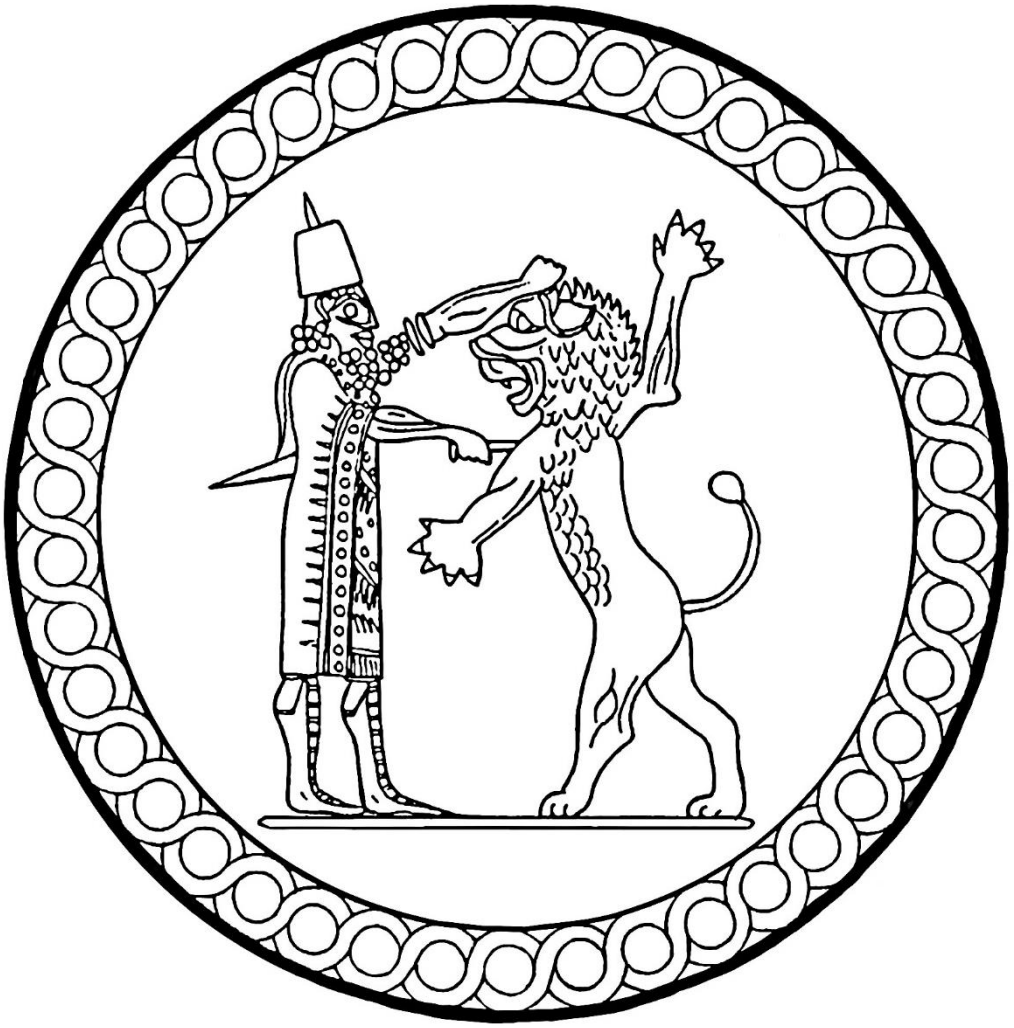


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NICOLETTA BELLOTTO "NICO"
(1962, November 25th – 2026, March 2nd)

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As a member of the SAAB team since 2015, Nicoletta was happy to see it developing into an electronic, open-access journal while maintaining its traditional garb in printed volumes. Her cooperation has been an invaluable resource over the years, and her attention has not slowed even when a fatal illness prevented her from a more active contribution but in no way diminished her intellectual vivacity.

The editorial work was only one of the many occasions all of us had to enjoy Nico's friendship and competence. She addressed historical problems from an original perspective, giving keen attention to the role of social and civic institutions and their symbolic expressions, and demonstrating a peculiar sensibility for the everyday life that emerged through the stereotypical formulae of ancient texts. Her volume Le adozioni a Emar (2009)*, her articles on the structure and regulations of family, and on witnessing and slavery, show Nico's attention to juridical matters and her competence in framing them within the context of historical complexity, guided by curiosity and by a solid culture that stimulated comparisons.*

She was discreet in presenting her point of view, and even shy when speaking in public; but she was resolute and decisive in her judgments and ideas, which were often original and inspiring. Thus, her advice was always sound and pondered, and her support was ready and generous. We could trust it both in scientific discussions and projects, and in practical matters. In fact, this was another of her great abilities: to find ways to solve various problems, since she was capable to deal with a wide range of matters, from modern literature and art to cuisine, from travelling to teaching — and obviously, Assyriology.

The sorrow for her untimely death will not end, but it will be in some, albeit insufficient measure comforted in the memory of her ironic, intelligent, and affectionate personality.

Simonetta, Gianni, Robert, Salvatore, Luigi

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

Jamie Novotny

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Keywords: Babylon — Ashurbanipal — Esarhaddon — royal inscriptions — Sippar — Šamaš-šumu-ukin

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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SOME NEW CLUES FROM THE ANCIENT LAND OF NIŠŠĀYA AND ITS RELATED TOPONYMS

Iraj Rezaei

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Keywords: Western Iran, Media, Niššāya, Irnisa, Nahavand Plain, Ṣibur, Ṣibar, Urimzan, Urenzan

Abstract

The article focuses on the study of the ancient land of Niššāya during the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid periods, based on the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BC) and Sargon II (722–705 BC), as well as on the inscription of Darius I in Bisotun (522 BC). It also considers information from ancient Greek and Roman historians and geographers, as well as archaeological evidence. Additional clues are presented for identifying the ancient land of Niššāya with the present-day Nahavand Plain, located in the southern part of the Hamadan Province. An important piece of evidence supporting this idea is an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III, which indicates that the Niššāya region was an important and well-known center for horse breeding during the Neo-Assyrian period. This assertion is significant as there was previously no evidence supporting the importance of the Niššāya land as a center for horse breeding during the Neo-Assyrian period. Accordingly, the author suggests that Niššāya/Irnisa in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, Nisāya in the inscription of Darius I in Bisotun, and the adjective Nesaean mentioned by classical historians such as Herodotus and Strabo, all refer to a single place, which coincides with the current Nahavand plain in the southern part of the Hamadan province. In addition, this study also suggests the probable locations of two toponyms related to Niššāya, Ṣibur/Ṣibar and Urimzan/Urenzan. The author suggests that both territories were situated in the present-day Nahavand area.

Introduction

The inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II, prominent kings of the Neo-Assyrian period in the 8th century BC, provide significant insights into the Central Zagros region and the Central Iranian Plateau, which ancient geographers usually refer to as Media. These inscriptions contain a variety of toponyms related to ancient Media, including regions, towns, villages, mountains, rivers, and also tribes. These inscriptions are unique, special, and diverse when compared to other sources, such as the inscriptions of the previous Assyrian kings, of the later Assyrian kings, and of the later Iranian dynasties such as that of the Achaemenids. This article explores the significance and common occurrence of the toponym Niššāya and its related toponyms in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II, as well as in the inscription of the Achaemenid king Darius I at Bisotun. In addition, some classical texts and archaeological evidence will be used to support the argument.

Some scholars suggested that there were several Iranian regions and places called Niššāya/Nisāya, which cannot easily be distinguished from one another.[1] Therefore, various options have been proposed for the location of Niššāya: northeast of Hamadan; in Khorasan; around Kermanshah, etc.[2] Most suggestions put forward in the last two centuries focused on the location of the land Nisāya mentioned in Darius I's inscription at Bisotun (see below). In general, among the many previous proposals about the location of Niššāya, I agree with the following four:

1. R. Ghirshman's identification of Niššāya with Tepe Giyan in the Nahavand region;[3]
2. M. M. Ahadian's, who, considering the linguistic evidence, suggests that the modern toponym Nahavand has its roots in the ancient Niššāya;[4]
3. A. N. Sherwin-White and J. Wiesehöfer's, who believe that Laodicea (variously called Laodicea in Media, in Persia, also known as Antiocheia in Persia or Chosroes' Antiocheia), currently identified with Nahavand, was located in ancient Niššāya;[5]
4. I. Rezaei, S. Alibaigi and J. MacGinnis', who, in their study about the itinerary of Sargon II's sixth campaign as described in the Najafabad stele, identified the land Niššāya[6] mentioned in the Assyrian texts with present-day Nahavand, in the southern part of the Hamadan province.[7]

In this study, I present supplementary evidence indicating that the Niššāya mentioned in the Assyrian texts was the same as the Nisāya mentioned in the inscription of Darius I in Bisotun, and that it was the origin of the adjective (*nisbe*) Nesaean used by classical historians such as Herodotus and Strabo,[8] and that all referred to the present-day Nahavand plain.

Niššāya and Related Toponyms in the Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II

In two inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III,[9] the name of the land Gizin(i)kissi is mentioned along with the name of the land Niššāya, which was likely situated nearby. Considering that the direction of Tiglath-Pileser's army was from Niššāya (Nahavand) towards Uppuria (present-day Borujerd[10]), in a north-south direction,[11] I would suggest that the land of

1. Schmitt 2002; recently, Bagg 2020, 440.
2. Schmitt 2002; Bagg 2020, 440; Firouzi & Novotny 2023, 18, no. 413.
3. Ghirshman 1954, 93.
4. Ahadian 2010.
5. Sherwin-White & Wiesehöfer 2012.
6. Alibaigi & MacGinnis 2018, 203 first suggested the identification between the lands of Irnisa and Niššaya, and the land of Bīt-Ištar which is only mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III.
7. Rezaei *et al*. 2023, 137f.
8. Bagg 2020, 439f. s.v. "Niššāya", lists Niššaya together with the *Nis(s)aion pédion* of the Classical historians and with the *Ni/ussaja/n-i-s-a-y* of the Bisotun inscription. He also adds a *Nussayu* in Elamitic.
9. RINAP 1 41, 4′b–10′, and 47, 29–32.
10. Rezaei *et al.* 2023, 135. For a different location, however, see Bagg 2020, 591f.
11. In Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions RINAP 1 41, 4′b–10′, and 47, 29–32, Niššāya is always mentioned before Uppuria. Since Niššāya and Uppuria are identified with modern Nahavand and Borujerd, respectively (see Rezaei *et al.* 2023), this implies that the direction of his campaign was from north to south.

Gizin(i)kissi, which is mentioned in the inscriptions before Niššāya, was located somewhere to the north of Niššāya, present-day Nahavand. On the other hand, considering the location of the ancient land of Uratista, which is the present-day Tuyserkan County[12] in the northeastern corner of Niššāya/Irnisa,[13] it is likely that the Gizin(i)kissi mentioned in Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions was located northwest of Niššāya/Niššāyaey, specifically within the boundaries of the present-day Khezel district centred on the city of Firuzan. In the aforementioned inscriptions, the names of two cities, Urimzan and Ṣibur, are mentioned just after the lands of Niššāya and Gizin(i)kissi, which logically should belong to the aforementioned lands. In the following, I will scrutinize the evidence related to the location of the two cities.

Urimzan/Urenzan

Regarding the arrangement of the toponyms in RINAP 1 47, I believe that the ancient city of Urimzan/Urenzan was part of the land Niššāya, and, consequently, that it was located within the boundaries of the present-day Nahavand area. Accordingly, I suggest that Urimzan/Urenzan is the ancient name of the present-day town of Āvarzamān, located near the Nahavand city, for the following reasons: a) the phonetic similarity between the ancient toponym Urimzan/Urenzan in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and the present-day toponym Āvarzamān; in my opinion, the current toponym largely preserves its original ancient form up to the present day; b) as can be deduced from RINAP 1 47, Urimzan/Urenzan was the name of a town in the land of Niššāya. Today, the village of Āvarzamān is located in the Nahavand area. In other words, assuming the identity of the ancient land of Niššāya with the present-day Nahavand plain, the identification of the ancient city of Urimzan/Urenzan with the present-day village of Āvarzamān seems quite probable.

Āvarzamān, locally known as Uwerzemūn, is a small village and hamlet located in the southern part of the Hamadan province, ca. 20 km northeast of Nahavand, on the road towards Malayer and Hamadan. It is likely that the urban settlement of Urimzan/Urenzan in the Neo-Assyrian period coincided with one of the ancient hills in this region, perhaps Tape Imamzadeh in the Āvarzamān rural area. In a superficial survey, pottery from the second and first millennium BC has been identified on this hill. Today, this hill is registered with the number 7014 in the list of the national monuments of Iran.

Ṣibur/Ṣibar

The second ancient toponym associated with Niššāya is the city of Ṣibur/Ṣibar, which is also one of the most important and frequently mentioned toponyms linked with the land of Media in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III[14] and Sargon II.[15] The inscriptions of

12. Rezaei *et al.* 2023, 138.
13. Rezaei *et al*. 2023, 135.
14. RINAP 1 15, 12; 17, 8; 35, ii 28′, 34′; 38, 4′; 41, 7′; 47, obv. 30, 37.
15. RINAP 2 1, 10; 43, 14; 65, 48; 76, 7′; 105, i′ 9′; 117, ii 65; 129, 14). The exact relationship between the Ṣibur/Ṣibar with Ṣibara from the land of Gizilbunda mentioned in the inscriptions of Šamšī-Adad V (RIMA 3 A.0.103.1, ii 59b–iii 27a) is not clear. It is possible that all these names actually refer to the same place. If this assumption is correct, the suggested location of Gizilbunda in the Zanjan plain

Sargon II mention several times the *topos* "whose great hand conquered the area from the land Ḫašmar to the city Ṣibar, which borders on the distant Medes in the east".[16] This phrase seems to indicate the approximate extent of Sargon's advance into Media, or, more likely, an area within the ancient Median territory that became part of the Assyrian tributary states under Sargon's rule. In Tiglath-Pileser III's inscriptions RINAP 1 41 and 47, the city of Ṣibur/Ṣibar is listed after the neighbouring lands of Gizin(i)kissi and Niššāya, indicating that Ṣibur/Ṣibar, like Urimzan/Urenzan, probably was under the jurisdiction of either Gizin(i)kissi or Niššāya. This possibility is strengthened in favour of the land Niššāya by the Najafabad stela, since it mentions Sargon's collection of tribute from Uardatti of the city Ṣibar after entering the land of Irnisa (Niššāya), despite Uardatti had not paid tribute to any previous Assyrian king.[17] Therefore, based on the available evidence, the connection between Ṣibur and Niššāya, present-day Nahavand, is almost certain. This suggests that Ṣibur/Ṣibar was located somewhere in the present-day Nahavand County.

Accordingly, and considering the archaeological evidence of the region, I would suggest that the most likely location of ancient Ṣibur/Ṣibar is the Tepe Giyan Hill, located 15 km west of Nahavand. Previously, I. Rezaei, S. Alibaigi and J. MacGinnis located Niššāya of the Assyrian texts at the Giyan Hill near the present city of Nahavand due to the absence of archaeological evidence from Nahavand itself.[18] We can assume that the lack of evidence for an Iron Age settlement within the modern Nahavand is due to the inadequacy of archaeological excavations. In such circumstances, Ṣibur/Ṣibar, as the most important and frequently mentioned toponym of the land Niššāya in the Assyrian inscriptions, most likely corresponds to the most important Iron Age site in the Nahavand County, *i.e.*, Tepe Giyan. According to RINAP 17 and 47, Tiglath-Pileser III erected a royal image in the city of Ṣibur, which, according to the author's proposed location, should be sought at the present-day Tepe Giyan.

Another crucial aspect of the ancient land of Niššāya is its renowned status as a main centre for horse breeding in the ancient land of Media, as documented in the writings of classical historians like Herodotus,[19] Strabo,[20] and others. Tiglath-Pileser III's inscription RINAP 1 35 provides a very interesting, new clue to the importance of ancient Niššāya as a main centre for horse breeding and its connection to the present-day Nahavand Plain: lines 30–44 give in detail the number of horses received as tribute from the rulers of the cities and regions of ancient Media. Unfortunately, this inscription is damaged, and parts of it are illegible. However, the surviving text contains the names of at least twenty Median towns and lands, including well-known places such as Bīt-Ištar, Bīt-Kapsi, Uppuria, Šaparda, Sikrâ, and Zakruti, which are often mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. One significant point of this inscription is that, unlike other Median cities and lands that typically

(see Bagg 2020, 234), north of present-day Nahavand, would imply that in the times of Šamšī-Adad V (r. 811–824 BC) the city of Ṣibar was under the dominion of the principality of Gizilbunda for some time.

16. RINAP 2 1, 10; 43, 14; 76, 7′; 105, i′ 9′; 129, 14.
17. RINAP 2 117, ii 64–68a.
18. Rezaei *et al*. 2023, 138.
19. Hdt. VII, 40.
20. Strabo XI, 13.7; XI, 14.9.

paid tribute of 30–130 horses, the city of Ṣibur provided about 300 horses. This amount is significantly high, two to three times more than what most cities and lands contributed.[21] Most likely, in the Neo-Assyrian period, as was common in ancient times, the amount of tribute was determined in proportion to the capacities (κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος / κατὰ δύναμιν) of the subjects.[22] This suggests that the land of Ṣibar/Ṣibur was the most important, or at least one of the main centres of horse breeding in ancient Media. Given the location of Ṣibur in the land of Niššāya, *i.e.*, in the present-day plain of Nahavand, the issue of the correspondence of Niššāya with the plain of Nahavand, as well as the claim of classical writers that the Nesaean plain was a centre of horse breeding in ancient Media, is once again confirmed.

Certainly, the access to fertile plains with lush pastures and abundant running water was a key factor in achieving such a privileged position for horse breeding. In his description of the Nesaean plain, Diodorus writes: "This region could support enormous herds of horses".[23] This feature is consistent with the proposed location for Ṣibur at Tepe Giyan and in the large plain of Nahavand, where there are abundant running waters, including the Gāmāsīāb River, and an abundance of fodder for grazing. Ibn Faqih Hamadani (*fl.* 902 AD) pointed out this important feature: "The vegetation of Nahavand is more abundant than all the cities of God";[24] according to him, "Likhwast is a village among the villages of Nahavand. Here, there is a piece of grass shaped like a horse that remains green in both summer and winter. Locals say that this is a talisman for the greenery and fertility of the region".[25] Naser al-Din Shah, a king of the Qajar dynasty, also wrote in his travelogue (1891 AD): "The Nahavand valley is not more than two *farsakh* wide, but its length is fifteen to twenty *farsakh*. We drove a long way, and everywhere we looked, we saw cultivated fields. Whether it was seasonal or irrigated agriculture, there was not a single piece of barren land in sight".[26] It is clear that the conditions were optimal for horse breeding in such a favourable environment. It should be noted that the second major place for horse breeding in Tiglath-Pileser III's inscription RINAP 1 35, with 200 horses, was the town of Šaparda. Rezaei, Alibaigi and MacGinnis located Šaparda in the Zwairi Plain (Zubaydia in early Islamic texts), adjacent to the vast Mahidasht Plain in the Kermanshah Province.[27] These examples indicate the importance of the intermountain plains in the central Zagros as centres for horse breeding in ancient times.

Niššāya/Nisāya in the Bisotun Inscription

According to the Bisotun inscription, Gaumāta, a *maguš* who had usurped the throne from the Achaemenid dynasty, was killed by Darius I in 522 BC in the fortress of Sikayuvati located in Nisāya in the land of Media.[28] In the past, scholars have located the Nisāya

21. RINAP 1 35, ii 30′–44′.
22. Briant 1996, 602.
23. Diod. XVII, 110.5.
24. Ibn Faqih 1970, 95.
25. Ibn Faqih 1970, 95.
26. Naser al-Din Shah 1983, 120.
27. Rezaei *et al*. 2023, 132.
28. Schmitt 1991, i 26–61 (pp. 50–52).

mentioned in the Bisotun inscription somewhere not far from Ecbatana, modern Hamadan,[29] especially in its northeastern part.[30] E. Herzfeld believed that Nisāya and its fortress, Sikayuvati, were located in the Bisotun and Harsin region, including Sakawand.[31] Since the mid-twentieth century, most scholars have located Nisāya and the Sikayuvati fortress in the surroundings of Mt. Bisotun.[32] For example, W. Kleiss believes that the so-called Median fortress located under the Bisotun inscription is the same as the Sikayuvati fortress.[33] However, there are also different opinions, such as that of P. Azkaei, who considers the Nisāya plain to be the same as the present-day Mahidasht region in the Kermanshah province.[34] E. Herzfeld,[35] and, following him, P. Azkaei,[36] proposed that Sikayuvati could be equivalent to the land Sangibuti mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. However, it is clear from Assyrian inscriptions that Sangibuti and Nisāya were two independent toponyms.

The first point about the location of the Nisāya mentioned in Darius I's Bisotun inscription is that there is no reason or evidence to suggest that this toponym is different from Niššāya in the Assyrian inscriptions. On the contrary, given the tight similarity of the toponyms and the fact that both places were located in the ancient Median region,[37] it seems that the Niššāya/Nisāya land mentioned in the Assyrian and Bisotun inscriptions refers to the same place. Therefore, if we assume that the ancient Niššāya/Nisāya is the same as the present-day Nahavand, we can confidently conclude that the final part of the story of the *maguš* Gaumāta (Smerdis in Herodotus' account) took place in the present-day Nahavand region. I suggest that the name of the river Gamasiab, which springs from the Nahavand County and is now recognized as the primary and largest river in the Kermanshah and Hamadan provinces, could potentially be a modified form of the ancient name Gaumāta. This assumption is derived from the phonetic similarity of the names, and considering the historical fact that the *maguš* Gaumāta was killed in Nisāya, the present-day Nahavand. Similarly, in the Nahavand region, there are cases where the place names are derived from historical personalities. One example is the village of Sa'd Waqas, located 15 km northwest of Nahavand, which commemorates the Muslim Arabs' invasion under the leadership of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas and the victory over the Sasanid army in the

29. Maspero 1900, 673.
30. Justi *et al*. 1905, 170.
31. Herzfeld 1934, 39; 1941, 205f.
32. Kleiss 1970; Schmitt 1991, 18; 2002; Von Gall 1994; Vogelsang 1998, 196; Huyse 1999, 57; Luschey 2013; Alibaigi & MacGinnis 2018.
33. Kleiss 1970.
34. Azkaei 2002, 46f.
35. Herzfeld 1941, 206.
36. Azkaei 2002, 46f.
37. During the Neo-Assyrian period, the regions of Bisotun and Nahavand, and in general the present-day provinces of Kermanshah and Hamadan, were considered as the western part of ancient Media, which bordered Assyria (see Rezaei *et al*., 2023: 141). In the Parthian period, Nahavand was part of Upper Media (see Rezaei, 2025), and in early and middle Islamic texts, the Nahavand region is referred to as "Māh-i Basra" (cf. Ibn-Rustah, 1986, 166; Al-Maqdisi 1982, 575), where the word "Māh" likely derives from the old word "Mād/Media." The naming was done because the tribute from Nahavand was sent to the city of Basra in Iraq (cf. al-Baladhuri 1988, 120; Ibn-Faqih 1970, 94).

Battle of Nahavand in 640 AD.[38]

The modern toponym Gāmāsīāb (locally known as Gāmāsīāw) is formed of two components, the second of them being *āb*/*āw*, "water"; it thus means "the river Gāmāsī". The name of this river is not mentioned in early and middle Islamic texts; however, historians such as Ibn Faqih Hamadani (*fl.* tenth century AD), Abu-Dulaf (d. 950), and Yaqut Hamavi (d. 1229) describe a snow charm on Mount Iza near Nahavand which is called "the 'Gāmāsī' of Nahavand", where water is pouring out of rocks shaped like a cow and a fish. The compound toponym Gāmāsīāb/Gāmāsīāw, thus, appears to be formed of Gāw, "cow", and Māhī, "fish".[39] Today, in the indigenous languages of the Central Zagros, including Lori, Kurdish, and Laki, Gāmāsī means "cowfish", or "large fish", which apparently refers to the same story. However, I believe that the existence of the talismans, such as Gāw and Māhī, and grass horses in the Nahavand region may have roots in historical events and characteristics of the region, such as horse breeding and the murder of Gaumāta the *maguš*.

Nesaean in the Greek and Roman Sources

A considerable number of Greek and Roman historians and geographers, such as Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo, Arrian, and Stephanus of Byzantium mention a peculiar race of very large horses called "Nesaean". According to Herodotus, who is the first to mention this adjective, these large horses were bred in a very large plain in Media called *Nesaion*.[40] Another very interesting clue from the Assyrian sources confirms the connection between the large Nesaean horses and the Nahavand region: according to the Najafabad stele, when Sargon II entered the land of Irnisa (Niššāya), present-day Nahavand, he received as tribute "large horses trained for the yoke".[41] Diodorus and Strabo offer detailed information about the location of *Nesaion* as a centre for horse breeding. Diodorus, who actually does not mention this place name, describes it as lying between *Bagistana* (mod. Bisotun) and *Ekbatana* (mod. Hamadan): "Where of old they say that there were one hundred and sixty thousand horses grazing, but at the time of Alexander's visit there were counted only sixty thousand".[42] According to Strabo,

> Those who travel from Persis and Babylon to the Caspian Gates pass through it [here he refers to a meadow called *hippobótos*, which he locates south of the Caspian Sea]; and in the time of the Persians, it is said that fifty thousand mares were pastured there, and that these herds belonged to the kings. As for the Nesaean horses, which the kings used because they were the best and the largest, some

38. al-Baladhuri 1988, 115.
39. Zakariya ibn Muhammad Qazwini (ca. 1203–1283); Ibn Faqih 1970, 94; Abu-Dulaf 1975, 69; Hamavi 1995, Vol. 5, 313: "On Mount Iza in Nahavand there are two talismans shaped like a fish and a cow, made of snow, that remain unmelted throughout both winter and summer. These figures are easily recognizable from the city, depicting a standing cow with a fish trailing behind. Locals believe that these talismans are meant to ensure that the water in the area never diminishes".
40. See Schmitt 2002.
41 RINAP 2 117, ii 66.
42. Diod. XVII, 110.6.

writers say that the breed came from here, while others say from Armenia".[43]

Given the correspondence between Assyrian and Persian Niššāya, Greek *Nesaion* and the present-day Nahavand Plain, it can be assumed that the major route from Babylon to Ecbatana in Media, and further to the Caspian Gates, passed through the present-day province of Loristan. After passing through the Khorramabad-Aleshtar-Delfan road, and leaving behind Mount Garin, this route reached the Nahavand Plain before turning north towards Hamadan. It is worth noting that Sargon II reached Nahavand (Niššāya/Irnisa) *via* a similar route in 716 BC during his sixth campaign.[44] It is possible that the route from Persis to Ecbatana also passed through the Borujerd-Nahavand route.

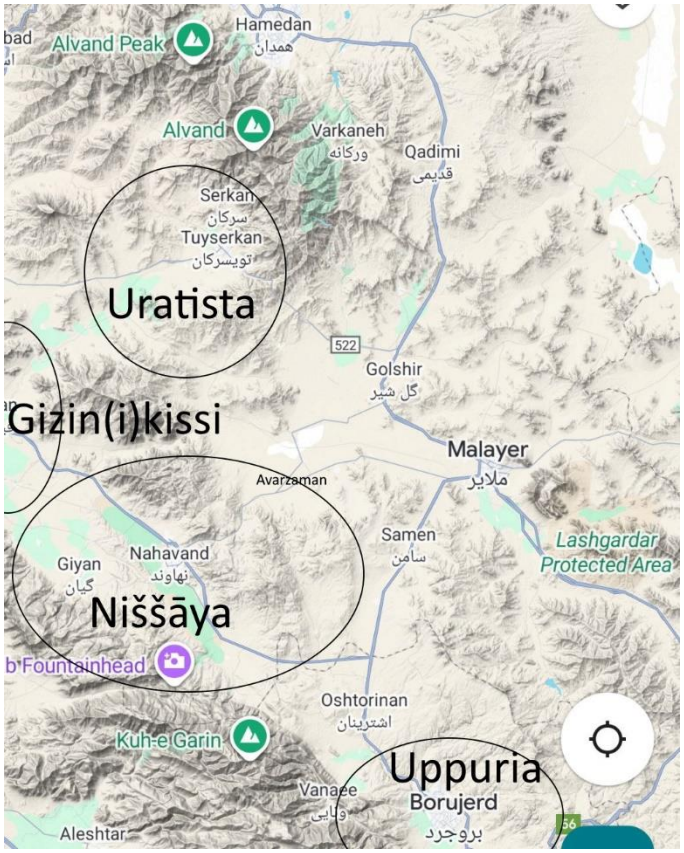


Fig. 1. Ancient toponyms (large characters) and modern towns (small characters).

Conclusion

This article presents new clues about the Niššāya region and its related toponyms, Ṣibur/Ṣibar and Urimzan/Urenzan, during the Neo-Assyrian period. It confirms the previous suggestions that Niššāya/Irnisa in the Assyrian texts of the 8th century BC was the same as Nisāya in the inscription of Darius I at Bisotun, and *Nesaion* (with Nesaean) mentioned by classical historians such as Herodotus and Strabo, all of which refer to the

43. Strabo XI, 13.7.
44. Rezaei *et al*. 2023.

present-day Nahavand plain. I suggest that the toponyms Ṣibur/Ṣibar and Urimzan/Urenzan mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II were both located in the land of Niššāya, present-day Nahavand, and correspond to present-day Avarzaman and Tepe Giyan, respectively. In this regard, my analysis of Tiglath-Pileser III's RINAP 1 35 inscription shows that the city of Ṣibur/Ṣibar, located in the ancient land of Niššāya, was most likely a major centre for horse breeding in the Median region. This feature, which was probably possible due to the availability of all the required conditions and facilities, such as extensive pastures, is consistent with the characteristics of the land of Niššāya/*Nesaion* as a well-known centre for horse breeding, as noted by Greek and Roman writers. In addition, I believe that the Gamasi River probably took its name from the *maguš* Gaumāta. It seems that, as stated by Herodotus,[45] the pseudo-Smerdis or the *maguš* Gaumāta was a Median personality, likely from Niššāya or Nahavand, who took refuge in his homeland and was killed there by Darius I.

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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).

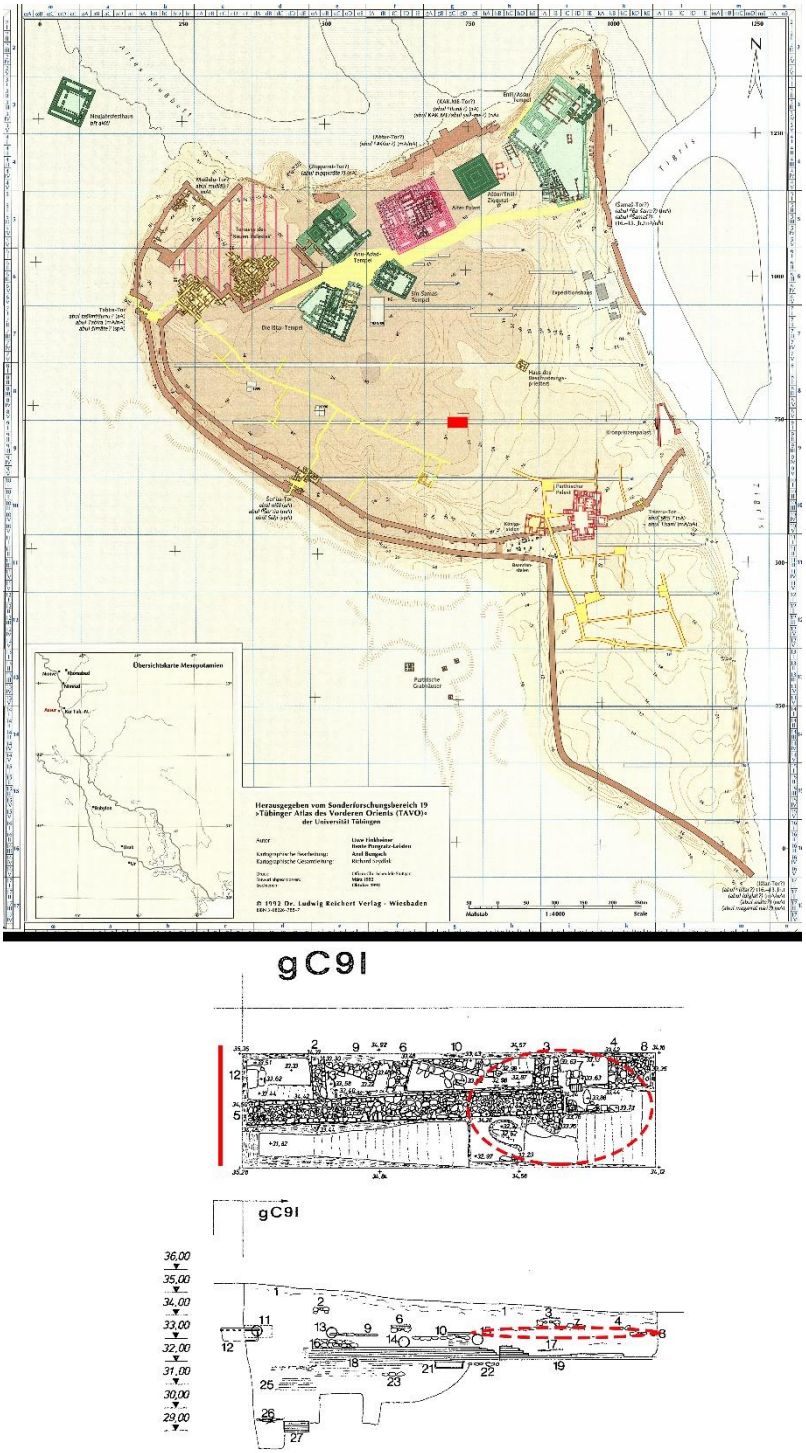


Fig. 1. (top) Plan of Assur - the rectangle in the centre marks the site of exploratory trench gC9I (adapted from TAVO Karte B IV 21 (c) Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, reproduced with permission); (bottom) plan of the second layer and section of exploratory trench gC9I (reproduced with permission from Miglus 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]

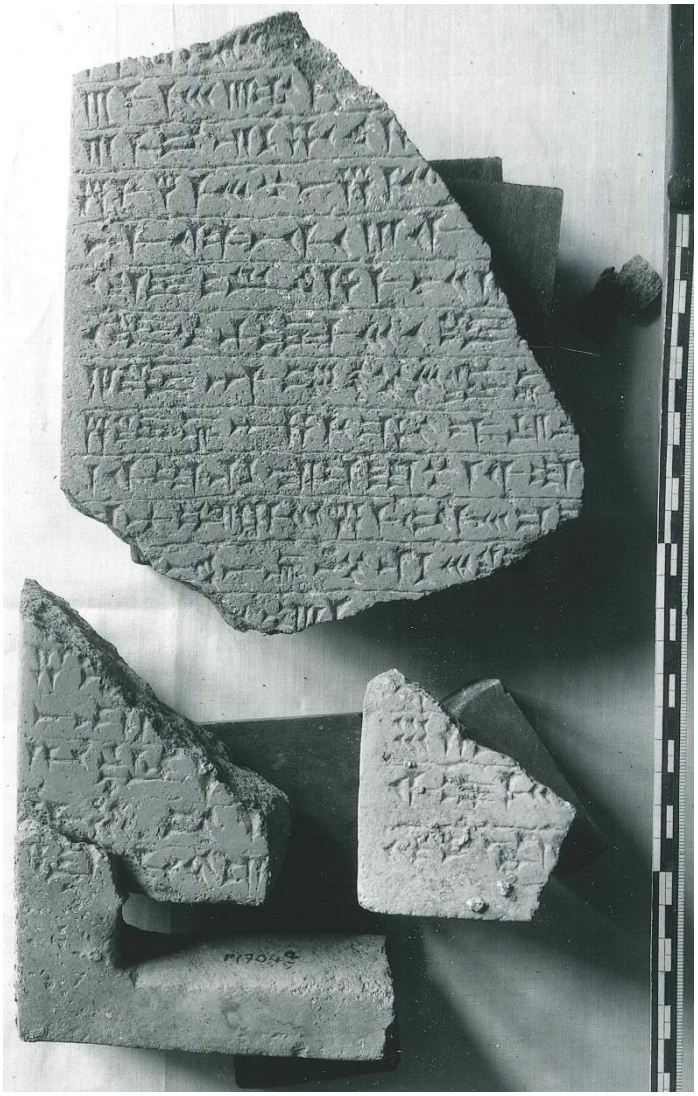


Fig. 2. This excavation photograph (Ass S 4180, reproduced with permission from the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft), shows all the excavated fragments of Ass 14704 as well as the fragment numbered Ass 14562. The topmost is Ass 14562; the lower left is the joined piece Ass 14704a+b; the lower right is the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

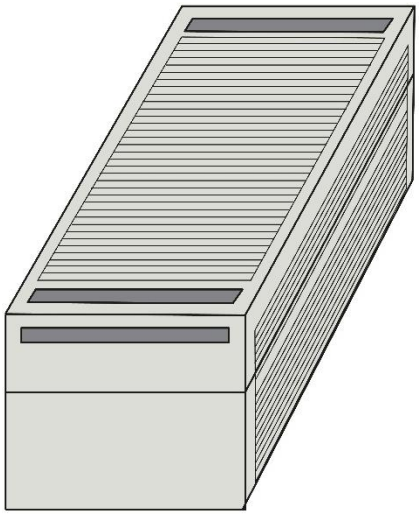


Fig. 5. A possible reconstruction of the inscribed chests.

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.

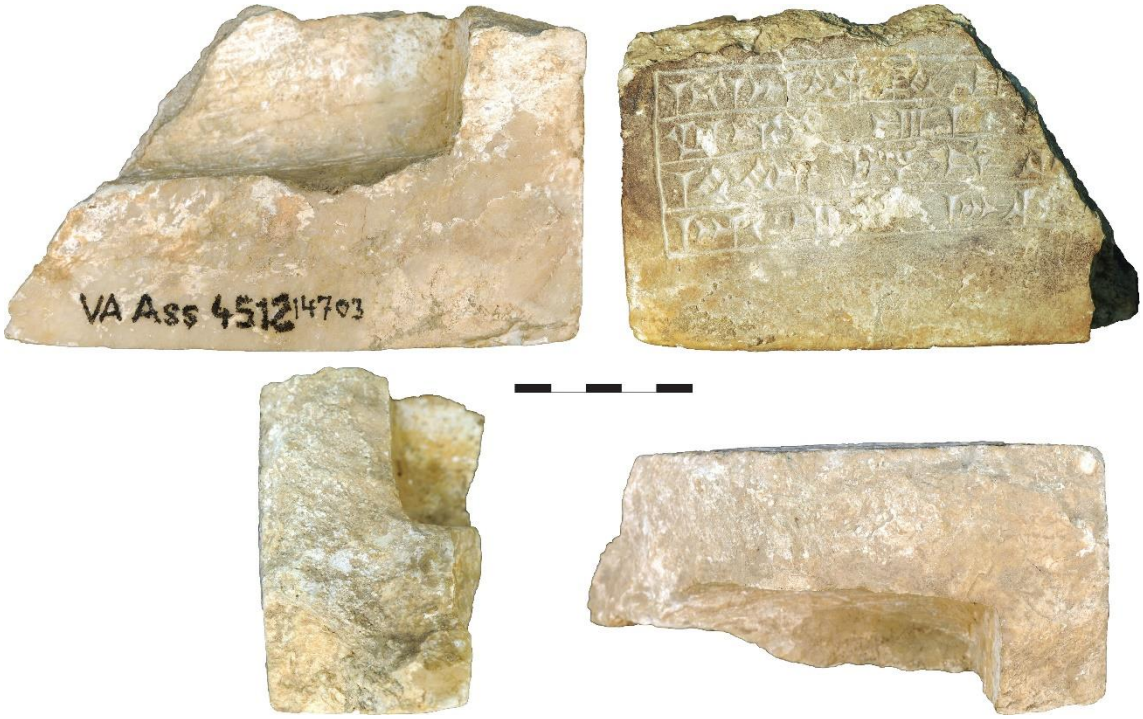


Fig. 6. Fragment Ass 14703 (VA Ass 4512). Published under CC-BY-SA 4.0.
Photo credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Jens Rohde.

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.

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