saraku as my own and inside (it) I laid up the barley and grain.

In the eponymy of Ninualia I marched against Hanigalbat for the third time. I seized the city Huzirina. I encircled the wall all around. The cities at the foot of Mt. Kashiari which Mamli the Temannite, had seized, submitted to me. His palaces I considered as my own. At that time, I received a large female ape and a small female monkey, a consignment from the land of Bit-Adini, which is set on the banks of the Euphrates River.

In the eponymy of Likberu, I marched against Hanigalbat for the fourth time. At that time Muquru the Temannite, broke the oath of the great gods and was hostile to me in order to do combat. He put trust in his fortified city, his powerful bow and his vast army and the Arameans and he revolted against me. I mustered my chariots and my troops and marched to the city Gidara, which the Arameans call Raqammatu, (and) which the Arameans took away by force from Tiglath-pileser, son of Ashur-resha-ishi, king of Assyria, a prince who came before me. In the wisdom of my heart, I laid down a bulwark all around it, which (tactic) did not exist among the kings, my fathers. He dug a moat all around his city (but) they became afraid in the presence of my furious weapons, my fierce battle and my powerful forces, and I entered with force and strength into the city Raqammatu. That one I lead out from inside his palace. I reviewed his property, valuable stones of the mountains, chariots, horses, his wives, his sons, his daughters, his heavy plunder. That one, together with his brother, in bronze fetters I fastened them (and) I brought to my city Ashur. I have constantly established the power and strength of Ashur, my lord, over it, the land of Hanigalbat.

In the eponymy of Adad-aha-iddina, governor of Ashur, I marched to Hanigalbat a fifth time. I received the tribute of the lands.

In the eponymy of Adad-dan with the fury of my strong weapons, I marched to Hanigalbat a sixth time. I enclosed Nur-Adad, the Temannite, in Nasibina; I laid down seven bulwarks all around it. I made Ashur-dini-amur, the Turtan (general), take position inside it. He (Nur-Adad) dug a moat, which did not exist before, in firm bedrock. He made it nine cubits wide (and) caused it to reach ground water. The wall was adjacent to the moat. I made my warriors surround his moat like a flash of fire and they (the enemy soldiers) howled about it like little children. [. . .] traps for him as strong as the devastating flood. I deprived him of grain. At the command of Ashur my great lord, I plundered from his city his [. . .], his gold, his possessions, valuable

mountain stones, his gods, chariot teams, [. . .], a scepter, battle equipment, gold thrones, shiny gold dishes, inlaid [. . .], weapons, arrows, a gold tent at the value appropriate for his kingship, [. . .] whose weight I did not grasp, and vast property of his palace. [. . .] . . . sat on his lordly throne. Inside his sanctuary, he slaughtered pure sacrifices, offered oxen, made a libation of ritual beer (and) he finished with pure sweet mountain wine. He established his offerings and glorified himself with grand praise. "The kings of all the lands are in dire straits! The mountains quake!" The king speaks [. . .] to his nobles, "The man of Ashur praise of his heroism is vaunted; his deeds are the god Dagan's, the king who makes great his praise!" I brought Nur-Adad with his vast army into my presence as captives. I presented them – cities with people – (to) Assyria and I counted them (among the Assyrians).

In that same eponymy on my campaign (in) which I returned Nur-Adad and his vast army to my presence as captives, I brought him to my land (and) made him enter Nineveh. I levied the chariots and troops (and) marched narrow roads (and) mountain tracks which were not fit for the passage of my chariots and troops, near to which none of the kings, my fathers, had advanced, and (even) the flying birds of the air did not approach. I went to the city Sikkur, the city Sappanu, which since the time of Tukulti-Ninurta, king of Assyria, son of Shalmaneser, likewise king of Assyria, a prince who went before me, had held back tax and tribute from Ashur, my lord; I encircled the cities Sikkur and Sappanu and I fought with them. I massacred them. I brought their plunder, their possessions, property, cattle and flocks of sheep to my city Assur. I conquered the cities of the province in the environs of the cities Sikkur and Sappanu. Those remaining who had fled in the face of my strong weapons, came down and seized my feet (i.e., formally submitted). I received from them tribute and set for them increased tribute and taxes.

In the fifteenth day of Siwan, the eponymy of Ina-iliia-allak, I went to help the city Kummum. I made sacrifices before the god Adad of the city Kummum, my lord. I burned with fire the cities of the land Habhu, enemies of the city Kummum. I gathered the harvest of his land. I set for them increased tribute and taxes.

In the month Nisan, the eponymy of Shamash-abuia, I went to help the city Kummum a second time. The cities Satkurru, Isaddu, Kunnu, Tabsia, cities of the land of Habhu, in the vicinity of Kummum, withheld (their tribute of) my chariot teams. Those cities I defeated, burned with fire (and) demolished. At the command of Ashur, great lord, my lord, and Ishtar, lady of battle and war, the one who goes before my vast army, in the month Siwan, in the same eponymy, I marched a fifth time to Hanigalbat. I received the tribute of Hanigalbat, above and below. I ruled the broad land Hanigalbat to the borders of its totality. I brought it within the limit of my land. I assigned to them one commander. I crossed the Habur River and entered the city Guzana which Adi-Salamu, a member of (the tribe) Bit-Bahiani held. I entered the city Sikkanu, which is located at the source of the Habur River. By the supreme force of Shamash, lord of my diadem, who loves my priesthood, I received from him many chariots, chariot teams, silver, gold, the property of his palace, I imposed tribute on him. On my (same) campaign I took (the road) along the banks of the Habur River. I stayed overnight in the city Amabanu. I departed from the city Amabanu (and) stayed overnight in the city Tabitu. I departed from Tabitu and entered the city Shadikannu. I received tribute, payment, chariots, (and) gold. I departed from the city Shadikannu. I stayed overnight in the city Kisiru. I departed from the city Kisiru. I entered the city Qatnu. I installed Amil-Adad, a man of Qatnu, as my vassal. I received from him the property of his palace, chariots, horses, wagons and cattle. I imposed tribute on him.

From Qatnu I departed (and) stayed the night in the land Buṣu, set on the banks of the Habur River. I departed the mountains and entered Dur-aduklimmu. I considered the city Dur-aduklimmu as my own. I departed from Dur-aduklimmu and went to the land of Laqu, to the city Zurih (which) Bartara, the Halupian, held. I received from him tribute and tax. I proceeded to the city of the man of Haran (and) received tribute and tax. I went to the city Siqu, which is set on that bank of the Euphrates, which Mudadda the Laqian held. I received tribute, tax, property of his palace, cattle, agaludonkeys, tribute, and tax of the land Laqu to its entire limit above and below. I received tribute of the city Hindanu. I brought (it) to my city Ashur. I built palaces in the districts of my land. I readied plows in the districts of my land (and) stored up more grain than ever before. I hitched teams of horses for the forces of my land more than ever before.

Ninurta (and) Nergal, who love my priesthood, gave me the beasts of the steppe and ordered me to hunt. I killed 360 lions from my open chariot with the combat of my manhood (or) on my nimble feet with a javelin; 240 bulls I killed; I took alive 9 strong, wild, potent bulls, those with horns. I killed 6 elephants in a fight. I set a trap for 4 elephants and took (them) alive. I took 5 (more) in a snare. I collected herds of lions, wild bulls, elephants, stags, wild goats, onagers, roe deer, and ostrich inside (my) city.

When the earlier temple of Gula, my lady, which formerly Tukulti-Ninurta, my ancestor, viceroy of Ashur made, that temple became run-down, I dismantled its ruins and I reached its foundation platform. That temple I greatly extended more than previously and I made (it) large. From its foundation to its parapet I completed it and set up my stele. May a future prince restore its ruins; may he return my inscribed name to its place. Ashur and Gula will hear his prayers. The one who erases my inscription and my name, may Ashur and Gula overthrow his kingship (and) make his name and his seed disappear from the land.

In the month of Ab, seventeenth day, eponymy of Ili-napishti-uṣur, eunuch of Adad-nirari, king of Assyria.

B. Ashurnasirpal II (Strawn)

Ashurnasirpal II (Akkadian: Aššur-našir-apli, "the god Ashur guards the son") ruled Assyria 883–859 BCE as the son and successor of Tukulti-Ninurta II. Ashurnasirpal left more numerous and more detailed inscriptions than any of his predecessors (Grayson 1976: 113) and this fact cannot be explained simply as the chance circumstances of discovery or preservation. On the contrary, it is additional testimony to this king's energy and industriousness (Kuhrt 1995: 483) and well suits both the length and importance of his reign (Grayson 1976: 114).² Ashurnasirpal's annals recount 14 major campaigns prior to 866, including several to the northern (Anatolia) and eastern (the Zagros) parts of the empire. Subsequently, he went west where he says he washed his weapons in the Mediterranean Sea.³

The extensive military exploits of Ashurnasirpal II are what produced the formidable Neo-Assyrian empire of the ninth and early eighth centuries, and he bequeathed both this empire and his military legacy to his son, Shalmaneser III (see that entry). Ashurnasirpal's campaigns, and the inscriptions that bear

witness to them, testify to the ruthless manner in which he dealt with acts of disloyalty. His harsh policy included public acts of cruelty and mass executions as well as the razing of whole cities. The annals are replete with such actions, mentioning on numerous occasions how he made piles of decapitated heads; impaled, skinned, or burnt people alive; or dyed the landscape red with the blood of his enemies. Given this iron fist – what some have called “the calculated frightfulness of Ashurnasirpal” (see Millard 2000: 38) – most countries chose to placate the king, knowing that such a move was to their own benefit and self-preservation.⁴ The success of Ashurnasirpal's tactics was not lost on those who ruled after him, and they continued in his imperialistic footsteps.

The text that is translated here is selected from what is typically thought to be the definitive edition of Ashurnasirpal's annals.⁵ This text comprises one of the most extensive and important Assyrian royal inscriptions ever discovered. It was inscribed on large stone reliefs that lined the temple of Ninurta at Calah (Nimrud). It recounts many of the king's campaigns from his accession through the eighteenth year of his reign in great and often gory detail (see above).

In addition to his military prowess, Ashurnasirpal was an energetic builder. The capstone of his building career was the work done at Calah, which transformed that site into a thriving metropolis and his capital city (Grayson 1991: 189). Not only did the king forcibly settle people there, but he also dug a canal; planted gardens; constructed a large palace (the “Northwest Palace,” more than 656 feet × 394 feet [200 × 120 meters]); erected the temples of Adad and Šala, Šarrat-niphi, Ea and Damkina, Gula, Kidmuru, Nabû, Enlil and Ninurta, the Sibitti, and Sin; and built a wall around the city (Grayson 1991: 189–90). The so-called “Banquet Stele” describes the king's inauguration of sorts and offers a detailed description of the building of Calah. In the text the king claims to have entertained 69,574 people from around the empire and from Calah itself for 10 straight days (see *ANET*, 558–60; Kuhrt 1995: 2: 486–7).

In addition to the massive efforts at Calah, which must have extended over most of his reign, Ashurnasirpal also undertook construction projects at Nineveh, Ashur, Imgur-Enlil (modern-day Balawat), and Apqu (Tell Abu Marya) (see Grayson 1991: 190). Leick is certainly correct, then, when she states that Ashurnasirpal “presents a high point of the might of Assyria, an indefatigable campaigner, but also resourceful diplomat, able to inspire loyalty as well as fear, and not least a cultivated patron of arts and letters” (1999: 31).

119. Calah Annals Text⁶

Invocation (i: 1–9a)

To divine Ninurta:⁷ the strong (one), the mighty (one), the exalted (one), first among the gods, splendid-perfect warrior, whose attack in battle is unrivaled, first son,

gatherer of battle, child of divine Nudimmud,⁸ warrior of the Igigi-gods,⁹ capable (one), prince of the gods, offspring of Ekur,¹⁰ holder of the bond of heaven and earth, opener of springs, the one who walks the wide world, god without whom no decision in heaven or earth is made, swift (one), ferocious (one), whose oral command is not changeable, first in the (four) quarters (of the world), giver of scepter (rule) and decision (law) to each and every city, furious canal-inspector, whose spoken utterance cannot be altered, widely capable, sage of the gods, noble (one), divine Utulu,¹¹ lord of lords, whose hands are entrusted with the perimeter of heaven and earth, king of combat, powerful (one) who boasts in battles, triumphant (one), perfect (one), lord of springs and seas, angry (one), merciless (one), whose attack is a flood, who flattens enemy lands, who ruins the evildoer, splendid god who does not change even once, light of heaven and earth, enlightener of the midst of the apsû,¹² destroyer of evil, who subjects the incontinent, annihilator of enemies, whose command no god in the divine assembly can change, giver of life, merciful god, whose prayer is good,¹³ who inhabits Calah, great lord, my lord (listen):

Royal epithets (i: 9b–17a)¹⁴

(I am) Ashurnasirpal (II), strong king, king of the world, king without rival, king of all of the four quarters (of the world), divine sun¹⁵ of all the people, favorite of divine Enlil and divine Ninurta, beloved of divine Anu and divine Dagan, divine weapon of the great gods, reverent (one), beloved of your heart,¹⁶ the prince, darling of divine Enlil, whose priesthood is pleasing to your great divinity and whose reign you established,¹⁷ heroic (young) man who moves about with the help of (the god) Ashur, his lord, and who has no rival among the princes of the four quarters (of the world), wonderful shepherd, who is fearless (in) combat, high flood-wave that has no opponent, king who subjects those not submissive to him, who rules each and every person, strong male, the one who walks upon the necks of his foes, who tramples all enemies, who scatters the band of the arrogant, who moves about with the help of the great gods, his lords, and whose hand has conquered all lands; who rules the entirety of the highlands¹⁸ having received their tribute, seizer of hostages, establisher of victory¹⁹ over all lands.²⁰

Expedition to Carchemish and Lebanon (iii: 56–92a)

On the eighth of (the month of) Iyyar, I set out from Calah. After I crossed the Tigris river, I journeyed to the city of Carchemish which (is in) the land of Hatti. I drew near to Bīt-Baḫiāni. I received the tribute of the king of Baḫiāni:²¹ harnessed chariots, horses, silver (items), gold (items), tin (items), bronze (items), (and) bronze vessels. I took the chariots, cavalry, (and) infantry-men of the king of Baḫiāni with me.²²

I set out from Bīt-Baḫiāni. I drew near to the land of Azallu. (After which time), I received the tribute of Adad-ime, the (A)zalluīte: harnessed chariots, horses, silver (items), gold (items), tin (items), bronze, bronze vessels, oxen, sheep, (and) much wine. I took the chariots, cavalry, (and) infantry-men with me.

I set out from the land of Azallu. I drew near to Bīt-Adini. The tribute of Aḫunu, the king of Adini²³ (was as follows): silver (items), gold (items), tin (items), bronze, bronze vessels, ivory dishes, ivory couches, ivory chests, ivory thrones plated (with) silver (and) gold, gold bracelets, gold rings with inlays, gold necklaces, a gold dagger,

oxen, sheep, (and) much wine. I received his tribute. I took the chariots, cavalry, (and) infantry-men of Aḫunu with me.

At that time, I received the tribute of Ḥabinu of the city Tīl-abni: four minas of silver (and) 400 sheep. I imposed upon him 10 minas of silver as his annual tribute.

I set out from the land Bīt-Adini. In truth, I crossed the Euphrates river at its flood in rafts of (inflated) goatskins. I drew near to the land of Carchemish. I received the tribute of Sangara, king of the land of Hatti, (objects) indicative of his royalty: 20 talents²⁴ of silver, a gold ring, a gold bracelet, gold daggers, 100 talents of bronze, 250 talents of iron, bronze cauldrons, bronze buckets, bronze washbasins,²⁵ a bronze oven, many utensils from his palace, the weight of which could not be ascertained, boxwood beds, boxwood thrones, boxwood dishes plated (with) ivory, 200 adolescent girls, multicolored linen garments, purple wool, red-purple wool, gišnugallu-alabaster, ivory of elephants (i.e., tusks), a polished (gold) chariot, (and) a gold couch with inlays. I took the chariots, cavalry, (and) infantry-men of the city of Carchemish with me. The kings of all the lands came down to me. They submitted to me. I took hostages from them (who) were kept before me (as) they marched to Mt. Lebanon (Lab-na-na).

I set out from the land of Carchemish. I journeyed in between Mt. Munzigānu (and) Mt. Ḥamurga. I passed Mount Aḫānu on my left. I drew near to the city of Ḥazazu of (king) Lubarna, the Patinu(ite). I then received gold (items) (and) linen garments. I then passed through (and) crossed the Aprē river. I pitched camp (and) spent the night (there).

I set out from the Aprē river.²⁶ I drew near to the city of Kunulua, the royal city of Lubarna, the Patinu(ite). He was terrified at the sight of my raging weapons (and) my fierce battle (abilities) and (so) he submitted to me in order to save his life. I received as his tribute (the following): 20 talents of silver, one talent of gold, 100 talents of tin, 100 talents of iron, 1,000 oxen, 10,000 sheep, 1,000 multicolored linen garments, boxwood couches with plated inlays, boxwood beds, beds with plated inlays, many dishes of ivory (and) boxwood, many utensils from his palace, the weight of which could not be ascertained, 10 female singers, his niece with her rich dowry, a large female monkey, (and) large birds. As for (the king) him(self), I showed him mercy. I took the chariots, cavalry, (and) infantry-men of the Patinu(ite)²⁷ with me. I (also) took hostages from him.

At that time, I received the tribute of Gāsu of the land of laḫānu: silver, gold, tin [. . .], oxen, sheep, (and) multicolored linen garments.

I set out from the city of Kunulua, the royal city of Lubarna, the Patinu(ite). I then crossed the [Oron]tes river. I pitched camp (and) spent the night by the Orontes river.

I set out from the Orontes river. I journeyed in between Mt. Iaraqu (and) Mt. laḫturu. I then traversed Mt. [. . .]ku. I pitched camp by the Sangurru river.

I set out from the Sangurru river. I journeyed in between Mt. Saratinu (and) Mt. Qalpānu. I pitched camp by [the . . .]bamesh [river].²⁸ I entered into the city of Aribua, the fortified city of Lubarna, the Patinu(ite). I seized the city for myself. I harvested the barley and straw of the land of Luḫutu; I stored (it) inside. I held a celebration in his palace. I settled people from Assyria in the midst (of the city). While I was in the city of Aribua, I conquered the cities of the land of Luḫutu. I killed many of them (i.e., the inhabitants). I demolished; I destroyed; I burnt with fire. I captured soldiers alive by hand. I impaled (them) on stakes in front of their cities.

At that time, in truth: I journeyed to the slopes of Mt. Lebanon, went up to the great sea of the land of Amurru,²⁹ washed my weapons in the great sea, (and) performed sacrifices to the gods. I received the tribute of the kings of the seacoast – namely, the

lands of the peoples of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Maḫallatu, Maizu, Kaizu, Amurru, and the city Arvad which is (an island) in the middle of the sea: silver (items), gold (items), tin (items), bronze (items), a bronze vessel, multicolored linen garments, a large female monkey, a small female monkey, ebony (items), boxwood (items), (and) ivory of naḫiru sea creatures.³⁰ They submitted to me. (Then), in truth: I went up to Mt. Amanus; cut down beams of cedar, cyprus, dapraṇu-juniper, (and) burāšu-juniper; (and) performed sacrifices to my gods. I made a memorial to my valor. I erected (it) thereon. I carried cedar beams from Mt. Amanus. I brought (them) to Ešarra, to my temple – the shrine,³¹ a joyful temple – to the temple of the divine Sin and Shamash,³² the holy gods. I went to the land of the meḫru-trees. I conquered the entirety of the land of the meḫru-trees. I cut down beams of meḫru-trees. I brought (them) to the city of Nineveh. I gave (them) to Ishtar, lady³³ of Nineveh, my lady.³⁴

C. Shalmaneser III (Strawn)

Shalmaneser III (Akkadian: *Šulmānu-ašarēdu*, “the god Shulman is pre-eminent”) was the son and successor of Ashurnasirpal II; he ruled Assyria from 858 to 824 BCE. No king left more royal inscriptions and annals than Shalmaneser III (Leick 1999: 146). Moreover, the practice of summarizing military campaigns in order of the king’s regnal year was apparently initiated by this important Assyrian king.

Shalmaneser inherited the large and powerful kingdom established by his father, but he immediately faced growing unrest across the empire.³⁵ The result was the need to campaign almost constantly with a grand total of 34 campaigns recorded for his reign.³⁶ A number of these trips were to the west,³⁷ where he first faced a north Syrian coalition under the leadership of Bit-Adini. After several attempts, the Assyrian king defeated this group and annexed Bit-Adini to his empire. Slightly later, Shalmaneser faced another coalition in the west, this one under the leadership of Hadadezer (Adad-idri) of Damascus, Irḫulēni of Hamath, and Ahab of Israel (*a-ḫa-ab-bu KUR sir-ʿi-la-a-a*).³⁸ The forces clashed at Qarqar in Shalmaneser’s sixth regnal year (853) and the fullest account of the battle is found in the Kurkh Monolith (see COS 2.113A: 261–4; ANET, 278–9; Luckenbill 1989: 1: 211–24). The Assyrian king claimed a victory, saying he killed 25,000 people, but the fact that he pushes no further west at this time and that he had to face the same group again three more times in subsequent years indicates that the situation was not as decisive as the king would have it seem. This north Syrian coalition eventually broke, however, partly due to changes in leadership in its partner states (Kuhrt 1995: 2: 488), and, in 841, Shalmaneser was able to triumph over them, receiving tribute from its constituent groups. The tribute reception is described and depicted in several of the 20 panels on the Black Obelisk, where the king of Israel³⁹ is among those shown bringing gifts and doing obeisance to the Assyrian monarch.⁴⁰

Shalmaneser also conducted military operations on the northern frontier, against the kingdom of Urartu, and played an important role in Babylonian politics at several key junctures. In addition to this impressive military resume,

Shalmaneser undertook numerous building projects, including, at Calah (Nimrud), the construction of or completion of the ziggurat, the temples of Ninurta and Nabu, and a large fortress (some 12 acres [5 hectares]) called “Fort Shalmaneser” by its excavators. He devoted even more time and energy at Ashur, reconstructing walls and gates and restoring the temples of Ashur and Anu-Adad there (Grayson 1996: 5). He was also active at other sites with smaller building projects (see Grayson 1996: 5–6).

The text translated below is selected from Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk – so called because of its shape and its material (black alabaster) – which was discovered by A. H. Layard at Calah in 1846.⁴¹ The obelisk is over 6 feet [2 meters] tall with four sides, each of which is inscribed. Each of the four sides also has five pictures that are meant to be “read” laterally around the four sides of the obelisk; each row has its own epigraph. The top of the obelisk is in the shape of a ziggurat or step-pyramid structure. After an introduction, which invokes the gods and identifies Shalmaneser (lines 1–21), the body of the text runs from the king’s accession down to his thirty-first year (828). The information for each regnal year is relatively concise and mostly concerns the king’s military campaigns,⁴² often across the Euphrates, sometimes with additional data regarding what the king did in these foreign locales. After the thirty-first year, there is no space left on the obelisk, and, since there are no concluding formulae or building descriptions, the scribe probably ran out of space and simply stopped (Grayson 1996: 63). Despite its somewhat inconclusive nature, however, the inscription is often thought to be the final or definitive edition of Shalmaneser’s annals (McCarter 1996: 21). Whatever the case, the last dated regnal year on the monument allows one to fix the date of the execution of the monument to late 828 or 827 (Grayson 1996: 63).

The reliefs on the Black Obelisk have been of particular interest to scholars insofar as they provide visual data that accompanies the inscription. The second frieze depicting the king of Israel is especially intriguing since it is the only contemporary depiction of an Israelite king known from antiquity. But it is not only *that* such personages as the Israelite king are artistically represented on the obelisk that is of importance; equally important is *how* these figures are portrayed. The first frieze portrays the tribute of Sūa, the Gilzānean;⁴³ the second depicts the Israelite king. He, like Sūa, is clearly dominated, down on hands and knees, but – unlike Sūa whose face is up – the Israelite king has his nose to the floor. He dare not even look up at the Assyrian king who stands above him holding a bowl of some sort, perhaps an item of tribute that he is admiring. Directly above both kings in the first two friezes, surmounting these climactic scenes, are the winged disk and star symbols that represent the gods Ashur and Ishtar.⁴⁴ The juxtaposition of these two tribute receptions also communicates something important. Gilzānu was probably in the far (north)east of the empire;⁴⁵ Israel belonged to the far (south)west. The combination thus “creates a pictorial merism stressing the gigantic extent of Shalmaneser’s Assyrian empire” (Younger 2000: 269;

cf. Green 1979; Porada 1983; Lieberman 1985; Marcus 1987). There is also a chronological merism of sorts, since not all of the friezes depict the same time period.⁴⁶

120. Black Obelisk⁴⁷

Invocation (1–14)

(O) divine Ashur, great lord, king of all of the great gods; (O) divine Anu, king of the Igigi-gods⁴⁸ and the Anunnaki-gods,⁴⁹ (O) divine Enlil, sovereign, exalted (one), father of the gods, creator of everyth[ing]; (O) divine Ea, king of the apsū,⁵⁰ decider of destinies; (O) divine [Sin, the wise], king of the crown,⁵¹ exalted in radiance; (O) divine Adad, powerful, awesome, lord of plenty; (O) divine Shamash, judge of heaven and earth, governor of all; [(O) divine Marduk], sage of the gods, lord of omens; (O) divine Ninurta, warrior of the Igigi-[gods] and the Anunnaki-gods, mighty god; (O) divine Nergal, [perf]ect one, king of battle; (O) divine Nusku, bearer of the holy scepter; god of deliberation; (O) divine Ninlil, spouse of Enlil, mother of the [great] gods; (O) divine Ištar, first (in) heaven and earth, who is perfect in the rites of battle: (O all you) great gods, deciders of destinies, who have made my sovereignty great, (listen).

Royal epithets (15–21)

(I am) Shalmaneser (III), king of all peoples, prince, ruler of Ashur, strong king, king of all of the four quarters (of the world), divine sun⁵² of all the people, ruler of all lands, son of Ashurnasirpal (II), exalted priest whose priesthood was pleasing to the gods and who made all lands bow at his feet, pure progeny of Tukulti-Ninurta (II), who killed all his enemies and wiped (them) out like a flood.⁵³

Year 1

(26b–31) In the first year of my reign: I crossed the Euphrates at its flood; I marched to the western sea;⁵⁴ I washed my weapons in the sea;⁵⁵ I performed sacrifices for my gods (there); I climbed the Amanus mountain range; I cut cedar and juniper logs (there); I climbed Mount Lallar; I set up my royal statue (šalmu)⁵⁶ thereon.⁵⁷

Year 6

(54b–66) In the sixth year of my reign: I approached the cities that are on the banks of the Balīḫ river – they (had?) killed Giammu, the lord of their cities – I entered the city of Til-Turaḫi; I crossed the Euphrates at its flood; I received the tribute of [all] the kings of the land of Hatti. (Now), at that time Hadadezer (Adad-idri) [of] the land of Damascus (and) Irḫulēni (of) the land of the Hamathites, along with the kings of the land of Hatti and (of) the coast(al areas), trusting in (their) combined forces, came against me in order to make war and battle. At the command of Ashur, the great lord, my lord, I fought with them. I accomplished their defeat. Their chariots, their cavalry, (and) their battle equipment I took away from them. I put 20,500 of their fighting men to the sword.⁵⁸

Year 11

(87–89a) *In the eleventh year of my reign: I crossed the Euphrates for the ninth time; I captured countless cities; I descended to the cities of the land of the Hamathites; I captured 89 cities (there). (Now) Hadadezer (Adad-idri) (of) the land of Damascus (and) 12 kings of the land of Hatti stood in (their) combined forces. I accomplished their defeat.*⁵⁹

Year 14

(91b–92a) *In the fourteenth year of my reign: I mustered the country; I crossed the Euphrates; 12 kings⁶⁰ came against me; I fought <with them>; I accomplished their defeat.*⁶¹

Year 18

(97b–99a) *In the eighteenth year of my reign: I crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time; Hazael of the land of Damascus came to do battle; I took away from him 1,121 of his chariots (and) 470 of his cavalry along with his camp.*⁶²

Year 21

(102b–104a) *In the twenty-first year of my reign: I crossed the Euphrates for the twenty-first time; I marched to the cities of Hazael of the land of Damascus; I captured four of his cities; I received tribute from the land of the Tyrians, the land of Sidonians, (and) the land of Byblians.*⁶³

Epigraph 1⁶⁴

I received the tribute of Sūa, the Gilzānean: silver (items), gold (items), tin (items), bronze vessels, the staffs of the king's hand,⁶⁵ horses, camels with two humps.

Epigraph 2

I received the tribute of Jehu (la-ū-a),⁶⁶ the son⁶⁷ of Omri: silver (items), gold (items), a gold bowl, a gold goblet, gold cups, gold buckets, tin (items), a staff of the king's hand, spears.⁶⁸

Epigraph 3

I received the tribute of Egypt (Muṣri): camels with two humps, a river ox,⁶⁹ a rhinoceros, an antelope, female elephants, female monkeys, apes.⁷⁰

Epigraph 4

I received the tribute of Marduk-apla-uṣur, the Suḥean: silver (items), gold (items), gold buckets, ivory, spears,⁷¹ byssus, clothes with colored trim, and linen (items).