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Comments on the Nassouhi Kinglist and the Assyrian Kinglist Tradition¹

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In 1954, I. J. Gelb's publication of two almost complete eighth-century copies of the Assyrian Kinglist (KhKL and SDAS) put an end to more than two decades of dilatory irresponsibility which had withheld this text, save in measured doses, from the scholarly world. Since that time, historians of ancient Mesopotamia have had the advantage of basing their chronologies of Assyria directly on a carefully preserved tradition of the Assyrians themselves; and most Middle Assyrian or Neo-Assyrian chronological problems discussed since 1954 have centered around conflicts or lacunae within the Assyrian tradition.

The present meager offering in honor of Professor Gelb consists of two parts: (A) a contribution to the textual accuracy of the kinglist tradition, comprising some collations made of the Nassouhi Kinglist, the oldest extensive copy of the Assyrian Kinglist presently known²; and (B) a few remarks on the Assyrian Kinglist tradition, including its relevance and factual accuracy, from the point of view of an historian.

A

The first lengthy version of the Assyrian Kinglist to be published in modern times was the tenth-century text edited by Essad Nassouhi in 1927. In view of the very damaged condition of the tablet and the fact that only one tiny duplicate (containing parts of twelve lines)³ was then known, Nassouhi's edition was commendable for its accuracy and usefulness. Some twenty years later, Weidner published comments on various lines of the text, basing his readings on photos⁴. In the summer of 1971, I had a brief opportunity to collate the tablet in Istanbul; my comments and some of the more significant

¹ Abbreviations used in this article generally follow CAD K (1971), pp. vi-xix, with the following additions: AsKL = VAT 11554 (published as KAV 15); KhKL = Khorsabad Kinglist (JNES 13 [1954] 209-230); NaKL = Nassouhi Kinglist (AfO 4 [1927] 1-11); NiKL = kinglist fragment from Nineveh (BM 128059, published by Millard, Iraq 32 [1970] 174-176); SDAS = Seventh Day Adventist Seminary Kinglist (JNES 13 [1954] 209-230). Throughout this article, the term "Assyrian Kinglist" will be used to refer to the tradition embodied in the five documents above (to the exclusion of other types of Assyrian kinglists, such as the synchronistic kinglists).

² AfO 4 (1927) 1-11.

³ AsKL.

⁴ AfO 15 (1945-51) 88, especially note 16.

collations are published below. Eventually, a re-edition of the text is desirable; but, because of the condition of the tablet, the editor should be able to study it carefully over an extended period and to compare the tablet sign for sign with the excavation photos⁵.

Since 1954, commentators have had the benefit of being able to compare the Nassouhi list with the longer and better-preserved eighth-century versions (KhKL and SDAS). Needless to say, these duplicates frequently furnish insights—denied to Nassouhi—into enigmatic sign traces.

Column I

It is sometimes difficult to see how Nassouhi determined the line numbering for this column. It is uncertain how many lines are missing before the first visible traces⁶. In Nassouhi's copy, the line number "20" to the left of this column is so placed as to overlap both with the line ending in $[-li-e]$ and with the apparently blank next line. It is only by counting from line "18", which ends in $[-a?-ni]$ (according to Nassouhi's copy), that one can see that the line terminating in $[-li-e]$ was presumably reckoned as line 19. But then, between line 16 (ending in $-si$) and line 19 (ending in $[-li-e]$), there are apparently traces of two lines in the copy, while the tablet clearly has three lines here⁷.

Since this is an eclectic commentary on a published text rather than a re-publication, I have retained Nassouhi's line numbering for easy reference. A thorough re-edition would undoubtedly renumber the lines.

- 8-11 There are no readable traces on the tablet.
- 12 $[-u]l-ta-ri$ is clear (cf. KhKL i 10, SDAS i 9).
- 13-21 There are ten lines to this section in each of the three preserved kinglists—NaKL, KhKL, and SDAS. As noted above, the Nassouhi copy seems to omit one line⁸.
- 13 $]-bu$ (The name of the father of Šamši-Adad I ends in $-bu$ also in i 37; KhKL and SDAS have $-bi$.)
- 14 $]-[x]-DINGIR$ ($[x]$ could be the end of *kur*; cf. KhKL i 13, SDAS i 12)
- 15 $]-[me-ni]$
- 16 $]-[x]-me-si$
- 16a] ... (no readable traces, but clearly a line of text here)

⁵ In contrast with the synchronistic kinglist Assur 14616c, also in Istanbul, which has markedly deteriorated since its excavation photo was taken, NaKL seems to be in much the same condition now as it was when discovered.

⁶ KhKL and SDAS have 9 and 8 lines respectively before the summary at the end of the first section. Nassouhi estimates room for 11 lines here (probably based on spatial considerations and a comparison with the bottom of the third column, which is relatively well preserved); but it is difficult to tell whether the original count may not have been more in line with the other lists.

⁷ As do KhKL and SDAS.

⁸ Here inserted as line 16a, though from the copy one could suspect that line 17 was omitted (and hence the numbering 17, 17a, 18 might be more accurate).

- 17] [x-(x)-ni]
 18] [Sa-ma-a-ni]
 19]-[li-e]
 20]-[x]
 21]-[x]

A horizontal dividing line (not in the copy) follows immediately after line 21.

- 22-30 The only sign which I can positively verify in these lines is the -ni- in line 30⁹. It is difficult to match the traces here in NaKL with KhKL and SDAS¹⁰. In general, in NaKL i 22-34, Nassouhi's line numbering is suspect; from line 28 on, the numbers may be at least two lines too low for the available space¹¹.

- 34 It should read: [] [x] [] [4(+?) MU.MEŠ] LUGAL-ta [DÜ-us]
 35 can be read -a]m-a30
 39]-[ás] il-[lik]
 41 K]ar-du-[ni]-[x]
 42] [x].MEŠ

Column II

- 1-14 The traces here are indefinite, but might repay further study.
 15-24 Because of his relatively incomplete knowledge of the sequence of the Assyrian kings, Nassouhi restored incorrect names at the beginning of lines 15, 17, 19, 21, and 23. Bazaju, Lullaju, šú-Ninua, Šarma-Adad, and Erišu should be restored in these lines¹².
 16 The number at the beginning of the line is 20[(+x)].
 17 The RN clearly ends in -[ia] as opposed to -a-a in KhKL ii 22 and SDAS ii [19].
 21 There may be a trace of [šú] at the beginning of the patronymic here.

⁹ The usual restoration of KhKL i 28 and SDAS i 27 (*JNES* 13 [1954] 212-213, following Poebel in *JNES* 1 [1942] 283), was probably ruled out in any case because NaKL i 29-30 should refer to Ikūnum, not Erišum.

¹⁰ In *JCS* 8 (1954) 108 note 198, Landsberger transliterates lines 27-28 on the basis of Nassouhi's copy and photo (?), but notes that in 1954 only unreadable traces remained. After a comparison of the present-day (1971) condition of the tablet with the excavation photos, I am unable to establish any significant deterioration of the tablet here or elsewhere and hence believe that the basis for Landsberger's reading is insecure. Similarly with his reading for i 33 proposed in *JCS* 8 (1954) 110 note 208 (where Narām-Sîn, not Puzur-Aššur is expected).

¹¹ As may be seen from measuring the average size of a line elsewhere and comparing the damaged area here. Furthermore, if one accepts Nassouhi's numbering, one would obtain the following correlation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NaKL i 22} &= \text{KhKL i 21} = \text{SDAS i 20} \\ \text{NaKL i 35} &= \text{KhKL i 37} = \text{SDAS i 36} \end{aligned}$$

which would mean that NaKL covered the same material in fewer lines than the other texts—the exact reverse of the situation in the other columns, where NaKL eschews the abbreviation of formulae.

¹² For the reading Šu-Ninua vs. Kidin-Ninua, see the Excursus below.

- 21-26 My collation was able to verify very few of the traces indicated in Nassouhi's transliteration, *AfO* 4 (1927) 3.
- 29 *mŠam*-[*ši-a*][] [*Is-me-a*][]
- 31 The number at the beginning of the line is 15[(+x)]; the digits are hopelessly damaged here, but the traces do not necessarily disagree with the figure 16 given in both KhKL and SDAS.
- 32 *mAš*+*šur*-[*ERIN*][*x*] [*DUMU Iš-me-aDa-gan*]
- 35 NaKL clearly reads 14 for the regnal years of Puzur-Aššur III. SDAS has 24; KhKL is broken¹³.
- 40 *mAš*+*š[ur]*-*KUR*-[*ni*] *DU*[*MU Z*]*ALÁG-DINGIR*
- 41 [1 *ITI UD.ME?*-*t*][*e*] *LUGAL-ta DÜ-u*[*š*]
- 43 -*b*[*i*] [*GIŠ.GU.ZA*] []

Column III

- 11 *U*[*N.ME-šú*] *DUMU Aš*+*šur*-[*EN-UN.ME*]-[]
- 12 The number is too badly damaged to be read with any degree of probability. This is true also on the excavation photos, and it is difficult to see any basis for Nassouhi's transliteration "6".
- 13]-*a*-[*hi*] *DUMU Aš*+*šur*-*ÁG-UN.ME-šú*]
- 20 -*t*[*a DÜ-u*][*š*] is visible.
- 21 Traces of one uncertain sign are visible.
- 23 [] [*GABA*] *DUMU GÍD*-[*di-en*]-[]
- 24 The number at the beginning of the line is 10[(+x)], as copied.
- 28 The number is 30[(+x)].
- 29 [*x?*] [] -*ti-a**MAŠ da-a*-[*ri*]
- 30 [*mAš*+*šu*][*r-SUM-IBILA*] *DUMU-šu*
- 31 [*GIŠ.GU.ZA lu iš*-[*bat* 4 *MU.MEŠ*]¹⁴
- 36 end: *DUMU DINGIR*-[*had*]-[*da*]
- 40 There is no doubt about the reading "13" for the regnal years of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, while KhKL and SDAS both have "3".
- 42 The number is 26[(+x)]¹⁵.

Column IV

- 1] [*i*]-[*du*]*k a-n*[*a*]
- 2 -*iá*[*k-kil-a*] [] *x* []
- 3 -[*i*] [*KUR*]-[*a*] [*e*]-[] (-*ta* is totally gone both on the tablet and on the excavation photo).
- 7 The number for the regnal years of Tiglath-pileser I cannot be verified¹⁶.

¹³ This is the only case in which NaKL preserves a lower figure for a number than either KhKL or SDAS.

¹⁴ The number is clearly 4, as opposed to 3 in both KhKL and SDAS.

¹⁵ Weidner's reading of 46! (based on a photo) in note 16 seems to me excessively optimistic, considering the old excavation photos.

¹⁶ The digits are badly mangled; but they could have been written in two horizontal rows (5+4). Cf. the number in iv written 4+4.

- 14 [] [Šam-ši-^aIM DUMU GIŠ.TUKUL-A-É.Š][ÁR]
 15 T]A KUR [Kar-du]-[] e-[la]-[
 21 at end: [^aŠul-ma-nu-SAG]
 23 The damaged number shows at least two *Winkelhaken*; readings of 40 or 41 cannot be ruled out¹⁷.
 27] TUKUL-^a[i-A]-[É.ŠÁR.RA] A Aš+šur-[SAG-i]-[š]i
 28 Nassouhi's copy of the number here as [(x+)]["3"] is not exact. Only one final vertical is visible on the tablet (and also on the excavation photo)¹⁸. Hence the supposed NaKL "33" for the "32" of KhKL (SDAS is broken here) is non-existent¹⁹. Thus the balance of evidence favors a thirty-two-year reign for Tiglath-pileser II; and, with his accession date set at 967 (rather than 968 as in *CAH*, 3rd ed., and my chronological tables in Oppenheim's *Ancient Mesopotamia*), all dates in Assyrian chronology before this time which are calculated by dead reckoning by means of the Assyrian Kinglist figures should be lowered by one year. Thus Shalmaneser I should be set at 1273-1244 instead of 1274-1245, etc. Likewise all chronologies based on the Assyrian, e.g., the Babylonian, should be dropped by one year²⁰.

B

Chronology is the backbone of history and especially of political history; and, for Mesopotamian chronology between 1500 and 600 B.C., there is no body of evidence more important or more widely used than the Assyrian Kinglist tradition. Practically all dates in Mesopotamian history calculated over this time span are based directly or indirectly on the data contained in this tradition. Because the Kinglist preserves a detailed list of Assyrian rulers, their genealogies, and their lengths of reign which is supposed to be complete for more than a millennium preceding 722 B.C. and because it is the only text which provides such a skeleton essential to all historical work, there has been an understandable tendency on the part of historians to utilize this evidence gratefully, sometimes with little critical examination.

This is not to say that there has not been significant historical criticism concerned with the Assyrian Kinglist. F. R. Kraus²¹ and B. Landsberger²² have contributed greatly to our understanding of the text, especially the origins

¹⁷ Contrary to Weidner, *Afo* 15 (1945-51) 88 note 16.

¹⁸ Weidner also believed, on the basis of the photo, that a reading of [30] +2(!) was possible.

¹⁹ Nassouhi may have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the number of years ("33") listed for the eponym period of Tiglath-pileser II in *KAV* 22 v 9".

²⁰ This holds for all dates of the Kassite dynasty after 1500 and for all dates of the Post-Kassites before 935 (the latter are calculated on Assyrian-based dates for the Isin II dynasty).

²¹ *WZKM* 52 (1953-55) 238-243 and *Könige, die in Zelten wohnten (Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 28, no. 2; Amsterdam, 1965)*.

²² *JCS* 8 (1954) 31-45, 47-73, 106-133.

and completeness of its earlier portions²³. Röllig has recently presented a short theoretical treatment of the typology and sources for the Kinglist²⁴; and his assessment of the role of chronicles or chronicle-like documents in the evolution of the Kinglist follows in the tradition of Poebel and Landsberger, who either classified the document among the chronicles²⁵ or said that it was written in chronicle style²⁶.

My present purpose is more modest. I wish simply to raise certain questions about isolated points concerning the Assyrian Kinglist tradition and then, in conclusion, to propose further desiderata for a critical approach to the tradition.

The first topic I would like to broach is the reliability of the latter two-thirds of the list, from Bēlu-bāni (king no. 48) on. Landsberger's perceptive analysis of the deficiencies of the Assyrian Kinglist (*JCS* 8) concentrated on the completeness and accuracy of its earlier portions. His study of the Kinglist's conflict with other traditions²⁷ and its occasional internal chronological improbabilities²⁸ showed that these early sections have to be interpreted critically, not literally. But what of the later sections of the list? Are they as reliable as generally assumed? Here too, one can easily unearth inconsistencies within the tradition as well as conflicts with other traditions. It may be instructive to list some of the more obvious discrepancies.

A. Length of reign²⁹

- A.1 Puzur-Aššur III (no. 61): 24 years (SDAS ii 29), 14 years (NaKL ii 35)
- A.2 Aššur-nādin-apli (no. 79): 4 years (NaKL iii 31), 3 years (KhKL iii 22, SDAS iii 12)
- A.3 Ninurta-apil-Ekur (no. 82): 13 years (NaKL iii 40), 3 years (KhKL iii 30, SDAS iii 17)
- A.4 *Tiglath-pileser II (no. 97): 33 years (*KAV* 22 v 9'', referring to the eponym period), 32 years (KhKL iv 13)³⁰

²³ An earlier contribution in the same vein was made by Weidner in *A/O* 15 (1945-51) 96-97. See also Finkelstein, *JCS* 20 (1966) 95-118, especially pp. 112-113, for an assessment of the initial "list of ancestors".

²⁴ *AOAT* 1 265-277.

²⁵ *JNES* 1 (1942) 281, covering all but the earliest sections of the list.

²⁶ *JCS* 8 (1954) 34 note 23.

²⁷ Notably with royal inscriptions and with the kinglist *KAV* 14, which showed an alternate line of rulers continuing the house of Šamši-Adad I after Išme-Dagan I.

²⁸ Especially in the matter of assigning too many generations to a relatively short period of time.

²⁹ One can add two further discrepancies to this list, if one interprets *KAV* 9 in the usual fashion (see Rowton, *Iraq* 8 [1946] 99 and Grayson, *AOAT* 1 112-114). *KAV* 9 apparently assigns 35 years to [Aššur-uballit (I)], as opposed to KhKL's 36, and 33 years to [Adad-nirāri (I)], as opposed to KhKL's 32. It should be noted, however, that these variants balance out in the totals; and it would probably be preferable for future chronologies to accept a total of 68 years for these two reigns (which is agreed upon by both sources) rather than to pick the higher figure in each case and arrive at a sum of 69 (supported by neither source).

³⁰ For other discrepancies between regnal years and eponym periods, see Poebel's table in *JNES* 2 (1943) 88. Note too that the (new?) king reign-

B. Genealogy ³¹

- B.1 *Aššur-nīrārī II (no. 68): son of Enlil-nāšir (I/II; KhKL iii 3), son of Aššur-rābi I according to an inscription of his own son ³², Aššur-rā'im-nišēšu (*KAH* 1 63:3-4, cf. *KAH* 2 25:8-9)
- B.2 Aššur-rā'im(rē'im)-nišēšu (no. 70): son of Aššur-bēl-nišēšu (KhKL iii 7, cf. NaKL iii 11), son of Aššur-nīrārī II according to his own text (*KAH* 1 63:3)
- B.3 Erība-Adad I (no. 72): son of Aššur-bēl-nišēšu (KhKL iii 11, SDAS iii 4, possibly once supported by *KAH* 2 25), son of Aššur-rā'im-nišēšu (NaKL iii 15)
- B.4 Adad-nīrārī I (no. 76): son of Arik-dēn-ili (NaKL iii 23 and his own royal inscriptions, *KAH* 1 7:2, 8:2, 9:2, etc.), brother of Arik-dēn-ili (KhKL iii 17, SDAS iii 8)
- B.5 Aššur-nīrārī III (no. 80): son of Aššur-nāšir-apli (KhKL iii 23, SDAS iii 13), son of Aššur-nādin-apli (NaKL iii 32)
- B.6 Erība-Adad II (no. 90): son of Aššur-bēl-kala (NaKL iv 12.16, SDAS iii 31.35, KhKL iii 45), son of [Ilu-kabk]abi (KhKL iv 2-3)
- B.7 Tiglath-pileser III (no. 108): son of Adad-nīrārī III (*KAH* 1 21:2), son of Aššur-nīrārī V (SDAS iv 24)

C. Omission ³³

- C.1 Shalmaneser II (no. 93) is omitted in NaKL.

D. Variation in royal names ³⁴

- D.1 King no. 79 is Aššur-nādin-apli in NaKL iii 30 and KhKL iii 21, but Aššur-nāšir-apli in SDAS iii 11 ³⁵.

ing 828-824 B.C. supposedly inserted in the eponym list *STT* 46+348 (according to Parpola, *AOAT* 6 xvii note 1) is non-existent; the separation of the eponyms for the years 827-823 in some lists simply marks off the second eponym period of Shalmaneser III (cf. C¹ ii 36-40, *STT* 47 ii).

³¹ Landsberger, *JCS* 8 (1954) 42-44, argues on the chronological grounds of figures (for various "generations") given in the Assyrian Kinglist tradition that between Bēlu-bāni (no. 48) and Aššur-nādin-aḥḥē II (no. 71) the tradition incorrectly designates no fewer than eleven kings as "son" of their immediate predecessor, when each should have been designated "brother" (plus one instance in which "his brother" should read "son of his brother"). Since only one of these cases can be supported by outside textual evidence, the rest are omitted from the list here (without in any sense implying the present writer's dismissal of the cumulative weight of Landsberger's evidence).

³² *māru* can also be translated "descendant"; but, in context, this is less likely in the royal inscriptions cited in section B.

³³ *KAV* 14 also apparently omits kings 41-53, the latter of which fall after Bēlu-bāni; but this has been again discussed by Landsberger, *JCS* 8 (1954) 31-33, etc.

³⁴ This excludes possibly orthographic variants as -PAB.MEŠ (KhKL iii 9, SDAS iii 3) vs. -a-*hi* (NaKL iii 13) for king no. 71 and -*had-da* (NaKL iii 36) vs. -i-*had-da* (KhKL iii 27, SDAS iii 15) in the patronymic of king no. 82. — Some apparent variants between col. i of the synchronistic kinglist Assur 14616c (copied most recently from a photo by Weidner, *Afo* 3 [1926] 70-71) and the Assyrian Kinglist do not exist. My collation of Assur 14616c (summer 1971) showed the following readings: (3') m[Li-ba-a-a], (5') m[IB-TAR]-a30, (8') [mšū-Ni]-nu-a.

³⁵ Tukulti-Ninurta's son and successor is called Aššur-nādin-apli in NaKL and KhKL, but Aššur-nāšir-apli in SDAS (cf. Chronicle P iv 10). The matter

Using the above data, the following observations may be made.

1. Among the various versions of the Assyrian Kinglist, the most nearly contemporary source is not necessarily the most accurate. NaKL omits Shalmaneser II, who ruled about a century before the list was written (C.1). SDAS apparently gives erroneous information on the parentage of Tiglath-pileser III, who died within a few years of the writing of the text (B.7).

2. Most chronological discrepancies involve only one year (A.2, A.4, and the two listed on page 311 note 29) and are relatively insignificant for approximate calculation. More troublesome are the two conflicts of ten years each: A.1 and A.3. Though these two variations—between NaKL and KhKL/SDAS—could conceivably cancel each other out for dates before Puzur-Aššur III (no. 61), A.3 affects the reckoning of dates for most of the latter half of the second millennium. Despite the current historical fashion which prefers “13” rather than “3” years for the length of the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, it should be pointed out that there is not a single shred of positive evidence in favor of either alternative³⁶. For several hundred years before 1181 B.C. we are faced with a Mesopotamian chronology that may be inaccurate by as much as ten years (plus the usual minimal margin of error reckoned for dates in the early first millennium B.C.). When, in addition, one considers that we are still not sure of the meaning of the phrase “he ruled/held the throne *tuppišu*” applied to kings 84-85 and that many of the uncontested dates in the latter part of the Kinglist (principally before 910 B.C.) are uncontested simply because there is no additional evidence with which to compare them, one is apt to temper one’s enthusiasm for the presently unverified later portions of the Kinglist and to wish for further comparative chronological data, preferably contemporary³⁷.

3. Because of the relatively high number of variations, the genealogical tradition of the Assyrian Kinglist is quite faulty. This conclusion is bolstered by Landsberger’s analysis of generations for kings 48-71, which shows that half the genealogical attributions of this section of the Assyrian Kinglist are likely to be erroneous³⁸. For these reasons, it is probably unsafe to accept genealogical statements of the Assyrian Kinglist as true without supporting evidence³⁹.

is further complicated by the fact that Tukulti-Ninurta’s second successor, Aššur-nirāri III, is described as the son of Aššur-nādin-apli only in NaKL, but as the son of Aššur-nāsir-apli in both KhKL and SDAS. Contemporary inscriptions survive only from the reign of Aššur-nādin-apli, son of Tukulti-Ninurta (Weidner, *Tn. I*, nos. 40-41). Poebel, *JNES* 1 (1942) 484-490, suggested that Aššur-nādin-apli and Aššur-nāsir-apli were two quite different sons of Tukulti-Ninurta—the latter leading the revolt against his father and the former succeeding his father on the throne; and a similar position was advanced by Weidner, *Tn. I*, no. 37:10/11, *Kommentar*. With the present evidence, it seems uncertain whether one or two princes lie behind the conflicting scribal traditions.

³⁶ To those who would point out that a damaged “13” is apt to be copied as “3” in later lists, one may refer to A.1 as an example of the reverse phenomenon.

³⁷ Such data are now becoming available for the Middle Babylonian period and are throwing interesting light on the figures given for the Kassite dynasty in the Babylonian Kinglist A.

³⁸ See note 31 above.

³⁹ Especially for kings in the second millennium. Babylonian Kinglist A has a tendency to make the same type of genealogical errors; see J. A. Brink-

One does not wish to be overly sceptical about the data of the Assyrian Kinglist tradition. But there is a tendency when dealing with such a unique and—at least in its later portions—seemingly scientific document to forget that all of its data may not be equally reliable ⁴⁰.

The second topic I would like to touch on is the relative age of the five currently published examples of the Assyrian Kinglist. One, KhKL, is dated exactly by its colophon to 738 B.C. Two more, NaKL and SDAS, may be dated with reasonable accuracy by their concluding portions: NaKL ends with the reign of Tiglath-pileser II (died 935 B.C.) and SDAS ends with the reign of Shalmaneser V (died 722 B.C.); and each should presumably be dated within a few years after these events. Most difficult to date are the two fragmentary exemplars of the list: AsKL and NiKL. Poebel ⁴¹ argued that AsKL is the oldest known fragment of the list; and his conclusion was accepted, among others, by Landsberger ⁴² and Grayson ⁴³. The date proposed by Poebel would probably lie around the middle of the eleventh century B.C. ⁴⁴. Millard tentatively dated NiKL to sometime in the tenth century ⁴⁵, roughly around the time of NaKL.

Though Poebel himself expressed doubts about the certainty of his argument for the date of AsKL ⁴⁶, recent commentators have tended to become less reserved in their statements until AsKL has come to be designated simply as the oldest text of the Kinglist. This is not so sure. Only a small portion—approximately half a dozen lines on each side—of the left column on the obverse and the reverse of the tablet survive. These lines occur towards the bottom of column i on the obverse and towards the top of column iv on the reverse ⁴⁷. If one estimates the amount of space remaining at the bottom of column iv, one can see that there may have been room for AsKL to end with Tiglath-pileser II or Aššur-dan II ⁴⁸; and, conceivably, AsKL could be roughly the same age as NaKL or even slightly younger than it ⁴⁹. Unfor-

man, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia* (AnOr 43 [Rome, 1968], p. 27).

⁴⁰ Especially when its material on a given ruler may be the only historical information available.

⁴¹ *JNES* 1 (1942) 251.

⁴² *JCS* 8 (1954) 39 note 48.

⁴³ *AOAT* 1 109.

⁴⁴ Since he infers that the list "closed with a king six or seven more reigns before Tukulti-apil-Ešarra II" (*JNES* 1 [1942] 251).

⁴⁵ *Iraq* 32 (1970) 176.

⁴⁶ *JNES* 1 (1942) 251 note 5.

⁴⁷ Not, as Landsberger stated, in the middle of the column (*JCS* 8 [1954] 39 note 48). Obv. 1' deals with king no. 35 (= KhKL i 32, SDAS i 31), thereby affording some basis for believing that approximately thirty lines may be missing from the beginning of col. i. All the reasonably well preserved versions of the Kinglist (NaKL, KhKL, SDAS) end their first column with the episode of Šamsi-Adad I.

⁴⁸ Rev. 6' = KhKL iii 28, SDAS iii 15. If one calculates that the bottom of col. iv in AsKL is identical in size to the missing top of col. i (which corresponds to thirty-one lines in KhKL and thirty in SDAS), one can form an approximate estimate of how much may be lacking in col. iv. (Thirty-one additional lines in KhKL lead to the Aššur-dan II entry, and thirty lines in SDAS to the second line of the Tiglath-pileser II entry).

⁴⁹ The latter alternative is highly unlikely. It must be stressed that these are maximal estimates in that one cannot be sure that the whole of column iv in AsKL was inscribed and that there was no colophon (as in the tenth-century NaKL).

tunately, the sections marked *hepi* in NaKL i 33 ([*he-pi*], Sargon I entry) and in AsKL 3' ([*he-pi*], Puzur-Aššur II entry) do not correspond; so we cannot tell which scribe is likely to have had a more complete original to copy from⁵⁰. One may also note that the vertical dividing line within the columns, present in both eighth-century copies (KhKL and SDAS) and lacking in the tenth-century copy (NaKL), is also present in AsKL⁵¹.

NiKL also has the vertical dividing line, but the top of the final column on the reverse is uninscribed. Whether this latter feature is to be interpreted as evidence for an early date or whether it should simply be suggested that the inscription was not completed is uncertain. Millard's resort to paleographic evidence is useful, if inconclusive⁵². If the AsKL and NiKL fragments were larger or if we had a detailed study of the development of the Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian script, this could be of real value. In the present state of affairs, it seems safer to assert only that NaKL, AsKL, and NiKL represent older versions of the Assyrian Kinglist tradition than do KhKL and SDAS. It is difficult to assign absolute chronological priority—in any meaningful sense—to any one of these tablets.

It is also worth stating that the latest significant redaction of the Assyrian Kinglist probably took place in Middle Assyrian times or very early in the Neo-Assyrian period (the latter part of the tenth century being the latest possible date)⁵³. Regardless of how one speculates on the sources and origins of the early portions of the list or of various preliminary compilations, the consistent use in the final version of the term *Karduniaš* for Babylonia (in the various episodes concerned with exile of princes or kings)⁵⁴ rules out a

⁵⁰ Landsberger in *JCS* 8 (1954) 110 note 208, followed by Grayson, *AOAT* 1 110, miscalculated the reference in NaKL i 33 and assigned it to Puzur-Aššur II. Landsberger failed to note that NaKL in the body of the text (i.e., beginning with king no. 33)—in contrast with the practice in both KhKL and SDAS—does not abbreviate the repetitious formulae, and so there are never less than two lines to an individual entry. Since it is quite clear that both lines 32 and 34 end in *šarrūta ēpuš*, the end of column i should be assigned as follows:

i 37-43	Šamši-Adad I	(no. 39)
i 35-36	Erišum II	(no. 38)
i 33-34	Narām-Sin	(no. 37)
i 31-32	Puzur-Aššur II	(no. 36)

Though it is interesting that the only *hepi*'s in the Kinglist tradition occur so close together in this section (raising the possibility that AsKL and NaKL may descend from a single original with damage to more than one entry in this area), one should note that the Nassouhi lacuna—apparently in the father's name of Narām-Sin—does not seem to affect the later KhKL i 35.

⁵¹ It is difficult to tell whether such an argument, based on a superficial analysis of physical style, has any significance. Only the recovery of further exemplars can decide.

⁵² The form of *su* in NiKL is not quite so distinctively Middle Assyrian as Millard states (*Iraq* 32 [1970] 176). A similar form, slightly abbreviated, occurs in the tenth-century NaKL iii 17, 37, and iv 12; and a virtually identical form can be found in the tenth-century annals of Aššur-dan II (*Afo* 3 [1926] 155 no. 1 rev. 11), in the early-ninth-century annals of Adad-nirāri II (*KAH* II 84:33), etc.

⁵³ Obviously at the time of or before NaKL, our oldest reasonably dated copy.

⁵⁴ Šamši-Adad I, Ninurta-apil-Ekur, Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur (Mutakkil-Nusku), and Šamši-Adad IV. It is noteworthy that most of the longer entries in the later portion of the Assyrian Kinglist mention Babylonia.

time before the Middle Assyrian period for the final redaction⁵⁵. As is evident from KhKL and SDAS, once the last significant redaction had been made, references to further reigns were added on in stereotyped formulae⁵⁶.

Another interesting feature is the connection of most of the Kinglist tablets with the city of Assur. Two of them were excavated there (AsKL, NaKL). KhKL, although excavated at Khorsabad, was copied from an original from Assur (iv 33); and SDAS, according to its colophon, belonged to Bēl-šuma-iddin, a *mašmāšu* of Assur (iv 29). Only the fragmentary NiKL, the colophon of which is missing, cannot be connected in any way with Assur⁵⁷.

One minor topic or textual query which, to my knowledge, has not yet been raised concerns the place where Erišum II, son of Narām-Sin, ruled. According to the wording of the section of the Kinglist dealing with Šamši-Adad I, Šamši-Adad, after proceeding north from Babylonia to Ekallāte, then "came up" (*ēlā*)⁵⁸ further north to depose Erišum. This, taken literally, would imply that Erišum was ruling north—or upstream—of Ekallāte⁵⁹ and not, as Landsberger and David Oates have implied, at Assur⁶⁰. Was the capital north of Ekallāte at this time, perhaps removed thither temporarily because of Šamši-Adad's invasion? Or should *ēlā* be taken simply as a repetition of the customarily used verb⁶¹ without intended geographical precision⁶²? In any case, it is worth observing that the normal sense of the verb seems to require that Erišum was deposed from a seat north or upstream of the now agreed on location of Ekallāte⁶³.

In conclusion, if one may look forward to the future, it would be a great service to students of Mesopotamian history if all the various Assyrian and Babylonian kinglists⁶⁴ were available in more accessible and reliable form.

⁵⁵ Landsberger in *JCS* 8 (1954) 35 referred to the *māt Akkad* of the hypothetical forerunner(s). He also speculated on the compilation of the "Grundstock" of the Assyrian Kinglist at some time during the dynasty of Šamši-Adad I (*ibid.*, p. 109).

⁵⁶ One should note that the last entry with additional information (other than royal name, patronymic, and length of reign) pertains to Šamši-Adad IV in the middle of the eleventh century. Note also that Rowton, *CAH* I/1, 3rd ed., p. 195, would date the compilation of the "original copy" of the Assyrian Kinglist to the eleventh century for reasons he is yet to publish.

⁵⁷ Oppenheim has pointed out privately the similarity in the distinctive shape of KhKL/SDAS and the ruled-off inscriptional sections of some *limu* steles found at Assur (*WVDOG* 24 nos. 15, 28, etc.) and has suggested that certain copies of the Assyrian Kinglist may have been intended for funerary or ceremonial purposes (rather than for strictly chronological ends). See also note 70 below.

⁵⁸ I.e., in the sense of going upstream.

⁵⁹ Located north of Assur. See Finkelstein, *JCS* 7 (1953) 119; Hallo, *JCS* 18 (1964) 72; Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*, p. 38.

⁶⁰ Note the capture of Assur mentioned in Landsberger, *JCS* 8 (1954) 35; Oates, *Studies*, p. 38.

⁶¹ Besides the Kinglist passage referring to Šamši-Adad I, *ēlā* is used also of Ninurta-apil-Ekur and Šamši-Adad IV (in connection with their journeys from Babylonia to Assyria).

⁶² This seems less likely, though one might speculate whether Erišum operated along an Ešnunna-Assur axis which was not totally disrupted by Šamši-Adad's presence at Ekallāte.

⁶³ Nineveh and Šubat-Enlil come to mind as possibilities, though the latter is probably not directly upstream from Ekallāte and is suggested principally because of Šamši-Adad's later connection with the town.

⁶⁴ And the eponym lists and date lists as well.

It is essential that these documents be carefully re-edited from the original tablets⁶⁵, since some of the present disagreements concern even the basic reading of the text⁶⁶. In cases where a tablet has deteriorated over the years⁶⁷, it would also help to provide a list of variant readings offered by previous editors⁶⁸. At this stage in the history of the discipline, we would all derive much more benefit from an adequate and reliable text edition than from further elaborate theorizing on an unevenly edited jumble.

When the text of the kinglists has been reasonably established, it would be desirable to have a detailed typological analysis of the various genres that would transcend a superficial classification of types relying on comparative phrase- or sentence-structure⁶⁹. One may even look forward to a day when the determination of the *Sitz im Leben* and textual origins of the kinglists and other chronological documents may represent something other than well-intentioned speculations based on minimal or non-existing evidence⁷⁰. Finally, when one has gained some appreciation of the textual tradition and what it stands for in terms of "literary truth"⁷¹, one should also attempt to assess the tradition as "historical truth" preferably by means of reliable contemporary documents. Obviously, these various analyses and assessments cannot

⁶⁵ Editing from photographs or simple re-working of older editions is quite inadequate, as has been documented by the numerous disputes or explanations concerned with non-existent readings. In the case of new editions, one would hope that, in so far as possible, ambiguous signs or traces would be carefully described to minimize the scurrying after collations following the discovery of each new piece of evidence.

⁶⁶ While it is helpful to have collations such as those offered here for NaKL and those published by Grayson in *AOAT* 1, it would be much more advantageous to have a standard edition of all kinglists available in a single volume. Assyriologists and historians spend an inordinate percentage of their time threading their way through bibliographical mazes.

⁶⁷ As is true, e.g., with the synchronistic kinglist Assur 14616c and probably with Babylonian Kinglist A.

⁶⁸ For Babylonian Kinglist A alone, this would probably fill a rather large article.

⁶⁹ Lower criticism has its uses, if applied with restraint and common sense. But it would be pointless to attempt a reconstruction of the origin of the sundry types of kinglists and chronological documents based solely on the arbitrary distinction of certain documentary groups by reason of their choice of one or other sentence structure within the allowable variations of Sumerian or Akkadian syntax. Similarities of this type could well be fortuitous and, unless some sort of ulterior connection can be shown (such as origin within a very restricted time or place range), need not reflect anything other than the convenience of the classifier.

⁷⁰ The ceremonial function of the genealogical list of the Hammurapi dynasty (Finkelstein, *JCS* 20 [1966] 95-118), as indicated in the latter part of the text, is of particular relevance here, since this is the only document of this type for which we have direct evidence concerning its *Sitz im Leben*. It could be desired that the often-repeated theorizing on the derivation of the Assyrian Kinglists from eponym lists or chronicles/chronicle-like documents would be based on similar grounds rather than on questionable interpretations of the word *limāni* (KhKL i 26, etc.) or vague similarities in sentence arrangement. We have at present no eponym lists or chronicles which are capable of supplying all the information contained in the terse formulae of the Assyrian Kinglist—royal name, immediate descent, length of reign.

⁷¹ See the analysis by Landsberger, *JCS* 8 (1954) 109.

always proceed sequentially because of the random nature and very incomplete state of the evidence; but they are essential parts of the historical process and can be ignored only to the detriment of history.

Excursus: The Reading of the Royal Name ŠU-Ninua

In 1954, Gelb and Landsberger independently and almost simultaneously introduced the reading Kidin-Ninua for Assyrian king no. 54. Gelb in *JNES* 13 (1954) 225-226 translated the name written as $\text{𐎶𐎵}-\text{URU.AB} \times \text{𐎶𐎶}$ (in both KhKL ii 24, 26, 28, 35 and SDAS ii 20, 21, 22, 27) as Kidin-Ninua. Though Gelb did not annotate his translation, he today (August 1972) believes that he made this translation on the basis of the use of the logogram ŠU for *kidinnu* in Middle Assyrian personal names, as analyzed by Ebeling, *MAOG* 13/1 (1939) 52-54. Landsberger in *JCS* 8 (1954) 42 transliterated *KAV* 14:6' as $[\text{Ki}-\text{d}]\text{in}-\text{AB} \times \text{𐎶𐎶}$. Since 1954, the reading Kidin-Ninua has generally remained unquestioned.

There is, however, some reason for doubting its accuracy. First of all, it is by no means certain that ŠU was ever used as a logogram for *kidinnu*. The Middle Assyrian sign in question varies from a form in which a horizontal wedge and a vertical wedge cross each other at right angles (akin to the common Neo-Assyrian BAR) to a form where the horizontal wedge is at such an oblique angle as to become like the Achaemenid Babylonian form of BAR (often difficult to distinguish from ŠU). This variation both major Akkadian dictionaries have rightly taken as indicating that the sign in question is BAR⁷². Though Saporetti retains both BAR and ŠU as transliterations in his *Onomastica medio-assira*, I, 279-290, it would have to be established that these forms are not variants of the same sign⁷³. While there is no doubt that BAR can represent *kidinnu* in Middle Assyrian personal names⁷⁴, one might question whether some of the references currently interpreted as a logographic ŠU/BAR might not in fact represent a syllabic Šu, which was gradually coming into use in Babylonia and Assyria in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries and was to win increasing favor as a short substitute for Šu in the later periods. Some names would, therefore, be read as Šu-DN and would parallel other Middle Assyrian names which are written Šu₁-DN⁷⁵.

On the other hand, there is also reason for doubting Landsberger's reading $[\text{Ki}-\text{d}]\text{in}-$ in *KAV* 14:6'. The copies, by Schroeder in *KAV* and by Weidner in *MVAG* 26/2 (1921) pl. 5, show for the first preserved sign in this line only a vertical wedge followed by an oblique wedge; the oblique wedge of Schroeder

⁷² *AHW*, p. 473 and *CAD*, vol. K, p. 342. The ŠU sign would very seldom have the oblique wedge crossing so high (and almost horizontally) across the vertical.

⁷³ As they clearly are in the Achaemenid and later Babylonian scripts and in Kassite Babylonian.

⁷⁴ The best evidence for this is the alternate spellings for the name of Kidin-Sin, the *bēl pāhete* and eponym official in *KAJ* 109:18 (*Ki-din*), *WVDOG* 24 no. 132:2 (BAR-, slanted), *JCS* 7 (1953) 148 no. 1:26 (BAR-, slightly slanted horizontal crossing almost at the top of the vertical).

⁷⁵ E.g., Šu-Adad, Šu-ilāni (Saporetti, *Onomastica*, I, 465-467). One cannot, of course, entirely disregard the possibility that ŠU was being read as *gimil(lu)* at this time.

is a *Winkelhaken*, while that of Weidner approaches the angle of a horizontal stroke and he interprets the sign traces as [Š]I in *MVAG* 26/2 (1921) 6⁷⁶. In *JNES* 1 (1942) 475, Poebel noted that he collated the passage and that it apparently read [Š]U-U-*Ninua*⁷⁷. Thus, four different authors have given four different interpretations of the sign traces before *AB* × *HA* in this royal name: Schroeder—vertical wedge plus *Winkelhaken*; Weidner—[Š]I; Poebel—[Š]U-U; Landsberger—[*Ki-d*]in. Grayson in his collations of *KAV* 14 in *AOAT* 1 111 did not comment on this line.

With the exception of the disputed reading in *KAV* 14, the first element of the RN is always written šu (SDAS, KhKL; NaKL possibly in ii 21, 30). The synchronistic kinglist Assur 14616c i 8', despite Weidner's copy in *Afo* 3 (1926) 70 (made from a photo), reads [ŠU-Ni]-nu-a⁷⁸. Since all these copies of kinglists date from Neo-Assyrian times and since there is no evidence that *BAR* (even similar to šu) was used as *kidinnu* after the thirteenth century, it would seem that Šu-Ninua is at present a more likely reading for the royal name than Kidin-Ninua; but more conclusive evidence is certainly to be desired.

⁷⁶ Presumably because of his reading of the same name as ŠI-Ni-nu-a ("vielleicht *Pán-Ninua* zu lesen") in Assur 14616c (= Weidner's "Assur 4128") i 8' in *MVAG* 26/2 (1921) 13. For the correct reading, see note 34 above and also the last paragraph of this Excursus.

⁷⁷ He stated that "of the first sign only the perpendicular wedge and apparently the lower end of its slanting wedge is preserved".

⁷⁸ Personal collation of both the tablet and the excavation photo.