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REYNOLDS, F. — *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon*. (State Archives of Assyria Volume XVIII). Helsinki University Press, Helsinki, 2003. (25 cm, XLII, 230). ISBN 951-570-567-3.

SAA 18 contains all the hitherto unpublished correspondence of Esarhaddon in the Neo-Babylonian language, as well as Neo-Babylonian letters to Assurbanipal and Šîn-šarru-iškun from northern and central Babylonia. The volume completes the publication of the correspondence of Esarhaddon; the other parts of the corpus are to be found in SAA 10, SAA 13, and SAA 16. Before the editing of the book began, M. Dietrich, S. Cole, and S. Parpola entered the transliterations of the relevant texts into the electronic database. F. Reynolds prepared the basic manuscript and S. Parpola supplemented the volume with an additional 47 texts (scattered throughout the volume), revised the manuscript according to the editorial principles of the project, and provided the indices.

The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon consists of an introduction, transliterations and translations of the texts, a glossary, indices, collations (of 125 letters), and copies (of nos. 37, 154 and 166). The 204 texts edited in the volume are divided into two main sections, which are grouped further into thirteen fairly coherent groups. The first part (Chapters 1–9) not only contains royal correspondence that can be dated to Esarhaddon's reign, but also fragmentary letters that cannot be assigned with certainty to his or Assurbanipal's reign; less than 100 belong to the former category and more than 50 to the latter. The second part (Chapters 10–13) has letters to Assurbanipal and Šîn-šarru-iškun from northern and central Babylonia; only 2 of the texts (nos. 163 and 187) date to the reign Šîn-šarru-iškun. In addition, the volume contains 19 fragments (nos. 124–142) which should have been included in SAA 10 or SAA 13, but which were overlooked at the time, and possibly 4 texts (nos. 5, 113, 170, and 201) which predate Esarhaddon's reign and thus belong to the correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib. Furthermore, SAA 18 presents editions of 4 previously unpublished letters and 27 texts not previously edited or discussed.¹⁾

¹⁾ Nos. 37, 39, 154, and 166 were previously unpublished; and nos. 9, 26, 38, 66–67, 78, 81, 99, 104, 114, 116, 118, 120–123, 128–130, 136–142, and 179 have not been previously edited or discussed.

Very few of the letters are complete or nearly complete; the majority are fragmentary.²⁾ Despite this, Reynolds has made a tremendous effort in presenting up-to-date and reliable editions, as well as gathering the texts into fairly coherent groups. The accuracy of the transliterations of most of texts was ensured by sign by sign collation of the originals in the British Museum. Such time consuming and meticulous work deserves much appreciation, especially considering the high number of improved readings. It is not certain, however, to what degree the texts edited by Parpola were examined; only several of these appear to have been checked or spot collated.³⁾ Although the translations are generally both readable and accurate, there are some minor omissions and a few places where the translation could be marginally improved; some of these are mentioned below.

REMARKS ON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ESARHADDON (NOS. 1–142)

1. *Letters from the King and the Crown Prince of Babylon* (nos. 1–7). **No. 4:** “Further instructions” is too free of a translation for *mi!-ni šá ši-i* (“whatever it is”) in r. 5. **No. 6:** The expected number of fugitives in l. 4 is 13, but the tablet (coll. p. 219) appears to have 15. Is 3 written over an erasure of 2 or is 5 a scribal error for 3?

2. *Letters from Akkad and Cutha* (nos. 8–13). **No. 8:** EN-*iá* in r. 2 is likely plural (“my lords”), referring to both the king and the crown prince (of Babylon). [*a-ki-ma*]-*‘a’-de-e* (“very, greatly”) in r. 3 is not translated. **No. 9:** [*u* ARAD-*šú*] (“[and his servant]”) in l. 22’ is omitted in the translation; the restoration is based on r. 16’. Possibly restore *i-te-pu-uš* after ARAD-*šú*; compare 8:10’–11’ and 9 r. 17’. **No. 12:** *x|x* in l. 9’ could be read as A. If so, restore GÚ.DU₈.*‘A’*.KI (“[Cuth]a”). **No. 13:** The attribution of the letter to Akkad or Cutha is uncertain. Therefore, it should have been edited with geographically and chronologically unattributed letters.

3. *Letters from or Relating to Babylon* (nos. 14–53). **No. 19:** LÚ.[*x x*] in l. 5’ is omitted in the translation. **No. 27:** The letter may have been written either to Esarhaddon in 668 or 669, to Assurbanipal in his accession year (IX–XII 669), or to Šamaš-šumu-ukin between Kislimu and Addaru 669. The wording suggests that the addressee had not yet received an answer (positive or negative) to the oracle query regarding Marduk’s return to Babylon in Nisannu (I) or that the extispicy had not yet been performed. **No. 27,** if addressed to Assurbanipal, may be closely associated with SAA 4 no. 262, a request of the newly enthroned king of Assyria to Šamaš for a positive answer regarding Šamaš-šumu-ukin escorting the statue of Marduk to Babylon (dated I-23-668). In any event, the *terminus ante quem* for the letter is Aiiaru (II) 668. **No. 36:** There is some confusion about the reading of the name in r. 1. The transliteration has ^{md}+EN-MU *iš-ku[n]*, the translation has Bel-šuma-iškun, and the critical apparatus has “Or ^{md}+EN-MU-*iš-ku[n]*” with reference to the PNA 1/II p. 313 s.v. *Bēl-iddina* 29. **No. 51:** Following the translation and the traces in the CT 54 copy (no. 46), possibly read *x|x* in l. 7’ as L[UGAL?].

4. *Letters from Kish, Borsippa, Bit-Dakkuri and Marad* (nos. 54–67). **No. 54:** Translate LÚ.UR[U].*‘dil’-bat.KI-ú!-a!* in l. 23 as “Dilbatians”; “from Dilbat” is misleading in the context of this passage.

5. *Letters from Nippur and Larak* (nos. 68–78). **No. 69:** Remove “[...]” from the translation before “in Ša-pi-[Bel]” (ll. 2–3); and change “the king should not hear [...]” to “the king should not listen to [...]” (r. 6’ LUGAL *la i-šem-mu*). **No. 71:** As correctly pointed out by Reynolds, the identity of Sasiya (l. 6) is uncertain. He may not be the same Sasiya who is linked with a conspiracy against Esarhaddon; compare Nissinen, SAAS 7 pp. 135–150, especially p. 140. **No. 73:** Translation omits [KUR.KUR] (“the lands”) in l. 7.

6. *Letters from Uruk* (nos. 79–84). **No. 79:** Change “have opene[d his ears]” to “have opened his [ear]s” (l. 9 [PI.2].MEŠ-*šú ip-te-‘tú-ú’*). **No. 82:** [*x|x*] in r. 12’ is translated as “[in the pres]ence of.” The traces in the copy (CT 54 no. 60) and the space available on the tablet exclude the reading [*ina pa-a*]n.

7. *Letters from the Sealand* (nos. 85–91). **No. 89:** Change “sen[t us a bodyguard [...], say]ing” to “sen[t us a bod]yguard [..., say]ing” (ll. 24’–25’ [LÚ?.*qu*]r-ru-bu-tu il-tap-r[*a-an-na-ši x x x / um?*]-ma). For *ki-i / [ni-iš-mu-u* in r. 11–12, translate “when [we heard (this)],” rather than “So [we wrote].” **No. 91:** Translate “[our] messenger” for LÚ.A-KIN-[*a-ni?*] in l. 9’, rather than “the messenger.”

8. *Miscellaneous Letters* (nos. 92–123). **No. 92:** Following Nissinen (SAAS 7 p. 140) and Reynolds (pp. XX and XXVI), a date of 675 seems likely. The mention of Abu (V) in l. 13 may indicate that the letter does not refer to the conspiracy against Esarhaddon which took place at the end of 671. However, should this text concern those rebellious activities, then plans to assassinate the king and his family were in motion several months earlier than previously thought. **No. 100:** The new edition of this damaged letter to Esarhaddon early in his reign (ca. 681) recounting some of the events of Arda-Mullissi’s successful conspiracy to murder Sennacherib significantly improves upon Parpola’s edition (CRRAI 26 pp. 180–181) and makes this interesting piece of correspondence available to a much wider audience; for differences in the transliterations, compare ll. 2’, 6’, 9’, r. 1, 3, 8–16. **No. 112:** *la* in r. 4 is taken as an Aramaism, not the negative particle *lā*; note that the glossary does not have an entry for *la* (“from”). **No. 114:** The second LUGAL *be-lí-a-ni* (“the king, our lord”) in r. 11’ is not translated.

9. *Additions to SAA 10 and SAA 13* (nos. 124–142). **No. 125:** There are several places in the translation where the square brackets are omitted; for example, “Ša-Nabû-šû” for ^{mšá-d}+A[G-*šú-u x x x*] (l. 4’) and “Zer-kitti-lišir” for ^mNUMUN-*kit-t[i-SI.SÁ]* (r. 30). **No. 127:** Should the attribution to Bel-ušezib be correct, then possibly restore *lik-ru-bu-šú* (“may they bless him”) for *lik-ru-bu* in l. 2; see no. 126:2. **No. 128:** Translate *mi-nam-ma* in l. 9’ as “why,” rather than “[w]hy on earth.” **No. 135:** The restoration of ERI.DÜG for Eridu in l. 6’ is unclear. Why not NUN.KI as it is in l. 5’? **No. 138:** Change “[one ki]ng will [send] hostile messages to another” to “[one ki]ng will [send] hostile messages to a(nother) king” (l. 4’ [LÚ]GAL *‘a-na’* LUGAL *nu-kúr-ti ‘i’-[šap-ra]*).

REMARKS ON THE LETTERS TO ASSURBANIPAL AND ŠIN-ŠARRU-IŠKUN (NOS. 143–204)

10. *Letters from Birati, Dur-Šarrukku and Cutha* (nos. 143–157). **No. 144:** “[By the de]stiny of (the king,) [my]

²⁾ Nos. 6, 10, 14, 17, 21, 55, 56, 60, 64, 70, 83, 86–87, 123, 146, 148–149, 160, 162–163, 175–177, 181, 185, 197, and 202 are the most complete letters in the volume.

³⁾ These are nos. 4, 39 (transliterated by W.G. Lambert), 98, 102, 114–115, 117, 119, 123, 124, 125, 126, 151, 161, and 170 (collated by Dietrich).

lord, [...]” should be “[by the de]stiny of the k[ing, my lord, ...]” (l. 10’ [ina šī]m-ti ‘šá?’ L[UGAL? EN-ia x x x]).

No. 156: There are several square brackets missing in the translation of ll. 2’–4’; ‘a’-na TIN Z[L.MEŠ-šú] / be-lí a-na [U.GUR] / u [la-a[s 0] should be “to [Nergal] and La[s] for the preservation of [his] li[fe],” not “to Nergal and La[s] for the preservation of [his] life.”

11. *Letters from or Relating to Babylon* (nos. 158–172).

No. 159: la (“from”) in r. 5 is an Aramaism, not the negative particle lā (“not”); see no. 112 above. In the glossary, el-li at the end of r. 5 is indexed incorrectly as ellu (“pure, holy”), instead of as elú (“to go up”). **No. 161:** DÚMU mZALAG-^d30 (“son of Nur-Sin”) in l. 3 is omitted in the translation. **No. 163:** A post-Assurbanipal date is likely given the provenance of the letter (found in or near throneroom area of SW Palace of Kuyunjik) and historical information given in the text. **No. 165:** According to the translation of l. 12’ (“their fear”), the transliteration should be ‘ni-kit-ti’-šu-nu, not ‘ni-kit-ti’ šu-nu; note that -šunu is written elsewhere in the letter as -šú-nu (ll. 3’, 5’, 6’).

12. *Letters from Borsippa, Dilbat, and Bit-Dakkuri* (nos. 173–191). **No. 175:** x[x x]x.MEŠ in l. 8 is translated without explanation as “not do-nothings.” **No. 182:** Change “for oath” to “fo[r oa]th” (r. 2 ‘a’-n[a MU-DI]NGIR!). **No. 184:** Translate [ki-i ap-la-hu] in r. 3’ as “[I was afraid that]” instead of “[Afraid that].” **No. 187:** Change “(his) [royal] throne” to “(his) royal throne” (l. 4 GIŠ.GU.ZA LUGAL-ú-ti).

13. *Letters from Nippur* (nos. 192–204). **No. 193:** x x x x x] at the end of l. 8 is omitted in the translation. It is likely that a-kan-na?] at the end of r. 7 should be translated as “here” instead of “there.” If so, then Handiya was detained in Nippur, not in the Sealand. **No. 197:** Change “our watch” to “[our] watch” (l. 11 EN.NUN-[i-ni]). **No. 201:** LÚ.GÚ.EN.NA (l. 1) is translated elsewhere in the volume as “the šandabakku,” not as “the governor of Nippur.”

SAA 18 is a professional treatment of the Neo-Babylonian correspondence of Esarhaddon and letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-šarru-iškun from northern and central Babylonia. Reynolds deserves our deepest gratitude for all of her hard work in providing reliable, up-to-date editions. The volume has benefited greatly from the high calibre research standards of its editor, namely her attention to detail and meticulous collation of the originals. *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon* is not only an important and useful contribution to the field of Neo-Assyrian studies, but a much needed companion to CT 54.