



QUERIES TO THE SUNGOD

DIVINATION AND POLITICS
IN SARGONID ASSYRIA

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The Chronology and Historical Background of the Corpus

The problem with the royal documents from the reign of Esarhaddon is not lack of information, but their chronological arrangement. We lack from the reign of this king annals in the strict sense of the term, such as we have from the reigns of other Assyrian kings. On the other hand, we do have, aside from royal inscriptions, chronicle texts providing a firm chronological framework for the major political events of the period, and an abundance of royal correspondence, including astrological omen reports and the corpus of oracle queries and reports edited here. The queries in particular are a major source of information, sometimes our only source, for events in the reign of Esarhaddon. The major shortcomings of the queries are their fragmentary nature and, with a few exceptions, their lack of dating, so that in the majority of cases we can only guess at the chronological order of the episodes described in them.

Texts Dated by Eponym Year

The oracle queries themselves may have undergone a process of evolution. It has been suggested by Aro that the earliest ones were written in Babylonian and generally left undated, or, if dated, then only by the day and month of the performance; further, that names of the officiating haruspices were generally not noted in the older queries.²³⁸ In this view, reports in Assyrian script made their appearance only gradually, toward the end of Esarhaddon's reign, while at the same time dating by year eponym (*limmu*) started to become a habit and finally, at the latest stage of the evolution, a rule. The earliest year date attested in an unbroken context is Nabû-bel-uşur, eponym for the year 672 (no. 183, a text in Assyrian script). However, if the other part of Aro's theory is correct, viz. that queries in Babylonian script tend to be earlier than those in Assyrian script, then some of the earliest ones do have the names of the participating officials, at least, as well as a date, e.g. nos. 3, 5 and 13.

Many of the queries preserve the names of the officiating haruspices or the officials involved in recording them. It is noteworthy, however, that no titles are ever mentioned. In particular, the title *bēl ʔēmi*, "reporter," so prominent in the reports, is conspicuously lacking.²³⁹ In the reports, by contrast, not only are the names of the officiating haruspices and the reporting officials systematically given but they are also consistently differentiated by title or profession. Both diviners and "reporters" are occasionally listed side by side, e.g. nos. 279, 296, 316 and 324. The title "reporter" appears to have been indicated regularly. It also appears that the chief haruspex too could serve as a reporter, see 319 r.5, 326 r.3f and 334 r.3.

Many queries from the reign of Esarhaddon are dated by month and day; some also indicate provenance (e.g. city Calah, Succession Palace, etc.). It is not clear, however, how prevalent dating by eponym was. The word *limmu* is preserved five times in the extant queries from Esarhaddon's reign (nos. 13, 89, 90, 183 and 212), and it is restorable in three further texts (nos. 23, 35 and 74). However, many of the texts are fragmentary, and an eponym date may have been included in the portion of the tablet now lost. It is therefore difficult to determine whether dating by eponym indicates a development in the latter part of the reign of Esarhaddon, or just the vagaries of preservation.

It certainly appears to have become standard practice in the "reports," all of which are from the reign of Assurbanipal. However, in the queries from this reign, the practice of dating appears to have been as erratic as under Esarhaddon. It is true that four of the relatively few (sixteen) queries extant from this reign bear an eponym date (nos. 262 and 271–273, dating from years 668 and 658–657 respectively); but it has to be noted that a date is *certainly* lacking in at least one (no. 267), and possibly many more of these texts.

Systematic vs. unsystematic dating may thus simply reflect the functional difference between queries and reports. As primary documents prepared at the time and probably also at the site of the extispicy (see above, pp. XXIII and XXVIII), the former were often left undated; whereas the latter, as documents prepared primarily for archival purposes, were bound to be dated more systematically.

282. Is Šamaš-šumu-ukin Fleeing to Elam?

K 4

- 1 [BE SUHUŠ NA] *šá-miṭ* GĪR GAR
 2 [X X X] GAR 150 ZĒ *ša-mid*
 3 [BE ina S]AG E[DI]N 150 U GIŠ.TUKUL GAR-
ma
 4 [SAG] U IGI [Z]I-ib⁹ KÚR *kaš-du*
 5 [BE ina U]GU MÁŠ GIŠ.TUKUL GAR-*ma* TA
 15
 6 [ana 1]50 *te-bi* ERIM-*ni hi-im-ša-ta* ERIM
 KÚR KÚ
 7 BE *gíp-ši* 150 ZĒ U₅ *gíp-ši* ERIM KÚR *ana*
 KUR-MU
 8 BE AN.TA-*ti* DU-*ik*
 9 BE SA-*ti* UGU U.SAG U₅
 10 BE *ina* 150 MUR GĪR GAG.ZAG.GA SAG-*sà*
 DU₈
 11 BE ŠÀ.NIGIN 14 ŠÀ UDU.NITÁ *šá-lim*
-
- 12 BE SUHUŠ NA *šá-miṭ ina* SAG EDIN 150 U
 13 GIŠ.TUKUL GAR-*ma* SAG U IGI
 14 BE *gíp-ši* 150 ZĒ U₅
 15 BE *ina* 150 MUR GĪR GAG.ZAG.GA SAG-*sà*
 DU₈
 16 BE *ina* DAGAL 150 U *ana* Á EDIN U MURUB₄
 BÜR
 17 [ŠU]B-*dī* 5 TAG.MEŠ *ina* ŠÀ
 18 [m^oGIŠ.NU₁₁]-MU—GL.NA ŠEŠ *lá* GIN

PRT 109

- ¹ [The base of the 'station'] is protruding pointedly. The 'path' is present.
² [...] is present. The left of the gall bladder is attached.
³ [If in the t]op of the left surface of the 'finger' there is a 'weapon'-mark which faces the [top] of the 'finger': the enemy's [ons]laught will be successful.
⁵ [If] there is a 'weapon'-mark [abo]ve the 'increment' which rises from right [to] left: my army will take the enemy's booty.
⁷ If the 'mass' rides upon the left of the gall bladder: the mass of the enemy's army (will march) against my country.
⁸ The upper part is *elevated*.
⁹ The 'outside' rides upon the 'cap.'
¹⁰ In the left side of the lung there is a 'foot'-mark. The top of the breast-bone is split.
¹¹ The coils of the colon are 14 in number. The heart of the ram is normal.

- ¹² The base of the 'station' is protruding pointedly. In the top of the left surface of the 'finger' there is a 'weapon'-mark which faces the top of the 'finger.'
¹⁴ The 'mass' rides upon the left side of the gall bladder.
¹⁵ There is a 'foot'-mark in the left side of the lung. The top of the breast-bone is split.
¹⁶ There is a hole in the wide part of the left side of the 'finger' at the side of the middle surface of the 'finger.'
¹⁷ There are 5 unfavorable features in the extispicy.
 18 [Šamaš]-šumu-ukin, unfaithful brother,

282 NB script. Collated by S. Parpola, Aug. 1988. ^{1,12} For the reading of the first protasis (*šá-miṭ*, not GAR BE, as in PRT 109) cf. no. 281:1. ⁴ The apodosis is also attested in CT 30 24 K 8178 r.26; for the rendering, see CAD K 287b s.v. *kašdu*. ^{5f} For slightly different versions of this omen see KAR 423 iii 1 and Starr Rituals p.129:9ff; also attested in no. 288:1f and (without the apodosis) in 326:4. ¹⁰ For the apodosis of this omen, see YOS 10 36 iii 6f, *šumma* (DIŠ) *i-na* Á.GUB MUR *ši-pu-um ši-ip* LÚ.KÚR-*im a-na ma-a-ti-ka ur-ra-ad*, "If in the left of the lung there is a 'foot'-mark, an enemy's expedition will descend on your land." For the opposite omen, see *ibid.* 8f. ¹²⁻¹⁷ Note that the omen in line 9, which is unfavorable (see no. 305:6), is not listed as such in this list of unfavorable protases. Instead, we have in line 16f a protasis which does not appear in the body of the report. ^{19ff} For the restorations, see

19 [šá KUR] *i-dal-la-hu-ma*
 r.1 [SÙ]H GAL-ú *i-pu-[šú]*
 2 [x x x] *-un-ni-i la ta-a-bu*
 3 *i-šéš⁷, KI-na* ^{MAN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A} MAN
 KUR-*aš-šur*
 4 MAN DÙ-*ut šu.2-ka šá ana* TU₁₅-*ka DÙG.*
 GA
 5 *ú-paq-qu u ki-di-in šá z1-ka*
 6 *šit-ku-na IGI.2-šú iš-mu-ú um-ma*
 7 ^{MGŠ.NU₁₁-MU-GI.NA} *ana* KUR.NIM.
 MA.KI
 8 *i-hal-liq a-mat-ú šá-lim-tu ši-i*
 9 *ana* KUR.NIM.MA.KI *i-hal-li-qí*
 10 4 TAG.MEŠ *ina šà ul DÙG.GA*
 blank space; following two lines insert-
 ed and in smaller script
 11 ITI.DU₆ UD-15-KÁM *lim-mu* ^{UD-gab}
 12 ^{mdà-ri-LUGAL} *dan-a-a* EN-UMUŠ
 blank space
 13 DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ EN.MEŠ EŠ.BAR
 14 UD-*mu-us-su EŠ.BAR-šú-nu*
 15 *šá SIG₃ a-na LUGAL be-lt-iá*
 16 *liš-tap-pa-ru-ú-ni*

who stirred up [the country] and caused a major uprising, [...]... not good —

^{r.3} now Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, a king created by you, who is attentive to your gentle breath and whose eyes are set on your personal protection, has heard:

⁷ "Šamaš-šumu-ukin is fleeing to Elam." Is the rumor true? Is he indeed fleeing to Elam?
¹⁰ 5(!) unfavorable features in the extispicy. It is unfavorable.

¹¹ Month Tishri (VII), 15th day, eponym year of Sagab (651).

¹² Dari-šarru (and) Dannaya, reporters.

¹³ May the great gods, lords of decision, send their favorable decision daily to the king, my lord.

283. Will Šamaš-šumu-ukin Fall into the Hands of Assyrian Troops?

K 3161

1 [x x x]x GÍD GÍR DAG.MEŠ-šú KUR-*id*
 2 [x x KAL]AG SILIM GAR GÍR 150 ZÉ
 3 [x x x]-*ma* KI ŠUB-AŠ.TE KUR-*u[d]*
 4 [x x x ŠU.S]⁷ *ul-lu-ma*
 one line completely broken away
 6 150 [ZÉ⁷] [x x x x x]
 7 BE *ina* EDIN U MURUB₄ GIŠ.HUR
 8 [TA] 15 *ana* 150 *er-bet*
 9 [BE x x š] *a⁷-lim AN-ti DU*
 10 [BE U-MUR MURU]B₄ SUHUŠ-*sà KÉŠ-is*
 11 [BE GAG.ZA]G.GA KUG
 12 [BE ŠA.NIGIN x x] ŠID-šú-*nu*
 only traces left of last line
 r.1 [TA U]D-16-KÁM *šá ITI an-ni-i*
 2 [IT]I.APIN *šá MU.AN.NA an-ni-tú*
 3 GIM ERIM.MEŠ Á.KAL
 4 *šá* ^{MAN.ŠÁR-DÙ-A} MAN KUR-*aš*
 5 *ana* UGU ^{MGŠ.NU₁₁-MU-GI.NA}
 6 *it-tal-ku ana šu.2-šú-nu*
 7 ŠUB-ú-*tu DÙG.GA*
 s.1 [ITI].APIN UD-16-KÁM *lim* ^{msa-g[ab]}

PRT 107

¹ [...] the 'path' reaches its 'seats.'
² [...] The 'streng]th' (and) 'well-being' are present. The 'path' on the left of the gall bladder [is long] and reaches the place of the 'base of the throne.'
⁴ [...] 'finge]r' is raised [...].
⁵ [...].
⁶ The left [...].
⁷ There is a design in the middle surface of the 'finger' which penetrates from right to left.
⁹ [...] is normal. The upper part is elevated.
¹⁰ The base of [the middle] [finger] of the lung is 'bound.'
¹¹ [The breas]t-bone is thick.
¹² [The coils of the colon are ... and are ...] in number.
 r.1 [From] the 16th [da]y of this month, Marchesvan (VIII), of this year,
³ if the men and army of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, march against Šamaš-šumu-ukin, will he fall into their hands? Favorable.
^{s.1} [Month] Marchesvan (VIII), 16th day, eponym year of Sag[ab] (651).

CAD D 44a. ^{r.3} See coll. ^{r.8} Cf. no. 289:4. ^{r.10} There are actually five unfavorable omens in this extispicy (cf. line 17). ^{r.13ff} For similar prayers for the king ending the report, see no. 336 r.4f, 340 r.2ff, 341 r.2ff and possibly 316 r.11.

283 NB script. ² At the end of the line, Klauber (PRT p.111) restores GÍR 150 ZÉ[GAR], but it is possible that this protasis continues into line 3. ⁴ The restoration [ŠU.S] is possible, but uncertain. ⁶ Klauber (ibid.) restores 150 [ZÉ ša-mid]. This restoration, however, is doubtful, because it places the gall bladder out of sequence. ⁷ This omen had a favorable apodosis, see BRM 4 12:51, ERIM-*ni ina hal-se-e KUR NAM.RA È-a*, "my army will remove booty from the enemy's fortresses." ⁹ If the reading is correct, the part of the liver involved may have been the 'increment' (MÁŠ).
^{r.6f} Cf. no. 279 r.6, where ŠUB-ú-*tu* is written syllabically, *i-ma-aq-qu-tu*.

262. Should Šamaš-šumu-ukin Escort the Statue of Marduk to Babylon?

K 11478

1 [dUTU EN GAL-ú šá a-šal-lu-ka an-n)a
 GI.NA a-[pal-an-ni]
 2 [mdGIŠ.NU₁₁-MU-GI.NA DUMU md^{aš}-šur-
 ŠEŠ-SU]M-na LUGAL KU[R-aš-šur.KI]
 3 [i-na ŠA MU.AN.NA NE-ti qa-a]t EN GAL-i
 d[AMAR.UTU]
 4 [i-n)a ŠA-bi-URU.KI li-iš-bat-ma a-na i-
 na pa-a[n dEN]
 5 a-na KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI lil-lik UGU DINGIR-
 ti-ka [GAL-ti]
 6 ù UGU dEN GAL-i dAMAR.UTU DÙG.GA
 7 pa-an DINGIR-ti-ka GAL-ti ù pa-an dEN
 GAL-i
 8 [d]AMAR.UTU ma-hi-i-ri DINGIR-ut-ka
 GAL-ti ZU-e
 9 [i-na] SILIM-tim i-na KA DINGIR-[t]i-ka
 GAL-ti dUTU EN GAL-ú
 10 [qa-bi]-i ku-un IGI-ra IGI-mar še-mu-ú
 ŠE-e
 11 [e-zib šá di-in UD-me] NE-i GIM DÙG.GA
 GIM ha-ṭu-ú UD ŠU-pu A.AN ŠUR
 12 [e-zib šá KUG lu-u]-ú SISKUR.SISKUR
 TAG-tú lu-ú a-na IGI SISKUR.SISKUR
 GIL.MEŠ
 13 [e-zib šá lu-u-ú lu]-u-ú-tu KI MÁŠ DIB.
 DIB-ma ú-l[e]-u-ú
 r.1 [e-zib šá UDU.NITÁ] DINGIR-ti-ka šá a-na
 MÁŠ MÁŠ-ú LAL-ú ha-ṭu-[ú]
 2 [e-zib šá TA]G-it SAG.KI UDU.NITÁ TÚG
 gi-né-e-šú ár-šat lab-šú [mim-ma] lu-u-ú
 3 [KÚ] NAG ŠEŠ-šú ku-un ŠU BAL-ú uš-pe-
 lum
 4 e-zib šá a-na-ku DUMU LÚ.HAL ARAD-ka
 TÚG gi-né-e-a lab-šá-ku ú-lu ta-mit
 5 i-na KA-ia up-tar-ri-du lu-ú ZI.MEŠ lu-ú
 BAR.MEŠ
 6 a-šal-ka dUTU EN GAL-ú ki-i mdGIŠ.NU₁₁-
 MU-GI.NA
 7 DUMU md^{aš}-šur-ŠEŠ-SUM-na LUGAL
 KUR-aš-šur.KI i-na ŠA MU.AN.NA NE-ti
 8 qa-at EN GAL-i d[AMAR.UTU i-n)a ŠA-
 URU i-šab-bat-ú-ma

AGS 149

¹ [Šamaš, great lord, give m]e a firm [posi-
 tive answer [to what I am asking you]!

² [Should Šamaš-šumu-ukin, son of Esar-
 had]don, king of [Assyria, within this year]
 seize the [han]d of the great lord [Marduk i]n
 the Inner City, and should he lead [Bel] to
 Babylon? Is it pleasing to your [great] divini-
 ty and to the great lord, Marduk?

⁷ Is it acceptable to your great divinity and
 to the great lord Marduk? Does your great
 divinity know it? [Is it decreed] and con-
 firmed [in] a favorable case, by the command
 of your great divinity, Šamaš, great lord?
 Will he who can see, see it? Will he who can
 hear, hear it?

¹¹ [Disregard the (formulation) of today's case], be it
 good, be it faulty, (and that) the day is overcast and it is
 raining.

¹² [Disregard that a clean or an un]clean person has
 touched the sacrificial sheep, or blocked the way of the
 sacrificial sheep.

¹³ [Disregard that an unclean man or] woman has
 come near the place of the extispicy and made it unclean.

^{r.1} [Disregard that the ram (offered) to your great
 divinity for the performance of the extispicy is deficient
 or faulty.

² [Disregard that he who] touches the forehead of the
 sheep is dressed in his ordinary soiled garments, [has
 eaten], drunk, or anointed himself with [anything] un-
 clean, [(or) has] altered or changed the (ritual) proceed-
 ings.

⁴ Disregard that I, the haruspex your servant, am
 dressed in my ordinary soiled garments, or (that) the
 oracle query has become jumbled in my mouth.

Let them be taken out and put aside!

⁶ I ask you, Šamaš, great lord, whether
 Šamaš-šumu-ukin, son of Esarhaddon, king
 of Assyria, should within this year seize the
 hand of the great lord, [Marduk, i]n the Inner
 City, and lead Bel (to Babylon),

- 9 *i-[n]a pa-an* ^dEN DU-ku-[*ma UG*]U ^dEN
 GAL-*i* ^dAMAR.UTU DÙG.GA-*i*
 10 [*pa*]-an EN GAL-*i* ^dAMAR.UTU *mah-ru i-na*
 ŠA UDU.NITÁ NE-*i*
 11 [GUB-*za*]-am-*ma an-na* GI.NA GIŠ.HUR.
 MEŠ SILIM.MEŠ UZU.MEŠ *ta-mit*
 12 [SIG₅].MEŠ SILIM.MEŠ ŠÁ SILIM-*tim šá* KA
 DINGIR-*ti-ka GAL-ti*
 13 [Šuk]-nam-*ma lu-[mur]*
 14 [UGU DINGIR-*t*]i-ka GAL-*ti* ^dUTU EN GAL-
 ú lil-*lik-m[a KIN li-tap-pal]*
 15 [ITI].BARAG UD-23-KÁM *lim-me* ^mma-ri-
 la-rim ina É-[*re-du-ti*]

⁹ (whether) it is pleasing to the great lord, Marduk, (whether) it is acceptable to the great lord, Marduk.

¹⁰ [Be] present in this ram, place (in it) a firm positive answer, favorable designs, favorable, propitious omens by the oracular command of your great divinity, and may [I see (them)].

¹⁴ May (this query) go [to] your great [divinity], O Šamaš, great lord, and [may an oracle be given as an answer].

¹⁵ [Month] Nisan (I), 23rd day, eponym year of Mari-larim (668). In the [Succession] Palace.



COURTESY TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FIG. 48. Šamaš-šumu-ukin as builder of the Nabû Temple, Borsippa. Compare the Assurbanipal stela from Babylon illustrated in SAA II, Fig. 19. BM 90866.