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Zaḥalû-Metal for Marduk's *Paramāḥu* and the Date of Assurbanipal's E-Prisms¹

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Scholars generally agree that the E-Prisms are the earliest of Assurbanipal's prism inscriptions, despite the fact that no exemplar preserves a complete and useful date. Regrettably, these recensions of his *res gestae* remain far from complete and there are many lacunae that need to be filled before we understand fully the relationship between Editions E₁ and E₂². M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, in their study of the literary transmission of the Gyges narrative, pointed out that the latest chronologically dated event narrated in positively identified E-fragments is the reinstallation of Necho as ruler in Sais, and since this led to the revolt of Tanutamon and to the sack of Thebes, they concluded that the inscriptions must antedate 664³. Although this proposed *terminus ante quem* has been long accepted⁴, it is possible that one of the E-Prisms may have been composed after Assurbanipal's second Egyptian campaign (ca. 663-662). This proposal is based solely on several pieces of conjectural evidence:

1. In 1996, R. Borger suggested that K 13726 could be a flake off a prism and that it may belong to one of the E-Editions⁵; the proposal appears to be based on the length of each line, which is shorter than that of the Large Egyptian Tablets (LET)⁶. If the identification proves true, then the campaign against Tanutamon was also narrated in at least one of the E-Prisms since lines 2'-9' contain part of a report of the second Egyptian campaign.

2. H.-U. Onasch proposed recently that the 120 talents (*biltu*) of *zaḥalû*-metal used to decorate the *atmanu* of Šin in Eḫulḫul (Ḫarrān) and the *paramāḥu* of Marduk in Esagila (Babylon) came from the spoils of Thebes⁷, specifically from the

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² For further details on the E-Prisms, see Appendix 1.

³ M. Cogan - H. Tadmor, "Gyges and Ashurbanipal: A Study in Literary Transmission", *Or* 46 (1977) 81-82.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften* (= *BIWA*; Wiesbaden 1996) 175.

⁶ Compare Bauer, *Asb.* pl. 46 with H.-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens* (*ÄAT* 27; Wiesbaden 1994) 2, 72-74 K 228+ 69'-rev. 3 // K 2675 68'-74'.

⁷ Onasch, *ÄAT* 27 1, 80 n. 386, 156-158, and 161.

two obelisks which are reported to have been set up in the gateway of a temple (possibly the Amun temple at Karnak), *pitiq zaḥalê ebbi* ("plated with shiny *zaḥalû*-metal"), and which weighed 2,500 talents each⁸. If the source of the metal in question originates from the Egyptian booty brought back to Nineveh in 664, then the *terminus post quem* for both the aforementioned projects is the sack of Thebes.

3. In the most recent publication of Assurbanipal's *res gestae*, Borger edited BM 128302 + BM 128311 (E10), a fragment of an octagonal prism whose first preserved column contains a report describing his activities in Esagila, as part of the prologue of the E-Prisma⁹; the identification may have been based on the contents of col. ii', which preserves part of a report of the first Egyptian campaign, one paralleling the version known from the LET¹⁰. In addition, prism fragment 82-5-22,21 (E3) i' 7-9 duplicates col. i' 1'-3', but the report describing his activities at Babylon is not preserved¹¹. If the assignment is correct, then at least one of the editions presently classified as E may have been composed after 664 since BM 128302+ i' 13'-15' preserves an account of the decoration of Marduk's *paramāḥu*:

(13') [BÁRA.MAḤ-ḥu at-man DINGIR-t]i-šú šir-te (14') [šá e-li gi-piš tam-tim] [gaḏ-la-te (15') [na-du-u ...] [AMAR!].UTU (16') [50 GUN za-ḥa-lu-u eb-bu] (17') [a-na a-gúr-ri ap-ti-iq-ma] (18') [ú-rab-ba-a še-ru-uš-šú]

[(With regard to) the *paramāḥu*, the *atmanu* of] his exalted [divinity], [which is founded upon the high] surging [sea, ...] the god Marduk, [I plated (its) baked bricks with 50 talents of shiny *zaḥalû*-metal and enlarged its (structure)]¹².

The validity of the proposal that one of the E-Prisms may have been composed ca. 663-662 can be supported only if the fragment in question is an E-exemplar and if the 50 talents of *zaḥalû*-metal reported to have been used for the project originated from the spoils of the second Egyptian campaign. Should only one of these prove correct, then we would have to disregard the identification of BM 128302+ as a fragment from one of the E-Editions or the notion that the *paramāḥu* of Babylon's tutelary deity was decorated with Theban booty. In either case, there would be no need to amend Cogan's and Tadmor's proposed date for E₁ and E₂ (ca. 666-665 and ca. 665-664).

⁸ Borger, *BIWA* 26 B/D ii 33-35, C iii 57-61, F i 53-55, and A ii 41-43. Some scholars suggest that the (7 metre tall) obelisks, which may date to the reign of Tuthmosis III (1504-1450), were solid *zaḥalû*-metal. For this opinion, see C. Desroches-Noblecourt, "Deux grands obélisques précieux d'un sanctuaire à Karnak", *RdE* 8 (1951) 47-61; J.-M. Aynard, *Le prisme du Louvre AO 19.939* (Paris 1957) 23-25; K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)* (Warminster 1986) 394; and Onasch, *ĀAT* 27 1, 158. However, we are under the impression that they were merely covered with metal; our translation of *pitiq* is based on this interpretation.

⁹ Borger, *BIWA* 174 and 176-177. For a copy, see A. R. Millard, "Fragments of Historical Texts from Nineveh: Ashurbanipal", *Iraq* 30 (1968) pl. XXIII. The episode in question may have been narrated at the beginning of col. ii' or iii'.

¹⁰ Borger, *BIWA* 178 Stück 9; and Onasch, *ĀAT* 27 2, 56-57 K 228+ 15'-19' // K 2675 14'-18'.

¹¹ Borger, *BIWA* 173, 176-177 Stück 6 and LoB1 107.

¹² Borger, *BIWA* 177 Stück 6 19-21. The restorations are based largely on 81-2-4,212 7'-8' (Bauer, *Asb.* pl. 57), but also on Prisms C i 29-31 and T i 27-30 (Borger, *BIWA* 138-139). 81-2-4,212 appears to have been composed after the prism fragment in question and before Abu (V) 648. For the latter date, see Millard, *Iraq* 30 pl. XXI BM 134464 ii' 29': [ITL.N]E!(?) UD.8.KA[M]*. K 6338 (Borger, *BIWA* 8° Heft 165-166), Rm 2,329 (Borger, *BIWA* LoB1 98), and BM 134557 (Millard, *Iraq* 30 pl. XXV) were also composed during this span of time.

Given the uncertainty of BM 128302+'s attribution to the prism inscriptions in question and the absence of concrete textual evidence for the origin of the *zaḥalû*-metal, the suggestion that at least one of the E-Prisms may have been composed after the second Egyptian campaign cannot be confirmed at present, as this proposal is based solely on circumstantial evidence. Assuming BM 128302+ belongs to either E₁ or E₂ and Marduk's *paramāhu* was decorated with booty from Thebes, Cogan's and Tadmor's *terminus ante quem* needs to be adjusted slightly for one of the recensions; if so, then this would also give credibility to Borger's suggestion that K 13726 may be an E-text. On the other hand, this need not be the case if the fragment in question belongs to another edition, one redacted sometime after 664 and before Abu (V) 649¹³, or if the 50 talents of *zaḥalû*-metal prove not to have come from the Egyptian spoils taken back to Nineveh after the sack of Thebes; this also appears to be the case for 82-5-22,21 as it partially duplicates BM 128302+ i'. Since we agree with Onasch's proposal for the origin of the *zaḥalû*-metal and since we acknowledge that the E-Prisms were composed before the LET (ca. 663-662), principally on grounds of the literary transmission of the military narration (including the Gyges episode), Borger's identification of BM 128302+ (and 82-5-22,21) as an E-exemplar is rejected as it is probably a part of an otherwise unclassified prism inscription. Therefore, there is no need to adjust Cogan's and Tadmor's proposed dates for the E-Prisms. However, it is possible that Borger's assignment is correct, and if so, then one of the E-Editions may have been written after the second Egyptian campaign (664) and in the same year as the LET, but several months earlier¹⁴. Unfortunately, no definite solution can be reached at this time and we must await further information to help clarify matters. But until then, the door certainly remains open for alternative interpretations.

Appendix 1: Additional Information on the E-Prisms

Although E was first identified by G. Smith (*History of Assurbanipal, Translated from the Cuneiform Inscriptions* [London 1871] 78) as a separate edition in 1871, it was not until 1977 that Cogan and Tadmor (*Or* 46, 65-85) pointed out correctly that this recension of Assurbanipal's *res gestae* was, in fact, two different inscriptions, which they designated as sub-editions E₁ and E₂. Following P. D. Gerardi (*Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study* [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania 1987] 108 n. 125), we consider E₁ and E₂ as separate editions. For the relationship between the two, see in particular Cogan-Tadmor, *Or* 46, 65-85; and Weissert-Onasch, *Or* 61, 58-73.

For the most recent edition, see Borger, *BIWA* 173-184, 204, 210-212, 217-219, and 251-252. Sixteen exemplars have been assigned to the E-Prisms: K 1821 (+)⁷ 82-5-22,2 (E1), A 7920+ (E13), and A 8130 (E14) are the principal E₁-exemplars; BM 121018+ (E6), BM 127923+ (E8), BM 127940+ (E9), BM 128306+ (E11), and

¹³ For this opinion, see E. Weissert - H.-U. Onasch, "The Prologue to Ashurbanipal's Prism E", *Or* 61 (1992) 73 n. 46; and Onasch *ĀAT* 27 1, 243.

¹⁴ Compare the relationship between Prisms CND and G, as well as that of Prisms F and T. With regard to the latter, the earliest F-exemplar was inscribed on 24-II-645 and the earliest copy of T dates to 6-V-645.

BM 134454 (E12) are the main E₂-exemplars; and K 1828 (E2), 81-7-27,263, 82-5-22,21 (E3), 89-4-26,151 (E4), 1904-10-9,359 (E5), BM 121029+ (E7), BM 128302+ (E10), and A 8140 (E15) could belong to either edition. Like 82-5-22,21 and BM 128302+, the assignment of 1904-10-9,359 is not entirely certain. For the conjectured join of K 1821 and 82-5-22,2, see E. Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph in a Prism Fragment of Ashurbanipal (82-5-22,2)", in: S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995* (Helsinki 1997) 340 n. 6; and for the identification of 81-7-27,263 as an E-exemplar, see R. Whiting, "Gleanings from ADD, 2. An Unrecognized Assurbanipal Prism Fragment", *SAAB* 10 (1996) 3-4.

For the opinion that E₁ and E₂ were composed prior to 664, see for example Aynard, *Le prisme* 18 n. 9; A. K. Grayson, "The Chronology of the Reign of Ashurbanipal", *ZA* 70 (1980) 245; M. Cogan - H. Tadmor, "Ashurbanipal's Conquest of Babylon: The First Official Report - Prism K", *Or* 50 (1981) 229 n. 2; Gerardi, *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns* 52-53; Onasch, *ÄAT* 1, 78; and Weissert, *Assyria 1995*, 340. A. Spalinger ("Esarhaddon and Egypt: An Analysis of the First Invasion of Egypt", *Or* 43 [1974] 308), however, suggests the E-Prisms were composed ca. 663 and G. B. Lanfranchi (*I Cimmeri: Emergenza delle élites militari iraniche nel Vicino Oriente [VIII-VII sec. a.C.]* [Padova 1990] 110) dates at least one of the editions to 664-663.

Appendix 2:

Chronological Sequence of Assurbanipal's *Res Gestae*

This appendix is a revised version of Grayson, *ZA* 70, 245 Appendix E (Dates for Editions of the Annals of Ashurbanipal). For the pertinent bibliographical information, see Borger, *BIWA*. For the designation of Borger's TVar as Prism I, see J. R. Novotny, "A Note on the *Akītu*-House at Ḥarrān", in: C. Wunsch (ed.), *Mining the Archives: Festschrift for Christopher Walker on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday* (Dresden 2002) 192 n. 6. For discussions of the post-canonical eponyms Nabû-nādin-aḥi, Nabû-šar-aḥḥēšu, and Šamaš-da'inanni (with references to previous literature), see G. Frame, *Babylonia 689-627 B.C.: A Political History* (Leiden 1992) 28-29. For the chronological sequence of the post-canonical eponyms, see R. Whiting, "The Post-Canonical and Extra-Canonical Eponyms", in: A. R. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910-912 B C* (SAAS 2; Helsinki 1994) 72-78; K. Radner (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 1/I* (Helsinki 1998) XVIII-XX; and J. E. Reade, "Assyrian eponyms, kings and pretenders, 648-605 BC", *Or* 67 (1998) 256-260. Further details on the dating of the inscriptions will appear in the author's dissertation.

E _{1,2}	ca. 666-665 and 665-664 (date not preserved).
LET	ca. 663-662 (not dated); the <i>terminus post quem</i> is the second Egyptian campaign.
BM 128302+	composed after 664 and before 649 (date not preserved); see the discussion above. The proposed date also applies to 82-5-22,21.
66-5-19,1	composed ca. 652-650 (date not preserved). The latest datable event preserved is the second Elamite campaign (the war against Teum-

- man [Tepti-Huban-Inšušinak?]), which can be dated by a lunar eclipse (Du'ūzu [IV] 653).
- B dated to the eponymy of Aḥu-ilā'ī (649) and the post-canonical eponymy of Bēšunu (648).
- D dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Bēšunu (648).
- I dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Bēšunu (648).
- C date not preserved, but it may have been composed one year earlier (647, possibly the eponymy of Nabû-da'inanni) than the post-canonical eponymy of Nabû-nādin-aḥi (646) since its *terminus ante quem* can now be established as the first war against Ummanaldasu (Huban-haltās III).
- H4 date not preserved, but the *terminus post quem* for BM 127994 is the accession of Ummanaldasu. The inscription may have been composed around the same time as Prism C.
- CKalach (CND) dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Nabû-nādin-aḥi (646); its *terminus post quem* is the first war against Ummanaldasu.
- G dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Nabû-nādin-aḥi (646), but later in the year than Prism CND. Its *terminus post quem* is the capture of the Arabian queen ADīia (exact reading uncertain).
- F dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Nabû-šar-aḥḥēšu (645).
- T dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Nabû-šar-aḥḥēšu (645), but later in the year than Prism F.
- A dated to the post-canonical eponymy of Šamaš-da'inanni (644, 643, or 642).
- UCLM 9-1774 ca. 640 (date not preserved). The proposed date is based principally on notable variants appearing in its prologue, particularly the absence of the completion of the Gula temple at Babylon (Esabad), which appears to have been recorded for the first time in the building account (not preserved) of EŠ 7832.
- H1 EŠ 7832 is dated to 6-II-639 (Assurbanipal's thirtieth regnal year).
- J ca. 638 (date not preserved). The *terminus post quem* for the composition of the J-fragments from Nineveh (J_n) is the completion of Esabad; therefore the inscription must have been composed sometime after 6-II-639, in the following year at the earliest.
- IIT ca. 638 (not dated). The *terminus post quem* for the composition of the Inscription from the Ištar Temple (IIT) is the completion of Gula's temple; therefore it must have been composed sometime after the issuing of EŠ 7832, in his thirty-first year at the earliest.

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