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From the Foundations to the Crenellations

Essays on Temple Building
in the Ancient Near East
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Assyrian Sources

5.1 An Inscription of Šalim-aḫum (Early Old Assyrian vice-regent of Aššur)

Sources: A stone block (VA 8835, Ass 17186) discovered in the oldest stone foundation of the east corner room of the main court of the Aššur temple.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 p. 14 A.0.31.1; and W. Farber, “Šalim-aḫum Revisited,” *ARRIM* 9 (1991) pp. 13–16.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Šalim-aḫum records that Aššur requested of him a temple, which he built. For the sake of his own life, the life of the city of Assur, and for his tutelary deity, he constructed the temple, its shrine, its *temple area*/cattle pens, its House of Beer Vats, and its storage area.

5.2 An Inscription of Ērišum I (Early Old Assyrian vice-regent of Aššur)

Source: Two clay tablets from a private house in Area B (square 20–21–22) at Kaniš (An 201139 and An 20114).

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 19–21 A.0.33.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Ērišum states that he built the Step Gate and cella of the Aššur temple in Assur. With the support of Aššur (likely a reference to a positive response to a haruspical query), he cleared houses from the Sheep Gate to the People’s Gate in order to expand the temple grounds. He records also that he constructed/fashioned several items: a high throne decorated with a precious stone (*ḫušāru*), two beer vats, and two duck figures (each weighing one talent and adorned with bronze *moons*). This inscription mentions the Aššur temple by name: *rīnum*, “Wild Bull.” The names of

the door, lock, and threshold are also recorded here: respectively, “Protective Goddess,” “Be Strong!,” and “Be Alert!”

5.3 An Inscription of Ērišum I (Early Old Assyrian vice-regent of Aššur)

Source: A stone door socket from Assur (BM 115689).

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 22–23 A.0.33.2.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Ērišum states that he built the Aššur temple in Assur and its *temple area*/cattle pens (*išārū*); that with the support of Aššur (likely a reference to a positive response to a haruspical query), he cleared houses from the Sheep Gate to the People’s Gate in order to expand the temple grounds; and that he had ghee (*ḫimētu*) and honey (*dišpu*) mixed into the mortar of every wall of the temple (*rīnum*, “Wild Bull”). The inscription also contains a reference to the vice-regent making silver, gold, copper, tin, barley, and wool tax-exempt, and to his and his father Ilu-šūma’s plan to build Assur’s wall.

5.4 An Inscription of Šamši-Adad I (Old Assyrian ruler, dynasty of Ekallātum)

Sources: Nine stone tablets from the Aššur temple in Assur (including EŠ 5223).

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 47–51 A.0.39.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: The inscription states that Šamši-Adad rebuilt the temple of Enlil (=Aššur) built by Ērišum I, which had become dilapidated. After clearing away its ruins, the superstructure was constructed by a skilled building guild in Assur, who placed (inscribed) tablets silver, gold, lapis lazuli and carnelian under the walls and mixed cedar resin, high-quality oil, honey, and ghee into the mortar. The temple was roofed with cedar beams; its cedar doors were decorated with silver and gold stars; and the temple was renamed Eamkurkurra (“House, Wild Bull of the Lands”).

5.5 An Inscription of Šamši-Adad I (Old Assyrian ruler, dynasty of Ekallātum)

Sources: Nineteen stone cylinder fragments from the Ištar temple (Emašmaš) in Nineveh.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 51–55 A.0.39.2.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Šamši-Adad records that he rebuilt the temple Emenue (part of Emašmaš), which the Sargonic king Man-ištūšu had built, which had become dilapidated, and which no ruler had worked on for seven generations. He claims to have constructed the *ziqqurrat* with more skill than previously and to have named this structure Ekituškuga (“Her Treasure House”). Šamši-Adad also states that he erected its doorframes.

5.6 An Inscription of Arik-dīn-ili (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: A stone tablet (VA 5917) from the Šamaš temple in Assur; the object is inscribed on four sides and the text was never finished.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 120–122 A.0.75.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: So that the harvests of Assyria might prosper, Arik-dīn-ili planned to rebuild the sanctuary of Šamaš. When construction began, the site was apparently a mound of dirt inhabited by squatters. The ruins were cleared and the foundations were relaid in the eponymy of Berūtu. The rest of the building account was never finished (six uninscribed lines).

5.7 An Inscription of Adad-nārārī I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Three stone tablets (BM 90978, CBS 9446, and Ass 781) from Assur.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 139–140 A.0.76.7.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: According to this inscription, the Step Gate of the Aššur temple in Assur—which is opposite the Gate of the Oath of the God of the Land and the Gate of the Judges—had become dilapidated, sagged, and shook. Adad-nārārī records that he cleared the site down to the foundation pit, then rebuilt it with limestone and mortar from the city Ubasē. In (the structure of) the temple, he deposited inscribed objects.

5.8 An Inscription of Adad-nārārī I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Nine stone tablets from Assur (VA 8801 and duplicates); five of the tablets were deposited in the Ištar temple when Tukultī-Ninurta I completed the reconstruction of that structure. The inscriptions are dated to the eponyms of Ša-Adad-nīnu and Aššur-dammiq.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 149–151 A.0.76.15.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: This inscription not only records that Adad-nārārī rebuilt the temple of the Assyrian Ištar when it had become dilapidated, but also the building's history: Sargon I restored the temple constructed Ilu-šūma and Puzur-Aššur III renovated it when it had become old. That temple, its towers, the *šaḥūru*-room of the courtyard, the storeroom of the courtyard called "Inn of Ištar," and the room of the goddess Iṣhara are reported to have been in ruin when Adad-nārārī became king. He claims to have reconstructed the weakened portions of that temple; strengthened the foundations with limestone; removed the old beams, *supports*, and lashings of the *šaḥūru*-room, and the beams of the storeroom of Ištar; installed new beams in these rooms; and deposited inscriptions in the temple.

5.9 An Inscription of Shalmaneser I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Numerous stone tablets (including EŠ 6688, EŠ 9510, and EŠ 6689) from Assur (mostly discovered in the Aššur temple); the exemplars are inscribed in two columns on each side.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 180–186 A.0.77.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Shalmaneser includes in this text details about the history of Eḫursaġkurkurra prior to his rebuilding the Aššur temple: Ērišum I rebuilt the temple which Ušpia had built; one hundred and fifty-nine years later, when it had become dilapidated again, Šamšī-Adad I renovated it; and after five hundred and eighty years, a fire broke out in the extremely old building and this conflagration destroyed the temple, its sanctuary, its chapels, shrines, daises, cult platforms, stools, and all of the temple's property. Shalmaneser claims to have removed the debris down to the bottom of the foundation pit; relaid the foundations on bedrock; and put a great deal of effort into the building of the structure of the temple, making it more cunning than before. This inscription states that stones, silver, gold, iron, copper, aromatic plants were placed at the foundations; and that oil, scented oil, cedar resin, honey, and ghee were mixed into the plaster. He also mentions that inscriptions were deposited in the temple and that he celebrated the completion of the temple with a joyous festival.

5.10 An Inscription of Shalmaneser I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: A stone tablet (Ass 2708) from Assur.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 189–191 A.0.77.3.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Shalmaneser records that he rebuilt Eḫursaġkurkurra, which had become extremely old and had been destroyed in a conflagration. He claims to have removed the debris down to the bottom of the foundation pit, relaid the foundations on bedrock, considerably enlarged the temple of Aššur beyond its previous extant, built two new towers for the Kalkal Gate, and enlarged the forecourt of the god Nunnam-nir. He also mentions that he returned the gods who dwell in Ekur and that he deposited inscriptions in the temple.

5.11 An Inscription of Shalmaneser I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Numerous clay cones (including BM 123446 and BM 123456) from Nineveh; the cones were discovered in the Ištar temple, the Nabû temple, and in the palace of Ashurnasirpal.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 205–207 A.0.77.17.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: This inscription records some of the history of the Ištar temple in Nineveh prior to Shalmaneser: Aššur-uballiṭ I rebuilt the temple which Šamšī-Adad I had built; sometime later, the temple was damaged in an earthquake and was in ruin. Shalmaneser claims to have cleared away the debris in its entirety, reconstructed the weakened portions, rebuilt the damaged sections from top to bottom, returned objects inscribed with texts of Aššur-uballiṭ to their place, and deposited his own inscriptions in this building.

5.12 An Inscription of Tukulti-Ninurta I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: One massive stone block (VA Ass 2296), two gold tablets, two silver tablets, and five weighty lead tablets from the Ištar temple in Assur.

Selected bibliography: Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 98–100; and RIMA 1 pp. 253–256 A.0.78.11.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: The king records here that at the beginning of his reign the temple of the Assyrian Ištar had become dilapidated; he mentions Ilu-šūma as a previous builder and that seven hundred and twenty years had passed since it had last been worked on. At the beginning of his reign, Tukultī-Ninurta had the old structure removed down to its foundation pit, rebuilt Eme (“Temple of Cultic Rubrics”), made the structure better than previously, and made it as beautiful as a heavenly dwelling. He boasts of completing the temple from its foundations to its crenellations. The post-script on VA Ass 2296, which was intended to replace lines 33–34, explains that Tukultī-Ninurta decided to build a second temple, at the request of Ištar (the means of communication is not recorded).

5.13 An Inscription of Tukultī-Ninurta I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: A stone tablet from Assur purchased by a German traveller in Iraq in 1917.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 257–258 A.0.78.13.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Tukultī-Ninurta states he cleared away the debris of the Assyrian Ištar temple, which had been built by Ilu-šūma and which had become old and dilapidated. He changed the site of the temple and made it more outstanding than before. The king also claims to have built a *šaḥūru*-room and lofty towers, completed it from its foundations to its crenellations, constructed its dais and sanctuary, and deposited his inscriptions in the temple.

5.14 An Inscription of Tukultī-Ninurta I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: A gold tablet (EŞ 3762) and a silver tablet (Ass 6510) found in a small capsule deposited in the temple of Ninuaītu (“The Ninevite Goddess”) in Assur by Shalmaneser III.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 264–265 A.0.78.17.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: This inscription records that Shalmaneser I rebuilt the temple of Ninuaītu when it had become old and dilapidated; this king cleared away the debris down to its foundation pit, relaid its foundations, and raised the walls seventy-two courses of bricks. Tukulti-Ninurta states that it was he who completed the work: he added to the walls twenty layers of bricks, installed the roofing and doors; constructed a dais, placed the goddess on her dais during a joyous celebration, and deposited inscriptions in the temple.

5.15 An Inscription of Aššur-rēša-iši I (Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Numerous clay cone fragments from the Ištar temple in Nineveh.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 1 pp. 309–311 A.0.86.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: This inscription records that the tower of the great gate of the main fore-court of the Ištar temple had been damaged in an earthquake that took place during

the reign of Shalmaneser I and that they were severely damaged again in an earthquake that occurred in the time of Aššur-dān I. Aššur-rēša-iši states that he tore down fifteen(?) courses of bricks from the battlements to the roof, rebuilt the walls thirty-five(?) layers higher than before, and decorated the battlements with stone rosettes.

5.16 An Inscription of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BC, Middle Assyrian king)

Sources: Numerous clay octagonal prisms (including VA 8255) and fragments (mainly from Assur).

Selected bibliography: RIMA 2 pp. 7–31 A.0.87.1.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: In the building report of this inscription, which was used in the “test-case” to prove that cuneiform had been deciphered, Tiglath-pileser states that he was commanded by Anu and Adad to rebuild their double temple in Assur; apparently sixty years earlier Aššur-dān I had this temple torn down. The king records the making of bricks, the removal of the old temple down to the foundation pit, the construction of a fifty-layer mud-brick platform, the laying of the temple’s foundations, the building of the *ziqurrats*, the sumptuous decoration of the interior rooms which made them shine like the interior of the heavens, and the return of Anu and Adad to their daises. The king also mentions that he rebuilt and decorated the *hamru*-temple of Adad; he deposited inside this temple precious stones from the mountains of the Nairi lands (obsidian, *hultu*-stone, and haematite).

5.17 An Inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC, early Neo-Assyrian king)

Sources: Two stone monumental lions (ex. 1=BM 118895) found at the entrance to the temple of Šarrat-nip̄i in Calah.

Selected bibliography: RIMA 2 pp. 283–286 A.0.101.28 and pp. 295–297 no. 32.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Ashurnasirpal records that he founded (and refounded) in Calah the temples of Enlil, Ninurta, Ea and Damkina, Adad and Šala, Šîn, Gula, and Šarrat-nip̄i. He decorated them in a splendid fashion: roofed them with cedar beams, hung doors of cedar in their gateways, made bronze replicas of beasts and stationed them in their towers, and made statues of lions from white limestone and *parūtu*-alabaster and stationed them in gateways (as guardians). A text inscribed on the reverse of one of the lions (BM 118895) also records the fashioning of a new divine image for Šarrat-nip̄i and the construction of her temple. The image, which had not previously existed, was adorned with the finest stones, high quality gold, and reddish-gold. As for the temple, it was roofed with cedar beams, had tall cedar doors placed in its gateways, and white limestone lions stationed in its entrances.

5.18 An Inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC, early Neo-Assyrian king)

Sources: A large stone slab found in the North West Palace in Calah (ND 1104; in the Mosul Museum).

Selected bibliography: RIMA 2 pp. 288–293 A.0.101.30.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Ashurnasirpal records that he founded in Calah new temples for Enlil and Ninurta, and refounded the temples of Ea and Damkina, Adad and Šala, Šîn, Gula, Nabû, Šarrat-nip̄i, the divine Sibitti, and the divine Kidmuri. He decorated them in a splendid fashion: roofed them with cedar beams, hung bronze-banded doors of cedar in their gateways, stationed bronze images in their gateways, and decorated their divine images with reddish-gold and sparkling stones. The king claims to have adorned the cella of Ninurta with gold and lapis lazuli and to have stationed images of wild ferocious gold dragons (*ušumgallū*) by this god's seat.

5.19 An Inscription of Sargon II (721–705 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: A clay cylinder (YBC 2181) reported to have been found at Uruk.

Selected bibliography: RIMB 2 pp. 146–149 B.6.22.3.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: The inscription, parts of which are copied verbatim from a text of Marduk-apla-iddina II, records the renovation of Eanna, the Ištar temple in Uruk. Sargon claims (falsely) that he was the first ruler since Šulgi to renovate this building, which was now in a dilapidated state (walls buckled, bondings disintegrated, parapet in ruins, and foundations collapsed). After being selected by Marduk and Asari, who gave the king excellent judgment and increased understanding, he tore down the outer enclosure wall of Eanna and laid bare its foundations. The foundations were then relaid while the appropriate rituals and prayers were performed and recited. Sargon boasts that the chief builder, with artisans who know their craft and through the techniques of Kulla, built the walls with (ritually) pure bricks.

5.20 An Inscription of Sennacherib (704–681 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Two complete cylinders discovered in clay boxes at the northwest and southwest corners of the principal room of Egalammes, the temple of Nergal in Tarbišu, 50 cm below the pavement.

Selected bibliography: E. Frahm, "New Sources for Sennacherib's 'First Campaign'," in P. A. Miglus and J. M. Córdoda (eds.), *Assur und sein Umland: Im Andenken an die ersten Ausgräber von Assur* (ISIMU 6; Madrid 2003) pp. 129–163.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: After reporting in detail events the first campaign, Sennacherib records the rebuilding and expansion of Egalammes. The king describes the project as follows:

At that time Egalammes, the temple of the god Nergal that is inside Tarbišu, which Shalmaneser (III), son of Ashurnasirpal (II), (grand)son of Tukultī-Ninurta (II), a former ruler, had built had become dilapidated. I tore down

that temple in its entirety (and) reached its foundation pit. I filled in a terrace in an area (measuring) 200 cubits along the side (and) 100 cubits along the front, (thus) increasing the size of the former temple. I made Egalammes larger than before and completely (re)built (it) through the craft of clever master builders. For the god Nergal, (the god) who (lives) in Tarbiṣu, I indeed did a splendid job, which surpassed previous (work) and was worthy of (high) praise. I brought the god Nergal, the lord of exalted strength, powerful (and) perfect, the foremost (warrior who) has no rival, inside it and peacefully placed (him) on his lofty seat. Before him I sacrificed plump bulls (and) fattened sheep, splendid (and) pure offerings, and I held festivities inside that temple. I had (an account of) the might and conquests which with his great support I have been achieving over all enemies written in (my) inscriptions and I deposited (these inscriptions) for posterity, for the kings, my descendants.

5.21 An Inscription of Sennacherib (704–681 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: A limestone stele (EŠ 7847) and an alabaster slab (VA 8248) discovered at Assur (areas iD3III and aA3I respectively).

Selected bibliography: Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 135–139 no. I2; V. Donbaz and H. Galter, “Zwei Inschriften Sanheribs im Istanbul Museum,” *ARRIM* 3 (1985) pp. 4–8; and Frahm, *Einleitung* pp. 173–175 nos. T 139–140.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: This inscription reports that Sennacherib decided to rebuild the *akītu*-house at Assur after being defunct for a long time and it records the circumstances in which the king began the project: his heart moved him and Šamaš and Adad gave his diviners a “firm yes” (*annu kēnu*) to a haruspical query concerning the restoration work. The project is said to have begun in a favourable month and on an auspicious day. Sennacherib boasts of using mountain limestone (*pīli aban šaḏī*) for the foundations and walls (which are said to have been raised as high as mountains). He then surrounded *akītu*-house with lush and well irrigated gardens and fruit orchards. This inscription also records in detail that Karib-ilu, king of Saba, presented stone for this project and mentions the types and quantity of metal, stone, plants, and organic material deposited with the foundations: the stones listed are *pappardiltu*-stone, camelian (*sāmtu/sāndu*), lapis-lazuli (*uqnū*), *hulālu*-stone, malachite (*muššāru*), and *papparmīnu*-stone.

5.22 An Inscription of Sennacherib (704–681 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: An inscription written on single column clay tablet (K 1356) discovered in the Kuyunjik collection of the British Museum, London.

Selected bibliography: Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 139–142 no. I6; and Frahm, *Einleitung* pp. 222–224 no. T 184.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Sennacherib states that he rebuilt the *akītu*-house at Assur after receiving a favourable oracle response from Šamaš; its outer temple is reported to have been destroyed by fire and its cult is said to have been defunct for a long time. In a/the principal entrance, he had skilled metalworkers fashion an ornate gateway from red-

dish bronze (*siparru ruššû*). This work of art is described as depicting an epic battle between Aššur and his entourage and Tīāmat and her horde of monsters. Assyria's chief god is reportedly shown raising his bow and riding in a chariot with Amurrū and the king; at least twenty-five gods and goddess assisted him, on foot and in chariots.

5.23 Esarhaddon Prism "Assur A" (680–669 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Seven octagonal prisms (including VA 8411+), a stone tablet, and a clay tablet from Assur.

Selected bibliography: Luckenbill, ARAB 2 pp. 271–273 §§703–708 and pp. 276–277 §§713–719; Borger, *Asarh.* §2 (Ass. A) pp. 1–6; and Nissinen, SAAS 7 pp. 14–34.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Esarhaddon reports on the favourable omens that were observed when he came to power: auspicious planetary alignments and movements were observed and messages were received from ecstasies and in dreams. He then describes how he increased the traditional privileges (*kidinnu*) of the citizens of Baltil (Assur) and gives a detailed building history of the Aššur temple: the temple was founded by Ušpia, an ancient ancestor; rebuilt by Ērišum I, then by Šamšī-Adad I one hundred and twenty-six years later, and by Shalmaneser I four hundred and thirty-four years later (after it had been destroyed by fire); and then after another five hundred and eighty years had passed, Esarhaddon sought to rebuild Assur's most holy temple. The king obtained approval from Šamaš and Adad, who gave him a positive answer "in the diviner's bowl" (*ina mākaliti bārūte*). The rebuilding is described in detail: (1) the people of conquered lands made bricks; (2) the old structure was torn down to its foundations; (3) the king personally moulded bricks and mixed oil, honey, ghee, wine, (and) cedar resin into the composition of the bricks, and, in a ceremony held with the workers in attendance, he carried the *libittu mahṛitu* (here "first brick") to the temple grounds and set it in its place; (4) in a favourable month and on an auspicious day, the foundations were laid and gold, silver, stones, antimony, all kinds of aromatics, *pūru*-oil, fine oil, honey, ghee, beer, (and) wine were scattered over them; (5) in the second year of the project, the entire superstructure was rebuilt; (6) the temple was roofed with cedar and cypress beams from Mounts Sirāra and Lebanon, and metal-banded doors were hung in its gateways; and (7) the shrines, daises, and cult platforms were lavishly decorated, which made them shine like the sun. Lastly, Esarhaddon states that he returned Aššur to his dais and offered sacrifices and presented gifts to him; the king, his nobles, and other Assyrians celebrated for three days in the courtyard of this temple.

5.24 Esarhaddon Prism "Babylon A" (680–669 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Seven fragmentary of seven- and ten-sided clay prisms (including BM 78223 and BM 60032); one exemplar (BM 78223) was purchased by E. A. W. Budge in Babylon, MMA 86.11.342 + CBS 1526 was purchased, while others were discovered at Assur (VA 8420) and Sippar (BM 60032; provenance not entirely certain). BM 78223 has "hieroglyphs" on the top and bottom.

Selected bibliography: Luckenbill, ARAB 2 pp. 244–249 §§647–659; Borger, Asarh. §11 (Bab. A) pp. 10–29; and Finkel and Reade, ZA 86 pp. 244–261 and figs. 2 and 21–22.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Esarhaddon describes the pitiful state of Babylonia during the reign of an unnamed previous king (=Sennacherib): for example, its inhabitants lied to each other, its gods had abandoned their earthly residences, the purification priests had abandoned their rites, and the inhabitants of Babylon had sold the possessions of Esagila cheaply to Elam. However, when Esarhaddon became king, Marduk, who had abandoned his temple in anger, changed destiny by changing the order of the two wedges making up the number 70; thus Babylon's abandonment was changed from seventy to eleven years by changing the wedges DIŠ[60]+U[10] to U[10]+DIŠ[1]. Esarhaddon records in detail the circumstances leading up to his restoration of Babylon's principal temple: (1) auspicious planetary alignments and movements were observed; (2) Šin and Šamaš gave positive responses to haruspical queries; (3) Nudimmud (Ea) put the idea in the king's head; and (4) messages were received from ecstasies and in dreams. The king then obtained approval from Šamaš and Adad, who gave him a positive answer "in the diviner's bowl" (*ina mākalti bārûte*). The rebuilding is described in detail: (1) craftsmen and Babylonians made bricks; (2) the king personally moulded bricks and mixed fine oil, honey, ghee, *ku-runnu*-wine, *muttinu*-wine, and pure mountain beer into the composition of the bricks, and, in a ceremony held with the workers in attendance, he carried bricks in a basket; (3) craftsmen and ritual experts carefully examined the foundations; (4) in a favourable month and on an auspicious day, the superstructure was rebuilt on the old foundations, in exact accordance with the earlier plan, not deviating even a half cubit; (5) the temple was roofed with cedar beams from Mount Amanus and metal-banded cypress doors were hung in its gateways; and (6) the king had the divine statues repaired and placed back on their daises. The rest of the inscription describes the construction of Babylon's walls and the re-establishment of Babylon's status as a thriving metropolis and revered cult centre.

5.25 An Inscription of Esarhaddon (680–669 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Three clay cylinders from Uruk (AO 6772, BM 113204, and W 4098).

Selected bibliography: RIMB 2 pp. 186–188 B.6.31.17.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Esarhaddon records that he renovated Ehiliana, the cella of Nanāia in Eanna (Uruk), which had become old and dilapidated. He sought out its ground-plan and repaired the dilapidated sections with baked bricks made in a (ritually) pure kiln. The king states that he took the hand of the goddess, escorted her inside, and had her take up residence inside.

5.26 Assurbanipal Prism T (668–631 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: One nearly complete hexagonal clay prism ("Thompson Prism"; BM 121006 + BM 127889) and seventeen to twenty-two prism fragments from Nineveh (Prism T; Ab [V] and Elul [VI] 645).

Selected bibliography: R. C. Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal found at Nineveh*, 1927–8 (London 1931) pls. 14–18; and Borger, *BIWA* pp. 132–133, 137–147, and 167–172.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: The prologue describes temple building and decoration in five Assyrian and three Babylonian cities: the completion and decoration of Eḫursaġalkurkurra in Assur, the completion of Esagila in Babylon and the return of statues of Marduk and his entourage, the refurbishing and fashioning of objects for Marduk and Zarpanitu, the setting up of wild bulls in gateways of Ezida in Borsippa, the decoration of Emašmaš in Nineveh and Egašankalama in Arbela, the refurbishing of Šarrat-Kidmuri's divine image and the renewal of her cultic rites; the setting up of lion-headed eagles and divine emblems in Egalmeslam in Tarbišu, the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul and the construction of Emelamana in Ḫarrān, the completion of Edingal-kalama in Dēr, and the rebuilding and decoration of the Sîn-Šamaš temple in Nineveh. The building account recounts the rebuilding of one of the two *akītu*-house of Mullissu in Nineveh; the one last rebuilt by Sargon II. Most of the reports from the prologue are also known from Prisms I (=Tvar; 648), C (647), Kh (=CND, CKalach; 646), and G (646).

5.27 Assurbanipal's "Large Egyptian Tablets" (668–631 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Two nearly complete clay tablets (K 228+ and K 2675; the "Large Egyptian Tablets" or "Ḫarrān Tablets") and three clay tablet fragments (K 4451, and the possible exemplars are K 5564 and K 6368).

Selected bibliography: H. -U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens 1* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 27; Wiesbaden 1994) pp. 78–79, 103–115, 210–213, 223, 226, 227, pls. I–X, and 2 pp. 54–93; and Novotny, *Eḫulḫul* pp. 30–33, 88–94, and 253–289.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: The building report describes the rebuilding and decoration of Eḫulḫul and the founding of Emelamana in Ḫarrān. Assurbanipal reports that his workmen tore down the dilapidated walls, exposed the foundations, made the *durgu* ("the innermost part," the "heart" of the structure) accessible for examination, and raised the walls of the entire temple thirty courses of bricks. To the east, he had an area 350 cubits long and 72 cubits wide cleared, had a 130-course platform constructed, and had limestone foundations laid for a new structure (Emelamana). After the walls of Eḫulḫul were completed, the temple was roofed with cedar provided by kings of the Sea Coast from Mounts Lebanon and Sirāra, and metal-banded doors were hung in principal gateways. The king boasts of lavishly decorating the interior of Eḫulḫul: the walls of the inner sanctum and ante-cella were covered with objects made from seventy talents of *zaḫalū* (a silver alloy), skilfully crafted and inscribed statues of wild bulls and long-haired heroes were set up as gateway guardians, and some of the walls were decorated with friezes of baked-bricks coloured with obsidian-coloured (green, black, white, or red) and lapis-lazuli-coloured (blue) glaze. After the temple was completed, Assurbanipal returned Sîn to his dais in the midst of a joyous festival, during which priests offered sumptuous sacrifices and presented gifts.

5.28 Sîn-šarru-iškun “Cylinder A” (ca. 627–612 BC, Sargonid king of Assyria)

Sources: Three clay cylinders (Ass 13158+; Ass 13595; and LB 1323) and seven clay prisms (Ass 948; Ass 13266+; Ass 13374; Ass 18738; Ass 19423; and SÉ nos. 155–156).

Selected bibliography: Luckenbill, ARAB 2 pp. 414–416 §§1156–1164; and J. Novotny and G. Van Buylaere, “Sîn-šarru-iškun and Ezida in Calah,” in G. Galil, M. Geller, and A. Millard (eds.), *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded* (Vetus Testamentum Supplements 130; Leiden 2009) pp. 215–243.

Language: Akkadian.

Contents: Sîn-šarru-iškun states that the Nabû temple in Assur had become extremely dilapidated. The situation is described as follows:

[For a] long [time], it fell into disrepair and (eventually) it became like the ground (itself). (On account of this), the god Nabû and the goddess Tašmētu took up residence in the temple of the Assyrian Ištar and (there) they received strewn offerings. Kings, [predecessors of mine] that came before me, did not think about (re)building that temple; they did not pay (it any) attention. I, Sîn-šarru-iškun, king of the universe, king of Assyria, the one who respects the great gods, the one who is assiduous towards their places (of worship), conceived in my heart (the idea of re)building that temple; my mind urged me (to carry out this project).

Once the ruins were cleared, the king took the necessary measures to ensure this temple was constructed carefully. He states that when the new foundations were laid, the former ground plan was followed exactly; the foundations were set in place in a favourable month, on an auspicious day, and in accordance with the craft of the incantation-priest. The walls were then raised from the foundations to the crenellations and are said to have shone like daylight. When the work was completed, Nabû and Tašmētu were escorted from their temporary home in the temple of the Assyrian Ištar to their daises; the event was concluded with sumptuous offerings.