

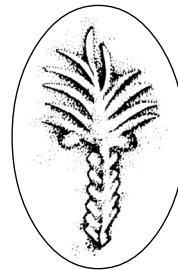
UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

MESOPOTAMIA

RIVISTA DI ARCHEOLOGIA, EPIGRAFIA E
STORIA ORIENTALE ANTICA

XLVII

2012



LE LETTERE
FIRENZE

Rivista fondata da Giorgio Gullini.

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«Mesopotamia» is an International Peer Reviewed Journal.

Proprietà letteraria riservata

Iscritta al Tribunale di Torino n. 1886 del 20/6/67.

Si prega di indirizzare la corrispondenza diretta alla Redazione e i manoscritti a: Carlo Lippolis, Redazione di Mesopotamia, Dipartimento di Studi Storici - Università degli Studi di Torino, Via Giolitti 21/E, 10123 Torino.

ISSN: 0076-6615

SOMMARIO

MUAYAD SAID BASIM DAMERJI, <i>Babylon - KA.DINGIR.RA - "Gate of God". The Story of a City killed by Legends and Oblivion</i>	p. 1
PAOLO GENTILI, <i>Some Notes between Yelkhi and 'Dating'</i>	» 103
NATHAN MORELLO, <i>New inscribed Bricks from Nimrud</i>	» 113
CARLO LIPPOLIS, NICOLÒ MASTURZO, <i>Nimrud - Kalkhu. A Re-examination of the topographical Studies conducted between 1987 and 1989</i>	» 117
VITO MESSINA, <i>Apollonios at Seleucia on the Tigris?</i>	» 121
LEONARDO GREGORATTI, <i>The Importance of the Mint of Seleucia on the Tigris for Arsacid History: Artabanus and the Greek Parthian Cities</i>	» 129
ROBERTO PARAPETTI, <i>Documents of the Iraqi-Italian Centre for the Restoration of Monuments</i>	» 137
The Site of the Italian-Iraqi Institutes of Baghdad, 1969-2010: Migration Chronicle	» 139
The Iraq Museum in Perspective: Birth, Decay, Rebirth	» 144
The Anah Minaret	» 155
The Arch of Kosroe I at Ctesiphon	» 170

Notiziario Bibliografico

O. ROUAULT, <i>Terqa Final Report No. 2: Les textes des saisons 5 à 9</i> (N. Morello)	» 195
O. AURENCHÉ, <i>Vous avez dit ethnoarchéologue?, Choix d'articles (1972-2007)</i> (E. Quirico)	» 196
R. ROLLINGER, B. TRUSCHNEGG, R. BICLHER (hrsg.), <i>Herodot und das Persische Weltreich. Herodotus and the Persian Empire</i> (V. Messina)	» 198
E. DĄBROWA, <i>Studia Graeco-Parthica. Political and Cultural Relations between Greeks and Parthians</i> (N. Manassero)	» 199
T. KAIZER, M. FACELLA (eds.), <i>Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East</i> (J. Bruno) ..	» 201
K. ABDULLAEV, L. STANČO, <i>Jandaylattepa. The Excavation Report for Seasons 2002-2006</i> (A. Invernizzi)	» 203
Abstracts	» 205
PLATES	

NATHAN MORELLO
NEW INSCRIBED BRICKS FROM NIMRUD*

Forty-one inscribed bricks were found at Nimrud/Kalhu, during the excavations led by Paolo Fiorina between 1987 and 1989 for the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino. They have been discovered in part (twenty-four bricks) during the first survey of the site and partly (seventeen bricks) during the excavations at Fort Shalmaneser, the *ēkal māšarti* or Review Palace of the city. All the bricks are dated to the reign of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) with the exception of one text, which belongs to the time of Assurnaširpal II (883-859 B.C.), and other two, whose dating is at the moment not deductible.

The excavations at Fort Shalmaneser took place in the South-West Quadrant (a storing quarter¹), in the area between storerooms SW 36-37 and room SW 8. Approximately in the middle of SW 36 was found a new wall – directed NE-SW – which divided the room in two separate chambers (renamed A 3 and A 10). Between the north-east part of the eastern wall of SW 37 (renamed A 1) and the western wall of SW 8 (renamed A 15), the excavators found a long storeroom (A 2) which opened southward on a little courtyard. Here, some walls had been raised creating a number of smaller rooms: A 4, 6-8, 11-14, 17-18.² These changes on the planimetry of the quadrant were dated by the excavators to the time of Esarhaddon's reconstruction of parts of the building (676-672 B.C.).³

The bricks have been analysed on autographed copies (plus four photos) accomplished by Dr. Angelo Ghiroldi and can be divided in three groups on the basis of their inscriptions: a group of bricks coming from the ziggurat of Nimrud; a group with a very simple É.GAL inscription; and a group with different or not readable inscriptions. No bricks were found *in situ*, but they were scattered in the rooms of the quadrant and in different areas of the site.

Bricks from the ziggurat

Seventeen bricks⁴ bear an inscription attesting their belonging to the revetment of the “ziggurat of Kalhu”, built by Shalmaneser III in front of the temple of Ninurta in the north-west corner of the city's acropolis.⁵ The ziggurat covered an area of approximately 60 m² and was built with stone walls in the lower part and burned bricks in the upper.⁶ The shape of the bricks is regular, square or rectangular, with a face

almost completely occupied by a regular inscription without log lines.⁷ The inscription includes the genealogy of Shalmaneser III up to Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884 B.C.) with four titles for each king.

* This article is an introduction to the complete catalogue of the bricks which will be published in *Nimrud. Gli Scavi della Missione Italiana*, forthcoming. It is my deep honour to present this preliminary study, and to dedicate it to the memory of Paolo Fiorina and I am very grateful to Professors S. de Martino and C. Lippolis who gave me the possibility to publish this introductory article and to contribute with the catalogue to the forthcoming volume. The first analysis of these bricks was accomplished for the appendix of my MA thesis *Forte Salmanasar. Testi Accadici e Aramaici nel Contesto Topografico* (2007). I'm very grateful to Prof. F.A. Pennacchietti and Prof. F.M. Fales, who supervised the work and contributed with a number of valuable comments in private communications. I am also very grateful to Prof. M.P. Streck and to Dr. Cinzia Pappi, who read the article in draft and gave me useful advises. In any case, any mistake or slip should be ascribed to the present writer.

¹ MALLOWAN 1966, 407-417.

² The seventeen bricks found in this area were in rooms A1 (six bricks), A3 (seven), A4 (one), A6 (one), A14 (two) and A15 (one).

³ MILLARD 1961. For the planimetry of the quadrant before the Italian expedition see OATES, OATES 2001, 146, 165. The reports of the Italian excavations in Fort Shalmaneser are in FIORINA 2004. Further information are to be found in the forthcoming *Nimrud. Gli Scavi della Missione Italiana* and were kindly given to me by Paolo Fiorina.

⁴ Eight bricks out of seventeen were found in the rooms of quadrant SW (one in A 1, four in A 3, one in A 4, one in A 14 and one in A 15) and nine during the survey. These are very similar to other 77 discovered in various places of Nimrud (see RIMA 3, 166-168. See also FALES 1989, 229).

⁵ RIMA 3, A.0.102.56: 3b-7 (Shalmaneser III): 3b) *e-nu-ma U₆.NIR 4) ^aMAS EN GAL-e EN-ia sá ina MAN.MEŠ-ni AD.MEŠ-a-a 5) a-šar-sá la kul-lu-mu-ma la-a ŠUB-at SIG₆.MEŠ 6) 'ina' hi-sa-at l̄b-bi-a sá d̄-a EN uz-nu DAGAL 7) i-qí-su-ú-ni U₆.NIR šu-a-tú ina URU kal-hi lu D̄U-uš* (“At that time the ziggurat of the god Ninurta, the great lord, my lord, the site of which no one among the kings, my fathers, had ever designated nor, had the bricks been laid; with my skill, which the god Ea, lord of wide understanding, gave me, I built this ziggurat in Kalhu”).

⁶ POSTGATE, READE 1976-1980, 308. See also MALLOWAN 1966, 85-86.

⁷ The (reconstructed) average size of the bricks is around 35 cm. wide and 30-35 cm. high.

1. ^{1.d}sūl-ma-nu-MAŠ MAN GAL-ú
2. MAN KALAG-nu MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ
3. A 'AŠ-PAP.A MAN GAL-ú
4. MAN KALAG-nu MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ
5. A 'TUKUL-MAŠ MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ-ma
6. ri-sip-tú U₆.NIR
7. šá ^ukal-ḥi

1-7) Shalmaneser, great king, strong king, king of the universe, king of the Land of Ashur, son of Assurnaširpal (II), great king, strong king, king of the universe, king of the Land of Ashur, son of Tukulti-Ninurta (II), also king of the universe and king of the Land of Ashur, (brick of the) revetment of the ziggurat of the city of Kalḥu.

Among the bricks of this group, there can be found at least three versions of the same inscription: with five or seven lines and with a sign šá between *rišiptu* and U₆.NIR.⁸ Only two exemplars are complete, while other thirteen are not complete and two are particularly fragmentary. Nevertheless, in most of the cases the presence of the formula *rišiptu siqurratē* -which is typical of Shalmaneser III⁹- and the position of the signs easily reveal the nature of the bricks.

Bricks with É.GAL inscription

Twenty-one bricks¹⁰ bear a simple inscription beginning with the attestation of property to the palace of Shalmaneser III (*ēkal Šulmānu-ašarēdu*). The inscription continues with a genealogy of Shalmaneser III up to Tukulti-Ninurta II, in which each suzerain is celebrated as the king of the Land of Ashur.

1. É.GAL ^{1.d}sūl-ma-nu-MAŠ MAN KUR AŠ
2. A 'AŠ-PAP.A MAN KUR AŠ
3. A 'TUKUL- MAŠ MAN KUR AŠ-ma

1-3) (Property of the) Palace of Shalmaneser, king of the Land of Ashur son of Assurnaširpal (II), king of the Land of Ashur son of Tukulti-Ninurta (II), also king of the Land of Ashur.

The majority of the bricks are oblong rectangular in shape with one side almost completely occupied by an inscription without log lines, sometimes carelessly written.¹¹ Differently, a little group of three bricks appear to have had a larger shape, perhaps square, with a regular inscription engraved in the middle of them and framed by log lines.¹² Three examples out of twenty-one are complete, while twelve are not complete and other seven are particularly fragmentary. The homogeneity of the inscriptions, anyway, allows to identify the bricks most of the time, even when only few signs are visible.

The attestation of property É.GAL and the fact that

part of the bricks were found in Fort Shalmaneser, could bring to the conclusion that all the bricks originally came from the fort itself, even though we are not able to identify exactly which part of it. However, it should be noted that the attestation É.GAL alone doesn't assure the belonging to any building in particular, among the many that were built or restored by Shalmaneser during his reign.¹³ Besides, the bricks were never found *in situ*, but scattered in four adjacent rooms (A1, 3, 6 and 14) – often together with the bricks coming from the ziggurat – or in other areas of the site.

Other inscriptions

Finally, three bricks bear different inscriptions. In one brick found during the survey,¹⁴ we find the genealogy of the father of Shalmaneser III, Assurnaširpal II – whose name is although missing – and has been, therefore, dated to this king. The brick is quite fragmentary, but its shape seems to have been square.¹⁵ It bears a five lines inscription regularly written. Only the left part of first four lines is clearly readable, while on line 5 there are two half-visible signs of difficult reading. The original place of deposition of the brick was most probably somewhere in the acropolis of Kalḥu.¹⁶

1. É.GAL ^{1.}[AŠ-PAP.A]
2. MAN ŠÚ MAN [KUR]AŠ]
3. A 'TUKUL- MAŠ [ŠÚ MAN KUR]AŠ]
4. A 10 ÉRIN.TAH [ŠÚ MAN KUR]AŠ-ma]
5. 'NÍG.GA?" (or šá BÀD?) [...]

1-5) (Property of) the Palace of [Assurnaširpal (II)], king of the universe, king [of the Land of Ashur], son of Tukulti-Ninurta (II) [king of the universe, king of the Land of Ashur], son of Adad-nārāri (II), [also king of the universe, king of the Land of Ashur]; (property of [the temple of Ninurta?/ the walls of Kalḥu?]

⁸ Cf. RIMA 3, 167.

⁹ Cf. AHw, 989a.

¹⁰ Nine bricks out of twenty-one were found in the rooms of quadrant SW (five in A 1, two in A 3, one in A 6 and one in A 14) and twelve during the survey.

¹¹ The (reconstructed) average size of the bricks is around 35 cm wide and 15 cm high.

¹² The absence of photos could be misleading in this sense. For example, the visible log lines in brick no. 4 (see catalogue, forthcoming) were not drawn in the autographed copy. The original size of these three bricks can't be precisely reconstructed. However, the size of the fragments is 16.6 x 28, 15.5 x 15.6 and 23 x 24 cm.

¹³ See RIMA 3, 159-169.

¹⁴ Classified as no. 21.

¹⁵ The size of the fragment is 27.3 x 24.8 cm.

¹⁶ The first sign is quite clearly a šá, while the second looks to me as GA or BÀD. In the first case, the šá should be read

The last two bricks are very difficult to read. The first one¹⁷ is similar in shape to the bricks of the É.GAL group, but its signs are unreadable. Differently, the second brick is quite well readable in its central part, but still very difficult to date, even though a dating to Assurnaşirpal II is possible.¹⁸

Conclusions

The forty-one inscribed bricks analysed here appear to have been previously removed from at least three different original places, and partly stored in Fort Shalmaneser. The only case in which there is certainty about the original provenance of the bricks is given by the ziggurat group, for which the inscription is explicit. The bricks bearing the É.GAL inscription could have indeed come from Fort Shalmaneser itself, the main *ēkallu* of Shalmaneser in Nimrud, even though this is not certain. The brick(s) dated to the reign of Assurnaşirpal II came, most probably, from the acropolis – or, perhaps, from the city-walls – of Nimrud. However, no bricks were found *in situ*, which implies that, at a certain point in history, they had been removed from their original place of deposition (inside or outside the fort) to be stored in different areas. As far as is concerned with the seventeen bricks excavated in Fort Shalmaneser, their discovery in the rooms of South-West quadrant fits well with the storing purposes of this quarter.

Two different hypothesis can be formulated, in my opinion, about the time and the reasons of the displacements. The rooms where the bricks have been discovered were added to the quarter's planimetry during the extensive restoration of the fort undertaken by Esarhaddon in 676-672 B.C. – a quite certain *terminus post quem*. Esarhaddon's earliest text from Nimrud mentions repairs to the walls, gates and some not better specified “desolate buildings which lay derelict in Kalḫu”.¹⁹ As it has been previously noted,²⁰ these “desolate buildings” don't necessarily refer to the *ēkal māšarti*, but could be identified with some other palaces in the acropolis. This seems to be supported by the discovery of six large stone town-wall inscriptions – five of Assurnaşirpal II and one of Shalmaneser III²¹ – in the North-East Quadrant of the fort (room NE26), also suggesting that Fort Shalmaneser served as storage place during the period of Esarhaddon's reconstruction works.²² If it were so, the bricks coming from the ziggurat of Nimrud could have been removed by order of Esarhaddon and temporarily stored in the fort, together with other bricks from different areas displaced for similar reasons.

A second possible period for the moving of the bricks dates back to the last years of the empire, during the reign of Sin-šar-iškun (627-612 B.C.). After the devastations caused during the first sack of the city in 614 B.C., we assist to a whole reorganization of the

main palaces of Nimrud, including Fort Shalmaneser, where many areas are put under reconstruction and some rooms are used for the storage of objects of various values and provenances. Following the excavators opinion, this will be the reason for which the majority of the objects found during the Italian expedition lay on the level of this period.²³ The bricks found in the rooms of the South-West Quadrant, therefore, could also have belonged to the material of reconstruction used during this attempt of the Assyrian government to reconstitute the place. A work that was never completed, for in 612 B.C. the enemy returned for a second sack, from which the city never recovered.

NÍG, which together with GA gives NÍG.GA, *nikkassu*, “property of”. This formula can be found in many inscriptions from the time of Assurnaşirpal II, which come both from Nineveh and Kalḫu: on several clay cones from the temple of Kidmuru in Kalḫu (RIMA 2, A.0.101.109), on some clay cone fragments from the temple of Ištar in Nineveh (RIMA 2, A.0.101.112), on clay hands from the temples of Ninurta in Kalḫu and Ištar in Nineveh (RIMA 2, A.0.101.120-121), and from five bricks from the temple of Ninurta in Kalḫu (RIMA 2, A.0.101.122), which (like the temple of Kidmuru) was situated just in front of the ziggurat built by Shalmaneser III. In the second case, the formula *šá BĀD*, “of the wall”, is attested only from the time of Shalmaneser III on bricks from Ashur, which record the work that the king made on the wall of Inner City (RIMA 3, A.0.102.100). The only construction work on the walls of the Assyrian capitals made by Assurnaşirpal II known to us was in Nimrud (RIMA 2, 189-190), and, even though no parallel is given, this could also be the original place of this brick.

¹⁷ Classified as no. 14.

¹⁸ The brick (classified as no. 22) has an inscription of five visible lines, of which only the two in the middle (3' and 4') are well readable. Here, we find the repetition of the titles MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ (“King of the universe, king of the Land of Ashur”), which makes this brick similar to many others, including those of the ziggurat group. At line 5' it seems to be a MAN and maybe a KUR, which suggests that this should be the last line ([....]MAN KUR AŠ-*ma*) of a king's genealogy. It has to be noted that at line 4' (the second of the supposed genealogy) the last sign before the formula MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ is a MAŠ, which could suggest the name of Tukulti-Ninurta (II), and consequently the genealogy of Assurnaşirpal II, or the name of Shalmaneser, for the genealogy of Šamši-Adad V (824-811 B.C.); I would prefer Assurnaşirpal, for no building work by Šamši-Adad V is attested in Kalḫu. Lines 1' and 2' have only few strokes, unreadable to me, while other two unreadable signs are on the right edge of the brick.

¹⁹ MILLARD 1961, 178: É.GAL.MEŠ *ab-ut-ti ša qī-rib* *URU**kal-ha ma-aq-tu-ti*.

²⁰ POSTGATE, READE 1976-1980, 317.

²¹ ND 6232-7.

²² MALLOWAN 1966, 395.

²³ FIORINA 2004, 78. See also FIORINA, BERTAZZOLI, BERTOLOTTO 1998 and MALLOWAN 1966, 469.

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Impaginazione a cura di Stefano Rolle

FINITO DI STAMPARE
NEL MESE DI FEBBRAIO 2013
PER CONTO DELLA
CASA EDITRICE LE LETTERE
DALLA TIPOGRAFIA ABC
SESTO FIORENTINO - FIRENZE