

A NEW TEXT RELATING TO ASHURBANIPAL'S ELAMITE WARS

Jaakko HÄMEEN-ANTTILA — Helsinki

The text 83-1-18, 476+492+728¹ is an interesting account of incidents during the eighth campaign of Ashurbanipal. The text seems to be neither a letter nor a royal inscription; it is difficult, however, to determine the literary category to which it belongs. It has, in common with royal inscriptions, some formulae which are unusual in letters (e.g. *šarri d[anni]*, r.3). On the other hand, the king (who is referred to in the third person, not in the first person as in royal inscriptions) does not seem to be the protagonist of this historical narrative; he is mentioned only at the beginning (4') and at the end (r.10; r.14), whereas his officials are frequently mentioned (e.g. the title *ša rēši/ū* occurs nine times). The language of the text seems to be relatively close to that of royal inscriptions, although it has a certain colloquial flavour (e.g. *agâ (?)* 24', 25'; *[m]uš-šar-a-n[i 6'*, cf. *muš-šá-ra-ni-i ABL 157:19*, *muš-ša-ru-u ibid.* r.3.) and it lacks the poetic quality of royal inscriptions. Finally, the text resembles chronicles (though lacking their terseness) in that it is prose narrative in the third person².

The text deals with some episodes on the Elamite border; these are also known from other sources, the most important of which are: 1) the Annals of Ashurbanipal (Rassam Cylinder, M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten Könige ...*, vol. II, p46ff.); 2) two short fragments K. 2825 and K. 1609+4699 (*CT 35, 47*); 3) a Neo-Babylonian letter (*ABL 1007+82-3-23,40*), in which the names Marduk-šar-ušur, Milkirāme and Arāšu are mentioned (r.16-19).

No line-to-line translation will be given because of the fragmentary state of the text: approximately two-thirds of every line is broken away. A summary of the contents will be given instead, though much of it remains pure guesswork.

¹) Published with the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. I am grateful to Professor Simo Parpola, who ceded his prior rights to edit this text to me and gave me much valuable advice during my work. Joins by Karlheinz Deller and Simo Parpola, copy by Simo Parpola.

²) The closest parallel to our text seem to be *CT 46 45* (W.G. Lambert, "Nebuchadnezzar King of Justice", *Iraq 27* (1965) 1-11) and the epical fragments published by A.K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto, 1975) p. 47ff; cf. especially the Nabopolassar epic, p. 78ff. However, it seems too bold to classify the present text as an "Ashurbanipal epic" on the basis of these parallels only.

Summary of the contents.

The beginning of the preserved part (1'-7') seems to form an introduction to the episode of Arāšu. Already in this part the title ^{LÚ}SAG is prominent. From line 8' onwards the text tells about the campaign in Elam, mentioning perhaps the king of Elam (12'). Lines 14'-15' give an account of the magnates (of Ashurbanipal) entering some cities and looting them. After that the troops seem to conquer Arāšu, and to open the gate of its palace (?), which they presumably robbed from its riches. Marduk-šar-ušur (or somebody else?) from his chariot reviews then the booty and/or the captives. (From K. 2825 we indeed learn that Marduk-šar-ušur took captives during the Elamite campaign). The rest of the obverse and the edge may have contained the names of some of the captives.

The reverse probably relates how a eunuch (possibly the same that was mentioned on lines 2'-5') is brought in handcuffs to Ashurbanipal, the mighty King. He may have been arrested by Milkirāme. The eunuch probably crawled on his belly (cf. K. 2825:10) pleading for mercy. The king listened to him (or, perhaps, slapped his face?). Rev.15 seems to be a citation, presumably from Ashurbanipal's speech: "From the beginning you did not send (?) your reports to me (?)...". After that the text becomes too broken to be paraphrased. The only words that are intelligible are on rev. 20 ("the lands").

Transliteration

83-1-18, 476+492+728

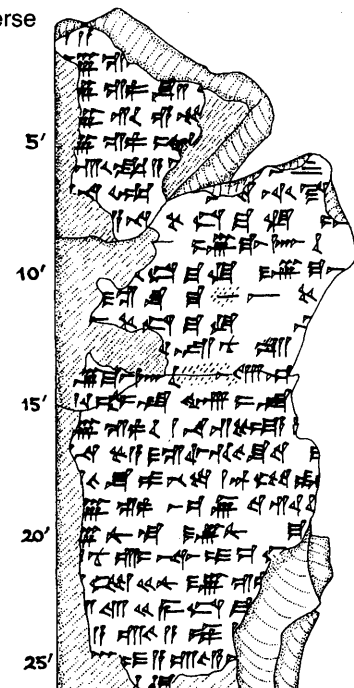
Obverse

beginning broken away

- 1' [x x] []
 2' [^L]ÚSA[G]
 3' [^L]ÚSAG ŠU^{II} x [x]
 4' [LU]GAL re-e-mu [(škn/ršû)]
 5' [^L]ÚSAG [tê]-[e-mu]
 6' [m]uš-šar-a-n[i x x x] x []
 7' [a]-na UGU [ši-pir]-ti ša []
 8' [ša?] a-na ^{KUR}NIM.MA^{KI} x [x]
 9' [x x -n]u? ^{LÚ}GAL^{MEŠ}-šû []
 10' [x x ^{KU}R]NIM.MA^{KI} ^{LÚ}GAL []
 11' [^{KUR} a]-ra-šu-ma [(x)] ina ^{KUR}[NIM.MA^{KI}]
 12' [LUGA]L? ^{KUR}NIM.MA^{KI} x [x]
 13' [x x x] x -su-nu TA* []
 14' [^L]ÚGAL^{MEŠ}-šû ina ŠÀ ^{UR}[U]
 15' [h]u-ub-tu ih-tab-tu []

83-1-18, 475+492+728

obverse



- 16' [L]^ÚSAG-šú¹ na-zi-ia x [x
 17' [a]¹-na^{KUR} a-ra-ši ik-šu-ud(-)m[a?
 18' [GIŠI]G-šu i-bat-te^{Id} AMAR.UTU-LUG[AL-PAB
 19' [L]^ÚSAG ina^{GIŠ} sa-par-ri-šú [
 20' [L]^ÚKÚR la^{LÚ} KÚR-ma [
 21' [x] x -nu-ú ina pi-i^{GIŠ} BA[N
 22' [I]^d AMAR.UTU-MAN-PAB^{LÚ} SA[G
 23' [T]A* ŠÁ man-ni NIM.MA^{KI}
 24' [x] a-ga-a DUMU^M[EŠ? (or DUMU^I [])
 25' [x]^{LÚ?} i a-ga-a D[UMU^{MES?}
 26' [KUR]NIM.M]A^{KI} [

Edge (3 lines) broken away, except for a trace

Reverse

- 1 [L]^ÚSAG iṣ qa-ti na-š[i
 2 [iṣ]-šu-niš-šu ina dan-[
 3 a-na¹ AN.ŠÁR-DÛ-A LUGAL d[an-ni
 4¹ mil-ki-ra-me^{LÚ} GAL-[ka-šir
 5^{LÚ} GAL^{MES} šá tē-e-me tar-du il-[
 6 sa-bit-su^L[^Ú]GAL-ka-šir [
 7^{LÚ} GAL^{MES} ŠÀ-bi e-[
 8 ki ša a-na 2^{LÚ} GAL^{MES} [
 9 ki ša a-na 2 ŠEŠ^{MES} x [x
 10 šá-^{LÚ}SAG ina IGI LUGAL ip-š[i-il/la
 11 LUGAL ina pa-an^{LÚ} GAL^{MES} n[i
 12^{GIŠ} BAN a-na [(x)]? 2? LÚ [
 13 [L]^ÚSAG k[i?
 14 [L]UGAL lit-su id-d[i
 15 [T]A* SAG ul taš-[(špr/škn)
 16 [x-x-t]i x [x
 17 [
 18 [
 19 [a-na]¹ x [x
 20 KUR.KUR x [x
 21 at- x [x
 22 [x] x [x
 rest broken away



Notes to the text

Obv. 11' The Elamite-Babylonian border district Arāšu (Rāšu) was conquered during the eighth campaign of Ashurbanipal (cf. Rassam Cylinder V 63-68).

16' Nazija was perhaps, though no Elamite etymology seems to be at hand for the name, a eunuch of the Elamite, not the Assyrian king. The name is otherwise attested only in *ABL* 1357:7', a letter of unknown provenience probably dating from the reign of Sargon.

18' A common name in Assyria (cf. Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names*). This Marduk-šar-ušur is met three times in the royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal, viz. K. 2825:9, K. 1609+4699 (*CT* 35,47) r.6 and K. 4464:12 (Th. Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, vol. I, plate 40). For the attestations in letters, see Tallqvist, *op.cit.* and L. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence ...*, vol.IV.

21' Probably [i]š-nu-ú ("they ...-ed another time") or [š]u-nu-ú ("are they...?" with interrogative intonation common in Neo-Assyrian).

24'-25' Here we may have the Neo-Babylonian demonstrative *agâ*, which belongs to the epistolary language: in royal inscriptions it is attested only in the Achaemenian period (attestation in *CAD agâ*).

Rev. 4 Milkirāme, eponym of 656, known by the title ^{LÚ}GAL-*ka-šir*/KA.KÉŠ in several Nimrud documents, e.g. ND 2328, ND 2330 (both in Iraq 16, p.43) and ND 5448: 27-29 (Iraq 19, plate 28). ^{LÚ}GAL-*ka-šir* "chief tailor" was an honorary title borne by one of the king's magnates and it must not be confused with the title ^{LÚ}GAL-*ki-šir* denoting a lower level official ("cohort commander") in the *ilku* system.

5 We seem to have here a relative clause beginning with *šá*. *Ṭēme ṭardu* is probably the object (*ṭēme*, assimilated for *ṭēmu*) with the verb (*špr?*, *škn?*) following it. The exact meaning of this line remains unclear.

8-9 The signs could also be read *ki-ša-a-ru*, but this seems to be a hapax. Besides, *šá* (not *ša*) is more common in medial position in Neo-Assyrian orthography. The writing of *kī* with *ki* is attested (e.g. *ki ša ABL* 158 r.21), though the plene writing *ki-i* is much more common. The reading *ki ša-a-ru* ("like the breath of ...") does not seem to fit very well, either.

10 The titles beginning with *ša-* are sometimes written *ša-LÚ* (e.g. *ša-LÚBAD.HAL ABL* 309 r.7, *ša-LÚBAD.HAL-li-a-ti ABL* 1063:10'). An alternative reading is naturally *ša LÚSAG* "of the eunuch". The verb *pšl* is found also in K. 2825:10 and K. 1609+4699 r.7.

12 [(x)] 2 should perhaps be read [x] x.

14 Here we may have the literary expression *lētu nadû* (see *CAD lētu*) "to pay attention". The sense of the story would also allow a phrase "he slapped his face", but neither *naṭû* (*iṭ-t[i]*) nor *ṭerû* (*iṭ-t[i-ir]*) is convincing, though both occur in e.g. *BINI*94:28 (NB letter, see *CAD naṭû* 1). The last remaining possibility (*sc. lītu* 'triumph') fits even less.

21 Probably *at-t[a]* or *at-t[u-nu]*.