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## THE ASSYRIAN KING LIST FROM KHORSABAD

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### I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The new king list discussed in the following was found at Khorsabad, the site of ancient Dûr-Šarrukîn, in the course of excavations conducted there in the season 1932/33 by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. When the news of its discovery came to Chicago, Professor Breasted, then director of the Oriental Institute, charged the writer with the publication of the list. Since the king list was one of the most outstanding finds of the Institute's expeditions, it was Professor Breasted's plan to have it published in an impressive form and with a full treatment of Assyrian chronology before 900 B.C., which it promised to place for the first time on a secure basis. It was evident from the outset that realization of this plan would require considerable time, and it was therefore decided to publish first and as soon as possible a preliminary report setting forth in mere outlines the importance of the new text for the history and particularly the chronology of the Assyrian kingdom. But a speedy execution of these plans was prohibited by many circumstances, chief among them, apart from a one-and-a-half year's delay in the transport of the tablet to Chicago, the fact that in recent years the writer has been engaged with other duties of a more urgent and immediate character. However, the preliminary report here published is broader in scope than was planned at first, since it includes a few of the results which have been arrived at in the course of my investigations and which will be of interest, I believe, to a wider circle than that interested merely in the king list as such.

The tablet, containing the list measures  $7\frac{1}{4}$  by  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches, but both at the upper-left and at the upper-right corners a rectangular piece has been cut out, and the tablet thus shows the shape indicated in Figure 1. In the lower part of each vertical side of the reduced upper portion of the tablet, a horizontal hole can be observed. As I shall show in the final publication of the list, the two holes doubtless served to hold wooden or metal pins on which the tablet swung in a frame or casing contrived to hold the tablet in a good position for reading and to allow turning it conveniently from its obverse to its reverse side.

Unfortunately the tablet is not undamaged. The loss of parts of the corners of the unscribed top piece is of no consequence, but very regrettable are the loss of the lower-left corner and the destruction of a

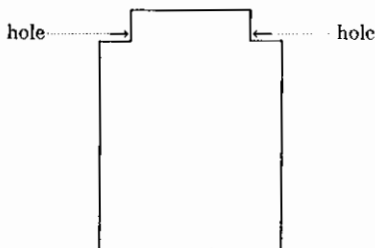


FIG. 1

comparatively large piece of the surface of the first column a little above that corner, since these involve the loss of the numbers indicating the length of the reigns of five Old Assyrian kings. As may be concluded from the two parallel grooves running along opposite sides of the destroyed part of the surface, the damage in this case was probably done by the tool of the workman who dug up the tablet from the ground. Possibly it was likewise with his instrument that the lower-right corner portion of the tablet was smashed into several pieces. Most of these pieces have been joined again to the main portion of the tablet, but the destruction of part of the tablet surface unfortunately brings with it the loss of the statements concerning the length of reign of two Middle Assyrian kings. However, we shall see later on that the length of the two reigns may be accurately determined by synchronization of the king-list chronology with chronological statements in the inscriptions of certain Assyrian kings.

The tablet is kiln fired. Most of its surface is now rather rough—

though still quite even in appearance—and of a dull light brown-red-dish color. Originally, however, as can be seen from considerable traces in parts of the tablet, the whole tablet surface was covered by a very thin layer of fine ivory-colored clay, faintly tinged with green, that gave the tablet a very smooth and pleasing appearance. Fortunately the surfaces of two vocabularies from Khorsabad, coated in the same manner, are much better preserved and still show the pleasing effect of the coating. I hope that a chemical analysis will make it possible to determine the details of that ancient coating technique.

The text of the king list extends through four columns, two on the obverse of the tablet and two on the reverse. The first and the second as well as the third and the fourth columns are separated from each other by a vertical double line, and each of these columns is again subdivided into two half-columns by a similar vertical double line. In detail the arrangement of the text is as follows. Where the statement devoted to a certain king contains all the items intended to be conveyed (i.e., besides the name of the king, that of his father, and the length of the king's reign), it is usually spread over two full lines (= four half-lines) in the following manner (Fig. 2):

X, x years	son of Y, exercised kingship
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FIG. 2

Nevertheless, in comparatively many cases (namely, whenever the scribe feared that the space which he intended to fill with a certain text portion would not suffice), the statement is crowded into one line, the arrangement then being as follows (Fig. 3):

X, son of Y,	x years exercised kingship
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FIG. 3

On the other hand, in cases where the scribe inserts before the statement on the length of the king's reign some additional remark or remarks relating to events prior to the king's accession to the throne, the section devoted to a particular king may consist of three and even more lines. In cases, however, where only the descent of the king but

not the length of his reign is known, the reference is given without exception as in line 1 of Figure 2, while, finally, in those cases where nothing but the name of the king is known, the space allotted to that king is only one half-line.

In those cases where the statement devoted to one king contains all items, it is separated from the preceding and the following statements by simple horizontal dividing-lines, but the text lines within such a section are not separated from each other by dividing-lines, each section devoted to a king thus being clearly set off from every other section by means of the dividing lines inclosing it.

On the other hand, none of the three groups composed of kings whose regnal years were unknown—and this is the case for the first thirty-two kings—has dividing-lines between the names of the various kings that form those groups. But every subscription found at the end of a group and giving the total number as well as a short characterization of the kings enumerated in that group is set off by a dividing-line from the following group of kings and, in the case of the first two groups, even from the kings listed before the subscription. By this device the various groups as such, too, stand out very clearly. The reason why the dividing-line before the subscription is dispensed with in the third group evidently is the fact that the subscription begins in the second half of a line.<sup>1</sup> For the same reason it is omitted in the only instance of group enumeration outside the three groups at the beginning of the list, namely, in the second column in the case of six consecutive kings who together ruled only a portion of the unfinished year of the king preceding that group.

The lower part of the fourth, i.e., the last, tablet column finally contains the tablet subscription, set off from the king list proper merely by much wider spacing of the signs as well as of the lines. It states that the list has been copied from a king-list tablet in the city of Aššûr by a certain Kandilanu, scribe of a temple in the city of Arbail in the easternmost part of Assyria, on the twentieth day of the month *araḥ lu-lu-bi-e* of the second *limmu* of Adad-EN-GIN, *šaknu* of Aššûr, i.e., in the 7th official regnal year of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra III (108),<sup>2</sup> the immediate successor of Aššûr-nerâri V (107), with whose reign the king list closes.

<sup>1</sup> The enumeration of the kings in this group comprises 34 lines, the subscription 14 lines.

<sup>2</sup> The number in parentheses following the name of a king indicates his place in the row of Assyrian rulers enumerated in the king list (supplemented by later documents).

Apart from orthographical differences and apart from the fact that our tablet carries the list of Assyrian rulers ten reigns further, our Khorsabad list is a duplicate of the much-damaged Assur king list published by Nassouhi in AOf IV, 1-11, and henceforth referred to by us as Assur king list A, or simply as Assur A. Unfortunately the date of this list is broken off, but in view of the fact that the list ends with the reign of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra II (97), after which it has a horizontal line<sup>3</sup> and a large unscribed space, as well as in view of the analogy offered by the Khorsabad list, we may confidently assume that this list was written in the reign of the immediate successor of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra II, i.e., Aššûr-dan II (98). Probably, therefore, Assur A is about 190 years older than our Khorsabad list. Another even older specimen of the king-list text is represented by the small Assur fragment VAT 11554, published by Schroeder in KAVI as No. 15 and designated by us as Assur B. Although only a few lines of its first and fourth columns are preserved, the fact that it enumerates the kings Aššûr-nerâri III (80), Enlil-kudurra-ušur (81), and Ninurta-apil-Ekur (82) in its fourth column, while both the Khorsabad list and Assur A mention them already in their third columns,<sup>4</sup> may be taken as an indication that Assur B closed with a king six or seven more reigns before Tukulti-apil-Ešarra II (97), the last king mentioned in Assur A.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This dividing line is important, since beginning with its second column Assur A does not separate the various reigns by dividing-lines.

<sup>4</sup> In the Khorsabad list the section relating to the three kings begins in the middle of the column (l. 23); in Assur A, about three lines before the beginning of the last quarter (l. 30).

<sup>5</sup> This point, however, is not so certain as one would desire, for Assur A leaves a portion of its fourth column unscribed, and this space might well have been utilized by Assur B to record a number of reigns.