Sin-šumu-epuṣ

THE PROSOPOGRAPHY OF THE NEΔ-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Sin-šumu-epuṣ


2. Governor of Ur, son of the governor Nikkal-iddin, brother of his predecessors Sin-balassu-iqbi and Sin-šarru-usur (reign of Assurbanipal): Sin-tabni-usur appears to have been appointed governor of Ur sometime after the beginning of Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s revolt (652) and before the 23rd Si-manu (iii.) 650 (see Brinkman [1969a] 342f). He may have remained in office for the remainder of the war (i.e. until 648). As governor of Ur he is attested both as the sender and recipient of letters to and from the king, and is also mentioned in other royal correspondence. Unfortunately, the letters are often fragmentary and difficult to interpret, so that their sequence is not easily established. The correspondence generally dates to the period of Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s rebellion (652-648). For the historical background see Brinkman (1984) 93-104; Frame (1992) 131-90.

a. Family background: Sin-tabni-usur is explicitly identified as a son of Nikkal-iddin in two haruspical queries of Assurbanipal regarding his appointment as governor of Ur and his loyalty to Assyria (see b.). He had at least two brothers, Sin-balassu-iqbi and Sin-šarru-usur. All three of the sons of Nikkal-iddin succeeded their father as governor of Ur. Following the tenure of Sin-balassu-iqbi, Sin-šarru-usur was appointed prior to Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s revolt (652-648) (see Durand [1981] 181-5); during the course of the revolt he was succeeded by Sin-tabni-usur.

b. Appointment and titles: Assurbanipal consulted diviners in order to find out whether *m30-tab-ni-ŠES son of Nikkal-iddin would be a loyal, pro-Assyrian governor or if he would support his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin; the diviner Dansia provides the king with a favourable report SAA 4 300:5 (date lost, but presumably written before 23-iii-650 [see the following]). He is first referred to as LUGAR.KUR ŠES.UNUG.KT in a text dated 23-iii-650 at Nina (Frame [1992] 163, 279 n. 65); he also bears this title in several other legal documents from Ur (see d.). At some point during the rebellion, Assurbanipal consulted diviners once again to determine whether *m30-tab-ni-šur son of Nikkal-iddin would turn against Assyria and join Šamaš-šumu-ukin; the haruspex’s report contains ten unfavourable omens SAA 4 301 r. 8 (date lost). Since the date of this haruspical query is not preserved and Sin-tabni-usur is not given any titles, it is not known whether this text pre-dates his appointment.

c. Sin-tabni-usur’s career:

1. In letters from Assurbanipal to Sin-tabni-usur: In a letter addressed to *m30-tab-ni-ŠES, Assurbanipal states that he did not believe the slanderous remarks that Sin-šarru-usur and Ummanigâš made about him; the Assyrian king expresses his faith in Sin-tabni-usur, and commends him for
enduring anti-Assyrian rebels and famine for two
A BL 290:1 (not dated). Although the exact
of this letter is uncertain, it has been suggested
by Frame (1992) 165 that it was written after
the commencement of Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s revolt; ac-
cording to the chronology of events presented
by Frame, this letter would have been written in late
651 or early 650. Brinkman (1965) 254 suggests
that the text could date to 647, after the rebellion
in Babylonia had been quelled. Durand (1981)
184f suggests that ABL 290 was written before
with the “two years” to 655/654 and
when there was an absence of a strong
central authority, and when the rivalry between
Assyria and Babylonia was beginning to heat up.
He supports his theory by suggesting that the “pro-
Babylonian” Sin-šarru-ušur would not have been
corresponding with Assurbanipal while aiding
Šamaš-šumu-ukin in his rebellion against Assyria,
that Ummân-ni-ša was the Elamite king Hubu-
nišsh III who appears to have been killed early in
the revolt (655), and that there is no evidence in
the letter suggesting that Sin-ta-bni-ušur was al-
ready the governor of Ur. However, if this letter
was composed during the revolt, and after Sin-
ta-bni-ušur’s installation as governor, then Sin-
šarru-ušur may have been trying to cause trouble
for his brother, hoping to regain control in Ur
(Frame [1992] 166 n. 165).
In another letter, Assurbanipal writes to "šmu-ki-ḫur-FAPB" commending him for having fulfilled
his duties as governor for a third year A BL 523:1
(not dated); see Frame (1992) 165 n. 160 for the
reading of the name. It has been suggested that this
letter was composed after the worst pressure on
Ur had been relieved. Assuming that anti-Assyrian
rebels put pressure on Ur in 652, at the commence-
ment of the revolt, then this may that Ur
had been relieved as early as 650, Assyria
began gaining the upper hand in northern Babyl-
onia and in the vicinity of Uruk (Frame [1992]
165f).
2'. In letters addressed to Assurbanipal by Sin-
ta-bni-ušur: In a very fragmentarily preserved let-
ter Sin-ta-bni-ušur informs the Assyrian king
that Esarhaddon had aided his father Nikkal-iddin
when the Sealand Nabû-zer-kitti-liššu made raids
against Ur; the governor of Ur appears to have been
asking for the same protection against Nabû-bel-
sûmati ABL 1248:2 (not dated). This letter may
also allude to the anti-Assyrian Sealand de-
stroying parts of Ur in his raids (interpretation un-
certain) see Frame (1992) 164; Dietrich (1970)
202f no. 159 (for possible restorations). šmu-ki-ššu-FAPB reports to the Assyrian king on an ex-
pedition to Uruk by Sin-šarru-ušur ABL 1207:1 (not
dated); Sin-šarru-ušur may have been trying to
rally support in Uruk, perhaps in an attempt to
regain control of Ur. In this same letter, Sin-ta-bni-
ušur also claims to have captured a rebel, fettered
him and sent him to Nineveh for interrogation; the
identity of the adversary is not preserved, but it is
not impossible that it was Sin-šarru-ušur who was
detained by the troops of Ur. In a third letter to
Assurbanipal, šmu-ki-ššu-FAPB boasts that he
took prisoners from the Sealand, and informs the
king about Bel-uballit, son of his wet nurse; in
addition, he requests aid in protecting some
citizens of the town Ekušu ABL 920:2 (not dated).
Since this letter is not dated and the name of the
author is only partially preserved, the sender could
be either Sin-balassu-ibbi, Sin-šarru-ušur, or Sin-
ta-bni-ušur; the latter appears to be the most likely
candidate. Frame (1992) p. 167 and n. 167 suggests
that this letter may refer to Ur aiding Bel-ibni in
his subjugation of the Sealand.
3'. Sin-ta-bni-ušur as the possible author of let-
ters: Two fragmentarily preserved letters in which
the name of the sender is missing may be tentative-
ly assigned to Sin-ta-bni-ušur; the sender invokes
Sin and Nikkal, suggesting an origin in Ur or its
vicinity. In a letter to Assurbanipal [šmu-ki-ššu-
FAPB] makes a report on two men affiliated with
tribal chieftains(? ) or lovers(? ) (interpretation un-
certain) CT 54 210:1 (date lost); the second letter
to the king from a governor of Ur [šmu-ki-ššu-
FAPB] is too badly damaged to ascertain the nature
of its contents (see 1984c). Sin-ta-bni-ušur was
then the governor of Ur. In this letter, the
citizens of Ur: In a letter addressed to the king, the
citizens of Ur make a report on the pitiable condi-
tion of Ur and claim that šmu-ki-ššu-FAPB had submitted to Šamaš-šumu-ukin only out of sheer desperation, and was indeed a
loyal Assyrian subject ABL 1274:7 13 r. 7 (not
dated); see Dietrich (1970) 202f no. 160 for
possible restorations. Although the exact date of
ABL 1274 is uncertain, it appears to have been
written when Ur’s access to food and reinforce-
ments had been completely cut off; pleas to Assur-
banipal for aid appear to have received no immedi-
ate response since Assyrian forces could not pene-
trate that far south. Frame (1992) 166 and n. 164
dates the letter during the revolt, but finds the
submission of Sin-ta-bni-ušur difficult to explain
since there is no other evidence suggesting that Ur
was ever occupied by anti-Assyrian rebels. Frame
suggests that he may have been forced to offer
some kind of submission to Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but
help may have arrived as soon as Sin-ta-bni-ušur
began to negotiate the surrender of Ur; it is
possible that this letter pre-dates ABL 290 (see c.1').
For texts reflecting the scarcity of food in Ur,
On the other hand, Durand (1981) 184f dates ABL
1274 to before the revolt, when Sin-šarru-ušur and
Sin-ta-bni-ušur were for power (655/654 and
653/652).
5'. In letters addressed to the king by other offi-
cials in Babylonia: Nabû-šušabā (governor of Uruk), in a report to the Assyrian king about Pu-
qadean raids in the vicinity of Uruk and Ur, men-
tions that the Puqade managed successfully to at-
tack the town of Bit-Il-ahtir, taking two or three
troops of šmu-ki-ššu-FAPB to prisoner ABL 1028 r. 6, 16 (not dated);
while the passage is fragmentarily preserved it is
not impossible that the troops of Sin-ta-bni-ušur
captured the Puqade (Frame [1992] 164 n. 151).
šmu-ki-ššu-FAPB is mentioned in a damaged pas-
sage of a letter of Nabû-šušabā to the king concern-
ing a certain Sin-ibni’s raids on Uruk, Ur, and
Sln-takliik

Eridu ABL 753:9 (not dated). In another letter addressed to the Assyrian king, the sender (name lost) reports that Nabû-bel-šumati was trying to win over the Gurasimmu tribe in an attempt further to isolate Ur; the author implies that the Gurasimmu were under the jurisdiction of .sprites (interpretation uncertain) ABL 1236:16 (not dated). Kudurrū of Uruk reports to Assurbanipal that sprites made an appeal to him and to the Assyrian Aplaia (governor of Arrapha); the governor of Ur claims that the Gurasimmu had rebelled against him at the instigation of Samaš-sumu-ukin, and if aid was not forthcoming then Ur would fall into rebel hands ABL 754+:4; Kudurrū and five or six hundred archers from Uruk, together with Aplaia and Nurea went to the rescue of sprites ABL 754+:12; the sender also mentions that sprites had detained five or six influential rebels and handed them over to Aplaia ABL 754+:17, 18; the expedition was apparently successful, but since Bel-ibni (military commander of the Sealand), Aplaia, and sprites had to conduct additional military manoeuvres against the Puqudu, it is unlikely that all the pressure on Ur had been relieved ABL 754+:21 (not dated). → Dietrich (1970) 75, 85, 89, 92f, 100, 115, 124, 128; Frame (1992) 160f, 164f.


J. R. Novotny