LETTERS FROM ASSYRIAN SCHOLARS

to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal

Part II A: Introduction and Appendices

by

Simno 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-NEUKIRCHEN, VELYN 1971
PREFACE

The present volume contains the information that, in my opinion, is essential to a fruitful utilization of the letters edited in Pt. 1 (AOAT 51). It is naturally intended to replace the previous commentary on the letters presented in the Vol. III of L. Waterman, Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire1. Though I have written in the first place for specialists, I have, at the same time, tried to take into account the more generally oriented reader too.

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 adding or illustrating parallel or other evidence from other, mostly contemporary sources. On the other hand, I have done my best to point out the relative or absolute certainties 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 index. 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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1 For purely practical reasons, I have not included the appendix to this outdated edition, especially since it is readily accessible and can be consulted in case a comparison of the two editions seems desirable.

2 The most vexing feature in the earlier editions, particularly in that by Waterman, is certainly their poor philological quality and the frequent 'non-sense-translations' resulting from it. With regard to the suspensions and lapses involved by such translations, it is simply imperative to demonstrate with all desirable clarity what translations are possible and what not.
letter are preceded by a list of the extant photographs, copies (other than AARL) and scholarly contributions that have appeared after 1930.1

The main body of this volume dates from 1968: chapter 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.1

I repeat my thanks to all persons and institutions whose assistance was acknowledged in Pt. I. Furthermore, I want to thank my wife for her loving help, Prof. K. Deller (Heidelberg) for reading through the introduction, and especially the editors of the series AOAT for the outstanding generosity and elasticity shown to me during the printing of this book.

Heidelberg

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1 For the research done before 1930 I refer to Waterman, BCE III under respective numbers, and to the bibliography of Pfeiffer, SIA. Only those of the “pre-Waterman” studies which are of real scientific value (e.g., Botta and Land-burger) are listed in the present volume.

2 The slight unevenness in the final manuscript are explained by these circumstances and will, I hope, be excused with regard to the extent of the work involved.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface ........................................... V
Table of Contents ................................ VII
Bibliography .................................... IX
Abbreviations ................................... XI
Systematic Introduction ......................... 1

I. Characterization of the Material: The Letters as Historical Source .......... 3
II. The Scholars ................................ 6
   A. Definitions ................................ 6
      1. On the Mesopotamian concept of scholarship ......... 6
      2. Mesopotamian scholars: priests or scientists? ... 10
      3. The classes and special fields of the scholars ... 12
   B. On the activity and role of the scholar ............. 16
      1. On the scientific activity of the scholars (from the modern point of view) ... 16
      2. The influence of the scholars at court ........... 21
C. Prosopographical data ..................... 26

Prefatory remarks ........................... 28
1. Adad-šumu-zišur .............................. 28
2. Akaču-ulis ................................. 29
3. Bēša-bašu-ad-Išu ............................ 29
4. Be-taš .............................. 30
5. Bāšal .......................... 30
6. Bēš-šanu .............................. 31
7. Bēš-šāšu-apli ............................. 31
8. Bēš-šāšu-ži-la ............................. 32
9. Maršak-liškin-liš .......................... 33
10. Maršak-šumu-zišur ......................... 44
11. Marš-šaru ................................ 44
12. Nebil-li ................................. 46
13. Nebil-ša-kāšlušu .......................... 46
14. Nebil-ša-kāšlušu-šana ........................ 48
15. Nebil-ša-niš .............................. 48
16. Nebil-ša-niš-tišu .......................... 49
17. Nebil-ša-tišer ............................. 49
18. Nebil-šumu-ad-Išu ......................... 10
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1 For purely practical reasons, I have all along the line avoided making a stand to this outdated edition, especially once it is easily accessible and can be consulted easily. A comparison of the two editions seems desirable.

2 The most vexing feature in the earlier editions, particularly in that by Waterman, is certainly their poor philological quality and the frequent "non-seme-translations" resulting from it. With regard to the suspicious and "copied" words and phrases evoked by such translations, it is simply imperative to demonstrate with all desirable clarity what translations are possible and what not.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

V

Preface

Table of Contents

Bibliography

Abbreviations

Systematic Introduction

I. Characterization of the Material. The Letters as Historical Source

II. The Scholars

A. Definitions

1. On the Mesopotamian concept of scholarship

2. Mesopotamian scholars; priests or scientists?

3. The classes and special fields of the scholars

B. On the activity and role of the scholars

1. On the scientific activity of the scholars (from the modern point of view)

2. The influence of the scholars at court

C. Prosopographical data

Preliminary remarks

1. A/lilum-asur

2. A/kullitu

3. Bēlu-bēlum-ēlulēn

4. Behist

5. Bēl

6. Ebbānu

7. Ilīr-nīrim-akīlu

8. Ilīr-šašum-ēlulēn

9. Marālu-bēl-īlim-ēn

10. Marālu-bēlum-asur

11. Nāṣ-īlu

12. Nāš-em

13. Nāš-nīrum-ēlulēn

14. Nāš-nīrum-ēlulē

15. Nāš-nīrum

16. Nāš-nīrum-ēntāli

17. Nāš-nīrum-

18. Nāš-nīrum-nālu

19. Nāš-nīrum-nālu

20. Nāš-nīrum...
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1. Cultural and historical background (excepting text-editions)
   


1 This bibliography does not contain all the books or articles mentioned or cited in the commentary; on the other hand, a number of books and articles not directly relevant to the subject matter are included. The purpose is to provide the uninitiated reader with the basic literature.


- - - , "The eyes of the lord?" *JAOS* 88 (1968), 174-180.

- - - , "The shadow of the king?" *BASEAR* 107 (1947), 7-11.


Reiner, E., "The etiological myth of the "Seven ages"." *Or* NS 30 (1961), 1-11.

Ritter, E., "Magische Experten (e illnesses) and physician (e illnesses): notes on two complementary professions in Babylonian medicine." *Studia Semitica et Assyriologica* 11, 1967.


- - - , "Der neue Osten im Altertum", *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte* 2, Berlin 1962, 41-133.

- - - , "Die Universellvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen?" *ZA* 43 (1939), 1-31.


- - - , "Religiose Unvollständigkeit, Sanktifikationsstendenz, and Abhängigkeit der Zeit der Sargoniden?" *Analekta Biblica* 12 (1959), 156-167.

Weinreich, E., "Der Tag der Stadtgötter?" *AO* 14 (1941-44), 340-342.


2. Astrology, astronomy, and (astronomical) chronology


- - - , *Spezieller Kanon der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse für das Landesgebiets der kaiserlichen Altertumswissenschaften and den Zeithase von 900 v. Chr. bis 600 nach Chr. Berlin 1929.

21. Nergal-Tumu-idinna .......................... 42
22. Tashû .......................... 43
23. Ušūd-En .......................... 43
24. Ušūd-Ena .......................... 44
25. Ušūd-Nidal .......................... 44

III. The King: A Reconsideration of the Person of Esharhaddon .......................... 46

IV. On the Dating of the Letters .......................... 48

V. Historical Problems: The Substitute King Ritual .......................... 54

1. Sources .......................... 55
2. On the popularity of the ritual .......................... 56
3. Factors necessitating the enthronement of a substitute .......................... 56
4. The length of the ritual .......................... 59
5. The initiatory of the ritual .......................... 60
6. The substitute king .......................... 61
7. On the course of the ritual .......................... 62

Commentary .......................... 67

Appendixes .......................... 1

1. Scholars .......................... 1
   A. Scholarly advisors of Esharhaddon and Assurbanipal .......................... 1
   B. Bibliography of related texts .......................... 7

2. Chronology .......................... 15
   A. Diachronic surveys on the letters .......................... 15
   B. List of letters and reports dated on astronomical grounds .......................... 19
   C. Table of correspondences between Julian and Assyrian dates in the reign of Esharhaddon .......................... 23
   D. Mesopotamian calendar and time measuring .......................... 25

3. Astrology .......................... 27
   A. Planetary tables for years 680-663 B.C. .......................... 33
   B. Graphic presentation of the lunar eclipses visible in Mesoopotamia in years 679-663 B.C. .......................... 34
   C. Interpretation of lunar eclipses .......................... 37
   D. Sun’s way through the zodiac and sun’s daily course in different seasons .......................... 39

Indexes .......................... 41

BIBLIOGRAPHY ¹

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¹ This bibliography does not contain all the books or articles mentioned or cited in the commentary; on the other hand, a number of books and articles not directly relevant to the subject matter are included. The purpose is to provide the uninitiated reader with the basic literature.
- - - - - Letters from Mesopotamia. Chicago and London 1967.
- - - - - "The eye of the lord". JAOS 86 (1966), 17-180.
- - - - - "The shadow of the king." BASOR 107 (1947), 7-11.
- - - - - The Ancient Near East. Supplementary texts and pictures relating to the Old Testament. Princeton 1969.
Rainer, E., "The etiological myth of the "Seven ages"." OR 30 (1961), 1-11.
Ritter, E.K., "Magical expert (= ilpap) and physician (= anû): notes on two complementary professions in Babylonian medicine"., Liber Iurisibi (1965), 299-321.
- - - - "Der Nahe Osten im Altertum" Propädeutische Geschichtsbücher 2 (Berlin 1962), 41-133.
- - - - "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Krönungsinscriften." ZA 43 (1939), 1-31.
- - - - - "Herr und der altere Orient". Verhandlungen des Fürstenkreises 54. Berlin-Göttingen-Heidelberg 1954.
- - - - - "Religiosität und Säkularisierungsstendenzen in der Zeit der Sargoniden." Analela Biblica 12 (1955), 356-367.
- - - - - "Hof- und Harem-Erlassen assyrischer Könige aus dem 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.". ÀO 17 (1954-56), 237-293.

2. Astrology, astronomy, and (astronomical) chronology

Ehlke, M. "Die Eponymen der spätassyrischen Zeit", ÀO 17 (1954-56), 100-129.
- - - - - Spezieller Kalam der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse für das Länderjahr der klassischen Assyrnomazinschrift und den Zeitraum von 980 vor Chr. bis 669 nach Chr. Berlin 1929.
Less important contributions are listed in the commentary under respective numbers.

4. Neo-Assyrian grammar and vocabulary

The date there is no adequate presentation of either the Neo-Assyrian grammar or vocabulary. Especially the latter has been badly neglected, the only extensive list of words available being the one published in the fourth volume of RCAE (which besides being incomplete, is to a large extent unreliable and does not distinguish between NA and NB words). The main features of the NA grammar are worked out in S. Ylvisaker, Zur babyloni- schen und assyrischen Grammatik, eine Untersuchung auf Grund der Briefe aus der Sargondynastie (Leipzig 1912). Despite its undeniable merits, this study is now outdated, owing to the considerable growth of the textual material. A new, comprehensive grammar is in preparation by K. Deller. Until its completion, Neo-Assyrian students have to resort to their own collections and the scattered lexical and grammatical studies that have appeared during the two past decades. Here is a list of the most important ones:

1932 V. von Soden, Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik (= Arch 33, Rome 1932), passim, esp. p. 248. (Erzlyerforschung Rome 1964)

1936 L. Matois and K. Petriček, "Beiträge zur akkadischen Grammatik I," Arch 24, 1-144.

1957 V. von Soden, "Zur Laut- und Formenlehre des Neoassyrischen," MO 18, 121-142


---, Review of A. Salonen, Hipposkopia Ascendens; Or 27, 311-314.

1. Mesopotamian traditional literature

The following list of Neo-Assyrian authors and their works is meant to provide a brief but fairly complete overview of Neo-Assyrian literature. It includes works of literature, history, and instruction, as well as inscriptions and literary fragments.


---, "Zur Terminologie neoassyrischer Urkunden," EAW 37, 29-42.

---, "Zur Syntax der neoassyrischen Orthographie," JRAS 37, 29-42.

---, "Zur Syntax der neoassyrischen Orthographie," JRAS 37, 29-42.


---, "Studien zur neoassyrischen Wissenschaft," Or 33, 98-103.


---, "Zur Syntax der neoassyrischen Orthographie," Or 33, 338-374.

---, "Zur Syntax der neoassyrischen Orthographie," Or 33, 338-374.

---, "Zur Syntax des Infinitivs des Neoassyrischen," Or 33, 479-482.

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---, "Zur Syntax der neoassyrischen Orthographie," Or 33, 479-482.
For medical ritual—see under aklu "medicine".

Exorcist’s manual = E. Ebeling, KAR 14; see H. Zimmerm., ZA 33 (1916), 204-229.


Aś ÇTU — MEDICINE


F. Köcher, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der assyrisch-babylonischen Medizin, AHB 18, Leipzig 1904.

R.C. Thompson, Assyrian Medical Texts, London 1923.

Kalà ĂTU — LAMENTATION

S. Langdon, Babylonian Liturgies, Paris 1913.


— — Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms, Paris 1909.


— — Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms, PBS 10.4, Philadelphia 1919.

— — Tammuz and Ishtar, Oxford 1914.

— — "The liturgical series "From the assembly wisdom is departed", a Nahû liturgy": Gaster anniversary volume, London 1936, p. 335 ff.

— — "Two Sumerian liturgical texts": RA 16 (1919), 207 ff.

— — "The Assyrian catalogue of liturgical texts, a reconstruction of the tablet": RA 18 (1921), 137 ff.

— — "A list of the known titles of Sumerian penitential psalms (erbûglûmu), arranged in alphabetical order": RA 22 (1925), 119 ff.


F. Thureau-Dangin, Rituals acadiens, Paris 1921.
ABBREVIATIONS

I. Bibliographical abbreviations

AB  Assyriologische Bibliothek (Leipzig)
ABB E. Bottaens, Assyrisch-babylonische Briefe kultischen Inhalts (*LS 2/2, Leipzig 1906)
ABRT J. Craig, Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts (* AB 13, Leipzig 1893-97)
AC F.M.T. de Liagre Böhl, Akkadisch Christentum (Leiden 1947)
ACK Ch. Virolleaud, L'astrologie chaldéenne (Paris 1908-12)
ADD C.H.W. Johns, Assyrian Deeds and Documents (Cambridge 1898-1923)
AK Archiv für Keilschriftforschung (Graz: continued as AO)
AK (BH) Archiv für Orientforschung (Beihefte) (Graz)
AGH E. Eheling, Die akkadische Gebetsreihe "Handerschwung" (Berlin 1953)
AGS J. Knudtzon, Assyrische Gebete an den Sonnengott (Leipzig 1923)
AHW W. von Soden, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch (Warszawa 1956)
AJSL American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures (continued as JAES)
AJIL Revue d'histoire des textes d'histoire orientale et slaves (Brussels)
AKA E.A. Budge and L.W. King, Annals of the Kings of Assyria I (London 1902)
AL F. Delitzsch, Assyrische Lesestücke (Leipzig)
AML R.C. Thompson, Assyrian Medical Texts (London 1923)
AOA AN Vie de la littérature (Rome)
Antagal lexical series a n t a g a l = annes, cited from unpub. Chicago MS (in the remains of F.W. Gezer)
AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Kevelaer - Neukirchen)
AOAS American Oriental Series
APN B. Tallqvist, Assyrian Personal Names (Helsinki 1914)
AR J. Kohler and V. Unger, Assyrische Rechtsurkunden (Leipzig 1914)
Arv Archiv Orientální (Prague)
AS Assyriological Studies (Chicago)
BA Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft (Leipzig)
BabArch Babyloniaca (Paris)
BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (Jerusalem, Baghdad)
BFA B. Landsberger, Brief des Bischofs von Eszüla an König Assurbanipal (Amsterdam 1963)
BBR H. Zimmer, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion II (* AB 12, Leipzig 1901)

1 Titles of Akadian literary works are also used as abbreviations; for these, see the bibliography.