

III. THE KING:

A RECONSIDERATION OF THE PERSON OF ESARHADDON

The conclusion of chapter II B3 necessitates a reconsideration of an essential part of the portrait of Esarhaddon. The hitherto established opinion is that he was an extremely superstitious man, and largely only an instrument in the hands of his courtiers. Cf., e.g., A.T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria* (1923), p. 347: "The new régime [of Esarhaddon] . . . was to be under ghostly control of the priestly advisers"; W. von Soden, *Herrscher im alten Orient* (1954), p. 125: "Die Briefe bezeugen uns ferner, wie groß der persönliche Einfluß bestimmter Astarologen und Priester auf den offenbar nicht immer einen klaren Linien folgenden König war"; R. Labat, *Fischer Weltgeschichte* 4 (1967), p. 81: "Asarhaddon war schon von Natur aus ein Zauderer, Unentschlossen, abergläubisch, ängstlich und nicht selten der Spielball in den Händen seiner Ratgeber, lebte er in ständiger Furcht vor ungünstigen Vorzeichen, Krankheit oder dem Zorn der Götter." This label of "superstitiousness" and "susceptibility" is, as we have seen, certainly justifiable to some extent: *but it is out of place and untrue, if, as has hitherto been done, it is used in contrast to his contemporaries or other Assyrian kings.* The current opinion is clearly influenced by the fact that the main part of the letters of scholars, and reports of astrologers and haruspices belongs to (or has been dated to) Esarhaddon's reign; however, this very fact should warn of hasty conclusions, for the present distribution of the material does in no way represent the original one but is only a small fraction of the large correspondence once covering the whole reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (see below, p. 49). With regard to the intimate character of the matters discussed above all in the letters of the physicians, the references to the king's anger (LAS 224:13, 306 r4 etc.), fears (40:6, etc.), moping (51 and 143), sadness (141) and complaints (246 and 247) should be interpreted as *commonly human traits* rather than explicit characteristics of Esarhaddon. Similar characteristics would be found in letters addressed to other kings too¹. Study of the inscriptions of Esarhaddon does not suggest a weak ruler; on the contrary, his reign was generally perhaps the most successful one of all Sargonids². Since *the portraits of most Assyrian kings are formed solely on the basis of their inscriptions*, it would be hazardous to claim that Esarhaddon was inferior in ability to the other kings.³

¹ See below, p. 47.

² Note especially his swift and determinate action after the murder of his father, the conquest of Egypt and other military successes (Mannaeans, Subria), the quelling of a revolt in 670 B.C., the extensive building operations in Babylon and other cities of Akkad, the preparations for the transport of the statue of Marduk to Babylon, and the political treaties intended to guarantee the security of the empire.

³ Cf. von Soden, *Herrscher*, p. 119: "Asarhaddon war offenbar nicht aus dem harten Holz seines Vaters geschwitzt und diesem wohl auch an Begabung durchaus nicht ebenbürtig." p. 131: "Assurbanipal muß als Politiker und auch als Mensch seinem Großvater Sennacherib viel ähnlicher gewesen sein als seinem Vater Asarhaddon."

Furthermore it can be demonstrated that superstitiousness was no *special* trait of Esarhaddon and that scientific experts (astrologers, diviners, exorcists, physicians, and "appeasers") functioned as the king's advisors in other courts too. Two kings are usually connected with Esarhaddon, his father Sennacherib and his son Assurbanipal (see the preceding footnote). No letters, astrological reports or extispicies addressed to Sennacherib have been preserved; we get, however, a revealing glimpse to his court through a Neo-Babylonian letter sent to Esarhaddon, ABL 1216 (see R. Labat, *RA* 53 [1959] 113-118, and for translation of the crucial passage, note on LAS 41:6 ff). According to this text, astrologers and diviners, headed by the "chief scribe" Kallbu, sent regularly reports to the king, just as in the reign of Esarhaddon, but censored all the evil omens which they thought might frighten their superstitious lord; only after "a devil" (what sort of omen is meant?) had appeared, the king found out the deception and urged that all omens, whether good or bad, should be reported to him. From LAS 125:15-16 it appears that the exorcist Adad-šumu-ušur had been a servant of Sennacherib too (on the dating of this letter see notes on LAS 121). As for Assurbanipal, sufficiently many letters and reports addressed to him have preserved to show that *no change* in the position of the scholars *took place after the death of Esarhaddon*, and that *the new king was as concerned about the supernatural as his predecessor* (see LAS 60, 96-98, 108-110, 114, 298-299, 301-302, 309 and 324, ABL 1113, RMA 68, 70, 187-189, 191A, 193, 210, 233, 236G, 264, 272A, 274F [cf. Appendix 2B], AGS 147-154, and PRT 101-140). This is only natural in view of the careful education of Assurbanipal (see p. 8) which introduced him into the Mesopotamian sciences: according to LAS 34 r6-9, one of his teachers was Esarhaddon's astrologer Balasī. All Esarhaddon's counselors seem to have retained their offices under the new king: cf. LAS 60, RMA 70 and 236G (from Nabū-ahhē-erība, year 667 B.C., RMA 68 (from Balasī, 667 B.C.), LAS 298 and RMA 272A (from Akkullānu, 667 and 666 B.C.), RMA 264 (from Ištar-šumu-ereš, 657 B.C.), ADD 448 = AR 443 (mentions Ištar-šumu-ereš, chief [scribe], Adad-šumu-ušur, chief [exorcist] and [Marduk-]šākin-šumi; for the dating on the document (666 B.C.) see footnote 1 on p. 28), and ADD 444 = AR 445 (mentions Ištar-šumu-ereš, chief scribe, and Marduk-šākin-šumi, chief exorcist; dated 660 B.C.). Later on (c. 650 B.C.) they became replaced by other scholars (see ADD 851). The superstitiousness of Assurbanipal is well enough witnessed by the fact that he too let perform the substitute king ritual (see LAS 298), and several texts betray in him similar human traits as in Esarhaddon, including fear and anxiety (see, e.g., WAB 7 248 ff and ABL 1367-1368); we must not dwell on those questions longer here. Just to make it quite clear that superstition was a common trait of Mesopotamian monarchs, two well-known personages will be taken as examples: Nebuchadnezzar, whose superstitiousness and scholarly advisors are described in the book of Daniel, and Alexander the Great himself, whose last days (as the king of Babylon) are described by Plutarch as follows: "Alexander, then, since he had now become sensitive to indications of the divine will and perturbed and apprehensive in his mind, converted every unusual and strange occurrence, were it never so insignificant, into a prodigy and portent; and sacrificers, purifiers and diviners filled his palace." (Loeb Classical Library, Plutarch's *Lives* VII, Alexander LXXV).

Some indications suggest that also the assertion of Esarhaddon's lack of ability is overdrawn. *At least he seems to have been able to read and write.* Cf., above all, LAS 318 and the pertinent notes: the "glosses" added to the letters of Nabū-ahhē-erība to facilitate the reading of the cuneiform signs were not meant for Assurbanipal only (so A. Schott, *ZA* 44 [1938] 194 ff) but also for Esarhaddon (see p. 33). See also LAS 198 which speaks about a "writing" (*ša-ta-a-ri*) of the king. That the letters were normally read to the king by a scribe was merely a practical and conventional arrangement and does not testify to the illiteracy of the king.

IV. ON THE DATING OF THE LETTERS

The basic premise for a sound study and interpretation of all epistolary texts is their correct chronological classification. Since the Assyrian scribes themselves dated their letters only exceptionally¹, the dates must now be deduced from the chronological evidence present in the letters. It is self-evident that the degree of accuracy and certainty in which this can be done varies depending on the case. Though an exact dating is even theoretically possible only on special occasions, it is important that the best result is striven for in each letter, for chronologically fixed letters can, naturally, more appropriately be evaluated and used as historical evidence than isolated ones.

It has to be emphasized that utmost care and criticism are necessary to eliminate faulty datings which, especially in the present case, are prone to result from a superficial study of the material. Though the letters were sent to different Assyrian kings, these were always addressed similarly, "the king (my lord)", the name of the king never being mentioned. Operating only with analogies and other circumstantial evidence, letters are easily assigned to a completely wrong reign. If such wrongly dated letters are used as evidence in arguing about the person of a given king or about a given historical period, the result is necessarily untrue or at least distorted. The dating must under no circumstance lead to this end, which would be of greater disadvantage to the study than leaving the letters undated.

The only method to achieve lasting results is to start from absolutely certain facts and, by applying only absolute criteria, to weave a "chronological net" until the general picture is to be seen. Only then it is possible to apply circumstantial criteria to obtain a more precise dating for individual letters.

The absolute time limits of all letters under study are 722 and 612 B.C., during which time Nineveh (where the letters were found) was the capital of Assyria. These limits can, however, be considerably narrowed on prosopographical evidence. It appears that the letters originate from a limited number of authors who were all approximately contemporaries² and served the same kings: their names occur in each other's letters, or as witnesses in same legal documents dating from 671 to 660 B.C.³; many of them even wrote joint letters. Since a man's active career hardly exceeds a generation, or 30 years, all letters were most probably written between 680 and 650 B.C., with a theoretical margin of safety of 15 years in both directions. These margins are, however, really only theoretical: it has hitherto not been possible to assign a single Assyrian letter of the Kuyunjik-collection to the reign of Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.), except possibly some to the beginning of this reign, and only

¹ Thus only four letters published in the present edition were dated in the antiquity (see LAS 96-98 and 286: in the former the dates do not originate from the writer, but were added by the palace archivist).

² Ištar-nādin-apli and the authors of LAS 108-110 form an exception: their letters are about 20 years later than the bulk of the edition. But all in all this does not make more than slightly over two per cent of the whole lot.

³ ADD 448 = AR 443, mentioning Ištar-šumu-ereš, Adad-šumu-ušur, [Šum]jānu son of [Nabû-zēru-ēšer] and [Marduk-šāk]im-šumi, dates from 666 B.C.; ADD 444 = AR 335, mentioning Ištar-šumu-ereš and Marduk-šākim-šumi, bears the date 660 B.C.; for more dates in documents see Chapter II C.

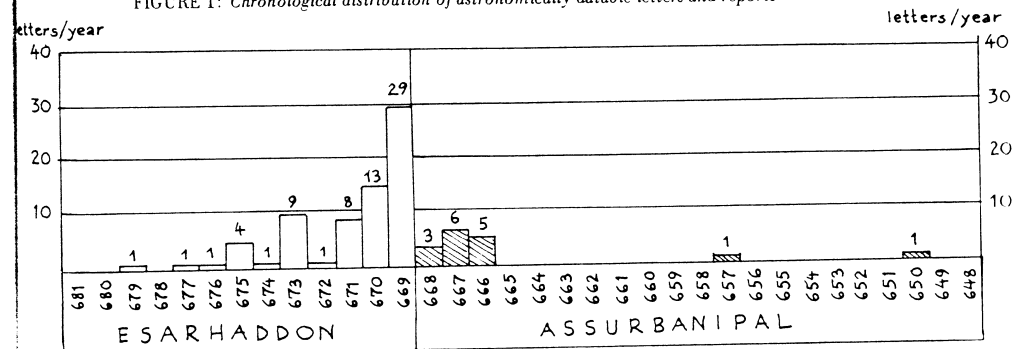
one letter from the whole archive (ABL 469, probably addressed to Aššūr-etelli-ilāni) seems to date from the time after 646 B.C., the latest date found in all letters and reports from Nineveh¹.

It is a priori clear that the letters are not distributed evenly over this period of 30 years. Statistical probability suggests that the number of letters and reports streaming in a year to the Sargonid kings may well have exceeded the figure which is the grand total of all epistolary texts found in Nineveh². The filing of the accumulating material would have been cumbersome and hardly rewarding by means of the archival techniques of that time, and it is throughout possible that large numbers of letters were destroyed on purpose already by the ancient archivists; the sack of Nineveh and ravages of time have caused additional losses, and lastly, modern excavators may have spotted only a portion of the extant material. Whatever the causes affecting the preservation of the available body of texts be, it is theoretically most probable that it consists of coherent groups coming from relatively limited spans of time, with long intervening periods virtually blank. The determining of this statistical distribution would be of immense importance to the dating and classification of letters which contain no tangible dating criteria. It is the purpose of this chapter to collect and discuss the evidence available for identifying these chronological groups, whereas the treatment of individual datable letters is reserved to the commentary.

Naturally, it is possible to detect these groups, and determine them with certainty, only by means of cumulative evidence. I have therefore not restricted myself to the present letters, but taken into consideration the whole Sargonid epistolary material, including the reports of scribes and haruspices. The latter (totalling to approximately 1000 texts) are particularly important, because they contain a great wealth of astronomical and historical information which makes their chronological classification possible throughout: in the event of the letters, this can be done only partially. As will be seen, the chronological distribution of the reports does not differ from that of the letters, a fact that adds to the general reliability of the emerging picture.

I begin with the chronological evidence that can be extracted from the letters and reports datable on astronomical grounds. Since a complete list of texts so dated is to be found in Appendix 2B, and the dating of individual letters is discussed fully in the commentary, I will not go into the method and problems involved but shall only present a survey on the results achieved. About one-third of the letters and reports containing astronomical information are datable with certainty (I have been able to date 84 texts, but in a more thorough analysis this figure would no doubt become higher); out of these, only 16 (= 19%) belong to Assurbanipal's reign, the rest (= 81%) being sent to Esarhaddon. Their distribution over different years of the two reigns can be visualized as follows:

FIGURE 1: Chronological distribution of astronomically datable letters and reports

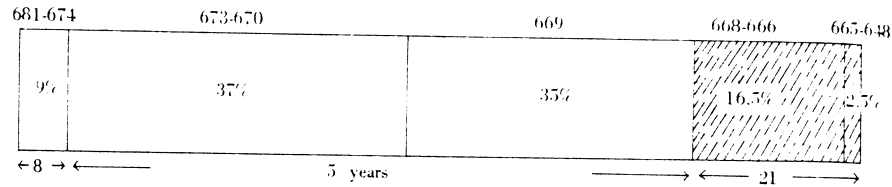


¹ Cf. below, p. 51.

² The grand total is about 4500 texts (= 3500 letters + 600 astrological reports + 400 reports on extispicies). A-

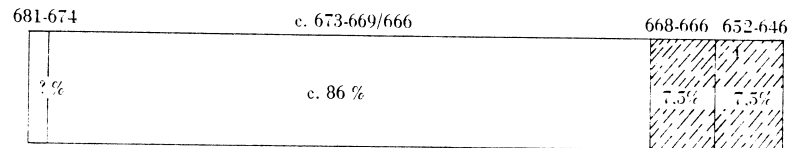
It appears that practically all texts come from the latter part of the reign of Esarhaddon (i.e., the years 675-669 B.C.) and the beginning of the reign of Assurbanipal (years 668-666). Sporadic texts are datable to the years 679, 677, 676, 657 and 650 B.C. A clear centre of gravity is in years 673-669, especially 669, thus:

FIGURE 2: Distribution of astronomically datable texts in percentages



The evidence gathered from Assyrian letters datable on historical grounds points to the same direction (the Babylonian letters of the archive, of which I have no exact statistics, have a divergent, though parallel distribution¹). Out of the c. 700 letters (published and unpublished) which were certainly addressed to either Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal, only 70 (= 14%) can be definitely assigned to the reign of the latter: approximately 500 can be dated on historical and prosopographical grounds to Esarhaddon's reign (or perhaps to the beginning of the reign of Assurbanipal). Again it is evident that the bulk of the letters sent to Esarhaddon date from the latter part of his reign (only ABL 442 can, with a fair degree of certainty, be placed to his first regnal years), whereas about half of the letters sent to Assurbanipal belong to a few years after his accession (see the comments on LAS 60), and the other half to the years 652-646 (see the comments on LAS 109). In percentages, this distribution may be presented as follows:

FIGURE 3: Chronological distribution of historically datable letters

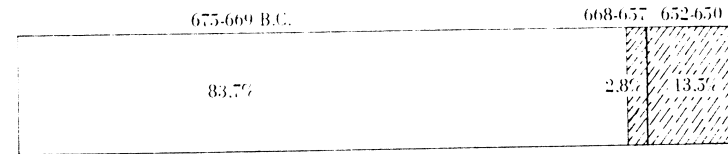


I now proceed to the oracle queries of the haruspices. In these texts the name of the king on whose behalf the queries were made is always mentioned, and it is therefore easy to assign the texts to definite reigns. Out of the 294 published texts, 246 (= 83.7%) were written in the reign of Esarhaddon, and only 48 (= 16.3%) in the reign of Assurbanipal. All queries made by order of Esarhaddon date from the time after 676 B.C., predominantly from the last years of this king (see J. Aro in *La divination en Mésopotamie ancienne*, p. 112 ff); whereas 8 queries date from the beginning of Assurbanipal's reign (up till 657 B.C.), and the rest from the years 652-650.

will be shown in detail in the commentaries on LAS 70 and 174, some scholars wrote as many as 6 letters to the king within half a month. This rate would make about 150 letters a year for each author. But even if one counts with only 10 letters per author in a year, the figure 3500 (letters) would have been reached by 350 correspondents. Taking into account the daily requests for an audience and the diplomatic, administrative and military correspondence (partly – but certainly not exclusively – written on perishable materials) steadily flowing into the palace, this figure may have been even higher.

It seems that the Neo-Babylonian letters addressed to Assurbanipal are more numerous than those addressed to Esarhaddon; this may well result from a desire to preserve documents relating to the civil war in 652-648 B.C.

FIGURE 4: Chronological distribution of the reports of haruspices



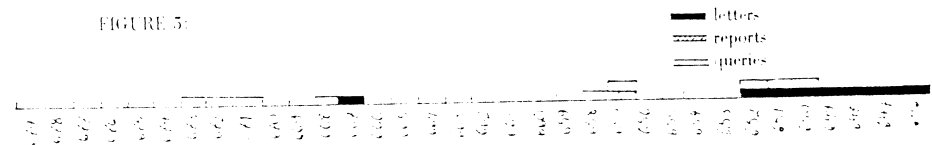
There remains the meagre evidence to be derived from the letters and reports dated already in the antiquity. Before evaluating this evidence, a prefatory remark must be made. Since only few of the numerous texts from Esarhaddon's time (cf. above) bear a date, and since this is relatively often found in texts connected with the civil war between Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin (which are relatively few in number), it is clear that the accumulation of dates around certain years cannot be in true proportion to the number of texts actually preserved from these years. It seems that the dates found on texts from the years 652-646 B.C. were added by a palace archivist for archival purposes (cf. p. 48, footnote 2).

The following dates are attested (the asterisk precedes texts written in Babylonian characters):

a) Letters:	B.C.
83-1-18.847	667
ABL *301, *944, 1210	652
LAS 96	651
LAS 97, ABL *289, *517	650
ABL *1151	649
LAS 98, ABL *1170	648
BM 132980	647
ABL *518, 879, 1222, 1262	646
b) Astrological reports:	
RMA 264	657
c) Oracle queries:	
AGS *51	673 or 671
AGS 99	672
AGS *149	668
AGS 153	658
Ki. 1904-10-9.10	657
PRT *102, *103	652
PRT *105-*119	651
PRT *120-*124	650

Put on a chronological ordinate, the distribution of dates appears as follows:

FIGURE 5:



On the ground of the foregoing analysis, some general conclusions about the distribution of the whole body of the epistolary texts preserved from Esarhaddon's and Assurbanipal's time can be drawn, and these conclusions should be directly applicable to the dating of the present letters too:

1. *The material consists of three separate groups.*
 - a) from the years 675-666 B.C. (a lot of texts);
 - b) " " " 658-657 " (few texts);
 - c) " " " 652-646 " (several texts).

Sporadic texts may be found from the period 679-676, but the years 665-659 and 656-653 seem to be blank.

2. *Eight texts out of 10 belong to Esarhaddon's reign.*
3. *Texts from Esarhaddon's reign are focused on years 671 ff, especially 669; whereas those from Assurbanipal's time date either from the beginning of his reign or from years 652-650 B.C.*

These conclusions must be observed in the dating of letters when no absolute criteria (dates, sufficient astronomical or historical evidence) are available. Circumstantial criteria present in the letters may be used for the dating, on the premise that the restricted spans of time to which the letters might belong are taken into consideration. In several cases these criteria not only enable attributing a text to a definite reign or a definite group, but also, when connected with other indications, give an exact date.

Circumstantial criteria pointing to the reign of Esarhaddon are:

- 1) Reference to the treaty (*adṣ*) by which Esarhaddon regulated his succession in Ajaru 672 B.C. (see the comments on LAS 1).
- 2) Reference to the crown prince (*mār šarri*) = Assurbanipal. All letters mentioning him belong to 672-669 B.C., i.e., between the treaty just mentioned and the death of Esarhaddon (Araššamna, 669). Assurbanipal's reign does not come into consideration, since the crown prince does not occur in the letters certainly datable to the years 652-646.
- 3) Reference to the crown prince of Babylon (*mār šarri Bābili*) = Šamaš-šumu-ukīn.¹
- 4) References to other children of Esarhaddon (see the note on LAS 129:25-26).
- 5) Reference to the queen mother (*ummi šarri*) = Naqia. All letters mentioning her are addressed to Esarhaddon, since in Assurbanipal's reign Naqia was entitled "the Lahirite queen" (MÉ.É.GAL URU *La-ḫi-ra-a-ja*, AR 101 r16).
- 6) Reference to Esarhaddon's Egyptian campaign (Nisannu-Du'ūzu, 671 B.C.).
- 7) Reference to the statue of Marduk (see B. Landsberger, BBEA p. 17 ff and 66 ff.).
- 8) Reference to the conspiracy or rebellion quelled in 670 B.C. (see notes on LAS 247 and 284).

Criteria pointing to the reign of Assurbanipal are:

- 1) Reference to the king of Babylon (*šar Bābili*) = Šamaš-šumu-ukīn.
- 2) Reference to extensive building operations in Babylon (cf. Streck, VAB 7, p. 252 ff).

Other, less obvious criteria are discussed in the commentary in appropriate connections.

As stated on p. 47, the scholars working for Esarhaddon remained in their offices also under Assurbanipal. Since the letter group I covers both the last years of Esarhaddon and the first years of Assurbanipal (see above), it is not always possible to decide to which reign a given letter belongs, if no decisive criteria are

found in the letter itself. In such cases I have always passed the dating in silence. External evidence (shape of the tablets, script, colour etc.) cannot be used as criteria within such a limited span of time. The registration numbers of the texts do not help either¹.

¹ One could a priori suppose that the letters addressed to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal were filed in different places, say, in different rooms of a palace or even in different palaces, and that this difference might have been taken into consideration in registering the tablets. This however is not the case: not only were the archives mixed in the antiquity as a result of the building operations of Assurbanipal and the sack of Nineveh, but the excavators of the 19th century also did not record carefully where each tablet was found. Thus, even texts excavated in Calah were incorporated into the Kuyunjik-collection. Letters dating from the reign of Sargon, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal are found in all subdivisions of the Kuyunjik-collection (though the collections Sm., Rm.2, 79-7-8 and 81-7-27 seem to contain mostly letters from Sargon's time, whereas the letters found in the collections 83-1-18, Bu. and Ki. belong nearly exclusively to Esarhaddon's and Assurbanipal's time).

V. HISTORICAL PROBLEMS: THE SUBSTITUTE KING RITUAL

Ten per cent of the letters under study¹ in a way or another bear witness of a strange ritual of "the substitute king" (*šar pūhi*) practiced in the court of the Sargonid kings. A proper understanding of this ritual, with its important historical and religious implications, is hampered both by the difficult and fragmentary documentation offered by the letters and by the lack of sufficient external evidence². Thanks to several studies devoted to the subject during the past decades³, significant progress in this respect has been made, and two fundamental things, *the purpose and the idea of the ritual*, are now well established. The performance of the ritual was considered necessary *to save the king from death* portended by evil ominous signs: the personality of the king being transferred to a substitute, it was believed that the senders of the signs, i.e., the gods, would be content with the death of the substitute and leave the true king in peace. Though also the understanding of the details has been advanced on a large scale, there are still so many uncertainties and riddles left that one feels at a loss to combine the unconnected pieces of evidence into a sensible whole⁴. The present chapter, based on a detailed analysis of the old and new material, hopes to contribute to the clarification of certain central points. At the same time, without striving for exhaustiveness, I try to provide the reader with all the facts essential to understanding the ritual as a whole⁵.

¹ Cf. below, lb. where 33 pertinent letters are listed; these include letters a) mentioning the substitute king and b) addressed to the "farmer", as well as c) those dealing with the ritual in general terms.

² Cf. W. von Soden, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der neuassyrischen Briefe über die Ersatzkönigsriten*, Fs Christian (1956), p. 100 ff. Note that many of the sources listed below have become available only after 1956.

³ The most important contributions are W. von Soden, *Texte zum assyrischen Begräbnisritual*, ZA 43 (1936) 254 ff, esp. p. 255 f. and the article mentioned in the preceding note; R. Labat, *Le sort des substituts royaux en Assyrie au temps des Sargonides*, RA 40 (1946) 123-142; A. Schott, *Vier Briefe Mār-Itars an Asarhaddon über Himmelserscheinungen der Jahre -670/668*, ZA 47 (1941-2) 89 ff, esp. p. 112 f; F.M.Th. de Liagre Böhl, *Opera Minora* (1953), p. 384 ff; B. Landsberger, *Brief des Bischofs von Esangila an König Asarhaddon* (1965), p. 38 ff; and H. Kümmler, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (1967), esp. p. 169 ff. Cf. also W. von Soden, ZA 45 (1939) 42-61 and E. Dhorme, RA 38 (1944) 57-66. A survey on the work done so far has recently been given by H. Kümmler, *loc. cit.*, and can be omitted here.

⁴ Cf. von Soden, Fs Christian, p. 106: "Hoffentlich helfen einmal neue Quellen zur Aufhellung der vielen Unklarheiten, die wegen der Ersatzkönigskulte unter Asarhaddon heute noch bestehen"; B. Landsberger, BBEA (1965), note 64: "Wir können nur unterschreiben, was von Soden 192 über diesen Brief sagt: 'Leider bleibt in diesem sehr wichtigen Brief mancherlei unklar'; the many remaining unclarities are especially evident in the recent (1967) contribution of Kümmler.

⁵ In doing this I will not present systematically the suggestions put forth by other scholars, but will rather cite primary texts; nor will I, in general, repeat observations to which I have nothing to add.

I. Sources

a) Ritual tablets

- 1) Akkadian: W.G. Lambert, *A Part of the Ritual for the Substitute King*, AfO 18 (1957-58) 109-112; additions 19 (1959-60) 119;
- 2) Hittite: H.M. Kümmler, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (StBoT 3, Wiesbaden 1967).

b) Texts attesting the performance of the ritual

- 1) Chronicles: L.W. King, *Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings*, II (London 1907), p. 12;
- 2) Letters: LAS 4, 25-28, 30-31, 77, 134-140, 166-167, 171, 179, 185, 205, 235-236, 249, 257, 278-280, 292, 298-299, 317, 334; ABL 735, 1006;
- 3) Administrative texts: ND 3483 = D.J. Wiseman, *Iraq* 15 (1953) 148, pl. XV (cf ND 3414, *ibid.*, p. 139);
- 4) Classical authors:
Berosus, Babyloniaca I 15 (see P. Schnabel, *Berosos*, p. 256; the passage is here cited according to the synthesis of R. Labat, RA 40 [1946] 125);
 Plutarch, *Vitae*, Alexander LXXIII-IV (cf Th. Jacobsen, ZA 52 [1957] 139, note 115);
 Arrianus, *Anabasis* VII 24;
 Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliothèque* XVII 116 (cf H. Kümmler, *op.cit.*, p. 184 ff);
 Herodotus, *Historiae* VII 15;
 Suetonius, *Vitae*, Claudius XXIX.

2. On the popularity of the ritual

The simple question as to how wide use of the ritual was made, has long, so to say, hung in the air, owing to the lack of clear-cut positive evidence. In addition to the Sargonid letters, which *seemed* to bear witness of three performances of the ritual in the reign of Esarhaddon¹, only a single performance in the early Old Babylonian time was known. This meagre evidence led to the – still widely spread – assumption that the ritual was a kind of relic temporarily revived in Esarhaddon's time, and otherwise rarely practiced², though the possibility of a continuous tradition was also taken into consideration³. Meanwhile, the relevant material has considerably increased⁴, making it possible to reconsider the matter on a broader basis. On the other hand, detailed analysis of the Sargonid letters necessitates a partial revision of the earlier conceptions about that period (for details see the commentary). The list of actually attested performances of the ritual would now appear as follows:

PERIOD	DATE	RULING KING	SOURCE
1. OB	1860 B.C.	Erra-imitti	King, <i>Chronicles</i> II
2. MB	c. 1300 B.C.		Hittite ritual tablets
3. NA	783 B.C. ⁵ Du'ūzu 22	Adad-nērārī III	ND 3483
4. "	672 B.C. Ajaru 26-	Esarhaddon	LAS 334 (cf LAS 300)
5. "	671 B.C. Du'ūzu 14-	"	LAS 249
6. "	671 B.C. Kanūnu 15-	"	LAS 185, 278-280
7. "	669 B.C. Simānu 14-	"	LAS 25, 136; ABL 100
8. "	666 B.C. Nisanu 15-	Assurbanipal	LAS 298-299
9. Macedonian	323 B.C.	Alexander	Plutarch, <i> Lives</i> , etc.

⁵ Cf. W. von Soden, Fs Christian, p. 106: "Damit wären also für die Zeit Asarhaddons nicht mehr als drei Fälle bezeugt, in denen man bei einer Mondfinsternis einen Ersatzkönig eingesetzt hat." The later studies of

→ Assur
Bosrup.
671 B.C.