

Preface

The following text editions of the two hundred Nuzi tablets published as *JEN VII* (text numbers *JEN* 674-881; Lacheman†, Maidman 1989) have appeared so far: *JEN* 674-833 (Maidman 1994; 1998; 1999a; 2002; 2009; 2008, 213-220; 1987a; 2015). This monograph completes this series of text editions.

In addition to the usual array of Nuzi private documents, the present set of editions contains peculiar items. (It is recognized, of course, that each document is unique in its own way and contributes to the general store of knowledge.) Among these “special” texts are the following. *JEN* 834 is possibly the oldest antichretic loan transaction attested at Nuzi. *JEN* 836 is most probably an antichretic loan tablet of Teḫip-tilla son of Puḫi-šenni. If so, it is the only such attested transaction in his long line of economic activities. *JEN* 851 is an unusual description of litigation. *JEN* 854 is a unique and enigmatic text pertaining to an economic transaction. *JEN* 856 possibly yields new insights into the economic relationships among the descendants of Teḫip-tilla son of Puḫi-šenni. *JEN* 872 is a unique and lengthy roster of land measurers. The function of this document is somewhat obscure. *JEN* 873 contains a significant trial, part of an extended series of texts involving the entry and exit of members of a family into and out of the house of Teḫip-tilla son of Puḫi-šenni.

Furthermore, the edition of *JEN* 857 includes a preliminary transliteration of an important and unpublished document, *JENu* 1108a.

The project of publishing *JEN VII* (begun by Lacheman), and of editing all the texts of this volume began on 8 December 1982 and ended, effectively, on 3 July 2019, a period of thirty-six and a half years. Other projects, interests, and responsibilities aside, why did this project take so long to complete? After all, the editing of a couple of hundred quotidian documents, no matter how carefully studied, should not demand decades of work. But Nuzi texts are different. They *do* demand that attention. This is so because of a concatenation of circumstances, a perfect storm, as it were.

Nuzi texts, excluding Kirkuk and “Tell al-Faḥḥar” tablets, number about 8000 texts and fragments (mostly texts),¹ one of the larger collections to come from any Mesopotamian site. They come from a middling-sized town. They come from a tightly circumscribed time span, 125-150 years. This concentration of many texts from a smallish place over a moderate time span means that the level of interrelatedness among these tablets, especially private documents, is large and complex.² My primary goal in publishing and editing *JEN VII* was to establish the text itself, especially the filling-in of lacunae.³ Given the “perfect storm” that is Nuzi, even this modest goal could only be accomplished by tracking down and studying interrelated texts, mostly tied together through personal names. For any given text, Nuzi requires of the student careful study and reflection of often a dozen or more other texts. Lacunae were indeed filled in as a result of this *modus operandi*, but, in addition, other issues frequently opened up as well. Often, but by no means always, ancillary studies and observations became embedded in what originally was meant to be strictly philological Comments and Notes. Thus did a seemingly simple and short task become complicated and very time consuming. It is to be hoped that the resulting complex edition of these tablets opens up to the student a rich tapestry of the social and economic life of family and community at Nuzi, and beyond.

As for future desiderata in the field of Nuzi studies, one is paramount: a new name book. Now, the prosopographical analysis of *JEN VII* has depended on the lists of Nuzi personal names to be found (in order of utility) in *NPN*; the unpublished Lacheman name book; Maidman 1994, 370-417; *AAN*; Müller 1998, 253-81; Mayer 1976, 206-7; and Jankowska 1961, 498-522. *NPN* especially is an astonishing work and in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, these tools are outdated or inaccurate or both. In addition, the pace of text publication in recent decades has accelerated, bringing to the fore thousands of new data. For these reasons, a new, comprehensive name book is indispensable.⁴ Only when the materials from the major

¹ See Fincke 1999, 13 (the “Harvard” texts; ca. 5000 items); and Maidman 1999b, 26-27 (the “Chicago” texts; ca. 2800 items). Nuzi texts are to be found in British Museum, Louvre, Hermitage, Pushkin, and other museum collections as well.

² But note also the bewilderingly large number of interrelated texts among government documents. See, for example, Dosch 2009.

³ See Maidman 1994, 1-8 (“Introduction”). Many of the judgements and observations made there are echoed here – with greater hindsight.

⁴ That is, it needs to be comprehensive *at least* for the published material, including *JEN 774-1000*.

I have noted all PNs (wholly and partially preserved) from *all* unpublished “Chicago” Nuzi texts and fragments. This manuscript material will be useful for scholars wishing to thoroughly scour the “Chicago” material. It can be acquired by contacting me at mmaidman@yorku.ca.

text collections with *all* their fragments and all the minor collections are integrated can a truly thorough analysis of the Nuzi texts be undertaken.

But that is for the future. For now, text publication and edition are still priorities. And the *JEN VII* project, a large step in addressing these priorities, is, at long last, completed.

As Pepys would have it, “and so to bed”.

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