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MISIDENTIFIED ASSYRIAN ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS: ŠAMAŠ-ŠUMU-UKIN INSTEAD OF ESARHADDON? *

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Abstract

Four prism fragments bearing at least two different royal inscriptions written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian script were tentatively attributed to Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) by P. Gerardi (1993), although they were not immediately identifiable as exactly duplicating the style or contents of any other presently attested inscriptions of a late Neo-Assyrian king (721–612 BCE). E. Leichty (2011) accepted that one of these pieces (BM 56617), the largest of the four, was indeed an inscription of Esarhaddon from Babylonia since that king's name, titles, and genealogy were partially preserved. He regarded the attribution of other three fragments as uncertain, editing them as "1000-number" texts, implying that an assignment to Esarhaddon was possible, but not certain. A re-examination of these four fragments, the texts on which seem to be closely related, might suggest that none of the fragments should be attributed to Esarhaddon. Instead, these texts, which do not match the style and contents of Esarhaddon's "Babylon Inscriptions" (Leichty 2011, Esar. 104–111), might prove to be hitherto unidentified inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin (667–648 BCE), his son and successor on the throne of Babylon. This short paper examines this possibility.

Introduction

In 1993, P. Gerardi published her editions and commentary of four prism fragments catalogued as originating from Sippar (BM 50582, BM 51254, BM 56617, and BM 56628), together with T.G. Pinches' then-unpublished hand-drawn facsimiles of them. She concluded that (1) the inscriptions should be attributed to an Assyrian king rather than to a Babylonian king since (pentagonal) prisms were the medium of choice for Assyrian rulers (whereas cylinders were the preferred medium of Babylonian rulers), although Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE) had at least one inscription written on a clay prism;[1] (2) the fragments represented the same text or very similar texts; and (3) Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), as clear from his name (which could be confidently restored in one of the texts), titles, and two-generational genealogy, was the royal author. E. Leichty, in his discipline-standard edition of Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions that appeared in 2011, agreed with the

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1. Novotny & Weiershäuser 2024, Nbk. 11.

assignment of BM 56617 (2011, Esar. 112), the largest and best preserved of the four pieces published by Gerardi. However, he was less certain about the attribution of BM 50582, BM 56628, and BM 51254 (*ibid.*, Esar. 1001–1003) and thus he edited them together with the other texts tentatively attributed to this seventh-century-BCE king, principally since there was no direct or clear link to the presently attested inscriptions of Esarhaddon; the style and contents were not regarded as matching the known positively identified texts. Leichty was right to do so since it is not impossible that these three prism fragments, as well as BM 56617 (which was firmly assigned to Esarhaddon), were composed in the name of another ruler, very likely his son Šamaš-šumu-ukin, a king of Babylon for whom very few royal inscriptions have been certainly identified (Frame 1995, B.6.33.1–2001).[2] The scant evidence for such a proposal is examined here.

Reassessing BM 56617

In his edition of Esarhaddon 112, Leichty (2011, 227f.) wrongly presented the state of preservation of BM 56617, a large fragment of a five-sided clay prism bearing a text written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian script. In what was likely a significantly later post-collation examination/re-evaluation of the text, the first preserved line of col. i (= col. iv′, Pinches' col. D) was regarded as being the first line of that column (as well as of the inscription) since it contained Esarhaddon's name, which was immediately followed by his titulary. These are the standard first lines of a prism inscription of this Assyrian ruler, including his so-called "Babylon Inscriptions" (*ibid.*, Esar. 104–106). This reinterpretation also led Leichty to make the first-preserved line of the other three extant columns the first line of their respective columns, despite the fact that the top of the prism was no longer preserved and that first-preserved lines of the columns were not next to one another; i 1′ is next to v 5′ and iii 1′ is beside iv 5′, as already mentioned by Gerardi and shown in the formatting of Pinches' copy (Gerardi 1993, 119, 123). The author confirmed the accuracy of the arrangement of the positions of the lines shown in Pinches' facsimile, as well as the absence of the prism's top, during a cursory evaluation of BM 56617 in the British Museum in November 2012. While BM 56617 i 1′ does contain Esarhaddon's name, although not at the beginning of the line as presented in Leichty 2011 (227), it is fairly certain that the end of this line contained this Assyrian king's name, as stated by Gerardi (1993, 119).

Gerardi (*ibid.*) suggested that the now-missing beginning of the inscription on BM 56617 contained a dedication to a god or goddess. This was not an unreasonable assumption since some cylinder inscriptions of Sargon II, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal from Babylonia began with a dedication.[3] Inscriptions on prisms, on the other hand, began with the king's name, titles and epithets, and (depending on the ruler) his genealogy (going back two, three, or four generations).[4] At the present time, no Sargonid-period inscription

2. For a recent study about Šamaš-šumu-ukin, see Zaia 2019.
3. See Frame 2021, Sar. 125; Leichty 2011, Esar. 127–130 and 133–136; and Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 241, 253, 258, and 263.
4. See Frame 2021, Sar. 74; Grayson & Novotny 2012, 15–17, 22–24, and 27; Leichty 2011, Esar. 1–2, 57–58, and 104–106; Novotny & Jeffers 2018, Asb. 2–5, 7, 9–11, and 13; and Novotny, Jeffers &

written on a clay prism is known to have begun with a dedication to a deity. Thus, based on the currently published evidence, Gerardi's proposal cannot be confirmed, although it cannot be entirely ruled out since there are significant gaps in the textual record and one such inscription might come to light. If the inscription on BM 56617 did not begin with an address to a god or goddess, then it must have begun with the name of a king, followed by his titulary and genealogy, which included Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon II. In this case, Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin are the most likely candidates since both rulers referred to Sennacherib as their grandfather and (occasionally) to Sargon II as their great grandfather.[5]

In a Babylonian context, Ashurbanipal usually did not mention Sargon II; "Prism J" and the so-called "School Days Inscription" (or "L[ondon]$_4$ Inscription") are the known exceptions.[6] Moreover, he generally gave the names and titles of his predecessors shortly after his own name and titulary.[7] However, this was not a hard and fast rule since there are a few inscriptions with long titulary separating Ashurbanipal's name from those of his father and grandfather.[8] Šamaš-šumu-ukin, on the other hand, is a little harder to gauge since significantly fewer inscriptions of his are preserved and identified, especially longer narrative texts. Frame 1995 (B.6.33.1–2001) edited only six Šamaš-šumu-ukin inscriptions, plus a text by a governor of Ur (Sin-šarru-uṣur) written on his behalf. At least three texts, one on a stone stele (*ibid.*, B.6.33.3) and two on single-column clay cylinders (*ibid.*, B.6.33.4, 6), demonstrate that Šamaš-šumu-ukin, like his younger brother Ashurbanipal, described himself in detail before introducing his immediate predecessors, Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon II. For example, *ibid.*, B.6.33.3 lines 1–12:

> I, Šamaš-šumu-ukin, *m*[*ighty*] king, [king] of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad, the exalted [vice]-regent (and) true shepherd who reveres the lord of lords; the one during [who]se reign the Enlil of the gods, the god Marduk, had pity, entered Babylon amidst rejoicing, and took up residence in E-sagil, which is his eternal dwelling; [who (re)confirmed] the regular offerings (in) Esagil (for) the gods of the land of Sumer and Akkad; son of Esarhaddon, great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, (and) king of the land of Sumer and Akkad; grandson of Sennacherib, king of Assyria; descendant of Sargon (II), king of Assyria, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad; favorite (brother) of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, king of the

Frame 2023, Ssi 7. Note that Sargon II and Sennacherib did not mention their predecessors in their prism inscriptions. Esarhaddon did not mention Sennacherib or Sargon in his extant prism inscriptions from Babylonia. Ashurbanipal tended to name Esarhaddon and Sennacherib in his genealogy, and Sargon only very occasionally. Sin-šarru-iškun usually listed four generations: Ashurbanipal, Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon. Šamaš-šumu-ukin (Frame 1995, B.6.33.3–4, 6) named Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon as his predecessors and Ashurbanipal as his brother.

5. See fn. 4, above.
6. Respectively, Novotny & Jeffers 2018, Asb. 13; and Jeffers & Novotny 2023, Asb. 220.
7. Compare, for example, Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 242 lines 1–7a; and Asb. 244 lines 1–7.
8. See, for example, Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 246 lines 1–36a; Asb. 254 lines 1–23a; and Asb. 263 lines 7–16a.

four quarters (of the world).[9]

While the epithets for Esarhaddon do not match those in BM 56617 i 1′–7′ — which are "… of Es[arhaddon], great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of [Assyria], king of the kings of [(Lower) Egypt], Upper Egypt, and [Kush], king of the [four] quarters (of the world), the king who [has] no rival in all of [the lands]"[10] — they also do not match the titles used by Esarhaddon in his "Babylon Inscriptions" (Leichty 2011, Esar. 104–111, 114–117).[11] However, the titles for Sennacherib and Sargon II are close. BM 56617 i 8′–10′ read as follows: "s[o]n of Sennach[erib, king of Assyria, descendant of Sargon (II), grea]t [king], mighty king, king of the world, king of [Assyria, governor of Babylon], king of the land of Sumer [and Akkad]".[12] The scant traces in i 11′ are harder to identify, as almost nothing is preserved, but what remains appears to be the traces of a LUGAL-sign ("king"). If Šamaš-šumu-ukin is regarded as the king in whose name this prism inscription was written, then this line might be tentatively read as follows: [*ta-lim* AN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A] ⌜LUGAL$^{?}$⌝ [ŠÚ LUGAL KUR–*aš-šur*], "[favorite (brother) of Ashurbanipal], *king of* [the world, king of Assyria]".[13] Given this speculative reading of the line, then one might tentatively read the traces of the first two signs in i 1′ as ⌜UŠ$^{?}$⌝-[*t*]*i*$^{?}$ (*ridûti*, "succession"). If interpreted correctly, then one might expect [DUMU] (*māru*, "son") or [DUMU LUGAL *šá* É] (*mār šarri ša bīt*, "prince of the House (of Succession)" in the now-missing line immediately before i 1′ (= i 0′).[14] The unusual affiliation, *mār ridûti* ("heir designate") or *mār*

9. Frame 1995, B.6.33.3 lines 1–12: ⌜*a-na*⌝-[*ku*] / [^{d}]⌜GIŠ.NU$_{11}$⌝–MU–GI.NA MAN *d*[*an*$^{?}$*-nu*] / [MAN] TIN.TIR.KI MAN KUR-EME.GI$_7$ *u* ⌜URI.KI⌝ / [ÉN]SI *ṣi-ru* SIPA *ki-nu pa-liḫ* EN ⌜EN.EN⌝ / [*ša*] *ina* BALA-*šú* ^{d}EN.LÍL DINGIR.DINGIR <^{d}>AMAR.UTU ARḪUŠ *ir-šú-u* / ⌜*ina*⌝ *ri-šá-a-tú a-na* TIN.TIR.KI *i-*⌜*ru*⌝*-um-ma* / *ina é-sag-íl šá da-rat šu-bat-su ir-*⌜*me*$^{?}$⌝ / *sat-tuk-ku é-sag-gíl* DINGIR.ME KUR–EME.GI$_7$ *u* ⌜URI.KI *ú-kin*$^{?}$⌝ / ⌜DUMU⌝ AN.ŠÁR-PAP-AŠ MAN GAL MAN *dan-nu* MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR–*aš-*⌜*šur*⌝ / ⌜LUGAL⌝ KUR-EME.GI$_7$ *u* URI.KI A A ^{d}30–PAP.ME–SU MAN KUR–⌜*aš-šur*⌝ / [Š]À.BAL.BAL LUGAL-GIN MAN KUR–*aš-šur* MAN KUR-EME.GI$_7$ *u* ⌜URI⌝.KI / ⌜*ta*⌝*-lim* AN.ŠÁR–DÙ–A MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR–*aš-šur* MAN *kib-rat* LÍMMU-*ti*. The translation is based on and adapted from Frame 1995, 253.
10. Leichty 2011, Esar. 112 i 1′–7′: *x x* ⌜AN⌝.Š[ÁR–ŠEŠ–SUM.NA] / LUGAL GAL-*ú* LUGAL *dan-nu* LUGAL ŠÚ LUGAL [KUR–*aš-šur*] LUGAL LUGAL.MEŠ KUR.[*mu-uṣ-ri*] / KUR.*pa-ta-ri-is* u [KUR.*ku-u-si*] / LUGAL *kib-ra-a-ti* [LÍMMU-*ti*] / LUGAL *šá ina kul-lat* [KUR.KUR] / *ma-ḫi-ri la i-*[*šu-ú*]. See below for a discussion about the reading of the signs before Esarhaddon's name.
11. Compare Leichty 2011, Esar. 104 i 1–7; Esar. 105 i 1–6; Esar. 106 i 1–7; Esar. 113 lines 1–2a; and Esar. 114 i 1–4.
12. Leichty 2011, Esar. 112 i 8′–10′: *b*[*u-kú*]*r* ^{d}30–ŠEŠ.MEŠ–[SU LUGAL KUR–*aš-šur* ŠÀ.BAL.BAL LUGAL-GIN] / [LUGAL GAL]-*ú* LUGAL *dan-nu* LUGAL ŠÚ LUGAL [KUR–*aš-šur*] / [GÌR.NÍTA TIN.TIR].⌜KI LUGAL⌝ KUR-EME.[GI$_7$ *u* URI.KI]. Note that the spelling of Sennacherib's name without the personal determinative (^{m}) is attested in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions. See Frame 1995, B.6.33.3 line 10; B.6.33.4 line 21; and B.6.33.6 line 7′. Note that the word *bukru*, "son", also written *bu-kúr*, appeared in *ibid.*, B.6.33.4 line 9 (indicating the god Nabû's relationship to his father Marduk as the god Asari).
13. The restoration is based on Frame 1995, B.6.33.3 line 12.
14. A *ša*, "of", before Esarhaddon's name appears not to have been needed. Compare, Leichty 2011, Esar. 113 line 30: ^{m}*aš-šur*–DÙ–A DUMU *ri-du-tú* KUR–*aš-šur*.KI *ù* ^{md}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$–MU–GI.NA DUMU *ri-du-te* KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI, "Ashurbanipal, heir designate of Assyria, and Šamaš-šumu-ukin, heir designate of Babylon". In both instances *ša* is not used after *mār ridûti*, "heir designate". This construction might speak in favor of the shorter title *mār ridûti Aššur-ahu-iddina*, "heir designate of Esarhaddon". The longer title, *mār šarri ša bīt ridûti*, "prince of the House of Succession", on the other hand, might have required the use of a *ša* before Esarhaddon's name. Compare Parpola & Watanabe 1988, Text 6 lines

šarri ša bīt ridûti, "prince of the House of Succession", might not be out of place, considering that the text used *bukru*, "son", to describe the relationship to Sennacherib, rather than the typical *mār māri*, "grandson". Note, however, that it seems strange that the scribe split the title over two lines, thus, the interpretation of i 0′–1′a suggested here might be wrong. Nevertheless, should one or both interpretations prove correct, then BM 56617 — and perhaps also BM 50582, BM 56628, and BM 51254 (see below) — should be reassigned from Esarhaddon to Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

A possible attribution of BM 56617 to this king of Babylon and son of Esarhaddon might be further supported from one certain inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the so-called "Borsippa Stele" (Frame 1995, B.6.33.3). Admittedly, evidence from a single inscription is not the "smoking gun" one needs to prove the present author's assumption, although it does lend some credence to the suggestion. Lines 17–21, which are part of the advice to a future ruler, reads as follows:

> *man-nu ina* LUGAL.ME *ar-ku-tú* DUMU.ME-*e-a / šá* E$_{11}$-*ma ú-ma-ʾa-a-ru* KUR / *ṣa-lam-a li-mur-ma* Ì.GIŠ *lip-šu-uš* / *ni-qa-a liq-qí* MU-*a it-ti* MU-*šú* / *liš-ṭur-ma ep-še-ti-iá lit-ta-ʾi-id* [15]
> Whoever among the future kings, my descendants, appears and governs the land, may he read my statue, anoint (it) with oil, (and) offer a sacrifice. May he write my name with his (own) name and praise my deeds.

This passage appears in BM 56617 v 19′–23′ (the inscription under investigation), as well as in two inscriptions (written in contemporary Neo-Babylonian script) whose attribution is uncertain: BM 51254 v 1′–9′ (Leichty 2011, Esar. 1003) and Si. 4+5 iv 16–21 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235f.).[16] BM 90866 (Šamaš-šumu-ukin's "Borsippa Stele"), which was cited above, is the only text with wording *mannu ina šarrāni arkūti mārēya ša illûma umaʾʾaru mātu*, "whoever among the future kings, my descendants, appears and governs the land", that can be firmly and unequivocally attributed to a specific ruler. Although this is far from conclusive, it is a piece of evidence that directly links the wording of an inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin to the text preserved on BM 56617. One cannot, however, rule out the possibility that Esarhaddon also used this exact passage in his Babylonian inscriptions. At the moment, the attested texts of these two kings differ significantly.[17]

666b–669, which have *ina* UGU ^{m}*aš-šur*–DÙ–A DUMU MAN GAL *šá* É UŠ-*ti šá* KUR–*aš-šur*.KI *ù ina* UGU ^{md}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$–MU–GI.NA DUMU MAN <GAL> *šá* É UŠ-*ti* [*šá*] KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI, "on behalf of the great prince of the House of Succession of Assyria and on behalf of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the <great > prince of the House of Succession [of] Babylon". Thus, [DUMU$^{?}$] / ⌜UŠ$^{?}$⌝-[*t*]*i*$^{?}$ ⌜AN⌝.Š[ÁR–ŠEŠ–SUM.NA], "[*heir*] *desig*[*nat*]*e* of Es[arhaddon]", is tentatively the author's preferred reading of BM 56617 i 0′b–1′.

15. The translation is from Frame 1995, 253.
16. This text has been attributed to Nabonidus by M. Frazer and S.F. Adalı (2021) and to Cyrus II by A. Bartelmus (2025, 277–280). The present author and M. Frazer will present a detailed study of the possible royal authors of Si. 4+5, including Šamaš-šumu-ukin, in a forthcoming article.
17. Regarding Esarhaddon's advice to future rulers in his "Babylon Inscriptions", see, for example, Leichty 2011, Esar. 104 vii 19–23, which has ⌜*a-na*⌝ *ár-kát* u$_4$-*me a-na* u$_4$-*me ṣa-a-ti ina* LUGAL.MEŠ DUMU.MEŠ-*iá šá* ⌜LUGAL⌝ DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}AMAR.UTU *a-na be-lut* KUR *u* UN.MEŠ *i-nam-bu-ú zi-kir-šú*, "in

The contents of BM 56617 iv might offer a third piece of evidence for a possible attribution to Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The Elamite attack on Karduniaš (Babylonia), which was mentioned directly after the statement about the king providing an abundance of grain to stave off famine, was cited by Gerardi (1993, 120) as proof that Elam attacked Sippar in Esarhaddon's sixth regnal year (675 BCE), an incursion on Babylonian soil that was recorded in the "Chronicle Concerning the Period from Nabu-naṣir to Šamaš-šumu-ukin" iv 9–10 (Leichty 2011, 7). The provocation for the assault was not mentioned. The Elamite attack on Babylonia that was recorded in BM 56617 iv, however, if the inscription does in fact date to Šamaš-šumu-ukin's reign, might have been about a decade later (ca. 664 BCE), when Urtaku (the king of Elam) invaded Karduniaš at the instigation of Bel-iqiša (the ruler of the Gambulu), Nabu-šumu-ereš (the governor of Nippur), and Marduk-šumu-ibni (an Elamite eunuch), despite the fact that Ashurbanipal claimed to have aided Elam during a severe famine that had just ended.[18] The events, at least from Ashurbanipal's perspective, were narrated in several prism inscriptions from Nineveh (and Kalhu), including the so-called "Prism B" inscription.[19] If the attribution of BM 56617 to Šamaš-šumu-ukin proves correct, then this inscription might present the king of Babylon's account of Urtaku's invasion, a version of events that has not been preserved in the currently extant textual record. Moreover, this text, if the reassigned dating is accurate, recorded that Babylonia endured hunger and famine at the same time as Elam, something that was not described or alluded to in Ashurbanipal's annalistic texts. The direct connection between the famine, which the royal author claimed to have competently kept at bay, and an attack on Karduniaš seem to fit very well with the preserved contents of BM 56617 iv. Moreover, the use of a *topos* of abundance (iv 5–7) in this text makes good sense if the inscription is dated to Šamaš-šumu-ukin's reign, especially since his younger brother Ashurbanipal (the king of Assyria) regularly included such passages in his inscriptions.[20] Note that the political events in Babylonia during the reign of Esarhaddon were described very differently in that Assyrian king's prism inscriptions, none of which mentioned the Elamite king invading Babylonia or a famine having taken place.[21]

The use of third personal plural suffixes in the long *ana šatti*, "on account of", section of the inscription (v 1′–18′), which took up a significant portion of the fifth and final column of the prism might offer further support for an attribution to Šamaš-šumu-ukin; *-šunu* and *-šunūti* were used in v 1′–2′, 4′–6′, 10′, 12′–14′, and 16′. As Gerardi (1993, 120) has already asked, who were the "them" referred to in this part of the text? Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Ashurbanipal, but as the kings of Babylon and Assyria respectively, and not as

future days, in far-off days, may one of the kings, my descendants, whom the king of the gods, the god Marduk, names to rule the land and the people".

18. On the date of this campaign, see Frame 1992, 119 n. 93.
19. Novotny & Jeffers 2018, Asb. 3 iv 15–79 ("sixth campaign"). For an overview of the events, see Frame 1992, 119–121, and Novotny & Jeffers 2018, 20f.
20. See, for example, Novotny & Jeffers 2018, Asb. 3 i 27–34; and Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 263 lines 11b–12a.
21. For example, Leichty 2011, Esar. 1 ii 40–64, and Esar. 2 ii 24–33.

Esarhaddon's heir designates (as Gerardi thought). The words *ummānšunu*, "their armies", and *karāssun*, "their camp(s)", in v 6′, and *mātīšunu*, "their land(s)", v 10′, make better sense when the two brothers are regarded as kings, rather than as princes (who did not yet have full authority over their respective lands). While the idea of having two kings referred to in this section of the inscription seems a little unusual, it is not unexpected because Šamaš-šumu-ukin requested good things on his younger brother's behalf in some royal inscriptions.[22] The inclusion of Ashurbanipal in this section of the text (although his name is not presently preserved) might have been due to the fact that Assyrian troops helped drive out the Elamites who had invaded Babylonia at the encouragement of the governor of Nippur (Nabu-šumu-ereš) and the leader of the Gambulu (Bel-iqiša). In fact, the blessing sections pertaining to Ištar (whose name is now missing), Nergal, and Adad (respectively BM 56617 v 1′–2′, 3′–7′, and 8′–10′a) might have been rooted in the events recorded in col. iv: Adad provided support in ending the famine that had just ended and Ištar and Nergal aided and protected the two kings, their troops, and their camps in the battles with Urtaku and his seditious allies.

Although the evidence is not overwhelming, it is possible that BM 56617 bears a hitherto unidentified inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. This assumes (1) that the text began with the king's name, titles, and genealogy, and not with an opening dedication to a god or goddess (as Gerardi has suggested), an inscription type not presently attested on clay prisms; (2) that i 0′–1′ mentioned that the now-king of Babylon was an heir designate of Esarhaddon and that i 11′ contained a reference to Ashurbanipal being the brother of the king of Babylon; (3) that the wording *mannu ina šarrāni arkūti mārēya ša illûma uma᾽᾽aru mātu*, "whoever among the future kings, my descendants, appears and governs the land", was commonly used in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions; (4) that the events described in col. iv are the Babylonian perspective of Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia, which took place ca. 664 BCE, rather than an invasion that took place in 675 BCE, an event that was not even referred to in Esarhaddon's prism inscriptions; (5) that the inclusion of a *topos* of abundance is not unexpected since a famine had struck a large swath of land and therefore was referred to by both Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his brother Ashurbanipal; and (6) that the use of third person plural suffixes in the *ana šatti* passage referred to the two brothers as kings (rather than as princes). If all six points prove correct, then the text inscribed on BM 56617 would date after 664 BCE and before 652 BCE (the outbreak of the Brothers' War). Moreover, this would be the first text of Šamaš-šumu-ukin known to have been written on a clay prism.

The Prism Inscription(s) of Šamaš-šumu-ukin

Before diving into a short discussion of the contents and style of the inscription written on BM 56617, it is necessary to first address the possible association of the text(s) preserved on BM 50582, BM 56628, and BM 51254 (Leichty 2011, Esar. 1001–1003), three prism fragments provisionally assigned to Esarhaddon. Like BM 56617, these three pieces from five-sided prisms might also be tentatively attributed to Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

22. See Frame 1995, B.6.33.4 lines 24–27, and B.6.33.5 lines 36–37.

BM 51254 (*ibid.*, Esar. 1003), like BM 56617, contained the wording *mannu ina šarrāni arkūti mārēya ša illûma umaʾʾaru mātu*, "whoever among the future kings, my descendants, appears and governs the land", which was also used in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's "Borsippa Stele" (Frame 1995, B.6.33.3 lines 17–21). The inscription on BM 51254, which had a very long prologue, alluded to the stabilization of the economy (perhaps after a famine) and to the defeat of an unnamed enemy (possibly the Elamites); see i 2′–5′: "the one who distributes [shares] to the …[…] people, opens canals, (and) makes the pasturage (and) watering places flourish",[23] and i 8′: "the one who conquered the enemy (and) overthrew e[vil]".[24] These epithets might directly relate to the contents of BM 56617 iv, which might have recorded the Babylonian perspective of Urtaku's invasion of Karduniaš (see above). If this was the case, then BM 51254 might be a second inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin written on a clay prism. The texts written on BM 51254 and BM 56617 are not the same inscription, as it is clear from BM 51254 v 3′–4′, which add "when this [*temple*] becomes old and when he (a future ruler) renovates its [dilapid]ated section(s)".[25] Thus, there were probably at least two inscriptions of this king of Babylon written on clay prisms.

As already noted by Gerardi (1993, 120), the physical appearance and script of BM 56628 (Leichty 2011, Esar. 1002), a fragment from the top of a five-sided prism, is very similar to those of BM 56617. Gerardi tentatively suggested that the two pieces could belong to the same prism, although with no clear join. The possibility of a non-physical join is likely when one compares the copy of the inscription written on clay tablet Si. 4+5 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235f.), a text whose royal author is yet to be positively identified.[26] Si. 4+5 iii 13′–16′ duplicate BM 56628 v (= iii′) 1–4, and Si. 4+5 iii 28′b–iv 22 duplicate (with some variation) BM 56617 v 1′–15′ and 19′–23′. If the now-missing text between BM 56628 v 4 and BM 56617 v 1′ duplicated Si. 4+5 iii 17′–28′a with little to no variation, then there would be approximately twelve lines of text missing between the two fragments. If there were omissions, then the lacuna would be shorter. Based on the parallel passage know from Si. 4+5, no physical join is expected between BM 56628 and BM 56617, should they originate from the same pentagonal prism. Whether or not there is a join between the two fragments, the text inscribed on them is either (1) the same inscription or (2) two closely related inscriptions. This is clear from Si. 4+5 (iii 13′–16′, 28′b–iv 22) and from the use of the third personal plural suffixes in the long *ana šatti*, "on account of", section (see above); *-šunu* and *-šunūti* are used in BM 56628 v 1, as well as in BM 56617 v 1′–2′, 4′–6′, 10′, 12′–14′, and 16′.

As for the contents of cols. iii (= i′) and iv (= ii′), the preserved sections contain descriptions of work carried out at Babylon (and/or Borsippa), Cutha, and Bāṣ, and further titulary closely connected to the king's work on temples. The use of third person verbal forms and epithets starting with participles matches the language style of BM 56617 ii

23. Leichty 2011, Esar. 1003 i 2′–5′: *mu-za-*ʾ*i-iz* [*is-qa-a-ti*] / *a-na* UN.MEŠ *x x* [*x x*] / *mu-pat-tu-ú* ÍD.MEŠ / *mu-šam-me-eḫ ri-*ʾ*i-i-tú maš-qí-tú*.
24. Leichty 2011, Esar. 1003 i 8′: *ka-šid a-a-bi mu-šam-qit* Ḫ[UL].
25. Leichty 2011, Esar. 1003 v 3′–4′: [É?] *šu-a-tú i-la-ab-bi-ru-ma* / [*an-ḫ*]*u-us-su ú-da-šú*.
26. See fn. 16, above, for more information.

and iv, which also used third person verbs and (extended) epithets beginning with a participle; for example, [*mušta*]*pik karê ašnan*, "[the one who he]aps up grain", in BM 56617 iv 3′, and *mušandil māḫā*[*zī*] / *murappiš ēkurrāti ilī r*[*abûti*], "the one who enlarged the cult cent[ers], enlarged the temples of the [great] gods", in BM 56628 iv 6′–7′. The fact that both BM 56617 and BM 56628 had long prologues and *ana šatti*, "on account of ", sections, employed the same language and (contemporary Neo-Babylonian) script, and were written on identical material supports highly suggests that the texts inscribed on them likely belong to the same king, perhaps even from the same text. Thus, it seems very plausible that BM 56628 also dates to Šamaš-šumu-ukin's reign. Whether or not it comes from the same prism (or inscription) as BM 56617 is still uncertain.

BM 50582 (Leichty 2011, Esar. 1001) is a fragment from the bottom of a five-sided clay prism. BM 50582 ii (= i′) 10′ and iii (= ii′) 12′ duplicate respectively BM 26628 iii (= i′) 1 and iv (= ii′) 1. The duplication with BM 56628 makes it certain that the two fragments are either (1) different exemplars of the same inscription or (2) copies of two very similar inscriptions. The preserved contents contain descriptions of work carried out at Babylon (and/or Borsippa), an unnamed city, and Bāṣ.

Based on language, script, material support, and content, BM 56617, BM 56628, BM 50582, and BM 51254 likely preserve parts of at least two different inscriptions that were written in the name of the same king, very possibly Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The fragments could represent as few as two five-sided prisms or as many as three or four different prisms, depending on whether some of the pieces come from the same object. BM 56617 and BM 51254 come from different prisms, as do BM 56628 and BM 50582 (see above). BM 56617 and BM 56628, on the other hand, might belong to the same five-sided prism.

If all four prism fragments preserve part of an inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, what would the complete inscription(s) have contained? Based on what is extant, cols. i–iv would have had a lengthy prologue that included (1) Šamaš-šumu-ukin's name; (2) his titles and epithets; (3) his genealogy going back three generations (Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon II); (4) his affiliation to his brother Ashurbanipal (who was then the king of Assyria); (5) further epithets; and (6) third-person descriptions of and epithets relating to his accomplishments, which included work at Babylon, Cutha, Bāṣ, and possibly other cities (including Borsippa), actions that not only ended a famine in Babylonia but also took steps to prevent future harvest shortfalls, and the defeat of the Elamite king (Urtaku), who had invaded Babylonia. The style of the lengthy introduction is a blend of what his father Esarhaddon had used in his so-called "Nineveh B" inscription (Leichty 2011, Esar. 2), what his brother Ashurbanipal was using in some of his prism inscriptions from Nineveh and Kalhu (Novotny & Jeffers 2018, Asb. 5–8 and 10), and Šamaš-šumu-ukin's own style, which was to report the information in this part of the text in the third person (rather than in the first person) and with epithets beginning with a participle.

The lower part/end of col. iv would have contained the main building report or primary purpose for the text's composition, which might have been quite short, following the style of many building reports of Assyrian rulers in Babylonia.[27] In the case of BM 51254,

27. See, for example, Frame 1995, B.6.33.3 lines 13–16; and Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 246

based on v 3′–4′, the purpose of the inscription was to record the renovation of a building, possibly a temple, perhaps even Ebabbar, "Shining House", the earthly abode of the sun-god Šamaš, the patron deity of Sippar, the city from which this prism fragment is said to have originated.[28] The main purpose of the composition of the text on BM 56617, on the other hand, is less clear. At the present time, it is not possible to guess since the relevant information is completely missing.

The long *ana šatti*, "on account of ", section began at the very end of col. iv (or at the beginning of col. v) and occupied most of col. v, the final column. That part of the text described the divine support that Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his brother Ashurbanipal, then respectively the kings of Babylon and Assyria, received on behalf of their good deeds. Lastly, at the end of col. v, was the advice to future rulers, namely information about how to respect the inscribed object upon which the text was written, which, in these cases, was a five-sided clay prism. Presumably the prisms were dated, following the style of his grandfather Sennacherib, his father Esarhaddon, and his brother Ashurbanipal. However, this cannot be confirmed at the present time.

Conclusion

If the reattribution of the texts written on BM 56617, BM 50582, BM 56628, and BM 51254 to Šamaš-šumu-ukin proves correct, then we now have evidence that this king of Babylon followed in the footsteps of his father by commissioning longer inscriptions of his to be written on (pentagonal) clay prisms, a medium which we did not previously know that he had used. Moreover, the texts provide information about building projects that had been up to now attributed to Esarhaddon, specifically the rebuilding of Edurgina, the temple of the god Bēl-ṣarbi at Bāṣ and the refurbishment of its divine statues (which had undergone the *mīs pî* and *pīt pî* rituals). Moreover, the inscription (on BM 56617) might provide a non-Ashurbanipal version of Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia, which took place (shortly) after a widespread famine that had taken place during the early years of the reigns of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Ashurbanipal. Lastly, this reassessment opens the possibility that other inscriptions of this king of Babylon might be lurking in plain sight, thus, shedding new light on Šamaš-šumu-ukin's reign, much of which had been overshadowed by Ashurbanipal, his younger brother, the king of Assyria.[29] Further detailed studies of previously published inscriptions might prove worthwhile.

lines 65b–67a; and Asb. 262 lines 16–18a.

28. Šamaš-šumu-ukin's work on the Ebabbar temple at Sippar can be confirmed from bricks bearing a Sumerian inscription of his. See Frame 1995, B.6.33.2. He also renovated the city wall, Badullisâ (*ibid.*, B.6.33.1).
29. For example, possibly the text written on Si. 4+5 (Frazer & Adalı 2021).

APPENDIX 1

COMPARISON OF THE LEMMAS AND WRITTEN FORMS OF BM 56617 WITH AN AKKADIAN GLOSSARY AND INDEX OF NAMES

To further examine the possible attribution of BM 56617 to Šamaš-šumu-ukin, perhaps it is useful to compare the lemmas and written forms of the text inscribed on this fragmentarily preserved five-sided prism. For this study, most of Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions and Šamaš-šumu-ukin inscriptions are used; respectively Leichty 2011, Esar. 104–111, 113–114, 116–125, and 127–139; and Frame 1995, B.6.33.1 and 3–6. This was done in order compare "apples to apples", that is, to examine inscriptions written on their intended material supports (clay cylinders and prisms, stone stele and monuments, and bricks), rather than copies known from clay tablets, which are either drafts or archival copies of texts written on other media; for example, Leichty 2011, Esar. 48, which is a copy of an inscription written on a pair of steles.[30] Leichty 2011, Esar. 115–116 are exceptions. While they are inscribed on clay tablets originating from Nineveh, these two inscriptions are included in the comparison since the language and content of Esar. 115–116 are like texts of Esarhaddon known from multi-columned clay prisms (Esar. 104–111) and a stone monument (Esar. 114), this Assyrian king's so-called "Babylon Inscriptions".

The data used here is based on current online edition of BM 56617 (December 25, 2025), which is a significantly updated version of Leichty 2011, Esar.112.[31] The revised transliteration contains 147 words and names, with 166 distinct written forms. However, when the completely restored forms are removed, 130 words, with 138 written forms, remain. In the thirty-three Esarhaddon inscriptions compared, 61 words are used in BM 56617, with 62 written form matches. That is, 46.92% and 44.92% respectively. However, when word matches without an exact spelling match are calculated (an additional 39 words), then the total word match between BM 56617 and Esarhaddon's Babylon inscriptions is 76.92%. In the five Šamaš-šumu-ukin inscriptions compared, 45 words are used in BM 56617, with 45 written form matches. That is, 34.61% and 32.6% respectively. However, when word matches without an exact spelling are calculated (an additional 19 words), then the total word match between BM 56617 and Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions is 49.23%. While the numbers seem to favor Esarhaddon, they really do not, since significantly more royally commissioned texts of his are presently preserved than for his son Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Just in this scenario only, twenty-eight more inscriptions of Esarhaddon were used. If the full Esarhaddon corpus had been used in the study, the statistics would skew further in that Assyrian king's favor.[32]

30. Other texts, the so-called "Aššur-Babylon" inscriptions, could be included here. For example, Leichty 2011, Esar. 41, 49, and 51–53.
31. http://oracc.org/rinap/Q003341/ (last accessed on December 22nd, 2025). This link might change in the future, probably to http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon6/Q003341/ and/or http://oracc.org/ribo/Q003341/.
32. This will be further examined in the in-progress study of Si. 4+5 (Frazer & Adalı 2021) mentioned in fn. 16, above.

Do the higher percentages justify a more certain attribution to Esarhaddon? Not necessarily, especially considering the new interpretations of BM 56617 i 1′ and 11′ presented above, which, if proven correct, would confirm Šamaš-šumu-ukin as the royal author of the text written on BM 56617. Thus, the perceived attribution of an unattributed inscription based solely on lemmas and written forms might lead us down the wrong path. In fact, the statistics are significantly better for Šamaš-šumu-ukin when only comparable passages are examined. In this case, the king's genealogy (with those rulers' titles; i 1′–11′) and the advice to future rulers (v 19′–24′), both of which match very well those passages in the known and firmly attributed inscriptions of this king of Babylon. These parts of the text match texts of Šamaš-šumu-ukin very well. Of the 34 words (with 38 written forms) in BM 56617 i 1′–11′ and v 19′–24′, there are 22 exact form matches for 21 words in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions, together with another 6 words without a form match. Respectively, the percentages are 61.76% (words with exact written forms), 57% (form matches), and 79% (words used). However, a comparison of the words and forms in the still-partially preserved prologue and *ana šatti*, "on account of ", section of BM 56617 (iii 1′–iv 18′) is not particularly useful since neither section is remotely duplicated in either the known and positively attributed inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Thus, those parts of the BM 56617 are not particularly helpful in the cross-textual examination.[33] In sum, we need more than just statistics when attributing a text to a particular ruler, something that will be addressed by the author and M. Frazer in a forthcoming study.[34]

Akkadian Glossary

E and Š after the written form denote respectively an exact form match in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon and the inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Additional notes, as needed, are provided, although these are kept to a bare minimum.

abbūtu (n.), "patronage"; wr. [*a-bu-u*]*s-su-un*. The restoration is based on Si. 4+5 iv 10 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235).

amāru (v.) G, "to read"; wr. [*li-mur-ma*] (E, Š).

ana (prep.), "to"; wr. *a-na* (E, Š), *ana* (E, Š).

andullu (n.), "protection"; wr. *an-dul-la-šú*.

arāku (v.) G, "to become long"; wr. *li-ri-ku*. This word appears in the inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon, but not in the precative of the G-stem.

ašnan (n.), "grain"; wr. *aš-na-an*.

ayyābu (n.), "enemy"; wr. [*a-a-bi*] (E).

balāṭu (n.), "life"; wr. (Š) [TIN] (E). The word is used in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions, but not with this restored spelling.

bamātu (n.), "open plain"; wr. *ba-ma-a-ti*. Read as *ba-ba-a-ti* (*babtu*, "city quarter") in Leichty 2011

33. The *ana šatti*, "on account of ", section of Si. 4+5 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235 iii 12′–iv 15) largely duplicates the preserved *ana šatti* section of BM 56617 (v 1′–18′). The attribution of BM 56617, therefore, might influence scholars when they decide on who the royal author of Si. 4+5 was.

34. See fn. 16, above.

(228).
bēlu (n.), "lord"; wr. EN (E, Š).
bitrû (v.) Št, "to do something permanently"; wr. *liš-tab-ra-a*.
bukru (n.), "son"; wr. *b*[*u-kú*]*r* (Š).
dannu (adj.), "strong"; wr. *dan-nu* (E, Š).
dekû (v.) G, "to raise, muster"; wr. *id-kam-ma*. The G-stem of this verb is also used in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but not with the ventive and not in the third person singular.
dešû (v.) D, "to let flourish"; wr. *ú-da-áš-šu-ú*. Read as *ú-šá-áš-šu-ú* (*našû* Š, "to bring about") in Leichty 2011, 228.
ebūru (n.), "harvest"; wr. BURU$_{14}$ (E).
ēkallu (n.), "palace"; wr. É.GAL (E, Š).
ēkurru (n.), "temple"; wr. ⌜É⌝.KUR (E).
eli (prep.), "on, over"; wr. UGU-*šú-nu*. This preposition is used in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but without the third person plural suffix.
elû (v.) G, "to go up"; wr. E$_{11}$-*ma* (Š). The G-stem verb also appears in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but not with this written form.
ēm (*ēma*) (prep.), "wherever"; wr. *e-ma* (E, Š).
epištu (n.), "deed"; wr. ⌜*ep-še*⌝-[*ti-ia*] (E, Š).
erbe (num.), "four"; [LÍMMU-*ti*] (E, Š).
erēbu (v.) Gtn, "to constantly enter"; wr. ⌜*i*⌝-*te-né-er-ru-bu*. The Gtn-stem of *erēbu* is presently not attested in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions and Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.
erṣetu (n.), "earth"; wr. KI-*tim* (E, Š).
ešēru (v.) G, as n. "success"; wr. SI.SÁ (E).
eṭēru (v.) G, "to save"; wr. *li-ṭi-ra*.
gamālu (v.) G, "to spare"; wr. *li-ig-mil*.
gapšu (adj.), "arisen"; wr. *gap-šu-ti*. The adjective is known from Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but in the masculine singular form *gap-šu*.
gērû (*gārû*) (n.), "enemy"; wr. *ga-re-e*. The noun is known from Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but as *ga-re-e-šú*.
gugallu (n.), "irrigation controller"; wr. GÚ.GAL.
hadîš (adv.), "happily"; wr. *ha-diš* (E, Š).
hengallu (n.), "plenty"; wr. HÉ.GÁL.LA. Also attested in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but not with this spelling.
hušahhu (n.), "need"; wr. *hu-šah-hu*.
ilu (n.), "god"; wr. DINGIR (E, Š), DINGIR.MEŠ (E, Š).
immu (n.), "daytime"; wr. *im-ma*.
ina (prep.), "in, on, among, through"; wr. *ina* (E, Š).
išû (v.), G "to have"; wr. *i-šu-ú*.
itti (prep.), "with"; wr. KI. Attested with different spellings in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions and Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.
kakku (n.), "weapon"; wr. GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ. Attested as GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-*ia* in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.
kalû (n.), "all"; wr. *ka-li-šú-un*. Also attested in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but not with this spelling.
kânu (v.) D, "to firmly establish"; wr. [*ú*]-⌜*kin*⌝ (E, Š).

karābu (v.) Gtn, “to constantly pray; wr. [SÍ]S[KUR$^{?}$-*šú*]-*nu-ti-ma*. The reading and restoration are based on Si. 4+5 iv 9 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235). This word was read as [*lip-pal-su-šú*]-*nu-ti-ma* (*palāsu* N, “to look at”) in Leichty 2011, 228. The Gtn-stem of *karābu* occurs also in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions.

karāšu (n.), “camp”; wr. *ka-ras-su-un*.

karû (n.), “grain-heap”; wr. *ka-re-e* (E).

kibru (n.), “quarter”; wr. *kib-ra-a-ti*. This noun is also used in Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s inscriptions and Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions, but written as *kib-rat*.

kīnu (adj.), “stable”; wr. GI.NA. This adjective is written phonetically in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions and Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s inscriptions.

kiššatu (n.), “totality, world”; wr. ŠÚ (E, Š).

kullatu (n.), “all”; wr. *kul-lat* (E, Š).

kūnu (n.), “firmness”; wr. *kun* (E).

lā (neg. particle), “not”; wr. (MOD) *la* (E, Š). The attestation of the word in iv 8′ was read as *ú-la* (*ula*, “not”) in Leichty 2011, 228.

lalû (n.), “plenty”; wr. [*la-le-e*] (E).

lemnu (adj.), “evil”; wr. [*lem-nu*]. This word is written logographically in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

libbu (n.), “heart”; wr. *lìb-bi-šú-nu* (E). This noun appears in the extant Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but as *lìb-bi-šú*.

līpu (n.), “descendant”; wr. [ŠÀ.BAL.BAL] (E, Š).

mâdu (v.) G, “to become many”; wr. [*li-ʾi-i-da*]. The restoration based on Si. 4+5 iv 11 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, N). The G-stem of this verb is not used in the known Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon; it is attested at the present in that group of texts in the Š-stem. This restored word was read as *lil-bi-ra* (*labāru* G, “to become old”) in Leichty 2011, 228.

māhāzu (n.), “cult center”; wr. ⌜*ma-ha-zi*⌝ (E). Šamaš-šumu-ukin uses the noun *māhāzu* in his texts.

māhiru (n.), “opponent, equal”; wr. *ma-hi-ri*.

mahīru (n.), “exchange rate”; wr. KI.LAM.

mahru (n.), as prep. “before”; wr. *ma-har-šú-un* (E). This word is attested in the inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but not with this written form and not with a third person plural suffix.

mala (prep.) as rel. pron., “as much as”; wr. [*ma*]-⌜*la*$^{?}$⌝ (E). The reading and restoration are based on Si. 4+5 iv 22 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 236).

manāma (indefinite pron.), “somebody”; wr. *ma-na-ma*.

mannu (interr. pron.) as indefinite pron., “whoever”; wr. *man-nu* (E, Š).

maqātu (v.) Š, “to cut down”; wr. *li-šam-qí*-[*tu*]. The Š-stem of this verb is not attested in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

māru (n.), “descendant”; wr. [DUMU.MEŠ-*e-a*] (Š). This noun is regularly attested in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscription, but not with this spelling.

matīma (adv.), “ever”; wr. *ma-ti-ma* (E).

mātu (n.), “land”; wr. KUR (E, Š), [KUR.KUR] (E, Š), KUR-*šú*, KUR-*šú-nu*, [*ma-a-tú*]. The restoration of *ma-a-tú* is based on BM 51254 v 2′ (Leichty 2011, Esar. 1003).

mīlu (n.), “high water”; wr. ILLU.MEŠ (E). The singular form of *mīlu* is used in an inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

mušarû (n.), “(royal) inscription”; wr. MU.SAR-[*re-e*$^{?}$], [MU].SAR-*ru-ú* (E). The known written forms of this word in Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s inscriptions are MU.SAR-*e-šú*, MU.SAR-*u-a*, and MU.SAR-*ú-a*.

muštapiku (n.), “one who piles up”; wr. [*muš-ta*$^{?}$]-*pi-ik*.

mūšu (n.), "night"; wr. GE$_6$.

nâdu (v.) Gtn, "to repeatedly praise"; wr. [*lit-ta-ʾi-id*] (Š).

nabnītu (n.), "creation"; wr. *nab-nit* (E). Also attested in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions, as *nab-ni-it*.

nadû (v.) G, "to lay (down)"; wr. *na-du-ú*. This verb is attested in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon, but not as a G-stem stative.

nakru (n.), "enemy"; wr. LÚ.KÚR (Š). The noun is written phonetically in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.

napāšu (v.) G, as n. "abundance"; wr. *na-pa-áš* (E).

napištu (n.), "life"; wr. *nap-šat*. The noun is written phonetically in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions (*na-piš-ta-šú*), but logographically in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions (ZI.MEŠ, ZI.MEŠ-*ia*, ZI.MEŠ-*šú*, and ZI-*tì*).

naqû (v.) G, "to make (an offering)"; wr. [*liq-qí*] (E, Š).

nêru (v.), "to kill"; wr. *li-nar-ru*. This word is also attested in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon, but not with this written form

nesû (v.) Š, "to drive out"; wr. *ú-šá-as-su-ma*. This verb was read as *ú-šá-aṣ-ṣu-ma* (*waṣû* Š, "to make go out") in Leichty 2011, 228.

nīqu (*niqû*) (n.), "offering"; wr. *ni-qa*-[*a*] (Ssu). Read as NA$_4$.[…] in Leichty 2011, 228. The word *nīqu* is generally written logographically in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.

nišu (n.), "people"; wr. *ni-šu-*⌜*šú-nu*⌝, UN.MEŠ (E, Š).

palû (n.), "reign (of a king)"; wr. BALA-*šú* (E, Š).

pānu (n.), "front; past"; wr. *pa-ni* (E), *pa-ni-šú*.

papallu (n.), "young shoot"; wr. [*pa-pal-lu*] (E).

pašāšu (v.) G, "to anoint"; wr. *lip-šu-uš* (E, Š).

perʾu (n.), "offspring"; wr. NUNUZ.MEŠ-*šú-nu*. The Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon and the inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin also use the word *perʾu*.

qaqqadu (n.), "head"; wr. SAG.DU.

qerbu (n.), "interior"; wr. *qé-reb* (E, Š).

rabû (adj.), "great"; wr. GAL.MEŠ (E, Š), GAL-*ú* (E).

rapšu (adj.), "wide"; wr. *ra-pa-áš-ti*. This adjective is used in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions and in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.

raṣmu (adj.), "powerful"; wr. *ra-ṣú-un-du*. Read as *ra-ṣu-un-du* in Leichty 2011, 228.

ridûtu (n.), "succession"; wr. ⌜UŠ$^{?}$⌝-[*t*]*i*$^{?}$. The word appears in one inscription of Esarhaddon from Babylon. The written forms are *ri-du-te* and *ri-du-tú*.

sinništu (n.), "woman"; wr. MUNUS.MEŠ.

sunqu (n.), "famine"; wr. *su-un-qu*.

ṣabātu (v.) G, "to seize"; wr. *li-i*[*ṣ-bat*]. The reading and restoration are based on Si. 4+5 iv 10 (Frazer & Adalı 2021, 235). The G-stem of this verb also appears in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions, but not in the precative.

ṣalmu (adj.), as n. "black one"; wr. *ṣal-mat* (E).

ṣarāšu (v.) D, "to spread out"; wr. ⌜*li-ṣar*⌝-*ri*-[*šú*]. The D-stem of *ṣarāšu* is regularly attested in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon, but not with this exact spelling. This word was read as *li-ru-ri* (*arāru* G, "to curse") in Leichty 2011, 228.

ṣēru (n.), "open country"; wr. ⌜EDIN$^{?}$⌝. This noun is generally written phonetically in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

ša (det. pron.), "2"; as rel. pron., "who, whose, that"; wr. *šá* (E, Š).

šaggaštu (n.), “slaughter”; wr. *šag-ga-*⌜*áš*?⌝-[*ti*]. Or read as *šag-ga-aš*-[*ti*].

šakānu (v.) G, “to place, establish”; wr. *iš-ku-nu*. The G-stem of this verb is attested in both the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon and the inscriptions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

šakkanakku (n.), (military) governor; wr. [GÌR.NÍTA] (E, Š).

šamāhu (v.) G, “to grow”; wr. *liš-mu-ḫu*.

šamnu (n.), “oil”; wr. [*šam*]-*ni*. This noun is usually written logographically in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions.

šamû (n.), “heaven”; wr. AN-*e* (E, Š).

šapšāqu (n.), “hardship”; wr. *šap-šá-qu*.

šarru (n.), “king”; wr. LUGAL (E, Š), LUGAL.MEŠ (E).

šâšunu (pron.), “them”; wr. *šá-a-šú-nu*.

šattu (n.) “year”; wr. [MU].AN.NA.MEŠ-*šú-nu*. This word was read as [MU].AN.NA.MEŠ-*šú-un* in Leichty 2011, 228. The noun *šattu* is regularly used in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

šaṭāru (v.) G, “to write”; wr. *liš-ṭur* (E, Š).

šebû (v.) G, “to be satisfied”; wr. [*liš-bu*]. The G-stem of *šebû* (including precative forms) is used in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions.

šemû (adj.), “obedient”; wr. *še-mu-ú*.

šibṭu (n.), “plague”; wr. *šib-ṭi*. This word is written as *šib-ṭu* in an inscription of Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

šiṭru (n.), “(piece of) writing; inscription”; wr. *ši-ṭir* (E).

šumu (n.), “name”; wr. MU-*šú* (E, Š), *šu-mi*-[*ia*], [*šu-m*]*i*? (E, Š).

talīmu (n.), “(close or beloved) brother”; wr. [*ta-lim*] (Š).

tarāṣu (v.) G, “to stretch out”; wr. *lit-ru-*⌜*uṣ*⌝. The G- and Š-stems of this verb are used in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions.

tebû (v.) G, “to rise up, attack”; wr. *it-ba-am-ma*. The verb *tebû* appears in the Š-stem in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

ṭahdu (adj.), “abundant”; wr. *ṭaḫ-du-ti*. Read as *ṭáḫ-du-ti* in Leichty 2011, 228. This adjective appears in one Babylonian inscription of Esarhaddon.

ṭēmu (n.), “decision”; wr. *ṭè-e-mu*.

u (conj.), “and”; wr. *u* (E, Š).

ummānu (n.), “army, troops”; wr. *um-man-šú-nu*. The word is attested in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions from Babylonia, but usually written logographically.

ūmu (n.), “day”; wr. [*u*$_4$]-*me* (E, Š), UD.MEŠ-*šú* (Š), UD.MEŠ-*šú*-[*nu*]. UD.MEŠ-*šú*-[*nu*] in v 14′ was read as UD.MEŠ-*šú*-[*un*] in Leichty 2011, 228.

wabālu (v.) G, “to consider thoroughly”; wr. *ub-la*. G- and Št-stems of this verb are used in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon.

warkû (adj.), “later”; wr. *ár-ku-ti*. This adjective is well attested in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions and Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s inscriptions, but not with this exact written form.

wâru (v.), “to govern”; wr. *ú-ma-*⌜*aʾ-a*⌝-[*ru*] (Š). The word was read as *ú-ba-aʾ*-[*ú*] (*buʾʾû* D, “to look for”) in Leichty 2011, 228. The D-stem of *wâru* is not presently attested in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions from Babylonia.

zikaru (n.) “men”; wr. NÍTA.MEŠ.

zunnu (n.), “rain”; wr. ŠÈG.MEŠ (E). This word appears in Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s inscriptions, but as ŠÈG.

Index of Names

Adad (DN); wr. ^{d}IŠKUR (E).

Aššur-ahu-iddina (RN), "Esarhaddon"; wr. ⌜AN⌝.Š[ÁR–ŠEŠ–SUM.NA] (E, Š).

Aššur-bāni-apli (RN), "Ashurbanipal"; wr. [AN.ŠÁR–DÙ–A] (Š). The restoration of the name without the masculine determinate (^{m}) is based on Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions. Ashurbanipal's name appears in one of Esarhaddon's Babylon inscriptions. It is written as ^{m}*aš-šur*–DÙ–A.

Bābili(SN), "Babylon"; wr. [TIN.TIR].⌜KI⌝ (E, Š).

Elamû (EN), "Elamite"; wr. ELAM.MA.KI-*ú*. Read as ELAM.MA.KI in Leichty 2011, 228.

Esagil (TN) (Marduk's temple in Babylon); wr. *É-sagíl* (E).

Kusu (GN), "Kush"; wr. [KUR.*ku-u-si*]. Kush is attested in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, but not in his Babylonian inscriptions.

Māt-Akkadî (GN), "Akkad"; wr. KUR–URI.KI (E, Š), [URI.KI] (E, Š).

Māt-Aššur (GN), "Assyria"; wr. [KUR–*aš-šur*] (E, Š). The restoration of Māt-Aššur without the place determinative (KI) is based on Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions.

Māt-Šumeri (GN), "Sumer"; wr. KUR–EME.⌜GI$_7$⌝ (E, Š). The spelling is not fully attested in BM 56617 and the reconstructed form is based on two attestations (i 10′ and iv 1′).

Muṣur (GN), "Egpyt"; wr. KUR.[*mu-uṣ-ri*]. Egypt is attested in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, but not in his Babylonian inscriptions.

Nergal (DN); wr. ^{d}U.GUR (E).

Nisaba (DN), as n. "grain"; wr. ^{d}*nisaba* (E).

Paturisu (GN), "Upper Egypt"; wr. KUR.*pa-ta-ri-is*. Upper Egypt is attested in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, but not in his Babylonian inscriptions.

Sin (DN); wr. ^{d}30 (E).

Sîn-ahhe-erība (RN), "Sennacherib"; wr. ^{d}30–ŠEŠ.MEŠ–[SU] (Š). The name without the masculine determinative (^{m}) is known from Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions. The written form with the masculine determinate (^{m}) is used in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.

Šamaš (DN); wr. ^{d}UTU (E, Š).

Šarru-kēn(u) / Šarru-ukīn (RN), "Sargon (II)"; wr. [LUGAL–GIN] (Š). The reconstructed form without the masculine determinative (^{m}) is based on Šamaš-šumu-ukin's inscriptions. The writing LUGAL-GIN with the masculine determinate (^{m}) is used in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions.

APPENDIX 2

K 13733: AŠŠUR-NADIN-ŠUMI INSTEAD OF ESARHADDON?

A closer examination of the preserved contents of K 13733, a small clay tablet fragment presumably from Nineveh, might reveal that the text inscribed on it might not be firmly attributed to Esarhaddon (Leichty 2011, Esar. 47), although this is far from certain given

its poor state of preservation. While the inscription, as far as it is preserved, looks very similar to firmly-attributed inscriptions of Esarhaddon, including those written on clay cylinders from Nippur and Uruk, there are perhaps a few subtle clues that the attribution to Esarhaddon is wrong, despite the fact that 37 of the 39 words in the text (including fully restored ones) are known from that corpus of texts.[35] What then is the evidence against an attribution to Esarhaddon?

Firstly, the genealogical remarks are exceptional. In the inscription preserved on K 13733, the king in whose name the text was written is referred to in line 1′ as [IBI]LA ⌜*a-šá-re-du šá*⌝ ^{m}[^{d}30–ŠEŠ.MEŠ–SU], "the foremost [so]n of [Sennacherib]", and in line 2′ as [DU]MU DUMU ^{m}LUGAL–G[I.NA], "[the gra]ndson of Sarg[on (II)]". In the firmly-attributed Esarhaddon texts, Esarhaddon referred to himself 51 times as *mār Sîn-ahhē-erība*, "son of Sennacherib", and 38 times as *mār Šarru-kēnu*, "descendant of Sargon", but never once as *aplu ašarēdu ša Sîn-ahhē-erība* or *mār mār Šarru-kēnu*. The term *aplu*, "son", as far as the Esarhaddon corpus is extant, is used three times, and always as an epithet of a god.[36] Furthermore, the expression *mār māri*, "grandson", is not otherwise attested in Esarhaddon's texts.[37] Secondly, after the remarks about being a distant descendant of Bēl-bāni in lines 4′–5′, the king's titles and epithets continue in lines 6′–8′, claiming that the ruler was [GÌ]R.NÍTA KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI […] / [*t*]*a-me-eh ṣer-r*[*e-ti* …] / [RE.É].⌜UM⌝ *ṣal-mat* SAG.[DU …], "[gov]ernor of Babylon, […, the one wh]o holds the nose-rop[es of …, the shep]herd of the black-headed [people, …]". While Esarhaddon regularly referred to himself as *šak-kanak Bābili*, "governor of Babylon", the other two epithets are not presently attested for him. The participle *tāmihu*, "the one who holds", does not otherwise appear in texts of this Assyrian king. Moreover, when Esarhaddon boasted of being descended from Bēl-bāni, that passage always concluded the introduction of the king. That is, references to the king's origin in the Baltil district of the city Assur was never followed by additional epithets, as it is in the inscription written on K 13733. Of course, this text could be an outlier.

On the other hand, perhaps K 13733 should be attributed to a ruler other than Esarhaddon, someone who was not only a son of Sennacherib but also a person who held authority over Babylon. Aššur-nadin-šumi, whom his father Sennacherib referred to in his inscriptions as his *māru rēštû*, "first-born son", is a highly-plausible candidate because he was

35. For example, compare Leichty 2011, Esar. 48 lines 47–49a; Esar. 87 lines 3b–5; Esar. 113 lines 5b–8a; Esar. 128 lines 13–14; Esar. 129 lines 25–27; and Esar. 133 lines 26–29. The same might be true of Leichty 2011, Esar. 46 (K 7943), which might actually preserve part of an inscription of Ashurbanipal, as already suggested by T. Mitto (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/K.7943 [last accessed on January 19th, 2026]). The present author agrees with that interpretation since the beginning of rev. 1 (= Leichty 2011, 102 Esar. 46 obv. 1) is probably not the first line of the inscription (but rather the first line inscribed on the reverse face), which should be read as [*x* (*x*)] *x* ⌜*šá*⌝ ^{m}AN.ŠÁR–⌜ŠEŠ⌝–[SUM.NA], "[…] *of/which* Esarhad[don]" (collated from a high-resolution digital photo); and because Esarhaddon never referred to Sennacherib as his *līplīpu* ([*lip-l*]*ip*$^{?}$, "descendant"), something, however, that Ashurbanipal regularly does.

36. Leichty 2011, Esar. 77 line 62: ^{d}*nin-urta* IBILA ^{d}EN.LÍL, "the god Ninurta, the son of the god Enlil"; and Esar. 113 lines 28 and 37: ^{d}AG IBILA *ṣi-i-ru*, "the god Nabû, the sublime son". Note that the adjective *ašarēdu*, "foremost", is not presently attested in firmly-attributed Esarhaddon inscriptions.

37. Ashurbanipal referred to himself as *mār mār Sîn-ahhē-erība*, "grandson of Sennacherib", in his Babylonian inscriptions. See, for example, Novotny, Jeffers & Frame 2023, Asb. 241:9.

Sennacherib's eldest son and because he ruled over Babylon for six years (699–694 BCE). Despite the fact that no royal inscriptions of Aššur-nadin-šumi are attested, this at-present conjectural interpretation might explain why there are clear differences in how the king referred to his relationships with his father and grandfather. Since Esarhaddon was a younger son of Sennacherib, it seems unlikely that he would have used the title *aplu ašarēdu*, "foremost son", as it is already abundantly clear from his other inscriptions, where he always called himself *mār Sîn-ahhē-erība*, "the son of Sennacherib". Even if the attribution to K 13733 to Aššur-nadin-šumi, an Assyrian prince who was the king of Babylon, is not accepted, the inscription in question should probably be moved from the certain Esarhaddon corpus to the group of texts tentatively assigned to him. Unfortunately, the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the present time. Thus, we have either the first-identified royal inscription of Aššur-nadin-šumi or an inscription of Esarhaddon that does not conform to the other presently-attested inscriptions of that Assyrian king, neither of which is supported by the up-to-present textual record.

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