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*“Bir vatanın sahibi olmanın yolu,
o topraklarda yaşanmış tarihi olayları bilmek,
doğmuş uygarlıkları tanıma ve sahip olmaktan geçer.”*

*“The path to own a homeland is to know
the historical events which have taken place on that land,
to know and own the civilisations born on that land.”*

K. Atatürk



Political Relations between the Urartian and Assyrian Kingdoms: A Regional Comparison in Areas of Conflict¹

Harun Danişmaz²

Abstract

In the Middle Iron Age, two kingdoms came into prominence in Eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia respectively. The Urartian Kingdom had militaristic characteristics and performed advanced economic activities, including mining. The Assyrian Kingdom on the other hand had developed a statecraft tradition and capacities in mobilization and campaigning. The boundaries between the domination areas of the two kingdoms were set by the chain of mountains formed the boundaries between the areas under the domination of these two kingdoms. The kingdoms overcame these boundaries when they established direct contact. Furthermore, the two kingdoms managed their political relations through buffer states and nomadic tribes. The records as to these relations are partially inferred from texts on the tablets and annals that give information about the campaigns carried out by Urartian and Assyrian kings. However, the records are mostly propaganda. It is difficult to carry out an evaluation exclusively based on written documents. Consequently, the current study evaluates the political relations by taking into consideration the reliefs and stelae erected by the kingdoms during campaigns, archaeological finds and topography in addition to the written documents.

Keywords: Urartu, Assyrian Kingdom, Political Relations, Middle Iron Age, East Anatolia

Urartu Krallığı ile Assur Arasındaki Siyasi İlişkiler: Çatışma Alanlarında Bölgesel Bir Karşılaştırma

Öz

Orta Demir çağında, Doğu Anadolu ve Mezopotamya'da iki krallık ön plana çıkmaktadır. Bunlar savaşçı ve madenci karakterlere sahip Urartu Krallığı ile devlet geleneği, seferberlik ve fetih kapasitesine sahip Assur Krallığı'dır. İki krallığın hâkimiyet alanlarını yüksek dağ sıralarından oluşan doğal sınırlar ayırmaktadır. Krallıklar güçlü oldukları dönemlerde bu sınırları aşarak birbirleriyle direk temas kurmuşlardır. Ayrıca tampon devletler ve göçebe aşiretler üzerinden dolaylı siyasi ilişkiler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu ilişkilere dair kayıtlar kralların başarılı geçen seferlerinin sonuçlarından bahsettiği annalarda ve kısmen tabletlerde görülmektedir. Fakat kayıtlar daha çok propaganda amacı taşımaktadır. Dolayısıyla siyasi ilişkiler hakkında sadece yazılı belgeler üzerinden değerlendirme yapmak zordur. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada siyasi ilişkiler yazılı kayıtların yanında kralların sefer sırasında diktirdikleri stel ve rölyeflerin dağılımı, arkeolojik maddi buluntular, topografya göz önüne alınarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Urartu, Assur Krallığı, Siyasi İlişkiler, Orta Demir Çağı, Doğu Anadolu

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Introduction

From its foundation (mid-9th century BC) until its destruction (end of 7th century BC), the Urartian Kingdom was contemporary to the Assyrian Kingdom and based at a different location. Eastern Anatolia, where the kingdom emerged, stands out at first glance with its mountainous terrain and challenging physical conditions. The Assyrian Kingdom, on the other hand, was located south of the Urartian Kingdom, mainly occupying the region where the Great and Little Zap rivers meet the Tigris River. The altitude in this area is app. 0-500 m. The lands where the Urartians and Assyrians ruled was divided by the Taurus and Zagros mountains (Fig. 1). Direct contact between these two kingdoms depended on crossing this natural border. The mountainous area was also home to various buffer states and semi-nomadic tribes. Relations were conducted indirectly through these communities.

Information obtained from accounts of ancient texts that are mostly derived from primary sources, from Assyria or Urartu at points in time when one of them dominated and/or allegedly won a military victory. In such cases, the pertinent account is one-sided and incomplete. This makes it necessary to consult archaeological evidence and carry out a detailed analysis of the distribution of stelae and reliefs as well as the geographical landscape in order to reach a relatively more comprehensive assessment.

This paper evaluates Urartian and Assyrian relations in three sections: Middle Euphrates basin, Southeastern Taurus region, and Lake Urmia basin. These are based on geographical differences as well as distinctions mentioned in written sources. The aim was to identify changes in the relations. For example, Urartian-Assyrian relations were intense in the Middle Euphrates region during the reign of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC), while no political contact seems to have occurred in the east, in the Lake Urmia basin, in this period (Fig. 5).

The Middle Euphrates Basin During the Late Hittite Kingdoms

The Middle Euphrates region corresponds approximately to the area between the province of Malatya and Northern Syria. The Southeastern Taurus mountains form the highest point of this basin. Another prominent geographical feature is the Euphrates River (Fig. 2).

City states, referred to as the Late Hittite kingdoms, ruled the basin in the first millennium BC. Assyrian written sources refer to the region as the Land of Hatti (Parpola, Johns & Tallqvist, 1970, p. 157) while Urartian sources also

mention Hate land (Diakonoff & Kashkai, 1981, pp. 39-40). The Land of Hatti contained the kingdoms of Melid, Kummuh, Tabal, Gurgum, Karkemish, Que, Hilakku, Sam'al and Unki, as mentioned in Urartian and Assyrian inscriptions (Fig. 2). Struggles to rule over these kingdoms formed one of the reasons for conflict in Urartian-Assyrian political relations.

Urartu came out as the more powerful force in the Middle Euphrates region during Minua's reign because Urartu's expansion corresponded to years of rebellion and inner turmoil beginning with the later years of Shalmaneser III's reign in Assyria (858-824 BC).³ This turbulent period continued for about 70 years until the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III came to the throne (Fig. 5).

It is the Assyrian governor Shamsh-ilu who upholds Assyrian interests during this time against the Urartu in the Middle Euphrates region. Shamsh-ilu fought against Urartu in 780 BC (Millard, 1994, p. 58). Inscriptions dating to Shalmaneser IV (782-773 BC) refer to this war. In the inscription, the Urartian king Argišti I is referred to as the king who incited rebellion among the people during the reign of the previous Assyrian king (Thureau-Dangin & Dunand, 1936, pp. 149ff). This suggests that Argišti I was engaged in activities against Assyria from early on in this reign. It also corroborates the activities of Argišti I on his fourth year of reign, to which the Horhor chronicles refer (*CTU I: A 8-3*).

The 12-year period that followed Sarduri II's ascension to the throne and ended with the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III's accession (744 BC), corresponded to the most intense phase of Urartian-Assyrian relations in the Middle Euphrates basin (Fig. 5). The Urartian king Sarduri II's campaigns allowed him to not only come into contact with Late Hittite kingdoms but also allowed him to face an Assyrian king for the first time.⁴

The Urartian king Sarduri II conducted two campaigns targeting the Middle Euphrates basin. The first campaign, which features in the Habibuşağı inscription, is dated to 753 BC (*CTU I: A 9-4*). In this inscription, the king argues that it was he who crossed the Euphrates River for the first time, of which he is

³ Shalmaneser III, the Assyrian king, could not lead his campaigns personally during the last years of his reign. Governors stationed in Assyrian cities took advantage of this situation to carry out anti-authority activities. Acting as local rulers, they had inscriptions made in their names so much so that, led by the king's brother Assur-da'in-apla, 27 cities, including large cities such as Arbela, Nineveh and Assur, rebelled against king Shalmaneser III (Postgate, 1995, pp. 252-253). Shamshi-Adad V (823-811 BC), who replaced Shalmaneser III, had to deal with internal problems that originated in the latter's reign. Rebellions in the cities were crushed (Grayson, 1996, p. 183; Radner, 2016, pp. 47-48). The Assyrian state kept weakening during the reign of Adad-nirari III, who succeeded the throne at a very young age. Caused primarily by lack of authority, this decline continued during the reigns of Shalmaneser IV (782-773 BC), Assur-dan III (772-755 BC) and Assur-nirari V (754-745 BC). The Assyrian economy faltered, and difficulties were experienced in tax collections from distant provinces (Kuhrt, 1995, pp. 490-493). In the time of Adad-nirari III, loss of state power was not as it is known, especially the south and west fronts of Assur were submitted to be powerful (Siddall, 2013).

⁴ Inscriptions that refer to war mention that Sarduri II beat the Assyrian king Assur-nirari in his early years as king.

proud. The first target of his campaign was the kingdom of Melid. The kingdom of Kummuh with its abundant gold and cedar trees was his next target.

Salvini, who reinterpreted Sarduri II's annals, associates Sarduri's Kummuh campaign dated either shortly before or during 743 BC (Salvini, 1995, pp. 72-73). Sarduri II's Kummuh campaign, however, should be different from the one where he met Tiglath-pileser III in 743 BC, which is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions because it see the king of Kummuh had asked for help from Assyria, Kummuh should not have been part of an alliance against Assyria.⁵

As the remainder of the inscription is damaged, Sarduri II's subsequent target after his Kummuh campaign is unclear. Another inscription, however, mentions that Sarduri II defeated Sinalibi, son of Luehu, king of the city of Tuliḫu, and Assur-nirari, son of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari, and conquered the Land of Arme and its capital Niḫiria (*CTU I: A 9-1*). The location of Tuliḫu is considered to be in the modern Adiyaman province whereas Arme is thought to be north of Diyarbakır (Diakonoff & Kashkai, 1981, pp. 11, 85). As the inscription makes no reference to the crossing of the Euphrates River, this campaign can be assumed to be a continuation of Sarduri II's Kummuh campaign. Furthermore, the fact that Sarduri II met Assur-nirari dates this campaign to the early years of his reign.

The Urartian Kingdom appears to have had, when compared to the Assyrians, a more moderate but organised oppression policy against the Late Hittite kingdoms. Therefore, the main aim of Urartian campaigns into the lands of the Late Hittite kingdoms was neither full domination nor destruction. Indeed, Arslantepe, the capital of the Kingdom of Melid, was not damaged during the campaigns of Minua, Argišti I, and Sarduri II (Salvini, 1995, pp. 50-78). Each war ended with treaties favouring the Urartians. This policy reached its peak during the reign of Sarduri II's Kummuh campaign and weakened the prevalent pro-Assyrian balance in the region. Urartu's rising power in the Middle Euphrates basin forced Late Hittite kingdoms to form an alliance with Urartu against Assyria.

Urartu's expansion in the Middle Euphrates basin through the Late Hittite kingdoms came to end during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC). One of Tiglath-pileser III's first military actions was to react against Urartian pressure on the Late Hittite kingdoms. To that end, he led his Assyrian army against the Urartu-Late Hittite kingdoms alliance in 743 (Millard, 1994, p. 59; Salvini, 1995, pp. 72-73). The war that took place in Halpa (Gölbaşı), Adiyaman resulted in the defeat of the Urartu and its allies (Fig 2).

⁵ [In my third] year of reign, [Sardurri of Urartu, revolted against me,... with] Mati'-ilu.... [Sulmal of Melid (Melitene), Tarhulara of Gurgum, [Kushtashpi of Kummuhu, [trusted] in each others might (*ARAB I: 769*).

The greatest blow to Urartu's expansion in the Middle Euphrates basin was struck during the eleventh year of Tiglath-pileser's reign (735 BC). Assyrian army went as far as Tushpa and besieged the Urartian capital (*ARAB I*: 785). Our calculations reveal that this campaign must have lasted at least six months.⁶ It is most likely that Tiglath-pileser III lifted the siege on Tushpa because of the approaching winter. The inscriptions that describe this campaign refers to the capture of numerous Urartian fortresses behind the Nal Mountains during the return journey of the armies. The exact location of this mountain remains unknown; therefore, it is not clear which fortresses are referred to according to this inscription. Another reason for this ambiguity is that Assyrian inscriptions sometimes tend to use the phrase 'mountain' for hills that are not even as high as 1000m.

It should not be forgotten that Assyrian campaign inscriptions were composed for propaganda purposes. In other words, it is likely that Tiglath-pileser III's assertion that Urartian fortresses and cities were taken were in fact used to gloss over the unsuccessful siege of Tushpa. This also explains why the siege of Tushpa was only briefly mentioned. Regardless, however, Tiglath-pileser III's interventions re-established Assyrian power in the Middle Euphrates basin, resulting in the Urartu withdrawal to the west of the Euphrates.

Assyrian pressure on the Late Hittite kingdoms reached its peak during the period of Sargon II (721-705 BC). Sargon was apprehensive of the regional alliance that included Urartu and the Mushki. He therefore followed a policy to end the rule of the Late Hittite kingdoms. He campaigned against Tabal in 713 and appointed an Assyrian governor. A year later he campaigned against the Kingdom of Melid, taking hostage its king and sending him to Assyria along with his entourage. He annexed this kingdom to the Kingdom of Kummuh. He then ended the independence of the Gurgum Kingdom on several grounds and turned this kingdom into an Assyrian province called Markasi (Adalı, 2018, pp. 287-291; *ARAB II*: 55, 61; Hawkins, 1982).

When the Kingdom of Melid fully came under Assyrian rule, an Assyrian presence, which hitherto had been limited to the south of the Taurus mountains, began to form on the western border of Urartu. Assyria's increasing hegemony over the Late Hittite Kingdoms forced the Kingdom of Kummuh to form an

⁶ The distance between Nineveh and Halpa, where the battle took place, is 610 km. The distance between Halpa and the Urartian capital is approximately 640 km. Tiglath-pileser III's return journey would be 890 km if we assume that he crossed the Taurus mountains via the Lice-Genç pass and went through Diyarbakır. Shalmaneser III and Tiglath-pileser I are also known to have used the Lice-Genç pass. This means that Tiglath-pileser III's armies had to cover 2140 km in order to travel from Nineveh to Halpa, defeat the Urartu and its allies, besiege the Urartian capital Tushpa, and return to Nineveh. Considering that the Assyrian army travelled 15 m per day, this campaign should have lasted 142 days. Adding 40 days for resting period, this makes a total of 182 days.

alliance with Urartu against Assyria. However, Sargon II conquered Kummuh in 798, ending its independence (*ARAB II*: 64).

The Urartian Kingdom aimed to be part of the political scene of the Middle Euphrates basin during the reign of Rusa II. This period also coincides with the restructuring of the kingdom. Human resources needed for construction activities was supplied through campaigns led against Assyria, Late Hittite kingdoms, and Mushki. The inscription on the temple at Ayanis describes Mushki, Tabal and Hatti lands as targeted regions together with Assyria (Çilingiroğlu, 2012, p. 6). As in the Ayanis inscription, an inscription found in the Kef Fortress identifies Mushki, Hatti and Halitu lands as enemies and states that people were forced to migrate from these territories (*CTU I*: A 12-4). Rusa II must have travelled through the Kingdom of Melid during his campaigns. In the period of Esarhaddon, the Kingdom of Melid is apparently not entirely under Assyrian rule (*SAA IV*: 1-12). This suggests that Urartu may have come to an agreement with Melid.

Southeastern Taurus Region through Nairi and Şubria

Political relations in the Southeastern Taurus region began much earlier than in the other two fronts. As mentioned previously, Southeastern Taurus mountains and its eastern extensions formed a natural border between the Urartian Kingdom and Assyria. Immediately south of this natural border lies the Upper Tigris region (Fig. 1-2), which was inhabited by Assyria since the Middle Assyrian period and was home to the Assyrian provinces of *Amedi* and *Tushan* during the Neo-Assyrian period (Köroğlu, 1998; Radner & Schachner 2001). There were also semi-nomadic tribes living north of the Siirt and Şırnak provinces, in the area called the Hakkari massif (Fig. 2). These tribes migrated to the highlands in the summer and spent winter months in the lowlands. These semi-nomadic tribes, called the Nairi peoples, had a significant role in cultural relations between Urartu and Assyria (Köroğlu, 2015)⁷. Early relations were the result of Assyrian campaigns into the Nairi region.⁸ The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III met at least eight times with Urartian tribes during his campaigns against the Nairi on his first (858), third (856), tenth (849), eleventh (848), thirteenth (846), fifteenth (844), twenty-seventh (832), and thirty-first (828) year in reign (Fig. 5).

⁷ It is known that Urartian and Assyrian kingdoms had an effect upon each other about cultural affairs such as urbanization, tradition of annal, royal tombs and setting up stelae (Genç, 2015).

⁸ Assyrian written sources mention that they made contact with the tribes making up the Urartu before the foundation of the Urartu Kingdom, during Assyrian's pillaging campaigns into the Nairi region led by the Assyrian kings Shalmaneser I, Tukulti-Ninurta I, and Tiglath-pileser I (Köroğlu, 2011, pp. 20-23).

Urartu's interest in the southern Taurus region was neither limited to semi-nomadic populations nor to attacks against Assyrian states in the Upper Tigris region, as will be discussed further below. They were also interested in cult regions in the mountainous zone. An example is the city of Qumenu, or Kumme, seen in Urartian inscriptions. This city was considered holy by both the Urartians and Assyrians, much like the city of Musasir (Radner, 2011, pp. 744-745), so much so that the god of Kumme appears in the list of sacrifices to be made to gods on the Meher Kapı inscription, dated to the period of Išpuini (*CTU I: A 3-1*). Kumme comes second after Musasir in this list, before the capital Tushpa.

Inscriptions that refer to the Urartian king Minua's campaigns mention that Urartian armies reached Isala/Izalla (southern slopes of Karacadağ), Uliba (Kulp) and Qumenu (Zaho) and as far as Assyrian lands (*CTU I: A 5-9*). All three of these settlements are placed to the south of the Taurus mountains (Diakonoff & Kashkai 1981: schematik map). The Urartian king must have attacked Assyrian provinces in the Upper Tigris region during this campaign. Indeed, researchers state that Minua attacked Assyrian settlements (Salvini, 1995, pp. 52).

Recently, as part of his research on Üçtepe and Ziyaret Tepe mounds in the Upper Tigris region, Köroğlu put forward some evidence that could be related to these attacks. Excavations in the areas L and K in Ziyaret Tepe resulted in two phases dated to the Neo-Assyrian period.

A similar situation is observed in Üçtepe where there are two architectural levels (8th and 7th building levels) that are dated to the neo-Assyrian period (Köroğlu, 2018). There is a brief disruption between these two levels/phases in both Assyrian centres. Changes were made in some buildings after this disruption, while others remained the same (Köroğlu, 2016, pp. 313-317).

These disruptions also explain the gaps between governors that Assyria sent to its provinces in the Upper Tigris region. The chronological chart we prepared clearly shows this situation. Ishtar-emugaya appears as the first governor of Tushan according to eponym lists, which give Mukin-abua as the next governor. There is a 73-year gap between the first and second governor (Fig. 5). As Tushan's governor could not have served for 73 years, there must have been a break in the Assyrian rule in the Upper Tigris region towards the end of this period.

This gap coincides with Minua's above-mentioned campaigns (Fig. 5). Minua's campaigns into the southern Taurus region appear to have briefly

disrupted the rule of Assyria, already beset by inner conflict, in its provinces in the Upper Tigris region.

Relations in the Southeastern Taurus region were sometimes facilitated by a third country. One such country was the Šubria Kingdom, which is mainly associated with the area between the north of the Tigris River and Southeastern Taurus mountains (Kessler, 1995; Radner & Schachner 2001, pp. 736; Dezső, 2006) (Fig. 1). Indeed, written sources point to Assyrian apprehension towards a possible Urartian invasion of Šubria, which demonstrates that Šubria was at a strategic location that Urartian armies could reach.

Šubria, situated between Urartu and Assyria, appears to have maintained its rule for a long time owing to its capacity for diplomacy (Kessler, 1995, pp. 55). The Assyrian king Esarhaddon, however, campaigned against Šubria in 673 BC as the latter began to pose serious problems for Assyria. One of the reasons for this campaign was the fear that Urartu was going to invade Šubria. Šubria became an Assyrian province following the campaign. The Assyrian king killed Assyrian fugitives that escaped into Šubria but returned Urartian fugitives back to the Urartian Kingdom. An existing agreement between Urartu and Assyria is given as the reason for this (Zimansky, 2018, pp. 251-252; Radner, 2012, pp. 260-264; *ARAB II*: 607).⁹ The purpose of Assyria's stance must have been to prevent a possible Urartian campaign into Šubria which could use Urartian fugitives who had escaped into Šubria as an excuse. This, however, was not sufficient to quell Urartu's ambitions over Šubria. According to an Assyrian inscription dating to Assurbanipal (668-627 BC), in 657 BC the Urartian governor attacked Šubria's cities, then under Assyrian rule, but was defeated (Piepkorn, 1933, p. 57).

Lake Urmia Basin through Mannaea and Parsua

Urartian-Assyrian political relations in the Lake Urmia basin took place in two areas: one was the cult region of Musasir, situated in the mountainous section in the west of the basin, and the other comprised places such as Mannaea and Parsua, economically and strategically important locations south of the basin (Fig. 3).

Urartian campaigns into the basin began during the reign of Išpuini when Urartian armies went as far as Musasir (*CTU I*: A 3-9). The last place that the campaign reached is depicted on the Kelishin stele, which refers to a temple

⁹ Before the campaign to Subria, the campaign organized to Egypt by Esarhaddon was a failure. The attack to Šubria can be considered as a suppression effort of this failure. After conquering Šubria, a new campaign was organized to Egypt (Eph'al, 2005).

built in the name of God Haldi in the city of Musasir (*CTU I: A 3-11*). The reference to “*all the gods of Ardini (Musasir)*” suggests that there were other gods in Musasir. As in the case of Kumme, Musasir was a cult centre not only for the Urartians but also for Assyrians as well as semi-nomadic tribes in the region. Indeed, when the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II built a palace in Kalhu, the ambassadors of Kumme and Musasir were among those invited to the opening (Grayson, 1991, p. 293).

The fact that the Urartians built a temple in Musasir suggests that it was under the cultural rule of Urartu. This explains why the Assyrian king Sargon II ransacked Musasir in 714 BC and punished its inhabitants.

Coinciding with Urartian campaigns into the basin were Assyrian campaigns targeting this region. An inscription dating to Shamsi-Adad V (823-811 BC) mentions that Assyria taxed Hubushkia, Mannaea and Parsua (Grayson, 1996, p. 184). There is a record concerning Mannaea on the eponym lists of 819 (Millard, 1994, p. 57). This puts the campaign to the period immediately before Urartu’s campaigns carried out at Lake Urmia during Išpuini’s reign.

Urartian campaigns into the region continued during Minua’s reign. The Taštepe inscription found south of the basin provides information about these campaigns. The inscription states that Minua built a fortress in the region, leaving behind soldiers and cavalymen (*CTU I: A 5-10*). The fact that there are fortresses that could belong to the Urartu suggests that Minua may have seized an existing fortress.

Assyria wished to prevent Urartian expansion into the south of the basin during Minua’s reign. Eponym lists regarding the Urmia basin contain four records dating to 807, 806, 800 BC and 799 BC (Millard, 1994, p. 57). That the relationships attested to by the eponym lists are not mentioned on other inscriptions may suggest that the Assyrians may have left their stake in the Lake Urmia basin to the Urartians. Furthermore, neither eponym lists nor inscriptions mention Lake Urmia until Sargon II’s reign (Fig. 5). This situation should be the likely result of the turmoil that befell Assyria following Shalmaneser III’s reign.

The Urartian rule in the basin was largely established during the reign of Argišti I. Inscriptions dating to this period state that armies went from the Mannaea region as far as the mountains surrounding Assyria. 73.703 people were deported to other regions after these campaigns. 39.135 people were deported from the Lake Urmia basin in later periods (Konakçı, 2009). Although the figures in written sources appear exaggerated, following deportations over 50 years, the Urartian Kingdom must have turned the political situation to its own benefit by eliminating tribes with close links to Assyria.

Urartu's power range in the south of the basin is questionable. Written sources dating to Rusa I refers to Assyrian cities and that they were destroyed (*CTU I: A 10-5*). Their accuracy cannot be confirmed. However, Assyrian inscriptions mention that the Urartians had laid claim to the region by allying themselves with several Mannaeen lords. Assyrian intelligence reports give us some information, according to which the Urartian King made an agreement with Zikirtu, a kingdom which had seceded from Mannaea, to put pressure on Mannaea (Parpola & Reade, 1987, pp. 28-29). This policy mostly failed because Sargon II, the Assyrian king, had to campaign into the basin on his third, sixth, and seventh years of reign, prior to his famous eighth campaign in 714 (Fig. 5).

Urartu had a significant power over Mannaea in this period. Rusa I, the Urartian king, arranged for Ullusununu to take the Mannaeen throne after coming to an agreement with Mannaeen lords. This resulted in Sargon II's campaign into the region. The fact that Ullusununu recognized the Assyrian king suggests that Mannaea, caught between Urartu and Assyria, was playing both sides. Indeed, Assyrian records show that Sargon II began a new campaign on Mannaea a year later. In the campaign records, the king of Mannaea is accused of handing over 22 fortresses to the Urartians (*ARAB II: 10, 12*). There is also a record about this campaign on the eponym lists (Millard, 1994, p. 60). By fighting against pro-Urartian lords, Sargon's aim in these campaigns must have been to break Urartian influence on Mannaea region.

The 714 Urartu Campaign of the Assyrian King Sargon II

Sargon II's famous eighth campaign in 714 BC makes the Lake Urmia basin a significant place in terms of Urartu-Assyrian relations. Up until this point, relations between these two powers were mainly conducted indirectly through Mannaea and Musasir (Fig. 3).

Information about this campaign is only available from Assyrian records. One of the main sources for the 714 BC campaign, Sargon II's letter to god Ashur, refers to it in detail. The political geography of the region is extensively described in this inscription. Toponyms mentioned in Sargon's campaign have yet to be completely identified. As such, researchers put forward conflicting hypotheses about the route Sargon took during his campaign. The only aspect that researchers agree on is where the armies entered the basin and where the campaign ended. There are three main views in relation to the route (Marriot & Radner, 2015, p. 139):

1. Travelling east of Lake Urmia and north of Lake Van (app. 1600 km) (Thureau-Dangin, 1912).

2. Travelling east and west of Lake Urmia (app. 1200 km) (Lehmann-Haupt, 1916; Wright, 1943; Reade, 1976; Çilingiroğlu, 1976-77; Zimansky, 1990; Dezsó, 2018: Fig. 3).
3. Travelling south of Lake Urmia and passing to the mountainous section of the basin (app. 950 km) (Rigg, 1942; Levine, 1977; Muscarella, 1986).

The outcomes of this campaign were disastrous for the Urartians. The kingdom suffered a major defeat, leaving the Haldi Temple in Musasir to be pillaged (Fig. 4). Assyrian inscriptions allege that Rusa I committed suicide upon learning the news of the temple's fate. Archaeological evidence discovered in the region, such as stelae and inscriptions, confirm Urartu's withdrawal from the south of the Lake Urmia basin. After this date, the Urartian Kingdom did not campaign to the south of the Lake Urmia basin. As a result, Urartian inscriptions that frequently referred to Mannaea and Parsua before the 714 campaign no longer made any references to these places. Subsequent campaigns were led to the north of the basin, to the slopes of the Sabalan Mountain (Fig. 3).

Conclusion

The Urartian Kingdom underwent a rapid expansion process during Assyria's troubled periods. Despite this, however, there are no Urartu campaigns going as far as Assyria's central region. The Assyrian Kingdom, on the other hand, led campaigns into Urartu's centre, to Van and its vicinity, whilst powerful. Although the Urartians could not stop Assyrian campaigns, they survived nevertheless, due to the advantage of living in a mountainous terrain.

The Urartian Kingdom, from the time of Minua's reign in the 9th century, appears to have been successful against Assyria. This period, which begins towards the end of Shalmaneser III's reign, also marks the era when both the Urartian and Late Hittite kingdoms gained more power. The Urartian Kingdom expanded its borders in the west as far as the Kingdom of Melid and led campaigns into Kummuhean lands west of the Euphrates.

Urartu's reach into the Middle Euphrates basin led to a policy shift in Assyria in relation to the Late Hittite kingdoms. While campaigns during the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) and Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) were to obtain tax and tribute, this changed with the arrival of Urartian armies to the region. As a result, campaigns into the Late Hittite kingdoms during the reigns of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC), Shalmaneser V (726-722 BC) and Sargon II (721-705 BC) were mainly aimed at imposing heavy vassal responsibilities and gaining new provinces.

Urartian armies were able to pillage Assyrian lands to the south of the Taurus Mountains (Upper Tigris region). This process continued until the battle between the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III and the Urartian king Sarduri II in 743 BC.

The Urartian Kingdom settled in the Urmia basin in the east and made contact with the powers in northwest Iran, such as Mannaea and Parsua. Their prominence ended with the Assyrian king Sargon II's eighth campaign in 714 BC. The Urartian Kingdom engaged in activities in the west during the reign of Rusa II in the 7th century BC and appears to have been partly successful. Reference in several Assyrian inscriptions and reliefs to a Urartian delegation sent to Assyria demonstrates that even in the 7th century BC, when the Urartian Kingdom entered into decline, it remained a significant power for Assyria.

Abbreviations/Kısaltmalar

- ARAB** D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia I: Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia I: From the Earliest times to Sargon* (Chicago 1926).
II: Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia II: From Sargon to the End (Chicago 1927).
- CTU** M. Salvini, *Corpus dei testi Urartei I: Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia* (Rome 2008).
- SAA** *State Archives of Assyria IV: I. Starr, Queries to the Sungod: Divination and politics in Sargonid Assyria* (Finland 1990).

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Figures / Figürler



Fig. 1: The Map Showing Boundaries between Urartu and Assyria.

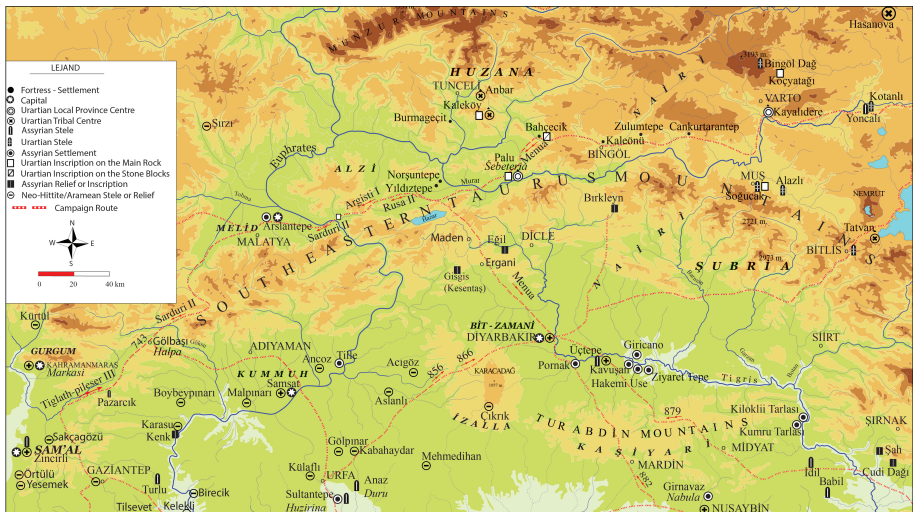


Fig. 2: The Map of the Middle Euphrates Basin and Southeastern Taurus Region During the Iron Age.

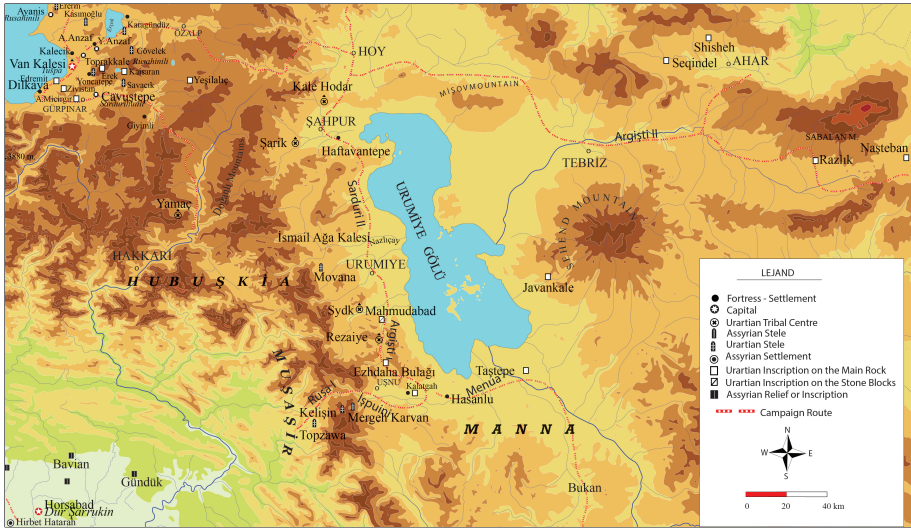


Fig 3: The Map of Lake Urmia Basin During the Iron Age.

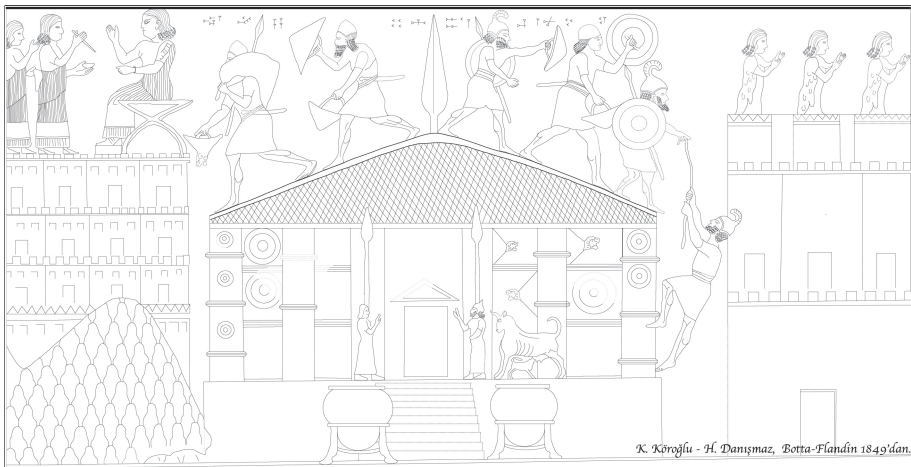


Fig. 4: The Sacking of Musasir-Haldi Temple by the Assyrians During Sargon's Campaign of 714 BC (Redrawn from (Botta & Flandin, 1849).

Political Relations between the Urartian and Assyrian Kingdoms: A Regional Comparison in Areas of Conflict

Governors of Tushan	Governors of Amedi/Nairi	Urartian campaign to the Middle Euphrates basin, Southeastern Taurus and Lake Urmia Basin	Assyrian Campaign to Urartian Geography	Kings of Mannaea	Kings of Kummuh	Kings of Melid
867 Ishtar-emugaya	849 Hadi-lipushu	880 870 860 850 840 830 820	882 Foundation of Tushan province		Katazilu 866-857	
		838 Nimurtakibi-usur	858 The destruction of Sugunia city of Urartian Aramu 856 The destruction of Arsasku royal city of Urartian Aramu 849 The captured of Arne royal city of Aramu 848 The destroyed and burned one hundred cities of Aramu and capture of Aparāzu, royal city of Aramu 846 The destruction of Arsaskun royal city of Urartian Aramu 844 The destroyed and burned cities of Aramu, the Urartian, as far as the source of the Euphrates 832 War with Urartian Seduri	Assurnasirpal II	Kundaspī 853	Lalli
		830 820 810	Shalmaneser III The capture of 11 fortified cities and 200 cities of Uspina 819 Campaign to Mannaea, Parsua and Mesu	Shamsi-Adad V	Sakhu	
794 Mukin-abua	799 Marduk-ismanni	800 790 780 770	807 Bel-dan to Manna (ponym list) 806 Sil-beli to Manna (ponym list) 800 Shep-ishtar to Manna (ponym list) 799 Marduk-ismanni to Manna (ponym list)	III. Adad-nerari	Uspilulume 805-773	Heleruada 780-750
		770 760 750 740	Shalmaneser IV 781 Shalmaneser to Urartu (ponym list) 780 Shamshi-ilu to Urartu (ponym list) 779 Marduk-remanni to Urartu (ponym list) 778 Bel-leher to Urartu (ponym list) 776 Paz-Ashur-lamur to Urartu (ponym list) 774 War between the Assyrian governor Shamshi-ilu and Argišti	Assur-dan III		
		730 720 710	Assur-nirari V			
764 Sidqi-ilu	762 Tab-Belu	750 740 730 720	743 War against Tiglath-pilaser III by Urartian Sarduri and allied powers in Halpa-Görlübaşı	Tiglath-pileser III	Kushtashpi 755-732	Sulumal 743-732
		730 720 710	735 Campaign to Urartu and siege of the capital Tushpa 735 Ashur-shallimanni to Urartu (ponym list)	Shalmaneser V	Iranzu	Gunzinanu Tarhunazi Mugallu
728 Dur-Ashur	726 Marduk-bel-usur	720 710	719 Campaign to Mannaea 716 Campaign to Mannaea (Urartian Ursa) 715 Campaign to Urartian King of Rusa 714 Campaign to Urartu and pillage of Musasir	Sargon II	Aza Ullusumu	
		700 690 680 670	Sennacherib	Esarhaddon	Governor of Uppumu Governor of Kullumeri	Mutarim 668 Assyrian Governor
707 Sha-Assur-Dubbu	705 Nashur-Bel	690 680 670	673 Campaign to Subria The dispatch of Urartian fugitives	Bi-llu	Ahseri	
		660 650 640 630	657 The Urartian king sent a delegation to Assyria Attack of Urartu governor Andaria to Uppumu and Kullumeri	Marduk-eriba	Bel-iddina	
Şaru-nuri	Baia-di-il	640 630	640 630	Assur-matu-laqqin	Uallu	[...]jussi
		630 620 610 600	627 Sarduri III ? Sarduri VI ?	Assurbanipal		

Fig. 5: According to Urartian and Assyrian Incriptions, the Chronological Chart that Shows Relationship between Assyria, Urartu and Their Neighbours.