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Innovation and tradition
in the sphere of Neo-Assyrian officialdom

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Abstract: This article examines some aspects of innovation within Neo-Assyrian officialdom, taking as a case study the composition of the household of the crown prince. Analysis of the range of functionaries subordinate to the crown prince shows that the establishment of this key royal figure increased in size and complexity over time (taking into account the uneven distribution of the sources). This article takes a detailed look at the crown prince's household, focusing on changes to its composition and considering possible explanations for these changes.

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1 Introduction

My aim in this article is to trace some aspects of innovation within Neo-Assyrian officialdom based on the composition of the household of the crown prince. By innovation in the sphere of officialdom I mean any kind of alteration or modification aimed at improving the existing bureaucratic system. There are two ways in which such innovation might be implemented: by the rearrangement of traditional offices, or the introduction of new ones. Naturally, these are not mutually exclusive, and the process of introducing new offices would inevitably affect those already existing. As to the officialdom of the Neo-Assyrian empire, it was not only different from that of preceding periods,¹ but it also underwent some changes within the time span of about 300 years over the course of the empire’s lifespan. In order to identify changes within officialdom based on the Neo-Assyrian written sources, I searched for those titles attested for the first time and attempted to evaluate their appearance at this period. In doing so I tried to take into account possible complicating factors such as changes in linguistic habits (rather than an altered machinery of administration), and discrepancies between the literal meaning of a title and the actual functions of the office-holder. Relevant information for this study comes primarily from the everyday documents, namely the legal and administrative texts and also the letters, mainly deriving from the last 150 years of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Within this timespan the written record varies in character and thus in the information it provides.² While the variable informative value of the sources and our understanding of them generate uncertainties, some are also inherent in the nature of Assyrian officialdom: although basic, routine tasks were assigned to particular officials, they were also entrusted with ad hoc missions not directly related to their regular function.³ Nevertheless, it is possible to make some progress in identifying aspects of change within Neo-Assyrian officialdom.

2 From a “conquest phase” to an “imperial phase”

Innovation within the sphere of officialdom might reflect an episode of deliberate reform, or alternatively, an on-going process of smaller-scale ad hoc alterations. In the Neo-Assyrian empire it was the king who initiated and controlled conscious acts of bureaucratic innovation. He imposed administrative rearrangements or even widespread reform, either because of a perceived need to improve the system, or, in some cases, in response to a political crisis. There have been a few attempts to associate deliberate changes to officialdom during the Neo-

¹ Especially in regard to the Middle Assyrian period; see Jakob 2003 (on MAss administration and society).

² Note e.g. the chronological structure of the legal documents given in Kwasman and Parpola (1991: XVIII-XX, Tables I and II). Between 747 and 612 BC most legal documents from Nineveh derive from the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.

³ This would lead us to the question of the degree of rationality in the sense intended by Max Weber (’1972: 124ff.) and his models of bureaucratic and patrimonial rule. While the assignment of specific tasks to specific functionaries implies a degree of rationalisation, ad hoc assignments are more consistent with a patrimonial mode of domination; thus the Neo-Assyrian empire may be categorised as a mixed type, a “patrimonial-bureaucratic” empire (cf. Blake 1979 on the Mughal empire).
Assyrian period with particular historical events. For example, Radner has convincingly related the apparent reinforcement of personnel concerned with palatial access during the reign of Assurbanipal to the after-effects of Sennacherib’s murder as well as the conspiracy against Esarhaddon. These political disturbances may in turn have been partly provoked by the reinforcement of the establishments of the queen and crown prince from the reign of Sennacherib on (as indicated, for example, by their use of “bureau seals” in the 7th century; Radner 2008: 508-11). While the enhanced role of the establishments of the crown prince and the queen indicates that additional responsibilities were adopted by key figures of the royal family, the growth in the number and range of officials concerned with palatial access reflects an increasing attention on the royal household. This increased focus on internal matters by Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal was also stressed by Liverani (2009 [2001]: 385), contrasting it with the achievements of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II in enlarging Assyrian territory and in reforming the provincial and military system. In view of these developments Postgate (1979: 194) called the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II a “conquest phase” and those of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal an “imperial phase”. While some changes owing to this shift have been already observed and commented on by other scholars, my aim here is to fill out the picture with further details and analysis, focusing on the household of the crown prince.

3 The establishment of the crown prince

As to the royal family in Neo-Assyrian times, apart from the king it is the crown prince, the queen and the queen mother who feature in the sources as prominent figures. Moreover, these key royal figures begin to appear more frequently with their own staff, forming separate establishments. Over the centuries it seems that these establishments underwent some modifications. The evidence for personnel of the queen mother dates exclusively to the 7th century, presumably owing to the prominence of Naqi’a, queen mother of Esarhaddon. While the queen had her own staff already at the beginning of the 8th century, only in the 7th century do we have evidence for an expanded household. Similar developments apply in the case of the crown prince, to whom the term mar šarri usually refers (Kwasman and Parpola 1991: XXVII-XXIX).

3.1 8th century

Radner (2010b: 279f.) suggests that the introduction of the rab sikkāti (“lock master”) and the ša-pān-nērebī (“entrance supervisor”) in the reign of Assurbanipal is an innovation of that time.

E.g. Liverani 1995; Mattila 2009; Radner 2010b.

For most of the personnel of the queen mother we cannot determine whether their attestations date to the late reign of Esarhaddon or early reign of Assurbanipal, although the evidence seems to refer to Naqi’a (Melville 1999: 86, fn. 41; Svärd 2012: 99f.).

The most prominent figure in this respect is the palace supervisor (SAA 12 96 l.e. 3, 616*). It is only in the reign of Sennacherib that rab-x-officials appear as subordinates of the queen (e.g. chief cook of the queen, BT 140 r. 14, Parker 1963: 100, Pl. XXVI).

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Before the seventh century we hear of the *masennu*, so-called “treasurer”, the ša-qurbūti-officials (“aide”), and unspecified servants (*urdu*) under the authority of the crown prince. While these functionaries are explicitly designated as his subordinates, their activities were limited to the external sphere. The treasurer of the crown prince administered real estate, and the ša-qurbūti-officials of the crown prince were often concerned with captives and other military-related affairs. Similarly the *sūsānī ša-sēpē* (“horse grooms of the personal guard”), mentioned in a letter of the crown prince Sennacherib to his father as being in his service (SAA 1 37 r. 7-8), were related to the military. Before the seventh century, unspecified servants of the crown prince appear as witnesses, and perhaps once in a short administrative note from the reign of Adad-nerari III. From the same reign there is a fragment of a land grant preserved mentioning “men of the domain of the crown prince” (*amēlē ša bēt mār šarrī*) in the penalty clause (SAA 12 9 r. 3, on the date see Kataja and Whiting 1995: 13). This could in particular refer to landed property of the crown prince as is probably also the case with *bēt marʾē šarrī* (property of the king’s sons) mentioned in the decree on the appointment of Nergal-āpiš-kamū’a in the reign of Aššurnāṣirpal II (SAA 12 83:14’). Thus, while the crown prince is attested as having his own domain already in the ninth century, his establishment as well as his personnel is in particular associated with “external” affairs; his household proper is less observable.

3.2 7th century

3.2.1 Administrators

Apart from Bēl-na’di, another treasurer of the crown prince acting as a witness for Atar-ili, eunuch of the crown prince of Babylon (SAA 6 287 r. 11, 670 BC), the 7th-century sources not only mention additional and different functionaries in the service of the crown prince, but also key figures of the household administration previously only known in connection with the king’s own household. There is the ša-pān-ekalli (“palace supervisor”) attested beneath the crown prince from the late reign of Esarhaddon on. He is probably twice mentioned in Babylonian letters (SAA 18 101 r. 7-8; 109:3’) and he also witnesses a house sale (SAA 6 328 r. 7). Additionally a chariot fighter of his (*mār damqi ša ša-pān-ekalli ša mār šarrī*) sells a woman in the year 629* (ND 2325, Parker 1955: Pl. XIX). According to the Babylonian letter SAA 18 109, it may be that the palace

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9Postgate (2007: 341ff.) describes this functionary as “royal representative par excellence”.

10ND 2648 r. 4’ (Postgate 1974: 385ff.); SAA 11 219 ii 14’ That the *masennu* managed the estates of the king, crown prince and queen mother was already observed by Postgate (1974: 104ff.).

11ND 2803 ii 26’, r. i 1, 8, 33, ii 14 (Parker 1961: 55ff., Pls. XIX-XXX); SAA 15 236:9-10; SAA 1 29 r. 15.

12Edubba 10 36 r. 15’-16’; SAA 5 228: 10’-11’; SAA 6 52 r. 17, and probably TH 22 mentioning an otherwise unknown (crown) prince of Adad-nerari III named Ḫurēpu (Weidner 1940: 25).

13Subordinates of the crown prince only described as the “men” of his household perhaps indicate an early stage of development.

14For post-canonical eponym dates see Parpola in PNA 1/II: XVIII-XX.
supervisor of the crown prince, like his counterpart in the main palace (see e.g. SAA 13 80), was responsible for access to the crown prince’s establishment, assuming that bēt rēdāti refers to this institution.\textsuperscript{14} We also find a ša-muḫḫi-bēt-rēdāti (“overseer of the Succession House”) who owes silver to Aššur-mudammiq in the reign of Assurbanipal (STAT 2 132:3-4, 645*). A similar office was presumably ša-muḫḫi-bēt ša mār šarrī; Šīl-Bēl-dalli, frequently attested as witness for the eunuch Šamaš-šarru-usur between 660 and 631*, bears this office when witnessing a donation to Ninurta (SAA 12 92 r. 7, 638*).\textsuperscript{15} Apart from these two ša-muḫḫi-x-titles there is also the rab-bēt-mār-šarrī (“majordomo of the crown prince”) attested in two 7th-century documents. The title may be restored in a ceremonial banquet account (SAA 7 148 ii 2’)\textsuperscript{16} and in a legal document, designating Ezbu who receives silver (ND 3412:1, Parker 1955: Pl. XXVIII).\textsuperscript{17}

The literal meaning of the titles ša-muḫḫi-bētī and the rab-bētī suggests an official managing or supervising a household. The attestations of these offices within the domain of the crown prince do not reveal their particular tasks; these are illuminated by the evidence for the two offices installed beneath magnates\textsuperscript{18} and provincial governors.\textsuperscript{19} To name just a few significant instances, the ša-muḫḫi-bētī of the governor of Kalḫu appears once in connection with releasing an official (SAA 5 254:13’), while the rab-bētī of the chief cupbearer figures in connection with assembling troops (SAA 5 67:10’). Assuming that the two titles refer to different offices, it seems that the rāb-bētī was especially engaged in military affairs (see e.g. also SAA 15 60 r. 10’-15’, cf. Postgate 1989).

\textsuperscript{14}Understood as “Succession House” (CAD R 325-328; Altv 981 s.v. rīdātu), as also indicated by the designation mār rēdātu e.g. for the crown prince Assurbanipal (RINAP 4 60 r. 29’; RINAP 4 113:30 [together with Šamaš-šarru-ukin]) who entered the bēt rēdāti when nominated as crown prince and lived there afterwards (RINAP 41 i 1:21-22; RINAP 4 13:1, RINAP 4 64:7-10; cf. SAA 9 7:3-6). The term bēt rēdāti first appears in the Neo-Assyrian period, when references to it almost exclusively derive from the seventh century BC. A single attestation of bēt mār šarrī bēt rēdāti, attested in a copy of a decree of Tukulti-Ninurta I (SAA 12 68:6), presumably dating to the reign of Shalmaneser III (Kataja and Whiting 1995: 68), reveals that this concept already existed in the 9th or even 13th century, though it features as a physical building first in the reign of Sargon, when a bēt rēdāti was erected in Nineveh by crown prince Sennacherib who apparently lived there also after becoming king (until his “Palace without a Rival” was finished); cf. Esarhaddon in SAA 9 1 i 34’-35’. Assurbanipal even states that he grew up in this building, designated as “alternate palace within Nineveh”, and thus he lived there before his nomination (Prism F vi 24 / A X 53 in Borger 1996: 72, 255f.). Furthermore, it is clear from the letter SAA 16 28 of Šemu’a-ṭīrat, eldest daughter of Esarhaddon, that the bēt rēdāti was intended for other royal children too. Thus the bēt rēdāti is not strictly identical with the bēt mār šarrī (contra Renger [1980-83: 248], but it is highly related to the mār šarrī. Cf. Streck 1916: 568f.

\textsuperscript{15}Šīl-Bēl-dalli bears the title ša-muḫḫi-bētī (without reference to the crown prince) also in ND 3463 r. 11 (641*) and SAA 12 94 r. 12’ (637*), although he was most likely installed beneath the crown prince here too; see PNA 3/I 1172 s.v. Šīl-Bēl-dalli 2.

\textsuperscript{16}Fales and Postgate (1992: 154) suggest that it should be rather read as IGI.DUB.

\textsuperscript{17}Ezbu’s relation to the domain of the crown prince is emphasised by his father’s designation “from the Village of the Crown Prince”.

\textsuperscript{18}That is, the seven highest-ranking officials of state (Mattila 2000).

\textsuperscript{19}For the ša-muḫḫi-bētī and the rab-bētī see Radner 1997: 201f., fn. 1061. A ša-muḫḫi-bētī is also attested within the temple sphere (SAA 14 62 r. 5’, SAA 6 86 r. 13 and SAA 1 75:6) and beneath the ša-pān-ekallī (CTN 2 96 r. 11-12).
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While the ša-muhḫi-bēti was rather responsible for his master’s household proper,\(^{20}\) however, it is significant that only in the seventh century are the “oversee of the household”, the “majordomo” as well as the “palace supervisor” attested beneath the crown prince. Assuming them to be administrators within large households, their subordination to the crown prince indicates that his household was of considerable size, including administrative personnel for its internal organisation. Whereas the title ša-pān-ekalli implies that the crown prince’s household was a palatial one (thus indicating its enhanced status),\(^{21}\) the ša-muhḫi-bēti and the rab-bēti emphasise its structural similarities with those of the magnates and governors, presumably arising from the fact that the crown prince had his own province in the seventh century (see below).

3.2.2 Other administrative figures

The rab nuḫatimmi (“chief cook”) and the rab karkadinni (“chief confectioner”) feature almost exclusively within the households of the king and his closest relatives, including the domain of the crown prince.\(^{22}\) The chief cook of the crown prince is witness in a broken legal document (SAA 14 307 r. 5’), while his chief confectioner is listed in an administrative record (SAA 7 4 r. ii’ 4’) dated to the reign of Assurbanipal on prosopographical grounds (Mattila 2000: 17, 64). He is one of the men summed up as 49 “higher-ranking magnates of the crown prince” (r. ii’ 6: LŬ.GAL–GAL.MEŠ.DUMU–LUGAL) who were apparently just assigned to the crown prince. As the tablet is broken, only five out of 49 officials are preserved, namely the chief confectioner, the “chief of equipment” (rab tilli),\(^{23}\) the “official in charge of the levy” (rab batqi), the “chief of accounts” (rab nikkassi) and an overseer of […] (ša-muhḫi-[…] also attested in SAA 7 3 r. i 13’ with his personal name); the chief of accounts of the crown prince is also mentioned in a list of palace personnel (SAA 7 5 r. i 47). Judging from the overall attestations of these two officials, they were responsible for the maintenance and organisation of particular foodstuff: the chief cook was occupied with the supply of meat (related to temple offerings, see e.g. SAA 11 90 and SAA 12 77) and the chief confectioner was associated with fruits (see e.g. SAA 11 36 and SAA 12 77). The sources shed little light on the duties of these officials under the crown prince, though it seems reasonable to assume that they performed tasks similar to their counterparts in the main household. Thus in the reign of Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal the crown prince’s establishment may have been self-sufficient in the provision of foodstuffs for the household itself and for certain temple offerings.

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\(^{20}\) Although observations made for the Middle Assyrian period suggest that the two titles were used interchangeably (cf. rab ekalli and ša-muhḫi-ekalli, Jakob 2003: 72ff.), perhaps supported by the Neo-Babylonian case concerning the titles ša-muhḫi-sūti, bel sūti and rab sūti (Jursa 1995: 86), they will be kept separate here as regards their contextualisation.

\(^{21}\) Not only does this underline the erection of a “palace” for the crown prince Assurbanipal in Tarbiṣu (RINAP 4 93:22ff. and the stone slab inscriptions RINAP 4 94 and 95) but may in particular refer to this circumstance.

\(^{22}\) A chief cook of the Istar temple is also attested (StAT 2 102 r. 3’), while the contextualisation of other chief cooks and also chief confectioners suggests a temple connection too (cf. Menzel 1981 I: 240).

\(^{23}\) This official can also be found as subordinate of the commander-in-chief (SAA 14 146 r. 5’-6’).

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3.2.3 Personnel concerned with gatekeeping

Personnel responsible for gatekeeping are first attested for the crown prince in the reign of Esarhaddon (SAA 6 299 r. 7-8). Specific officials administering the locking of doors are only attested in the reign of Assurbanipal. Thus Ṣur-dala, the “lock master of the crown prince” (rab sikkāti ša mār šarri), witnesses a legal transaction of the eunuch Šamaš-sarru-ūṣur (ND 3426 r. 35, Wiseman 1953: 141, Pl. XII). As Radner pointed out, the office of lock master does not appear before the reign of Assurbanipal (see above). Thus this official was not only newly introduced into the crown prince’s household but also into the king’s own household at this time. It is not attested in connection with other satellite households apart from the crown prince’s.

3.2.4 Professionals

There are also some professionals attested under the crown prince’s authority, including a few explicitly designated as belonging to his household. This is the case with a brewer (śrāšu ša bēt mār šarri, STAT 1 23:9’ = STAT 2 243), a master-builder (etinnu ša bēt mār šarri, SAA 14 166 r. 8, 621*) and a carpenter (naggāru ša bēt mār šarri, STAT 1 23:5’). Other personnel include a shepherd (rē’āu, SAA 14 415 r. 10’), a farmer (ikkāru, SAAB 5 51 r. 35, 620*) and a tiller (qatinnu, STAT 1 22 r. 23, = STAT 2 244).24 There is even a cook mentioned in the literary composition known as the Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince (SAA 3 32:5), where this person is made responsible for the preparation of mountain beer (šikār šaddī). Out of these professionals the tiller, the farmer and the shepherd would clearly have been active outside of the crown prince’s residence, but the brewer (and the cook) may be counted among the domestic staff of the crown prince. Most of these individuals feature in legal documents, either as witnesses or as house owners. The latter is the case with the brewer and the carpenter in the legal document SAA 14 59:7, 675 BC. This may partly explain why professionals subordinate to the crown prince resided in Assur (and not in Nineveh, where the crown prince’s main seat was located at that time).27

3.2.5 The crown prince’s scribe


25STAT 1 22 was drawn up after the reign of Assurbanipal (PNA 3/II 1276f. s.v. Šulmu-māt-Asšur 4.).

26These houses were located in an area also occupied by other functionaries, some of whom belong to the household of the commander-in-chief. Cf. SAA 11 222:13’-r. 2 where the servants of the crown prince too occur together with those of the commander-in-chief.

27Sennacherib erected residences for two of his sons (Asšur-nādin-šumi and Asšur-ili-muballissu) in Assur and for another son (Asšur-šumu-ušabili) in Nineveh (Frahm 1997: 142ff., 179-181), neither of which is explicitly known as crown prince.
Scribes beneath the crown prince are attested in legal texts, often as witnesses (SAA 6 57 r. 1’; 86 r. 8; 328 r. 6) but also as joint debtor of silver (STAT 3 84:6, 641*) and, in the case of an Aramean scribe, as joint seller (SAA 14 205 r. 13). Another scribe of the crown prince, Kēnî, is mentioned in a colophon according to which his son Aplāia drew up the tablet in question (4th tablet of the series ḤAR.RA = ḫubullu) for the reading of the crown prince Assurbanipal (Hunger 1968: 108, no. 345). Hence scribes of the crown prince might have functioned as his secretaries but are also associated with scholarly scribes. While these attestations refer to crown princes active in the seventh century, earlier crown princes must also have had scribes at their disposal, given that Shalmaneser V and Sennacherib sent letters to their fathers, king Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II respectively.

3.2.6 Scholars

In the scholarly realm we find a chief exorcist, an exorcist, two diviners and a physician in the service of the crown prince; of these the chief exorcist is explicitly said to be “of the household of the crown prince” when witnessing a slave sale document (SAA 14 264 r. 3’). According to the letter SAA 10 257 from the exorcist Marduk-šākin-šumi,29 his colleague Remûtu, who is in the service of the crown prince, is ill. The sender lists suitable substitutes, all designated “bearded courtiers” (ša-ziqui), from whom the king might choose a replacement to serve the crown prince. Of the two diviners, one is witness in a legal document (SAA 14 166 r. 6, 621*) while Tabnî is known as (co-)author of several letters and queries. In the letter SAA 10 182 he describes how favour was shown not only to his father, a chief haruspex,30 but also to himself when he was given (as subordinate) to the crown prince and used to have usufruct of the “leftovers” of the crown prince. Now apparently this situation had changed and another diviner had been honoured by being dressed in purple. Finally, after the reign of Assurbanipal we encounter Nabû-šarru-ūṣur, physician of the crown prince, witnessing a legal document (A 11240: r. 6, 622*, see PNA 2/II 878 s.v. no. 52).

When discussing scholars serving the crown prince we should mention the scholar (ummânu) Balasî who is known to have been responsible for the education of the crown prince Assurbanipal, according to his own testimony in one of his letters to the king (SAA 10 39 r. 4-9):31

“To whom indeed has the king done such a favour as to me whom you [the king] have appointed to the service of the crown prince, to be his master and to teach him?”

Although Balasî was already regarded as belonging to the king’s entourage (cf. Il. 7-8), it was clearly a great

28SAA 6 57 dates to the reign of Sennacherib since Nabû-šumu-īškun is designated as “[chariot driver] of Sennacherib”. A similar date is suggested for SAA 6 86 (see PNA 3/1 1152 s.v. Sitirkânû).

29He became chief exorcist in the reign of Assurbanipal (PNA 2/II 722 s.v. Marduk-šākin-šumi 2).

30In the very same letter Tabnî points out that his father took care of Esarhaddon already when he was a child.

31On the installation of an ummânu for the education and teaching of the crown prince see most recently Radner 2011: 364; Zamazalová 2011: 319f.
honour to be selected to educate and train the heir to the throne. In other cases it is not so clear whether scholars were being employed to serve the crown prince before he reached maturity.32

During the reign of Esarhaddon the crown prince features prominently within oracle queries as well as in the king’s correspondence with scholars, so it is perhaps not surprising that some scholars were specifically working for the crown prince.33 Aside from his father, the crown prince was the only person to have scholars at his disposal, since access to scholars and thus to their wisdom was highly restricted. This is clear from a letter written to Esarhaddon by the so-called “enigmatic informer” reporting on Parrūtu, a goldsmith of the household of the queen, who had “like the king and the crown prince” bought a Babylonian to teach his son exorcistic literature and extispicy omens (SAA 16 65:2-12).34

3.2.7 Other offices

We find not only functionaries with specific tasks and skills in the service of the crown prince in the seventh century, but also quite a number of ša-rēšī-officials. As the title itself does not illuminate their function, we rely on either the context or on additional titles to determine their spheres of activity. In the case of those ša-rēšī said to be beneath the crown prince, they mainly appear as parties to legal transactions (SAA 6 287:13-14 [eunuch of the crown prince of Babylon], 670 BC; SAA 14 178:1’, SAA 14 205:5’) or are listed in administrative records of palace personnel (SAA 7 4 r. ii’ 8’), thus shedding no light on their actual sphere of responsibilities.

Nevertheless, few observations can be made by means of prosopography. The eunuch Aṭar-ilī, leasing the village Baḥaia in SAA 6 287 and designated as team-commander when selling the very same village in 666 BC (SAA 14 2:1), probably hold this military function already in 670 BC. Similarly, Šīl-Bel-dalli, known as household overseer of the crown prince (see above), is designated as ša-rēšī in another tablet (ND 3426 r. 8, see PNA 3/I 1172 s.v. no. 2). In addition to the king and his closest relatives (crown prince, queen, queen mother), also higher-ranking officials such as the chief eunuch, the commander-in-chief and governors are attested with a ša-rēšī beneath them. Thus the employment of ša-rēšī was not restricted to members of the royal family, although in the context of the present study they may be treated as another sign of the increased size and complexity of the crown prince’s household. Further functionaries whose title reflects status or social rank rather than a particular function include the mār ekalli ("son of the palace"), two of whom are described as “of the Succession House” in legal texts (SAA 14 166 r. 3, 621*; 426:4-5, 630*).35 Translated as “courtier” or “palace official” (CAD M/I

32The same question arises with regard to other officials beneath the crown prince; cf. the discussion in Kwasman and Parpola (1991: XXVII-XXIX, especially XXVIII) on the time span 667-660, when only a child “prince par excellence” seems possible. Note also the suggestion of Radner (2010a: 27) that there may have been a nominated crown prince at all times.

33Several queries to the sungod were performed in the bēt rēdūti: SAA 4 89; 326-328.

34According to Luukko and Van Buyelaere (2002: XXXVII) this letter dates to 672-669, thus Parrūtu might actually have been in the service of the queen mother Naqi’a as Ešarra-ḥammat had already died in 673.

35Radner (1997: 206) suggested that this term partially overlaps with that of rab ekalli since the rab ekalli Tartmanni is once designated

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258; HAD 24 s.v. ekallu) and probably featuring a birth and childhood in the palace, they were usually assigned to the palace although the two of the Succession House suggest an attribution to the crown prince. The crown prince also had a mār qāṭī in his service, attested as witness in the reign of Assurbanipal (SAA 14 125 r. 5'-6'). As far as I am aware, this compound only appears in Neo-Assyrian sources. The term is usually translated “adjutant” and the office can also be found beneath the chief eunuch and the palace supervisor; the latter’s mār qāṭī clearly acted as his master’s assistant (SAA 1 76:10).

3.2.8 The staff of the main wife of the crown prince

As shown by Svärd and Luukko (2009), the main wife of the crown prince is normally, but not exclusively, designated by the term bēlat bēti, usually translated as “lady-of-the-house”. From the reign of Esarhaddon we not only encounter the lady-of-the-house herself more frequently, but also some of her subordinates. Now common servants (ura, SAA 6 257:1-4, 680 BC), chariot fighters (mār damqi, SAA 6 200 r. 7', SAA 14 169 r. 1, 619*), a chariot driver (mukl appāti, in SAA 6 339 r. 9) and a šakintu (a female “administrator”, see Teppo 2007: 258; SAA 7 23:1, 13, 14) are attested beneath her. In the case of common servants and a chariot fighter, the bēlat bēti’s association with the crown prince is made explicit (ša bēlat bēti ša mār šarrī). Thus it seems clear that in the seventh century not only did the crown prince have a well-developed household of his own, but also his main wife had her own establishment, presumably headed by a šakintu, like the queen but on a smaller scale.

3.2.9 Safeguard and campaigning

The enhanced status of the crown prince’s household is also indicated by military functionaries attached to the crown prince from the reign of Sennacherib onwards (cf. Mattila 2002: XX). The following military or military-related officials appear in the service of the crown prince: probably a commander-of-the-fifty (rab mēr ekalli (CTN 3 30) instead. See also PNA 3/II 1319.

When discussing designations which do not convey a precise function, I shall also refer to some 7th-century attestations of common servants (ura) beneath the crown prince as can be found in SAA 10 24:9-11; SAA 16 41 r. 1 and SAA 16 63 r. 20.

Many attestations of the lady-of-the-house presumably refer to the crown prince Assurbanipal and thus to his main wife Libbali-Šarrat.

Probably also a eunuch of hers is attested already in the reign of Sargon II (CTN 2 223:2).

It is exactly this specification which indicates that there existed more than one woman with this status contemporaneously. Note that there is a village manager of the bēlat bēti of the commander-in-chief attested in the later eighth century (ND 2605:17-18, Parker 1961: Pl. XIX).

A “chief fuller” (rab ašlǟki), a majordomo, a village manager, and probably a eunuch of the crown prince are assigned to the household of the lady-of-the-house in SAA 7 4 r. ii’ 8’-12’. This assignment seems to be rather temporary (cf. the lists of lodgings SAA 7 8-12).

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mother are related to the designation Assurbanipal). Of the crown prince attested: a scribe (SAA 7 50 iii 5´-6´, reign of Assurbanipal) and a horse-trainer (SAA 14 40:1-2, after reign of Sennacherib military forces beneath the crown prince were of considerable size and were organised like palace forces. Thus the military unit beneath the crown prince was presumably separated into the personal forces (equivalent to the qur(r)ụbtu forces of the king consisting of ša-qurḫēti and ša-šēptē) and the military forces (comparable to the king’s standing army led by the chief eunuch). There remains the question of whether the ša-qurḫēti officials attested beneath the crown prince in the second half of the eighth century indicate that the crown prince had his own qur(r)ụbtu-forces already in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III or Sargon II. Similarly, there is the singular attestation of the šuṣânu ša-šēptē beneath the crown prince from the reign of Sargon. It might

**41** E.g. SAA 16 148 r. 14-15; SAA 7 5 ii 51. For a deputy cohort-commander of the crown prince see PNA 3/I 1448 s.v. Ztzi 15. The rab ḫiṣir also supervised cohorts of craftsmen instead of commanding a military unit, at least since the reign of Esarhaddon (Postgate 1979: 210ff.).

**42** E.g. in SAA 7 150 ii 8´ (of the open chariotry); SAA 7 5 ii 31. We also find Sama’, a murabbânu (translated as tutor or trainer [of horses]) of the crown prince, attested in the reign of Sennacherib (SAA 6 37 r. 7, 39:16´, 40 r. 4 and 41 r. 5-6). In SAA 6 41 Sama’ is designated as murabbânu of Nergal-šumû-[...] which might have been another crown prince of Sennacherib (see K. Weidner and Postgate 1991: XXXIII, fn. 59).

**43** E.g. Aplasha (PNA 1/I 116 s.v. no. 11). Including the chief “third men” Šin-ašadē (PNA 3/I 1129 s.v. no. 3.) and a deputy “third man” (SAA 14 53 r. 6´).

**44** E.g. BATSH 6 47 r. 12-13; STAT 2 181 r. 17.

**45** The attestation of Bel-Ḫarrān-dûrû, chariot driver of the crown prince (broken), probably dates to the 8th or early 7th century (SAA 14 457:10-11, see Ismail and Postgate n.d.: 49). For another example from the reign of Assurbanipal see SAA 14 21 r. 9.

**46** While the title šaknu may refer to a governor or a prefect (Postgate 1980), those attested beneath the crown prince are all to be identified as prefects because of the writing (L.U.)GAR-nu (e.g. SAA 7 148 r. ii 4´).

**47** E.g. SAA 14 16 r. 7.

**48** The cohort-commander of the crown prince Nabû-šarru-usur is assigned to the ša-šēptē (SAA 6 325 r. 20’, PNA 2/II 875f. no. 17), whereas his colleague Zārtûlî is assigned to the ša-qurḫēti in the same text (SAA 6 325 r. 19’, see PNA 3/II 1438 s.v. no. 20).

**49** Šamaḫ-šarru-usur in SAA 7 4 i 16´ and Aššūr-rēmanni, eponym of the year 621*. There are even two subordinates of the chief eunuch of the crown prince attested: a scribe (SAA 7 50 iii 5’-6’, reign of Assurbanipal) and a horse-trainer (SAA 14 40:1-2, after reign of Assurbanipal).

**50** Cf. Dalley and Postgate (1984: 41) who suggested that the introduction of military forces beneath the crown prince and the queen mother are related to the designation ḫisir (ṣa) Sin-ahhe-eribaŠšu mentioned in SAA 7 3 and 4.

be that while the crown prince had his own personal forces already in the later eighth century, he was responsible for his own army only from the reign of Sennacherib on. Both the ša-qurbāti as well as the ša-šēpē are exclusively assigned to the palace or to the king and key members of the royal family. The king, the crown prince and the queen mother had ša-qurbāti-officials (with those of the queen mother attested only in the seventh century). As for the ša-šēpē-officials, it seems that they were only attached to the king and the crown prince. Thus we may be dealing not only with a sign of the increased military responsibilities of the crown prince but also with a correspondingly greater degree of concern for the security of his person.

3.2.10 Completing the picture

For the sake of completeness we should also mention that governors, village managers and mayors are attested in the service of the crown prince in the seventh century. It is only evident for the seventh century that the crown prince had his own province probably located in the Assyrian heartland, with its capital at Balāṭu (Radner 2006: 49). Possibly related to the introduction of a province of the crown prince might be those attestations of the crown prince’s personal estate, managed either by his governor (SAA 14 23: barley and a wagon-ox) or his deputy (governor) (SAA 14 98/99: barley). Also attested as subordinates of the crown prince are two merchants, one of which is said to be “of the household of the crown prince” (SAA 6 210 r. 14, 676 BC; BATSH 6 8 r. 12-13, 635*). Merchants are otherwise specified as being in the service of the household of the queen (SAA 6 140 r. 11) or with their origin. Since tamkārūs are known to have been royal trade agents (Radner 1999c: 101f.), their assignment to the household of the crown prince and the queen mother supports the impression of a (conscious) assimilation of these two households to the king’s domain.

3.3 Conclusions

Judging from the evidence discussed above, it was only in the seventh century that the household of the crown prince employed many of the key officials already found in the king’s own establishment. Thus we gain the clear impression that the crown prince’s household was developing into an alternative royal palace household. This development may have begun at the latest in the second half of the eighth century, when in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III the crown prince Ululāiu (that is, the later king Shalmaneser V) was engaged in state...
affairs (Radner 2003-4: 96-101). The same is true for the crown prince Sennacherib, who was apparently entrusted with similar responsibilities (Frahm 1997: 2f.). Thus it is likely that the crown prince generally—at least from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III on—played a similar role in state affairs, providing he was old enough. A special case was certainly the “double-crown-princeship” of Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin in the years 672-669, where it appears that the crown princes became part of the kingship itself (Maul 1995: 401f.). Whereas Assurbanipal, as designated heir to the Assyrian throne, may have been occupied with tasks similar to his predecessors (see Luukko and Van Buylaere 2002: XXVI, fn. 72), Šamaš-šumu-ukin presumably took on responsibilities over Babylon even before his father’s death. Similarly, the Assyrian prince and son of Sennacherib, Aššur-nadin-šumi, ruled over Babylonia from 699 down to 694 during his father’s reign (until he was captured by the Elamites). In the case of both these Assyrian princes, high-ranking palatial officials of theirs are attested as witnesses in contemporary Babylonian legal documents (kudurrus). Accordingly Aššur-nadin-šumi had in his service a palace supervisor, a “chamberlain” (ša-muḫḫi-bēšāni), and a palace scribe (along with cohort commanders, a “third man” and a chariot driver). For Šamaš-šumu-ukin the following Assyrian offices were installed in Babylonia during his rulership: a vizier (sukkallu), a governor (šākin māti), a chief eunuch, a palace supervisor and a palace scribe (as well as a chariot driver). It is not surprising that the Assyrian princes who were installed as Babylonian rulers had their own court and thus their own court officials at hand, therefore we have to treat this evidence separately from the evidence pertaining to the designated heirs to the Assyrian throne. On the other hand, this line of enquiry may lead us to another reason for the increase in the size and complexity of the household of the crown prince in Assyria. The introduction of rulership by an Assyrian (crown) prince over Babylonia in the early 7th century had general implications for the status of the crown prince: if a prince in such an influential position naturally has his own court, then there was all the more reason for the designated heir to the Assyrian throne to have one too. Both developments—the installation of an Assyrian prince in Babylon and the enhanced position of the designated heir to the Assyrian throne—may have

59See letters written by Sennacherib to his father: SAA 1 29-40; SAA 5 281.

60See the letters of the crown prince Assurbanipal to the king Esarhaddon (SAA 16 14-20). In 671, when Esarhaddon was on campaign in Egypt, it is assumed that it was Assurbanipal who governed in his stead (see SAA 10 68; cf. Livingstone 2007: 102). Also it is assumed that when king Esarhaddon suffered from illness and was not able to govern his country, his role was taken over by Assurbanipal (Parpola 1983: 235f.).

61Although he officially gained the throne of Babylonia only when his father died, the correspondence of Šamaš-šumu-ukin with the king Esarhaddon (SAA 16 21-24, especially no. 21) suggests his engagement in Babylonia began prior to that (see Maul 1995: 401), though it remains unclear whether Šamaš-šumu-ukin was permanently resident in Babylonia before his father’s death (Frame 2007 [1992]: 97).

62He was described as māru reštu in the inscriptions of Sennacherib (e.g. OIP 2 76: F2:11).

63See Frame 2007 [1992]: 232-235 (for Šamaš-šumu-ukin: VA 3614 and BM 87220, both listing the same individuals with the same titles in the same order; for Aššur-nadin-šumi: Ashmolean 1933.1101, edited by Brinkman and Dalley 1988). Strikingly, officials attested in the latter document can also be found in sources from Assyria, as noted by Mattila (2000: 63) with reference to SAA 11 221; cf. ABL 270; SAA 7 5, 6, 9.

64The majority of these offices (together with their office-holders) was most likely only introduced into Babylonia during the period of Assyrian domination, when they mostly appear for the first time (cf. Jursa 2010: 97-99)
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originated in the same shift in policy.

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