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The Formation Process and Date Setting of Nakajima Atsushi's *Mojika*

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Abstract

Nakajima Atsushi's *Mojika* is a rare work by a prewar Japanese writer set in the ancient Near-East. This article clarifies Nakajima's formation process for *Mojika*, especially on some sources of Nakajima's extracts in his Notebook 3, and argues that Nakajima's "Romantic

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1) This article is a revised English version of Mitsuma (2020). I thank Miriam Hewes Slejko and Elaine Schaufele for their help in identifying George C. Hewes, Jr., the illustrator of Olmstead (1923, pp.46-47, maps 2-3). I also thank the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago for allowing me to publish the images of the maps. I thank the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature for allowing me to publish their photographs from Nakajima Atsushi's notebooks, which are now preserved by them, as illustrations.

The citations in this article from the text of *Mojika* 文字禍 are according to Nakajima (2001, pp.30-38). Kyūjitai kanjis have been replaced by Shinjitai kanjis. Some notations have also been changed. The creative materials for *Mojika* are cited from Nakajima (2002) and corrected following Kanagawa Bungaku Shinkōkai (2009), but the Kyūjitai letters are adjusted to Shinjitai ones.

Throughout this study, when referring to each year of the standard Mesopotamian Calendar beginning in the spring of a given Julian year (year n), the notation n/n-1 BCE is used, and each month of the standard Calendar is given in Roman numerals. For the standard Mesopotamian Calendar, see Cohen (1993, pp.297-305).

Realism” is not based on mere prejudice or the inadvertent manipulation of numbers but is based on multiple references. I clarify this point by analyzing the date-setting process of *Mojika*.

First, I summarize *Mojika*'s formation process and sources and identify Meyers *Kleines Konversations-Lexikon* and Lewis Spence's *Myths & Legends of Babylonia & Assyria* as sources of Nakajima's extracts in Notebook 3. Second, I discuss how Nakajima had set the story *Mojika* in the 20th year of Assurbanipal, just after the fall of Babylon. Nakajima may have primarily dated the story according to the list of Assyrian kings in his extracts in Notebook 6, which dates the death of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, to 668 BCE. Furthermore, I identify Albert T. Olmstead's *History of Assyria*, Maps 2-3, as the source of Nakajima's king list. I also identify a trace of Nakajima's date calculation formula in Notebook 6.

I. Introduction

In July 1941, a famous Japanese novelist, Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦 (1909-1942),²⁾ started a new job in Palau (then under Japanese rule) as a secretary for compiling a new Japanese textbook for the government of the South Seas Mandate.³⁾ In June 1941, before traveling to Palau, he visited Fukada Kyūya 深田久彌 (1903-1971) in Kamakura and left a collection of four short novels titled *Kotan* 古譚.⁴⁾ Nakajima published these four stories together in August 1942,⁵⁾ although two had been published earlier in the February 1942 issue of *Bungakukai* 文學界 under the same title, *Kotan*. One of them is the famous *Sangetsuki* 山月記.⁶⁾

Another piece in *Bungakukai* is *Mojika* 文字禍,⁷⁾ a short novel set in Nineveh, the Assyrian capital under King Assurbanipal. The story follows a rumor that every night in the darkness of Nineveh's famous Assurbanipal library, a voice is heard speaking and thought to be that of the spirits of the letters. The protagonist, scholar

2) Nakajima Atsushi: Born in Tokyo, he graduated from the Faculty of Letters, Tokyo Imperial University in 1933 and became a teacher at Yokohama Kōtō Jogakkō (Today's Yokohama Gakuen High School). In 1942, his novel *Hikari to Kaze to Yume* 光と風と夢 was nominated for the Akutagawa Prize (Kawamura 2009, pp.335-341). In December of the same year, however, his chronic asthma worsened and he died as a result (Kawamura 2009, p.332). He studied the ancient Near-Eastern and Hellenic history from around 1940 (Nakajima 2003, pp.216-218) and this resulted in the 1942 publication of *Kotan* 古譚.

3) Takahashi et al. (2002, p.504); Kawamura (2009, pp.339-340).

4) Takahashi et al. (2002, p.504); Fukada (2002, pp.183-185); Kawamura (2009, p.339).

5) Nakajima (1942b, pp.1-47); For the publication date, see Takahashi et al. (2002, p.509).

6) Nakajima (1942a, pp.138-144); Nakajima (2001, pp.22-29).

7) Nakajima (1942a, pp.144-151).

Nabû-aḥḥē-erība,⁸⁾ is commissioned by the king to find the spirits of the letters. Nabû-aḥḥē-erība discovers the spirits, who give a certain sound and meaning to each set of strokes that make up the cuneiform signs. Following this, in his dialog with the young historian Iṣḏi-Nabû on the question, “What is history?” the protagonist unwittingly praises the power of the spirits of the letters to give immortal life to things. Eventually, Nabû-aḥḥē-erība reports the evils of the letters to the king, but he is a man of letters. Assurbanipal is much offended by this slander and sentences Nabû-aḥḥē-erība to house arrest, where he eventually dies from the vengeance of the spirits of the letters.⁹⁾

Analyzing another story in *Kotan*, *Miira* 木乃伊,¹⁰⁾ set during the Persian Empire's conquest of Egypt (525 BCE), Sasaki highlights that the time-space of the ancient Near-East and the representation of things belonging to it (in this case mummies) are devices of Nakajima's “Romantic Realism” 伝奇的リアリズム, which place readers between the real world and beyond.¹¹⁾ This “Romantic Realism” pervades the four tales of *Kotan*.¹²⁾ The tales such as *Kitsunetsuki* 狐憑,¹³⁾ the story of a poet who appeared in a Scythian tribe before Homer, *Miira*, and *Mojika*, contain realistic descriptions of the ancient Near-East and its surrounding areas and are substantiated by Nakajima's detailed research. Nakajima used the English translation of Herodotus' *Histories* as a source for the *Kitsunetsuki* and *Miira*.¹⁴⁾ He conducted a meticulous survey to compose *Mojika*. The work provides in-depth descriptions of the politics and culture of Assyria around the seventh century BCE. They encourages the reader to feel a sense of reality in the story of the spirits of the letters in ancient Nineveh. Since Kimura (1980), studies have clarified how such descriptions were made possible and which sources of information on Assyria were used. Kimura points out that part of Nakajima's description is based on Olmstead (1923), referring to Nakajima's manuscripts and notes such as *Moji* 文字 (the draft of *Mojika*), Notebook 3, Notebook 6, and Handbook 1941,¹⁵⁾ while Yasufuku (2001) shows that Jastrow (1915) was also used as a source. Yamamoto (2015) further pointed to Myers (1904) as a source,¹⁶⁾ and Yamashita (2017) added Breasted (1916;

8) The model for the character is the real-life astronomer-astrologer Nabû-aḥḥē-erība, who was active between 677-666 BCE, and made a report identified as the oldest record of aurora-like phenomena (Hayakawa et al. 2019, pp.2-3, 6, Tablet R2).

9) An introduction to *Mojika* is given in Kobayashi (2015, pp.153-155). There are also works that could be considered homages, such as Enjō (2018).

10) Nakajima (2001, pp.16-21).

11) Sasaki (1975, p.182).

12) Sasaki (1973, pp.119-120); Hung (2009, p.196).

13) Nakajima (2001, pp.9-15).

14) Kimura (1980, pp.67-69); Arai (2004, pp.118-123); Arai (2005, pp.136-140).

15) Kimura (1980, pp.69-70).

16) Yamamoto (2015, pp.149-154).

1919) to the sources and noted that the former was more likely to have been referred to by Nakajima.¹⁷⁾ Yamashita further comments to the *Mojika* text to clarify which parts of the English books Assyrian-related narratives were based on.

Chapter II summarizes the formation process of *Mojika* and its materials. The source materials of Nakajima's collection of Extracts in Notebook 3 were enigmatic; however, two sources can be identified. Furthermore, Chapter III illustrates how the narratives of *Mojika* were based on analyzing various materials by elucidating the date setting of the novel. It is clear from the description at the beginning of the story that the date of *Mojika* was set in the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign, immediately after the rebellion of Shamash-shum-ukin, Assurbanipal's brother, and the Babylonian king under him, which ended in the fall of Babylon. This is misaligned with ancient Near-Eastern history, which places the fall of Babylon in the 21st year of Assurbanipal's reign.¹⁸⁾ This chronological gap is a questionable element in the story-telling that supports the work's connection to reality. Therefore, Chapter III shows that such dating was not a result of careless counting but rather a result of Nakajima's research. Nakajima recognized that the revolt ended in 648 BCE, but Assurbanipal throned in 668 BCE, contrary to modern understanding (in 669 BCE).¹⁹⁾ The date 668 BCE, the starting point of Nakajima's date calculation (I call it Year Zero), is based on Olmstead (1923, pp.46-47, maps 2-3) made by George C. Hewes Jr. in some independent modes, although this was not included as a source in a previous study.²⁰⁾ Additionally, I show that notes suggest the above-date calculation from Year Zero in Nakajima's Notebook 6.

II. The Process and Sources of the Formation of *Mojika*

The novel's narrative and the contents of Nakajima's notes can be arranged in a certain formation process that demonstrates how Nakajima's Assyrian narrative came to be. Therefore, I present the process presented by Yasufuku²¹⁾ in a chart with revisions and references to Nakajima (2001) and Nakajima (2002).²²⁾ The numbers in the following chart will be used for the reference of *Mojika* and its materials.

17) See Yamashita (2017, p.(14)) for a discussion of this point.

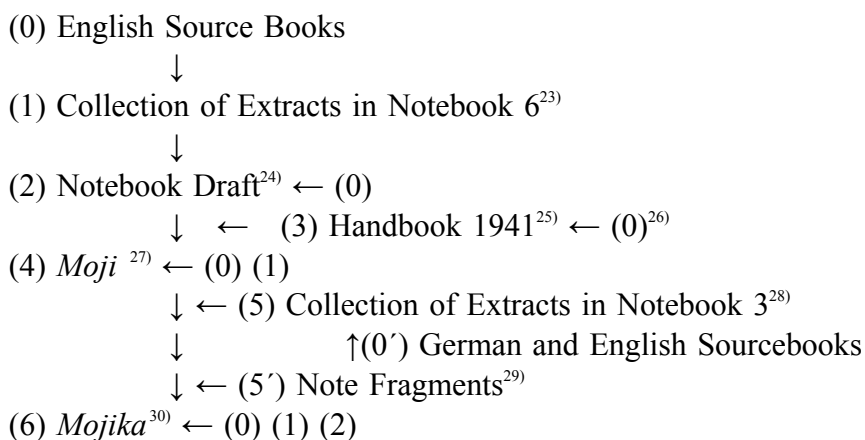
18) See for example, Novotny and Jeffers (2018, pp.27-32).

19) See for example, Parpola (2007, p.382). This chronology may also be estimated from the main text of Nakajima's sourcebook, Olmsted (1923, p.399).

20) Yamashita (2017, p.(15)).

21) Yasufuku (2001, p.204).

22) Yasufuku does not use the numbers (0), (0'), and (5'). The number (0) is simply called "English-language material" and (5') is included in (5) (Yasufuku 2001, p.204). Source (0') was unidentified by Yasufuku (2001, p.206).



Thus, I find the linear composition process to *Mojika*: (0) → (1) → (2) → (4) → (6). Source (3) seems to have been referred to at the formation stage of (4), (5) and (5') at the formation stage of (6). Notebooks 3 and 6 are literal “notebooks,”³¹⁾ and extracts from their reference books are numbered (5) and (1), respectively. Source (2) is written in Notebook 3 and (5') in Notebook 6. Notebook 3 also contains (4). During the process, materials from the earlier stages were repeatedly referenced from Phase (2) onwards. This means that (0), (1), and (2) must be considered as references until the final phase (6).³²⁾

Source (1) is based on (0), which contains English sourcebooks. As cited by Kimura, Yasufuku, and Yamashita,³³⁾ there is a list of English books on the pages corresponding to January 1-5 and 6-12 of the Handbook 1941.³⁴⁾ Yamashita³⁵⁾ noted that it is unclear whether all the books on this list were purchased and referenced by Nakajima. Catalogs of Nakajima's former bookshelf (Nihon Daigaku Hōgakubu Toshokan 1980; Tanabe 1986) do not confirm that he owned any of the books on

23) Nakajima (2002, pp.281-290).

24) Nakajima (2002, pp.243-246).

25) Nakajima (2002, pp.429-437). Designation in Kimura (1980) is “Shōwa 16-nen Techō” (昭和一六年手帖).

26) The correspondence between the English texts on the pages for 13-19 January 1941 of (3) (Nakajima 2002, p.432) and on Olmstead (1923, p.387) is noted in Yasufuku (2001, p.199).

27) Nakajima (2002, pp.246-254).

28) Nakajima (2002, pp.254-256).

29) Nakajima (2002, p.290).

30) Nakajima (2001, pp.30-38).

31) On the form of those notebooks, see Nakajima (2002, pp.678-680).

32) Yasufuku (2001, p.204).

33) Kimura (1980, p.69); Yasufuku (2001, pp.193-194); Yamashita (2017, pp.(13)-(14)).

34) Nakajima (2002, p.432).

35) Yamashita (2017, p.(14)).

the list. This may be because many of the books in his collection were sold before his death or were damaged and lost during the 1947 floods.³⁶⁾

Olmstead (1923) and Jastrow (1915) were identified as parts of (0) by Kimura (1980) and Yasufuku (2001), whereas Myers (1904) and Breasted (1916) (or Breasted 1919) were identified as other parts. Although Myers (1904) does not appear on the list of the Handbook 1941, that work was found on Nakajima's bookshelves.³⁷⁾ According to Yamashita,³⁸⁾ the phrase in (6) can be traced back to Myers (1904).³⁹⁾

More than a thousand Babylonian captives were killed with their tongues removed. When the tongues were collected, a small mountain was built.

千に余るバビロンの俘囚は悉く舌を抜いて殺され、その舌を集めた所、
小さな築山が出来た

Furthermore, the following two phrases in (6) can be traced back to Breasted.

(the library of Nineveh was) buried underground two hundred years after that
and accidentally excavated two thousand three hundred years later

其の後二百年にして地下に埋没し、更に後二千三百年にして偶然発掘される

and

the ancient Sumerians did not know the beast called horse

古代スメリヤ人が馬といふ獣を知らなんだ

Those can be traced back to Breasted (1916), which Yamashita considered to be a highly likely source of Nakajima.⁴⁰⁾ Since the first phrase has corresponding descriptions in (5') and (4) and the second in (4), Myers (1904) and Breasted (1916) are thought to have been referred to before (4) was written.⁴¹⁾

According to Yasufuku, the source materials of (5) comprised at least two

36) Tanabe (1986, p.276).

37) Nihon Daigaku Hōgakubu Toshokan (1980, p.19); Tanabe (1986, p.283).

38) Yamashita (2017, p.(16)).

39) See also Yamamoto (2015, pp.149-152).

40) Yamashita (2017, pp.(17), (24)).

41) It is possible that they were referred to at an earlier point. This could be proved by a precise comparison of (1) and (2) with these sources, although this work is outside the scope of the current research.

sources and included German ones.⁴²⁾ Folios 37 Verso to 35 Verso of (5)⁴³⁾ contain many Assyrian and Babylonian kings' names and German words such as Sohn, des (as highlighted by Yasufuku) and the writing "sch" for /š/ in some personal names. Mitsuma (2020) did not clarify the source materials; however, two sources can now be identified. One main German source is the article "Assyrien" in *Meyers Kleines Konversations-Lexikon*.⁴⁴⁾ The kings' names, reigns, and deeds listed in it seem to have been continuously extracted by Nakajima to Folios 37 Verso to 36 Recto. However, the accounts in Folios 35 Verso and 34 Verso and Recto are seemingly extracted from Lewis Spence's *Myths & Legends of Babylonia & Assyria*.⁴⁵⁾ Folio 37 Verso also inserts an extract about the Kassite King of Babylonia and some other information derived from Spence (1916).⁴⁶⁾ I refer to these sourcebooks as (0').

The next section traces the formation process of *Mojika*. It clarifies what materials were used to establish the chronological setting shown at the beginning of (6), an element that is questionable in terms of how it connects with historical reality.

III. Date Setting of *Mojika*

1. Date Setting of (6) *Mojika*

The date of the story of *Mojika* is given at the beginning of (6), as follows:

At that time, that is, in the 20th year of the reign of Assurbanipal the Great, there was a strange rumor in the court of Nineveh. Every night, in the darkness of the library, suspicious voices whispered. Since the rebellion of the king's brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, had finally quelled in the fall of Babylon, another rebel plot was suspected, but there was no sign of this.

其の頃——といふのは、アシュル・バニ・アパル大王の治世第二十年目の頃だが——ニネゴの宮廷に妙な噂があつた。毎夜、図書館の闇の中で、ひそひそと怪しい話し声がするといふ。王兄シャマシュ・シム・ウキンの謀叛がバビロンの落城で漸く鎮まつたばかりのこととて、何か又、不逞の徒の陰謀ではないかと探つて見たが、それらしい様子もない。⁴⁷⁾

42) Yasufuku (2001, p.206).

43) Nakajima (2002, pp.254-255). Folios 37 Verso to 34 Recto of Notebook 3 is used backwards (Nakajima 2002, p.679).

44) I saw Meyer (1906, pp.408-409).

45) Spence (1916, pp.16-23).

46) Spence (1916, pp.22-23).

47) Nakajima (2001, p.30).

Here, the event recounted in *Mojika* is attributed to “in the 20th year of the reign of Assurbanipal the Great,” when “the rebellion of the king’s brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, had finally just quelled in the fall of Babylon.”

In Assyria, the name of the year is that of the person holding the eponymous office *limmu* each year. The year in which Shamash-shum-ukin’s revolt against Assurbanipal ended with the fall of Babylon was called “the *limmu* (year) of Bēlšunu, governor of Ḫindānu.”⁴⁸⁾ The year of the standard Mesopotamian Calendar, which began in Assyria at sunset on April 7, 648 BCE of the Julian calendar⁴⁹⁾ (that is 648/647 BCE),⁵⁰⁾ corresponds to the 21st year of Assurbanipal, not the 20th.

The Assyrian (and Babylonian) king Esarhaddon died in 669/668 BCE, and Assurbanipal ascended the throne in Assyria in the same year. However, the Babylonian king Shamash-shum-ukin did not ascend the throne in the same year. Esarhaddon died *en route* to Egypt on the 10th day of month VIII of the 12th year of his reign (month VIII began at sunset on October 23 and ended on November 22, 669 BCE in Assyria).⁵¹⁾ This event has been described in Babylonian Chronicles ABC 1 iv 30-31 and ABC 14 28-29. According to ABC 14 34, Assurbanipal ascended the throne in Assyria shortly afterward, in month IX in 669/668 BCE (that began at sunset on November 22 and ended at sunset on December 21, 669 BCE).⁵²⁾ The period from his accession to the end of 669/668 BCE is called the accession year of Assurbanipal. The first year of his reign was the following year (668/667 BCE). However, ABC 1 iv 34-36 and ABC 14 35-36 mention the return of the god Marduk from Assur to Babylon in month II of the accession year (MU.SAG) of Shamash-shum-ukin. This accession year does not cover the last months of 669/668 BCE but corresponds to the year 668/667 BCE. Therefore, the first year of Shamash-shum-ukin was 667/666 BCE.⁵³⁾ Table 1 summarizes the modern consensus on chronology from the death of Esarhaddon to the fall of Babylon.

However, this modern chronology has not influenced Nakajima’s date setting.

48) For this *limmu*, see Parpola (2007, p.384); Millard and Whiting (1994, pp.91-92); Novotny and Jeffers (2018, pp.30-32). See also SAA 10 (141 r.4-5) for an example of the use of this *limmu* year.

49) For the Julian date of the first day of each month (from sunset to midnight) from the accession year to the 21st year of Assurbanipal, see Parpola (2007, pp.382-383); Novotny and Jeffers (2018, p.28).

50) For the dating of the fall of Babylon and the end of Shamash-shum-ukin’s revolt to 648/647 BCE, see Frame (1992, pp.153-155); Novotny and Jeffers (2018, p.32).

51) For the correspondence of the first day of each month in the 12th year of Esarhaddon’s reign in Assyria with Julian calendar dates, see Parpola (2007, p.382). For the convention of Parpola’s table, see Novotny and Jeffers (2018, p.28).

52) See Parpola (2007, p.382); Novotny and Jeffers (2018, p.28).

53) See for example, Frame (1992, p.267).

Table 1 Modern Chronology of 669/668-648/647 BCE

BCE	Esarhaddon	Assurbanipal	Shamash-shum-ukin
669/668	12(th year)	Accession (0)	
668/667		1	Accession (0)
667/666		2	1
≈		≈	≈
648/647		21	20

Nakajima dated the end of Shamash-shum-ukin's revolt to the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign, referring to the materials of *Mojika*.

2. Dates in (5) Collection of Extracts in Notebook 3

An account on the events from the death of Assurbanipal's grandfather Sennacherib to the end of Shamash-shum-ukin's revolt is provided in (5) on Folio 36 Verso and Recto.⁵⁴⁾ This account is used to form (6) from (4). This is part of the extract from (0') that was identified in Chapter II. Owing to the complexity of the description, a photograph of this part is presented in Figure 1.

Sennacherib was killed by his two sons.

One of their brother, Asur-ach-iddin,
banished the two. (680-668)

| 670

Restoration of Babylon. Expedition to Egypt.

Sohn. Asur-banapal (668-626)

↘ His brother. ↓ Samas-schūm-ukin (Sammūges).

Viceroy of Babylon (668-648)

The brother rebelled and holed himself up in Babylon.

↙ 648 Fall of the city,

Thereafter, Asur-banipal ruled the city by himself.

Kandalanu (Kineladanos)

セナンケリブ、二人ノ子ニ弑サル

ソノ二人ヲ兄弟ノ一人、Asur-ach-iddin

ニ追ハル、 (680-668)

| 670

54) Nakajima (2002, p.255).

バビロン復興。 埃及遠征。
 Sohn. Asur-banapal (668-626)
 ↘ 弟. ↓ Samas-schūm-ukin (Sammūges)
 バビロン代官、(668-648)
 弟、謀叛、バビロンに拠る
 ↙ 648 落城、
 以後、アスユル、バニパル親政
 Kandalanu (Kineladanos)

The name of Esarhaddon is rendered as Asur-ach-iddin, Assurbanipal is Asur-banapal and アスユル、バニパル, and Shamash-shum-ukin is Samas-schūm-ukin (Sammūges). Kandalanu (Kineladanos) was the king whom Assurbanipal made the ruler of Babylonia after Shamash-shum-ukin,⁵⁵⁾ or, as Meyer (1906) suggests,⁵⁶⁾ the name of Assurbanipal itself as the king of Babylon. The designations Sammūges and Kineladanos are derived from Greek historical sources and their translations. Sammuges is a Latin transcription of the name in the Armenian translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon bipartitum*, as it appears alongside the Armenian transcription in Eusebius (1818).⁵⁷⁾ Kineladanos is a Latin transcription of the Greek genitive form of Ptolemy's Royal Canon.⁵⁸⁾

The chronological information from (5) differs from the modern chronology and places Esarhaddon's death and the accessions of Assurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin in 668 BCE. If Nakajima had an understanding of Assyrian and Babylonian calendar practices, whereby the year following the year of his accession was the first year of the new king, he would have been able to determine that the first year of Assurbanipal's reign was 667 BCE.⁵⁹⁾ Nakajima also notes in (5) that Babylon fell in 648 BCE. If 667 BCE was the first year, 648 BCE (the year of the fall of Babylon) would be the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign, as stated in (6). To derive this figure, it is easy to take 668 BCE as "Year Zero" and conclude that $668 - 648 = 20$. This chronological understanding and calculation was seemingly established earlier in the formation process. To confirm this, I examine (4) *Moji*.

55) For this person, see Frame (1992, pp.191-192).

56) Meyer (1906, p.409).

57) Eusebius (1818, p.44).

58) Grayson (1980-1983, p.101).

59) It is questionable whether Nakajima calculated the dates strictly according to the standard Mesopotamian Calendar or not. Most date descriptions used or referred to by Nakajima, as will be seen below, does not take the style n/n-1 (BCE), but only n (BCE). Therefore, in reconstructing his dating calculations in this study, it is assumed that he made his calculations according to the Western (Julian) calendar.

3. Date Setting in (4) *Moji*

At the beginning of (4), Folio 9 Recto reads as follows (the shaded parts were later canceled, and the insertions in brackets are the texts found between the lines):⁶⁰⁾

One day in the early summer of the 20th year of the reign of Assurbanipal the Great (so to speak, Louis XIV of Assyria), three (famous) scholars (happened to) meet in the hall of the (great) Royal Library of Nineveh.

アッシリアのルキ十四世ともいふべきアシュル・バニ・アパル大王の治世第二十年〔目〕の初夏の或日、ニネヴェの王立大図書館の広間に、〔偶々〕三人の聞えた大博士が落合うつた。

Moji is set at this meeting of the three scholars with the following statement on Folio 11 Verso.⁶¹⁾

After seventeen years of seclusion, Shamash-shum-ukin, (the King of Babylon,) the elder brother of the (present) Great King, launched a great rebellion against his younger brother, the King of Assyria, on a scale never previously seen in the realm. Southwest Asia was divided into two, (each people) siding with one or the other. After three (full) years of fierce conflict, (recently) it finally ended with the fall of Babylon.

現大王の兄に当る〔バビロン王〕シャマシュ・シュム・ウキンが、十七年の隠忍の後、弟たるアッシリア王に対して、未だかつてこの国に例の無かつた大規模の叛乱を起した。西南亜細亜は二分して、各々〔その〕いづれかに味方し、〔まる〕三年間烈しく争つた末、〔最近〕漸くバビロンの落城によつて、けりがついたのである。

From these two statements, it is clear that in (4), Nakajima had already placed the fall of Babylon in the early summer or shortly before in the 20th year of Assurbanipal. The phrase “(recently) it finally ended with the fall of Babylon” suggests that Babylon fell not long before the meeting of the three scholars in the early summer of the same year. I examined (1) and its sources to explore the basis of this dating.

60) Nakajima (2002, p.246).

61) Nakajima (2002, p.247).

4. Dating Calculations and Sources in (1) Collection of Extracts in Notebook 6

Notebook 6 is mostly used backward,⁶²⁾ and in Folio 42 Recto, the following extract is written:

669. Esarhaddon died on the way to Egypt in November.
Ashur-bani-apal (Assurbanipal) ascended to the throne.

669. Esarhaddon 埃及への途上に
十一月 死す
Ashur-bani-apal 即位,⁶³⁾

The extract is based on Olmstead (1923),⁶⁴⁾ according to Yamashita.⁶⁵⁾ The English text shows that Esarhaddon died on his way to Egypt in November 669 BCE, and a description of Assurbanipal's accession follows immediately on the same page. These English texts belong to Chapter XXX of Olmstead (1923), and the source for Esarhaddon's death seems to be Babylonian Chronicle ABC 1 iv 30-31, but Olmstead does not provide his source.⁶⁶⁾

As for the fall of Babylon, the following extract appears in Folio 32 Verso:⁶⁷⁾

648 middle of July. (inhabitants of Babylon) were obliged to eat children's flesh.

engulfed in harness leather.

Shamash-shum-ukin died in the fire.

Funeral rites (were performed by) astrologer Mar Ishtar.

were entrusted to

Citizens of Babylon were massacred.

↘ taken to Assur

their tongues were cut out in front of the king.

Dead bodies of starvation, plague in all the city.

Wolves, wild boars, vultures, wild dogs,

62) Nakajima (2002, p.680).

63) Nakajima (2002, p.283).

64) Olmstead (1923, p.399).

65) Yamashita (2017, p.(15)).

66) The Chronicle ABC 1 had already been published in 1887, see bibliography in *ABC*: 70. However, ABC 14, another historical document on the event, was first published in 1924, and could not have been used by Olmstead (1923).

67) Nakajima (2002, p.286).

648 七月半。⁶⁸⁾子供の肉を喰ふに至る。
 馬具の革を嚙む、
 Shamash-shum-ukin 火に入つて死す。
 葬礼は占星家。Mar Ishtar 行ふ。
 に託して。
 Babylon 市民虐殺。
 ↘ Ashur につれ去られ
 王の前で舌を切断さる。
 餓死体、満市疫病。
 狼、野猪、秃鷹、野犬、

The source of this extract was described in Chapter XXXVI of Olmstead (1923).⁶⁹⁾ Between Chapters XXX and XXXVI of Olmstead (1923), although not reflected in the extracts collection (1), an account states that the first year of the official reign of Shamash-shum-ukin began in March 668 BCE.⁷⁰⁾ Olmstead could have interpreted the word MU.SAG, which is now interpreted as “accession year,”⁷¹⁾ literally as “head (i.e., first) year” for understanding ABC 1 iv 34-38 (the last yearly section of the chronicle), as the description of Shamash-shum-ukin’s first year. ABC 1 iv 33 indicates that both Shamash-shum-ukin and Assurbanipal ascended the thrones in Babylonia and Assyria after the death of their father, Esarhaddon. This statement is undated but naturally implies that the simultaneous accession of the brothers, and Olmstead’s interpretation seems to proceed on this line. However, modern chronology differentiates their accession years (see above III.1.).

Although Nakajima did not extract information on Shamash-shum-ukin’s first year, he included extracts from the accounts of the return of the god Marduk to Babylon in Folio 40 Verso in (1).⁷²⁾ These accounts were written before and after the chronological information provided by Olmstead (1923).⁷³⁾ Thus, Nakajima read Olmstead’s account of the first year of Shamash-shum-ukin. Nakajima may have applied this gap between the death of Esarhaddon and the first year of Shamash-shum-ukin to Assurbanipal and considered the first year of his reign as the year following the death of Esarhaddon.⁷⁴⁾ Table 2 presents a chronology based on

68) Nakajima refers to the season of the meeting of the three scholars in (4) as “early summer.” This may mean that the meeting was dated to July 648 BCE, just after the end of the revolt of Shamash-shum-ukin.

69) Olmstead (1923, p.475, in Chapter XXXVI).

70) Olmstead (1923, p.406 in Chapter XXXI).

71) See *ABC* (p.86).

72) Nakajima (2002, p.284).

73) Olmstead (1923, pp.405-406).

74) However, as noted in note 59, even if Nakajima made such a judgment, it is highly likely that ↗

Table 2 Chronology Based on the Main Text of Olmstead (1923)

BCE	Esarhaddon	Assurbanipal	Shamash-shum-ukin
669	Death	Accession (0) (year)	Accession (0)
668		1	1
667		2	2
≈		≈	≈
648		21	21

Olmstead's (1923) main text.

Based on Esarhaddon's death in the Folio 42 Recto, one may interpret that the first year of Assurbanipal's reign was 668 BCE, and the year of Babylon's fall (648 BCE) can thus be calculated as the 21st year of Assurbanipal's reign. This conforms to the established dating but not to the descriptions in (4) and (6).

One possible clue to Nakajima's dating of 648 BCE as the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign may be the reigning years of Shamash-shum-ukin. Notebook 6, Folio 33 Verso, extracts the hunger situation in May during the 20th year of Shamash-shum-ukin, based on Olmstead (1923).⁷⁵⁾ This is followed by an extract from the same work⁷⁶⁾ on Folio 33 Verso and Recto on the prayers to the gods by Assurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin, and then the description of mid-July 648 BCE on Folio 32 Verso cited above. This suggests that 648 BCE may have been understood as the 20th year of Shamash-shum-ukin and Assurbanipal if Nakajima regarded both reigns as chronologically parallel. However, these extracts do not necessarily indicate that the year 648 BCE is the 20th year of Shamash-shum-ukin and are not strong enough to cancel the clear date of Esarhaddon's death (and the accession of Assurbanipal) in 669 BCE, as shown in (1) and Olmstead (1923).⁷⁷⁾

However, there are clear accounts in Olmstead (1923) and (1) that place Esarhaddon's death and Assurbanipal's accession in 668 BCE. These accounts have not been noted in previous studies. Source (1) contains a list of Assyrian kings, as shown in Figure 2,⁷⁸⁾ in which Esarhaddon's death and Assurbanipal's accession are dated to 668 BCE. Column 3 in Table 4 presents the entries in the list. The main source for Nakajima is the eight small maps showing the "development of the

↘ the "following year" in his mind was not of the standard Mesopotamian Calendar, but that according to the Julian calendar.

75) Olmstead (1923, p.471).

76) Olmstead (1923, pp.471-475).

77) Olmstead (1923, p.399).

78) See also Nakajima (2002, p.289).

Assyrian Empire” presented in a spread in Olmstead (1923).⁷⁹⁾ Each four maps are arranged as maps 2 and 3 and presented with the ligature of G, C, and H. These maps were drawn by George C. Hewes Jr., Olmstead’s student at the University of Illinois. His name is shown on Olmstead (1923, p.xxxi) as “George C. Hewes.” The heading of each sub-map combines the names of the major kings (all in capitals) from ASHUR-UBALLIT (I) to ASHUR-BANI-APAL (two each in the seventh and eighth sub-maps) with the duration of their reigns (for the first two, the final years of their reigns) (See Figure 3). The last four headings, which include the odd date of 668 BCE, almost correspond to the short king list of Breasted.⁸⁰⁾ At least the date “668 BCE” seems derived from this list. Table 4 shows the entries in Breasted’s list in Column 1 and the headings of the sub-maps in Column 2 in bold.

The year 1100 on the third sub-map may indicate the (approximate) date of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I. Olmstead (1923) did not indicate his reign. Rather, Olmstead (1923) provides an account of the reign of his predecessor Ashur-resh-ishi I as “(1127-1115)”⁸¹⁾ and the reign of Tiglath-pileser’s successor Saggal-apal-ekur II as “(1102-1092).”⁸²⁾ Those do not indicate the date “1100” for Tiglath-pileser. The date seems to have been inserted by Hewes’ tact on the sub-map. Among the sourcebooks published before Olmstead (1923), Sayce (1894),⁸³⁾ and Sayce (1899)⁸⁴⁾ show Tiglath-pileser’s date as “B. C. 1100” and “about 1100 BC,” respectively. Olmstead (1916, p.10) even mentions this king as “Tiglath Pileser I. (circa 1100 B. C.)” Olmstead’s relationship with Hewes makes the latter the most plausible source of his map. Sayce’s books are noted in the book list of Nakajima’s Notebook 1941,⁸⁵⁾ but Nakajima seems to know the date from the Hewes’ sub-map.

The names of kings and of their reigns that do not appear on the sub-maps but appear in Nakajima’s king list can be found on other pages of Olmstead (1923). In such cases, a relevant entry is quoted in Table 4, Column 2, indicating also the pages on which they appear.

Comparing the names of kings and their reigns given in the sub-map headings with those in Nakajima’s list (in bold in Table 4, Column 3) shows that the differences between the two sources are small, and the correspondence between them is fairly clear. In particular, for the first two kings, although the beginning and end years of the reign are given in Olmstead (1923),⁸⁶⁾ only the end year visible in

79) Olmstead (1923, pp.46-47, maps 2-3).

80) Breasted (1916, p.152), reproduced in Breasted (1919, p.71).

81) Olmstead (1923, p.61).

82) Olmstead (1923, p.70).

83) Sayce (1894, p.49).

84) Sayce (1899, p.136).

85) Nakajima (2002, p.432).

86) Olmstead (1923, pp.43, 52).

the sub-map heading is used in Nakajima's list, indicating a close relationship between his list and the sub-map headings. Nakajima's continuous extraction of sub-map headings is evident in a photograph of his list (Figure 2). The names of the kings corresponding to the sub-map headings and the periods of their reigns (or the last years of their reigns or the truncated date for Tiglath-pileser I) are written in pencil in Folio 23 Verso, and the information not found there is either written in ink in relatively small characters between the lines and in the margin on the right-hand side of Folio 23 Verso or Folio 24 Recto. As to the group of kings shown in Folio 24 Recto, its insertion between "Shamshi Adad V" and "Tiglath Pileser III" on Folio 23 Verso is indicated by an arrow. In other words, Nakajima first wrote out all the sub-map headings of Maps 2-3 of Olmstead (1923) in pencil and then filled in the additional information using ink. He then understood the last year of Esarhaddon's reign as 668 BCE and the first year of Assurbanipal as 667 BCE. He calculated 648 BCE, the year of the fall of Babylon, as the 20th year of Assurbanipal. In this calculation, 668 BCE was considered "Year Zero" (668-648 = 20).

The numbers "68" and "48" can be seen vertically aligned in the lower right corner of Notebook 6, Folio 25 Verso (Figure 4: "68" is to the right of the name "Sin-shar-ishkun"). These numbers are encircled in a line by the author in Figure 4 and shown in Figure 4a in a zoomed-in and high-contrast style but are not reprinted in Nakajima (2002)⁸⁷⁾ or Nakajima (1976).⁸⁸⁾ These numbers are probably traces of Nakajima's calculation, showing its starting point at 668 BCE and the ending at 648 BCE.⁸⁹⁾ The calculation in (1) forms the basis of the description in (4). His subsequent reference in (5), based on (0'), also places Assurbanipal's accession in 668 BCE and the fall of Babylon in 648 BCE. Therefore, Nakajima's first calculation endured, and the date of Babylon's fall in the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign was passed on to (6): The estimated chronology of Nakajima is summarized in Table 3.

87) Nakajima (2002, p.288).

88) Nakajima (1976, p.373).

89) If Nakajima represented a standard Mesopotamian Calendar year by the Julian year in which the former began, as is often the case in contemporary scholarly works (see, for example, Frame 1992, p.XXXIV), this "(6)68" refers the year 668/667 BCE and "(6)48" means 648/647 BCE. If the fall of Babylon was dated to mid-July 648 BCE, it would be during 648/647 BCE, and if 668/667 BCE is considered "Year Zero," the fall of Babylon would still be in the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign. However, this hypothesis requires a detailed examination of the relevant sources and will be considered in future research.

Table 3 Nakajima's Chronology (estimated by the author)

BCE	Esarhaddon	Assurbanipal	Shamash-shum-ukin
669			
668	Death	Accession (0) (year)	Accession (0)
667		1	1
≈		≈	≈
648		20	20

IV. Conclusion

Chapter II of this article summarizes the complex formation process and sources of Nakajima Atsushi's *Mojika*, and the source (0') is identified. Chapter III discusses how Nakajima dated the story of *Mojika* in the 20th year of Assurbanipal's reign, just after Babylon's fall. Nakajima may have dated the story based on the list of Assyrian kings in (1) Nakajima's extracts in Notebook 6, which dates Esarhaddon's death to 668 BCE, and identify the maps 2-3 by Olmstead (1923) as the primary source. Nakajima took 668 BCE as the starting point (Year Zero) when calculating Assurbanipal's reign and subsequently subtracted 648 from 668 to obtain the number 20 (648 BCE = the 20th year of Assurbanipal). A trace of Nakajima's formula can be identified in (1).

Mojika is a rare work by a prewar Japanese author set in ancient Assyria and an early example of a Japanese literary work focusing on ancient Near-Eastern politics and culture. This study argues that the narrative supporting the connection with the reality of Nakajima's "Romantic Realism" is not based on mere prejudice or the inadvertent manipulation of numbers but on multiple references. The date of *Mojika* seems to be slightly different from our current (and Olmstead's) understanding of ancient Near-Eastern history and is, therefore, at odds with the reality of the work. My study clarifies this through a detailed examination of the formation process of *Mojika*. I would like to continue my research on how the reality of *Mojika* and the other works of *Kotan* was worked out in their formation through detailed comparisons with the creative materials and sources on which they are based. In the future, I would also like to elucidate the circumstances that led Nakajima to conceive works set in the ancient Near-East.

Appendix: List of Assyrian Kings in Yuhanon Qashisho's Work

As the list of Nakajima shown in Column 3 of Table 4 and Figure 2, another

list of Assyrian kings, which is also an extract of the sub-map headings of the maps 2-3 of Olmstead (1923), was published by Y(o)uhanon Qashisho (1918-2001), a Syrian Orthodox Christian from Tur Abdin, Turkey who emigrated to Sweden in 1970 (see Alkhas 2001 for his biography). It was inserted in his paper “We are historically, geographically, linguistically and culturally Assyrians” (Qashisho 2006) as “kings during the peak of the Assyrian Empire.”

Qashisho (2006) was available in the archives of *Hujådå* magazine. The list of kings was originally published in *Hujådå* 1/1 (1978, p.2).⁹⁰⁾ *Hujådå* magazine was published by Assyriska Riksförbundet i Sverige, ARS. Qashisho was the first editor-in-chief.⁹¹⁾ His king list is reproduced from Qashisho (2006) in Column 4 of Table 4 (collated with the original). He mentions TIGLATH PILESER III’s reign as that of Shalmaneser III and omits the mention of the former.

Abbreviations

- ABC* Grayson, A. Kirk (1975), *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5, Locust Valley, New York: Augustin.
- SAA 10* Parpola, Simo (1993), *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, State Archives of Assyria 10, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

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90) For the original articles, see Makko (2017, pp.268, 289, note 22).

91) Makko (2017, pp.267-268).

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Table 4 Lists of Assyrian Kings

1. Breasted (1916, p.152; 1919, p.71)	2. Olmstead (1923)	3. Nakajima, Notebook No.6	4. Qashisho (2006)
		«Folio 23 verso»	
	ASHUR-UBALLIT (1340) cf. Ashur-uballit (1370-1340) (p.43)	Ashur-Uballit (1340)	Ashur-Ubalit (1340)
	TUKULTI URTA I (1232) cf. Tukulti Urta (1260-1232) (p.52)	Tukulti-Urta I (1232)	Tukulti Urta I (1232)
	TIGLATH PILESER I (1100)	Tiglath Pileser (1100)	Tiglath Pileser I (1100)
	ASHUR-NASIR-APAL (885-860)	Ashur-Nasir-apal (885-860)	Ashur-Nasir-Apal (885-860)
	SHALMANESER III (860-825)	Shalmaneser III (860-825)	Shalmaneser III (746-728)
	the fifth Shamshi Adad (825-812) (p.75)	Shamshi Adad V (825-812)	
		«Folio 24 recto»	
	the third Adad-nirari (812-782) (p.75)	Adad-Nirari (812-782)	
	the fourth Shalmaneser (782-772) (p.75)	Shalmaneser IV (782-772)	
	Ashur-dan III (772-754) (p.75) Ashur-dan III (772-755) (p.169)	Ashur-Dan III (772-755)	
	Ashur-nirari V (754-746) (p.75) Ashur-nirari's reign (755-746) (p.172)	Ashur-Nirari V (755-746)	
		«Folio 23 verso again»	
	TIGLATH PILESER III (746-728)	Tiglath Pileser III (746-728)	
	Shalmaneser ... the fifth ... (728-722) (p.204)	Shalmaneser V (728-722)	
Sargon II	722-705 B.C. SARGON (722-705)	Sargon (722-705)	Shargon (722-705)
Sennacherib	705-681 B.C. SENNACHERIB (705-681)	Sennacherib (705-681)	Sennacherib (705-681)
Esarhaddon	681-668 B.C. ESARHADDON (681-668)	Esarhaddon (681-668)	Esarhaddon (681-668)
Assurbanipal	668-626 B.C. ASHUR-BANI-APAL (668-626)	Ashur-bani-apal (668-626)	Ashur-Bani-Apal (668-626)

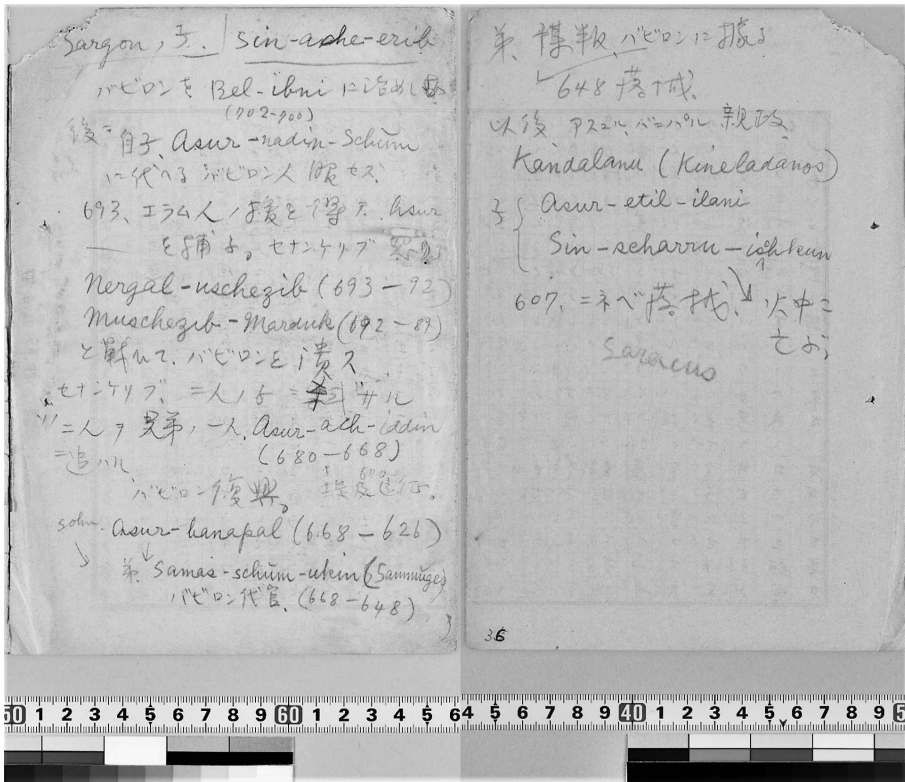


Figure 1 Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, Notebook 3 ノート第三, Folio 36 Verso (left) and Recto (right)
(Courtesy of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature 神奈川文学資料館, contrast increased)

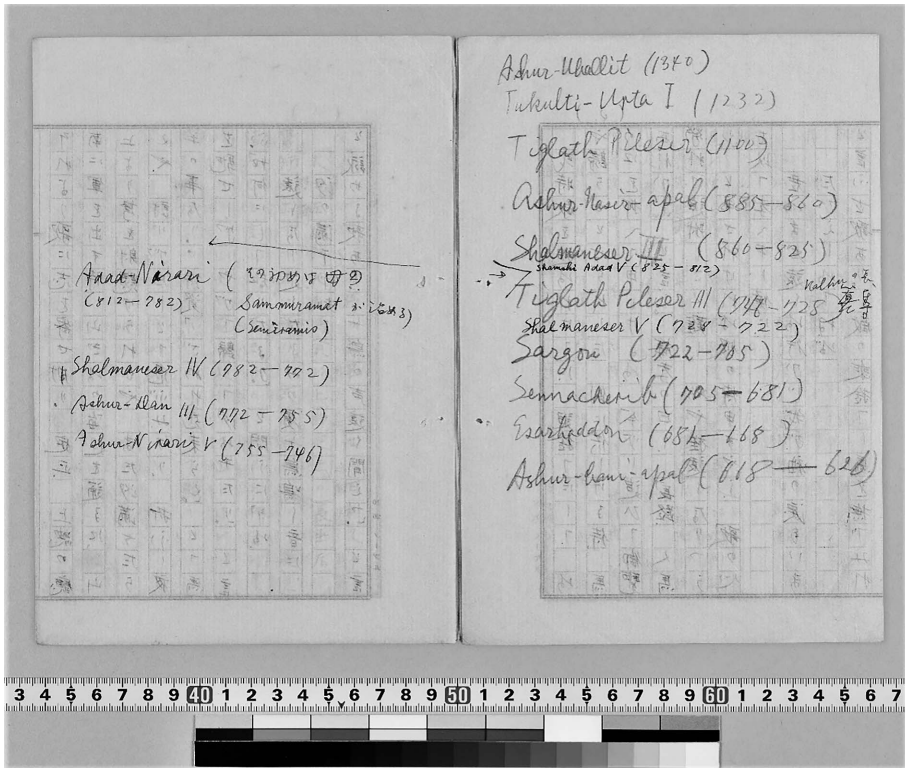
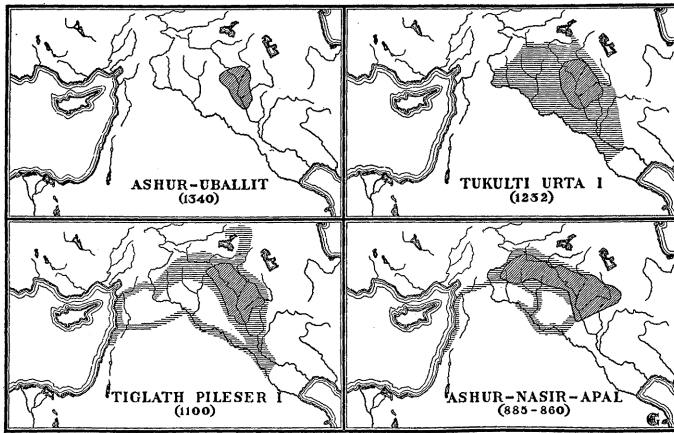
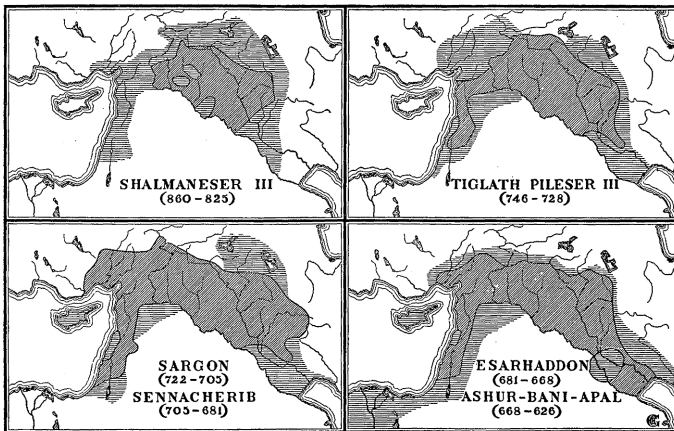


Figure 2 Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, Notebook 6 ノート第六, Folio 24 Recto (left) and Folio 23 Verso (right)
 (Courtesy of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature 神奈川文学資料館, contrast increased)



MAP 2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (1340-860).



MAP 3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (860-626).

Figure 3 Olmstead (1923, pp.46-47, Maps 2-3)
(Courtesy of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of
the University of Chicago)

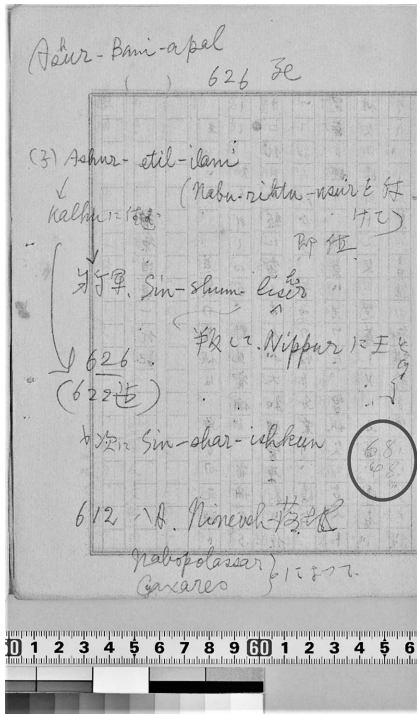


Figure 4 Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, Notebook 6 ノート 第六, Folio 25 Verso (Courtesy of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature 神奈川文学資料館, contrast increased)



Figure 4a Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, Calculation 68 (-)48. Detail from Figure 4 (Courtesy of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature 神奈川文学資料館, trimmed and contrast increased)