

SR IX C Form 9/III

Prof. Pombré



COURTESY TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FRONTISPIECE. *The Assyrian sacred tree, a symbol of fertility and the cosmic order upheld by the king of Assyria as Aššur's earthly representative (from Nimrud, reign of Assurnasirpal II, 9th cent. B.C.).*  
BM 124584.



# STATE ARCHIVES OF ASSYRIA

Published by the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project  
of  
the Academy of Finland  
in co-operation with  
Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft

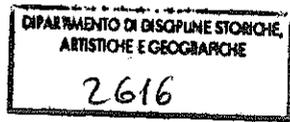
Managing Editor  
Robert M. Whiting

Editorial Committee  
Karlheinz Deller, Frederick Mario Fales, Simo Parpola,  
Nicholas Postgate, Julian Reade

VOLUME III  
Alasdair Livingstone

COURT POETRY AND LITERARY MISCELLANEA

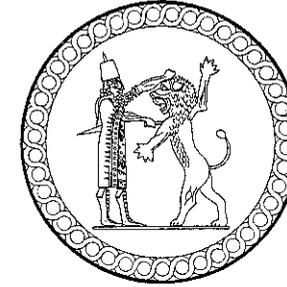
HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS



259450

© 1989 by The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project  
and The Helsinki University Press  
All Rights Reserved  
Printed in Finland

Publication of this volume was made possible in part by a grant  
from the Research Council for the Humanities of  
the Academy of Finland



# COURT POETRY AND LITERARY MISCELLANEA

*Edited by*  
ALASDAIR LIVINGSTONE

*Illustrations*  
*edited by*  
JULIAN READE

Set in Times  
Typography and layout by Teemu Lipasti  
The Assyrian Royal Seal emblem drawn by Dominique Collon from original  
Seventh Century B.C. impressions (BM 84672 and 84677) in the British Museum  
Typographical encoding by Laura Kataja and Raija Mattila  
Photocomposition by Tuula Hauhia  
Paste-up by Jouni Laakso and Paavo Sahlman

Helsinki University Press  
Vuorikatu 3 A 2, SF-00100 Helsinki, Finland  
Tel. 358-0-701 9077, Tfx. 358-0-175 368

ISBN 951-570-001-9 (Whole Series, Paperback)  
ISBN 951-570-002-7 (Whole Series, Hardbound)  
ISBN 951-570-043-4 (Volume 3, Paperback)  
ISBN 951-570-044-2 (Volume 3, Hardbound)

HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS

1989

## FOREWORD

First we would like to thank the editor, Dr. Alasdair Livingstone, for his wholehearted and enthusiastic participation in the project. This book is doubtless not the one that he would have prepared had he set out to produce a work on Assyrian literature *ab initio*, but the completion of a volume within the somewhat limiting framework of the SAA series format in a timely manner owes much to his willing co-operation. These texts call for much more comment and discussion than can be provided by this format and we fully expect that Dr. Livingstone will provide additional commentary in the near future. One of the goals of the series is to provide Neo-Assyrian texts with the best possible transliterations, and towards this end Dr. Livingstone has made five collation trips to the British Museum in London and one to various museums in Berlin.

The project wishes to express its appreciation to the many institutions that have continued to make the publication of this series a possibility: The British Museum, London; Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin; Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin; Musée du Louvre, Paris; and the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft. It must be kept in mind that behind the names of these institutions there are people, too numerous to be thanked individually here, whose work makes possible the access to texts and illustrative material without which the project could not function.

Our thanks are again due to the Olivetti (Finland) Corporation for continuing to provide the project with computer hardware and software, maintenance, and advice; to the Finnish Ministry of Education for providing printing subsidies for the volumes of the series; and last, but hardly least, to the Academy of Finland for the financial support that has made the project a reality.

Helsinki, May 1989

Robert M. Whiting

## PREFACE

The present volume began as a corpus of nine texts, but background research and the realization that it would be necessary to include certain Assyrian texts written in the Standard Babylonian dialect resulted in its expansion to the present size. Although the subject of Assyrian as opposed to Babylonian literature has been neglected, its importance has not passed unnoticed. Referring to the lyrical passages in Sargon II's account of his eighth campaign, formulated as a letter to the god Aššur, and deploring the one-sided view of Assyrian civilization often current, A. L. Oppenheim wrote as follows of the citizens of the god's city:

These citizens must have been interested in hearing about the sounds and smells of the mountain forests, the dizziness felt on dangerous trails, they must have enjoyed the references to cities that grow like trees (l. 239) or shine like stars (l. 288) on mountaintops. Such imagery can have meaning only to an audience that is receptive to the beauties of a landscape seen in its reflection in a poet's soul. It is rather obvious that appreciation for such literary genres can only be the result of a living tradition that has conditioned the audience. One may think in this respect of the lost love songs that are listed in the unique catalogue found in Assur (KAR 158) and of all the songs of battle and triumph, the songs in praise of the king and of the city, and those songs which we cannot even imagine, that have all disappeared because not even their incipits were written down or the songs themselves in such numbers as to bring about their preservation and discovery. One may, moreover, think of the epical tradition of Assyria, of which only a few fragments have survived and which it will be the task of future historians of Mesopotamian literature to follow up and to relate in some way with the contemporaneous revival of such literature in Babylonia.

All this unexpected complexity and multifaceted sophistication shows that we have not yet begun to utilize all the information that the cuneiform texts contain. (JNES 19 1960, p. 147)

Apart from the special case of KAR 158, the material referred to by Oppenheim is substantially that which forms the contents of this book, and it is hoped that the book constitutes at least a small step toward realizing his stated objectives. If so, this results from a co-operative effort. My greatest debt of thanks is to Prof. S. Parpola, for involving me in the project in the first place, and for constant encouragement and advice throughout the processes of research and completion of the manuscript. The selection and order of texts in this edition owes much to him, and many of the new texts included in it were

originally identified by him. At the final stage, Prof. Parpola devoted a very substantial amount of his time and energy to scrutinizing the transliterations and translations, contributing important new readings and interpretations and thereby improving the final version. He also contributed the present reconstruction of the Nineveh version of the Marduk Ordeal (no. 35), and personally prepared the score transliterations of texts 34, 35 and 38, the glossary, and all the indices to the volume. Thanks are also due to Prof. Parpola's assistants, Raija Mattila, Laura Kataja, and Hannes Hägglund for their help and co-operation during my stay in Helsinki, and at other times, and the competent work done by them in entering text and monitoring the photocomposition process is gratefully acknowledged.

My work has also benefited from the advice of Prof. K. Deller, who read through an initial version of the manuscript in the summer of 1988, and made many valuable suggestions. Subsequently, despite the pressures of running three Departments during the temporary vacancy of the Heidelberg chairs of Semitics and Islamic Studies, he was always ready to discuss textual difficulties and problematic passages, conversations which invariably led to new insights.

A substantial debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. R. Whiting for handling communication between Heidelberg and Helsinki, and the gradual incorporation into the computerized manuscript of new material and corrections sent from Heidelberg. Moreover, during a two week research visit which I was able to make to the Department of Asian and African Studies, University of Helsinki, in September/October, 1988, Dr. Whiting read through many of the texts with me from the point of view of English style, an exercise which not infrequently led to improving the translation.

Prof. W. von Soden communicated new readings of his for certain lines of the Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Crown Prince (no. 32); his contributions are acknowledged individually in the critical apparatus to that text and he is thanked here for his generosity. Both Prof. W. G. Lambert and Prof. R. Borger read through a list of texts to be included, and made helpful suggestions. Prof. H. Tadmor extremely generously gave permission to include his new reconstruction of no. 33 in the volume even before the appearance of his own fundamental study of this important text.

The selection of illustrations has benefited not only from the expertise of Dr. J. Reade, but also from that of Frau Dr. E. A. Braun-Holzinger. At an early stage in the preparation of the manuscript, before it had become clear that Dr. Reade would act as general editor for illustrations for the whole series, Dr. Braun-Holzinger sought out and collected suggested illustrations on the basis of a list of key words and topics, with much scholarly engagement. She produced a substantial amount of useful material, but in a special working session with Dr. Reade on the illustrations for the whole series, held in Helsinki in October 1988, it was decided that many of her suggestions would fit other volumes in the series better, and were accordingly set aside for that purpose. On the basis of our discussions, Dr. Reade subsequently made available a large selection of excellent British Museum prints, and the final selection from this material was made in the course of the paste-up process by Prof. Parpola in consultation with Dr. Reade. My thanks are thus due to both Dr. Reade and Dr. Braun-Holzinger, but I would like to emphasize that the bulk of the final illustrations and all the captions for them stem from Dr. Reade alone. Special thanks are due to Nadja Wrede for taking time from her

doctoral work to prepare the line drawing of the engraving on a pebble given on p. 41.

Thanks are due to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to collate or publish certain tablets in their keeping, and for providing photographs for study and for illustrations, and to their staff in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities for their unfailing courtesy and assistance. Dr. I. L. Finkel helped with the collations, and provided valuable information about the rules of play of the Royal Game of Ur from an unpublished text. I am grateful to the Director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, Frau Dr. L. Jakob-Rost, for permission to make collations of tablets in her care, and to Dr. J. Marzahn for his helpfulness. Prof. J. Renger, Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, and Frau Dr. E. Strommenger, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin, made it possible for me to consult excavation photographs of Assur tablets in the Charlottenburg Museum. Prof. O. R. Gurney generously lent me such photographs as he had available of the Sultantepe tablets included in this volume.

Financial support to undertake collation trips and my visit to Helsinki was provided by the Academy of Finland.

I would like to express my awareness of, and appreciation for, the large amount of time and dedication expended by the project staff and the staff of the Helsinki University Press in the production of the volume.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for providing me with a liberal education involving three distinct parts of the world. The book is dedicated to Anita and Kristina.

Heidelberg, May 1989

Alasdair Livingstone

## CONTENTS

FOREWORD .....	VII
PREFACE .....	IX
INTRODUCTION .....	XV
The Cultural and Historical Background of the Corpus .....	XV
The Sources and Attribution of the Texts .....	XVIII
The Nature and Content of the Corpus .....	XXI
On the Present Edition .....	XXXII
Notes .....	XXXIV
Abbreviations and Symbols .....	XXXV
 TRANSLITERATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS .....	 1
Hymns to Gods, Temples, Cities and Kings .....	3
1. Assurbanipal's Hymn to Aššur .....	4
2. Assurbanipal's Acrostic Hymn to Marduk and Zarpanitu .....	6
3. Assurbanipal's Hymn to the Ištar of Nineveh and Arbela .....	10
4. Nanaya Hymn of Sargon II .....	13
5. Nanaya Hymn of Assurbanipal .....	16
6. Assurbanipal's Hymn to Tašmetu and Nabû .....	17
7. Assurbanipal's Hymn to Ištar of Nineveh .....	18
8. Hymn to the City of Arbela .....	20
9. Psalm in Praise of Uruk .....	23
10. Blessing for the City of Assur .....	24
11. Assurbanipal's Coronation Hymn .....	26
Elegaic and Other Poetry .....	29
12. Righteous Sufferer's Prayer to Nabû .....	30
13. Dialogue Between Assurbanipal and Nabû .....	33
14. Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu .....	35
15. Elegy in Memory of a Woman .....	37
16. Elegies Mourning the Death of Tammuz .....	39
Epic Poetry in Praise of Assyrian Kings .....	43
17. Shalmaneser III's Campaign to Urartu .....	44
18. Epic of Sargon II .....	47
19. Assurbanipal Epic .....	48
20. Epic Narrative Relating to Assurbanipal's Elamite Wars .....	48
21. Assurbanipal's Wars in Elam .....	50
22. Paean to Assurbanipal after the Conquest of Elam .....	51
23. Epic Text Mourning the Death of a King .....	52
24. Fragment of a Royal Epic(?) .....	53
Literary Letters .....	55
25. Letters to Assurbanipal from his Son .....	56
26. A Petition to Assurbanipal .....	59
27. Fragment of a Letter Praising Assurbanipal .....	60