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INSCRIBED CHESTS RELATING TO TEMPLE OFFERINGS FROM ASSUR

Fabian Sarga — John MacGinnis

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Abstract

In this article we present the fragments of three inscribed stone chests unearthed during the German excavations carried out at Assur at the beginning of the twentieth century. A description of the objects and their contexts is followed by an edition and discussion of the inscriptions, two of which bear a list of offerings, one a dedicatory inscription. While in the offering lists the only divine name preserved is that of the goddess Šulmanitu, it seems likely that the full text listed offerings to multiple deities living in the Temple of Ištar in Assur.

The German Excavations at Assur

The excavations at the beginning of the twentieth century at Assur (Qal'at Sherqat) were undertaken under the auspices of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (DOG), a private association founded in January 1898 with the twin objectives of funding research into the cultures of ancient western Asia and supporting the acquisition of antiquities from the region for the Imperial Museums in Berlin — the "Königliche Museen", today the museums under trusteeship of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz.[1] While the DOG was officially a private association, it was deeply connected with both the museums and the highest powers of Imperial Germany — Kaiser Wilhelm II was one of its main funders (Crüsemann 2003a, 38–39). Qal'at Sherqat had from the beginning been discussed by the DOG as the potential target of its first expedition. Excavations commenced on September 18th, 1903 and continued until April 1st, 1914. The official head of the excavations was Robert Koldewey (who was, however, primarily engaged at Babylon), but the actual field direction was in the hands of Walter Andrae; both of these men were architects by training (Crüsemann 2003a, 44). Andrae and Koldewey were both

1. From 1997 to 2010, the documentation produced by the excavations at Assur as well as the objects in the keeping of the Berlin museum were re-evaluated in the scope of the Assur-Projekt. Subsequently, new studies have been published, especially on the architectural remains but also on various categories of objects, see for example Renger 1997 and Pedde 2018. The authors would like to express their deep thanks to Jaume Llop, Wiebke Meinhold, Simo Parpola, and Nicholas Postgate for their help and comments; and to the museum staff of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, who were so helpful in facilitating access to the objects and providing photographs.

heavily interested in architectural history, and at Assur and Babylon they developed innovative techniques and approaches geared towards exposing, documenting and reconstructing the architectural configurations and urban layout of these cities (see e.g. Bär 2003). At Assur, exploratory trenches ("Suchgräben") were excavated at regular intervals over the whole of the urban expanse. When they found interesting or more substantial architectural remains, these trenches were expanded in order to enable the excavation of complete buildings. While the focus was not on finds, in many cases there is in fact relatively good documentation of small finds, sometimes with very detailed notes on the find spots; as we shall see, however, there are also exceptions to this. The finds were recorded in the *Fundverzeichnis* or *Fundinventar*, logs maintained on site comprising numbered lists with short descriptions of the objects (including objects from burials), the grid coordinates where the object was found, sometimes a sketch and occasionally further details of the context of the find (e.g., Bär 2003, 49). The most expansive excavations were undertaken in the northern part of the ancient city, revealing a number of palaces and temple complexes. Several large residential neighbourhoods were excavated in the northwest, and a large Parthian palace was excavated in the south central area of the city (a broad overview is given in Andrae 1938; for the post-Assyrian remains, see Hauser 2017).

The Objects and Their Contexts

The objects which form the main focus of this paper are Ass 14562 and Ass 14704, while Ass 14703 is of interest due to its close proximity and its nature as another inscribed chest. All three have the grid coordinates gC9I, excavated from the exploratory trench in that location. Ass 14562 was listed as a find on November 4th 1908 with the description of the find spot as coming from the eastern part of the trench at a depth of 1 m.[2] Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 on the other hand were listed as finds on December 23rd, 1908. Two quotation marks behind the object description of both objects show that the grid coordinate information was copied from the details recorded for the burial Ass 14702 the day before. No detailed find context is provided for either Ass 14703 or Ass 14704, but considering the depths given for the finds from the burials Ass 14702 (1.6 m below the surface), Ass 14705 (1.7 m below the surface) and Ass 14706 (1.5 m below the surface), the last two of which were both registered on the same day as Ass 14704, it is reasonable to surmise that Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 must also have been found at a depth of between 1.5 and 1.7 m below the surface. It is unlikely that they originated from higher up in the trench, as Ass 14701 has no recorded find context and objects from Ass 14707 onwards originate in other trenches. Furthermore, the upper reaches of the trench, as the find context for Ass 14562 makes clear, had already been cleared in November. Thus, Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 must have been excavated in the same layers as the finds recorded the day before and on the day of its registration.

All three objects belong to the exploratory trench gC9I, in the centre of the old city (Fig. 1). As the mound of Assur slopes towards the east, as shown in Fig. 1 in the section

2. "1m unt[er] Hügeloberfläche | gC9I O[st]". The find is listed as a "Basaltbruchstück mit Inschrift" (an inscribed basalt fragment).

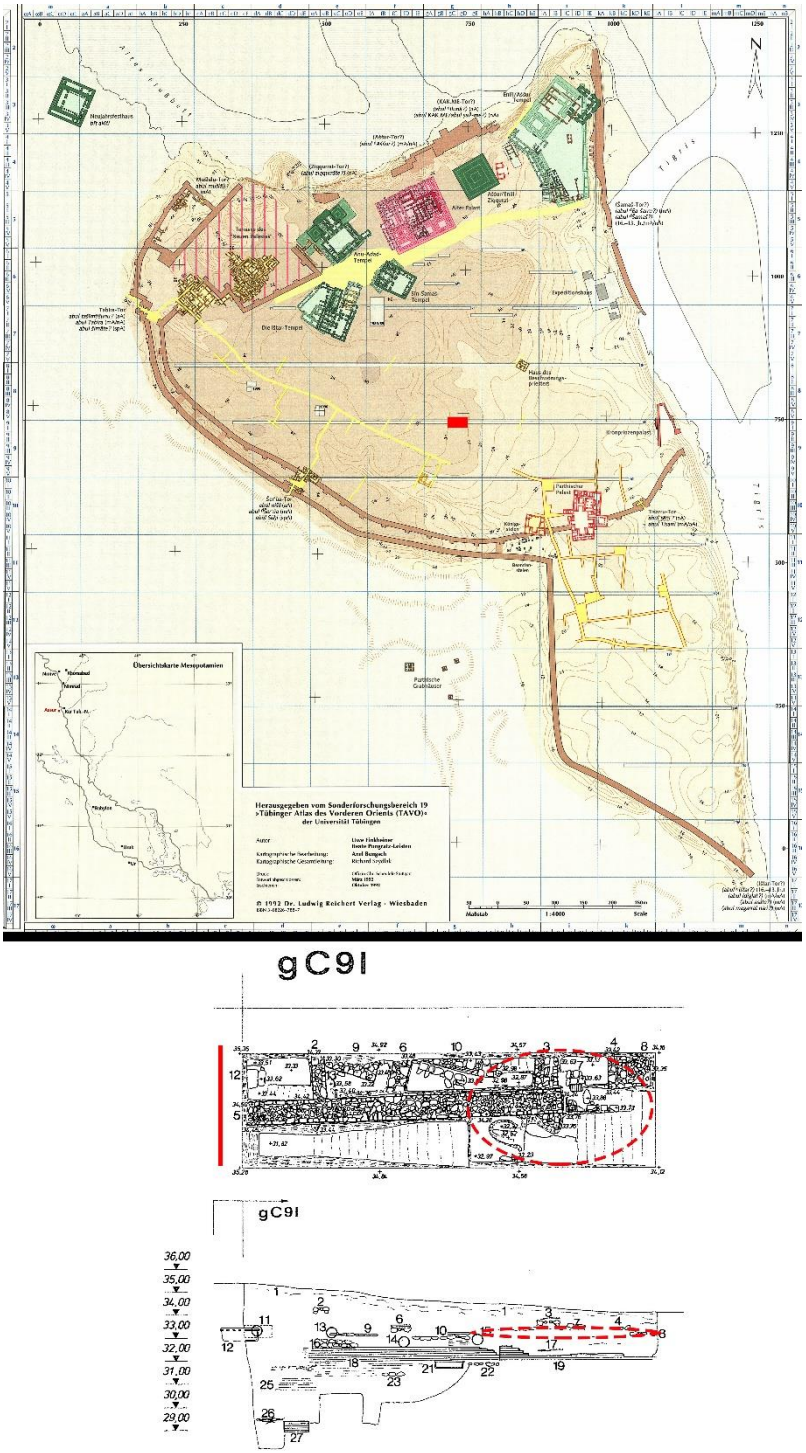


Fig. 1. (top) Plan of Assur - the rectangle in the centre marks the site of exploratory trench gC9I (adapted from TAVO Karte B IV 21 (c) Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, reproduced with permission); (bottom) plan of the second layer and section of exploratory trench gC9I (reproduced with permission from Miglus 1996, Plan 52). The circles in the bottom image show the estimated find area of Ass 14562.

of the exploratory trench, Ass 14562 originated in the second layer, the plan of which is shown in the same figure. It might be hypothesised that it belonged to one of the possible rooms of the structure in the northern half of the trench. The reconstruction of the findspot thus places Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 as well in the trench's second layer. While the first layer of this trench only produced fragmentary, probably Parthian-era stone foundations, in this second layer the architecture was somewhat better preserved, with a long, relatively thick west-east wall in the centre of the trench, and walls running towards the north off of it, most likely separating rooms; this level is interpreted as being pre-Parthian but post-Assyrian. Below this, in the third layer, were found a Neo-Assyrian mudbrick foundation as well as a substantial mudbrick terrace 1 m or more high (description based on Miglus, 1996, 268–269). The area exposed was too small to determine the nature of this architecture, though the likelihood, given its location in the centre of the old city, is that it was domestic — comparable with the House of the Incantation Priest (see Maul 2010). If the reconstruction of the findspot is correct, however, Ass 14562, Ass 14703, and Ass 14704 were found in post-Assyrian layers, with Ass 14562 originating in the eastern part of the trench, whereas the location for Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 is not clear — we might hypothesise that they originated in the more westerly room structures. Ass 14562 seems to have been found together with — or at least in the general vicinity of — a glazed ceramic bottle (Ass 14564), as well as a copper bowl fragment and a fragment of an unspecified copper tool (Ass 14565a, b), as both these entries have the reference that their find spot is "wie oben" ("as above"). Also from this trench came a broken stone fragment with an inscription by Tukultī-Ninurta I (Ass 14700),[3] though this object's contextual circumstances were not recorded beyond originating from gC9I.

The fragments of Ass 14562, Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 were among the objects which were sent to Berlin only after the end of active excavations in Assur. While a large number of boxes of glazed bricks and cuneiform tablets had been transported in three shipments before 1911, the large majority of excavation finds had not been despatched. The division of finds between the Ottoman authorities and the DOG was completed by June 5th, 1914. This took place under heavy political pressure from the German Empire, and the outcome was certainly to the benefit of the Germans, who were allocated 445 boxes of finds as opposed to only 257 for the Ottoman authorities. These 445 boxes were in the process of been shipped to Germany when the First World War broke out. This led to them being seized in Lisbon and then brought to Oporto, from where, 12 years later, Walter Andrae was at long last able to take possession of them and bring them to Berlin, where they arrived in September 1926 (Crüsemann 2003b). It is highly probable that both Ass 14562 as well as Ass 14703 and Ass 14704 were among these finds. The pieces had already been copied and studied early on by Kinscherf, but in a dissertation which regrettably remained

3. This object is called "Kieselurkunde" (pebble document) in the *Fundinventar*, while Pedersén 1997, 96, calls it a "Kieselbruchstück mit Inschrift" (pebble fragment with inscription), giving information on the inscription as "Inhalt: Tukulti-Ninurta I. | Periode: mAss". The object was recorded on the photograph Ass Ph 4055. The object seems worked, its sides slightly smoothed down, with the inscription running along all three visible sides. The remaining shape of the fragment calls to mind some of the duck weights, though no details identifying it as such can be made out.

unpublished and with extremely restricted circulation.[4]

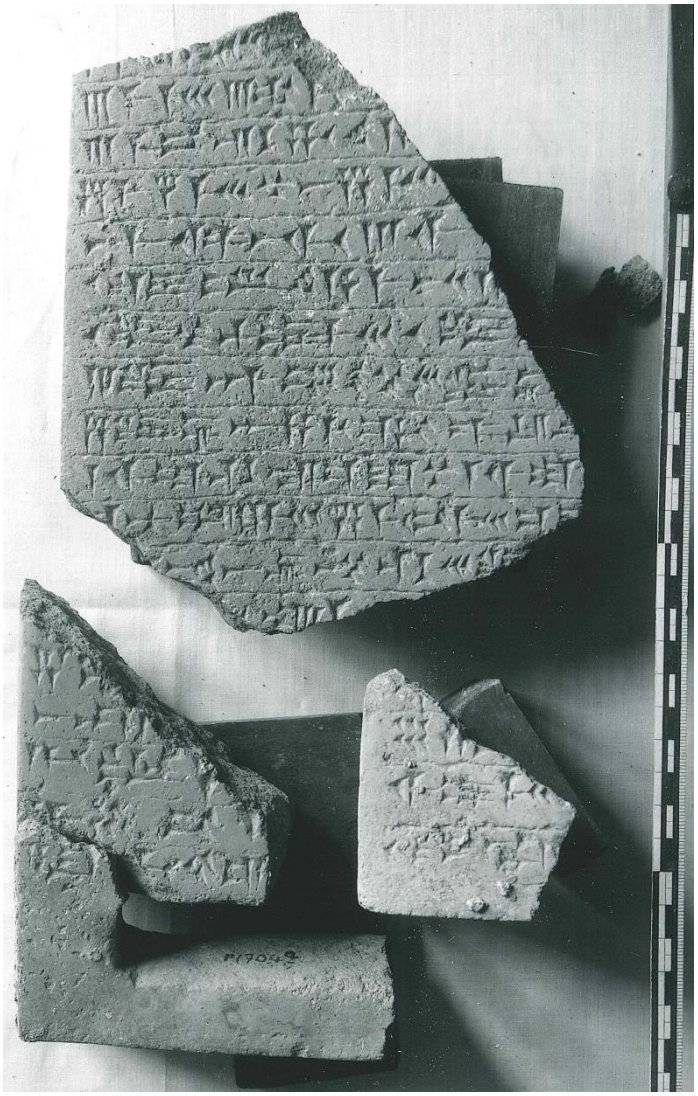


Fig. 2. This excavation photograph (Ass S 4180, reproduced with permission from the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft), shows all the excavated fragments of Ass 14704 as well as the fragment numbered Ass 14562. The topmost is Ass 14562; the lower left is the joined piece Ass 14704a+b; the lower right is the fragment Ass 14704c.

The fragments under consideration came from objects made of, firstly, a relatively coarse reddish-brown basalt with white inclusions (Ass 14562 and Ass 14704) and, secondly, a whiteish-yellow limestone (Ass 14703). Altogether, four pieces of Ass 14562 and Ass 14704 were recovered (Fig. 2). All four are today in the holdings of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, the largest piece bearing the museum number VA 5056 (Ass 14562)

4. Kinscherf 1918, no. 82 and no. 83, pl. 47; the pieces are also listed in Pedersén 1997, 46; 96.

while the other three are numbered VA 19135.1 (Ass 14704a-b) and VA 19135.2 (Ass 14704c). Of Ass 14703 only one fragment was recovered which today is also in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, bearing the museum number VA 4512.

Ass 14704a+b

At some stage, likely later at the museum,[5] Ass 14704a and b were joined; they appear in Ashur photos 4756 and 4757, and have now been assigned the museum number VA 19135.1 (Fig. 3); the measurements of the joined piece are length 12 cm, height 14.4 cm and thickness 2.6–4.3 cm. This piece is from a corner of the object, with parts of inscription on two faces. The section which we designate Side A has parts of the beginnings of five lines of inscription from the bottom left-hand corner of the face on which it is written; Side B has the ends of three lines from the upper right-hand corner of that face. The shape of the piece is highly unusual: our understanding is that it preserves part of a handle.



Fig. 3. The joined fragments Ass 14704a+b (VA 19135.1). Published under CC-BY-SA 4.0. Photo credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Olaf M. Teßmer.

Ass 14562+Ass 14704c

The largest piece, measuring height 19.8 cm, length 16.7 cm, and thickness 1.8–3.6 cm, has the most substantial surviving part of the inscription, with parts of 14 lines. According to Pedersén (1997, 46), the piece has the designation Ass 14562 (VA 5056) — he notes the content as "Opferstiftungsliste?". The piece is from the middle section of the surface

5. The pieces are not joined in Kinscherf's plates.

on which it was written, incorporating the left edge but no upper or lower corner. Ass 14562 can now be joined to Ass 14704c, which thus completes the lower left part of the object. The dimensions of Ass 14704c are: width 6.5 cm, length 8.5 cm, height 7.2 cm and thickness 2.4–2.9 cm; the piece has now been given the museum number VA 19135.2.



Fig. 4. Fragment Ass 14562 (VA 5056)+Ass 14704c (VA 19135.2). Published under CC-BY-SA 4.0. Photo credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Jens Rohde.

It looks probable, without being certain, that Ass 14704a+b and Ass 14562+Ass 14704c belong to two different but possibly related objects. Both would constitute the top sides of whatever object they came from, as otherwise neither inscription would be properly readable. Based on the slightly hollowed-out back side of each joined fragment, we propose that these pieces are the lids of stone chests, with handles at each end (Fig. 5).[6] The assumption is that the hollowed-out back of each fragment would be fitted on to the base, possibly with slightly in-set sides. We estimate that the original artefact must have been at least 30 cm high and 20 cm wide. We do not preclude the possibility that other reconstructions may be feasible.

6. It was not possible to find any comparable objects in publications dealing with Assyrian stone vessel corpora, such as Searight, Reade & Finkel 2008 or Squitieri 2017.

What were these objects for? The more complete inscription of Ass 14562+Ass 14704c relates to temple offerings including meat, fish, wine, oil, vegetables and bread. The inscription on Ass 14704a+b is much less well preserved, but appears to be of a similar nature. It seems unlikely that the chest was intended to contain the actual offerings, but perhaps it could have been for keeping records related to these offerings. This could have included copies of the original decrees ordaining the offerings, and/or records of day-to-day transactions — payments of commodities in and out of the temple complex — on both clay tablets and waxed wooden writing boards. We can imagine that these chests were kept in their place down to the end of the Assyrian Empire. Quite possibly they were then smashed by enemy troops marauding through Assur when the city was taken in 614 or 612 BC. But exactly how these fragments found their way from the temple district — a considerable distance away — to the location where they were found in the centre of the post-Assyrian residential district is impossible to say.

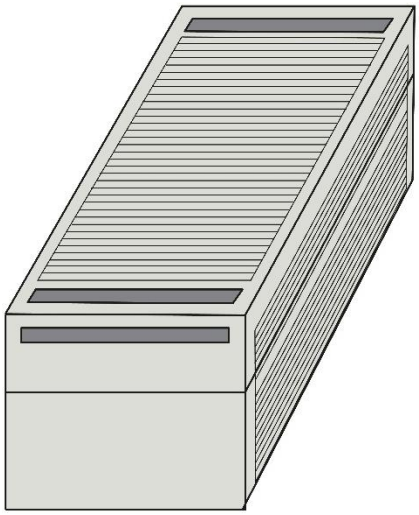


Fig. 5. A possible reconstruction of the inscribed chests.

Ass 14703

Compared to the fragments of Ass 14704, this object is much better preserved. The surviving part of Ass 14703 (VA Ass 4512)[7] measures height 9.6 cm; length 16.3 cm; width 7.8 cm; thickness of walls 3.2–4.5 cm; and a depth of the interior of 4.6 cm. The inscription is on one side, in a framed inscription box on the outside of the vessel, written in four lines, though the line endings do not survive. The object has rather thick walls and base. Pédersen (1997, 21) lists it as bearing an "Adad-Dedikation; Person: Ṭab-šār-Aššur, *aba*-[*rakku rabû*]". The object very likely was used as a simple four-sided box container.

7. Also mentioned in Kinscherf 1918, Nr. 82 and Miglus 1996, 269.

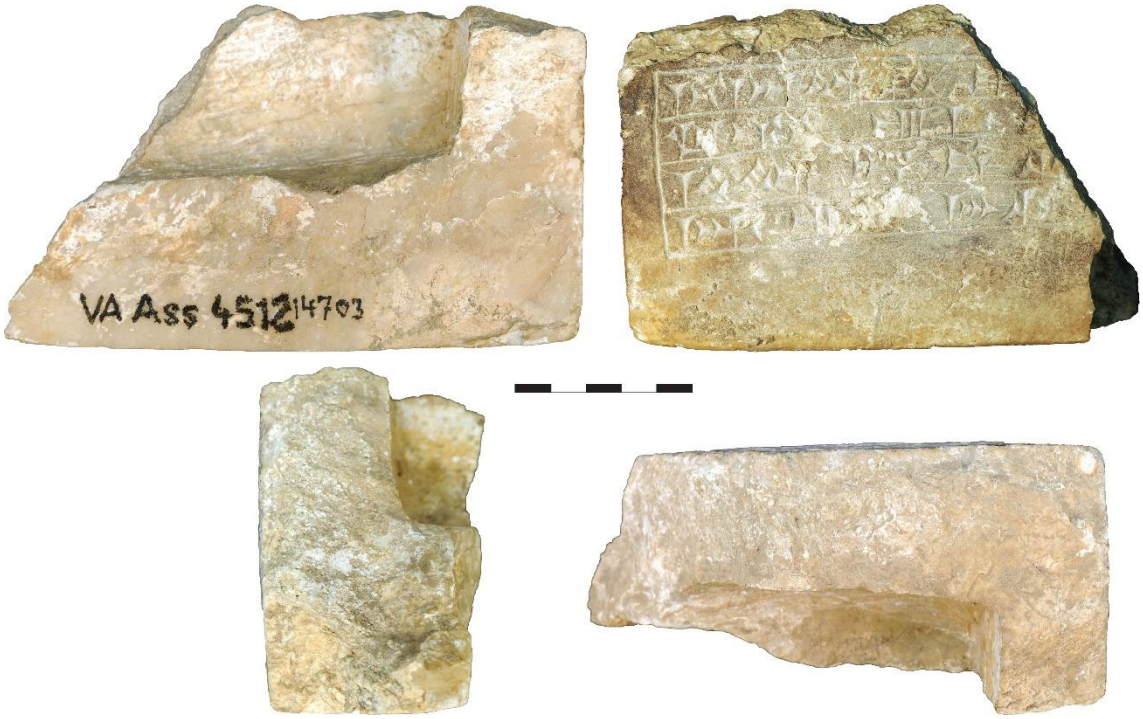


Fig. 6. Fragment Ass 14703 (VA Ass 4512). Published under CC-BY-SA 4.0.
Photo credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Jens Rohde.

The Inscriptions

Ass 14562+14704c

Transliteration

1′ ⌜x x x x x⌝ […]
2′ 3 ME 93 GUD.M[EŠ …]
3′ 3 ME *bi-ri* KU$_6$.HI.A […]
4′ 5 ME NINDA.MEŠ *sad-rum* 5 ME$^{!?}$ ⌜30⌝ […]
5′ ^{d}DI-*ti* 3 LIM […]
6′ 10 ANŠE GEŠTIN.hi.a *me-zu* […]
7′ 10 ANŠE ŠE.BAR TUR.MEŠ 10 ANŠE […]
8′ 3 ANŠE *an*$^{!}$*-dah*$^{(!)}$*-še* 40 ANŠE Ì […]
9′ 5 ANŠE Ì *hal-ṣa* 11 DUG.ŠAB *g*[*ur-nu* …]
10′ 1 LIM *at-hu-si* GIŠ.HAŠHUR KUR 1000 *at*-[*hu-si* …]
11′ ⌜GIŠ⌝.*nu-úr-ma*.MEŠ 5 ME ṢUR.MEŠ GIŠ.P[ÈŠ …]
12′ [60 *za*]-*am-rum sa-mu-hu* 30 ANŠE […]
13′ IGI.TUR.MEŠ *qàl*.M[EŠ …]
14′ 20 ANŠE ⌜x⌝ […]

Translation

2′ 393 oxen […]
3′ 300 *grills* of (grilled) fish […]
4′ 500 loaves of ordinary bread; 530 [loaves of (small) bread …]
5′ of the goddess Šulmanitu. 3000 […]
6′ 10 homers of *mēzu* wine […]
7′ 10 homers of "small" barley; 10 homers of […]
8′ 3 homers of small onions; 40 homers of oil […]
9′ 5 homers of pressed oil; 11 jars of average quality (beer) […]
10′ 1000 sticks of quinces; 1000 sticks [of …]
11' pomegranates; 500 *bags* of apples […]
12' 12 of mixed fruits; 30 homers of […]
13' small IGI.TUR […]
14' 20 homers of […]

Notes

3′: *bi-ri* is not previously attested as unit of fish. Perhaps it is *birru*, "lattice", or "grill", so indicating 300 frames of grilled fish. An alternative would be that it is a previously unattested item of vocabulary of some other method (rope/box/basket?) of packaging and accounting fish.

5′: We take ^{d}DI-*ti* to be a writing of the name of the goddess Šulmanitu. This poses no particular problem, even if the goddess' name is otherwise known with writings including an infixed *-ni-*, i.e. ^{d}DI-*ni-tu*/*tu*$_4$/*te*. An alternative could be to take ^{d}DI-*ti* as the same deity as the ^{d}*di-tu* appearing in KAV 72, 13′ (Meinhold 2009, 270 Text No. 1), but the obscurity of this deity (only attested in that one place) make us hesitate to follow the suggestion; it is also not inconceivable that this entry is in fact to be read ^{d} ⌜*ki*⌝*-tu* — the DI is damaged in the copy — corresponding to the well-known Kittu, the deified concept of Justice. Another issue is whether Šulmanitu should actually be read Salmanitu, mirroring the writing of ^{d}DI-(*nu*) for the god Salman (Radner 1998); however, until unequivocally proven for the goddess, we stay with the traditional reading. Some wider points relating to Šulmanitu are discussed further below.

6′: For *mēzu* as a type of wine, cf. AHw and CAD *s.v. mīzu/mīz'u.*

8′: *an*$^{!}$*-dah*$^{(!)}$*-še*: the AN is written as a TI, while the end part of the DAH is written as if it is part of a different sign.

9′: The only possibility here is *gurnu*, "average quality" — attested as applying to a grade of both oil and beer (SAA XII 48, 14); as these are both liquids, it can be suggested that *gurnu* designated a characteristic specifically relevant to liquids (such as "strained" or "filtered").

10′: *at-hu-si*: this word, which has curiously escaped both CAD and AHw (though it does appear in CDA), is attested as both *athusu* (SAA XII 71, 6, 9, 15, 17) and *ithusu* (SAA XI 36. I 26) as a unit of delivering pomegranates. The word is discussed by Whiting (SAA

XII, XXXIII), who noted that the term could correspond to the sticks/ropes used for carrying pomegranates shown on the reliefs. Postgate (pers. comm.) suggests that the word may be a *pa/itrust* formation from *e'ēlu*. We take HAŠHUR KUR to be a shortened form of HAŠHUR.KUR.RA, "quinces".

11′: There is no logographic reading of ṢUR which makes sense here, nor any relevant lexeme *ṣurru, zurru*, or the like. Could *ṣurru* be either a cognate or a loanword of Aramaic *ṣurra* (from the root *ṣ-r-r*, "to bind up": see *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* [online]), meaning "bundle" or "pouch"? The meaning would then be "500 bags of apples".

13′: (i) For NINDA.MEŠ QÀL.MEŠ, "small loaves", cf. SAA XII 77, i 29''. (ii) IGI.TUR is not otherwise known; most likely it designated a plant or some other foodstuff.

Ass 14704a+b

Transliteration

Side A
1″ 5 A[NŠE …]
2″ *ina* URU […]
3″ 1 ME 10 ANŠE ⌜*šá*⌝ […]
4″ 1 ME 50 bi x […]
5″ a x [t]i? KUR x […]
No translation warranted.

Side B
1 […] LIM? 5 ME na ṣa? x x 3 […]
2 […] x 5 3 LIM na x […]
3 […] ra? ⌜ṣi/ia⌝ na? […]
No translation warranted.

Ass 14703

Transliteration
1 *ana*^{na} ^{d}IM GÚ.GA[L AN-*e u*]
2 KI-*tim* NUN x [x x]
3 ^{m}DÙG–IM–*aš-šur* LÚ.IGI.[DUB]
4 *ana* TI ZI.MEŠ-*šú* [*i-qi-iš*]

Translation
To Adad, the canal inspector [of heaven and] earth, [*exalted*] prince, Ṭab-šar-Aššur, the Chief Treasurer, (dedicated this) for the fullness of his life.

Notes

2: For the epithet of Adad as "canal inspector of heaven and earth", see Tallqvist 1938, 73–74, 249; and Schwemer 2001, 708. For *rubû*, "prince", as an epithet of Adad, see Schwemer 2001, 713; perhaps the end of the line is to be restored M[AH], giving *rubû ṣīru* (or *rubê ṣīri*), "exalted prince".

3: Ṭab-šar-Aššur, a Chief Treasurer in the reign of Sargon, and eponym for 717 BC, is very well known, see PNA 3/II, 1344–1346.

4: Literally "for the life of his soul".

Discussion

The text of Ass 14562+Ass 14704c (as well as the fragmentary lines of Ass 14704a+b) concern temple offerings. At the very least, the more complete inscription constitutes a list of offerings due to various gods (of which only the name of one is preserved), and quite probably it recorded a royal decree dedicating or confirming these offerings: if so, the text belongs to a well-known class of royal decrees for temple endowments, for which editions may be found in SAA XII (Kataja & Whiting 1995, 67f.). There is, furthermore, abundant information on Assyrian temple offerings in surviving administrative texts, especially documents listing offerings to the temple of Aššur in Assur (Fales & Postgate 1992, 165f.; for a recent contribution on divine offerings, see Greenfield & Matney & MacGinnis 2021). The full range of items in these texts is very extensive, including meat, birds, fruit, vegetables, grains, seeds, olives, beer, wine, soup, yoghurt, bread, cakes, pastries, oils, spices and salt. It is noteworthy that many of the distinctive terms in Ass 14562+Ass 14704c — wine (*mēzu*), onions (*andahše*), pressed oil (*šamnu halṣu*), sticks (*athusu*) of pomegranates (*nurmû*) and fruit (*zamru*) — occur in these administrative documents. This also feeds into the dating of Ass 14562+Ass 14704c (as well as Ass 14704a+b): the palaeography is Neo-Assyrian (there are no Middle Assyrian features), and numerous elements in the vocabulary — *athusu*, *birru*, *mēzu* — are only attested in the Neo-Assyrian period; in addition, *andahše,* while attested in the third millennium, is not so far attested in Middle Assyrian sources. The piece may therefore be dated to the Neo-Assyrian period, i.e. broadly the ninth to seventh centuries BCE.

The extant sections of Ass 14562+Ass 14704c only preserve the name of one deity, ^{d}DI-*ti*, which we read as Šulmanitu (see above). Šulmanitu was a goddess whose cult room, the É-KÙ, was located inside the Ištar Temple complex at Assur (for discussions of Šulmanitu see Meinhold 2009, 71–76, and Krebernik 2011; cf**.** George 1991, 115 No. 662, as well as a brief mention in Menzel 1981, 70). As noted above, her name is hitherto known with the writings ^{d}DI-*ni-tu/tu$_4$/te*; the reading Šulmanitu was first proposed by Böhl (1922, 77f.; cf. Litke 1998, 158; Meinhold 2009, 74f.) but has taken some time to catch on. Šulmanitu is first attested in texts of Tukultī-Ninurta I (1234–1207 BCE), who records on tablets of gold, silver, lead and stone how he rebuilt the shrine of the goddess inside the temple of Assyrian Ištar; the shrine had originally been built by Ilušuma (ca. 1886–1873 BCE) and was restored by Adad-nērārī I (1305–1274 BCE) (see Grayson 1987,

259–263 A.078.14–16).[8] These tablets were found *in situ* in Room 7 of Tukultī-Ninurta I's Ištar Temple, allowing an exact identification of the goddess' cult room (Meinhold 2009, 29–36). According to Andrae, the Šulmanitu shrine was originally dedicated to Bēlet-Akkade, but Meinhold (2009, 73f.) demonstrates that this is not so. Šulmanitu appears to have had an association with the goddess Kudnitu. The two appear in successive lines in a text recording allocations of cedar resin to temples in Assur (KAV 78, Meinhold 2009, 479–482 lines 11–12; Meinhold dates the text to the reign of Shalmaneser II), and in the *Götteradressbuch* they are listed together as dwelling in the Bēl-šarru temple (Meinhold 2009, 441 line 71). Meinhold suggests, convincingly, that the temple of Bēl-šarru was itself a unit within the temple of Ištar (Meinhold 2009, 72; for a discussion on Bēl-šarru, see Meinhold 2009, 126f.): the implication, therefore, is that Šulmanitu and Kudnitu transited from having dedicated cult rooms in the temple of the Assyrian Ištar directly to having rooms in the Bēl-šarru temple, itself within the Ištar Temple complex. Unfortunately, we have no indication as to exactly who Šulmanitu was, or what areas of life she was deemed to control.

To return to Ass 14562+Ass 14704c, it would seem that it must have been originally installed in the temple of Ištar. The appearance of a section of offerings for Šulmanitu at a point in mid-text strongly suggests that this artefact with its inscription was not made for Šulmanitu alone, rather it is much more likely that the piece recorded dedications to all the principal gods in the Ištar or Bēl-šarru complex. For the Middle Assyrian period, the relevant complement of the Ištar Temple would comprise Assyrian Ištar, Išhara, Kudnitu, Šulmanitu, Ištar *ša šamê*, Ištar of Nineveh, Tašmetu, and Nabû (8 deities in all) (Meinhold 2009, 69f.). By the later Assyrian period, i.e. by the time of the composition of the *Götteraddresbuch*, the register of deities listed as resident in the temple of Bēl-šarru is significantly different, including Bēl-šarru, two images of Nabû, Bēt-ali, Gubaba, Abaku'a, Ištar of Arbail, Išum, Kettu, Šulmanitu, Kudnitu, and IGI.KUR-*belet-ali* (11 deities, albeit with two effigies of Nabû) (Meinhold 2009, 68–73; 441). Including all the deities in the Ištar Temple overall in the late Assyrian period would add Assyrian Ištar, Ber, Tašmetu, Kutatate, Šimatu, Papsukkal, Dumuzi, Aruru, Šarrat-Eqi, Latarak, Kulili, Ulaya, an image of the king, four lions and Mulahhišu to this list (Meinhold 2009, 74–82; 441). As we do not know the exact date when this reorganisation of the House of Ištar took place, nor precisely when in the Neo-Assyrian period Ass 14562+Ass 14704c was commissioned, there is ambiguity on this issue. Our proposed reconstruction for Ass 14562+Ass 14704c would suggest that there would have been plenty of room for listing the offerings of eight (or eleven) deities in all, if not for the full complement of deities in the overall Ištar complex in the *Götteraddresbuch* in the late Assyrian period. While Ass 14704a+b bears a far more fragmentary inscription, its similar dimensions could account for a comparable list having been inscribed upon it.

8. The dates given for the Middle Assyrian kings follow Postgate 2013, 429.

LITERATURE

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