

AFTER THE FALL OF BABYLON: A NEW LOOK AT THE PRESENTATION SCENE ON ASSURBANIPAL RELIEF BM ME 124945–6

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BM ME 124945–6, a relief of Assurbanipal, was discovered in the ruins of Room M (the so-called ‘Throne Room’) of the North Palace in the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, and is now on display in the British Museum (Fig. 1). The slabs are divided into two registers: an upper register² and a lower register, which are separated by a broad wavy band, each side of which forms the bank of a river. Two rivers flow horizontally in parallel in the centre of the slabs. The presentation scene appears in the lower register, which shows the Assyrian king Assurbanipal (668–631 BC) reviewing war spoils taken from Babylon after the city was captured by the Assyrian army in late 648 BC. The aim of this paper is to examine the spoils represented on the relief and, by carefully analysing Assurbanipal’s inscriptions, to clarify how textual accounts of the event or events are reflected in the narrative scheme of the composition.

1. *Themes represented on the relief*

The presentation scene is further divided into three rows by simple horizontal lines, each forming a ground line that normally indicates the recession of space based on the principle of “vertical perspective” in which distant figures are placed higher than nearer ones.³ The king is represented on the right of the scene, occupying the upper and middle rows (Fig. 2). He is mounted on a chariot and is accompanied by courtiers and soldiers who all face to the left of the scene. An epigraph is engraved above the horses of the king’s chariot. On the far side of the scene, Assyrian soldiers, in the upper row, proceed towards the king. The first person is a eunuch raising his right hand; he is followed by a bearded man (Fig. 3). Then there are three soldiers, each holding a particular item of booty (Fig. 4). These men are followed by two wheeled vehicles: one is carried on the shoulders of several men (Fig. 5) and the other pulled by a group of soldiers (Fig. 6). To the far left of the scene, prisoners are led away by soldiers. In the middle row, four foreigners face right (Fig. 7), and behind them stand two scribes making a record in front of one pile of bows and quivers and another of severed heads (Fig. 8). More soldiers follow from the left with a team of horses. The lower row shows a procession of prisoners; all of them move from left to right (Fig. 9). To the far left, there are two sets of chariots, the horses of which are being led by soldiers (Figs. 10 and 11). The overall composition, except for the lower row, is arranged symmetrically facing to the centre, with special emphasis on the king.

2. *The identification of motifs in the upper row*

2.1. *Previous studies*

Barnett described this scene as “the king in his chariot receiving the surrender of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and Ummanaldas”.⁴ He regarded the upper row as depicting the surrender of the Babylonian

¹Both authors would like to express gratitude to Dr Dominique Collon, Dr Julian Reade, and Professor Michael Roaf for their helpful advice and comments. Thanks are also due to Dr Paul Collins for his generous help in arranging photography at the British Museum. We are grateful to Dr Mikko Luukko and Greta Van Buylaere for taking photographs of tablets K 4453+, Rm 40 and K 3096 in the British Museum; because of their kind help, we were able to collate the texts edited and discussed here.

²The upper register has only partially survived, and is further divided into two rows separated by the depiction of a stream. Its upper row shows the destruction of a city and its lower row a procession of soldiers carrying away war spoils along the river on which floats the naked body of an enemy and an Elamite chariot. The spoils include a wheeled

throne, weapons or stakes, and the statues of two bulls, each of which is pulled in a cart. Reade suggested that the presence of the bulls identifies the city which is being destroyed as Susa (Reade 1976: 103–4). The removal of “fierce wild bulls that adorned the gates” of temples at Susa is mentioned in Prism F (v 41–2) and Prism A (vi 60–2); Borger 1996, 55.

³The Assyrians used two distinct principles for rendering depth: one is by means of the vertical arrangement (“vertical perspective”) as used here, which enables the artist to indicate the recession of space in as much depth as he wishes. The other method is the overlapping of figures that stand on the same ground line, which is used for representing rather shallow spatial recessions perceived between the figures. Cf. Russell 1987, 523–5; 1991, 193; and 1993, 57–61.

⁴Barnett 1976, 46–7: a commentary under Pl. XXXV.

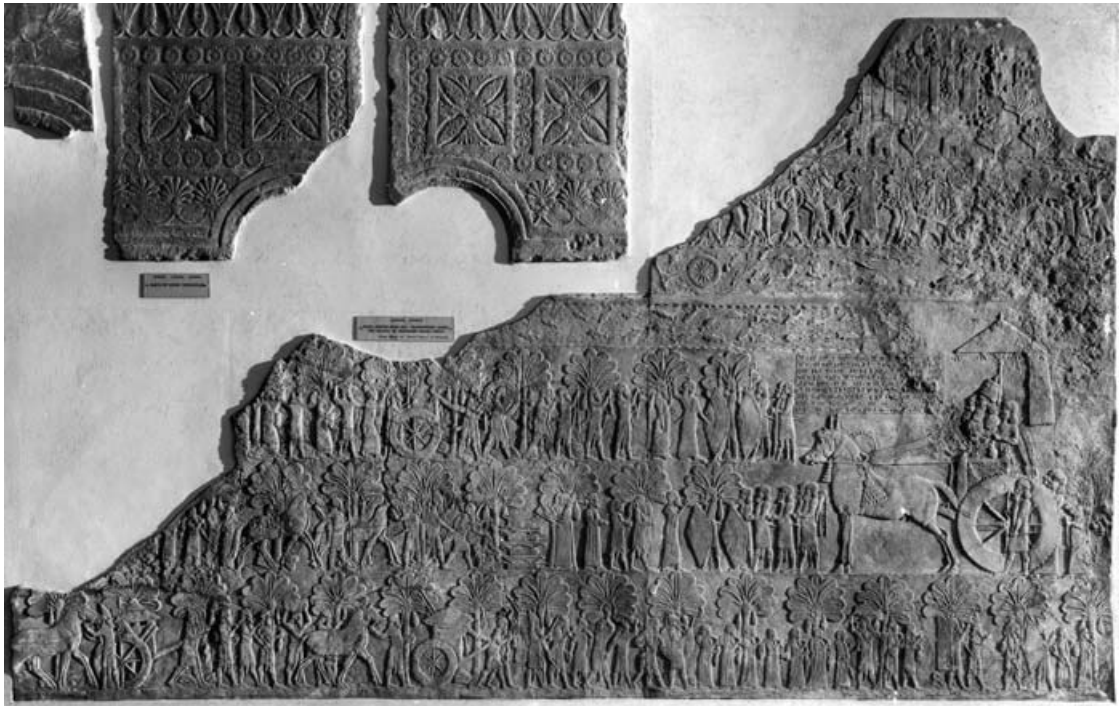


Fig. 1 Relief showing the presentation scene of Assurbanipal (BM ME 124945–6). From Nineveh, North Palace, Room M, 127 × 195.6 cm and 213.4 × 147.3 cm. The British Museum. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 2 Assurbanipal reviewing war spoils from a chariot. BM ME 124946 upper and middle rows, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

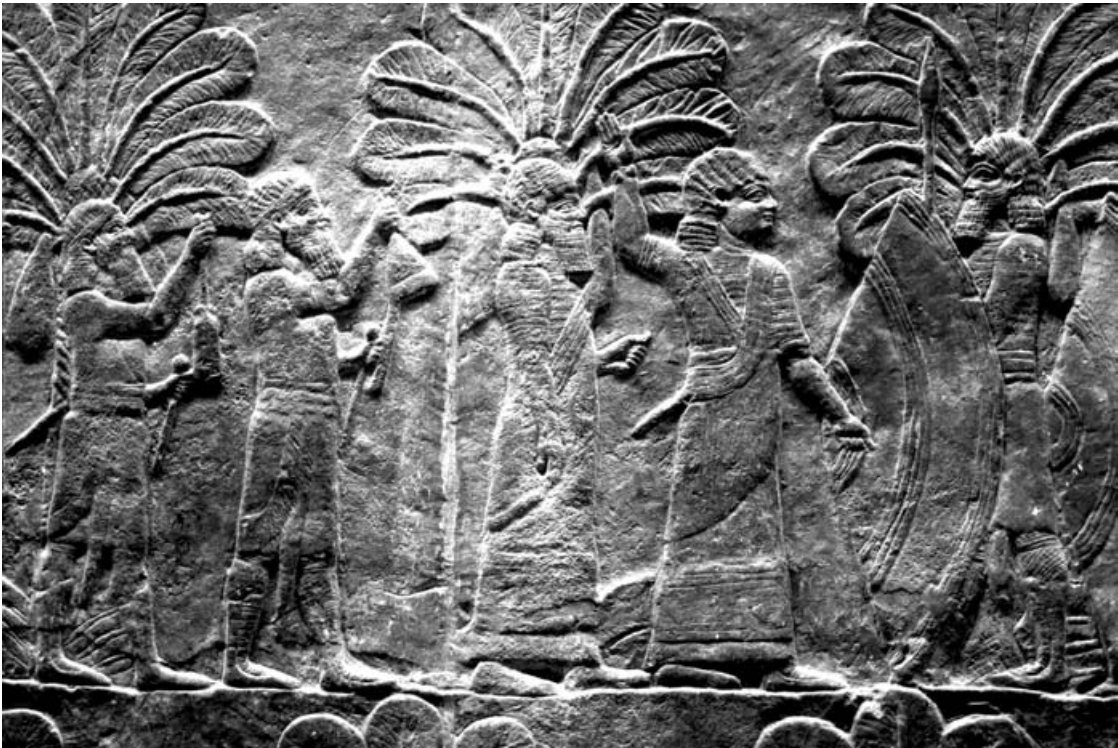


Fig. 3 Assyrian soldiers carrying war spoils. BM ME 124945–6 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 4 Soldiers holding three items of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's regalia. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 5 Soldiers carrying a wheeled vehicle. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M, The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 6 A wheeled vehicle being pulled by soldiers. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M, The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 7 Four foreigners paying homage to the Assyrian king. BM ME 124945–6 middle row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 8 Scribes taking an on-the-spot inventory. BM ME 124945–6 middle row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 9 Procession of prisoners. BM ME 124946 lower row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 10 A chariot with a round shield. BM ME 124945 lower row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

king, and the middle row as that of the Elamite king. A question arises concerning the first identification — Šamaš-šumu-ukīn is reported to have died in a raging fire:

The gods Aššur, Sīn, Šamaš, Adad, Bēl (Marduk), Nabû, Ištar-of-Nineveh, Šarrat-Kidmuri, Ištar-of-Arbela, Ninurta, Nergal (and) Nusku, who marched before me, (and) slew my enemies, cast him into a raging conflagration and ended his life.⁵

If this account is true, then Šamaš-šumu-ukīn cannot be presented in the upper row. The epigraph on the relief, which is modelled on earlier inscriptions, likewise does not mention the surrender of the Babylonian king (Appendix 1, No. 12).

⁵ Borger 1996, 43–4 Prism A iv 46–52.



Fig. 11 A chariot with a triangular object. BM ME 124945 lower row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

I, Assurbanipal, king of the universe, king of Assyria, who at the command of the great gods, achieved my (text: his) heart's desires. They paraded before me clothing (and) jewellery, appurtenances of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal person — the treacherous brother — women of his palace, his courtiers, his battle troops, a chariot, a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — every single piece of equipment that was in his palace, (and) people — men (and) women, young and old.⁶

Barnett regarded the bearded man behind the eunuch as Šamaš-šumu-ukīn (Fig. 3, centre). Although this man looks as if he is being slapped by the eunuch, Reade suggested that a man appearing in this position of the procession could be considered as a general and the eunuch as an Assyrian high official, possibly the *rab ekalli*, the chief palace official.⁷ Nadali further speculated that the bearded man should be regarded as Milki-rāmu (*rab kāširi*), who took part in Assurbanipal's Elamite wars.⁸ This man introduces the parade of booty and prisoners by standing at the front, and the eunuch with the raised hand controls access to the king. Similar scenes are represented elsewhere in Assurbanipal's reliefs. For example, a relief from Room F⁹ shows the same group of people at the front of the procession of prisoners before the king.¹⁰ The costume worn by this man is also very similar to that of the eunuch;¹¹ the clothing of both men is clearly Assyrian in style. Based on this evidence, the identification of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn can be ruled out.

⁶For the previous publication of the epigraph, see Barnett 1976, 47, Pl. XXXV, slabs 12–13: inscription.

⁷We are grateful to Dr Reade for his suggestion in our conversation of summer 2006.

⁸Nadali 2007, 70–1, note 48.

⁹Barnett 1976: Pl. XVII (BM 124931), lower register, lower row, the left side of the relief.

¹⁰Other examples are found on the reliefs from Rooms S¹ and V¹/T¹. For the relief from Rooms S¹, see Barnett 1976, Pl. LX (drawings by W. Boutcher, Or. Dr. V 24), upper register (Louvre AO 19905: the relief is originally from Room S¹ of the North Palace): a scene representing the submission of an Elamite king (whose identity has still to be established) and eight more Elamites who all bow to

the ground in the presence of the Assyrian king and are led by the same set of Assyrian officials at the front of the procession. For the relief from Rooms V¹/T¹, see Barnett 1976, Pl. LXVII (Or. Dr. V 31, slabs A–B) lower register, upper row: the same set of Assyrian officials appear in front of the procession of Elamite prisoners who wear knotted hairbands.

¹¹The eunuch is dressed with a fringed long robe with a drape(?) hanging from his shoulder across his body, while a band hanging from his opposite shoulder holds a sword at his waist, only the top of which is visible. His beardless face suggests his identity as a eunuch. A bearded man to his left is dressed in a very similar costume to that of the eunuch, except that he has no sword at his waist.

2.2. *Three items: the regalia of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn*

The first set of the paraded war spoils consists of three items: a pointed cap with a tassel, an unidentified object and a long staff (Fig. 4). The pointed cap with a tassel hanging down at the back (Fig. 12) can be identified as the Babylonian crown by comparing it with representations of other Babylonian rulers. For example, the ninth-century king Nabû-apla-iddina is shown with a



Fig. 12 The first item of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's regalia: the crown. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.



Fig. 13 Stone tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina (BM ME 90922), about 870 BC, from Sippar. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

similar type of crown (Fig. 13).¹² He also holds a long staff in his hand; a similar object is depicted in our relief as the third item of Babylonian booty (Fig. 14). Although the staff in this relief of Assurbanipal is much thinner than that of Nabû-apla-iddina, similar objects can be found in representations of the ninth-century ruler Marduk-zākir-šumi¹³ and the eighth-century king Marduk-apla-iddina (Merodach-Baladan) II.¹⁴ These Babylonians also wear the same type of crown as shown in our example. The passage in the accompanying epigraph referring to the three royal items reads: “clothing (and) jewellery, appurtenances of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s royal person” (*lu¹bul-tú šu¹kut-tu si-mat LUGAL-u-ti šá*^{1d}GIŠ.NU₁₁-M[U-G]I.NA).¹⁵ Barnett regarded these three items as Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s “crown, sceptre and wand”¹⁶ without having carefully examined the king’s inscriptions. Reade described them simply as “the Babylonian crown and other regalia”.¹⁷ These three items are likely to have been counted among the Babylonian king’s “clothing (and)

¹²This tablet records the restoration of certain lands by the king Nabû-apla-iddina to a priest of the same name (King 1912, No. 27).

¹³Orthmann 1985, 208.

¹⁴Jacob-Rost *et al.* 1992, 54.

¹⁵See Appendix, No. 12: BM ME 124945–6 Epigraph: 3–4.

¹⁶Barnett 1976, 47, under Pl. XXXV.

¹⁷Reade 1976, 103.

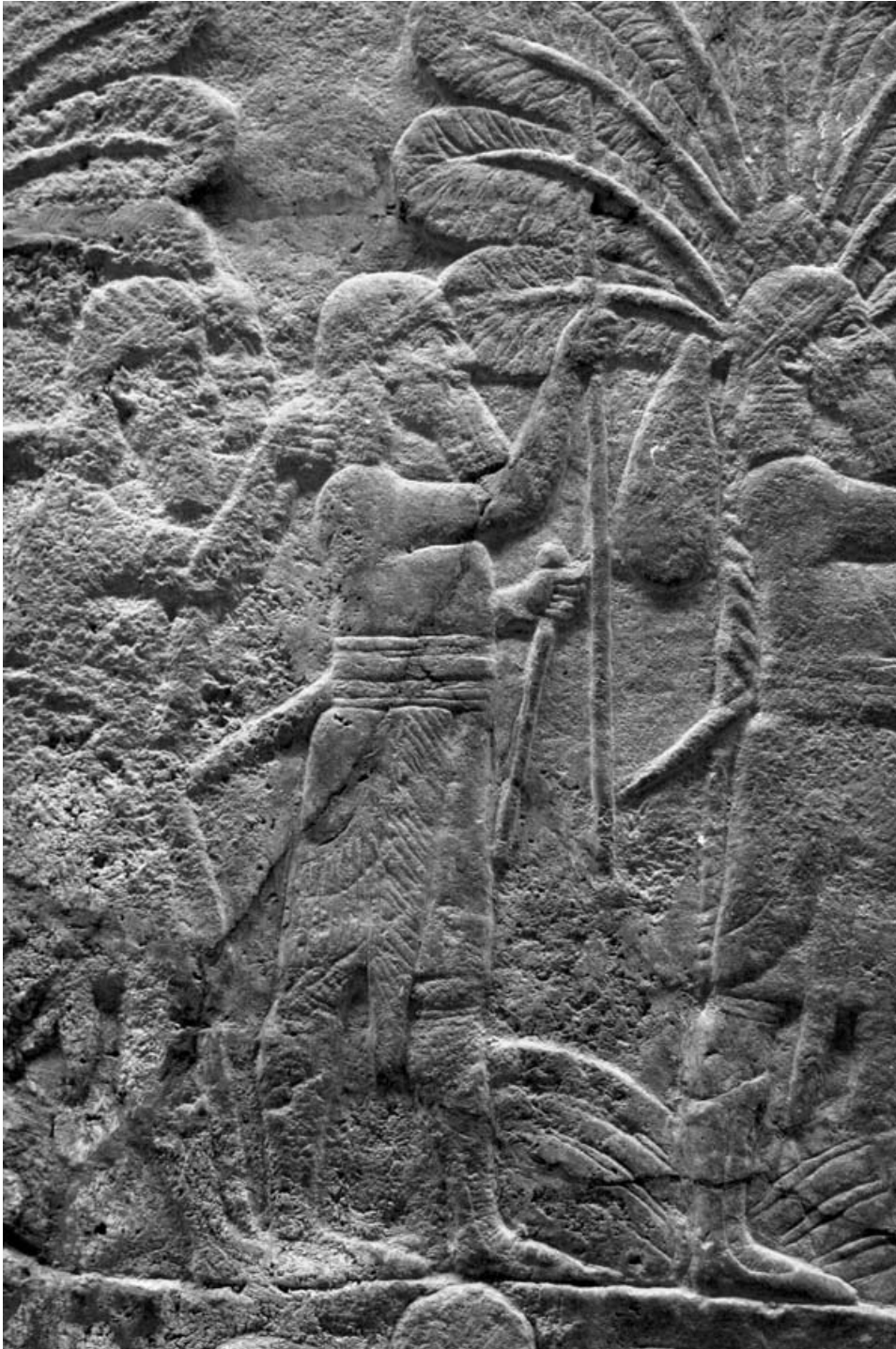


Fig. 14 The third item of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's regalia: the staff. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

jewellery" mentioned in K 3110 + , Prisms C, Kh, and G, and in earlier versions of this inscription known from epigraph collection tablets K 4453 + and Rm 40.

A number of Assurbanipal's inscriptions composed after 648 BC record the receipt of royal property and palace staff from Babylon. The scenes showing the Babylonian war spoils are described in texts on the stone reliefs themselves, and on clay prisms and clay tablets. The lists of

objects received are not always the same; some texts rely on a “master inventory” that is presumed to have existed but that has not yet been discovered or identified, whereas others borrow their lists from known inscriptions.

K 3110 +, a fragmentary multi-column tablet, probably contains the earliest account of the end of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s rebellion. The inscription may have been composed late in 648 or early in 647 BC. The inclusion of the passage recording the receipt of royal property and palace staff may have been an afterthought, since it is separated from the rest of the text by two horizontal rulings and the contents are written vertically. The list of objects received reads:

I carried off to Assyria clothing, precious jewellery, every appurtenance of (his) royal person, women of his palace, his courtiers, and (other) people attached to his palace, silver, gold, valuables, property, every single piece of equipment that was in his palace, [chariots], a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — his yoked teams of [horses], (and) people — [male] and female, young and old.¹⁸

The three items under discussion are here implied by the phrase “clothing (and) precious jewellery, every appurtenance of (his) royal person”.

No fewer than four prism inscriptions record the receipt of the personal property of the deceased king of Babylon.¹⁹ Prism C, which was composed in 647 BC, and Prisms Kh and G, both of which were composed in 646 BC, have lists of objects received that are nearly identical to that of K 3110 +. The order was modified in Prism A, which was written in the eponymy of Šamaš-da”inanni, 644 or 643 BC — the list is abridged, stating that the king received “the property of his palace”. There is no reference to Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s regalia.

Thus far, of the three items under consideration, we have discussed the crown and the staff — however, the identity of the second item, held by an Assyrian soldier, remains as yet unknown. The object is slender with a curved round top and has a narrow extension that is held upright by the soldier (Fig. 15). A pair of oval items project around the top of the object near the extension. To the best of our knowledge, this object has not yet been correctly identified. To solve this mystery, we now turn to the inscription preserved on Sm 559 +. Its complete transliteration was recently published by Borger.²⁰ Sm 559 + is a fragment from a single-column clay tablet that contains parts of an abridged report of the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and the removal of royal property, and the beginning of an account of the fifth Elamite campaign. The inscription was composed sometime after 1 Kislev 646 BC and probably before Prism A in the eponymy of Šamaš-da”inanni, 644 or 643 BC. It provides some information on the royal objects depicted on BM ME 124945–6 not recorded in other extant texts; it also omits other information. The relevant passage reads:

I carried [off] to Assyria (his) [chariot], the conveyance of his lordly person, the staff which he held (in) his [hands], (and his) seal, the ornament (worn around) his neck, [together] with the furnishings of his palace.²¹

This is the only known text of Assurbanipal mentioning Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s “staff” and “seal”. The passage confirms that the third item of regalia carried on the relief (Fig. 14) is a staff, and allows the identification of the second (Fig. 15) as a seal. Because the second object is greatly enlarged on the relief, it was not easy to identify. Its enlargement was presumably deliberate, because the seal was much smaller than the other two items, and it was important to show it clearly. Each item displays the concept of kingship symbolically, and together they demonstrate the significance of the loss of Babylonian royal power. For this reason the artist would have wanted to ensure that each item could be recognised instantly by the viewer. The palace reliefs were designed with the intention of conveying political messages; thus it was necessary to enlarge so small an object as the royal seal in order for it to fulfil its role as “visual propaganda”.

The impression of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn’s seal was reproduced, modelled in relief, on a later copy of a Neo-Babylonian royal charter that records his renewal of a prebend and its endorsement by the “royal seal”; the reproduction depicts the Babylonian king subduing a wild goat.²² A close parallel may be identified in the royal seal of Esarhaddon in the seventh century. The seal itself

¹⁸ See Appendix, No. 2: K 3110 + K 5832 (+) Rm 2, 96 rev. ii 1–7.

¹⁹ The relevant passages are given below in the Appendix, Nos. 3–6.

²⁰ Borger 1996, 341 (ll. 16’–17’) and LoBl 81.

²¹ See Appendix, No. 7: Sm 559 + Sm 1892 + Sm 2003, ll. 16’–17’.

²² See Da Riva and Frahm 1999–2000. We thank Professor A. R. George for this reference.



Fig. 15 The second item of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's regalia: the royal seal. BM ME 124945 upper row, from Nineveh, North Palace, Room M. The British Museum. Photograph taken by C. E. Watanabe.

is not extant, but its impressions on a jar sealing were discovered at Nimrud in the house of the *rab ekalli*.²³ The sealing consists of a cylinder-seal impression with the motif of the king subduing a lion in the centre, surrounded by several circular stamp-seal impressions bearing the same device (Fig. 16). The length of the cylinder seal was 8.8 cm, including the settings that were attached to the top and bottom of the cylinder and appear in the impression as parallel horizontal lines; the diameter of the base was 3.0 cm. It is assumed that the seal was incised on its base as well as its rolling surface, and so functioned as both cylinder seal and stamp seal. This style of seal, the "stamp-cylinder" is typical of the royal seals of this period.

The seal of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn depicted on the relief (Fig. 15) presents the curved round top and flat base characteristic of a stamp seal, but with a slender body that is too long for an ordinary stamp seal. Its upper structure, with a narrow extension, can be compared with a stamp-cylinder from Neirab (near Aleppo in Syria), which exhibits gold caps set on the top and bottom of the seal (Fig. 17).²⁴ This seal's base also functions as a stamp seal. The caps are engraved with horizontal lines, in a very similar style to Esarhaddon's seal impressions discussed above, and the upper one is formed into an extension, through which the seal was strung on a necklace. This stamp-cylinder has a pair of ornamental projections on the top of the gold setting, which can be compared with the peculiar oval items projecting around the top of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's seal. Thus the seal of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn was very probably made in the style of a stamp-cylinder. The very narrow extension above the oval objects, held in the soldier's hand, should be understood to be the string of the seal that was once hung around the neck of the Babylonian king. The seizure of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal seal to confirm the Assyrian victory reminds us of an episode when James II who, before fleeing to France in 1688, threw the Great Seal of England into the Thames, thinking that this would prevent his usurpers from governing.²⁵

²³ Collon 1987, 79: 359. We are grateful to Dr Collon for providing us with generous information and advice.

²⁴ Collon 1987, 85: 391.

²⁵ We would like to express our gratitude to Mr Peter Stubbs for suggesting this episode.



Fig. 16 Seal impressions of Esarhaddon's royal seal, after Collon 1987, 359.

Thus two of the three items of regalia depicted on Assurbanipal's relief (Fig. 4) are explicitly recorded in the inscription preserved on Sm 599 + ; the crown remains the only object that is not mentioned in any known text. The scholar responsible for this text appears to have had access to a copy of the master inventory of objects removed from the palace in Babylon; the artists who designed the relief appear to have been working from the same inventory.

The three items are followed by two wheeled vehicles. The first of these is carried on the shoulders of four soldiers (Fig. 5) and can be identified as Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's "processional carriage"; it is further described as "the conveyance of his lordly person".²⁶ The second vehicle is a chariot for military use (Fig. 6). The latter is bigger and stronger in structure than the processional carriage. A man stands immediately behind this chariot holding a long stick upright. The top of the stick is divided into three but the upper part of the relief is broken. It has been suggested by Roaf that this man is holding the parasol of the Babylonian king, which is mentioned in the account of Prism A.²⁷

They brought before me chariots, a processional carriage, a parasol, women of the harem (and other) property of his palace.²⁸

The reference to a parasol occurs only in the account of Prism A. This information, for both Prism A and the relief, most probably came from an inventory composed in late 648 (see the Appendix, No. 6).

²⁶The reference appears in Prisms C, Kh, G, and the epigraph of the relief.

²⁷We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Roaf for his suggestion. Thanks are also due to Dr D.

Collon and Dr K. Radner who kindly took a close look at it in the British Museum and informed us that parasol tassels are partially visible along the broken edge.

²⁸See Appendix 1, No. 6: Prism A iv 64-5.



Fig. 17 Stamp-cylinder from Neirab (near Aleppo, Syria), after Collon 1987, 391.

3. *The identification of motifs in the middle and lower rows*

3.1. *Scribes and four horses*

In the centre of the middle row, two scribes are taking an on-the-spot inventory of confiscated weapons and the severed heads of the enemy (Fig. 8). To the left of the piles of weapons and severed heads, a team of horses is led by two Assyrian soldiers, each man leading a pair of horses. Yoked teams of horses are mentioned among the list of booty in texts K 3110 +, Prisms C, Kh, and G, and in earlier versions of this inscription known from epigraph collection tablets K 4453 + and Rm 40. Four foreigners appear to the right of the scene (Fig. 7), one apparently pleading with the king Assurbanipal, and others paying homage to the king, who looks down on them from a chariot. The king is accompanied by many soldiers and courtiers who surround and protect him.²⁹ The identification of the four foreigners is discussed below (section 4).

3.2. *Male and female prisoners*

The composition of the lower row consists of Assyrian soldiers leading prisoners from left to right (Fig. 9). All together fourteen male and nine female prisoners are depicted in the scene.³⁰ They are divided into several male and female groups by the Assyrian supervisors placed between them. It is likely that this procession of prisoners represents people who worked at the Babylonian palace, as mentioned in the texts. In particular, the large number of women suggests that they may well be “women of his harem” (MUNUS *sek-re-e-ti-šú*).

3.3. *Chariots and horses*

The left side of the lower row presents two horse-drawn chariots. One is depicted immediately behind the prisoners and is pulled by two Assyrian soldiers; a round shield is placed on top of it, facing up in profile (Fig. 10).³¹ After five prisoners, there is a second chariot, which carries a curious triangular object that is clearly different from the depiction of the previous shield (Fig. 11). The identity of this object remains unknown.

4. *The submission of four foreigners*

In the middle row there are four foreigners (Fig. 7), who Reade has suggested may be (from right to left) the Elamite king Tammariu II, the Qedarite Arab leaders Abi-Iate' and Aia-ammu, and the Nabatean king Natnu.³² This episode is not mentioned in the epigraph, nor are there any textual references to four foreigners simultaneously paying homage to the Assyrian king at the time of the fall of Babylon. According to Prism A, Tammariu II submitted to Assurbanipal in Nineveh after he fled from Indabibi; he took refuge in Assyria with eighty-five nobles and his family.³³ There is a passage mentioning him standing before Assurbanipal, praising his lordship and extolling his valour to the great gods. If the scene records this particular flight of Tammariu to Assyria, then the episode should have taken place in 650 BC. He is also known to have taken refuge in Assyria again sometime around 648 BC when Ummanaldas seized the Elamite throne. In either case it is an enigma, since the king's inscriptions record that this Elamite came only to Nineveh. The scene depicted on this relief is set against a background of palm trees, which indicates the event took place in southern Mesopotamia, not in Assyria.

²⁹ There are six soldiers in front of the king's chariot, of whom the two at the front are holding shields. In the chariot, there is a charioteer in front of the king and a parasol bearer behind him. There is also a man beside the chariot holding one of the chariot wheel's spokes, and two whisk bearers standing behind the chariot, followed by others (the relief is broken).

³⁰ To the end of the procession at the right are two women, followed by an Assyrian soldier, then two male prisoners who are controlled by an Assyrian soldier from behind. Two more male prisoners follow, one of whom is about to be beaten by an Assyrian soldier with a club. Then seven women follow under the supervision of a soldier; then five male prisoners. All the prisoners, both men and women, wear broad plain hairbands. The men are dressed in tunics

and the women in long fringed robes; all the women have similar hairstyles, ringlets hanging down to their shoulders; ringlets are also worn by some of the men. People with similar clothes and hairstyles are represented on reliefs from Courtyard J (Barnett 1976, Pl. XXIX, slabs 4, 7–8); and from Room S¹ (Barnett 1976, Pl. LX: Or. Dr. VI 24 — lower register, upper row, the relief is now lost; *ibid.*, Pl. LXI, slab B: Louvre AO 19909 + 19906 — lower row; *ibid.*, Pl. LXVI, (e): BM 124788).

³¹ There are string-like objects leading from the carriage towards the yoke, which may be loose reins. Behind the chariot two horses are being led by an Assyrian soldier.

³² Reade 1998, 221–31.

³³ Borger 1996, 44–5 Prism A iv 9–41.

The parading of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal property most probably took place outside Babylon itself. Reade suggested that this scene is a composite representation of triumph and acts of submission that did not actually happen simultaneously.³⁴ If the submissions of the four foreigners did not take place at the same time as the parading of the Babylonian booty, then we have here a very interesting use of vertical perspective; further research should be carried out on this scene to confirm Reade's hypothesis.³⁵

Conclusion

It is evident from extant inscriptions of Assurbanipal that the individuals responsible for the relief carved on BM ME 124945–6 and the accompanying epigraph had a variety of sources at their disposal, including a copy of the inventory of property and palace staff from Babylon presented to the Assyrian king. An inventory recording the receipt of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's regalia (*si-mat LUGAL-u-ti šá* ^{1d}GIŠ.NU₁₁-M[U-G]I.NA), personal property and entourage appears to have been consulted since no known royal inscription mentions the deceased Babylonian king's crown, seal, and staff all together. Sm 559 + and Prism A may have also been consulted when preparing the image on the relief, because the former inscription specifically mentions the seal and staff alongside the king's processional carriage and chariot, and the latter text records the receipt of the king's parasol.

Appendix: Editions of the textual sources

At least twelve inscribed objects record the receipt of objects and palace staff from Babylon, including reference to Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's crown, seal, and staff. The scenes showing the Babylonian booty on BM ME 124945–6 are described in texts on several clay prisms, a stone orthostat, and a few clay tablets (containing collections of epigraphs). As discussed in the body of this manuscript, the lists of objects received are not always the same; some texts rely on an inventory (or inventories) written after the fall of Babylon, whereas others borrow their lists from other inscriptions. We take this opportunity to present editions of the relevant passages. The passages are arranged from earliest to latest, or at least in the order in which we believe the texts to have been composed based on available evidence.³⁶

1. Inventory/Inventories listing royal property and palace staff

No inventory listing objects from Babylon received by Assurbanipal in late 648 BC has been discovered or identified. Lists of property and palace staff may have been in Akkadian (and/or Aramaic?).

2. K 3110 + K 5832 (+) Rm 2, 96 rev. ii' 1–7

A seven-line passage on the reverse face of K 3110 + (rev. ii' 1–7) records the receipt of Babylonian booty. The description is nearly complete (beginning of the lines are damaged), written *ca.* 90° to the right, and is separated from the rest of the inscription by horizontal rulings. The inclusion of the list of objects and people received by the Assyrian king appears to be an afterthought on the part of the individual(s) responsible for this tablet; it is possible that an inventory was not readily available at the time the text was written on the tablet and was added later when the information was available (interpretation conjectural). The passage has not been collated and the present edition relies on previous publications.³⁷

- 1) [lu]-bul-tu šu-kut-tú a-gar-tú mim-ma si-mat LUGAL-u-ti
- 2) [MUNUS s]ek-re-ti LÚ šu-ut SAG.MEŠ-šú ù UN.MEŠ
- 3) [li]-mì-it É.GAL-šú KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.GI NÍG.ŠU NÍG.GA

³⁴ Reade 1998, 230.

³⁵ The acceptance of Reade's idea would not tend to undermine the principle of vertical perspective, as artistic elements could be introduced for the sake of visual effect.

³⁶ We are certain of the order of K 3110 +, Prism C, Prism Kh, and Prism G. The chronological sequence of

Sm 559 +, Prism A, K 4453 +, Rm 40, K 3096, and VAT 11264 cannot be reconstructed with certainty. The epigraph on BM ME 124945–6 appears to be the latest text included here.

³⁷ Borger 1996.

- 4) [hi-š]ih-ti (erasure)³⁸ É.GAL.MEŠ *ma-la ba-šú-u*
 5) [GIŠ.GIGIR]R.MEŠ GIŠ *ša šá-da-di ru-kub be-lu-ti-šú*
 6) [ANŠE.KUR].RA.MEŠ *ši-mit-ti ni-ri-i-šú* UN.MEŠ
 7) [zi-ka]r u *sin-niš* TUR u GAL *al-qa-a a-na* KUR *aš-šur*

I carried off to Assyria clothing, precious jewellery, every appurtenance of (his) royal person, women of his palace, his courtiers, and (other) people attached to his palace, silver, gold, valuables, property, every single piece of equipment that was in his palaces, [chariots], a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — his yoked teams of [horses], (and) people — [male] and female, young and old.

3. Prism C ix 50–6

A ten-line account of the receipt of objects and palace staff from the recently deceased king of Babylon appears on col. ix of this decagonal prism. The scribe(s) responsible for the composition of this passage may have used K 3110 + rev. ii' 1–7 as a model; note, however, that the texts are not identical and there are some minor differences in the two descriptions. The passage is preserved only on K 1794 + (Borger's C1). Prism C's principal exemplar has not been collated and the edition is based on previous publications.³⁹ The translation is a composite of the passage in Prisms C (No. 3), Kh (No. 4), and G (No. 5).

- 50) [GIŠ.GIGIR GIŠ *ša šá-da-di ru-kub* E[N-ti-šú]
 51) [ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ *ši-mit-ti*]i ni-ri-šú
 52) [UN.MEŠ *zi-kir u sin-niš* T]UR u GAL
 53) [*ša la-pa-an mit-hu-ši*] GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ
 54) [*di-š' šib-tu*] NAM.ÚŠ.MEŠ
 55) [*ù né-eb-ri-tú*] 'i¹-še-tu-u-ni
 56) [*ik-šu-da šu.ii-a-a áš-lu-l*]a a-na KUR *aš-šur*.KI

I took into my possession and carried off to Assyria clothing, precious jewellery, every appurtenance of (his) royal person, every single piece of equipment that was in his palace, women of his palace, his officials, his courtiers, and (other) people attached to his palace, silver, gold, valuables, property, chariots, a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — his yoked teams of horses, (and) people — male and female, young and old — who had escaped armed combat, *di'u*-disease, plague, pestilence and famine.

4. Prism Kh viii 47'–56'

The report of receipt of objects and people from Babylon appears on col. viii of this decagonal prism. The individual(s) responsible for this lengthy inscription copied or directly borrowed this passage from Prism C. The relevant section is preserved on ND 814 and ND 5406 (Borger's CND 1 and CND 5 respectively). The relevant fragments have not been collated and the edition is based on previous publications.⁴⁰ See above (No. 3) for a composite translation.

- 47') *lu-bul-tu šu-kut-tú a-qar-tú mim-ma si-mat* LUGAL-t[i]
 48') *hi-ših-ti* É.GAL-šú *ma-la ba-šu-ú¹*
 49') MUNUS *sek-re-ti-šú* GAL.MEŠ-šú LÚ *šu-ut* SAG.MEŠ-š[ú]
 50') *ù* UN.MEŠ *li-bit* É.GAL-šú
 51') KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.GI NÍG.ŠU NÍG.GA
 52') GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ GIŠ *ša šá-da-di ru-kub* EN-ú-ti-šú
 53') ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ *ši-mit-ti ni-ri-i-š[ú]*
 54') UN.MEŠ *zi-kir u sin-niš* TUR u GAL *ša la-pa-an mit-hu-ši* GIŠ.TUKUL.ME[Š]
 55') *di-š' šib-tu* NAM.ÚŠ.MEŠ *ù né-eb-ri-tú i-še-tu-ni*
 56') *ik-šu-da šu.ii-a-a áš-lu-la a-na* KUR *aš-šur*.KI

³⁸ Borger 1996, 153 suggests that the fourth sign (originally -šú) was a scribal error that was erased.

³⁹ Bauer, 1933, Pls. 5–13.

⁴⁰ Wiseman 1951, Pl. XII; and Knudsen 1967, Pl. XIX. The line-numbering is based on J. Novotny's unpublished edition of Prism Kh.

5. Prism G (*frgm. 10*) viii 24'–33'

The account of the removal of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's property and staff from Babylon appears on col. viii of this fragmentarily preserved decagonal prism. The individual(s) responsible for this lengthy inscription copied or directly borrowed this passage from Prism C and/or Prism Kh. The passage is preserved on A 8111 (+) BM 134436 (Borger's G1E). The relevant fragments have been collated from the originals in the British Museum and Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.⁴¹ See above (No. 3) for a composite translation.

- 24') [lu-bul-tu šu-ku]t-tu a-qar-tu mim-ma si-mat LUGAL-ti
 25') [hi-ših-t]i É.GAL-šú ma-la ba-šú-u
 26') [MUNUS sek-re-t]i-šú GAL.MEŠ-šú LÚ šu-ut SAG.MEŠ-šú
 27') [ù UN.MEŠ l]i-mi-it É.GAL-šú KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.GI NÍG.ŠU NÍG.GA
 28') [GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ GIŠ šá] šá-da-di ru-kub be-lu-ú-ti-šú
 29') [ANŠE.KUR.RA].MEŠ ši-mit-ti ni-i-ri-šú
 30') [UN.MEŠ z]i-kir u šin-niš TUR u GAL
 31') [šá la-pa]-an mit-ḥu-ši GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ
 32') [di-š šib-tu NA]M.ÚŠ¹.MEŠ u né-^feb-ri¹-tú i-še-tu-u-ni
 33') [ik-šu-da ŠU.II]-^fa¹-a áš-lu-la a-na KUR aš-šur.KI

6. Prism A iv 64–5

Prism A, the latest known prism inscription that records the receipt of royal objects from Babylon, contains some of the same information as Prisms C, Kh, and G; it excludes some details and adds one new object. This edition was composed in the eponymy of Šamaš-da²inanni of Babylon (644 or 643 BC) and copies were placed in the walls of the House-of-Succession, Assurbanipal's palace; the best-known exemplars are the "Rassam Cylinder" (K 15110 + Rm 1) and "Cylinder A" (K 1678 +). Chariots and the processional carriage are mentioned once again, as they are in all texts referring to this event. However, the individual(s) responsible for the composition Prism A includes one detail that is not shown on BM ME 124945–6 or mentioned in any other extant inscription: Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's parasol. This information most probably came from an inventory list composed in late 648, immediately after the capture of Babylon; this list, if it was written on clay, has not yet been discovered or positively identified in the collections of the British Museum. The passage is preserved on K 15110 + Rm 1, Prism A's principal exemplar (Borger's A1), and on other copies of this 1302 line inscription. The passage has not been collated and the present edition relies on previous publications.⁴²

- 64) GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ GIŠ šá šá-da-di GIŠ šá šil-li MUNUS sek-re-e-ti-šú
 65) NÍG.GA É.GAL-šú ú-bil-u-ni a-di maḥ-ri-ia

They brought before me chariots, a processional carriage, a parasol, women of his harem, (and other) property of his palace.

7. Sm 559 + Sm 1892 + Sm 2003 16'–17'

The scribe(s) responsible for the composition of this inscription appear to have had at their disposal inventory list(s) of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's personal property. It is the only known text recording the receipt of this king's staff (*ḥaṭṭu*) and seal (*kunukku*); the artists responsible for BM ME 124945–6 appear to have had access to the inscription on tablet fragment Sm 559 +, the object(s) upon which the inscription on this tablet was written, and/or the same inventory list that was used for the composition of this text. It is not known if this text is earlier or later than Prism A; its relation to the epigraph collection tablets (see below) is also not known. The inscription has been collated from the original.

⁴¹ We are grateful to J. E. Curtis and C. B. F. Walker for permitting us to collate Assurbanipal inscriptions in the British Museum; to W. Farber for allowing us access to the Assurbanipal material in the Oriental Institute; and to the staff of the Department of the Ancient Near East

and J. Tenney (University of Chicago) for the efficient and speedy supply of prisms. The line-numbering is based on J. Novotny's unpublished edition of Prism G.

⁴² Borger 1996, 44.

- 16') [GIŠ.GIGIR] 'ru¹-kub EN-ti-šú GIŠ.GIDRU ši-^rbit¹ [ŠU.II]-^ršú¹ NA₄.KIŠIB si-mat GÚ-šú
 17') [it-t]i ú-nu-ut É.GAL-šú áš-l[u-l]a a-na KUR AN.ŠÁR.^rKI¹

I carried [off] to Assyria (his) [chariot], the conveyance of his lordly person, the staff which he held (in) his [hands], (and his) seal, the ornament (worn around) his neck, [together] with the furnishings of his palace.

8. K 4453 + K 4515 (+) 89-4-26, 116 ii 15'-22'

This multi-column tablet is inscribed with a collection of epigraphs, including one text that is almost identical to the epigraph BM ME 124945-6. The short epigraph concerning the removal of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's property and staff from Babylon appears to be partially modelled on passages known from tablet K 3110 + and Prisms C, CND, and G (see above); the list of items, however, is shorter. It is not known if the inscriptions on this tablet are earlier or later than Prism A; its relation to Sm 559 + is also not known. This tablet (or Rm 40) may have been used when the scribe(s) wrote the epigraph on BM ME 124945-6. The relevant passage was collated from photographs taken by Greta Van Buylaere and Dr Mikko Luukko. The translation is a composite of the text inscribed on K 4453 + (No. 8) and Rm 40 (No. 9).

- 15') a-na-ku ¹A[N.ŠÁR-DÙ-A MAN KUR] AN.ŠÁR.KI šá ina ^rqi-bit¹ [DINGIR].^rMEŠ GAL.MEŠ¹
 16') ik-šu-d[u šu-me-r]at lib-bi-šú lu-bul-tú ^ršú¹-[kut-t]ú
 17') mim-ma si-m[at MAN-t]i ^{1d}GIŠ.NU₁₁-MU-GI.NA ŠEŠ N[U G]L.NA
 18') MUNUS sek-r[e-ti-šú L]Ú šu-ut SAG-šú LÚ.ÉRIN.MEŠ MÈ.M[E]Š-šú
 19') GIŠ.GIGIR GIŠ [šá šá]-da-di ru-kub EN-ti-šú¹
 20') ANŠE.KUR.R[A.MEŠ] ši-mit-ti GIŠ.ŠUDUN-šú mim-ma hi-ših-t[i]
 21') É.GA[L]-šú ma-la ba-šu-u UN.MEŠ zi-kir s[in-niš]
 22') T[UR u G]AL ú-še-ti-qu ina IGI-^ria¹

I, Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, who at the command of the great gods, achieved my (text: his) heart's desires. They paraded before me clothing (and) jewellery, appurtenances of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal person — the treacherous brother — women of his palace, his courtiers, his battle troops, a chariot, a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — his yoked teams of horses, every single piece of equipment that was in his palace, (and) people — men (and) women, young and old.

9. Rm 40 1-6

This single-column tablet is inscribed with a collection of epigraphs, including one inscription that is identical to K 4453 + ii 15'-22' (apart from minor variants). This tablet (or K 4453 +) may have been used when the scribe(s) wrote the epigraph on BM ME 124945-6. The relevant passage was collated from photographs taken by Greta Van Buylaere and Dr Mikko Luukko. See above (No. 8) for a composite translation.

- 1) ana-ku ¹AN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A MAN KUR AN.ŠÁR.KI šá ina qi-bit DINGIR.ME! GAL.MEŠ ^rik-šu¹-d[u]
 2) šu-me-rat ŠÁ-šú lu-bul-tú šu-kut-tú mim-ma si-mat MAN-ti ^{1d}GIŠ.NU₁₁-M[U-GI.NA]
 3) PAP! NU GI.NA MUNUS sek-re-ti-šú LÚ* šu-ut SAG.MEŠ-šú LÚ*.ÉRIN.MEŠ MÈ-šú
 4) GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ GIŠ šá šá-da-di ru-kub EN-ti-šú ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ
 5) ši-mit-ti GIŠ.ŠUDU[N]-šú mim-ma hi-ših-ti É.GAL-šú ma-la ba-šú-u
 6) UN.MEŠ zi-kir sin-niš TUR u GAL ú-še-et-⟨ti⟩-qu ina IGI-^ria¹

10. K 3096 9-11

This single-column tablet is inscribed with a collection of epigraphs. One text appears to mention items from the recently deceased king of Babylon, including Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's standards (*zaqiptu* and *šakirūtu*) and his chariot (*narkabtu*); none of the other property or palace staff mentioned in the other texts included here appears in this short inscription, at least as far as it is preserved. The scribe(s) responsible for writing out this tablet appear to have had at their disposal inventory list(s) of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's personal property, since they mention the king's standards. Since lines 11-13 are similar to Sm 559 + 16'-18', this epigraph may have been composed around the

same time as the inscription known from Sm 559+. The relevant lines were collated from photographs taken by Greta Van Buylaere and Dr Mikko Luukko.

- 9) $\text{[}a\text{-na-ku]}^1 \text{AN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A MAN KUR AN.ŠÁR.KI ina tukul-ti AN.ŠÁR u}^{\text{d}15} \text{la x[x . . .]}$
 10) $\text{[}za\text{-qip-tú]}^1 \text{GIŠ! šá-ki-ru-tú si-mat LUGAL-ti}^{\text{d}1} \text{GIŠ.NU}_{11}\text{-MU-GI.NA}^1 \text{[. . .]}$
 11) $\text{GIŠ.GIGIR [ru-kub EN-ti-šú LÚ.ÉRIN.MEŠ e-piš si-ḫi bar-ti ir-t[e?-du-u? . . .]}$
 (rest of the inscription not edited here)

I, Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, placing faith in the god Aššur and the goddess Ištar, . . . [they] brought [before me . . .] the *zaqiptu*-standard (and) *šakirūtu*-standard,⁴³ appurtenances of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal person [. . .] (his) chariot — the conveyance of his lordly person — soldiers who had perpetrated sedition (and) rebellion, [. . .].

11. VAT 11264 rev.? 2'-9'

This single-column tablet is inscribed with a collection of epigraphs. One text is similar to the K 4453 + ii 15'-22' and Rm 40 1-6. The list of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's property and palace staff is the nearly the same as K 4453 +, Rm 40, and the epigraph on BM ME 124945-6, but with one addition: the king's standards (*zaqiptu* and *šakirūtu*). The scribe(s) responsible for writing out this tablet appear to have had at their disposal inventory list(s) of the king of Babylon's personal property and/or K 3096. The relationship of VAT 11264 to the other texts included here is not certain. This short epigraph appears to be modelled on the reports recorded on tablet K 3110+ and Prisms C, CND, and G. If K 4453+ and Rm 40 were written earlier, then the texts on those tablets may have been consulted when this inscription was written; on the other hand, VAT 11264 may have served as a source for one or both of aforementioned epigraph collection tablets. The passage has not been collated and the present edition relies on previous publications.⁴⁴

- 2') $\text{[}a\text{-na-ku]}^1 \text{AN.ŠÁR-DÙ-[A . . .]}$
 3') $\text{[}šá i\text{]}na \text{tukul-ti AN.ŠÁR}^{\text{d}1} \text{NIN.}^{\text{d}1} \text{LÍL}^1 \text{x [. . .]}$
 4') $\text{[}za\text{-qí]}p\text{-tú GIŠ šá-ki-ru-tú lu-bul-}^{\text{d}1} \text{tú}^1 \text{š[u- . . .]}$
 5') $\text{[x x]}^{\text{d}1} \text{GIŠ.NU}_{11}\text{-MU-GI.NA PA[P NU GI.NA]}$
 6') $\text{[MUNUS se-e]}k\text{?-re-ti-šú LÚ šu-ut SAG.MEŠ-šú LÚ.[ÉRIN.MEŠ MÈ-šú]}$
 7') $\text{[GIŠ.GIGIR [GIŠ}^1 \text{šá šá-da-di ru-ku[b EN-ti-šú]}$
 8') $\text{[ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ ši-mi]}t\text{-ti GIŠ.ŠUDUN-šú mim-ma ḫi-[. . .]}$
 9') $\text{[. . .] zik-ru s[in- . . .]}$

[I], Assurbanipal, [(king of the universe,) king of Assyria, who] placing faith in the god Aššur (and) the goddess Mullissu [. . . *They paraded before me*] the *zaqiptu*-standard, the *šakirūtu*-standard, clothing je[wellery, appurtenances of] Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's [royal person — the treacherous] brother — [women of] his palace, his courtiers, [his battle troops, a chariot], a processional carriage — the conveyance of [his lordly person — his yoked] teams of [horses], every [single piece of equipment that was in his palace, (and) people] — men (and) [women, young and old.]

12. BM ME 124945-6 Epigraph

The epigraph on this stone orthostat (Fig. 2) was from one of the epigraph collection tablets: K 4453+ or Rm 40. There are some minor differences between this text and those found on the epigraph collection tablets. This short inscription is probably the latest text edited here. The epigraph was collated from photographs taken by Chikako Watanabe.

- 1) $a\text{-na-ku}^1 \text{AN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A MAN [ŠÚ]}^1 \text{MAN KUR AN.ŠÁR.KI}$
 2) $šá \text{ina qí-bit DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.}^{\text{d}1} \text{MEŠ}^1 \text{ik-šú-du}$
 3) $š\text{-um-me-rat lib-bi-šú lu-}^{\text{d}1} \text{bul-tú šu}^{\text{d}1} \text{-kut-tu}$

⁴³ See Borger 1996, 309 for details about $\text{[}za\text{-qip-tú]}^1 \text{GIŠ! šá-ki-ru-tú}$. He tentatively suggests that *zaqiptu* here and in VAT 11264 (rev. 4') may be an adjective, rather than a nominal form.

⁴⁴ Borger 1996, 312.

- 4) *si-mat* LUGAL-*u-ti šá* ^{1d}GIŠ.NU₁₁-M[U-G]I.NA
- 5) ŠEŠ NU GI.NA MUNUS *sek-re-te-šú* LÚ š[u-ut SA]G.†MEŠ¹-šú
- 6) LÚ ÉRIN.MEŠ MÈ-šú GIŠ.GIGIR GIŠ *šá šad*-†*da*¹-d[i r]u-kub EN-ti-šú
- 7) *mim-ma hi-ših-ti* É.GAL-šú ma-†*la*¹ [b]a-šú-ú
- 8) UN.MEŠ *zik-ru u sin-niš* †TUR GAL¹
- 9) *ú-še-et-ti-qu ina* †mah¹-ri-ia

I, Assurbanipal, king of the universe, king of Assyria, who at the command of the great gods, achieved my (text: his) heart's desires. They paraded before me clothing (and) jewellery, appurtenances of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal person — the treacherous brother — women of his palace, his courtiers, his battle troops, a chariot, a processional carriage — the conveyance of his lordly person — every single piece of equipment that was in his palace, (and) people — men (and) women, young and old.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ For the previous publication of the epigraph, see Barnett 1976, 47, Pl. XXXV, slabs 12–13: inscription.