

## Assyrian eponyms, kings and pretenders, 648-605 BC

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### “Post-canonical” eponyms

The sequence of eponyms given in SAAS 2: 62 ends at 649. It can be continued, but the chronological order of the eponyms attested on economic and other documents is uncertain. R. M. Whiting has gathered much of the evidence (SAAS 2: 72-78) and, in the absence of any more explicit record, he is clearly right that only intensive prosopographic analysis may be able to demonstrate an exact sequence. In the mean time, however, some publications are still citing the sequence put forward by M. Falkner in her pioneering work on the subject (*AfO* 17 [1954-6] 100-120); while her research retains considerable value, subsequent discoveries have shown up many errors in her scheme, and it cannot be used to place texts dated by eponyms in their historical context.

A sequence more compatible with the available evidence is therefore presented below, with Falkner's dates given in brackets after my own. The scheme is based partly on the analysis of archives and witnesses in related documents, as done by Falkner, but incorporates further information that has become accessible in the many years that have elapsed since she was writing: most notably the texts and information provided by S. Dalley and J. N. Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser* (Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud 3; 1984); by O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur II* (Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 8; 1986) [henceforth *ALA* II]; by F. M. Fales and L. Jakob-Rost in SAAB 5 (1991); and by Whiting himself in SAAS 2 (1994). In preparing this paper, I have frequently had the benefit of advice from Dr. I. L. Finkel.

A basic problem is that there are too many eponyms recorded. Many of them, however, are only attested once, and some of these can be dismissed as modern or ancient mistakes or fancies. For instance, while *Ṭab-šil-Sîn* of ND 3462 cannot be checked because the tablet is unavailable, collation by J. D. Hawkins has shown that the troublesome *Urda-Nabû* of ND 3422, a tablet on which the writing is very cramped, is actually a witness rather than an eponym, and that this contract can really be dated to *Upāqa-ana-Arbail*. The eponym *Mannu-kī-aḥḥē* governor of *Šimir* on K 336 has been collated by I. L. Finkel and that is indeed how the name is written, but one is tempted to see this as a fanciful version of *Iddin-aḥḥē*, governor of *Šimir*, eponym of 688. Various other emendations of individual signs, reducing the total number of eponyms, are suggested in SAAS 2 and accepted here.

Furthermore, if it is correct that there could be more than one eponym within a year (see the previous paper, 787, 748, 718), some of the hapax eponyms could belong before rather than after 648. Thus K 976, a tablet dated in month ix of *Sîn-šumu-ibni*?, should perhaps be dated in the same range as other *šakintu* documents

from Nineveh, ca. 692-650. Falkner relied much too heavily on having more than one eponym in a year, but this remains in principle a possibility, especially for Šanta-dameqi governor of Diḥri (ND 3431, not available for collation) and Ilu-šumu'-uṣur who, even if authentic, are only attested in months i and xii respectively.

The most serious problem of superfluous eponyms lies in those texts from Aššur which are dated in many different months of *lim-mu arki ša* Nabû-šarru-uṣur (*tupšar ekalli*) and of *Pa-ši-i*. All the latest eponymates before 614 attested elsewhere are attested at Aššur too, filling the available years down to 615, so that there seems to be no space for this pair of eponymates. They are discussed below in the notes concerning 623 and 617-6.

#### Proposed eponym list

- 648 (648). Bēlšunu governor of Hindānu
- 647 (634). Nabû (Adad?)-nādin-aḫi governor of Kār-Šulmān-ašaridu (Til-Barsip)
- 646 (646). Nabû-šar-aḫḫēšu governor of Samirina
- 645 (647). Nabû-da''inanni governor of Que
- 644 (636A). Šamaš-da''inanni governor of Babil
- 643 (645). Nabû-šarru-uṣur *rab šarēši*
- 642 (637). Šarru-mītu-uballiṭ/Šamaš-zēru-uballiṭ/Šamaš-mītu-uballiṭ
- 641 (643). Aššur-šarru-uṣur governor of Marqasi
- 640 (635). Aššur-gārūa-niri *rab šaqē*
- 639 (632). Bulluṭu *rab nāri*
- 638 (631). Upāqa-ana-arbail
- 637 (642). Mušallim-Aššur governor of Aliḫi/Dūr-Sin-aḫḫē-erība ešši
- 636 (641). Aššur-gimillī-tirri *masennu rabû/rab ašlāk*
- 635 (640). Zababa-erība
- 634 (639). Sîn-šarru-uṣur governor of Hindānu
- 633 (638). Bēl-lū-dāri
- 632 (630). Adad-rēmanni
- 631 (636B). Marduk-šarru-uṣur governor of Que
- 630 (-). Bēl-šadûa
- 629 (628). Nabû-sagib *rab ālāni*
- 628 (622; 627B; -; -). Sîn-šarru-uṣur *tupšar ekalli* (months i-x) = Sin-šarrussu-ukīn (month viii); Sin-šarru-uṣur *arkû* and <sup>10</sup>*arkû* (months ix-xi); and Nūr-šalam-kaspi (month xii).
- 627 (-). Kanūnāya governor of Dūr-Šarrukīn (i.e. Dūr-Šarruku?)
- 626 (624). Aššur-mātu-takkin governor of Bummū (Uppume)
- 625 (630). Aššur-rēmanni *rab šarēši ša mār šarri*
- 624 (626). Nabû-šarru-uṣur *tupšar ekalli*
- 623 (623; 625). Šalmu-šarru-iqbi *turtānu šumēli* (of Kummuh); *ša arki* Nabû-šarru-uṣur *tupšar ekalli*
- 622 (620). Daddi *masennu rabû*
- 621 (619). Bēl-aḫu-uṣur *ša pān ekalli*
- 620 (618). Sailu *rab nuḫatimme*
- 619 (616). Bel-iqbi governor of Tušḫan/Bīt Zamāni
- 618 (615A). Iqbi-ilāni

- 617 (615B). *Sîn-ālik-pāni ša muḥḥi būāni*  
 616 (617). *Nabû-tappūti-alik rab šarēši* = Paši  
 615 (613). *Šamaš-šarru-ibni turtānu*  
 614 (639?). *Sîn-šarru-ušur* governor of Ninua  
 613 (644A). *Marduk-rēmāni* governor of Kilizi  
 612 (612). *Nabû-mār-šarri-ušur turtānu*  
 611-605. None known

## Notes on eponyms

648. *Bēl-šunu*: this has long been known (SAAS 2: 72).

647. See, for instance, J. E. Reade and C. B. F. Walker (*AfO* 28 [1982] 121-2).

646. See, for instance, Reade and Walker (*ibid.*) contra SAAS 2: 75, which offers 646 or 645. It is clearly stated on K 4773 that there were six years from Sagab-bu (of 651) to *Nabû-šar-aḥḥēšu* (SAA 7: 78, no. 59), and it is difficult to understand how this can be regarded as anything other than an inclusive count of years.

645-638. The internal sequence of these eponyms is particularly uncertain.

645. *Nabû-da''inanni* seems very early in the sequence (Falkner, *AfO* 17: 112-3).

644. Prism A, dated by *Šamaš-da''inanni*, contains virtually the same building-inscription as Prism F of 646. The military narrative is intermediate between Prism F and Prism H which is dated to Aššurbanipal's year 30, i.e. 639 (e.g. R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* [Wiesbaden 1996] 250, 257); this was probably first pointed out by H. Tadmor, *Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Orientalists* 1 (1962) 240.

643. *Nabû-šarru-ušur* was *rab šarēši* under Aššurbanipal (SAAS 2: 75).

642. It is presumed that these names refer to the same man (SAAS 2: 119).

641. Aššur-šarru-ušur is earlier than *Bēl-lū-dāri* of 633 (SAAS 2: 76).

639. Bulluṭu made a dedication for Aššurbanipal (SAAS 2: 75).

637-633. These precise dates rely on Zawadzki's dating of Aššur-gimillī-tirri to 636 (SAAB 8 [1994] 48) and on the sequence of five names in O. R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein, *The Sultantepe Tablets* I: no. 48.

634. A Nineveh cylinder (BM 122613) is dated by *Sîn-šarru-ušur* governor of *Ḫi[ndānu]*. It was dated to Aššurbanipal's reign by Millard (*Iraq* 30 [1968] 111), who rightly pointed to the strong probability of its being part of the same cylinder as BM 122616+, which surely does date from Aššurbanipal and which refers to historical events and a temple restoration (Borger, *Beiträge* 199-200). Weissert's dissertation is cited by Borger (*Beiträge* 356) as ascribing BM 122613 to *Sîn-šarru-iškun*; there is no obvious reason for detaching it from Aššurbanipal in this way.

631-628. The internal sequence of these eponyms is not entirely clear.

631. A governor of Que was eponym in or soon after the year when Aššur-etel-ilāni gained the throne (SAA 12: 36-41, nos 35-6); two post-canonical eponyms are known to have had this title, *Marduk-šarru-ušur* and *Nabû-da''inanni*. Aššur-etel-ilāni's accession year was 631 (see below); in view of the internal opposition which he experienced, it may be significant that *Marduk-šarru-ušur* is probably the only eponym between 637 and 626 not attested in the Kalḫu archive of *Šamaš-šarru-ušur*.

630. The eponym of 650 had a similar name, but Whiting rightly concurs that there is a strong case for a "post-canonical" Bēl-šadūa (SAAS 2: 74). In this eponymate Emuq-Aššur was *rab ekalli* of the Kalḫu arsenal (CTN 3: 6).

629. Falkner (*Afo* 17: 112) noted that Nabû-sagip should be later than Marduk-šarru-ušur because one royal officer was promoted from shield-bearer to charioteer in the interval.

628. Falkner (*Afo* 17: 107-8) separated Sin-šarru-ušur *tuṣšar ekalli* from Sin-šarru-ušur *arkū* on the grounds that the military titles *qurbūtu* and *rab kiṣri*, applied to witnesses in business documents, necessarily reflect a methodical process of promotion; but this assumption is clearly unsafe. Although the term *arkū* might represent an attempt to distinguish the Sin-šarru-ušur of 628 from the Sin-šarru-ušur of 634, it seems more likely that the later Sin-šarru-ušur had died in office, and that *arkū* refers to his replacement. If so, usage cannot have been consistent, since the denominations *tuṣšar ekalli* and *arkū* overlap in months ix-x. The hapax eponym Nūr-šalam-kaspi is only attested in month xii and should be close to Kanūnāya (CTN 3: 5); so Nūr-šalam-kaspi could have been Sin-šarru-ušur's replacement. In the eponymates of Sin-šarru-ušur *tuṣšar ekalli* and that of Aššur-mātu-taqqin, Isseme-ili was *rab ekalli* of the arsenal at Kalḫu, between Emuq-Aššur and Tartimanni; the latter may have been *rab ekalli* as early as the eponymate of Aššur-rēmanni. Isseme-ili is also attested with the hapax Sin-šarrussu-ukīn as eponym; perhaps this is a scribal oddity replacing Sin-šarru-ušur around the time of his death.

627-6. Kanūnāya is shortly before Aššur-mātu-taqqin (CTN 3: 5).

626. Aššur-mātu-taqqin is attested as eponym on a Babylonian legal text from Nippur, where Sin-šarru-iškun is attested as king possibly in his accession year 627 (N. Na'aman, *ZA* 81 [1991] 246-7), and in regnal years 2-5 (625-621); the last instances of dating by an Assyrian king in Babylonia are at Uruk in year 6 (621) and at Kar-Aššur probably north of the Diyala river in year 7 (620). The use of eponym dating at Nippur in 626 might reflect a moment of uncertainty about this king's position on the throne. Foundation prism fragments of Sin-šarru-iškun, dated by Aššur-mātu-taqqin and found in the Nabû Temple at Aššur, have to refer to an initial stage of the temple repairs eventually completed or continued in years 621-620.

625-622. The internal sequence of these eponyms is not entirely clear.

624. The appearance of a *tuṣšar ekalli* as eponym early in two successive reigns points to the importance of the office in this period.

623. From Aššur or Kanna' there are three texts dated to month i of *lim-mu ša arki* Nabû-šarru-ušur *tuṣšar ekalli*; they could easily be dismissed, as in other cases of *ša arki* dating at the beginning of a year (681, 650), as resulting from uncertainty about the new eponym. There are also four tablets (SAAB 5: nos 11, 19, 41, 43) which are dated in months iv, x and xi (two) of *limmu arki ša* Nabû-šarru-ušur (*tuṣšar ekalli*); remarkably they are all from the archive of one Šar-ili at Aššur, suggesting that there was some special reason for this man's scribe or scribes not to use the normal eponym.

623-2. The archive of the royal guards (Kakkullānu et al.), probably found in Room C of the North Palace, stretches back to the late 640s but ends in 623 or 622. One might propose a link between the termination of this archive and the account in the Babylonian Chronicle (A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; 1975 [henceforth *ABC*] 90) of someone marching on Nineveh in 623.

**622.** Sîn-šarru-iškun Cylinder B for his repair of the Nabû Temple at Kalḫu is dated to Daddî (D. J. Wiseman, *Iraq* 26 [1964] 124). Fragments of a similar text in the K Collection (M. Falkner, *Afo* 16: 305-6) are from Nineveh.

**621.** Whiting pointed out that the death of Mudammîq-Aššur in the eponymy of Bêl-aḫu-ušur (SAAB 5: 107-8) means that eponyms named in his business texts must be earlier. They include all those here dated to the years 630-622.

**621-620.** Sîn-šarru-iškun Cylinder A for the repair of the Nabû Temple at Aššur is dated by Bêl-aḫu-ušur, and *sikkātē* for the superstructure by Sailu; Falkner (*Afo* 17: 115) suggested that they might relate to the same building operation. A tablet of unknown provenance, headed *mu-šar-ū ša dūr Ninua<sup>ki</sup>* and giving the text of Sîn-šarru-iškun Cylinder C, presumably written for the repair of the town-wall, is also dated by Bêl-aḫu-ušur (A. K. Grayson, in J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford, editors, *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World* 157-68). Grayson is probably wrong in amalgamating this with another version of Cylinder C, written for the repair of a Sennacherib building (*bū gišnugalli*) at Nineveh, and dated by Nabû-tappûti-alik (616); this building was probably the South-West Palace, a refurbishment of which, begun under Aššurbanipal or later, was never completed (Reade, *Iraq* 29 [1967] 44). So Bêl-aḫu-ušur and Nabû-tappûti-alik do not need to be particularly close to one another.

**620-619.** Deller (*Afo* 32 [1985] 50) noted a pair of texts linking Sailu and Bêl-iqbi quite closely, but the order of the two could perhaps be reversed.

**618-7.** The order of these two could perhaps be reversed.

**618-6.** Tartimanni had probably been *rab ekalli* of the Kalḫu arsenal since the later 620s and still held this office during the eponymates of Iqbu-ilāni and Sîn-ālik-pāni, whereas Urad-Ištar was *rab ekalli* during the eponymate of Nabû-tappûti-alik (CTN 3: 6; SAAB 1: 24-5).

**618-5.** These were the last years of relatively normal commerce at Aššur, which the Babylonians attacked in 615. It may be significant that three Aššur archives (Pedersen, *ALA* II: N 17, 21, 28) have clusters of texts from these years.

**617-6.** According to SAAS 2: 76, Paši was probably eponym immediately after Sîn-ālik-pāni. Texts of Nabû-tappûti-alik and Iqbi-ilāni (the latter is relevant if the order for 618-7 is reversed) have been found at Aššur, Kalḫu, and Nineveh. Paši is only attested from Aššur, being found in altogether seven texts from archives N 4, 21, 28 and 33, covering months i-xii. Was Paši an alternative name sometimes used at Aššur for the eponym following Sîn-ālik-pāni? There seems to be no satisfactory parallel for such a use of alternative names (as opposed to variant writings or obvious hypocoristics) for Assyrian eponyms, though one might adduce nicknames applied to Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser V. Without this expedient, however, there remain too many eponyms attested at Aššur to accommodate in the years available. There seem to be five methods of reducing their number: eliminate Bêl-šadūa (630) and move Aššur-rēmanni (625) up a few years; or assume that Aššur was not captured until month xi or xii of 614; or assume that in one year such as 626 there were concurrent rival eponyms, both well attested at Aššur; or assume that the eponym system and commercial activity survived in Assyria after the disasters of 614-612; or, finally, amalgamate some other two eponyms such as Bêl-iqbi and Iqbi-ilāni. All these ideas seem even less attractive than the hypothesis of an alternative name.

**616.** For building work, see 621-620.

**616-5.** According to a text from Dūr-Šarrukīn (SAAS 2: 76), Nabû-tappûti-alik or possibly Nabû-mār-šarri-ušur was probably the eponym immediately before Šamaš-šar-ibni.

**614-2.** The order of these three is not entirely clear.

**614.** In this year, in month v by the calendar of Babylon, the Medes captured Tarbišu north of Nineveh. They then marched south to attack Aššur and had a great victory (*ABC* 93, lines 24-29); the text does not actually specify that the city was captured, the end of line 28 being illegible, but that is the obvious sense of the passage. The month of the victory is not given. SAAS 2: 116 lists eight Sîn-šarru-ušur Aššur texts for which no month is available, so some of them might belong in this year. The eponym Sîn-šarru-ušur governor of Ninua is positively attested once, on the Nineveh text Th. 1905-4-9, 356, in month ii (collation by I. L. Finkel confirms that NINA.KI is more probable than Kwasman's UNUG.KI in *NALK* 28, no. 20). Whereas most documents dated by eponyms refer to normal commercial activities, many of which may have been suspended in times of crisis, this one concerns the division of an inheritance. There is no reason to link this Sîn-šarru-ušur with the eponyms of 634 and 628. (K 179 is dated by 'Sîn-šarru-u-šú-ur without any title, as given in SAAS 2: 115 and confirmed by I. L. Finkel, rather than by the form ending in NI[NA.KI] which is proposed in *NALK* 453, no. 398).

**613-612.** Marduk-rēmāni is attested once in month iii, on a silver loan from Nineveh. Nabû-mār-šarri-ušur *turtānu*, only recorded at Tell Halaf in months i-ii, was identified by Falkner as an obvious candidate for one of these years (or possibly 611); probably the previous *turtānu*, eponym in 615, had come to a bad end.

**612-605.** Nineveh was sacked in month v of 612, and in the same year the Babylonians advanced as far as Našibina and Rašappa. Yet the Assyrian king Aššur-uballit II, having taken the throne at Harran late in 612, was still active with Egyptian allies near the Euphrates until at least 609. In 606 an Egyptian army is mentioned without reference to an Assyrian king; the Babylonians captured Carchemish in 605 (*ABC* 94-8). So excavations at west Syrian sites such as Til-Barsip may yet produce eponyms for some of these years.

#### Kings and pretenders

The above reconstruction of the eponym sequence must fit and preferably elucidate the political situation, but the date, order and identity of the last Assyrian kings, and the extent of their authority, are questions on which there is not yet a consensus. For excellent references, see S. Zawadzki (*The Fall of Assyria* [Poznań 1988] and *ZA* 85 [1995] 67-73), and N. Na'aman (*ZA* 81 [1991] 243-67). The main problem lies between 631 and 627. Because of overlaps in the dates appearing on sporadic contracts from the Babylon region, from Nippur, and from Uruk, there appears to be one year too few to accommodate the records of four Assyrian kings, all concurrent with the last years of Kandalānu of Babylon. There are also several texts dated during periods of crisis at Uruk by the siege-years (*edil bābi*) of an unidentified king. The essence of the problem is as follows:

Aššurbanipal: last attested on 20.iii.year 38 = no earlier than 631

Aššur-etel-ilāni: attested from 20.vii.year 0 to 1.viii.year 4, i.e. at the earliest 631-627

Sîn-šumu-līšir: attested from 12.iii.year 0 to 15.v.year 0

Sîn-šarru-iškun: attested from at latest 8.vii.year 0 = no later than 627

Three main ways round the problem can be explored.

1. Drag back Aššurbanipal year 38 from 631 to 632, with 669 counted as Aššurbanipal year 1. This would provide the extra year needed for his successors. One might cite the practice of counting a king's accession year as his year 1, which is attested in a few scholarly and economic texts of Sennacherib's reign from Nineveh (SAAS 2: 71) and which presumably derives from the rulings preceding Sennacherib's accession year on eponym-lists such as A1, A2 and B4. Yet we only know of this surprising practice because the tablets in question give an eponym's name too, and the confusion that would have resulted from two concurrent systems is unbelievable. Or was Aššurbanipal appointed joint king of Assyria by the sick Esarhaddon in 670, a year when there was trouble in Assyria and many senior men were executed? Coregency without decent evidence is a counsel of despair: one letter (S. Parpola, *LAS* 1-2: no. 129) does literally state that Esarhaddon entrusted Aššurbanipal with the kingship of Assyria, but it simultaneously refers to the appointment of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as king of Babylon, and since the latter appointment did not really happen until 668, it has naturally been assumed that the reference is to the crown-princships announced in ii.672. Moreover, with 669 as Aššurbanipal year 1, there would be an overlap, at Borsippa in 648, between tablets dated to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn year 20 and to Aššurbanipal year 22. These difficulties are insuperable.

2. Push down Sīn-šarru-iškun year 0 from 627 to 623. This presents very serious problems with the events recorded for later years, as discussed by Zawadzki (op. cit. 37-42).

3. Accept all the evidence, and explain it by mistakes, alliances, coups, counter-coups, alternative names, alternative sequences of kings, double dating, different intercalary months in rival jurisdictions, and so on. Most scholars have taken one or more of these approaches, and the possibilities are infinite. The situation has been greatly simplified, however, by catalogues giving more reliable information on relevant texts (J. A. Brinkman and D. A. Kennedy, *JCS* 35 [1983]: 1-90; *JCS* 38 [1986]: 99-106; D. A. Kennedy, *JCS* 38: 172-244). It is now clear that the system most easily compatible with the available evidence is closest to that put forward in 1962 by J. van Dijk (*XVIII. vorläufiger Bericht... Warka* 57): Aššurbanipal 669-631, Aššur-etel-ilāni 631-627, Sīn-šuma-lišir 627, and Sīn-šarru-iškun 627-612.

Van Dijk did not set out his results in full, and connected the siege-years with Nabopolassar rather than Sīn-šarru-iškun. My own chart (*JCS* 39 [1970] 6-9) is mostly correct, but the associated historical hypothesis, which places Aššur-etel-ilāni one year too low, relies on textual evidence that has since evaporated. So it may be convenient to list the main data again as follows. The provenance "Babylon region" refers to tablets which most probably derive from excavations at Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat or Sippar, but which have yet to be fully published and allocated to archives.

**631.** Kandalānu year 17: various texts (Babylon region, Uruk).

Aššurbanipal year 38: last text dated 20.iii (Nippur).

Aššur-etel-ilāni year 0: first text dated 20.vii (Nippur).

**630-629.** Kandalānu year 18-19, Aššur-etel-ilāni year 1-2: various texts.

**628.** Kandalānu year 20: various texts (Babylon region).

Aššur-etel-ilāni year 3: last text dated 21.xi (Nippur).

**627.** Kandalānu year 21: last text dated 8.iii (probably Babylon region).

*arki* [...] Kandalānu year 21: text dated 1(+).viii (Babylon).

- Aššur-etel-ilāni year 4: one text only, dated 1.viii (Nippur).  
 Sîn-šumu-līšir year 0: texts dated 12.iii; 15.v (Babylon); 13.? (Nippur).  
 Sîn-šarru-iškun year 0: texts dated i.vii? (Nippur, see ZA 81 [1991] 246-7); 8.vii, 22.viii (probably Babylon region); 6.xi (Uruk); and 21.xii (Babylon).
626. Sîn-šarru-iškun year 1: text dated 11.ii (probably Babylon region).  
 [Month i-ii?] Sîn-šarru-iškun's forces driven from Babylon (ABC 87-8, lines 1-3).  
 Month ii. Assyrian army enters Babylonia (ABC 88, line 10).  
 Month? Assyrian army pursues Nabopolassar from Nippur to Uruk, but then retreats (ABC 88, lines 7-9).  
 Nabopolassar year 0: text dated 10.iv (Uruk).  
 12.vi. Assyrians active, possibly at unlocated town of Šaznaku (ABC 88, line 4).  
 [Month vi?] Assyrians burn temple at Šaznaku (ABC 88, line 5).  
 Nabopolassar year 0: text dated 22.vi (probably Babylon region).  
 Month vii. Assyrians threaten Kish; gods sent to Babylon (ABC 88, line 6).  
 12.vii. Babylonians defeat Assyrians (ABC 88, lines 10-13).  
 arki Kandalānu year 22: text dated 2.viii (Babylon).  
 Aššur-mātu-taqin, eponym: text dated 18.viii (Nippur).  
 Nabopolassar: enthronement at Babylon, 26.viii (ABC 88, line 14).
625. 17-20.i(?). Panic; gods of Sippar sent to Babylon (ABC 88-9, lines 18-19, 21).  
 Months ii-v. Assyrians capture Sallat (probably on the Euphrates north of Babylon), resist counter-attack (ABC 89, lines 20, 22-4).  
 Sîn-šarru-iškun year 2: texts dated from 1.ii - 2'.ix (Sippar), v-xii (Nippur).  
 Nabopolassar year 1: texts dated ii-xii (Uruk), xii-xii<sub>2</sub> (Babylon), others (probably Babylon region).
624. Month vi. Assyrian army enters Babylonia; indecisive battle (ABC 89, lines 25-8).  
 Sîn-šarru-iškun year 3: texts dated 11.i (Sippar), ii-ix (Nippur, including ii-vi siege-texts).  
 Nabopolassar year 2: various texts (including Babylon, Dilbat, Uruk).
623. Months? Der revolts from Assyria. Assyrian king and army in Babylonia, with activity near Nippur (ABC 89-90, lines 29-32). Other events in Assyrian empire.  
 Sîn-šarru-iškun year 4: text dated 15.xi (Nippur).  
 king unspecified, *edil bābi* year 4: texts dated 16.viii and 8.xi (Uruk).  
 Nabopolassar year 3: text dated 22'.iv (Uruk) and others (including Borsippa).
622. Sîn-šarru-iškun year 5: texts dated vi-viii (Nippur) and 4.viii (Uruk, *edil bābi*).  
 king unspecified, *edil bābi* year 5: text dated 13.viii (Uruk).  
 Nabopolassar year 4: various texts (including Babylon, Borsippa).
621. Sîn-šarru-iškun year 6: texts dated 1.viii - 21.viii (Nippur), 16.vi - 23.vii and 6.xi (Uruk, both *edil bābi*).  
 king unspecified, *edil bābi* year 6: text dated 8.xi (Uruk).  
 Nabopolassar year 5: texts dated 25.iv (Sippar), 16.v (Uruk) and various (including Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat, Kutha).
620. Sîn-šarru-iškun year 7: texts dated 9.v and 12.x (Uruk, both *edil bābi*), and 13.i (Kār-Aššur).  
 Nabopolassar year 6: texts dated 19.ix (Uruk) and various (including Babylon, Borsippa, Dilbat).



The one notable anomaly left in this list is the 627 text dated 1.viii.Aššur-etel-ilāni year 4. If not merely a mistake of some kind, it must be explained as reflecting concern about how to date texts in times of political uncertainty. So the year-name could be correct without proving that Aššur-etel-ilāni was still alive and well.

It should be stressed that these data relate primarily to Babylonia, and developments in Assyria could have been significantly different, but there is no pressing reason to suppose so. Overall, in Babylonia, there was substantial confusion in month viii of 627, when Sin-šarru-iškun was establishing himself as king, and in months vi-viii of 626, when Nabopolassar was not yet enthroned at Babylon. The only year when an Assyrian king is attested personally campaigning in Babylonia is 623. Nabopolassar or his supporters seized Uruk in late 627 or early 626, Sippar and Babylon in 626. They lost Sippar in early 625 but recovered it in 624. They lost Uruk in 623 and recovered it finally, after a topsy-turvy struggle, late in 620. They probably captured Nippur late in 621 or in 620, and thereafter were recognised throughout southern Mesopotamia.

We then have the following leading personalities in Assyria and Babylonia, some, of whom are likely to be identical with one another, who are or implicitly may be mentioned in the main sources for 631-623:

1. Aššurbanipal. Died, abdicated or was deposed in 631, in or after month iii. Aššurbanipal's appointment of his chief musician Bulluṭu as eponym recalls the classic image of Sardanapalus (= Aššurbanipal); presumably Bulluṭu was effectively a high official, like Sin-šarru-iškun's chief cook Sailu who was also eponym, but the promotion suggests a self-indulgent and irresponsible king. Note the little-known statement of Cleitarchus (quoted by Athenaeus in *Deipnosophistai* xii: 530) that Sardanapalus was removed from the throne of Assyria in his old age. This is further evidence compatible with the view, going back to Greek sources, that Aššurbanipal was identical with Kandalānu king of Babylon. This old identification is discussed at length by Zawadzki (*The Fall of Assyria* 57-62). The fiction of a separate king could have been effected by employment of a statue, representing Aššurbanipal but named Kandalānu, which took part in the New Year ceremonies at Babylon.

2. Kandalānu, 647 (year 1) – early 627. He may be Aššurbanipal under another name (see above), or even Aššur-etel-ilāni (von Voigtlander, cited by Zawadzki, op. cit. 46), since their deaths could coincide.

3. Aššur-etel-ilāni, son of Aššurbanipal. Accession year 631, attested from month vii; he lost the throne in late 628 or much more probably early 627. By introducing an otherwise unknown pretender, PN1, to bridge the gap between 21.xi.Aššur-etel-ilāni 3 and 12.iii. Sin-šumu-līšir 0, we could reduce Aššur-etel-ilāni's reign to the mere 3 years apparently assigned in the Harran text of the mother of Nabonidus. A simpler explanation for this anomaly, unless it merely reflects ignorance, is that tradition ascribed Nabopolassar's original rebellion against Assyria to the end of Aššur-etel-ilāni year 3.

4. Nabū-reḫtu-ušur. This man was opposed to Aššur-etel-ilāni at the start of his reign (SAA 12: 36-41, nos 35-6), in or before the eponymate of Marduk-šarru-ušur, and presumably supported another claimant to the throne: the obvious candidate is the old king Aššurbanipal, but it might also have been himself, or a third person whom we may call PN2.

5. *Sîn-šumu-lišir*. Accession year 627: so far only attested as king in Babylonia and in months iii-v. Na'aman (ZA 81 [1991] 256-7) places *Sîn-šumu-lišir* in 626, which is conceivable but seems to create more problems than it resolves. *Sîn-šumu-lišir*, *rab šarēši*, had supported Aššur-etel-ilāni against Nabû-rehtu-ušur, and must surely be identical with this king, whose reign may have been curtailed through prejudice against his background, of which we have no knowledge, and/or his physical status as a eunuch.

6. *Ištar(?)*-šumu-lišir. Possibly someone of little importance, but worth mentioning to avoid confusion with *Sîn-šumu-lišir*. Among fragments of fine stone vessels in the British Museum bearing the names of seventh-century kings and probably deriving from the South-West Palace at Nineveh, there is one from the shoulder of an agate jar; the piece is 5.9 cm wide and numbered 81-7-27, 179. It is inscribed [...]<sup>41</sup>5<sup>7</sup>-MU-SI DUMU 'AN.Š[ÁR- or <sup>43</sup>0-, i.e. [Išta]r-šumu-lišir son of Aššu[r-...] or S[īn-...] (rather than Aššur-šumu-lišir which would presumably have been written AN.ŠÁR-MU-SI). I am indebted to I. L. Finkel for the schematic copy given here as Fig. 1; the stone-cutter clearly had difficulty with this very hard stone, and the signs themselves are rougher. The owner of the jar cannot have been king, since he has no title before the patronymic, but he could have been a royal prince, a son of any seventh-century king, except perhaps Esarhaddon (whose known sons' names do not include any ending in -MU-SI; see Parpola, LAS 2: 117-8).

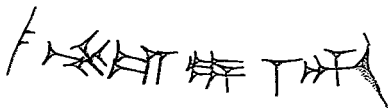


Fig. 1. 81-7-27, 179: copy

7. *Sîn-šarru-iškun*, son of Aššurbanipal. Accession year 627, attested from month vii. Probably died at the fall of Nineveh in 612 (ABC 94 line 44).

8. PN3. A Babylonian chronicle (ABC 132, lines 24-6) refers to rebellions in Assyria and Akkad in the period 627-626. One rebel may have been *Sîn-šarru-iškun* himself, but there is clearly the possibility that he had an opponent, PN3, even after the disappearance of Aššur-etel-ilāni and *Sîn-šumu-lišir* from our records.

9. PN4. An Assyrian crown-prince, *mār šarri*. The eponym of 625 was *rab šarēši ša mār šarri*, and Kakkulānu is attested as *rab kišri ša mār šarri* in texts of 626 and 623 from the North Palace at Nineveh. This crown-prince, probably then in his twenties, is likely to be the man who eventually succeeded as Aššur-uballiṭ II at Harran in 612, and who is last recorded in 609 (ABC 94-6). The rapid appointment of an official heir looks like an attempt to avoid uncertainties about the succession which had plagued the Assyrian royal family since the later years of Sennacherib.

10. PN5. Someone in Babylon, possibly Iti-ili and most probably a supporter of Nabopolassar, was responsible for appointing officials after the expulsion of *Sîn-šarru-iškun*'s troops from the city in 626 (ABC 88, line 4). There has been some discussion over whether this section of the chronicle describes two years,

627-6, or 626 alone (for the variant views see Zawadzki, *The Fall of Assyria* 48-54), and it has been interpreted according to whatever chronology is preferred — in this case obviously 626 alone. Problems for the chronicler were how to combine different sources, and how to organize accounts describing concurrent sets of events, some in the vicinity of Babylon itself and others as far away as Uruk.

11. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon. Accession year 626, attested from month iv at Uruk.

12. Iti-ili. He is mentioned in 623 (*ABC* 90, lines 31-2), possibly besieging Nippur (<sup>10</sup>*šū-lu-tu ana Nippur<sup>ki</sup> ul-te-li*), though other interpretations are possible (e.g. Na'aman, *ZA* 81: 262). There is no definite indication on whose behalf, if not his own, Iti-ili was operating.

13. PN6-7. Again for 623 (*ABC* 90, lines 33-36), we know of a campaign; an advance on Nineveh; and an army that surrendered. The text is badly broken, and the subject or subjects of the surviving verbs are unknown. At least two leading personalities must be involved in these operations, possibly more. Na'aman (*ZA* 81: 262-4) proposed that this and the following passage both related to an Assyrian usurper coming from the west.

14. PN8. Again for 623, there is mention (*ABC* 90, line 38-41) of a usurper, PN8, and maybe a reign of 100 days. The reference could be to Assyria, Babylon, Elam or elsewhere.

### Conclusion

The reconstructions of the sequence of eponyms and kings suggested above were considered independently, though a few cross-references have been included, and are mutually consistent. A corollary is that, while the royal succession within Assyria was probably disputed, it is not known whether this was a significant factor in the collapse of the empire, for which many other reasons can be adduced. The titles of eponyms indicate that Assyria still held Kummuh west of the Euphrates in 623, and Tušhan on the upper Tigris in 619. Yet it is clear that the empire was already disintegrating before the events recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle for 616 and thereafter.

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