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Zsolt SIMON <zsltsimon@gmail.com>

Institut für Assyriologie und Hethitologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, MÜNCHEN

**22) A Revised Reconstruction of Col. II of the Synchronistic King List (A. 117 / Ass. 14616 c)\* —**

The Synchronistic King List (ScKL) is a list recording the contemporary kings of Assyria and Babylonia in two sub-columns on the left and the right sides in parallel approximately from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Until now, the sources of the ScKL consist of one tablet (A. 117 = AfO 3, 70-71; KAV 216) and several tablet fragments (VAT 11931 = KAV 9, VAT 11261 = KAV 10, VAT 11262 = KAV 11, VAT 11338 = KAV 12, VAT 11345 = KAV 13, and A. 118 / Ass. 13956 dh = KAV 182), all excavated by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at the site of Aššur at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The texts were first edited by E. F. Weidner (MVAG 20/4, 6-10; MDOG 58, 1-10; MVAG 26/2, 2-24; AfO 3, 66-77) and later reedited by A. K. Grayson (AOAT 1, 112-115; RLA 6, 116-125). Although nearly one third of the tablet has been lost, A. 117 is the main tablet of the ScKL, containing more entries of kings and rendering a clearer overview of the format. However, the obverse of the tablet (Col. I-II) was largely damaged and has badly deteriorated. This was indicated by Weidner's warning that "Was die Lesungen in Assur 14616 c, Vs. II, 2. Spalte (AfO 3, S. 70) betrifft, so sind sie mit grosser Vorsicht zu benutzen und bleiben besser unberücksichtigt"; and his later remark that the obverse of the tablet was "nummehr fast ganz verwittert" (AfO 17, 383, n. 1). Even though the earlier edition of Weidner of this part was improved with the help of the Babylonian King List C, which recorded the kings of the Isin II Dynasty by A. Poebel (AS 15, 14), the reconstruction of Col. II of A. 117 still remains uncertain.

Poebel's revision of Col. II of A. 117, basically followed by Grayson (RLA 6, 118-119), can be seen as follows:

|   |      |   |      |
|---|------|---|------|
| .....   |      |   |      |
| 10. <sup>m</sup> Ašš[ur]-dan <sup>[a]n</sup>      | min  | <sup>md</sup> Za-ba <sub>4</sub> -[ba <sub>4</sub> -šuma-iddina | min] |
| 11. <sup>m</sup> min                              | min  | <sup>md</sup> Enlil-nādin-[aḥḥē                                 | min] |
| 12. <sup>md</sup> Ninurta-tukul-ti-Aš-šur         | min] | <sup>md</sup> Marduk-[kabit-aḥḥē-šú                             | min] |
| 13. <sup>m</sup> Mu-tak-kil- <sup>d</sup> Nusku   | min  | <sup>m</sup> [Itti- <sup>d</sup> Marduk-balātu                  | min] |
| 14. <sup>m</sup> Aš-šur-rēša-iši                  | min  | <sup>md</sup> Ninurta-[nādin]-šumi [                            | min] |
| 15. <sup>m</sup> min                              | min  | <sup>md</sup> Nabû-kudurri-ušur [                               | min] |
| 16. <sup>m</sup> min                              | min  | <sup>md</sup> Enlil-nādin-apli [                                | min] |
| 17. <sup>m</sup> Tukul-ti-apil-[É]-šár-ra         | min  | <sup>md</sup> Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē [                               | min] |
| 18. <sup>md</sup> Ašarēd <sup>!</sup> -apil-É-kur | min  | <sup>md</sup> Marduk-šāpik-zēri [                               | min] |
| 19.   |      | <sup>m</sup> [...] um-[man-šú]                                  |      |
| 20. <sup>m</sup> Aš-šur-bēl-ka-la                 | min  | <sup>md</sup> Marduk-[šāpik-zēri                                | min] |
| 21. <sup>m</sup> Aš-šur-bēl-ka-la                 | min  | <sup>md</sup> Adad-[apla-iddina                                 | min] |
| 22. <sup>m</sup> Aš-šur-bēl-ka-la                 | min  | <sup>m</sup> [ <sup>d</sup> Marduk-. . . . .                    | min] |
| 23. <sup>m</sup> min                              | min  | <sup>m</sup> [. . .   | min] |
| 24. <sup>m</sup> min                              | min  | <sup>m</sup> [. . .   | min] |
| .....   |      |   |      |



The reconstruction is problematic in several aspects: 1) in the unit of Lines 12-13, two Assyrian kings, Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur and Mutakkil-Nusku, are listed parallel with two Babylonian kings, Marduk-kabit-aḥḥēšu and Itti-Marduk-balātu; 2) in the two separate units (in Lines 18 and 20), the entry of the

Babylonian king Marduk-šāpik-zēri is listed twice. This reconstruction contradicts the overall format of A. 117.

In accordance with the overall organization of A.117, the methods applied by the scribe for placing the synchronistic kings of Assyria and Babylonia in single units – following the presumed structure of the ScKL – indicate that: either 1) one Assyrian king corresponds to one Babylonian king in a unit of one line, which can be seen in the first lines of Col. I and III; or 2) one Assyrian king corresponds to several Babylonian kings in a unit of several lines, which can be seen in Col. I 11-18, Col. II 7-9, 14-16, 20-24, Col. III 9-12 and Col. IV 14-16; or 3) several Assyrian kings correspond to one Babylonian king in a unit of several lines, which can be seen in Col. I 22-25, Col. II 5-6 and Col. III 13-15<sup>1)</sup>.

The arrangement that several Assyrian kings correspond to several Babylonian kings in a single unit is unattested in A. 117. An individual king (of Assyria or Babylonia) is never listed repeatedly in two or more independent units<sup>2)</sup>. A similar design for avoiding this type of repetition can be seen in the unit of Line 12 of VAT 11338 (RLA 6, 124), where the entry of Enlil-nādin-apli listed in the left half-line corresponds to a blank space in the right half-line. According to the interpretation of J. A. Brinkman (AnOr 43, 28), the blank space would stand for an extension of the reign of Aššur-rēša-iši I inscribed in the preceding right half-line of Line 11. More importantly, A. 117, as a king list, is meant to list the kings in a direct chronological order without considering the actual overlapping reigns. This means that, in the right half-lines of Col. I, A. 117, the Babylonian kings from the first three dynasties of Babylon which are partly overlapped are listed one after another in a direct line (Weidner, MVAG 26/2, 23; Poebel, JNES 2/1, 61; Brinkman, AnOr 43, 29). The repeated entries of one same king in different units, which will break the chronological order, would be unusual.

Thus, the two rules followed by the scribe of A. 117 for registering the entries of kings can be summarized as follows: 1) never list two or more Assyrian kings parallel with two or more Babylonian counterparts in one unit; 2) never list a king in different units.

Furthermore, some traces on the tablet would also indicate that another arrangement might be preferable. The status of the tablet A. 117 around the time of the excavation can be seen from its excavation photo (Ass. 4128), on which the right part of Col. II still shows large shadows of cuneiform signs. However, the initial traces for the royal name in the right part of Line 16 seem to be one or two heads of horizontal wedges followed by two or three vertical wedges, clearly referring not to “<sup>d</sup>BE-MU” of “Enlil-nādin-apli” (AfO 3, 70, Col. II, 16). More probably the signs should be read “PA-ku” (  ), which could match the first elements of “Nabû-kudurri-ušur”<sup>3)</sup>. Additionally, the traces at the end of Line 18 seem more likely to be two crossed wedges followed by a vertical wedge (  ), which should be “PAB.MEŠ” as the last element of “Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē”, rather than “DUB-NUMUN” or “ze-ri” as part of the name of “Marduk-šāpik-zēri”.

Accordingly, the reconstruction on Col. II of A. 117 (especially from Line 13 onwards) can be revised as follows:

|  |      |  |      |
|--|------|--|------|
| .....  |      |  |      |
| 10. <sup>m</sup> Aš-šur-dan <sup>an</sup>        | min  | [ <sup>md</sup> Za-ba <sub>4</sub> -ba <sub>4</sub> -šuma-iddina | min] |
| 11. <sup>m</sup> [min]                           | min  | [ <sup>md</sup> Enlil-nādin-aḥi                                  | min] |
| 12. <sup>md</sup> [Ninurta-tukul-ti-Aššur        | min] | [ <sup>md</sup> Marduk-kabit-aḥḥē-šú                             | min] |
| 13. <sup>m</sup> [Mu-tak-kil- <sup>d</sup> Nusku | min] | [ <sup>m</sup> ... um-ma-an-šú]                                  |      |
| 14. <sup>m</sup> [Aš-šur-rēša-i-ši               | min] | [ <sup>m</sup> Itti- <sup>d</sup> Marduk-balāḫu                  | min] |
| 15. <sup>m</sup> [min]                           | min  | [ <sup>md</sup> Ninurta-nādin-šumi                               | min] |
| 16. <sup>m</sup> [min]                           | min  | [ <sup>md</sup> Nabû-kudurri-ušur                                | min] |
| 17. [ <sup>mr</sup> Tukul-ti-apil-É-šár-ra       | min] | [ <sup>md</sup> Enlil-nādin-apli                                 | min] |
| 18. [ <sup>md</sup> Ašarēd-apil-É-kur]           | min  | [ <sup>md</sup> Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē                                | min] |
| 19.  |      | [ <sup>m</sup> ... um-ma-an-šú]                                  |      |

|                         |     |                      |             |
|-------------------------|-----|----------------------|-------------|
| 20. [ᵐAš-šur-bēl-ka-la] | min | [ᵐᵈMarduk-šāpik-zēri | <b>min]</b> |
| 21. [ᵐAš-šur-bēl-ka-la] | min | [ᵐᵈAdad-apla-iddina  | min]        |
| 22. [ᵐAš-šur-bēl-ka-la] | min | [ᵐᵈMarduk-aḥḥē-erība | min]        |
| 23. [ᵐ min]             | min | [ᵐ . . .             | min]        |
| 24. [ᵐ min]             | min | [ᵐ . . .             | min]        |

.....

In this new reconstruction:

1) The entry of Itti-Marduk-balātu is suggested for Line 14, rather than Line 13, where the entry of a Babylonian ummānu must be registered (just like the entry of the ummānu in Line 19). The two Assyrian kings are thus listed parallel with only one Babylonian king in Lines 12-13<sup>4)</sup>.

2) The entry of Marduk-šāpik-zēri in Line 18 is replaced by the entry of Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē and so the former will not be listed repeatedly in Lines 18 and 20.

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1) For more discussions on the arrangement of parallel pairs of Assyrian and Babylonian kings in A. 117, see the revised version of the present writer's doctoral thesis (submitted to Peking University in 2014) to be published as *Studies on the Synchronistic King List from Ashur* (forthcoming).

2) In Col. IV, the entries of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon are written closely together, but it should be noted that there was no Babylonian king after Babylon was destroyed by Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon himself was king of Assyria and Babylonia.

3) It is highly probable that the name of Nebuchadnezzar I in this line is written as “ᵈPA-ku-dūr-PAB” (A. K. Grayson, ABC 21, iii 6', 8'). The present writer thanks Dr. Jaume Llop for the discussions with him on the traces of this name.

4) Grayson (RLA 6, 121) suggested that a) if Itti-Marduk-balātu is listed in Line 13, then a horizontal dividing line between Line 12 and Line 13 (Brinkman, AnOr 43, 41, n. 178) would have been mistakenly omitted; or b) if an ummānu is listed here, then the entry of Itti-Marduk-balātu would have been omitted. Be that as it may, a new problem will be: another king of the Isin II dynasty between Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē and Marduk-šāpik-zēri will have to be expected in Line 18, which will contradict the evidence from the Babylonian King List C (Poebel, AS 15, 3).

Fei CHEN <chenfei@zedat.fu-berlin.de>

Freie Universität Berlin, Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 BERLIN

**23) SB Gilgamesh XI 149-150** — In A.R. George's magisterial edition of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the term *i-pi-ra-am-ma* was left untranslated in the Standard Babylonian text. The corresponding lines, 149-150 of Tablet XI, describe Ūta-napišti's release of the dove to ascertain if there is dry land. The lines in the majority of manuscripts read:

149: *il-lik summatu(TU)<sup>mušen</sup> i-pi-ra-am-m[a]*

150: *man-za-zu ul li-pa-aš<sub>2</sub>-šim-ma is-sah-r[a]*

“off went the dove . . .

No perch was available for it and it came back to [me]” (GEORGE 2003: I 713)

Variants in two (of four and five witnesses per line, respectively) other manuscripts, one from Nineveh (K 3375) and one from Aššur (VAT 11294) preserve a different reading deemed by George as an “easy variant” of the untranslated verb *i-pi-ra-am-ma*. The lines in these two manuscripts read:

149: *il-lik summatu(TU)<sup>mušen</sup> i-tu-ra-am-m[a]*

150: *man-za-zu ul li-pa-aš<sub>2</sub>-šim-ma is-sah-r[a]*

George prefers the reading *i-pi-ra-am-m[a]* over *i-tu-ra-am-ma* one two grounds. The first follows the text critical rule of *lectio difficilior* in preferring the more difficult verb *i-pi-ra-am-ma*, for which he does not offer a translation. The second reason is the reading *i-tu-ra-am-ma*, from the verb *tāru* “to return,” is redundant since the dove clearly returns in line 150 with the verb *is-sah-ra* “to turn back (around).” There is, however, another reason to prefer *i-pi-ra-am-ma* over *i-tu-ra-am-ma*, as well as to discount *i-pi-ra-am-ma* as a “difficult verb because of its obscurity” (GEORGE 2003: II 889).