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# Khorsabad, le palais de Sargon II, roi d'Assyrie

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# **The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin in the Assyrian Royal Correspondence**

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Seen from the air, the ancient city of Dur-Šarrukin, present-day Khorsabad, with its square circuit wall looks like a mandala, the Buddhist symbol of the universe<sup>1</sup>. And indeed it was built to be the capital of the world, a visual demonstration of the superhuman power of Sargon II, « king of the universe ». The area enclosed within the city walls, three square kilometers, makes it one of the largest cities in antiquity. It matches in size Babylon, Calah and Nippur, and easily leaves behind such ancient metropolises as Athens, Jerusalem and Susa<sup>2</sup>. A huge artificial platform on the north side of the city supports an acropolis studded with palaces and temples. This area alone is almost twice as large as Persepolis, the ceremonial center of the Achaemenid empire.

Excavations begun by Paul-Émile Botta a hundred and fifty years ago revealed the grandiose designs of the city and made it possible to form an idea of its past glory. The massive city wall, 14 meters thick and 20 meters high, was fortified with more than two hundred bastions projecting from it at 15 meter intervals<sup>3</sup>. A 50-meter-high multicolored temple tower dominated the city<sup>4</sup>. The interior and exterior walls of the royal palace were lined with colored orthostat reliefs illustrating the king's military feats and other achievements<sup>5</sup>. Ornamental paintings in brilliant colors decorated the walls and ceilings of royal and state apartments<sup>6</sup>. Doors of the temples were plated with hammered silver and bronze sheets, and their portals and walls were richly decorated with friezes and scenes in polychrome glazed brick<sup>7</sup>. Colossal human-headed winged bulls and other protective genii flanked palace doorways and city gates<sup>8</sup>. Exquisitely carved fragments of ivory furniture and other objects of art attest to the sumptuous interior furnishing of the upper class habitations<sup>9</sup>. The city proper remains largely unex-

cavated, but soundings made at several points indicate that it was densely populated <sup>10</sup>.

What makes Dur-Šarrukin unique among all ancient cities, however, is not its size, design or artistic execution, but the megalomaniac drive and unparalleled organizational effort behind its construction. We know that its foundations were laid in Sargon's fifth year (717 B.C.) and that its inaugural festival was celebrated no later than the king's sixteenth year <sup>11</sup>. Thus the entire project was completed within a period of slightly more than ten years – an incredible achievement considering the gigantic scale of the work and the level of technology available at the time.

How was it done? The ruins of ancient cities generally leave such questions unanswered, but Dur-Šarrukin again constitutes an exception <sup>12</sup>. Numerous royal inscriptions carved on the walls and other parts of the palaces and temples provide an official account of the city's building history <sup>13</sup>, and their story is complemented by the reliefs of the royal palace illustrating selected episodes of the building process in visual form <sup>14</sup>. In addition, a large number of letters and other documents from the Assyrian state archives directly relate to the building of the city <sup>15</sup>. This invaluable source of information has, rather surprisingly, been badly neglected in previous discussions of the city <sup>16</sup>. Accordingly, before going into the substance of this paper, the contents of the letters, a few general remarks about the Dur-Šarrukin correspondence as a whole may be appropriate.

## Volume and Nature of the Correspondence

The magnitude of the effort behind the building of the city is reflected in the volume of the correspondence. A total of a hundred and thirteen letters can, with various degrees of certainty, be associated with the project <sup>17</sup>. This makes ten per cent of the entire extant correspondence of Sargon II <sup>18</sup>. Almost

all of the letters originate with men in charge of the project or otherwise directly involved with it. The largest number of letters, fourteen, are by the State Treasurer, Ṭab-šar-Aššur<sup>19</sup>. This man clearly emerges as the chief coordinator and supervisor of the works<sup>20</sup>. Six of the letters are from the king himself<sup>21</sup>, one from his son, the crown prince Sennacherib, who acted as his father's replacement during the latter's absence from Assyria<sup>22</sup>. Almost all the remaining letters originate with various ministers and provincial governors, each of whom was entrusted with specific tasks within the overall project<sup>23</sup>. A number of letters are by officials stationed in Dur-Šarrukin itself, including the governor, the city treasurer, and priests in charge of the temples of the citadel<sup>24</sup>. The same individuals recur in the message part of the letters<sup>25</sup>. This shows that our sample of letters, which of course is but a fraction of the original correspondence, is large enough to give a good idea of the organization of the work and the roster of men responsible for executing it<sup>26</sup>. In addition to the nineteen governors figuring as authors, seven more are mentioned in the contents<sup>27</sup>. The total of twenty six governors thus explicitly associated with the works come from all parts of the empire and give a good cross-section of Assyria's provinces at the time<sup>28</sup>. It seems accordingly clear that practically the whole empire was, through the governors, committed to the realization of the project. None of the letters are dated, but a good number of them are datable by their contents, and then invariably to the latter part of Sargon's reign<sup>29</sup>. Although it is by no means excluded that some of the undatable letters are in fact earlier, a relatively late date does seem likely for the bulk of the correspondence<sup>30</sup>. A few letters may by their contents be assigned to the very beginning of the project<sup>31</sup>. Thus the letters are not evenly distributed over the whole building process, but in compensation they supply us with plentiful information about its final phases.

In contrast to the royal inscriptions, which were written to glorify the king's deeds and thus dwell on the magnificence of the buildings, walls and parks erected in the city in considerable detail<sup>32</sup>, the emphasis of the letters is on down-to-earth matters. This is understandable, for the senders were not charged to praise the king but to make his will come true, cost it what it may. They were thus mainly concerned with practical matters like the planning, organization and supervision of the works, or the procurement of labor and building materials. Problems and difficulties encountered in the execution of as-

signed tasks are a frequently recurrent topic in the letters <sup>33</sup>. In fact, it seems that many of them got written only because the senders had run into a trouble of sorts. Affairs running smoothly and according to the plans were not worth troubling the king with.

## Organization of the Work

The prime mover and heart of the project, of course, was the king.

In his inscriptions, Sargon claims: « I planned and thought day and night in order to make this city habitable, and to erect its shrines as abodes for the great gods, and a complex of palaces as my royal residence. » <sup>34</sup>

The letters prove that these were no empty words. About forty royal orders cited in them show that the king not only took active interest in the project but also directed it personally and followed the progress of works with impatient eagerness. There appears to have been hardly any matter in which he would not have intervened, from requisition of labor to transportation problems and discussion of architectural details <sup>35</sup>. Of the six extant royal orders relating to the project, four are short and stereotyped messages concerning the provision of raw materials. It is worth quoting one of them in full, for its formulation tells a lot about the king's style to direct the project and helps to understand how it could be completed so efficiently: « The king's word to the governor of Calah: 700 bales of straw and 700 bundles of reeds, each bundle more than a donkey can carry, must be at hand in Dur-Šarrukin by the 1st day of Kislev. Should even one day pass by, you will die. » <sup>36</sup> Another short order tells the deputy vizier « to quickly bring to Dur-Šarrukin 700 limestone blocks, each as big as a cart can carry » <sup>37</sup>. Both orders have almost exact duplicates differing from the ones + just quoted only in their addresses <sup>38</sup>. Evidently, many more similar royal orders must have once existed, and it can be safely surmised that the officials charged with the deli-

veries addressed similar orders to their subordinates. The remaining two royal orders relate to labor management and display a more refined style of leadership. In one of them the king reproaches an official for failure to carry out his work assignment, alleging that his subordinates had managed to evade their duty by illegally trading it off for something<sup>39</sup>. The surprisingly lenient tone of the letter suggests that the addressee was one of the king's relatives or friends<sup>40</sup>. The other letter is addressed to a company of brick-masons, who are urged to stay in the city after the completion of their work and assist in the installation of the winged bull colossi<sup>41</sup>. It seems that this letter was a reply to a petition and its tone, which again is quite conciliatory, shows that the king knew how to deal with grumbling labor.

## Financing

Dur-Šarrukin was built on virgin land in the area of a village named Magganubba, situated at a big well in the vicinity of Nineveh<sup>42</sup>. The inscriptions of Sargon tell us that the king « reimbursed the owners of the fields with silver or bronze according to the purchase documents »<sup>43</sup>, but they do not specify whence the money required was raised. One might be inclined to think that it was simply taken from the bottomless reserves of the royal treasury, but a letter to the king suggests otherwise. The letter is important enough to be quoted in full : « The king my lord told me : "Nobody will pay back your loans until the work on Dur-Šarruken is finished !" Now they have refunded to the merchants the portion of Dur-Šarrukin that has been constructed, but nobody has reminded the king about me ; 570 kilos of silver with my seal and due this year have not been repaid as yet. When the king, my lord, sold gold and precious stones on my account, I told the king my lord that my father was much in debt to Huziru and two other persons. After my father's death I paid half of his debts, but now their sons are telling me : "Pay us the debts that your father owes to our fathers !" As soon as Dur-Šarrukin has been completely built, let the king my lord reimburse my house so that I can pay my

debts to these people. The king my lord may ask Šarru-emu-ranni : half of his work assignment in Dur-Šarrukin is finished. »<sup>44</sup> This letter leaves no doubt that a considerable part of the building expenses was financed by loans taken from private moneylenders. In addition, the writer informs us that the king had used his services for converting gold and precious stones from his treasury into money. It is conceivable that this money was needed for reimbursing the owners of the land, but it may have been needed for other purposes as well, like the acquisition of raw materials, products and services not available within the empire itself.

## Labor

However that may be, it is certain that the bulk of the labor and materials for the city was obtained cheaply or for no cost at all. In his inscriptions, Sargon states that he built the city « with the labor of foreign people whom I had captured »<sup>45</sup>. The letters tell us more about the composition of this slave labor. A fragmentary letter to the king indicates that it included deportees from Samaria, the capital of Israel whom Sargon had conquered in the first year of his reign : « Concerning what the king, my lord, wrote to me : “Provide all the Samaritans in your hands with work in Dur-Šarrukin”, I subsequently sent word to the sheikhs, saying : “Collect your carpenters and potters ; let them come and direct the deportees who are in Dur-Šarrukin...” »<sup>46</sup>

It seems that Dur-Šarrukin became the melting pot for many nations, including the « lost tribes of Israel ». After the completion of the city, Sargon says he « settled in its midst deportees from the conquered countries, made them speak one language, and commissioned natives of Assyria, experts in all craft, as overseers and commanders over them to teach them correct behavior and the right reverence towards god and king »<sup>47</sup>. This statement recalls the letter passage just quoted and suggests that a good part of the population of Dur-Šarrukin consisted of slave labor settled there during its construction.



Another letter, from the governor of the city, shows that the population also included deportees from Marash, an Anatolian city state conquered in 711 B.C. The writer informs the king that he had given to these people houses belonging to the servants of the previous governor, who had been transferred to Phoenicia <sup>48</sup>.

Another plentiful source of cheap labor for the works consisted of Assyrian citizens under work obligation. In principle, every Assyrian subject to military service was also subject to labor service, « king's work ». In practice, this obligation could be evaded in various ways <sup>49</sup>, but it can still be safely assumed a large percentage of the Assyrian manpower participated in the construction of the city, as illustrated by the following letter from a governor of a northern province: « Let he king, my lord, send word that the prefects of the royal Taziru and Itu'u troops settled here should come and stand guard with me, until those beams are brought out. The king, my lord, knows that my men are working in Dur-Šarrukin and I have only cavalymen at my disposal. » <sup>50</sup> The only segment of domestic manpower exempt from the labor service was the standing army, which included the special troops mentioned in the passage just quoted and mercenaries employed in the cavalry and chariotry. The privileged status of these elite troops and their exemption from work on the city is repeatedly stressed in the correspondence <sup>51</sup>.

## Specialized Labor

While there thus was, in principle, no shortage of cheap labor, the demand for craftsmen appears to have exceeded the supply. A letter from the governor of Zobah in Syria presents excuses for not having been able to send to Dur-Šarrukin the carpenters the king had requested, and thus implies that craftsmen were recruited for the city from all over the empire <sup>52</sup>. Several letters indicate that there was a shortage especially of master builders needed for the construction of walls, canals and complex edifices <sup>53</sup>. It is unclear how permanent this shortage was, but at least the following two letters

prove that the problem could be acute at times : « To the king, my lord : your servant Aššur-dur-paniya. Good health to the king, my lord ! As to the master builders concerning whom the king, my lord, wrote me : “Give junior ones to the magnates, so they can perform their work assignment with their help”, out of my 16 master builders three are with the palace herald, three are working in the center of the city, and ten are engaged in bricking my work allocation of the city wall. This makes a total of 16 master builders engaged in work. As for their junior sons, they are just apprentices, incapable of doing any serious work ; it is not within their understanding. They just carry chests after them. I must say : “The master builders have work to do, I cannot give away any of them.” I have already given six master builders to the work assignment of the center of the city and the palace herald, and my own work is a great burden on me. These ten master builders at my disposal cannot go out ; they shall not even break a brick for anybody else. » <sup>54</sup>

The other letter reads almost identically : « Concerning what the king, my lord, wrote me : “Give master builders to the magnates who have none, let them be available”, there are six master builders with me, and we are doing the king’s work. From the beginning I have been constantly writing to Badaya and Lansî : “Everybody should bring a master builder for his work assignment ! Not one master builder should be missing !” The king, my lord, knows that there is a runaway Kassite master builder in our presence. I have now brought the six master builders and the Kassite with me. If I give one to Badaya and one to Lansî, there will be four only at my disposal to do the work. Shouldn’t they write to the official of Lansî : “Is there a master builder of yours ?” If there is, let the king, my lord, do as he finds best so that I can perform my work and deliver it to the king, my lord. » <sup>55</sup>

It is interesting, and illustrative of the king’s personal involvement in the project that the order to furnish this specialized labor came directly from him and not from the State Treasurer, who otherwise acted as the project’s general coordinator. A similar case is recorded in a letter from the Treasurer himself, who writes, referring to the canal which was dug to provide the city with water : « Paqaha, the master builder in charge of the canal came and had an audience with me, saying : “The king has added to the men working on the canal but there are no taskmasters. The governor of Talmusa is not able to

direct the men." He said to me as follows: "3,000 men is too much for me, this way we cannot do the work." Paqaha told me: "I must personally take the lead of 100 men and spend a full month on the work. Let the king my lord hold the lack of taskmasters responsible for the fact that I must spend a full month on the work employing only 100 men." »<sup>56</sup>

Here the Treasurer is not in a position to provide the missing taskmasters but must refer the matter to the king. It is accordingly clear that the king's central role in the project is not just a token of his personal interest in it. It also reflects Assyria's highly centralized administrative system, which concentrated all power in the king's hands at the cost of the authority and freedom of action of his subordinates<sup>57</sup>.

## Acquisition of Raw Materials

The greatest number of letters pertain to the acquisition of raw materials for the works, especially straw and reeds for bricks and walls, limestone for pavement, thresholds, and winged bull colossi, saplings of fruit trees for parks, and timber for roof-beams and door-shafts<sup>58</sup>. Bricks were produced on the spot by the local population<sup>59</sup>. The letters give a very good idea of the sources from which these materials were acquired, the methods by which they were transported and the problems encountered in the acquisition and transportation process.

## Straw and Reeds

Straw was needed as a binding material for mud bricks and reed for layers of matting used as binders every nine courses of brick in the walls<sup>60</sup>. As we have seen, these materials were raised from the nearby provinces, and the demand

was so great that a member of the Assyrian cabinet, the Palace Herald, had to complain : « All the straw in my land is reserved for Dur-Šarrukin, and my recruitment officers are now running after me because there is no straw for the pack animals. Now, what are the king my lord's instructions ? » <sup>61</sup>

A series of letters from Taklak-ana-Bel, the governor of Nisibin, indicates that some governors had difficulties in meeting the quota imposed on them <sup>62</sup>. In fending off accusations of having treated unjustly a certain captain of shepherds, the governor writes : « I imposed on him a levy of 300 bales of straw and reeds for the bricks, but he did not give any of it ; instead he stole the sheep in his charge and went away, seeking refuge in a temple. I sent men to bring him to me and told him : "I will excuse your dues but bring the men, come and do your work in Dur-Šarrukin." He brought half of the men but did not bring the other half, so their work assignment is in arrears. » <sup>63</sup>

## Saplings for Parks

Seven letters refer to saplings of trees to be planted in the « tremendous park, comparable to the Amanus Mountains », which Sargon laid out at its sides of Dur-Šarrukin <sup>64</sup> ; and they confirm that it was « planted with all the aromatic plants of Hatti, the fruit trees of every mountain », as the inscriptions claim. Almost all the letters concerned come from the north-western provinces of Assyria, mostly from the Habur region <sup>65</sup>. The only exception is a letter from a northern province to the east of Nisibin, which reads : « Concerning the saplings about which the king, my lord, wrote me, there is much snow and ice, so they cannot be picked up yet ; they will pick them up and bring them to Dur-Šarrukin at the beginning of the new moon of Adar [in early spring]. » <sup>66</sup>

A letter from the Jezirah refers to saplings extracted from Suhu and Laqê in the middle Euphrates and is more specific : « I have imposed on the people of Nemed-Ištar 2,350 bundles of apple tree (sapling)s and 450 bundles of medlar tree (sapling)s, in all 2,800 bundles ; on the xth day of Shebat I

returned Mr. NN to Dur-Šarrukin. Nanî and the king of Suhu have come to me ; Ahu-illika and Zabina-Il are with them. They are extracting saplings of almond, quince and plum trees and transporting them to Dur-Šarrukin. The Suhaean and the local people are also bringing saplings from the country of Laqê – 1,000 bundles of apple trees ; their vanguard has arrived and I have seen it, but their rearguard has not yet arrived. »<sup>67</sup>

These letters not only give an idea of the quantity of trees needed for the park but also show how efficiently and methodically it was put together. Still other letters indicate that in addition to fruit trees, also cedars and cypresses were planted in the park <sup>68</sup>. A letter from the governor of Calah refers to a sketch of a park according to which he wishes to plant the saplings in his custody <sup>69</sup>. It is, however, not certain that this letter pertains to the building of Dur-Šarrukin <sup>70</sup>.

## Timber

A large number of letters (twenty eight in all) deal with the acquisition of timber <sup>71</sup>. We learn that it was primarily acquired from the mountainous and apparently densely wooded regions in the upper reaches of the Tigris, from which it was floated downstream to a collection point at Nineveh and thence transported by carts to Dur-Šarrukin <sup>72</sup>. However, more distant and inconvenient sources were also exploited <sup>73</sup>. Trees felled as far as the Amanus mountains were floated down the Euphrates to the point where the river approaches the Tigris, whence they were towed by boat upstream to Nineveh <sup>74</sup>. A letter from the Treasurer Ṭab-šar-Aššur illustrates the difficulties involved in this process : « His servants said : “From where the distant logs are being stored the river is navigable as far as Assur ; from Assur to Nineveh it is difficult.”... I asked them : “Where are the distant logs then ?” They said : “Opposite the city of Aryawate. The logs which we towed last year from Sapirrutu in the district of the Governor arrived in Nineveh in the month Adar.” Since I heard these words from the mouth of the Governor, namely that the river is navigable from Aryawate as far as

Assur, the gods of the king willing, we shall tow the logs past the risky places and bring them to Assur; then we shall see what lies ahead and tow them to Nineveh as best as we can.»<sup>75</sup>

With this method, timber could be retrieved from sources all over the Near East and towed to Assur, where it was temporarily stored before shipment to Dur-Šarrukin. A letter from the governor of Assur presents an inventory of the timber stored in the city at point of time and illustrates the quantity of wood the project demanded: 372 heavy beams, 808 second-size, 2,313 third-size, 11,807 fourth-size, in all 15,290 intact ones, plus 13,157 damaged or burnt<sup>76</sup>. The laborious towing process is illustrated on a series of sculptures from Dur-Šarrukin, showing an army of small boats rowed by captives hauling logs upstream, while others are unloading their cargo or returning for another load<sup>77</sup>. This series of reliefs was previously misinterpreted as depicting a Mediterranean seascape<sup>78</sup>.

Some of the timber was retrieved from domestic sources, the use of which was, however, heavily restricted. Several letters indicate that national forest resources, which were meagre, were exploited only selectively and even then only by explicit royal order<sup>79</sup>. Most of the timber was in fact extracted from border areas or vassal or enemy territory. It seems that there generally was an effort to do this legally by obtaining a permission to export the timber from the foreign government. In one of his letters to the king, the governor of Tušhan states that his messenger had presented the king of Šubria with a formal request for hundreds of roof-beams already piled on the river bank. He informs the king the permission was not granted, and then goes on to tell that a team of Assyrians, accompanied by cavalry, had proceeded to the territory of Urartu and was actually cutting timber there. He then asks: «What are the king my lord's orders? Would the king of Urartu give beams to the king, my lord, when the Šubrian does not?»<sup>80</sup> Apparently the writer was determined to get his quota of trees extracted from the area with or without permission, for he stresses to have impressed his attitude towards the šubrian king upon the local population: «He must cooperate and render services to the king, his lord, along with other subjects of the king. Are you yourselves not subjects of the king of Assyria, who have cut door-beams, poplar trees and reeds in the province and are transporting them to Dur-Šarrukin? Do you perhaps think I am afraid of the Šubrian?»<sup>81</sup>

Other letters make it clear that raw force had in fact often to be applied in order to get timber felled in foreign territory moved to the Assyrian side of the border. A letter from Nashur-Bel, governor of Amidi, tells us : « I sent Itu'e'an elite troops with the village inspector for the logs which were held back in Eziat, and he got them moved through after a fight. The deputy of the village inspector and nine of his soldiers were struck down by a bow ; two of them died. They wounded three of the enemy soldiers. » <sup>82</sup>

The exploitation of foreign timber resources thus at times amounted to outright robbery. It was sanctioned by the military power of Assyria, but it did involve an element of risk, as shown by a letter from another governor of a northern province : « As to what I wrote to the king, my lord : "They have selected 500 roof-beams in the territory of the Urartian", now my "third man" who did the selection has felled them and piled them up along the river. As soon as he has finished the job, he will set out and assemble the troops. I can free up to 100 men to enter the Urartian territory and throw the beams in the river ; the rest I shall base in garrisons and ambush positions. Some kind of an insurrection may occur. I am strengthening the guard – I am afraid of an insurrection. » <sup>83</sup>

## Transportation of stone objects

Stone of all kind was available plentifully in Assyria <sup>84</sup>, and its quarrying and transportation to Dur-Šarrukin presented no problem on the whole. Blocks of stone could be relatively easily moved over long distances by carts, sledges, coracles and rafts, as shown by the sculptures of Sennacherib's famous palace in Nineveh <sup>85</sup>. The only problem that surfaces in the letters concerns the transportation of the winged bull colossi guarding the entrances to the royal palace and the city gates, which surpassed in size anything previously seen in Assyria. The tallest of them measured 5.8 meters in height and weighed 50 tons <sup>86</sup>. A letter to the king refers to two 11 cubits high colossi placed in front of the main gate of the center of the city

and two 10-cubit ones set up in front of the royal palace<sup>87</sup>. Another letter inventories eight colossi not yet removed from a riverside quarry, averaging 10 and 5 cubits (that is, about 4 and 2 meters) in length and width<sup>88</sup>. Both letters show that the colossi were provided by the king's magnates, each of whom was supposed to provide at least one of them<sup>89</sup>.

The problem created by the mere size of these objects was compounded by the fact that they had to be transported to Dur-Šarrukin from quarries situated across the river. There were two of these in Adia and Tastiate on the other bank of the Tigris<sup>90</sup>, and one in Habruri across the Upper Zab<sup>91</sup>. The problem is well stated by Sargon's son Sennacherib, who in his inscriptions describes the transportation of his father's bulls as follows: « Bull colossi of white limestone they quarried in Tastiate, which lies across the Tigris, as supports for their doors. For the construction of boats they felled mighty trees in the forests throughout the whole of their land. In Iyyar, at the regular time of the spring floods, they laboriously brought them over to this side on the mighty boats. As they crossed the quay-wall, the large boats went down. Their crews strained and injured their bodies, but by might and main with difficulty they brought them and placed them by their doors. »<sup>92</sup>

## Boats

Interestingly, we can actually follow the transportation process even in greater detail through the letters. The construction of the boats forms the subject of several letters from the State Treasurer Ṭab-šar-Aššur<sup>93</sup>, one of which reads as follows: « Concerning what the king, my lord, wrote to me: "The new boat which is coming from Assur – is there any other boat you are bringing in addition to it?"», six Assyrian boats have been launched on the river. I showed them to the boatmen, but they said: "We won't go near them." Now, I am going to bring two of these boats and, going back and forth, use them to transport the stone steps and thresholds of the watchtowers, until I can make the remaining boats available. Until I have



these boats ready, I shall bear the responsibility for the bull colossi in Adia. I shall [...] bring them over to this bank of the river. »<sup>94</sup>

Another letter, from the governor of Assur, evidently pertains to the same situation : « As to the boats which the king, my lord, wrote me about : "They must be finished by the beginning of the month ! Now all these months have been wasted, are there really no boats ?" Did I not write to the king my lord like this : "They will finish three boats by the 1st of Nisan, the fourth will be ready by the 1st of Iyyar ?" At the moment three (?) boats are finished... »<sup>95</sup>

The king's impatience derived from the fact that the bulls could be brought across the river only once a year, at the time of the spring floods in Iyyar, when the water in the river was high enough<sup>96</sup>. This fact was noted in the royal inscription just quoted, and it is also pointed out in several letters. It was of course absolutely essential from the viewpoint of the general timetable to utilize this opportunity ; missing it would have meant the delay of the entire project by a year. The idea was to bring as many colossi as possible across the river at the same time, and since the time available was limited, several ships at a time were needed to speed up the process. An acute awareness of the time factor clearly emerges from the following letter : « Concerning the officials in Adia and in Tastiate about whom the king, my lord, wrote me : "All of them should go to Dur-Šarrukin !", the bull colossi of the magnates are set up together and the king, my lord, earlier commanded : "They should quickly move the colossi and as long as the water in the river is high, bring them across the river !" If the officials go, who would then be here to look after the bull colossi ? Now, the magnates are expecting me to act. Let the king, my lord, give me time until Sivan, and I will get the work done and deliver it to the king. »<sup>97</sup>

Another letter refers to the process of raising a rough-hewn bull from the quarry to the quay at the river bank : « On the first day I took x king's men with me and went to Tastiate to raise the bull colossus. It has been hewn and is ready to be moved. I am now rolling poles against the quay and raising the bull colossus. We will do it all right ; the king, my lord, can be glad. »<sup>98</sup>

Finally, the dramatic sinking of a boat under the weight of a bull mentioned in the inscription is confirmed in a

letter from Aššur-bani, governor of Calah, who writes : « Aššur-šumu-ke'in called me to help and loaded the bull colossi on the boats, but the boats could not carry the weight and sank. Now, although it cost me a great trouble, I have now hauled them up again. » <sup>99</sup>

## Building of the City

As I already had occasion to point out, relatively few letters deal with the construction of the city proper and its parts <sup>100</sup>. We do, however, get some interesting glimpses into various aspects of the work ; and as in the case of the letters already reviewed, these few glimpses largely owe their existence to problems and difficulties encountered in the course of the works.

## City Wall and Canal

A case in point is a letter from the Treasurer Tab-šar-Aššur dealing with the building of the city wall <sup>101</sup>. The letter shows that the work on the wall was divided between various governors, whose respective assignments were calculated and defined in terms of specific work units, and that the calculations and assignments were made by the Treasurer, who also distributed the bricks <sup>102</sup>. However, we would know nothing of this, had not one of the governors misunderstood his assignment as too large and complained to the king. The writer explains the misunderstanding to the king and concludes the letter with the words : « The governor of Calah did not know that his wall assignment extended only as far as the edge of the gate, and that is why he said : "I have too large an assignment." I have now arbitrated between them and they are both doing their work. »

Another letter from the Treasurer details the amounts of bricks he had distributed to various governors, including those of Arpad, Samaria and Megiddo <sup>103</sup>; we learn that each of them had received 40 000 bricks, presumably for use in the stretch of the wall assigned to them. This letter seems to have been written only because the writer anticipated trouble as a result of his action: «The king, my lord, knows that the eunuchs and the royal entourage from whom I have been taking the bricks which I have given to the magnates are going to petition the king. The king, my lord, may do as he deems best; the king, my lord, knows that I have in the past days given bricks to the king's entourage.»

A further letter suggests that work on the canal leading to the city was probably started only after the city wall was already completed <sup>104</sup>. Again, this letter might have remained unwritten, had the writer not observed: «The men working in the canal,... 125 in number, have neither delivered straw of their own nor are they carrying that of Halahhu. By means of what will they glaze bricks for their work-quota tomorrow? What does the king my lord say?» <sup>105</sup>

## Palaces and Temples

Ten letters provide information on the palaces and temples constructed on the citadel and the lower city <sup>106</sup>. Two of these are very fragmentary and deal mainly with allegations against teams of craftsmen headed by a certain Gidgidanu, who were accused of having neglected their work and left Dur-Sarrukin without permission <sup>107</sup>. We learn, anyhow, that work on the temples of the citadel and the armory of the lower city was in progress while the letters were written <sup>108</sup>; and since the affair was being handled by the crown prince, these two sections of the city were certainly completed relatively late, between 710 and 708 B.C., when Sargon was residing in Babylonia. Interestingly, the prince points out that he had imposed strict security regulations in the city; making fire was not permitted, among other things <sup>109</sup>.

Two letters by the Treasurer Tab-šar-Aššur pertain to the construction of columned porticos called by the Hittite name *hilānu* for the royal palace<sup>110</sup>. According to Sargon's inscriptions, these structure were supported by four massive cedar columns, 12 cubits each in girth, placed on top of eight bronze lions arranged in pairs, which weighed 4,610 full talents each<sup>111</sup>. The measures indicate a diameter of 1.9 meters for the columns and a weight of 17 000 kg and a volume of 1.93 m<sup>3</sup> for the lions, assuming a light talent of 30 kg<sup>112</sup>. No trace of either the columns or the column bases has been discovered, but their existence cannot be doubted, as one of the letters reads: « Concerning what the king, my lord, wrote to me: "When are they going to cast the column – bases of the gate for the pillars of the *hilānu* houses?" I asked Aššur-šumu-ke'in and the artists, who told me this: « We are going to cast four column-bases of bronze for two *hilānus* in the month of Marchesvan; the small lions of the *hilānus* will be cast together with the big lions in the spring.»<sup>113</sup>

The letter then passes on to a review of the work on the temples of Sin, Šamaš and Nikkal, stating that their doors coated with sheets of silver had been finished and that work was progressing well on the doors to be coated with bronze sheets. This confirms the accuracy of Sargon's inscriptions, which state: « I covered the door wings made of cypress and sissou with bands of shining bronze and hung them in their entrances.»<sup>114</sup>

A further letter from the Treasurer deals with the orthostat reliefs of the palace depicting campaigns to Mannea and Media, explaining why the names of the conquered city lords and cities had not yet been attached to the scenes<sup>115</sup>. An interesting pair of letters describes a boat trip of the Treasurer to the city of Assur to fetch the cult objects to be set up in the temples<sup>116</sup>, and several further letters provide details on the organization of the economy and cultic services of the temples<sup>117</sup>.

The gods of Dur-Šarrukin were ready to enter their temples on the 22nd of Tishri, 707<sup>118</sup>, and half a year later, on Iyyar 6, 706, the city was officially inaugurated<sup>119</sup>. To honor the occasion, the next royal New Year's reception was held in the new capital; the inscriptions of Sargon describe the event as follows: « I invited Aššur, the father of the gods, the great lord, (and all) the great gods who dwell in Assyria into it. I pre-

sented them with... gifts without number, and offered pure sacrifices, given out of (my) hearts desire, before them. Sitting down in my palace together with rulers from the four quarters (of the world), with the governors of my land, with the princes, the eunuchs, and the elders of Assyria, I celebrated a feast, and accepted from the rulers of east and west valuable showpieces made from gold, silver, (and) all kinds of precious things befitting those palaces. » <sup>120</sup>

The happy mood created by these festivities was apparently not even spoiled by the earthquake which shook the city at the end of the year, for the governor was glad to report the king that no damage had occurred: « Upon my coming from Milqia to Dur-Šarrukin, I was told that there had been an earthquake in Dur-Šarrukin on the 9th of Adar. Perhaps the king, my lord, now says: "Is there any damage within the city wall?" There is [no]ne. The temples, the ziggurat, the palace, the city wall and the buildings of the city are all well; the king, my lord, can be glad. » <sup>121</sup>

## Epilogue

Thus, after a decade of sweat and toil, in early 705 Sargon could look forward to many happy years in his newly built capital, the consummation of his military and political successes. In his inscriptions he confidently declares: « The gods who dwell in heaven and earth, and also in this city, were pleased with my command and therefore granted me for all times the privilege of building of this city and growing old in it... I shall gather there the possessions coming from the numerous enemy countries, the offerings from all the inhabited places in the world, also the abundant produce of the mountains and the sea. » <sup>122</sup>

Fate, however, had decreed otherwise. Not half a year later, in Ab 705 B.C., Sargon fell on a campaign against a rebellious vassal <sup>123</sup>. His body was not retrieved for burial and his camp fell prey to the hostile troops, leaving the shocked crown

prince to ponder what the sins his father may have committed to deserve such a death <sup>124</sup>. The ignominious fate of the great conqueror brandmarked his city, too. It never became the Assyrian capital but was doomed to wither in the shadow of another great city, Nineveh, a mock of the glorious future that had been planned for it <sup>125</sup>.

## La construction de Dur-Sharrukin d'après la correspondance royale assyrienne

*Grâce à la correspondance adressée au roi par les gouverneurs et fonctionnaires assyriens, nous pouvons suivre au jour le jour les difficultés rencontrées pour se procurer main d'œuvre et matériaux nécessaires à l'ambitieux projet de cité nouvelle élaboré par Sargon depuis son ancienne capitale de Nimrud (Kalhu). Ces documents constituent une source d'informations précisément chiffrées sur l'organisation et l'infrastructure logistique qu'entraînent ces travaux, sur les corvées d'ouvriers, les animaux de transport avec les quantités de fourrage, l'extraction des blocs de pierre, l'état des routes.*

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### Notes

\* In the preparation of the present article I have benefited from an unpublished edition of all Sargon inscriptions by J. Renger placed at the disposal of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary project. This edition will be referred to below as « J. Renger, *Sar.* »

1. This resemblance is not accidental ; in the inscriptions of Sargon, the construction of the circuit wall is described in terms directly taken over from the section describing the creation of the world in Tablet V of Enūma

eliš (see D. Lyon, 1883, p. 10 : 66, and see *En. el.* V 9). For a square world map from Uruk see *Baghdader Mitteilungen Beiheft* 2 n° 98, analyzed in W. Horowitz, forthcoming, Ch. VIII ; note that this map is oriented exactly like Dur-Sarrukin, the four edges of the diagram facing the four cardinal directions. The same square groundplan, similarly oriented, is also found in Babylon, Borsippa and Calah, the holy abodes of Marduk (the demiurge) and Ninurta/Nabû (the cosmic scribe). Note also the Tibetan square world map centering

on Pasargadae and thus probably based on an Achaemenid original, reproduced in B. Mazar, 1975, p. 24, and analyzed in L.N. Gomilev and B.A. Kuznetsov, 1969. On the mandala see G. Tucci, 1969.

2. The total walled area of Babylon was  $2600 \times 1600 \text{ m} = 4.0 \text{ km}^2$  (cf. Herodotus I 178: « It [Babylon] lies in a great plain, and is in shape a square, each side an hundred and twenty stadiums (185 m) in length »); that of Calah was  $2100 \times 1670 = 3.5 \text{ km}^2$ , and that of Nippur about  $2000 \times 1500 \text{ m} = 3.2 \text{ km}^2$ . Compare the areas of Athens of Themistocles (550 acres =  $2.2 \text{ km}^2$ ), pre-exile Jerusalem (150 acres =  $0.6 \text{ km}^2$ ), and Susa (c.  $1300 \times 900 \text{ m} = 1.2 \text{ km}^2$ ).

3. See G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, p. 18ff.

4. According to V. Place, 1867-1870, vol. II, p. 79, the ziggurat had each stage of a different color (from the bottom: white, black, red, blue); see the reconstruction *ibid.* pl. 37. As noted by A. Jeremias, 1913, this sequence of colors corresponds to the coloring of the seven concentric walls of Ekbatana in Herodotus, Book I 98 (white, black, purple, blue, orange, gold, silver) and probably symbolized the seven planetary spheres.

5. See P. Albenda, 1986, p. 40ff. For reliefs still carrying traces of paint see, e. g., P.-E. Botta and E. Flandin, 1849-1850, vol. I, p. 76, and II, pp. 114 and 146.

6. See G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, II, p. 17, 48, and 65ff.

7. For the doors see *ibid.*, p. 25f and 43f (see below n. 114); for the glazed bricks, see *ibid.* p. 41f.

8. See P. Albenda, 1986, p. 49ff.

9. See G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, II, p. 95ff.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 75. See also below, n. 47.

11. Eponym chronicle, entry for year 706 (A.R. Millard, 1994, p. 48): « On the 6th of Iyyar, Dur-Šarrukin was inaugurated (šarru, stative of šarrû "to begin, inaugurate", see von Soden, 1957-1981, 1286 s. v. šurrû II 3). » See also below, n. 120.

12. Another exception is constituted by the Temple Mount project of Herod, which closely parallels the Dur-Šarrukin project and can be reconstructed in detail on the basis of historical sources and archaeological evidence. See A. Warszawski and A. Peretz, 1992, 3-46 (in Hebrew; ref. courtesy Israel Eph'al). The article evaluates « the nature and extent of this undertaking, which included quarrying, stone-dressing, and transportation of stones to the site, masonry, earthwork to fill in the esplanade and assorted tasks to complete the buildings. The listing of the methods used is derived from descriptions in historic sources, ancient drawings, and study of tools. An estimate of the manpower and time required to carry out the work is based on an analysis of the various types of labor required, and the assumed order in which the work was carried out. The economic aspects of the project are examined in terms of the wage level paid at that time, and the sources of funding that may have been available » (English abstract, *ibid.*, p. 191).

13. For the time being see D. Lyon, 1883; H. Winckler, 1889; A.G. Lie, 1929.

14. See below, nn. 77f (transport of timber). Additional visual information on the building process is provided by the sculptures of Sennacherib, on which see J.M. Russell, 1991, p. 101ff.

15. In addition to the letters listed in n. 17 below, see also the building



progress reports *ADD* 915+983, 916, 917, 949, and *CT* 53 429 + 430, to appear as *SAA* 11 n<sup>os</sup> 15-20.

**16.** See Unger, *RIA* 2 (1938): 250 (referring to *ABL* 102 = *SAA* 1 65, *ABL* 487 = *SAA* 1 67, *ABL* 989, and *ABL* 990 = *SAA* 1 130); G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, II, pp. 16, 30 and 57 (referring to *ABL* 92 = *SAA* 1 100, *ABL* 452 = *SAA* 1 66, *ABL* 480 = *SAA* 1 106, and *ABL* 813-814 = *SAA* 1 226-227); P. Albenda, 1986, pp. 33, 35 and 50 (referring to *ABL* 452 = *SAA* 1 66, *ABL* 484 = *SAA* 1 98, *ABL* 485, *ABL* 486 = *SAA* 1 64, *ABL* 705 = *SAA* 5 33, *ABL* 758 = *SAA* 5 205, *ABL* 813-814 = *SAA* 1 226-227, *ABL* 1432 = *SAA* 1 235 and *ABL* 1442 = *SAA* 1 159).

**17.** *SAA* 1 4\*, 25!, 26! 27\*, 39!, 54!, 56\*, 59, 60, 61, 62!, 63\*, 64\*, 65, 66!, 67\*, 68, 70+!, 80\*, 98, 101, 102\*, 106!, 110, 119\*, 120\*, 124!, 125!, 128!, 129!, 131!, 132\*, 133, 134\*, 139\*, 143\*, 144, 145\*, 150\*, 151, 152!, 159!, 163, 164\*, 165\*, 166, 167, 168!, 179!, 192!, 194!, 222, 226!, 227, 229, 235!, 236\*, 237\*, 238!, 239!, 248, 259!; *SAA* 5 3\*, 4\*, 6\*, 7\*, 8\*, 17\*, 25\*, 26\*, 27\*, 32!, 33\*, 34!, 43\*, 47!, 56\*, 57\*, 58\*, 105!, 111\*, 115\*, 117\*, 118\*, 119!, 127\*, 129\*, 206!, 232\*, 253, 254, 255, 268, 269\*, 290\*, 291\*, 292!, 296!, 297\*, 298!, 299\*, 300; *ABL* 581\*, 709!, 1065!; *CT* 53 61\*, 66\*, 239\*, 363, 369!, 741!; *ND* 2606! and 2651! (*Iraq* 23 pl. 19 and 22). Dur-Sarrukin is explicitly mentioned in the (39) texts followed by an exclamation mark; the (50) asterisked texts certainly refer to the city, even though the name of the city is not explicitly mentioned. The pertinence of the remaining twenty four letters is probable though not certain.

**18.** See *SAA* 1, Introduction, p. XI and XVII f.

**19.** *SAA* 1 54, 56, 59-68, 70+; *SAA* 5 290.

**20.** For the Treasurer (*masennu*) as the image of Marduk (the demiurge), see my article «The Assyrian Cabinet» in *Festschrift W. von Soden* (forthcoming).

**21.** *SAA* 1 4 and 25-27; *ND* 2606 and 2651.

**22.** *SAA* 1 39; see below, nn. 107-109.

**23.** There are six letters from the governor of Amidi, dealing with logs, bulls and thresholds (*SAA* 5 3, 4, 6-8 and 17); six letters from the governor of Nisibin, dealing with straw, reeds, and labor (*SAA* 1 235-239 and 248); five letters from the governor of Assur, dealing with boats, logs, and land (*SAA* 1 80, 98, 101, 102, 106); four letters from the Palace Herald, dealing with bulls, thresholds, and straw (*SAA* 5 115, 117-119); three letters from the governor of Tidu (?), dealing with door-logs and fruit trees (*SAA* 5 25-27); three letters from the governor of Tušhan, dealing with logs, reeds, and labor (*SAA* 5 32, 33, 95); two letters from the governor of Šabirišu (?), dealing with bulls, walls, and builders (*SAA* 5 56, 57); two letters from the governor of Harran, dealing with labor and oil (*SAA* 1 192, 194); two letters from the governor of Arzuhina, dealing with logs, stone, and land (*SAA* 5 232, *ABL* 581); and one letter each from the governors of Bit-Zamani (*SAA* 5 47/labor), Calah (*SAA* 1 119/bulls), Zobah (*CT* 53 010/labor), Arrapha (*ABL* 709/labor), Calah (*SAA* 1 110/bulls), Nineveh (*SAA* 1 151/logs), Birate (?) (*SAA* 5 129/logs), Sadikan-ni (*SAA* 1 222/saplings), and Habruri (*SAA* 1 145/bulls).

**24.** See *SAA* 1 124 and 125 (governor), *SAA* 1 128 and 129 (treasurer), and *SAA* 1 131-134 (priests).

**25.** See *SAA* 1 63 and 106, referring to the governor of Assur (context: timber and land); *SAA* 1 139 and

150, referring to the Palace Herald (context : stone slabs, bulls, labor); SAA 1 64 and 144, referring to the governor of Calah (context : city wall, reeds); and SAA 1 64, referring to the governor of Arrapha (context : city wall).

26. See the discussion in SAA 1, Introduction, p. XVIf.

27. See SAA 1 4 (governor of Que ; timber); SAA 1 65 and 237 (governor of Talmusa ; canal, labor); SAA 1 150 (governor of Rasappa ; bulls); SAA 1 4 (governor of Til-Barsip ; timber); SAA 5 291 (governors of Arpad, Samaria and Megiddo ; bricks).

28. For a survey of the Assyrian provinces see my forthcoming article on the Assyrian cabinet (above, n. 20).

29. For example, SAA 1 25 (below, n. 41), SAA 1 39 and 152 (below, nn. 107-109), SAA 1 54, 128-134 (below, nn. 116f), SAA 1 143 and 65 (below, nn. 104f), SAA 1 125 (below, n. 121), and SAA 1 159 (below, n. 44).

30. See my article « Assyrian royal inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian letters » in F.M. Fales (ed.), 1981, p. 117-143, esp. 132.

31. See below, n. 70 ; two other letters from Nimrud, ND 2606 and 2651 (see above, n. 21), may also date from the beginning of the building project.

32. E. g., Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 27ff (H. Winckler, 1889, pl. 29, n° 62 and p. 80ff; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 323ff).

33. See SAA 1 4, 39, 56, 63, 64, 65, 119, 125, 143, 152, 179, 235, 237; SAA 5 3, 34, 117, 118, 119, 268; *ABL* 1065.

34. Display Inscription, Room XIV, line 31; see Bull Inscription, line 48 (D. Lyon, 1883, p. 14; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 371ff); Barrel Cylinder from

Khorsabad, lines 43-49 (D. Lyon, 1883, p. 30ff; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 494ff).

35. See SAA 1 39: 18ff, 238: 4ff, 239: 4-8, SAA 5 298: 4-8, *ABL* 709: 3-6, 1065: 1-3 (labor); SAA 1 39: 6f, 60: 4ff, 152: 6-11, r. 4-8, 164: 4-9, *ABL* 1104: 1ff, *CT* 53 61: 3-8, (specialists); SAA 1 56: 4-8, 80: 5-10 (boats); SAA 1 64: 4-8, SAA 5 292: 4ff (city wall); SAA 1 145: 3ff, 150: 5-7, 166: 4ff, 167: 1ff, SAA 5 57: 4-6, 298: 9-3 (bull colossi); SAA 1 66: 4-8 and 67: 4-7 (hilanu palace); SAA 1 70+: 4f (sculptures); SAA 1 98: 5-11, 101: 9f, 102: 5-7, 151: 5f, 229: 4f, 248: 1-7, SAA 5 7 r. 3-5 (timber); SAA 1 222: 4ff, 227: 4ff, SAA 5 105 r. 4ff (saplings); SAA 1 106: 6-14 (land); SAA 1 192: 6-12, SAA 5 269: 4-7 (oil and barley); SAA 1 124: 4-7, 18-21 (houses); SAA 1 132: 5f (temples).

36. SAA 1 26.

37. ND 2651 (*Iraq* 23, pl. 22).

38. See SAA 1 27 and ND 2606 (*Iraq* 23, pl. 19).

39. SAA 1 4.

40. See SAA 1 12, and note the role played by the emperor's « friends » (*philoï, amici*) in Achaemenid, Hellenistic and Roman empires.

41. SAA 1 25.

42. Barrel Cylinder from Khorsabad, lines 45f (D. Lyon, 1883, p. 30ff; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 494ff); see Bull Inscription, lines 39f (D. Lyon, 1883, p. 14; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 371ff).

43. Barrel Cylinder from Khorsabad, lines 51f.

44. SAA 1 159.

45. Inscription from Room V, line 450 (H. Winckler, 1889, pl. 24, n° 50,

- J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 212ff); Display Inscription, Room XIV, line 29 (H. Winckler, 1889, pl. 29, n° 62 and p. 80ff; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 323ff); Display Inscription, Rooms IV... X, lines 153f (H. Winckler, 1889, pls. 30-36, n°s 63-77 and p. 96ff, J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 317), describes the forced labor as «people drawn from countries I had conquered, captives of mine».
46. *ABL* 1065 : 1-10.
47. Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 49-53; Bull Inscription, lines 92-96; Barrel Cylinder from Khorsabad, lines 72-74.
48. *SAA* 1 124.
49. See J.N. Postgate, 1974, p. 90ff and 221ff, and see Parpola, 1983, p. 244, note on text 248 r. 5f.
50. *SAA* 5 32 r. 11ff.
51. See especially *ABL* 709 : 3-8, « [Concerning the *mercenaries* of the chief eunuch [about whom the king, my lord], wrote : "They are to be exempt ; nobody may litigate [against them] and nobody may exact [corn taxes from them] !" », and *ibid.* r. 1ff, « [As to those...] who appealed to the king, my lord, saying, "We are exempt, but they have taken out our brothers to Dur-Šarrukin as recruits" – which mercenary's brother, or even nephew, has been taken out? They told the king, my lord : "Our relatives have been taken out", so let the king find out the truth in this matter. » See also *SAA* 1 25 and *SAA* 5 268. The privileged status of these troops is explained by their vital importance to national security, see *SAA* 1, Introduction, p. XIII.
52. *SAA* 1 179 r. 13ff.
53. See *SAA* 1 164 and 165 ; *SAA* 5 56 ; *CT* 53 61 and 239.
54. *SAA* 5 56.
55. *CT* 53 61.
56. *SAA* 1 65.
57. This matter is discussed from the ideological point of view in my article on the Assyrian Cabinet, to appear in *Festschrift W. von Soden*.
58. The letters distinguish between logs fit for roof-beams (GIŠ.ÚR = gušūru) and door-shafts (GIŠ.SŪ.A = šibšutu), see *SAA* 1, p. 156, note on n° 202, and the glossaries in *SAA* 1 and 5 s. vv. gušūru and šibšutu. See G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, p. 16, 23 and 25f.
59. See *SAA* 5 296 : 4ff, « As to the work of Dur-Šarrukin, we have brought out the local population by villages ; they will produce the bricks. »
60. See G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, p. 18.
61. *SAA* 5 119.
62. *SAA* 1 235-237.
63. *SAA* 1 236 r. 2-9 ; 235 : 13-20.
64. Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 29f ; Bull Inscription, lines 41f.
65. See *SAA* 1 226 and 227 (Nemed-Ištar, Suhu, Laqê) ; *SAA* 1 222 (Šadikanni on the Habur) ; *SAA* 5 27 (Tidu) ; *SAA* 5 105 (Tamnuna) ; *SAA* 1 110 ; *SAA* 5 268.
66. *SAA* 5 105 r. 4ff ; the letter was probably written by Nabû-ušalla, governor of Tamnuna (see *SAA* 5 104). On the location of Tamnuna « in dem Tigrisknie nordöstlich von Balata », see K. Watanabe, 1992, p. 361.
67. *SAA* 1 226.

68. SAA 1 227 : 4ff.

69. SAA 1 110 : 29-r. 3.

70. The author of the letter, Marduk-remanni, held the governorate of Calah before Aššur-bani, the author of SAA 1 119 (see below, n. 99), who certainly was the governor of the city since 713 BC. On the date of SAA 1 119 (ca. 716 BC) and Marduk-remanni's tenure of office (ca. 728-715) see J.N. Postgate, 1973, p. 8ff. Considering that the foundations of Dur-Šarrukin were laid in 717 BC, the date of the letter seems early but not incompatible with the construction of the city, since the writer only asks for a plan and does not refer to actual work on the park.

71. See SAA 1 4, 62, 63, 98, 101, 102, 151, 229, 248; SAA 5 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 25, 26, 33, 34, 43, 111, 117, 127, 129, 253, 254, 255; *ABL* 581; *CT* 53 66.

72. See SAA 5 3 r. 6ff, 6 : 7ff, 7, 26 r. 2ff, 33 r. 1ff, 34 r. 12ff, 111, 117 : 15ff, 254 r. 3ff, and see Fig. 3 *ibid.*, p. 7; for Nineveh as the collection point see SAA 1 63 : 8ff, 17ff and r. 8ff.

73. See SAA 1 4 : 7ff and r. 2ff, referring to timber from Tabal (Cappadocia); SAA 5 254 r. 9ff (Isana on the Habur); *ABL* 581 : 4ff and r. 1ff (Yasubu on the Adhem).

74. See Inscription from Room V, lines 461f (J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 212ff); Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 38f (J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 323ff); Bull Inscription, lines 72f (J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 371ff), referring to «four cedar columns measuring 12 cubits in girth, brought from the Amanus Mountains». See SAA 1 4 and 63.

75. SAA 1 63 : 8-13, 19-r. 16.

76. SAA 1 100.

77. P.-E. Botta and E. Flandin, 1849-1850, I, pp. 32-35, reproduced in P. Albenda, 1986, pl. 20-23, and SAA 1, p. 58f.

78. See P. Albenda, 1983, p. 103-135, with earlier literature. Albenda believes that the reliefs illustrate transport of lumber from Cyprus (or possibly Mt. Lebanon) to Al Mina in North Syria (p. 16f). This is out of the question since :

1. Cyprus is not indicated as a source of timber in Assyrian sources ;

2. Lebanon is not mentioned as a source of timber for Dur-Šarrukin in Sargon's inscriptions ; even the massive cedar columns for the *hilānu* porticos are explicitly said to have been imported from Mt. Amanus ;

3. one may further note that it would have made no sense to import large quantities of timber from Cyprus (over a long and dangerous detour via Tyre and Arvad) when much more convenient sources were available close to Assyria ;

4. the boats depicted in the reliefs were fit for river traffic but under no circumstances for use in the open sea. Similar boats are depicted in another Khorsabad relief (the *hilāni* scene in P.-E. Botta and E. Flandin, 1849-1850, II, p. 114 = SAA 1, fig. 23), and there the context unquestionably is river not sea ; see also the Sennacherib relief reproduced in SAA 5, fig. 32. In both of these latter reliefs, waves and fish are represented in exactly the same way as in the timber series. The winged bulls and mermaids shown on the timber reliefs are protective spirits guarding the towboats against dangers referred to in SAA 1 63 ; the other creatures depicted in them (snakes, turtles, crabs, conches) belong to the normal riverine fauna of the Euphrates and the Tigris (see, e. g., SAA 1, figs. 13 and 19d). The island towns of the timber reliefs most likely represent the (fortified) cities of Anat and Talmiš, both of which were situated «in the middle (*i. e.*, on islands) of

the Euphrates » according to Tukulti-Ninurta II (W. Schramm, 1970, 157, lines 67f). Note that the town of Sapirrutu mentioned in SAA 1 63 was also situated « in the middle of the Euphrates » in the immediate vicinity of these two cities (*ibid.*, line 66).

79. See SAA 1 98 and 248.
80. SAA 5 34 r. 12-22.
81. *Ibid.* r. 1-7.
82. SAA 5 3 r. 1ff. In SAA 5, the name of the governor is incorrectly read as Liphur-Bel; the correct reading is established by the spelling <sup>m</sup>na-as-hur-EN in O. Schroeder, 1922, I 41 : 7 (A. K. Grayson 1 n<sup>o</sup> 230) and its duplicate V. Donbaz, 1984, n<sup>o</sup> 233.
83. SAA 5 33 r. 1-15.
84. G. Loud and C.B. Altman, 1938, II, p. 15.
85. See the reliefs reproduced in SAA 1, p. 53 and 57 (figs. 17a-b and 19d).
86. On the Sargon bulls in general see P. Albenda, 1986, p. 49-51, and on the individual bulls *ibid.*, p. 121 (height 5.80 and 4.90 m.), 173f (4.80 m), 166 (4.42 and 4.09 m.), 157 (4.25 and 4.20 m.), and 179 (4.0 m.); G. Loud *et al.*, 1936, p. 46-55 (weight 30 tons and more); A.H. Layard, 1853, p. 110 (weight « between forty and fifty tons »). For letters dealing with the quarrying, fashioning and transportation of the bulls see SAA 1 25, 56, 61, 110, 119, 120, 145, 150, 163, 164, 166, 167; SAA 5 17, 57, 58, 115, 118, 297, 298, 299, 300; CT 53 363.
87. SAA 1 150.
88. SAA 1 145.
89. The bulls inventoried in SAA 1 145 are summed up as « eight bull colossi of the magnates »; SAA 1 150 refers to an « eleven-cubit colossus [of the Chief Clupbearer », « [two] bull colossi of Zeru-ibni » (the governor of Raṣappa), and « one belonging to the Treasurer ». Bulls were also provided by the governor of Amidi (SAA 5 17), the Palace Herald, Gabbu-ana-Aššur (SAA 5 115 r. 5f and 118). Note also SAA 5 298 : 9ff, referring to « the bu[ll colossi] of the magnates » waiting from transport over the river.
90. On the Tastiāte and Adia quarries see B. Engel, 1987, p. 18-25 with nn. 78-81 on p. 116, and J.M. Russell, 1991, p. 94-100 and 301, n. 9.
91. See SAA 1 145, by Šamaš-upah-hir, governor of Habruri.
92. D.D. Luckenbill, 1927, p. 104 : 64-78 (Cylinder E1, dated 694 BC).
93. SAA 1 56-57, and SAA 5 290.
94. SAA 1 56.
95. SAA 1 80.
96. See B. Engel, 1987, p. 22f.
97. SAA 5 298.
98. SAA 5 297.
99. SAA 1 119. Aššur-šumu-ke'in, whose professional status is unknown, deals with the transportation of bull colossi in his letter, SAA 1 150, and is stationed in Tastiāte in SAA 1 120 r. 2ff. In SAA 1 66, he appears as responsible for casting the bronze column-bases for the hilānu palace of Dur-Sarrukin (below, n. 113).
100. See SAA 1 64, 143, 165, SAA 5 56, 291, 292 (city wall); SAA 1 65, 143 (canal); SAA 1 39, 66, 67, 70+, 150, 152, CT 53 363 (palaces); SAA 1 54, 128, 129 (temples).
101. SAA 1 64.
102. These calculations are illustrated by the work-assignment schedules SAA 11 15-20.

- 103.** SAA 5 291. The assignation of this letter to Tab-šar-Aššur is not absolutely certain in view of the spelling EN for bēli in obv. 12 and rev. 6f and 11f, which is unusual in Tab-šar-Aššur's orthography; it is, however, attested in SAA 1 65 r. 10 and SAA 5 288 r. 4.
- 104.** SAA 1 143 : 1-8.
- 105.** *Ibid.*, obv. 8ff. See SAA 1 65, discussed above, p. 56.
- 106.** See above, n. 100.
- 107.** SAA 1 39 (from the crown prince, Sennacherib), and SAA 1 152.
- 108.** See SAA 1 39 : 18ff (citadel), and *ibid.*, r. 2ff (armory).
- 109.** *Ibid.*, r. 9ff.
- 110.** See J. Renger and B. Hrouda, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 4 (1972-5) : 405ff.
- 111.** See Inscription from Room V, lines 459ff; Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 36ff; Bull Inscription, lines 67ff; Threshold Inscription II, lines 28ff (J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 406ff).
- 112.** See B. Engel, 1987, p. 58ff.
- 113.** SAA 1 66 : 4-17.
- 114.** Inscription from Room V, line 458; Display Inscription, Room XIV, line 36; Bull Inscription, lines 65ff; Threshold Inscription II, lines 26ff.
- 115.** See SAA 5 282, now joined to SAA 1 70; note also SAA 1 59 and 60, referring to engravers (kapšarru) sent to Dur-Šarrukin... The « previous campaign » referred to in SAA 1 70+ may be that conducted by the magnates against Ellipi in 713, see the relevant entry in the eponym chronicle (A.R. Millard, 1994, p. 60) and *ABL* 1046 r. 4-10. SAA 5 250 reports on an army of the magnates gathering in Kar-Aššur under the leadership of the turtānu, the rab šaqê and Taklak-ana-Bel; a sculpture from Room 14 of the royal palace of Dur-Šarrukin depicts a military camp and is captioned « camp of Tak[lak-ana-Bel] » (see C.B.F. Walker in P. Albenda, 1986, p. 111). Note that the captioned sculptures from Room 2 of the palace pertain to the campaigns of 716 and 715 (*ibid.*, p. 108, nos. 2, 3), and those from Room 13 to the 8th campaign of year 714 (*ibid.*, p. 110f, n° 6).
- 116.** SAA 1 54 and 55. These letters are certainly related to the eponym chronicle entry for the year 707 (n. 118) and hence probably date from the preceding year. The letters SAA 1 131-134 seem to be more or less contemporary with SAA 1 54 and 55; SAA 1 128-130 refer to the gods of Dur-Šarrukin in their introductory formula and hence postdate Tishri, 707.
- 117.** See SAA 1 54, 128-129, 131-134.
- 118.** Eponym chronicle, entry for year 707 (A.R. Millard, 1994, p. 60).
- 119.** *Ibid.*, entry for year 706; see above, n. 11.
- 120.** Inscription from Room V, line 466-477; Display Inscription, Room XIV, lines 54-69; Bull Inscription, lines 98-100 (specifying the month Tishri as the time of the festival). Note that the divine and human banquets described in the inscriptions mirror each other, and see my remarks in W. von Soden (forthcoming).
- 121.** SAA 1 125 : 4-r. 7. Since the earthquake occurred in Adar (the 12th month) and the author refers to the temples, the ziggurat, the palace and the city wall as completed, it is extremely unlikely that the letter

was written before the inauguration festival, *i. e.*, in Adar 707.

122. Bronze Tablet, lines 55ff (D. Lyon, 1883, 20-22 and p. 48ff; J. Renger, *Sar.*, p. 483ff); Barrel Cylinder from Khorsabad, line 75; A.G. Lie, 1929, p. 83 : 11ff; H. Winckler, 1889, n° 54 : 12f.

123. Eponym chronicle, entry for year 705 (A.R. Millard, 1994, p. 60).

124. See H. Tadmor, B. Landsberger and S. Parpola, 1989 : 3-51.

125. It should be noted, however, that contrary to a wide-spread notion among Assyriologists (see, e. g., W. von Soden, 1954, p. 105, and most recently A.K. Grayson, 1991, p. 118),

the city was by no means abandoned after Sargon's reign. It is well attested as provincial capital through the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (see A.R. Millard, 1994, p. 61, years 693, 672, 664, and p. 130, s. v. *dür-Sarru-kën*; note also *ABL* 440 : 12, 538 r. 2, 845 : 7 and 1017 : 15, of Esarhaddon, and C. H. Johns, 1898-1923, 27 : 4 and *SAA* 6 340 r. 4, reign of Assurbanipal), and continued to be inhabited down to the end of the Assyrian empire. The economic and administrative tablets from the city found in the Oriental Institute excavations bear post-canonical eponym dates (*Sin-alik-pani*, *Sin-šumu-ibni* and *Nabû-tapputi-alik*) assignable to the very end of the reign of *Sin-šarru-iškun* (see R. Whiting, *State Archives of Assyria Studies* 2, p. 75f).