

Sin-šarru-iškun (“Sin has established the king”); Akk.; masc.; wr. ^{md}30—LUGAL—*iš-ku-un*, ^m30 LUGAL *iš-kun*, ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR—*un*, ^m30—LUGAL—GAR, ^m30—MAN—*iš kun*, ^{md}30—MAN—GAR—*un*, ^{md}30—MAN—GAR, ^m30—MAN—GAR, ^m30—LUGAL—GAR, ^d30—LUGAL—*iš-kun*, ^d30 LUGAL—GAR—*un*, ^d30—LUGAL—GAR, ³⁰—LUGAL—GAR, ^{md}EN.ZU—LUGAL—GAR—*un*; ft. Grk. Σαρρακος; Tallqvist (1918) 201.

King of Assyria c. 627-612, son of the king Assurbanipal, successor of his brother Aššur-etel-ilani:

a. Background: It has sometimes been argued that Aššur-etel-ilani and Sin-šarru-iškun were the same person, the former being the “Assyrian” throne name and the latter the “Babylonian” throne name; however, this theory can be discarded (see Frame [1992] 304 and nn. 27-28). The reign of this king is poorly documented, and its precise dates are still debated. For recent proposals concerning the chronology of his reign, with a bibliography of earlier treatments, see Beaulieu (1997); Gerber (1998); Reade (1998); Oelsner (1999); Liebig (2000).

b. In the Assyrian sources:

1'. Royal inscriptions from Nineveh: A fragmentarily preserved cylinder of ^m[^d30—LUGAL]—GAR from Nineveh probably records the rebuilding of the Nabû temple in that city Sši Cyl B:1 (622*); see Reade (2000) 410a, 415b. Another cylinder inscription of ^{md}EN.ZU LUGAL—GAR—*un* from Nineveh commemorates his renovation of the western entrance of the South-West palace of Sennacherib Sši Cyl C:1 Grayson (1972a) (616* [exemplar e]; 613* [exemplar a]); see Falkner (1952-53) 306; Grayson (1972a) 159; Reade (2000) 415b. A third cylinder (D) from Nineveh has been attributed to Sin-šarru-iškun solely on the basis of his titulature; see Schramm (1975-76) 45-8. It is possible that K 6681 and BM 122613 also represent inscriptions of Sin-šarru-iškun; see Borger (1996) 335, 356.

2'. A royal inscription from Kalhu: According to its inscription a sealed clay label from the Review Palace at Kalhu is said to belong to the palace (property) of ^m30—MAN—GAR CTN 3 83:1 (not dated).

3'. Royal inscriptions from Assur: Clay cones from the Nabû temple at Assur commemorate the rebuilding of that temple by ^{md}3[0—LUGAL—GAR—*un*] // [^{md}30]—LUGAL—GAR—*un* // ^m30—MAN—GAR // ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR, king of Assyria, son of Assurbanipal, son of Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, descendant of Sargon Donbaz - Grayson (1984) 57ff exemplars a, b, d, o (620*). A brick inscription

of ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR—*un*, again citing his descent from his forebears down to *on*, also commemorates the rebuilding of the Na *û* at Assur KAH 2 134 1 (not dated), as does a cylinder inscription from Assur of ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR—*un* Šši Cyl A:1, 27 (616*).

A model of an inscription written on a tablet from Assur records that [^m30—MAN—GAR] // ^{md}30—MAN—GAR // [^m]30 MAN GAR // ^m30—MAN—GAR fashioned an offering table of *musukkannu*-wood, overlaid it with a silver alloy and dedicated it to the goddess Antu KAV 171:3, 11, r. 3, 9 (not dated). Another tablet from Assur contains copies of two dedicatory inscriptions of Sin-šarru-iškun. The first text records that [^m]30—LUGAL—GAR—*un* fashioned a bowl from reddish-gold and dedicated it to the god Nabû in Assur AfO 16 pl. 15:4 (not dated); the second inscription states that ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR—*un* fashioned a spoon from silver and dedicated it to the goddess Tašmetu in Assur AfO 16 pl. 15 r. 1 (not dated). According to its inscription, a brick from Assur is from the palace of ^m30—LUGAL—GAR—*un* KAH 1 56 1 (not dated). → Pedersén (1997) 340 (for a catalogue of Sin-šarru-iškun inscriptions from Assur).

4'. In loyalty oaths: Nabû-aplu-iddina, Tebetaiu, and Aqru, all possibly Babylonian, are mentioned in a fragmentarily preserved text as having a loyalty oath imposed upon them by ^{md}30—¹MAN—GAR¹—[*un*] SAA 2 11:1 (not dated or date lost, but possibly 627*). An extract copied from a treaty refers to “this treaty” (*ā-de-e an-nu-te*) of ^{md}30—MAN—GAR—*un* SAA 2 12:2 (not dated); Parpola - Watanabe (1988) xxxiif suggest that this text may have been an extract from a loyalty treaty which was imposed on the Assyrian population shortly after the king's accession in 627 (possibly after a civil war).

5'. In a private votive donation: Nabû-sagibi son of Ahhe-damqu donates two slaves and a seven hectare estate in the town of Šabat-lukun to the god Nabû for the preservation of the life of ^m30—MAN—*iš-k[un]* LUGAL KUR—*āš-šur*, “his lord,” and his queen SAA 12 96:11 (621*).

6'. Dating a contract written in Kar-Aššur but found at Kalhu: A Neo-Babylonian debt note found in the Review Palace at Kalhu is dated according to the Neo-Babylonian system in the seventh year of ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR LUGAL KUR.KUR CTN 3 62 r. 8.

7'. In a šu-îl-la prayer: A šu-îl-la prayer of Sin-šarru-iškun to the god Marduk is mentioned in BM 123395, cited by Lambert - Millard (1968) 22 (but without citation of the name); the text is a duplicate of an Assurbanipal prayer to the same god (see Cooper [1970]).

c. Dating documents from Babylonia: Approximately sixty business documents were dated by the regnal years of Sin-šarru-iškun in Babylonia; they indicate that he exercised control over Babylon, Nippur, Sippar, and Uruk at times. The earliest tablets date to his accession year, and the latest to his seventh regnal year. In these texts he is called “king of Assyria,” “king of the lands,” and “king of the world”; see Frame (1992) 213; Frame (1995)

270; the texts are catalogued in Falkner (1952-53) 308-9 and Brinkman - Kennedy (1983) 54-9.

c. In later sources:

1'. In the Uruk King List: Sin-šumu-lešir and ^{md}30—LUGAL—*iš-¹ku-un*¹ are mentioned as jointly ruling over Babylonia for one year in the Uruk King List, between the reigns of K[anda]lanu and Nabopolassar IM 65066:5 (not dated, but written some time after Seleucus II [246-226]). → Grayson (1980) 97.

2'. In later chronicles: The passage in Chronicle 2 mentioning ^{md}30—LUGAL GAR—*un* is damaged, but he may have been involved with the hostilities which were taking place between Assyria and Babylonia Grayson (1975) no. 2:3. He is not any titles, and it is not clear if the entry to the year 628, 627, or 626; see Frame (1995) 270. Brinkman (1998a) 13 tentatively suggests a date of 627, while Gerber (1998) 88f suggest that the passage could refer to 626. After an initial setback, the Assyrian king launched a major attack on Nippur; Nabopolassar withdrew as Assyrian troops approached the city. Presumably in that same year, Sin-šarru-iškun's army, which was composed of Assyrians as well as citizens of Nippur, was defeated at Uruk. In 626, amid general disorder in Babylonia, the Assyrians suffered yet another defeat, this time further north at Babylon; at this time, Nabopolassar formally took the Babylonian throne (viii-26-626) Grayson (1975) 17-18, 87-88. The events of the years 625-617, in which Nabopolassar gradually reduced Sin-šarru-iškun's influence in Babylonia, are sketchy and difficult to place in absolute chronology; see Brinkman (1998a) 13f. During these years Assyrian and Babylonian forces appear to have vied for control of Nippur and Uruk, and perhaps even Babylon and Sippar; Uruk could very well have changed hands more than once (Beaulieu [1997]).

The events of the following years (616-612) are relatively well-preserved in the Babylonian Chronicle; see Brinkman (1998a) 14. During this time the Babylonians and their allies, the Medes (and?) Ummanmanda, aggressively campaigned in Assyria proper until the conquest and subsequent destruction of Nineveh. In 616, Sin-šarru-iškun's army was defeated by Nabopolassar near the town Balihu, but it was not until an Egyptian army joined forces with Assyria that the Babylonians had to withdraw. Later that same year, the Assyrians were defeated once again by the forces of Nabopolassar, this time at Arrapha. The following year (615), the Babylonians attacked Assur, but were repulsed and pursued as far as Takritain (modern Tikrit); however, Sin-šarru-iškun's forces were decisively defeated when they attempted to take this fortress. In 614, Assyria's fortunes took a turn for the worse when the Medes, under the authority of (Umakištar), captured the city Tarbišu, and then apparently captured and destroyed Assur (passage damaged). Two years later (612), the Babylonians, Medes (and?) Ummanmanda besieged Nineveh, and, after three months, defeated the Assyrians. Chronicle 3 mentions that ^{md}30—LUGAL—GAR—*un* LUGAL KUR—*āš-š[ur]* either died or disappeared (passage damaged)

immediately after Babylonian and Median troops forcefully broke through Nineveh's defenses Grayson (1975) no. 3:44. Unfortunately, the true nature of Sin-šarru-iškun's death — whether he committed suicide (see below), was murdered by one or more of his officials, or was executed by the troops of Nabopolassar and Cyaxares — or disappearance is not recorded in cuneiform sources. For other proposals on the chronology, see the references cited in 1. above.

3'. In Berossos: According to the Hellenistic writer Berossos, Sarakos (Sin-šarru-iškun) made Bupalassaros (Nabopolassar) a general and sent him to Babylon to deal with an invading force from the Sealand. Soon after, Bupalassaros (Nabopolassar) rebelled against him, and marched against Nineveh; afraid of being captured, Sarakos (Sin-šarru-iškun) committed suicide by burning down his palace around him. → Burstein (1978) 26; Scurlock (1983) 95f.

J. R. Novotny