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Shigeo Yamada (ed.)

NEO-ASSYRIAN SOURCES IN CONTEXT
THEMATIC STUDIES OF TEXTS, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN TEXT CORPUS PROJECT

State Archives of Assyria Studies is a series of monographic studies relating to and supplementing the text editions published in the SAA series. Manuscripts are accepted in English, French and German. The responsibility for the contents of the volumes rests entirely with the authors.

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Set in Times

The Assyrian Royal Seal emblem drawn by Dominique Collon from original Seventh Century B.C. impressions (BM 84672 and 84677) in the British Museum

Cover: Sennacherib sitting on his throne at Lachish, BM 124911 (detail)

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NEO-ASSYRIAN SOURCES IN CONTEXT

Thematic Studies on Texts, History, and Culture

Edited by

Shigeo Yamada

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN TEXT CORPUS PROJECT

2018

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The emergence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the eighth-seventh centuries BC is one of the outstanding phenomena in the history of the ancient Near East. The multi-language and multi-cultural state stretching over an extensive area of the ancient Near East has long been recognized and studied as one of the earliest imperial political entities. The philological study of inscriptional sources from the Neo-Assyrian period has rapidly progressed, especially since the 1980s, with a number of large-scale editorial projects that include the State Archives of Assyria Project (Helsinki), the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project (Toronto), the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period Project (Pennsylvania), the Assur Project (Berlin) and the *Edition literarischer Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Heidelberg). These projects have provided us with the text editions and hand copies of various materials (such as administrative/legal texts, letters, religious/literary texts, and royal and private commemorative inscriptions, etc.), either previously known or newly worked on, with high standards of philological accuracy. Hence, the time has come to undertake a variety of advanced research on the texts of the Neo-Assyrian period from new perspectives using different sorts of sources in combination, alongside the study of specific corpuses and text genres. On this tide, the seminar “Interaction, interplay and combined use of different sources in Neo-Assyrian studies: Monumental texts and archival sources” was held at the University of Tsukuba and the Tsukuba International Congress Center (Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan) on December 11–13, 2014, with the program given below. The event was supported by the fund for the Finnish-Japanese joint seminar sponsored by the Academy of Finland and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (representatives: Raija Mattila and Shigeo Yamada), as well as by a Japanese research grant (MEXT KAKENHI 24101007). I especially owe gratitude to Raija Mattila, Daisuke Shibata, and the staff of the Research Center for West Asian Civilization at the University of Tsukuba for their kind cooperation in organizing the meeting.

Seminar Program:

Day 1 (Dec. 11)

13:30~17:30 Session 1 (Chair: Shigeo Yamada)

Sebastian Fink, “Different Sources – Different Kings? The Picture of the Neo-Assyrian King in Inscriptions, Letters and Literary Texts”

Raija Mattila, “The Military Role of Magnates and Governors: Royal Inscriptions vs Archival and Literary Sources”

Jamie Novotny, “Late Neo-Assyrian Building Histories: Tradition, Ideology, and Historical Reality”

Shuichi Hasegawa, “Use of Archaeological Data for the Investigation of the Itineraries of Assyrian Military Campaigns”

Day 2 (Dec. 12)

10:00~12:00 Session 2 (Chair: Daisuke Shibata)

Greta Van Buylaere, “Tracing the Neo-Elamite Kingdom of Zamin in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Sources”

Shigeo Yamada, “Ulluba and Its Surroundings: Tiglath-pileser III’s Province Making Facing the Urartian Border, Reconsidered from Royal Inscriptions and Letters”

13:30~17:30 Session 3 (Chair: Raija Mattila)

Robert Rollinger, “Yawan in Neo-Assyrian Sources: Monumental and Archival Texts in Dialogue”

Sanae Ito, “Propaganda and Historical Reality in the Nabû-bêl-šumāti Affair in Letters and Royal Inscriptions”

Andreas Fuchs, “How to Implement Safe and Secret Lines of Communication Using Iron Age Technology: Evidence from a Letter to a God and a Letter to a King”

Jamie Novotony and Chikako E. Watanabe, “Unraveling the Mystery of an Unrecorded Event: Identifying the Four Foreigners Paying Homage to Assurbanipal in BM ME 124945-6”

Day 3 (Dec. 13)

10:00~12:00 Session 4 (Chair: Robert Rollinger)

Grant Frame, “Lost in the Tigris: Trials and Tribulations in Editing Royal Inscriptions of Sargon II of Assyria”

Karen Radner, “The Last Emperor: Aššur-uballit II in Archival and Historiographic Sources”

13:30~17:30 Session 5 (Chair: Chikako Watanabe)

Saana Svärd, “‘Doing Gender’: Women, Family and Ethnicity in the Neo-Assyrian Letters and Royal Inscriptions”

Silvie Zamazalová, “Images of an Omen Fulfilled: *Šumma ālu* in the Inscriptions of Sargon II”

Mikko Luukko, “The Anonymity of Authors and Patients: Some Comparisons between the Neo-Assyrian Correspondence and Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals”

Daisuke Shibata, “The Akītu-festival of Ištar at Nineveh: Royal Inscriptions and Emesal-prayers”

The present volume contains 14 articles. The majority of them follow the original papers read in the seminar relatively faithfully, though some have largely been expanded and/or changed in the focus of discussion. Daisuke Shibata and Robert Rollinger preferred to keep their papers out of this volume and may publish their research results elsewhere.

The combined use of different genres of text is an obvious need for many thematic studies, and it has already been attempted for a long time in studies concerning the Neo-Assyrian period and Assyriology in general. Thus, the collection of articles in this volume may mostly not be very special in the methodological sense. It may be of value, however, to classify the articles from the viewpoint of the theme of the above-mentioned seminar to review what sorts of studies were made and what kinds

of approaches and methods were used. In this volume, the articles are presented in the same order as they are given in the following rather arbitrary overview:

(1) One major group comprises a variety of historical studies that naturally require the use of various textual sources related to historical reconstructions of any kind (political, social, administrative, cultural, or geographical), either commemorative or archival, dated or undated, literary texts or practical sober documents, or textual or pictographic. Eight articles may be assigned to this group. **Mattila** highlighted the military role of high officials, magnates, and governors that is concealed and only rarely referred to in royal inscriptions but often referred to in other texts such as private inscriptions, administrative texts, eponym chronicles, letters, oracles, and literary compositions. **Yamada** scrutinized the process of Tiglath-pileser III's province-building along the Urartian border, utilizing the king's inscriptions and Eponym Chronicles as a chronological backbone while reinforcing those data with Assyrian letters and Urartian inscriptions. **Fuchs'** article is a unique piece discussing geo-political issues and Assyrian strategic thinking related to Sargon's campaign against Urartu in 714 BC, with the complementary use of two different sources, i.e., the highly literary composition stylized as a letter to a god commemorating this military enterprise on one hand, and a practical intelligence report written during the ongoing campaign on the other. **Van Buylaere** tackled the problem of Zamin, a town attested in Neo-Elamite sources, and identified it with Samuna of Neo-Assyrian/Neo-Babylonian sources. Thus, bridging between the different linguistic materials, she reconstructed the historical-geographical circumstances under which this town was situated. **Ito** advanced a new study of the affair of Nabû-bêl-šumāti, the rebellious prince of Bit-Yakin punished by Ashurbanipal. To reconstruct the relevant events historically, she analyzed details given in rich epistolary sources in combination with information from royal inscriptions and other texts. The joint study of **Novotny and Watanabe** dealt with the personal and ethnic identity of four foreigners depicted on a wall relief of the North Palace in Nineveh as submitting to Ashurbanipal after the fall of Babylon. The study analyzed the pictographic details with circumstantial evidence from the king's inscriptions. **Svärd** assembled and viewed data about groups of women involved in the temple administration (*šēlūtu*, *kazrutu*, *mašītu*, *qadissu*, *entu*) from various archival texts – contracts, administrative records, decrees, oracles, and letters – to consider the social context in which they were involved. Finally, **Radner's** study concerned the last ruler of Assyria, Aššur-uballit II. She pointed out a remarkable fact that Aššur-uballit was regarded only as a crown prince in Assyrian archival documents even after the death of his father, Sin-šarru-iškun, persuasively explaining this phenomenon by reflecting the lack of the accession ceremony after the fall of the religious capital, Assur. Thus, she displayed the official Assyrian view in contrast with the Babylonian Chronicle, where Aššur-uballit II is referred to as the king of Assyria.

(2) Another group comprises comparative or contrastive literary studies of different text genres concerning specific terms, concepts, and ideologies, and it occasionally also deals with the problem of intertextuality. **Fink** analyzed royal portraits as projected in royal inscriptions, letters, and various literary works – historiographical texts, wisdom literature, and folk tales – touching on their different ideological-functional modes of composition. The unique article of **Luukko** concerned the anonymity and related phenomena commonly observed in the corpora of Neo-Assyrian denunciation letters and Mesopotamian anti-

witchcraft rituals. Comparing both corpora, he discussed the common motive of self-protection found behind them and attempted to explain the social norm in which the anonymous denunciation letters were written. **Zamazalová** investigated the image of mountains from the Mesopotamian viewpoint in monumental texts, letters, and literary and scholarly compositions. Thus, she demonstrated the ideologically formulated description of mountains as royal heroic space in royal inscriptions, particularly those of Sargon II, while comparing it with texts of other genres and discussing possible intertextuality between them.

(3) Other articles, though each unique, discuss the philological or historiographical problems of royal inscriptions in some connection with archaeology. **Frame**'s article presented the unusual philological complexity that he encountered in his editing of Sargon II's inscriptions, particularly those inscribed on the stone slabs found at Khorsabad. He described dramatic historical circumstances that later caused complexity, i.e., the loss of excavated original inscriptions and the subsequent remains of incomplete fragmentary and oft-contradicting records. Then, he illustrated his complicated work in reconstructing the lost original. **Hasegawa** discussed the reliability of "itineraries" found in Assyrian royal inscriptions and that of archaeological data for the identification of ancient sites. He gave several caveats for the critical interpretation of both sorts of evidence. **Novotny** critically analyzed the building accounts of the late Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions by interrelating and comparing those from various periods. Thus, he showed that the "building history" given in the royal inscriptions refer only selectively to the predecessors' building works and often appear misleading or incorrect.

In various stages of editorial work, I had kind advice and assistance from Raija Mattila, Daisuke Shibata, Jamie Novotny, Chikako Watanabe, Keiko Yamada, and Yasuyuki Mitsuma. I am very grateful to all of them. I would like to thank Simo Parpola for his generous acceptance of this volume in the State Archives of Assyria Studies, as the director of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND OBJECT SIGNATURES

Bibliographical Abbreviations

<i>AAA</i>	<i>Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i> (Liverpool)
<i>ABL</i>	R. F. Harper, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum</i> (Chicago 1892–1914)
<i>ActAnt.</i>	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> (Budapest)
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i> (Berlin etc.)
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i> (Chicago)
<i>AMD</i>	Ancient Magic and Divination (Groningen/Leiden)
<i>AnOr.</i>	Analecta Orientalia (Rome)
<i>AOAT</i>	Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn/Münster)
<i>AS</i>	Assyriological Studies (Chicago)
<i>BA</i>	Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft (Leipzig)
<i>BagM</i>	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i> (Berlin/Mainz)
<i>BBVO</i>	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient (Berlin)
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago/Glückstadt)
<i>CDOG</i>	Colloquien der Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (Saarbrücken/Wiesbaden)
<i>CHANE</i>	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden)
<i>CM</i>	Cuneiform Monographs (Groningen/Leiden)
<i>CMAwR 1</i>	T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, <i>Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals, Volume One</i> , AMD 8/1 (Leiden/Boston 2011)
<i>CMAwR 2</i>	T. Abusch, D. Schwemer, M. Luukko, and G. Van Buylaere, <i>Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals, Volume Two</i> , AMD 8/2 (Leiden/Boston 2016)
<i>CT</i>	<i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</i> (London 1896ff.)
<i>CT 53</i>	S. Parpola, <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Part 53: Neo-Assyrian Letters from the Kouyunjik Collection</i> (London 1979)
<i>CT 54</i>	M. Dietrich, <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum Part 54: Neo-Babylonian Letters from the</i>

- CTN *Kuyunjik Collection* (London 1979)
 Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud (London)
 CTN 2 J. N. Postgate, *The Governor's Palace Archive* (London 1973)
 CTN 3 S. Dalley and J. N. Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser*
 (London 1984)
 CTU M. Salvini, *Corpus dei testi urartei*, I-III (Rome 2008)
 CUSAS Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
 (Bethesda, MD)
Hchl F. W. König, *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft
 8 (Osnabrück 1955)
IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal* (Jerusalem)
IranAnt. *Iranica Antiqua* (Gent/Leuven)
Iraq *Iraq: Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq*
 (London)
Isimu *Isimu: Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antigüedad*
 (Madrid)
JA *Journal Asiatique* (Paris)
JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New Haven etc.)
JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (New Haven etc.)
JESHO *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
 (Leiden)
JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
KAR E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (Leipzig
 1919)
Kaskal *Kaskal: rivista di storia, ambiente e culture del vicino oriente*
antico (Padua)
LAS S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings*
Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, AOAT 5/1-2 (Neukirchen-
 Vluyn 1970–1983)
 MC Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake, IN)
 MDP Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse (Paris)
 MSL Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon = Materials for the
 Sumerian Lexicon (Rome)
MVAG Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft (Berlin/
 Leipzig)
NABU *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* (Rouen/Paris)
 OLA Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven)
Or. / Or. NS Orientalia Nova Series (Rome)
Orient *Orient: Reports of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*
 (Tokyo)
 PIHANS Publications de l'Institut Historique-Archéologique Néerlandais
 de Stamboul (Leiden)
PNA K. Radner (1998–1999) and H. Baker (2000–2011) (eds.), *The*
Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, 1–3 (Helsinki
 1998–2011)
RA *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* (Paris)
 RGTC Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes (Tübinger
 Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Beiheft Reihe B, Wiesbaden)

ABBREVIATIONS AND OBJECT SIGNATURES

RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto)
RIMA 1	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennium BC (to 1115 BC)</i> (Toronto 1987)
RIMA 2	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: I (1114–859 BC)</i> (Toronto 1991)
RIMA 3	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: II (858–745 BC)</i> (Toronto 1996)
RIMB 2	G. Frame, <i>Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)</i> , The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods 2 (Toronto 1995).
RIME 2	D. R. Frayne, <i>Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)</i> , The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 2 (Toronto 1993)
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Winona Lake, IN)
RINAP 1	H. Tadmor, and S. Yamada, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2011)
RINAP 3/1	A. K. Grayson and J. Novotny, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2012)
RINAP 3/2	A. K., Grayson and J. Novotny, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 2</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2014)
RINAP 4	E. Leichty, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2011)
RINAP 5/1	J. Novotny and J. Jeffers, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria, Part I</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2018)
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie (und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie)</i> (Berlin/Leipzig)
SAA	State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki)
SAA 1	S. Parpola, <i>The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West</i> (Helsinki 1987)
SAA 2	S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, <i>Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths</i> (Helsinki 1988)
SAA 3	A. Livingstone, <i>Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea</i> (Helsinki 1989)
SAA 4	I. Starr, <i>Queries to the Sun god: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria</i> (Helsinki 1990).
SAA 5	G. B. Lanfranchi and S. Parpola, <i>The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces</i> (Helsinki 1990)
SAA 7	F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part I. Palace and Temple Administration</i> (Helsinki 1992)

- SAA 8 H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* (Helsinki 1992)
- SAA10 S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Helsinki 1993)
- SAA 11 F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II* (Helsinki 1995)
- SAA 13 S. W. Cole and P. Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (Helsinki 1998)
- SAA 14 R. Mattila, *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II: Assurbanipal through Sin-šarru-iškun* (Helsinki 2002)
- SAA 15 A. Fuchs and S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III: Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces* (Helsinki 2001)
- SAA 16 M. Luukko and G. Van Buylaere, *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon* (Helsinki 2002)
- SAA 17 M. Dietrich, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* (Helsinki 2003)
- SAA 18 F. Reynolds, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-šarru-iškun from Northern and Central Babylonia* (Helsinki 2003)
- SAA 19 M. Luukko, *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud* (Helsinki 2012)
- SAA 20 S. Parpola, *Assyrian Royal Rituals and Cultic Texts* (Helsinki 2017)
- SAA 21 S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part I: Letters from Assyria, Babylonia and Vassal States* (Helsinki 2018)
- SAAB *State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin* (Padua)
- SAACT State Archives of Assyria. Cuneiform Texts (Helsinki)
- SAAS State Archives of Assyria. Studies (Helsinki)
- SANER Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Boston/Berlin)
- SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago)
- STAT 2 V. Donbaz and S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Texts in Istanbul, Studien zu den Assur-Texten 2* (Saarbrücken 2001)
- STT O. R. Gurny and J. J. Finkelstein, *The Sultantepe Tablets*, vols. I–II (London 1957, 1964)
- TCL Textes cunéiformes. Musées du Louvre (Paris)
- TCL 3 F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon (714 av. J.-C.)* (Paris 1912)
- TCS Texts from Cuneiform Sources (Locast Valley, NY)
- TH J. Friedrich, G. R. Meyer, A. Ungnad and E. F. Weidner, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf. Keilschrifttexte und aramäische Urkunden aus einer assyrischen Provinzhauptstadt. AfO Beiheft 6* (Berlin 1940)
- TIM Texts in the Iraq Museum (Baghdad/Wiesbaden)
- WO *Die Welt des Orients: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Wuppertal/Göttingen)
- ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* (Berlin etc.)

ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
(Mainz/Wiesbaden)

Object Signatures

A	Aššur collection of Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri
Assur	Siglum of texts excavated in the German excavation at Assur
BM	British Museum, London
HMA	Hearst Museum of Anthropology of the University of California at Berkeley
K	Kuyunjik collection of the British Museum, London
MMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
N	Nippur collection the University Museum, Philadelphia
ND	Field numbers of tablets excavated in Nimrud
O	Siglum of texts in the Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels
Rm	H. Rassam collection of the British Museum
SÉ	The convent Saint-Étienne, Jerusalem
VA	Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin
VAT	Tablets in the collections of the staatliche Museen, Berlin.
YBC	Babylonian collection of the Yale University Library, New Haven

Last Emperor or Crown Prince Forever? Aššur-uballiṭ II of Assyria according to Archival Sources

Karen Radner, Munich

The year 614 BC saw the capture of the city of Aššur, the religious and ideological nucleus of the Assyrian Empire, and the destruction and looting of the temple of its eponymous god. The year 612 BC witnessed the loss of the city of Nineveh, the political capital of the Empire, and the life of the last rightfully appointed king Sin-šarru-iškun who died defending his city and the Empire. With the Aššur temple lost, the ancient coronation ceremony that confirmed the king as the deity's representative on earth was impossible. The sacred bond between the god and his king that had served as the ideological backbone of the imperial claim to power was painfully disrupted as Sin-šarru-iškun's successor could not be crowned in the sanctuary of Aššur.

According to the Babylonian Chronicles, the new ruler was instead crowned in the temple of the moon god of Harran, one of the most eminent deities in the realm. But while the coronation in Harran was enough for Babylonian commentators who considered Aššur-uballiṭ the king of Assyria, contemporary Assyrian sources suggest that to his Assyrian subjects, he remained the crown prince, leaving the struggling realm without a true king. In this paper, I will discuss this evidence, archival documents from Dur-Katlimmu/Magdala (Tell Sheikh Hamad) and Guzana (Tell Halaf). The information gained from these sources adds nuance and texture to the evidence in the Babylonian Chronicles and, importantly, provides insight into the Assyrian perspective on the final years of the Empire's existence.

Aššur's conquest and the implications for the status of Aššur-uballiṭ

Ancient custom required the kings of Assyria to be formally appointed by the god Aššur in his temple in a coronation ritual conducted during the New Year festival. In the early 7th century, the gigantic sanctuary in the city of Aššur dedicated to the god Aššur had been extensively renovated and redesigned in a project masterminded by king Sennacherib (r. 704–681 BC)¹ who began the project late in 689 BC. When Median forces conquered and sacked Aššur in 614 BC, this temple was looted and destroyed, as related in the Babylonian chronicle text dubbed "Fall of Nineveh

¹ Grayson and Novotny 2014, 20–22.

Chronicle”² which details King Nabopolassar of Babylon’s war of attrition³ against the Assyrian Empire. The Median contribution to this war was limited to the attack and plunder of the most prominent cities in the Assyrian heartland, including Aššur. The extent of their destruction of the Aššur temple in 614 BC came to light when Walter Andrae excavated the remains of the shrine in the early 20th century.⁴

The last king to be crowned in the Aššur sanctuary had been Sin-šarru-iškun⁵ (r. 622–612 BC), a son of Assurbanipal. When he died two years after the destruction of the temple during the siege of Nineveh in 612 BC,⁶ the Babylonian chronicles name as his successor the man portentously named Aššur-uballiṭ.⁷

Aššur-uballiṭ II: king or crown prince?

The throne name Aššur-uballiṭ “The god Aššur has kept alive” was surely a very deliberate choice, serving on the one hand to indicate the, as we now know, futile hope that the god and his Empire would prevail and on the other hand to commemorate the very first Assyrian ruler to assume the title “King of the Land of Aššur” in the 14th century BC. The first Aššur-uballiṭ had transformed the traditional Assyrian concept of hereditary rule: instead of seeing the city-god Aššur’s earthly representative chiefly as a religious authority (*iššiakkum* “city-ruler”) who shared political power with others, the dynast now took on the uncontested role of an absolute monarch (*šarrum* “king”).⁸ The connection with the god, however, had remained as close as before and until the death of Sin-šarru-iškun, every Assyrian ruler had been crowned in Aššur’s sanctuary, confirming the new king as the deity’s representative on earth.⁹

When the Aššur temple was destroyed in 614 BC, this ancient sacred custom was painfully disrupted. The Babylonian chronicles relate how the second Aššur-uballiṭ ascended to the throne in Ḫarran,¹⁰ rather than in Aššur. While the Babylonian chronicles nevertheless see Aššur-uballiṭ as the “King of Assyria,”¹¹ evidence

² Grayson 1975, 93 no. 3: 24–30.

³ Recent discussions include Joannès 2008; Melville 2011 and Fuchs 2014.

⁴ Miglus 2000, 87.

⁵ For a discussion of the circumstances of his accession to the Assyrian throne see Fuchs 2014, 35–36; for his building inscriptions from Assur and Kalḫu see Novotny and Van Buylaere 2009; Novotny 2014.

⁶ Grayson 1975, 94 no. 3: 38–46.

⁷ Grayson 1975, 96 no. 3: 166.

⁸ Faist 2010, 17.

⁹ Müller 1937; Kryszat 2008.

¹⁰ Grayson 1975, 95 no. 3: 50.

¹¹ Grayson 1975, 95 no. 3: 49–50: *ina* ITU.[x U4—x—KÁM ^mAN.ŠÁR—ú-bal-liṭ] ⁵⁰ *ina* URU.Ḫar-ra-nu ana LUGAL-ut KUR.Aš-šur <DÜ> *ina* AŠ.TE DÚR-ab “On [day X month X, Aššur-uballiṭ] ascended the throne in the city of Ḫarran to rule Assyria”; l. 60: ^{md}[Aš-šur—DIN]-iṭ šá *ina* KUR.Aš-šur *ina* AŠ.TE ú-ši-bi “[Aššur-uballiṭ], who had ascended the throne of Assyria.” The

from contemporary Assyrian documents suggests that from an inside perspective, this ruler was not thought of as the king, but merely as the crown prince.¹² The Assyrian view on the matter emerges from private legal documents from two sites in the Ḫabur region in north-eastern Syria: the cities Guzana (Tell Halaf) and Dur-Katlimmu/Magdala (Tell Sheikh Hamad).

The covenant of the crown prince: a unique variant of a legal clause

A legal document from Dur-Katlimmu¹³ features a singular legal clause that mentions the crown prince in a function otherwise exclusively reserved for the king. The clay tablet was found in Room XW¹⁴ on a floor of the fourth and final main occupation level (“Gebäudenutzungsphase 4”¹⁵) of the so-called “Red House,” an elite residence owned by the family of Šulmu-šarri. Most documents recovered from the “Red House” record the business dealings of this contemporary of King Assurbanipal who held the court title of *ša qurbūte* “he who is close (to the king),” a honorary designation that one best translates as “companion (of the king).”

Our text mentions Nabû-našir son of Šulmu-šarri as the second witness and is dated to the otherwise unattested eponym year of Se’-ila’i; like other eponym dates that are only in use in one specific city (see below for an example from Guzana), this suggests a date after the loss of the Assyrian heartland – as does the find context of the tablet.¹⁶

Upper edge

1 *de-^le^l-[n]u ša ¹MAN—ZĀLAG LÚ*.qur-bu-u-^lte^l*

Obverse

2 [TA* ¹x x]x—^d15 ·. [x x]-ri

3 [x x x x] a a nu u x[x x] me

4 [x x x ^m]r^d130—MU—[x GAL—ki-š]ir

5 [...] MÍ-šú-nu

Uninscribed space, with one impression of a stamp seal preserved¹⁷

complete name is preserved in l. 61: ^mAN.ŠĀR—ú-bal-lit, and l. 66: ^{md}Aš-šur—DIN-it LUGAL Aš-šur.

¹² As briefly discussed in Radner 2002, 17–19.

¹³ DeZ 21059/2 = SH 98/6747 II 246; edition: Radner 2002, 215 no. 199.

¹⁴ Kreppner and Schmid 2013, 208–210 (with photograph of find situation: Abb. 221), 350 (with plan of find situation: Abb. 379).

¹⁵ Kreppner and Schmid 2013, 359–360.

¹⁶ Although the exact date of the end of the main occupation of the “Red House” cannot be established the building was certainly destroyed at some point after 600 BC in the first half of the sixth century BC; cf. Kreppner and Schmid 2013, 359.

¹⁷ Records of judicial settlement, such as this text, are always in landscape format and sealed. There are two types: simple tablets or envelope tablets, i.e., an inner unsealed tablet encased in a sealed envelope. The inner tablets of envelope tablets can readily be identified as such because of their smaller size and the signs smudged by the application of the envelope, cf.

Remainder lost

Lower edge

1' *man-nu šá* ^rGIL-*u-ni*¹ [DN DN]2' EN—*de-ni-šú a-de-e* A—MAN *ina* ŠU-šú I[*u-ba-'i-ú*]

Reverse

3' 10 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR *i-dan*

4' ITU.AB UD—28—KÁM

5' *lim-mu* ^mSe—*i-la-a-'i*6' IGI ^mIa-*di-i'*—DINGIR LÚ*.EN—URU7' IGI ^{md}PA—PAP A ^mDI-*mu*—MAN8' IGI ^mMAN—IGI.LAL-*a-nu* A ^{md}PA—KAR-*ir*9' IGI ^{md}DI-*ma-nu*—TAG₄—PAP

Remainder not inscribed

¹⁻⁵ Lawsuit which the Companion Šarru-nuri [brought] against [...] -Issar, likewise (a Companion). [...] cohort commander Sîn-šumu-[...] [...] their woman [...].

^{1-3'} Whoever contests (the agreement), [DN and DN] shall be his legal adversaries; the covenant of the crown prince shall seek vengeance; he shall give ten minas of silver.

^{4-5'} 28th day, month Tebetu (= November/December), eponym year of Se'-ila'i.

^{6-7'} Witness is the city lord Iadi'-il. Witness is Nabû-našir son of Šulmu-šarri. Witness is Šarru-emuranni son of Nabû-eṭir. Witness is Salmanu-reḥtu-ušur.

Although the operative section of the tablet is badly broken the document certainly records the outcome of a dispute between at least two men and presumably regarding the woman mentioned in line 5. The titles of the legal parties are typical of the Assyrian elite and refer to members of court (*ša qurbūte*; see above) and the military (*rab kišri* “cohort commander”). The mention of these titles indicates the continuing existence and relevance of the imperial court and army. This is crucial, as four other texts found in the fourth and final main occupation level of the “Red House” are dated according to the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (602 and 600 BC, respectively), indicating that this ruler’s authority was accepted by 602 BC (the earliest date of these texts). Although these tablets are still written in Assyrian language and script, they do not mention any of Assyrian court or military offices – by 602 BC, the Empire was dead and using its titles no longer held any appeal. But when our text was written the honorary title of a Companion and the military office of a Cohort Commander still held their traditional prestige. However, the title of the first witness indicates that other aspects of the imperial organisation were no longer functioning.

Iadi'-il bears the title *bēl āli* “city lord.” During the imperial period, this title is well attested in the Assyrian documentation, but exclusively for local dynasts,

Radner 1997, 32. The present tablet is not an inner tablet but belongs to the first format type. The tablet and its sealing are not discussed in Fügert 2015 as „Ich konnte beim besten Willen bei der Autopsie der Tafel keine Siegelung feststellen“ (Anja Fügert, pers. comm., 16 May 2016). However, although the surface of the tablet is worn one can nevertheless discern the rounded curve of a faint stamp seal impression in the right hand side of the section on the obverse that is without writing, as indicated in my hand copy (Radner 2002, 215); cf. also the photo: Radner 2002, 273 Abb. 19.

e.g. in Western Iran,¹⁸ as *bēl āli* is not a title of the Assyrian administration. On the municipal level, the highest-ranking officials were the *ḥazannu*¹⁹ (a traditional term of unknown etymology, usually translated as “mayor”) and the *ša muḥḥi āli*²⁰ (literally “city overseer”). Both are well attested in 7th century Dur-Katlimmu.²¹ The king appointed local dignitaries to these posts for longer terms of office, perhaps for life. Whether the king merely confirmed the results of a local selection process or picked candidates of his own choosing remains tantalisingly unclear as is the distribution of power and responsibilities between the two offices.

As the first witness to the legal settlement, the city lord Iadi’-il occupies the position typically reserved for the person who mediated the conflict. In doing so, the city lord acted in a role that had been traditionally fulfilled by the *ḥazannu* or the *ša muḥḥi āli*.²² The mention of a city lord, and moreover his specific role in the document, indicate that Dur-Katlimmu’s municipal administration had undergone a change and was now organized in a different manner. This, too, fits the already established chronological framework, the tumultuous period after the capture of the Assyrian heartland. While court and army were still fighting for the Empire’s survival, it fell to the local communities, now without much guidance from above, to administrate their own affairs.

For our purposes, the most important section of the document is the guarantee clause section that protects the validity of the legal settlement. It contains a singular variant of an otherwise very common clause that is well attested ever since the year 672 BC when Esarhaddon (680–669 BC) promulgated his succession arrangements and bound the entire Empire by oath. In all other attestations of the clause,²³ the “covenant of the king” (*adē ša šarri*) is invoked as an avenging entity to safeguard adherence to the terms recorded in the document in question. Here, however, it is the “covenant of the crown prince” (*adē ša mar šarri*). This indicates that there was no king and that the crown prince (*mar šarri*, literally “son of the king”) filled the vacant role instead.

The unusual name of the last Commander-in-Chief

As befitted their position as one of the highest officials of the realm,²⁴ the Commanders-in-Chief (*turtānu*) habitually lent their names as eponyms to years in the Assyrian calendar. The date line of three private legal documents from Guzana

¹⁸ Lanfranchi 2003, 92–95.

¹⁹ Van Buylaere 2010.

²⁰ Van Buylaere 2009–10.

²¹ *ḥazannu*: Radner 2002, no. 119: 15; *ša muḥḥi āli*: Radner 2002, no. 62 rev. 5, no. 95 rev. 11, no. 99: 19.

²² Radner 2005, 57–59.

²³ Listed in Radner 2002, 19.

²⁴ Mattila 2000, 107–125.

(Tell Halaf),²⁵ not far from the last imperial centre in Ḫarran, features the very last Commander-in-Chief of the Empire. His predecessor as Commander-in-Chief, Šamaš-sarru-ibni, who is attested as eponym in texts from Aššur, Nineveh and Dur-Šarruken,²⁶ presumably had died with his king, Sin-šarru-iškun, at Nineveh.

The documents from Guzana are part of the late 7th century Assyrian and Aramaic archive of Il-manani.²⁷ The only other preserved eponym date in this archive is that of Sin-alik-pani, the Major Domo of King Sin-šarru-iškun and one of the last eponyms of his reign.²⁸ Our eponym date records the name used by his successor's Commander-in-Chief. It is Nabû-mar-šarri-ušur, "O Nabû, protect the crown prince!"

Month Nisannu = March/April:

(1) Tell Halaf 105: 13: ^{md}PA—A—MAN—PAB LÚ*.*tur-tan*

Month Ayyāru = April/May:

(2) Tell Halaf 101: 10: ^{md}PA—A—MAN—PAB (inner tablet)

Tell Halaf 104: 3': ^{md}[PA—A—MAN—PAB] (fragmentary envelope)

(3) Tell Halaf 103: l.h.e. 2: ^{md}PA—A—MAN—[PAB]

Names of this type were very common in Assyrian onomastics and especially popular among state officials. However they usually referred to their master the king,²⁹ and not the crown prince. The conclusion is therefore obvious. Just like the scribe from Dur-Katlimmu who modified a familiar clause when drafting a legal settlement after the death of Sin-šarru-iškun, the Commander-in-Chief serving his successor Aššur-uballiṭ must have adapted his name to suit the unusual circumstances of Assyria having a ruler, but not a proper king.

Merely the crown prince but still the legitimate ruler

The evidence from the Assyrian sources does not challenge Aššur-uballiṭ's legitimate claim to the Assyrian throne. As indicated by our analysis of legal texts from Dur-Katlimmu and Guzana, which must be dated to the period between 612 and 609 BC (see below), he was referred to as "crown prince," with the traditional title of the officially appointed heir apparent to the throne. The appointment of the Assyrian crown prince required the formal blessing of the gods and the official recognition of all subjects whose representatives (governors, client rulers) were required to

²⁵ Ungnad 1940, 48–54, nos. 101, 103, 104, 105; Millard 1994, 105.

²⁶ Millard 1994, 119.

²⁷ Baker (ed.) 2000, 521–522.

²⁸ Ungnad 1940, 54–56 no. 106; Millard 1994, 76, 114.

²⁹ E.g. Radner (ed.) 1998, 218–221 (Aššur-šarru-ušur); Baker (ed.) 2001, 874–879 (Nabû-šarru-ušur); Baker (ed.) 2011, 1211–1213 (Šamaš-šarru-ušur).

enter a covenant (*adē*) accepting the succession arrangements.³⁰ Once appointed, the crown prince had far-reaching competences and was, by default, a suitable substitute for the king, should he ever be unavailable.³¹ When Sin-šarru-iškun died during the defence of Nineveh in 612 BC, the succession and legitimacy of his successor were not contested. And yet, without the coronation in the Aššur temple and Aššur's final blessing, Aššur-uballiṭ's rule was still a provisional arrangement, at least from a religious and ideological point of view.

When Aššur-uballiṭ came to power in 612 BC, several years before the war for Assyria was to end with the Empire's complete dissolution, the retaking of the Assyrian heartland and of the city of Aššur was certainly the main objective of the Assyrian forces. With powerful allies like Saite Egypt and the Western Iranian kingdom of Mannea rallying to lend their support to the Assyrian cause, reclaiming Aššur must have seemed possible and even likely – and once realised, the new ruler's current inability to ascend the Assyrian throne in the correct manner was to be quickly remedied by his proper coronation in the temple of Aššur. But this never came to pass and instead, the temporary retreat to the Assyrian stronghold Ḫarran turned into the Empire's last stand. With Aššur-uballiṭ's defeat at a final battle at Ḫarran in 609 BC,³² the Assyrian monarchy came to an end, never to be reinstated. The loss of a king had cost the cult of Aššur its high priest and, importantly, its patron. The rebuilding of the ruined shrine had to be left to others.³³

Aššur-uballiṭ's ultimate fate is unknown but he certainly passed away without ever undergoing the coronation ritual at the Aššur temple that would have made him the lawful king of Assyria. From an Assyrian perspective, he died not as the Last Emperor but remained forever the crown prince.

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³⁰ For a recent discussion: Lauinger 2013.

³¹ This is especially well documented for the crown prince Sennacherib during the four-year sojourn of his father, King Sargon II, in Babylon: Frahm 2011, 14.

³² Grayson 1975, 96 no. 3: 66–69.

³³ Radner 2017.

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