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A New Reconstruction of the Reigns of Adad-nārārī II and Tukultī-Ninurta II in Light of Five Unattributed Royal Inscriptions

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Abstract: The reigns of Adad-nārārī II (911–891) and his son Tukultī-Ninurta II (890–884) are vital to understanding the rise of Neo-Assyria; yet, reconstruction of these is hampered by the scarce and fragmentary sources available. This study surveys the reigns of these two kings, and examines five fragmentary early Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions from the city of Aššur published in 2009 by Frahm within *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts* 3, providing solid ascriptions of three of these to Adad-nārārī II and two to Tukultī-Ninurta II on philological and historical grounds. These findings are then integrated into present knowledge of this period in order to present new portraits of these kings' respective reigns. This results in a clearer historical articulation of Adad-nārārī II's remarkably successful incumbency, particularly shedding light on his early victories. In turn, Tukultī-Ninurta II's difficult reign spent consolidating his father's territorial gains can also be better understood. Interestingly, various innovations can be ascribed to this latter king, not least the 'calculated frightfulness' for which his son would become so (in)famous within Assyriology. Finally, some repercussions of these findings for the study of 10th and 9th century royal inscriptions are explored.

Keywords: Assyria; Adad-nārārī II; Tukultī-Ninurta II; Assyrian royal inscriptions; historical lacunae

1 Introduction

Reconstructing the events of the early Neo-Assyrian period remains an exciting but fraught challenge:¹ In the span of a few generations, a kingdom reeling from

¹ The present study is an elaboration and refinement of arguments made in the third chapter and appendix of the present author's doctoral thesis written at the Eberhard-Karls Universität

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the deprivations of the 11th and 10th centuries became a dominant state once more within the ancient Near East,² before ultimately overcoming its own structural constraints in the 8th century and attaining ‘true’ empire. The reigns of the early Neo-Assyrian kings Adad-nārārī II (911–891) and Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884) are crucial in understanding the beginnings of this process, but they continue to suffer from a fragmentary state of documentation, and hence negligence on the part of scholars.³

This contribution seeks to presents an historical analysis of five early Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions from Aššur (Qal’at Širqāt, Iraq) published by Frahm (2009b) within the third volume of the series *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts*, for which he only furnished tentative suggestions as to their precise commissioner.⁴ As will be demonstrated, close historical, historical-geographical, and philological analysis can safely accord each text an Assyrian monarch. While fragmentary, these texts are still rich in information with which to fill lacunae remaining within these kings’ respective reigns (see the summary of findings in Table 1).

Tübingen. The present author is very grateful to Andreas Fuchs, Stefan M. Maul and two anonymous reviewers for their comments and assistance, and especially to John MacGinnis and Daisuke Shibata for generously sharing their research with the author prior to publication. All translations are the present author’s own, and all dates BC. Abbreviations follow the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. Localisations of ancient toponyms are presented following their first appearance in the main text and follow those of TAVO unless otherwise stated. Renderings of modern and ancient toponyms generally follow the conventions of TAVO and ancient personal names PNA, with Victorian anachronisms such as ‘Nineveh’ or ‘Assurnasirpal’ avoided both for the sake of consistency with the wider onomastic and toponymic corpus and Assyriology’s burgeoning *Eigenbegrifflichkeit*. ‘Babylonia’ and ‘Karduniaš’ are used interchangeably for variety.

² The most recent and comprehensive overview of this period may be found in Shibata 2023.

³ This has led to an oversimplified historical narrative in which the better attested reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II is taken as emblematic of the period (e.g. Grayson 1976; Liverani 2004) despite his own reign’s large lacunae and idiosyncrasies (see below). Shibata’s recent study (2023) is more balanced.

⁴ “Fortschritte dürften auch bei der genaueren Datierung der im vorliegenden Band veröffentlichten Königsinschriften unsicherer Zuweisung möglich sein. ... Detaillierte Studien zu Inhalt und Stil der Königsinschriften dieser Zeit sollten auf mittlere Sicht eine präzisere chronologische Einordnung der fraglichen Texte ermöglichen.” (Frahm 2009b: 9).

Table 1: Texts discussed and a summary of this study’s new historical findings.

Text	Reference in Frahm 2009b	Main findings
KAL 3: 45–46 (= RIMA.0.101.21–22)	92–97; pls. pp. 231–32; 233	Tukultī-Ninurta II’s defeat of Nirdun & Na’iri, of Irbibu on the Upper Ḫābūr, discovery of a rock relief in the Tūr ‘Aḫdīn, and the quashing of a rebellion in Tillê and Kaḫat (ca. 890–887).
KAL 3: 47	97–98; pl. p. 234	Adad-nārārī II’s first and second Na’iri campaigns and his defeat of Katmuḫi (909-ca. 905).
KAL 3: 48	98–101; pls. pp. 235–36	Adad-nārārī II’s defeat of Ušḫu and Atkun and Qumānū (911), and further very fragmentary campaigning including a pre-901 campaign to the Middle Euphrates and a hunting tally.
KAL 3: 53	104–05; pl. p. 239	Adad-nārārī II’s fourth Na’iri campaign, defeat of the Aḫlamū, and a campaign to the Middle Euphrates (ca. 905–901).
KAL 3: 56	108–111; pls. pp. 241–42; photo 274	Side a.: Various small early campaigns of Tukultī-Ninurta II (ca. 890–889). Side b.: Reports of his later defeat and capture of Apā of Ḫubuškia and quelling of a revolt of Naṣībīna and further march into the Tūr ‘Aḫdīn (887). Side a. unusually displays the deliberate striking through of many lines.

For the sake of brevity and considering their fine state of publication, text editions are not presented, but rather their pertinent contents are summarised and quoted where necessary; the five texts are here discussed sequentially in approximate chronological order (i.e. KAL 3: 48, 47, 53, 56, 45–46).⁵ These five textual-historical analyses’ findings are then integrated into what is known of the reigns of Adad-nārārī II and Tukultī-Ninurta II, and presented in two historical summaries. Finally, new avenues of historiographical research yielded by this work are identified and considered. Prior to the discussion of the unattributed texts, however, it is vital to outline the present state of knowledge on both reigns, and overviews of those surrounding them, as a solid historical foundation for the ensuing analyses (see also the map in Figure 1).

⁵ The present author recommends that the reader consult the relevant editions parallel to the five sections on discrete texts. The entire volume is openly accessible under <https://digi.hadw-bw.de/view/kal3>.

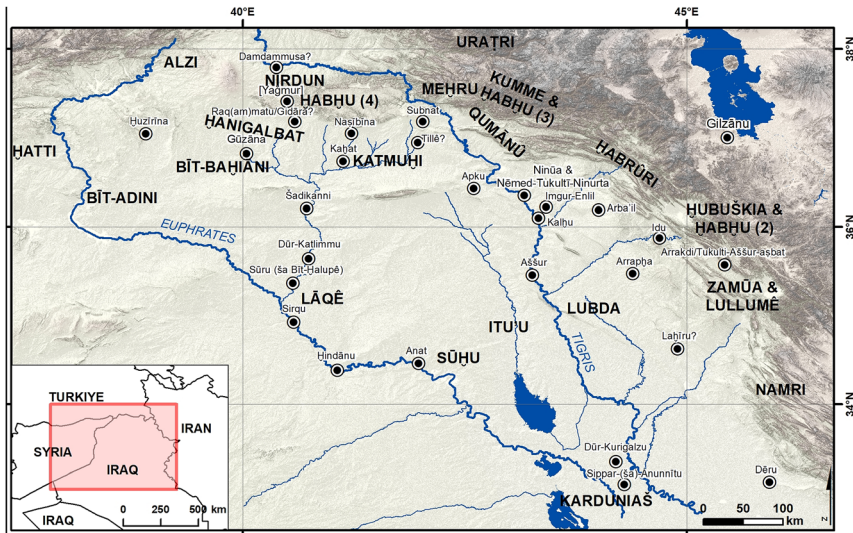


Figure 1: Key toponyms mentioned in this paper. Map by Bartłomiej Szypuła.

2 Adad-nārārī II's Reign and its Remaining Lacunae

The reign of Adad-nārārī II is generally characterised as a period of sweeping reconquest of Assyria's erstwhile territory (e.g. Grayson 1982: 249–51; Shibata 2023: 201–09). The backbone to reconstructing his reign is an extended semi-annalistic text from Aššur dubbed the 'Gula Temple Inscription' by Dewar (2019) after its appended building report (RIMA.0.99.2). Its historical portion is divided into two parts: The first is an unusual geographical summary (ll. 23–38) of the king's achievements prior to 901 divided into multiple ruled sections culminating in the rebuilding of the city of Apku ('Abū Māryā, Iraq); the second is an extended annalistic section (ll. 39–119) running from 901 to 894 and describing his seven campaigns to Ḫanigalbat (Upper Ḫābūr plain, Syria and Turkey), some additional campaigning in the Zagros mountains including to Kumme (vicinity of Beytuşşebap, Turkey), and a march along the Euphrates. While this provides detailed coverage of the second half of his reign, the initial decade of his reign up to 901 (the 'pre-Apku' period) can only be understood schematically.

This situation is somewhat alleviated by another text, RIMA.0.99.1 (= KAL 3: 15), dated to 6th Kislimu (IX) 909 which, although fragmentary, does report on a defeat of Qumānū (vicinity of the Zāḥū plain, Iraq) in his accession year, then (after a break) the conquest of Arrapḫa (Kirkūk, Iraq),⁶ followed by yet another lacuna, and then a conquest on the Tigris involving 40 cities and the deportation of three more,⁷ and then a final campaign dated 4th Araḫsamnu (VIII)⁸ to Ḥabḫu (3)⁹ and Meḫru (probably the Şırnak plain, Turkey), implying that the final two episodes occurred just before the inscription's commission, in late 909.

Mention of Arrapḫa raises a tantalising issue, that of his assault upon Karduniaš known to have occurred prior to 901 (Shibata 2023: 203–04). The *Synchronistic Chronicle* mentions two (undated) wars between Assyria and Babylonia, the first clearly corresponding to that sketched in the pre-Apku summary, and the second evidently after the events of RIMA.0.99.2, at the close of the king's reign (ABC 21 iii 1–21). The mention of Arrapḫa in RIMA.0.99.1 suggests that the first Assyro-Babylonian war was prior to 909, but it could also have unfolded in stages (see Fuchs 2011: 263 with ns.) The second, post-884 conflict seems to have been included in KAL 3: 16–17 (= RIMA.0.99.4), which presents a very late geographical summary (13'–52') based on that of RIMA.0.99.2 23–38, albeit with additional content, some deletion or telescoping of earlier achievements, and a more logical geographical organisation. Comparison of these 'pre-' and 'post-Apku' summaries is revealing (Table 2):

6 The reading was secured by Frahm 2009b: 43. He estimates that the traces of Arrapḫa on the edge of the tablet are at roughly l. 30 of KAL 3: 15. Considering that this tablet is broader than RIMA.0.99.1 ex. 1, and thus that each line holds slightly more text (so that l. 15 in ex. 1 corresponds to KAL 3: 15 12), and that probably an additional line or two were preserved below where ex. 1 (and RIMA.0.99.1 more generally) breaks off, likely describing the imposition of vassalage and tribute upon Qumānū (as can be inferred from the parallel description in KAL 3: 48 obv. i 16', see below), it can be roughly guessed that some 15 or so lines precede the mention of Arrapḫa. This is enough for a few very minor campaigns or two important ones. The rev. of KAL 3: 15 is far more relaxed in its vertical and horizontal spacing and generous with its empty ruled spacings, implying that the larger part of the text lay on the broken obv.

7 It is tempting to associate this episode with the mention of the reconquest of Arinu, Turḫu, and Zaduru mentioned in RIMA.0.99.2 35 considering the Tigridian context (the traces on rev. 2' could also support a reading [^{kur}Šu-b]a-re-e) and that three cities are mentioned (the first and second toponyms are also clearly Hurrian). Nonetheless, the sense of the passages is apparently contradictory (despite the strange wording of RIMA.0.99.2 35).

8 RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 6' with collation by Frahm (2009b: 43).

9 The present author follows the system of numbering Ḥabḫu-regions outlined by Fuchs (2000) wherever it is clear from a respective source which region is meant.

Table 2: The contents of the ruled sections of the pre- and post-Apku summaries of Adad-nārārī II with known dates.

RIMA.0.99.2	KAL 3: 16–17 = RIMA.0.99.4
(23–25) marched from the other side of the Lower Zāb (the region Lullumê, Ḫabḫu (1) & Zamūa) to passes of Namri; made Qumānû submit (911) incl. Meḫru (909), Salua & Uraṭri	(13'–20') marched from the other side of the Lower Zāb (the region Lullumê, Inner Ḫabḫu & Zamūa) to passes of Namri; made Qumānû submit (911) incl. Meḫru (909), Salua & Uraṭri; aided Kumme, sacrificed there, defeated enemy Ḫabḫu (3)-lands (896–895)
(26–29) takes control of & annexes all Katmuḫi; victor over all Karduniaš; defeated Šamaš-mu-dammiq (King of Babylonia) from Yalman to Turān; Laḫīru (1) to Ugār-Sallum appended to border; Dēru captured; Arrapha and Lubdu (Babylonian fortresses) annexed	(21'–26') takes control of & annexes all Katmuḫi; marched 4 th time to Na'iri (4 additional broken lines mentioning horses for chariots and tax)
(30–33) marched 4th time to Na'iri, captured Inner Ḫabḫu & cities Naḫur (and) Ašnaku; constantly traversed great mountains; captured cities of the land of Natbu; turned all Alzi to ruins, took hostages, imposed tribute and tax; defeated Aḫlamû-Arameans; received Sūḫu's tribute	(27'–34') Defeated Šamaš-mudammiq (King of Babylonia) from Yalman to Turān; Laḫīru (1) to Ugār-Sallum appended to border; Dēru captured; Arrapha and Lubdu (Babylonian fortresses) annexed (4 additional broken lines about Karduniaš [post-893])
(34–35) Idu and Zaqqu (Assyrian fortresses) annexed; (reclaimed) cities Arinu, Turḫu, & Zaduru from Šubria	(35'–38' – broken)
(36–38) Restoration of Apku (902)	(39'–41') Defeated & plundered Sūḫu up to [...]
(39–119) Conventional annalistic account of Ḫanigalbat, Zagros and Kumme campaigns and march to Middle Euphrates (901–894)	(42'–51') Marched 7th time to Ḫanigalbat, defeated Nūr-Adad, imposed dominance over region
	(52'onwards – broken)

In KAL 3: 16–17, not only are Kumme and Ḫanigalbat now mentioned in summary (thus postdating 894), but the otherwise identical Karduniaš section is also supplemented with four additional (unfortunately broken) lines (31'–34') describing the new conflict, and the section on Sūḫu ('Āna and Ḫadīṭa Districts, Iraq) is extended from mere mention of tribute to a brief (but broken) description of Sūḫu's defeat, implying further campaigning there. In turn, the Ḫabḫu (2) beyond the Lower Zāb has now become Inner Ḫabḫu (l. 14'), demonstrating deeper penetration of the Zagros, which must correspond to the defeat of Sikkur and Sappānu in 896 (RIMA.0.99.2 80–90). It remains unclear what must have filled the broken section of KAL 3: 16–17 35'–38'.

A final, unusual source is Tukulti-Ninurta II's unique stele from Sirqu (Tall 'Ašāra, Syria).¹⁰ This curious Medioeuphratine monument (perhaps a *kudurru*?)

¹⁰ RIMA.0.100.1004, see Güterbock 1957; Tournay 1998; Masetti-Rouault 2001: 104.

seems to have been a pre-existing local sculpture of a mythological scene to which an *ad hoc* inscription and an Aramaicising carving of a deity (or Assyrian king?) were added.¹¹ Quite uniquely, it does not directly commemorate Tukultī-Ninurta II's own deeds, but rather those of his father:

(ll. 1–2; 6–7) *Adad-nārārī šar māt Aššur dā'iš Lāqê ... Tukultī-Ninurta māršu šarru e[ršu ...] ša abūšu ipušu šū ipuṣ [...]*

Adad-nārārī (II), king of Assyria, trampler of (the city of) Lāqê ... Tukultī-Ninurta (II), his son, the wise king [...], did that which his father had done

This inscription alludes to a campaign to the Middle Euphrates by Tukultī-Ninurta II which would tally well with the mention of Lāqê in his summary inscriptions (see below); it also implies that Adad-nārārī II violently subdued this region (indeed, ^{uru}*La-qê-e* would imply that Sirqu itself had been taken), although it is unclear as to whether this would have been before or after the peaceful march of 894, in the course of which this is unlikely to have occurred.¹² Moreover, it intimates that Adad-nārārī II himself did not create stelae outside of Assyria, and his son felt compelled to improvise such a monument while in Sirqu. Certainly, no rock reliefs or stelae of Adad-nārārī II have yet been found, nor do his inscriptions mention such activities. In turn, Aššur-nāṣir-apli II mentions only stelae of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I and Tukultī-Ninurta II at the Subnat source (Kebeli, Turkey). The hypothesis might hence be posed that Tukultī-Ninurta II was the first Neo-Assyrian king to create such monuments, as will be further explored. From all of this information, the following conservative reconstruction of Adad-nārārī II's reign may be presented see (Table 3):

Table 3: A summary of the hitherto-known events of Adad-nārārī II's reign and their sources.

911	AN II's accession and campaign to Qumānû	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 10–19; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 15'–16'
Mid-late 911 to ca. mid 910	(10–15 lines of campaign narrative, either various smaller campaigns or 1–2 larger campaigns)	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 20–ca. 30
ca. mid 910 to mid-909	Campaign and annexation of Arrapha. War with Babylonia probably initiated	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. ca. 30
Mid-late 909	Campaign to the Tigris, defeat of 40 cities, deportation of 3 others	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 1'–5'
	Campaign against Ḫabḫu (3) & Meḫru	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 6'–9'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 24–25; KAL 3: 16–17 16'

¹¹ See esp. Kühne 2009: 50; Younger 2016: 282–85.

¹² On the one hand, Lāqê is already peaceful come 894. On the other, Sūḫu was seemingly attacked once more at the very end of his reign, and it is possible that Lāqê was assaulted simultaneously.

Table 3: (continued)

4th Ara- ḥsamnu (VIII) 909		
6th Kislimu (IX) 909	Renovation of quay at Aššur completed	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 10'–20'
908–901	Campaign to Salua and Uraṭri. Defeat of Babylonian. Campaign to Lullumê, Zamûa, Ḥabḥu (2), and Namri. 4 campaigns to Na'iri. Conquest of Katmuḥi. Defeat and resettlement of the Aḫlamû. Campaign to Middle Euphrates including Sûḫu. Reconquest of Arinu, Turḫu, & Zaduru from Šubria?	RIMA.0.99.2 23–35; KAL 3: 16–17 13'–34'; cf. ABC 21 iii 1–7; RIMA.0.100.1004?
901 or (immediately?) prior	Renovation of Apku completed.	RIMA.0.99.2 36–38
901	1st Ḥanigalbat campaign. Nûr-Adad of Našibîna defeated at Pa'uza	RIMA.0.99.2 39–41
900	2nd Ḥanigalbat campaign. Battle at Našibîna. Yaridu raided. Saraku occupied with the region's crops	RIMA.0.99.2 42–44
899	3rd Ḥanigalbat campaign. Huzîrîna taken. Mamlî defeated. Bît-Adini sends diplomatic gift	RIMA.0.99.2 45–48
898	4th Ḥanigalbat campaign. Mûquru of Raqa-mātu/Gidāra defeated	RIMA.0.99.2 49–60
897	5th Ḥanigalbat campaign. Tribute received	RIMA.0.99.2 61
896 Earlier	6th Ḥanigalbat campaign. Našibîna defeated after siege. Nûr-Adad removed and new client king installed	RIMA.0.99.2 62–80; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 48'–50'
Later	Campaign to Sikkur and Sappānu	RIMA.0.99.2 80–90
15th Simānu (III)	1st campaign to Kumme	RIMA.0.99.2 91–93; KAL 3: 16–17 17'–19'
895		
Nisannu (I)	2nd campaign to Kumme	RIMA.0.99.2 94–96; KAL 3: 16–17 19'–20'
894		
Simānu (III)	7th Ḥanigalbat campaign. Tribute collected.	RIMA.0.99.2 97–119; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 51'
894	Campaign to the Middle Euphrates	
17th Abu (V)	Renovation of Gula Temple at Aššur completed	RIMA.0.99.2 128–34
893		
Late 893 to 891	2nd Babylonian war and subsequent peace treaty	KAL 3: 16–17 30'–34'; cf. ABC 21 iii 8–21
	2nd campaign to Sûḫu (after Babylonian war) (other campaigns?)	KAL 3: 16–17 39'–41' KAL 3: 16–17 35'–38'; 52' onwards
891	AN II dies	

From this summary, it is evident that the historian’s most pressing task is to establish an internal chronology of events between mid-late 911 to mid-909 and between 908 and 901. As this contained extensive campaigning in every direction and a momentous war with Babylonia, the order and tempo of these events would reveal a great deal about Assyria’s strategic motivations at this time.

3 Reconstructing the Missing Half of Tukultī-Ninurta II’s Reign

Studies of the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II tend to emphasise its brevity and this ruler’s continuation of his predecessor’s policies; while some authors have underlined the restricted nature of Tukultī-Ninurta II’s campaigning (e.g. Grayson 1982: 251–53), Shibata (2023: 209–13) has recently presented a more positive assessment of this king. His reign’s state of preservation is much the same as for Adad-nārārī II.¹³ The only extended annalistic text (RIMA.0.100.5 [+ KAL 3: 19–20]) is frustratingly broken, providing a narrative only from late 887 to 885.¹⁴ This can be summarised in the following table (Table 4):

Table 4: Campaigns of Tukultī-Ninurta II recorded in RIMA.0.100.5.

Date	Event and Line Number
Late 887	Conclusion of a campaign to Na’iri and Kāšiāru, TN II returns to Aššur (1–3)
Late 887 or very early 886	Aftermath of the prior campaign, Bīt-Zamāni campaigns in Assyria’s name and forward tribute and hostages to TN II in Ninūa (4–8)
Early 886	Rebellion of a ‘principal he’ ^a in a piedmont region. Insurrectionist pursued up to difficult mountains. ^b TN II dispatches troops from Ninūa. They return with silver, gold and property (9–10)
1st Simānu (III) 886	TN II campaigns to Bīt-Zamāni (11–29)
17th Tašritu (VII) 886	Campaign beyond Ḥabrūri to Ladānu (western Zamūa) (30–40)
26th Nisannu (I) 885	March to Babylonia, defeat of nomads in the Wādī at-Ṭarṭār, tribute of Sūḫu, Lāqê and Lower Ḥābūr (41–127)
Prior to 9th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 885	A single broken line refers to another (presumably unimportant) campaign (127)

^aThe present author uses the terms ‘principal he’ and ‘barbarian they’ to denote the foes engaged by Assyrian kings where their names are broken, and only suffixes (i.e. -šu and -šunu) survive. In Assyrian inscriptions, the former generally refers to individual leaders of ‘organised’ polities, while the latter is used to denote more ‘loosely’ structured groups such as nomads or mountain groups. ^bThe expression *adi šadī eqli namrāši* (RIMA.0.100.5 10) is tantalising. The closest parallels are in Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I’s description of his battles at Katmuḫi and in the Zagros (RIMA.0.87.1 i 73; ii 70; iii 42; 51; 97; iv 14). The implication here seems to be that the engagement occurred on accessible piedmont before the forces were chased into a rough mountain landscape.

13 Note that RIMA.0.100.7 is now to be assigned to Aššur-rēša-išši (MacGinnis 2022).
14 KAL 3: 21 nonetheless demonstrates that alternate recensions of his annals were commissioned, and that this absence is merely an accident of survival.

From this, it is evident that a campaign to Na'iri (eastern Taurus and northern Zagros mountains) must have occurred late in 887, and that Bit-Zamāni (vicinity of Diyarbakır, Turkey) followed this up with a campaign of their own which assisted Assyria. Tukulti-Ninurta II's march to Bit-Zamāni from Ninūa (Naynawā, Iraq) began on the 1st Simānu (III), a significant date also chosen by other kings to begin their campaigns (Frahm 2009b: 54), implying that it was carefully planned; that Tukulti-Ninurta II previously dispatched a force from Ninūa to quell a rebellion while remaining at Ninūa also implies that he was still in the process of massing his troops for the assault on the Upper Tigris, and thus that this must have occurred shortly beforehand in the spring. Considering that Bit-Zamāni was still in Tukulti-Ninurta II's graces following his campaign of 887, and that the Upper Tigris campaign of 886 was planned, it is hence likely that Bit-Zamāni's own campaigning must either have occurred very early in 886 (thus giving Tukulti-Ninurta II sufficient time to marshal his forces), or at the end of 887.

The three-and-a-half years prior to these events (alongside perhaps his final year) can only be reconstructed with the assistance of various near-identical geographical summary inscriptions intended for his unfinished residence at Nēmed-Tukulti-Ninurta (Qaḏiya, Iraq), here referred to as RIMA.0.100.6 (found at Naynawā = Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 117–18; pl. 41) and Qaḏiya 1–3 (= Ahmad 2000).¹⁵ The Ninūa copy seems the most trustworthy, as the Qaḏiya exemplars contain some howlers, such as one text repeating Sippar-ša-Šamaš (Tall Abū Ḥabba, Iraq) twice, and the other repeating the doublet Dūr-Kurigalzu ('Aqar Qūf, Iraq) and Sippar-ša-Šamaš twice.¹⁶ A composite rendering of the geographical section of RIMA.0.100.6 and Qaḏiya 1–3 is here provided:

kāšid (mātāt) Na'iri ana pāt gimriša šarru ša ištu ebertān Idiqlat adi (māt) Ḥatti (māt) Lāqē ana siḫirtiša Na'iri ana pāt gimriša (māt) Sūhi adi (māt) Rāpiqi ištu nērebe ša (māt) Ḥabrūri adi (māt) Gilzāni Apā šar {var. ebertān} (māt) Hubuškia qereb tamḥāri qāssu iṣbatu ištu nērebe ša Bābite adi (māt) Ḥašmar (māt) Zamūa ana siḫirtiša ištu Zāba elī adi Til-Bāri ša ellān (māt) Zabban (māt) Ḥirimmu (māt) Ḥarutu birāte ša māt Karduniaš ištu Šuši ša eli Idiqlat adi Dūr-Kurigalzi ištu Dūr-Kurigalzi adi Sippar-ša-Šamaš Sippur-ša-Anunnitu (?) (māt) Aramu qāssu ikšudu

¹⁵ As RIMA.0.100.6 was found at Ninūa in a reused context, and hence had never been transported to Nēmed-Tukulti-Ninurta, it could be hypothesised that this was the latest edition of the summary inscription before Tukulti-Ninurta II's death and the halting of construction work, but this cannot be proven. Its only deviation from the Qaḏiya inscriptions is the mention of one Apā of Hubuškia, should the *ebertān* of Qaḏiya 2: 3. not be yet another mistake.

¹⁶ One solution would be that the civic doublet of Sippar-ša-Šamaš and Sippar-ša-Anunnitu (Tall ad-Dēr, Iraq) were meant (cf. Bagg 2020: 520).

Conqueror of (the lands of) Na'iri to its farthest extent, the king who took in the midst of the fray from the other side of the Tigris to (the land of) Ḫatti, (the land of) Lāqê and its environs, (the lands of) Na'iri to its furthest extent, (the land of) Sūḫu up to (the land of) Rāpīqu (and) from the passes of (the land of) Ḫabrūri to (the land of) Gilzānu (and as captive) Apā, king of (the land of {var. the city of}) Ḫubuškia {var. Gilzānu on the other side of Ḫubuškia}. He captured from the passes of Bābite to (the land of) Ḫašmar (the land of) Zamūa and its environs, from the Lower Zāb to Til-Bāri from upstream of (the land of) Zabban, (the land of) Ḫirimmu and (the land of, var. the city of) Ḫarutu, fortresses of Karduniaš from the city of Šuši on the Tigris to Dūr-Kurigalzu, from Dūr-Kurigalzu to Sippar-ša-Šamas and Sippar-ša-Anunnītu (?), (the land of) the Arameans.

This geographical extent might be measured against the achievements of Adad-nārārī II (see also Zadok 2008: 322–23): The *Synchronistic Chronicle* reports the setting of the border at Til-Bāri at the close of Adad-nārārī II's reign, this lasting until the time of Salmānu-ašarēd III's intervention, and hence there is no change.¹⁷ The mention of Ḫatti (northern Syria) does intimate Tukultī-Ninurta II's penetration farther westwards than his predecessor, and the inclusion of the passes between Ḫabrūri (Ḫerīr plain, Iraq) and Gilzānu ('Urūmiye basin, Iran) and the taking of Ḫubuškia (vicinity of Pirānšahr, Iran) and its king (in the Ninūa text) is novel. The mention in his geographical summary of the pass of Ḫašmar (region of Darband-i Ḫān, Iraq), in contrast to Adad-nārārī II venturing to Namri (western Kermānšāh Province, Iran), is difficult to qualify without more information.¹⁸ It does, nonetheless, intimate that Tukultī-Ninurta II undertook at least one campaign across Zamūa (Šahr-i Zūr plain, Iraq).

Moreover his 'conquest' extending to Dūr-Kurigalzu and Sippar was merely the defeat of the Aramean tribes of the Itu'u on the Wādī at-Tartār (see RIMA.0.100.5 49–50) on the way to Sūḫu. The inscription does note campaigning to Lāqê (Dayr az-Zūr District, Syria), Sūḫu, and Na'iri (all within the orbit of his father's achievements), and places the most emphasis upon the lattermost region, as his summary is presaged with the epithet *kāšid (mātāt) Na'iri* 'victor over the lands of Na'iri', perhaps echoing Adad-nārārī II's epithet as *kāšid (māt) Karduniaš*. All of this presents a relatively scant list of accomplishments for the first half of the Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign, which can be contextualised as follows (Table 5):

¹⁷ See the study by Fuchs (2011: 264–65).

¹⁸ It is possible that Assyria had agreed to leave Namri to Karduniaš as part of the peace treaty at the end of Adad-nārārī II's reign, considering its cultural ties to Babylonia and possible status as a protectorate.

Table 5: A summary of the hitherto-known events of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign and their sources.

Date	Event	Source
890 Earlier	Accession of TN II	RIMA.0.100.1 28
Later	Completion of wall at Baltil (Aššur)	RIMA.0.100.2 rev. 1'–12'
890–887	Campaign to border of Ḫatti. Defeat and capture of Apâ of Ḫubuškia	RIMA.0.100.6; Qaḏiya 1–3
Late 887	Conclusion of a campaign to Na'iri and Kāšīāru, TN II returns to Aššur	RIMA.0.100.5 1–3
Late 887 or very early 886	Aftermath of the prior campaign, Bīt-Zamāni undertakes campaign, forwards tribute and hostages	RIMA.0.100.5 4–8
Early 886	Rebellion of a 'principal he' in piedmont and defeat	RIMA.0.100.5 9–10
1st Simānu (III) 886	Campaign to Bīt-Zamāni. Imposition of horse-trading deal and supervision by Assyrian officials	RIMA.0.100.5 11–29; KAL 3: 21 obv.? 2'–5'
17th Tašrītu (VII) 886	Campaign beyond Ḫabrūri to Ladānu (western Zamūa)	RIMA.0.100.5 30–40
26th Nisannu (I) 885	March to Babylonia, defeat of nomads in the Wādī aṭ-Ṭartār, tribute of Sūḫu, Lāqê, and Lower Ḫābūr	RIMA.0.100.5 41–126
Prior to 9th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 885	A single broken line refers to another (presumably unimportant) campaign	RIMA.0.100.5 127
9th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 885 ^a	Completion of renovation of palace terrace at Aššur	RIMA.0.100.5 136–46; cf RIMA.0.100.3 rev. 7'–17'
884	TN II dies, his new palace at Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta remains unfinished	Cf. RIMA.0.100.6

^aIt is likely that RIMA.0.100.3 rev. 7'–17' refers to precisely the same event; as the eponym date is Na'idi-ilu, governor of Katmuḫi, in RIMA.0.100.5 147, it is striking that an epigraph or colophon (?) on the edge of RIMA.0.100.3 reads]-ḫa-a-ū. Although the use of *ū* is peculiar, this could stand for *Katmuḫāyu* 'the Katmuḫian'. Alternatively, this could stand for an Aramaic name such as Idrī-aḫā'u (often written with a final -ū) and conceivably be a byname for Na'idi-ilu or even the following eponym, Iarī (whose obscure name is a hypochoristicon), although there would be no etymological link evident between names in either case.

Here, the historian's task is to establish the events and internal chronology of Tukultī-Ninurta II's regnal years prior to late 887. While the scarceness of achievements by his reign's close implies that they were consolidatory in nature, this would provide vital information as to the state of Assyria's much expanded realm in the wake of Adad-nārārī II's conquests, and whether much resistance to Assyrian rule existed prior to his successor's reign. Before the five unattributed texts might be considered, it is germane to consider the reigns surrounding this period, namely those of Aššur-dān II (934–912) and Aššur-nāšir-apli II (883–859).

4 Framing the Era – The Reigns of Aššur-dān II and Aššur-nāšir-apli II

The reigns of Aššur-dān II and Aššur-nāšir-apli II could not seem more different. Where the first struggled to keep rampant nomads from Aššur's gates, the latter could march to the Mediterranean, construct a new capital at Kalḫu (Nimrūd, Iraq) and invite emissaries from the nations surrounding the Neo-Assyrian kingdom to a giant spectacle at its inauguration. Despite this, the inscriptions to be discussed could ostensibly belong to the reigns of either king upon initial inspection of their language, script, or content.

Aššur-dān II's reign lasted more than two decades, and yet only some seven undated and geographically limited campaigns are recorded within his inscriptions. The first three imply that Assyria was territorially reduced to its heartland (RIMA.0.98.1 6–32), while the latter demonstrate minor *chevauchées* and the reimposition of vassal arrangements on neighbours. While it could be argued that RIMA.0.98.1 (Aššur-dān II's only extended annalistic text) hails from early in his reign as its eponym remains unattributed, this is contradicted by the large numbers of animals mentioned within his hunting tally (see discussion of tallies below in respect to KAL 3: 48), including some 120 lions, 1600 wild bulls, and 56 elephants (RIMA.0.98.1 68–72) which must have taken considerable time to accumulate, implying a date well into his reign. Constrained by his own kingdom's weakness, it may well be that Aššur-dān II employed such hunting as a propagandistic pastime in lieu of campaigning. Regardless, none of the unattributed texts discussed here are compatible with what is known of his reign, and need not be further factored into the coming analysis.¹⁹

Akin to the end of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign, the opening of Aššur-nāšir-apli II's reign is very well documented, providing consecutive annalistic accounts running to roughly 877. While this leaves another 18 regnal years in which only Aššur-nāšir-apli II's much-lauded 'march to the sea' and an abortive campaign to Amēdu 866 are annalistically extant, his various geographical summary inscriptions, the depictions on his gates from Imgur-Enlil (Balāwāt, Iraq), the literary text LKA 64, and the events

¹⁹ These can be briefly summarised as follows: KAL 3: 48 describes the opening of a reign, contradicting the details of Aššur-dān II's accession from his extant annals, thus precluding such an ascription; KAL 3: 47 numbers campaigns whereas Aššur-dān II's annals do not, and the reference to a king does not fit his reign as his march on Katmuḫi was not presaged by campaigning into Na'iri; KAL 3: 53's events overwhelmingly tally with those of Adad-nārārī II's reign, and it strongly resembles KAL 3: 47 in format and ductus; Adad-nārārī II's annals claimed to have invented KAL 3: 45–46's stratagem of surrounding Irbibu's city with fortresses, excluding Aššur-dān II; finally, the references to Našī-bīna's rebellion in KAL 3: 56 immediately disqualifies its ascription to Aššur-dān II in favour of Tukultī-Ninurta II.

of his successor Salmānu-ašarēd III's early reign are sufficient to infer an historical framework.²⁰ During this period, Aššur-nāšir-apli II would become embroiled in wars with Bīt-Adini (the plains between Şanlıurfa, Turkey, and the Euphrates) and later Urartu (northern Zagros), the exigencies of which would seem to have well surpassed anything presented in the five inscriptions examined here. Indeed, the latter part of his reign seems to have been preoccupied with the shoring up of Assyria's defences by diplomatic means, with the polities of Bīt-Zamāni and Bīt-Baḫiāni (Baliḫ basin, Turkey and Syria) being incorporated into the Assyrian realm as 'transitional cases' with their local rulers as governors (Edmonds 2021). One might further note the 'international event' that was his inauguration of his capital at Kalḫu (RIMA.0.101.30), the emphasis upon tribute in visual sources, or indeed reconciliatory depictions on palatial reliefs (Portuese 2017). He may well have become a better statesman than warrior by this period. Nonetheless, the window between 877 and 866 cannot be entirely discounted for the events of the texts herein studied, and will be reckoned with in the analysis. In the present author's own mind, the many obelisk fragments found at Naynawā by Thompson and now spread between Birmingham, London, and Baḡdād depicting the tribute of various peoples (see Reade 2005: 374) are probably to be attributed to this latter era of the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, not only as what scant phraseology and names which might be securely read correspond to events from his reign,²¹ but also because comparable fragments of an obelisk of his reign are now known from Aššur, and there is presently no evidence of any king between Aššur-nāšir-apli I²² and himself having created such a monument: Indeed,

20 A detailed historical reconstruction of this period by Andreas Fuchs and the present author is forthcoming.

21 For some fragments, see Thompson 1937: 43–46; George 1979: 139–40; Figure 7. Frame 1984: 19 concludes that the best preserved ('A') dates to Aššur-nāšir-apli II. The theme of tribute-gathering is largely absent from the inscriptions of Adad-nārārī II, only emerging with Tukultī-Ninurta II's march to the Middle Euphrates late in his reign, which would support an identification of these fragments with Aššur-nāšir-apli II.

22 The present author follows Frahm (2009b: 119–22) in ascribing the 'White Obelisk' to Aššur-nāšir-apli I; this is based not only on Frahm's identification of a new chronicle-like text from this king's reign (KAL 3: 61) presenting affinities with the White Obelisk and various art historical analyses which have located its style within the Middle Assyrian period (e.g. Reade 1975; Pittman 1996), but also the present author's own epigraphical study of this obelisk, the full publication of which is forthcoming. This demonstrates that the text of Sides A and D of the relief is not contiguous, but rather comprises the respective passages from the beginning and end of a longer inscription, this markedly undermining any congruencies with the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, and that the relief's inscription was very abruptly halted mid-sentence but that the relief must nonetheless have been displayed outdoors at the temple of Ištar of Ninūa for centuries (due to its heavy weathering) before being deposited intact in a pit. The only plausible conclusion is that its royal commissioner had abruptly died during its creation, a fate less likely for Aššur-nāšir-apli II than for Aššur-nāšir-apli I who died in his 19th regnal year, and whose suffering from a bitter disease was immortalised in a remarkable

the pattern emerging rather places all dateable Assyrian obelisks and obelisk fragments in the reigns of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, Aššur-nāšir-apli I, Aššur-nāšir-apli II, Salmānu-ašarēd III, and Adad-nārārī III respectively.²³ Three of these four obelisk-makers are known to have visited the shores of the Mediterranean and washed their weapons there, which may well be meaningful; perhaps Aššur-nāšir-apli I made it further west than what little remains of his inscriptions intimates.²⁴ With this, the first unattributed inscription might be considered.

4.1 KAL 3: 48. Adad-nārārī II's Accession, Campaign to Ušḫu and Atkun, and Conquest of Qumānū (911 BC) and an Early March to the Euphrates

This fragment begins with a singular description of the intended audience of royal inscriptions (obv. i 1'–5'), then mentions the sovereign's accession and early conquests. These are the northern Zagrine polities of Ušḫu and Atkun (obv. i 6'–11'), and, in the next section, Qumānū including its capital Kipšūnu (obv. i 12'–13'). A further

confessional hymn to Ištar (Soden 1974–77). In turn, at least one obelisk from Aššur-nāšir-apli II (Thompson A, see previous n.) survived in the same courtyard until the end of the Assyrian Empire, when it was smashed by looters. It seems implausible that one obelisk from Aššur-nāšir-apli II would have been left standing while another had been buried during remodelling of the courtyard (in the same pit as the 'Venus' of Aššur-bēl-kala, probably during the reign of Sīn-aḫḫē-erība), it being more likely that the weathered state of this aged obelisk had made it an eyesore.

²³ Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I: the 'Broken Obelisk', Aššur Typ I (Frahm 2011: 59–62), and probably two obelisk fragments from Ninūa (Reade 2005: 373); Aššur-nāšir-apli I: the 'White Obelisk' (see previous n.); Aššur-nāšir-apli II: Aššur Typ II (Frahm 2011: 62–67), probably all of the Thompson fragments, certainly 'A'; Salmānu-ašarēd III: Aššur Typ III (ibid. 67–71), the 'Black Obelisk' (RIMA.0.102.14); Adad-nārārī III: A small obelisk fragment (RIMA.0.103.1003).

²⁴ Long suspected not to belong to Aššur-bēl-kala's reign (see analysis in Salvini 2014), an ascription of the 'Broken Obelisk' to Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I is now conclusive (Shibata 2022), and thus RIMA.0.89.8 and 9 are also to be ascribed to said king and not his son, as their only rationale for ascription to Aššur-bēl-kala was their affinity to the 'Broken Obelisk' (ibid: 121). Nonetheless, it remains unclear as to whether Aššur-bēl-kala should be excluded from this exclusive Mediterranean club for the time being or not. Although no obelisk of his has been found, a sculpted appendage of a *nāḫiru* does bear his name (RIMA.0.89.11; Lundström 2012: 333, fig. 48), which may imply him having visited the Mediterranean like his father (or alternately having appropriated one of the sculptures). That Aššur-nāšir-apli I made it as far as the Mediterranean is hardly impossible considering how much of his 19-year reign is presently lost, that he was considered successful enough to have a later namesake (who celebratedly marched to the Mediterranean), and as the Euphratine forts of Pitru and Mutkīnu were only lost in the reign of his son, Aššur-rabi II (RIMA.0.102.2 ii 35–38). Šamši-Adad V did not personally visit the Mediterranean, sending the chief eunuch Mutaqqin-Aššur instead, and hence he was probably disqualified from the creation of an obelisk.

broken column (obv ii.) provides little diagnostic beyond a mention of gold (3') and an *i-na* below a ruling which must point to the beginning of a dated campaign (6'). On the other side ([rev.] iv 1'), a broken description of hunting ensues ([rev.] iv 1'–14'). Frahm (2009b: 100) tended towards Adad-nārārī II, but did not exclude any other early Neo-Assyrian king, particularly Aššur-nāšir-apli II.

The first point is that the events occurred in a king's accession year. Here, it should be noted that Adad-nārārī II campaigned to Qumānû following his accession according to RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 10–19, and that Aššur-nāšir-apli II campaigned to Ušḫu and Atkun in his first regnal year (RIMA.0.101.1 i 69–73; 17 i 90–93, albeit as his second campaign), while the beginning of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign is not preserved. While this mention of Ušḫu and Atkun would favour Aššur-nāšir-apli II, it is clear from the description of mustering in KAL 3: obv. i. 6'–9' that this was the king's very first campaign, rendering the omission of Aššur-nāšir-apli II's 882 campaign to Ništun (RIMA.0.101.1 i 45–69; 17 i 65–95) implausible.

The next factor to be considered is Qumānû; Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions explicitly commemorate its defeat early in his reign both in the geographical summaries and in a damaged account from his 909-annals (RIMA.0.99.1 10–19). In turn, Qumānû is remarkably absent from the royal inscriptions of subsequent Assyrian kings; it would be very strange that the defeat of a kingdom described as “expansive” (RIMA.0.99.2 24; KAL 3: 16–17 15'–16') would have escaped scribes' notice or have been redacted. Moreover, KAL 3: 48's campaign initiates without *casus belli*; were this event to have occurred in a subsequent reign, then mention of Qumānû's insubordination would be expected to presage the narrative. Rather, this mirrors the apparently unprovoked conquest of RIMA.0.99.1 and implies that this was the first time that a Neo-Assyrian king had subdued this kingdom.²⁵

All of these points, along with Frahm's (2009b: 100–01) observation of the very close phraseology between the hunting reports of KAL 3: 48 (rev.) iv 1'–14' and RIMA.0.99.2 122–26 (particularly the hunting of elephants with traps) render an ascription to Adad-nārārī II certain.²⁶ Nonetheless, a few issues require resolution. The first of these is the differing information of the defeat of Qumānû presented in these two accounts, summarised in the following table (Table 6):

25 Aššur-nāšir-apli II's defeat of Ušḫu and Atkun is followed in the narrative by a march to Katmuḫi and then interrupted by rebellion on the Middle Euphrates (RIMA.0.101.1 i 69–99). A revolt by Qumānû would contradict the narrative and historical logic of this passage alike.

26 One might naturally play *advocatus diaboli* and suggest Tukultī-Ninurta II as the commissioner. Discounting this is the scale of the victory (which one might expect to have graced his summary inscription, especially as the analogous capture of Apā of Ḫubuškia is mentioned) and the extensiveness of the hunting account with its pursuit of elephants. While in the same region of the Euphrates, Tukultī-Ninurta II managed only to kill wild bulls (RIMA.0.100.5 46), and the hunting tally at the end of his 884 annals mentions only 60 lions (ll. 134–35).

Table 6: Differing accounts of the defeat of Qumānū.

KAL 3: 48 obv. i 12'–16'	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 10–19
[ina līt kiš]šūtīya šūturte ana (māt) Qumēnī [(...) allik(?) ... K]ipšūna šapliš [...] -na ālāni [...] i]kšudu/ū [...] biltu madattu(?) elišun]u ukīn [...] In the power of my overwhelming authority, [... I went (?)] to the land of Qumēnū [... K]ipšūna below [...] cities [...] they/he took [...] I imposed o[n them tribute (?)...]	ina qibit Aššur bēli rabē bēliya narkabāti šābiya adki ana (māt) Qumānē lū allik rapšāti Qumānē lū akšud Ilūya šar (māt) Qumānē ina qabal ekallišu qātī lū ikšussu aḥḥēšu ana gurunni lū amḥaš dīktīšunu ma'attu iddāk šallassunu būšīšunu makkūrīšunu alpīšunu immer šēnīšunu ana āliya Aššur ubla ilānī-šunu kī qīšūte ana Aššur bēliya iqīš sitāt ummānīšunu [ša ištu] pān kakkīya ipparšid[ūni] iturūni šubtu nēḫtu [ušēšibšunu ...] At the command of the great lord Aššur, my lord, I mustered my chariotry and troops. I went forth to the land of Qumānū. I took expansive Qumānū. I captured Ilūya, king of Qumānū, in the midst of his palace. I slew his brothers in heaps. I struck them a great blow. I brought their spoils, possessions, and property, their oxen, sheep, and livestock to my city Aššur. I bestowed them upon Aššur, my lord, as gifts. I settled in peaceful dwellings the remaining troops who had fled before my weapons and had since returned [...]

Although differences are apparent, both narratives are also incomplete: While only the end of RIMA.0.99.1's version is lost, the vast majority of KAL 3: 48's account has suffered this fate. What survives can, nonetheless, be reconciled. From the 'die' of Aya-ḫālu (formerly 'Yaḫālu'), *masennu rabū* to Salmānu-ašarēd III, it is apparent that Kipšūnu was the capital of Qumānū;²⁷ hence, the capture of Ilūya "in his palace" in RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 12–13 must have occurred there. In turn, RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 14–19 describes collection of spoils and of the resettlement of returning Qumānū soldiers

²⁷ ^{uru}kīp-šū-ni ^{kur}qu-me-ni ^{kur}me-eḫ-ra-ni ^{kur}ū-q[i] ^{kur}e-ri-ni[m] (RIMA.0.102.2003 = Stephens 1937: no. 73, ii 5–iii 3). Kipšūnu's status as Qumānū's capital is evident from RIMA.0.87.1 vi 23. While evidently within or adjacent to the Zāḫū Plain, Iraq, it remains presently unlocalised (Bagg 2017: 343–44). Possible locations might include the mounds of Basorin or Takyan in Turkey, or, in Iraq, the precipitous heights of 'Amādiya or Hawrīz; a lowland site such Zāḫū or Dayrabūn also cannot be fully excluded. The much-cited site of 'Gefš' with which it has often been identified (e.g. Kessler 1980: 170) seems unlocatable within the modern toponymy of the region, unless it is equated with (the unre-markable) modern toponym of Hafšīn, not far from Hawrīz.

before breaking off. It is logical that the next topic would have been the imposition of tribute and vassalage, as probably preserved in KAL 3: 48, and that the intervening portion was abridged in the latter account. Finally, KAL 3: 48 appears to be more thematically focused on military expeditions, while RIMA.0.99.1 focuses more on aftermaths. Here, the emphasis in RIMA.0.99.1 on the transporting of spoils to Aššur and their dedication to the eponymous god (found after each campaign described) are key, as this text was composed to commemorate the renovation of the quay at Aššur.²⁸ KAL 3: 48 may well thus represent a more ‘military historical’ annalistic account.²⁹

This leads to the next point, the omission of Ušḫu and Atkun from RIMA.0.99.1. One possibility is that the defeat of these hardy mountain communities did not yield any spoils with which to return to Aššur (thus disqualifying it from mention in the text). Another point is the apparent insignificance and banality of conquering these settlements (KAL 3: 48 devotes only two lines to the conquest); the mountainous flank of Nibur and Paṣâte in which they lay (Cudi Dağı, Turkey, and environs) has remained ungovernable throughout history, providing an eternal *casus expeditionis*. Both Aššur-našir-apli II’s unhurried conquest of the area on the way to Katmuḫi in his first year and Sin-aḫḫē-erība’s extensive hiking and creation of rock reliefs following a perfunctory battle at Nibur (see Finkel 2014: 291–92) recall Fuchs’ suggestion that new kings would often choose the foothills of the Zagros as ‘soft’ targets with which to gain military experience (and an easy victory with which to return home).³⁰ Indeed, Aššur-bēl-kala had previously marched to exactly the same area with similarly bland results near the beginning of his reign, and had it recorded in a ruled section of two lines (RIMA.0.89.1 12’–13’).³¹ While an exhaustive annalistic account might list this conquest, this would be the first achievement to be edited out

²⁸ Mention at the close of the governor of Libbi-āli and the mayor of Aššur imply that this may even have entailed some manner of civic event.

²⁹ It is worth noting that KAL 3: 48 uses the variant writing ‘Qumēnû’ only otherwise known from the die of Aya-ḫālu. Considering the present scarcity of attestations for this toponym, this cannot be considered diagnostic. During this period, variant renderings for toponyms are even known adjacent to one another within the same narrative (e.g. Našipānu and Našibina for Adad-nārārī II, or Talmiš and Talbiš for Tukulti-Ninurta II), which may hint at underlying redactional decisions such as the stitching together of different accounts, rather than any chronological factors.

³⁰ “For many a young Assyrian king for the first time in sole command of his army, campaigning against the tiresome but harmless nearby hillbillies was a welcome opportunity to gain military experience without taking risk.” (Fuchs 2017a: 249).

³¹ ^{uru}Aš-ku-x could easily stand for later Atkun; as the Hurrianising personal name of the late Middle Assyrian eponym Nathāya is written alternately as ^mNa-áš-ḫa-a-a and ^mNa-at-ḫa-a-a (Soden 1974: 190, n. 4), implying some variation in the rendering of the underlying consonant in Hurrian.

of a king's *res gestae*, particularly as the subsequent defeat of the nearby kingdom of Qumānū dwarfed it in scope.³²

Mention of elephants, ostriches, and perhaps bitumen in the hunting section implies that this text must have been compiled following Adad-nārārī II's earliest campaign to Sūḫu and the Middle Euphrates. This text's broken state is hence particularly frustrating as it must have been an early recension of the king's annals (particularly considering its retention of the episode of Ušḫu and Atkun); the text mentions him only having caught a single elephant in a *kippu*-snare (KAL 3: 48 [rev.] iv 3'), not the five which he would bag in such a manner by 893 (RIMA.0.99.2 125). This comparison of hunting reports does, nonetheless, demonstrate an interesting point – early Neo-Assyrian hunting reports were evidently running game tallies to which scribes would add following each royal hunting excursion and immortalise as such in the next royal inscription, perhaps as an encouragement for kings to reach 'high scores'.³³

4.2 KAL 3: 47. Adad-nārārī II's Early Na'iri Campaigning and the Conquest of Katmuḫi (ca. 909–902 BC)

This short and broken text begins with the fragmentary tail-end of a campaign (ll. 1'–7') describing the plundering and harrowing of a region in either the Upper Tigris or Zagros (on account of a 'barbarian they' and horses as spoils), following what would appear to be a dawn attack in which a fragmentary KUR s[u- can be recognised (l. 3'). Thereafter, underneath a ruling, may be found two broken lines which appear to relate to a second campaign on 28th Kislīmu (IX) of an unknown eponymate (ll. 8'–9'). After these, underneath yet another ruling, are the scarce fragments of another narrative (ll. 10'–15'), within which an URU-sign (11') and a LUGAL-sign (14', see comm.) are recognisable.³⁴ Beneath this lies what would seem to be yet another ruling, presumably signalling

³² Confirmation of this theory is present in the unusual ruling in RIMA.0.99.1 ex. 1 between mention of Adad-nārārī II's accession in ll. 8–9 and the beginning of the campaign to Qumānū itself in l. 10 (noted by Grayson 1991: 143), which hints at a narrative ellipsis. In ex. 2 (= KAL 3: 15), this ruling is not present (although the text and date is otherwise identical), which may imply that the decision had been made to 'sublimate' this very minor campaign entirely into the ensuing Qumānū campaign by late 909, but that not all scribes had been informed of this redactional change.

³³ This observation should also be employed methodologically in assigning future fragments of royal inscriptions. Once a 'hunting profile' of each early Neo-Assyrian king might be effectively identified, the numbers, species, manner of hunting, and internal organisation of these game tallies could well enable the attribution of otherwise less than ascribable fragments to discrete rulers and even time periods within their reigns.

³⁴ While Frahm is cautious and reads LÚ?, it is very unlikely from the traces and the distance to be reconstructed from the left margin (compare ll. 8' & 15') that this could be anything other than a LUGAL, as he tentatively suggests in his commentary.

another sequence (evident on the copy, albeit not in Frahm's score), and likely the top of an ITI-sign,³⁵ and thus the date of another campaign.

On grounds of the format of the dates and some phraseology, Frahm (2009b: 98) suspected that this text hailed from the reign of Adad-nārārī II. This is particularly interesting considering the sign-forms and rulings found in KAL 3: 53 (see below) are close enough to those here that they might hail from the same text. As he further notes, the expression *ana šanûtēšu* "for the second time" (l. 9') is paralleled in the passage of Adad-nārārī II's second campaign to Kumme (RIMA.0.99.2 94). Indeed, Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions quite exceptionally rationalise campaigns into numbered campaigns within discrete regions, i.e. seven campaigns to Ḫanigbat, two campaigns to Kumme, and four campaigns to Na'iri.³⁶ Hence, Adad-nārārī II's Supertigridian expeditionary foursome is by far the most fitting historical context for the KAL 3: 47's first (ll. 1'–7') and second (ll. 8'–9') sections.³⁷ A further point to be made is that the campaign "for a second time" is at the remarkably late date of 28th Kislimu (IX); the only early Neo-Assyrian king to campaign so far into a mountainous region in winter was Adad-nārārī II, who marched to Ḫabḫu (3) and Meḫru on 4th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 909. This king's remarkable energy in his initial regnal years would support an ascription of this campaign to his early reign.

Following from these conclusions, KUR s[u]-probably refers to Suḫme, a polity on the Upper Tigris;³⁸ while this land is not mentioned in the summary, the neighbouring country of Alzi (Elazığ Province, Turkey) is, rendering this plausible. It is noteworthy that dawn attacks (*ina/lām šamaš napāḫi* 'at/before daybreak') are only attested four other times within the corpus of Assyrian royal inscriptions, once by Aššur-nāšir-apli I in the Kāšiāru mountains' (modern Tūr 'Aḫdīn, Turkey) northern fringe (RIMA.0.101.18 26'–27', see above, n. 24 for ascription), and thrice by Aššur-nāšir-apli II. The latter used this tactic once in the Upper Tigris against the Dirru-people (RIMA.0.101.1 ii 106; 17 iv 71; 19 73), and twice in Zamūa, once against Nūr-Adad of Dagara (RIMA.0.101.1 ii 48–49) and once when attacking the city of Ammali

35 It is vertically aligned with that of l. 8', supporting such a notion. A single small horizontal wedge is discernible next to this, although this is not enough to narrow down the month in question.

36 Noting a campaign to a region was "for a second time" is only otherwise evidenced for Aššur-nāšir-apli II's reign, in his extensive 879 campaign to the Upper Tigris (RIMA.0.101.1 ii 97; 17 iv 39; 19 27); as this occurred on 1st Simānu, it cannot be reconciled with KAL 3: 47 8'–9'.

37 While the two expeditions to Kumme also featuring equines might seem a tempting identification for this fragment, the second Kumme campaign occurred during Nisannu (I) (RIMA.0.99.2 94), while the present campaign began on 28th Kislimu (IX), excluding such an identification.

38 A less likely possibility is Šubria, which could be written with a *šr* in literary or archaising texts as late as the so-called Epic of Salmānu-ašarēd III (SAA 3: 17 rev. 4).

(RIMA.0.101.1 ii 53–54). This seems to have been a common Assyrian tactic intended to catch mountain-dwellers before they fled to inaccessible terrain.

The next and most striking point is the reference to a king. By the early Neo-Assyrian period, it was unusual for royal inscriptions to refer to foreign rulers as *šarru*, which permits inference of the land discussed; to the present author's knowledge, only the rulers of Karduniaš, Katmuḫi, Gargamis (Ġarābulus, Syro-Turkish border), Gilzānu, Dayaeni (mountains north of the Upper Tigris plain, Turkey), Našībīna (Nusaybin, Turkey), and Ḫubuškia are accorded this title. With the exception of Našībīna and possibly Ḫubuškia (of which nothing is attested prior to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II) the roots of each of these kingships stretch back into the second millennium. Considering the geographical remits of his activities, only two king(dom)s are plausible for Adad-nārārī II to have defeated prior to 901, namely Karduniaš and Katmuḫi. Considering the brevity of this account, it is unlikely to reflect the former, which already receives considerable shrift in the summary inscriptions and was obviously a signal achievement – by means of contrast, the narrative here receives scarcely five lines despite containing a king! Rather, the natural candidate is Katmuḫi, which was unceremoniously annexed to Assyria early in his reign (RIMA.0.99.2 26), albeit remaining a 'transitional case' well into Aššur-nāšir-apli II's days. Aššur-dān II had deposed its previous king Kundibḫalê, and its shaky vassalage may have proven an impediment to an Assyria bent on campaigning in the Upper Tigris. Hence, it might be inferred that Adad-nārārī II's conquest of Katmuḫi followed his second Na'iri campaign.

What is striking about this event, however, is that despite the ruling demonstrating that this is a new narrative, no precise date is given; by means of comparison, the sign ITI may be noted at the same position beneath a ruling on ll. 8' and 15' above and below this ruled section. Deviation from the usual dating formulae is known from Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions, and is used to announce a further campaign in the same eponymate. As there does not seem to be enough space for a description of mustering troops or of a march from Assyria before a city is mentioned, the conclusion must be that this occurred immediately following the second Na'iri campaign. Considering the stark brevity of the second campaign, it may well have proven fruitless, and a defeat of Katmuḫi was necessary to return with glory and fulfil the Assyrian army's rapine ambitions.³⁹

³⁹ A similar situation appears to have occurred following Aššur-nāšir-apli II's failed siege of Amēdu, after which the Assyrian king attacked the polity of Udu quite without provocation (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 104–13).

4.3 KAL 3: 53. A Late Na'iri Campaign of Adad-nārārī II, his Defeat of the Aḥlamû, and a Harrying of the Middle Euphrates (ca. 909–902 BC)

Left unassigned by Frahm (2009b: 104–05), this text is noted by him to be of very similar ductus to KAL 3: 47. He suggests that it may in fact be from the same text, and, indeed the format, especially the rulings, supports this. If this is the case, then it must evidently hail from elsewhere in this same text; neither overlap nor direct join may be detected, and he notes, in turn, that the height of the lines in KAL 3: 53 does not precisely correspond to that of KAL 3: 47. Regardless, should the ductus be so arrestingly similar, then this text could well have been written out by the same scribe, and have been commissioned contemporaneously with KAL 3: 47.

The first preserved section is the fragmentary tail-end of a campaign to Na'iri mentioning harvesting, troops, the crossing of mountains⁴⁰ and the plundering of Usia, an otherwise unknown city likely in the Ṭūr 'Aḥḏin.⁴¹ The second (and very brief) ruled section (ll. 7'–8') retains only the second halves of two lines: [... *diktī*] *šunu ma'attu adūk* [... *Aṣṣaraphi ušaṣ[bi?]*] “[...I mas]sacred them in droves [...] I settled them in Arrapha”; the use of the ‘barbarian they’ points to the Assyrian ruler’s foe here being either a mountaineer or nomadic group. The third section (ll. 9'–13') evidences only a scarce few broken lines mentioning bronze and iron, perhaps the Euphrates, and harvesting.

While this seems little to go on, there are some diagnostic points. Firstly, as noted by Frahm, the verb *eṣēdu* is a rarity and only attested for Adad-nārārī II and Aššurnāṣir-apli II, as is also the case for *diktu ma'attu dāku*. More vitally, Arrapha had been conquered early in Adad-nārārī II's reign, and is not mentioned in the annals of any other king. Not only would the resettlement of a nomadic population there make particularly good sense if this was a relatively fresh conquest and Arrapha was undergoing restructuring,⁴² but also narratologically inasmuch as the precise destinations of deportees are not generally provided in early Neo-Assyrian inscriptions: the Arrapha reference would thus refer back to an earlier conquest within the same

⁴⁰ The GAJR²-*nu e-tiq* of l. 5' could neatly stand for *ḥurš]ānu ētiq* ‘I crossed the mountain range’.

⁴¹ Note the similar endings of the settlements of (Al)lapsia and Irsia found in this range, perhaps implying a shared linguistic heritage. Initial l or n sometimes disappears in piedmont Zagrine and Taurine toponyms (e.g. Lillimer/Illimer, Nār-Zuḥina/Arzuḥina), meaning that Usia could well share a common etymology with Lusia in the *māt masenni* (Bagg 2017: 377).

⁴² Zadok (1995: 27) has noted the remarkable decline in Hurrian personal names within Arrapha between the second and first millennia BC, and the great deal of West Semitic and Akkadian-West Semitic names. Might it be that the resettlement of these nomads was part of a demographic organisation? If so, then this would be an interesting early use of Assyria's ‘imperial toolkit’.

composition, and hence to Adad-nārārī II's reign. Perhaps the most suggestive argument, however, is the orthographic similarity to KAL 3: 47, which seems very likely to describe Adad-nārārī II's deeds.

If such an ascription is pursued, then the events mentioned tally nicely with the early events of this king's reign. The terse defeat of a 'barbarian they' in the second section and their subsequent settlement in Arrapḫa would accord extremely well with a mention by Adad-nārārī II in his summary that he defeated the Aḫlamû during the pre-Apku period.⁴³ In turn, the final section's mention of not only bronze, but also iron (indicative of the Upper Tigris, the Ṭūr 'Aḫdīn, or the Middle Euphrates) and probably of the Euphrates alongside *eṣēdu* could point very nicely to Adad-nārārī II's early exploits in the latter region, as prior to 901 he must have received Sūḫu's tribute and have harried Lāqê (thus justifying his epithet of *dā'iš Lāqê* on the Tall 'Ašāra Stele), albeit not necessarily simultaneously; it might be imagined that he brought the crops to the neighbouring allied Assyrian bulwark of Dūr-Katlimmu (Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad, Syria) which he would claim outright as his own come 885 (RIMA.0.99.2 111–12). Finally, the first section's mention of the lands of Na'iri seemingly in their entirety,⁴⁴ of harvesting, and of plunder of a city in the Kāšiāru on the return march all point to the successful conclusion of a period of concerted campaigning in the Upper Tigris and the establishment of supremacy there, perhaps with the bolstering of an outpost with the harvested crops (the obvious candidate for this early period being Damdammusa). It is hence reasonable to propose that this marked the last of his four Na'iri Campaigns.

4.4 KAL 3: 45–46. Some campaigns of Tukultī-Ninurta II to Nirdun and Na'iri Featuring a Rock Inscription, and his Defeat of Irbibu and a Superchaburine Insurrection (ca. 890–887 BC)

Unlike the other texts presented here, KAL 3: 45–46 possesses a long history of publication and interpretation. It consists of two exemplars, A (= VAT 9752) and B (VAT 9782+10944). B was first published by Schroeder (1922) as KAH 87 and 88, who suggested that it might date to the reign of Adad-nārārī II (108), a view

⁴³ RIMA.0.99.2 33. Note the preceding footnote and the logic of deporting West Semitic-speaking nomads to Arrapḫa's Hurrian milieu as opposed to mountaineers who might share far more linguistic and cultural affinities with this newly subjugated population.

⁴⁴ *ana* seems to be preserved after (*mātāt*) *Na'iri* (l. 3'), perhaps implying that a phrase such as *ana pāt gimrišina* is intended to follow.

tentatively followed by Luckenbill (1926: 124–25). By means of contrast, Seidmann (1935: 7) and Grayson (1991: 265–67) tended towards Aššur-nāšir-apli II, while Schramm (1973: 7–8) also did not exclude Aššur-dān II and Tukulti-Ninurta II from consideration. In scholarly literature, A was known to duplicate VAT 9782, but was first published by Grayson (1991), who presented an edition of VAT 9752 and 9782 together as RIMA.0.101.21, but did not recognise that VAT 9782 joins with 10944; he published the latter separately as RIMA.0.101.22. As a result, it is only come Frahm's edition that the text could be historically analysed in its fully preserved extent.

In his edition, Frahm (2009b: 92–97) notes the similarities in phraseology between this text and KAL 3: 56. This text is divided into a series of ruled passages. In the first section (ll. 1'–6'), the military of a 'barbarian they' is defeated and brought down into the lowlands, their livestock plundered, and slain in droves, including the amputation of hands and blinding. The land in which this happens must be a pastoral highland polity, probably Nirdun (Savur Çayı basin, Turkey).⁴⁵

In the next and best-preserved section (ll. 7'–16'), Iribu, a lord on the Upper Ḥābūr, refuses to pay tribute and has fortified his city with a moat. The Assyrian king lays siege to him with a series of encircling forts and marches down the Ḥarmiš River (Wādī al-Ğagğag, Syria) plundering adjacent settlements, after which he takes the nearby fortified city of Malḥāni.⁴⁶ The king butchers 174 men, flays 12, blinds and amputates the tongues of an unknown number, cuts the throats of 153, and impales 21 particular individuals associated with Iribu.

In a briefer section (17'–18'), Barzania and Dikun and their surrounding region are attacked by the Assyrian king and plundered. Thereafter, in a new ruled section (ll. 19'–25') which is quite broken, a rock relief of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra I is mentioned, and a mountain range is crossed to reach Na'iri. There, Barzania is attacked once more, its livestock plundered, and enemy soldiers beheaded and the area generally ravaged.

Finally, in lines 26'–31', the city of Tillê (likely Tall Rumaylān, Syria) rebels and moves forces to Kaḥat (Tall Barrī, Syria) and another city, the name of which is lost. The Assyrian king marches forth and defeats the insurrectionists, looting their livestock and bringing prisoners back to Assyria.

⁴⁵ Frahm reads an only partially preserved as 'a'-du-ni (l. 2). Were *a* to be understood as the second half of the sign *nir*, then one would have *Nirduni* for Nirdun, a plausible if hitherto unattested spelling.

⁴⁶ Reasonably equated by Frahm (2009b: 95–96) with the city of Malḥina known from RIMA.0.101.19 33.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information which excludes both Aššur-nāšir-apli II and Adad-nārārī II from consideration. Tillê belonged to Katmuḫi (İdil plain, Turkey), which was conquered and incorporated into Assyria's pale early in Adad-nārārī II's reign (although it enjoyed something of a 'transitional status' well into Aššur-nāšir-apli II's time), providing a *terminus post quem*. Nonetheless, a reasonable, if not certain *terminus ante quem* is furnished by Aššur-nāšir-apli II's consecration of a palace there in 879 following some hunting about the region, which bespeaks a solidified Assyrian presence (RIMA.0.101.19 32–35). While a subsequent rebellion cannot be discounted (and Tillê would be the centre of such in the years 818–817), other historical indications support a window prior to Aššur-nāšir-apli II's reign.

Key here is Irbibu's rebellion on the River Ḫarmiš, which bespeaks a transitional situation in the Upper Ḫābūr; that such a state of affairs would have persisted as late as Aššur-nāšir-apli II's reign is not impossible, but should the city of Maḫāni have been involved in the Irbibu insurrection as the traces suggest, then Aššur-nāšir-apli II's nonchalant jaunt past there in 879 would again place this text's events earlier. As noted, the siege technique of encirclement with towers mirrors that employed in KAL 3: 56.

In turn, as noted by Frahm, it is not insignificant that the only Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions presently recovered from Kaḫat were commissioned by Tukultī-Ninurta II for the construction of a palace there (RIMA.0.100.9). It could be imagined that this occurred in response to the uprising mentioned here (26'–31') as a means of reinforcing Assyria's presence.

Although the polity of Nirdun is first explicitly attested in the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, it is only depicted as rendering tribute; considering that it occupied the region around the Savur Çayı, the chief entrance to the Tūr 'Aḫdīn massif from the north, Assyria must have clashed with it prior to his reign. Here, it should be noted that its fortified settlement of Uda was already a target during the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II, with Bialasi of Bīt-Zamāni campaigning there on Assyria's behalf in late 877 (RIMA.0.100.5 6). As this was a follow-up to a prior Assyrian campaign, Nirdun must have endured the "wolf on the fold" prior to then, earlier in the same year at the very latest.

Next, the impalement must be considered; the history and terminology of this practice remains complicated, with Radner (2015) drawing a distinction between impalement upon a stake (*zaqīpu*) and the post-mortem hanging of a body from a post (*gašīšu*), the former during sieges and the latter in the aftermath. The scarcity of attestations precludes the drawing of many more inferences, but it might be noted that Aššur-bēl-kala's annals are the first to describe the displaying of a body from a

post by an Assyrian (RIMA.0.89.2 iii 12'). In turn, the first attestation of impalement proper (i.e. *ana zaqīpi zuqqupu*) hails from Aššur-nāšir-apli II's first regnal year (882) following Ahi-yababa's aforementioned usurpation at Sūru of Bīt-Ḫalupê, with further examples occurring at Pitura (879), and Amēdu and Udu (866), these latter three in the Upper Tigris.⁴⁷ In this initial impaling on the Euphrates, however, Aššur-nāšir-apli II created an elaborate tower with impaled bodies both atop and around its structure clad with flayed skins. Unless he was a punitive prodigy, the complicatedness of this cruel edifice implies that Aššur-nāšir-apli II did not originate this practice, but rather that it already belonged to the Assyrian ruler's 'frightfulness-toolkit' by his time, and that his tower of pain had simply elaborated on earlier practices.⁴⁸ In such a respect, it might be noted that his annals call his father Tukultī-Ninurta II *ša kullat zā'irīšu inerrūma ina gašīši urettū pagrī gērīšu* "he who defeated all of his enemies and fixed his foes' corpses to posts". Combined with the excruciating torture which will further be noted in KAL 3: 56 (see below), a somewhat dark image of Tukultī-Ninurta II emerges: might he have been the innovator of this brutality?

Turning to Barzanīa (which very likely corresponds to Barzaništun [see Bagg 2017: 97–98]), this polity was reached via Mount Amadānu (either the Maden Dağları or the Karacadağ, Turkey), as is evident from the itinerary of Aššur-nāšir-apli II's 866 campaign to Amēdu (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 104). It is fascinating to note that the second march there as described in the present text involves the visiting of a rock inscription of Tukultī-apil-ešarra I. As previously discussed, Tukultī-Ninurta II seems to have been the first Neo-Assyrian king to have left rock inscriptions, a pursuit eagerly followed by his son and grandson. Indeed, a recently identified group of three Assyrian rock inscriptions near the village of Yağmur in the western flank of the Țūr 'Abdīn could correspond to the site mentioned in this text, with one of these (Panel 1) clearly from the reign of Tukultī-apil-ešarra I, and two other fragmentary examples (Panels 2 and 3) which must be early Neo-Assyrian in date (Genç and MacGinnis 2023). It is the present author's opinion that one of the unattributed examples must be from Tukultī-Ninurta II, and that the king left an inscription here on the way to

⁴⁷ See Radner's (2015) overview. It is interesting, however, to note that Aššur-nāšir-apli II's forces 'fight the good fight' in his depictions on the Balāwāt Gates, with no atrocities depicted, while Salmānu-ašarēd III's bronze bands from the same site display various examples of impalement despite the lack of accompanying textual descriptions. It may well be that impalement as a tactic had become banal by the latter's reign and did not warrant annalistic commemoration.

⁴⁸ This same torture episode of 882 is also the first dated attestation of the flaying of underlings within the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, a practice which is also present in KAL 3: 56, Side b. 6' (see below).

Barzania/Barzaništun, as the fragmentary passage here intimates.⁴⁹ Indeed, it is possible that he initially encountered the relief on his first campaign to Barzania and returned to ‘discover’ the inscription and carve his own companion piece immediately afterwards. Certainly, it makes little sense for an Assyrian army to raid the same distant, pastoral mountain polity twice in a row, and an ulterior motive might be assumed.⁵⁰

Hence, taken together, these references render an ascription of this text to Tukultī-Ninurta II as certain, particularly in light of KAL 3: 56. This is further epigraphically supported by Frahm’s note (2009: 95) that idiosyncratic writings of the sign NA in this text only otherwise occur in inscriptions from Tukultī-Ninurta II’s reign. Together with the activities of KAL 3: 56 (see below), it can be presumed that much of the early years of his reign is now covered by these two texts. The internal chronology of these events will be considered in the latter section.

4.5 KAL 3: 56. Tukultī-Ninurta II’s Early Campaigns along with his Later Flaying of Apâ of Hubuškia and Punishment of Našībīna (ca. 890–887 BC)

Frahm (2009b: 108–11) considered KAL 3: 56 to present very striking similarities with KAL 3: 45–46 in phraseology, although (as he further notes) the most remarkable congruence is their exceptionally elaborate and minute descriptions of torture. He thus contended that both texts must hail from the same ruler’s reign. Having noted historical incongruities with an attribution to Adad-nārārī II and Aššur-nāšir-apli II, he ultimately arrived at a very tentative ascription to Tukultī-Ninurta II.

Side a. (probably obv.) is extremely fragmentary, with probably six different ruled sections (Figure 2). What is so exceptional about this tablet is that while Side b. is entirely intact (Figure 3), most of Side a. has been heavily damaged with long linear scratches made after the tablet had been baked (Figure 2). While Frahm notes these to be intentional, he does not comment on why they are only present on one side of the tablet, or why they are so long, parallel, and painstaking in

⁴⁹ Note that *e-tiq* must refer to the crossing of a mountain chain.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting that a march skirting the western edge of the Tūr ‘Abdīn by way of the Karacadağ could have been enough to justify Tukultī-Ninurta II’s claim to have campaigned from the other side of the Tigris to “Ḫatti”.

places.⁵¹ Scrutiny of the photograph included in the volume demonstrates that these are striking-through of lines, as the lines run carefully through the middle of signs, implying that whoever did this possessed literacy, or at least some familiarity with cuneiform writing. As Side b. is unscathed, the implication must be that its text was needed for some purpose, perhaps for recopying, while that of Side a. was of no further use. One good possibility is that this side, which contains many brief episodes describing the reception of tributes, had been selected for deletion from the historical record;⁵² if so, then this would be remarkable material evidence of the redaction of annalistic texts, although this would require further parallels to confirm.

The first of Side a.'s episodes (ll. 1'–8') fragmentarily describes a campaign to a land possessing horses and a population referred to with the 'barbarian they' and contains the name 'Adad-nārārī' near its close. The following ruled section of two lines (ll. 9'–10') describes an imposition of tribute upon a ruler whose name is lost. Yet another section of two lines (ll. 11'–12') follows describing the reception of tribute from a 'barbarian they'. The next possesses three unsalvageable lines (ll. 13'–15'). A single-line ruled section then refers to the reception of a livestock tribute without a 'barbarian they' (l. 16). A final ruled section of five lines before the tablet breaks is almost entirely gone (ll. 17'–21'); what little remains displays the 'barbarian they'.

Side b. is far better preserved, presenting two longer narratives divided by a ruled line. The first (ll. 1'–10') is somewhat fragmentary, but concerns the flaying and execution of a leader at Ninūa, the mutilation of his men, and the destruction of his city. The second narrative (ll. 11'–22') describes an insurrection at Našībīna, possibly inflamed by another group (l. 12'), the name of which is not preserved. The Assyrian king defeats and horrifically tortures the insurrectionists, and then encircles another city, this one belonging to a ruler. This is followed by a march into the *ḥabḥu*-lands of the Kāšiāru (i.e. Ḥabḥu 4) before the text breaks off.

51 "Diese Seite der Tafel ist sehr schwer zu lesen, weil sie von zahlreichen waagerecht verlaufenden, offenbar vermittels eines Werkzeugs produzierten tiefen Kratzern durchzogen wird, die den Einblick erwecken, als seien sie erst angebracht worden, als die Tafel bereits beschädigt war." (Frahm 2009b). The final part of his analysis is less convincing, as such a scenario of careful scratching through of individual lines following the damage of the tablet would make scarce sense. An already damaged tablet could simply be discarded or copied out anew, or the entire side 'crossed out' as is known from defunct legal tablets – there must rather have been a clear intention in the creation long, scratched lines.

52 In an Assyrian context, the present author can only otherwise think of the excised passage of Palil-ēreš' stele found at Tall ar-Rimāḥ (RIMA.0.104.7 13–21), which remain largely legible despite being struck-through.



Figure 2: KAL 3: 56 Side a. (Photograph: Maul, Assur-Forschungsstelle Heidelberg).

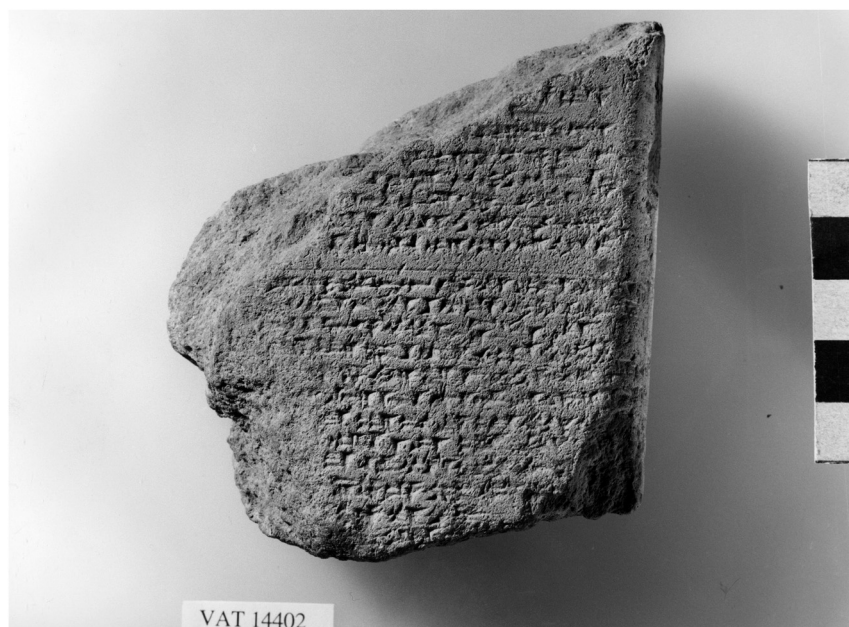


Figure 3: KAL 3: 56 Side b. (Photograph: Maul, Assur-Forschungsstelle Heidelberg).

Perhaps the most obvious point of attack is the name Adad-nārārī (Side a., l. 7'), and yet this is unfortunately not all that diagnostic. The campaign in question must have taken place in the Upper Tigris or Zagros due to the horses present as spoil, most likely the former. As Adad-nārārī I campaigned as far afield as Eluḥat (RIMA.0.77.1 8; 2 38), he cannot be discounted as the referent here, although his later namesake was much more active there and revered by his son, as discussed.

Rather, the most vital indicator is the appearance of Našibīna, which provides a chronological framework. This polity was only defeated by Adad-nārārī II in 896, at which point its ruler Nūr-Adad was replaced with a docile new client king as described in a colourful passage.⁵³ Despite Adad-nārārī II's continued activities in the Upper Ḥābūr, no mention is made of the city up to the end of annalistic documentation in 893, presenting a reasonable *terminus post quem* for the revolt. In turn, a good *terminus ante quem* is lent by the itinerary of Tukultī-Ninurta II's journey up the Greater Ḥābūr at the close of his largely peaceful Medioeuphratine campaign of 885; the monarch ceased collecting tribute after Šadikanni (Tall 'Aḡāḡa, Syria), implying that the series of settlements (including Našibīna) through which he passed thereafter on the way to Ḥuzīrīna (Sultantepe, Turkey) were not vassals, but rather provincial centres (RIMA.0.100.5 115–20). Were this to hold, then a brief window between late 893 and mid-to late 887 would be available for this uprising, probably discounting Adad-nārārī II and Aššur-nāšir-apli II. While such an insurrection could be supposed subsequent to provincialisation, the multiple campaigns through the Kāšīāru mountains undertaken by Aššur-nāšir-apli II early in his reign without mention of incident at Našibīna would seem to imply that the southern approaches to the Ṭūr 'Aḥdīn were well secured, and that it was now the *ḥabḥu*-lands (4) nestled within the range which posed an issue (see Radner 2006a).

Considering all of the minor (and apparently deleted) actions listed on Side a. and the grander business of the capture and flaying of the ruler of a city prior to the revolt at Našibīna and ensuing campaign on Side b. (of what is at all preserved of the tablet), it seems very unlikely that Adad-nārārī II would have had time for these many activities alongside a new war with Karduniaš and an assault on Sūḥu in the three years prior to his death.⁵⁴

In turn, and quite vitally, the gruesome and precisely documented torture forming the text's most distinctive hallmark (akin to KAL 3: 45–46, see above) is

⁵³ Radner (2006b: 52) understands annexation as having occurred directly in 896, perhaps on account of curious wording of RIMA.0.99.2 79. Considering the enthronement of a new lord of Našibīna in the previous lines, this seems unlikely; rather a closely supervised 'transitional case' situation is plausible.

⁵⁴ This would particularly be the case if KAL 3: 45–46 is understood as hailing from the same reign or even composition. See below in the summary of Adad-nārārī II for discussion of the king's possible illness between late 884 and mid-883.

entirely absent from Adad-nārārī II's royal inscriptions, where enemies are simply slain in heaps. Here, some 45 or more individuals receive amputations, blindings (in one instance with apparently molten tin!), and mutilation of the ears. While Aššur-nāšir-apli II also amputated the arms of captured soldiers and unabashedly decapitated, flayed, impaled, and even immured (RIMA.0.101.1 72), the other brutalities meted out here were not in his punitive inventory. Considering that KAL 3: 45–46 (see above) fields yet more of the same grisly horrors and displays many other similarities, it should be assumed that the same king commissioned both inscriptions.

A further point is the siegecraft depicted. Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions laud him as having invented the siege technique used here of encirclement with fortresses during the siege of Raqamātu/Gidāra in 898 (RIMA.0.99.2 54–55). That it appears here (KAL 3: 56 Side b. 18'–19') without further comment implies that this tactic was no longer novel and must postdate that year (and, indeed, 893). The same stratagem is employed in KAL 3: 45–46 10'–11', further underlying these two texts' chronological and stylistic propinquity. In turn, this technique excludes an ascription to the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, as this king favoured entirely different and more aggressive siege techniques such as storming, tunnelling, or using battering rams and siege towers.⁵⁵

Hence, all of these various factors indicate that the events of this text must have occurred within the early years of the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II (i.e. 890–887). From these findings, the capture and flaying of an enemy leader at Ninūa and the torture of his men in Side b., ll. 1'–10' might be examined. Flaying at Ninūa or Arba'il (rather than in the field) was reserved for enemies of importance, either kings or individuals of particular royal loathing;⁵⁶ furthermore, this individual nonetheless only held sway over a single city, but possessed silver and gold. Finally, a broken ethnicon]-*a'-ia* survives (b. l. 3'). Considering the established timeframe, three plausible candidates exist: Apā, king of the city-state of Ĥubuškia, an unknown ruler of an affluent city in Lāqê, or the governor of Sūḥu as all possess appropriately written gentilica⁵⁷ and rendered silver and gold as tribute.⁵⁸ What would bespeak Lāqê is the

⁵⁵ Examples of storming include Sūru (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 18) or (unsuccessfully) Amēdu (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 109). Tunnels, rams, and towers were used at the sieges of Kaprabu (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 52) and Udu (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 111). Nowhere is the encirclement tactic described in Aššur-nāšir-apli II's annals.

⁵⁶ See Minen's (2020) overview and discussion of flaying.

⁵⁷ RIMA.0.101.17 i 80: KUR *ḥub-uš-ki-a-ia*; RIMA.0.100.5 85: KUR *la-qa-a-ia*; RIMA.0.101.1 iii 34 KUR *su-ḥa-a-ia*.

⁵⁸ The present author is sceptical that a Temannu (see the writing KUR *te-man-na-a-ia* of RIMA.0.99.2 63 noted by Frahm [2009: 110]) could be the figure mentioned here, as the Temannu seem to have been restricted to the southern fringes of the Kašīāru and their urban rulers would seem to have already been deposed by this juncture. Indeed, the most prominent settlement ruled by a Temannu was Našībina which appears in the following settlement.

very similar treatment of Aḫi-yababa in 882 at Sūru of Bīt-Ḫalupê (probably Tall Fidēn, Syria), but what contradicts this is the lack of any disturbance of the lucrative region of Lāqê between Adad-nārārī II's march of 894 and Tukultī-Ninurta II's visit of 885, during which it was obviously in boom, and the very specific case of Aḫi-yababa who had killed Aššur-nāšir-apli II's double brother-in-law by inherited marriage;⁵⁹ in turn, none of Lāqê's emporia were destroyed during this period.⁶⁰ Sūḫu may be similarly discounted: It was only defeated at the end of Adad-nārārī II's reign, and Ilu-bāni/ibni would seem to have governed it from then on until his death early in the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II.⁶¹ Hence, it seems most likely that it is the ill fate of Apâ, King of Ḫubuškia, to which the reader is here party, which would make sense considering his appearance on the summary inscription. As his successors are termed 'King of Na'iri' (perhaps a hereditary or hegemonic title among the royalty of the Taurus and Zagros),⁶² the prominence of this kingdom during this period is evident; in turn, Tukultī-Ninurta II would have truly earned the title *kāšid (mātāt) Na'iri* by authoring this sovereign's doom. However, the question remains as to what justified this punishment. It is worth comparing this episode to that of Būbu, son of Babua the *bēl-āli* of Ništun, who was flayed by Aššur-nāšir-apli II in his first regnal year (RIMA.0.101 i 67–68) shortly after Gilzānu and Hubuškia presented their tributes at Ḫabrūri (i 56–57); no motivation for this act is presented by the annals,

59 The previous ruler Ḫamatāya had given his two sisters as wives to Tukultī-Ninurta II only three years before (RIMA.0.100.5 101–02) and Aššur-nāšir-apli II would have inherited them, rendering the usurpation an affront to the Assyrian royal house. It is unlikely that the small-fry Aḫi-yababa “son of a nobody” (RIMA.0.101.1 i 76; 81) would otherwise have warranted so prominent death as far afield as Ninūa.

60 The strange absence of Sūru of Bīt-Ḫalupê in 895 and disappearance of Zūriḫ of Bīt-Ḫalupê in 885 can be explained: They were one and the same toponym, albeit the earlier writing Zūriḫ preserved the common Hurrian toponymic ending *-he* affixed to its otherwise Semitic name (for *-he* to *-(vowel)+h*, compare Kalḫu/Kalaḫ [Bagg 2017: 277–83]). The island of Talb/miš (also Talbāniš) of Sūḫu (Tilbis, Iraq) is another example of a Hurrian toponym on the Middle Euphrates (from Hurrian *talv-* ‘to be large, great’, thus *talvi=i=šše* ‘the great place’ in analogy to Transtigridian Talmuš [Gir-e Pān, Iraq], i.e. *talvi=o=že*, following Wilhelm 1996: 175, n. 5]; note the m/b variance typical of Hurrian toponymy, and that the infix *-ān* of the by-form Talbāniš excludes a Semitic etymology but recalls hybrid toponyms such as Mar(i)dab/mān [Bāsitka, Iraq] or Uḫušmān [Upper Ḫābūr]) and Pongratz-Leisten (2011) and Kühne (2017) have recently pointed to interesting examples of Hurrian culture and belief in the region, supporting the notion that some Hurrian influence may have been at work in the area's toponymy. The present author is preparing a more detailed study on this topic.

61 See Edmonds in press for a new reconstruction of Sūḫu's Iron-age history, and Edmonds 2023 for a detailed study of the career of Ilu-bāni/ibni.

62 As is attested for Kākia (RIMA.0.102.2 i 20) and Yanzū (RINAP 2.1 104; 148; 2 99; 7 54; 65 307), the latter of whom's name simply means ‘king’ in Kassite, implying that this sobriquet was actually his title (Fuchs 2017b: 128–130). This same title was also adopted by some early Urartian rulers, and is thus deserving of further investigation.

and it is possible that it was done simply “*pour encourager les autres*”,⁶³ as the Assyrian demand for horses had become a crucial issue.⁶⁴

Considering the tight timeframe of three years at the beginning of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign, the deletion of the events of Side a., and that KAL 3: 45–46 must also date to this chronological span, the most logical constellation of events is to understand the events of Side b. as the latest events. Placing Side a.'s events prior to this, it seems most likely these six to seven campaigns occurred very early in Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign, and that they had thereafter been redacted on account of their inconsequentiality once this king had achieved greater things (such as the defeat of Apā), a situation akin to that of Ušḫu and Atkun's deletion from the annals as early as 909 (see above). In light of the tightness of the period, it would be most logical to infer the Našībīna episode ending in a foray into the Upper Tigris region of Side b. 11'–22' as constituting the first half of the Na'iri campaign of 887, which begins *in media res* in RIMA.0.100.5 1–3 with a return through the Tūr 'Abdīn after campaigning in the Upper Tigris, pillaging Ki[baki] (presumably Mağara, Turkey) on the journey back. This would place the other campaigns in the Upper Ḫābūr and Upper Tigris recorded in KAL 3: 45–46 in the intervening period, perhaps between 889 and 888. With this analysis of the five texts completed, new portraits may be now presented of these two kings.

5 Adad-nārārī II – Warrior King

Adad-nārārī II's reign is marked by sweeping conquests, the two main targets of which were Karduniaš and Ḫanigalbat. His throne name (which he himself intriguingly calls an “important name” [*šumu kabtu*, RIMA.0.99.2 9–10]) was programmatic,⁶⁵ as his namesake not only conquered a large swathe of Ḫanigalbat, but also celebratedly vanquished the Kassite king Nazi-Maruttaš, a deed celebrated in both an Assyrian epic composition and elsewhere in later literary tradition (Frazer 2013). The remarkable ambition implied by this decision is already demonstrated by

63 Note Adad-nārārī II's flippancy *casus belli* against Sikkur and Sappānu that they had failed to deliver tribute since the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta I (RIMA.0.99.2 84–86) – some three centuries before!

64 Compare with the equine summary of RIMA.0.100.5 128–31 and the deal struck with Bīt-Zamāni in the same text, l. 25.

65 Galter (2018) has already noted Adad-nārārī II's preoccupation with his own name and the similarities between these two rulers in their campaigning targets. It seems very likely that kings of this early period were bestowed their future throne names upon nomination to crown prince by their father, see Radner 2005: 35; Frahm 2005: 47. It is no coincidence that his earliest completed public work, the quay wall of Aššur in 909, is described as having been built by Adad-nārārī I (RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 10'–16').

the activities of his year of accession (911); after a minor campaign to Ušḫu and Atkun, perhaps as a first test of his abilities, Adad-nārārī II launched what would seem to be a surprise offensive on Qumānū, attacking its capital Kipšūna and capturing its king, Ilūya, and enforcing vassalage upon the kingdom. This aggressive strategy from the very outset could only have been enabled by a military and populace reinvigorated after the deprivations of the previous decades, and it must be assumed that Aššur-dān II's reign had been responsible for this renaissance. The following reconstruction of his reign can now be presented (Table 7):

Table 7: A new chronological summary of the events of Adad-nārārī II's reign.

911		AN II's accession. Campaign to Ušḫu and Atkun Campaign to Qumānū	KAL 3: 48 6'–11' RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 10–19; KAL 3: 48 12'–18'; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 15'–16'
Mid-late 911 to ca. mid 910		(10–15 lines of campaign narrative, either various smaller campaigns or 1–2 larger campaigns)	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. 20–ca. 30
ca. mid 910 to mid-909		Campaign and annexation of Arraḫa. War with Babylonia probably initiated	RIMA.0.99.1 obv. ca. 30
Mid-late 909		Campaign to the Tigris, defeat of 40 cities, deportation of 3 others	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 1'–5'
4th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 909		Campaign against Ḫabḫu (3) and land of Meḫru	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 6'–9'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 24–25; KAL 3: 16–17 16'
6th Kislimu (IX) 909		Renovation of quay at Aššur completed	RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 10'–20'
Unknown year a. (909–901)		Campaign deeper into Ḫabḫu (3) to Salua and Uraṭri	RIMA.0.99.2 24–25; KAL 3: 16–17 16'–17'
Unknown year b. (first half of 900's)	Prior (same year) 28th Kislimu (IX)	1st Na'iri campaign	KAL 3: 47 1'–7'
	Directly following previous campaign	2nd Na'iri campaign (very brief)	KAL 3: 47 8'–9'
		Conquest of Katmuḫi	KAL 3: 47 10'–14'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 26; KAL 3: 16–17 21
Unknown year b.+1 (= year. c)	Date given but broken	Another campaign, of which nothing is preserved	KAL 3: 47 15'
Unknown year d. (=c.?)		Defeat of Babylonia, conclusion of 1st Babylonian war	KAL 3: 16–17 27'–29'; cf. ABC 21 iii 1–7
Unknown year(s) e.		Campaign to Lullumê, Zamūa, Ḫabḫu (2), and Namri. (year d. likely <i>terminus post quem</i>)	RIMA.0.99.2 23–24; KAL 3: 16–17 13'–15'

Table 7: (continued)

Unknown year(s) f.	1st campaign	4th Na'iri campaign	KAL 3: 53 1'–6'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 30
	2nd campaign	Defeat and resettlement of the Aḫlamû	KAL 3: 53 7'–8'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 33
	3rd campaign	Campaign to Middle Euphrates	KAL 3: 53 9'–13'; cf. RIMA.0.99.2 33
901 or (immediately?) prior 901		Renovation of Apku completed	RIMA.0.99.2 36–38
		1st Ḫanigalbat campaign. Nūr-Adad of Našibīna defeated at Pa'uza	RIMA.0.99.2 39–41
900		2nd Ḫanigalbat campaign. Battle at Našibīna. Yaridu raided. Saraku occupied with the region's crops	RIMA.0.99.2 42–44
899		3rd Ḫanigalbat campaign. Huzīrīna taken. Mamlī defeated. Bīt-Adini sends diplomatic gift	RIMA.0.99.2 45–48
898		4th Ḫanigalbat campaign. Mūquru of Raḡamātu/Gidāra defeated	RIMA.0.99.2 49–60
897		5th Ḫanigalbat campaign. Tribute received	RIMA.0.99.2 61
896	Earlier	6th Ḫanigalbat campaign. Našibīna defeated after siege. Nūr-Adad removed and new client king installed	RIMA.0.99.2 62–80; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 48'–50'
	Later	Campaign to Sikkur and Sappānu	RIMA.0.99.2 80–90
15th Simānu (III) 895		1st campaign to Kumme	RIMA.0.99.2 91–93; KAL 3: 16–17 17'–19'
Nisannu (I) 894		2nd campaign to Kumme	RIMA.0.99.2 94–96; KAL 3: 16–17 19'–20'
Simānu (III) 894		7th Ḫanigalbat campaign. Tribute collected. Campaign to the Middle Euphrates	RIMA.0.99.2 97–119; cf. KAL 3: 16–17 51'
17th Abu (V) 893		Renovation of Gula Temple at Aššur completed	RIMA.0.99.2 128–34
Late 893 to 891		2nd Babylonian war and subsequent peace treaty	KAL 3: 16–17 30'–34'; cf. ABC 21 iii 8–21
		2nd campaign to Sūḫu (after Baby- lonian war)	KAL 3: 16–17 39'–41'
		(other campaign[s]?)	KAL 3: 16–17 35'–38'; 52' onwards
891		AN II dies	

In the wake of this early victory, it seems that Adad-nārārī II already assaulted and took the Babylonian protectorate of Arrapḫa between late 911 and mid-909. As discussed, it is unclear whether his Karduniaš campaign should be linked with this activity or not. During this period, in the autumn of 909, he also attacked forty settlements on the Tigris and deported the populations of three, all seemingly belonging to a mountainous or pastoral polity, although it is unclear whether this occurred upstream or downstream of Assyria.⁶⁶ On 4th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 909, he would march into Meḫru, a vital source of timber (RIMA.0.99.1 rev. 6'–9'): That he ventured into the mountains so late in the year bespeaks once more his remarkable energy as king, and, indeed, he would even campaign into Na'iri as deep into winter as 28th Kislimu (IX) on another occasion (KAL 3: 47 8'–9', see above). At some point between early 908 and 901, he must have surpassed this and marched on to the more distant regions of Salua and Uraṭri (perhaps in the region of Çatak, Turkey?) as summarised in RIMA.0.99.2 24–25.

Only the vaguest of chronologies can be established for the ensuing period up to 901, and considering the remarkable number of actions already in his first years, various minor campaigns might be assumed. Whether it occurred prior to or after late 909, his successful war with Karduniaš was the defining achievement of this period, leading him to style himself *kāšid (māt) Karduniaš*. This need not have been a single year's campaigning, but the decisive moment was the resounding defeat of his adversary Marduk-mudammiq, who is stated by the *Synchronistic Chronicle* to have adopted a defensive position on Mount Yalman, and his pursuit of the Babylonian to the River Turān (Diyālā), where the latter appears to have abandoned much of his equipment (ABC 21 iii 1–7). It may well be in the aftermath of this event that Adad-nārārī II undertook his dramatic foray southwards to Dēru (Tall al-'Aqar, Iraq); in light of the religious significance of this city (Frahm 2009a) and the impermanence implied by *kašādu*, this may well have been a propagandistic pilgrimage (akin to Kumme) rather than a military operation. In the aftermath, Assyria had incorporated Lubdu (vicinity of the Ġabal Ḥamrīn, Iraq) and controlled a swathe of territory stretching as far south as Laḫīru (1).⁶⁷

The wake of this victory must have witnessed considerable 'mopping up', such as the re-incorporation of Idu (Sātū Qalā, Iraq) and Zaqqu into Assyria. It would also have been the precondition for campaigning in Lullumê which ensued, as Assyria's

⁶⁶ Note that the Itu'u attacked by Tukulti-Ninurta II are also described simply as *ša šitkunū eli Idiqlat* "who were settled on the Tigris" (RIMA.0.100.5 49–50).

⁶⁷ Note that *šakānu* is exceptionally used instead of *turru* which may indicate a less than firm addition to Assyria's pale.

new north-eastern flank now lay open.⁶⁸ His annals mention campaigning as far as the passes of Namri, also a Babylonian holding during this period. It is in this context that the rather forlornly named Assyrian garrison of Tukulti-Aššur-ašbat at Arrakdi (probably as-Sulaymāniya, Iraq, see Radner 2017) must have been established, although it is unclear whether Adad-nārārī II or Tukultī-Ninurta II was responsible, and it may well have been the latter.

It was likely in the wake of his Babylonian expansion that Adad-nārārī II turned his attention to Na'iri. As KAL 3: 47 demonstrates, two campaigns to Na'iri certainly preceded his assault on Katmuḫi, which must have happened in the year following the second campaign, as it is dated to 28th Kislīmu (IX), at the very limits of the campaigning season. Perhaps marching through or around this previously disloyal vassal's territory to the Upper Tigris presented a frustration, and so he determined to annex the kingdom come spring. The *terminus post quem* for this action would have been 907, thus with the second Na'iri campaign having unfolded late in 908, but these campaigns could also have reasonably occurred within the mid-900's. As the remaining sources intimate, the chief priority here was the procuring of horses from the thriving husbandry of the Upper Tigris basin. The presumed reconquest of the cities of Arinu, Turḫu, and Zaduru from Šubria (RIMA.0.99.2 35 – the sentence is very curiously formulated) must have occurred during this period, and demonstrates the establishment of a 'pre-provincial' presence in the region, presumably in cooperation with the relict Assyrian community there (see Edmonds 2021: 79–81). His devastation of Alzi during the same period (RIMA.0.99.2 31–32) was likely a prophylactic measure to secure these Assyrian possessions. Following the intimations in KAL 3: 53, what was probably the last of the Na'iri campaigns saw the reinforcement of an Assyrian outpost in the Upper Tigris, presumably at Damdammusa, as is demonstrated by the harvesting of crops for the garrison there, and then his return through the Kāšiāru, his objectives apparently fulfilled. The conclusion of his Na'iri campaigns may have been close to 901, as a general spirit of consolidation throughout Assyria is evident during this later period.

This is attested by the subsequent defeat and deportation of the Aḫlamū (perhaps menacing the Singār or Middle Euphrates at the time) to Arrapḫa (RIMA.0.99.2 33; KAL 3: 53 7'–8'), the levying of tribute from Sūḫu and harrowing of Lāqē (its harvested crops perhaps being deposited at Dūr-Katlimmu), and finally Apku's refurbishment; this activity may well have been selected to commemorate

68 A broken *Gottesbrief* from an Adad-nārārī (KAL 3: 29) mentioning the king departing from Burali (province of Arba'il) on 25th Araḫsamnu (VIII) of an unknown year and attacking the otherwise unknown settlements of Pandu(-x?) and Habatešu before the text breaks off displays textual affinities with Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions (not to mention his curious taste for campaigning late in the year!) and likely corresponds to a campaign conducted in the Zagros or its foothills during this period.

one era's close, and the beginning of another, i.e. the Ḥanigalbat campaigns. Not only was Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I emulated and Assyria's Tigridian *rive droite* safeguarded from nomadic incursions (a problem well into the early 20th century AD),⁶⁹ but also communication with the Singār and Ḥābūr strengthened for the coming campaigns.⁷⁰

901 brought the initiation of Adad-nārārī II's seven Ḥanigalbat campaigns. Their concerted nature (including a superfluous final campaign, perhaps to reach a 'magic' seven) implies that they had long been planned, and all external threats to Assyria removed before their advent. Their central aim was the defeat of Našībīna, which would win Assyria hegemony over the region. This began with a pitched battle in the first year and the establishment of a forward stronghold at Saraku in the second. By the sixth year (896), he had succeeded in blockading Našībīna until it surrendered; he captured its king Nūr-Adad, and placed a new ruler on the throne whose only fragmentarily preserved name [DN-gi]milli hints at a Mesopotamian cultural background.⁷¹ In the intervening campaigns, he stormed and presumably provincialized the former Assyrian holding of Raqamātu/Gidāra, received the allegiance of Gūzāna/Bit-Baḥiāni (Tall Ḥalaf, Syria, ultimately destined to become a 'transitional case'), 'tidied up' along the western foothills of the Kāšiāru, re-established a presence at Ḥuzīrīna, and engaged in early diplomacy with Bit-Adini.

With Našībīna humbled, Adad-nārārī II could devote himself to other projects, such as a march to Sikkur and Sappānu in the Zagros (RIMA.0.99.2 84–88, this probably warranting the emendation to *Ḥabḥu ša betāni* in KAL 3: 16–17 14') and two expeditions in alleged defence of the shrine city of Kumme which were probably as much about securing horses as divine favour (RIMA.0.99.2 91–96; KAL 16–17: 17'–20'). He followed these activities with a tribute-gathering march to Ḥanigalbat to announce his dominance and 'incorporate' it into Assyria's borders, and then a journey down the Middle Euphrates collecting further tithes.

⁶⁹ Note once more the Broken Obelisk's attribution to Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, meaning that Apku's refurbishment was undertaken by this king, completing his father's work (RIMA.0.89.7 v 34–37). Adad-nārārī II is somewhat coy, stating only that former kings had built there (RIMA.0.99.2 36–38).

⁷⁰ There was likely also a deeper cultural element at work here: The ancient route from Ninūa to the Singār on which it lay passed through region called Kadišharu (RIMA.0.101.19 31), a portmanteau of Semitic *qdš* 'holy' and Hurrian *hari* 'road', and its final destination may well have been the still unlocalised settlement of Nēmed-Ištar 'Ištar's Resort', a fitting destination for a journey by the 'Lady of Ninūa'.

⁷¹ While Grayson's edition is very cautious, RIMA.0.99.2 73 can be plausibly reconstructed from Schroeder's (1922: 54–55) copy as follows: [*ašruk* (?) ^dDN-gi]-*mil'-li* MAN 'ĀB'.GU₄^{7(hi? a?)}]^{meš} 'UDU^{1meš}-šú [x x x]-šú *ina* ^{giš}GU.ZA EN-ti-šú *it-ta-šab*. Considering that the previous lines describe the looting of Nūr-Adad's treasures, the logic would here be that the new ruler, one [DN-gi]milli, was granted his predecessor's herds by Adad-nārārī II when he assumed the throne.

Curiously, he stopped before reaching Sūḫu, previously his tributary, the southernmost point rendering tribute being Ḫindānu (Abū Kamāl, Syria, RIMA.0.99.2 119). Considering the ensuing war with Babylonia and the subsequent “defeat” of Sūḫu in KAL 3: 16–17 39’–41’, it is likely that Sūḫu’s governor had accepted Karduniaš’ offer of protection, and that a Babylonian military contingent large enough to deter Adad-nārārī II had been stationed there, much as would be the case in 878.

This may well have been *casus belli* for the conflict which ensued. It seems unlikely that this had begun prior to mid-893, as Adad-nārārī II inaugurated a temple of Gula at Aššur in the middle of the summer (17th Abu [V]), when he would have been expected to have been busy prosecuting his war.⁷² Considering that his last campaign had been more than a year prior⁷³ and Gula’s role within the Mesopotamian pantheon, he may well have suffered from poor health following his Medioeuphratine campaign of 894 or his many years of relentless campaigning had begun to take a toll upon him.⁷⁴ This is particularly interesting considering the wording of the *Synchronistic Chronicle* (ABC 21 iii 8–21). Šamaš-mudammiq of Karduniaš had died and Nabû-šuma-ukīn had acceded to the Babylonian throne. The chronicle is ambiguous as to the instigator of the conflict, merely stating that Adad-nārārī II clashed with Nabû-šuma-ukīn, and that the former won, before mentioning that Adad-nārārī II raided various towns, took the booty back to Assyria, and strategically forced Nabû-šuma-ukīn to the negotiating table.

It may well be that it was Nabû-šuma-ukīn who had initiated renewed hostilities between Assyria and Babylonia, banking on Adad-nārārī II’s infirmity. Very suspicious in this regard is that the eponym named in RIMA.0.99.2 134 does not reflect that named in the later eponym lists – could there have been an internal political intrigue during this period? Certainly, Adad-nārārī II was unable for whatever reason to truly press his advantage, as a peace accord was ultimately agreed upon, with the two men

72 Had he already ‘won’ then it also seems unlikely that this event would not escaped mention within the inscription.

73 Compare this to RIMA.0.99.1 6’–9’ which describes a campaign to Ḫabḫu (3) and Meḫru completed only a month before the inauguration of the quay at Aššur. In turn, KAL 16–17, evidently compiled following the second Babylonian war, features an entirely reworked geographical summary where RIMA.0.99.2 does not. It may well be that the conclusion of this second war and the subsequent assault on Sūḫu had occasioned this redrafting.

74 Significantly, only four other Assyrian kings are known to have restored temples solely to Gula, Tukulti-Ninurta I, Aššur-aḫu-iddina, and Aššur-bāni-apli. While nothing is known to the present author about the health of the first, the second’s bouts of poor health are well documented, and the last famously eschewed campaigning for palatial and scholarly pursuits, perhaps indicating a sickly constitution.

marrying each other's daughters and a border being set from Til-(Bit-)Bāri to Til-ša-Abtāni and Til-ša-Zabdāni. The political manoeuvring was probably more complex than just this, with Laḫīru (1) (likely 'Askī Kifri, Iraq) perhaps returned to Babylonia's orbit,⁷⁵ Lubdu permitted some autonomy,⁷⁶ and Karduniaš' protection of Sūḫu revoked for the time being.⁷⁷ In the wake of this accord, Adad-nārārī II would have then have marched upon Sūḫu and dealt with it piecemeal. Not all that long afterwards, in 891, he would pass away; it would be left to his son to complete the renovation of the walls of Aššur with which he was still engaged at the time.

In sum, the reign of Adad-nārārī II represented a remarkable shift in Assyria's fortunes from scarce more than a recovering Transtigridian kingdom to a leading state within the Near East. Although Salmānu-ašarēd III's reign would mark the zenith of early Neo-Assyria's career, the kingdom would not experience another leader of such brilliance until Tukultī-apil-Ešarra III. Like the latter, his sheer competence renders his actual character somewhat obscure. An incredible dynamism and thirst to emulate his predecessors can nonetheless be noted; particularly telling is that he ventured into the mountains on campaign as late in the year as 28th Kislimu (IX) and 4th Araḫsamnu (VIII) respectively, something scarce other Assyrian ruler durst.⁷⁸ With this energy came also a touch of vainglory, whether in his long marches to distant shrines, his inscriptions' curious emphasis upon his own youthfulness, vigour, and appearance in what must have been middle age, or the unique description of his defeat of Našībīna in which the newly installed client king praises Adad-nārārī II in direct speech (RIMA.0.99.2 77–78). Adad-nārārī II's strange eponym stele remains an enigma; Andrae (1913: 14–18, no. 9) understands this as an anthropomorphic statue some three metres in height (including the base) which had been crudely reworked into a stele (Figure 4).⁷⁹ Considering the figure wears

75 KAL 3: 16–17 continues to mention Ugār-Sallum and Laḫīru (1) (27'–28') despite the reorganisation or deletion of other sections. Laḫīru (1) is to be distinguished from a second Laḫīru (i.e. 2) much further south (Bagg 2020: 366–67).

76 As is evident from the joint tribute rendered by the governors of Lubdu and Sūḫu to Aššur-nāšir-apli II (RIMA.0.101.30 95–96), this 'province' was actually a 'transitional case' (see Postgate 1992: 256–57 for this concept) akin to Sūḫu, where the 'governor' was free with his allegiance.

77 Under its new local ruler Kudurru, Sūḫu had regained Babylonia's protection by the events of 878 (RIMA.0.101.1 iii 16–24).

78 Quite famously, Šin-aḫḫē-erība saw no shame in turning back from a campaign to the Zagros for fear of the snowfall; on this and other examples of Assyrian trepidation at cold weather, see van Buylaere 2009.

79 RIMA.0.99.1002; Andrae 1913: 14–18 (no. 9); Reade 2004: 462. The present author is currently completing a detailed study of this overlooked artifact and its consequences for early Neo-Assyrian history.

Assyrian royal regalia, this could only be a previous king, but which could have earned such treatment, and why would Adad-nārārī II have chosen so curious a means of legitimating himself?

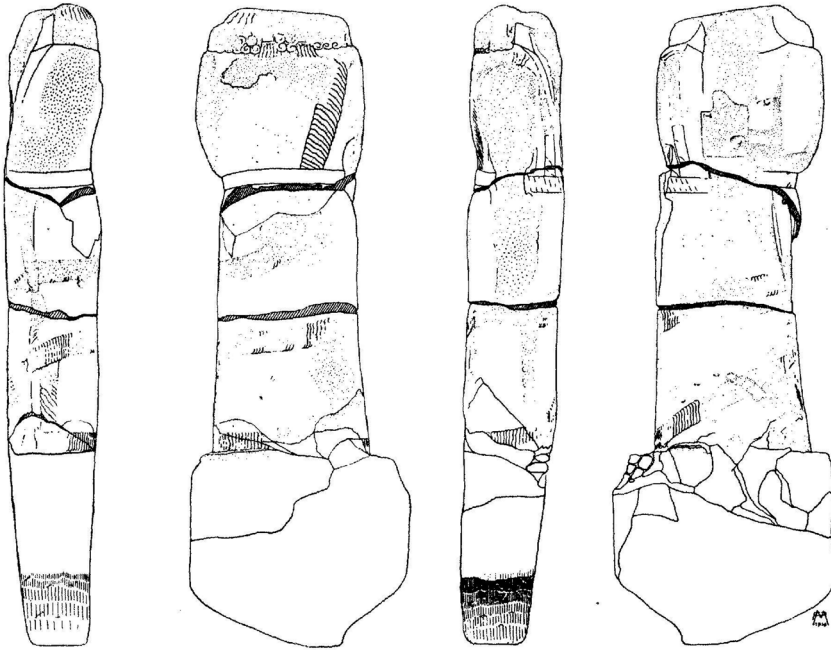


Figure 4: The eponym stele of Adad-nārārī II (Andrae 1913: 16, fig. 18).

Nonetheless, this is little to go on in terms of his character: As always, the most competent Assyrian kings present the least personal information. Certainly, Babylonia would not forget him: One exemplar of Adad-nārārī II's Ninūa Inscription was discovered in Bābilu (Bābil, Iraq), a trophy from the capital's fall some three hundred years later.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ The mutilation of certain eponym stelae of Assyrian kings and the preservation of others is intriguing. The otherwise sheltered inscription within the niche of the stele of Tukultī-Ninurta I, an Assyrian king most perfidious to the blue-blooded Babylonian, had been completely destroyed (Andrae 1913: 37–38, no. 22). By this same token, the absence of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I's stele (Reade 2004: 460) could well be explained as having been taken as (admittedly very heavy) spoils as revenge for his own wars on Karduniaš, or disposed of in some other manner.

6 Tukultī-Ninurta II – Consolidator and Innovator

Considering that both his father and grandfather had enjoyed long reigns of some two decades apiece and, in turn, his son and grandson would enjoy even longer reigns, it is likely that Tukultī-Ninurta II's eight-year incumbency began at something of a mature age, rendering it a 'sandwich reign'. This would be aptly supported by his (unfinished) palace at Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta ('Tukultī-Ninurta's Resort') at modern Qaḏiya just outside of Ninūa. His throne name is particularly interesting; like his father, it suggests a preoccupation with Babylonia (particularly interesting considering that Nabû-šuma-ukīn was now his double brother-in-law), and perhaps even scholarly pretensions, as will be explored.⁸¹ Despite his apparent age, his reign is patterned by an energetic consolidation of Adad-nārārī II's achievements and some further successes, albeit no direct territorial expansion seems to have occurred.⁸² In contrast to his father's unusual monument, his own eponym stele seems to have been a traditional *narû*-shape, albeit also quite sizeable (Figure 5).⁸³

As reverent as he would seem to have been of his father, Adad-nārārī II had left him with a large but disunified patchwork of provinces and dependencies on the Upper Ḫābūr, and it hardly surprises that his early years required the brutal suppression of rebellions by Irbibu on the River Ḫarmiš, Tillê and Kaḫat, and Našībīna. It may have been the frustrations of these constant uprisings which prompted the brutal measures which Tukultī-Ninurta II would undertake, which are curious in both their excess and minute documentation. Certainly, it is striking that his own son dubbed him "he who ... fixed his foes' corpses to posts"

⁸¹ As previously noted, Adad-nārārī II's annals mention that the very minor Zagrine polities of Sikkur and Sappānu had failed to render tribute since Tukultī-Ninurta I (RIMA.0.99.2 84–86). In turn, Adad-nārārī II restored the temple of Gula at Aššur which had (last) been built by Tukultī-Ninurta I (RIMA.0.99.2 128). Moreover, KAL 3: 22 describes Tukultī-Ninurta II's restoration of a silver ritual vessel for beer libation to Aššur which had been created by his namesake. All of these points demonstrate a keen historical awareness of Tukultī-Ninurta I's reign, and suggest that Tukultī-Ninurta II sought to live up to his homonymous forbear.

⁸² Aššur-nāšir-apli II would resort to precisely this in resolving the issue of the Upper Tigris which he had inherited from his father, simultaneously rebuilding nearby Sinābu and Tušḫan to deprive the now-untrustworthy Assyrian city Damdammusa of its power within the region (see Edmonds 2021: 80–81).

⁸³ Andrae 1913: 13–14 (no. 8); Reade 2004: 462. The stele is heavily damaged and without inscription, but its order would seem to fit Tukultī-Ninurta II.

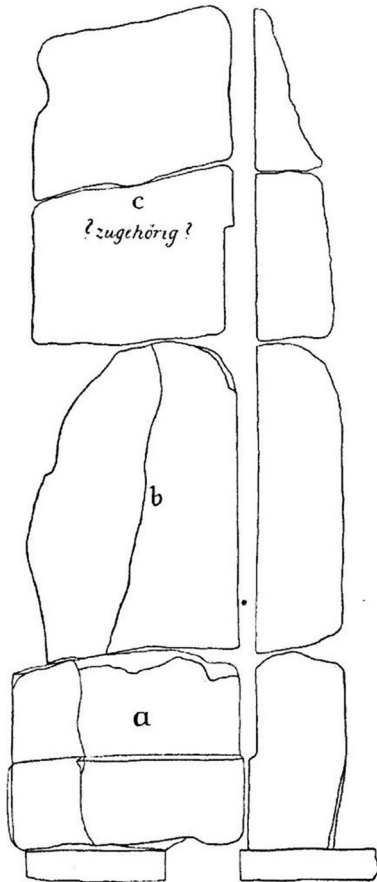


Figure 5: (What remains of) the eponym stele of Tukultī-Ninurta II (Andrae 1913: 18, fig. 20).

(ša ... ina gašiši urettû pagrī gērīšu RIMA.0.101.1 28–29; 17 28–29; 20 35–36; 40 17–18). While Olmstead (1918) famously scolded Aššur-nāšir-apli II for his “calculated frightfulness”, the innovator of this tactic seems to have been Tukultī-Ninurta II,⁸⁴ a summary of whose broader achievements can now be presented (Table 8):

⁸⁴ For detailed studies of brutality in the Neo-Assyrian period, see recently esp. Fuchs 2009; Bagg 2016.

Table 8: A new chronological summary of the events of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign and their sources.

Date		Event	Source
890	Earlier	Accession of TN II	RIMA.0.100.1 28
	Later	Completion of wall at Baltil (Aššur)	RIMA.0.100.2 rev. 1'–12'
Unknown year(s) a. (890–887)		6-7 campaigns/activities including receptions of tribute (later deleted from annals/abridged?)	KAL 3: 56 Side a.
Unknown year(s) b. (subdivisions sequential). (890–887)	b. 1.	Campaign to Nirdun	KAL 3: 45–46 1'–6'
	b. 2.	Suppression of rebellion of Irbibu	KAL 3: 45–46 7'–16'
	b. 3.	Campaign to Barzania and Dikun	KAL 3: 45–46 17'–18'
	b. 4.	Visit of rock relief of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, campaign to Barzaništun/Barzania	KAL 3: 45–46 19'–25'
	b. 5.	Suppression of rebellion at Tillē and Kaḫat	KAL 3: 45–46 26'–31'
Unknown year(s) c. (890–887)	Earlier	Defeat and flaying of Apā of Ḫubuškia	KAL 3: 56 Side b. 1'–10'; cf. RIMA.0.100.6 4
	Later (first half of late 887 campaign?)	Suppression of rebellion at Našī-bīna, march into Kāšīāru	KAL 3: 56 Side b. 11'–22'
Late 887		Conclusion of a campaign to Na'iri and Kāšīāru, TN II returns to Aššur	RIMA.0.100.5 1–3
Late 887 or very early 886		Aftermath of the prior campaign, Bīt-Zamāni undertakes campaign, forwards tribute and hostages	RIMA.0.100.5 4–8
Early 886		Rebellion of a 'principal he' in piedmont and defeat	RIMA.0.100.5 9–10
1st Simānu (III) 886		Campaign to Bīt-Zamāni. Imposition of horse-trading deal and supervision	RIMA.0.100.5 11–29; KAL 3: 21 obv.? 2'–5'
17th Tašrītu (VII) 886		Campaign beyond Ḫabrūri to Ladānu (i.e. western Zamūa)	RIMA.0.100.5 30–40
26th Nisannu (I) 885		March to Babylonia, defeat of nomads in the Wādī aṭ-Ṭartār, tribute of Sūḫu, Lāqê, and Lower Ḫābūr	RIMA.0.100.5 41–126
Prior to 9th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 885		A single broken line refers to another (presumably unimportant) campaign	RIMA.0.100.5 127
9th Araḫsamnu (VIII) 885 ^a		Completion of renovation of palace terrace at Aššur	RIMA.0.100.5 136–46; cf RIMA.0.100.3 rev. 7'–17'
884		TN II dies, his new palace at Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta remains unfinished	Cf. RIMA.0.100.6

^aSee Table 5, n. a.

Nonetheless, the challenges in consolidation may also have driven Tukultī-Ninurta II's exploration of new means of legitimation, such as leaving stele and inscriptions outside of Assyria proper (such as at Sirqu and the Subnat source) and creating rock reliefs.⁸⁵ In turn, as the example of Kaḫat demonstrates, Tukultī-Ninurta II was also prepared to construct palaces within his new realm as provincial control points,⁸⁶ a practice continued by his son on a wider scale (see e.g. Liverani 2012: 183). This is particularly interesting as there is little to no evidence of Adad-nārārī II creating such provincial nodes;⁸⁷ Adad-nārārī II's curt use of *eṣēdu* without any mention of construction implies that he simply harvested the crops of the defeated and brought them back to the nearest (allied) Assyrian stronghold (presumably Damdammusa for the Upper Tigris and Dūr-Katlimmu for the Middle Euphrates). It may well be on these grounds that the construction of Tukulti-Aššur-ašbat in the as-Sulaymaniya plain should be assigned to Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign.⁸⁸

From the epithet *kāšid (mātāt) Na'iri* “victor over (the lands of) Na'iri” with which his surviving summary inscriptions begin, it seems that Tukultī-Ninurta II considered his efforts in this region his central achievement, comparable to his father's Babylonian doings. Adad-nārārī II seems to have left him an Assyrian garrison in the Upper Tigris (presumably Damdammusa)⁸⁹ and probably an uneasy alliance with the local relict Assyrians of Ḫalziluḫa. Tukultī-Ninurta II's response was to improve communication between this region and the south by subjugating Nirdun (dispelling its control of the northern entrance to the Tūr 'Aḫdīn massif by the Savur Çayı) and exploring new routes to the Upper Tigris basin, such as via the Karacadağ. In turn, he sought to harness Bīt-Zamāni's rising power by entrusting the polity with campaigning on Assyria's behalf in 887. This tactic evidently backfired, as the Aramean state became confident enough to consider unsanctioned campaigns into the Upper Ḫābūr, and so Tukultī-Ninurta II was compelled to march once more to the

⁸⁵ While the Assyrian rock reliefs of the Zagros and Taurus are usually quite inaccessible and difficult to find without foreknowledge, the ceremony of their creation would have had been of propaganda value among his army, particularly as he was following in the footsteps of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra I.

⁸⁶ Although Kaḫat does not seem to have become a fully-fledged province, it may have served as a ‘pre-provincial’ Assyrian bastion on account of its traditional role as an Assyrian *Jagdschloss* (Salvini 2014).

⁸⁷ It seems rather that he took over pre-existing cities and fortresses such as Raqamātu/Gidāra, Idu and Zaqqu, or assumed direct control of previously independent Assyrian holdings such as Dūr-Katlimmu and perhaps Damdammusa (described as an *āl šarrūtīya* by Aššur-nāṣir-apli II in RIMA. 0.101.1 i 103).

⁸⁸ Andreas Fuchs has also suggested to the present author the possibility that the Assyrian name of this settlement is a play of sorts on the first part of Tukultī-Ninurta II's name. Considering his later construction of the eponymous Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta, this is not unlikely.

⁸⁹ This is attested by the harvesting activities of KAL 3: 53 4'.

Upper Tigris in 886 in order to bring the wayward polity of Bit-Zamāni to heel (RIMA.0.100.5 11–29). Fascinatingly, this resulted in an agreement that Bit-Zamāni would sell horses solely to Assyria, and close supervision of the polity. With this, it seems that the issue of the Upper Tigris was satisfactorily resolved, as his remaining campaigns were devoted to other regions.

The other defining moment of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign was likely the defeat, capture, and subsequent flaying of Apâ, King of Ḫubuškia. As suggested, this may have been to intimidate the remaining horse breeding and dealing polities of the northern Zagros to render tribute and do business on his own terms. Similarly economic motives may have inspired his campaign to the land of Ladānu (RIMA.0.100.5 30–40), which lay north of Ḫabrûri, a key conduit for equine tribute. It is during this campaign that the first mention of dedicated Assyrian cavalry might be found (RIMA.0.100.5 37), and Tukultī-Ninurta II's annals emphasise his accumulation of horses from the Upper Tigris and Zagros, providing a total figure of 2702 mounts (RIMA.0.100.5 128–131). It may well be the intense pressure laid upon these horse trading groups by himself and his son which provoked Urarṭu's ire in the 860's.⁹⁰

In 885, Tukultī-Ninurta II toured the Middle Euphrates collecting massive tribute from the flourishing trade emporia of the region (presumably stopping to inscribe the curious Tall 'Ašāra Stele), this also permitting him to attack the Itu'u, who would come to be a considerable nuisance by the 8th century.⁹¹ The genius of his route was that it took him through 'allied' Babylonian territory so as to approach Sūḫu from the south, an act of calculated political brinksmanship. While not breaking the decade's truce between Babylonia and Assyria, it was a remarkable demonstration of Assyrian might.⁹² The absence of Nabû-šuma-ukīn or any other Babylonian sovereign in this narrative is also telling; it may well be that the king of Karduniaš had died and his successor Nabû-apla-iddina had not yet been crowned, leaving a power vacuum for Tukultī-Ninurta II to exploit.⁹³

Yet, his visit to Karduniaš may also have provoked his employing of an *ummānu*, apparently the first time that an Assyrian king had done so since Tukultī-Ninurta I;

⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that parading chariots are the subject of two glazed bricks of Tukultī-Ninurta II from Aššur (Andrae 1923: pl. 7–8); these must have been part of a larger composition, and imply that this theme had further propagandistic visual correlates which are no longer extant.

⁹¹ Assyrian campaigns against the Itu'u are known from the eponym lists for 790, 783, 382, 777, and 769 (Millard 1994: 58).

⁹² Tukultī-Ninurta II's inscriptions even take the liberty of claiming that he 'seized' (*ana qātāya kašādu*) these Babylonian cities, when this was clearly a mere visit. Salmānu-ašarēd III would later employ a similar tactic of aggressive holidaymaking, visiting various Babylonian shrines during his campaigns against the Chaldeans (RIMA.0.102.5 v 3–vi 1).

⁹³ The present author is grateful to Andreas Fuchs for this observation.

the *Synchronistic King List* notes Tukultī-Ninurta II's scholarly advisor as one Gabbu-ilāni-ēreš,⁹⁴ who was retained by Aššur-nāšir-apli II, and would be an ancestor of the famous scribe Nabû-zuqup-kēnu.⁹⁵ In patronising an *ummānu*, it is possible that Tukultī-Ninurta II was inspired by his namesake, and particularly his famous plundering of Babylonian scholarly works as prominently commemorated in literature,⁹⁶ or his familial ties with Babylonia may have encouraged this. Collecting a fortune from the polities of the Middle Euphrates newly wealthy from caravan trade as he marched upstream, he cannily married the sisters of Ḥamatāya, ruler of the boomtown of Sūru in Lāqê (RIMA.0.100.5 101), ensuring that Assyrian interests would be represented in the region, the allegiance of which would soon become a point of contention between Assyria, Babylonia, and Bīt-Adini.

No further campaigns can be confirmed for Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign,⁹⁷ and he must have died while his Assyrian *Sanssouci* at Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta was still under construction, as Aššur-nāšir-apli II would reuse some of his father's inscribed slabs in Ninūa. Certainly, his building project at Qaḏiya serves as an interesting bridge between his father Adad-nārārī II's building works at Ninūa, and his son Aššur-nāšir-apli II's later creation of a new capital at Kalḫu, and thoughts also turn to the ill-fated construction of Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta; it is possible that he already strove to concentrate power beyond the city of Aššur's traditional confines by means of an informal or secluded powerbase in the manner of a Capri or Mar-a-Lago.⁹⁸ While there is nothing to suggest any irregularity in Aššur-nāšir-apli II's succession, it is striking that 'Tukultī-Ninurta' did not see use as a throne name thereafter, particularly in light of the turgid successions of Aššur-nārārī's which the Assyrian *entr'acte* brought.⁹⁹ One might ask if there was something maudlin or Tiberian about this

94 *Synchronistic King List*, iii 16–17 (= Chen 2020: 33; Grayson 1980–83: 119), and *ibid.* ii 32 for the broken reference to Tukultī-Ninurta I's *ummānu*.

95 On this influential scribe and his family tree, see Frahm 1999, 2011: 265–67; Baker and Pearce 2001.

96 *Tukultī-Ninurta Epic* vi 1'–11' (= Foster 2005: 609; Machinist 1978: 129).

97 Although this depends somewhat on which side of KAL 3: 21 is understood as the *obv.*: What Frahm tentatively suggests to be the *rev.* contains a brief mention of the burning of settlements, a ruled line, and then mention of someone son of someone else, who could conceivably be Ammi-ba'ali of Bīt-Zamāni. This would probably best fit the events of late 887 depicted in RIMA.0.100.5 1–4, but it would then have to be justified as to why such temporally close events were on opposing faces of a tablet despite the more clipped description of the 866 campaign to Bīt-Zamāni on the *obv.* It could well rather be that this fragmentary passage describes events at the end of his reign, although this must presently remain undetermined.

98 Maul (2013: 301) has interestingly noted that royal meetings with committees of diviners could be conducted in parkland to ensure their secrecy, a situation which might also have mirrored Nēmed-Tukultī-Ninurta's function.

99 Two appearances of Tukultī-Ninurta II's name with a divine determinative (Karlsson 2020) are probably inconsequential.

figure; his son's throne name, Aššur-nāšir-apli II, displays a tonal shift, his namesake having been a successful king in an ill-fated epoch, more Arthur than Alfred.

7 New Outlooks on Early Neo-Assyrian Historiography

Although only the discovery and publication of further texts will permit the better articulation of this period, it is clear that even with the fragmentary sources available much remains to be done. The next step must naturally be to recontextualise these two reigns within broader early Neo-Assyrian history, which may well be to the detriment of Aššur-nāšir-apli II's hold upon the Assyriological imagination. In turn, as will have become clear from this study, the redactional history of these early Neo-Assyrian kings' royal inscriptions is far more complex than was previously evident. A brief sketch can be outlined.

KAL 3: 48 presents a highly detailed description of the early conquests of Adad-nārārī II with a clear focus upon his military and venatory exploits. The surviving accounts have an almost military historical preoccupation: Ušhu and Atkun lie in the midst of a *karru*, a rather obscure geographical term (obv. 9'), while the account of Qumānū's conquest mentions the name of the capital city, the terrain (*šapliš*, obv. 13'), and possibly even a counterattack (obv. 15'). It is possible that precise dates were given for these campaigns and are lost in the broken portions (see *ina*, rev. 6').

Written but three years later, RIMA.0.99.1 already omits Adad-nārārī II's somewhat minor first campaign to Ušhu and Atkun and rather begins with the far more impressive defeat of Qumānū. In one exemplar of this text, a ruling is retained between the description of Adad-nārārī II's accession and the campaign to Qumānū, retaining a 'modular' model and permitting narrative ellipsis, while, in another, this ruling is absent, implying contiguity in events. The focus in what survives of this text is less upon warfare itself, and more upon the spoils of campaigning (including King Ilūya), returning with them to Aššur, and bestowing them upon the eponymous god, which is cogent considering that this text was compiled for the inauguration of a new quay wall at Aššur.

KAL 3: 47 and 53 display some affinities with KAL 3: 48 such as the use of rulings and mention of military historical details such as dawn attacks (47 2'–3') and the harvesting of grain for strategic purposes (53 4' & 12'). 47 displays precise dates for campaigns (53's broken state precludes judgement), perhaps akin to 48: This use of dates is of considerable historiographical interest. Otherwise in Adad-nārārī II's inscriptions, the precise dates for campaigns (or even simply the months) are only given for the campaigns most recent to that inscription. In RIMA.0.99.1, this is for the

campaign immediately prior to the inauguration, while the date or at least month is given for the campaigns of the two years preceding the text's creation in RIMA.0.99.2. This intimates a redactional procedure in which more precise (and perhaps more realistic) campaign accounts, perhaps based upon *Gottesbriefe*,¹⁰⁰ were gradually reworked into more summary descriptions retaining only the information which their editors considered most pertinent. It is possible that the more detailed 'first accounts' contained within these ruled sections were retained for future reference, perhaps compiled sequentially in the manner of KAL 3: 47 and 53, and excerpted for new texts when appropriate. That such a practice of documentation was well established would explain the penchant for early Neo-Assyrian kings to mention very precise events in their predecessors' reigns in respect to their own specific targets when campaigning. However, features such as the running game tallies may well point to other dynamic processes in the updating of these historical texts.

Hence, it is all the more striking that the long litany of apparently inconsequential early campaigns and tribute collections found on Side a. of KAL 3: 56 have been systematically scratched through with long lines well after they had been baked, while the more substantial, impressive, and recent achievements of the capture of Apā of Ḫubuškia and quelling of an uprising at Našībīna on Side b. are unscathed. A hypothesis for this presently unique phenomenon can be derived from the historical circumstances of Tukultī-Ninurta II's reign. Having finally stepped out Adad-nārārī II's shadow after a long period of less than glamorous consolidation, Tukultī-Ninurta II had achieved genuine success in his own right by capturing Apā and extending Assyrian influence over Na'iri. It was time to rework his very early, unglamorous campaigning into an entirely new narrative, or to delete it entirely as Adad-nārārī II had for Ušḫu and Atkun – quite literally *Strich drunter!*

In turn, the ghostly and astonishingly minute descriptions of torture found in the two narratives from the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II remind once more of the redactional layers through which a campaign account might travel before its 'annalistic' endpoint, and, indeed, of the first-hand documentary processes which must rather gallingly have been undertaken by scribes themselves. Far from the jovial writer of palatial missives one might imagine, here is a figure coldly tallying the flayed, perhaps while a colleague sketched the scene for a later palace relief.¹⁰¹ Such information did not make the 'final cut' of the annalistic accounts of RIMA.0.100.5, or indeed the even further abridged KAL 3: 21.¹⁰² Yet, herein lies an emerging issue.

100 Such as the aforementioned *Gottesbrief* from an Adad-nārārī, perhaps the second (KAL 3: 29). The variation between first- and third-persons in the Middle Euphrates campaign account RIMA.0.100.5 41–126 may well be indicative of a similar manner of *Urtext*.

101 See the discussion of depictions of scribes on campaign by Reade (2012), and consideration of the mentalities of campaigning scribes by Bernbeck (2017).

102 As such, this recension could well date to even later, i.e. 884.

The wide variety of narrative approaches, level of detail, and intended audiences presented by the texts here raise the question as to what exactly the moniker ‘annalistic’ should actually pertain during this period. Structuralist methodologies and inventories aimed at cracking an annalistic ‘code’ and, more recently, statistical and narratological investigations all necessitate uniformities and homogeneities which might come to be undermined as the true diversity of early Neo-Assyrian inscriptions becomes apparent. Considering the recent (and forthcoming shifts) in ascription of the Broken and White Obelisks and, in turn, of other late Middle Assyrian inscriptions, a revised diachronic, genre-historical study of the composition and redaction of Assyrian royal inscriptions prior to and including the early Neo-Assyrian kings will certainly become a necessity in the coming years, should it be sought to refine present methodological tools.

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