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**THREE CUNEIFORM TEXTS FROM THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINLAND:  
PROVENANCE, EDITIONS, AND  
COMMENTARY**

*Johannes Bach and Rick Bonnie*

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Kai Donner

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## Abstract

This paper offers provenance studies and editions of three hitherto unpublished texts stored in the National Museum of Finland collections. VK 5738:2 is another exemplar of a well attested clay cone of Gudea of Lagaš. The clay cone bears an M.K. signature in Arabic, indicating that it once was held in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. VK 6400:6 is a fragment of an octagonal prism of Sennacherib. Its text probably is a version of Sennacherib 17 with differing lineation, but other options remain possible. The object has been donated to the National Museum of Finland in 2004 after its re-discovery in the storerooms of the Finno-Ugrian Society. VK 6400:5 is a tablet fragment preserving text from a partially unknown royal inscription of Tiglath-pileser I. It has the same provenance as Sennacherib fragment VK 6400:6. The text on the obverse has its best parallel in the “Extended Five-Year-Annals” of Tiglath-pileser I (A.0.87.2). The reverse contains text that has its closest parallels in two inscriptions hitherto ascribed to Tiglath-pileser I’s son Aššur-bēl-kala. In 2020, Shibata proposed to rather attribute these two inscriptions to Tiglath-pileser I. The Helsinki fragment provides proof for this thesis, as the text on its reverse apparently also was part of at least some younger versions of the “Extended Five-Year-Annals”.



Dieser Aufsatz bietet Provenienzstudien und Editionen von drei bisher unveröffentlichten Texten, die in den Sammlungen des Finnischen Nationalmuseums aufbewahrt werden. VK 5738:2 ist ein weiteres Exemplar eines gut belegten Tonkegels des Gudea von Lagaš. Der Tonkegel trägt ein arabisches M.K.-Sigle, was darauf hinweist, dass er einst im Irak-Museum in Bagdad aufbewahrt wurde. VK 6400:6 ist ein Fragment eines achteckigen Prismas von Sanherib. Der Text ist wahrscheinlich eine Version von Sennacherib 17 mit abweichender Lineatur, andere Optionen sind jedoch weiterhin möglich. Das Objekt wurde 2004 dem Finnischen Nationalmuseum gespendet, nachdem es in den Lagerräumen der Finno-Ugrischen Gesellschaft wiederentdeckt wurde. VK 6400:5 ist ein Tafelfragment, das Text aus einer teilweise unbekanntenen Königsinschrift von Tiglat-pileser I. trägt. Es hat die gleiche Herkunft wie das Sanherib-Fragment VK 6400:6. Der Text auf der Vorderseite hat seine beste Parallele in den „Erweiterten Fünf-Jahres-Annalen“ Tiglat-pilesers I. (A.0.87.2). Die Rückseite enthält Text, der seine größten Parallelen in zwei Inschriften aufweist, die bisher Tiglat-pilesers Sohn Aššur-bēl-kala zugeordnet wurden. Im Jahr 2020 schlug Shibata vor, diese beiden Inschriften eher Tiglat-pileser I. zuzuschreiben. Das Helsinki-Fragment liefert einen Beweis für diese These, da der Text auf seiner Rückseite offenbar ebenfalls Teil der „Erweiterten Fünf-Jahres-Annalen“ war.



Source: *Advances in Ancient, Biblical, and Near Eastern Research*  
3, no. 1 (Spring, 2023): 1-27

# THREE CUNEIFORM TEXTS FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINLAND: PROVENANCE, EDITIONS, AND COMMENTARY<sup>1</sup>

*Johannes Bach and Rick Bonnie*



## Introduction

During preparations for the exhibition *Exploring the Ancient Near East* (Fin. *Tutkimusmatkoja muinaiseen Lähi-itään*),<sup>2</sup> three hitherto unpublished cuneiform texts kept in the Ethnographic Collection of the

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<sup>1</sup> Both authors have contributed equally to this study. We are grateful to Nadia Ait Said-Ghanem, Jacob Jawdat, Jaafar Jotheri, and Pilvi Vainonen for their efforts in providing us with information related to the objects, museums, and dealers discussed, and likewise to Jamie Novotny and Daisuke Shibata for their philological advice.

<sup>2</sup> The exhibition was held at the National Museum of Finland, Helsinki (May 18–September 4, 2022) and at the Museum of Central Finland, Jyväskylä (October 15, 2022 – January 1, 2023). The exhibition was developed and curated by researchers

National Museum of Finland in Helsinki were discovered. The three texts were brought to our attention by Pilvi Vainonen, the collection's curator. After a short contextualization, this article will provide a detailed account regarding the provenance of these three objects as well as a philological treatment of their texts.

Finland has had a long history related to the study of the ancient Near East,<sup>3</sup> including the first professorship in Assyriology in the Nordic countries. As a result, dozens of ancient Near Eastern archaeological objects, mostly cuneiform tablets, have found their way into Finnish museum collections (Bonnie 2022). The large majority of these objects are held by the Finnish Heritage Agency (Fin. *Museovirasto*), to which the National Museum of Finland also belongs.

Several dozens of cuneiform tablets are held in the Archaeological Collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency. These tablets were bought by the Finnish Assyriologist and later ambassador Harri Holma in Paris in 1913, and were almost certainly obtained from the Iraqi-French antiquities dealer Ibrahim Elias Gėjou (Bonnie 2022).<sup>4</sup> The cuneiform tablets have been published by Holma and others in the past.<sup>5</sup>

The three unpublished cuneiform texts discussed in this article, along with a few other objects, are instead held in the Ethnographic Collection of the National Museum of Finland. The difference in collection is due to the specifics of their provenance, as will be explained below.

### 3D Digitization and High-Resolution Photographs

The three cuneiform texts presented in this article first came to light during a study of ancient Near Eastern material held in Finnish collections, which was done in preparation for the above-mentioned recent exhibition. In light of this study, various objects, including these texts,

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from the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires at the University of Helsinki.

<sup>3</sup> Aro and Mattila 2007; Bonnie 2022.

<sup>4</sup> On Gėjou, see Dessagnes 2017, 76–119; Ait Said-Ghanem 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Holma 1914; Holma and Salonen 1940; Krecher 1971.

have been digitized in 3D using high-resolution photogrammetry, and they were incorporated into educational packages for Finnish high schools and in the popup exhibition *Baytuna*.<sup>6</sup>

A low-resolution (<100 mb) 3D digitization of the texts is available for viewing through the Sketchfab account of the Finnish Heritage Agency:

- Clay cone VK 5738:2: <https://skfb.ly/o7oEo>;
- Sennacherib prism fragment VK 6400:6: <https://skfb.ly/oqwQt>; and
- Royal inscription VK 6400:5: <https://skfb.ly/orxHs>.

A high-resolution 3D digital model of the three cuneiform texts is available for download via Debenjak-Ijäs, Bonnie, and Saari 2021. Click on the tab “Data,” then open the folder “Making Home Abroad: 3D Digitizations,” and then go to the specific inventory number (click on “Show more” at the bottom if you cannot find it directly):

- “VK5738\_2\_savinaula” (39,92 gb);
- “VK6400\_6\_saviprisma” (40,82 gb); and
- “VK6400\_5\_savitaulu” (38,42 gb).

A download button can be found on the righthand side. The 3D models can be downloaded in various formats, which can be opened in most 3D visualization programs. All photographs on which the 3D digital models are built can be downloaded from the links above. All files are shared under CC0 license.



## VK 5738:2–Gudea Clay Cone (= RIME 3/1.7.63)

### *Provenance*

Clay cone VK 5738:2 (Figures 1 to 4) is part of a collection of six objects (VK 5738:2–7) that were gifted in August 1977 by the Government

<sup>6</sup> For the high-resolution 3D digital models, see Debenjak-Ijäs, Bonnie, and Saari 2021. Lower resolution 3D models can be viewed on Sketchfab: <https://skfb.ly/owLZs>. For more about this project, see [www.makinghomeabroad.fi](http://www.makinghomeabroad.fi).



Figures 1–4: Clay cone VK 5738:2 from the Ethnographic Collection, The National Museum of Finland. Photos by Timo Ahola, reproduced under CC BY 4.0.

of Iraq to the President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen. A delegation of Iraqi officials visited the late President Kekkonen on the occasion of the opening of the *Kaksoisvirranmaan taidetta* (Eng. *Art of the Land of Two Rivers*) traveling exhibition at the Amos Anderson Art Museum in Helsinki.<sup>7</sup> The late President Kekkonen received the gift from this Iraqi delegation, which included the Minister of Information, Tariq Aziz, and the Chief State Archaeologist, during a visit at the President's residence. In autumn of that year, Kekkonen donated the six objects to the National Museum of Finland for safekeeping and conservation, which is how they became part of the Ethnographic Collection.

Aside from the clay cone, the gifted objects included a Syriac incantation bowl (VK 5738:3; see Harviainen 1978), a cylinder seal from Gudea's reign (VK 5738:4), an Abbasid golden *dinar* (VK 5738:5), an Abbasid silver *dirham* (VK 5738:6), and a Zengid copper coin (VK 5738:7).

Along the side of the clay cone, VK 5738:2, a museum inventory number in Arabic that spells "M.K. 2409/224" is handwritten in black pen (Figure 5). This presumably indicates the previous owner of this object, prior to it having been gifted to the late President Kekkonen. In the catalogue entry of the National Museum of Finland, it has been suggested that "M.K." stands for Kirkuk Museum. However, the number is actually used in the Iraq Museum, with M.K. being an abbreviation in Arabic for *mkerer*, meaning "repeated," as in "repeated object."<sup>8</sup>

In April 2013, the Iraqi Embassy in Helsinki requested that the National Museum of Finland returns VK 5738:2 and the other five objects gifted to the late President Kekkonen.<sup>9</sup> The Finnish Heritage Agency, which oversees the National Museum of Finland, ultimately



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<sup>7</sup> This traveling exhibition consisted of objects solely from the Iraq Museum and was shown at the Amos Anderson Art Museum from August 18 to November 13, 1977. It was the first exhibition on ancient Mesopotamia held in Finland. The traveling exhibition was organized by and its circulation fell under the responsibility of the Medelhavet Museum and the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm. The exhibition was first displayed in Stockholm and Oslo before opening in Helsinki, after which it moved to Geneva, Copenhagen, and Hildesheim. See further Styrenius 1977, 80.

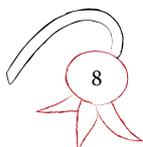
<sup>8</sup> We are grateful to Jaafar Jotheri for sharing this information with us.

<sup>9</sup> Yle News 2013; Salminiitty 2020, 13–14.



Figure 5: Inventory number inscribed on clay cone VK 5738:2 from the Ethnographic Collection, The National Museum of Finland.

Photo by Annukka Debenjak-Ijäs, reproduced under CC0.



decided against returning the objects. The reasons given were that the request was deemed to be an unofficial one from the Iraqi government to the Finnish government, and that a review of the documents, laws, and regulations indicated that the objects were legally obtained. The Iraqi government has issued no further requests to return these objects to date.

### Literature

Edzard 1997, 155–56 (E3/1.7.63).

Steible 1991, 361–62 (no. 67).

De Genouillac 1936, 129 and pl. XLVI.

Online edition at ORACC's subproject Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Royal Inscriptions (Zólyomi et al.): <http://oracc.org/etcsri/Q000920>.

## Measurements

Length	18.5 cm
Diameter top	7.3 cm
Diameter bottom	1.4 cm

## Edition

### *Transliteration*

- 1     <sup>d</sup>nin-ḡiš-zi-da
- 2     diḡir-ra-ni
- 3     gù-dé-a
- 4     énsi
- 5     lagaš<sup>KI</sup>
- 6     ur-<sup>d</sup>ḡá-tùm-du<sub>10</sub>-ke<sub>4</sub>
- 7     é-ḡír-su<sup>KI</sup>-ka-ni
- 8     mu-na-dù

### *Translation*

- 1–2   For Ningišzida, his (personal) god,
- 3–5   Gudea, the ruler of Lagaš,
- 6     man of Gatumdu,
- 7–8   built his house in Girsu.

### *Commentary*

The cone is in an almost perfect state of preservation, with only some minor damage mainly at the rim of the top knob. The signs are inscribed clearly and correctly, and the text exhibits no orthographic mistakes. Some stylus impressions are elongated. Each line of text is neatly separated by a line that regularly intersects with the top wedges directly below it. Nothing needs to be added to the philological commentaries given in the cited literature.

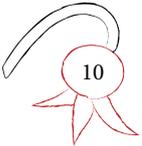


## VK 6400:6—A Fragment of a Sennacherib Prism Containing Accounts of the Third and Fifth Campaigns

### *Provenance*

The Sennacherib prism fragment VK 6400:6 (Figures 6–9), along with two other objects (including cuneiform text VK 6400:5; see below), was donated to the Ethnographic Collection of the National Museum of Finland in early 2004 by the Finno-Ugrian Society, a learned society in Finland.

The three objects were discovered when the society's storage room was being emptied, and it was decided in a meeting on February 20, 2004, that they, as well as some other objects, would be donated to the



Figures 6–9: Sennacherib prism fragment VK 6400:6 from the Ethnographic Collection, the National Museum of Finland.

Photos by Timo Ahola, reproduced under CC BY 4.0.

National Museum of Finland. A note from the Finno-Ugrian Society that came along with the objects states that the three objects in question were bought by Kai Donner in Paris. Kai Donner (1888–1935) was a Finnish anthropologist and linguist, and a friend of the Assyriologist Harri Holma. Donner’s father was the mentor of Karl Frederik Eneberg, the first Finnish Assyriologist, who in 1876 traveled along with George Smith to Nineveh and passed away there.<sup>10</sup> Donner’s mother, Minette Munck, was once Eneberg’s fiancée. There is no direct or specific information about the year in which Kai Donner bought the three objects in Paris, nor from whom. However, based on other sources it is likely that the objects were bought from the Iraqi-French antiquities dealer Ibrahim Elias Gėjou (1868–1942) in 1913.

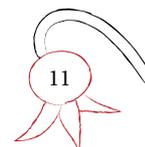
In Holma and Salonen’s publication (1940, 9–10) of some of the cuneiform tablets held in Helsinki, Holma writes: “Some time before the outbreak of the Great War my friend Kai Donner (d. 1935) ... and myself purchased from a Parisian dealer thirty-nine Babylonian cuneiform tablets.” As we noted in the introduction, these tablets are currently all held in the Archaeological Collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency. It can be presumed that the three objects that Kai Donner placed with the Finno-Ugrian Society were bought from that same Parisian dealer. This might have been around the same time, but it is equally possible that this was earlier or later.

Aside from cuneiform tablets, Holma also bought a complete Neo-Babylonian clay cylinder in Paris in 1913, which was specifically purchased for inclusion in the collections of the National Museum. Clay cylinder KM 6560 entered the museum’s collection in January 1914. Its description states specifically that it was bought for the sum of 750 Finnish marks from the antiquities dealer “I.E. Gėjou” in Paris (Bonnie 2022, 252). This clay cylinder is currently being prepared for publication (Debourse and Bonnie, Forthcoming). Based on this purchase, it is likely that the other cuneiform-inscribed objects bought in Paris also came from the same dealer.

During his career, Ibrahim Elias Gėjou came upon and sold several octagonal prisms inscribed with the annals of Sennacherib, both

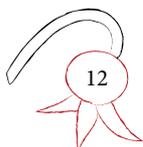
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<sup>10</sup> On Eneberg, see Aro and Matilla 2007; Bonnie 2022.



complete and fragmentary. In 1909, Gėjou sold the British Museum the complete octagonal prism BM 103000 (see Ait Said-Ghanem, Forthcoming for a study of its provenance) as well as a small fragment of an octagonal prism (BM 102996). Both preserve Sennacherib 17 (see Grayson and Novotny 2012, 126). The following year, in 1910, Gėjou again sold several fragments inscribed with the *Annals of Sennacherib* on an octagonal prism to the British Museum (BM 103214, 103216, 103217, 103219, and 103220), which partially preserve Sennacherib 16 (Grayson and Novotny 2012, 107). An additional fragment to this latter text was purchased by the British Museum from Gėjou in 1913 (1913-4-16, 160a).

Although the exact acquisition date of Sennacherib fragment VK 6400:6 is unknown, it is likely that if it were purchased from Gėjou it would have been at some point between 1910 and 1913, when this antiquities dealer was selling numerous fragments of octagonal prisms inscribed with the *Annals of Sennacherib*. Considering the known circumstances around the acquisition of VK 6400:6, it is very likely that this fragment (as well as VK 6400:5; see below) was acquired by the antiquities dealer Gėjou and sold on further to Kai Donner in contravention of the Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1906.<sup>11</sup>



### Literature

Grayson and Novotny 2012, 88–164, 167–203 (with detailed bibliography).

### Measures

Height	5.6 cm
Width	6.9 cm
Thickness	2.9 cm
Angle	ca. 130°

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Shaw 2003, 126–30; Kersel 2010, 86; Al Khabour 2023, 96.

## Edition

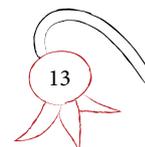
### Transliteration

#### col. I'

- 0' [ù<sup>m</sup>ha-za-qi-a-ú<sup>kur</sup>ia-ú-da-a-a]  
 1' [ša la ik-nu-šu a-na ni]-<sup>r</sup>ri<sup>1</sup>-ia  
 2' [46 URU<sup>MEŠ</sup>-šú É BÀ]D<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ni  
 3' [dan-nu-ti ù URU<sup>MEŠ</sup> TUR<sup>MEŠ</sup> ša li-me-ti]-šú-nu  
 4' [ša ni-ba la i-šu-ú i-na šuk-bu-u]s a-ram-me  
 5' [ù qit-ru-ub šu-pe-e mit-ḥu]-<sup>r</sup>su<sup>1</sup> <sup>r</sup>zu<sup>1</sup>-uk GÌR<sub>II</sub>  
 6' [pil-ši nik-si ù kal-b]an-na-te al-me KUR-ud  
 7' [2 ME LIM 1 ME 50 UN<sup>M</sup>]<sup>EŠ</sup> TUR GAL NITA ù MUNUS  
 8' [ANŠE.KUR.RA<sup>MEŠ</sup> ANŠE.KUN]GA<sup>MEŠ</sup> ANŠE<sup>MEŠ</sup> ANŠE.GAM.MAL<sup>MEŠ</sup>  
 9' [GU<sub>4</sub><sup>MEŠ</sup> ù US<sub>5</sub>.UDU<sup>LA</sup> š]a la ni-bi ul-tu qer-bi-šú-un  
 10' [ú-še-ša-am-ma šal-la]-ti-iš am-nu  
 11' [šá-a-šú GIM MUŠEN qu-up-pi] <sup>r</sup>qé<sup>1</sup>-reb<sup>URU</sup>ur-sa-li-mu  
 12' [URU LUGAL-ti-šú e-sír-šú]<sup>URU</sup>ḥal-šu<sup>MEŠ</sup> UGU-[š]ú  
 13' [ú-rak-kis-ma a-šé]-<sup>r</sup>e<sup>r</sup> KÁ.GAL <sup>r</sup>URU<sup>r</sup>-<sup>r</sup>šú<sup>r</sup>  
 14' [ú-te-ra ik-ki-bu-u]š URU<sup>M</sup>[<sup>EŠ</sup>-šú ša aš-lu-la]

#### col. II'

- 1' <sup>r</sup>a<sup>r</sup>-na-ku <sup>r</sup>i<sup>r</sup>-<sup>r</sup>na<sup>r</sup> [GÌŠGU.ZA né-me-di it-ti ERIM<sup>MEŠ</sup>]  
 2' <sup>r</sup>ta<sup>r</sup>-ḥa-zi-<sup>r</sup>ia<sup>r</sup> [gít-ma-lu-ti i-na né-re-bi-šú-un]  
 3' <sup>r</sup>pi<sup>r</sup>-qu-ti š[u-nu-ḥi-iš e-ru-um-ma mar-ši-iš]  
 4' e-te-el-l[a-a ŠU-SI<sup>MEŠ</sup> KUR<sup>MEŠ</sup> pa-áš-qa-a-ti]  
 5' <sup>r</sup>šu<sup>r</sup>-ú<sup>1</sup>ma-ni-i[a-e tur-bu-u<sup>r</sup> GÌR<sub>II</sub> ERIM<sup>HLA</sup>-ia]  
 6' <sup>r</sup>e<sup>r</sup>-mur-ma<sup>URU</sup><sup>r</sup>uk<sup>r</sup>-[ku URU LUGAL-ti-šú e-zib-ma]  
 7' <sup>r</sup>a<sup>r</sup>-na ru-qé-e-t[i in-na-bit<sup>URU</sup>uk-ku al-me KUR-ud]  
 8' <sup>r</sup>áš<sup>r</sup>-lu-la šal-la-s[u mim-ma šum-šú NÍG.ŠU NÍG.GA]  
 9' <sup>r</sup>ni<sup>r</sup>-šir-ti <sup>r</sup>É.GAL<sup>r</sup>-[šú ul-tu-qer-bi-šu]  
 10' <sup>r</sup>ú<sup>r</sup>-še-ša-am-ma šal-[la-tiš am-nu]  
 11' [ù 35 UR]U<sup>MEŠ</sup> ša pa-[a-ṭi li-me-ti-šú]  
 12' [ak-šud<sup>ud</sup>-ma UN<sup>MEŠ</sup>]<sup>r</sup>GU<sub>4</sub><sup>MEŠ</sup><sup>r</sup> [ù še-e-ni ANŠE.MEŠ]  
 13' [áš-lu-la ap-pu-ul aq-qur ina<sup>d</sup>GÌŠ.BAR aq-mu]



*Translation*

col. I'

[(Hezekiah ...) who had not submitted to my yo]ke—I surrounded (and) conquered [forty-six of his fortified wall]ed [cities and small(er) settlements in] their [environs, which were without number, by having] ramps [trodden dow]n [and battering rams brought up, the assault] of foot soldiers, [sapping, breaching, and siege] engines. [I brought] out of them [200,150 peopl]e, young (and) old, male and female, [horses, mul] es, donkeys, camels, [oxen, and sheep and goats, wh]ich were without number, and counted (them) a[s booty. As for him (Hezekiah), I confined him] inside the city of Jerusalem, [his royal city, like a bird in a cage. I set up] blockades against hi[m and made him dread exiting] his city gate. The citi[es of his that I had plundered...]



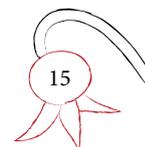
col. II'

(..., and) I myself, in [an armchair, with my crack] combat [troops, entered their] narrow [passes with great difficulty and] ascend[ed with struggle the steep mountain peaks.] He, Maniy[e,] saw [the dust cloud (stirred up) by the feet of my troops], then [he abandoned the city] Uk[ku, his royal city, and fled] afar. [I surrounded, conquered, (and)] plundered [the city Ukku. I brought out of it every kind of possession (and) property,] the treasures of his palace, and [I counted (it) as boo] ty. [Moreover, I conquered thirty-five cit]ies on the bor[ders of its out-skirts and carried off people], oxen, [and sheep and goats, (and) don- keys. (Then) I destroyed (them) devastated (them), (and) burned (them) with fire.]

*Commentary*

The text on this fragment has several parallels among Sennacherib's prism inscriptions. The account on the third campaign including the Siege of Jerusalem is also preserved in Senn. 4, 15–19, and 22–23; the report on the fifth campaign including the Maniye episode is attested in Senn. 16–19 and 22–23. Restorations and translation follow Senn. 17, iii 39–57 and iv 47–59; see Grayson and Novotny 2012, RINAP 3/1, 132–133 and 135. With all due caution in respect of the partially low numbers of preserved manuscripts, some orthographic features

support this choice: In col. i' 2', the Helsinki fragment uses the phonetic complement *-ni* after the logogram [... BÀ]D<sup>MEŠ</sup>, and in col. i' 6' it shows a gen. pl. fem. ending in *-āte*, [(ina) ... kal-b]an-na-te. This combination coincides only with the orthography displayed by Senn. 17; all other potentially related inscriptions exhibit either one of these two writings but never both together. The Helsinki fragment differs in some other orthographic aspects as well, for example in the use of *ù* and the spelling <sup>URU</sup>*ur-sa-li-mu* instead of <sup>URU</sup>*ur-sa-li-ma*.<sup>12</sup> Senn. 16 could be another potential text of comparison, as it is likewise recorded on an octagonal prism. Its only difference to the Helsinki fragment is using TE instead of TI as the final sign for writing the word *kalbanāti/e*. Likewise, Senn. 18 does not have these two particular words nor the Maniye episode preserved but would remain another potential candidate as it is the successor version to Senn. 17. Scores for the cited inscriptions are provided on the CD-ROMs accompanying the physical copies of RINAP 3/1 and RINAP 3/2, and on the corresponding homepages of the RINAP 3 subproject on ORACC.<sup>13</sup> The angle between the two preserved sides of the Helsinki fragment measures at ca. 130°, which points to it originally belonging to an octagonal prism.<sup>14</sup> The line arrangement of the Helsinki fragment is peculiar and does not match any of those given in the scores. Each sentence is written over two lines, which indicates that the prism had narrower columns than was customary in older prisms. The clay supports on which Senn. 17 is preserved are octagonal prisms, a shape that matches the Helsinki fragment. It therefore seems possible that the Helsinki fragment is a copy of Senn. 17 with differing linea-



<sup>12</sup> We thank Nadia Ait Said-Ghanem for this information. On textual criticism and royal texts, cf. Howard 2017; Howard 2020; Lauinger 2015; Worthington 2012.

<sup>13</sup> <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/scores/>.

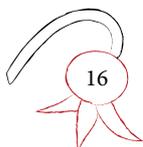
<sup>14</sup> On the different types of clay supports inscribed with Sennacherib's royal inscriptions, see Grayson and Novotny 2012, 2–6; cf. the overview at ORACC's RINAP 3 sub-project (<http://oracc.org/rinap/rinap3/rinap3introduction/surveyoftheinscribedobjectsincludedinpart1/>). The measurement of the Helsinki fragment's angle was taken by the collection's curator Pilvi Vainonen on March 24, 2021. Ideally for an octagonal prism, the measurement for a single angle should be 135°, corresponding to an angle sum of 1080°.

tion, but other options remain valid as well (e.g., intermediate version between Senn. 17 and Senn. 18, or copy of Senn. 18 with deviating line arrangement).

## VK 6400:5—A Partially Unknown Royal Inscription of Tiglath-pileser I<sup>15</sup>

### *Provenance*

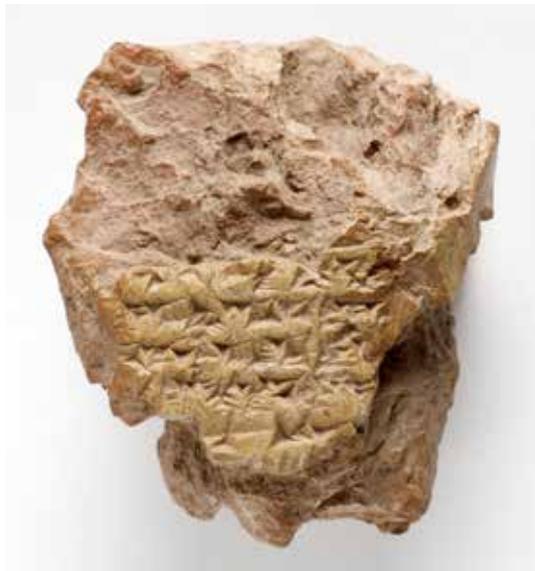
Royal inscription VK 6400:5 (Figures 10 and 11) has the same provenance information as Sennacherib prism fragment VK 6400:6. See further above.



### **Literature**

Grayson 1991, 31–35 (Tiglath-pileser I inscription A.0.87.2) and 86–112 (inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala).

Shibata 2022.



Figures 10–11: Royal inscription VK 6400:5 from the Ethnographic Collection, the National Museum of Finland. Photos by Timo Ahola, reproduced under CC BY 4.0.

<sup>15</sup> I (JB) thank Jamie Novotny, Daisuke Shibata, and the peer reviewer of this article for their philological advice and general help.

Online editions of the royal inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala and his father Tiglath-pileser I are available at the Royal Inscriptions of Assyria Online subproject at ORACC: <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/>.

### Measurements

Height	7.3 cm
Width	6.1 cm
Thickness	5.1 cm

A striking feature of the Helsinki manuscript is its thickness of about 5 centimeters. Such thicknesses are known from other tablets attributed to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. Judging from the photos provided online by the British Museum, some fragmentary manuscripts (K 2804; K 2806) of the “Extended Five-Year-Annals of Tiglath-pileser I” (A.0.87.2) have thicknesses comparable to that of the Helsinki fragment. The fragment’s thickness also implies that the original tablet was larger in size. Dominique Charpin (2010, 75) gives average measurements of 36 × 33 × 4–5 centimeters for large tablets. Jonathan Taylor (2011, 8) gives an average surface size of 30–40 square centimeters at a thickness of 4–8 centimeters. Two Middle Assyrian royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I today housed in the Schøyen Collection in Oslo have thicknesses of 3.3 and 3.5 centimeters, respectively (CUSAS 17, no. 68 and no. 69). The former is completely preserved, with a surface measure of 19.7 × 14.5 centimeters, while the latter is only preserved as a fragment (the remaining surface measures 6.9 × 8.7 cm). For further comparison regarding surface sizes, some examples from the Neo-Assyrian period might be of interest: the tablet of “Sargon’s Eighth campaign,” carrying 430 lines of text, measures about 37 × 24 × 4 centimeters,<sup>16</sup> and K 3751, the surviving half of a tablet presumably from the 17th *palû* of Tiglath-pileser III, which carries a long summary inscription (86 lines preserved), is 23.4 centimeters wide<sup>17</sup> and must have once been about 40 centimeters in height (17.5 cm preserved) at a thickness of up to



<sup>16</sup> <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010166028>.

<sup>17</sup> Tadmor and Yamada 2011, 115–25.

4 centimeters.<sup>18</sup> The cited evidence suggests that the Helsinki inscription was quite long, too.

## Edition

### Transliteration

#### Obverse

- 1' [KUR a-bé-eš-la-a-ia<sup>MEŠ</sup> ERIM<sup>MEŠ</sup> KUR ha-te-e la-a ka-ni-še al-qa-a a-na  
UN<sup>MEŠ</sup> KUR-ti-ia am-nu]-ú [(blank)]
- 
- 2' [... IdIŠKUR<sup>?</sup>-ER]ÍN.TÁH AD-ia [(MAN<sup>?</sup>)]
- 3' [(KUR a-šur<sup>?</sup>) ... KUR lu-lu-mi-i a]-<sup>r</sup>na<sup>r</sup> si-ḫír-ti-[ša]
- 4' [ak-šud 25 DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ni-šu-nu ana ... d<sup>i</sup>š<sub>8</sub>-tár aš-šu-ri-te  
DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ni ša URU-i]a<sup>d</sup>a-šur<sup>KI</sup>
- 5' [ù<sup>d</sup>INANNA<sup>MEŠ</sup>Ša<sup>1</sup> KUR-ti-ia a-qiš NÍG.GA-šu-nu a-na d<sup>i</sup>škur EN-ia  
á]š-ru-u[k]
- 
- 6' [i-na GIŠTUKUL-ti aš-šur EN-ia KUR.KUR na-i-ri DAGAL<sup>MEŠ</sup> iš-tu  
KURtum<sub>4</sub>-me a-di KUR da-ie-e-ni] ù A.AB.B[A]
- 7' [e-le-ni-te (ša SILIM-mu<sup>d</sup>UTU/šam-ši) ak-sud 30 LUGAL<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ni-šu-nu  
a-na GÌR<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ia ú-šék-niš ina ap-pi]-<sup>r</sup>šu-nu<sup>r</sup> <sup>r</sup>ki<sup>r</sup>-ma [GU<sub>4</sub>]
- 8' [šer-re-ta at-ta-di a-na URU-ia<sup>d</sup>a-šur<sup>(KI)</sup> al-qa-šu-nu li-tí-šu-nu  
aš-bat GUN u ta-mar-ta UGU]-<sup>r</sup>šu-nu<sup>r</sup> <sup>r</sup>ú-kín<sup>r</sup>
- 
- 9' [aḫ-la-mi ar-ma-ia<sup>MEŠ</sup> iš-tu tar-ši KURsu-ḫi a-di URUKar-ga-miš ša  
KURha-at-te ina 1 u<sub>4</sub>-me aḫ-bu-ut EGIR-šu-nu i-na GIŠMÁ<sup>ME</sup>Š]

#### Reverse

- [...]
- 1' [i-na siq-ir/ri<sup>d</sup>a-šur<sup>d</sup>IŠKUR ... EGIR<sup>KUR</sup>] ḫa<sup>1</sup>-ri-me ša MU 1.KÁ[M]
- 2' [2<sup>?</sup>-šu<sup>id</sup>pu-rat-ta lu-ú e-te-bir iš-tu... ...-<sup>r</sup>a-da-i]a<sup>?</sup>MEŠ su-te<sub>9</sub>-e<sup>M</sup>[EŠ]
- 3' [KURna-<sup>r</sup>a-...<sup>?</sup> ...] ḫa<sup>1</sup>-di DAM<sup>MEŠ</sup>-šu-nu DUMU<sup>M</sup>[EŠ-šu-nu...]
- 4' [URUPit-ru ... ša GÌR<sup>MEŠ</sup>] am<sup>!</sup>-ma-a-te ša UGU í<sup>d</sup>[sa-gu-ra]
- 5' [(...) lu-ú ak-šu-ud... ...-šu]-nu-ti [...]
- 6' (traces of the tops of signs) [...]

<sup>18</sup> Reade 2017, 176.

### Translation

#### Obverse

[I subdued the rebellious and insubmissive Šubaru. I took 4,000 Urumu (and) Abešlu, insubmissive troops of Ḫatti, (and) regard]ed [them as people of my land].

[... Adad<sup>?</sup>]-nārārī (I), my (fore-)father, [(king of Aššur)<sup>?</sup>. I conquered t]he entire land [of the Lullumu. I gave 25 of their gods to the deities Ninlil, Anu, Adad, and the Assyrian Ištar, the gods of m]y [city] Aššur and the goddesses of my land. I] gav[e their property to the god Adad, my lord.]

[With the support of the god Aššur], my lord, I conquered the extensive lands Nairi from the land Tammu to the land Daiēnu] and the [Upper] Se[a] [in the west. I subdued 30 of their kings.] Like [oxen, to their noses I attached ropes (and) took them to my city Aššur. I took hostages from them]. I [imposed upon them tribute and impost.]

[I plundered [the Aḫlamû-Arameans from the edge of the land Sūḫu to the city Carchemish of the land Ḫatti in a single day. I crossed the Euphrates after them in rafts] (...).

#### Reverse

[By the command of Aššur and Adad ... in pursuit of the A]rameans, during which within one yea[r I did cross the Euphrates twice, from ... the ...-a'dai]u, the Sutu, [the Na'a-..., ...] besides their women and sons/children. [The city of *Pitru* which is on the opposite bank,] on the R[iver Sagurri I did conquer ... (I) ... t]heir [...].

### Commentary

If the proposed reconstruction of the text is correct, the side containing the Lullumu episode must be the obverse, since in the inscription A.0.87.4 of Tiglath-pileser I the episode on the multiple Euphrates crossings in one year in pursuit of the Aḫlamû-Arameans is relayed only later (cf. A.0.87.4, 20–21 and 34–36).



Obverse

For the obverse, the best parallel seems to be lines 21–28 of the Extended Five-Year-Annals of Tiglath-pileser I (A.0.87.2). I want to thank and give credit to the anonymous peer reviewer for their important comments on this part of the text, which I am following.

- 1’ The spacious arrangement of the signs of at least the last word in this line is indicated by the solitary appearance of the Ū-sign. There is only little space left toward the right edge of the tablet. It is therefore possible that the line’s single preserved sign is the end of a verbal form, either in 3rd pl or subordinated 3rd sg. However, in the proposed reconstruction this would result in a spelling *am-nu-ú* for *amnu* 1st preterite G of *manû* “to count.” Plene spellings of the 1st sg preterite of *manû* G are attested only in royal inscriptions since Tiglath-pileser III. Alternatively, and possibly less likely, one could propose that the wording of this line was slightly different from the assumed parallel line A.0.87.2, (21–)22. Instead of <sup>21</sup>4 *līm Urumaya Abešlaya ...* <sup>22</sup>... *ana nišē mātīya amnu* “4,000 Urumayu and Abešlayu ... I counted them to the / regarded them as people of my land,” the line could have ended in something along the lines of [... *ana mātīya / āliya Aššur*] *ú-[bil]* “([4,000 Urumayu and Abešlayu ...]) I [sent to my land / my city of Aššur]. The spelling *ú-bil* for the 1st sg preterite of (*w*)*abālu* G is attested twice in the corpus of Middle Assyrian royal inscriptions (A.0.76.21, 14’; A.0.78.1001, obv. 10’). However, the line as proposed here as an alternative reconstruction has no known parallel in the texts of Tiglath-pileser I. Yet another alternative would be to consider whether the line had an altogether different content than A.0.87.2, 21–22, or whether the single *ú* is the beginning of a verbal form *ú-te-er/ter*, which would match the end of A.0.87.2, 20 (here spelled *ú-te-er*). Lines A.0.87.2, 21–22 would have been elided then in the Helsinki manuscript, and its narrative would have continued with a modified version of the summary report on the conquest of Lullumu (A.0.87.2, 23–24).
- 2’ || - / A.0.87.2, 18’. No exact parallel to this line is attested. The mention of a royal predecessor at this point in the narrative,



assuming that the narrative in question is a military and not a building report, would be unexpected but not without precedent. Historical analepsis has been attested since the Old Assyrian period but before Adad-nārārī largely only in building reports (exceptions are A.0.39.1, 12–17; A.0.39.2, i 14–18; A.0.40.1001, 5). Since Adad-nārārī I, historical analepsis may also occur in the introductory section's filiation (cf., e.g., A.0.76.1, 18–26). Another inscription of Adad-nārārī I contains a highly fragmentary attestation of a (probable) historical analepsis referencing his royal predecessor Enlil-nārārī within a military report (A.0.76.21, 5–8'). Only two more examples of historical-military analepsis are known from his successors' inscriptions, one of which does not (A.0.77.1, 47–48) and one of which does (A.0.78.1, iii 30–34) reference events from the reign of a forefather. On the other hand, extensive analepsis with explicit recourse to the military deeds of the king's predecessors is attested in the royal epics (cf., e.g., Tukulti-Ninurta Epic ii = A obv. 26'–37'). One additional example hails from that very Tiglath-pileser inscription proposed as being parallel to the Helsinki manuscript, A.0.87.2, line 18. It remains unclear how much of the beginning of the line is lost, but ex. 3 preserves *a-bi-ia* "... my (fore-)father" before the summary narrative of the victory over the Mušku ensues. The discussed line of A.0.87.2 does not connect to the Helsinki fragment. The beginning of the corresponding line 23 that would connect to the following line 3' of the Helsinki fragment is not preserved for A.0.87.2 and is reconstructed based on the Lullumu episode of inscription A.0.87.4. Theoretically, this would allow the proposition of an initial analepsis for A.0.87.2, 23, which would (could) correspond to line 2' of the Helsinki manuscript. If so, a reconstruction of the royal name as [ ... <sup>ld</sup>IŠKUR-ER]ÍN.TÁḪ = Adad-nārārī would be fitting. The episode under discussion reports on a military victory of Tiglath-pileser I over Lullumu, while Adad-nārārī I notably included a victory over Lullumu in his titulary (cf. A.0.76.1, 3–4). There is some damaged space left at the end of line 2' that probably could have accommodated only one sign. If a sign were to follow, then it should probably belong



to a short apposition to the royal name, for example in the form of a title like “king (or: viceroy) of Aššur.” Line 2’ could have ended with a corresponding sign, likely ŠID (*iššiakku*) or MAN (*šarru*), but then the second element of the title, <sup>(KUR)</sup>Aššur, must have been shifted to the next line.

3’–5’ || A.0.87.2, 23–24. Tiglath-pileser I makes frequent use of the expression *ana siḫirtīšu* “in its totality” in the military narrative of his inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> Two further royal acts of donating to a deity constructed with *šarāku* “to gift, donate” are attested in another Tiglath-pileser I inscription.<sup>20</sup>

6’–8’ || A.0.87.2, 25–27. In 8’, only faint traces of the signs ŠU and NU are visible at the damaged lefthand side of the line; likewise, it is so regarding the sign KÍN at the righthand end of the line. After 8’, faint traces of a line ruling are preserved, which match the separation of the text into paragraphs by line rulings in obv. 1’ and 5’.

9’ || A.0.87.2, 28.



### Reverse

The text on the reverse of the tablet seems to be closely related to inscriptions which hitherto have been attributed to Aššur-bēl-kala (A.0.89.6; A.0.89.9). Recently, Daisuke Shibata (2022) could demonstrate that the so-called “Broken Obelisk” (A.0.89.7) as well as the two royal inscriptions just cited rather must be attributed to Aššur-bēl-kala’s father, Tiglath-pileser I. Shibata’s proposal is followed here. The report on the double Euphrates crossing also appears, in differing versions, in some other texts of Tiglath-pileser I (cf. A.0.87.3, 29–31; A.0.87.4, 34–36; A.0.87.31, 19–23).<sup>21</sup> The restorations of the Helsinki fragment offered here are based on these inscriptions. The line arrangement of

<sup>19</sup> A.0.87.1, *passim*. See further A.0.87.2–A.0.87.5; A.0.87.10; A.0.87.13.

<sup>20</sup> A.0.87.1, ii 61–62: 60 (copper kettles “together with their gods” for Adad); iv 32–39: 25 (gods from the lands of the Paphu and Ḫabḫu to various deities and temples).

<sup>21</sup> This inscription can be found only on ORACC (cf. <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/riao/ria3/Q006686/html>).

the obverse of the Helsinki manuscript is curious, since it seems to have covered considerably more text in a single line than the parallel version A.0.89.6. The Helsinki text appears to be also only roughly in sync with the lineation of A.0.89.9. It is most likely a summary inscription in the style of A.0.89.6 and A.0.89.9 without exactly duplicating their wording. As far as is discernible, the narrative of the Helsinki text is considerably closer to these inscriptions than to A.0.87.3; A.0.87.4; and A.0.87.10:

1' || A.0.89.6, 6'-7'; A.0.89.9, 3'-4'. A.0.89.6' spells *[i-na si-qi]r*, while A.0.89.9, 3' spells *i-na siq-ri*. The spelling <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-me* "Arameans" is not attested in the cited parallels, which have <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ra-me* and <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-mi*<sup>MES</sup>, respectively. However, and notably, the spelling <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-me* is attested abundantly in column iii of A.0.89.7, the "Broken Obelisk." Otherwise, it occurs also once in A.0.89.3, 6', an inscription of Aššur-bēl-kala. The signs RI and ME are not clearly visible on the officially issued photo of the Helsinki manuscript reproduced in this article (see below) but do come out better in a private photo taken by one of the authors of this essay on June 4, 2019. The sign ME is spaciouly written.



[... <sup>KUR</sup>] ṛa<sup>1</sup>      -ri      -me

That spelling <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-me* might indicate a time of writing of the Helsinki text around the same period of Tiglath-pileser I's reign when the "Broken Obelisk" was created. According to Shibata, this happened in the fourth decade of Tiglath-pileser I's reign, after his calendar reform (cf. Shibata 2022, 109, 123). This would also indicate that the Helsinki text, or rather at least the text on the reverse of the Helsinki tablet, likewise is a late version of Tiglath-pileser's annals. However, the content of the Helsinki text, like A.0.89.6 and A.0.89.9, is not directly connectable with the Aramean episodes narrated in the text of the "Broken Obelisk" but is closer to that of A.0.89.6 and especially A.0.89.9.

2' || A.0.89.6, 10'; A.0.89.9, 5'; A.0.87.10, 94 (colophon). The spelling *su-te<sub>9</sub>-e* “Suteans,” which only occurs in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, is a weighty indicator for attributing the Helsinki fragment to this ruler.

3' || – ; –. The signs that follow <sup>1</sup>*a*-*di* read as *MUNUS*<sup>MEŠ</sup>-*šu-nu*, which must be a mistake of incompleteness for an expected *DAM*<sup>MEŠ</sup>-*šu-nu* (on the error type of incomplete signs, see Worthington 2012, 106–7). The following *DUMU*<sup>M</sup>[<sup>EŠ</sup>-*šu-nu*] would suit well to an emended reading *DAM*, as a similar sequence “his wives (and) his natural sons” is attested in the Five-Year-Annals of Tiglath-pileser I (A.0.87.1, ii 28–29: ... *DAM*<sup>MEŠ</sup>-*šu* *DUMU*<sup>MEŠ</sup> *nab-ni-it šà-bi-šu*...). *MUNUS* = *sinništu* is rarely used in Assyrian royal inscriptions, and only appears in texts from the first millennium BCE.

4' || A.0.89.6, 13'; A.0.89.9, 8'. Although only the *HI*-element of an expected *AM*-sign is discernible while any horizontal wedges apparently are missing, the parallel A.0.89.6, 13' confirms this emendation.

5' || – ; –. The two preserved signs *NU* and *TI* probably form the end of a possessive suffix 3rd pl masc. acc. *-šunūti* “their.” The river name Sagura (NAss Sagurri) is restored after A.0.89.9, 8' (cf. Cancik-Kirschbaum and Hess 2016, 117). On suggestion by Daisuke Shibata, the name of the conquered place lost in the lacuna can be confidently restored as “Pitru,” where Tiglath-pileser I had built a fort.<sup>22</sup>

The Helsinki tablet provides a curious case. While the obverse is clearly connectable to early versions of Tiglath-pileser I's annals (A.0.87.2; A.0.87.3; A.0.87.4; A.0.87.31), the reverse resembles the fragmentary texts A.0.89.6 and A.0.89.9, and the spelling of the name of the Aramean lands as <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-me* connects the Helsinki tablet to the “Broken Obelisk.” The Helsinki tablet makes it appear possible that the Aramean episode of A.0.89.6 and A.0.89.9 was located on the broken reverses of the tablets making up inscription A.0.87.2. If so, one would assume that the Aramean episode references events from the first ten regnal years of Tiglath-pileser I, while the spelling <sup>KUR</sup>*a-ri-me* that connects the text

<sup>22</sup> cf. Cancik-Kirschbaum and Hess 2016, 14, s.v. *Ana-Aššur-utēr-ašbat*; Younger 2016, 138–39, 170, 172, 190; 2017, 210.



to the “Broken Obelisk” might indicate that the text itself was written much later, likely in chronological vicinity to the creation of the “Broken Obelisk” in the fourth decade of Tiglath-pileser I’s rule. Furthermore, if the proposed reconstruction is accepted (for which I once more want to give credit to the unnamed reviewer of this article), it would provide proof of the propositions made by Shibata (2020) regarding the attributions of A.0.89.6 and A.0.89.9. Together with the Helsinki tablet, there seems to have been at least four different versions of the text (A.0.87.2; A.0.89.6; A.0.89.9; Helsinki text), presumably the products of modifications over time.

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