

1. Letters from Arrapha (nos. 1–23); 2. Letters from Lubda and the Hamrin Area (nos. 24–52); 3. Letters from Parsua, Bit-Hamban and Singibutu (nos. 53–82); 4. Letters from Kar-Šarrukin (nos. 83–110); 5. Letters from Dēr and Yadburu (nos. 111–154); 6. Letters from Northern Babylonia (nos. 155–216); 7. Letters from Central and Southern Babylonia (nos. 217–273); 8. Additions to SAA 1 and SAA 5 (nos. 274–287); and 9. Varia and Unassigned (nos. 288–391). In addition to all identifiable Assyrian letters sent to Sargon from Babylonia and the southeastern provinces, the volume contains 14 fragments which should have been included in SAA 1 or SAA 5, but which were overlooked at the time, as well as 94 fragments of unknown authorship and provenance; the editors (p. XLVIII) stress that not all of these letters belong to the Sargon correspondence. Furthermore, nine fragmentary letters (nos. 137, 178, 343, 360, and 387–391) are published here for the first time.

Very few of the texts edited are complete; the majority are fragmentary. Despite this, Parpola has made a tremendous effort in presenting up-to-date and reliable editions, as well as gathering the texts into fairly coherent groups. The editions benefit greatly from Parpola's many years of experience with Neo-Assyrian royal correspondence and his unrestricted access to the SAA database.¹⁾ The accuracy of the transliterations was ensured by repeated collation of the texts. Such time consuming work deserves our appreciation. Over all, the translations raise little doubt although there is some inconsistency in the translation of individual words and there are several passages where the translation could be better; for example, Parpola translates "[NN]" for ^maš-[šur-EN-PAB] in no. 62:2 and "[following the king], my lo[rd]'s instructions" for [ki-i ša LUGAL be]-lī iš-pur-an-ni in no. 280 r.5.

With regard to the texts included in the volume, there is at least one instance where the text genre of the fragment is uncertain: no. 309 could be part of an administrative document or part of a letter (compare no. 181:8–23). There is also one case where the letter does not appear to be royal correspondence; no. 371 is a personal letter from [^mx]-[x-ia?] to Bel-abu-ušur.

Fuchs' introduction is a critical appraisal of numerous reports sent from no less than thirty officials reporting on the war with Merodach-baladan (Marduk-aplu-iddina II), events in the Zagros and Western Iran, and Dēr and the Elamite Frontier. He also attempts to establish an eight-phased chronological framework for the period from 710 to the beginning of 706: (1) 710a, (2) 710b, (3) 710c–709a, (4) 709b, (5) 708a, (6) 708b–707a, (7) 707b, and (8) 707c–706a. Of the 391 letters edited in the volume, 186 texts are assigned dates. Of these, 55 of the dates as regarded as tentative and another 51 are cited as "the given year and afterwards until the end of Sargon's reign." The dates of the texts provided in the proposed chronology (pp. XL–XLI) correspond with only a few minor discrepancies to those provided in Table VI (pp. XLII–XLVII):²⁾

¹⁾ The database was probably used a great deal in restoring partially preserved names. One example is ^maš-he-[šā-a-a] in no. 358:11. Although this name is the most common personal name beginning with Ahhē- in Neo-Assyrian texts and the only occurrence of an Ahhē-name in the volume, it is not the only possibility: Ahhē-a, Ahhē-ballit, Ahhē-damqū, Ahhē-iddina, Ahhē-iqbi, Ahhē-riḫa, Ahhē-šāia, Ahhē-šallim, and Ahhē-šu (PNA 1/1 pp. 60–62). The name should probably be read as Ahhē-...].

²⁾ This does include texts whose date is cited as firm in one place and tentative(?) in another. These are: nos. 31, 68, 88, 100, 174, 191–192, 195–196, 201, 216, and 227.

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FUCHS, A., S. PARPOLA — The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III: Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces. (State Archives of Assyria Vol. XV). Helsinki University Press, Helsinki, 2001. (25 cm, LVIII, 280, III pls.). ISBN 951-570-001-9; ISBN 951-570-496-0.

Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces completes the edition of the Assyrian language correspondence of Sargon II; the other parts of the corpus are to be found in SAA 1 (S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West*) and SAA 5 (G.B. Lanfranchi and S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces*). A. Fuchs wrote the introduction and S. Parpola prepared the text editions. The former also made many useful comments on the preliminary proofs of the editions and the arrangement of the letters owes much to him.

SAA 15 consists of an introduction, transliterations and translations of the texts, a glossary, indices, collations (of 95 letters), and photographs (of no. 129 only). The introduction comprises discussions of the war against Merodach-baladan (pp. XIII–XXIII), the Neo-Assyrian Zagros and Western Iran (pp. XXIV–XXXI), and Dēr and the Elamite frontier (pp. XXXII–XXXV); an attempt to provide a chronological framework (pp. XXXVI–XLVII); and notes on the text editions (XLVIII–L). The 391 texts edited in the volume are divided into three main sections (Letters from the Eastern Provinces and Media, Letters from Babylonia, and Miscellaneous Letters), which are grouped further into nine chapters:

Text no.	Date in Proposed Chronology	Date in Table VI
4	710b	710b+ ³⁾
138	709b	709b+
140	709b	710b+?
141	709b?	710b+?
187	710a	no date given
188	710a?	no date given
221	707b	710b+
238	710b	710b+
267	709b	709b+
286	708a	no date given

Fuchs makes a valiant attempt in his appraisal of the material, despite nearly all of the letters being heavily damaged or broken, the language of the texts being highly idiomatic and not always comprehensible, the historical context of the reports being unclear, and none of the tablets being dated. The chronological vagueness of the letters permits many possible interpretations of the Sargon correspondence, one of which is presented in the introduction. Of course, further analysis of the material by other specialists will doubtlessly yield alternate interpretations and chronological arrangements of the corpus, or part thereof. Regardless of whether scholars agree or disagree with the appraisal and proposed chronological framework, Fuchs' introduction will serve as a solid foundation for future studies on the war with Merodach-baladan II, events in the Zagros and Western Iran, and Dēr and the Elamite Frontier.

The reviewer has no major problems with Fuchs' analysis of the letters and chronological framework. However, I have three short remarks about the war of succession in Ellipi (pp. XXIX–XXXI and XLI).

1. Fuchs (p. XXIX) divides the succession into three stages: a) the demise of Daltā, b) the short reign of Nibē, and c) the Assyrian campaign to install Ašpa-bara. Later on in the discussion (p. XXXI and XLI), he describes a fourth event, Ašpa-bara's civil war with Lutū, a son of the recently deceased Ellipean king.⁴⁾ Therefore, the war of succession should be divided into four phases and should be considered over in 706 once Lutū and his supporters had been subdued, not in 707 when Ašpa-bara was installed on the throne by Sargon's magnates.

2. Fuchs (pp. XXX, XLI, and XLIII) regards no. 84, a letter ascribed to Nabû-belū-ka'in when he was governor of Kar-Sarrukīn, as being written closest to the time of Daltā's death in 708 (shortly before [x]1st of Kislev) since the sender reports: "Concerning news of Daltā: he does not leave the house and no one enters into his presence" (lines 3–4). He dates the letter to 708a and suggests that the Ellipean king may have been ill or had just died and his death was being kept secret in order to prepare for the succession. Fuchs, however, does not mention the possibility that the letter may have been sent to Sargon in 713, when Ellipi revolted against Daltā; during this time, the Ellipean king may have been confined to his royal residence.⁵⁾ Therefore, no. 84 should be assigned a less precise date, ca. 713–708a.

³⁾ The siglum + after the date indicates "the given year and afterwards until the end of Sargon's reign." Therefore, Fuchs regards 710b+ as 710b–705, not as 710b.

⁴⁾ The fighting between these two Ellipean cousins is not referred to in the PNA entries for Ašpa-bara (PNA 1/1 p. 143) and Lutū (PNA 2/2 p. 673). The pertinent information in no. 101: 10–15 is overlooked in both cases.

⁵⁾ Fuchs refers to this possibility in PNA 1/2 p. 373 sub. Daltā §c. For references to Daltā and the Ellipean rebellion, see PNA 1/2 p. 373.

3. Fuchs does not include no. 34 ("A Bodyguard Sends the Magnates Off") in his study of the war of succession (pp. XXIX–XXXI) or in the proposed chronology for 708a–706a (p. XLI); the text is not assigned a date in Table VI (p. XLIII). The letter, which is attributed to Nabû-belū-ka'in by Parpola, states that the bodyguard Sîn-kenu-ušur came to an unspecified location and told the magnates to "set out and go" (*na-mi-šá li-kal-ka*), and reports that they have departed (lines 3'–8'). The text may have been composed in 707b, shortly after the Assyrian "magnates" departed the area around the cities of Urammu and Sumurzu (in the province of Namri) to aid Ašpa-bara.⁶⁾ If this proves true, then no. 34 was written shortly before nos. 35 and 95 since both letters report that "the magnates... have entered the land of Ellipi"; the text's placement in the volume suggests that it was written prior to no. 35. It is unclear why Fuchs did not refer to this letter in his study. With regard to the attribution of the letter, it is not explained in the critical apparatus why the text is assigned to Nabû-belū-ka'in.⁷⁾ Parpola makes no reference to the scribal hand, such as "hand of Nabû-belū-ka'in," "tentatively assigned to Nabû-belū-ka'in," or "assignment to Nabû-belū-ka'in" ascertained by orthographic details." The attribution to this official is less certain when it is pointed out that the opening address does not match any of the known letters of this individual, specifically *a-dan-niš 'lu! DI! -mu!* in line 2'. Therefore, it is likely that no. 34 was written by an official other than Nabû-belū-ka'in, perhaps the provincial governor of Namri, the governor of Urammu, or the governor of Sumurzu; this assumes the association of the letter with the campaign to Ellipi in 707. Until the scribal hand can be confirmed, the authorship of the text should be regarded as uncertain.

The only major complaint that the reviewer has with the volume is that the proposed dates of the letters do not appear in the critical apparatus at the bottom of each page, as they do in SAA 8 (H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings*) and SAA 10 (S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*). This is a major inconvenience for the reader, principally since he or she must either write the dates in the appropriate places or constantly consult the introduction each and every time he or she wishes to know the approximate date of composition of a letter. Either way, the reader is inconvenienced since time is wasted flipping back and forth between pages.

In sum, SAA 15 is a professional treatment of the correspondence of Sargon II, specifically the letters from Babylonia and the eastern provinces. Fuchs deserves our gratitude for his efforts in providing a well-thought out and coherent background with a chronological framework of the texts, and for attempting to date many of the letters in the corpus. Parpola deserves our appreciation for all of his years of hard work on the editions. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III*, like the other volumes in the SAA series, is an important contribution to the field of Neo-Assyrian studies. Although much work can still be done on this text corpus, Fuchs' and Parpola's volume lays a solid foundation for future studies and text editions.

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⁶⁾ The rallying-point for the magnates is referred to in no. 76 and in SAA 1 no. 13.

⁷⁾ For the career of this official, see most recently PNA 2/2 p. 815–817 no. 1.