



WRITING NEO-ASSYRIAN HISTORY

Sources, Problems, and Approaches

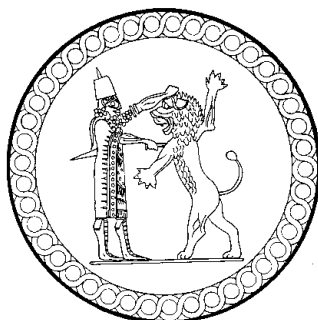
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Edited by

G.B. Lanfranchi, R. Mattila and R. Rollinger

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WRITING NEO-ASSYRIAN HISTORY
SOURCES, PROBLEMS, AND APPROACHES

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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: Assyrian scribes recording spoils of war. Wall painting in the palace of Til-Barsip.
After A. Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon* (Paris, 1961), fig. 348.
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ABBREVIATIONS

- A = tablets in the collections of Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri.
- ABL = R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum I–XIV*, Chicago, 1892–1914.
- ADW = A.Y. Ahmad, J. N. Postgate, *Archives from the Domestic Wing of the North-West Palace at Kalhu/Nimrud (Edubba 10)*, London 2007.
- AHw = W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden 1959–1981.
- ALA = O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur*, Uppsala, Part I 1985, Part II 1986.
- BIWA = R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C=K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften. Mit einem Beitrag von Andreas Fuchs*, Wiesbaden, 1996.
- BWL = W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, Oxford, 1960.
- CAD = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago, Glückstadt 1956–2010.
- CAH = J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. III, Cambridge, 1925.
- CAH² = I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd and N. G. L. Hammond (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. Second Edition, Vol. III/2: The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and Other States of the Near East, from the 8th to the 6th Centuries B.C.*, Cambridge, 1991.
- CDA = J. Black, A. George, N. Postgate, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, Wiesbaden 2000 (2nd ed.).
- CDLI = The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative.
- CHLI = J.D. Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Volume. I: Inscriptions of the Iron Ages (Studies in Indo-European Language and Culture 8/1)*, Berlin - New York 2000.
- CT = *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, London
- CT 53 = S. Parpola, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Part 53: Neo-Assyrian Letters from the Kuyunjik Collection*, London, 1979.
- CT 54 = M. Dietrich, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, part 54. Neo-Babylonian Letters from the Kuyunjik Collection*, London, 1979.
- GPA = J. N. Postgate, *The Governor's Palace Archive*, London 1973.
- K = tablets in the collections of the British Museum.
- KAJ = E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur juristischen Inhalts (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 50)*, Leipzig 1927.
- KAN 1 = L. Jakob-Rost, F. M. Fales, *Neuassyrische Rechtsurkunden, I (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 94)*, Berlin 1996.
- KAN 2 = L. Jakob-Rost, K. Radner, V. Donbaz, *Neuassyrische Rechtsurkunden, II (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 98)*, Saarbrücken 2000.
- KAN 3 = B. I. Faist, *Neuassyrische Rechtsurkunden, III (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 110)*, Saarwellingen 2005.
- KAN 4 = B. I. Faist, *Neuassyrische Rechtsurkunden IV (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 132)*, Wiesbaden 2010.
- KAR = E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, Leipzig 1920–23 (Neudruck: Osnabrück 1970–72).
- KAV = O. Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 35)*, Leipzig 1920.
- LAS = S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 5/I–II)*, Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970–83.
- LAS 2 = S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, Part II: Commentary and Appendices (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 5/2)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1983.
- LKA = E. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*, Berlin, 1953.

ABBREVIATIONS

- MARV I = H. Freydank, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, I (*Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* 19, N.F. 3), Berlin 1976.
- MARV II = H. Freydank, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, II (*Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* 21, N.F. 5), Berlin 1982.
- MARV III = H. Freydank, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, III (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 92), Berlin 1994.
- MARV IV = H. Freydank, C. Fischer, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, IV: *Tafeln aus Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta* (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 99), Saarbrücken 2001.
- MARV V = H. Freydank, B. Feller, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, V (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 106), Saarbrücken 2004.
- MARV VI = H. Freydank, B. Feller, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, VI (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 109), Saarwellingen 2005.
- MARV VII = H. Freydank, B. Feller, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, VII (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 111), Saarwellingen 2006.
- MARV VIII = H. Freydank, B. Feller, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, VIII (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 119), Wiesbaden 2007.
- MARV IX = H. Freydank, B. Feller, *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, IX (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 125), Wiesbaden 2010.
- MSL 12 = M. Civil, *The Series lú = ša and Related Texts* (*Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon* 12), Roma 1969.
- NATAPA 1 = F. M. Fales, L. Jakob-Rost, “Neo-Assyrian Texts from Assur. Private Archives in the Vorderasiatisches Museum of Berlin, Part I”, *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 5 (1991).
- NATAPA 2 = K. Deller, F. M. Fales, L. Jakob-Rost, “Neo-Assyrian Texts from Assur. Private Archives in the Vorderasiatisches Museum of Berlin, Part II”, *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 9 (1995).
- ND = field numbers of tablets excavated in Nimrud.
- NL = H. W. F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952 — Parts I–IX”, *Iraq* 17 (1955), 21–50 until *Iraq* 36 (1974), 199–221.
- NWL = J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists: A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the Eighth Century BC* (*Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud* 1), London 1972.
- OIP 117 = S. W. Cole, *The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor’s Archive from Nippur*, Chicago 1996.
- PNA = K. Radner, H. D. Baker (eds.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Helsinki 1998–2011.
- PNA 1/I = K. Radner (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 1, Part I: A*, Helsinki 1998.
- PNA 1/II = K. Radner (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 1, part II: B–G*, Helsinki, 1999.
- PNA 2/I = H. D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 2, Part I: H–K*, Helsinki, 2000.
- PNA 2/II = H. D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 2, Part II: L–N*, Helsinki, 2001.
- PNA 3/I = H. D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 3, Part I: P–Š*, Helsinki 2002.
- PNA 3/II = H. D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire 3, Part II: Š–Z*, Helsinki 2011.
- RGTC 7/1 = A. Bagg, *Die Orts- und Gewässername der neuassyrischen Zeit*, Teil I: *Die Levante* (*Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes* 7/1 [Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients]), Wiesbaden, 2007.
- RIMA 1 = A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the 3rd and 2nd Millenia BC (to 1115 BC)* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods* 1), Toronto 1987.

ABBREVIATIONS

- RIMA 2 = A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC)* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods* 2), Toronto, 1991.
- RIMA 3 = A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II: 858–745 BC* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods*), Toronto 1996.
- RIMB 2 = G. Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia from the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of the Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods* Vol. 2), Toronto, 1995.
- RIME 4 = D. R. Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods* 4), Toronto 1990.
- RINAP 1 = H. Tadmor, Sh. Yamada, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria* (*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* Vol. 1), Winona Lake, IN, 2011.
- RINAP 3/1 = A. K. Grayson, J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1* (*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* Vol. 3/1), Winona Lake, IN, 2012.
- RINAP 3/2 = A. K. Grayson, J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1* (*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* Vol. 3/2), Winona Lake, IN, 2014.
- RINAP 4 = E. Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria 680–669 BC* (*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 4), Winona Lake, IN 2011.
- RINAP 5/I = J. Novotny, J. Jeffers, *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* (*The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 5/1), Winona Lake 2018.
- RIA = *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Leipzig, Berlin, New York, 1928–.
- SAA = *State Archives of Assyria*, Helsinki 1987–.
- SAA 1 = S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West* (*State Archives of Assyria* I), Helsinki, 1987.
- SAA 2 = S. Parpola, K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (*State Archives of Assyria* II), Helsinki, 1988.
- SAA 3 = A. Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (*State Archives of Assyria* III), Helsinki, 1989.
- SAA 4 = I. Starr, *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria* (*State Archives of Assyria* IV), Helsinki, 1990.
- SAA 5 = G.B. Lanfranchi, S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces* (*State Archives of Assyria* V), Helsinki, 1990.
- SAA 6 = T. Kwasman, S. Parpola, *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part I. Tiglath-Pileser III through Esarhaddon* (*State Archives of Assyria* VI), Helsinki, 1991.
- SAA 7 = F. M. Fales, J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I. Palace and Temple Administration* (*State Archives of Assyria* VII), Helsinki, 1992.
- SAA 8 = H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* (*State Archives of Assyria* VIII), Helsinki, 1992.
- SAA 9 = S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (*State Archives of Assyria* IX), Helsinki, 1997.
- SAA 10 = S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (*State Archives of Assyria* X), Helsinki, 1993.
- SAA 11 = F. M. Fales, J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration* (*State Archives of Assyria* XI), Helsinki, 1995.
- SAA 12 = L. Kataja, R. Whiting, *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (*State Archives of Assyria* XII), Helsinki, 1995.
- SAA 13 = S. W. Cole, P. Machinist, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Priests to Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (*State Archives of Assyria* XIII), Helsinki, 1998.
- SAA 14 = R. Mattila, *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II. Assurbanipal through Sîn-šarra-iškun* (*State Archives of Assyria* XIV), Helsinki, 2002.

ABBREVIATIONS

- SAA 15 = A. Fuchs, S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III. Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces* (State Archives of Assyria XV), Helsinki, 2002.
- SAA 16 = M. Luukko, G. Van Buylaere, *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon* (State Archives of Assyria XVI), Helsinki, 2002.
- SAA 17 = M. Dietrich, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* (State Archives of Assyria XVII), Helsinki, 2003.
- SAA 18 = F. Reynolds, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun from Northern and Central Babylonia* (State Archives of Assyria XVIII), Helsinki, 2003.
- SAA 19 = M. Luukko, *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud* (State Archives of Assyria XIX), Helsinki, 2012.
- SAA 20 = S. Parpola, *Assyrian Royal Rituals and Cultic texts*, Helsinki 2017.
- SAA 21 = S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part II: Letters from the King and from Northern and Central Babylonia* (State Archives of Assyria 22), Helsinki, 2018.
- SAA 22 = G. Frame, *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part II: Letters from Southern Babylonia* (State Archives of Assyria 22), Helsinki, forthcoming.
- SAAS 8 = A. Fuchs, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr.* (State Archives of Assyria Studies VIII), Helsinki 1998.
- StAT 1 = K. Radner, *Ein neuassyrisches Privatarhiv der Tempelgoldschmiede von Assur* (Studien zu den Assur-Texten 1), Saarbrücken 1999.
- StAT 2 = V. Donbaz, S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Texts in Istanbul* (Studien zu den Assur-Texten 2), Saarbrücken 2001.
- StAT 3 = B. Faist, *Alltagstexte aus neuassyrischen Archiven und Bibliotheken der Stadt Assur* (Studien zu den Assur-Texten 3), Wiesbaden 2007.
- TAVO = *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, Wiesbaden 1969–1994.
- TCAE = J. N. Postgate, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire* (Studia Pohl: Series Maior 3), Roma 1974.
- TCL 3 = F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon (714 av. J. C.)* (Textes cunéiformes du Louvre 3), Paris, 1912.
- TFS = S. Dalley, J. N. Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser* (Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud 3), London 1984.
- TIM 9 = J. van Dijk, *Cuneiform Texts: Texts of Varying Content* (Texts in the Iraq Museum 9), Baghdad, Wiesbaden 1976.
- Ugaritica 5 = J. Nougayrol, *Nouveaux textes accadiens, hourrites et ugaritiques des archives et bibliothèques privées d'Ugarit. Choix de textes littéraires*, 1968.

INTRODUCTION

Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi, Raija Mattila, Robert Rollinger

Due to the collective effort of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project in Helsinki the Neo-Assyrian epoch is one of the best documented periods within Ancient Near Eastern history. So far 21 volumes have been published presenting the most important bulk of the archival, literary and religious sources in new and reliable text editions, collated and indexed, and complemented with English translations and elucidating introductions. In the meanwhile, most of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions are as well available in modern editions with English translations, thanks to the efforts of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia and the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period projects.

Having these facts in mind, in early 2014 we decided that it was time to launch an international conference aiming at establishing a full-fledged methodological address to the problems concerned with the “Writing of Neo-Assyrian History”. This approach included a clear cut look at the sources, and at the problems connected with their interpretation and “transformation” into what is used to be called “history”. Accordingly, the conference focused on several main topics connected to this issue, and therefore we organized an international meeting in September 2014 at the University of Helsinki when Robert Rollinger held his Finland Distinguished Professor at the Department of World Cultures, University of Helsinki (Research Director of the project “Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East”, 2011–2015).

The structuring of the volume mainly follows the outline of the conference with some additions and adaptations. The first section “History of Research and General Questions” is devoted to important problems of defining the Neo-Assyrian empire as well as its history within broader frameworks. How does the composition and structure of the empire look like? What about ethnicities, languages and identities? How did the Neo-Assyrians themselves approach their past and how? Which role are texts, scribes and literary tradition playing in shaping what we are used to call Neo-Assyrian history? What does Neo-Assyrian history mean and what is the place of Neo-Assyrian history within world history? This also includes modes of modern approach and terminologies. Gendered history is a keyword in this respect, but there is also the vast problem that Neo-Assyrian history — as Ancient Near Eastern history in general — is still widely perceived through western lenses and encapsulated in western terminologies. These are defined by sources from the Biblical and Classical World, and this bears important consequences on how we assess and qualify

historical processes and developments. These issues give way to a broad range of topics which are dealt with in the second section of the volume.

In this second section “How to deal with the Neo-Assyrian Sources” some general questions are addressed. The various contributions focus on three main categories of sources that can be defined as “historical” *stricto sensu*: royal inscriptions, eponym lists, and eponym chronicles.

The next seven sections develop a broader focus on Neo-Assyrian history by defining and discussing all available sources and their specifics: the religious texts, the literary texts, the letters, the administrative and legal texts, the treaties, archaeological sources. In this context the sources themselves are introduced and qualified, distinguishing between the different categories of source production and their *Sitz im Leben*. This includes both the written and the archaeological sources. Bureaucratic contexts and redaction processes are taken into consideration and the relevant archaeological contexts are revealed. Assyrian royal inscriptions and treaties, religious texts and literary texts, letters, administrative and legal texts on the one side, archaeological remains, reliefs, and works of art as well as urban planning on the other side are evaluated and put into their specific contexts. Each section’s discussions do not only imply the simple question of how to use and deal with these sources, but to reflect on text production and context and to develop an updated theory of how to approach these sources. Their specific characteristics are outlined, their validity are analysed and the main problems addressed a modern historian is facing who is using these sources. In this respect the problems of transforming the available sources into “history” are specified and discussed in detail. How can a modern historian use these sources and what are the main problems he/she encounters when he/she is dealing with them?

The volume concludes with two additional sections. The first one focuses on the Neo-Assyrian Onomastics and its relevance for writing Neo-Assyrian history. The second one deals with the Periphery of the Assyria by discussing two exemplary neighbouring regions of the empire and their text production.

By addressing these questions the conference was aimed at singling out paradigmatically a specific and extraordinarily well documented period of Ancient Near Eastern history and at addressing the basic questions of any historiographical approach. This should be done within an Ancient Near Eastern framework, where Classical and Biblical historiographies are not taken as a defining leitmotiv but as a point of reference where specific regional and cultural developments are taken into considerations accordingly.

True, the goals of this conference were ambitious; but we are convinced that the various contributions, how diverse and varicoloured the sources of Neo-Assyrian history are, could contribute to an intense methodological discussion and to a robust increase of historical self-conscience in Neo-Assyrian studies. We also were, and still are convinced that this is a distinct field of historical research offering an enormous potential for historical analysis, methodology and sophisticated *Quellenkritik*. It allows rich insights in general historical problems which not only deserve to be considered by specialists but also by any historian who can learn as much from Neo-Assyrian history as, just to take some examples, from histories of the French Revolution, the First World War or the Cold War. Neo-Assyrian history is important, illuminating and exciting, and the path towards it are the sources we have. These were the aims of our conference, and we very much hope that with this publication its targets have been somehow accomplished.

INTRODUCTION

* * *

This volume contains most of the contributions of the conference held in Helsinki in September 2014. However, after the conference, we considered that some important fields were not covered due to various reasons; thus, we requested some scholars to submit additional contributions so as to have a more complete view on the general topic of “How to write Neo-Assyrian history?”. Not all those who agreed, however, were able to submit their text, and in late 2017 we decided to proceed for final publication with the available texts at our hands.

* * *

With the publication of such a volume it is always a pleasure to thank those colleagues and institutions without whose assistance and help this volume would not have been possible. This is first the University of Helsinki which launched the project “Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East” and hosted Robert Rollinger as Finland Distinguished Professor (2011–2015). We are especially grateful to Prof. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila the former Director of the project who was excited about the conference and its aims from the very beginning. A special thanks goes to the Getty Foundation that offered Robert Rollinger a Getty Scholarship during which the final steps of the editing process of this volume could be accomplished. We wholeheartedly thank Prof. Simo Parpola, Editor in Chief of the *State Archives of Assyria* series, for accepting this volume in the series *State Archives of Assyria Studies*, of which he is Project Director. Last but not least, we thank Dr. Silvia Gabrieli, Università degli studi di Verona, for her difficult but very successful enterprise of preparing the indexes of this volume.

We very much hope that the volume will be useful not only for specialists but for all those who are interested in ancient Near Eastern history of the first millennium BCE, a period of high interest and relevance that still does not have the place in world history it really deserves.

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NEO-ASSYRIAN TREATIES AS A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORIAN

BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP, THE VIGILANT SUBJECT AND THE VENGEFUL KING'S TREATY

Karen Radner

Treaty-making is an important instrument in the toolkit of Assyrian statecraft. The textual sources of the Neo-Assyrian period frequently mention bilateral treaties between the king of Assyria and other rulers. These treaty partners could be leaders of equal standing or rulers that were seen as subservient to the Assyrian king (Ass. *urdu*, “servant, slave”). The latter was increasingly more common, given the growing predominance of the Assyrian Empire from the 9th to the 7th century BC. Dependant on the frame of reference employed (Roman patronage or medieval European feudalism), modern scholarship tends to refer to these dependent rulers as client or vassal rulers; I will use the term “client ruler” in the following. Regardless whether the partners were seen as equals or not, the basic nature of all these agreements was reciprocal. On the other hand, the king, but also other members of the Assyrian royal family, could impose treaties that were meant to guarantee their subjects’ loyalty. In this case, the power relationship of the agreement is more obviously unbalanced than in the case of the treaties with other rulers. Both types of treaty are known from a limited number of original manuscripts, many of which are only very fragmentarily preserved.

What opportunities and challenges does this relatively limited body of sources present to the modern historian? In this chapter, we will briefly review the terminology and character of the Neo-Assyrian treaty (§1) before discussing the extant copies, a mix of chancellery texts (presumably used for reference) and valid “treaty tablets” who were thought to bind the treaty partners through divine agency to their agreement (§2). We will highlight the long shadow cast by the only treaty whose text is preserved more or less in full, the succession treaty imposed by Esarhaddon in 672 BC. It is crucial to stress, as we will in §3, that this particular treaty, with its focus on demanding and enabling vigilance of the individual subject, cannot be considered typical in many respects, especially when it comes to the impact of dialogue and negotiations between the treaty partners on drafting the agreement. This focus on diplomacy and more broadly political and cultural dialogue as a tool of Assyrian statecraft leads us to a discussion of the extent and the limitations of the Assyrian treaty system (§4); not everyone “gets it”, as shared cultural values and especially religious concepts necessarily underpin the binding force of the treaty. We close with an analysis of the emergence in the mid-7th century BC of the King’s Treaty as an avenging entity that transcended the sphere of statecraft and became widely popular in private contractual law (§5).

1 Terminology and basic character of the Neo-Assyrian treaty

At least from 754 BC onwards, the customary Assyrian designation for treaty was *adê*. This plural term is first attested¹ in the reign of Aššur-nerari V (754–745 BC) in his treaty with Mati'-il of Arpad.² In Aramaic, the term (*dy*) is used in a second treaty involving Mati'-il, documented on the so-called Sefire Stelae.³ The term occurs in a Babylonian text concerning another contemporary of Aššur-nerari's, Nabû-šuma-iškun of Babylon (ca. 760–748 BC); the composition is thought to be a creation of the second half of the 8th century BC and has the king impose the *adê* on the high officials of his realm.⁴ After the term's first attestations in the time of Aššur-nerari V, *adê* is used to designate the bond established through all Assyrian treaties that are known to us in the original (as far as the relevant passages are preserved), and the term is employed routinely in Assyrian inscriptions and archival texts.⁵

Imposing an *adê* agreement always includes swearing an oath.⁶ This is made explicit whenever *adê* is used in hendiadys or parallel with the noun *māmītu*, “oath”, or alternatively with the verb at the root of this noun, *tamû*, “to swear”. Three examples may suffice. The inscriptions of Sennacherib of Assyria (704–681 BC) call Padî king of Ekron “possessor of *adê* and the oath of the country of Assyria (*bêl adê u māmīti ša māt Aššur*)”;⁷ an adviser of Esarhaddon of Assyria (680–669 BC) passes a crushing verdict over the Cimmerians: “They are the off- spring of outcasts who recognize no oath sworn by a god (*māmīti ša ili*) and no *adê*”;⁸ and a now hostile Elamite ruler is characterised in an inscription of his former ally Assurbanipal (668–630 BC): “Ummanigaš, for whom I performed many acts of kindness and whom I appointed as king of Elam, who forgot my favours and did not honour the *adê*, the oath sworn by the great gods (*adê māmīt ilāni rabūti*)”.⁹

The earliest secure attestation for the term *māmītu* in an Assyrian inscription dates to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BC) and follows the description of a battle against the rulers of the Na'iri lands near Lake Van. The passage offers a good summary of the resultant obligations and the control mechanisms used to secure the agreement:

¹ A possible attestation in a fragmentary passage of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic of the 12th century BC remains uncertain: Machinist 1978, 102, iv 8': [...] *a-de-e EN-ni*, cf. Brinkman 1990, 82f. with note 4.

² SAA 2 2; cf. Watanabe 1987, 9.

³ Lemaire & Durand 1984; Fitzmyer 1995; for the context: Morrow 2001; Fales & Mazzoni 2009–11.

⁴ Edition of a Late Babylonian manuscript from Uruk: Cole 1994; cf. Brinkman 1990, 95, 99f.

⁵ For references see Watanabe 1987, 10–23.

⁶ Radner 2006, 353–357; Lauinger 2013, 105–107. This is in contrast to the quasi synonym *kitru*, also first attested in the 8th century BC, which is usually employed with negative, that is anti-Assyrian, connotations: Liverani 1982, 56–58.

⁷ RINAP 3/1 4, 42 and parallels.

⁸ SAA 10 111, 15–16; see below, §4.

⁹ RINAP 5/1 3, vi 86–89; 4, vi 96–99.

Tiglath-pileser I: RIMA 2 A.0.87.1, v 8–32

- ^{8b} LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*
⁹ KUR.KUR.*na-i-ri bal-tu-su-nu qa-ti*
¹⁰ *ik-šud a-na* LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni ša-a-tu-nu*
¹¹ *re-e-ma ar-ša-šu-nu-ti-ma*
¹² *na-pi-š-ta-šu-nu e-ti-ir šal-lu-su-nu*
¹³ *ù ka-mu-su-nu i-na ma-har* ^dUTU EN-*ia*
¹⁴ *ap-tu-ur ma-mi-it* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia*
¹⁵ GAL.MEŠ *a-na ar-kàt* U₄.MEŠ *a-na* U₄-*um*
¹⁶ *ša-a-te a-na* ARAD-*ut-te ú-tam-mi-šu-nu-ti*
¹⁷ DUMU.MEŠ *nab-ni-it* LUGAL-*ti-šu-nu*
¹⁸ *a-na li-tu-te aš-bat*
¹⁹ 1-*lim* 2-*me* ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ 2-*lim* GU₄.MEŠ
²⁰ *ma-da-at-ta* UGU-*šu-nu ú-kín*
²¹ *a-na* KUR.KUR.MEŠ-*šu-nu ú-maš-še-er-šu-nu-ti*
²² ^m*se-e-ni* LUGAL KUR.*da-ie-e-ni*
²³ *ša a-na* ^d*a-šur* EN-*ia la-a ka-an-šu*
²⁴ *šal-lu-su* ^d*ka-mu-su a-na* URU-*ia*
²⁵ ^d*a-šur ub-la-šu re-e-ma*
²⁶ *ar-ša-šu-ma iš-tu* URU-*ia* ^d*a-šur*
²⁷ *da-lil* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ
²⁸ *a-na da-la-a-li a-na na-pi-iš-ti*
²⁹ *ú-maš-še-er-šu* KUR.KUR.*na-i-ri*
³⁰ DAGAL.MEŠ-*te a-na paṭ gim-ri-ši-na a-pél*
³¹ *ù nap-har* LUGAL.MEŠ-*šu-nu*
³² *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ-*ia ú-šék-niš*

I captured all of the kings of the Na'iri lands alive. I had mercy on those kings and spared their lives. I released them from their bonds and fetters in the presence of the god Šamaš, my lord, and made them swear the oath of my great gods for servitude in all eternity.

¹⁷ I took their sons of royal descent as hostages. I imposed upon them a tribute of 1,200 horses and 2,000 cattle. I allowed them to return to their lands.

²² I brought Seni, king of the land Daienu, who had not been submissive to the god Aššur, my lord, in bonds and fetters to my city Assur. I had mercy on him and let him leave my city Assur alive in order to proclaim the glory of the great gods.

^{29b} (Thus) I became lord of the vast lands of Na'iri in their entirety.

According to this, accepting the defeated enemy rulers into servitude (Ass. *urdūtu*) was deemed an act of mercy. They were released from their physical bonds and fetters in the presence of the all-seeing, all-knowing sun god Šamaš and these chains were replaced by an oath, sworn by the great gods of Assyria, that bound them to their new master Tiglath-pileser for all eternity. As a guarantee for their obedience and for the delivery of their yearly tribute (Ass. *maddattu*) the rulers' sons were placed as hostage. One of the defeated enemies accompanied them, still in chains, to the city of Assur, then the capital of the kingdom of Assyria, to be pardoned and released there. In this way, he could report as an eyewitness on the splendour of Assyrian power upon his return and this would serve to further cement the new clients' compliance to their master Tiglath-pileser. Shedding the physical shackles by taking the oath of servitude created another bond, the abstract "yoke of dominion" (*nīr bēlūti*) of the Assyrian king,¹⁰ also called the "yoke of the god Aššur",¹¹ that the treaty-partner was to carry from now on. In turn, the Assyrian king provided protection. Therefore, although the use of *adê* in the context of treaty-making may well be a terminological innovation of the early first millennium BC,

¹⁰ E.g. Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1206 BC): RIMA 1 A.0.78.1, iii 4; Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BC): RIMA 2 A.0.87.1, ii 54, 93; iii 85; A.0.87.12, 23'; Sennacherib (704–681 BC): RINAP 3/1 3, 33; 4, 11, 31; 8, 11; 15, ii 37''; 16, ii 74; 17, ii 56; Esarhaddon (680–669 BC): RINAP 4 1, iii 55; 2, ii 15.

¹¹ E.g. Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC): RINAP 1 5, 11; 42, 37'; Esarhaddon: RINAP 4 1, ii 67–68; 6, ii 12'; 34, 14'.

and perhaps indeed the mid-8th century BC, the central concept of a bond of obligation that was created and secured by an oath was certainly not new to Assyrian statecraft, as earlier Assyrian references such as this Tiglath-pileser I passage show.¹²

Traditionally translated as “treaty”, the sacred nature of the bond forged by the *adê* makes the more specific translation “covenant”¹³ appealing. But while the meaning of the plural term *adê* / *dy* is quite clear, its origins are a matter of some debate. Although a West-Semitic derivation is frequently assumed,¹⁴ this remains unproven.¹⁵ In my view, Jean-Marie Durand offered the only convincing etymology when he connected *adê* with Akkadian *adû*, “work assignment”, a term attested since the Old Babylonian period and derived from Sumerian *a₂.du₃*.¹⁶ Given that the Assyrian understanding of the bond established by oath always included the parties’ requirement to provide services to each other (military assistance; procurement of materials), Durand’s interpretation of *adê* as a technical term derived from the more general *adû* is compelling.¹⁷ My assumption is therefore that the Assyrian term *adê* entered the vocabulary of Assyria’s Aramaic-speaking treaty partners (*bêl-adê*) who then employed it for and in their own binding agreements. The extensive borrowing of Assyrian technical vocabulary in the Aramaic legal texts of the Neo-Assyrian period¹⁸ provides a good parallel for this.

2 The material basis and the long shadow cast by Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty

While we can state with confidence that the practice of treaty-making was routine in Assyrian statecraft, the material basis for analysing the precise terms and conditions of these treaties is relatively limited. Simo Parpola compiled a list of 43 *adê* that are explicitly mentioned in the inscriptions and correspondences of kings Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) to Assurbanipal (668–630 BC),¹⁹ in a period spanning just over a century of Assyrian history. Although the high frequency of attestations indicates that forging bilateral treaties was a routine political tool of the Assyrian kings, only a few original tablets survive. Many of these tablets are chancellery copies that were kept for reference by the state administration, often abridged versions or extracts; they usually were found in the Nineveh palace archives, but there are also copies from Assur (possibly from the archives of the Aššur temple).²⁰

¹² Radner 2006, 353–357 for a discussion of references in inscriptions of Adad-nerari I (1305–1273 BC), Tukulti-Ninurta I, Tiglath-pileser I and Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BC).

¹³ Thus Radner 2017, 80f.

¹⁴ E.g. Fitzmyer 1995, 57–59; Tadmor 1982; 1987; 1990; recently again Watanabe 2014, 162.

¹⁵ Neither of the Akkadian dictionaries accepted a West-Semitic origin: AHW 14, s.v. *adû* I; CAD A/I, 131–134 s.v. *adû* A; CDA 5 s.v. *adû* I; cf. also Lemaire & Durand 1984, 98–106 and Brinkman 1990, 82f. with note 3.

¹⁶ Durand 1991, 70 note 167.

¹⁷ Radner 2006, 357; Lauinger 2013, 100, 115.

¹⁸ E.g. Röllig 2014, 7–10 (contract terminology), 11 (Ass. *lîmu/limmu*, Aram. *l’m*), 14 (month names).

¹⁹ Parpola 1987, 184f.

²⁰ Radner 2006, 365–375; Frahm 2009, 133; Lauinger 2015, 287.

Presently known in the shape of physical tablets are six bilateral treaties, of which the first dates to ca. 882 BC and the last to the period between 625–616 BC when Nabopolassar wrestled control over Babylonia from the Assyrian Empire's grip:

| <i>Assyrian king</i> | <i>Treaty partner(s)</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Edition</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Šamši-Adad V | Marduk-zakir-šumi of Babylon | ca. 882 BC | SAA 2 1 Brinkman 1990, 112 |
| Aššur-nerari V | Mati' -il of Arpad | ca. 754 BC | SAA 2 2 |
| Esarhaddon | Ba'alu of Tyre | ca. 677 BC | SAA 2 5 |
| Assurbanipal | Babylonian allies | 652 BC | SAA 2 9 |
| Assurbanipal | Two leaders of the Qedar tribe | ca. 652 BC | SAA 2 10 |
| Sin-šarru-iškun | Babylonian allies | ca. 625–616 BC | SAA 2 11 |

In addition to these, there are four treaties known in the original that bind the subjects of the Assyrian crown to the newly appointed crown prince in order to prevent any succession conflict upon the king's death — generally the most fragile moment in any monarchy:²¹

| <i>Imposed by</i> | <i>On behalf of</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Edition</i> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|--|
| Assurnasirpal II (?) ²² | ? | ? | Frahm 2009, no. 66 |
| Sennacherib | Crown prince Esarhaddon | 683/682 BC | Frahm 2009, nos. 67–69 ²³ |
| Esarhaddon | Crown prince Assurbanipal | 672 BC | SAA 2 6 Frahm 2009, nos. 70–71 Lauinger 2012 |
| Queen Mother Naqi'a | Crown prince Assurbanipal | 672 BC | SAA 2 8 |

By far the best documented of these treaties was imposed by Esarhaddon on all his subjects on the occasion of the appointment of his son Assurbanipal (668–630 BC) as crown prince in 672 BC. The treaty bound the client states and the more than 70 provinces²⁴ that made up the kingdom of Assyria at that time to the king's will. This meant that an absolute minimum of 110 physical copies of the treaty²⁵ had to be

²¹ Radner 2016, 48f.

²² ^mAS–PAB–A is mentioned in line 3' in a fragmentary passage of the badly preserved manuscript, and again in line 4' (^mAS–PAB–[A]). The attribution to Assurnasirpal II matches also the use of an early Neo-Assyrian cuneiform ductus: Frahm 2009, 130.

²³ Only one of these manuscripts (VAT 11149) was known before Frahm's identifications: SAA 2 3; Radner 2006, 376–378.

²⁴ Radner 2006–08.

²⁵ Lauinger 2015, 289–292: 110 copies = 71 provinces + 39 client kingdoms, as explicitly attested in Esarhaddon's inscriptions. As Lauinger stresses it is, however, clear that there were many more client rulers that had to enter the treaty; Fales 2012, 148 therefore assumed the existence of about 220 copies.

created within a relatively short time — an instance of scribal mass production before the age of mechanical reproduction that deserves closer study.²⁶

Ten of these copies are at least partially known in the original. The manuscript excavated in 2009 in the provincial capital city of Kullania (Tell Tayinat in the Amuq region of Turkey)²⁷ is the first version to record how Esarhaddon's treaty was worded for the provincial administrations that acted on behalf of all people living under their control.²⁸ The manuscripts found at Kalhu in 1955, of which there are at least eight,²⁹ document the treaty as it was imposed on the rulers of the client states of the Assyrian Empire who acted for their people. The small fragments of a manuscript from Assur³⁰ are too incomplete to allow more than the identification as a copy of this treaty.

With the possible exception of the very fragmentary Assur manuscript, these are not chancery texts. The Kullania manuscript was found inside a small temple, next to a pedestal³¹ that seems to have served for the formal presentation of the treaty tablet. Like the other manuscripts of the same treaty found previously at Kalhu, the large tablet in portrait format is inscribed in such a way that, when stood on its shorter side, the text on the obverse and the reverse can be read.³² This is unique, as Neo-Assyrian clay tablets usually are turned along their horizontal axis in order to inscribe and read their reverse.³³ The Kalhu manuscripts were created to bind various clients of Esarhaddon's in the mountainous frontier region in the east of the Empire, between Mazamua and Elam. They were not found in the cities of these rulers but instead in the temple of Nabû in Kalhu³⁴ — possibly because they were never collected by the intended treaty partners and because the temple of the god who held the title of "Keeper of the Tablets of Destinies"³⁵ was considered suitable to store these powerful objects.

We can therefore state with certainty that the succession treaty was made between Esarhaddon and one of his provincial governors or client rulers, respectively. The latter acted on behalf of themselves and all their subordinates as well as their legal successors. On the other hand, the Assyrian king acted as the representative of the god Aššur whose consent was expressed by the use of his seals. All known copies (as far as preserved) feature the same arrangement of impressions of the deity's three seals (dating to the early second millennium BC, the 14th century BC and ca. 700 BC), known as "Seals of Destinies".³⁶ They were identified as belonging to Aššur in a caption inscribed across the very top of the

²⁶ For a first assessment see Watanabe 2014, 161f., and Lauinger 2015.

²⁷ Lauinger 2012.

²⁸ The surprise discovery and Lauinger's commendably prompt publication led to a flurry of new publications in which Neo-Assyrian specialists offered their updated views on Esarhaddon's succession treaty, including Fales 2012; Ponchia 2014; Watanabe 2014; 2015.

²⁹ Watanabe 1987, 45–142.

³⁰ Frahm 2009, nos. 70–71.

³¹ Harrison & Osborne 2012, 130–133, 137.

³² Watanabe 1988.

³³ Radner 1995, 63.

³⁴ Radner 2006, 367–371.

³⁵ George 1986, 140–142; Radner 2006, 369.

³⁶ George 1986; Watanabe 1985; 2015, 207f.

tablets that was designed to emphasise the seal impressions' powerfully binding nature (SAA 2 6, i–iv):

ⁱ NA₄.KIŠIB ^d*a-šur*₄ LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ ⁱⁱ EN KUR.KUR *ša la šu-un-né-e* ⁱⁱⁱ NA₄.KIŠIB NUN-e GAL-e AD DINGIR.MEŠ ^{iv} *ša la pa-qa-a-ri*

ⁱ Sealing of the god Aššur, king of the gods, ⁱⁱ lord of the lands, not to be altered.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sealing of the great ruler, father of the gods, ^{iv} not to be disputed.

The act of sealing the tablet with Aššur's Seals of Destinies turned it into a Tablet of Destinies.³⁷ The sealing created a close and inalienable connection between the treaty tablet (*tuppi adê*) and the god Aššur, and this was made explicit in a clause that is best preserved in the new manuscript from Kullania (Lauinger 2012, 98f., 112, T v 68–72):

⁶⁸ NA₄.KIŠIB <NUN³⁸> GAL-e *an-ni-e* ⁶⁹ *ša a-de-e ša* ^m*aš-šur*–DÙ–A DUMU–MAN GAL *ša É UŠ-te* ⁷⁰ DUMU ^m*aš-šur*–PAP–AŠ MAN KUR–*aš-šur* EN-*ku-nu* *ina ŠÀ šá-tir-u-ni* ⁷¹ *ina* NA₄.KIŠIB *ša aš-šur* LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ *ka-nik-u-ni* ⁷² *ina* IGI-*ku-nu* *ša-kín-u-ni* *ki DINGIR-ku-nu la ta-na-šar-a-ni*

⁶⁸ This seal(ed tablet) of the great ruler ^{69–70} on which is written the treaty of Assurbanipal, the great crown prince designate, the son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, ^{71–72} that is sealed with the seal of Aššur, king of the gods, (and) that is set up before you, like your god — you shall guard it.

That the treaty tablets were indeed meant to be displayed and in fact considered the object of worship³⁹ is demonstrated forcefully by the already mentioned architectural context, in which the Kullania manuscript was found. The treaty bound together god, king and subjects through a holy oath. Each treaty tablet was meant to serve the local community as a visual reminder of this fundamental relationship. But far beyond that important function, the tablets — sealed with the divine seals — were considered divine themselves and received worship.

It is not clear whether the worship of the treaty tablets was an innovation of Esarhaddon's reign or whether this was practiced already earlier. It is also unclear whether the creation and worship of such Tablets of Destinies was exclusively reserved for the genre of the succession treaty that bound all subjects to loyalty to the crown, or whether also bilateral treaties between, say, the Empire and the kingdom of Tyre would have taken this physical shape.

What is certain, however, is that at least from 672 BC onwards, the god Aššur was made manifest across the empire in the form of such sacred texts, transcending the confines of his temple in the city of Assur. Due to the extensive and deliberate dissemination of the succession treaty tablets, the idea that the god was present in these texts must have been widely familiar in the Assyrian influence sphere.⁴⁰ We must therefore acknowledge this element of Assyrian theology as one of the most important and recognizable features of the empire's ideological policy, designed to reinforce the identity of all subjects — inside the provincial borders and in the client states — as the congregation of Aššur. Outside of city of Assur, which housed his

³⁷ Watanabe 2014, 161f.

³⁸ The sign NUN, which is amended here, has been omitted by scribal mistake in this copy. It is present in the parallel passages in other manuscripts.

³⁹ An “icon”, as Steymans 2003, 93 called it.

⁴⁰ In particular, the potential influence on the client state of Judah and on its theology, as reflected in certain parts of the Bible, has found a great deal of interest, e.g. recently Levinson 2010; Steymans 2013; Harrison 2014; and Crouch 2014.

temple and statue, his subjects were able to encounter the god in the physical form of sacred text.⁴¹

3 Treaty-making: “one size fits all” vs. detailed negotiations

All known copies of Esarhaddon’s succession treaty use the same standard form, a lengthy composition of 670 lines that devotes ca. 250 lines to a final section of curses protecting the treaty. The agreement’s contents concern the treaty partners’ acceptance of Esarhaddon’s choice of successor and present the ways in which this arrangement should be protected, elaborating in great detail on the crown’s expectations in the treaty partners’ participation.⁴² The key purpose of the agreement was to guarantee that all subjects were vigilant on behalf of Esarhaddon and his successor. That this vision of the subjects as eyes of the all-seeing state was not merely a fantasy, that the responsabilisation of the Empire’s inhabitants was indeed realized to a certain degree, is demonstrated by a range of archival texts, most importantly letters in which the royal order to be watchful on behalf of the crown is explicitly referenced.⁴³

In the parts with the treaty clauses, variation is limited to the date section at the very end (with different day dates) and the introductory clause, which needed to be adapted in order to identify the individual treaty partner. Inside the provincial system, the introductory clause mentions the political and military apparatus installed by the king to govern the specific province on his behalf,⁴⁴ without giving the names of the officials in question. Even the governor who headed the provincial administration remains anonymous. Whoever was appointed in the future would enter into the agreement as the successor of the original treaty partners (Lauinger 2012, 91f., 112, T i 1–19):

¹ *a-de-e ša* ^{maš-šur}–PAB–AŠ MAN KUR–*aš-šur* ² DUMU ^{md30}–PAB.MEŠ–SU MAN KUR–*aš-šur* ³ TA LÚ.EN.NAM KUR.*ku-na-li-a* ⁴ TA LÚ.2-*e* LÚ.GAL–È ⁵ LÚ.A.BA.MEŠ LÚ.DIB–PA.MEŠ LÚ.3.U₅.MEŠ ⁶ LÚ.GAL–URU–MEŠ LÚ.*mu-tir-tè-me* ⁷ LÚ.GAR-*nu*.MEŠ LÚ.GAL–*ki-šir*.MEŠ ⁸ LÚ.EN–GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ LÚ.EN–*pet-ḫal-la-ti* ⁹ LÚ.*zak-ku-e* LÚ.*kal-la-ba-ni* ¹⁰ LÚ.*um-ma-a-ni* LÚ.*a-[ri-ti]* ¹¹ LÚ.*kit-ki-tu-u* TA LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ [ŠU.2-šú *gab-bu*] ¹² TUR *u* GAL *mal ba-[šú-u]* ¹³ [*is*]–*si-šú-nu* LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ–*šú-nu* *ša* EGIR *a-de-e* ¹⁴ *ina* [U₄]–*me* *ša-a-ti* *ib-ba-šu-u-ni* TA *na-pa-aḫ* ¹⁵ *a-di e-reb* ¹⁶ *am-mar* ^{maš-šur}–PAB–AŠ ¹⁷ MAN KUR–*aš-šur* LU-GAL-*u-tú* EN-*u-tú* *ina* UGU-*ḫi-šú-nu* ¹⁸ *up-pa-áš-u-ni*

¹ The treaty of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, ² son of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, ³ with the governor of Kullania, ⁴ with the deputy, the majordomo, ⁵ the scribes, the chariot drivers, the third men, ⁶ the village managers, the information officers, ⁷ the prefects, the cohort commanders, ⁸ the charioteers, the cavalrymen, ⁹ the exempt, the outriders, ¹⁰ the specialists, the shi[eld bearers], ¹¹ the craftsmen, with all the men [in his hands], ¹² small and great, as many as there are, ^{13–17} with them and with the men who will be born after the treaty in days to come, from sunrise to sunset, all those over whom Esarhaddon exercises kingship and lordship.

For the client states, this introductory clause was modified to take into account that political power was usually hereditary and passed down from father to son. In

⁴¹ Radner 2017, 80f.

⁴² Ponchia 2014, 504–510 for a concise overview of the content.

⁴³ Most explicitly SAA 16 126 with a verbatim quote from the Succession Treaty.

⁴⁴ Ponchia 2014, 513–516 offers a discussion of the individual officials and groups.

contrast to the members of the provincial administration, the client ruler is mentioned by name (SAA 2 6, 1–10 (manuscript F⁴⁵):

¹ *a-de-e ša* ^{maš-šur}—PAB—AŠ MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR—*aš-šur*.KI ² DUMU ^{md}30—PAB.MEŠ—SU MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR—*aš-šur*—³ TA ^{tu-ni-i} LÚ.EN—URU KUR.*el-pa-a-a* ⁴ DUMU.MEŠ—šú DUMU—DUMU.MEŠ—šú TA KUR.*el-pa-a-a* ⁵ LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ ŠU.2—šú *gab-bu* TUR *u* GAL *ma-la ba-šu-u* ⁶ TA *na-pa-aḥ* ⁴UTU—šú *a-di ra-ba* ⁴šam—šú ⁷ *am-mar* ^{maš-šur}—PAB—AŠ MAN KUR—*aš-šur* LUGAL—*tu* EN—*tu* ⁸ *ina* UGU—*ḫi-šú-nu* *up-pa-áš-u-ni* ⁹ *is-si-ku-nu* DUMU.MEŠ—*ku-nu* DUMU—DUMU.MEŠ—*ku-nu* ¹⁰ *ša* EGIR *a-de-e a-na* U₄—*me ša-a-ti ib-ba-áš-šú-u-ni*

¹ The treaty of Esarhaddon, king of the world, king of Assyria, ² son of Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, ³ with Tunî, city lord of Elippi, ⁴ his sons, his grandsons (and) with the people of Elippi, ⁵ all the men in his hands, small and great, as many as there are ⁶ from sunrise to sunset, ⁷⁻⁸ all those over whom Esarhaddon exercises kingship and lordship — ⁹ with you, your sons (and) your grandsons ¹⁰ who will be born in days to come after the treaty.

At least on occasion, a knowledge and appreciation of specific cultural circumstances could be acknowledged by the insertion of clauses featuring locally important deities in the curses section. The new Kullania manuscript includes an additional curse clause that is not attested in any of the other known manuscripts: “May (the goddess) Šarrat-Amqaruna (meaning, “Queen of Ekron”) make a worm fall from your insides”.⁴⁶ The mention of the Queen of Ekron in the Kullania manuscript seems to reflect a specific local interest. Intriguingly, it provides a further cultural link between Kullania and the Philistine lands in the southern Levant — a connection that has found much interest since the recent realisation that the Amuq region was known as Palistin/Patin in the Early Iron Age, after the great migrations of the Late Bronze Age collapse, and constituted a northern settlement region for the “Sea People” of the *peleset*, in addition to Philistia.⁴⁷ The Queen of Ekron mentioned in the Kullania manuscript is surely to be identified with the goddess who had a temple in Ekron (Tel Mique) according to a 7th century BC inscription found in that Philistine city in 1996, with which the king of Ekron, Ikausu (son of Padî, mentioned above, §1, as a treaty partner of Sennacherib) commemorated the building of a shrine for his goddess.⁴⁸ Whether the name of this goddess is to be read *ptgyh*⁴⁹ or *ptnyh*⁵⁰ is a matter of debate, as the third letter is of irregular shape; if the recent suggestion of Alexander Fantalkin to follow the second reading and to interpret the name as Patinaya,⁵¹ “indicating a female patron deity, named after” Palistin/Patin is accepted, the connection would have been even more explicit.

Such adaptations notwithstanding, the principle of Esarhaddon’s succession treaty is otherwise very much “one size fits all”: the known manuscripts indicate

⁴⁵ Wiseman 1958, pl. 14; Watanabe 1987, 56f., manuscript 31.

⁴⁶ Lauinger 2012, 102, 113, T vi 47.

⁴⁷ Hawkins 2009; Singer 2012; Weeden 2013, 11–20.

⁴⁸ Israel Museum, IAA 1997-2912. Publication: Gitin, Dothan & Naveh 1997.

⁴⁹ So the original reading; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1998 and 2000 suggested that *ptgyh* is to be identified as *Pythogaia*. For a critique of this identification and similar proposals based on the name of the Greek goddess Gaia, see Press 2012.

⁵⁰ First proposed by Demsky 1997 (who connected this with Greek *Potnia*; cf. Press 2012, 2); now again suggested by Fantalkin 2017, 99–104, who maintains that “the reconstructed *nun* is no less plausible than the reconstructed miniscule and unusual *gimel*” (p. 101).

⁵¹ Fantalkin 2017, 107.

that the basic text was drawn up once and applied to all partners, without any individual negotiations. But this is not at all representative for the way treaties were composed in other circumstances. The surviving texts indicate that every bilateral treaty was drawn up exclusively to suit the specific occasion, and this would have required detailed negotiations between the treaty partners.

The best evidence for this is Esarhaddon's treaty with Ba'alū king of Tyre. It is only known in the shape of a very fragmentarily preserved chancellery copy but the surviving clauses make it very clear that a detailed knowledge of the political and economic organisation of Tyre and its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean informed the specifics of the treaty. The preserved clauses deal with the participation of the Assyrian royal delegate (*qēpu*) in the political bodies of Tyre (including the council of elders) and with his involvement in the long-distance communication between Esarhaddon and Ba'alū,⁵² with the legal status of cargo and crews of Tyrian vessels shipwrecked on Assyrian-controlled stretches of the coast⁵³ and with the ports and shipping routes within Assyrian territory that Tyre was given permission to use.⁵⁴ All of this was specific to the relationship between the Empire and Tyre and particular to this moment in their long history, as for example the repeated mention of Philistine interests highlights. It is clear that this treaty was the product of negotiations that explored the interests of the treaty partners in much detail in order to create a mutually beneficial and acceptable agreement.

The badly damaged treaty between Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi of Babylon, dated to ca. 882 BC, provides further evidence for the deep knowledge informing such treaties. It deals prominently with military matters including the treatment of captives and fugitives but also focuses in some detail on the protection of an otherwise unknown (Assyrian or Babylonian) individual called Marduk-remanni: "Šamši-Adad shall not say evil words about Marduk-remanni [... to] the king, (such as): 'Kill, blind, or se[ize him]', nor] shall king Marduk-zakir-šumi listen to him (should he say such things)".⁵⁵

Most of the preserved text of the badly broken copy of the treaty between Aššurnerari V and Mati'il of Arpad, conducted ca. 754 BC, deals with the curses protecting the agreement, but the surviving sections show that the treaty was intended to regulate the king of Arpad's participation in Assyrian military campaigns, with specific arrangements concerning other political entities, including Assyria's sworn enemy Urartu.⁵⁶ The deities invoked include a great number of Syro-Levantine gods, including the storm gods of Aleppo and Damascus, Ramman of Damascus, Kubaba and Karhuha of Carchemish, Melqart of Tyre and Eshmun of Sidon.⁵⁷

The bilateral treaties between Assyrian rulers and their counterparts in allied states can be described as the product of intensive political and cultural exchange and interaction that would have required detailed negotiations between the treaty

⁵² SAA 2 5, iii 6'-14'.

⁵³ SAA 2 5, iii 15'-17': the cargo belongs to the Assyrian crown but all people must be returned unharmed.

⁵⁴ SAA 2 5, iii 18'-30'.

⁵⁵ SAA 2 1, 8'-10'.

⁵⁶ SAA 2 2, iii 8'.

⁵⁷ SAA 2 2, vi 18-25.

partners and/or their representatives. The treaties therefore constitute evidence for an important non-violent aspect of Assyrian statecraft that is often side-lined in discussions of how the Empire interacted with other political entities.

4 The limits of treaty-making

Binding one's contemporaries into a treaty agreement was seen, as we have discussed, not merely as a political act. The heavy reliance on the involvement of the divine world is obvious because of the oaths and curses that were meant to protect the power of the treaty; and at least in the case of Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty, the god Aššur was given direct agency by sealing the treaty tablet with his seals.

Most treaty partners' cultural sensibilities were aligned closely enough with the Assyrian practices to allow them to understand and appreciate the divine dimension that governed treaty-making, that informed the treaty's power and that bound the treaty partners to each other. Understanding this of course does not necessarily mean that one would honour the arrangement, and a few letters from Esarhaddon's state correspondence will serve to highlight this key difference.

In a letter to the king, a Babylonian subject of Esarhaddon is very much on message:

I have not abandoned the feet of Assyria that I have grasped. I am a guardian and keeper of the treaty of the king, my lord (*be-el* EN.NUN *u na-šir a-de-e šá* LUGAL *be-lí-ia ana-ku*).⁵⁸

Yet he contrasts his worthy attitude with that of another individual who is *paḥ-ḫu-zu-ú ù šá-ar-šá-ra-nu šu-ú*, "an insolent cad and a traitor".⁵⁹ In another letter, Šulmu-bel-lašme, Esarhaddon's governor of Der, is reminded by Šamaš-šumu-ukin, crown prince of Babylon, that

Having listened to one another, the king of Elam and the king of Assyria have made peace with one another at (the god) Marduk's command and become treaty partners (*ana* EN.MEŠ *a-de-e šá a-ḫa-meš it-tu-ra*).⁶⁰

The governor is now deemed in violation of the terms of that treaty, which was conducted in 674 BC after long years of war between the Empire and Elam, as he had detained some Elamites who wanted to enter Assyrian territory to participate in a religious festival (most likely in Babylon). "Do not cast a shadow between the king of Elam and the king of Assyria", demands the crown prince of the governor.⁶¹

While it was clear that even its divine protection would not always guarantee that the treaty was honoured, such behaviour was considered delinquent and constituted an acceptable reason for retribution. Violating an existing treaty is of course a very frequently invoked reason for going to war in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.⁶² When Assurbanipal attempted to cause the inhabitants of Babylon to break the treaty that bound them to his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, now king of Babylon, he had to point out that "Violating a treaty is a matter (to be settled) before

⁵⁸ SAA 18 102, 4'–6'.

⁵⁹ SAA 18 102, 9'.

⁶⁰ SAA 18 7, 3–7.

⁶¹ SAA 18 7, r.11'–13'.

⁶² Oded 1992.

the god”⁶³ while reassuring the Babylonians that in this case it was entirely justified to do so.

However, what if a potential treaty partner did not share the underlying values and beliefs that informed the treaty system? Esarhaddon encountered this problem when dealing with the nomadic Cimmerians in Northwestern Iran, or so at least one of his advisers thought:

The Cimmerians, who said ‘The Manneans are at your disposal; we shall keep aloof’ — maybe it was a lie: they are the offspring of outcasts (NUMUN LÚ.*ḫal-qá-ti-i*); they do not know an oath sworn by a god nor a treaty (*ma-me-ti šá* DINGIR *ù a-de-e ul i-du-ú*).⁶⁴

Here, a link is made between the Cimmerians’ nomadic, migratory lifestyle and their unfamiliarity with oath and treaty. But whether this is prejudice or reality is unclear in light of the fact that very little is known about the beliefs and customs of the Cimmerians in this regard.

In general, however, the Assyrian crown saw treaty-making as a perfectly valid political instrument, irrespective of whether the treaty partners were permanently settled or not. Assurbanipal’s treaty with two leading figures of the Arab Qedar tribe⁶⁵ is testimony to the fact that nomadic populations were not automatically suspect — although sadly, in this particular case, the Qedarites broke the agreement. However, they were subsequently defeated, thereby proving the treaty’s strength: “As the treaty of the king, my lord, has caught up with them, those who escaped the iron sword will die of hunger”, states the happy commander of the Assyrian forces when reporting his victory over the Qedarites to his king.⁶⁶

5 The agency of the King’s Treaty

What exactly was thought to happen when a treaty was violated? The original concept is that the gods, as guarantors of the oaths taken, enact revenge on the perpetrator. An inscription of Esarhaddon, composed in 673 BC, provides a good example for this idea: “At that time, Nabû-zer-ketti-lešir, son of Marduk-apla-iddina (Merodach-baladan), governor of the Sealand, who did not keep his treaty nor remember the agreement of Assyria, forgot the good relations of my father (*i.e.*, Sennacherib)”.⁶⁷ After detailing how Nabû-zer-ketti-lešir exploited the succession war crippling the Empire in 681 BC in order to besiege Ur, the following list of misdeeds describes his failings as a treaty-partner:

⁶³ ABL 301, r.10–11: *ḫaṭ-tu-u ina šá a-de-e ina IGI DINGIR*. For a translation see Parpola 2004, 227f.

⁶⁴ SAA 10 111, 12–16. Simo Parpola translated NUMUN LÚ.*ḫal-qá-ti-i* as “barbarians”.

⁶⁵ SAA 2 10.

⁶⁶ SAA 18 143, r.5’–7’: *ù a-de-e šá LUGAL be-lí-ia ki-i ik-šu-du-šú-nu-ti šá la-pa-an GÍR AN.BAR ú-še-zi-bu ina bu-bu-tu i-ma-ti*.

⁶⁷ RINAP 4 1, ii 40–42: *ina U₄-me-šu-ma* ^{md}AG–NUMUN–ZI–SI.SÁ DUMU ^{md}AMAR.UTU–A–AŠ LÚ.GAR KUR–*tam-tim la na-šir a-de-e la ḫa-si-is* MUN *ša* KUR–*aš-šur*.KI *ṭa-ab-tú* AD-ia *in-ši-ma*.

He was not respectful, did not stop (his evil deeds), and would not leave my servant (*i.e.* the governor of Ur) alone. Moreover, he did not send his mounted messenger before me and did not ask after the well-being of my kingship.⁶⁸

Therefore, Esarhaddon, once firmly established as king of Assyria, dispatched his troops and Nabû-zer-ketti-lešir, “the rebel, the traitor”,⁶⁹ fled to Elam — but there he found his death:

Because of the oath of the great gods which he had transgressed, (the gods) Aššur, Sin, Šamaš, Bel and Nabû imposed a grievous punishment on him, and they killed him with the sword in the midst of the land Elam.⁷⁰

Also Esarhaddon’s chief physician portrays the gods as enacting vengeance on those who had broken their treaty with Esarhaddon, referring in his letter to the events of 670 BC when a rebellion against the king had been uncovered.⁷¹

(The god) Aššur and the great gods bound and handed over to the king these criminals who had plotted against (the king’s) goodness and who, having concluded the king’s treaty together with his servants before Aššur and the great gods, had broken the treaty.⁷²

But during the reign of Esarhaddon’s son and successor Assurbanipal a new understanding seems to emerge: the execution of revenge is no longer directly and explicitly attributed to the gods but traced back to the agency of the treaty itself. Retribution for breaking a treaty reaches the delinquents in different ways, the result being fatal. In the following passage from an inscription composed in 649 BC (“Prism B”), we see Assurbanipal rejoice about the fact that three former allies came to a gruesome end in 664 BC, after having broken their treaties with the Empire — one by slow and painful decline, one by rodent bite and one by abdominal dropsy. Only the fate of an Elamite eunuch whom Assurbanipal personally blames for corrupting the king of Elam is directly attributed to the god Marduk taking vengeance, and this man did not personally conclude a treaty with Assurbanipal:

Urtaku, the king of Elam, who had not honoured my friendship, whom death called on a premature day, who came to an end (and) withered away while wailing: he no more set foot upon the land of the living. His life came to an end in the very same year; he passed away. Bel-iqiša of Gambulu who had cast off the yoke of my lordship: he lost life through the bite of a rodent. Nabû-šumu-ereš, the governor of Nippur, who did not honour the treaty: he suffered from dropsy, being full of water. Marduk-šumu-ibni, his (*i.e.* Urtaku’s) eunuch, the instigator who had incited Urtaku to plot evil: (the god) Marduk, the king of the gods, imposed a grievous punishment upon him. Within one year (664 BC), they gave up life at the same time as one another.⁷³

⁶⁸ RINAP 4 1, ii 48–50: *šu-ú ul ip-làḥ na-de-e a-ḥi ul ir-ši-ma ar-di ul ú-maš-šir ù LÚ.rak-bu-šú a-di maḥ-ri-ia ul iš-pu-ram-ma šul-mu LUGAL-ti-ia ul iš-al.*

⁶⁹ RINAP 4 1, ii 54: *ba-ra-nu-ú na-bal-kàt-ta-nu.*

⁷⁰ RINAP 4 1, ii 55–57: *áš-šú ma-mit DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ ša e-ti-qu dáš-šur d30 dUTU dEN ù dAG an-nu kab-tu e-mì-du-šu-ma qé-reb KUR.ELAM.MA.KI i-na-ru-uš ina GIŠ.TUKUL.*

⁷¹ Radner 2016, 52f. for a brief summary.

⁷² SAA 10 316, 23–r.3: *aš-šur u DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ TA LÚ.ARAD.MEŠ-šú iš-kun-u-ni ša ina šÀ-bi a-de-e iḥ-tu-u-ni aš-šur u DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ uk-ta-si-iu-u ina ŠU.2 LUGAL be-lí-ia i-sa-ak-nu-šu-nu.*

⁷³ RINAP 5/1 3, iv 49–62: *ur-ta-ki LUGAL KUR.ELAM.MA.KI šá la iṣ-šu-ru ib-ru-ti ina U4-me la šim-ti-šú mu-ú-tu ú-ga-ru-u ina ta-né-ḥi iq-tu-u i-zu-bu ina qaq-qa-ri ba-la-ṭi GİR.2-šú ul iš-kun ina MU.AN.NA-šú na-piš-ta-šú iq-ti il-lik nam-mu-ši-šú mEN-BA-šá LÚ.gam-bu-la-a-a ša iṣ-*

In the terse and far more prosaic vocabulary of the private legal texts, the underlying concept is personified and named. At about the same time when Assurbanipal's Prism B inscription was composed, a divine entity called the King's Treaty (*adê ša šarri*) became widely attested in private legal documents from across the Empire as enacting vengeance upon any defaulting party, either alongside or instead of some of the most important Assyrian gods. The King's Treaty features in two penalty clauses that are used to secure the contract against any attempt to break the agreement or litigate against it:

- *adê ša šarri ina qātēšu luba' 'û*, “The King's Treaty shall call him (*i.e.*, the defaulting party) to account”;
- *adê ša šarri lū bēl-dēnišu*, “The King's Treaty shall be his (*i.e.*, the defaulting party's) prosecutor”.

The first is a novel clause that is first attested in a private legal document from Assur, written in 650 BC (no. 1, below). It is subsequently known from documents from Nineveh, Kalhu, a site near modern Girnavaz in the Tur Abdin mountain range (no. 27), and Dur-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad on the Khabur). In this last city, a modification of the clause is attested that invokes the Crown Prince's Treaty (*adê ša mār-šarri*) instead of the King's Treaty, in two documents that date to the period after the Babylonian and Median invasions of the Assyrian Heartland from 614 BC onwards (nos. 31–32).⁷⁴ The clause most frequently attributes agency to the King's Treaty (or the Crown Prince's Treaty) on its own. In three cases, however, the Treaty is the last agent in sequences of divine entities that feature Aššur in combination with other gods: Aššur – Bel – Šamaš – Ninurta – King's Treaty (no. 14 from Kalhu); Aššur – Nabû – Ištar of Arbail – King's Treaty (no. 16 from Kalhu); and Aššur – Šamaš – King's Treaty (no. 17 from Assur). The mention of Ninurta and Nabû in the two documents from Kalhu may be due to the fact that these gods had temples in the city. The all-seeing sun god Šamaš is always appropriate when it comes to guaranteeing justice while Bel (Marduk) and Ištar of Arbail are among the most popular and widely worshipped deities in the Empire.

| | Place of origin & edition | Penalty clause | Date ⁷⁵ |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Assur: KAN 2 70 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 650 Bel-Ḫarran-šaddû'a |
| 2 | Assur: KAN 3 2 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 648 Belšunu |
| 3 | Assur: KAN 4 18 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 646* Nabû-šar-ahhešu |
| 4 | Nineveh: SAA 14 100 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 643* Nabû-šarru-ušur <i>ša-rēši</i> |
| 5 | Unknown provenance: Kohler & Ungnad 1913 no. 46 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. ⁷⁶ | 638* Upaqa-ana-Arbail |

lu-ú GIŠ.ŠUDUN EN-u-ti-ia ina ni-šik PÉŠ iš-ta-kan na-piš-tú^{md}PA-MU-KAM-eš LÚ.GÚ.EN.NA la na-šir a-de-e iš-ši a-ga-nu-til-la-a A.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ^{md}AMAR.UTU-MU-DÙ LÚ.šu-ut-SAG-šú mu-šad-bi-ib-šú ša MUNUS.ḪUL ú-šak-pi-du a-na mur-ta-ki e-mid-su^dAMAR.UTU MAN DINGIR.MEŠ še-er-ta-šú GAL-tú ina 1-et MU.AN.NA mé-eḫ-ret a-ḫa-meš iš-ku-nu na-piš-tú.

⁷⁴ Cf. Radner 2002, 17f. and Radner forthcoming on the political implications on the state of the Assyrian monarchy.

⁷⁵ The “post-canonical” dates after 648 BC follow the preliminary sequence established by Reade 1998 and are marked with an asterisk behind the year.

⁷⁶ Very possibly preceded by the clause *adê ša šarri lū bēl-dēnišu* but this is not entirely certain due to the imprecision of the original publication. The present location of the tablet is unknown, so collation is impossible.

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 6 | Assur: VAT 1953 ⁷⁷ | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 637* Mušallim-Aššur |
| 7 | Assur: Ahmad 1996 no. 30 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 636* Aššur-gimilli-terre |
| 8 | Assur: KAN 3 88 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 636* Aššur-gimilli-terre |
| 9 | Nineveh: SAA 14 459 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 633* Bel-lu-dari |
| 10 | Assur: KAN 3 60 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 632* Adad-remanni |
| 11 | Assur: KAN 1 59 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 625* Aššur-remanni |
| 12 | Kalhu: CTN 3 30 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 625* Aššur-remanni |
| 13 | Assur: KAN 3 103 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 622* Daddi |
| 14 | Kalhu: CTN 3 31 | Aššur & Bel & Šamaš & Ninurta & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 623* Šalmu-šarri-iqbi |
| 15 | Assur: KAN 4 53 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 621* Bel-ahu-ušur |
| 16 | Kalhu: Postgate 1976 no. 11 | Aššur & Nabû & Ištar of Arbail & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 621* Bel-ahu-ušur |
| 17 | Assur: KAN 1 51 | Aššur & Šamaš & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 620* Sa'ilu |
| 18 | Assur: Deller & Millard 1985, 42–46 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 620* Sa'ilu |
| 19 | Assur: KAN 4 49 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 619* Bel-iqbi |
| 20 | Kalhu: CTN 3 64 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 616* Nabû-tapputu-alik |
| 21 | Assur: Ahmad 1996 no. 10 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | 615* Šamaš-šarru-ibni |
| 22 | Assur: KAN 3 64 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | post-648 Sin-kenu-ide |
| 23 | Assur: KAN 3 3 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | post-648 Sin-kenu-ide |
| 24 | Assur: KAN 3 59 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost: post-648 |
| 25 | Assur: Ahmad 1996 no. 3 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost: post-648 |
| 26 | Kalhu: CTN 3 47 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost: post-648 |
| 27 | Girnavaz: Donbaz 1988, 9f. | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost: post-648 |
| 28 | Nineveh: SAA 6 95 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost |
| 29 | Nineveh: SAA 14 311 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost |
| 30 | Assur: KAN 3 74 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall call him to account. | Date lost |
| 31 | Dur-Katlimmu: Radner 2002 no. 199 | <i>adê ša mār-šarri</i> shall call him to account. | post-614 Se'-ila'i |
| 32 | Dur-Katlimmu: Radner 2002 no. 128 | <i>adê ša mār-šarri</i> shall call him to account. ⁷⁸ | Date lost |

The second clause is an adaptation of the very common clause “DEITY shall be his prosecutor”, one of the most frequently used penalty clauses in private Neo-Assyrian legal documents. The clause is known with a wide range of deities⁷⁹ but the variant invoking the King’s Treaty is securely attested only in the 630s BC (no. 1, below). The clause with the King’s Treaty is known from five texts from Assur, Kalhu und Nineveh. In two texts, the King’s Treaty is the sole agent (nos. 1 and 5), whereas in the other three texts, it is mentioned as the last entity in a sequence featuring Aššur and Šamaš (nos. 2 and 4) or Aššur and Nabû (no. 3 from Kalhu).

| | Place of origin & edition | Penalty clause | Date |
|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Kalhu: CTN 3 34 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall be his prosecutor. | 636* Aššur-gimilli-terre |
| 2 | Assur: KAN 3 76 | Aššur & Šamaš & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall be his prosecutor. | 635* Zababa-eriba |

⁷⁷ Unpublished; for a partial edition see Radner 1997, 288.

⁷⁸ This text uses a longer phrasing: *adê ša mār-šarri ina qātēšu ina qātēšu mātātišu luba''û*.

⁷⁹ Radner 1997a, 126–129 with notes 37–47 for references.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 3 | Kalhu: CTN 3 63 | Aššur & Nabû & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall be his prosecutor. | 625* Aššur-remanni ⁸⁰ |
| 4 | Kalhu: CTN 3 36 | Aššur & Šamaš & <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall be his prosecutor. | 622* Daddî |
| 5 | Nineveh: SAA 14 96 | <i>adê ša šarri</i> shall be his prosecutor. | Date lost: post-648 ⁸¹ |

From these clauses, it is clear that the King's Treaty was seen as a divine entity capable of acting and especially enacting revenge on behalf of the injured party to the contract. It is also clear, from the fact that the King's Treaty is always the last to be listed in any sequences of divine entities, that it was conceived as being of lesser importance than the great gods of the Assyrian Empire, although certainly considered worthy of being named alongside them. But if mentioned in combination with other entities, the King's Treaty always occurs together with the god Aššur, in both clauses.

This close connection of the King's Treaty with the god Aššur recalls the fact that the divine Treaty Tablets (*tuppi adê*) were sealed with Aššur's sealing, made with his Seal(s) of Destinies, as known from the extant manuscripts of Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty as well as from the text they bear: "You shall guard this treaty tablet which is sealed with the seal of Aššur, king of the gods, and which is set up before you, like your god" (see above, §2). The inhabitants of the Empire who chose to invoke the King's Treaty as a divine entity to protect the validity of their legal transactions seem to have attributed this specific power to the deified Treaty Tablets bearing the text of Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty that were set up in shrines and received worship in provincial centres across the realm. Given that Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty is so very prominently concerned with ensuring that this specific agreement is honoured it is fitting that the divine entity King's Treaty was deemed responsible for safeguarding contracts more generally.

Esarhaddon had bound the Empire with his Succession Treaty already in 672 BC. When he died in 669 BC, the crown passed on to his crown prince Assurbanipal as planned. But it would appear that only by 650 BC, the concept of the divine treaty had transcended the sphere of statecraft and entered the world of private contractual law in the shape of the divine entity King's Treaty. As the available documentation is reasonably good we cannot explain this with gaps in the sources. Perhaps this time lag is merely due to the generally very conservative nature of Neo-Assyrian legal practice and its documentation. But one might also see a connection with the revised concept of divine retribution as attested in the contemporary royal inscriptions that we discussed above. While these do not directly mention the King's Treaty as an agent of vengeance, a close link between breaking the treaty with Assurbanipal and the doom of the delinquent allies is constructed.

⁸⁰ J. N. Postgate (in Dalley & Postgate 1984, 123) reads ^m*Aš-šur*-DINGIR[?]-a[?]-[a[?]], for Aššur-ila'i, the eponym of 653 BC, and stresses that "this appears to be one of the few legal texts from Fort Shalmaneser dated by canonical *limmus*". And yet, the tablet was found together with CTN 3 52, dated to the eponymate of Iqbi-ilani (618* BC). I therefore prefer the reading ^m*aš-šur-rém*¹-a-[ni], which can easily be reconciled with Postgate's copy. The tablet is in the Iraq Museum and cannot be collated easily at present.

⁸¹ If Amurri, the purchaser in this text, is to be identified with Amurri, the creditor in SAA 14 94 (envelope) and SAA 14 95 (inner tablet), dated to 646* BC, then this text may also date to roughly this time.

I would argue that we should see the newly prominent role of the deified treaty in connection with the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, king of Babylon, against his brother and overlord Assurbanipal, king of Assyria. The conflict began in 652 BC and ended in 648 BC, after a prolonged period of war that truly ravaged Babylonia. In a world where temples displayed as holy icons treaty tablets binding this man to his royal brother, the betrayal of Šamaš-šumu-ukin took on an even more problematic character, as his part in the Succession Treaty is far more prominent than that of any other person in the realm: not only is he mentioned as the future king of Babylon, he is the only person other than Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal mentioned by name in the treaty clauses.⁸² But the existence of that agreement, the reality of the Treaty Tablets and its manifestation as the King's Treaty would guarantee that his treachery could not succeed, and the high drama of the war between the royal brothers⁸³ as well as the gruesome consequences of the long conflict for the Babylonian population may have widely promoted the role of the divine entity King's Treaty as an avenging angel, a fury, that would see justice done, no matter what the price.⁸⁴

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⁸² SAA 2 6, 86, 668.

⁸³ The conflict became the subject of literature that was passed down for centuries, cf. Aramaic "Tale of Two Brothers" as recorded on a Demotic papyrus: Steiner 1997.

⁸⁴ Conceptually, the king's treaty is therefore close to the Greek Erinyes (corresponding to the Roman Furies) that Walter Burkert (1985, 198) defined as "an embodiment of self-cursing contained in the oath".

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