

Fragment of a Neo-Assyrian King's Annals

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This fragment of a Neo-Assyrian king's annals, on a piece of clay tablet, is probably from the ninth century BC. The format, the script, the literary style, and the content all suggest this date. It is hard to be more specific, because of the small amount of text preserved, but the reigns of either Shalmaneser III or Ashurnasirpal II are possibilities. The fragment (BM 90817) is published with the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. I wish to thank the staff of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities for their co-operation while working on this text, in particular Christopher Walker.

The text is divided into paragraphs by horizontal lines and the first paragraph (obv. 1'-2') had the royal name, titles, and genealogy. This is followed by two paragraphs describing events of the accession and first year (obv. 3'-7') and, presumably, the second year (obv. 8'-12'). On the reverse the concluding paragraphs are preserved: first the building passage (rev. 1'-6') followed by a curse (rev. 7'-9').

Unfortunately not quite enough is preserved to allow definite identification with any particular king of the ninth century. The occurrence of the name Ashurnasirpal (obv. 2') could be at or near the end of a genealogy, which would indicate either Shalmaneser III or Šamšī-Adad V. Since no other texts similar to this fragment have been preserved for Šamšī-Adad V, Shalmaneser III is perhaps preferable. It is possible, however, that the name of the ruling monarch was repeated here, in which case the fragment could be ascribed to Ashurnasirpal II. This tentative identification with either Ashurnasirpal II or Shalmaneser III is supported by the traces in obv. 6', URU *ul*-[...]. The only feasible possibility is URU *ulmānia* which was captured by both Ashurnasirpal II (RIMA 2 p. 197 i 55) and Shalmaneser III (3 R pl. 7 i 18), and in each case in the first regnal year.

Attempts to narrow down the identification further are unproductive. If Shalmaneser is really mentioned in rev. 1' as a previous builder of the unknown structure, it is probably Shalmaneser I or II. It is well known that Ashurnasirpal II commemorates Shalmaneser (I) as the earlier builder of Calah. In doing so, he always uses the same phrases which are quite different from this passage.

The provenance of the fragment is unknown. It is a piece from the left side, near the top, of a very thick (and presumably large) tablet; the piece measures c. 8.5 × 6.5 cm and is c. 4 cm thick.

TRANSLITERATION

Obverse:

Lacuna

1') [...] x [...]

2') [...] AŠ-PAB-IBILA [...]

3') [*ina* NAM.SA]G LUGAL-*ti-ia* [*ina mahrê palêia*]

4') [*ša ina* GIŠ.G]U.ZA LUGAL-*t[e rabîš ūšibū ...]*

5') [x x x] x *ú* x [...] x x [...]

6') [URU *si-me-r*]a(?) URU *ul*-[*mānia*(?) U]RU.MEŠ-*n*[*i ...*]

7') [*šal-la-su*(?)-*n*]u NÍG.ŠU.MEŠ-*šu-n*[*u NÍG.G*]A.MEŠ-*šu-n*[*u ...*]

8') [*ina 2 palêia*(?) *ina tukulti aššur*(?)] EN GAL-*i* [EN]-*ia* GIŠ.GI[GIR.MEŠ *ummānātīia adki*]

9') [...] x *al-li-ki* URU x [...]

10') [... *pit*(?)-*ha*](?)-*le-e*.MEŠ *ú*-[...]

11') [...] -*šu-nu* GU₄.M[EŠ-*šu-nu ...*]

12') [...] *šá* x [...]

Lacuna

Reverse:

Lacuna

1') [...] x *ša* Γ_{šùl}(?)¹-*ma-nu*-[*ašarēd*(?) ...]

2') [... *ālik*] *pa-ni-ia e-pu*-[*šu ...*]

3') [...] *a-šar-šu ú-me-si* [...]

4') [... *ištu u*]š-*še-šu* Γ_{a-dī}¹ *gaba-dib-be-š*[*u ...*]

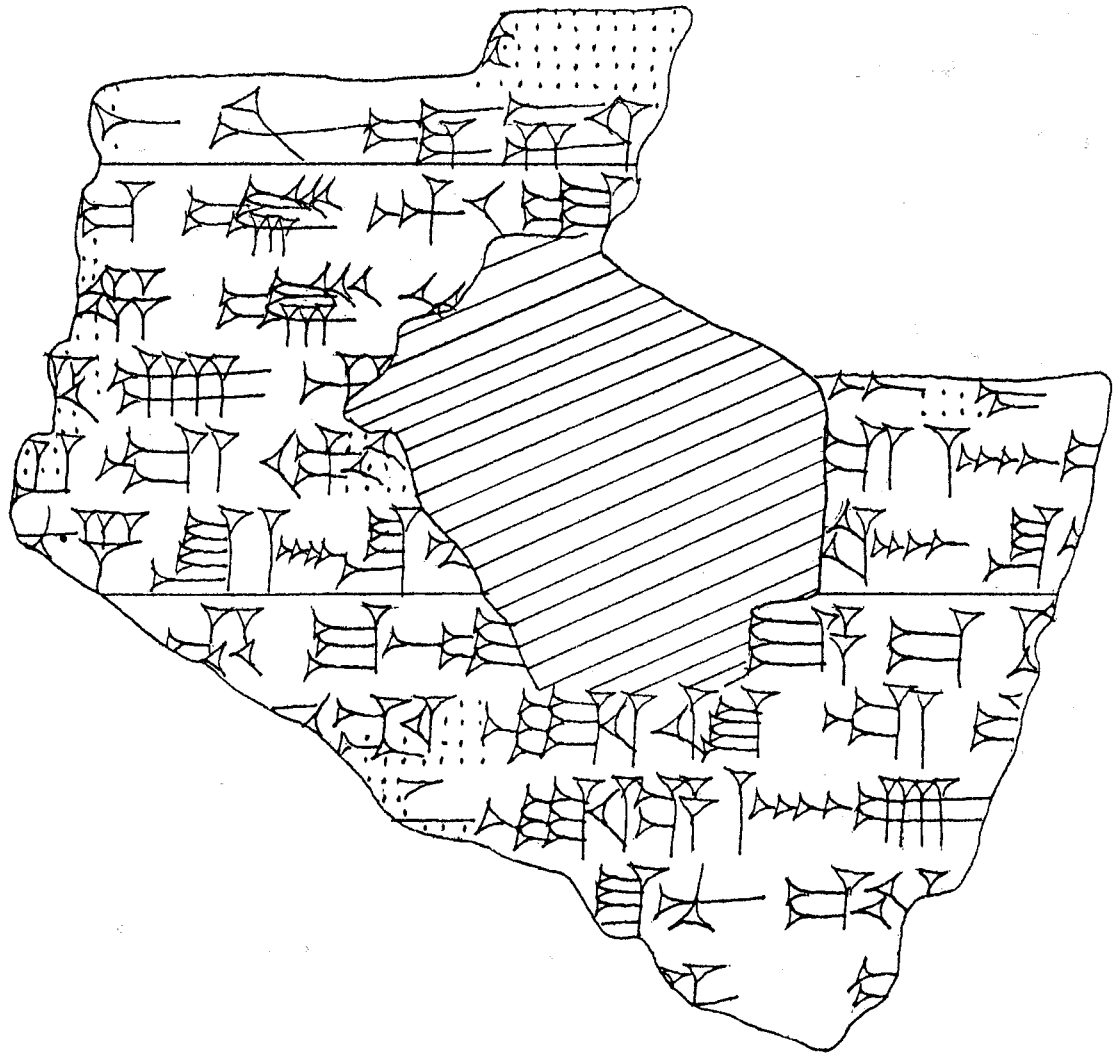
5') [... *a-g*]u(?)-*re-e* x [(x)] *il-mi* [...]

6') [... NA.R]Ú.A.MEŠ *á*[š](?)-*tu-u*]r *i-na qé*-[*rebišu aškun*]

7') [(...) *mannu ša ši*]-*tir š*[*u-mi-ia*] *ú-n*[*a-kkiru ...*]

Obv. 8': At the beginning of the line, the apparent discrepancy with the number of signs missing in previous lines is not a problem. It was not uncommon on annals tablets of this period for the date of a new paragraph to start in the margin. See, for example, Cameron, *Sumer* 6 (1950) pp. 6-26.

Obv. 9': *al-li-ki*. I doubt that this is the end of a place-name. But one should note URU *a-li-gu* which Shalmaneser III conquered in his second year: 3 R pl. 7 ii 33.



BM 90817, Obverse

8') [... š]á i-na MAN.MEŠ A[D(?).MEŠ ...]

9') [... l]u-ú [...]

Lacuna

TRANSLATION

Lacuna

Obv. 1'-2') [...] Ashurnasirpal [...]

Obv. 3'-7') [In] my accession year (and) [in my first regnal year, after I nobly ascended] the royal throne, [... *Simer*]a, Ul[*mania*], cities [... I carried off] from them [booty], property, (and) possessions. [(...)]

Obv. 8'-12') [In my second regnal year, with the support of *Aššur*], the great lord, my [lord, I mustered my] chariotry (and) [army (and)] marched [to ... I

(beseiged and) captured] the city [... I carried off ...] *cavalry*, [...] their [...], [their] oxen [...]

Lacuna

Lacuna

Rev. 1'-6') [...] which *Shalman[eser]*, ... who] preceded me, had built, [*had become old and dilapidated*]. I delineated its area [... I (completely) rebuilt it from] top to bottom. [...] baked bricks ... surrounded [...]. *I inscribed* monumental inscriptions (and) [deposited them] therein.

Rev. 7'-9') [(...) Whoever] removes [my] inscriptions, [...] which among the kings, the *fathers* [...], may [...]

Lacuna

