

**Elam after the Assyrian sack of Susa in 647 BC** — F. Vallat (Le royaume élamite de Zamin et les « lettres de Ninive », *Iranica Antiqua* 33 [1998] 95-106) has again argued that the Elamite tablets recorded as coming from the Assyrian capital of Nineveh were really found at Malamir in Iran, and suggests that they were dispatched to London at irregular intervals from a British equivalent (which would have to be the hut on Kuyunjik or the house of the British consul at Mosul) of the French *château* at Susa. As the question has wider implications, it is necessary to state that the evidence for their excavation at Nineveh (Kuyunjik), during a series of British Museum expeditions between 1847 and 1891, as given in NABU 1992/119, would be strengthened rather than weakened were Vallat's proposal, that the tablets once formed a single archive, to be proved correct by proper publication of their contents. While the stratigraphy is unknown, the indices to most volumes of *State Archives of Assyria* demonstrate that most seventh-century Assyrian archives found at Nineveh had been dispersed in a very similar way. The mention of an Assyrian king in Nin. 13, as in other Elamite documents from Susa itself, seems to constitute additional evidence for a date well before the fall of Nineveh in 612. Obvious hypotheses are that the tablets were captured in Elam by Assyrians and sent to Nineveh, or that they had been carried there by an Elamite official or refugee. Vallat mentions relationships between the Nineveh tablets and others from Susa, but these latter are themselves not securely dated.

The only evidence for British excavations at Malamir seems to be a remark by J. de Morgan, followed by G. Jéquier (*Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse* III [Paris 1901] 134), and quoted by Vallat in NABU 1988/39. W.K. Loftus, however, to whom de Morgan tentatively attributed the discovery of these tablets, first visited Iran and excavated at Susa in the spring of 1850 (*Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana* [London 1857] 278 ff.), nearly two years after the first Elamite tablet from Nineveh had been entered in the British Museum register. A. H. Layard (*Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana and Babylonia*, vol. I [London 1887] 404-9) had visited Malamir about 1841, but he was lucky to escape with his life and with some copies (not *mou-lages*) of rock-inscriptions. It is possible that some other Englishman visited

Malamir between 1841 and 1848, but the theory that the Nineveh tablets were found there derives from the coincidence that they were among the first ones written in Elamite to be identified, and that Malamir was one of the first places where Elamite rock-inscriptions were recorded. The theory fits one historical reconstruction, according to which Elam took a long time to recover from Assyrian invasions, but that is no reason to adopt it.

The political situation is that the Assyrians sacked Susa in 647 (rather than 646, as often stated). So far as we know, that was their last important campaign in Elam. However much chaos the Assyrians caused, they did not destroy the institution of Elamite kingship, since Ummanaldaš was still king for a time, followed by one « Pa-'e-e » who then went to Assyria as a political refugee according to Ashurbanipal's Cylinder A (R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* [Wiesbaden 1996] 59-60) ; this text was written within the period 645-640, probably about 644. Presumably Elamite reconstruction began soon after the departure of the Assyrian army in 647, and this is just the kind of context in which, following Vallat's readings (*ibid* : 97-8), we should look for people such as Ba-ḫu-ri, named in the Elamite tablets from Nineveh as attempting to found a new dynasty. Given the difficulties which Assyrian scribes had in rendering Elamite names, could Pa'e even have been identical with Bahuri? Maybe not, but that is another question. What is now needed is a full new publication of the Nineveh Elamite tablets, and a reconsideration of the date of the archaeological material associated with similar tablets at Susa.

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