FAMILY TIES: ASSURBANIPAL'S FAMILY REVISITED[1]

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For Simo:
ūmu ana ūme urḫu ana urḫi šattu ana šatti ša adi issēt mē šināni passurāte ša dunqi u ḫūd libbi ana kāša liqribāni[2]

ABSTRACT

This short article reviews the direct and indirect evidence for Assurbanipal's immediate family ties, excluding those to his father Esarhaddon and his paternal grandmother Naqi'a. We will re-examine extant Neo-Assyrian texts pertaining to the royal family in order to provide a plausible portrayal of Assurbanipal's relationships to his birth mother, brothers, and sisters.

1. INTRODUCTION

A letter attributed to the exorcist Adad-šumu-uṣur (SAA 10 185) refers not only to the promotion of Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin to crown prince of Assyria and Babylon respectively, but also to the large family of Esarhaddon:

> What has not been done in the heavens, the king, my lord, has done on earth (and) has shown us (the following): you have girded a son of yours with the (royal) headband and entrusted him with the kingship of Assyria, (and) you have established your eldest son as king in Babylon. You have placed the first on your right (and) the second on your left. […]. Just as you have prepared fine career(s) for these sons of yours, prepare in the same way fine career(s) for (the rest of) your numerous children.[3]

In addition to citing the large size of Esarhaddon's family, the sender also provides us with evidence that Assurbanipal was not the king's oldest son; he instead refers to him as "a son of yours" (DUMU-*ka*). Šamaš-šumu-ukin, referred to here as "your

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[2] Based on SAA 10 249 r.2′–7′.

[3] SAA 10 185:5–13 and 22–27.

eldest son" (DUMU.UŠ-*ka* GAL-*ú*), was the oldest living son of Esarhaddon, at least by Iyyar (II) 672, when the "Succession Treaty" was concluded.

In the large corpus of Neo-Assyrian texts, nearly all of which have been edited under the direction of Simo Parpola, the names of some of Assurbanipal's other siblings are preserved. Besides Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the best-attested brothers and sister(s) are: Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, Aššur-mukin-pale'a, Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ, Sîn-nadin-apli, Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ, and Šeru'a-eṭirat. We also know the name of a queen/wife of Esarhaddon: Ešarra-ḫammat. The Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon indicates that his children did not have a single mother; this text carefully differentiates between "sons born by Assurbanipal's mother" and "the rest of the sons engendered by Esarhaddon". Who was Assurbanipal's mother? Who were the other children born by the same mother as Assyria's last great king? Who were the other children fathered by Esarhaddon? And what was their relationship to Assurbanipal? This manuscript examines the relevant texts in order to provide an accurate as possible portrayal of what we know about Assurbanipal's relationships to his birth mother, brothers, and sisters.[4]

2. ASSURBANIPAL'S OLDER BROTHERS

We know that Assurbanipal had older brothers since he states that he was his father's favourite son "among his brothers" in inscription K 2694 + K 3050 i 30′ (= L[4]) and because older brothers are mentioned in the "Succession Treaty" (SAA 2 6:55–56, 69); note that the adjective for "older" (*rabûtu*) has been erased in K 2694+ (see below for details).[5] Weissert has recently described Sîn-nadin-apli, Šamaš-šumu-ukin, and Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ as the eldest, second eldest, and third eldest brothers of Assurbanipal respectively.[6]

The letter attributed to Adad-šumu-uṣur cited above (SAA 10 185) provides clear-cut (although inexplicit) evidence that Šamaš-šumu-ukin, at least by Iyyar (II) 672, was Esarhaddon's eldest living son. His seniority of age, as many scholars have already pointed out, was intentionally downplayed by the heir designate of Assyria once he became king; Assurbanipal conveniently referred to him as his "favourite brother" (*aḫu talīmu*) and he does not refer to himself as being younger than his brother in his inscriptions; the adjective *rabûtu* ("older") had been erased on K 2694+ (see above), which, as Weissert suggests, is hardly an accident since Assurbanipal does not refer to himself as being younger than his brothers in his

4 For a recent study of the same subject, see Weissert in PNA 1/I: 160–162. See also Novotny in PNA 3/I: 1139–1140; Pempe in PNA 1/I: 184–185; Radner in PNA 1/I: 197–198; Radner in PNA 1/II: 406–407; Radner & Weissert in PNA 1/I: 227; and Weissert in PNA 3/I: 1138–1139. The conclusions presented in PNA differ in several instances from those presented here.

5 Weissert in PNA 1/I: 162 (I.1.g.2′).

6 Weissert in PNA 1/I: 161–162 (I.1.f–h). See also Weissert in PNA 3/I: 1138–1139.

inscriptions. The exact age difference between Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Assurbanipal is not yet known.

With regard to Sîn-nadin-apli, a haruspical query concerning his appointment as heir designate (SAA 4 149) suggests that this prince may have been the eldest of Esarhaddon's sons at the time of the query (late 677).[7] Although this text does not explicitly state that he was the oldest son (or that he was to enter the "House-of-Succession of Assyria"), it is a reasonable assumption based on the fact that Esarhaddon was considering him as his successor early in his reign. In addition, the declaratory message constituting his name ("The god Sîn is the provider of an heir") could suggest that he was the first born son; however, as Sennacherib's choice of Esarhaddon and the appointments of Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin demonstrate, the eldest son was not necessarily chosen to succeed his father as king. If Sîn-nadin-apli's nomination was successful, and it appears to have been as evident from two legal transactions (SAA 6 210 and 239), we do not know how long he held this prestigious position since he is not mentioned or referred to after this time in extant sources. Since Šamaš-šumu-ukin is clearly the individual referred to as "your eldest son" (DUMU.UŠ-*ka* GAL-*ú*) in the letter attributed to Adad-šumu-uṣur cited above (SAA 10 185), which was written soon after the succession arrangement in Iyyar (II) 672, since Esarhaddon nominated two other sons to rule over Assyria and Babylonia, and since Sîn-nadin-apli does not appear in any text listing members of the royal family written after 672 (see below), it is plausible that Sîn-nadin-apli died before 672. Alternatively, he may have fallen out of favour with the king; however, no record of such an occurrence is known.[8]

The association of Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ with the royal family is known from two texts: a damaged account for a ceremonial banquet (SAA 7 154 i′ 1′–5′) and the "Zakutu Treaty" (SAA 2 8:4).[9] In the former, he is the last identifiable member

[7] Weissert (in PNA 1/I: 162 I.1.f.) states that the *terminus ante quem* for this query is probably late 677, since a merchant of the "crown prince" and another person in his entourage are mentioned in two legal transactions dated to Nisan (I) 676 (SAA 6 210 and 239). For the identification of the "crown prince" in these texts with Sîn-nadin-apli, see Kwasman & Parpola 1991: XXIX and XL n. 55.

[8] For other suggestions on his fate/identity in previous scholarly literature, see Weissert in PNA 1/I: 161–162 (I.1.f–g.1′). We agree with Weissert that it is extremely unlikely that Sîn-nadin-apli was actually the birth-name of Assurbanipal; there is no apparent motivation to replace one *aplu* name for another (that is, Aššur-bani-apli replacing Sîn-nadin-apli). Livingstone (2007a: 106–107), on the evidence of SAA 16 19, has recently questioned whether or not Assurbanipal adopted the name Aššur-bani-apli ('The god Aššur is the creator of an heir') when he [officially] became crown prince. If this prince personally wrote SAA 16 19 when he was young and some time before he became Balasî's student, then it is possible that Assurbanipal was officially designated as Esarhaddon's successor sooner than extant evidence suggests. This, of course, would have occurred after Sîn-nadin-apli died or fell out of favour; it seems unlikely that two princes would have simultaneously had *aplu*-names.

[9] Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ, possibly to be identified as the same individual due to the rarity of the name, is mentioned in three administrative documents (SAA 7 131:6′, 149 iii′ 3′, and 157 i 2′), and sent three letters to the king, his father (SAA 16 25–27).

of Esarhaddon's children preserved before the tablet breaks off. He appears after the "crown prince", Šeru'a-eṭirat, Aššur-mukin-pale'a, and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu. In the latter text, he is one of two sons of Esarhaddon named as the principal oath-takers of the treaty imposed by Naqi'a on Assurbanipal's behalf when he ascended the throne; the other is Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Since the "Succession Treaty" refers to older brothers in the plural and since he is singled out in the "Zakutu Treaty", Weissert tentatively suggested that Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ was Esarhaddon's third eldest son, and thus older than the heir designate of Assyria. His specific mention could indicate that he was older than Assurbanipal, or about the same age if he were younger.[10] On the evidence of his name ("Šamaš has brought to life the dead"), Weissert has proposed that his father overlooked him in favour of his younger brother because of his poor health. Although it is plausible that the name refers to the fact that he survived his birth, which may have been difficult (or perhaps he appeared to be dead or was dead for a brief time at his birth), there is no extant explicit reference to this prince's ill heath in the Neo-Assyrian corpus. If he were older, and this seems likely, it is not evident from known texts why Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ was overlooked as heir designate.

3. ASSURBANIPAL'S YOUNGER BROTHERS

Weissert has described Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ, Aššur-mukin-pale'a, and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu as the eldest, second eldest, and third eldest of Assurbanipal's younger brothers.[11]

All three are mentioned in an administrative text recording quantities of unknown commodities associated with statues of Esarhaddon's family on display in Aššur's temple in Assur (Ass 13956bq:16–23).[12] The list (in order) comprises the "principal crown prince", Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the "mausoleum *which* Assurbanipal …", Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ, Aššur-mukin-pale'a, Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, Šeru'a-eṭirat, and a princess whose name is completely destroyed. In a letter concerning offerings to be presented before the tutelary deities of the Ezida temple in Calah (SAA 13 56 r.6–10), the priest Urdu-Nabû mentions Assurbanipal, Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Šeru'a-eṭirat, Aššur-mukin-pale'a and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu; Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ and the princess who was mentioned in Ass 13956bq are notably

[10] On the basis of the "Zakutu Treaty", Olmstead (1923: 408) suggested that Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ did not accept the "Succession Treaty" and paid for it with his life.

[11] Weissert in PNA 1/I: 162–163 (I.1.i–k). See also Pempe in PNA 1/I: 184–185; Radner in PNA 1/I: 197–198; and Radner & Weissert in PNA 1/I: 227. As for Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, the *etellu*-element is written syllabically as *e-tel* and logographically as LUGAL (SAA 10 223 and SAA 13 56); see Parpola (1983: 118 n. 249) for the reading of LUGAL = *etellu*. His name may have been abbreviated as Etlu-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu in a letter of Urdu-Nanaya informing the king about remedies for nosebleeds (SAA 10 321).

[12] Weidner 1939–1941: 213–216 and pl. XIV; and Menzel 1981/1982: T17–T18 no. 15.

absent. Aššur-mukin-pale'a and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu appear also in a damaged account for a ceremonial banquet (SAA 7 154 i′ 1′–5′). These princes are mentioned after the crown prince and Šeru'a-eṭirat; once again, Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ does not appear in this family listing.

The information for Assurbanipal's relationship with Aššur-mukin-pale'a and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu is recorded in K 891 (= L[3]). He states that, according to his father's wishes, he consecrated Aššur-mukin-pale'a, his "second brother" (*aḫu tardennu*) as *šešgallu*-priest of Aššur, and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, a "younger brother" of his (*aḫu ṣeḫru*), as *šešgallu*-priest of Sîn in Ḫarran.[13] By early 668, Aššur-mukin-pale'a and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu were respectively the eldest and second eldest of Assurbanipal's younger brothers; *tardennu* ("second in age, rank") is taken here from Assurbanipal's, not Esarhaddon's, point of view.[14] As Pempe has already pointed out, it is not clear whether the term "brother" (*aḫu*) here refers to all male descendents or only to brothers born to the same mother (see below for further details).[15] The information provided in K 891 appears to agree with the order of these two younger brothers in Ass 13956bq, SAA 7 154, and SAA 13 56: the older of the two is mentioned before the younger of the two. As suggested by the declaratory message of Aššur-mukin-pale'a's name ("The god Aššur is the one who established my reign"), both children were likely born after their father became king in 681.[16]

Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ, who is mentioned only in Ass 13956bq, may have been older than Aššur-mukin-pale'a, as suggested by his position within the male family members listed in this document. The difference in his age to Assurbanipal's, however, cannot be determined from extant sources. He may have been younger, or even older, than the heir designate of Assyria; he was certainly younger than Šamaš-šumu-ukin (see above). His absence in SAA 7 154, SAA 13 56, and K 891 may suggest that he died sometime between Iyyar (II) 672 (earliest possible date of Ass 13956bq) and Iyyar (II) 669 (latest possible date of SAA 13 56); in fact, it has been suggested that Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ may be the dead child referred to in SAA 10 187 (lines 6–15).[17] His name ("O Aššur, you have granted [a son] – let him live!"), as some scholars have suggested, could indicate that he was born a weak and sickly child;[18] however, the name could refer to him being born prematurely. If Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ had been a sickly child and if his poor physical health continued

13 Lehmann-Haupt 1892: XXXII, K 891:14–18.
14 See Weissert in PNA 1/I: 162–163 (I.1.j) for details on this interpretation.
15 Pempe in PNA 1/I: 184–185.
16 Parpola 1983: 118 n. 247.
17 Radner & Weissert in PNA 1/I: 227. The relevant passage of SAA 10 187 (lines 6–15) reads: "Regarding what the king, my lord, wrote to me: 'I am feeling very sad. How did we act that I have become so depressed for this little one of mine?' – had it been curable, you would have given away half of your country to have cured it! (But) what can we do? O king, my lord, it is not possible to perform (such) a ritual/treatment."
18 Radner & Weissert in PNA 1/I: 227.

throughout his youth, Esarhaddon may have overlooked him when the nomination of an heir became an acute political issue, that is, if he were older, not younger, than Assurbanipal; note that there is no known extant evidence for his ill health in the Neo-Assyrian corpus. At present, his age relationship to the heir designate of Assyria cannot be established; nor can his chronic poor health.

4. ŠERU'A-EṬIRAT

Assurbanipal's eldest sister is Šeru'a-eṭirat. She is included as part of the royal family in an administrative text concerning statues of Esarhaddon's family in Aššur's temple in Assur (Ass 13956bq:16–23). She is listed seventh, following the last son of Esarhaddon to be mentioned in this text, Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, and preceding a princess whose name has been completely lost. The order of the list may not indicate the relative ages of the siblings, since Šamaš-šumu-ukin follows the "principal crown prince" (= Assurbanipal), though Šamaš-šumu-ukin is clearly the elder of the two brothers (see above). The list may present the siblings in order of gender (male then female), and then rank (from highest to lowest); this would indicate that Šeru'a-eṭirat is the highest ranking of the sisters. Conversely, in an account for a ceremonial banquet (SAA 7 154 i′ 1′–5′), Šeru'a-eṭirat is listed second, following the "crown prince". The order, as in the previous text, may not be indicative of age, since Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ is probably older than the two brothers who precede him in this list (see above). In a letter concerning offerings to be presented in the Ezida temple in Calah (SAA 13 56 r.6–10), Šeru'a-eṭirat is named third, after Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Interestingly, in SAA 7 154 and SAA 13 56, this princess is listed first among the other children, immediately after the two highest ranking sons; this may indicate her importance among the siblings. Šeru'a-eṭirat's importance is also indicated by her prominent portrayal centuries later in an Aramaic text in Demotic script, in which Assurbanipal sends her to Babylonia to persuade their brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin not to rebel.[19] In a letter in which Šeru'a-eṭirat respectfully reprimands her sister-in-law, Assurbanipal's wife Libbali-šarrat, for not studying (SAA 16 28), she states that she is the "eldest daughter (DUMU.MUNUS GAL-*tú*) of the House-of-Succession of Aššur-etel-ilani-mukinni (= Esarhaddon)".[20] SAA 16 28 provides clear-cut evidence for her being the eldest of Assurbanipal's sisters. It is not known

[19] Hallo 1997: 323–325.

[20] We agree with Livingstone's interpretation of this letter (2007a: 103–105), that this princess is treating "her sister-in-law with respect, addressing her with her royal titles and emphasising her [Libbali-šarrat's] high position and reminding her of it." Livingstone also addresses the interesting implications of SAA 16 28 regarding the evidence for literacy amongst women of the royal family. Parpola (1997c: 321 n. 18) suggests that Šeru'a-eṭirat personally wrote this letter. Compare Luukko's and Van Buylaere's interpretation of the relationship between these two ladies in the introduction to letters edited in SAA 16 (XXVIII).

if she was younger or older than Assurbanipal; if Šeru'a-eṭirat were the older of the two, she (or any daughter) would not be presented in lists of the royal family before the heir designate(s), regardless of her seniority in years. Her age relative to her other brothers also cannot be determined. It is possible that she was the eldest of all her siblings.

5. OTHER SIBLINGS OF ASSURBANIPAL

Parpola (1983: 117–119) lists several other children of Esarhaddon: Aššur-šarrani-muballissu, Sîn-per'u-ukin, a princess whose name is completely destroyed, a child referred to as *lakû* ("baby"), children of three "charges" (*piqittu ša Šarrat-parṣē*, *piqittu ša bēt kutalli*, and *piqittu ša bēt Urdu-Dagūna*), and two unnamed patients in the "New Palace" (2 *ša bēt ešši*).[21]

Aššur-šarrani-muballissu, who is mentioned along with Aššur-mukin-pale'a in a letter of Nabû-naṣir (SAA 10 296), may be identical with Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu; but it is not impossible that he is another brother of Assurbanipal.[22] Sîn-per'u-ukin appears only in letters of Adad-šumu-uṣur. His association with the royal family is known from a letter concerning favourable dates for Aššur-mukin-pale'a and Sîn-per'u-ukin to visit the king (SAA 10 207) and a piece of correspondence stating that Assurbanipal, Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, and Sîn-per'u-ukin were healthy (SAA 10 223).[23] Another sister of Assurbanipal, whose name is completely destroyed, is mentioned in Ass 13956bq (line 23: ^{f}x[*x*-…]). Nothing about this princess is known.[24]

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[21] Parpola also lists here Aššur-šar-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu and Etlu-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu. For the identification of these two names with Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu, see n. 11. He also suggested that Šarrat-sams[i] (now read as Šarrat-samma-[ila'i] in SAA 10 300) could be a member of the royal family and that […]-*ia-aḫ* in SAA 10 223 and 299 is another royal child. The former individual is probably identical with the diviner of the same name, the "reporter" (*bēl ṭēmi*) of two queries (SAA 4 279 r.9′ and SAA 4 296 r.3′), and, therefore, should not be considered as a sibling of Assurbanipal; the name Šarrat-samma-ila'i appears also in SAA 7 28 and SAA 7 64, but the identity of the person(s) is not certain. Regarding the latter individual, Parpola's interpretation is not certain since the names of Esarhaddon's children are usually long and entirely Akkadian.

[22] Parpola 1983: 118; and Frahm in PNA 1/I: 218.

[23] For references, see Novotny in PNA 3/I: 1139–1140. SAA 10 207:5–11 reads: "As for what the king, my lord, sent to me: 'Is it favourable for Aššur-mukin-pale'a to come up into my presence (and) [for] Sîn-per'u-ukin to come [up] with him? [Can] he (the latter) join him? They are separated.'" SAA 10 223:6–15 reads: "It is [very] well with Assur[banipal], it is is [very] well with [Šamaš-šu]mu-ukin, [it is] very [well with Aššur]-etel-šamê-erṣeti-[muballissu, …… it is] very [well with] Sîn-per'u-ukin." This prince is also mentioned with Aššur-mukin-pale'a in SAA 10 208 r.2′–3′, but the context is not known.

[24] It is not known if Šeru'a-eṭirat or this princess is the "king's daughter" (DUMU.MÍ LUGAL) about whom the query to the sun-god was performed when the Scythian king Barta-tua requested a daughter of Esarhaddon's in marriage (SAA 4 20); the outcome is not known (positive or negative response). For similar queries, see SAA 4 21–22.

As for the less certain members of Esarhaddon's family, the term *lakû*, as Livingstone has suggested, in one instance is likely a hypocorism ("baby brother", "little brother") since this child (birth name not known) is able to write to his brother Assurbanipal (80-7-19,68).[25] Although his age is not known, he was presumably younger than the heir designate of Assyria; it is possible, but cannot be proven, that *lakû* was a term of endearment used by Assurbanipal for Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu (or Aššur-mukin-pale'a).[26] The members of the royal family referred to as the Charge-of-Šarrat-parṣe, Charge-of-the-Rear-Palace, and Charge-of-the-House-of-Urdu-Daguna were possibly "little babies", and therefore were not referred to by name;[27] perhaps the same can be said of the two unnamed patients of the "New Palace" mentioned with Sîn-per'u-ukin (SAA 10 222:6). Assuming these children were newborns, infants, or toddlers, then these family members were all much younger than Assurbanipal; of course, the child *lakû* would have been a little older.

6. EŠARRA-ḪAMMAT

There are few references to Ešarra-ḫammat during her lifetime; most of our information concerning her comes from after her death. She is certainly a wife of Esarhaddon: a votive inscription on an eye-stone identifies her as "queen of Esarhaddon".[28] Scholars usually identify her as the unnamed queen whose death in Adar (XII) 673 is recorded in two Babylonian Chronicles; this identification is based on an inscription mentioning "the mausoleum of Ešarra-ḫammat, his (= Esarhaddon's) queen" (EṢ 7864).[29]

It is not certain, however, that she is Assurbanipal's birth mother. A principal source of evidence for her relationship to Assurbanipal is SAA 10 188, a letter attributed to Adad-šumu-uṣur that reports on a ghost's blessing of the crown prince

[25] Livingstone 2007a: 105–106 (80-7-19,68). The word "brother" (*aḫu*), as Livingstone suggests, is to be understood literally. The young author ([m]ʳ*la*ʾ-[*ku-ú*?]) may have personally written this piece of correspondence, as indicated by the scribal hand and by the unusual, non-professional shape of the tablet (a "juvenile Do-It-Yourself exercise tablet"). This (or another) unnamed *lakû*, is mentioned with the royal family in three scholarly letters: SAA 10 298, 319, and 320.

[26] Villard (1997: 139) has suggested that Aššur-mukin-pale'a might have been literate, principally since an administrative document dated to Adar (XII) 648 records the receipt of eighteen scholarly tablets that were in his possession (SAA 7 51 ii 4′–r. i 1). It is not impossible that Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu also received training in the scribal arts; both he and Aššur-mukin-pale'a were appointed to the post of *šešgallu*-priest by Esarhaddon.

[27] Parpola (1983: 110) defines the "charges" (*piqittu*) as: "a charge associated with a god (*Šarrat parṣī*) or a court (*Bīt kutalli*, *Bīt Urad-Dagūna*), specifically an *infant* member of the royal family." For references in the Neo-Assyrian corpus, see Parpola 1983: 109–110.

[28] Ashmolean 1967.1483 = Lambert 1969.

[29] Grayson 1975: 85 and 127 (Chron. 1 iv 22 and Chron. 14:23). For the inscription, see Nassouhi 1927: 21–22. In addition, her mausoleum is mentioned in an administrative text from Assur as the recipient of food offerings: SAA 12 81 i 9 and r. i 7.

of Assyria. The crown prince is most probably Assurbanipal, but the ghost (*eṭemmu*) is not identified by name or title; it is clearly that of a woman since it appears with the third feminine possessive suffix (-*ša*).[30] The identification of the ghost with Ešarra-ḫammat in letter SAA 10 188 is scholarly conjecture based on the importance attached to the death of a queen recorded in two Babylonian Chronicles and the mention of Assurbanipal's responsibility for a mausoleum in Ass 13956bq:18. However, this letter could refer to the ghost of any woman who might have been influential in the life and appointment of the crown prince of Assyria; if Ešarra-ḫammat is indeed this woman, Assurbanipal may have had a great deal of respect for her even if she was not his birth mother (for example, compare his relationship with Naqi'a). If the *bēt kimaḫḫi Aššur-bāni-apli x* (*x*) *x* in Ass 13956bq refers to the mausoleum of Ešarra-ḫammat, then Assurbanipal's responsibility for her mausoleum may be interpreted as indicating a special relationship between them.[31] The mausoleum, however, is not explicitly associated with a queen in this administrative text and, as crown prince of Assyria, Assurbanipal may have been responsible for the family mausoleum(s), regardless of his relationship to the occupant(s). The identification of Assurbanipal's mother as Ešarra-ḫammat thus rests first on the probability of her identification with the unnamed ghost in SAA 10 188 and as the sole occupant of the mausoleum in Ass 13956bq, and secondly on the assumption that Assurbanipal would be influenced by and concerned with Esarhaddon's deceased queen only if she was his birth mother. This is not the only possible conclusion. Alternatively, for example, she may have been the mother of Sîn-nadin-apli, the first heir designate of Esarhaddon (see above), or simply a preferred wife that Esarhaddon continued to respect and be affectionate towards and whose direct influence was sorely missed by the crown prince of Assyria.

The possible identification of Ešarra-ḫammat as Šamaš-šumu-ukin's mother is based on the "Succession Treaty" (SAA 2 6). This document was to ensure also the protection of "his (Assurbanipal's) brothers, sons of the mother of Assurbanipal" (SAA 2 6:94).[32] Šamaš-šumu-ukin is not mentioned here by name; in fact, the reference is to a plural number of brothers, although it is not impossible that he is included among them since the exhortation in this passage is to protect *these*

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30 The translation of SAA 10 188 has been wrongly used by contributors to the PNA to provide evidence (although indirect) that Ešarra-ḫammat is Assurbanipal's mother. This letter does not specifically state that the ghost seen by the crown prince was that of a deceased queen.

31 Weissert in PNA 1/I: 160–161 (I.1.b). See also Radner in PNA 1/II: 406–407.

32 SAA 2 6 distinguishes four different designations of brothers: 1) "his brothers, elder or younger" (ŠEŠ.MEŠ-*šú* GAL.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ); 2) his "favourite brother" (ŠEŠ *ta-li-me-šú*); 3) "his brothers, sons of the mother of Assurbanipal" (ŠEŠ.MEŠ-*šú* DUMU AMA-*šú šá* ^{m}*aš-šur*-DÙ-A); and 4) "his brothers" as part of a list of extended family members and non-family members. Designations 1 and 4 are used primarily to describe potential rebels and designations 2 and 3 are protected by the treaty. It is not clear whether Šamaš-šumu-ukin is assumed to be one of the "brothers, sons of the mother of Assurbanipal" for whom the treaty provides protection in multiple passages. If he is, then he is certainly not singled out as the only son of the same mother.

brothers, which may have applied to the crown prince of Babylon. Šamaš-šumu-ukin is described in this text as Assurbanipal's "favourite brother" (line 86: ŠEŠ *ta-li-me-šú*).[33] The precise meaning of this phrase is unclear: it could indicate that these two brothers shared a special relationship as sons of the same mother, but it could also indicate their unusual relationship as simultaneous crown princes of Assyria and Babylon, or perhaps this was Esarhaddon's subtle way of downplaying the fact that Šamaš-šumu-ukin was older than Assurbanipal. Assurbanipal's mother, whether or not she was Ešarra-ḫammat, clearly gave birth to some of his brothers, but she was not necessarily the mother of Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

Some scholars have suggested that Šamaš-šumu-ukin's mother was actually a Babylonian, based on an ambiguous passage in a bilingual cylinder inscription from Sippar (RIMB 2 B.6.33.1:6): ki úlutim ama-ugu-mu / *a-šar nab-ni-it um-mi a-lit-ti-ia*, lit. "in the place of the mother who bore me". This statement has been interpreted in two ways: it may suggest that this prince was designated as king of Babylonia while still in his mother's womb, or that he was designated to reign over the place where his mother was born.[34] As Frame suggests, it is possible that Šamaš-šumu-ukin was chosen to rule over Babylonia because his mother was born there, or that he was the son of a secondary wife,[35] while Assurbanipal was the son of Esarhaddon's favourite wife. There is no concrete evidence for the identity of Šamas-šumu-ukin's mother.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In short, the available textual evidence provides concrete information about several members of Assurbanipal's immediate family; the evidence also offers grounds for some informed scholarly conjectures. His mother, although she cannot with certainty be identified as Ešarra-ḫammat, probably gave birth to other sons of Esarhaddon; their identities are not yet known. There is no firm evidence that Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin shared the same birth mother.

Assurbanipal had at least six brothers and one sister whose names are preserved in the Neo-Assyrian corpus. Šamaš-šumu-ukin was certainly the eldest of Esarhaddon's children by 672. Sîn-nadin-apli, Esarhaddon's earlier (and probably

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33 See CAD T: 95 (*talīmu* 2′.b′). See also Bartelmus 2007 for a discussion of the use of *talīmu* to describe the relationship between Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin.

34 For a summary of the various suggestions concerning the interpretation of this passage, see Frame 1995: 250, n. 6. See also Frame 1992: 96.

35 Finkel (2000: 12) has recently suggested that Ana-Tašmetum-taklak, whose name is partially preserved on a shallow limestone dish (55-12-5,252), may have been a second queen of Esarhaddon; [*ša*$^{?}$ ^{f}*a-na–taš*]-*me-tum–*^{r}*tak*$^{?}$-*lak* MÍ.^{r}É.GAL$^{?}$ "[Property of Ana-Taš]metum-taklak, the queen". Her identification as Esarhaddon's queen is far from certain and, therefore, she could have been a wife of another Sargonid king (Sargon, Sennacherib, Assurbanipal, Aššur-etel-ilani, or Sîn-šarru-iškun), that is, if she were an Assyrian queen.

first) choice for heir designate, may have been the oldest son prior to 672. Šamaš-metu-uballiṭ may have also been older than Assurbanipal, although there is not direct proof of this. Aššur-taqiša-libluṭ's age relationship to Assyria's last great king is not known; he may have been younger or older. As for Assurbanipal's younger brothers, Aššur-mukin-pale'a was the eldest of these by early 668 and Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣeti-muballissu may have been next in age. Šeru'a-eṭirat was probably the eldest of Assurbanipal's sisters; however, their age relationship is not recorded in extant sources. There are at least nine other individuals who may have been children of Esarhaddon; although most of these lesser-known persons were probably much younger than Assurbanipal (possibly newborns, infants, or toddlers), their exact relationship to Assurbanipal cannot be determined based on the ambiguity of the sources in which they appear.