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LETTERS FROM ASSYRIAN SCHOLARS

to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal

Part II A: Introduction and Appendixes

by

Simo Parpola

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

*to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Section of History and Philology
of the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Helsinki,
in Lecture Room XII, on Saturday, March 20, 1971, at 12 o'clock noon*

KEVELAER-NECKIRGHEN, VLUYN 1971

P R E F A C E

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The adopted scheme (Introduction, Commentary, Appendices, Indexes) as such is conventional and hardly need be accounted for. A few comments on the introduction and the commentary may however be appropriate in this connection.

The *introduction* contains a *synthesis* of the general conclusions that can be drawn from the detail *analysis* of the material presented in the commentary. Far from trying to exhaust the information of the letters, I have concentrated on a number of carefully selected topics that bear on the understanding of the letters as a whole. This was all the more imperative as in many cases widely current opinions about these questions obviously were in need of revision or precision.

The purpose of the *commentary* is twofold. On one hand, I have tried to clarify difficult passages by adducing illustrating parallels or other evidence from other, mostly contemporary sources. On the other hand, I have done my best to point out the relative or absolute certainty of the text and translation given by me². This implied a thorough grounding of all major restorations (especially concerning the assignment of letter fragments to definite authors) and questionable translations (especially those deviating from authorities such as CAD and AHw; quite obvious mistranslations and misinterpretations of earlier editions are passed over in silence); the numerous philological and historical discussions serving for this purpose are registered in the indexes. Whenever sufficient astronomical or historical criteria are available, I have endeavoured to establish the exact date of each document, and the line of argumentation is presented in the commentary in proper connections; otherwise the general time limits deduced in the introduction have to be applied. The comments on each

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letter are preceded by a list of the extant photographs, copies (other than ABL) and scholarly contributions that have appeared after 1930¹.

The main body of this volume dates from 1968: chapters III and IV of the introduction, and parts of chapter II, were written after my release from military service in 1969. In order to keep the manuscript up to date, I have later on inserted new material and rewritten some sections.²

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