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Shigeo Yamada (ed.)

NEO-ASSYRIAN SOURCES IN CONTEXT
THEMATIC STUDIES OF TEXTS, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN TEXT CORPUS PROJECT

State Archives of Assyria Studies is a series of monographic studies relating to and supplementing the text editions published in the SAA series. Manuscripts are accepted in English, French and German. The responsibility for the contents of the volumes rests entirely with the authors.

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Set in Times

The Assyrian Royal Seal emblem drawn by Dominique Collon from original Seventh Century B.C. impressions (BM 84672 and 84677) in the British Museum

Cover: Sennacherib sitting on his throne at Lachish, BM 124911 (detail)

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NEO-ASSYRIAN SOURCES IN CONTEXT

Thematic Studies on Texts, History, and Culture

Edited by

Shigeo Yamada

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN TEXT CORPUS PROJECT

2018

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The emergence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the eighth-seventh centuries BC is one of the outstanding phenomena in the history of the ancient Near East. The multi-language and multi-cultural state stretching over an extensive area of the ancient Near East has long been recognized and studied as one of the earliest imperial political entities. The philological study of inscriptional sources from the Neo-Assyrian period has rapidly progressed, especially since the 1980s, with a number of large-scale editorial projects that include the State Archives of Assyria Project (Helsinki), the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project (Toronto), the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period Project (Pennsylvania), the Assur Project (Berlin) and the *Edition literarischer Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Heidelberg). These projects have provided us with the text editions and hand copies of various materials (such as administrative/legal texts, letters, religious/literary texts, and royal and private commemorative inscriptions, etc.), either previously known or newly worked on, with high standards of philological accuracy. Hence, the time has come to undertake a variety of advanced research on the texts of the Neo-Assyrian period from new perspectives using different sorts of sources in combination, alongside the study of specific corpuses and text genres. On this tide, the seminar “Interaction, interplay and combined use of different sources in Neo-Assyrian studies: Monumental texts and archival sources” was held at the University of Tsukuba and the Tsukuba International Congress Center (Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan) on December 11–13, 2014, with the program given below. The event was supported by the fund for the Finnish-Japanese joint seminar sponsored by the Academy of Finland and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (representatives: Raija Mattila and Shigeo Yamada), as well as by a Japanese research grant (MEXT KAKENHI 24101007). I especially owe gratitude to Raija Mattila, Daisuke Shibata, and the staff of the Research Center for West Asian Civilization at the University of Tsukuba for their kind cooperation in organizing the meeting.

Seminar Program:

Day 1 (Dec. 11)

13:30~17:30 Session 1 (Chair: Shigeo Yamada)

Sebastian Fink, “Different Sources – Different Kings? The Picture of the Neo-Assyrian King in Inscriptions, Letters and Literary Texts”

Raija Mattila, “The Military Role of Magnates and Governors: Royal Inscriptions vs Archival and Literary Sources”

Jamie Novotny, “Late Neo-Assyrian Building Histories: Tradition, Ideology, and Historical Reality”

Shuichi Hasegawa, “Use of Archaeological Data for the Investigation of the Itineraries of Assyrian Military Campaigns”

Day 2 (Dec. 12)

10:00~12:00 Session 2 (Chair: Daisuke Shibata)

Greta Van Buylaere, “Tracing the Neo-Elamite Kingdom of Zamin in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Sources”

Shigeo Yamada, “Ulluba and Its Surroundings: Tiglath-pileser III’s Province Making Facing the Urartian Border, Reconsidered from Royal Inscriptions and Letters”

13:30~17:30 Session 3 (Chair: Raija Mattila)

Robert Rollinger, “Yawan in Neo-Assyrian Sources: Monumental and Archival Texts in Dialogue”

Sanae Ito, “Propaganda and Historical Reality in the Nabû-bêl-šumāti Affair in Letters and Royal Inscriptions”

Andreas Fuchs, “How to Implement Safe and Secret Lines of Communication Using Iron Age Technology: Evidence from a Letter to a God and a Letter to a King”

Jamie Novotony and Chikako E. Watanabe, “Unraveling the Mystery of an Unrecorded Event: Identifying the Four Foreigners Paying Homage to Assurbanipal in BM ME 124945-6”

Day 3 (Dec. 13)

10:00~12:00 Session 4 (Chair: Robert Rollinger)

Grant Frame, “Lost in the Tigris: Trials and Tribulations in Editing Royal Inscriptions of Sargon II of Assyria”

Karen Radner, “The Last Emperor: Aššur-uballit II in Archival and Historiographic Sources”

13:30~17:30 Session 5 (Chair: Chikako Watanabe)

Saana Svärd, “‘Doing Gender’: Women, Family and Ethnicity in the Neo-Assyrian Letters and Royal Inscriptions”

Silvie Zamazalová, “Images of an Omen Fulfilled: *Šumma ālu* in the Inscriptions of Sargon II”

Mikko Luukko, “The Anonymity of Authors and Patients: Some Comparisons between the Neo-Assyrian Correspondence and Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals”

Daisuke Shibata, “The Akītu-festival of Ištar at Nineveh: Royal Inscriptions and Emesal-prayers”

The present volume contains 14 articles. The majority of them follow the original papers read in the seminar relatively faithfully, though some have largely been expanded and/or changed in the focus of discussion. Daisuke Shibata and Robert Rollinger preferred to keep their papers out of this volume and may publish their research results elsewhere.

The combined use of different genres of text is an obvious need for many thematic studies, and it has already been attempted for a long time in studies concerning the Neo-Assyrian period and Assyriology in general. Thus, the collection of articles in this volume may mostly not be very special in the methodological sense. It may be of value, however, to classify the articles from the viewpoint of the theme of the above-mentioned seminar to review what sorts of studies were made and what kinds

of approaches and methods were used. In this volume, the articles are presented in the same order as they are given in the following rather arbitrary overview:

(1) One major group comprises a variety of historical studies that naturally require the use of various textual sources related to historical reconstructions of any kind (political, social, administrative, cultural, or geographical), either commemorative or archival, dated or undated, literary texts or practical sober documents, or textual or pictographic. Eight articles may be assigned to this group. **Mattila** highlighted the military role of high officials, magnates, and governors that is concealed and only rarely referred to in royal inscriptions but often referred to in other texts such as private inscriptions, administrative texts, eponym chronicles, letters, oracles, and literary compositions. **Yamada** scrutinized the process of Tiglath-pileser III's province-building along the Urartian border, utilizing the king's inscriptions and Eponym Chronicles as a chronological backbone while reinforcing those data with Assyrian letters and Urartian inscriptions. **Fuchs'** article is a unique piece discussing geo-political issues and Assyrian strategic thinking related to Sargon's campaign against Urartu in 714 BC, with the complementary use of two different sources, i.e., the highly literary composition stylized as a letter to a god commemorating this military enterprise on one hand, and a practical intelligence report written during the ongoing campaign on the other. **Van Buylaere** tackled the problem of Zamin, a town attested in Neo-Elamite sources, and identified it with Samuna of Neo-Assyrian/Neo-Babylonian sources. Thus, bridging between the different linguistic materials, she reconstructed the historical-geographical circumstances under which this town was situated. **Ito** advanced a new study of the affair of Nabû-bêl-šumāti, the rebellious prince of Bit-Yakin punished by Ashurbanipal. To reconstruct the relevant events historically, she analyzed details given in rich epistolary sources in combination with information from royal inscriptions and other texts. The joint study of **Novotny and Watanabe** dealt with the personal and ethnic identity of four foreigners depicted on a wall relief of the North Palace in Nineveh as submitting to Ashurbanipal after the fall of Babylon. The study analyzed the pictographic details with circumstantial evidence from the king's inscriptions. **Svård** assembled and viewed data about groups of women involved in the temple administration (*šēlūtu*, *kazrutu*, *mašītu*, *qadissu*, *entu*) from various archival texts – contracts, administrative records, decrees, oracles, and letters – to consider the social context in which they were involved. Finally, **Radner's** study concerned the last ruler of Assyria, Aššur-uballit II. She pointed out a remarkable fact that Aššur-uballit was regarded only as a crown prince in Assyrian archival documents even after the death of his father, Sin-šarru-iškun, persuasively explaining this phenomenon by reflecting the lack of the accession ceremony after the fall of the religious capital, Assur. Thus, she displayed the official Assyrian view in contrast with the Babylonian Chronicle, where Aššur-uballit II is referred to as the king of Assyria.

(2) Another group comprises comparative or contrastive literary studies of different text genres concerning specific terms, concepts, and ideologies, and it occasionally also deals with the problem of intertextuality. **Fink** analyzed royal portraits as projected in royal inscriptions, letters, and various literary works – historiographical texts, wisdom literature, and folk tales – touching on their different ideological-functional modes of composition. The unique article of **Luukko** concerned the anonymity and related phenomena commonly observed in the corpora of Neo-Assyrian denunciation letters and Mesopotamian anti-

witchcraft rituals. Comparing both corpora, he discussed the common motive of self-protection found behind them and attempted to explain the social norm in which the anonymous denunciation letters were written. **Zamazalová** investigated the image of mountains from the Mesopotamian viewpoint in monumental texts, letters, and literary and scholarly compositions. Thus, she demonstrated the ideologically formulated description of mountains as royal heroic space in royal inscriptions, particularly those of Sargon II, while comparing it with texts of other genres and discussing possible intertextuality between them.

(3) Other articles, though each unique, discuss the philological or historiographical problems of royal inscriptions in some connection with archaeology. **Frame's** article presented the unusual philological complexity that he encountered in his editing of Sargon II's inscriptions, particularly those inscribed on the stone slabs found at Khorsabad. He described dramatic historical circumstances that later caused complexity, i.e., the loss of excavated original inscriptions and the subsequent remains of incomplete fragmentary and oft-contradicting records. Then, he illustrated his complicated work in reconstructing the lost original. **Hasegawa** discussed the reliability of "itineraries" found in Assyrian royal inscriptions and that of archaeological data for the identification of ancient sites. He gave several caveats for the critical interpretation of both sorts of evidence. **Novotny** critically analyzed the building accounts of the late Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions by interrelating and comparing those from various periods. Thus, he showed that the "building history" given in the royal inscriptions refer only selectively to the predecessors' building works and often appear misleading or incorrect.

In various stages of editorial work, I had kind advice and assistance from Raija Mattila, Daisuke Shibata, Jamie Novotny, Chikako Watanabe, Keiko Yamada, and Yasuyuki Mitsuma. I am very grateful to all of them. I would like to thank Simo Parpola for his generous acceptance of this volume in the State Archives of Assyria Studies, as the director of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND OBJECT SIGNATURES

Bibliographical Abbreviations

<i>AAA</i>	<i>Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i> (Liverpool)
<i>ABL</i>	R. F. Harper, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum</i> (Chicago 1892–1914)
<i>ActAnt.</i>	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> (Budapest)
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i> (Berlin etc.)
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i> (Chicago)
AMD	Ancient Magic and Divination (Groningen/Leiden)
AnOr.	Analecta Orientalia (Rome)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn/Münster)
AS	Assyriological Studies (Chicago)
BA	Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft (Leipzig)
<i>BagM</i>	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i> (Berlin/Mainz)
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient (Berlin)
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago/Glückstadt)
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (Saarbrücken/Wiesbaden)
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden)
CM	Cuneiform Monographs (Groningen/Leiden)
<i>CMAwR 1</i>	T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, <i>Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals, Volume One</i> , AMD 8/1 (Leiden/Boston 2011)
<i>CMAwR 2</i>	T. Abusch, D. Schwemer, M. Luukko, and G. Van Buylaere, <i>Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals, Volume Two</i> , AMD 8/2 (Leiden/Boston 2016)
<i>CT</i>	<i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</i> (London 1896ff.)
<i>CT 53</i>	S. Parpola, <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Part 53: Neo-Assyrian Letters from the Kouyunjik Collection</i> (London 1979)
<i>CT 54</i>	M. Dietrich, <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum Part 54: Neo-Babylonian Letters from the</i>

- CTN *Kuyunjik Collection* (London 1979)
 CTN 2 Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud (London)
 CTN 3 J. N. Postgate, *The Governor's Palace Archive* (London 1973)
 S. Dalley and J. N. Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser*
 (London 1984)
 CTU M. Salvini, *Corpus dei testi urartei*, I-III (Rome 2008)
 CUSAS Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
 (Bethesda, MD)
Hchl F. W. König, *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft
 8 (Osnabrück 1955)
IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal* (Jerusalem)
IranAnt. *Iranica Antiqua* (Gent/Leuven)
Iraq *Iraq: Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq*
 (London)
Isimu *Isimu: Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antigüedad*
 (Madrid)
JA *Journal Asiatique* (Paris)
JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New Haven etc.)
JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (New Haven etc.)
JESHO *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
 (Leiden)
JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
KAR E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (Leipzig
 1919)
Kaskal *Kaskal: rivista di storia, ambiente e culture del vicino oriente*
antico (Padua)
LAS S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings*
Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, AOAT 5/1-2 (Neukirchen-
 Vluyn 1970–1983)
 MC Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake, IN)
 MDP Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse (Paris)
 MSL Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon = Materials for the
 Sumerian Lexicon (Rome)
MVAG Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft (Berlin/
 Leipzig)
NABU *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* (Rouen/Paris)
 OLA Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven)
Or. / Or. NS Orientalia Nova Series (Rome)
Orient *Orient: Reports of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*
 (Tokyo)
 PIHANS Publications de l'Institut Historique-Archéologique Néerlandais
 de Stamboul (Leiden)
PNA K. Radner (1998–1999) and H. Baker (2000–2011) (eds.), *The*
Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, 1–3 (Helsinki
 1998–2011)
RA *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* (Paris)
 RGTC Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes (Tübinger
 Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Beiheft Reihe B, Wiesbaden)

ABBREVIATIONS AND OBJECT SIGNATURES

RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto)
RIMA 1	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennium BC (to 1115 BC)</i> (Toronto 1987)
RIMA 2	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: I (1114–859 BC)</i> (Toronto 1991)
RIMA 3	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: II (858–745 BC)</i> (Toronto 1996)
RIMB 2	G. Frame, <i>Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)</i> , The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods 2 (Toronto 1995).
RIME 2	D. R. Frayne, <i>Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)</i> , The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 2 (Toronto 1993)
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Winona Lake, IN)
RINAP 1	H. Tadmor, and S. Yamada, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2011)
RINAP 3/1	A. K. Grayson and J. Novotny, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2012)
RINAP 3/2	A. K., Grayson and J. Novotny, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 2</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2014)
RINAP 4	E. Leichty, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2011)
RINAP 5/1	J. Novotny and J. Jeffers, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria, Part I</i> (Winona Lake, IN 2018)
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie (und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie)</i> (Berlin/Leipzig)
SAA	State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki)
SAA 1	S. Parpola, <i>The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West</i> (Helsinki 1987)
SAA 2	S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, <i>Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths</i> (Helsinki 1988)
SAA 3	A. Livingstone, <i>Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea</i> (Helsinki 1989)
SAA 4	I. Starr, <i>Queries to the Sun god: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria</i> (Helsinki 1990).
SAA 5	G. B. Lanfranchi and S. Parpola, <i>The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces</i> (Helsinki 1990)
SAA 7	F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part I. Palace and Temple Administration</i> (Helsinki 1992)

- SAA 8 H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* (Helsinki 1992)
- SAA10 S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Helsinki 1993)
- SAA 11 F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II* (Helsinki 1995)
- SAA 13 S. W. Cole and P. Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (Helsinki 1998)
- SAA 14 R. Mattila, *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II: Assurbanipal through Sin-šarru-iškun* (Helsinki 2002)
- SAA 15 A. Fuchs and S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III: Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces* (Helsinki 2001)
- SAA 16 M. Luukko and G. Van Buylaere, *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon* (Helsinki 2002)
- SAA 17 M. Dietrich, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* (Helsinki 2003)
- SAA 18 F. Reynolds, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-šarru-iškun from Northern and Central Babylonia* (Helsinki 2003)
- SAA 19 M. Luukko, *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud* (Helsinki 2012)
- SAA 20 S. Parpola, *Assyrian Royal Rituals and Cultic Texts* (Helsinki 2017)
- SAA 21 S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part I: Letters from Assyria, Babylonia and Vassal States* (Helsinki 2018)
- SAAB *State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin* (Padua)
- SAACT State Archives of Assyria. Cuneiform Texts (Helsinki)
- SAAS State Archives of Assyria. Studies (Helsinki)
- SANER Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Boston/Berlin)
- SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago)
- STAT 2 V. Donbaz and S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Texts in Istanbul, Studien zu den Assur-Texten 2* (Saarbrücken 2001)
- STT O. R. Gurny and J. J. Finkelstein, *The Sultantepe Tablets*, vols. I–II (London 1957, 1964)
- TCL Textes cunéiformes. Musées du Louvre (Paris)
- TCL 3 F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon (714 av. J.-C.)* (Paris 1912)
- TCS Texts from Cuneiform Sources (Locast Valley, NY)
- TH J. Friedrich, G. R. Meyer, A. Ungnad and E. F. Weidner, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf. Keilschrifttexte und aramäische Urkunden aus einer assyrischen Provinzhauptstadt. AfO Beiheft 6* (Berlin 1940)
- TIM Texts in the Iraq Museum (Baghdad/Wiesbaden)
- WO *Die Welt des Orients: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Wuppertal/Göttingen)
- ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* (Berlin etc.)

ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
(Mainz/Wiesbaden)

Object Signatures

A	Aššur collection of Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri
Assur	Siglum of texts excavated in the German excavation at Assur
BM	British Museum, London
HMA	Hearst Museum of Anthropology of the University of California at Berkeley
K	Kuyunjik collection of the British Museum, London
MMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
N	Nippur collection the University Museum, Philadelphia
ND	Field numbers of tablets excavated in Nimrud
O	Siglum of texts in the Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels
Rm	H. Rassam collection of the British Museum
SÉ	The convent Saint-Étienne, Jerusalem
VA	Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin
VAT	Tablets in the collections of the staatliche Museen, Berlin.
YBC	Babylonian collection of the Yale University Library, New Haven

Late Neo-Assyrian Building Histories: Tradition, Ideology, and Historical Reality

Jamie Novotny, Munich

1. Introduction¹

Assyrian kings of the eighth and seventh centuries sponsored and supervised numerous building projects in both Assyria and Babylonia. These rulers frequently recorded information about their construction projects in official, self-aggrandizing inscriptions; the texts were generally written in the Standard Babylonian dialect of Akkadian but also occasionally in monolingual Sumerian. Some of the details described in textual sources can be confirmed by archaeological evidence, but most, however, cannot and, therefore, much of what we know about the palaces, temples, and city walls that were built, enlarged, or renovated by Assyria's kings comes from texts that are usually more concerned with royal ideology than historical reality. This paper will provide some of my current thoughts on late Neo-Assyrian building reports, especially the changing and selective nature of the building histories included in royal inscriptions. This careful examination will illustrate that late Neo-Assyrian kings in descriptions of construction: (1) never referred to both a ruler who lived in the distant past and an immediate predecessor, a king's father, grandfather, or great-grandfather; (2) rarely named more than ruler who lived in the distant past; (3) carefully selected which earlier former rulers were named; (4) regularly excluded reference to their own father's and/or grandfather's achievements; and (5) never named more than one immediate predecessor. This paper will present the Assyrian evidence for each of these five points in order to help us better understand the very selective nature of late Neo-Assyrian "building histories." The Babylonian evidence, that is, reports of projects in southern Mesopotamian, generally falls outside the scope of this brief, introductory study. Moreover, I will give a general

¹ Support for my research on Assyrian (and Babylonian) inscriptions is provided by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (through the establishment of the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Ancient History of the Near and Middle East) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Historisches Seminar – Abteilung Alte Geschichte). I would like to thank Karen Radner for reading through and commenting on a draft of this manuscript. Her time and care are greatly appreciated. Any errors or omissions are solely my responsibility. All dates are BC(E), except, of course, in bibliographical references.

Because this is an introductory paper to the topic and because this volume contains numerous Neo-Assyrian-specific studies, footnotes and bibliography are kept to a minimum. For further details on Assyrian (temple) building, see, for example, Novotny 2010 and Novotny 2014a.

overview of the sources in which building histories appear and address some of the problems that scholars and students encounter when trying to reconstruct the history of any given building or wall, including how archaeological evidence, in at least one instance, can help us identify misinformation in the textual record.

2. General Overview of the Textual Sources

There are numerous textual sources for construction projects sponsored by Assyria's kings.² The royal inscriptions in which construction work is recorded or mentioned fall into three general groups: (1) texts that are written on objects deposited in the structure of the building; (2) texts that are inscribed or stamped on objects that form part of the physical structure of the building; and (3) texts that are written on objects decorating the interior of the building. Inscriptions in the first category are the most informative since they provide (detailed) accounts of construction projects. The attested media for what scholars commonly referred to as "commemorative inscriptions," "historical inscriptions," "annals," "display inscriptions," and "foundation inscriptions" are (barrel) cylinders, cones or nails, prisms, vertical cylinders, horizontal prisms, (clay, metal, and stone) tablets, and small cuboid-shaped monuments and steles. These were usually placed in the walls of buildings, sometimes in alabaster coffers.³ Texts in the second category provide little descriptive information about building projects. Occasionally "labels" or "commemorative labels" provide information not included in longer building accounts written on cylinders, prisms, tablets, etc.; for example, the name of a specific part or room of the building.⁴ Because these short texts were written on objects that were used to construct the structure of the building, they provide (certain) physical evidence that work was undertaken on the king's behalf.⁵ Few actual texts in the

² For example, see Borger 1996; Frame 1995, 143–154, 164–247, and 261–268; Fuchs 1994; Grayson and Novotny 2012 and 2014; Leichty 2011; Novotny and Jeffers 2018; and Tadmor and Yamada 2011. For (general) studies on royal inscriptions, see in particular Fales 1999–2001; Grayson 1980; Renger 1980; and Tadmor 1997.

³ For example, gold (AO 19933; formerly Nap. III 2897), silver (AO 21371; formerly Nap. III 2898), bronze (AO 21370; formerly Nap. III 2900), and magnesite (Nap. III 2899) tablets of Sargon II were discovered in 1854 inside alabaster coffers embedded in the mud-brick wall between rooms 17 and 19 of Sargon's palace at Dūr-Šarrukīn. In Babylonia, especially during the reign of Nabonidus, clay foundation records were placed in clay boxes that were then deposited in the mudbrick walls of temples.

⁴ For example, Grayson and Novotny 2014, 282–285 nos. 203–204, which name the mausoleum of the royal family in Ashur as the "Palace of Rest" (*ekal tapšuḫti*) and Sennacherib's burial chamber as the "Palace of Sleep" (*ekal šalāli*).

⁵ These include bricks, door sockets, wall slabs, paving stones, threshold slabs, and human-headed bull colossi. Note that Assyrian kings did not always have inscriptions placed on bricks, as is clear from eighth- and seventh-century repairs made to the Ezida temple at Calah. No inscribed bricks of Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, or Sin-šarru-iškun have been found in that temple. The only inscriptions on bricks from that Ezida temple come from the time of Aššur-etel-ilāni. Also at Calah, there are no inscribed bricks, for example, from the Central Palace or from the South-West Palace. At Nineveh, the same is true, for

third category survive today since many of them were written on metal, a precious material that was in antiquity often removed from the original object, melted down, and reused.⁶ These texts, which we often refer to as “dedicatory inscriptions” or “display inscriptions,” were written on (cast) metal objects or sheets of metal that plated a variety of objects decorating the interior rooms of buildings; for example, the banding on wooden doors and the plating on apotropaic gateway guardians. However, a fair number of these inscriptions are known from copies written on clay tablets.⁷ Texts in this category contain short descriptions of construction that record the fashioning of the objects upon which the inscriptions were to be written. Without such texts, much information about the decoration of palaces and temples would otherwise be lost. Generally, only inscriptions in the first category provide information about previous builders.

3. Reconstructing a Temple’s Building History: Outlining Some of the Problems

Since descriptions of construction, like those concerned with military campaigns, were more concerned with royal ideology than historical reality, it is very difficult to accurately reconstruct the building history of any given palace, temple, or wall. Projects are always presented as if the work has already been undertaken from start to finish. No project is ever described as incomplete. Thus, in the case of building reports, the information included likely presents the intentions of the king, rather than what he had actually achieved. To use a modern comparison, we need to think of passages recording construction as if they were architectural models or concept drawings created by architects or architectural firms to sell their designs to clients and to advertise, show off, and promote those buildings as they are being constructed. Moreover, because information included in the inscriptions themselves can be ambiguous, scholars are usually not in a position to make firm conclusions about many building activities. For example, it is not always clear whether a ruler is making minor repairs to part of the building or rebuilding it in its entirety from top to bottom.⁸ In addition, since projects are always presented as a *fait accompli*,

example, of the North Palace (the so-called House of Succession), the Sîn-Šamaš temple, the Citadel Wall, and the wing of the armory built by Esarhaddon and repaired by Ashurbanipal.

⁶ Three good examples are BM 91157, IM 62197, and AO 20185. Respectively Grayson and Novotny 2014, 272–273 nos. 193–194; and Leichty 2011, 323–324 no. 2010 (with fig. 19). The most famous surviving works of metal from Assyria are the bronze bands of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III from Balawat (Imgur-Enlil); see King 1915; and Curtis and Tallis 2008.

⁷ This is especially true for the reign of Ashurbanipal. For example, Bu 89-4-29,209, K 2803+, K 2813+, K 2822+, K 8759+, K 9143, Sm 530+, and Sm 671 are inscribed with copies of “display inscriptions” that were written on metal-plated objects set up in temples at Ḥarrān. For details, see Novotny 2003, 30–43.

⁸ For example, Ashurbanipal records that he built and completed Nineveh’s citadel wall “from its foundation(s) to its crenellations,” (Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 4 viii 58–69), but it is unlikely that he had the entire wall rebuilt. In reality, he probably only made repairs to

it is impossible to know for certain whether or not a project was carried out in full or whether only part of the work had been finished. It is only in instances when a king's successor records that he completed work left unfinished by his predecessor that we can say with confidence that a king's claims in his inscriptions were not fully realized. For example, Esarhaddon repeatedly boasts that he finished building the Aššur temple at Ashur, but several texts of Ashurbanipal report that he had to complete the work after the death of his father.⁹

Although accounts of construction sometimes refer to previous builders, this information is not particularly useful since building histories are very selective as to whom is mentioned as a previous builder. As we will see shortly, most previous builders are never named, while only a handful of Assyria's more illustrious, previous rulers are mentioned by name; for example, Shalmaneser I, Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, and Adad-nārārī III. On at least two occasions, information included in a building history is borrowed from an earlier inscription. The best example appears in Esarhaddon's "Aššur A Inscription," which credits Ušpia, Erišum I, Šamšī-Adad I, and Shalmaneser I as previous builders of the Aššur temple at Ashur.¹⁰ The first three are named only because those rulers are given credit for work on the temple in inscriptions of Shalmaneser I.¹¹ Esarhaddon wanting to be seen as the next builder of the Aššur temple in line after Shalmaneser I intentionally excludes the names of at least eleven rulers who are known to have worked on Ešarra.¹² If it were not for the fact that evidence for those eleven kings working on Aššur's temple is extant, all of the history of Assyria's most venerated temple

sections of it and strengthened the stretches of wall that needed better reinforcing. The same is true of the armory; see Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 3 viii 56–64 and no. 6 x 19"–2". There is sufficient archaeological evidence to support the fact that Ashurbanipal's workmen did not entirely tear down and rebuild that palace; see most recently Reade 2017.

⁹ Esarhaddon states, for example, "I built (and) completed that temple from its foundations to its parapets (and) filled (it) with splendor to be seen. I roofed it with beams of cedar (and) cypress, grown on Mount Sirāra (and) Mount Lebanon, whose fragrance is sweet. I fastened bands of gold on [doors] of cypress and installed (them) in its gates." However, Ashurbanipal records "I completed Eḫursaggalkurkurra, the temple of (the god) Aššur, my lord, (and) I decorated its walls with gold (and) silver. ... I made (the god) Aššur enter into Eḫursaggula and made (him) reside on (his) eternal dais." Elsewhere, Ashurbanipal makes the following claim about his father's work: "(As for) the sanctua[ries of A]ssyria (and) the land Akkad whose foundation(s) Esarh[addon], king of Assyria, the father who had engendered me, had laid, but whose construction he had not finished, now I myself completed their work by the command of the great gods, my lords." See respectively Leichty 2011, 127 no. 57 vi 1–14; and Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 10 i 14–20 and no. 6 i 5'–10'.

¹⁰ Leichty 2011, 124–125 no. 57 iii 16–41: "The former temple of the god Aššur, which Ušpia, my ancestor, priest of the god Aššur, first built, became dilapidated and Erišum (I), son of Ilu-šūma, my ancestor, priest of the god Aššur, (re)built (it); one hundred and twenty-six years passed and it became dilapidated again, and Šamšī-Adad (I), son of Ilā-kabkabī, my ancestor, priest of the god Aššur, (re)built (it); four hundred and thirty-four years passed and that temple was destroyed in a conflagration, (and) Shalmaneser (I), son of Adad-nārārī (I), my ancestor, priest of the god Aššur, (re)built (it); five hundred and eighty years passed and the inner cella, the residence of the god Aššur, my lord, the *bī-šahūru*, the temple of the god Kubu, the temple of the god Dibar, (and) the temple of the god Ea became dilapidated, aged, (and) antique."

¹¹ Grayson 1987, 185 A.0.77.1 lines 112–118.

¹² These eleven rulers are Tukultī-Ninurta I, Aššur-rēšī-iši I, Aššur-dān II, Tukultī-Ninurta II, Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, Adad-nārārī III, Aššur-dān III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib.

between the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Esarhaddon would now be lost.¹³

Building reports in inscriptions written between 744 and 609 BCE usually name only one ruler as a previous builder; it is rare for more than one king to be named. In inscriptions of Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon, only distant rulers are given credit as previous builders. These three kings never refer to their immediate predecessors in connection with building. The inscriptions of Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun, on the other hand, mention either early rulers or one of their immediate predecessors. In cases when both the king's father and grandfather are known to have worked on the same structure — for example, the armory at Nineveh — the name of only one builder is given. In instances when both immediate predecessors and earlier kings sponsored construction on a building, the earlier ruler is generally given preference. Unless textual evidence exists for a project, that information may now be lost to us since in most instances it is unlikely that it will be referred to in a building report. What is known about the history of every palace, temple, or city wall is dependent on what evidence is still extant. Although it is rare, but a building history may contain information that is now lost in the archaeological record. For example, Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun both state that Adad-nārārī III worked on the Ezida temple at Calah; that accomplishment of that early Neo-Assyrian king is not known from sources of the late ninth and early eighth centuries.¹⁴ More is lost than is known about the history of most Assyrian building projects.¹⁵ This is particularly true for buildings or walls known only from the textual record; for example, the Eḫulḫul temple and *akītu*-house of the moon god at Ḫarrān.¹⁶

4. Late Neo-Assyrian Building Histories

Of the numerous, extant official inscriptions written in the names of Assyria's last ten kings (from Tiglath-pileser III to Aššur-uballiṭ II), only twenty-eight texts refer to a previous builder in their accounts of construction.¹⁷ These so-called “building histories” appear in inscriptions that are written on clay cylinders, prisms, vertical cylinders, and cones, as well as stone blocks and foundation tablets, discovered at Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, Tarbiṣu, Tīl-Barsip, and Uruk. Previous builders are named in the preserved texts of Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and Sîn-šarru-iškun. The extant inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Aššur-etel-ilāni, however, do not mention any previous rulers, which is mostly due to the nature and/or media of those king's texts, nearly all of which one

¹³ For some information on building as history, see Galter 2004.

¹⁴ For the building history of the Ezida temple at Calah, see Novotny and Van Buylaere 2009, 233–235.

¹⁵ The author is currently working on a publication addressing some of these issues.

¹⁶ See Novotny 2003.

¹⁷ These inscriptions will be referenced in the notes below (especially nn. 20 and 38–39); see also Novotny 2014a, 110–111.

does not expect to find a building history.¹⁸ Moreover, there are no known official inscriptions of Sîn-šumu-lēšir and Aššur-uballiṭ II, so nothing about the building projects that those two men may have undertaken is known.¹⁹ In total, late Neo-Assyrian descriptions of construction record information about previous builders for twenty-one different palaces, temples, and walls in six Assyrian cities and one Babylonian city. These are for: (1) the Old Palace, the Aššur temple (Ešarra), and the Nabû temple (Egidrukalamasumu) at Ashur; (2) the North-West Palace, Fort Shalmaneser, and the Nabû temple (Ezida) at Calah, as well as the nearby Tebilti canal; (3) the Sîn temple (Eḫulḫul) at Ḫarrān; (4) the North Palace (the so-called House of Succession), the South-West Palace, the armory, the citadel wall, one of the two *akītu*-houses, the Ištar temple (Emašmaš), the Sîn-Šamaš temple, the Nabû temple (Ezida), and another temple at Nineveh; (5) the Nergal temple (Egallammes) at Tarbišu; (6) the Adad temple at Tīl-Barsip; and (7) the Ištar temple (Eanna) and Nanāya shrine (Eḫiliana) at Uruk. An at-a-glance chart of this information can be found in Novotny 2014a, 110–111.

A careful examination of the relevant texts reveals that the “building histories” are very selective as to whom is mentioned as a previous builder, something that should not come as too much of a surprise given the fact that official texts were more concerned with ideology than historical reality. Once all of the evidence is neatly laid out, it becomes clear that five patterns or traditions emerge when recording information about the previous incarnation of a building or wall. Late Neo-Assyrian rulers: (1) regularly exclude reference to their own father’s and grandfather’s achievements; (2) never name more than one immediate predecessor; (3) never give credit to both a distant ruler and an immediate predecessor; (4) rarely cite more than ruler who lived in the distant past as a previous builder; and (5) carefully select which earlier former rulers were named. Now, let us examine each of these points.

4.1. *Exclusion of the Achievements of the King’s Father and Grandfather*

The extant inscriptions of Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon name only distant rulers in “building histories.”²⁰ These three kings never refer to their father

¹⁸ In the case of Tiglath-pileser III at Calah, the only building reports of his record work on a new palace and, therefore, one does not expect him to mention a previous builder of a structure that had not previously existed. At Ashur, the only inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser mentioning building are on bricks, a medium on which Assyrian kings did not refer to previous builders. As for Shalmaneser V, the only certain extant inscriptions of his are engraved on lion-shaped weights. With regard to Aššur-etel-ilāni, the only known inscription of his from Assyria (the Ezida temple at Calah) is found on bricks.

¹⁹ Given the nature and length of the tenures of Sîn-šumu-lēšir and Aššur-uballiṭ II as kings of Assyria, it is unlikely that either had time to build/restore/repair palaces, temples, and/or shrines. Aššur-uballiṭ II, however, may have reinforced the city walls of Ḫarrān and it seems rather doubtful that he would have utilized resources to have had bricks for that project inscribed (or stamped).

²⁰ For the inscriptions of Sargon, see Frame 1995, 148 no. B.6.22.3 lines 18–20 (Uruk, Ištar temple: Šulgi); Fuchs 1998, 5 lines 7’–8’ (Tīl-Barsip, Adad temple: Ashurnasirpal II); Rawlinson and Smith 1870, pl. 3 no. 12 lines 4–5 (Nineveh, Nabû temple: Adad-nārārī III); and Winckler 1889 1, 170–171 line 13 (Calah, North-West Palace: Ashurnasirpal II). For the

or grandfather as previous builders of palaces and temples. Based on current textual and archaeological evidence, there is relatively little overlap in the known construction activities of Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon, and even fewer sources in which one expects to find the mention of a previous builder in the overlapping projects. With regard to Sargon II, the only project that he and his father, assuming Tiglath-pileser III was his father, have in common is the Aššur temple at Ashur. The only inscriptions of Sargon recording this work are written on bricks and clay cones, media generally not known for including references to previous builders.²¹ Moreover, Sargon generally does not mention his ancestry in his annals and display texts, so one should not expect him to mention his father or grandfather as a previous builder.

The same is true for Sennacherib, who did his best to distance himself from his father by never mentioning that he was the son of Sargon; this, of course, had to do with the fact that Sargon's body was not recovered from the battlefield and, therefore, not buried as tradition prescribed.²² The only known project that both rulers worked on was the Aššur temple Ešarra. Even through a narrative inscription written on horizontal stone prisms has been preserved, Sennacherib did not need to record the names of previous builders, especially his father, since that text is concerned with the king having a new wing built onto the structure of the temple.²³ No former builders are listed since that multi-room complex, the so-called "Ostanbau," had not previously existed.²⁴

As for Esarhaddon, he had at least three opportunities to name Sennacherib and/or Sargon as previous builders. First, he could have named Sennacherib and Sargon as builders of the Aššur temple at Ashur. For ideological reasons, specifically to make himself the next king in line after Shalmaneser I to have worked on Ešarra, and possibly to distance himself from his father's expansion of the temple, work that may have upset temple personnel and court officials, Esarhaddon does not

texts of Sennacherib, see Grayson and Novotny 2012, 235 no. 36 rev. 3'-7' (Nineveh, Lady of Nineveh temple, Sîn-Šamaš temple, and another temple [name lost]: Ashurnasirpal II); and Grayson and Novotny 2014, 235 no. 164 lines 1-6 (Ashur, Old Palace: Tiglath-pileser I and Ashurnasirpal II), and 299 no. 213 (Tarbišu, Nergal temple: Shalmaneser III). For Esarhaddon's inscriptions, see Leichty 2011, 124-125 no. 57 iii 16-34 (Ashur, Aššur temple: Ušpia, Erišum I, Šamši-Adad I, Shalmaneser I); 131 no. 58 iii 8-16, 133 no. 59 i 19-22, and 136 no. 60 lines 17'b-19'a (Ashur, Aššur temple: Shalmaneser I); 156 no. 77 lines 42-43, 164 no. 81 lines 3b-5a, and 165 no. 82 lines 2b-3a (Calah, Fort Shalmaneser: Shalmaneser III); 170 no. 87 lines 6-7 (Calah, Tebilti canal: Ashurnasirpal II); and 278 no. 136 lines 11-14 (Uruk, Nanāya shrine: Nazi-Maruttaš and Eriša-Marduk).

²¹ Messerschmidt 1911, nos. 38-42, and 71.

²² The fact that the Assyrians were not able to recover Sargon's body and that Sennacherib was not able to hold a funeral for his father as tradition prescribed was regarded as highly inauspicious. The so-called "Sin of Sargon" text (Livingstone 1989, no. 33), probably written during the reign of Sennacherib's immediate successor Esarhaddon, reports that Sennacherib investigated the nature of his father's alleged sin. E. Frahm (Frahm 1999, 73-90) has suggested that the Assyrian scholar Nabû-zuqup-kēnu may have studied the passage about the spirits of the deceased in Gilgamesh Tablet XII in order to elucidate the consequences of Sargon II's death.

²³ Grayson and Novotny 2014, 239-244 no. 166.

²⁴ For details, see Grayson and Novotny 2014, 20-21; Novotny 2014a, 101-107; and Gries 2017.

mention his father or grandfather in the “building histories” included in his “Aššur A,” “Aššur B,” and “Aššur-Babylon E” inscriptions.²⁵ Of course, there may have been other factors at play. For example, Sennacherib’s work on Aššur’s temple appears to have been mainly confined to the construction of a new extension, rather than to rebuilding of the entire structure. Second, Esarhaddon could have noted that Sennacherib had worked on the armory at Nineveh, but he does not.²⁶ This omission may have been because Esarhaddon was constructing an entirely new wing onto that palace, rather than making repairs to the sections built anew by his father; this is similar to the lack of a building history in Sennacherib’s “Aššur Temple Inscription.”²⁷ Third, Sennacherib could have also been named as a previous builder of the Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh, but he is not; moreover, even Ashurnasirpal II is not given credit for his work on that temple.²⁸

Even if we had more textual evidence available, it seems unlikely that Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon would have given credit to their immediate predecessors as builders.

4.2. *Only One Immediate Predecessor Named as a Previous Builder*

Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun had no problems mentioning one of their immediate predecessors as a previous builder in their inscriptions.²⁹ Ashurbanipal includes reference to his father Esarhaddon, his grandfather Sennacherib, and his great grandfather Sargon II in building reports. Sargon is named as a previous builder of one of Nineveh’s two *akītu*-houses; this is the one located inside the citadel and not the one that Sennacherib started to build outside the city wall as part of his religious reforms.³⁰ Sennacherib is named as a king who had worked on the North Palace, the armory, and the citadel wall of Nineveh. Esarhaddon is credited with his work on the armory and Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh. There are two instances when Ashurbanipal could have named both his father and grandfather in a building history, but he lists only one of them. First, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon

²⁵ Leichty 2011, 124–125 no. 57 iii 16–34, 131 no. 58 iii 8–16, 133 no. 59 i 19–22, and 136 no. 60 lines 17b–19a.

²⁶ Esarhaddon’s work on the Nebi Yunus armory is recorded in Leichty 2011, 22–25 no. 1 v 40–vi 43 and 33–34 no. 2 iv 54–vi 9.

²⁷ Grayson and Novotny 2014, 239–244 no. 166.

²⁸ Esarhaddon’s work on the Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh is recorded in Leichty 2011, 56–60 nos. 10–12. Sennacherib credits Ashurnasirpal II as a previous builder of this temple; see Grayson and Novotny 2012, 235 no. 36 rev. 3’–7’.

²⁹ For the relevant inscriptions of Ashurbanipal, see Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 2 vii 4’–8’ and no. 4 viii 58–63 (Nineveh, citadel wall: Sennacherib); no. 3 viii 56–59 (Nineveh, armory: Sennacherib); no. 5 iv 9–14 and no. 10 ii 18–22 (Nineveh, Sîn-Šamaš temple: Esarhaddon); no. 6 x 19’–2’’ (Nineveh, armory: Esarhaddon); no. 9 vi 22–27a and no. 11 x 51–56 (Nineveh, House of Succession: Sennacherib); and no. 10 v 38a–42 (Nineveh, *akītu*-house: Sargon II). For the text of Sîn-šarru-iškun, see King 1914, pl. 3 lines 11’–12’ (Nineveh, South-West Palace: Sennacherib).

³⁰ For details on the two *akītu*-houses at Nineveh, see Frahm 2000, 75–79 no. 66; and Grayson and Novotny 2012, 22. The New Year’s temple started by Sennacherib, which was located outside the northern city wall, near the Nergal Gate, was probably never completed.

are both known from the textual record to have worked on the Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh. Only Esarhaddon is named as a previous builder. The reasons for Sennacherib's omission are not known, but it may have been because Ashurbanipal's workmen did not discover inscribed objects of his grandfather in the structure of that temple.³¹ Of course, since late Neo-Assyrian building reports generally only included the name of one previous builder, Ashurbanipal had to decide whether the name of his father or his grandfather was to be included in reports concerning work on the Sîn-Šamaš temple and, therefore, preference was given to Esarhaddon. The second instance is the armory.³² In some texts, Ashurbanipal names Sennacherib as the previous builder and, in other inscriptions, he credits Esarhaddon as that palace's builder. The choice of name seems to be more obvious here than with the inscriptions pertaining to the Sîn-Šamaš temple. His father is listed in the "building history" of inscriptions that were intended to be deposited or displayed in the new wing constructed by Esarhaddon, while his grandfather is named as a previous builder in texts that were inscribed on objects placed in the sections of the armory built by Sennacherib. Thus, once again, only one previous builder is given since neither his father or grandfather worked on the same sections of the armory of Nineveh; Sennacherib is credited only for the parts of the building he worked on and Esarhaddon is credited only for the wing he constructed. In this case, it is possible that Ashurbanipal's scribes included information that reflected historical reality and followed the tradition of naming only one previous builder.

As for Sîn-šarru-iškun, he names Sennacherib as the previous builder of the South-West Palace at Nineveh. Although there is archaeological evidence to suggest that Ashurbanipal worked on that palace, it is unknown whether or not Sîn-šarru-iškun's scribes would have regarded Ashurbanipal as a previous builder; in my opinion, it seems rather doubtful that they would have.³³

From extant evidence from the reigns of Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun, it appears that some late Neo-Assyrian kings followed the tradition of naming one, and only one, of their immediate predecessors as a previous builder.

4.3. *Naming an Ancient Ruler Rather Than an Immediate Predecessor*

In instances when both immediate predecessors and certain, well-known earlier rulers sponsored construction on a particular building, the earlier ruler is usually given preference in the "building history"; there is at least one instance where this does not seem to have been the case, but there may be a perfectly good explanation

³¹ Ashurnasirpal II's name is also not included in Ashurbanipal's building reports about the Sîn-Šamaš temple. At present, that temple is known only from textual sources; no physical proof of its existence is known from the archaeological record. Moreover, its ceremonial (Sumerian) name, assuming it was given one, is not known.

³² Sennacherib's work on the Nebi Yunus armory is recorded, for example, in Grayson and Novotny 2012, 184–185 no. 22 vi 36–73a, 201–202 no. 23 vi 31–53a, and 224–226 no. 34 lines 55b–90. For the texts of Esarhaddon, see n. 26. For a recent study on the armory, see Reade 2017.

³³ For example, Room XXXIII of the South-West Palace is lined with reliefs depicting the battle at Tīl-Tuba. For additional details on Ashurbanipal's work on his grandfather's palace, see Reade 2000, 415.

for the fact that the king's father, and not the famous Ashurnasirpal II, is credited as the previous builder (see below).³⁴

Sargon II names Ashurnasirpal II as the previous builder of the North-West Palace at Calah and the Adad temple at Til-Barsip; Adad-nārārī III as the last king who worked on the Nabû temple at Nineveh; and Šulgi as a former builder of the Ištār temple at Uruk.³⁵ Sennacherib credits Tiglath-pileser I and Ashurnasirpal II for their work on the Old Palace at Ashur; names Ashurnasirpal II as the builder of the Lady of Nineveh temple, the Sîn-Šamaš temple, and at least one other temple at Nineveh; and records that Shalmaneser III was the last ruler to have worked on the Nergal temple at Tarbišu.³⁶ Esarhaddon names Ušpia, Erišum I, Šamšī-Adad I, and Shalmaneser I as previous builders of the Aššur temple at Ashur; cites Ashurnasirpal II as the former builder of the Tebilti canal near Calah; credits Shalmaneser III as last king to have worked on Fort Shalmaneser at Calah; and reports that the Babylonian rulers Nazi-Maruttaš and Erība-Marduk sponsored construction on the Nanāya shrine at Uruk.³⁷ Ashurbanipal reports that that Ashurnasirpal II renovated the Ištār temple at Nineveh, that Shalmaneser III sponsored construction on the Sîn temple at Ḥarrān, and that Adad-nārārī III worked on the Nabû temple at Calah.³⁸ Lastly, Sîn-šarru-iškun states that Adad-nārārī III worked on the Nabû temple at Calah and reports that Shalmaneser I, Aššur-rēšī-iši I, and Adad-nārārī III apparently renovated the Nabû temple at Ashur.³⁹ Note that the archaeological record does not support Sîn-šarru-iškun's assertion that those three previous rulers worked on Nabû's temple at Ashur.⁴⁰ Shalmaneser I, Aššur-rēšī-iši I, and Adad-nārārī III all worked on various incarnations of the neighboring Ištār temple, and not the Nabû temple itself.⁴¹ Thus, the "building history" included in Sîn-šarru-iškun's "Cylinder A Inscription" is inaccurate, as clearly shown by the ruins uncovered by early

³⁴ Ashurbanipal names Esarhaddon, not Ashurnasirpal II, as the former builder of the Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh. See Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 5 iv 9–14 and no. 10 ii 18–22.

³⁵ See n. 20 for the relevant textual references.

³⁶ See n. 20 for the relevant textual references.

³⁷ See n. 20 for the relevant textual references.

³⁸ Novotny 2014c, 84 no. 20 rev. 43–45 (Ḥarrān, Sîn temple: Shalmaneser III); and Novotny and Jeffers 2018, no. 5 ii 11'–13', no. 6 i 73'–75'a, no. 7 i 47'–49'a, and no. 10 ii 39–41 (Ḥarrān, Sîn temple: Shalmaneser III); no. 7 x 53'–56' (Calah, Nabû temple: Adad-nārārī III); and no. 23 lines 162–163 (Nineveh, Ištār temple: Ashurnasirpal II).

³⁹ Meinhold 2009, 453 no. 11 lines 41b–45a (Ashur, Nabû temple: Shalmaneser I, Aššur-rēšī-iši I, and Adad-nārārī III); and Novotny and Van Buylaere 2009, 228 line 28 (Calah, Nabû temple: Adad-nārārī III).

⁴⁰ The relevant section of the building report of the "Cylinder A Inscription" of Sîn-šarru-iškun (Meinhold 2009, 453 no. 11 lines 41b–45a) reads: "At that time, the temple of the god Nabû that is inside Ba[ltil (Aššur) (which) Sha]lmaneser (I), the one who (re)built the temple of the god Aššur, built became dilapidated; and (then) Aššur-rēšī-iši (I), son of Mu[takkil-Nusku, (re)built (it and)] it became dilapidated (again); and (then) Adad-nārārī (III), son of Šamšī-Adad (V), (re)built (it) and it be[came dilapidated and o]ld." For a discussion of the problem, see Novotny 2014b.

⁴¹ Adad-nārārī III may have been given credit for work on Egidrukalamasumu simply because Sîn-šarru-iškun's scribes knew that he had sponsored work on other Nabû temples in Assyria: the Ezida at Calah and the Ezida at Nineveh. Thus, Sîn-šarru-iškun falsely attributed work on the Nabû temple at Ashur to Adad-nārārī III as that king was so closely linked with that god.

twentieth-century German excavations.⁴²

From extant textual evidence, it is certain that late Neo-Assyrian building reports gave preference to ancient rulers over immediate predecessors. This is undoubtedly closely linked with royal ideology. For example, Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun both name in their inscriptions Adad-nārārī III as the previous builder of the Nabû temple at Calah. In the former case, Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and possibly Sargon II are not given credit for their work on that temple, and, in the latter case, Aššur-etel-ilāni and Ashurbanipal are not listed as previous builders.⁴³ Another good example is Esarhaddon's omission of Sennacherib, Sargon II, and Tiglath-pileser III as former builders of the Aššur temple at Ashur.⁴⁴ There seems to be one known exception, as noted above, when an immediate predecessor is named as a previous builder rather than a distant, former ruler. Ashurbanipal credits Esarhaddon, and not Ashurnasirpal II, as the king who worked on the Sîn-Šamaš temple at Nineveh. One possible explanation is that this seventh-century Assyrian king's workmen did not discover inscribed objects of that ninth-century ruler in the structure of that temple. Note also that Ashurbanipal does not credit his grandfather Sennacherib as a builder of that temple.

4.4. *One Former Ruler Usually Named as a Previous Builder*

Usually, late Neo-Assyrian building reports give only the name of one previous ruler, whether this is an immediate predecessor or a distant ruler. There are four instances when more than one ruler's name is provided. These are in: (1) an account of Sennacherib recording his renovations of the Old Palace at Ashur; (2) an inscription of Esarhaddon describing his rebuilding of the Aššur temple at Ashur; (3) a text of Esarhaddon narrating work on the Nanāya shrine at Uruk; and (4) an inscription of Sîn-šarru-iškun recording the construction of the Nabû temple at Ashur.⁴⁵ As mentioned earlier, the fourth and last of these is a “false building history.”

As for the lengthy “building history” in Esarhaddon's “Aššur A Inscription,” that text may have been influenced by the discovery of inscriptions of Shalmaneser

⁴² See Andrae 1915, 15–118; Bär 2003; Meinhold 2009, 15–46; and Schmitt 2012.

⁴³ The building history of the Calah Ezida before the time of Ashurbanipal is far from certain. Ashurnasirpal II claims to have founded the temple, but he is not credited by Ashurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun as a previous builder. Instead, both kings name Adad-nārārī III; there is no supporting contemporary evidence (that is, inscriptions) for that king's work on that temple. No inscriptions of Sargon attest to his work on that temple, but scholars generally believe that he did base the upper wall decoration with recesses and rows of engaged columns, which match the style of those of the Nabû temple at Khorsabad. Evidence for Sennacherib and Esarhaddon having worked on this Ezida is based solely on the fact that Ashurbanipal requests in his annals from Calah that future rulers return inscriptions of his father and grandfather to their appropriate place in that temple. Presumably other Assyrian kings between Ashurnasirpal II (if he was really the founder of this Ezida as he claims) and Sargon II rebuilt/renovated Nabû's temple at Calah, including possibly Tiglath-pileser III and/or Shalmaneser V.

⁴⁴ See above for one explanation of the omission of these kings.

⁴⁵ Grayson and Novotny 2014, 234–235 no. 164 lines 1–6; Leichty 2011, 124–125 no. 57 iii 16–34 and 78 no. 136 lines 11–14; and Meinhold 2009, 453 no. 11 lines 41b–45a.

I in the structure of the Aššur temple. As a result of that find, Esarhaddon's scribes appear to have altered the style of "building histories" to be more like the one included in that Middle Assyrian king's texts. This change also included the span of time between rebuildings. In this case, Esarhaddon's scribes broke with a tradition used by his immediate predecessors and attempted to revive a Middle Assyrian practice. That trend does not seem to have caught on.

4.5. *The Selective Nature of Assyrian "Building Histories"*

Finally, this brings us to which earlier kings were mentioned. Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, and Adad-nārārī III are the only early Neo-Assyrian kings mentioned as previous builders.⁴⁶ Based on the number of attestations for each of them, it appears that late Neo-Assyrian royal scribes were selective when mentioning early Neo-Assyrian kings in a building report. Thus, it seems unlikely that the following kings would be named as a previous builder by Sargon II and his successors in their official inscriptions: Aššur-dān II, Tukultī-Ninurta II, Adad-nārārī II, Šamšī-Adad V, Shalmaneser IV, Aššur-dān III, Aššur-nārārī V, Tiglath-pileser III, and Shalmaneser V. Shalmaneser I, Aššur-rēšī-iši I, and Tiglath-pileser I are the three known Middle Assyrian kings included in late Neo-Assyrian building reports.⁴⁷ There is not sufficient evidence at this time to be able to determine which other Middle Assyrian kings would have also been worthy of being referred to as a previous builder. Adad-nārārī I and Tukultī-Ninurta I may have made the cut. Ušpia, Erišum I, and Šamšī-Adad I are the only three Old Assyrian kings cited as previous builders.⁴⁸ Their mention in Esarhaddon's "Aššur A inscription" is probably due to the fact that Esarhaddon's scribes were copying that information directly from the texts of Shalmaneser I that had been discovered in the Aššur temple.⁴⁹ Moreover, the inclusion of these rulers linked Esarhaddon back to the founding of the temple, making him the fifth ruler — the first after Shalmaneser I — to have undertaken construction on Aššur's residence. This list may have also underscored the message that Esarhaddon was rebuilding the temple exactly as it had been previously, unlike his father Sennacherib who had changed it.

⁴⁶ Ashurnasirpal II is named as a previous builder of the Old Palace at Ashur; the North-West Palace and the Tebilti canal at Calah; the Ištar temple (= Lady of Nineveh temple), the Sîn-Šamaš temple, and another temple (name lost) at Nineveh; and the Adad temple at Tīl-Barsip. Shalmaneser III is referred to as a former builder of Fort Shalmaneser at Calah, the Sîn temple at Ḥarrān, and the Nergal temple at Tarbišu. Adad-nārārī III is recorded as a previous builder of the Nabû temples at Ashur, Calah, and Nineveh. See nn. 20 and 38–39 for the relevant textual references.

⁴⁷ Shalmaneser I is named as a previous builder of the Aššur temple and the Nabû temple at Ashur; Aššur-rēšī-iši I is referred to as a former builder of the Nabû temple at Ashur; and Tiglath-pileser I is recorded as a previous builder of the Old Palace at Ashur. See nn. 20 and 39 for the relevant textual references.

⁴⁸ Ušpia, Erišum I, Šamšī-Adad I are all named as previous builders of the Aššur temple at Ashur; see Leichty 2011, 124–125 no. 57 iii 16–34.

⁴⁹ Grayson 1987, 185 A.0.77.1 lines 112–118.

5. Conclusions

Assyrian kings spent a great deal of time and effort constructing, enlarging, rebuilding, renovating, and decorating palaces, walls and temples. They regularly boasted about these accomplishments in a wide variety of texts composed in their names. Due to the nature of our primary textual sources, it is difficult, if not impossible in many cases, for the modern scholar to determine what work actually took place since building reports were more concerned with ideology than reality. Moreover, no project is ever described as unfinished. From day one, at least as far as the official inscriptions were concerned, each and every project was described as being one hundred percent complete. Thus, given the meager or lack of corresponding archaeological evidence, it is a real challenge for scholars and students to present an accurate reconstruction for any given building project, as well as a complete building history for any Assyrian palace, wall, or temple. Despite the limiting nature of the extant source material, we do know a great deal about Assyrian building activities. Unfortunately, we cannot present this material in a manner that is as definitive as we would like. What we can say with absolute certainty is that building was extremely important to late Neo-Assyrian kings and played a vital role in royal ideology. The same was true of mentioning previous builders. “Building histories,” as I hope I have shown in this paper, are very selective as to whom is mentioned as a previous builder and these vary not only from city to city but also from project to project. At present, we can only make firm conclusions about which early Neo-Assyrian kings would have been named as a previous builder. Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, and Adad-nārārī III were highly regarded by Sargon II and his successors. The same cannot be said of most Assyrian kings.

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