

to persuade the inhabitants of Jerusalem to surrender against the will of Hezekiah, is generally completely ignored. However, we have known for some time that this may be historically in its nucleolus very accurate, since the Assyrians made similar efforts to save their troops from the necessity of an expensive and wasteful siege. That this was sometimes their custom is found in        is contained in an Assyrian letter found in Kalach (today called Nimrud), probably from the year 731, which tells about the dealings with the inhabitants of Babylon. H.W.F.Saggs published and discussed it in Iraq 17(1955) p.23ff. On page 47 he shows the similarity of the account in 2 Kings 18f. Unfortunately part of the letter has been very poorly preserved, and also it may not have been copied entirely correctly. I have had no opportunity to examine it personally. All I can do here is to get a translation of the understandable part and in parentheses to place the transcription which I read differently than Saggs.

(1) To my lord the king (2) your servant [ Sama ] <sup>v?</sup> -bunaga (and) Nabû-êtir (3) May everything go well with my lord the king; (4) Nabû (and) Marduk may they bless my lord the king! (5) On the 28th we went to Babylon (6) (and) took our place in front of the Marduk Gate (7) We spoke with (issil) a Babylonian. (8) [ . . . ] nu, a servant of Ukinzer <sup>1</sup> - (9) A Chaldean man was with him (i-se!-e!su) <sup>v</sup> -, (10) they came out (and) stood with Babylonians (11) in front of the gate. We spoke as follows (12) to the Babylonians: (13) "The

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1 Ukin-zēr was king of Babylon for barely three years, 732-730.