

Representations of Rebellion in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is a study of the literary motifs and topoi relating to rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. It is particularly concerned with the ways in which the Assyrian kings and their scribes emplotted rebellion into the narratives of the royal inscriptions in order to present these events in a favourable light. Details such as the identities of those responsible for a rebellion; the location of the king at the time at which the rebellion began; or the involvement of the gods (or lack thereof) all contributed towards a message that rebellions against Assyria were unjustified and lacked divine backing. In cases where it was felt that events could not be made to present the king in a favourable light, reference to rebellion was omitted from the inscription. I argue that the approach to these events changed during the reign of Ashurbanipal. This king presented events which might otherwise have been seen as negatively connoted as having been decreed by the gods in order to allow him the opportunity to gain further military successes against his enemies.

To Sophie, for everything.

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Introduction

Rebellion was a near constant presence in Assyrian history. Every king for whom we have any detailed information from Adad-nārārī I onwards experienced at least one revolt,¹ and the occurrence of rebellion has been identified as a cause for almost every major event in Neo-Assyrian history, from the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib,² to the first Neo-Assyrian campaigns to the west under Ashurnasirpal II,³ or the decline in Assyrian imperialism over the period from the reign of Šamšī-Adad V until the accession of Tiglath-pileser III.⁴ In fact, nearly all that survived into modern times of the memory of Assyria before the rediscovery of its major cities in the mid-nineteenth century were the events of two rebellions against this ancient empire: Hezekiah of Judah's attempt to shrug off Assyrian imperialism on one hand,⁵ and the fall of Nineveh at the hands of Babylonian and Median rebels on the other.⁶ Even now, rebellion is a major thread in the narrative surrounding Assyria. The recent plays by the Assyriologist Selena Wisnom on Assyrian history focus on the conspiracy against Esarhaddon by several of his officials and the rebellion against Ashurbanipal by his brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.⁷ Wisnom's next play will focus on the murder of Sennacherib, meaning that rebellion will again play a major role in the plot.⁸

¹ To demonstrate this point, every king for whom we have inscriptional campaign accounts of any real length and detail from this period can be found in Tables 1-5, which list the attestations of some terms and topoi relating to rebellion in the inscriptions, with the exception of Shalmaneser IV, who includes a short campaign account in his inscription on the Pacarzik Stele (RIMA 3 A.O.105.1: 4-13), but does not make any explicit reference to rebellion. Rebellions against two more kings, Aššur-dān III and Aššur-nārārī V, are recorded in the Eponym Chronicle (Millard 1994: 58-59), and the Assyrian king list records that Ninurta-tukultī-Aššur and Erība-Adad II, two kings for whom no campaign accounts survive, were overthrown by usurpers (Glassner 2004: 142-43 iii 32-36, iv 1-4).

² Brinkman 1973: 94; Frahm 2014: 209-10.

³ Grayson 1982: 257.

⁴ Grayson 1982: 271; Siddall 2013: 86.

⁵ 2 *Kings* 18-19.

⁶ Diodorus Siculus 2.23-28; Herodotus 1.95-106. Diodorus Siculus (2.1-20) also gives accounts of the reigns of the mythical rulers Ninus and his queen and successor Semiramis. The narrative concerning Ninus is effectively just a list of conquests, but Semiramis' reign is described as ending with a rebellion by her son Ninyas (Diodorus Siculus 2.20.1).

⁷ *Ashurbanipal: The Last Great King of Assyria* ran at the Simpkins Lee Theatre, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford from the 15th to the 18th of May 2013, and *Esarhaddon: The Substitute King* ran at the same venue from the 29th of October to the 1st November 2014. Wisnom has discussed the process of writing these plays and her views on the role that theatre can play in introducing new audiences to the Ancient Near East in an interview for *Mar Shiprim* (<https://iaassyriology.com/popular-culture-18-1/> date accessed: 19 Jan 2019) and an article in *Altorientalische Forschungen* (Wisnom 2016).

⁸ Wisnom states the subject matter of her third play in her profile on the TORCH website (<https://torch.ox.ac.uk/selena-wisnom> date accessed: 19 Jan. 2019).

In part, this association of Assyria with rebellion can be attributed to the fact that stories of betrayal, brother fighting against brother, and mighty empires brought low by their disaffected subjects make compelling narratives. However, the focus on revolts and insurrection carries through to the official narratives commissioned by the Assyrian kings themselves. The royal inscriptions show a surprising willingness to discuss the occurrence of rebellions against the state; all but one of Shalmaneser I's campaigns are described as being undertaken in response to rebellion, whilst Ashurnasirpal II's annals explicitly state the occurrence of rebellion six times in the course of his first five regnal years.⁹ Rebellion is a recurring image throughout the corpus.

Although the subject of rebellions has been touched upon by various scholars in the course of studies on other aspects of Assyrian history or royal ideology,¹⁰ there is no detailed study of the portrayal of such events in the royal inscriptions. Recently, Frahm and Radner have provided contributions on Assyria to a volume on rebellion in the ancient world,¹¹ but these papers are both very broad introductions to the subject of revolts against Assyria, and dedicate only a short amount of space to the royal inscriptions. Richardson has also edited a volume on the subject of rebellions and peripheries in the Ancient Near East.¹² None of the contributions to this volume have rebellion against Assyria as their primary focus.¹³ Richardson's own contribution to this volume does discuss the topoi used to describe rebellion in Akkadian texts, including the Assyrian royal inscriptions, but is more concerned with determining the underlying historical events recorded in these texts than with studying the topoi and their placement within the narratives of the inscriptions.¹⁴ This dissertation aims to fill this gap in the scholarship. In doing so, I will be primarily concerned with the representation of these events in the inscriptions, the terminology, phrasing, and literary topoi used in accounts of rebellions in these texts, and the circumstances in which an inscription did or did not include explicit statements of the occurrence of rebellion.

⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 75-76, i 102-103, ii 15-16, ii 24-25, ii 50, ii 118.

¹⁰ For example, Badali et al. 1982: 22-23; Karlsson 2016: 154-55, 162-64; Liverani 1990: 126-34; Oded 1992: 69-99; Saggs 1982: 87.

¹¹ Frahm 2016; Radner 2016.

¹² Richardson (ed.) 2010.

¹³ The only article with an Assyrian focus is that of Melville (2010) on the region of Tabal in central Anatolia as a "contested periphery" between Assyria, Urartu, and Phrygia.

¹⁴ Richardson 2010: 4-15.

For several decades now, it has been standard practice within Assyriology to approach the Assyrian royal inscriptions as much as works of literature as historical sources.¹⁵ This dissertation will in many ways follow this tradition. It will be primarily concerned with the specifics of phrasing, word choice, content, and structure through which the Assyrian kings and their scribes “emplotted” episodes involving rebellions into the narratives of the inscriptions, and the effect which these decisions had on the ideological and rhetorical content of these texts.

The Structure of this Dissertation

In order to carry out this project, it will first be necessary to establish some points relating to the audience and purpose of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, a task which will be carried out in Chapter 1. The answer to this question has important implications for the analysis within this dissertation. This chapter will approach the question of audience through the distinction between “real audience”, those who receive a text in reality, and “particular audience”, those whom the author(s) of a text intend to influence with their rhetoric. I will argue that the extent to which the Assyrian royal inscriptions conveyed state propaganda to a contemporary audience, through either public readings or the “self-indoctrination” of scribes, has been overstated by many previous scholars. I will therefore seek to determine some aspects of the intended purpose of these texts’ rhetoric for an audience of the gods and future kings.

Having established my position on the audience of the inscriptions, I will then discuss a few generalities of Assyrian views on the concepts of kingship and warfare in Chapter 2. This chapter will focus on the role which the gods were perceived to play in relation to both of these subjects. In particular, it will discuss the Mesopotamian understanding of the relationship between the king and the gods. A good ruler would be rewarded for his piety through the achievement of divinely-decreed success during his reign, whilst a poor ruler would be punished, even overthrown, by his deities. Furthermore, the gods played an important role in the legalistic framework in which warfare was understood throughout the history of the Ancient Near East. Warfare was conceived of as a form of trial, with the gods deciding which party was

¹⁵ Some of the most prominent and influential examples of this approach are several of the papers in the volume *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons* (Fales 1981; Liverani 1981; Tadmor 1981).

in the right. These ideas bear a great deal of importance for the analysis which will be undertaken in the proceeding chapters.

Chapter 3 will address the various terms and phrases in the inscriptions which represent the concept of rebellion, and the methodology by which I will determine the occurrence of explicit statements that a rebellion had occurred. For the purpose of this dissertation I will define rebellion as resistance by an organised group against an established ruler or government which exercises or claims a degree of control over that group.¹⁶ A major concern of this chapter will be to determine whether or not the Assyrian king and his scribes drew any distinctions between rebellion and other forms of resistance against the state. It has sometimes been assumed that all hostility against Assyria or resistance to Assyrian imperialism was viewed as rebellion in Assyrian thought. This question will be addressed through a consideration of the contexts in which specific terms relating to revolt and resistance appear in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Having addressed this question, I will then specify the characteristics which I will use to identify the occurrence of rebellion in these texts. As I am primarily concerned with *representation* as opposed to the underlying historical reality, these identifiers will differ somewhat from the framework put forward by Richardson.¹⁷ Instead, I will be aiming to determine whether a narrative makes it clear to the audience that an event was a rebellion, and the markers which I will use to identify these events will reflect this.

Chapters 4 to 6 will explore various *topoi* relating to rebellion in the royal inscriptions. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the role of rebellion in Mesopotamian mythology, and the way in which the mythological connotations of rebellion were exploited in the rhetoric of the royal inscriptions. Particularly important for this task will be the recent studies by several scholars on “literary allusion” or “intertextuality” in the royal inscriptions. The idea that some inscriptions quote or make reference to other texts has frequently been put forward in relation to connections between rebellion and Mesopotamian combat myths, and must therefore be discussed here. The proposals of literary allusions in the inscriptions have been widely accepted, with little criticism. What little opposition has been raised has demonstrated a lack of understanding or engagement with the theoretical underpinnings of the arguments put forward in

¹⁶ See the discussion in Chapter 3 for elaboration.

¹⁷ Richardson 2010: 4-15.

support of intertextuality. I will therefore assess these proposed allusions with particular reference to rebellions, especially Weissert's argument that Sennacherib's inscriptions allude to *Enūma Eliš* for political-propagandistic purposes.

Chapter 5 will explore the question of agency in the narratives describing rebellion. To which groups or individuals can the onset of rebellion be attributed? How does context affect this? Previous studies have frequently characterised Assyrian views of foreign enemies as being mainly quite homogeneous. I argue that this adherence to a rigid binary opposition between the Assyrian king and the single, monolithic idea of the Enemy obscures the nuances present in the texts. By acknowledging the subtle variations between different accounts, we can open up various new avenues for exploring the concepts of rebellion, legitimacy, and authority in Assyrian thought.

In Chapter 6, I will progress from the discussion of the agency of human rebels in the Assyrian royal inscriptions to a study of the roles played by the gods in these events. I will begin by examining the role played by the gods in Sargon's accession in the Aššur Charter, before comparing this text to Sargon's Letter to the God in order to elucidate some points concerning the relationships between Sargon and his adversary Rusa and their respective gods. Following this will be a study of the episodes in which the gods cause rebellion against Assyria's adversaries. It will be argued that the nature of these episodes and their ideological basis change significantly during the reign of Ashurbanipal in response to political events occurring at that time.

Chapter 7 will focus on occasions when the occurrence of rebellion was either obscured in the narrative, or else the events were omitted altogether. In this chapter, I will discuss the nature of the differentiation in Assyrian thought between the Assyrian heartland, the periphery of the empire, and polities outside of Assyrian control, and explore the relationship between the spatial or temporal distance of a good ruler and the likelihood of rebellion. I will particularly focus on a series of case studies concerning rebellion in the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, and the ways in which these kings avoided specifying the occurrence of rebellion in contexts which would present them in a negative light. In doing so, I will explore important considerations on the compositional history of these kings' inscriptions, and on the relationship between core and periphery in Assyrian royal ideology.

Finally, Chapter 8 will seek to determine if and how the punishments for rebellion in the royal inscriptions differed at all from the punishment for other forms of armed resistance. It will be argued that certain symbolic forms of city destruction were only carried out in response to rebellion. I will place these symbolic acts in their broader Ancient Near Eastern context by comparing them to similar episodes in Hittite texts and the Hebrew Bible. Conversely, there is far less of a correlation between violence towards captives and rebellion. This distinction is attributed to differing conceptions of the value and importance of cities and individual inhabitants therein.¹⁸

A Note on Normalisation and Translation

All translations of cuneiform texts in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise stated. The Akkadian given in quotation generally follows the cited edition, unless specified otherwise, but for ease of reading (and formatting), and due to the existence of recent, high-quality editions of the majority of the texts quoted here, I have elected to give the Akkadian in transcription as opposed to transliteration.

¹⁸ Theoretical and methodological considerations will be introduced in the chapters where they are most relevant.

1. The Audience and Purpose of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

When discussing the accounts of rebellion contained within the Assyrian royal inscriptions, it is important to address the problem of the audiences for whom these texts were written. Without consideration of this subject, it is even more difficult to discuss adequately the significance of rhetorical and narrative devices within a text, or the messages which its authors wished to convey.¹⁹ This is of particular importance when discussing rebellion. The content of the inscriptions has sometimes been considered as targeted at subjugated peoples, especially with regards to the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II. This king's vivid descriptions of extreme violence, dubbed "calculated frightfulness" by Olmstead,²⁰ are characterised by several scholars as propaganda intended to demonstrate the consequences of rebellion to Assyria's conquered subjects.²¹

A drastically different view of the inscriptions and their audiences was proposed by Oppenheim. He argued that these texts were mostly inaccessible to the majority of the population, either because they were placed in the foundations of buildings where they were physically impossible for a contemporary audience to reach, or because their locations inside buildings meant that they would be poorly lit and difficult to read. The result of this, in Oppenheim's eyes, was that a contemporary audience was not considered during the writing of the majority of Assyrian royal inscriptions.²² As such, Oppenheim did not consider the inscriptions to be "propaganda", and the term is therefore noticeably missing from his posthumously published contribution to the volume *Propaganda and Communication in World*

¹⁹ A great deal has been written, in varying degrees of detail, on the audiences of inscriptions, either specific examples or a corpus in general, from other ancient cultures. For the audiences of Old Babylonian inscriptions, see Seminara 2005. For Greek and Roman inscriptions, see E. Thomas 2014; R. Thomas 1994: 37-45. For Egyptian monumental inscriptions, see Manniche 2010: 159 n. 1. For Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, see Archi 2016: 28-30; Payne 2006; van den Hout 2011: 904-905; Yakubovich 2008a: 29-31. For multilingual inscriptions from Anatolia and Mesopotamia, see Dušek and Mynářová 2016: 28-36; Payne 2006; Winter 1979: 139. For brief considerations of the audience of specific West Semitic inscriptions, see Sanders 2015: 72; Stefanovic 1992: 46-47. For Achaemenid inscriptions, see Finn 2017a; Rollinger 2016. For Mayan inscriptions, especially as recited to an audience, see Brown 1991: 489-90; Carrasco 2013; Houston and Stuart 1992: 590-92; Law et al. 2013: E27-E28, E37-E38.

²⁰ Olmstead 1918: 224-25.

²¹ For example, Barjamovic 2012: 46; Roux 1992: 290; Rowlett 1996: 120.

²² Oppenheim 1979: 118-19. He makes an exception for the Letters to the God, which he argues were recited before an audience (see the discussion below).

History.²³ He instead views them as “ceremonial writings” which were not intended as communications to a contemporary audience, but which:

reflect a dialogue that took place continuously at the court of the king between the ruler and those who helped him determine the policies of the realm and to reconcile political and economic realities with the traditional aspirations of Mesopotamian rule.²⁴

Since Oppenheim first argued against the existence of contemporary audiences for the inscriptions, the subject has been discussed by various scholars. Many of these scholars have taken an opposing position to Oppenheim, and argue that the inscriptions received at least some level of audience from contemporary groups or individuals. For example, Porter’s study on Esarhaddon’s policy towards Babylon is entirely based upon a “reader-response” model which is dependent upon there being contemporary audiences receiving the content of the inscriptions.²⁵ The title of Karlsson’s recent monograph *Alterity in Ancient Assyrian Propaganda* demonstrates his similar viewpoint on the matter.²⁶ The subject has been tackled frequently by scholars.²⁷ I do not wish to retread heavily travelled ground, but the question of audience is an important one for our current purpose. It is therefore necessary to discuss the audiences of the inscriptions, and the arguments put forward by other scholars on this subject.

Audience and Intent

A text’s audience is not a single, homogeneous entity, and various scholars have attempted to define the types of audiences which a text might have. Genette highlights the “implied reader” or “extradiegetic narratee”, an audience addressed by a text’s narrator which is fictional, but exists at a higher “diegetic level” than the narrative which is being narrated to it.²⁸ Similarly, the philosophers Perelman and

²³ Oppenheim 1979. Oppenheim’s complete avoidance of the term “propaganda” in this article has previously been noted by Tadmor (1997: 333) and Cooley (2014: 7).

²⁴ Oppenheim 1979: 118.

²⁵ Porter 1993a. For the characterisation of Porter’s methodology as “reader-response”, see Holloway 2002: 75.

²⁶ Karlsson 2017. For his discussion of the inscriptions as “propaganda”, see Karlsson 2016: 10-18, 327; 2017: 7.

²⁷ In addition to the studies by Oppenheim, Porter, and Karlsson cited above, see for example Liverani 2014; Sano 2016; Siddall 2013: 141-46; 2017; Tadmor 1997: 330-35.

²⁸ Genette 1980: 227-29; 1988:131-32. For definitions of the “implied reader” that differ from Genette’s usage of the term to some extent, see Schmid 2014.

Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguish between the “real”,²⁹ “particular”, and “universal” audiences of rhetoric, the real audience being the sum total of the actual recipients, the particular audience being those the rhetor hopes to influence, and the universal audience being the rhetor’s and the real audience’s conceptions of “all those who are competent and reasonable”.³⁰ The literary theorist Rabinowitz takes a more complex view, distinguishing three types of audience. Summarised in his own words, these are:

(1) the *actual audience*, the flesh-and-blood reader with her own background of knowledge and beliefs; (2) the *authorial audience*, the hypothetical audience the author has in mind as she makes rhetorical choices, and which recognises the text as an artistic invention; (3) the *narrative audience*, the imitation audience for whom the narrator (implicit or explicit) is writing, and which accepts what it is reading as more or less “real.”³¹

Within the broader category of narrative audience, Rabinowitz distinguishes the “ideal narrative audience”, the narrator’s conception of the audience, from the narrative audience more generally, the reader “playing the part” of the audience addressed by the narrator.³²

The distinction made by all of these categorisations of audience is one of intent; a text may be read by those other than its intended audiences, whilst its intended audience may never see it. For example, the Assyrian scribes could hardly have predicted that the inscriptions would find an audience in a doctoral student from the Northwest of England in the twenty-first century AD, nor even what one of those was. They could not feasibly be expected to have written the inscriptions with their potential meaning to and impact on such an individual in mind.

Obviously, not all of the distinctions given above are equally useful for the current purpose; Rabinowitz’s model assumes that the actual audience of a text accepts that it is a work of fiction. This assumption does not fit well with the study of

²⁹ The term “real audience” is not used in *The New Rhetoric* to describe the actual audience who receive an argument whether it is intended for them or not, although this type of audience is clearly acknowledged by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 19; Perelman 1982: 13-14). I borrow the label “real” for this type of audience from Sigler’s study of the reception of *The New Rhetoric* in rhetorical studies (2015: 326-27).

³⁰ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 18-35; Perelman 1982: 13-14.

³¹ Rabinowitz 2001: 205.

³² Rabinowitz 1977: 134-36; 2001: 206-207.

historiographical texts, and raises a multitude of questions on ancient peoples' concepts of fiction, and the level of their belief in the veracity of the historical and mythological texts which they read.³³ Furthermore, the concept of narrative audience does little to explain the ideological message of the inscriptions, and I therefore will not utilise it here. The concept of "universal audience" can also be discounted for the purposes of this study, since Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca conceived of it as a method of distinguishing philosophical discourse from rhetoric.³⁴ Even in relation to philosophy, the concept of universal audience has been criticised as simply another form of particular audience, as the rhetor's understanding of "all those who are competent and reasonable" is dependent upon their own conceptions of competence and reasonableness.³⁵ Similarly, the types of audiences proposed by Rabinowitz can all be categorised as either real audiences (the actual and narrative audiences), or particular audiences (the authorial and ideal narrative audiences). I will therefore adopt the simpler separation between the real and particular audiences of the texts.

What becomes apparent from the scholarship cited above is that simply identifying the groups with access to the inscriptions only does so much to aid us in studying their intended messages and purpose. Rhetoric may be received by many people in whom it would not produce the desired response. The reception of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's monograph *The New Rhetoric* forms a good example of the concepts that they themselves discussed within it. The book was intended to recast philosophy as a form of rhetoric, distinct from other forms because it appealed to a universal audience.³⁶ Rhetorical scholars interpreted the work differently, constructing systems of rules regulating the types of rhetorical arguments which can appeal to particular or universal audiences.³⁷ Perelman highlights this point in his rebuttal of rhetorical scholarship's response to *The New Rhetoric* when he states:

I take this opportunity to rectify certain false interpretations of my thought and to explain certain errors committed in *The New Rhetoric* out of my ignorance,

³³ For an overview of discussions concerning fictionality in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Hittite historical literature, see Gilan 2008: 268-78. The Assyrian royal inscriptions are not mentioned by Gilan, who is concerned with more firmly "literary" types of texts as opposed to ancient historiography. For an overview of ideas on the relationship between fiction and history within literary theory, see Zetterberg Gjerlevsen 2016.

³⁴ Sigler 2015: 328-40.

³⁵ Frogel 2009; Sigler 2015: 343-47; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1995: 124.

³⁶ Sigler 2015: 337-39.

³⁷ Sigler 2015: 330-44. For examples of the application of universal audience to the study of rhetoric, see Aiken 2008; Crosswhite 1995: 140-41; Gross 1999.

which lasted until 1962, of the very existence of a university profession in the United States devoted to the study and teaching of rhetoric.³⁸

Perelman's real audience included a group, rhetorical scholars, which he did not predict or accommodate for in the construction of his particular audiences, which consisted solely of philosophers. This element of his audience, whom his rhetoric was not written "for", took a very different meaning from *The New Rhetoric* than his intended one.

This is not to say that a text cannot have the desired effect on unintended audiences. For example, Liverani's study of the Telipinu Edict is full of criticism for the "lazy historian", who takes ancient sources at face value, falling for its rhetoric and thereby continuing its propagation.³⁹ However, the distinction between real and particular audiences does highlight the importance of identifying those whom a text was written "for" if we are to understand its intended messages. It also highlights the obstacles present when attempting to reconstruct ancient audiences. In order to determine possible particular audiences, we must use what we know of the makeup of the texts' ancient real audience together with information from the texts themselves.

The Question of Authorial Intent

All of this makes one thing abundantly clear; the extent to which we can discuss the audience of a text is entirely dependent on our ability to identify authorial intent within that text. If we were unable to identify a text's intentions, then we would have no way of determining its particular audiences, and would therefore have to restrict ourselves to identifying real audience. Intentionality is a concept which has received some opposition within the field of literary criticism, and it is therefore important to consider for the current purpose. Furthermore, intent will also influence the broader findings of the entire thesis, as the position taken on this question will dictate the kinds of significance which can be read into a text. The subject has rarely been addressed in Assyriological literature, and is deserving of discussion here.

Within literary criticism, the question of authorial intent first came to prominence through the New Criticism of the 1940s.⁴⁰ This approach argued that external

³⁸ Perelman 1984: 188.

³⁹ Liverani 2004a: 28-31. I will return to Liverani's criticism of the "lazy historian" below.

⁴⁰ For a brief but informative overview of this movement in literary theory, see Schmitz 2007: 91-92.

information was not to be used in the interpretation of a text, the words on the page being the only thing which “matter” for close reading.⁴¹ This line of thought led Wimsatt and Beardsley to coin the phrase “the intentional fallacy”, to describe the use of information pertaining to an author or events from their life in interpreting that author’s work.⁴² To the New Critics, considering what the author was intending to do does not result in the production of literary criticism, but of biography instead.⁴³

A second, more infamous rejection of authorial intent was put forward by Barthes in *The Death of the Author* in the 1960s.⁴⁴ Building on Kristeva’s work on the concept of “intertextuality”,⁴⁵ Barthes argues that every text is constructed from “quotations” of uses of language which are already in existence,⁴⁶ and that all texts are therefore composed of the “already written”.⁴⁷ He argues that the author has no control over their use of these “quotations”, and as a result has no control over the meanings and messages of their texts. He therefore declares the author, as the curator of a single “true” interpretation of a text, to be dead; meaning is constructed by the reader.⁴⁸ The meaning found by the reader is not a stable, universal meaning, but one of a plurality of possible interpretations.⁴⁹ This lack of a stable meaning for a text is a hallmark of poststructuralism,⁵⁰ a movement of which Barthes and Kristeva were two of the most prominent members.

The Death of the Author has encountered a great deal of criticism since its publication. Burke has characterised it as lacking a coherent argument and being full of contradictions.⁵¹ Other scholars have noted that Barthes replaces the omnipotent, monolithic figure of the author with a comparable figure in the reader.⁵² The

⁴¹ Lamarque 2006: 177-83; Schmitz 2002: 92.

⁴² Wimsatt and Beardsley 1945.

⁴³ Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946: 477-78.

⁴⁴ Barthes 1977.

⁴⁵ Kristeva 1986a: 35-37; 1986b: 111. Kristeva and Barthes’ approaches to intertextuality will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

⁴⁶ Barthes 1977: 146-47.

⁴⁷ Barthes 1974: 10-11, 20-21.

⁴⁸ Barthes 1977: 147-48.

⁴⁹ Allen (2011: 68-89) gives an overview of Barthes’ approach to intertextuality which is clearer than the frequently contradictory statements made by Barthes himself on the subject.

⁵⁰ Allen (2011: 3) describes poststructuralism as a movement which “argued that criticism, like literature itself, is inherently unstable, the product of subjective desires and drives”. Poststructuralist critics such as Barthes and Kristeva therefore “attempt to disrupt notions of stable meaning and objective interpretation”.

⁵¹ Burke 1998: 20-61.

⁵² Allen 2011: 73; Ginsburg and Rimmon-Kenan 1999: 70.

disregard of the author in poststructuralist literary criticism has also been criticised for erasing the identities of authors belonging to marginalised groups.⁵³

Returning to the intentional fallacy, the most basic premise of this concept is that what an author was intending in their work is not a useful consideration to read into a text, as this information is unattainable.⁵⁴ Even if an author did state elsewhere what their intentions were when writing, this information “would have nothing to do with” the text in question.⁵⁵ The veracity of this second point is not relevant for the study of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, as no ancient commentaries on these texts exist by their authors, or by anyone else for that matter, and we can hardly ask them what their intentions were. The first point, that what is inside an author’s head is unknowable, is more obviously problematic for attempts to find intention in ancient texts.

The Implied Author

One solution to the problem of the intentional fallacy is the implied author, first posited by Booth in 1961 as a reaction against New Criticism’s “textualism”. The implied author has been given various different definitions, but most commonly refers to the author’s views and personality as can be constructed from information within a text.⁵⁶ It is the sum of the moral and ideological views demonstrated by the author in the text.

As he (the author) writes, he creates not simply an ideal, impersonal “man in general” but an implied version of “himself” that is different from the implied authors we meet in other men’s works. ... Whether we call this implied author an “official scribe,” or adopt the term recently revived by Kathleen Tillotson—the author’s “second self”—it is clear that the picture the reader gets of this presence is one of the author’s most important effects. However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official

⁵³ Allen 2011: 150-55; Miller 1988: 104.

⁵⁴ Lamarque 2006: 177-83.

⁵⁵ Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946: 487.

⁵⁶ Schmid 2013. Green (2010: 5-6) treats the term as identical to the “ideology” or “*Weltanschauung*” of a text’s author. However, this definition removes all distinctions between the implied and real authors present in Booth’s conception of the term.

scribe who writes in this manner—and of course that official scribe will never be neutral to all values.⁵⁷

The concept of the implied author constructed by the reader from the information supplied by a text bears a close resemblance to Eco's concept of *intentio operis*, the "intention of the work",⁵⁸ summarised by Wisnom as "to draw sensible conclusions about what the text is doing from the text itself, without invoking any biographical information about its author".⁵⁹ Eco argues that whilst there are various "good" interpretations of a text, some interpretations are clear misinterpretations that the text itself does not allow for.⁶⁰ Wisnom's application of *intentio operis* is practically the same as the implied author. In fact, the nature of Mesopotamian literature means that the author can often only be reconstructed from the text, as they are left anonymous.⁶¹

The implied author has become widely accepted among American scholars within the field of narratology.⁶² However, the concept has generally been rejected by scholars outside of the United States.⁶³ In opposition to the concept of the implied author, Ryan writes:

My problem with the IA (implied author) does not lie in an *a-priori* rejection of all things authorial as a tool for interpretation, but in a proliferation of parameters which would not, as Genette argues, stand the test of Ockham's razor ... I regard IA as a lame compromise between radical textualism and reading texts as the expression of a human mind (a view widely rejected by critics as biographism). I see nothing wrong with constructing an author-image; but if readers are interested in the author as a whole person, there is no reason to exclude other data from this image.⁶⁴

The Assyrian royal inscriptions have the added complication of the figure of the king. In these texts, as in a modern ghost-written autobiography, the implied author is an entirely different person from the real author, not just in his moral standing,

⁵⁷ Booth 1983: 70-71.

⁵⁸ Eco 1992: 64-65.

⁵⁹ Wisnom 2014: 5.

⁶⁰ Eco 1992: 65.

⁶¹ Wisnom 2014: 6.

⁶² Ryan 2011: 30.

⁶³ Prominent examples include Bal (1997: 18) and Genette (1988: 137-45).

⁶⁴ Ryan 2011: 41-42.

temperament, and worldview, as is the case in Booth's example of the poet Robert Frost,⁶⁵ but in his very identity: the king as opposed to one or more of his scribes. In fact, the ghost-written autobiography is one of the scarce few instances in which Genette sees any point in distinguishing between the real and implied authors of a text.⁶⁶ In reality, the creation of a ghost-written autobiography is a collaborative act between the subject and the ghost-writer,⁶⁷ and the same can be said of the royal inscriptions. Letters demonstrate that the king had the final say on the details of royal statues.⁶⁸ Furthermore, officials would contact the king to request the inscriptions to be placed in a building during its construction.⁶⁹ It is reasonable to assume that the king also had the final say on the content of these inscriptions, as well as the reliefs and other royal texts and artworks.⁷⁰ The inscriptions therefore present an image of the king and his deeds which he himself had deemed appropriate, and it is important to consider the involvement of both the king and his scribes in the production of the inscriptions.⁷¹

Authorial Intent within the Discipline of History

The considerations discussed so far have mainly come from the field of literary criticism. Historians generally take a very different view of the subject, and authorial intent is almost always assumed. This difference in approach is partially due to the history of the two disciplines' methodologies. Whilst New Criticism reacted against

⁶⁵ Booth 2005: 79-80.

⁶⁶ Genette 1988: 146-47.

⁶⁷ Whannel 2002: 57-58. This collaboration can vary from "close, intense and prolonged" interaction to "a few quick interviews" (Whannel 2002: 58).

⁶⁸ SAA 13 34: obv. 11-rev. 12; 178: obv. 10-25.

⁶⁹ SAA 15 4: obv. 17-rev. 6; SAA 16 125: obv. 2'-rev. 10; 143: obv. 6-11.

⁷⁰ Liverani 2014: 375-76.

⁷¹ A slightly different approach to authorship is suggested by the work of Goffman (1981: 166-67) on the "functions" involved in speech acts, which has been adapted by a group of American scholars for discussing Mayan inscriptions (Law et al. 2013: E32). Goffman identifies three such functions, summarised by the Mayanist adapters of his work as:

the *animator* of an utterance, the individual who actually voices the message; the *author* of the message, who is the person composing the words of the message; and the *principal*, the person who authorizes the message and is socially responsible for its content (Law et al. 2013: E32, their emphasis).

These functions can be tailored to written communications by simply considering the text itself as the animator (Law et al. 2013: E32); in fact, Goffman himself suggests the possibility of inanimate animators of speech actions when he describes this function as "the talking machine, the thing that sound comes out of" (Goffman 1981: 167). In relation to the Assyrian royal inscriptions, we might view the inscription itself as its own animator, the scribes as its authors, and the incumbent king as its principal. However, this alteration of Goffman's work effectively makes the principle identical to the concept of the implied author, and we should again consider the role of the king as a collaborator with the scribes in composing the text and therefore as one of the text's authors.

the use of biographical information in literary criticism being taken to extremes, the entry of authorial intent into history was a reaction against the uncritical acceptance of historiographical accounts in earlier scholarship. An early example of the insertion of authorial intent into historiography comes from the Mexican historian O'Gorman, who wrote in the 1940s:

Historians tend to accept that historical sources are, so to speak, gold mines from which to extract data. The least that one could say today about this position is that it is absolutely inefficient. It is impossible to ignore, at this time and age, that a text, or a source, is the response of a will, which, in its turn, is supported by an indefinite series of presuppositions.⁷²

Within Assyriology, Liverani echoed this sentiment some thirty years later:

Laziness is common among historians. When they find a continuous account of events for a certain period in an 'ancient' source, one that is not necessarily contemporaneous with the events, they readily adopt it. They limit their work to paraphrasing the source, or, if needed, to rationalisation. No one would recommend such a procedure on a theoretical level, but nonetheless it continues to be used, especially in fields where awareness of the methodology and aims of history is not great. ... (H)istorical narratives do not have a 'pure' historical aim, if such an aim could ever exist. Their aim is political, moral, theological, or whatever else it may be, and therefore they view events from a particular perspective.⁷³

This still leaves the question of whether historians are in danger of reading too much into the unknowable inner workings of ancient authors' minds. This question is partially answered by the fact that historians work with very different material to the majority of literary critics. Historiography describes real world events, or at least events which are presented as such. In many cases, it is possible to use outside evidence to assess the accuracy of the events as described in the text. Disparities between two or more historiographic texts can provide us with a great deal of information, both on the historical events described, and on the reasons for the discrepancies themselves. For example, Sennacherib's earliest campaign, to

⁷² O'Gorman 1972: 166-67, trans. Mignolo 2002: xxii.

⁷³ Liverani 2004a: 28.

Kulumme, is listed in the Eponym Chronicle, but is absent from all of the royal inscriptions.⁷⁴ From this we might infer that the campaign was unsuccessful, and was therefore omitted from the annals.

Speculation and Imagination in the Writing of History

This inference highlights an alternative approach to authorial intent; textualism works to avoid any speculation about intentions, whereas historians will often have need for speculation in their work. This is not the wild, unsupportable speculation that textualists see in the intentional fallacy, but “grounded speculation” based upon consideration of all the available evidence.⁷⁵ In this light, Hexter dubs historical reconstruction as “prediction of the past”.⁷⁶ The historian uses their own knowledge and the available historical record to inform their grounded speculation on the unrecorded outcomes of historical events.⁷⁷ Frequently, the negative connotations of the word “speculation” mean that this action is described in terms of the historian’s “imagination”. For example, Plumb states that “imagination” is an important aspect of the historian’s work,⁷⁸ whilst Trevor-Roper distinguishes between “imagination”, which a historian should possess, and “barren speculation”, which is to be avoided.⁷⁹

Frequently, the historian’s “imaginings” relate to the motivations, intentions, and thought processes of individuals. For example, Gaddis describes Ulrich’s *A Midwife’s Tale*, a study based on the diary of the eighteenth-century American midwife Martha Ballard,⁸⁰ in the following terms:

Ulrich fleshes out this archival fossil (the diary)—neglected by several generations of male historians—in several ways: by drawing on what’s known from other sources about the time and place in which Ballard lived; *by imagining how Ballard herself must have understood and sought to manage her situation*; and by using contemporary gender and family relationships to compare it with what women experience today.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Frahm 1999: 84.

⁷⁵ Bolin 2009: 110-12.

⁷⁶ Hexter 1971: 46-58.

⁷⁷ Hexter 1971: 50-53.

⁷⁸ Plumb 1969: 12.

⁷⁹ Trevor-Roper 1981: 364-65.

⁸⁰ Ulrich 1990.

⁸¹ Gaddis 2002: 41-42, my emphasis.

Similarly, Bolin speculates that reference to the influence of Russian approaches on the beginnings of American manual training was omitted from Logan's 1955 monograph *Growth of Art in American Schools* due to the political climate in the United States at the time.⁸² The concept of imagining past individuals' experiences is applied much more broadly by Hexter as a key aspect of writing history. He gives as an example Stone's study of the seventeenth-century beneficial lease, in which Stone argues that tenants preferred this arrangement to more financially favourable ones because it better fit into their "vision of life on earth".⁸³ On this assessment, Hexter writes:

Lawence Stone has been successively an English public school boy, an Oxford undergraduate, an English army officer, a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, and a professor of history at Princeton University. He has never been an English peasant holding land by beneficial or any other kind of lease in the twentieth much less the seventeenth century. Yet he claims to understand 'the vision of life' of such peasants three hundred years ago. To claim this is to claim to know a good bit about what it was like to have been such a peasant.

...

This point calls for some emphasis because one set of writers about history makes something of a mystique of the historians' claimed ability to know what Others are like, while a second set seem to think that historians can carry on all their proper business of explanation without claiming or possessing such knowledge.⁸⁴

Hexter is, I would argue, too strong in his assertion that a historian can "know" what it was like to be anyone in the past, but the example of Stone's interpretation of the beneficial lease is indeed another example of a historian "imagining", that is, making "grounded speculations" about, a past individual's thoughts on and experiences of events. Stone cannot possibly have concrete knowledge of the phenomenological experience of being a seventeenth-century peasant. Even if he were to somehow meet and converse with one, his own worldview, experiences, and cultural background would differ from theirs so drastically that he, or indeed anyone from the

⁸² Bolin 2009: 114-18.

⁸³ Stone 1965: 315-16.

⁸⁴ Hexter 1971: 279.

modern day, would probably never fully understand “what it was like” to be a seventeenth-century peasant. This does not mean that he cannot imagine what some aspects of that experience might have been.

Speculation and Imagination versus the Intentional Fallacy

The task of imagining what a past individual's experience might have been like is in many ways the antithesis of the textualist approach. After all, in a common interpretation of the intentional fallacy, such information is unattainable, and should therefore not be sought. However, the above discussion has demonstrated that a form of speculation is a crucial part of the discipline of history, especially for discerning the motivations behind events or the ways in which they are presented in historiography. Is this a bad thing? Not at all, without such “thought experiments” historians would be greatly restricted in the ways in which they might interact with the historical record.⁸⁵ Their absence would have us all be Liverani's “lazy historian”, paraphrasing the historical record without adding anything meaningful to our understanding of the past.

The example of Sennacherib's campaign to Kulumme cited above is not pure speculation on the inner workings of Sennacherib's mind, but the result of the observance that events which cast the Assyrian king in a negative light were either turned into victories in the inscriptions, or else left out altogether. Thus the fact of a large, stereotyped corpus, and the existence of other sources covering the same events are both useful tools for determining the intended messages of the inscriptions. This is not to say that all aspects of the inscriptions were intentional, but we should not shy away from ascribing intent when it seems reasonable to do so. As Wisnom writes:

asking questions about intent is not to ask about unknowable psychological states, but rather to enquire into the text as the product of purposive behaviour ... What matters is not to go to extremes: to be aware of the limits of what we can know, and be reasonable in our assumptions.⁸⁶

It would be a mistake to limit ourselves to studying the author's intent in historiography, as there is great deal which a document's author did not intend to

⁸⁵ For the concept of the historian carrying out “thought experiments”, see Gaddis 2002: 40-43.

⁸⁶ Wisnom 2014: 6.

convey which can be gleaned from it all the same.⁸⁷ However, intentions are useful to consider, and we are entirely justified in discussing them. Having established this, we can now return to a discussion of the question of audience.

Determining Real and Particular Audiences

The theoretical discussions cited above are a useful starting point for considering the question of audience in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. However, they relate to the audiences for literature in a far more general sense, or are framed in terms of modern, western literature. The result of this is that they are not tailored to the specific qualities of inscriptions, particularly of those inscriptions buried in foundation deposits, a practice peculiar to the Ancient Near East and Egypt.⁸⁸ Because of this, it is important to also consider studies on audience more specifically tailored to inscriptions, and Assyrian royal inscriptions in particular.

An important point that must be acknowledged with regards to particular audiences of rhetoric is that not all elements of a text need be intended for all of that text's particular audiences. A good example of this from this from a modern context is the inclusion in family-oriented cartoons of pop culture references, more sophisticated humour, and surreptitious adult jokes intended to appeal to the parents of the programmes' younger viewers.⁸⁹ Often, the divide between the content intended to appeal to the adult and child audiences is drawn along visual-verbal lines, so that the resulting products are simultaneously "children's visual shows and adult audio shows".⁹⁰

A similar visual-verbal divide in the messages intended for different audience is also displayed by ancient epigraphic material, where the messages conveyed by a text's content must be separated out from the meaning carried by the fact of the writing's existence and visibility.⁹¹ For Assyria, Bagg has noted that:

⁸⁷ Evans 1997: 91-93.

⁸⁸ For inscribed objects in Mesopotamian foundations deposits, see Ellis 1968: 46-124. For Egyptian foundation deposits, see Weinstein 1973.

⁸⁹ Farley 2003: 151-52; Feasey 2008: 33-34; Mitchell 2004: 86-87.

⁹⁰ Mitchell 2003: 43.

⁹¹ For the application of this concept to inscriptions from the classical world, see Thomas 2014. For Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, see Gilbert 2011: 120, and for West Semitic inscriptions, see Mandell and Smoak 2017; 2018; Smoak 2017.

At a non-verbal level, the inscriptions expressed the greatness of a king, who controlled the use of script and was able to have such texts written. In the case of the stelae and rock reliefs in foreign regions, they functioned at a non-verbal level to make clear the rules of the game: “We were here and we will come back if you do not observe the rules”.⁹²

This element of spectacle to the inscriptions is perhaps best demonstrated by the texts on the walls, colossi, and threshold slabs of Ashurnasirpal II’s Northwest Palace at Kalḫu, where the primary concern appears to have been to cover as many surfaces as possible with cuneiform script.⁹³ However, not all divisions in the message conveyed to a text’s different particular audiences will fall along such lines. Returning to the earlier example of adult and child as two particular audiences of a text, Wall has argued that many works of children’s literature address a “double audience, using double address”, whereby the narrator shifts between addressing child and adult audiences.⁹⁴

Previous Studies on the Audiences of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

When taken together, the above considerations result in a rather difficult situation when determining the audiences and messages of the inscriptions; not all of a text’s real audience will be particular audiences, not all particular audiences may be real audiences, and the text may carry differing messages for its various particular audiences. These obstacles to the study of audience present pitfalls that have not been explicitly acknowledged by all Assyriologists discussing the question of audiences for the Assyrian royal inscriptions. The result of this is that much of the discussion on the audience of the Assyrian royal inscriptions has been based on determining the real audiences of these texts.⁹⁵ This is generally done by determining whether a group would have access to an inscription and, if so, whether they would be able to comprehend it, either by reading the text, or by receiving a recitation of it.⁹⁶ On the subject of access, these texts were usually placed in locations where they could be read either by no contemporary audiences (such as

⁹² Bagg 2016: 62.

⁹³ Russell 1999: 47.

⁹⁴ Wall 1991: 34-60.

⁹⁵ The work of Porter (1993a: 105-16; 2003; 2004) is perhaps the clearest example of this approach.

⁹⁶ Porter (1995: 51-54) does discuss the concept of “intended audience”, but consistently views this audience as anyone capable of accessing and understanding a text.

foundation deposits, the backs of wall slabs, or the cliffs above Sennacherib's aqueduct at Jerwan), or only by those few with access to a restricted area (such as the interior of palaces and temples) which may not always have been particularly well-lit.

This generalisation is not true of all scholars; for example, Russell does differentiate between "actual" and "intended" audiences in a fashion similar to that of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's real and particular audiences.⁹⁷ However, considerations such as this are not generally actively engaged with in the scholarship. For example, Bagg makes a distinction between "intended" and "potential" audiences of the inscriptions.⁹⁸ This terminology may at first appear to be analogous with that of real and particular audiences adopted by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, but Bagg's discussion of possible audiences demonstrates that he makes no such distinction. Bagg never defines what exactly he means by "possible audience", but seems to view all of a text's real audiences as its particular audiences. His possible audiences are therefore those who may be a part of a text's particular audience, but for whom this identification is uncertain, or who may have been a particular audience for only some of the inscriptions.

Bagg concludes that the content of the inscriptions was predominantly intended for future rulers and the gods.⁹⁹ However, on the contemporary human audiences of the inscriptions, he writes:

I take it that a reading of some royal inscriptions before the king and his entourage is plausible, especially in times of inner political trouble.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, he later adds;

At a verbal level, the royal inscriptions, specially (sic) the narrative accounts, were intended for the gods and future ruler, probably at least in some cases also for the elite as a kind of self-indoctrination.¹⁰¹

These passages are representative of a tendency within Assyriology towards judging the content of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, whenever possible, in political terms.

⁹⁷ Russell 1991: 223-62.

⁹⁸ Bagg 2016: 60-62.

⁹⁹ Bagg 2016: 60-62. The significance of the inscriptions to both of these audiences will be discussed below.

¹⁰⁰ Bagg 2016: 62.

¹⁰¹ Bagg 2016: 62.

This habit, described as “boys fetishizing power” by Richardson,¹⁰² is not entirely surprising. The Marxist and structuralist approaches adopted by many of the major contributors to the study of the inscriptions are tailored towards questions of power and propaganda.¹⁰³ The result of this is that all the contemporary real audiences of the inscriptions are not only presumed to be particular audiences, but also to be the recipients of an inherently political message intended to reinforce support for the king.

These assumptions are also on display in Liverani’s study on the audiences of Assyrian “royal messages”,¹⁰⁴ the most developed model that has been proposed for the audience of the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Liverani conceptualises the audiences of royal “messages”, including both the inscriptions and the reliefs, as a series of concentric “belts”. The first, central belt (hereafter referred to as “Belt 1”) consists of the literate elite. Moving out from the centre, the other four belts are the general population of the major Assyrian cities (“Belt 2”), the inhabitants of the minor towns and villages of Assyria (“Belt 3”), and finally foreigners in contact with Assyria (“Belt 4”). In Liverani’s words:

Shifting from the innermost to the outermost belt, the degree of detail decreases, while to (sic) amount of involved peoples increases—so that in a theoretical product between the two factors, the amount of information remains the same.¹⁰⁵

Liverani argues that, moving outwards from the centre, the messages targeted at the belts become more predominantly conveyed through image than through text. Thus the literate elites inhabiting Belt 1 are the only group with proper access to the full content and meaning of the royal inscriptions. This assessment leads him to a more definite position on the role of the inscriptions for a contemporary audience, concluding that “their basic purpose is the self-indoctrination of the scribal elite”.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Richardson 2017: 19.

¹⁰³ Marxism is a particularly strong influence on Liverani’s (1979) seminal study of Assyrian imperial ideology, although this influence is not explicitly stated.

¹⁰⁴ Liverani 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Liverani 2014: 374.

¹⁰⁶ Liverani 2014: 374. The same position is also stated in Liverani 1979: 302. Portuese (2017: 121-23) has recently adapted Liverani’s model to describe the frequency with which various (particular) audiences encountered specific portrayals of the king.

Problems with the Theory of “Self-Indoctrination”

Liverani’s views on the self-indoctrination of Assyrian scribes have been referenced by several scholars,¹⁰⁷ but there has been little criticism of them. The Assyrian royal inscriptions frequently contain contradictions and alterations from edition to edition which would be obvious to those writing or copying these texts at the time.

Furthermore, many of the claims in these texts could be easily disproved with reference to available resources such as the Eponym Chronicle, which frequently lists rebellions not included in the inscriptions.¹⁰⁸ A king’s scribes were therefore the best-placed people to see the falsifying nature of some accounts in inscriptions, and to view these accounts with a healthy dose of scepticism.

Pertinent to this proposed scepticism of the scribes towards the claims made in the inscriptions is the short discussion of “ideology” by Bahrani.¹⁰⁹ She uses the work of Adorno on fascist ideology,¹¹⁰ as well as her own experience of growing up under dictatorship in Iraq, to argue that the overt statements of “repressive” states are taken as falsehoods by the people, but that the use of terror and the forceful silencing of opposition prohibit their ability to publicly acknowledge that this is case.¹¹¹ Drawing on her own experience of life in Ba’athist Iraq, she writes:

I learned from a very early age that no one takes seriously the dictatorship’s overt statements, or any newspaper or television accounts, but pointing this out was out of the question.¹¹²

She goes on to say:

The underlying ideology at that time was actually the unconditional submission of the people to the Saddam-ruled Iraq. It is what Žižek refers to as the syndrome of “Yes, we know, but all the same...”¹¹³

Assyria was not a modern dictatorship. Recent studies have questioned the strength and extent of royal power in several periods of Mesopotamian history,¹¹⁴ and it is

¹⁰⁷ For example, Bagg 2013: 132; Kuhrt 1995: 476; Richardson 2007: 199.

¹⁰⁸ For example, Millard 1994: 58-59.

¹⁰⁹ Bahrani 2008: 65-74.

¹¹⁰ Adorno 1997.

¹¹¹ Bahrani 2008: 71-73.

¹¹² Bahrani 2008: 71.

¹¹³ Bahrani 2008: 73.

¹¹⁴ Kuhrt 2014; Larsen 1976: 148-59; Richardson 2012; 2017.

doubtful that the Assyrian state was capable of such concerted silencing of opposition. However, grand public displays of violence towards captured enemies seem to have occurred fairly regularly,¹¹⁵ and would presumably have gone some way towards persuading the Assyrian people of the king's ability to find and punish wrongdoers. Furthermore, when discussing the scribes we are not dealing with groups outside of the limited reach of the king. Instead the scribes formed a central part of the inner workings of the state, and were employees of the palace. They were reliant on the king for their livelihoods, and within reach of his retribution for misconduct. The scribes were therefore well placed to, upon reading statements in the inscriptions which they knew to be false, throw up their hands and say "yes, we know, but all the same..."

This is not to say that the scribes were an oppressed group living in constant fear of a despotic king. As highly skilled workers forming the educated, literate elite, they enjoyed a privileged position and the protection of the palace. They also played a vital role in the creation of Assyrian royal discourse, as has recently been discussed by Pongratz-Leisten.¹¹⁶ This is not a situation of "irrational sacrifice to the state" like that of Saddam's Iraq described by Bahrani.¹¹⁷ The scribal elite enjoyed a privilege position within Assyrian society, and in return performed a number of duties vital to the proper running of the empire, including interpreting omens and looking after the king's health.¹¹⁸ This reciprocal relationship provided the scribes with ample reason to support the kingship.

The scribes did not blindly conform to all of the positions taken by the king; the proposal by Finn that several Neo-Assyrian texts contain elements of "counterdiscourse" against the king would suggest that disagreements between the ruler and the scribal elite did occur, but that the scribes needed to handle these disagreements delicately.¹¹⁹ Conversely, texts were also produced which appear to be intended as communications of royal rhetoric to the Assyrian elites. One obvious example of a text which appears to have fulfilled such a function is the "Sin of Sargon", probably written during the reign of Esarhaddon, which sought to justify and

¹¹⁵ These punishments will be discussed in relation to rebellion in Chapter 8.

¹¹⁶ This is the central thesis of Pongratz-Leisten 2015.

¹¹⁷ Bahrani 2008: 73.

¹¹⁸ SAA 10: XXII-XXIV.

¹¹⁹ Finn 2017b. Fink (2017: 177-80) similarly comments on several texts which he views as "making fun of the king".

rationalise the position which Esarhaddon had taken regarding Babylon.¹²⁰ Other examples of texts apparently in circulation amongst the Assyrian elite which conveyed royal rhetoric include a farcical parody of the Cuthean Legend attacking a Babylonian individual named Bēl-ēṭir,¹²¹ and, more interestingly for our current purpose, Sargon II's Letter to the God.¹²² This text is a rare example of an Assyrian royal inscription discovered outside of a royal context, in a private archive from Aššur.¹²³ This is particularly significant for discussion of the audience of the inscriptions, as Sargon's Letter has been the focus of discussion concerning a possible alternative route by which the content of the inscriptions might have reached a contemporary audience, the possibility that these texts were on occasion recited in front of an audience.

The Arguments for the Recitation of Inscriptions

The suggestion that the inscriptions may have sometimes been read aloud was first suggested by Oppenheim with particular reference to Sargon and Esarhaddon's Letters to the God.¹²⁴ The beginning of Sargon's Letter reads:

*ana Aššur abu ilāni bēli rabē āšib Eḫursaggalkurkura ekurrišu rabî adanniš
adanniš lū šulmu ana ilāni šimāti ištārāti āšibūt Eḫursaggalkurkura ekurrišunu
rabî adanniš adanniš lū šulmu ana ilāni šimāti ištārāti āšibūt Aššur ekurrišunu
rabî adanniš adanniš lū šulmu ana āli u nišišu lū šulmu ana ekalli āšib libbiša
lū šulmu*

To Aššur, father of the gods, great lord who dwells in the Eḫursaggalkurkurra, his great temple, very great greetings! To the gods of the fates and the goddesses who dwell in the Eḫursaggalkurkurra, their great temple, very great greetings! To the gods of the fates and the goddesses who dwell in the city of Aššur, their great temple, very great greetings! To the city and its people, greetings! To the palace (and) the dweller within,¹²⁵ greetings!¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Tadmor et al. 1989: 46-47; Weaver 2004: 63-64.

¹²¹ SAA 3 29.

¹²² Mayer 1983: 68-113.

¹²³ Van De Mieroop 2010: 430-31.

¹²⁴ Oppenheim 1960; 1979: 123-33.

¹²⁵ For this reading, see Foster 2005: 791; Worthington 2012: 215-16.

¹²⁶ Mayer 1983: 68 lines 1-4.

The inclusion of the city and its people (*āli u nišīšu*) in the salutation led Oppenheim to argue that this type of text would have been read aloud before the god, the priesthood, and the citizens of Aššur.¹²⁷

Oppenheim believed that public reading was restricted to the Letters to the God.¹²⁸ However, since the publication of his views on this subject, other scholars have extended the idea of public reading of text to the other royal inscriptions. Both Bagg and Liverani entertain the possibility of inscriptions being recited to differing degrees. Bagg concedes that inscriptions may sometimes have been read aloud. However, he argues that the recitation of inscriptions was probably not the norm, and was likely restricted to readings for members of the elite. Even then, he sees this as being more likely in times of political turbulence.¹²⁹ Liverani, on the other hand, applies the possibility of public reading to a larger audience, believing that the Letters to the God, and also possibly other texts, were read to the broader population of the city of Aššur.¹³⁰ He views them as “war news” conveyed to the populace, and characterises this type of communication as serving two primary purposes in overcome the two major fears which people hold in relation to war: the fear of killing and of being killed.¹³¹ This is certainly an important consideration, but could equally well be achieved through the various types of image and spectacle which Liverani discusses during his study, such as the procession of enemy kings’ heads through Assyria, or the hanging of flayed skins on the walls of Assyrian cities.¹³²

The existence of Sargon’s Letter in a non-royal context demonstrates that it enjoyed a wider audience than just its primary, divine addressee, but the extent of this broader audience is far from certain, and some scholars have questioned the extent to which the illiterate sections of Assyrian society would have been able to fully comprehend the antiquated Standard Babylonian dialect in which the Letters to the God and other inscriptions were written.¹³³ Sano has countered these arguments

¹²⁷ Oppenheim 1960: 143; 1979: 124.

¹²⁸ Oppenheim 1979: 124.

¹²⁹ Bagg 2016: 62.

¹³⁰ Liverani 1979: 302; 2014: 374.

¹³¹ Liverani 2014: 381-83.

¹³² Liverani 2014: 376-79.

¹³³ Michalowski 1996: 186-87, 191-92; Siddall 2013: 143-44. It has been argued that the general populace of Mesopotamian cities may have had higher levels of literacy than my comments here might suggest (Charpin 2004; Wilcke 2000). However, this literacy would have been at a purely “functional” level, and it is doubtful that the inscriptions would be readable by someone whose knowledge of cuneiform was limited to writing

with the proposal that the inscriptions would have been recited in Aramaic translation.¹³⁴ This highly speculative argument encounters serious logistical problems in the texts themselves. Sargon's Letter is a composition filled with neologisms and word play,¹³⁵ and the translation of such a text might therefore prove difficult.¹³⁶

The various poems in praise of Assyrian kings, ranging from the lengthy Tukultī-Ninurta Epic to the much shorter texts in an epical style which commemorate the campaigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III,¹³⁷ are another type of text which may have been read aloud; a poem commemorating Ashurnasirpal's campaign to the Mediterranean, explicitly states that it is to be sung (*zamāru*).¹³⁸ Short poems such as this would seem to be far better suited for recitation at public events than the long, rambling, and frequently dry and statistical texts written on foundation deposits. Of course, it is possible that only select passages from an inscription might be read out. The recitation of Sargon's Letter is possible, but far from certain, and the use of this text as evidence for other inscriptions being read aloud is even more speculative.

Images, Power, and Politics (and Audience)

Porter has also argued that the inscriptions were read in public, but provides several more items as evidence beyond the salutation in Sargon's Letter. Firstly, she points to examples of hymns and poems which refer to themselves as being sung.¹³⁹ This argument provides no evidence for the recitation of the inscriptions, as these texts

simple letters and doing basic accounting (Siddall 2017: 65). Furthermore, Veldhuis (2011: 73) writes that the Neo-Assyrian evidence may indicate "a near monopoly on cuneiform literacy on the side of the state" during that period.

¹³⁴ Sano 2016: 226-31.

¹³⁵ Van De Mieroop 2010: 418. For examples of wordplay from the Letter, see the footnotes to Foster's translation of the text (2005: 791-813). For the syntactical complexities present in this text, see Vera Chamaza 1992a.

¹³⁶ For the difficulties involved in translating wordplay, see Delabastita 2004; Vandaele 2011.

¹³⁷ Machinist 1978; Prosecký 2001: 431-33; SAA 3 17. Reade (1989) has argued that the text *STT* 43 (SAA 3 17) describes campaigns by Ashurnasirpal II rather than Shalmaneser III. However, much of his argument is based on discrepancies between this text and Shalmaneser's campaign accounts in the inscriptions (Reade 1989: 94-96), an argument diminished by the existence of similar discrepancies in Ashurnasirpal's inscriptional and poetic accounts of his campaign to the Mediterranean (Prosecký 2001: 433-34).

¹³⁸ Prosecký 2001: 431-32 obv. 1. LKA 62, a poem describing the king on campaign as a hunter in the mountains, also contains a statement that it is to be sung. However, there is some debate over whether this text is a Middle Assyrian poem in praise of Tiglath-pileser I (Ebeling 1949: 33-34; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 252), or a Neo-Assyrian parody (Edzard 2004; Finn 2017b: 151-54).

¹³⁹ Porter 1993a: 114-15.

are an entirely different genre, and are verse as opposed to the prose form of the inscriptions.¹⁴⁰ In addition, Porter argues that at least some inscriptions show signs that they are intended for consumption by a broader contemporary audience. A text which she highlights as demonstrating this is Esarhaddon's Nineveh A.¹⁴¹ She argues that this text would not have included Esarhaddon's "apology",¹⁴² if it was not intended for a contemporary audience. Elsewhere, she argues that inscriptions were tailored for their audience dependent on the region in which they were deposited, so that Esarhaddon's inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia have distinct elements that set them apart from one another.¹⁴³ This theory of recitation forms the foundations for her study of Esarhaddon's "policy" towards Babylon, which takes a reader-response approach to finding the ways in which this "policy" was conveyed to the Assyrian and Babylonian people.¹⁴⁴

There are problems in all of these proposals. There are various reasons why Esarhaddon might have included the apology in his inscriptions, as will be discussed in Chapter 7. The variation in the content of inscriptions between Assyria and Babylonia may indicate that these texts were targeted at those countries' populations, but it may equally suggest that they were written in the regions in which they were deposited, by local scribes who gave them a local flavour. Furthermore, many of Porter's views on Esarhaddon's "public relations campaign" towards Babylon and the Babylonians are couched in deeply anachronistic terms better suited to modern politics than the ancient world.¹⁴⁵ A result of this is that she places a great deal of importance of the king's need to justify his actions to the general populace. As Bahrani has noted, the rulers of non-democratic societies do not require the agreement of the public that their actions should happen, only their acceptance that they are going to.¹⁴⁶

Porter's arguments for a wider audience frequently hinge on her view that Assyrian inscriptions would have been recited at a ceremony accompanying their placement

¹⁴⁰ Even in these instances, it is of course possible that "sing" should be read as a metaphor, rather than a literal instruction concerning the performance of the text.

¹⁴¹ RINAP 4 1.

¹⁴² RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11.

¹⁴³ Porter 1993a: 95-105.

¹⁴⁴ Porter 1993a.

¹⁴⁵ Porter 1993a: 13, 66, 77, 149-50; 1996.

¹⁴⁶ Bahrani 2008: 71-73.

in a building.¹⁴⁷ Whilst the evidence which she presents in support of this view is unconvincing, there is little evidence which actively disproves the public reading of inscriptions. However, if the Letters were read aloud to a human audience, then this audience is unlikely to have included large portions of the city's population, as is discussed above. In spite of this, Porter's view on the recitation of royal inscriptions is accepted by Karlsson, who identifies the inscriptions as "Ancient Assyrian Propaganda" in the title of his recent monograph.¹⁴⁸ In fairness, Karlsson's study of "propaganda" is restricted to titles and epithets, elements of the inscriptions which one might reasonably assume could appear in other contexts, such as elements of state ceremony. However, in justifying his choice of title, Karlsson explicitly refers to the possibility of the inscriptions being recited.¹⁴⁹

Visibility and Reading: Inscriptions on Walls, Floors, and Stelae

So far, this study has primarily been restricted to a discussion of texts such as those in foundation deposits, which could not possibly have a contemporary audience due to their physical location, but which it has been argued might be read aloud on the occasion of their deposition. We should now turn our attentions to texts which were visible to a contemporary human audience, those on the walls or floors of palaces and temples, or on stone objects placed therein. As mentioned above, these texts would have conveyed a message to contemporary particular audiences through the spectacle of their existence. This is particularly true of the longer inscriptions on the walls of Assyrian palaces, such as those of Ashurnasirpal II, Tiglath-pileser III, or Sargon II.¹⁵⁰ Under later kings, the palatial wall inscriptions tend to be much shorter epigraphs to the reliefs, the purpose of which was to provide context for the images.¹⁵¹ For longer texts, some scholars have also argued for a contemporary particular audiences due to the better accessibility enjoyed by these texts as compared to the foundation deposits. As such, the arguments surrounding the audiences of these texts must also be discussed.

One of the most detailed arguments for the contemporary particular audiences of a visible inscription was put forward by Porter in relation to Ashurnasirpal II's annals,

¹⁴⁷ Porter 1993a: 112-15.

¹⁴⁸ Karlsson 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Karlsson 2017: 7. Karlsson's views on the audience for the inscriptions will be discussed below.

¹⁵⁰ For example, RIMA 2 A.O.101.2; A.O.101.23; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 1-34; Fuchs 1993: *Ann.*; *Prunk.*

¹⁵¹ Russell 1999: 210 table 10.1.

inscribed on the walls and floor of the Ninurta Temple at Kalḫu.¹⁵² She argues that due to the limited access to the annals resulting from their location in the shrine of a temple, this inscription is:

a text designed to please and win the continuing support of Ninurta, and by extension, that of his priests, a group with many literate members who would have seen the text often as they performed their temple duties.¹⁵³

For Porter, this means that the extreme violence described in this text, unusual even by the standards of other Assyrian royal inscriptions, is only present out of a need to appeal to the warrior god and his priesthood.¹⁵⁴ By contrast, she views other Ashurnasirpal inscriptions, such as the Kurkh Monolith, as portraying a slightly less violent and bloodthirsty image of the Assyrian king which balanced intimidation with an emphasis on the benefits of peaceful submission to Assyria.¹⁵⁵ She therefore proposes that the Ninurta Temple text is a form of “polemic” intended to win the support of these groups.

There are problems with this assertion. Although some of the violent acts in the annals do not appear in the inscription on the Kurkh Monolith, it does contain many of the graphic passages from the annals. For example, the Kurkh Monolith records that Ashurnasirpal impaled captives,¹⁵⁶ or cut off their arms,¹⁵⁷ burned adolescents alive,¹⁵⁸ and flayed rebel leaders.¹⁵⁹ Conversely, the passage which Porter quotes as an example of the gentler tone of some passages of the monolith, through which the “intimidating effect is partly balanced”,¹⁶⁰ actually appears in both the Ninurta Temple annals and the Kurkh Monolith.¹⁶¹ There is little to no difference in the tone of the two texts.

Furthermore, Porter fails to account for the Great (or Nimrud) Monolith.¹⁶² This text, containing a duplicate of the earlier years from the annals, was found outside the

¹⁵² Porter 2004. The text in question is edited by Grayson as RIMA 2 A.O.101.1.

¹⁵³ Porter 2003: 85.

¹⁵⁴ Porter 2004: 43-47.

¹⁵⁵ Porter 2003: 86-88.

¹⁵⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.101.19: 76.

¹⁵⁷ RIMA 2 A.O.101.19: 82.

¹⁵⁸ RIMA 2 A.O.101.19: 76-77.

¹⁵⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.19: 91.

¹⁶⁰ Porter 2003: 87.

¹⁶¹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1.: ii 90-91; 19: 47-51. Porter gives no reference for this quotation.

¹⁶² RIMA 2 A.O.101.17.

entrance to the shrine of the Ninurta Temple, but does not include the hymn to Ninurta which begins the annals,¹⁶³ and contains a long list of curses relating to the care of the palace, not the temple.¹⁶⁴ This has led Reade to suggest that this stela was originally erected in the Northwest Palace, before being moved to the Ninurta Temple at a later date.¹⁶⁵ This would not be the only example of such an object being relocated; the stela of Šamši-Adad V discovered in the Nabû Temple was also most likely moved there from the Ninurta Temple.¹⁶⁶ There may therefore have been a near duplicate of the annals originally standing in the palace, a situation which greatly detracts from Porter's proposed function for the text as "polemic".

Furthermore, the statement that the priests of Ninurta "would have seen the text often as they performed their temple duties," is also problematic. The important consideration here is that the priests would certainly have *seen* the inscription frequently whilst performing their duties, but this does not mean that they would have *read* the inscription whilst performing these duties. The annals in their fullest form on a single, large slab from the back of the temple,¹⁶⁷ consist of 389 lines of over thirty signs each, and would have been partially obscured from most angles by the altar, cult statue, and other paraphernalia placed in the inner sanctum of the temple. The dim lighting within the shrine would also have reduced the ease of reading this text. The priests themselves would, as Porter remarks, be performing their temple duties whilst inside these areas, and one has to wonder whether they would have the time or the inclination to procrastinate on their religious duties by reading the floor. Once again, real audience does not necessarily equal particular audience.

Priests as Audience More Generally

The same argument against the priesthood as a contemporary particular audience can be extended to the inscriptions from temples more generally. In addition to the walls or floor of a temple's shrine, these texts often appear on gateway colossi at the shrine's entrance,¹⁶⁸ or on stelae or obelisks in the courtyard outside that

¹⁶³ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 1-9.

¹⁶⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.101.17: v 24-103.

¹⁶⁵ Reade 2002: 142-43.

¹⁶⁶ Reade 2002: 169-70.

¹⁶⁷ M 27 in Finkel and Reade's appendix to Reade 2002: 207-209.

¹⁶⁸ For example, RIMA 2 A.O.101.28; 32; RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010.

entrance.¹⁶⁹ The gateway to the shrine can be characterised as what Lefebvre terms a “transitional object”; its primary function is to portion off two spaces from one another, and to act as the point at which one transitions from one of these spaces to the other.¹⁷⁰ Gateways are generally a space passed through from one location to another, but the placement of most Assyrian colossi at these locations means that the reader must stand in the gateway and look to one side in order to read the inscription. Reading the text requires the reader to stop and linger in what is usually a space passed through during the transition from outside to inside. This is not an action which would be carried out casually and passively during other duties. Furthermore, the suggested reader, a priest, is someone who would have passed through this space regularly as part of his job. In such circumstances, the priests may have barely acknowledged the presence of these texts as they retread the familiar route between shrine and courtyard day after day.

The courtyard of a temple appears to have been the location for various ritual practices, including the preparation of the god’s “divine meal”,¹⁷¹ and Neumann has also suggested that the courtyard would have been used as a storage area for items utilised during rituals within the shrine.¹⁷² We might therefore surmise that the primary concerns of the priests when in this space were either performing their temple duties there, or travelling to and from the locations where they would do so. Further objections to the identification of “the priests” as an audience of inscriptions are raised by Pongratz-Leisten, who argues that:

The priesthood itself ... consisted of cultic functionaries with circumscribed cultic and administrative duties; excepting the *šangû* of Aššur and the *šangûs* of other gods, it is doubtful whether the priesthood constituted a strong and discrete social group in Aššur.¹⁷³

Finally, many of the inscribed obelisks and stelae in temple courtyards for which the original location can be deduced were placed close to walls.¹⁷⁴ This creates a difficulty for the notion that temple officials might read the inscription during their

¹⁶⁹ For examples, see n. 174 below.

¹⁷⁰ Lefebvre 1991: 209-10.

¹⁷¹ Neumann 2014: 231.

¹⁷² Neumann 2014: 230.

¹⁷³ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 328.

¹⁷⁴ Meuszyński 1976: 38 fig. 1; Reade 1980: 3 fig. 1; 2002: 142 fig. 6, 169-70; 2005: 374.

duties, as part of the inscription would have faced the wall, requiring the reader to walk around to the space between the wall and the object in order to finish reading the text.¹⁷⁵ All of these points detract from the suggestion that the priests were a particular audience for inscribed objects in temples.

Inscriptions in the Palace

Many of the problems with identifying the temple officials as a particular audience of inscriptions in those buildings also apply to the identification of those inhabiting, working in, or visiting the palace as particular audiences for the visible palatial inscriptions. Porter suggests that visiting dignitaries might be accompanied by their own scribes whilst visiting the palace, who would then be able to read the inscriptions to them.¹⁷⁶ In the case of short epigraphs accompanying reliefs, this is perhaps possible. It would be incredibly unlikely however, that the scribes of visiting dignitaries could dedicate the time needed to read the room-spanning texts inscribed on the walls of the palaces of Tiglath-pileser III or Sargon II,¹⁷⁷ and reading the Standard Inscription was presumably the last thing that Ashurnasirpal would have wanted his subservient vassals to do, as the knowledge that the text was not planned to fit the space provided would have somewhat diminished the impact of the great walls of cuneiform script which met visitors to the palace.

An alternative suggestion, made originally by Russell, and then adopted by Porter with regards to Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu, is the possibility that individuals holding the position of *targumannu*, "interpreter", might have acted as guides for visiting dignitaries.¹⁷⁸ In this case, these probably illiterate individuals might have quoted the inscriptions to the visitors from memory. Russell and Porter disagree over the length of texts which might have been memorised by such an interpreter. Russell only mentions interpreters in relation to the epigraphs to the reliefs,¹⁷⁹ whilst Porter views this as "an unnecessary reservation in light of reports of memorization of very long texts in other non-literate and semi-literate societies".¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ The height of some obelisks when standing in their original fittings (Reade 1980: fig. 3) may also have made reading the upper portions of the inscription difficult from ground level.

¹⁷⁶ Porter 2003: 92.

¹⁷⁷ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 1-34; Fuchs 1993: *Ann.*; *Prunk.*

¹⁷⁸ Porter 2003: 92; Russell 1991: 233. The possibility of visitors being taken on guided tours of the palace was previously raised by Paley (1983: 53) and Reade (1979: 336).

¹⁷⁹ Russell 1991: 233.

¹⁸⁰ Porter 2003: 92 n. 224.

We would not in this case be dealing with the inscriptions themselves, but with translations of those inscriptions into various different languages. We might wonder at the time and effort required to memorise, mentally translate, and accurately recite these longer texts, and whether under the circumstances these interpreters might have more easily conveyed the content of the reliefs and inscriptions without memorising and reciting the texts, a possibility implied by Russell.¹⁸¹ The recitation of the inscriptions by interpreters is possible, but highly speculative and, in my view, somewhat unlikely for anything longer than the epigraphs to the reliefs.

Writing for Posterity

Having discussed the contemporary, human, real audiences of the inscriptions, I will now turn my attention to the explicitly stated particular audience of these texts, future rulers. Placing an inscription in a foundation deposit meant that it would eventually be found during the course of future renovation to that building.¹⁸² A king's ability to record his deeds for posterity was clearly an especially important aspect of Mesopotamian royal ideology. The number of inscriptions which curse any individual who would move, alter, or destroy them is itself ample evidence of this.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the importance of leaving a written legacy is stressed in several literary works. The Cuthean Legend makes a comparison between two poor rulers in Narām-Sîn and Enmerkar. Enmerkar had previously faced, and apparently defeated, the Ummān-manda in battle, but did not write any inscriptions, and thus suffered a poor afterlife.¹⁸⁴ He had therefore had a good reign, which had been spoiled by his lack of a written legacy. Conversely, Narām-Sîn makes serious errors of judgment and conduct within the course of his reign, such as ignoring the omens telling him not to face the Ummān-manda in battle,¹⁸⁵ but does write about his mistakes so that other kings might learn from them.¹⁸⁶ This didactic element is often present in so-

¹⁸¹ Russell 1991: 239-40.

¹⁸² The discovery of the inscriptions of previous kings during building works is a common topos in the Assyrian royal inscriptions (for example RIMA 1 A.O.39.2: i 7-iii 10; A.O.76.13: 29-43; A.O.78.18: 35-36; RIMA 2 A.O.100.5: 136-42; RIMA 3 A.O.102.25: 30-31; RINAP 4 1: vi 65-74; RINAP 5/1 3: viii 78-86).

¹⁸³ For examples, see Grayson 1980a: 151-54.

¹⁸⁴ Westenholz 1997: 300-307 lines 1-30.

¹⁸⁵ Westenholz 1997: 316-17 lines 72-83.

¹⁸⁶ Westenholz 1997: 326-31 lines 149-80.

called *narû*-literature, or “fictional autobiography”,¹⁸⁷ which is frequently presented as a royal inscription of a past ruler.¹⁸⁸

The image which this gives of royal inscriptions is that they served to leave a record of a king’s deeds for posterity. If Narām-Sîn could have consulted an inscription of Enmerkar, then he might have known how to deal with his enemies. The concept of consulting earlier royal narratives in the course of decision making appears to have been practiced in at least one instance in the Neo-Assyrian period; Frahm has proposed that the Twelfth Tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh was consulted by Sennacherib’s scholars in an attempt to determine his father’s fate in the afterlife.¹⁸⁹ By understanding events in the past, Mesopotamian scholars sought to understand and predict the future, as is demonstrated by the “historical” entries in omen lists.¹⁹⁰

Unlike the Narām-Sîn of the literary tradition, a reformed *Unheilsherrscher* who wanted to advise future rulers on how to avoid making the same mistakes,¹⁹¹ the Assyrian king wanted to be remembered as a model ruler, an individual who future rulers would attempt to emulate. In this fashion, the continuation of royal legacy also formed an important aspect of the inscriptions’ purpose with respect to a future audience. This view of the written word is amply demonstrated in the Epic of Gilgamesh; although the eponymous hero fails in his quest to gain immortality, he ultimately lives on through his achievements as recorded in his “inscription”, ostensibly from the walls of Uruk.¹⁹² There was no true immortality to be achieved in Mesopotamian thought, and the best alternative that could be attained was to be remembered favourably down through the ages.

An individual in the Mesopotamian afterlife was entirely reliant on offerings of food and drink in order to exist comfortably.¹⁹³ Being remembered after death was therefore of paramount importance. A king that could demonstrate his heroic and

¹⁸⁷ A study on a selection of these texts has been published by Longman (1991), which divides them into subgenres based on the messages contained in their endings. However, Westenholz (1997: 19) has described Longman’s methodology as “a process of arbitrary selection of fifteen texts”.

¹⁸⁸ Not all texts of this type are written from the perspective of a king. For example, the “autobiography” of Nabonidus’ mother Adad-guppi (Gadd 1958: 46-53).

¹⁸⁹ Frahm 1999: 76-78.

¹⁹⁰ For this type of omen, see Pongratz-Leisten 2014: 41-43; Starr 1986.

¹⁹¹ The concept of an *Unheilsherrscher* is discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁹² George 2003 I: 24-28.

¹⁹³ This point is amply demonstrated by Tablet 12 of the Epic of Gilgamesh (George 2003: 728-35) and its Sumerian precursor Gilgamesh and the Netherworld (Gadotti 2014).

mighty deeds would be more likely to be remembered in such a way. Royal legacy was therefore about far more than the king's ego, although this of course played a part in the royal imperative to be remembered.¹⁹⁴ The Old Akkadian kings are the most pronounced example of this, and their statues received offerings as late as the Neo-Babylonian period.¹⁹⁵ In order to ensure that a king's texts survived to be read by future generations, a level of reciprocity was required. A king who read and heeded the words of an earlier ruler's inscription would be blessed with similar successes.

This reciprocal nature of the inscriptions is well demonstrated by a passage found in several of Ashurbanipal's prism inscriptions:

*kī ša anāku mušarû šītir šume Sîn-aḥḥē-erība ab abi bānīja āmuru šamnī
apšušu nīqu aqqû itti mušarē šītir šumija aškunu atta kīma jātima mušarāja
amurma šamnī pušuş nīqu iqī itti mušarē šītir šumika šukun ilāni rabûti mala
ina mušarē annē šaṭru šarrûtka liktarrabû lišsurû palêka*

Just as I read the inscribed object bearing the name of Sennacherib, the father of the father who created me, anointed (it) with oils, made offerings, (and) deposited it with an inscribed object bearing my name, (so too may) you, like me, read the inscribed object bearing my name, anoint (it) with oils, make offerings, and deposit it with an inscribed object bearing your name! (Then) may the great gods, as many as are written on this inscribed object, bless your kingship (and) protect your reign.¹⁹⁶

In return for continuing the past king's legacy, the current king is blessed with a good and stable kingship. The system is also partially based upon the incentive for each king to encourage its continuation through his own example; a ruler honours the inscriptions of his predecessors so that his successors will do the same for him.

A Divine Audience

All of this explains the purpose of the inscriptions for a future audience, but not for a divine one. The gods would not give the dead king offerings, and there was therefore no need to ensure the survival of the royal legacy with regards to the gods. The gods

¹⁹⁴ For the king's ego as a motivator for the creation of royal inscriptions, see Siddall 2017: 65.

¹⁹⁵ Westenholz 1997: 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ RINAP 5/1 3: viii 78-86. The same topos also appears in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon (RINAP 4 1: vi 65-74).

might be expected to be aware of the king and his deeds. However, this does not appear to have been an assumption made by Mesopotamian rulers, as the gods are frequently addressed in the royal inscriptions.¹⁹⁷ The gods may have been capable of learning information which was not accessible to humans, but they were not omniscient.¹⁹⁸ They therefore appear to have been in need of occasional reminders of an individual's behaviour. The royal inscriptions provided an obvious way in which to do this. Maintaining approval from the gods was highly important to Mesopotamian rulers, as divine support was the major factor in ensuring a long and successful reign.¹⁹⁹ Curse formulae in the inscriptions frequently threaten offending rulers with the destruction of their name and their seed,²⁰⁰ effectively erasing them from history and severely reducing the quality of their afterlife. The fact that the gods could punish poor rulers by subjecting them to *damnatio memoriae* gave the Assyrian kings yet another reason to emphasise their good conduct.

A second reason for addressing the gods is demonstrated by the Letters from the God.²⁰¹ These texts were written in response to letters from the king to Aššur, or in one instance Ninurta,²⁰² and are presented as correspondence from the god himself. They consist of a summary of the king's achievements during a campaign. One letter from Aššur, dating to the reign of Šamšī-Adad V,²⁰³ gives a much clearer picture of the purpose of these texts. Each passage of this text is divided into two sections. The first begins *ša tašpuranni mā*, "concerning what you wrote to me", and then proceeds to give a first person narrative of the campaign from the king's perspective, clearly a quote from Šamšī-Adad's original letter.²⁰⁴ The second section begins *ina pī ilūtija rabīti ittuqta*, "it happened by the command of my great divinity", followed by the same account of the campaign, but addressed to the king in the second

¹⁹⁷ For example, RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: i 1-14; A.0.99.2: 1-4; A.0.101.1: i 1-9; RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: i 1-4; A.0.103.1: i 1-25; A.0.104.6: 1-5; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 37: 1-11; RINAP 3/2 223: 1-2; RINAP 5/1 23: 1-13.

¹⁹⁸ Trigger (2003: 441) has previously highlighted the Mesopotamian gods' lack of omniscience in relation to the substitute king ritual. Bottéro (1992: 143) instead argues that this ritual is not intended to trick the gods, but "to enable the gods to realize their wish, to accomplish their decision, under the same conditions but on another "basis" as close as possible to the one they originally had in mind, even if it was materially different".

¹⁹⁹ See Chapter 2.

²⁰⁰ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.33.1: 23-25; A.0.76.2: 52-53; A.0.77.1: 163-66; A.0.78.5: 114-15; A.0.79.1: 39-40; A.0.86.4: 10; RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: viii 88; A.0.99.2: 133; A.0.100.5: 146; A.0.101.26: 72; RIMA 3 A.0.104.6: 29; RINAP 3/1 10: 29; RINAP 4 57: viii 5'-6'; RINAP 5/1 3: viii 92.

²⁰¹ SAA 3 41-47.

²⁰² SAA 3 47.

²⁰³ SAA 3 41.

²⁰⁴ SAA 3 41: obv. 5-11, rev. 5-12.

person.²⁰⁵ Aššur's reply serves to verify the account given by Šamšī-Adad's letter. It therefore seems that part of the reason for addressing the god in the first place was so that he could authenticate the narrative in his response. Similarly, by containing a hymn to the gods, other inscriptions would draw divine attention to themselves. The gods would then serve as witnesses to the inscription thus authenticating its record of events. This purpose for invoking the gods can be clearly seen in some Old Akkadian inscriptions. For example, an inscription of Rīmuš claims of the events which it records:

Šamaš u Ilaba umma lā surrātim lū kīnišma

I swear by Šamaš and Ilaba that (these) are not lies. (They) are indeed true.²⁰⁶

This is perhaps the most obvious example of a divine audience playing the role of reliable witness in an Akkadian-language inscription, but it suggests that the gods may have played the same role in other inscriptions that do not state the fact so clearly. Drawing the gods' attention to the text by invoking their names would also mean that they would be more likely to notice any actions, good or bad, carried out by a future king on the inscriptions, and thus ensure that the curses and blessings would be enforced.

On the Subject of Propaganda

In a recent paper on proposed propagandistic elements of references to celestial divination in Esarhaddon's inscriptions, Cooley has highlighted the fact that:

what is shared by most modern studies of the term ... is that propaganda is deliberate persuasive communication, the goal of which is to convince people to think specific things and perform certain acts that further the objectives of the originator of the communication. ...

Note also what is *not* included in these contemporary definitions of the term offered by scholars who approach the phenomenon from the perspective of communications: a definition of just who the audience is.²⁰⁷ One of the

²⁰⁵ SAA 3 41: obv. 4-rev. 4, rev. 13-18.

²⁰⁶ RIME 2 E2.1.2.4: 73-78.

²⁰⁷ Cooley 2014: 9-10 (his emphasis).

reasons for Oppenheim's rejection of the word "propaganda", I believe, revolved around the assumption that by definition the intended audience for propaganda must be the general public.

This definition of the term, and Cooley's emphasis on the fact that propaganda can be targeted at any audience might suggest that even for the chronologically or cosmologically distant audiences discussed above, the inscriptions are still in fact propaganda; the rhetoric of these texts was intended to convince these audiences to act in ways which benefited the Assyrian king in question, even if that king was long dead. I would argue that the contemporary definitions of propaganda cited by Cooley do not define its audience because they do not consider the possibility of communications to non-human audiences to be possible, and do not consider communications to chronologically removed audiences to "further the objectives of the originator of the communication". If we are to completely disregard the identity of the audience when defining propaganda, then we might consider prayer to be a form of "propaganda". This position would be somewhat unusual, and makes the term so general as to be almost useless. Because of this, I do not consider the rhetorical content of the royal inscriptions to be "propagandistic".

A Naïve View of the Inscriptions?

On the subject of the inscriptions' audience, Karlsson has recently written:

these sources indeed express ideology and propaganda. This is evident from their content which conveys a systematically biased perspective.²⁰⁸

He goes on to argue:

To my mind, it is naïve to believe that these sources were made only for the deities and cult, and that the claims made in them are representative for the whole of Assyrian society. This perspective from above, which seems to argue that an Assyrian *Volksseele* is conveyed by the major primary sources, is clearly untenable. This perspective aside, it seems to me that the said view on the sources is based on a presumption that the ancient world and its inhabitants were fundamentally different from our own/ourselves, and that people in those days lived together in harmony and unison in a somewhat

²⁰⁸ Karlsson 2016: 327.

otherworldly universe which harboured social laws unknown to us in the modern world. ... I believe that the displayed relativism in question is quite misleading. Rulers and elites have always had a need to create and diffuse a picture of themselves as legitimate and irreplaceable. The Assyrian rulers and elites should not be seen as exceptions to the rule in this respect.²⁰⁹

These are strong words, and should be addressed before I end this chapter.

Am I, by discounting a contemporary particular audience for the ideological content of the inscriptions, being naïve? I would not say so. Karlsson here seems to conflate several disparate points and opinions. There are other ways to explain the biased character of the royal inscriptions, as demonstrated above. To say that the rhetoric of these texts is not intended for a contemporary audience is not to say that the Assyrian kings made no attempts to convey royal ideology to their people. Much of the passage quoted above is something of a straw man argument. I know of no scholar who has taken the bizarre position outlined here, certainly not any of those cited by Karlsson as sceptical of a role for the inscriptions as propaganda, several of whom do see the inscriptions as conveying royal ideology to the elite.²¹⁰ Karlsson's assumption that this thinking accompanies the rejection of the inscriptions as propaganda seems to stem from his own misunderstanding of the arguments put forward by the previous literature. To place so much weight on royal monuments and inscriptions as conveyors of royal propaganda is to ignore the array of other channels of communication available to the Assyrian kings which did not involve the elements of material culture extant today. Reading a dry, statistical, and heavily stereotyped Standard Babylonian literary composition to a populace who were unlikely to properly understand it would do little to convey state power to the people. Having a group of captured enemies grind their ancestors' bones to dust at the city gates might just do the trick.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Karlsson 2016: 327.

²¹⁰ Parker 2011: 368-75; Siddall 2013: 140-46. Karlsson (2016: 13) seems to me to have misunderstood Siddall's conception of royal ideology, and to have overlooked the fact that Siddall frequently talks about Assyrian *royal* ideology, not Assyrian ideology more generally. In no way does Siddall demonstrate a belief that "the pervading praises of the king in these sources were embraced by the whole Assyrian population", as is argued by Karlsson (2016: 13). He simply argues that the populace are unlikely to have received royal ideology through the inscriptions, and that there are other, more likely channels for royal propaganda.

²¹¹ For this punishment, see Chapter 8. This is not to say that only spectacles of violence emphasising the king's military might and merciless punishment of his enemies served a propagandistic purpose in ancient Assyria. Building works, religious festivals, tax exemptions, and various other events presented ideal contexts for the

king to demonstrate his piety, conformity to tradition, magnanimity, and other positive qualities associated with kingship.

2. The Concepts of Kingship and Warfare in Ancient Near Eastern Thought

Accounts of rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are almost always encountered within campaign accounts. They are usually accounts of the wars undertaken by the Assyrian king to quell the rebellion in question. Because of this, it will be useful to address some points concerning warfare in Assyrian thought more generally before we can progress to discussing the specifics of rebellion in particular. Equally importantly, it will be necessary to cover some aspects of the Assyrian conception of the figure of the king, who is usually the narrator, or at least the focus of the narrative.²¹² This chapter will therefore address these broader topics in preparation for a deeper engagement with rebellion in the following chapters.

Divine Support for the Assyrian King

The first point that it is important to raise is the divine support enjoyed by the Assyrian king. The king was ultimately a servant of the gods. He acted in order to benefit the gods, and in doing so received their favour, resulting in success and prosperity for him and his land. The concept of the king being appointed and supported by the gods had a long tradition in Mesopotamian thought, appearing in written sources by the Early Dynastic period,²¹³ and possibly being depicted in art even earlier than that.²¹⁴ In the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the concept of the divine favour enjoyed by the king frequently presents itself. In the Old Assyrian period, the title *šarru*, “king”, was reserved for the god Aššur, whilst the human ruler was the *iššiak Aššur*, “governor of Aššur”.²¹⁵ Although the proper noun is sometimes the city of Aššur (*Aššur^{ki}*),²¹⁶ in most instances it is instead written as the name of the god Aššur (*^dAššur*).²¹⁷ Furthermore, the inscription on the seal of Šilulu begins *Aššur^{ki} šarrum*, “(the city) Aššur, king”,²¹⁸ whilst Erišum writes *iššiak Aššur* variously as

²¹² Although the vast majority of events in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are narrated by the king in the first person, some sections of some texts refer to the king in the third person (for example RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 50-52; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 71-72). Equally, some texts have an Assyrian official replace the king as the focus of at least some of the narrative (for example, RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 141-90). For discussion of the purpose of some of these instances of changes in person, see Hasegawa 2014; Yamada 2000: 327-32.

²¹³ For example, RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: iv 9-v 17.

²¹⁴ This is most notable in the scenes on the Uruk Vase (Suter 2013: 206 fig. 10.1), which has frequently been interpreted as depicting a “sacred marriage” between the ruler and the goddess Inanna (Bahrani 2002: 18-19; Steinkeller 1999: 104-105; Suter 2013: 206-207).

²¹⁵ For example, RIMA 1 A.O.27.1: 1-4.

²¹⁶ For example, RIMA 1 A.O.27.1: 1-4; A.O.33.14: 2-3.

²¹⁷ For example, RIMA 1 A.O.34.1: 2-3; A.O.35.1: 2-3; A.O.60.1: 2; A.O.69.1: 2; A.O.71.1: 3.

²¹⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.27.1: 1-2.

Aššur^{ki 219 d} *Aššur*,²²⁰ or *Aššur* with no determinative.²²¹ This suggests that the two writings should be treated as interchangeable at this early stage in Assyrian history.²²² The king is the earthly representative of the god.²²³ Later, following the advent of Assyrian imperialism, the king's divine support is still clearly demonstrated in the inscriptions by epithets such as *migir ilāni rabûti/DN*, “favourite of the great gods/the god DN”,²²⁴ or the common statement that *Aššur* or the other gods selected the king to rule Assyria.²²⁵

As the representative of the gods, the king had a duty to serve their needs. This duty went beyond simply maintaining their cults and temples, and included military conquest in their name. Assyrian imperialism was a religious imperative. This concept is demonstrated in two coronation hymns, one Middle Assyrian, the other Neo-Assyrian, which include a command that the king expand his territory.²²⁶ For example, from the Neo-Assyrian hymn marking the coronation of Ashurbanipal:

*ūmēka šanātika Aššur nādin ḥaṭṭika lurrik
ina šēpīka mātka ruppiš*

May *Aššur*, who gives you the sceptre, lengthen your days (and) years.
Extend your land at your feet!²²⁷

The juxtaposition of the statement of Ashurbanipal's reception of kingship from *Aššur* with the command that the king go forth and conquer demonstrates the link between religion and imperialism. Similarly, in Ashurnasirpal II's annals from the Ninurta Temple at Kalḫu, this king's campaigns were not simply undertaken on the whim of the monarch, but were instead commanded by the gods:

*ina biblāt libbija u tiriš qātija Ištar bēltu rā'imāt šangūtija²²⁸ tamgurannima
epēš qabli u tāḥāzi libbaša ublamma ina ūmešuma Aššur-nāšir-apli rubû*

²¹⁹ RIMA 1 A.0.33.14: 2-15.

²²⁰ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.33.2: 2-3, 5-6; 4: 2-3, 5-6.

²²¹ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.33.1: 1-2; 3: 2-3, 5-6. For a full list of the ways in which this title is written in the inscriptions of Old Assyrian kings, see Larsen 1976: 115.

²²² The distinction between the god and the city of *Aššur* may not have been so clear-cut during the early second millennium BCE as in later periods (Eppihimer 2013: 35 n. 1; Larsen 1976: 115-17),

²²³ Eppihimer 2013: 35.

²²⁴ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 2; A.0.78.1: i 3-4; RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 33; Fuchs 1993: Zyl. 2; RINAP 3/1 22: i 4; RINAP 4 1: i 4; RINAP 5/1 2: i 10.

²²⁵ Karlsson 2016: 77-80; Tadmor 1981: 26-30.

²²⁶ Müller 1937: 8-19; SAA 3 11.

²²⁷ SAA 3 11: obv. 2-3.

na'du pāliḥ ilāni rabûti ša biblāt libbišu Enlil ušakšidušuma napḥar malkī lā māgirīšu ikšudu rabītu qāssu kāšid ajjābīšu ša ina ašri namrāši uparriru kišir multarḥī enūma Aššur bēlu rabû nabû šumija mušarbû šarrûtija eli šarrāni ša kibrāt erbetti šuma rabīš lušarbû kakkašu lā pādâ ana idi bēlûtija lušatmiḥ mātāti ḥuršānī dannûti ana pēli šuknuše u šapāri aggiš uma''eranni

Because of my voluntary offerings and prayer(s), Ištar, the lady who loves my priesthood, approved of me, and her heart desired war and battle. At that time, Ashurnasirpal, attentive prince, who fears the great gods, whose desires Enlil caused him to achieve, and whose great hand conquered all the princes who did not submit to him, conqueror of his enemies, who in difficult terrain disperses the forces of the arrogant, when Aššur, the great lord, who calls my name (and) expands my kingship over the kings of the four quarters, gloriously made my name great, he had me take his merciless weapon in my lordly arm(s) (and) sternly appointed me to rule, subdue, and govern the lands and mighty mountains.²²⁹

The king owed his position to the gods, and it was their will that he conquer the world.

The quoted passage from Ashurnasirpal's annals also demonstrates a second facet of Assyrian imperial ideology; whilst the conquest of foreign regions was a way in which the Assyrian king served his gods, the ability to amass new territory and subjects was itself a reward given to a ruler in recognition of his piety and good kingship. This concept is frequently present in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. For example, in the inscription Nineveh A, Esarhaddon writes:

²²⁸ The phrase GAŠAN ÁGA SANGA-*ti-ia*, normalised here as *bēltu rā'imat šangûtija*, is instead normalised by Karlsson (2013: 82; 2016: 90) as "*bēlat irammu* (sic.) *šangûtī*". This writing is grammatically untenable. The spelling of the following word as SANGA-*ti-ia* clearly indicates that this noun is in the genitive. ÁGA should therefore represent a noun in the construct state, not a verb. *Rā'imtu*, the feminine active participle form of *rāmu*, "to love", is a more suitable reading. That this was the case was already recognised by Budge and King (1902: 266), and Peiser (1889: 58), and is confirmed by the descriptions of Ištar in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon as *bēltum rā'imat šangûtija* (RINAP 4 1: i 74; 98: rev. 27), and of Ninkarrak in an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II (VAB 4: 76 iii 6) as *bēlti rā'imtija*, "the lady who loves me", with the participle written syllabically in both instances. For a similar usage of the masculine active participle *rā'imu* to describe a god's love for a human devotee, see CAD s.v. *rāmu* A [1d].

²²⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 37-42.

*adi ēkurrī ušakliluma ilāni ina parakkīšunu ušarmû šubat dārâti ina tukultišunu
rabīti ultu ʃīt šamši adi erēb šamši šalṭiš attallakuma māḥira ul tīši malkī ʃa
kibrāt erbeti ušaknišū šēpū'a māt ana Aššur iḥṭū uma''erūinni jāši*

As soon as I had completed the temples, and established the gods on their
daises as (their) eternal dwellings, with their great support, I marched
triumphantly from the rising sun to the setting and had no rival. They caused
the rulers of the four quarters to bow down at my feet, (and) delivered to me
(whichever) land had sinned against Aššur.²³⁰

The relationship between piety and successful kingship meant that misrule could
equally result in disaster befalling the king. In the royal inscriptions, the results of bad
kingship most frequently appear in the context of curse formulae, in which future
rulers are warned of the punishments they will suffer if they mistreat the inscription or
the building in which it was placed. Frequently, this punishment relates to warfare
and a lack of military success. For example, a common curse in the inscriptions of
Shalmaneser I for one who would damage or alter the text is:

šarru bēl lemuttišu kussāšu liṭir ana niṭli īnīšu māssu lišpur

May a king, his adversary, take away his throne (and) govern his land under
his (own) eyesight.²³¹

This connection between military victory and a king's good conduct has a long
tradition in Mesopotamian thought. The most notable example of this model for
success in battle comes from the literary tradition surrounding the Old Akkadian ruler
Narām-Sîn. Several legends about this king describe how his poor kingship led to his
defeat at the hands of an army from the mountains.²³² Several transgressions are
given by different texts for this punishment, including ignoring omens²³³ and sacking
temples.²³⁴ In some versions of the story, Narām-Sîn eventually emerges victorious,
but only after having seen the error of his ways and corrected his behaviour.²³⁵ The
figure of the bad king who is punished by the gods, and then learns from his

²³⁰ RINAP 4 1: 25-29.

²³¹ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 167.

²³² Cooper 1983; Glassner 2004: 266-67 lines 62-63; Westenholz 1997: 270-368.

²³³ Westenholz 1997: 316-317.

²³⁴ Cooper 1983: 54-57.

²³⁵ Westenholz 1997: 318-31.

mistakes, has been labelled by Güterbock as the *Unheilsherrscher*, or “calamitous ruler”.²³⁶

Narām-Sîn is not the only king in the literary tradition to be punished by the gods for his transgressions. The Weidner Chronicle contains several other examples of the topos, including the punishment of kings otherwise portrayed in a positive light, even including Sargon of Akkad,²³⁷ an otherwise exemplary specimen of Mesopotamian kingship. This thinking is also demonstrated by the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*, or “Advice to a Prince”, a text which contains examples of behaviours which a ruler should not display, and the effects of acting in this fashion. Several of these effects relate to warfare. For example:

*mārī Nippuri ana dīnim ublūnišumma katrâ ilqēma idâssunūti Enlil bēl mātāti
nakra aḥām idâkaššumma ummānātišu ušamqati rubû u šūt rēšišu ina sūqi
zilulliṣ iṣṣanundū*

*kasap mārī Bābili ilqēma ana makkūri ušēribu dīn Bābilaja išmēma ana qalli
turru Marduk bēl šamê u erṣeti ajjābišu eliṣu išakkanma būšāšu makkūršu
ana nakriṣu išarrak*

(If) they bring the citizens of Nippur before him (the king) for judgement, and he receives a bribe and treats them unjustly, Enlil, lord of the lands will muster against him a foreign enemy and so defeat his armies. His prince(s) and official(s) will constantly roam the streets like vagrants.

(If) he takes the silver of the citizens of Babylon and he brings (it) into (his) property, (or) he hears a legal case (concerning) the Babylonians and makes (it) of little value, Marduk, lord of heaven and earth, will set his enemy upon him. He (Marduk) will give his (the king's) property (and) and possessions to his (the king's) enemy.²³⁸

A successful empire was reliant upon the proper conduct of its ruler; the good, pious Assyrian king was rewarded with the ability to expand his empire through conquest. This in turn was a show of his devotion to Aššur, in whose name he expanded the

²³⁶ For discussion on this term, see Güterbock 1934: 75-75; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 87-88; Tadmor, Landsberger, and Parpola 1989: 46.

²³⁷ Glassner 2004: 266-67 lines 60-61.

²³⁸ BWL: 112-13 lines 11-18.

borders of Assyria. The accumulation of wealth through tax, tribute, and the spoils of war funded further acts of devotion, such as the construction and maintenance of temples, which led to further conquests, and afforded greater prosperity to the people of Assyria.²³⁹

Warfare as Legal Case

The link between a king's piety and his country's prosperity and military success described above had existed in Mesopotamian thought for centuries by the time that military deeds first appear in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.²⁴⁰ However, an additional aspect to the Ancient Near Eastern understanding of war enters into Assyrian royal ideology in the Middle Assyrian period. From this point onwards, warfare is occasionally presented in divine-legalistic terms; battle is a form of "legal case" used to decide which party is in the right in the eyes of the gods. This concept is best demonstrated by the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic. This text describes a conflict between the Assyrian king, Tukultī-Ninurta I, and his Babylonian counterpart, the Kassite ruler Kaštiliaš. The narrative hinges on the two kings' attitudes towards a treaty between the two countries; Tukultī-Ninurta steadfastly observes the terms of the treaty, whilst Kaštiliaš seeks to undermine it at every opportunity.²⁴¹ The Assyrian king petitions the sun god and god of justice, Šamaš, to punish Kaštiliaš for his transgressions.²⁴² In a letter to his Babylonian adversary, Tukultī-Ninurta describes the battle between the two kings as a way to judge which of them is in the right:

*kuldamma ina taqrubti ša ardāni arkat aḥāmiš i niprus
ina isin tamḥāri šātu ētiq māmīti aj ēlā pagarsu liddû*

Come to me in the battle of the servants. Let us establish the facts together.
In that festival of battle, may the breaker of the oath not rise up; may they cast
down his corpse.²⁴³

²³⁹ An example of this increased prosperity is the boast by Sargon II that his conquests in the west allowed silver to become cheaper than copper (Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 232-34).

²⁴⁰ See the very early instance of this topos in the inscriptions of Eanatum (for example, RIME 1 E1.9.3.1).

²⁴¹ Machinist 1976: 458.

²⁴² Machinist 1978: 76-79 II 12'-24'.

²⁴³ Machinist 1978: 90-91 III 19'-20'.

Warfare is presented as a reliable method for discovering which party is in the wrong. Predictably, when the two kings do meet in battle, Tukultī-Ninurta emerges as the victor.²⁴⁴

The metaphor of battle as a legal case is also occasionally suggested in the inscriptions of Adad-nārārī I, where the gods are described as *mālik damiqtija*, “those who decide in my favour”.²⁴⁵ The divine-legalistic view of battle also appears in the Neo-Assyrian period; vassal treaties and the punishments enacted for breaking them become increasingly important to the narratives of the inscriptions during the course of the Neo-Assyrian period. Furthermore, Ashurbanipal’s *Grosse Jagdinschrift* describes the involvement of the gods in his first Elamite campaign thus: *idīnū dēnī itti Urtaki šar Elamti*, “they judged my case against Urtaku, the king of Elam”.²⁴⁶

The divine-legalistic character of warfare is especially common in the Ancient Near East during the Late Bronze Age, particularly in Hittite texts. Altman has demonstrated that Hittite treaties functioned within a legalistic framework in which the gods acted as a form of divine law court. He describes this system thus:

The aid of the gods ... was not taken for granted, even by those who were in the right. Nor were the gods perceived as omniscient. ... Thus, in the event of transgression, it was up to the injured party to appeal to the gods to punish the offender. The gods, however, were conceived to do so only after a trial, which means that there was an opportunity for the other party to present his counterclaims. Yet the ancients modeled the divine judges on their human judges, with all their merits and weaknesses. Hence, the outcome of a divine trial, much the same as a human trial, could not be foreseen with certainty. It was dependent upon the quality of the legal arguments presented by each side, the advocates and influential intercessors representing the litigants, as well as the enticements and bribes offered to the judges by both sides.²⁴⁷

This conception of international law is not only demonstrated in the treaties. When Muršili II marches to war against the western Anatolian polity Arzawa, he first writes to its king, Uḫḫa-ziti, the following indictment:

²⁴⁴ Machinist 1978: 118-27 III 31'-IV 34'.

²⁴⁵ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 9; 17: 21.

²⁴⁶ *Grosse Jagdinschrift*: obv. 15.

²⁴⁷ Altman 2004a: 36-37.

Because I asked you for my subjects back—those who had come to you—and you did not give them back to me, and kept calling me a child and belittling me—come now, let us do battle, and the Storm-God, My Lord, shall judge our case!²⁴⁸

Similarly, the text known to Hittitologists as the Indictment of Maduwatta may be a draft of such a letter sent to an unruly Hittite vassal.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, Singer has extended this view of the legalistic aspect of Hittite religion to cover the act of prayer more generally.²⁵⁰

Altman's description of the legalistic aspect of Hittite religion is equally applicable to Assyrian thinking about the gods. As discussed in Chapter 1, the gods may be able to see things which are hidden from human eyes, but they are by no means omniscient. The desirable outcome in war was therefore to be achieved through a mixture of currying divine favour and a programme of selectively informing the gods of the Assyrian king's virtues, and the crimes of his opponent. Previous victories also acted as proof that the king had simultaneously served the gods by defeating their enemies, and enjoyed their support in achieving victory. It was important for the king to remind the gods of these victories in order to ensure their continued support. The inscriptions also informed his successors of these deeds, ensuring that his monuments and inscriptions received the proper treatment, thus continuing the memory of his deeds, and securing him a good afterlife.

Oded applies a similar understanding of warfare as trial by combat to Assyrian royal ideology:

The result of the conflict is explained within the conceptual framework of the ordeal (cf. *ḫuršānu* i.e., sacral jurisdiction, *Gottesgericht*). The belief that the outcome is divinely determined is a well-established idea in the Ancient Near Eastern cultures. ... The verdict of the divine tribunal will emerge from an ordeal of battle between the protagonists. The battlefield is the law court and the place of the ordeal. The result of the combat is the manifestation of the divine justice and decision. Victory is considered the god's verdict (*dīnu*)

²⁴⁸ KBo 3.4: ii 10-14. Trans. Beckman in Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011:15.

²⁴⁹ Yakubovich 2008b: 100. For a recent edition of the text in question, see Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011: 70-97.

²⁵⁰ Singer 2002: 5-11.

emerging from the ordeal of combat. Thus war is interpreted as a kind of juridical process undertaken to determine who is right and who is wrong, with the deities as the true authorities who judge between the adversaries and make their just divine verdict (*dīna purrusu*). The just cause will always win, since the gods punish the sinner.²⁵¹

Although this summary is useful, I would debate the accuracy of the final sentence of the quoted passage. As I have stated above, the gods were not omniscient. Furthermore, Altman's proposed framework for the workings of the "divine court" suggests that the gods will not always make the correct decision. However, within the internal logic of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, where ample evidence is usually supplied to demonstrate that the Assyrian king is in the right and his adversary in the wrong, we might be more accepting of an understanding of victory as a legal justification of the Assyrian king's deeds.

The view of the Assyrian conception of warfare as a legal case has been criticised by Galter, who opposes Oded's model on the grounds that:

it depends on the doubtful premise that, theoretically, the Assyrian army could be defeated. Yet, in the ideological framework of the Assyrian royal inscriptions this is not a possibility, as is amply illustrated by the fact that no realistic narrative of a battle is ever given. Rather, enemies were never contenders but inferior beings, doomed to succumb to the terrifying splendor of the Assyrian god and of his king.²⁵²

However, this argument overlooks the fact that several texts do in fact describe military setbacks for Assyria. Some kings cite successful rebellions against their predecessors. For example, an inscription of Adad-nārārī II describes the city of Gidara in Ḫanigalbat in the following terms:

*Gidara ša Arumu Raqammatu iqabbīšūni ša ištu Tukultī-apil-Ešarra mār
Aššur-rēša-iši šar māt Aššur rubê ālik pānija Arumu ina danāni ēkimūni*

²⁵¹ Oded 1992: 38-39.

²⁵² Galter 1998: 89.

Gidara, which the Aramaeans call Raqammatu, (and) which, at the time of Tiglath-pileser, son of Aššur-rēša-iši, a prince who went before me, the Aramaeans took away by force.²⁵³

This is a clear statement of a military defeat experienced by a previous Assyrian king.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, curse formulae such as those quoted above make it clear that such events were at least hypothetically possible within the framework of Assyrian royal ideology; the important factor in Assyrian military invincibility was the character of the incumbent king, not the mere fact that he was king of Assyria.

This distinction means that when discussing the Assyrian royal inscriptions, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the rhetoric of an inscription refers specifically to the king who commissioned it, not to the figure of the Assyrian king in general. The king commissioning an inscription will be presented as the exemplary model of Assyrian kingship who exceeded the achievements of all his predecessors, and whose example future kings should strive to imitate. In order to distinguish the commissioner of an inscription from his predecessors and successors, I will refer to this figure throughout this dissertation as the “incumbent king”, by which I mean the incumbent king at the time that the inscription was written.

Positively and Negatively Connoted Rebellions

The above discussion has outlined some generalities concerning warfare in Assyrian thought, but how do these concepts relate specifically to rebellion? To answer this question, I will begin with a discussion of the differing portrayals of the “Great Revolt” against Narām-Sîn in his own inscriptions and in later literary texts. Prior to this, rebellion had appeared in the inscriptions of Eanatum of Lagaš as something experienced by enemy kings,²⁵⁵ not as something overcome by the king responsible for the inscription. Narām-Sîn’s predecessor Rīmuš acknowledges the occurrence of a revolt in Kazalla during his reign.²⁵⁶ However, this account is brief and unadorned. Narām-Sîn instead emplotted the “Great Revolt” into his inscriptions as an obstacle

²⁵³ RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 52-53.

²⁵⁴ Whether the Tiglath-pileser mentioned in this text is the first or second ruler of that name is unclear, as both kings’ fathers were named Aššur-rēša-iši.

²⁵⁵ For example, RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: viii 1-3.

²⁵⁶ RIME 2 E2.1.2.4: 44-55.

which encompassed the entire world, and which he heroically overcame with the support of the gods, thereby demonstrating his exceptional qualities as a ruler:

*Narām-Sîn dannum šar Akkade inu kibrātum arba'um ištīniš ikkirnišu in rīmāti
Aštar tarāmušu 10 LAL 1 REC 169 in šattim išteat išārma*

Narām-Sîn, the mighty, king of Akkad; when the four quarters as one became hostile towards him, through the love that Aštar showed for him he was victorious in nine battles in one year.²⁵⁷

Furthermore, the existence of an Old Akkadian school tablet bearing a literary account of the rebellion demonstrates that works of literature on this event were being produced not long after it had occurred.²⁵⁸

Rebellion as an obstacle for the king to heroically overcome became a staple of the Mesopotamian literary tradition. Not only are tales of the Great Rebellion attested from the Old Babylonian period,²⁵⁹ but the defeat of a rebellious monster or demon by a warrior became the standard format of combat myths written down from the Ur III period onwards, and scenes of battles between gods and monsters are common in the art of the Old Akkadian period.²⁶⁰ The topos also appears in the inscriptions of the Old Babylonian king Samsu-iluna, which describe rebellion in almost exactly similar terms as those used by Narām-Sîn:

*napḫar māt Šumerim u Akkadim ša izēruninni in libbu šattim ištīat adi
samānīšu in kakkim lū adūk*

The entirety of the land of Sumer and Akkad, who hated me, within a single year I defeated eight times with the sword.²⁶¹

Narām-Sîn and his scribes made unsuccessful rebellion against the state into something to be celebrated; revolt provided an opportunity for the incumbent king to achieve a military victory, demonstrating the divine favour which he enjoyed, whilst

²⁵⁷ RIME 2 E2.1.4.10: 1-15. Narām-Sîn's reconceptualisation of the rebellion has previously been noted by Westenholz (Westenholz 2000: 106-107), who speculates that the actual uprising may have been a local rebellion which was presented as far larger in the inscriptions.

²⁵⁸ Westenholz 1997: 223.

²⁵⁹ Westenholz 1997: 232-45.

²⁶⁰ Wggermann 1992: 152-53.

²⁶¹ RIME 4 E4.3.7.3 Akkadian: 39-46. A Sumerian version of the same text also exists (RIME 4 E4.3.7.3 Sumerian). For the reception of the Cuthean Legend during the reign of Samsu-iluna, see Cooper 1993: 23.

showing the rebels to be unruly and unjust. Quashing the Great Revolt reaffirmed the correctness of Akkadian rule over Sumer by allowing Narām-Sîn to conquer anew this region that he had inherited from his predecessors. Suffering a rebellion could sometimes be seen as an event which carried positive connotations in Mesopotamian royal ideology. Sometimes a rebellion will occur against a vassal or ally of the incumbent king. In these instances, the rebellion is still a positively connoted event which the incumbent king might overcome, and by doing so he is able to demonstrate both his divine favour, by overcoming the rebels, and his magnanimity, by saving his ally or vassal.²⁶²

Although the earlier portrayals of the Great Revolt in literary texts follow Narām-Sîn's inscriptions in highlighting the positive connotations of this event, later traditions are less flattering. Although the Old Akkadian Empire survived beyond Narām-Sîn's death, he came to be viewed its last king, under whom the empire had collapsed in the face of the invading Gutî from the mountains.²⁶³ As discussed above, Narām-Sîn became the archetypal *Unheilsherrscher*, punished for misrule by universal rebellion. Although the Cuthean Legend portrays him as eventually correcting his behaviour and surviving to pass on the lessons learned from his punishment to future generations,²⁶⁴ the fact still remains that the rebellion happens because Narām-Sîn is a bad king. Rebellion may sometimes be positively connoted, but it can also be negatively connoted when it suggests the occurrence of some wrongdoing on the part of the incumbent king. The result of this dichotomy is that inscriptions strive to portray rebellion against the incumbent king as positively connoted, whilst those which can only be viewed as negatively connoted are omitted altogether.

Previous scholarship on the Assyrian royal inscriptions has assumed that only the positive connotations of rebellion are present in these texts.²⁶⁵ For example, Radner writes:

Even more remarkable, then, is the prominence given to revolts in the royal inscriptions. Those compositions serve to celebrate and commemorate the king's achievements. One might assume that in such a context the very

²⁶² For rebellions against Assyrian vassals, see Chapter 5.

²⁶³ For a detailed discussion of the Gutî in the literary tradition surrounding Narām-Sîn, see Chapter 6.

²⁶⁴ Westenholz 1997: 318-331.

²⁶⁵ For example, Frahm 2016: 81-82; Melville 2016a: 66-67.

occurrence of insurrection against the king is highly undesirable and that such information should therefore be excluded from the carefully edited account. However, rebellions are of course mentioned only in the context of their subsequent suppression by the king and his forces. The heroic overcoming of adversity is a central motive of the Assyrian royal inscription and the repression of rebellious subjects is comparable to the conquest of the unwelcoming, hostile nature in the form of mountains, rivers in flood and deserts while campaigning, another popular subject of the inscriptions.²⁶⁶

However, this does not mean that the negative connotations of rebellion are absent from the Assyrian royal inscriptions. The shadows cast over these texts by the Assyrian kings' anxieties concerning how such events might be interpreted by their audiences are frequently detectable, as this dissertation will demonstrate in the following chapters.

The tensions between the two faces of rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions will be a recurring theme throughout this dissertation. Of course, all acts of rebellion against Assyria held inherently negative connotations for the Assyrian king. The categories of positively and negatively connoted rebellions are not hard distinctions between two distinct types of rebellion. Instead, the question is if and how a particular rebellion might be "emplotted" into the narrative of a specific inscription in a way which presented it as positively connoted.²⁶⁷ My description of these two types of rebellion as positively and negatively connoted is only correct in relation to revolts against the incumbent king or his allies. When a rebellion occurs against an enemy king, the exact opposite is true; the incumbent king and his scribes work to portray the rebellion as occurring due to the enemy king's misdeeds, whilst unsuccessful rebellions against Assyria's enemies are omitted from the inscriptions. In the following chapters, we will repeatedly see that the tensions between the ideologically positive and negative aspects of rebellion are a major factor in shaping the narratives in which these events appear in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

²⁶⁶ Radner 2016: 46.

²⁶⁷ For a brief discussion of the concept of "emplotment", see Chapter 6.

3. Terms for Rebellion in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

Now that the preliminary considerations of the previous two chapters have been addressed, we can begin to discuss rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. In order to do so, it is important to first consider how I will identify events in the royal inscriptions as rebellions. As this study is primarily concerned with the presentation of events within the inscriptions, as opposed to the historical reconstruction of those, the solution to this problem might appear to be obvious; an event is presented as a rebellion if the text states that it is one. However, the reality is more complex. A quick glance through Grayson's translations for the *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia* Series and the Akkadian dictionaries reveals several disagreements between these works on which words should be translated as "to rebel", "a rebel", "rebellious", and other related terms. This chapter will therefore be concerned with assessing previous approaches to the identification of rebellion, and formulating my own methodology for approaching the topic.

Rebellion and Insubmission in Assyrian Thought: Is There a Difference?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines rebellion as:

An organized armed resistance to an established ruler or government; an uprising, a revolt.²⁶⁸

This established ruler or government is one that exercises or claims a degree of control over the rebels, a fact demonstrated by both the etymology of the term, from the Latin *rebellāre*, "to recommence a war", and the dictionary definition of revolt as:

An act of renouncing allegiance to established authority, esp. through collective armed rebellion.²⁶⁹

Of course, "rebellion" as an English term derived from Latin should not be assumed to fit perfectly with ancient Mesopotamian understandings of revolt and resistance. In light of this caveat, we might ask the following question; did the Assyrians differentiate rebellion from other kinds of resistance against the Assyrian state? It is quite clear that the specification in the dictionary definition that rebellion is an *armed* resistance is not appropriate for the Assyrian royal inscriptions. The same

²⁶⁸ OED s.v. *rebellion*, n.1 [1a].

²⁶⁹ OED s.v. *revolt* n.1 [1a].

terminology is often used for armed resistance against the state and for the abandonment of the payment of tribute.²⁷⁰ It will be important to consider whether the Assyrian definition of rebellion could also encompass states which had not yet been subjugated by Assyria, or whether we can take rebellion to be the organised resistance by a group against an established government which exercises or claims a degree of control over that group.

A common approach to Assyrian imperialism in the previous scholarship is to implicitly assume that to the Assyrians there was little difference between rebellion and other forms of armed resistance. This thinking stems from some peculiarities of Assyrian imperial ideology as portrayed in some texts. The two coronation hymns discussed in Chapter 2 both contain a command from the god Aššur that the king extend the borders of Assyrian territory.²⁷¹ Furthermore, several inscriptions also contain references to the king being commanded by the gods to wage war and conquer his neighbours.²⁷² This has led Fales to characterise the Assyrians as viewing themselves as “popoli eletti”.²⁷³

The divine imperative for the Assyrian king to conquer at the behest of Aššur has resulted in a several scholars demonstrating an assumption that, because the entire world should be conquered by Assyria, any resistance to Assyrian conquest is effectively a form of rebellion. This thinking is clearly displayed in the title of Grayson’s article ‘Shalmaneser III and the Levantine States: The “Damascus Coalition Rebellion”’.²⁷⁴ Similarly, the invasion of Babylonia by the Elamite king Urtaku during the reign of Ashurbanipal is also sometimes viewed as a “rebellion”.²⁷⁵ In spite of this, it is quite clear that Ashurbanipal did not view Elam as a part of the empire until after his second campaign there.²⁷⁶

Grayson’s translations of the royal inscriptions also demonstrate this thinking; the term “rebellious” is used almost interchangeably with “recalcitrant” and other such terms. For example, the word *šapšu* is consistently translated as “rebellious” in the

²⁷⁰ See for examples the overlap in the events listed in Tables 1, 2, and 4.

²⁷¹ For discussion of these texts, see Chapter 2.

²⁷² See Chapter 2 for examples.

²⁷³ Fales 2015: 35.

²⁷⁴ Grayson 2004.

²⁷⁵ Gerardi 1987: 132; PNA s.v. *Urtaku*: 1419. Henkelman (RIA s.v. *Urtak*: 443) Similarly writes that Ashurbanipal viewed Urtaku’s actions as “treason”.

²⁷⁶ Frame 1992: 123-24; Waters 2000: 57-58.

RIMA volumes.²⁷⁷ This translation is not warranted by either the etymology of the word, nor the context in which it appears in the inscriptions. *Šapšu* is equated with the Sumerian word *lirum*, a term which is otherwise equated with Akkadian words denoting “strength”.²⁷⁸ The translation of *šapšu* as “strong, resistant”, favoured by the CAD,²⁷⁹ is therefore more appropriate than Grayson’s translation “rebellious”. In addition, the term is sometimes used to describe cities and regions which had not previously been conquered by Assyria. For example, Melid is described as such in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I,²⁸⁰ but was at that time an independent kingdom.²⁸¹ Similarly, Grayson also translates *muštarḫu*, “arrogant”, as “rebellious”.²⁸² The term’s etymology, from *šarāḫu*, “to be(come) proud”, does not suggest this meaning.

nabalkutu and *nakāru*

The assumption that rebellion and resistance were viewed as essentially the same by the Assyrians is contradicted by the evidence from the inscriptions. The description of the conquest of Ḫanigalbat in the inscriptions of Adad-nārārī I is especially instructive in this respect. The relevant passage reads:

*enūma Šattuara šar māt Ḫanigalbat ittija ikkiruma zā’erutī ēpušu ina qibīt
Aššur bēlija alik rēšija u ilāni rabūti mālik damiqtija ašbassuma ana ālija Aššur
ublaššu utammišuma ana māssu umešširšu šattišamma adi balṭu tāmartašu
ina qereb ālija Aššur lu amdaḫar arkišu Uasašatta mārūšu ibbalkitamma ittija
ikkir u zā’erutī ēpuš*

When Šattuara, king of the land of Ḫanigalbat, became hostile towards me and committed hostilities against me, by the command of Aššur, my lord who goes to my aid, and the great gods who decide in my favour, I seized him and brought him to my city, Aššur. I made him swear (an oath) and released him (back) to his land. Yearly, for the rest of (his) life did I receive his tribute inside

²⁷⁷ RIMA 1: 235-36; RIMA 2: 16-17, 19, 22, 29-30.

²⁷⁸ ePSD2 s.v. *lirum* [STRENGTH] N.

²⁷⁹ CAD s.v. *šapšu* [1].

²⁸⁰ RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: v 34-35.

²⁸¹ For the identification of the Allumari who pays tribute to Tiglath-pileser I (RIMA 2 A.O.87.4: 31-33) with one of the rulers named PUGNUS-mili who commissioned several of the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions from Malatya (Hawkins 2000 MALATYA 5-14), see Bryce 2012: 103-104; Simon 2016.

²⁸² For example, RIMA 1: 192, 316; RIMA 2: 23, 114; RIMA 3: 102.

my city, Aššur. After him, Uasašatta, his son, rebelled against me, became hostile and committed hostilities against me.²⁸³

Several scholars have noted the significance of the difference in the verbs used to describe the deeds of the two kings. Šattuara, who has yet to be conquered by Assyria, becomes hostile (*nakāru*, *zā'erutī ēpušu*), whilst Uasašatta, now an Assyrian vassal, not only becomes hostile, but also rebels (*nabalkutu*).²⁸⁴

There are several details which can be gleaned from the passage quoted above. First and foremost, *nabalkutu* carries a narrower semantic range than *nakāru*. The CAD gives “to rebel” as a possible meaning of *nakāru*, and it is used in this way in the inscriptions of Narām-Sîn to describe the “Great Revolt” against Akkadian rule.²⁸⁵ Grayson therefore almost always translates the word as “to rebel” when it describes the actions of Assyria’s enemies.²⁸⁶ However, *nakāru* also means “to be(come) hostile” more generally, a fact demonstrated by its relation to the noun *nakru*, “enemy”. *Nakāru* therefore carries a meaning of “to rebel” only contextually; a previously conquered individual who becomes hostile is a rebel, but an independent ruler who does so is not. By contrast, *nabalkutu* exclusively refers to rebellion. As Liverani states it:

The act of “opposing”, “being enemy” (*nakāru*) and “performing hostilities” (*zā'erūta epēšu*) against Assyria becomes a true “rebellion” (*nabalkutu*) if the enemy, already submitted and bound by a loyalty oath, infringes the oath.²⁸⁷

All of this demonstrates that “to rebel” is often an inappropriate translation for *nakāru* when it describes the actions of Assyria’s enemies. Because of this, I will consistently translate the term as “to be(come) hostile” in these contexts.

External Rebellion?

The question of what should be viewed as the Assyrian understanding of rebellion does not end with the distinction between *nakāru* and *nabalkutu*. Although he acknowledges the differing semantic ranges of these two terms, Karlsson also

²⁸³ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 4-17.

²⁸⁴ Harrak 1987: 100-102; Liverani 1990: 128; Saggs 1982: 87-88.

²⁸⁵ RIME 2 E2.1.4.8: 5'; 10: 9; 28:13; 29: 7.

²⁸⁶ RIMA 1: 119, 136; RIMA 2: 171; RIMA 3: 183.

²⁸⁷ Liverani 1990: 128. For a discussion of the role of treaties in the royal inscriptions, see Chapter 5.

assumes that the Assyrians counted the actions of unconquered kings as rebellion under at least some circumstances when he writes:

there are two other kinds of resistance (besides fight and flight) brought up in the relevant sources, namely *external* resistance from getting conquered for the first time by the Assyrian king, and centering on the word *nakāru* which means “to be hostile” and the like, and *internal* resistance in the shape of a true rebellion, and centering on the word *nabalkutu* which literally means “to cross over”...

Some Early Neo-Assyrian rulers bring up this issue of internal rebellion. Shalmaneser III faces a large Syrian-Palestinian coalition which aims at diminishing the great influence just gained by this king in the west, although from a historian’s point of view, this rebellion was rather *external*.²⁸⁸

There are several problems with this assessment. It is quite clear that *nakāru* does not simply refer to external resistance, but to *any* resistance or hostility against the Assyrian king. Secondly, Karlsson’s understanding of Shalmaneser III’s battle against this Syro-Palestinian coalition is based on several assumptions. Firstly, the coalition does not appear to have formed in order to diminish Shalmaneser’s influence in the west. Instead the primary motivation was more likely to simply stop the advance of the Assyrian army to regions yet to be conquered; this force met Shalmaneser in battle at Qarqar in Hamath, and all of the members of the coalition are from south of this point, with the exception of Hamath itself. There is also no indication in the inscriptions that Shalmaneser viewed this event as a rebellion. Because of this, there is no basis for the assumption that Shalmaneser and his scribes viewed this event as anything other than an act of external resistance.

Markers for Identifying Rebellion

The discussion above still leaves us without a clear idea of how to determine which events in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are portrayed as rebellions. For this purpose, the previous scholarship is not always as helpful as it might at first appear. The most developed study of the terminology for rebellion in cuneiform texts is that of Richardson, who separates the metaphors describing rebellion into five types:

²⁸⁸ Karlsson 2016: 162. His emphasis.

1. Noise and movement.
2. Children disobeying their parents.
3. Animals requiring control.
4. Breach of contract and crime.
5. Sin and perversion.²⁸⁹

Richardson highlights a difference in the metaphors used in the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian periods. Old Babylonian texts predominantly describe rebellion with types 1 and 2 (“noise and movement” and “children disobeying their parents”), whilst Neo-Assyrian ones instead mainly use types 4 and 5 (“breach of contract and crime” and “sin and perversion”). He attributes this difference to the “new, imperialized, and self-policing” character of Neo-Assyrian society.²⁹⁰ Whilst this observation is certainly interesting and insightful, the list of types of metaphor given by Richardson is not especially useful for identifying occurrences of rebellion in a text. With the exception of “breach of contract”, all of the types which appear in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are used therein to describe all forms of resistance, not just rebellion. This typology is therefore useful only for analysing accounts of rebellion, not for identifying them as such in the first place.

Having discounted *nakāru* as a marker for the occurrence of rebellion in the inscriptions, and having demonstrated that several of Richardson’s topoi relating to rebellion can instead be applied to insubmission more generally, we are left with a more restricted list of ways in which I will identify rebellion in the inscriptions. These are:

- The occurrence of words meaning “to rebel”, “a rebel”, or “rebellion”.²⁹¹
- Instances of the withholding of tribute or breaking an oath or treaty with Assyria.²⁹²
- Acts of aggression by a ruler or people explicitly stated to be subjects of Assyria.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Richardson 2010: 15. The numbering of items in this list follows that in Richardson’s “descriptive-heuristic typology” of rebellion (Richardson 2010: 12-15).

²⁹⁰ Richardson 2010: 11.

²⁹¹ The terms which I identify as carrying these meanings will be discussed below. Their attestations in the inscriptions are collected in Tables 1-3.

²⁹² The instances of these topoi in the inscriptions are collected in Tables 4 and 5.

²⁹³ A common example of this in Sargonid inscriptions is an Assyrian vassal throwing off the *nīru*, “yoke”, of either of Aššur or the Assyrian king. For this topos, see Chapter 7.

- The overthrow of an Assyrian vassal by their people or nobles.²⁹⁴
- Acts of aggression by a ruler or people previously conquered in the prior narrative of the inscription.

Some of these markers are fairly self-explanatory, but others require some extrapolation. This is particularly true of the Akkadian words translated as “to rebel” or a related meaning, as these particular terms must be identified. As stated above, *nabalkutu*, and related terms such as *nabalkattānu*, “rebel”, are clear indicators of the occurrence of rebellion.²⁹⁵ There are also several other terms which clearly described rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. From the reign of Šamšī-Adad V onwards, the words *sīḫu* and *bartu* are both used frequently to describe rebellion, often appearing as a pair.²⁹⁶ Other terms related to these two nouns, such as *seḫû*, “to rebel”, or *bārānû*, “a rebel”, also appear in the inscriptions.²⁹⁷ Finally, the term *ḥammā’u*, “rebel, usurper” is sometimes used to describe rebels in the inscriptions. This is especially the case in the construction *šar ḥammā’i*, “usurper king”.²⁹⁸

Rebellion in the Epithets

This assessment of the terminology applied to rebellion makes it clear that words explicitly referring to such acts almost never occur in the royal epithets found in the inscriptions.²⁹⁹ This seems to be due to the generalised nature of the majority of epithets, and the brevity of those which mention specific polities and regions. Rather than discussing the king’s victories over rebels and the rebellious in generalised terms, the epithets instead describe his defeat of the recalcitrant (*šapšu*), insubmissive (*lā māḡiru*, *lā kanšu*), or arrogant (*muštarḫu/multarḫu*), terminology which can be equally well applied to both rebels and independent enemy kings.

²⁹⁴ The instances of this topos are collected in Table 6. The successful overthrow of Assyrian allies or vassals by their subjects will be discussed in Chapter 5.

²⁹⁵ Table 1.

²⁹⁶ Table 2. Juhas (2011) has recently attempted to identify the different connotations of *sīḫu u bartu* on one hand, and *nabalkutu* on the other. However, his findings that *nabalkutu* represents “a personal rebellion or a pre-level of the more organised action” (Juhas 2011: 112) are based on a very limited selection of texts. Across the entire corpus of Assyrian royal inscriptions, this differentiation between these terms seems unlikely.

²⁹⁷ Table 2.

²⁹⁸ Table 3. The term *saḫmaštu* is also sometimes translated as “rebellion” or “revolt” (for example, RIMA 3: 234). However, the Sumerian equivalents for this term suggest that it may in the correct context refer to rebellion, but that it can equally refer to a state of chaos or anarchy more generally (CAD s.v. *saḫmaštu* A).

²⁹⁹ For a complete list of epithets relating to the king’s enemies, see Karlsson 2017: 11-54.

There is one exception to this rule. Sargon II's inscriptions sometimes contain the epithet *ḥammāmī ša arba'ī iddû šerretu*, "he placed nose-ropes on the usurpers of the four (quarters)".³⁰⁰ The word *ḥammāmu* is best understood as a variant of *ḥammā'u*,³⁰¹ and this passage therefore represents a rare instance of one of the terms for rebellion identified above appearing in an epithet of the Assyrian king. To understand the reason for this deviation from the usual lack of reference to rebels and rebellion in the epithets, the historical context for these inscriptions must be considered. Sargon II's own succession was irregular, and he was keen to avoid being seen as an illegitimate ruler.³⁰² In light of this, I would argue that the use of *ḥammāmu* in this king's epithets represents an effort to define the concept of a *šar ḥammā'u* in opposition to himself. Sargon is presented in the typical fashion for an Assyrian king as a good and just ruler chosen for kingship by the gods, a far cry from an impious and illegitimate *šar ḥammā'i*, who lacks divine support and relies on the strength of his weapons instead of the gods.³⁰³ The references to the Assyrian king's victory over all of the usurper kings helped to demonstrate how unlike a *šar ḥammā'i* Sargon was.

Nowhere are Sargon's efforts to construct the figure of the *šar ḥammā'u* as his antithesis clearer than in the Aššur Charter, a text which describes the campaigns of Sargon's second year, his accession following the poor kingship of Shalmaneser IV, and the tax exemptions which he reinstated in Aššur.³⁰⁴ The campaign account is predominantly concerned with the campaign against Ilu-bi'di of Hamath,³⁰⁵ an individual who is described as *lā bēl kussī lā šininti ekalli*, "a 'non-lord of the throne', unsuitable for the palace",³⁰⁶ demonstrating his position as a ruler without approval from the gods.³⁰⁷ By contrast, Sargon does not actively seek the throne, but is chosen by the gods, who have overthrown his predecessor for misrule.³⁰⁸ The text

³⁰⁰ See Table 3.

³⁰¹ The dictionaries all agree on this point (AHw s.v. *ḥammā'u(m)*, *ḥammû I*, *ḥammāmu*; CAD s.v. *ḥammāmu*; CDA s.v. *ḥammā'u(m)*), as does Fuchs (1993: 343).

³⁰² Sargon's portrayal of his succession is discussed in Chapter 6.

³⁰³ Lexical lists equate *šar ḥammā'i* with the Sumerian LUGAL.IM.GI (MSL 12: 95 I 61), a term which a scribal commentary parses as "king who relies on strength" (Leichty 1970: 214 I 72-75).

³⁰⁴ This text is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

³⁰⁵ Sargon's inscriptions sometimes give this individual the alternative name Jau-bi'di (for example, Fuchs 1993: *Prunk.* 33).

³⁰⁶ Saggs 1975: 14-15 obv. 18.

³⁰⁷ Yamada 2000: 222 n. 502.

³⁰⁸ The account of Sargon's succession from the Aššur Charter is quoted in Chapter 6.

therefore compares and contrasts the two kings; Ilu-bi'di is a *ḥammā'u*, Sargon is not.³⁰⁹

The Interrelations between Campaigns

This analysis of the opposition between Sargon and Ilu-bi'di demonstrates an important methodological point for this study which is relevant to one of my criteria for identifying episodes of rebellion; it will be necessary for the current purpose to investigate the interrelations between the constituent parts of an inscription. This is not only important for close reading of the texts such as the brief assessment of the contrasting actions of the Assyrian and Hamathite kings, but also for the identification of episodes presented as rebellion in the inscriptions. As stated above, one of the criteria which I shall use to identify these episodes is the occurrence of acts of aggression by a ruler or people previously conquered in the prior narrative of the text.

By taking this approach, I treat the individual campaign accounts within an inscription as part of a broader narrative. This view differs from much of the previous scholarship. Literary studies of the Assyrian royal inscriptions have tended to focus on smaller units than a text as a whole. This is due to the fact that previous scholarship has generally concerned itself with the study of variation between recensions.³¹⁰ The corpus of royal inscriptions is fairly large, and the individual texts from within a reign often contain passages which follow one another quite closely, but which contain slight variations. This has meant that focusing on minor variations has been viewed as an important methodological approach to these texts. As Fales puts it:

The multiform nature of the Assyrian royal inscriptions can probably be better approached through a study of variants and variation in general than by any, however deep, regard to single texts within this class of written materials.³¹¹

To Fales, the study of variants is vital to furthering our understanding of the compositional processes of the inscriptions, and his model of scribal “competencies”

³⁰⁹ Ilu-bi'di is explicitly described as a *ḥammā'u* in Sargon's Cylinder Inscription from Khorsabad (Fuchs 1993:Zyl. 25).

³¹⁰ I have previously discussed this trend in the scholarship on the Assyrian royal inscriptions in my study of the throne-base inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III (2017a: 76-77).

³¹¹ Fales 1981: 169.

for studying the composition of these texts is entirely based on such an approach.³¹² Liverani has also argued for the approach of critiquing variations between different recensions on the grounds that finding such variants allows us to address the historical and ideological reasons behind the alteration of texts from one recension to the next.³¹³ Scholars have adopted the approach of studying variants within the inscriptions for a variety of purposes, from historical reconstruction,³¹⁴ to analysis of royal ideology,³¹⁵ to the study of the compositional processes involved in the writing of these texts.³¹⁶ It has also been adopted at various levels of detail, from individual syntagms,³¹⁷ to the overarching structure of campaign accounts.³¹⁸ The approach can be expanded to a very broad extent, and De Odorico applies it to the entire corpus of inscriptions from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.³¹⁹

This approach has proven to be both necessary when dealing with such a large corpus notable for its homogeneity, and incredibly useful in advancing our understanding of all facets of this corpus. However, there are some problems which it presents. Frequently, it has resulted in the “parcelling up” of inscriptions into individual passages taken out of context from the text as a whole. This exact problem was commented upon by Liverani nearly forty years ago,³²⁰ but has continued to present itself in more recent scholarship. The standard unit in the study of Assyrian royal inscriptions has therefore tended to be the individual campaign account. This approach is exemplified by the morphological analysis of the annals of Ashurnasirpal II undertaken by a group of Italian scholars in the early 1980s.³²¹ In this study, which breaks the narrative into a series of “functions” in the style of Propp’s studies on Russian folktales,³²² each campaign is treated as an individual “story”.³²³ The result is to reduce the annals to an anthology of campaign accounts with little bearing on one another.

³¹² Fales 1999-2000: 133-36.

³¹³ Liverani 1981: 225-31.

³¹⁴ For example, Brinkman 1968: 390-94; de Filippi 1977: 27-30.

³¹⁵ For example, Karlsson 2016: 247-67; Liverani 1981.

³¹⁶ For example, De Odorico 1994; Fales 1981; Spallinger 1974a.

³¹⁷ Fales 1981.

³¹⁸ Badali et al. 1982.

³¹⁹ De Odorico 1994.

³²⁰ Liverani 1981: 225-26 and n. 3.

³²¹ Badali et al. 1982.

³²² Propp 1968.

³²³ Badali et al. 1982: 15-16.

The continued decontextualisation of campaign accounts from one another is perhaps not entirely surprising in light of prevalent views on the structure of Assyrian royal inscriptions. The texts are often viewed as mainly being structured in two ways, chronologically for the annals, or geographically for display inscriptions. A third method, dubbed “order of relevance” by Liverani, might also be used to alter the chronological or geographical ordering slightly.³²⁴ For example, Esarhaddon’s campaign against Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, a particularly important event in his reign, is placed out of geographical order at the beginning of Nineveh A.³²⁵ The inscriptions are usually viewed as being updated following every campaign, with the new content being appended to the older material, which may sometimes be edited for space.³²⁶

When viewed in this fashion, it might be expected that the macrostructure of the inscriptions effectively “writes itself”. However, I have previously demonstrated that even texts which at a glance appear to conform to these ideas of chronological or geographical ordering can contain more complex structural elements, whilst those which are sometimes labelled as lacking any logic to their structure can in fact be motivated by other concerns than chronology or geography.³²⁷ Furthermore, several individual campaign accounts within a text can display a variety of relationships with one another. The most clear of these is the occurrence of parallelisms between two or more accounts. Galter has demonstrated that such parallelisms are on display in Sennacherib’s Bavian Inscription between the construction of Nineveh and destruction of Babylon,³²⁸ and I have similarly argued for a parallelism between the two accounts of a campaign to the west in Ashurnasirpal II’s Throne-Base Inscription.³²⁹ Tadmor, Cogan, and especially Hurowitz have all written various studies on the overarching structure of individual inscriptions of Esarhaddon and

³²⁴ Liverani 2014: 99.

³²⁵ RINAP 4 1: ii 40-64; Tadmor 2004: 271-72. For the internal logic of this change in order, see Chapter 7.

³²⁶ Grayson 1980a: 152; Na’aman 1979: 63-64. Although Levine (1981: 60) questioned this view in the eighties, his basis for doing so was rather unsound. He points to the fact that Sennacherib’s second campaign account was never abridged in the annals, but the change of medium from cylinders to prisms between its original creation and its later copies explains this point; the prisms have a larger writing surface than the cylinders.

³²⁷ Dewar 2017a.

³²⁸ Galter 1984: 163-67.

³²⁹ Dewar 2017a: 79-82, 86 table 1.

Ashurbanipal which observe relationships between individual campaign accounts as part of broader narratives.³³⁰

Inscriptions were intended to be read by future kings, as discussed above. As a record of the king's great deeds, the individual text was a single unit with a cohesive narrative of the king's conquests and domestic achievements. These achievements were not simply ordered by chronology or geography with no thought for the content of the text as a whole. Instead value judgements were made on what events should be included in each campaign account, whether pre-existing accounts should be condensed, or even if an account should be cut out completely in some cases.³³¹

These decisions were sometimes also made on where to place events within the structure of the text. For example, several of Sennacherib's later annals conflate his first and fourth campaigns into a single campaign.³³² The fact that this is done at all demonstrates that the narrative structure of these texts and the progression from campaign to campaign were important considerations for the annals' authors.

Further evidence for the narrative unity of the inscriptions is found in Ashurbanipal's Prism A, where the "prologue" to the sixth campaign, against Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and his Elamite allies, is placed at the end of the account of the fifth campaign, before the ruled dividing line marking the beginning of a new campaign.³³³ By making this compositional choice, the scribe draws attention to the progression of the narrative from one campaign to the next.³³⁴ The campaigns are all series of events within the larger story of Ashurbanipal's reign.

Comparison of multiple editions and recensions of the Assyrian royal inscriptions is clearly an important concern for the interpretation of these texts. However, it should not be the only approach taken towards them, and can lead to a problematic decontextualisation of the events which they record from one another. Approaching each inscription as a narrative whole allows us to combat this tendency to isolate the campaigns from one another, and opens up avenues of research which are not realised through taking the individual campaign account as the primary unit of study.

³³⁰ Cogan 2014; Hurowitz 2009; 2013; Tadmor 2004. Similarly, Porter (2010) has argued for interrelations between the building account and the accounts of the campaigns to the west in Esarhaddon's Nineveh A, and Hertel (2004: 310-11, 314) has also argued for the need to treat inscriptions as individual, cohesive narratives.

³³¹ The editorial decision to omit certain events from a text will be the primary focus of Chapter 7.

³³² RINAP 3/1 34: 6-11.

³³³ RINAP 5/1 11: iii 70-127.

³³⁴ Hurowitz 2013: 230.

At its most basic, this approach leads us to identify the presentation of rebellion in cases of aggression by regions and peoples already conquered in a preceding campaign account from the same text. More complex applications will allow for various lines of interpretation and analysis throughout this dissertation.

4. The Heroicising and Mythologising Aspects of Accounts of Rebellion

Broadly speaking, rebellions in the Mesopotamian literary tradition can be divided in two groups, those which have no legitimate basis, but serve as obstacles for the ruler to heroically overcome, and those which serve as punishment for a ruler's misdeeds. Both of these types of rebellion are present in the royal inscriptions, and parallels between the events in the inscriptions and those in other texts have frequently been highlighted in the previous scholarship.³³⁵ In some instances this has included suggestions that an inscription borrows from or alludes to an earlier text.³³⁶ Because of this, it will be important to assess the influence of accounts of rebellion in the wider Mesopotamian literary tradition upon those in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

Combat Myths in Ancient Scholarship

Outside of the royal inscriptions, the topos of the unjustified rebellion heroically overcome by the incumbent ruler is closely associated with the combat myth. Various deities achieved victories over monsters and demons that had “rebelled” against the gods. These achievements were frequently commemorated in epic; in *Enūma eliš*, rebellions by Apsu and Tiāmat are overcome by Ea and Marduk respectively.³³⁷ Similarly, several epics record the victories of Ninurta over rebellious monsters and demons such as Anzû and Asakku.³³⁸ Furthermore, there are often references elsewhere in the textual record to combat myths for which no epic is known, for example the defeat of the *igitelû*, “monoculus”, by Nergal attested in a birth omen dating to the First Dynasty of the Sealand.³³⁹ The pervasiveness of the Mesopotamian “combat myths” in scribal thinking is clearly demonstrated in the genre of explanatory works,³⁴⁰ which Lambert has characterised as:

occupied in explaining traditional rituals as re-enactments of traditional myths in what, to us, is a highly artificial manner.³⁴¹

³³⁵ For example, Ataç 2015: 236-40; Annus 2001: xxii-xxiv.

³³⁶ For example, Adalı 2013: 588-91; Baruchi-Unna 2008; Parpola 2001: 185-87; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 306-21; Weissert 1997b.

³³⁷ Lambert 2013: 52-55, 89-94.

³³⁸ Annus 2001; Van Dijk 1983.

³³⁹ George 2013a 26: rev. 34'.

³⁴⁰ For editions of these texts, see Livingstone 1986: 115-253; SAA 3 37-40.

³⁴¹ Lambert 1968: 111.

There is a strong tendency for this logic to be tied to myths of conflict between the gods, or between gods and monsters or demons.³⁴² For example, the gypsum and bitumen used in a ritual for curing sickness are identified as Ninurta and Asakku respectively.³⁴³ Livingstone and Lambert both argue that these myths were viewed as being repeated constantly through the enacting of rituals.³⁴⁴ In Livingstone's own words:

It is the nature of Ninurta to defeat Asakku, and of Mami to create mankind, and these mythological actions can be repeated.³⁴⁵

Similarly, George has argued that when myths are present in incantations intended to solve a specific problem:

mythical time is deemed to hold the solution to the crisis and acts as a paradigm for the correct response in current time. The incantation, by evoking the archetypes and precedents of mythical time, bridges with words the gap between the pristine universe of long ago and the degenerate universe of the present, and allows some of the former's purity to work magic in the latter.³⁴⁶

One interpretation of this repetition of mythical events is that the universe was in a near constant cycle of rebellion and subdual of rebellion. Pongratz-Leisten has recently proposed that the king's campaigns were also viewed as repetitions of the cosmic conflicts represented in the combat myths.³⁴⁷ In light of the ancient scholarly preoccupation with combat myths demonstrated by the explanatory texts, this interpretation is certainly possible; warfare, the combat myths, and rituals all served the purpose of imposing or maintaining order and ensuring that the universe was kept in a desirable state. At the very least, this kind of thinking highlights clear similarities between human warfare and its divine counterpart, regardless of whether or not the two were ever directly equated with one another.

³⁴² Lambert 2013: 207-209; Livingstone 1986: 151-53.

³⁴³ Livingstone 1986: 172-73 line 1.

³⁴⁴ Lambert 1968: 110-11; Livingstone 1986: 168-70.

³⁴⁵ Livingstone 1986: 170.

³⁴⁶ George 2016: 1-2.

³⁴⁷ Pongratz-Leisten 2014: 34-35.

Combat Myths and the King on Campaign

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising to find frequent parallels to combat myths in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, which are after all filled with exaltations of the incumbent king's good kingship. Both mythical rebels and the king's human adversaries inhabit the same peripheral regions in the mountains and by the sea.³⁴⁸ Furthermore, both sets of enemies are integrated into the properly ordered structure of the world following their defeat. Humans are incorporated into the empire as subjects, whilst demons and monsters serve their conqueror as divine symbols and apotropaic agents.³⁴⁹ A general restructuring also accompanies the victory. The Assyrian king makes the rebellious region into a province, installs governors, and deports the people, settling others in their place.³⁵⁰ In the myths, there is also a post-combat reorganisation. Ea uses Apsu's remains to create his dwelling of the same name,³⁵¹ and Marduk creates the earth from the corpse of Tīāmat.³⁵² Anzu's defeat is followed by the installation of cults to Ninurta, in various guises, in major cultic centres across the known world.³⁵³ Similarly, Ninurta assigns functions to the various stones of the mountain after his victory over Asakku.³⁵⁴ The epic Lugal-e goes a step further in drawing parallels between the Ninurta's confrontation with Asakku and human battles between warring kings. Unlike the Epic of Anzu, which has the adversaries meet in single combat, both Ninurta and Asakku are described as leading armies,³⁵⁵ and Asakku builds fortifications in the mountains.³⁵⁶

All of these similarities portray the divine sphere as functioning in much the same fashion as the human one. In fact, Mesopotamian literature presents us with a worldview in which three separate spheres, the divine, the human, and the natural, function in much the same way, but within a hierarchy in which the human is superior to the natural, and the divine supreme over both of them. Various texts portray animal activity as analogous to that of humans.³⁵⁷ Furthermore, there are several

³⁴⁸ Wiggerman 1992: 152-55; 1996: 209-15.

³⁴⁹ Ataç 2015: 236-37.

³⁵⁰ Liverani 1990: 139; 2016: 191-94; Oded 1979: 33-74.

³⁵¹ Lambert 2013: 54-55 I 67-76.

³⁵² Lambert 2013: 92-95 IV 129-4.

³⁵³ Annus 2001 III 126-57.

³⁵⁴ Van Dijk 1983: 105-36 lines 419-644.

³⁵⁵ Van Dijk 1983: 56 lines 37-38, 59-60 lines 61-62, 71 line 150.

³⁵⁶ Van Dijk 1983: 81 lines 237-38.

³⁵⁷ Dewar 2017a: 81; Foster 2002: 275-77.

examples of animals and natural features of the landscapes possessing human social structures in Mesopotamian mythology. In a recently discovered addition to the Epic of Gilgameš, Humbaba is attended by the animals of the forest, who serve as his “royal court”.³⁵⁸ In Lugal-e, Asakku is elected to kingship by the stones of the mountain.³⁵⁹ The epic is set at a time when the gods were still required to perform corvée,³⁶⁰ placing it before the creation of humans. The cities of the rebel lands which Asakku rules over are therefore presumably inhabited by the stones of the mountain.

The Epical Elements of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

This mirroring between the divine, human, and natural worlds has the result that the combat myth, warfare, and the hunt were all seen as analogous concepts. The hunt differed slightly in comparison to combat myths and warfare in that animals are usually passive in the inscriptions.³⁶¹ Only in some texts of Ashurbanipal do hunted animals exhibit any capacity for active hostility,³⁶² although the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II do depict lions attacking the royal chariot.³⁶³ Combat myths and warfare are portrayed far more similarly to one another, and the inscriptions therefore frequently adopt elevated language in an epical style in order to heroicise and mythologise the king’s achievements. An example of the heroicising aspect of Assyrian inscriptions from the reign of Sennacherib is the account of his fifth campaign, targeted against the cities on Mount Nipur in which he states:

*itti qurbūti šēpīja nasqūti u šābī tāḥazija la gāmelūti anāku kīma rīmi ekdi
pānuššun ašbat ḥurrī naḥallī natbak šadī mēlê maršūti ina kussī aštamdih
ašar ana kussī šupšuqu ina šēpīja aštaḥḥiḥ kīma arme ana zuqti šaqūti
šēruššun ēli ašar birkāja mānaḥtu īšā šēr aban šadī ūšibma mē nādi kašūte
ana šummēja lu ašti ina ubānāt ḥuršāni ardēšunūtima aštakan taḥtāšun
ālānišunu akšudma ašlula šallassun appul aqqur ina girri aqmu*

³⁵⁸ Al-Rawi and George 2014: 76-79.

³⁵⁹ Van Dijk 1983: 56 line 35.

³⁶⁰ Van Dijk 1983: 93 lines 334-38.

³⁶¹ RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: iv 58-84; A.O.89.1: rev. 7'-11'; A.O.89.3: 7'-9'; A.O.89.7: iv 1-33; A.O.98.1: 68-72; A.O.99.2: 122-27; A.O.100.5: 134-35; A.O.101.1: iii 48-49; A.O.101.2: 31-37; A.O.101.30: 84-101.

³⁶² Weissert 1997a: 344-45.

³⁶³ Budge 1914: pl. XII. For the parallels between combat myths and the hunt, see Watanabe 2002: 76-82.

With my choice personal bodyguard and merciless combat troops, I, like a fierce wild bull, took their lead. I proceeded in a chair through ravines (and) gorges, mountain torrents, (and) steep slopes. Where it was too difficult for my chair I climbed up on foot like a mountain goat. I ascended lofty mountain peaks after them. Where my legs grew weary I sat upon the rock of the mountain and drank the cold water of a water skin for my thirst. I chased them from the mountaintops and inflicted their defeat. Their cities I conquered, carried off their plunder, tore down, demolished, (and) burned with fire.³⁶⁴

The heroic elements of the description of the king bounding ahead of his army up the steep mountainside are quite clear. The emphasis on the scale and inhospitable nature of the mountainous terrain enhances this effect, and the poetic language of this passage further aggrandises the king's achievements. For example, inverted word order is used in the phrases *ina šēpīja aštaḥḫiṭ kīma arme* "I climbed up on foot like a mountain goat", and *ašlula šallassun* "I carried off their plunder". The words *pānuššun* "their lead", and *šēruššun* "after them" are both in the Standard Babylonian locative case with *-u(m)*, and these two words, as well as *šallassun*, "their plunder", also bear the shortened pronominal suffix *-šun* for *-šunu*, "their". All of these examples are features more commonly associated with poetry than prose, but which are common in conquest accounts from Assyrian inscriptions of the Sargonid period.³⁶⁵ The use of such language and style in the inscriptions is reminiscent of another genre of Assyrian texts, epical poems in praise of the king, examples of which are known from both the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods.³⁶⁶

Even when the features of epical style are not present, the content of royal inscriptions regularly exaggerates the scale of conflicts and the landscapes in which they take place in order to aggrandise the king's achievements.³⁶⁷ Some passages make direct references to mythical beings and events, such as Ninurta's adversary Anzû,³⁶⁸ or *abūbu* "the deluge".³⁶⁹ However, these passages do not usually mirror

³⁶⁴ RINAP 3/1 22: iii 81-iv 12.

³⁶⁵ For the unusual feature of Sennacherib stopping to drink in this passage, see Chapter 7.

³⁶⁶ For an overview of the texts in this genre from the reign of Adad-nīrārī I to that of Shalmaneser III, see Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990: 40-44. For the Neo-Assyrian texts from Shalmaneser III to Assurbanipal, see SAA 3: 17-24.

³⁶⁷ For example RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 88-106; A.O.78.1: ii 14-36; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: iii 13-27, iii 35-56; A.O.101.1: i 58-69.

³⁶⁸ For example RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 107; RIMA 3 A.O.102.5: iii 5; A.O.104.2010: 16.

the exact details of specific myths but instead suggest more general themes of Mesopotamian combat myths. For example, Anzû is usually mentioned in similes and metaphors describing the ferocity of the Assyrian troops rather than in relation to their enemies.³⁷⁰ The similarities between campaign accounts and combat myths can often be put down to the fact that both forms of text record an idealised account of the “perfect” military campaign.

Intertextuality and Literary Allusion

Some scholars have proposed a further level of connection between the inscriptions and the myths, and argue for the presence of “intertextuality” or “literary allusion” in the inscriptions.³⁷¹ One of the earliest and most pervasive of these proposals is that of Weissert, who argues that the account of the Battle of Ḫalule in Sennacherib’s annals makes various, deliberate allusions to Enūma Eliš in order to pre-emptively justify the destruction of Babylon.³⁷² This theory has proven very popular within Assyriology,³⁷³ and has led to several other studies on the intertextuality of the royal inscriptions. Baruchi-Unna finds allusions to the Epic of Gilgameš in Esarhaddon’s account of his invasion of Egypt,³⁷⁴ Parpola argues that Esarhaddon’s Apology alludes to Lugal-e,³⁷⁵ Adalı cites various references to the Cimmerians as alluding to the Kuthean Legend,³⁷⁶ and Frahm sees elements of the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic in the account of the Battle of Ḫalule.³⁷⁷ More broadly, Pongratz-Leisten has argued for allusion to various other texts in the Ḫalule account,³⁷⁸ and Bach’s recent doctoral dissertation studies intertextuality in a range of inscriptions.³⁷⁹ Some of the above proposals relate to rebellion, and should therefore be discussed here.

³⁶⁹ For example RIMA 1 A.O.78.1: ii 17; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: ii 78, iii 75-76, v 100; A.O.99.2: 18, 32, 67; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 6; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 20: 17’; 39: 9; 47: obv.19; RINAP 3/1 19: ii’13’; 24: vi13’.

³⁷⁰ For examples, see CAD s.v. *anzāniš*; *anzû* [b].

³⁷¹ For example, Adalı 2013: 588-90; Bach 2016; Baruchi-Unna 2008; Parpola 2001: 185-86 n. 26; Talon 2005: 100-101, 108-11.

³⁷² Weissert 1997b.

³⁷³ For example, Adalı 2013: 591; Elayi 2018: 118; George 2013b: 41-43; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 179-80; Tadmor 1997: 326.

³⁷⁴ Baruchi-Unna 2008.

³⁷⁵ Parpola 2001: 185-86 n. 26.

³⁷⁶ Adalı 2011: 85-132; 2013: 588-90.

³⁷⁷ Frahm 1997: 254; 2014: 211.

³⁷⁸ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 306-21.

³⁷⁹ Bach 2016.

There are a great number of obstacles in attempting to evaluate claims of literary allusion within a text. Such claims are usually impossible to definitively prove or disprove, and assessing them can ultimately boil down to an individual reader's feelings on how likely they are to be true on a case by case basis.³⁸⁰ This has led to a situation in which very little has been written which is critical of suggestions of literary allusion. Lambert and Jiménez have overtly criticised these ideas, but both do so in brief asides in longer studies; Lambert limits himself to half a paragraph dismissing the presence of allusion to Enūma Eliš in the inscriptions, and does not cite Weissert at all.³⁸¹

“Minimalists”, “Maximalists”, and the Death of the Author

Jiménez makes a longer assessment of previous approaches to intertextuality before his study on the intertextuality of Babylonian disputation poems.³⁸² A quick perusal of this assessment highlights some points which must be considered moving forward; Jimenez' argument is based on a misunderstanding of the theoretical considerations underpinning previous Assyriological approaches to intertextuality. He divides studies on intertextuality into “minimalist” and “maximalist” approaches.³⁸³ Jiménez, a self-professed “minimalist”,³⁸⁴ cites Baruchi-Unna's study of Esarhaddon's Egyptian campaign as an example of the “maximalist” approach,³⁸⁵ which he defines as:

represented by the postmodern concept of the “death of the author”: the reader, “emancipated” from the author, is free to find as many meanings and intertextual connections in a text as he wishes. In Assyriology, the maximalist take on intertextuality is represented by studies that proceed in a deductive fashion, from top to bottom: first they establish that there is intertextuality on the basis of large-scale structural similarities between texts, and then look for linguistic parallels between the two texts. Since the similarity is already established, these parallels need not be very distinctive: the co-occurrence of common words in two texts that are perceived as structurally similar is, in

³⁸⁰ Wisnom 2014: 12.

³⁸¹ Lambert 2013: 9.

³⁸² Jiménez 2017: 79-89.

³⁸³ Jiménez 2017: 80-81.

³⁸⁴ Jiménez 2017: 81.

³⁸⁵ Jiménez 2017: 80 n. 218.

these studies, enough to determine that there is an intertextual relationship between them.³⁸⁶

There are several problems with this assessment. Barthes' concept of the "Death of the Author" does not appear to be the basis for any Assyriological study on intertextuality. Barthes argued that a writer cannot have control over the messages contained within their writing, and that meaning can therefore only be found in a text by its reader, not ascribed by its author.³⁸⁷ The Death of the Author is admittedly a concept which will always be tied to intertextuality, but this a very different form of intertextuality from the concept which Jiménez associates with the term. To Barthes, intertextuality refers to the way in which a text is constructed from "citations" of language and phrasing already in existence, but which cannot be traced back to an original source.³⁸⁸ Barthes views on intertextuality fall within the confines of what I will refer to as "poststructuralist intertextuality".³⁸⁹ This view of intertextuality concerns itself with the ways in which texts are constructed from pre-existent discourse. "Intertextuality" in this case refers to something very general which cannot be traced back to an original source. It refers to topoi, word choices, and turns of phrase drawn from cultural discourse, not to the borrowing of specific elements from one specific text by another. Such a relationship between elements in two texts would require a stable relationship between signifier and signified that is antithetical to poststructuralist thinking.

The Theoretical Background of Intertextuality in Assyriology

The soundness of Barthes' argument, a topic that has received extensive discussion,³⁹⁰ is not relevant for the current purpose. What is important is that his views are in many ways diametrically opposed to the theoretical approaches of studies on intertextuality within Assyriology. All of the studies cited above concern

³⁸⁶ Jiménez 2017: 80.

³⁸⁷ Barthes 1977: 144-48.

³⁸⁸ Barthes 1977: 145-47.

³⁸⁹ As Allen (2011: 92) points out, it is not possible to speak of a sharp distinction between "poststructuralist" and "structuralist" uses of the term intertextuality. I use the term "poststructuralist" here because of this approach's foundations in poststructuralism of the late 1960s, especially the work of Kristeva (1986a: 35-37; 1986b: 111), and in order to distinguish it from a different approach to the concept which Allen (2011: 92-129) labels as "structuralist". This "structuralist" intertextuality will be discussed below. Juvan (2008: 44-46) refers to this form of intertextuality as "general intertextuality".

³⁹⁰ For criticisms of the Death of the Author, see Burke 1998: 20-61. For a defence of Barthes' ideas, see Allen 2011: 73-74.

themselves with a text borrowing from, or making reference to, specific previous works of literature.³⁹¹ The Death of the Author removes the possibility of authorial intent, yet intentionality is at the heart of many of the studies cited above, a fact demonstrated by a tendency to use the term “literary allusion” or “citation”, as opposed to “intertextuality”.³⁹² The most pronounced example of the importance of intentionality in Assyriological studies of intertextuality comes from Weissert, who argues for political, ideological, and propagandistic motivations for his proposed allusions in Sennacherib’s annals.³⁹³ The focus on intent holds true for Assyriological studies of intertextuality in texts other than the inscriptions. For example, Wisnom describes her study of intertextuality in Akkadian poetry as dealing with “deliberate, intended allusion”.³⁹⁴

Nearly all Assyriological studies of intertextuality can all be placed broadly under the category of “structuralist intertextuality”, defined by Allen as “grounded on the belief in a stable and accurate account of textual meaning and intertextual relations”.³⁹⁵ These studies attempt to find allusions to one specific text in another. This differs from the poststructuralist approach, in which intertextual relationships are unstable and untraceable, and cannot be attributed to deliberate decisions on the part of the author.³⁹⁶ This divergence of the term from its poststructuralist roots is in part due to attempts to find an application for it that it was never originally intended to have. As Lethbridge puts it:

As a tool for analysis, however, this concept (intertextuality) ... is far too general to be of any use. In consequence, many intertextual studies, after considerable effort to acknowledge the term’s origin and theoretical implications, quickly proceed to restrict or modify its generality in order to

³⁹¹ This line of enquiry in Assyriological research is not restricted to the Assyrian royal inscriptions. For just a few examples of studies of this sort focusing on other forms of cuneiform literature, see Bach 2018; Hallo 1990; Halton 2009; Seri 2006; 2014; Wisnom 2014.

³⁹² For example, Baruchi-Unna 2008: 57; Parpola 2001: 185-86 n. 26; Weissert 1997b: 192 n. 8. For discussion of the differences between the two terms, see Wisnom 2014: 3-8.

³⁹³ Weissert 1997b: 192-202.

³⁹⁴ Wisnom 2014: 7. I discuss the concept of authorial intent more generally in Chapter 1.

³⁹⁵ Allen 2011: 111. Juvan (2008: 46-48) refers to this form of intertextuality as “specific intertextuality” or “citationality”.

³⁹⁶ The closest that any Assyriological study that I know of comes to adopting this understanding of intertextuality is the work of Pearce (2006) on the nature of polyvalency in cuneiform writing. However, her stated intention “to determine in what ways and to what extent Mesopotamian literature is intertextual” (Pearce 2006: 12) places restrictions on intertextuality and seeks to quantify and measure it in ways which go against the all-pervasive, uncontrollable nature of the original concept as put forward by Kristeva.

make the term applicable. The accusation that has often been levelled against such proceedings is that in fact, they produce something remarkably similar to traditional source studies under a new and fashionable label. ... Strictly speaking, Kristeva's concept of intertextuality was not meant for an analytical tool and does not work as such. To adapt the concept to analysis, i.e. to specific cases, takes away its generality and with it the central element of its definition.³⁹⁷

Schmitz gives a similar assessment of attempts to find intertextual relationships between two texts:

When the term intertextuality is used for this kind of work, what we find is often no more than a fashionable version of pretty old-fashioned studies such as have been undertaken for centuries: which prior texts does a specific author quote, in which way does he imitate his models, and how does he highlight his allusions, imitations, and parodies? Undoubtedly, the use of the modern term can be a mere fad, especially when such studies are not so much interested in the text itself, but in its author, and when categories such as “influences” or “sources” are highlighted.³⁹⁸

In fact, the widespread use of the term intertextuality to refer to what is effectively source studies, as opposed to a radical theory of the construction of texts which removes authority from the author, later led Kristeva to instead prefer referring to her idea of intertextuality as “transposition”.³⁹⁹ The use of structuralist ideas on intertextuality is quite clear within Assyriology; Weissert states that he follows the theoretical framework of Ben-Porat,⁴⁰⁰ whose “markers” within “signs” which “activate” an “evoked text” in a rigidly defined fashion are clearly structuralist.⁴⁰¹ Alternatively, Bach takes his approach from Genette’s ideas of “transtextuality”,⁴⁰² a

³⁹⁷ Lethbridge 2003: 10. She goes on to argue that such a repurposing of the term is justified (Lethbridge 2003: 10-14).

³⁹⁸ Schmitz 2007: 79.

³⁹⁹ Kristeva 1986b: 111-12.

⁴⁰⁰ Weissert 1997b: 192 n. 8.

⁴⁰¹ Ben-Porat 1976: 107-25.

⁴⁰² Bach 2016: 39-61.

collection of various different ways in which a text can bear connections to another text.⁴⁰³

Jiménez is not the only Assyriologist to confuse and conflate these dissimilar forms of intertextuality; Hallo begins his study on quotations of proverbs in Sumerian and Akkadian epic with a definition of intertextuality quoted from Leitch's *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction*,⁴⁰⁴ a work which understands intertextuality very much in its "poststructuralist" meaning.⁴⁰⁵ For example, in the prologue to his chapter on intertextuality Leitch states that:

Neither author nor critic can ultimately control the free play of signifiers in disseminating reference. No one escapes the chains of figurality, the flights of signifiers, and the network of differences in writing.⁴⁰⁶

Furthermore:

All reading is necessarily misreading.

Texts are unreadable.

Criticism insists on performing what cannot be performed—reading texts. There can never be "correct" or "objective" readings, only less or more energetic, interesting, careful, or pleasurable misreading.⁴⁰⁷

This deconstructionist view of meaning emphasises the fact that the intertextuality discussed by Leitch has nothing to do with identifying the sources alluded to in a text; if accurate reading is impossible, and "dissemination of signifiers" (or "intertextuality")⁴⁰⁸ is uncontrollable, then there is no way for the (mis)reader to identify deliberate allusions to, or quotations of, one text in another.⁴⁰⁹ However, the

⁴⁰³ Genette 1997. For a particularly neat and concise summary of Genette's model of transtextuality, see Schmitz 2007: 80-83. Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 306 n. 55) also adopts Genette's model.

⁴⁰⁴ Hallo 1990: 203.

⁴⁰⁵ Leitch 1983: 161.

⁴⁰⁶ Leitch 1983: 58.

⁴⁰⁷ Leitch 1983: 59.

⁴⁰⁸ For the equation of the deconstructionist concept of "dissemination" with the poststructuralist idea of "intertextuality", see Brenkman 1979: 187.

⁴⁰⁹ A concise definition of deconstruction is given by Todorov (1988: 183), who describes this approach as stemming from a view that texts have no meaning, as opposed to "pragmatism" (i.e. poststructuralism in the style of Kristeva and Barthes), which argues that a single text possesses infinite meanings. For some objections to deconstructionist approaches, see Schmitz 2007: 122-24, 130-35. This understanding of deconstruction is rejected by Derrida (1988: 146-47) as a "bad" and "feeble" reading of his work, which he argues does not in fact lead to relativism. However, such as position is clearly put forward by Leitch in the passage quoted above.

research which Hallo goes on to present is concerned with identifying specific examples of quotations from one text appearing in another.⁴¹⁰ Hallo conflates two very different understandings of intertextuality, as does Jiménez.

Pure Speculation?

Although Jiménez' assessment of the theoretical underpinnings of Assyriological studies on intertextuality is false, his criticism of their approach to identifying literary allusion is justified to at least some extent. Some studies have taken the view that the appearance of a single rare word in two texts is enough to constitute a "marker" for literary allusion. This is particularly true of Baruchi-Unna's proposed allusions to Gilgameš in Esarhaddon's inscriptions. Some of these allusions are a single word: *rīmāniš*, "like a wild bull", and *ibru*, "friend", are both cited as conjuring images and scenes from the epic.⁴¹¹ Jiménez argues against this approach, finding support in Oppenheim's statement on the "impossibility of gauging adequately the conscious and subconscious associations inherent in words of a dead language",⁴¹² and sees the "maximalist" approach as purely speculative.⁴¹³

I am inclined to disagree to an extent with the statement on the impossibility of adequately gauging associations of words in Akkadian. Provided a term is attested in the right contexts, we can go quite some way towards reconstructing deeper connotations than its broad semantic meaning.⁴¹⁴ However, some of the Assyriological studies on allusion do not adequately consider the broader contexts of the terms and phrases which they discuss, both within the texts in question, and within Akkadian literature more generally. For example, Baruchi-Unna states that the term *ibru* does not appear in earlier inscriptions. However, the related term *ibrūtu*, "friendship", does appear in earlier texts.⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, both terms are always used in the inscriptions to describe relations between Assyria's enemies. This usage of

Furthermore, Schmitz (2007: 124, 128) has highlighted the fact that some deconstructionists may argue that not all readings are misreading, but "they have neglected to answer the question of what can ever be capable of limiting the free play of the linguistic sign if their theories ... are indeed correct", and that, from a deconstructionist perspective, "as long as we do not possess secure criteria to distinguish correct interpretations from misreadings, we gain little in knowing that once in a while, we may be right".

⁴¹⁰ In Hallo's case, the quoted "texts" are orally transmitted proverbs and popular sayings.

⁴¹¹ Baruchi-Unna 2008: 57-59.

⁴¹² Oppenheim 1966: 345.

⁴¹³ Jiménez 2017: 80-81.

⁴¹⁴ For example, my discussion of the connotations of the words *ibru* and *ibrūtu* in Chapter 5.

⁴¹⁵ See Chapter 5.

these words is very different from that in Gilgameš, where they describe the close bond between Gilgameš and Enkidu, but is much closer to their use across much of Akkadian literature, where it appears frequently, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. It is therefore highly unlikely that the use of *ibru* by Esarhaddon's scribes was intended to allude to Gilgameš.

This neglect of the broader literary context of a proposed allusion is also demonstrated in Baruchi-Unna's suggestion that the dividing of the journey to Egypt into shorter units measured in *bēru*, "leagues", was intended to parallel Gilgameš and Enkidu's journey to the Cedar Mountain.⁴¹⁶ This interpretation does not acknowledge the fact that Esarhaddon's inscriptions show a particular pre-occupation with the distances of some of the more remote regions described in his prism inscriptions. Measurements in *bēru* are given for the distance to Gambulu and the extent of Bazu.⁴¹⁷ These descriptions of distance fit well with the compilation of the Sargon Geography, a Sargonid text which seeks to provide measurements for the entire earth's surface as represented by the universal empire of Sargon of Akkad.⁴¹⁸ The itinerary with distances in this text may represent part of an effort to determine the measurements of Egypt as part of a broader Assyrian scholarly attempt to measure the world.

Assessing *Creating a Political Climate*

The same problems present themselves in several of Weissert's proposed allusions. The allusions which he claims are present in the Chicago and Taylor prisms are:⁴¹⁹

- The Babylonians are described as *gallû*, a type of demon present in Tiāmat's army in Enūma Eliš.
- The description of Mušēzib-Marduk's accession in Sennacherib's annals, *Bābilaja ana lā simātišu ina kussî ušēšibūšu*, "The Babylonians, inappropriately for him, sat him on the throne",⁴²⁰ and Marduk's accusation after Tiāmat's appointment of Kingu as ruler of the gods in Enūma Eliš, *ana lā simātišu taškunīš ana paraš enūti*, "You have, inappropriately for him, placed

⁴¹⁶ Baruchi-Unna 2008: 60-61.

⁴¹⁷ RINAP 4 1: iii 71-73, iv 53-60.

⁴¹⁸ Horowitz 1998: 68-75. For discussion of the text's date and significance, see Grayson 1974-77: 56-57; Liverani 1999-2000: 59-84; Van De Mieroop 1999b: 330-34.

⁴¹⁹ Weissert 1997b: 92-95.

⁴²⁰ RINAP 3/1 22: v 28-29.

him to the office of Anu-ship (i.e. the highest divine status)",⁴²¹ both contain the phrase *ana lā simātišu*, "inappropriately for him".

- The word *urruḫiṣ*, "very quickly" is not attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions from before the reign of Sennacherib, but appears in both Sennacherib's account of Halule and Enūma Eliš.
- Both Marduk and Sennacherib are given weapons by gods, and these weapons are both described with the phrase *napišta parā'u* "to cut off life/pierce the throat".
- When describing Sennacherib putting on his helmet, the word used for head is the Old Akkadian *rāšu* rather than the usual *rēšu*. The same word is used in Enūma Eliš when Marduk is described as being crowned in *melammu*, "terrifying splendour".

He argues that none of the connections between the two texts can be explained as literary tropes or as a by-product of the epical style of the passage as they do not appear elsewhere in Sennacherib's annals.⁴²² This argument is in no way sound. Why should the frequency of a word or phrase's appearance elsewhere be used as a measure of "epical" style? Furthermore, Wisnom has questioned the extent to which the rarity of a word's attestations can be used as a tool for identifying instances of intertextuality in all instances.⁴²³ The Battle of Halule forms the centrepiece of Sennacherib's annals which the preceding campaigns have been building to, and several scholars, Weissert included, have highlighted it as one of the finest extant examples of Neo-Assyrian prose.⁴²⁴ In this light, it is unsurprising that this account contains rare and unusual phrases from the epical repertoire which are not found elsewhere in the annals.

Some of the proposed links between the two texts can be immediately discounted as somewhat tenuous. In Enūma Eliš, *urruḫiṣ* is used when describing the speed with which Marduk will defeat Tiāmat.⁴²⁵ In the annals it is used to describe the speed with which the gods respond to Sennacherib's prayers.⁴²⁶ The less intensive form

⁴²¹ Lambert 2013: 90-91 IV 82.

⁴²² Weissert 1997b: 195-96.

⁴²³ Wisnom 2014: 12-14.

⁴²⁴ Grayson 1981: 44; Luckenbill 1924: 17; Weissert 1997b: 192.

⁴²⁵ Lambert 2013: 70-71 II 146-48.

⁴²⁶ RINAP 3/1 22: v 66.

arḥiṣ is used in Enūma Eliš when Anšar urges the divine assembly to reach a decision,⁴²⁷ perhaps a slightly closer context to that of its usage in Sennacherib's annals, but *arḥiṣ* is a much more commonplace word than *urruḥiṣ*.⁴²⁸ Furthermore, *urruḥiṣ* is used elsewhere in Sennacherib's annals to describe the death of Kudur-Naḥḥunte of Elam.⁴²⁹ This comes from a passage directly before the account of Ḫalule, weakening the proposal that it serves as a marker for allusion to Enūma Eliš. In fact, the assertion that *urruḥiṣ* is not attested in Assyrian inscriptions from before the reign of Sennacherib is false. The word is used in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III,⁴³⁰ and the unusual form *urruḥ* appears on a boundary stone of Shalmaneser IV where one would expect *urruḥiṣ*.⁴³¹

The weapon which cuts off life is best viewed as a literary trope. The bow was a weapon of both kingship and divinity in the Ancient Near East,⁴³² and Tadmor restores the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III as also using the phrase with regards to his own weapons.⁴³³ Weissert points to the mention of the temple name *Marduk pāri' napišti ajjābī*, "Marduk is the severer of the enemies' lives", in a fragmentary temple list,⁴³⁴ but Ashurbanipal also uses the phrase *napišta parā'u* in his inscriptions to describe how Ninurta's arrows slew the Arabs during a period of famine.⁴³⁵ This god has no role within Enūma Eliš, although he did defeat the monster Anzû with a bow. This would suggest that the phrase applies to arrows more generally, and I would therefore argue against identifying it as an allusion to Enūma Eliš, but as a more general use of the poetic language associated with combat myths.

Pongratz-Leisten has recently expanded upon Weissert's theory concerning literary allusion in Sennacherib's account of the Battle of Ḫalule. She goes beyond Enūma Eliš to propose further references to the Erra Epic, Sargon's Letter to the God, the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Angimdimma, two Middle Assyrian poems in praise of Tiglath-pileser I (LKA 62 and 63), and the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I.⁴³⁶ Pongratz-

⁴²⁷ Lambert 2013: 78-79 III 65.

⁴²⁸ CAD s.v. *arḥiṣ*, and *urruḥiṣ*.

⁴²⁹ RINAP 3/1 22: v 14.

⁴³⁰ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 9: 10'.

⁴³¹ RIMA 3 A.O.105.1: 18.

⁴³² Westenholz 2000: 104, 109, 115-17.

⁴³³ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 9: 11'.

⁴³⁴ Weissert 1997b: 194: n. 24; George 1993: 57 d. obv. 2'-3'.

⁴³⁵ RINAP 5/1 11: ix 84-85

⁴³⁶ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 310-21.

Leisten often links a single word or phrase in Sennacherib's account of the Battle of Ḫalule to several passages from earlier literature. For example, Sennacherib's description of his enemies at Ḫalule sharpening their weapons is compared to passages from: LKA 62, LKA 63, an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III, and Enūma Eliš.⁴³⁷ In spite of her stated support for Weissert's theory,⁴³⁸ Pongratz-Leisten's numerous claimed connections between Sennacherib's annals and various other texts amply demonstrate that in most instances no single text was alluded to by Sennacherib's scribes. Instead they used language and topoi associated with epical and mythological texts more generally in order to give a mythologising aspect to this passage of the annals. In this light, Enūma Eliš is not the "key text" through which the reader is constrained to interpret Sennacherib's annals,⁴³⁹ but instead just one of a variety of combat myths which are conjured by a wealth of poetic language drawn from the Akkadian epical tradition.

Not all of Weissert's proposed allusions can be so readily discounted. To my mind, the most convincing suggestion is that the phrase *ana lā simātišu*, "inappropriately for him", is used in the description of Mušēzib-Marduk's accession in order to draw parallels with the elevation of Kingu to Anu-ship, the position of chief deity.⁴⁴⁰ Both passages described similar events, and the phrase is unattested elsewhere. Even here there are still reservations to be had. The two similar events are described with the same rare phrase, but this may well be due to their similarity. The elevation of an individual to kingship by an improper authority is not a common occurrence in Mesopotamian epical literature; Lugal-e has Asakku raised to kingship by the stones of the mountain,⁴⁴¹ and the rebels against Naram-Sîn elect their leaders to kingship in the Old Babylonian accounts of the Great Revolt,⁴⁴² but I know of no other examples. The Akkadian of Lugal-e is a translation of a Sumerian original,⁴⁴³ and it is therefore unsurprising that the Akkadian phrase *ana lā simātišu* is not used to

⁴³⁷ Pongratz-leisten 2015: 313. The topos of enemy troops sharpening their weapons also appears in an inscription of Nabû-šuma-imbi, governor of Borsippa, where it describes how the Babylonians, Borsippians, Aramaeans, Chaldeans, and inhabitants of Dilbat and Dutēti became hostile towards one another during the reign of Nabû-šuma-iškun (RIMB 2 B.6.14.2001: i 17'-20').

⁴³⁸ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 179-80.

⁴³⁹ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 310-11.

⁴⁴⁰ Weissert 1997b: 193-94.

⁴⁴¹ Van Dijk 1983: 56 line 35. Anzu also usurps the kingship of heaven (Annus 2001 I 61-83), but does so through its own actions.

⁴⁴² Westenholz 1997: 224-227 lines 1-4, 235 obv. 13-16, 243 rev. 24-28.

⁴⁴³ Viano 2016: 90.

describe this event. The example from the account of the Great Revolt adopts the language and style of royal inscriptions,⁴⁴⁴ and once again it is unsurprising that less epical phrasing is used. The election of an individual to kingship by his people is far more common in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, but is usually described in less elevated terms.⁴⁴⁵ The phrase in Sennacherib's annals may be an allusion to the creation epic, but the similarity may equally arise from the use of elevated language to describe an event not normally described in particularly poetic terms.

Gallû-Demons and the Broader Context of Mesopotamian Myth

Some of the other proposed allusions are unlikely if taken by themselves, but would be more likely if their context included other, more likely allusions to *Enūma Eliš*. For example, the equation of the Babylonian people with *gallû*-demons fits well with a deliberate parallel being drawn between Mušēzib-Marduk and Kingu; the *gallû*-demons were Tiāmat's soldiers during her battle with Marduk.⁴⁴⁶ However, they also appear extensively across the breadth of Mesopotamian mythology, and without the support of the proposed allusion to Kingu's succession, the suggestion that their appearance here alludes to *Enūma Eliš* is very unlikely. *Gallû lemnūtu*, "evil demons", is a stock phrase in Akkadian literature. *Gallû*-demons are also used in metaphors and similes to describe both the unpleasant company with whom the eponymous narrator of the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer now shares a social status,⁴⁴⁷ and the terrifying visage of Ninurta during battle in the Standard Babylonian Anzû Epic.⁴⁴⁸ Enemy rulers are also sometimes compared to *gallû* in the inscriptions of Sargonid kings; both Sargon and Sennacherib refer to Merodach-baladan II as *ḫiriṣ gallê*, "copy of a *gallû*-demon",⁴⁴⁹ while Ashurbanipal describes Teumman as *tamšil gallê*, "image of a *gallû*-demon".⁴⁵⁰

Any Mesopotamian would have been aware of the *gallû*-demons' role in mythology, which existed outside of the poem. In spite of this, Weissert places a great deal of

⁴⁴⁴ Westenholz 1997: 223.

⁴⁴⁵ For this topos in the inscriptions, see Chapter 5.

⁴⁴⁶ Lambert 2013: 92-93 IV 116-17.

⁴⁴⁷ BWL: 35 line 85.

⁴⁴⁸ Annus 2001 I 8; II 11. *Gallû*-demons are also responsible for dragging individuals down to the underworld in Inanna's Descent (ETCSL 1.4.1: 293-379), but are omitted from the shorter Akkadian-language version of the myth (Lapinkivi 2010).

⁴⁴⁹ Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 327; RINAP 3/1 1: 17.

⁴⁵⁰ RINAP 5/1 3: iv 68; 4: iv 37'; 6: v 94; 7: v 35.

significance on the appearance of the *gallû*-demons in Enūma Eliš. This bias towards the written word is also demonstrated in the example given by Weissert of literary allusion elsewhere in the Assyrian royal inscriptions; in an inscription of Ashurbanipal, the god Išum is described as *ša qātāšu asmā* “(one) whose hands are fitting”,⁴⁵¹ and *na’du* “the famous one”.⁴⁵² These epithets are clarified by the Erra Epic, where Išum is called *ṭābiḥu na’du ša ana našê kakkēšu ezzūti qātāšu asmā*, “the famous butcher whose hands are fitting to carry his fierce weapons”.⁴⁵³ Whilst the Erra Epic clarifies the meaning of Išum’s epithets in the Ashurbanipal inscription, this does not mean that there is direct borrowing from one text to another. Both texts merely use the same titles of this minor god. Similarly in Sennacherib’s inscriptions the Babylonians are compared to *gallû*-demons due to their terrifying appearance and unpleasant nature throughout Mesopotamian literature and culture, not just for their appearance in Enūma Eliš.

Intertextuality and Literary Allusion: Over-Applied Concepts?

Of course, arguments such as this can only be applied on the basis of individual cases, and I am not arguing that the inscriptions never contained references to other texts. The phraseology used for the divine abandonment of Babylon in Esarhaddon’s Babylon inscriptions and the Erra Epic is identical in all but word order and some points of conjugation. For example, the following passage is one of several describing Erra’s plan to unleash destruction on the world:

*bēlum Erra minsu ana ilāni lemuttim takpud
ana sapān mātāti ḥulluq [nišīšin lemuttim] takpudma*

Lord Erra, why have you plotted evil against the gods?

In order to level the lands (and) destroy [their people] you have plotted [evil].⁴⁵⁴

An extremely close parallel appears in Esarhaddon’s Babylon A, describing the conditions which led to the destruction of Babylon during Sennacherib’s reign:

īgugma Enlil ilāni Marduk ana sapān māti ḥulluqu nišēša iktapud lemuttim

⁴⁵¹ Bauer 1933: 55 Rs. 13.

⁴⁵² 1880-07-19.195: 13’. Weissert argues that 1880-07-19.195 should be seen as a fragment of the same text as K 3098 + K 4450 (Bauer 1993: 55).

⁴⁵³ Weissert 1997b: 192-193.

⁴⁵⁴ Cagni 1969 I: 102-103.

The Enlil of the gods, Marduk, became furious and, in order to level the land (and) destroy its people, he plotted evil.⁴⁵⁵

However, I do feel that the concept of “allusion” has been over-applied to texts by those looking for it. Often a more general literary topos or turn of phrase from the sphere of Akkadian epical poetry is identified as an allusion to a specific text, when it might better be understood as conjuring more general images of the connections between the royal campaign and the combat myth as part of the parallels between the human and divine worlds. These instances might be described as “intertextuality” in its broader sense as the construction of text from cultural discourse, but then this usage could also be applied to everything ever written, and is not a particularly useful distinction to make. Perhaps better labels for the use of epical language and style in the royal inscriptions are “interdiscursivity” or “intergeneric borrowing”, the adoption of language, phrasing, or stylistic elements which alludes to a genre of text or a particular discourse, rather than to a specific individual work.⁴⁵⁶ In Genette’s terminology, I believe that we are often more likely dealing with the “imitation” of a genre rather than the “transformation” of an individual text.⁴⁵⁷

A Propagandistic Element?

Did Sennacherib’s scribes allude to Enūma Eliš in the account of the Battle of Ḫalule? It is certainly possible, but is not the cut-and-dry case that it is frequently presented as when Weissert’s ideas are mentioned in the scholarly literature.⁴⁵⁸ If the answer to this question is in fact “yes”, then we must ask a second question: was this allusion intended to justify the destruction of Babylon? I would argue that the answer is a clear no. The Bavian Inscription, Sennacherib’s inscriptional description of the destruction of Babylon, gives a differing account of the Battle of Ḫalule which contains none of the allusions mentioned by Weissert.⁴⁵⁹ Instead, the razing and flooding of Babylon is justified by the fact that Sennacherib has restored and rebuilt Nineveh; the two events “balance out” in the grand scheme of things.⁴⁶⁰ If Weissert’s

⁴⁵⁵ RINAP 4 104: i 34-37.

⁴⁵⁶ For interdiscursivity, see Bal 1997: 65-66; Moser 1981: 5-20). For intergeneric borrowing as applied to three very different contexts, see Al-Momani et al. 2016: 36-37, 44-57; Huang 1990: 67-68; Williams 2013: 47-72.

⁴⁵⁷ Genette 1997: 5-7.

⁴⁵⁸ For examples, see n. 372 above.

⁴⁵⁹ RINAP 3/2 223: 34-54.

⁴⁶⁰ Galter 1984: 163-67; Van De Mieroop 2003: 8-9.

theory were correct, we might wonder why Sennacherib abandoned his carefully wrought literary defence upon carrying out the act which he sought to justify.

Weissert argues that this discrepancy is due to the fact that by the time that the Bavian Inscription was written the account of the battle in the Chicago and Taylor Prisms had already served its purpose of creating the right political climate for the destruction of Babylon.⁴⁶¹ I would argue that the Assyrian royal inscriptions did not carry this kind of propagandistic purpose, as discussed in Chapter 1. Any pre-emptive justification for the destruction of Babylon in the Chicago and Taylor Prisms would be targeted at the gods and future kings, not Sennacherib's contemporaries. The creation of the correct political climate in the Assyrian court for the destruction of Babylon is therefore unlikely to have been achieved through the inscriptions. On these grounds, Weissert's theory is untenable. It is instead more likely that Sennacherib had the account of the battle written in an elevated style either to save face following an embarrassing defeat,⁴⁶² or because the siege of Babylon, or its preparation, was already underway, and he therefore already viewed his eighth campaign as the final conflict in his efforts to control Babylonia.

Sennacherib clearly wished to present the battle as a major achievement of his reign.⁴⁶³ In this respect, it can be compared to Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt,⁴⁶⁴ and to Sargon's eighth campaign, directed against Urartu.⁴⁶⁵ Both of these campaigns were the crowning achievement, up to that point in their respective reigns. Esarhaddon was the first Mesopotamian ruler to conquer Egypt,⁴⁶⁶ whilst Sargon had penetrated into the heart of the Urartu on the shores of Lake Van, and had also sacked the main cultic centre of the Urartian state god Haldi at Muşasir.⁴⁶⁷ Esarhaddon's inscriptions describe his Egyptian campaign in mythologising language reminiscent of Sennacherib's account of the Battle of Halule; the

⁴⁶¹ Weissert 1997b: 202.

⁴⁶² Luckenbill (1924: 17) labels the epical features of the account of the battle in the Chicago and Taylor Prisms as "the finest rhetorical smokescreen". If this was the case, then we might conclude, *pace* Weissert (Weissert 1997b: 202), that the "smokescreen" provided by these epical features became superfluous following the sack of Babylon, which was ample proof of an emphatic victory over the Babylonians.

⁴⁶³ Levine 1982: 51.

⁴⁶⁴ RINAP 4 8: ii' 1'-28'.

⁴⁶⁵ Mayer 1983: 68-113.

⁴⁶⁶ Grayson 1992a: 122-124.

⁴⁶⁷ Grayson 1992b: 95-96.

description of the king putting on his armour before battle is almost identical.⁴⁶⁸

Sargon's eighth campaign formed the subject of his letter to the god Aššur, an inscription which Grayson hails as "one text which really should be ranked with great Akkadian literature".⁴⁶⁹ Esarhaddon's Letter to the God, another accomplished literary work, recounts this king's campaign to Šubria. This campaign may have been undertaken to capture his father's killers possibly living there in exile,⁴⁷⁰ or alternatively as a show of Assyrian military might to compensate for Esarhaddon's failed first attempt at invading Egypt in 674 BCE.⁴⁷¹ As might be expected, the most ideologically and historically significant events of a king's reign were also those deemed suited to a more elaborate style in royal inscriptions of the Sargonid period.

Ninurta and the King

Parpola has suggested another example of allusion to earlier texts which is closely related to rebellion. He views Esarhaddon's Apology as containing various references to Lugal-e intended to demonstrate the king's close association with Ninurta. He goes on to argue that:

The sudden transformation of Esarhaddon into his divine paragon at hearing the news of his father's murder must not be understood as mere rhetoric only but seems to imply a deeper meaning: the body of the prince at the moment of crisis becomes a seat for Ninurta—a spiritual entity sent from heaven—who at that very moment takes his residence in it and spiritually *merges* with the prince.⁴⁷²

Parpola supports this equation of Ninurta with the king by citing examples of the use of terms denoting or relating to royalty in relation to Ninurta in Lugal-e.⁴⁷³ This argument is tied to Parpola's ideas on the Assyrian "Sacred Tree", which he believes was a core concept of Assyrian religion, and a precursor of the Sephirot in Kabbalah.⁴⁷⁴ This whole proposal, in which the king is the warrior god, sometimes

⁴⁶⁸ RINAP 3/2 22: v 67-68; RINAP 4 8: ii' 6'-7'.

⁴⁶⁹ Grayson 1981: 47. The Letter is also the only Assyrian royal inscription that Foster (2005: 790-813) deemed suitable for inclusion in *Before the Muses*, his anthology of Akkadian literature.

⁴⁷⁰ Grayson 1992a: 129-30; RINAP 4: pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷¹ Eph'al 2005: 100-102. For discussion of this proposal, see Chapter 7.

⁴⁷² Parpola 2001: 186. His emphasis.

⁴⁷³ Parpola 2001: 186.

⁴⁷⁴ SAA 9: XIII-XLIV; Parpola 1993. For criticism of Parpola's theories on Assyrian religion, see Cooper 2000; Kwasman 2001.

Ninurta, sometimes Marduk,⁴⁷⁵ brings us back to the points discussed at the beginning of this chapter. In Parpola's view, warfare is more than just a symbolic or ritual re-enactment of the combat myth. It is a literal reoccurrence of the actual event itself. His views relate to rebellion, both divine and human, in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and should therefore be addressed here.

All of the evidence for equating Ninurta with the king can equally well be explained by the parallelism discussed above between the natural, human, and divine worlds in Mesopotamian thought. Such parallelisms are far from unusual in theologies from around the world; in Chinese cosmology both the heavens and the netherworld are understood to function along the lines of the state bureaucracy,⁴⁷⁶ and it has been argued that the divine hierarchy in Hinduism parallels the caste system,⁴⁷⁷ to give just two examples. An obvious parallel to Ninurta as king from elsewhere in the Ancient Near East is provided by the Hebrew Bible, most notably in the "Enthronement Psalms", which frequently explicitly refer to YHWH as king.⁴⁷⁸ In Mesopotamia, various gods were designated as "king".⁴⁷⁹ Even the demon Pazuzu is given the title *šar lilê*, "king of the *lilû*-demons".⁴⁸⁰ Parpola argues that the wish expressed at the beginning of Lugal-e that "the king" (Ninurta) experience a long life is evidence that it is a human king who is referred to, and therefore that the king was equated with Ninurta.⁴⁸¹ This argument assumes that gods cannot die, but this assumption is demonstrably false. Combat myths do contain several examples of gods dying, most notably in the slaying of Apsu and Tiāmat in *Enūma Eliš*. Furthermore, several explanatory texts recount instances of gods killing other gods,⁴⁸² and divine patricide is the central concept of the *Theogony of Dunnu*.⁴⁸³ The

⁴⁷⁵ Parpola 2001: 185-86 n. 26. A differing proposal for the divinity of the Assyrian king has been put forward by Nowicki (2015) on the basis of Esarhaddon's Letter to the God. However, this relates to whether Esarhaddon was viewed as a god by a neighbouring culture, not by the Assyrians themselves, and is therefore not relevant for the current purpose. For a brief assessment of Nowicki's argument, see n. 697 in Chapter 5.

⁴⁷⁶ Gregory and Ebrey 1993: 9; Kleeman 1994: 232-34. The prevalence of this bureaucratic metaphor for the divine varied depending upon period and region, but was generally present to some extent (Webber 1995: 107-24).

⁴⁷⁷ Harper 1959: 227-34; Moffatt 1979: 247-50. However, see the reservations held by Fuller (1979: 459-74).

⁴⁷⁸ *Psalms* 47, 93, 96-99. For discussion of this group of psalms, see Botha 1998; Bellinger 2014: 313-28.

⁴⁷⁹ For references see CAD s.v. *šarru* [1m].

⁴⁸⁰ Borger 1987: 22-27; Wiggerman 2007a: 126.

⁴⁸¹ Parpola 2001: 186.

⁴⁸² Lambert 2013: 208-209.

⁴⁸³ Lambert 2013: 392-95.

wish for Ninurta to live forever cannot be used as evidence for the king being an embodiment of Ninurta.

A similar view of the close connection between Ninurta and the king is expressed by Maul and Annus, who both look to explanatory texts for support.⁴⁸⁴ In these texts, the king is sometimes equated with Ninurta during the enactment of royal rituals.⁴⁸⁵ However, we should be wary of using these texts to reconstruct religious and political ideology; some texts designate inanimate objects as gods, a bundle of reeds as Marduk, for example.⁴⁸⁶ There are definite parallels between the king and Ninurta, and the two performed similar roles as vanquisher of enemies and chief administrator for the king of the gods.⁴⁸⁷ These parallels meant that when scribes attempted to discern the meaning of rituals for which the original symbolic significance had long been forgotten, and did so through the lens of the combat myth, the king was naturally the obvious candidate to represent Ninurta. Even if it were not for these parallels, one suspects that the king would be cast as the hero of the story anyway. The identification of the king as Ninurta in state ritual does not mean that the king *is* Ninurta, and should be taken no more literally than the identification of Marduk as a bundle of reeds,⁴⁸⁸ Nabû as a group of chariots,⁴⁸⁹ or Nergal as a crying fox.⁴⁹⁰ The king and the god perform equivalent roles, and this is frequently highlighted in the inscriptions through the use of epical mythologising language, but a deeper theological syncretism between the two is unlikely.

Rebellion as Punishment

In addition to being an obstacle to be heroically overcome, rebellion also appears frequently in Mesopotamian literature as a punishment for a king's transgressions. For example, the Weidner Chronicle records several instances of a poor ruler being overthrown in a rebellion,⁴⁹¹ and the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* gives rebellion as one of the fates which might befall a bad king.⁴⁹² Most famously, the Old Akkadian

⁴⁸⁴ Annus 2001: xxii-xxiv; Maul 1999.

⁴⁸⁵ For example, SAA 3 39: obv. 25-26. The king is similarly sometimes identified as Marduk in these texts (for example, SAA 3 37: obv. 3'-4', 7', 16'-18', 20'-21).

⁴⁸⁶ SAA 3 38: 10.

⁴⁸⁷ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 228-31.

⁴⁸⁸ SAA 3 38: 10.

⁴⁸⁹ SAA 3 38: 12-13.

⁴⁹⁰ Livingstone 1986: 118-19 line 11.

⁴⁹¹ Glassner 2004: 263-68.

⁴⁹² BWL: 112-13 line 5.

ruler Narām-Sîn is punished by the gods with a rebellion which, in some traditions, results in the fall of the Akkadian Empire. In other versions of this story, Narām-Sîn learns from his mistakes, changes his ways, and is therefore able to overcome his adversaries.⁴⁹³ This topos of a ruler beset by rebels due to their own transgressions who alters their behaviour as a result also appears in a divine context in *Atra-ḫasīs*. Here the Igigi are subjected to excessive corvée by the Anunnaki, and rebel against them as a result.⁴⁹⁴ The situation is resolved through the creation of mankind, whose role is to produce the food offerings required to feed the gods.⁴⁹⁵

Rebellion as a form of punishment for a ruler's transgressions appears frequently in Sargonid inscriptions, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. However, these punitive rebellions are always successful in overthrowing the poor ruler, who never changes his ways and overcomes the situation in the fashion of Naram-Sîn or the Anunnaki.⁴⁹⁶ This is unsurprising. The inscriptions portray enemy kings in a consistently negative fashion,⁴⁹⁷ and possess neither the unbiased perspective nor the philosophical depth to allow Assyria's foes to experience "redemption arcs". Furthermore, allies of the Assyrian Empire subjected to rebellion are rescued or avenged by the Assyrian king, not by their own abilities, whilst the incumbent king himself would never admit to making a mistake in his own inscriptions, even one which he would learn from. The incumbent king was already a model ruler at the very beginning of his reign, and "character development" was therefore both irrelevant and unnecessary.

⁴⁹³ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁹⁴ Lambert and Millard 1969: 42-53.

⁴⁹⁵ Lambert and Millard 1969: 57-67.

⁴⁹⁶ See Chapter 6.

⁴⁹⁷ For discussion of Assyrian portrayals of the Other, see Chapters 5 and 7.

5. The Agency of Rebels in the Royal Inscriptions

One neglected line of research in the study of accounts of rebellion is the attribution of blame for the event. The Assyrian royal inscriptions contain an extremely large number of names of peoples, persons, cities, lands, and regions that were the targets of campaigns by, or givers of tribute to, the Assyrian king. This variety of different ways in which the king's enemies are presented might suggest that the decision to attribute actions to a region, its inhabitants, or its ruler, was a purely stylistic choice on the behalf of the scribe. However, the person or group to whom the action of rebellion was attributed does have a variety of implications for the narrative. The most obvious of these is the question of who is guilty for initiating the rebellion. If the action is entirely attributed to individual agency, a ruler or usurper, then to what extent might that ruler's people also bear the blame? Conversely, if the rebellion is attributed to the shared agency of the people,⁴⁹⁸ are all of the people culpable, or just a specific subsection of this group?⁴⁹⁹ Further factors which might be considered in the context of the agency ascribed to different groups during accounts of rebellion are the authority of these individuals or groups to initiate actions and whether they have the legitimacy to do so. These considerations carry great importance for understanding the manner in which the Assyrian king and his scribes perceived and chose to display these events.

There has been little study of to whom specific actions can be attributed in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. What scholarship there has been written on this subject is primarily concerned with the actions attributed to the gods, or to Assyrian officials or soldiers, and the reasons why these actions were not attributed to the king.⁵⁰⁰ By contrast, studies of the actions of Assyrian enemies are not normally concerned with whether these actions are described as performed by an individual, a group, or a city or region. Often these groups are treated as being effectively interchangeable; the

⁴⁹⁸ There has been much debate within the field of philosophy on the nature and definition of individual and shared agency (for an overview of the literature, see Roth 2017). Of course, for the purpose of this study, which concerns itself with to whom actions are ascribed by a third party in works of literature, the question of how a group makes decisions and performs actions is inconsequential. I therefore use "individual agency" to describe actions attributed to a specific individual (the king, governor, sheikh, chief, etc.), and "shared agency" to describe actions attributed to a group (the people, the nobles, a city, a country, etc.).

⁴⁹⁹ The question of who is seen as guilty following a rebellion is briefly touched upon by Crouch 2009: 47, 58-59.

⁵⁰⁰ For example, Liverani 2017: 129-30; Miller 2017: 274-77, 289-301; Yamada 2000: 328-32.

important distinction in these studies is that these enemies are not Assyrian.⁵⁰¹ Thus the differentiation between the actions of individuals or a group is only highlighted when it contrasts the Assyrian king with his enemies.⁵⁰² This is partly due to the structuralist leanings of many of the scholars studying the ideological content of the inscriptions, particularly those of the “Rome school”.⁵⁰³ Structuralism’s focus on binary oppositions makes a culture’s views on foreigners an obvious topic for it to be applied to.⁵⁰⁴ However, this focus has often led to a lack of consideration of the subsets of foreigners appearing within the royal inscriptions, instead placing all of these groups into a single category of “otherness” in opposition to “Assyrian-ness”.⁵⁰⁵ This concept is best demonstrated by Zaccagnini when he writes: “everything pertaining to Assyria (the country, the king, the people, etc.) is good; everything pertaining to the outer world (the “enemy”) is bad”.⁵⁰⁶ A similar approach is demonstrated by Pongratz-Leisten, who identifies three different binary oppositions used to define the other in Sumerian literature.⁵⁰⁷ She views these as three “models” for conceiving the place of types of other in the world, but sees them as being distinct from one another, and associates each with different literary genres.⁵⁰⁸ Alterity within a text is reduced to individual binary oppositions.

This is not to say that every work on the royal inscriptions has ignored this distinction. Richardson lists the identity of the rebel leadership as one of the “event conditions” in his “descriptive-heuristic typology” of rebellion in state rhetoric.⁵⁰⁹ He identifies six possible types of leadership: a single royal leader, a single non-royal leader, multiple actors, factional, multi-polity coalition, and unknown/“the people of GN”.⁵¹⁰ However, Richardson’s methodology is intended to aid in teasing out historical details of rebellions from the available source material, which he sees as

⁵⁰¹ The studies of the Assyrian enemy by Fales (1982), and Zaccagnini (1982) remain two of the most influential on the subject.

⁵⁰² Liverani 2001: 79-85; 2017: 120-21; Van De Mieroop 2010: 422-23.

⁵⁰³ For this term, see Van De Mieroop 2010: 417.

⁵⁰⁴ For a brief overview of the impact of structuralism on the field of Ancient Near Eastern history, see Van De Mieroop 2010: 417-18.

⁵⁰⁵ For different, but related, criticism of the over-simplification resulting from the approach to alterity as a binary opposition, see Van De Mieroop 2010: 425-31. Not all structuralist scholars work with oppositions which are so rigidly binary. The prominent structuralist literary theorist Genette (2006: 430) has condemned such an approach, and prefers to also consider a middle ground.

⁵⁰⁶ Zaccagnini 1981: 260.

⁵⁰⁷ Pongratz-Leisten 2001a: 195.

⁵⁰⁸ Pongratz-Leisten 2001a: 216-17.

⁵⁰⁹ Richardson 2010: 13-15.

⁵¹⁰ Richardson 2010: 14 δ.

deliberately concealing the complexities and unique identities of individual rebellions.⁵¹¹ His focus therefore differs from mine, being concerned with who is highlighted as the leader of the rebellion, rather than which actions within the course of the rebellion are attributed to whom. Similarly, Eph'al and Eph'al-Jaruzelska have considered the different types of people who are recording as successfully dethroning the king in the Ancient Near East.⁵¹² However, their study does not consider rebellions against foreign conquerors, and therefore excludes the majority of rebellions against Assyria.⁵¹³ Furthermore, their, admittedly preliminary, conclusions are much generalised, simply acknowledging the fact that usurpers usually have military backing.⁵¹⁴

Karlsson does investigate the differentiation in the types of actions which Assyria's enemies perform in the royal inscriptions. He makes several distinctions between types of enemy. First he divides the subject of otherness into the categories of:

- “Animate Other”: the peoples, individuals, and polities in foreign regions.
- “Inanimate Other”: geographical features within the foreign landscape and the landscape itself.⁵¹⁵

Karlsson finds that the “animate Other” is generally portrayed as actively resisting Assyrian authority, whilst the “inanimate Other” is passively tamed or dominated by the Assyrian king.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, Karlsson divides the portrayal of the “Animate Other” into four different types:

- “Passive and inferior (governance-related)”: the other who is subjected to Assyrian governance and administration.
- “Passive and inferior (campaign-related)”: the other who is defeated, conquered, or killed by the king on campaign.
- “Active and inferior (campaign-related)”: the other who takes an active role in either opposing or submitting to the Assyrian king, such as fighting, rebelling, fleeing, or paying tribute.

⁵¹¹ Richardson 2010: 12-13.

⁵¹² Eph'al and Eph'al-Jaruzelska 2017: 247-61.

⁵¹³ Eph'al and Eph'al-Jaruzelska 2017: 241 n. 1.

⁵¹⁴ Eph'al and Eph'al-Jaruzelska 2017: 266-67.

⁵¹⁵ Karlsson 2017: 116-17.

⁵¹⁶ Karlsson 2017: 117.

- “Active and superior”: the future king who reads the inscription.⁵¹⁷

However, Karlsson’s study limits itself to the titles and epithets, sections of an inscription which contain little description of events, and no direct references to rebellion,⁵¹⁸ with the exception of Sargon II’s epithet discussed in Chapter 3. Of course, in this unique instance of rebellion appearing in the epithets, the motif falls under Karlsson’s category of “active and inferior (campaign-related)”, and if any other occurrences of rebellion were to be found, they would always fall under this category. Karlsson’s “post-colonialist” methodology views alterity in terms of the same binary oppositions observed by structuralist approaches. His differentiation of types of agent in the epithets is therefore very general, simply acknowledging that people are distinct from the landscapes in which they live. There is no differentiation between individuals and groups, or between types of individual or group.

These differentiations have been made in some studies on the historiography of other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. In Hittitology, Liverani has discussed the differing connotations of actions performed by “lords” and “servants” in the Proclamation of Telipinu.⁵¹⁹ There has also been a similar attempt to differentiate the actions of the people as opposed to the king, the nobility, and the priesthood within the field of biblical studies.⁵²⁰ The studies on the Hittite and biblical historiography have produced contrasting findings. In the Hebrew Bible, de Vaux finds that the “people of the land” only take political action in times of crisis.⁵²¹ Conversely, Liverani finds that rebellions led by servants were not viewed in the same negative light as rebellion amongst the nobility.⁵²² Of course, these Hittitological and Biblical examples also deal with binary oppositions: the people versus the nobility. However, these studies do demonstrate a more nuanced approach to the agents of rebellion than the distinction of bad foreign rebels and the good incumbent king usually made within Assyriology.

⁵¹⁷ Karlsson 2017: 119-20.

⁵¹⁸ For all of the epithets from Assyrian royal inscriptions which relate to alterity, see Karlsson 2017: 11-51. It should be noted that Karlsson translates *muštarḫu* “arrogant”, as “rebellious” (Karlsson 2017: 53), following Grayson (for example, RIMA 1 A.O.77.4: 9; A.O.77.18: 4; A.O.78.2: 5; A.O.78.6: 2; A.O.78.7: 1; A.O.78.13: 6). As discussed in Chapter 5, this translation is not warranted by the etymology or usage of this term.

⁵¹⁹ Liverani 2004a: 33-34, 44-47. For a full edition of the text in question, see Sturtevant and Bechtel 1935: 175-93. For recent translations, see Beckman et al. 2006: 229-34; van den Hout 2003.

⁵²⁰ For example de Vaux 1964; Tadmor 1968.

⁵²¹ de Vaux 1964: 169-72; Tadmor 1968: 49-68.

⁵²² Liverani 2004a: 33-34.

Studies on Ancient Near Eastern historiography have generally seen the alterity of the lower strata of society and of foreigners as separate and distinct concepts; the internal other is separated from the elite by status, and the external other is separated from them by geographical distance. There is not generally a consideration of any overlap between these two forms of separation in the inscriptions. Outside of the inscriptions, the interplay between social and geographical distance in the construction of identity and alterity in the Ancient Near East has sometimes been touched upon in relation to slavery.⁵²³ However, these examples relate to foreigners relocated and integrated into society, not those who continue to inhabit foreign lands. These examples make it clear that the Assyrian “enemy” should not be considered as a single, monolithic entity, but as a variety of individuals and groups in opposition to Assyria and its king.

All of this has demonstrated that the type of actions which different agents within the royal inscriptions are permitted to perform is an area of research which has received little in depth study. Previous scholarship has frequently “lumped” all groups within foreign societies into a single category of “foreignness”. It is clear that a more nuanced approach to the question of how these agents act within the inscriptions is required. This chapter will therefore explore some of the ways in which the type of action dictated the type of individual or group to whom it could be attributed. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of the present study to extend this analysis to all types of action and agent in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and I will instead focus on the relevant actions of rebellion against Assyrian power.

Excursus: On Binary Oppositions

It may seem somewhat hypocritical for me to have so strongly opposed the use of binary oppositions above, yet to have approached the subject of this dissertation as a whole from the perspective of whether each rebellion was perceived as possessing positive or negative connotations. This is, after all, itself a binary opposition. My problem here is not with the concept of binary oppositions in general, but with the manner in which they have been applied in Assyriological study. Rigid adherence to inflexible oppositions can restrict the range and scope of analysis of a text or texts. In this light, Mackenthun criticises:

⁵²³ For example, Chirichigno 1993: 61-100, 145-85; Culbertson 2011: 6-7; Westbrook 1995: 1638-76.

the clean binaries of structuralist theory whose purpose at times seems to be to reduce, or even to exorcise, the fuzziness of historical reality.⁵²⁴

By contrast, the opposition between positively and negatively connoted rebellions adopted for this dissertation is not rigid, but flexible and dependent on context. I see no problem with using oppositions in the study of ancient texts, provided we do not lose sight of the fact that they are analytical tools which a scholar brings to bear upon their sources in order to aid in their interpretation, and not necessarily an inherent structural element of a text.⁵²⁵

Blame for Hostility against Assyria in the Middle Assyrian Period

References to enemy rulers, either by name or title, are not uncommon in the inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian period.⁵²⁶ The majority of rulers mentioned in Middle Assyrian inscriptions are either individuals who are captured in battle, submissive kings giving tribute, or the targets of campaigns in which they are not explicitly referred to as the aggressor.⁵²⁷ When the enemy is stated to have initiated the hostilities, these actions are almost always performed by the people, the land, or the city rather than the ruler.⁵²⁸ There are only a handful of possible instances from Middle Assyrian inscriptions of named individuals initiating hostilities against Assyria. The first of these comes from the inscriptions of Adad-nārārī I, where Šattuara I of Ḫanigalbat becomes hostile towards Assyria.⁵²⁹ Following the conquest of Ḫanigalbat, Šattuara's son, Uasašatta rebels.⁵³⁰ The next instance also relates to Ḫanigalbat, this time in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser I. As the Assyrian army marches to Ḫanigalbat on campaign, Šattuara II seizes the watering-places and lays an ambush for Shalmaneser and his troops.⁵³¹ Finally, a fragment of clay tablet of

⁵²⁴ Mackenthun 2008: 41.

⁵²⁵ Bal 1997: 128. It should be noted that the passage from White's *The Forms of Wildness* (1978d: 154) which Bal quotes in her discussion of how best to approach binary oppositions differs somewhat from the original text (presumably due to being a translation of a Dutch translation, although I have been unable to access a copy of Bal's original Dutch-language monograph to check this).

⁵²⁶ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.76.1001: 1'-3'; A.0.77.1: 60; A.0.78.1: iii 2, iv 2; A.0.78.24: 34; RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 25, ii 45, iv 71-82, v 22, vi 24; A.0.89.7: i 17, iii 7, iv 30.

⁵²⁷ For example, RIMA 1 A.0.78.1: iii 2-3, iv 1-9; RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 25-28, ii 44-46, iv 71-90, v 8-10, v 22-25, vi 24-26; A.0.89.7: iii 7-9, iv 29-30.

⁵²⁸ RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 27-28, 46-48, 88-92; A.0.78.1: iii 21-26, iii 30-35; RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: i 89-91, ii 90-94; A.0.87.12: 3'-5'.

⁵²⁹ RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 4-14.

⁵³⁰ RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 15-51.

⁵³¹ RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 56-63.

uncertain date from Nineveh may describe aggressions by either an individual named Irištienni, possibly a king of the Lullumu, or by this man's son.⁵³² However, the tablet is badly broken, and its meaning is far from certain.

The rarity of acts of aggression by named individuals in the Middle Assyrian inscriptions gives Assyria's enemies in these texts a certain degree of anonymity. Liverani has stressed the pluralistic character of Assyria's enemies in Assyrian royal ideology,⁵³³ and this plurality is aptly demonstrated by the facelessness of rebels and aggressors against the king in texts of this period. The significance of the people being the primary agents of rebellion will be discussed in further detail below. Even when individuals are mentioned in the context of battle, their incorporation into a greater unit is often stressed. Thus when Šattuara II lays his ambush for Shalmaneser he does so with support from the armies of the Hittites and the Aḫlamu.⁵³⁴ Similarly, Tiglath-pileser I's long list of the kings of Nairi serves to illustrate the multitudinous nature of the enemies whom he faced in battle on this campaign.⁵³⁵ Of the named aggressors in Middle Assyrian inscriptions, only Uasašatta and Šattuara I are presented without the backing of a larger group.⁵³⁶ However, this need to emphasise the plurality of the king's enemies did not extend to captured or submissive kings. A ruler who had submitted without battle was not an unruly enemy, but an individual who had made the correct decision to submit to the might of Assyria.⁵³⁷ The ruler captured on campaign was also worth mentioning by name, as he was now effectively part of the spoils gained during that campaign.⁵³⁸

Developments in the Early Neo-Assyrian Period

References to individuals initiating hostility against Assyria become more frequent in the early Neo-Assyrian period. Muquru the Temannu is stated to have rebelled against Adad-nārārī II.⁵³⁹ From the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, both Nur-Adad of Dagara and Iribu, a ruler somewhere on the River Ḫarmiš, are stated to have

⁵³² RIMA 1 A.O.76.1001: 1'-6'.

⁵³³ Liverani 2001: 79-85; 2017: 120-21.

⁵³⁴ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 60-62.

⁵³⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: iv 71-83.

⁵³⁶ The particulars of the representation of Adad-nārārī I's campaigns to Ḫanigalbat will be discussed below.

⁵³⁷ Crouch 2009: 46-47.

⁵³⁸ For the portrayal of human captives in such a way, see Dewar 2017a.

⁵³⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.99.2: 49-50.

rebelled against this king.⁵⁴⁰ Furthermore, the rulers Ameka and Araštua are described as withholding tribute,⁵⁴¹ whilst Ḫulajja, the city-ruler of Ḫalziluḫa, rebels together with his people.⁵⁴² However, the majority of instances of aggression against Assyria at this time are still attributed to the people or the region, or to a group within the population.⁵⁴³ Three of the episodes in which an individual is described as rebelling also involve the people of the rebellious region. Ḫulajja rebels with his people, who are mentioned before him in the text.⁵⁴⁴ Similarly, although Nur-Adad is named as the rebel in Dagara, it is the people of the entire land of Zamua who are responsible for seizing and fortifying the pass of Babitū, and who go to battle against Ashurnasirpal.⁵⁴⁵ Muquru the Temannu trusts in his people, and also relies on the Aramaeans for support.⁵⁴⁶

From the reign of Adad-nārārī III until that of Tiglath-pileser III, there is only one possible episode in which a rebellion is attributed to the people, rather than to the ruler. A text of Tiglath-pileser III may refer to a rebellion by the people of Lusīa and another land, the name of which is now lost.⁵⁴⁷ However, this passage is badly broken, and Fuchs instead interprets the verb *ibbalkittūma*, “they crossed over/rebelled”, as referring to Assyrian troops crossing a river.⁵⁴⁸ A second passage from an inscription of this king refers to Ḫalziatbar as *mātu nabalkutu*, “a rebellious land”,⁵⁴⁹ but this land is not explicitly stated to be the aggressor in this episode.

This demonstrates that there is a clear and pronounced shift in where the blame for rebellions is directed in inscriptions of the later pre-Sargonid Neo-Assyrian period. I would suggest that a possible source of this change in focus may be the growing importance of the treaty to the functioning of Assyria’s empire at this time. Earlier royal inscriptions sometimes refer to foreign rulers being placed under an oath (*māmītu*), or being made to swear an oath (*tummû*), but the topos of rebels breaking

⁵⁴⁰ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 24; A.O.101.21: 6’-8’.

⁵⁴¹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 50.

⁵⁴² RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 102-103.

⁵⁴³ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 75-76, ii 15-16, ii 118, iii 27-28; A.O.101.17: iv 109-10; A.O.101.19: 85-86; A.O.101.22: 8’.

⁵⁴⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 102.

⁵⁴⁵ RIMA 1 A.O.101.1: ii 24-25.

⁵⁴⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.99.2: 50-51.

⁵⁴⁷ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 36: 8’-9’.

⁵⁴⁸ Fuchs 2003: 50*.

⁵⁴⁹ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 37: 23.

a treaty or oath first appears under Adad-nārārī II, and becomes more common from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III onwards.⁵⁵⁰

I have previously argued in my master's dissertation that from the reign of Adad-nārārī III, treaties and diplomacy began to replace military campaigns as Assyria's preferred method of interacting with its neighbours.⁵⁵¹ This period was one of consolidation of control over previous conquests following a phase of rapid expansion, and the Assyrian kings entered into the system of alliances and treaties already present in the north Syria and southeast Anatolia in order to secure its borders in the west. This pre-existing network of treaties between western states is demonstrated by the ubiquity of coalition politics in the region at this time,⁵⁵² and Assyria became increasingly involved in this system.⁵⁵³

The Effects of the Treaty System on Attribution of Blame for Rebellion

The effect which this had on the royal inscriptions was to shift the focus of the narrative concerning rebellion. In inscriptions prior to the reign of Esarhaddon, the Assyrian king is only ever described as entering into, or being bound by, oaths

⁵⁵⁰ See Table 5.

⁵⁵¹ Dewar 2015: 40-43, 54-57, 63-64.

⁵⁵² Dewar 2015: 33-38.

⁵⁵³ The Sefire Treaties (Fitzmyer 1995), Aramaic treaties between the rulers of Arpad and the otherwise unattested kingdom of *KTK*, may represent part of the network of alliances between western polities. Alternatively, it has been suggested that these texts are in fact the Aramaic versions of an Assyrian vassal treaty, and that Bar-Ga'yah, the king of *KTK* named in them, should be identified as either the Assyrian king or the Assyrian official Šamši-ilu (Garelli 1991: 48; Ikeda 1993; Kuhrt 1995: 492-93; SAA 2: xxvii-xxviii). Several attempts at determining an identity for Bar-Ga'yah as a native ruler of a polity in the west (for example, Lipiński 2000: 221-31; Na'aman 1978) have been based on rather suspect methodologies involving a heavy reliance on so-called "klang klang" etymologies, where a disproportionate level of emphasis is placed on homophony between names (for this term, see Barjamovic 2011: 65-66; Bryce 2005: 41-42). I must admit in hindsight that the analysis of this text in my masters' dissertation (Dewar 2015: 52-53) falls into this trap. The argument for an Assyrian identity for Bar-Ga'yah is based on the slightly firmer ground of the inclusion of Aššur and Mullissu as the first two divine witnesses in the treaties (Barre 1985). However, the existence of two boundary stones from the reign of Adad-nārārī III between western states, one of which was reconfirmed during the reign of Shalmaneser IV, demonstrate that Assyria still intervened in the region to protect its allies from hostile neighbours. In this light, it is possible that Bar-Ga'yah was a pro-Assyrian ruler in the region, and the inclusion of the Assyrian gods at the head of the treaty was due to the possibility of Assyrian involvement in any dispute between the two parties. Alternatively, Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III both mention settling Assyrians in the west in their inscriptions (RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 82-83; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2 ii 34, ii 38), and Ashurnasirpal gives us examples of Assyrian settlers under previous kings leaving their cities and becoming independent from the Assyrian state (RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 102-103, ii 7-8). Might *KTK* represent a similar Assyrian enclave in the west? These musings are speculative, but they do demonstrate the complexities of identifying the elusive second party in the Sefire Treaty.

(*māmītu*) and treaties (*adê*) with individual rulers, rather than groups of people.⁵⁵⁴

Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal both record instances of oaths and treaties sworn by the Assyrian people to their king,⁵⁵⁵ but both of the earlier instances of oaths sworn between a ruler and a group of people are portrayed negatively. The rebellious Assyrian prince Aššur-daʾin-apla causes the people of Assyria to enter into rebellion by causing them to swear an oath.⁵⁵⁶ Similarly, in the reign of Sennacherib the Babylonians send treasures from the Esagil to Elam, and swear an oath to Umman-menanu.⁵⁵⁷ Although Assyrian treaties often include the people of a region as one of the parties involved, they are normally a secondary group after the ruler of that region.⁵⁵⁸ The exception to this is a loyalty oath sworn by a group of Babylonians to Ashurbanipal.⁵⁵⁹ This text is also unusual for its first-person perspective from the viewpoint of the Babylonians swearing the oath.⁵⁶⁰

The examples given above suggest that there was a proper etiquette to be observed in the enacting of treaties and loyalty oaths. It does not appear to have been appropriate for a ruler to bind a group of people to an oath or treaty without the ruler of those people also being a party involved in the treaty. A ruler could bind his own people to an oath or treaty, but needed to go through the correct authority to do so for foreign peoples. Thus the oath sworn by the Babylonians to the Elamite king was not a just act as it was not performed with involvement from the king of Babylon. By the same logic, Aššur-daʾin-apla is not appropriately positioned to bind the Assyrians to an oath directly, as he is not the king of Assyria. Within the context of the proposed growing importance of the treaty and loyalty oath in the late pre-Sargonid Neo-Assyrian period, the focus of accounts of rebellion shifted towards the ruler, who was the primary party addressed in treaties and oaths.

⁵⁵⁴ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 10-11; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: v 14-16; A.O.99.2: 49-50; A.O.100.5: 25; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 20: 18'; Tiglath-pileser III 22: 8'; Tiglath-pileser III 47: obv. 19; Fuchs 1993 *Ann*: 68-69, 72, 149-50, 256-57; RINAP 3/1 4: 42.

⁵⁵⁵ RINAP 4 1: i 15-19, i 50-51, i 80; BIWA A: i 18-22.

⁵⁵⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 41-43.

⁵⁵⁷ RINAP 3/2 146: obv. 11-13.

⁵⁵⁸ SAA 2 5: i 3; 6: 4-5; 8: 8-12; Lauinger 2012: T i 11-12.

⁵⁵⁹ SAA 2 9.

⁵⁶⁰ Grayson 1987: 140.

Adad-nārārī I and Uasašatta: An Early Instance of Treaties in the Royal Inscriptions

Although this focus on individuals in the context of oaths and treaties is less common before the Neo-Assyrian period, the connection between oaths and individual foreign rulers can already be seen in the account of Uasašatta of Ḫanigalbat's rebellion against Adad-nārārī I. The narrative of this passage concerns Uasašatta breaking an oath sworn by his father to Assyria,⁵⁶¹ and the focus is therefore on the king's individual agency in rebelling, rather than on the shared agency of his people.

An interesting aspect of this campaign account is Ḫanigalbat's political situation at the beginning of Adad-nārārī I's war against Uasašatta's father Šattuara. The texts portray Ḫanigalbat as an independent kingdom prior to its conquest by Adad-nārārī,⁵⁶² but in reality the region had been made into a Hittite vassal state following Suppiluliuma I's conquest of Mittani.⁵⁶³ The destruction of the Mittani state had created a power vacuum in northern Mesopotamia that was filled by the fledgling Middle Assyrian Empire, and North Syria became a contested region between Ḫatti and Assyria during the reign of Aššur-uballiṭ I.⁵⁶⁴ The Šattiwaza treaty states that the region briefly defected to the Assyrian camp before being brought back under Hittite control,⁵⁶⁵ where it apparently remained up until Adad-nārārī's campaigns; the sources are somewhat murky on Ḫanigalbat's status during this period, but the fact that Ramesses II lists troops from Naharin (Mittani) amongst the Hittite forces at Kadesh is a fairly strong indication that Šattuara was a Hittite vassal prior to his defeat by the Assyrian king.⁵⁶⁶

Although this may be how events had unfurled in reality, the Assyrian inscriptional account does not entirely follow this narrative.⁵⁶⁷ The text presents Šattuara as an independent ruler who attacks Assyria, and is then defeated and subjugated by the Assyrian king.⁵⁶⁸ Only after Šattuara dies, having lived out the rest of his days as an Assyrian vassal, does Ḫatti appear in the text. Uasašatta, the rebellious new king of

⁵⁶¹ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 4-17.

⁵⁶² RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 4-6.

⁵⁶³ Bryce 2005: 155-59, 161-80; Wilhelm 1995: 1251-52.

⁵⁶⁴ Bryce 2005: 184-85; Harrak 1987: 22-58.

⁵⁶⁵ Beckman 1991: 44.

⁵⁶⁶ Harrak 1987: 88-93, 119-28.

⁵⁶⁷ This campaign account is quoted in full in Chapter 3.

⁵⁶⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 4-14.

Ḫanigalbat, sends payment to the Hittites in return for aid in casting off the Assyrian yoke, but does not gain the support which he is looking for.⁵⁶⁹

This observation on the status of Šattuara within the narrative of this campaign account has implications for the message conveyed by the text. Šattuara begins the account as an independent ruler, is defeated through the will of the gods,⁵⁷⁰ and becomes an Assyrian vassal. Uasašatta ascends the throne as an Assyrian vassal, and rebels in the hope of escaping his vassalage to Assyria. However, he does not attempt to regain the independence previously enjoyed by his father. Instead he merely tries to find a new suzerain in the form of Ḫatti. Having been reduced to the status of vassal kingdom, Ḫanigalbat is now incapable of existing as an independent state.⁵⁷¹

Ḫanigalbat's reliance on its more powerful neighbours at this time may have been the political reality, but the differences between Ḫanigalbat's status at the beginning of the campaign in the inscriptions and its probable status in actuality results in a different message in the texts than if the region began the narrative under Hittite influence, as was in fact the case. Uasašatta's plan to defect from Assyria to Ḫatti ends in failure. This is far from surprising within the narrative. Adad-nārārī is an independent king with the support of the gods, whilst his vassal is both a subordinate and an oath breaker. Furthermore, the Hittites have no interest in helping the rebel king; they take his payments without offering any aid in return, effectively robbing him.⁵⁷² In formulating his plan, Uasašatta has made several errors of judgement:

- By attempting to defect to the Hittite camp, he has broken his oath to Adad-nārārī. The gods are therefore certain to punish him for his crime.
- By looking to the Hittites as allies, he has failed to account for their unscrupulous nature.

The rebellion is therefore doomed to failure. Furthermore Adad-nārārī is entirely justified in his treatment of the oath-breaker; the city of Irridu is destroyed in a symbolically thorough fashion, and the royal family are deported to Aššur:

⁵⁶⁹ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 18-20.

⁵⁷⁰ For the conception of victory in warfare as resulting from divine support, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁷¹ Liverani (2004e: 71-72) makes a similar observation about the status of Kizzuwatna in the Šunaššura Treaty.

⁵⁷² The unsound nature of alliances between Assyria's enemies will be discussed in detail below.

*ana šāšu aššat ēkallišu mārīšu mārātišu u ummānātišu ištu Irridu ušēšišunūti
šallussunu kamûssunu u namkuršu ana ālija Aššur ubla Irrida u ālāni ša ḫalši
Irrida akšud ašrup u aqqur u kudimme elišunu azru*

Concerning him (Uasašatta): his wife of the palace, his sons and daughters, and his people I brought out of Irridu. I brought them as captives (together with) their booty and his (Uasašatta's) property to my city, Aššur. I conquered, burned, and demolished Irrida and the cities of the district of Irrida and scattered *kudimmu*-seeds over them.⁵⁷³

The justification for these actions is built into the structure of the text; the campaign against Šattuara provides the context for explaining the harsh punishments enacted upon Ḫanigalbat following the campaign against Uasašatta.

This use of past events to justify the king's actions bears parallels to the Hittite practice of including a "historical prologue" in treaties and decrees which provided justification for the enactment of the document.⁵⁷⁴ Whilst this may at a glance seem to provide evidence in support of those who have suggested that Hittite historiography influenced the formation of the Assyrian annalistic tradition,⁵⁷⁵ a similar use of an apologetic historical prologue appears in a much earlier inscription of the otherwise unknown Assyrian king Puzur-Sîn.⁵⁷⁶ This text begins with a brief account of this king's overthrow of his predecessor Asīnum, a descendant of Šamšī-Adad I, before describing the destruction of Šamšī-Adad's palace, which is not rebuilt, but replaced with a wall instead.⁵⁷⁷ Puzur-Sîn's decision to destroy the palace of Šamšī-Adad I and not rebuild it is a marked departure from the usual Assyrian practice.⁵⁷⁸ The "prologue" concerning Asīnum's deposal highlights the foreign extraction of Šamšī-Adad and his line in advance of the destruction of the palace, providing a reason that this structure needed to be eradicated. Adad-nārārī's "prologue" concerning Šattuara has a similar apologetic function.

The need of Adad-nārārī to justify his deeds arose due to Ḫanigalbat's former standing as a major power. The kings of Mittani had previously been "great kings" on

⁵⁷³ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 45-51.

⁵⁷⁴ For a detailed study of this element of Hittite treaties, see Altman 2004a.

⁵⁷⁵ Grayson 1975: 2.

⁵⁷⁶ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001.

⁵⁷⁷ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001: 1-35.

⁵⁷⁸ For a discussion of Puzur-Sîn's actions, see Galter 2002-2005.

a par with those of Egypt, Ḫatti, and Babylonia. Although the region's stature had been diminished with its loss of independence following its conquest by Suppiluliuma I, it still held some status as an important kingdom. This is demonstrated by a response by a Hittite king, most likely Muršili III (Urḫi-Teššub), to a letter sent by his Assyrian counterpart, most likely Adad-nārārī I,⁵⁷⁹ in which the Hittite king writes:

You keep speaking about the defeat[?] of Wašašatta and the conquest[?] of the land of Ḫurri. You conquered by force of arms. You conquered by So you've become a "Great King" have you?⁵⁸⁰

Mittani may have lost its independence, but the memory of its imperial past still afforded it some level of status. By conquering this prized territory, Adad-nārārī felt justified in announcing himself a major player on the international stage.⁵⁸¹

All of these factors meant that the Assyrian king needed to provide justification for his severe treatment of Ḫanigalbat. This justification was provided in the form of the oath imposed upon Šattuara, which Uasašatta had broken. A parallel can be found in the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic, where the frequent references to the many transgressions by the Babylonian king Kaštiliaš against his treaty with Tukultī-Ninurta I justify the Assyrian king's conquest of Babylon.⁵⁸² In both cases, the problem that needs to be justified is not simply the conquest of the region in question as a vassal state, but the annexation of that region under the rule of the Assyrian king. However, there is one major difference between these two kings' justifications of the annexation of a foreign power (or former power) to Assyria; Adad-nārārī places his "historical prologue" in his inscriptions, whilst Tukultī-Ninurta mentions the crimes of Kaštiliaš in his epic, but not in his inscriptions. Kravitz has argued that the lack of justification in Tukultī-Ninurta's inscriptions is due to the fact that the poem and the inscriptions were intended for different audiences and worked within different ideological frameworks. The epic needed to demonstrate the validity of this king's conquest of Babylon to the

⁵⁷⁹ Liverani (2001: 42) instead identifies the two kings as Tudḫaliya IV and Tukultī-Ninurta I, but the reference to Uasašatta makes Urḫi-Teššub and Adad-nārārī I more likely candidates.

⁵⁸⁰ KUB 23.102: 1'-5'. Trans. Hoffner 2009: 323.

⁵⁸¹ Aššur-uballiṭ I had previously adopted the title of Great King in a letter to the Egyptian Pharaoh (Moran 1992: 38-39). The fact that Adad-nārārī still felt the need to justify his own claim to the title suggests that Aššur-uballiṭ's announcement of his self-appointed new status was not especially well-received on the international stage.

⁵⁸² Kravitz 2010: 122-24; Machinist 1976: 457-58.

other major powers of the Late Bronze Age, whose dignitaries and officials might have heard it recited during visits to Assyria, whereas the inscriptions did not.⁵⁸³

The differences between the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic and that king's inscriptions raise the question why Adad-nārārī felt the need to justify his actions in his inscriptions in a way that his descendant did not. I would argue that the answer to this question can be found in a peculiarity of some of the inscriptions which contain the accounts of the Ḫanigalbat campaigns. At least some of these texts were originally intended to be deposited at a palace that Adad-nārārī was building at Taidu, Uasašatta's "royal city".⁵⁸⁴ In light of this king's declaration of his increased status upon defeating Uasašatta, the decision to build a palace in a major city of Ḫanigalbat carries a strong message. Adad-nārārī lays claim to the kingship of Ḫanigalbat's capital, and therefore gains his place as a great king in the Late Bronze Age "club of great powers".

Weeks has argued that Adad-nārārī included the account of the conquest of Ḫanigalbat in his inscriptions in order to justify these building works at Taidu, which he views as differing from the norm by being carried out on a foreign palace as opposed to an Assyrian temple.⁵⁸⁵ By choosing to build at Taidu, Adad-nārārī recorded his claim over the city, and the rest of the once-great kingdom of Mitanni, for posterity. He was therefore careful to stress that he was entirely justified in doing so, as it was now his by right of conquest. Furthermore this conquest had been carried out in self-defence, and only after further aggression had the Assyrian king enacted harsh punishments on the region. If a major piece of Adad-nārārī's legacy was to be the conquest of Ḫanigalbat, then that legacy could not be tarnished by the possibility of the king's improper conduct. The breaking of the treaty by Uasašatta therefore forms an integral element of the narrative.

Treaties and the Royal Ideology of Tiglath-pileser III

Although treaties seem to have taken on a greater importance in Assyrian relations with neighbouring regions in the period from the reign of Adad-nārārī III to that of Aššur-nārārī V, explicit references in the inscriptions to rebels breaking an oath or

⁵⁸³ Kravitz 2010: 124-29.

⁵⁸⁴ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 26-27.

⁵⁸⁵ Weeks 2007: 81-82.

treaty only become common beginning in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III.⁵⁸⁶ Tutammu of Unqi, Samsi, queen of the Arabs, Mitinti of Ashkelon, and Zaḡiru of Bīt-Ša'alli are all explicitly stated to have broken an oath with Assyria.⁵⁸⁷ This may seem surprising, as Tiglath-pileser III abandoned the system of diplomacy and treaties adopted by his predecessors in favour of a more traditional model of conquest and military campaigns. In this respect, Tiglath-pileser III is often viewed as having rescued the empire from a period of extreme weakness, and many of the regions which he conquered are viewed as having been lost to the growing imperial power of Urartu during the reign of Aššur-nārārī V.⁵⁸⁸

Sarduri II of Urartu did campaign into regions previously within the Assyrian sphere of influence, but he did not conquer the Assyrian vassal kingdom of Kummuḥ until after the outbreak of the rebellion which saw Tiglath-pileser III take the throne,⁵⁸⁹ and Arpad most likely joined the Urartian camp only after the death of Aššur-nārārī V.⁵⁹⁰ The conquest of Kummuḥ is often highlighted as compelling evidence for the weakness of Assyria during Aššur-nārārī's reign, but this does not seem entirely appropriate. Clearly, Urartu was able to campaign into the peripheral regions of Assyrian territory during this period, but it was only with the onset of civil war in Assyria that Sarduri seized the opportunity to conquer such a staunch Assyrian ally as Kummuḥ. Assyria may not have possessed the same military might as it had in the earlier Neo-Assyrian period, or would do under the Sargonids, but it was still powerful enough that it took a major crisis in the Assyrian heartland for Sarduri to detach this important ally from its influence.⁵⁹¹

Furthermore, by usurping the throne, this king had voided the treaties between Assyria and its neighbours.⁵⁹² Esarhaddon's succession treaty explicitly states that in the event of a usurper taking the throne, the vassal should rebel against this usurper

⁵⁸⁶ Fales 1982: 430-31; Liverani 2017: 134. Earlier kings' inscriptions include the withholding of tribute, or the initiation of violence by a king mentioned as having sworn an oath earlier in the text, such as in Adad-nārārī I's account of his Ḥanigalbat campaigns, but there is only one explicit statement that an Assyrian vassal broke their treaty or oath with Assyria prior to Tiglath-pileser III (see Table 5).

⁵⁸⁷ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 12: 3'; Tiglath-pileser III 20: 18'; Tiglath-pileser III 22: 8'; Tiglath-pileser III 47: 19.

⁵⁸⁸ RINAP 1: 1; Grayson 1982: 276; Radner 2008a: 137; Yamada 2014: 44.

⁵⁸⁹ Dewar 2015: 2-3; Hipp 2014: 89 Table 1; Tadmor 2008: 268.

⁵⁹⁰ Tadmor 2008: 268.

⁵⁹¹ Sarduri had probably already conquered Kummuḥ's northwestern neighbour Melid at some earlier point in Aššur-nārārī's reign (CTU 1 A 09-04: 1-2; Hipp 2014: 89 Table 1), but had not been able to advance any further in this direction until after the outbreak of revolt in Assyria.

⁵⁹² Dewar 2015: 52-53.

and do everything in their power to overthrow him.⁵⁹³ A scenario such as this appears to have occurred at the outset of Tiglath-pileser III's reign. Regions such as Arpad seized upon this opportunity to secede from the Assyrian empire with the support of Urartu,⁵⁹⁴ whilst the civil war in Assyria allowed Urartu the opportunity to conquer other former vassals of its rival, such as Kummuh. Tiglath-pileser was keen to avoid being seen as usurper in his inscriptions, and avoids any reference to his succession.⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, several bricks from Aššur bear an inscription in which this king claims to be the son of Adad-nārārī III.⁵⁹⁶ Other than a strong tendency to avoid mentioning his genealogy, there is nothing in Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions which would highlight his position as a usurper. The references to broken oaths and treaties should therefore be viewed as resulting from this king's need to reinforce the legitimacy and legality of his rule.

An Exception to the Rule

This emphasis of the individual ruler as opposed to his people continues to be present in accounts of rebellion during the Sargonid period.⁵⁹⁷ However, one major exception to this rule throughout the Assyrian inscriptional tradition is rebellions which are portrayed as being successful in overthrowing their rulers. These accounts differ somewhat from the norm; most of the rebellions described in Assyrian royal inscriptions are portrayed as ending in total failure. The Assyrian king's victory is never really in doubt. The rebels surrender or are defeated in battle, and are then punished in a suitably brutal and theatrical fashion.⁵⁹⁸ In fact, a rebellion's successful suppression was the primary criteria for its inclusion in royal inscriptions.⁵⁹⁹ However, not all rebellions described in the inscriptions entirely failed to meet all of their objectives. Many insurrections are directed against the local ruler or governor of the respective city or region. Often these rebellions are successful in overthrowing this ruler and either killing or imprisoning them, or driving them into exile. It is at this point

⁵⁹³ SAA 2 6: 302-17.

⁵⁹⁴ Dewar 2015: 2-3.

⁵⁹⁵ Tadmor 1981: 26-28.

⁵⁹⁶ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 58: 2; Yamada 2003a: 270*.

⁵⁹⁷ For example Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 23, 68-69, 72, 204-208; RINAP 3/1 1: 6-7; 17: iv 61-65, v 2-6; 22: v 17; RINAP 4 1: ii 40-41, ii 65-67, iv 23-24; 30: obv. 17', rev. 2'-3'; BIWA A: i 53-57, i 118-19, ii 49-51, ii 114-15, iii 70-86, iii 96-106.

⁵⁹⁸ For discussion of the graphic punishments portrayed in Assyrian inscriptions and palace reliefs, see Richardson 2007: 196-200; Radner 2015: 103-17.

⁵⁹⁹ Frahm 2016: 81-82.

that the Assyrian king intervenes to depose the usurper and re-establish control.⁶⁰⁰ These accounts of internal strife in foreign regions are usually short, but stand out as the only instances in which rebellions in the royal inscriptions are shown to be successful, at least in their primary stages. These episodes provide a useful insight into some aspects of Assyrian notions of both rebellion and proper rule, and ideas concerning the attribution of blame and agency of rebellion. They are therefore deserving of in-depth study.

The Successful Overthrow of Foreign and Assyrian Kings

Episodes in which a rebellion is stated to have resulted in the overthrow of a foreign ruler appear frequently in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.⁶⁰¹ All of these episodes come from texts written in the period from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II to that of Ashurbanipal. There are also descriptions of three rebellions within Assyria itself which resulted in the death of the incumbent Assyrian king.⁶⁰² However, these episodes differ somewhat from those concerning foreign regions. Šamšī-Adad V's inscriptions pass straight from describing the rebellion of Aššur-da'in-apla against Shalmaneser III to an account of his own victory over the rebels, omitting both his father's death and his own accession.⁶⁰³ Similarly Esarhaddon's "apology" skips from the then crown prince Esarhaddon going into hiding to his brothers contesting the throne without any mention of Sennacherib's death.⁶⁰⁴ Only in an inscription of the Old Assyrian ruler Puzur-Sîn is the overthrow of an Assyrian king mentioned explicitly.⁶⁰⁵ This text was written roughly a millennium before those of Šamšī-Adad V and Esarhaddon, long before the genre of Assyrian annals was first conceived, and is not entirely comparable with the other two examples, but even here it is stressed that the deposed king, Asīnum, is of foreign descent, not a true Assyrian at all.⁶⁰⁶ References to the death of the king are similarly rare in inscriptions and hymns

⁶⁰⁰ Oded 1992: 69-75.

⁶⁰¹ See Table 6.

⁶⁰² RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001: 1-8; RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 39-53; RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11. For the instances of the overthrow of Assyrian kings which are not mentioned in the royal inscriptions, see Grayson 1985: 9-10.

⁶⁰³ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 39-53.

⁶⁰⁴ RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11.

⁶⁰⁵ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001: 1-14.

⁶⁰⁶ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001: 12-13, 23-25. For the methods by which this text conveys Asīnum's alterity, see Karlsson 2017: 57-58.

from other parts of the Ancient Near East,⁶⁰⁷ and it is clear that this was a subject deemed unsuitable for inscriptions. This observation detracts from the suggestion by several scholars that the omission of Sennacherib's death from Esarhaddon's apology could be a sign of this king's involvement in his father's assassination.⁶⁰⁸

There were no such concerns about recounting the murder of foreign rulers during rebellions. There are nine episodes which describe the death of a ruler during a rebellion, whilst six more accounts of rebellions state that the incumbent ruler was either imprisoned or driven into exile, and another recounts the exile of Assyrian officials from a region during a rebellion.⁶⁰⁹ Although the inclusion of these events in the Royal inscriptions was not taboo in the way that the assassination of an Assyrian king was, accounts of the murder of Assyrian vassals were still problematic from an ideological perspective. In the royal inscriptions, rebellions directed against Assyrian rule always ended in failure. The rebels were soundly beaten by the Assyrian king, and their defeat was a clear indication of the illegitimacy of their actions. The inscriptions often state that a king's victories were due to his piety and support from the gods.⁶¹⁰ Conversely, his enemies' defeat was due to their evil acts and the fact that their gods had abandoned them.⁶¹¹ By failing to throw off the Assyrian yoke, the rebels therefore demonstrated that their cause lacked divine approval.⁶¹²

In contrast to the demonstrable failure of most rebellions in the inscriptions, rebels who had overthrown their own ruler had already succeeded in the initial aims of their uprising. There was therefore an implication that the rebellion was divinely sanctioned; the previous ruler was a bad king whom the gods had abandoned, or the usurper had the support of the gods. Neither of these possible interpretations would have been acceptable in the inscriptions. The deposed ruler was almost always an Assyrian vassal, and the correlation of vassalage to Assyria and poor kingship would paint the Assyrian king and Assyrian imperialism in a very unfavourable light. Furthermore, the Assyrian response was usually portrayed as being carried out to

⁶⁰⁷ Michalowski 1977: 220-21, 224; Suriano 2010: 3-5. When the death of a king does appear in Mesopotamian literature, this is usually by virtue of its unusual nature (Hallo 1991: 164; Michalowski 1977: 220-21).

⁶⁰⁸ Von Soden 1954: 118; de Jong 2003-04: 115; Knapp 2015: 323.

⁶⁰⁹ Table 6.

⁶¹⁰ For the motif of divine intervention in warfare in Assyrian sources, see Oded 1992: 39-41. For divine intervention in the Ancient Near East more generally, see Weinfeld 1983; Liverani 2001: 101-107.

⁶¹¹ Oded 1992: 38-41.

⁶¹² For a more detailed discussion of the divine-legalistic framework for Ancient Near Eastern conceptions of warfare, see Chapter 2.

rescue or avenge the deposed ruler, and these episodes almost always end with the Assyrian king installing a new ruler or placing the region under direct Assyrian rule.⁶¹³

These concerns about divine support were not entirely hypothetical, as at least one recorded group of rebels are known to have actively attempted to demonstrate their divine backing. A letter to Esarhaddon describing the situation in Harran during the rebellion of Sasi includes a record of the words spoken by a slave girl presented by the rebels as a prophet speaking the word of the goddess Nusku, and denouncing Esarhaddon as a false king.⁶¹⁴ Similarly, Esarhaddon himself appears to have used omens as evidence of his legitimacy during the war of succession following Sennacherib's death.⁶¹⁵ Divine approval was presumably claimed by all rebellions against Assyrian imperialism. The inscriptions therefore had to demonstrate that the rebellion lacked support from the gods, and that the Assyrian king's support of the deposed ruler and enmity towards the usurper were therefore justified.

Popular Rebellion and the Popular Selection of Rulers

The majority of episodes from the inscriptions in which a rebellion is explicitly stated to be successful in overthrowing the incumbent ruler follow a similar pattern. The rebellion is ascribed to a group of people rather than an individual. Usually this group is either the nobles of the city or region,⁶¹⁶ or the people more generally.⁶¹⁷ In one instance, the overthrow of Aza of Mannea in Sargon II's inscriptions, the guilty party consists of several of Aza's governors.⁶¹⁸ In another, the imprisonment of Padi of Ekron, all three of these groups are described as being responsible for the rebellion.⁶¹⁹ After overthrowing the incumbent ruler, this group of people then select a new leader. This motif is not always present. For example, the annals of Ashurnasirpal II describe the murder of Amme-ba'li of Bīt-Zamāni by his nobles, but there is no mention of him being replaced by anyone as sheikh.⁶²⁰ However, the

⁶¹³ Oded 1992: 61-68.

⁶¹⁴ SAA 16 59: rev. 2'-5'. For the historical context of this revolt, and a reconstruction of the events, see Nissinen 1998: 108-53; Radner 2003: 173-77.

⁶¹⁵ Parpola 1980: 179-80 n. 41.

⁶¹⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 118.

⁶¹⁷ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 75; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 79-80; A.O.102.14: 147-48; Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 20-21, 96-97, 166-67, 244-46; BIWA A: iii 8; B: vii 54; H: 3'-4'.

⁶¹⁸ Fuchs 1993: *Prunk.* 36-39.

⁶¹⁹ RINAP 3/1 4: 42.

⁶²⁰ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 74-76.

Kurkh Monolith gives a more detailed account in which Ashurnasirpal flays Bur-Ramānu, a *bēl ḫiṭṭi*, “guilty person”, and installs Amme-ba’li’s brother Ilānu in his place.⁶²¹ The implication is that Bur-Ramānu was Amme-ba’li’s replacement, but the details of his accession are not stated. The motif of the people choosing their ruler also appears in episodes from the royal inscriptions in which the overthrow of the previous ruler is not mentioned. In Sennacherib’s Nebi Yunus Inscription, the usurper Nergal-ušēzib is placed on the throne of Babylon by the king of Elam at the behest of the Babylonians.⁶²² Similarly Sennacherib’s annals describe how the Babylonians later elevated Mušēzib-Marduk to kingship over themselves.⁶²³

The motif of the people selecting their ruler is not unique to the Assyrian royal inscriptions. In both the Old Akkadian royal inscriptions and the Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian literary texts which describe the “great revolt” against Narām-Sîn, the leader of the rebellion, Ipḫur-Kiš of Kiš is described as being elevated to kingship by his people.⁶²⁴ The inscriptions also describe the accession of Amar-Girid of Uruk in the same fashion.⁶²⁵ Furthermore, the Synchronistic History states that the Babylonian king Karaḫardaš was murdered by his Kassite soldiers, who then replace him with Nazibugaš,⁶²⁶ and Chronicle P assigns a similar fate to Kadašman-

⁶²¹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.19: 91. For Ilānu as the brother of Amme-ba’li, rather than that of Bur-Ramānu, see PNA s.v. *Ammi-Ba’al*: 103; Sano 2015: 62. For the significance of the name Bur-Ramānu, see Richardson 2010: 10 n. 46.

⁶²² RINAP 3/1 34: 27-29.

⁶²³ RINAP 3/1 22: v28-30.

⁶²⁴ RIME 2 E2.1.4.6: i 1’-4’; Westenholz 1997 15: 1-4; 16A: 15-16; 16B: 26-28. For the significance of the name Ipḫur-Kiš, see Güterbock 1934: 78; Jacobsen 1943: 165 n. 35; 1978-79: 1-2 n. 4; Postgate 1992a: 269-70.

⁶²⁵ RIME 2 E2.1.4.6: i 5’-9’. For other possible examples of the popular selection of rulers in the Third Millennium, see Postgate 1992a: 269-70. For the proposal of popular selection as an aspect of early kingship, see Jacobsen 1943: 165-66; 1976: 78-79. In opposition to this theory of early Mesopotamian “democracy”, Seri (2005: 159-62, 178-80) characterises the conclusions drawn by Jacobsen and others as “no more than educated guesses”, and criticises Jacobsen’s methodological approach of using literary texts to reconstruct early political structures.

Tinney (1995: 8-14) has argued that the elevation of Ipḫur-Kiš to kingship by his people in the Old Babylonian literary texts represents an Old Babylonian, Amorite-influenced criticism of the divinely appointed, hereditary kingship of the Old Akkadian period. However, Tinney’s argument is based in part on an inaccurate translation of the relevant passage in the Old Akkadian royal inscriptions (Westenholz 1999: 21 n. 27), and the popular election of Ipḫur-Kiš is in fact present in Narām-Sîn’s inscriptions, as stated above. This makes Tinney’s argument untenable.

⁶²⁶ Glassner 2004 10: 8-12.

Harbe.⁶²⁷ This text also records that the Babylonian king Adad-šuma-ušur was placed on the throne by the Babylonian nobles following a rebellion.⁶²⁸

Although foreign usurpers in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are often placed on the throne by their people or nobles, this is not always the case. Several rulers seize the throne for themselves. However, there is often an element of opportunism about these events. For example, Hazael seizes the Damascene throne only after the death of his predecessor Hadad-ezer,⁶²⁹ and in Sennacherib's annals Nergal-ušēzib takes control of Babylonia during a period of confusion in the land.⁶³⁰ Elsewhere, usurpers take power with foreign backing. In the inscriptions of Sargon II, both Jau-bi'di of Hamath and Merodach-baladan II of Babylonia usurp the throne without any mention being made of the previous ruler. Both of them do so with the support of foreigners: the people of Arpad, Šimirra, Damascus, and Samaria for Jau-bi'di,⁶³¹ and various tribal groups and the Elamite king for Merodach-baladan.⁶³²

Popular Rebellion and the Correct Order of Things

All of these motifs share a common theme: usurpers lack the power to seize the throne solely through their own actions. They must instead rely on the actions of others or on external events to provide them with the means or the opportunity to become king. This political impotence is also demonstrated through the occasional description of non-royal usurpers as *mar lā mammāna*, "son of a nobody".⁶³³ This epithet also appears several times outside of the royal inscriptions, often with connotations of insignificance and lack of political power. The Assyrian general Bēl-ibni uses the term in a self-deprecating fashion whilst pleading to Ashurbanipal.⁶³⁴ In the Fable of the Fox, the fox cries to the wolf and the dog that they should not cause

⁶²⁷ Glassner 2004 45: i 9'-11'

⁶²⁸ Glassner 2004 45: iv 8-9. Yamada (2003b: 165, 175 n. 43) has proposed that this event is also recorded in an epical poem in praise of Adad-šuma-ušur (BHLT: 64-75), contrary to Grayson (BHLT 57-58), who interprets this text as an account of a rebellion against Adad-šuma-ušur by his nobles.

⁶²⁹ RIMA 3 A.O.102.40: i 25-27.

⁶³⁰ RINAP 3/1 22: iv 46-48. For the differences between the accounts of Nergal-ušēzib's accession in the annals and in the Nebi Yunus Inscription, see Chapter 7.

⁶³¹ Fuchs 1993 *Prunk*: 33-34.

⁶³² Fuchs 1993 *Ann*: 255-59. For the pluralistic nature of Assyria's enemies in the royal inscriptions more generally, see Liverani 2017: 120-21.

⁶³³ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 76, i 81; RIMA 3 A.O.102.40: i 26; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47: rev. 15'; 49: rev. 28; RINAP 3/2 147: 6.

⁶³⁴ ABL 521: 6.

him, a son of a nobody, distress,⁶³⁵ presumably a proclamation of his harmlessness and inconsequence. Conversely, Nabopolassar's inscriptions boast that even though he was a son of a nobody, his piety allowed him to rise justly to kingship.⁶³⁶ Although this last example still demonstrates a reliance on external forces for political power, here the external force is an appropriate divine authority.

The accession of Nabopolassar through divine favour highlights an important and relevant tenet of Mesopotamia royal ideology. Legitimate kingship was a gift to be bestowed by the gods. This idea is explicitly stated in the Sumerian Kinglist,⁶³⁷ as well as in various other literary texts, most notably a myth describing the creation of mankind and the first king,⁶³⁸ and appears frequently in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. The Assyrian king was appointed by the gods, who chose him to be king before his birth, and bestowed upon him the qualities and attributes appropriate for kingship.⁶³⁹ He was therefore the gods' representative on earth,⁶⁴⁰ and was uniquely placed to make decisions concerning the rule of other regions and peoples on their behalf. The authority of the ruler or governor of a foreign region stemmed from the Assyrian king's decision that they were the appropriate person to rule there. Thus, whilst the accession of a son of a nobody usually has negative connotations in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, this is not the case in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, which describe how he deposed Wasusarma of Tabal and replaced him with Hulli, a son of a nobody.⁶⁴¹ Here, as with Nabopolassar, Hulli's non-royal extraction is not a barrier to kingship as he has been installed by the appropriate authority. Lanfranchi argues that the son of a nobody's need for another authority to grant them political

⁶³⁵ BWL: 194-95 rev. 23.

⁶³⁶ Da Riva 2013 C32: i 7-ii 5.

⁶³⁷ Glassner 2004: 118-19 i 1.

⁶³⁸ Mayer 1987: 55-58.

⁶³⁹ Seux 1967: 19-20; Bauer 1933: 87 Vs. 17-27; RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 5-10; BIWA A: i 1-7. The gods' creation of the king inside his mother's womb is not an uncommon theme in Ancient Near Eastern royal texts. For example, in the inscription from the Stele of the Vultures (RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: iv 9-12, v 1-5) E-anatum is conceived when his mother's womb is inseminated by the god Ningirsu. Similarly, from an Egyptian context, the walls of Deir el-Bahri narrate the conception of Hatshepsut when her mother was impregnated by the god Amun (Breasted 1906: 81-83). As in the Assyrian examples, both of these accounts of royal conception have various gods bestow their blessings and gifts upon the ruler (Breasted 1906: 82; RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: iv 18-v 17).

⁶⁴⁰ Liverani 2017: 10-24.

⁶⁴¹ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47: rev. 14'-15'. For the career of Wasusarma and the motivations behind his removal from the throne, see Weeden 2010: 39-59; 2017: 723-24.

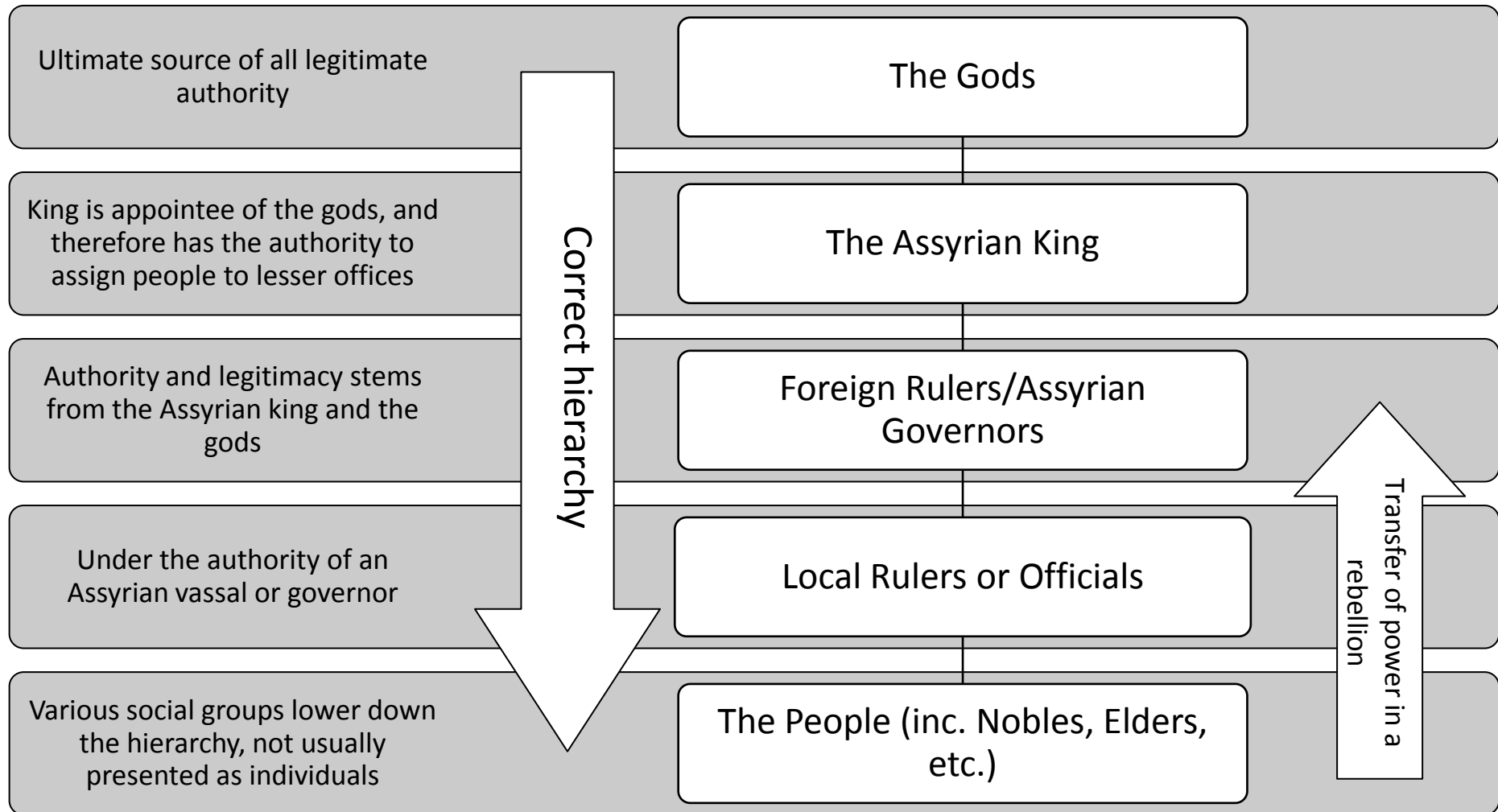


Fig. 1. Correct hierarchy versus the hierarchy of a rebellion in Assyrian royal ideology.

power is reflected in the term itself; the individual is an “orphan” requiring a “father” to take them under his wing.⁶⁴²

By contrast, those rulers appointed by their subjects have received their power from entirely the wrong source. A ruler’s governors, nobles, and people should be subservient to them, and for one of these groups to raise an individual to kingship was an inversion of the proper hierarchy.⁶⁴³ Furthermore, the king ruling due to popular consensus was entirely beholden to the whims of his people. A modern western audience might see the popular selection of a leader to serve the people as the preferable form of government. However, in Assyrian thought this situation was not only incorrect, but a serious danger to the ruler’s person. In the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the fate of these “elected” rulers is always capitulation followed by death. However, the ruler himself plays no part in the surrender. Instead his nobles, elders, or people submit to the Assyrian king;⁶⁴⁴ the hierarchy in the rebellious city or region has been inverted. In addition to the usurper’s lack of control, these episodes also demonstrate that the powers upon which a usurper relied were treacherous and untrustworthy.

This unreliable nature extends to other accounts of Assyria’s enemies seeking foreign support in the inscriptions. In the Middle Assyrian period, Adad-nārārī I describes how the king of Ḫanigalbat sent bribes to the Hittites to buy their military support, but received no help from Ḫatti in return.⁶⁴⁵ Similarly, the Babylonian fugitive Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir was executed by the Elamites after fleeing to Elam to escape

⁶⁴² Lanfranchi 2009: 140-41.

⁶⁴³ See Fig. 1. Lanfranchi (2007: 207) sees a similar view of the investiture of power in the Karatepe Inscription; Azatiwata, whose reign occurs as a result of divine support, is placed in opposition to Warika, whose reign is legitimised by a human source (the Assyrian king) in the Çineköy Inscription. However, this theory relies on the identification of the Awariku of the Karatepe Inscription as the Warika of the Çineköy Inscription, an equation which has been contested by Lipiński (2004: 116-23) and Simon (2014). In terms of Richardson’s (2010: 12-15) “descriptive-heuristic typology” of accounts of rebellion in state rhetoric, the Assyrian royal inscriptions frequently conflate the event conditions δ 2, 4, and 6 (“single non-royal leader”, “factional”, and “unknown/people of GN”) into a single category of rebel leadership. Irwin (2012: 447-53) has argued for a similar message concerning the poor foundations of kingship in Israel in the Hebrew Bible. Abimelech, the first king in Israel, is chosen for kingship by his subjects, and kingship of the northern kingdom is therefore unstable and prone to violent usurpation. By contrast, David is raised to kingship in Judah by YHWH, and the monarchy of the southern kingdom is therefore far more stable.

⁶⁴⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 80-81; ii 118-19; 19: 86-87; RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 151-53. An additional instance of the people deciding to surrender in early Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions is when Giammu, a ruler on the banks of the Baliḫ, is killed by his people, who then open their gates to Shalmaneser III (RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 78-80). No mention is made of a rebellion against Assyria in this instance.

⁶⁴⁵ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 18-20.

Esarhaddon.⁶⁴⁶ Both Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's brother Na'id-Marduk and the earlier Babylonian fugitive Mušēzib-Marduk returned from exile in Elam to avoid a similar fate.⁶⁴⁷ During Sennacherib's reign, the Elamites did not support Babylonia out of friendship, but required large payments for their troubles.⁶⁴⁸ Babylonians who relied on Elam were not safe from Elamite treachery even in death; the body of the fugitive Sealander Nabû-bēl-šumati is handed over by Ummanaldašu to Ashurbanipal, who decapitates it and displays the head during a triumph.⁶⁴⁹ The body is not given a proper burial, a terrible fate to consign a friend and ally to in Mesopotamian thought.⁶⁵⁰ The fact that the Elamite king would subject his ally to this once again demonstrates the weak bond between those allied against Assyria. Even the landscapes utilised by Assyria's enemies were treacherous. Those fleeing the king on campaign would often seek refuge in the mountains or at sea.⁶⁵¹ Once the king had overcome these obstacles and killed his enemies, the landscape would turn against them. Their blood is soaked into the mountains,⁶⁵² or their bodies fill the ravines and rivers.⁶⁵³

"Friendship" between Rebels

Another way in which Sargonid inscriptions highlight the poor quality of the relations between Assyria's enemies is through the use of the term *ibru*, "friend/fellow". This term, and its abstract form *ibrūtu* "friendship/fellowship", both appear in Assyrian royal inscriptions in relation to alliances between Assyria's enemies. Sennacherib describes how Merodach-baladan II sought the *ibrūtu* of the Elamite king Šutur-Nahhunte II,⁶⁵⁴ and Esarhaddon describes how Ba'alu of Tyre trusted in his *ibru* Taharqa.⁶⁵⁵ *Ibru* and *ibrūtu* are used in two episodes from Ashurbanipal's reign to describe relationships between the Assyrian king or his people and other individuals. In both of these instances, *ibru* and *ibrūtu* precede an instance of betrayal by an erstwhile Assyrian ally. Urtaku does not uphold Ashurbanipal's *ibrūtu*, and invades

⁶⁴⁶ RINAP 4 1: ii 55-57.

⁶⁴⁷ RINAP 3/1 22: v 26-28; RINAP 4 1: ii 58-61.

⁶⁴⁸ RINAP 3/1 22: v 31-34.

⁶⁴⁹ RINAP 5/1 11: vii 38-50.

⁶⁵⁰ For the afterlife awaiting an individual not given a proper burial in Mesopotamia, see George 2003 XII: 150-51.

⁶⁵¹ Karlsson 2016: 161-62; Liverani 1992: 149-50; Trimm 2017: 314-16.

⁶⁵² For example RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: i 79-80, ii 15-16, iii 25-26; A.O.101.1: i 53, ii 17-18; RINAP 3/1 22: vi 4-5.

⁶⁵³ For example, RIMA 1 A.O.78.1: ii 31-33; RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 53, ii 18, ii 37.

⁶⁵⁴ RINAP 3/2 213: 5-7.

⁶⁵⁵ RINAP 4 34: obv. 13'-14'.

Babylonia.⁶⁵⁶ Similarly, the Assyrian troops who had been sent by Ashurbanipal to aid Nabû-bêl-šumâti are described as protecting his land like his friends. The governor of the Sealand repays their friendship by imprisoning them through trickery.⁶⁵⁷

The result of this is that *ibru* and *ibrûtu* always carry negative connotations in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. This is a far cry from the situation in Epic of Gilgameš, where the word appears so frequently as to persuade Baruchi-Unna that the term was in itself a strong allusion to the epic.⁶⁵⁸ Here *ibru* is used extensively of the relationship between Gilgameš and Enkidu, a relationship which is clearly positive.⁶⁵⁹ However, elsewhere in Mesopotamian literature, *ibru* does not have the overwhelmingly positive connotations which it displays in the Epic of Gilgameš. Although the term is still often applied to good friendships between individuals,⁶⁶⁰ it frequently appears in relation to acts of treachery or hostility. In *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* the righteous sufferer laments that he now has *gallû*-demons for *ibru*,⁶⁶¹ In the Fable of the Fox, the wolf describes the sly and untrustworthy fox's *ibrûtu* in terms of destructive forces, a storm (*miḥû*), and the deluge (*abûbu*).⁶⁶² A bilingual proverb also states the impermanency of *ibrûtu* in comparison to *kinattûtu* "colleagueship", which lasts forever.⁶⁶³ This impermanency is also mentioned in *Maqlû*, which refers to witches spoiling relations between an individual and their *ibru*.⁶⁶⁴

All of the above examples demonstrate that *ibrûtu* was a fragile and changeable bond. Perhaps the most drastic example of this may come from the relationship between Etana and the eagle in the Etana Epic. Both of these characters refer to

⁶⁵⁶ BIWA B: iv18-20.

⁶⁵⁷ BIWA B: vii 81-86.

⁶⁵⁸ Baruchi-Unna 2008: 59. In stating that the term appears "a few times in other literary compositions", Baruchi-Unna understates the frequency in which it appears in the Etana Epic (Kinnier Wilson 1985 OV I/C: 49-51; OV I/E: 5; MAV I/G: 5, 12; MAV I/H: 6; LV IV/B: 2, 16, 27, 33, 37; LV IV/C: 12, 23, 31, 35, 39, 42).

⁶⁵⁹ George 2003 I: 214, 296-97; II: 186, 189, 194, 199, 232, 241; III: 5, 9, 15, 219, 224, 230; IV 27-28, 30, 95-96, 99, 212, 215, 218, 233, 243; V: 96, 100, 182, 241, 257, 259, 293; VI: 130, 132; VII: 1, 30, 71, 88, 95-96, 139, 164-65, 176, 253, 263, 266; VIII: 2, 44, 50-51, 59, 68-70, 97-102, 105-106, 108, 110, 112-15, 120-22, 124, 126, 130-32, 138, 166-67, 173; IX: 1; X: 69, 145, 226, 242, 245-46; XII: 90.

⁶⁶⁰ CAD s.v. *ibru*, and *ibrûtu*.

⁶⁶¹ BWL: 34-35 line 85.

⁶⁶² BWL: 209 line 20.

⁶⁶³ BWL: 259 lines 9-11.

⁶⁶⁴ Abusch 2015: 76-77 III 113.

each other as *ibru* throughout the text,⁶⁶⁵ but Kinnier Wilson has proposed that their friendship sours during the course of the poem, resulting in the eagle kidnapping Etana's son Baliḫ.⁶⁶⁶ Kinnier Wilson's reconstruction of the epic is based on heavy restorations, and is not followed by any other of the text's recent editors or translators.⁶⁶⁷ The episode of the eagle's animosity towards Etana must therefore remain hypothetical, although it is tempting to view it as yet another example of *ibrūtu* ending negatively. Kinnier Wilson's restoration is lent some support by the fact that the eagle's hunting arrangement with the snake is also ended by an instance of child-snatching by the eagle, in this case the eating of the snake's young.⁶⁶⁸ Within Kinnier Wilson's reconstruction of the narrative, this episode would foreshadow the eagle's actions later in the poem. Furthermore the snake is referred to as the eagle's *ibru*,⁶⁶⁹ perhaps a term which was also intended to foreshadow the breakdown of the eagle's *ibrūtu* with Etana. Helle acknowledges this possibility, but also suggests that the eagle's betrayal of the snake could alternatively be contrasted with its strong friendship with Etana.⁶⁷⁰ Ultimately, the current state of the text does not allow us to determine which situation is correct. Regardless of whether or not Kinnier Wilson's restoration is accurate, the eagle's betrayal of the snake is yet another example of a negative end to an *ibrūtu*.

In light of these considerations, the terms *ibru* and *ibrūtu* bore connotations of friendship built on uneasy foundations, which might often result in treachery or hostility between the two parties. In fact, within the tradition of the Mesopotamian literary texts, the *ibrūtu* of Gilgameš and Enkidu is perhaps unusual for the strength and permanence of its bond. Even when there is no indication of open hostility between two *ibru* their relationship is often not entirely firm. For example, the sufferer and the friend in the Babylonian Theodicy refer to one another as *ibru*,⁶⁷¹ but the two individuals' world views are in many ways diametrically opposed. The friend clearly

⁶⁶⁵ Kinnier Wilson 1985 OV I/E: 5; MAV I/G: 5, 12; MAV I/H: 6; LV IV/B: 2, 16, 27, 33, 37; LV IV/C: 12, 23, 31, 35, 39, 42.

⁶⁶⁶ Kinnier Wilson 2007: 47-53.

⁶⁶⁷ Dalley 1989: 191-200; Foster 2005: 533-34, 553-54; Haul 2000: 31 Fig. 2; Novotny 2001: xiii-xiv. Horowitz (1998: 45) entertains the idea that the epic continued after the retrieval of the plant of birth and the birth of Baliḫ.

⁶⁶⁸ Kinnier Wilson 1985 OV I/C: 12-35; LV II: 36-55.

⁶⁶⁹ Kinnier Wilson 1985 OV I/C: 49-51. The hunting arrangement between the eagle and the snake is also described with the related term *itbaru* (Kinnier Wilson 1985 LV II: 9).

⁶⁷⁰ Helle 2018.

⁶⁷¹ BWL: 71 II 12, III 23, 79 XIV 144, 87 XXV 265, 89 XXVII 287.

disapproves of the sufferer's thinking,⁶⁷² and frequently asserts that the sufferer's woes are down to his own lack of piety.⁶⁷³ These accusations contrast with the tone of utmost politeness adopted by both parties throughout the poem,⁶⁷⁴ and the friend's praise of the sufferer's intellect can feel at times scathingly sarcastic. All of this suggests that the terms *ibru* and *ibrūtu* were often laden with dramatic irony. They were therefore well suited to describing the treacherous and rebellious enemies of Assyria in the royal inscriptions.

Assyrian Attempts to Incite Rebellion

These instances of a rebel's people or allies turning against them are portrayed in the inscriptions as resulting from the dangers of relying on other people for support. However, there is some evidence from other sources of Assyrian efforts to encourage such behaviour among the subjects and allies of rebels. ABL 292, a letter from Ashurbanipal to the *šandabakku* Enlil-bani and the people of Nippur, contains a plea for the people of Nippur to capture an unnamed individual for a reward of payment of their weight in gold.⁶⁷⁵ The text goes on to say that a similar payment of silver was given by Sennacherib to the man who turned in the Babylonian rebel Šūzubu, probably to be identified as Mušēzib-Marduk.⁶⁷⁶ The letter ABL 297, to the governor and citizens of Uruk, may have been written for the same purpose,⁶⁷⁷ and Ashurbanipal also wrote to the citizens of Babylon pleading with them to reject the rebellious actions of their king, his brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.⁶⁷⁸ A letter from this king to the elders of Elam attests to his attempts to turn the opinion of the Elamites against the fugitive Sealander Nabû-bēl-šumati.⁶⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Rabshakeh's speech during the siege of Jerusalem recorded in the Hebrew Bible may represent

⁶⁷² A similar view of the relationship between the two men is taken by Oshima (2015: 486-87).

⁶⁷³ BWL: 71II 21-22, 73 IV 40-44, 75 VI 61-66, 85 XXII 235-42.

⁶⁷⁴ BWL: 64.

⁶⁷⁵ Ito 2013: 22-23 r. 1-11.

⁶⁷⁶ Ito 2013: 22-23 r. 4-7, 27.

⁶⁷⁷ Ito 2015: 13-14.

⁶⁷⁸ Parpola 2004a: 230-32. An Aramaic remembrance of the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn revolt from Amherst Papyrus 63 may represent the memory of Assyrian diplomatic responses to the rebellion in Babylonia in the episode in which the sister of the two adversaries is sent to Babylonia by Sarbanabal (Ashurbanipal) to appeal to Sarmuge (Šamaš-šumu-ukīn) to stop his rebellious behaviour (Steiner 2003: 324-25; Steiner and Nims 1985: 72-76; 2017: 76-83 XVII1/15-XX/11). For a synopsis of this story, see Steiner and Nims 1985: 63-65.

⁶⁷⁹ Waters 2002: 81-82 obv. 4-9.

the memory of another Assyrian attempt to sway public opinion against a rebel ruler.⁶⁸⁰

Appeals to the people such as this are not mentioned in the royal inscriptions, although in reality they clearly had their place in the Assyrian arsenal. Instead, appeals for the extradition of enemies, when they occur, are always directed solely towards the enemy king.⁶⁸¹ Although it is apparent from Sargon II's boasts in a letter concerning peace with Phrygia that gaining submission without victory in battle was viewed as a positive achievement,⁶⁸² there were acceptable and unacceptable ways of doing so. Actively seeking to influence the people of a hostile region through anything more than the mere fact of the king's terrifyingly splendid presence was an underhand tactic used by the vile and the treacherous. When the Assyrian king was responsible for a change in public opinion, this was due to the people being driven to action by fear of him, his weapons, or the repercussions which he might bring against them.⁶⁸³ All of the qualities which might bring about this terror; the king's formidable presence and splendour, the might of his weapons, and his previous military victories, were ultimately handed down to him by gods.⁶⁸⁴ At other times, the gods might intervene directly to strike down the king's enemies, or to turn their people against them, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

One particularly enlightening example is the account of the "battle" accompanying Esarhaddon's triumphant return from exile in his Apology.⁶⁸⁵ In this text, the rightful king is met by an army sent by his treacherous brothers. This army is defeated through divine intervention; fear of the gods drives the troops mad, and Ištar breaks their bows. Following this, the brothers' armies recognise Esarhaddon as their rightful king. Esarhaddon wins over the people only after he has successfully defeated his opponents the "right" way, through divine support. He therefore gains popular support only after, and as a direct result of, demonstrating that he does not

⁶⁸⁰ 2 Kings 18:19-35; Isaiah 36:4-20.

⁶⁸¹ Liverani (2004e: 69) has similarly noted that in the historical prologue to the Šunaššura Treaty the kings of Ḫatti and Ḫurri communicate with each other and never with "lower entities". However, this is not the case in all Hittite treaties, as is demonstrated by Muršili II's petitions to the people of Masa and Karkisa in the historical prologues of the Kupanta-Kurunta and Manapa-Tarḫunta treaties (Beckman 1999: 75, 82).

⁶⁸² SAA 1 1: 3-10. For a study of submission in the Ancient Near East, see Liverani 2001: 97-100.

⁶⁸³ For example, RIMA 1 A.O.78.1: iv 6-24; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: iii 2-6; A.O.100.5: 4; A.O.101.1: iii 23-24; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 79; RINAP 3/1 1: 25-26; 4: 32, 55; 22: iv 81-v 5. For a discussion of these repercussions in relation to rebellion, see Chapter 8.

⁶⁸⁴ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 220; Westenholz 2000: 115-17.

⁶⁸⁵ RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11.

need to rely upon it. By contrast, the enemy's need to rely on their own lies to win over the people to their cause demonstrates that they lack the divine support necessary to conquer them in the correct fashion.

Bad Advice and Poor Kingship

The dangers of a ruler allowing his nobles too much involvement in the running of the state can also be seen in two references to advice given to foreign rulers by their people or nobles in Assyrian royal inscriptions. The Elamite king Urtaku is turned against Ashurbanipal by the lies told to him by Bēl-iqīša the Gambulian, Nabû-šuma-ēreš the *šandabakku* of Nippur, and his own *ša rēši* Marduk-šuma-ibni.⁶⁸⁶ Similarly, in Esarhaddon's Letter to the God, the rebellious king of Šubria pleads with the Assyrian king that he was led astray by the lies told to him by his nobles.⁶⁸⁷

It could be argued that this misinformation removes some blame from Urtaku and the king of Šubria for their actions; both Gerardi and Waters have interpreted the portrayal of Urtaku in the account of Ashurbanipal's first Elamite campaign in this fashion,⁶⁸⁸ and the king of Šubria in Esarhaddon's Letter to the God clearly believes that having been lied to by his advisors is a legitimate excuse for his actions. However, the two misinformed kings are punished for their crimes all the same. The gods decree Urtaku's death and overthrow his dynasty, forcing his children and nephews to flee into exile.⁶⁸⁹ In the Letter to the God, Esarhaddon disregards the pleas of the Šubrian king, who should have obeyed him at the first time of asking.⁶⁹⁰ Outside of royal inscriptions, a similar view on listening to poor advice is displayed in *Enūma Eliš*, in which Tīāmat is incited to become hostile towards the gods by Qingu, but is killed for her crimes all the same.⁶⁹¹

A fragment of a historical epic relating to Nebuchadnezzar and Amēl-Marduk may appear, in the narrative reconstructed by Grayson,⁶⁹² to give another example of a

⁶⁸⁶ BIWA B: iv 28-29. The term *ša rēši* is traditionally translated as "eunuch", but whether or not these officials were actually castrati has been a matter of debate in the scholarship (AHw s.v. *rēšu(m)* [9b]; CAD s.v. *rēšu* in *ša rēši* [A2]; Grayson 1995: 91-97; Deller 1999: 304-305; Dalley 2001: 198-206; Hawkins 2002: 218-19; Tadmor 2002: 604-607; Siddall 2007: 225-37; N'Shea 2016: 214-15). Because of this, I prefer to leave this term in the Akkadian.

⁶⁸⁷ RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: i 20-21.

⁶⁸⁸ Gerardi 1987: 125-27; Waters 2000: 46.

⁶⁸⁹ BIWA B: iv 54-86.

⁶⁹⁰ RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: i 29-32.

⁶⁹¹ Lambert 2013: 110-11.

⁶⁹² BHLT: 87-91.

king receiving poor advice. However, Finkel has instead proposed that this text relates the details of Amēl-Marduk's imprisonment during the reign of his father due to false accusations levelled against him.⁶⁹³ Both this text and the Lament of Nabû-šuma-ukīn, which Finkel identifies as a composition written by the imprisoned Babylonian prince,⁶⁹⁴ suggest that it was Nebuchadnezzar who had listened to false advice before eventually relenting and freeing his son. In this instance, listening to false advice was apparently excusable. Perhaps because Amēl-Marduk was eventually released and instated as crown prince, no real lasting harm was seen to have been done.

A second instance in which a king is absolved of blame for actions taken following poor advice is the account of the treatment of Esarhaddon by Sennacherib in his "apology". The details are similar in some ways to Amēl-Marduk's situation; after declaring Esarhaddon the crown prince, Sennacherib is turned against his heir by his other sons. Esarhaddon then flees Assyria into exile.⁶⁹⁵ In the apology, Sennacherib is entirely blameless. Although the brothers succeed in alienating the king from his favourite son, he never changes his mind about Esarhaddon's position as crown prince.⁶⁹⁶ Instead, Esarhaddon goes into hiding at the behest of the gods to protect himself from his treacherous brothers.⁶⁹⁷

Esarhaddon's Letter to the God contains an attempt by the Šubrian king to attribute the blame for his actions to Asakku by means of a scapegoat ritual.⁶⁹⁸ This demon also appears during the Šubrian attempt to burn down the Assyrian siege ramp at

⁶⁹³ Finkel 1999: 336-37.

⁶⁹⁴ Finkel 1999: 325-38.

⁶⁹⁵ RINAP 4 1: i 17-44.

⁶⁹⁶ RINAP 4 1: i 26-31.

⁶⁹⁷ RINAP 4 1: i 32-44.

⁶⁹⁸ RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: ii 14-27. Nowicki (2015: 224-27) argues that the effigy should not be viewed as a scapegoat, but instead as a substitute king. He argues that this represents part of a substitute king ritual descended from a Hittite ritual in which two substitute kings, one human, and the other a wooden statue, are appointed, (for an edition of this ritual, see Kümmel 1967: 50-110). However, this distinction overlooks the fact that the Hittite substitute king ritual contains elements of a scapegoat ritual; the human substitute, a prisoner of war, is sent back to his homeland at the end of the allotted period, presumably taking with him the divine displeasure which necessitated his appointment (Bryce 2002: 207-208). Nowicki's claim that the human substitute was "sacrificed during the ritual to the gods of heaven" (Nowicki 2015: 226) is not supported by the text itself, which instead appears to have him being ordered to leave the city (Kümmel 1967: 58-59 A I 22'-36'). By extent, this observation weakens Nowicki's argument (2015: 227-28) that the Šubrian king believed Esarhaddon to be a god; the effigy is not being "sacrificed" to Esarhaddon to appease him, but is instead replacing the defeated king as the object of his conqueror's ire. To take this as anything more than a symbolic act of submission is to interpret events through the lens of the ritual in far too literal a fashion.

Uppume, the Šubrian capital.⁶⁹⁹ This act is carried out on a day described as *ūmu lemnu ilitti Asakku* “an evil day, the spawn of Asakku”.⁷⁰⁰ Enacting this plan on an evil day ultimately backfires on the Šubrians, as Marduk uses the north wind to blow the fire back onto Uppume.⁷⁰¹ This episode follows a similar format to the preceding one, in that the Šubrian king defies Esarhaddon, then blames his actions on someone else, first his nobles, then Asakku. In one instance he has followed the false advice of his nobles; in the other he has not consulted the hemerologies.⁷⁰²

The examples of Urtaku and the king of Šubria demonstrate that acting on poor advice was not an adequate justification for transgressions against Assyria. A ruler’s inability to identify that the advice he was receiving was based on lies meant that he was as much to blame for his actions as his advisers. This was not to say that a ruler should not listen to his nobles at all; the Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel* specifies that a king’s failure to heed the advice of his nobles would lead to his death.⁷⁰³ However, nobles are not the only source of advice which the *Fürstenspiegel* states that a king should heed. A king should also consult his *ummâni*, “experts”,⁷⁰⁴ the various scholars, diviners, and ritual specialists in the employ of the Assyrian palace. The *Fürstenspiegel* therefore stresses the importance of a ruler listening to his diviners. Assyrian inscriptions often stress that the king had consulted omens in his decision

⁶⁹⁹ RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: ii 1-13; Leichty 1991: 54.

⁷⁰⁰ The term *ilitti Asakku* is translated as “*der Teufelsbrut*” by Borger (1956 Gbr. II: ii 3), as “the devil’s offspring” by the I/J volume of the CAD (s.v. *ilittu* [1b]), and as “the birthday of Asakku” by Leichty (RINAP 4: 82), the A volume of the CAD (s.v. *asakku* A [a]), Parpola (1983 178 n. 21), and Sołtysiak (2008: 52). The reading of *ilittu* as “birthday” is unnecessary; the word is otherwise unattested with this meaning, and familial relations between gods and days of the month are occasionally mentioned in magical and hemerological contexts (Livingstone 1999: 136). Wiggermann (2007a: 133) interprets this passage as attributing the fire to *ūmu lemnu* as an “Evil Day-demon”, the demonic personification of an inauspicious day (for the proposal that *ūmu*-demons and their Sumerian counterpart *ud*-demons are the personification of days, see Wiggermann 1992: 169-71; 2007b: 111). The plural forms of the verbs used disagree with this reading, meaning that *ūmu lemnu* should be read as describing the day, not as the name of a demon. For days, months, and years possessing magical properties, see Livingstone 1999: 132-37; Lambert 2002: 189.

⁷⁰¹ RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: ii 5-7.

⁷⁰² Livingstone (2013: 271) highlights the fact that four of the five exemplars of the Babylonian Almanac actually list the 21st Kislīmu (IX) as an unfavourable day (Livingstone 2013: 56). Leichty (RINAP 4: 82) instead reads the month in Esarhaddon’s Letter as Ululu (VI). The 21st of this month is unfavourable in half of the exemplars of the Almanac (Livingstone 2013: 41). It may be that the scribe took liberties with the hemerological information for the sake of the narrative (Livingstone 2013: 271). For similar discrepancies between the meaning of celestial omens in Sargonic inscriptions and omen series, see Koch-Westenholz 1995: 152-61.

⁷⁰³ BWL: 112-13 line 4.

⁷⁰⁴ BWL: 112-13 line 5.

making.⁷⁰⁵ By contrast, the king acting on the counsel of his human advisers is never mentioned in the inscriptions.⁷⁰⁶ Enemy rulers act in the opposite fashion, taking advice from their nobles, but not from omens or the gods.⁷⁰⁷ Esarhaddon's Letter to the God gives a clear example of this; the king of Šubria takes advice from his nobles and refuses to turn over the fugitives to Assyria, but does not consult his *ummâni* and enacts his plan to burn the siege ramp on an unfavourable day. In reality, the Šubrian practice of giving sanctuary to fugitives appears to have been divinely mandated.⁷⁰⁸ However, this motivation for the withholding of criminals was not in-keeping with the ideological framework of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and was therefore disregarded.

Divination was a way for man to seek communications from the gods, and the advice of the gods greatly outweighed that given by mortals.⁷⁰⁹ A good king who had consulted omens as part of his decision making process would therefore be able to see if his nobles had tried to deceive him, as their advice would conflict with what had been gleaned through divination. The *Fürstenspiegel* further stresses the importance of a king being able to identify the moral character of his advisers when it describes the effects of taking advice from an *ishappu*, "a rogue".⁷¹⁰

Ultimately, the ruler who rebelled due to false advice should have been able to discern, through both divination and good judgement, that he was being misled. Thus in Ashurbanipal's Prism B, when the Assyrian king receives word of Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia, he does not accept the account at face value, but instead waits until he has verified his ally's treachery through other channels.⁷¹¹ Rather than being an uncharacteristic admission of error on the behalf of the Assyrian king, this episode appears to have been intended to demonstrate Ashurbanipal's

⁷⁰⁵ For omens in the inscriptions of the Sargonid period, see Koch-Westenholz 1995: 152-61; Fales and Lanfranchi 1997: 104-110. Badali et al. (1982: 23-24) identify divine approval for a campaign as one of the "functions" (C¹⁻³) in their morphological analysis of the annals of Ashurnasirpal II. This function appears thirteen times in the ten years covered by the annals (Badali et al. 1982: 24, 50-68).

⁷⁰⁶ Tadmor 1986: 207; Radner 2011: 358.

⁷⁰⁷ For enemy rulers trusting in their people instead of the gods in the royal inscriptions more generally, see Fales 1982: 428-29; Liverani 2017: 30-31 and 121.

⁷⁰⁸ SAA 5 35: 17-23; Deszö 2006: 37; Radner 2012: 263.

⁷⁰⁹ Liverani 2017: 29-30. Of course in reality, the *ummâni* were themselves only human and had their own views and interests which might influence their interpretations of signs and omens. For the methods by which the king guarded against this possibility, see Verderame 2014: 724-25.

⁷¹⁰ BWL: 112-13 line 6.

⁷¹¹ BIWA B: iv 43-48.

circumspection in contrast to Urtaku's rashness and lack of critical thinking. Frame has suggested that the Ashurbanipal's delayed response may have been due to him being absent from Assyria at the time,⁷¹² although he acknowledges that the peculiarities of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions make this difficult to state with certainty.⁷¹³ Regardless of whether or not Ashurbanipal was absent from Assyria at the time of Urtaku's invasion, this is not the stated cause of the delayed response in the annals.

Regicide in Ashurbanipal's Elam

The above discussion has demonstrated that a major ideological consideration in the royal inscriptions when a foreign ruler was overthrown was to demonstrate that the revolt had been orchestrated by the people, thus removing any doubt that it lacked the proper divine authorisation.⁷¹⁴ However, this is not the case in some episodes. In Ashurbanipal's inscriptions Tammarītu II ascends the Elamite throne after overthrowing Ummanigaš, and is himself deposed when Indabibi incites the Elamites to rebel against him.⁷¹⁵ Here there is a clear reason why the Assyrian scribes deviated from the formula described above; the rebellions and changes of king which occurred in Elam during the reign of Ashurbanipal are frequently described in his inscriptions as being decreed by the gods.⁷¹⁶ The rebellions in Elam were therefore divinely sanctioned, and there was no need to discredit the rebels there in the same way as in local rebellions in foreign regions under earlier kings.

Ashurbanipal may not have taken military action against the majority of the Elamite usurpers, but this does not mean that he was portrayed as entirely passive in these events. The accounts of the rebellions in Elam written for Prisms B, C, G, and Kh portray the Assyrian king as being increasingly involved in their causation. Conversely each successive usurper is less involved in the rebellion than his predecessor; Ummanigaš is overthrown by Tammarītu at the behest of the gods, Tammarītu is overthrown by his people, incited by Indabibi, as a result of Ashurbanipal's prayers, and Indabibi is overthrown by his people out of fear of

⁷¹² Frame 1992: 120.

⁷¹³ Frame 1992: 119 n. 93.

⁷¹⁴ Liverani (2004a: 33-34) finds a related but differing view of rebellion in Hittite historiography of the Old Kingdom. He argues that dissent by the lower strata of Hittite society did not reflect badly on the king, but that rebellion by the nobility did.

⁷¹⁵ BIWA A: iii 136-iv 12.

⁷¹⁶ For example, BIWA A: iv 9-12, v 29-35; B: iv 54-58; iv 69-71, vii 40-57.

Ashurbanipal when he despatches a messenger with a declaration of war against Elam.⁷¹⁷ In Prism B this may have simply been due to the scribe employing two different motifs to describe similar events, but in Prism C this is expanded into a literary device whereby Ashurbanipal becomes increasingly involved in events with each successive poor ruler of Elam. This may be intended to suggest future military campaigns to Elam, which whilst not included in Prism C, were likely to have been either in preparation or in progress at the time of its writing.⁷¹⁸

<u>Event</u>	<u>Ashurbanipal's Involvement</u>	<u>The Gods' Involvement</u>	<u>Elamite People's Involvement</u>	<u>Elamite Usurper's Involvement</u>
Rebellion against Ummanigaš (Prisms B, C, G, and Kh)	Passive interaction with gods (receives their just verdict)	Give verdict resulting in rebellion	None	Direct involvement (Tammarītu himself overthrows Ummanigaš)
Rebellion against Tammarītu (Prisms B, C, G and Kh)	Active interaction with gods (prayers and supplication)	Cause rebellion as a result of Ashurbanipal's supplications	Overthrow Tammarītu	Indirect involvement (Indabibi incites the people to rebel)
Rebellion against Indabibi (Prisms C, G, and Kh)	Indirect interaction with Elam (sends messenger)	Messenger goes to Elam with support of the gods	Overthrow Indabibi out of fear of Ashurbanipal	No involvement (Ummanaldašu placed on the throne by the Elamite people)
Ashurbanipal's 3 rd Elamite campaign (Prisms G and Kh)	Direct interaction with Elam (military campaign)	Support Ashurbanipal's army	Defeated in battle, captured, and executed by Ashurbanipal	N/A (Ummanaldašu flees into the mountains)

Fig. 2. Events in Elam following the defeat of Teumman in Prisms B, C, G, and Kh.

⁷¹⁷ The recently published editions of these texts for the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period project (RINAP 5/1 3: vii 29-42; 6: viii 1''-17'', ix 25''-52'') display this much more clearly than Borger's edition (BIWA B: vii 40-57; C: viii 31-47. ix 59-86), which separates out the relevant parts of the text across several chapters.

⁷¹⁸ See Fig. 2. For the dates of Prism C and the first campaign against Ummanaldašu, see Frame 1992: 28, 293-95; RINAP 5/1: 109; Waters 2000: 69-70. Grayson (1980b: 231, 235, 245) dates Prism C to 646 BC and the campaign to 648 BC. Grayson's dates give a two year period from "Elam 5" to the composition of Prism C, and in this case we might expect "Elam 5" to appear in Prism C. It is therefore more likely that both the campaign and the inscription should date to either 647 or 646 BC.

Prisms G and Kh continue the progression by including the first campaign against Ummanaldašu, which is presented as the culmination of this process, not only ending Ashurbanipal's Elamite campaigns, but providing closure for his grandfather's campaigns there by capturing and executing the survivors of the Battle of Halule and the Chaldeans who fled to Elam to escape Sennacherib's armies.⁷¹⁹ However, this device was not utilised by the authors of Prisms A and F, who rewrote, condensed, or cut much of this information from the accounts of the Elamite campaigns.⁷²⁰ By the time when these texts were written, the political situation in Elam had become more complex and anarchical,⁷²¹ and the simple progression from little Assyrian involvement to a military campaign would not accommodate the complexities of Ashurbanipal's last two Elamite campaigns. In Prism A, the role of the people in the overthrow of Tammarītu is removed completely, and instead he is defeated by Indabibi in a pitched battle.⁷²²

A further possible example of the gods decreeing the overthrow of a rebel by his own people in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions was suggested by Thompson, who restores the Ištar Temple Inscription as having the people of Akkad kill Šamaš-šumu-ukīn by throwing him into a fire.⁷²³ However, this detail is not restored by later editors of the text,⁷²⁴ and it is more likely that the gods are described as throwing the rebel king in the fire, as is the case in Prism A.⁷²⁵ This statement is far more ambiguous, and could represent Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's death as having been either suicide or murder.⁷²⁶ The motif of divine intervention in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions will be explored in further detail in Chapter 6.

Conflicting Accounts of Sargon's Gurgumite Campaign

A second account of the overthrow of a foreign ruler by a named individual comes from Sargon II's Khorsabad Annals and *Grosse Prunkinschrift*, wherein Tarhūlāra of

⁷¹⁹ RINAP 5/1 7: ix 30''-40''. Prism G preserves only the very beginning of this campaign account (RINAP 5/1 8: x 10'-16'), but the inclusion of the reference to Sennacherib seems likely on the basis of the similarities between this text and Prism Kh. These episodes are recorded in Sennacherib's annals (RINAP 3/1 22: iv 32-vi 35).

⁷²⁰ For the alteration of previously written material by the author of Prism A, see Cogan 2014: 71-80.

⁷²¹ Waters 2000: 69-69.

⁷²² BIWA A: iv 11-12.

⁷²³ Thompson and Mallowan 1933: 86, 95, pl. XCIV 112-13.

⁷²⁴ Fuchs 1996: 279, 293; RINAP 5/1 23: 110-11.

⁷²⁵ RINAP 5/1 11: iv 46-52. Zaia (2018a) argues that the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn at the hands of the gods was intended to absolve Ashurbanipal of any accusations of fratricide.

⁷²⁶ Frame 1992: 153-54.

Gurgum is murdered by his son Mutallu.⁷²⁷ However, Tarḫulara's assassination in these two texts differs drastically from the accounts of Sargon's Gurgumite campaign in his other inscriptions.⁷²⁸ Here Tarḫulara is deported for rebelling with the support of Phrygia. Hawkins labels these accounts as "irreconcilably contradictory",⁷²⁹ whilst both Melville and Bryce make no mention of the conflicting accounts, and simply follow the narrative of the annals and *Grosse Prunkinschrift*.⁷³⁰ However, two solutions to the problem have been proposed. Gadd argues that Tarḫulara was deported to Assyria by Sargon then murdered by Mutallu, who subsequently rebelled himself.⁷³¹ This solution seems unnecessarily convoluted, and does not account for the fact that the inscriptions state that Sargon replaced Tarḫulara with an Assyrian governor.⁷³² An alternative suggestion is that Tarḫulara was not deposed by Sargon, and the scribes confused the father with his son, who was himself deported to Assyria.⁷³³ Tarḫulara is listed as a defeated rebel in the west alongside both Gunzinanu of Melid in some inscriptions,⁷³⁴ and that king's successor Tarḫunazi in others.⁷³⁵ Tarḫunazi was deposed in 711 BC,⁷³⁶ and Gunzinanu at an unspecified date before this point.⁷³⁷ The campaign against Mutallu is securely dated to 711 BC,⁷³⁸ and this suggests that Tarḫulara did in fact rebel, but that this had occurred at a much earlier date, and that he had been subsequently spared by Sargon. Regardless of the actual events, the differing accounts present two very different pictures of rebellion in Gurgum. One is a revolt against Assyria by an incumbent king with support from a foreign imperial power, a common scenario in Sargon's inscriptions. The other is an unusual account of a named individual overthrowing foreign ruler. Unlike the examples from Ashurbanipal's reign, the assassination of

⁷²⁷ Fuchs 1993 *Ann*: 234-41; *Prunk*: 83-84.

⁷²⁸ Fuchs 1993 *Stier*: 26-27; *XIV*: 9-13; *S4*: 23-31; Gadd 1954: 182-83 v 41-42.

⁷²⁹ Hawkins 2000: 250.

⁷³⁰ Bryce 2012: 286; Melville 2016b: 151.

⁷³¹ Gadd 1954: 185.

⁷³² Gadd 1954: 183-84 v 73; Elayi 2017: 106.

⁷³³ Elayi 2017: 106.

⁷³⁴ Fuchs 1993 *Stier*: 26-27; *XIV*: 9-13.

⁷³⁵ Gadd 1954: 182-83 v 41-42; Fuchs 1993 *S4*: 23-31.

⁷³⁶ Fuchs 1998: 83; Melville 2016b: 151; PNA s.v. *Gunzinanu*; 431. Bryce (2012: 285-86) and Hawkins (2000: 285) both date this campaign to 712 BC, but the Eponym Chronicle states that the king remained in the land in this year (Millard 1994: 60), making this reconstruction unlikely.

⁷³⁷ Bryce (2012: 285) states that this occurred c. 719 BC, but I know of no evidence to support this. Other scholars simply state that the date of Gunzinanu's deposal is unknown (Hawkins 2000: 285; PNA s.v. *Gunzinānu*: 431).

⁷³⁸ Millard 1994: 60.

Tarḫulara is not portrayed as a positive event. This account is therefore in need of analysis.

Mutallu the Parricide

Sargon elaborates in the *Grosse Prunkinschrift* that Mutallu had murdered his father and ascended the throne *balum ṭēmeja* “without my instruction”.⁷³⁹ This is yet another example of a successful foreign usurper being delegitimised by their lack of approval from the proper authority. Furthermore, the fact that Mutallu was Tarḫulara’s son may also have demonstrated that the rebels were in the wrong. Enmity between parents and children is included amongst the various inversions of the natural order resulting from the anarchy caused by Marduk’s absence in the Erra Epic,⁷⁴⁰ whilst several examples of the murder of family members are included among the signs of societal collapse accompanying the fall of Akkad in the Curse of Agade.⁷⁴¹ In the Theogony of Dunnu, parricide is consigned to the primordial past, before the social conventions of civilised Mesopotamian society had been conceived.⁷⁴² Records of historical instances of parricide are rare in the Ancient Near East.⁷⁴³ There are no other explicit references to parricide in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and it may be that this crime was viewed as severe enough to completely remove the possibility of divine approval for Mutallu’s actions.

⁷³⁹ Fuchs 1993 *Prunk*: 84.

⁷⁴⁰ Cagni 1969 III A: 9-10.

⁷⁴¹ Cooper 1983: 60-61.

⁷⁴² Jacobsen (1984: 16-17) highlights the contrast between the actions of the gods in this text and Mesopotamian societal norms. However, his reconstruction of the text as demonstrating a progression towards proper behaviour (Jacobsen 1984: 6-9 obv. 37-42, followed by Foster 2005: 491; and Harris 2000: 75-77) is purely speculative, and the relevant section could equally be read, as by Lambert (2013: 395), as continuing the pattern of sons murdering their fathers.

⁷⁴³ Harris 2000: 70-71; Wiseman 1974: 251.

6. The Divine Causation of Rebellion

Throughout the history of the Assyrian inscriptional tradition, the gods play a major role in warfare. This is a theme which stretches back to the very earliest Mesopotamian records of warfare from the Early Dynastic Period.⁷⁴⁴ Usually, the gods' input allows the Assyrian king to defeat his opponents in combat. Their divine presence can cause Assyria's enemies to flee or surrender in fear, or distant kings to submit to the yoke of Aššur. At other times, the king's terrifying splendour, bestowed upon him by the gods, has the same effect.⁷⁴⁵ However, in some instances the gods are responsible for overthrowing or killing an enemy ruler without any military action by the Assyrian king. This motif is present in the curse formulae of many royal inscriptions.⁷⁴⁶ In these instances, the gods' overthrow of the cursed individual is not a specific historical event, but the proscribed punishment for anyone who would damage or neglect the inscription in question. By contrast, the motif is applied to several historical events in inscriptions from the Sargonid period, particularly during the reign of Ashurbanipal.⁷⁴⁷ These episodes almost always relate to rebellion, and are therefore in need of study here.

The "Apology" of Sargon II

The earliest example of the gods overthrowing a ruler comes from the Aššur Charter of Sargon II. This text contains the following very unusual passage:

[*Sulmānu-ašarēd*] *lā pāliḥ šar gimri ana āli šuātu qāssu ana lemutti ūbilma išt[akan.....] nīšišu ilku tupšikku maršiš [ēmidm]a ṭ[mt]ani šābī ḥupšiš ṭ[nūmišu?] Enlil ilāni ina uggat libbišu palē[š]u ṭ[skip]]āti Šarru-ukīn šarru [ka]jān[u...] ullā rēšija ḥaṭṭa kussā agā ušatmeḥan[ni]*

[Shalmaneser (V)], who did not fear the king of totality, he laid his hand on that city (Aššur) to evil effect, and he [placed.....] On his people he grievously [imposed] labour (and) corvée and [cou]nted the people as common labourers [... At that time], the Enlil of the gods, with anger in his heart, overthrew

⁷⁴⁴ RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: vi 8-vii 11.

⁷⁴⁵ Aster 2006: 89-133; Badali et al. 1982: 28-29; Cassin 1968: 71-77; Oppenheim 1943: 31; Richardson 2016: 51-55; Younger 1990: 73-74.

⁷⁴⁶ For example, RINAP 3/1 10: 27-29; 22: vi 80-83; RINAP 5/1 3: viii 87-92.

⁷⁴⁷ For example, RINAP 3/1 22: v 11-16; RINAP 4 1: ii 55-57; RINAP 5/1 3: iii 76-92, vii 29-42; 6: ix 40''-52''; 11: v 23-40, x 6-16.

[hi]s rule (and) for me, Sargon, the [legitimate] king [...] He raised my head (and) caused me to grasp sceptre, throne, (and) crown.⁷⁴⁸

This passage is the only instance in which Sargon mentions the fate of his predecessor. The nature of Sargon's succession has been the matter of some debate. Frequently, he has been cast as a usurper,⁷⁴⁹ but Vera Chamaza advises caution in assuming that this was the case,⁷⁵⁰ and Melville suggests that the apology may have simply been written because Shalmaneser died without declaring an heir, and that "there is no reason to believe Sargon did more than crown himself with untoward haste in order to preempt the competition".⁷⁵¹ However, the reference in the Borowski Stele to 6300 Assyrians deported to Hamath in the second regnal year suggests that Sargon's reign began in internal conflict in Assyria.⁷⁵² Elayi argues that Sargon's probable position as son of Tiglath-pileser III means that he was likely not a usurper;⁷⁵³ this point has no bearing on whether he took the throne by force. Furthermore, the account from the Aššur Charter bears several similarities to apologetic passages from the inscriptions of usurpers to the Babylonian throne such as Merodach-baladan II,⁷⁵⁴ Cyrus the Great,⁷⁵⁵ and possibly also Nabonidus.⁷⁵⁶ Fuchs also points to the frequency with which Sargon adopted titles containing the element *kēnu*, "true, legitimate", as stemming from his position as a usurper.⁷⁵⁷ Sargon's succession was therefore most likely irregular and accompanied by violence, and the negative portrayal of Shalmaneser suggests that this was the result of him usurping the throne. I will therefore treat Sargon as a usurper for the purposes of this study.

⁷⁴⁸ Saggs 1975: 14-15 rev. 31-35.

⁷⁴⁹ For example, Grayson 1992: 87-88; PNA s.v. *Šarru-kēnu*, *Šarru-kīn*, *Šarru-ukīn*: 1239-40; RIA s.v. *Sargon II*. [§4]; Tadmor 1981: 26-27.

⁷⁵⁰ Vera Chamaza 1992b: 31-32.

⁷⁵¹ Melville 2016b: 58-60.

⁷⁵² Hawkins 2004: 160; PNA s.v. *Šarru-kēnu*, *Šarru-kīn*, *Šarru-ukīn*: 1240. For the events of Sargon's early campaigns in the west, see Cogan 2017: 151-63; Melville 2016b: 65-74.

⁷⁵³ Elayi 2017: 27.

⁷⁵⁴ RIMB 2 B.6.21.1: 8-15.

⁷⁵⁵ Schaudig 2001 K2.1: 1-12. For the similarities between the Cyrus Cylinder and the cylinder inscription of Merodach-baladan II, see Kuhrt 2007: 173-75.

⁷⁵⁶ UET 1 30, a Cylinder fragment originally assigned to Cyrus, but attributed to Nabonidus by Schaudig (2001: 480-81) also contains the motif of a new ruler restoring the privileges of the temples (Kuhrt 2007: 174 n. 21).

⁷⁵⁷ PNA s.v. *Šarru-kēnu*, *Šarru-kīn*, *Šarru-ukīn*: 1239.

Puzur-Sîn is the only other Assyrian king to similarly refer to the overthrow of his predecessor.⁷⁵⁸ Both kings present themselves as liberators of Assyria, Puzur-Sîn from foreign rule and Sargon from oppressive taxation. However, there are some differences in the approach taken by the two kings to the act of overthrowing the previous king. Puzur-Sîn takes responsibility for the action himself,⁷⁵⁹ whilst Sargon attributes it to divine intervention. Shalmaneser has acted inappropriately by disregarding the traditional exemption of Aššur from corvée,⁷⁶⁰ and is duly punished for his crimes. Sargon does not play an active part in events. Instead the gods overthrow Shalmaneser and give Sargon the kingship. In return, Sargon restores the status quo by reinstating the privileges of the city of Aššur.⁷⁶¹ This is yet another example of divine origin of royal authority. Sargon is not in fact a usurper, but the divinely-selected ideal ruler who is entrusted with abolishing the evils of Shalmaneser's reign. As a result, the reinstatement of privileges for the major cultic centres of Assyria and Babylonia are a common theme in his inscriptions.

Sargon's Letter to the God and the "Apology" of Rusa

Sargon's representation of his accession offers an interesting perspective on some passages from his Letter to the God. During the account of the sack of Mušašir, there is a description of the Urartian king's coronation before the statue of the chief god Ḫaldi.⁷⁶² Later, the list of spoils from the campaign includes a statue of the Urartian king Rusa bearing the inscription:

ina šina sisīja u ištēn ša susānija šarrūt māt Urarṭi ikšudu qātī

With my two horses and my single riding partner,⁷⁶³ I obtained the kingship of the land of Urarṭu.⁷⁶⁴

The text is therefore a very brief account of Rusa's rise to power. Furthermore, it implies that there were irregularities in his succession.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁵⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001.

⁷⁵⁹ RIMA 1 A.O.40.1001: 1-10.

⁷⁶⁰ In reality, Shalmaneser appears to have upheld the privileges of major cities (Vera Chamaza 1992: 26-30).

⁷⁶¹ Saggs 1975: 16-17 rev. 36-40.

⁷⁶² Mayer 1983: 102-103 lines 338-42.

⁷⁶³ Rollinger (2018a: 589, 597-601; 2018b: 130-31) here reads the signs LÚ ^gGIGIR, usually *narkabtu*, "charioteer", as *susānu*, "groom, horse trainer". For a meaning of *susānu* as a cavalryman, and more specifically in the Letter as part of a two horseman military unit, see Fuchs 1998: 110-11; 2018b: 130-33.

⁷⁶⁴ Mayer 1983: 108-11 lines 403-404.

Van De Mieroop has highlighted these passages as two of several episodes in the text which he asserts that structuralist Assyriology has struggled to account for. He argues that they serve to stress Rusa's legitimacy as a ruler, highlighting the similarities between Sargon and his opponent as part of a commentary on the "royal condition".⁷⁶⁶ Van De Mieroop's study on the Letter is intended as a critique of the structuralist approaches of previous scholarship on the text.⁷⁶⁷ However, his line of reasoning in arguing that Sargon and Rusa's similarities are stressed by the text displays much of the theoretical rigidity which he criticises in structuralism. Because the quotation from the statue does not portray Rusa as dependent on others, and therefore does not conform to the binary opposition between individual and group, Van De Mieroop argues that "there is no negative mirror image but sameness".⁷⁶⁸ This supposition depends on a rigidly binary distinction between the good individual and the bad group. This ignores the nuances of the text, which, as I will demonstrate below, conveys a very different message when considered in contrast to Sargon's apology in the Aššur Charter.

Sargon and Rusa: Differing Forms of Irregular Succession

The content of the inscription on the looted statue poses several problems for Van De Mieroop's theory. The account of Rusa's rise to power in the Letter to the God is drastically different from Sargon's description of his accession in the Aššur Charter. Sargon is gifted the throne by the gods, Rusa wins the kingship by military force. The Assyrian and Urartian kings are therefore two sides of the same coin, and represent two very different forms of irregular succession. Sargon is selected to be king without ever seeking kingship of his own accord. By contrast, Rusa not only actively takes the kingship, but he claims to have done so without the proper divine support. Sargon is a divinely selected replacement for a bad king; Rusa is a usurper proper, with all the negative connotations attached to the term.

No gods are mentioned in Rusa's statue inscription, a situation which is at odds with the description of the Urartian king's investiture before Haldi. The inscription quoted from Rusa's statue is also at odds with the extant corpus of Urartian royal

⁷⁶⁵ Oppenheim 1960: 141-42; Van De Mieroop 2010: 427.

⁷⁶⁶ Van De Mieroop 2010: 425-27.

⁷⁶⁷ Van De Mieroop 2010: 417-19, 430-31.

⁷⁶⁸ Van De Mieroop 2010: 426-27.

inscriptions, which frequently mention the state god.⁷⁶⁹ Contrary to Taffet and Yakar, who state that “Urartian kings did not consider themselves (...) as his (their god’s) chosen servant as in Mesopotamia”,⁷⁷⁰ Urartian inscriptions sometimes refer to the king as the “servant” of Ḫaldi,⁷⁷¹ who is his “lord”.⁷⁷² Furthermore, the king’s building works are usually described as having been achieved through the greatness or might of Ḫaldi,⁷⁷³ and Zimansky notes the god’s presence in all of the better preserved inscriptions recording military achievements.⁷⁷⁴ In this light, the inscription on the statue reads like a parody of an Urartian royal inscription. Zaccagnini has already suggested that the authors of the Letter utilised information from Urartian royal inscriptions whilst writing the account of Rusa’s irrigation project at Ulḫu.⁷⁷⁵ I would suggest that a similar process is represented here. However, whereas the information of specific inscriptions may have been used in fleshing out descriptions of Rusa’s building works, in Rusa’s statue the general structure of Urartian inscriptions is altered so as to give a differing significance to its contents.

The altered character of Rusa’s inscription as it is quoted in Sargon’s Letter has previously been identified by Rollinger, who writes:

The alleged Urartian label as quoted by Sargon II in Sg 8, 403-404 is not an authentic Urartian text but a sophisticated Assyrian transformation and rewriting of an Urartian original. Rusa’s original text was reshaped in a very subtle way where wordplay, slightly changed semantics, mocking, scorn and derision are looming large.⁷⁷⁶

Rollinger argues that the quotation adapted a topos of an individual achieving kingship with the support of another individual, in this case his riding partner, and adapted it into a short tale mocking the Urartian king for relying on the support of a servant.⁷⁷⁷ He draws parallels between this episode and the inscription of Darius the

⁷⁶⁹ For the sheer volume of references to Ḫaldi in the Urartian monumental inscriptions, see CTU 2: 262-87.

⁷⁷⁰ Taffet and Yakar 1998: 145.

⁷⁷¹ For example, CTU 1 A 10-4: Vo 6’; A 10-5: Ro 25’, Vo 23’.

⁷⁷² For example, CTU 1 A 3-3 7; A 5-25: Ro 1, 17; A 5-28: Ro 1; A 8-18: 1; A 9-16: 3; A 12-1: I 1.

⁷⁷³ Campbell 2015: 133-45.

⁷⁷⁴ Zimansky 1985: 116 n. 52.

⁷⁷⁵ Zaccagnini 1981: 293.

⁷⁷⁶ Rollinger 2018a: 597.

⁷⁷⁷ Rollinger 2018a; 2018b: 129-33.

Great quoted by Herodotus,⁷⁷⁸ which states that Darius conquered Persia with his horse and his groom.⁷⁷⁹

Whilst I agree with Rollinger that the quoted passage represents an altered version of an Urartian royal inscription, there are some elements of his study which I feel must be challenged. He is more convinced than I am of the existence of a real inscription of which the passage in Sargon's Letter is a "biased translation". His arguments for the authenticity of the inscription are far from the "strong argument" which he presents them to be.⁷⁸⁰ He places the burden of proof on those who suggest that the inscription was fabricated by Sargon's scribes.⁷⁸¹ This approach is opposed to the more sceptical approach to the veracity of ancient sources, as championed by Beckman,⁷⁸² which argues that we should look for reasons why a claim in a historiographic text might be true rather than why it might be false.

Rollinger does provide evidence in favour of the inscription's existence; the statue is just one in a series of items listed as being carried off from Muṣaṣir, which were "listed fastidiously".⁷⁸³ This argument places a great deal of faith in the accuracy of lists in Assyrian inscriptions. Admittedly, the numbers given in the lists of booty in the Letter appear to be accurate,⁷⁸⁴ but this does not preclude the possibility that the inscription was fabricated by Sargon's scribes. Rollinger also places a great deal of faith in the general accuracy of the Akkadian "translation" of the inscription. Although he believes that the scribes may have used deliberately ambiguous language when translating the text, he still asserts that the quoted passage must broadly conform to the structure and content of the real inscription.⁷⁸⁵

A reader of Rollinger's article will be struck by the occurrence of a significant shift in his position over the space of a few pages. He begins apparently quite sceptical about the veracity of the inscription on the statue and states that the quoted passage in Sargon's Letter "was either invented or manipulated".⁷⁸⁶ However, five pages later,

⁷⁷⁸ Rollinger 2018a: 133-37. The similarities between the inscriptions quoted by Sargon and Herodotus is also highlighted by Liverani (2017: 74-75).

⁷⁷⁹ Herodotus 3.88.3.

⁷⁸⁰ Rollinger 2018b: 134 n. 45.

⁷⁸¹ Rollinger 2018b: 134 n. 45.

⁷⁸² Beckman 2005: 349.

⁷⁸³ Rollinger 2018a: 601-602; 2018b: 134 n. 45.

⁷⁸⁴ De Odorico 1995: 112-13.

⁷⁸⁵ Rollinger 2018a: 587-92.

⁷⁸⁶ Rollinger 2018a: 587.

after having discussed the ways in which an Urartian inscription could have been altered by Sargon's scribes,⁷⁸⁷ he appears to have completely excluded the possibility of the text being fabricated when he writes:

It has become evident so far, that the Urartian cast is an authentic monument with an inscription that, in a legitimizing way, referred to Rusa's accession to the Urartian throne.⁷⁸⁸

This is in no way the case; Rollinger's suggestion that the inscription was subjected to a "biased translation" is certainly both interesting and worthy of consideration, but there is little to recommend it as more likely than the possibility that the text has been fabricated. One might equally speculate that very few people in Assyria would have been capable of reading an inscription in Urartian, and that the scribe might therefore feel liberated to invent the content of an inscription on a real statue. Of course, the shared script and the occurrence of Sumerograms in these texts might have allowed ancient scholars to understand some of their content in very general terms, as was the case for the earliest modern decipherers of the Urartian language.⁷⁸⁹ However, there would most likely have been relatively little accurate information that could be gleaned in this fashion. It is certainly possible that the monument and inscription are both authentic, but this is not the open-and-shut case that Rollinger presents it to be.

Furthermore, I do not find Rollinger's discussion of the significance of Rusa's *susānu* in Sargon's Letter particularly convincing. Rollinger interprets the inscription as portraying Rusa's riding partner as taking an active role in supporting his struggle to power.⁷⁹⁰ The Urartian king's riding partner would not have been viewed as an individual aiding his master, but as part of Rusa's equipment for mounted combat. This thinking is demonstrated by several other texts. For example, in the inscription on the Idrimi Statue, when the eponymous protagonist sets off from political exile in Emar into the steppe to find his fortune, he leaves with his horse, his chariot, and his *kizû*, "groom".⁷⁹¹ This is not due to any part that this groom plays in aiding in Idrimi's exploits, he is not mentioned again in the text, but because he was a necessary

⁷⁸⁷ Rollinger 2018a: 587-91.

⁷⁸⁸ Rollinger 2018a: 592.

⁷⁸⁹ For example, both the first steps towards reading Urartian made by Hincks (1848) and the successful decipherment by Sayce (1882) were reliant on the presence of Sumerograms to provide context for determining the meaning of syllabically written words.

⁷⁹⁰ Rollinger 2018a: 589-92.

⁷⁹¹ *Idrimi* 13-15.

piece of the young prince's chariot team.⁷⁹² Similarly, Rusa's two horses and his *susānu* constitute the necessary components for his two horse combat unit; one rider takes both sets of reins, freeing the other to concentrate on firing a bow. Because of this, the quoted inscription in Sargon's annals does not diminish Rusa's achievements by highlighting the involvement of another human individual, but instead does so by omitting the involvement of the gods.

Haldi and the Urartian Kingship

By describing the proper coronation of an Urartian king earlier in the Letter, Sargon is able to highlight in the inscription that Rusa boasts of not behaving in the manner of a good Urartian ruler, and has not shown appropriate fear and reverence towards the gods. He may claim to have attained kingship without divine support, but the earlier account of the coronation highlights the reliance of Urartian kingship upon the presence of Haldi. Rusa is not exempt from this royal reliance on the gods, as is demonstrated by his reaction upon hearing of the sack of Muşaşir and the "godkidding" of Haldi.⁷⁹³ This passage, dubbed Rusa's "de-coronation" by Kravitz,⁷⁹⁴ contains a detailed description of the Urartian king's outpouring of grief and despair. Rusa is utterly powerless without his god, and can do nothing but tear his clothes, rip out his hair, and beat his chest whilst his people mourn for their country.⁷⁹⁵ Van De Mieroop views Rusa as "the agent of his own de-coronation",⁷⁹⁶ but this assessment discounts the stated importance of Haldi to Urartian royal legitimacy. The sack of Muşaşir does not just signify the end of Rusa's kingship, but of Urartian kingship as a concept, which cannot be instated without the presence of Haldi. The episode therefore represents the "death" of the Urartian state.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹² Liverani (2004d: 91 n. 8) compares the chariot team in this text to the application of the topos of setting off into the desert in Ancient Egyptian folktales, where a prince will take a chariot team (as in Lichtheim 1976: 200-201), whilst a commoner will take his sandals and walking stick instead (for example, Lichtheim 1976: 208, 212).

⁷⁹³ The term "godkidding" was coined by Livingstone (1997: 167-68) to describe the Mesopotamian practice of taking the cult statues from the temples of defeated enemies. For studies of this phenomenon in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Cogan 1974: 22-34; Holloway 2002: 123-151; Zaia 2015: 19-48.

⁷⁹⁴ Kravitz 2003: 88.

⁷⁹⁵ Mayer 1983: 110-11 lines 411-14. For a detailed study of Rusa's expression of emotion in this episode, see Van De Mieroop 2016: 18-29.

⁷⁹⁶ Van De Mieroop 2010: 429.

⁷⁹⁷ In reality, the statue of Haldi may have been returned to Muşaşir in the following year (Tadmor 1958: 86-87). For the similarities between Rusa's actions and acts of mourning in the Ancient Near East, see Van De Mieroop 2016: 26-29.

The connection between the sack of Muṣaṣir and the “de-coronation” of Rusa has previously been commented on by Kravitz, who dubs it the “Urartu strand”.⁷⁹⁸ She views this whole section of the narrative as a hasty revision intended to refocus the inscription back to Sargon’s victory over the Urartian king.⁷⁹⁹ In support of this argument, she points to a line from the description of the sack of Muṣaṣir in which the third person possessive suffix -šu is used following a reference to Ḫaldi but clearly refers to Rusa.⁸⁰⁰ This line of argument is far from satisfactory. Van De Mieroop has noted that the description of Rusa’s despair is too finely written to be relegated to a “last-minute revision” of the text.⁸⁰¹ Furthermore, there is no real reason that the “Urartu strand” cannot achieve the effect Kravitz discusses whilst still being an originally intended part of the text’s structure. The passage which she cites as evidence of rushed editing is confusing to a modern reader of the text, but does not seem particularly problematic. The context makes it abundantly clear that only Rusa, and not Ḫaldi, can be referred to. It is certainly not the “impossible sentence” which Kravitz states it to be.⁸⁰² Much of Kravitz’s line of argument simply highlights the integral role of these episodes in the plot; the text would not be anywhere near as effective without them.

Flawed Alliances and Flawed Kingships

Another major problem with Kravitz’s argument is that it does not consider the overarching nature of the campaign. Sargon and Rusa both join battle as a result of supporting the opposing sides in a local conflict between their vassals. Sargon is portrayed as the protector of Ullusunu the Mannaeen, who has been oppressed by both his belligerent neighbour Mitatti the Zikirtean, and Mitatti’s ally Rusa.⁸⁰³ When Sargon marches against Mitatti, Rusa gives his military support to the Zikirtean king.⁸⁰⁴ The difference between these two alliances lies in the character of their

⁷⁹⁸ Van De Mieroop 2010: 429.

⁷⁹⁹ Kravitz 2003: 89-92. Fales (1991: 138 n. 40) makes a similar suggestion.

⁸⁰⁰ Kravitz 2003: 87.

⁸⁰¹ Van De Mieroop 2010: 430.

⁸⁰² Kravitz 2003: 87.

⁸⁰³ Mayer 1983: 72-75 lines 52-63 and lines 80-81. On the career of this Ullusunu, who shifted allegiance between Assyria and Urartu several times, see PNA s.v. *Ullusunu*: 1374-75.

⁸⁰⁴ Mayer 1983: 78-79 lines 103-104.

members. Mitatti is a rebellious vassal of Ullusunū,⁸⁰⁵ whilst Rusa is stated to have broken his oath to Aššur.⁸⁰⁶

This oath-breaking most likely refers to the breaking of a parity treaty between the two empires, but it is also possible that Sargon intended to portray Rusa as a rebel against Assyria. Tiglath-pileser III similarly describes the Urartian king Sarduri as rebelling against him,⁸⁰⁷ in spite of the fact that Urartu had been an independent imperial power for a significant period prior to this point. This was presumably due to attempts by Assyrian scribes to reconcile the small polity in the north which Assyrian kings had campaigned against since the Middle Assyrian period with the major political force which the Urartian state had become by Tiglath-pileser's time.⁸⁰⁸

Whatever the case may be, both Rusa and Mitatti are untrustworthy and abandon their obligations, meaning that they conform to the motif of unreliable alliances between enemies discussed in Chapter 5. It is therefore no surprise that Sargon achieves victory over them. Mitatti is reliant on Rusa to maintain his position in the face of the Assyrian war machine. However, Rusa ultimately fails to protect him, and ends up fleeing into the mountains of Urartu.⁸⁰⁹ The reliance of Assyria's enemies upon unreliable allies is a recurring theme in the text. Rusa's kingship itself rests in the hands of others, and Urzana's capitulation spells the end of the Urartian king's reign.⁸¹⁰ This highlights another important point raised in the Letter; the continuation of Urartian kingship is reliant on the compliance of Urzana, a rebel against Assyria, and therefore, from the Assyrian viewpoint, a deeply untrustworthy and unreliable ally. The result of this is that Urartian royal ideology is seriously and intrinsically flawed.

The Urartian king's investiture by Ḫaldi is also a flaw of this system. Rusa may have the support of Ḫaldi, even if he scorns it in his inscription, but Sargon's march into Mušašir is described as being carried out:

*ina tukultišu rabīti ša Aššur abu ilāni bēl mātāti šar kiššat šamē eršētim ālid
<gimre> bēl bēlī ša ultu ūm šāti ilāni māti u šadī ša kibrāt erbetti ana*

⁸⁰⁵ Mayer 1983: 74-75 line 80.

⁸⁰⁶ Mayer 1983: 76-77 line 92, 82-83 line 148.

⁸⁰⁷ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39: 20.

⁸⁰⁸ For the development of Urartu into an imperial power, see Salvini 1967: 66-80; Zimansky 1985: 32-97.

⁸⁰⁹ Mayer 1983: 82-83 lines 148-51.

⁸¹⁰ For discussion of the fate of Urzana in this text, see Foster 2005: 808 n. 2; Kravitz 2003: 89 n. 19.

šutaqqurišu lā naparšude manama itti išittišunu kitmurti ana šūrub
Eḫursaggalkurkura išrukuš Enlil ilāni Marduk

With the great support of Aššur, father of the gods, lord of the lands, king of the entirety of heaven and earth, begetter of <everything>, lord of lords, to whom, since primeval days, the Enlil of the gods Marduk presented the gods of land and mountain of the four quarters, with their treasures piled high, for admittance to the Eḫursaggalkurkurra, so that none could avoid holding him in esteem.,⁸¹¹

The submission of every foreign deity before Aššur was decreed in time immemorial; Ḫaldi had therefore always been destined to be carried off to Assyria, and Urartian kingship had always been doomed to collapse before the might of Aššur. This predestined religious imperialism was particularly pertinent to Rusa because his fortunes were so closely tied to those of a foreign city. By contrast, the Assyrian king's rule was tied to Aššur, the eponymous god of the eponymous city of his native land. The self-sufficiency of Assyrian religious and royal ideology is therefore compared to dependent nature of that of their Urartian counterparts.

Rusa's Crimes and the Tragedy of the Eighth Campaign

One final element of Sargon's Letter to the God which I will discuss is the positive portrayal of Urartu. It has frequently been noted by scholars that several of the episodes in the Letter follow the pattern of a positive portrayal of Urartian building works or cultural practices followed by the flight of the Urartian people, and then the systematic destruction of the works previously referred to.⁸¹² Scholars have given various explanations for this pattern of praising the achievements of the Urartian king and his people. Fales and Zaccagnini see it as an example of the old adage "the bigger they are, the harder they fall",⁸¹³ whilst Oppenheim viewed the descriptions of Rusa's achievements as ethnographic asides intended to keep the audience interested in the narrative.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹¹ Mayer 1983: 100-101 lines 314-16.

⁸¹² Fales 1991: 142-45; Kravitz 2003: 92; Van De Mieroop 2010: 424-25; Zaccagnini 1981: 264-76.

⁸¹³ Fales 1991: 142; Zaccagnini 1981: 275-76.

⁸¹⁴ Oppenheim 1960: 146.

Most interestingly, Van De Mieroop views it as a commentary on the inherent contradiction between the constructive and destructive aspects of kingship.⁸¹⁵ Van De Mieroop's studies on the Letter have pursued avenues which have generally been neglected in the study of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, for example on their emotional content.⁸¹⁶ It is one such example from Van De Mieroop's work which I wish to focus on here, the suggestion that the Letter's audience are intended to feel sympathy for the Urartian king.⁸¹⁷ In a similar vein, I would suggest that the entire destruction of Urarṭu is presented as somewhat tragic. Assyria's northern neighbour is a mighty kingdom with vibrant customs and impressive feats of engineering, and its destruction is therefore bittersweet, a victory for Assyria, but one that removes some wonder from the world. However, contrary to Van De Mieroop, and the majority of other commentators on the text, this tragedy is not brought about by Sargon. To understand the chain of causation in the events described in the letter, we must reassess the meaning of a passage which is appended to a description of Rusa's negative qualities earlier in the text:

arka ḫiṭātešu maḥrāte gullultu rabītu ša ḫepê mātišu u šumqut nīšišu ēpušma

After all his previous crimes, he committed the great sin of destroying his land and causing the downfall of his people.⁸¹⁸

There has been some disagreement between the text's translators over whose land and people this passage refers to. Both Mayer and Foster interpret it as a reference to Rusa's oppression of Ullusunū,⁸¹⁹ whilst Thureau-Dangin reads it as a reference to Rusa's own land,⁸²⁰ and this interpretation appears to be followed by Luckenbill, Fales, and Fuchs.⁸²¹

If this passage refers to Ullusunū, then it is the first time that he appears in the narrative in over thirty lines of text. It seems more likely that this is a reference to the downfall of Urarṭu. Its position at Sargon's arrival in Uīšdiš, immediately prior to the

⁸¹⁵ Van De Mieroop 2010: 426-27.

⁸¹⁶ Van De Mieroop 2016: 17-35.

⁸¹⁷ Van De Mieroop 2016: 29.

⁸¹⁸ Mayer 1983: 76-77 line 95.

⁸¹⁹ Foster 2005: 796; Mayer 1983: 77.

⁸²⁰ Thureau-Dangin 1912: 17.

⁸²¹ Fales 2017a: 202; Fuchs 1998: 113-14; Luckenbill 1927: 79.

battle on Mount Uauš,⁸²² is significant in this respect. It marks the proceeding account of the destruction of Urarṭu and sack of Mušašir as the final “sin” of Rusa. It therefore forms an example of what Genette calls a “temporal prolepsis”,⁸²³ which anticipates the outcome of events in the narrative that follows. This style of narration is not uncommon in the royal inscriptions. To give just two examples, Tiglath-pileser I begins the campaign accounts section of one of his display inscriptions with the following statement:

ina siqri Aššur bēlija ištu ebertān Zabe šupālī adi tāmṭi elēnīte ša šulmu šamši qātī lū ikšud

By the command of Aššur, my lord, I conquered from the opposite bank of the Lower Zab to the Upper Sea of the West.⁸²⁴

The inscription then goes on to relate Tiglath-pileser’s campaigns to Nairi, Mount Lebanon and Amurru, and Ḫatti.⁸²⁵ The quoted passage therefore pre-empts the content of the proceeding campaign accounts. Similarly, the account of the restoration of Nineveh in Sennacherib’s Bavian Inscription begins with the statement *ina ūmešuma ša Ninua šubatsu magal ušrabbi*, “at that time, concerning Nineveh, I greatly expanded its site”.⁸²⁶ This is followed by a far more detailed description of the specific actions taken during the building project.⁸²⁷ The interpretation of the passage of Sargon’s Letter quoted above as a “temporal prolepsis” referring to the sack of Mušašir better fits the text than inserting Ullusunū into the narrative at this point.

This reading has implications for the rest of the text after this point; the devastation wrought by the Assyrian army is a tragedy, but it is Rusa that is the real perpetrator here. The Mesopotamian literary tradition is filled with examples of mighty kings brought low by their own misdeeds. Naram-Sîn is the most obvious example, but the motif is applied to various rulers including Sargon of Akkad and Šulgi of Ur.⁸²⁸ Van De Mieroop states that “in order to do good for his own people, the king has to harm

⁸²² Mayer 1983: 76-83 lines 96-148.

⁸²³ Genette 1980: 67.

⁸²⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.87.3: 6-8. Grayson (RIMA 2: 35) describes this text as “annalistic”, but the geographical ordering and reduced detail in comparison to Tiglath-pileser’s actual annalistic inscriptions (RIMA 2 A.O.87.1-2) make it clear that this is not the case.

⁸²⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.87.3: 9-28.

⁸²⁶ RINAP 3/2 223: 5.

⁸²⁷ RINAP 32 223: 5-34.

⁸²⁸ For example, Glassner 2004: 266-69, 288-91.

others”.⁸²⁹ This assumes that Sargon is the ultimate cause of Urartu’s plight.

Contrary to this, Rusa is stated to have ultimately caused the destruction through his misdeeds. He has done harm to others, and as a result has also harmed his own people. Conversely, Sargon has aided others by liberating Ullusunu, and in doing so has also aided his own people by bringing the extensive spoils of the campaign back to Assyria.

Kudur-Nahhunte Struck Down by Aššur

The divine overthrow of Shalmaneser V in Sargon’s inscriptions differs from the examples of the gods overthrowing rulers in later inscriptions in that it relates to an Assyrian king rather than a foreigner. Rusa’s de-coronation in the Letter to the God also differs from the later examples in that Sargon has much more involvement in overthrowing Rusa, by godkidding Ḫaldi, than later kings do in the instances from their inscriptions. The earliest of the episodes in which the gods strike down a foreign enemy of Assyria without need for a military campaign is the death of Kudur-Nahhunte of Elam following Sennacherib’s Seventh Campaign.⁸³⁰ This episode in turn differs somewhat from those appearing in the inscriptions of this king’s successors. Unlike Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, who make reference to the actions of human agents responsible for the enemy’s downfall, the account of Kudur-Nahhunte’s death deliberately obscures the occurrence of a rebellion against this king. The Babylonian Chronicle states that he was deposed in a palace coup,⁸³¹ but Sennacherib’s annals instead describe him as simply dying prematurely at the command of Aššur, and being succeeded by his brother Umman-menanu.⁸³²

The narrative of the campaign preceding Kudur-Nahhunte’s death is unusual for an Assyrian royal inscription. Sennacherib’s campaign into Elam was cut short because of the poor winter weather, and the Assyrian king returned to Nineveh to avoid the snow.⁸³³ This admission of caution is out of keeping with the usual gung-ho attitude of Assyrian kings in the royal inscriptions. Charging into battle half-prepared is a motif which appears occasionally in the royal inscriptions,⁸³⁴ and acted to

⁸²⁹ Van De Mieroop 2010: 426.

⁸³⁰ RINAP 3/1 22: v 11-16.

⁸³¹ Glassner 2004: 198-99.

⁸³² RINAP 3/1 22: v 11-16.

⁸³³ RINAP 3/1 22: v 7-11.

⁸³⁴ For example, RINAP 3/1 1: 19-20; RINAP 4 1: i 63-69.

demonstrate that the king did not need to rely on his troops and weapons to give him victory as he had the support of the gods.⁸³⁵ In particular, Sennacherib's unwillingness to march through snow contrasts directly with Sargon II's boasts of leaving his army behind when battling in the snowy mountains of Urartu in his Letter to the God.⁸³⁶ However, it is not the only episode in Sennacherib's inscriptions in which he demonstrates an unusual level of reticence. During the account of his Fifth Campaign, he describes how he stopped to rest and drink water when he and his troops became tired during his ascent of Mount Nipur.⁸³⁷ Sargon's Letter to the God may have portrayed this king's lack of preparation as a heroic quality, but ultimately he had died on campaign. His successor therefore made efforts to demonstrate his own circumspection and proper preparation. Unlike his father, Sennacherib would not be seen to be reckless.⁸³⁸

This is not to say that Sennacherib never described himself as charging into battle with little preparation; the motif is employed in the earliest account of the first campaign.⁸³⁹ However, this campaign was targeted against the more familiar landscape of Babylonia, not the hostile mountainous landscapes of the north. Sennacherib's caution was shown specifically with regards to the dangers of landscape and weather alien to Mesopotamia. He did not need to fear his human enemies in the same way. This context provides a better understanding of the account of Kudur-Nahhunte's death. The gods' support of Sennacherib meant that he did not need to risk the dangerous journey through harsh winter weather, and could rely on Aššur to strike down his enemies even if he himself was not able to reach their countries.

The annals emphasise the connection between Sennacherib's campaign and Kudur-Nahhunte's death by dating the rebellion against the Elamite king earlier than it actually occurred. The Babylonian Chronicle dates this event to the month of Abu (V),⁸⁴⁰ but Sennacherib's annals instead place it three months after his abortive

⁸³⁵ Fales 1991: 140-41; 2017a: 205 n. 9; Van De Mieroop 2010: 422-23.

⁸³⁶ Mayer 1983: 76-81 lines 96-132. For Assyrian reactions to wintry conditions in general, see Van Buylaere 2009: 297-305.

⁸³⁷ RINAP 3/1 22: iv 7-9.

⁸³⁸ A more detailed study of the effect of Sargon's death on the content of Sennacherib's inscriptions is carried out in Chapter 7.

⁸³⁹ RINAP 3/1 1: 19-20.

⁸⁴⁰ Glassner 2004: 198-99.

winter campaign to Elam.⁸⁴¹ This campaign is dated to Tamḫīru, the ninth month of the Elamite calendar, which corresponds to Ṭebētu (X) in the Mesopotamian calendar.⁸⁴² This would place the rebellion at some point in or before Nisannu (I) of the following year. This was apparently intended to demonstrate a close connection between the campaign and the rebellion evidenced by the short period of time separating the two events. The number three is commonly used as a stock small number in the inscriptions,⁸⁴³ and is therefore well-suited to its purpose here of highlighting the close proximity of the two events.

The Gods Overthrowing Rulers with Human Assistance

In Esarhaddon's and Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, the same motif of the gods overthrowing enemies without the kings' military input also appear. However, here the enemy in question is always a rebel, and the method used to overthrow them is frequently assassination or rebellion decreed by the gods. In Esarhaddon's inscriptions, the rebellious governor of the Sealand, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir is assassinated in Elam at the behest of the gods,⁸⁴⁴ while various rebels against Assyria in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions are in turn overthrown in rebellions.⁸⁴⁵ As discussed in Chapter 5, these rebellions were positively-connoted rebellions, carried out at the will of the gods. Thus the assassination of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir results in the submission of his brother and successor Na'id-Marduk,⁸⁴⁶ and Uallî the Mannean also submitted to Ashurbanipal following the rebellion against his father Aḫšēri.⁸⁴⁷ Similarly, Gyges of Lydia is overrun by the Cimmerians as punishment for cutting off relations with Assyria and supporting the rebellion in Egypt.⁸⁴⁸ Although this last episode is not an internal rebellion like the other examples cited above, Gyges had previously conquered (*kašādu*) the Cimmerians through divine support following his

⁸⁴¹ RINAP 3/1 22: v 12-13.

⁸⁴² For the names and order of the Elamite months, see Reiner 1973: 97-102. For the synchronisms between the Mesopotamian and Elamite calendars, see Knapp 2016: 183-85.

⁸⁴³ De Odorico 1995: 17-18.

⁸⁴⁴ RINAP 4 1: ii 55-57.

⁸⁴⁵ For example, the series of usurpers in Elam (see Fig. 2). An alternative method by which the gods strike down Ashurbanipal's enemies is through disease, as is the case for Nabû-šuma-ēreš (RINAP 5/1 3: iv 56-57), and Tugdamme the Cimmerian (RINAP 5/1 23: 157-59). For discussion of these instances of divine retribution through disease, see Chapter 8.

⁸⁴⁶ RINAP 4 1: ii 58-64.

⁸⁴⁷ RINAP 5/1 3: iii 76-92.

⁸⁴⁸ RINAP 5/1 11: ii 112-25.

submission to Ashurbanipal.⁸⁴⁹ The Lydian king's downfall is therefore yet another example of a rebel laid low by rebellion.

Episodes in which the gods cause rebellions against a king's enemies occur in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions from as far back as the Early Dynastic period.⁸⁵⁰ However, unlike these episodes, the divinely-sanctioned rebellions against Ashurbanipal's enemies do not always have an entirely positive outcome; each of the Elamite kings overthrown by rebellion in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions is replaced by a bad ruler, some of whom are explicitly stated to be worse than their predecessor. For examples, Tammarītu is described as *ša elā šāšu ekṣu*, "(one) who was more dangerous than him (Ummanigaš)".⁸⁵¹ It might be expected that the gods would only select a suitably pious and just individual to lead a rebellion with their support. Such is the case in the texts describing the rebellions by Nabopolassar and Adad-šuma-ušur.⁸⁵² That this is not the case in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions raises an important question concerning the Elamite rebellions: why would the gods select an unsuitable candidate for kingship to act as their instrument in a divinely sanctioned rebellion? The thinking behind this point in Ashurbanipal's texts must be examined.

Divine Intervention and the Moral Character of the Divinely Appointed Rebel

There are several examples of the gods causing rebellions against poor rulers in Mesopotamian literature outside of the royal inscriptions. The Weidner Chronicle contains several examples of rulers who were overthrown at the behest of the gods because of their transgressions.⁸⁵³ Several of these rulers then go on to be bad kings themselves, and are then deposed by another ruler with divine backing. Perhaps the most famous example of a group utilised by the gods to overthrow a ruler are the semi-mythical armies of the Ummān-manda or the Guti, the primary adversary of Narām-Sîn.⁸⁵⁴ These hordes achieve several victories over the Old Akkadian king. In the Cuthean Legend, Narām-Sîn eventually alters his behaviour and is spared by the gods.⁸⁵⁵ However, other traditions seem to consign him to

⁸⁴⁹ RINAP 5/1 11: ii 103-10.

⁸⁵⁰ RIME 1 E1.9.3.1: viii 1-3.

⁸⁵¹ RINAP 5/1 3: vii 32.

⁸⁵² BHLT 6; Da Riva 2013 C32: i 7-ii 5. For the Adad-šuma-ušur Epic as an account of that king's rise to power in a rebellion, see n. 627 in Chapter 5.

⁸⁵³ Glassner 2004: 266-69.

⁸⁵⁴ For discussion of the names for this group, see Adalı 2011: 3-34; Westenholz 1997: 265-66.

⁸⁵⁵ Westenholz 1997 Text 22: 88-148.

defeat, with kingship then taken by the Gutī.⁸⁵⁶ Naram-Sîn's opponents serve as a divine instrument, and clearly have divine support.

The Cuthean Legend, the Weidner Chronicle, and the Curse of Agade all portray the Gutī as exceedingly ill-suited for kingship. They are ruled by seven kings in the Cuthean Legend,⁸⁵⁷ whilst the Gutian rule is the only instance in the Weidner Chronicle in which the land is ruled by a group rather than a named individual.⁸⁵⁸ A Gutian king is similarly never mentioned in the Curse of Agade.⁸⁵⁹ The Sumerian King List states that the Gutī ruled as a collective for several years before eventually gaining a king.⁸⁶⁰ This pluralistic nature was at odds with the ideology of Mesopotamian kingship as discussed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, the Gutī are ignorant of proper religious practice in the Weidner Chronicle,⁸⁶¹ and are described as being barely human in both the Cuthean Legend and the Curse of Agade.⁸⁶²

The Gutī and Ummān-manda also appear frequently as enemies who do not have divine support. In the Cuthean Legend, they are an enemy defeated by Enmerkar, who neglected to record his victory and was punished by the gods as a result. Westenholz has argued that Enmerkar must have committed some unrecorded transgression in order to come under attack from these enemies.⁸⁶³ However, the text contains a contrast between the actions of Enmerkar and Nārām-Sîn: one is a good king who does not record his deeds, whilst the other records his deeds but demonstrates poor conduct in other ways. Modern narrative logic need not be applied to this text as it contains structural elements which give a logic to the narrative.⁸⁶⁴

Ummān-manda also sometimes appears as designations of historical enemies in Assyrian thought. The term Ummān-manda is occasionally used to describe the Cimmerians, and Adalı argues that the use of the term *zēr ḥalqātī*, "seed of

⁸⁵⁶ Glassner 2004: 124-25.

⁸⁵⁷ Westenholz 1997: 310-11.

⁸⁵⁸ Glassner 2004: 266-67.

⁸⁵⁹ Cooper 1983: 56-58.

⁸⁶⁰ This interpretation follows ETCSL (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm>). Glassner (2004: 124-25) interprets this passage as stating that the Gutī were ruled by a king named Nibia. For the significance of the sequence of Gutian kings and the meanings of their names, see Wilcke (1989: 568).

⁸⁶¹ Glassner 2004: 266-69.

⁸⁶² Cooper 1983: 56-59; Westenholz 1997 Text 22: 31-35, 63-71.

⁸⁶³ Westenholz 1993: 205; 1997: 294.

⁸⁶⁴ For similar attempts by scholars to find narrative logic in the Adapa Myth, see Liverani 2004b: 3-21. For the apparent lack of logic in myths more generally, see Lévi-Strauss 1963: 207-208.

destruction” was also applied to this group because they were equated with the Ummān-manda. He argues that the Cimmerians were viewed as responsible for the defeat of Assyria’s enemies at the will of the gods, but that the gods had always planned their destruction, just like Narām-Sîn’s adversaries.⁸⁶⁵ The Cimmerians’ victories over Urarṭu, together with their distant homeland, led the Assyrians to equate them with the Ummān-manda from the reign of Sargon II onwards, and this equation influenced the ways in which this group were described in prophecy under Esarhaddon.⁸⁶⁶ This argument has a lot of merit, but I find that too much ideological significance has been placed on what is apparently an attempt by the Assyrians to understand and contextualise Mesopotamian history and its connection to the present. Similar attempts can be seen in the use of the archaic toponyms Magan and Meluḥḥa, originally the names given to Oman and the Indus Valley, to refer to Egypt and Nubia.⁸⁶⁷ Whatever the case may be, the Cimmerians are not portrayed positively in the royal inscriptions. They may well have been viewed as defeating both Urarṭu and Lydia with divine support, but they are still an enemy of the Assyrian king like any other, and are portrayed as such.

The *Grosse Jagdschrift*: Ashurbanipal’s Ideological Approach to Rebellion in Elam

The episodes discussed above demonstrate that the gods choosing an individual or group to lead a rebellion against a poor ruler, only for that individual or group to go on to rule poorly themselves, was a fairly common motif in Mesopotamian literature. However, these examples differ from those in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions in one key aspect. In literary texts such as the Cuthean Legend or the Weidner Chronicle, the overthrown king is the ruler of a single, universal realm. By contrast, the Elamite usurpers in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions are all, from the Assyrian perspective, vassals of the Assyrian empire.⁸⁶⁸ Whereas the accession of the Gutî simply results in a period of misrule, and represents a “stopgap” in the royal tradition until the gods’ anger at the land cools and they select a suitable king, the presence of successive Elamite rebels results in constant conflict on Assyria’s eastern frontier. As a result, the gods allow further aggressions against their supposed favoured ruler.

⁸⁶⁵ Adalı 2011: 85-167.

⁸⁶⁶ Adalı 2011: 110-17; SAA 9 3 and 7.

⁸⁶⁷ RIA s.v. *Magan* [§§2-3]; *Meluḥḥa* [§§1, 7].

⁸⁶⁸ For the annexation of Elam following the defeat of Teumman, see Frame 1992: 123-24; Mattila 1987: 30; Waters 2000: 57-58.

A text which provides us with a unique insight into this facet of Ashurbanipal's political thinking is the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*.⁸⁶⁹ This inscription is primarily concerned with the details of a hunting expedition carried out against a pride of lions living in the marshes,⁸⁷⁰ but it also contains the earliest account of Ashurbanipal's first Elamite campaign.⁸⁷¹ The unique nature of this inscription, which contains the only account of conflict in Elam from the years between the first and second Elamite campaigns, makes it pre-eminently placed to provide insight into Ashurbanipal's approach to Elam in the inscriptions in the years before he conquered the region, and before the outbreak of the series of rebellions against successive Elamite rulers described in later texts. This aspect of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* has not been explored in the previous scholarship,⁸⁷² and is therefore deserving of study.

Elamites and the Lion Hunt

The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* dedicates only a small portion of its length to the first Elamite campaign. Many details from later accounts, such as the lies told to Urtaku by Bēl-iqīša and Nabû-šuma-ēreš, and Ashurbanipal's delayed response, are absent from this text.⁸⁷³ Instead the majority of the inscription is concerned with a hunting expedition in the marshes against a pride of lions which are terrorising the land, disrupting travel, and feeding on humans, livestock, and wild animals.⁸⁷⁴ Although the account of the first Elamite campaign is relatively short, Elam also takes an important position in the hunting account. The sons and nephews of Urtaku, living in exile in Assyria following the accession of Teumman to the Elamite throne, are

⁸⁶⁹ This text was given a full edition in print by Bauer (1933: 87-89, Tafel 31-32), but since that time several more fragments of the text have been found by Borger (1954-56: 346). Furthermore, Weissert (1997a: 341 n.8 and n.9, 350-51) has argued that K 6085 is not part of this text, and renumbered the lines to account for this, for Borger's joins, and for the presence of multiple texts on the tablet. An edition of the text by Novotny and Jeffers has recently been posted online in anticipation of the publication of the second volume of RINAP 5 (<http://oracc.org/rinap/rinap5/Q003772>). This online edition adopts Weissert's line numbers. Because of this, I will cite the text using Weissert's numbers.

⁸⁷⁰ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 24-36.

⁸⁷¹ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 15-23.

⁸⁷² In addition to the works cited in n. 868, the text has also been edited by Smith (1887: 1-9) and Streck (1916: 210-14), and translated by Luckenbill (1927: 361-63). Elsewhere, the appearance of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* in the scholarship has been limited to passing references in the context of more general themes relating to its content (Koch-Westenholz 1995: 159; Maul 1995: 397 n.25; 2006: 168-69; Weissert 1997a: 341, 344-45 fig. 1; Galter 1999: 66; Strawn 2005: 139 n.32, 169-171). I know of no in-depth study dedicated to the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* which is primarily concerned with anything other than editing the text, or finding or refuting joins to it.

⁸⁷³ Cf. RINAP 5/1 3: iv 15-67.

⁸⁷⁴ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 24-32.

present at the lion hunt.⁸⁷⁵ Furthermore, the passage on the edge of the tablet, Bauer's "Am linken Rande a",⁸⁷⁶ also includes a reference to the land of Elam.⁸⁷⁷

It is therefore clear that the unifying thread through the narrative is Elam. This bears parallels to some episodes in the reliefs and epigraphs from the North Palace at Nineveh, where there is also a connection between Elamites and the lion hunt. One epigraph from Room S of the North Palace at Nineveh, for which the accompanying relief has not survived, describes how Ashurbanipal rescued the Elamite prince Ummanappa from a lion during the hunt.⁸⁷⁸ Furthermore, a relief from the same room depicts the Assyrian with his bow drawn, standing over the prostrated forms of several Elamites who have laid down their bows at the king's feet.⁸⁷⁹ This relief is of particular interest when considered alongside the account of the archery display by the Elamite princes in the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. The passage of this inscription describing the archery display is badly broken, but references to both *šiltāḥīšunu šamrūti* "their fierce arrows", and *šīltāḥija šamri* "my fierce [ar]row" demonstrate that Ashurbanipal also took part in this display.⁸⁸⁰ The nature of Assyrian royal inscriptions dictates that the Assyrian king must have surpassed all the other participants in this event. This suggests that the relief of a group of Elamites prostrating themselves at Ashurbanipal's feet is likely to represent this demonstration of Ashurbanipal's superior skill at archery. The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* lends support for this suggestion several lines later, where a group of people are described as kissing the king's feet.⁸⁸¹

A further connection between the relief and the inscription is suggested by the appearance of the Elamite closest to Ashurbanipal in the relief. This figure has a very large nose, which is not particularly clear in the photographs from Barnett,⁸⁸² but

⁸⁷⁵ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 37-42.

⁸⁷⁶ Bauer 1933: Tafel 32; *Grosse Jagdinschrift* e. 1.

⁸⁷⁷ Weissert (1997a: 341-42 n. 9) assigns this line to a separate text, arguing that when the original text on the tablet was erased, the scribe missed the writing on the edge (pers. comm. E. Weissert). However, this position is speculative; the line clearly does not fit where Bauer placed it in his edition (Bauer 1933: 87), but this does not exclude the possibility that it was intended as an insertion elsewhere in the main text, perhaps in the broken section of the tablet (*Grosse Jagdinschrift* rev. 55-61). Without another exemplar of the text, there is little more that can be said on the matter.

⁸⁷⁸ Gerardi 1988: 25-26. For the restoration of the name of the son of Urtaku in this epigraph as Ummanappa, see Weissert 1997a: 341 n. 7; Russell 1999: 201.

⁸⁷⁹ Barnett 1976: pl. LI.

⁸⁸⁰ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 41.

⁸⁸¹ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 42.

⁸⁸² Barnett 1976: pl. LI.

is clearly visible in photographs in other publications.⁸⁸³ The features of this figure are a standard example of the ugliness of foreigners in Ashurbanipal's reliefs as identified by Miller, with a large nose, sloping forehead, and recessed jaw line.⁸⁸⁴ These ugly features are not given to every enemy in the reliefs, but are rather assigned to important individuals. The Urartian ambassadors observing the punishments meted out to the Gambulians are portrayed in such a fashion,⁸⁸⁵ as are Ummanigaš and the Elamite identifying Teumman's severed head.⁸⁸⁶ Teumman himself is the most pronounced example of this motif, as his unique appearance extends to his receding hairline and differently depicted beard.⁸⁸⁷ The fact that this ugliness is usually a feature of specific individuals provides evidence to support the identification of the first kneeling Elamite as one of the princes, perhaps either Ummanappa, who is mentioned in the epigraphs, or Ummanigaš, who was installed as king of Elam following Teumman's death.

Ashurbanipal's archery contest with the Elamites forms an important part of the narrative of his hunting expedition in the marshes. In fact, all of the preceding events in the inscription build up to this episode. Urtaku's aggression leads to the exile of his family, whilst the plague of lions which afflicts the land must be tackled through the hunt, which in turn leads to the archery contest. Ashurbanipal's prowess at archery appears to then lead the Elamite princes to bow down at his feet. There is then a passage in the second person which makes reference to the land of Elam.⁸⁸⁸ Unfortunately, this passage is badly broken, and we can only speculate as to what its significance might be.

"Processive Explanation" and the Significance of Events in Narrative Historiography

At this juncture, it is useful to introduce some theoretical considerations which will be relevant to the proceeding discussion. Before tackling the central significance of the archery contest and its purpose within the narrative of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*, I will first explore the ways in which narrative historiography imparts meaning upon events. This subject holds a great deal of importance for the argument of this chapter

⁸⁸³ For example, Barnett and Lorenzini 1975: 131; SAA 3: 113 fig. 35.

⁸⁸⁴ Miller 2017: 49-50, 83 fig. 2.2, 274 fig. 6.10, 314-16.

⁸⁸⁵ Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 305 and 312.

⁸⁸⁶ Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 289 and 291.

⁸⁸⁷ Collins 2006: 3-7.

⁸⁸⁸ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 51-54.

moving forward, and should therefore be addressed before I continue my analysis of the text.

Narrative explanation is a subject which has had a great deal of ink expended on it by both literary theorists and philosophers of history. For example, the philosopher of history Lemon has described narrative explanation as being intrinsically linked to the consecutivity of events:

To present an event as “subsequent” to a “prior” event is to do more than narrate the event—it is to say why it happened.⁸⁸⁹

Similarly, but approaching the subject from the direction of structuralist literary criticism, Barthes writes:

Indeed, there is a strong presumption that the mainspring of narrative activity is to be traced to that very confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, what-comes-*after* being read in a narrative as what-is-*caused-by*. Narrative would then be a systematic application of the logical fallacy denounced by scholasticism under the formula *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, which may well be the motto of Destiny whose “language”, after all, finds its expression in narrative.⁸⁹⁰

Of course, it would be ridiculous to claim that all consecutive events within a narrative are linked in a relationship of causation, and Lemon is keen to stress that he does not claim that this is the case.⁸⁹¹ Similarly, Barthes distinguishes between “catalyses”, “functions” in a text which are “purely chronological” and have no significance for causation, and “cardinal functions” which cause significant change and progress the plot in a meaningful way.⁸⁹²

There are several problems with these assessments of narrative explanation. The process of tracking causal links back chronologically from an event does not provide any insights into which of these links are more or less important to the narrative beyond the relatively basic distinction between “catalyses” and “cardinal functions”. A second criticism of this approach has been put forward by Bal, who believes that the

⁸⁸⁹ Lemon 2001: 109.

⁸⁹⁰ Barthes 1975: 248, his emphasis.

⁸⁹¹ Lemon 2001: 109-10.

⁸⁹² Barthes 1975: 247-49.

connection between chronology and causation is frequently overstated, and argues that chronological order frequently gives other forms of significance to events than simply demonstrating a causal chain.⁸⁹³

These considerations demonstrate that the models for narrative explanation proposed by Lemon and Barthes lack the nuance necessary to deal with complex narratives. They have the unfortunate result of effectively reducing narrative to a form of flowchart, leaving little room for nuanced interpretation. The conception of narrative explanation as a causal chain is both too simplistic and too rigid to be adequately utilised as an interpretive tool.

An alternative model for the workings of narrative explanation is presented by Hexter, who sees in the application of models of “causal explanation” to narrative historiography an attempt to apply an overly scientific approach to a discipline which deals in very different questions from the sciences.⁸⁹⁴ For Hexter, the explanation of past events in narrative historiography is essentially based upon rhetorical features of the text. As a result, he proposes that rather than a “causal” form of explanation, narratives explain events through “processive explanation”, explanation through the use of narrative and rhetorical devices.⁸⁹⁵ In processive explanation, consecutivity is replaced by concerns about the ways in which the narrative is paced, plotted, focalised, and ordered. Hexter viewed these narrative and rhetorical devices as serving to emphasise “pivot points” which cause meaningful changes in history, and to make these pivots central to the narrative.⁸⁹⁶

This understanding of narrative explanation is preferable for its greater flexibility, and its ability to better cope with the nuances of alterations to narrative order. Let us consider, for example, the processive explanation of events in Sennacherib’s Bavian Inscription.⁸⁹⁷ The structure of this text can be summarised thus:

⁸⁹³ Bal 1997: 214.

⁸⁹⁴ Hexter 1971: 25-53.

⁸⁹⁵ Hexter 1971: 195-277.

⁸⁹⁶ Readers may notice that this belief in the fundamentally rhetorical nature of the production of history is rather odd coming from the same pen that wrote the passage quoted in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, in which Hexter asserts that historians can “know” what the past was like. There is a peculiar tension in *The History Primer* between a belief that rhetorical devices and the historian’s own subjectivity are essential to the practice of history on one hand, and an insistence that historians can (and do) write accurate and truthful accounts of the past on the other. For a discussion of these contradictions in Hexter’s work, see Mink 1980: 18-21.

⁸⁹⁷ RINAP 3/2 223.

- List of gods (lines 1-2).
- Sennacherib's titles and epithets (lines 3-5).
- Expansion of Nineveh: the canal Patti-Sîn-aḫḫē-erība dug to provide water for Nineveh and its gardens (lines 5-34).
- Account of the Battle of Ḫalule (lines 34-43).
- Account of the siege and destruction of Babylon: a canal dug diverting water from the River Araḫtu to flood the city (lines 43-54).
- Placement of stelae by the Patti-Sîn-aḫḫē-erība (lines 54-57).
- Curse formulae (lines 57-60).

Several scholars have commented on the parallelism in this text between the rebuilding of Nineveh through the digging of a canal and the destruction of Babylon, which also involves the digging of a canal to flood the city.⁸⁹⁸ What has less often been commented on is this inscription's unusual structure. Usually, Assyrian royal inscriptions consist of the following elements:

- List of gods or hymn in praise of the gods (optional).
- Titles and epithets of the king.
- Military section consisting of either campaign accounts or a summary of conquests.
- Building section.
- Blessings and curses.

Whilst the military section may sometimes contain the details of some building projects undertaken on campaign, it is very unusual for the building of the structure which the inscription was actually written on or placed in to be placed outside of the building section.⁸⁹⁹ This is generally a logical point for it to be placed at; the king returns from his campaigns with spoils and captives which he then uses in his building projects. Hurowitz has characterised the consecutivity of the campaign and building accounts in Mesopotamian inscriptions as presenting the king as a

⁸⁹⁸ Galter 1984: 163-67; Van De Mieroop 2003: 8-9.

⁸⁹⁹ Another example of a text with an unusually placed building account is Ashurnasirpal II's annals from the Ninurta Temple at Kalḫu, where the construction of the Ninurta Temple is placed halfway through the campaign section (RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 131-35). The significance of this feature of the text will be discussed below.

“victorious temple builder”, and draws a parallel with the “divine warrior” topos in Ancient Near Eastern mythology.⁹⁰⁰

The usual narrative order of the inscriptions is abandoned in Bavian. The construction of the canal precedes the accounts of the campaigns against Babylonia. Furthermore, the beginning of the campaign section stresses the fact that the Battle of Ḫalule occurred in the same year as the digging of the canal for Nineveh.⁹⁰¹ The result of this is that Sennacherib’s hydraulic projects are given a central position throughout the entire narrative. Furthermore, a causal link is drawn between the digging of the canal and the victory at Ḫalule. The consecutivity of the two events is part of the processive explanation present in the text, but other factors, such as its unusual structure and the parallelism between the rebuilding of Nineveh and the destruction of Babylon, also contribute to the overall effect.

The example of Bavian highlights the importance of narrative order for the interpretation of the inscriptions in this fashion. It also demonstrates an unusual feature of these texts’ ordering principles. Narrative order is usually understood in literary criticism in terms of “anachrony”, the placement of events in the narrative in an order that differs from their chronological order. This understanding of narrative does work at the level of individual campaign accounts in an inscription, and I have discussed one such example of “anachrony” already above: the “temporal prolepsis” in Sargon’s Letter to the God. However, at the broader level of a text’s macrostructure, this approach breaks down for the Assyrian royal inscriptions. When campaign accounts are sometimes placed outside of their chronological order, they are generally still presented as following each other sequentially in time.⁹⁰² For example, the placement of the digging of the canal in the Bavian Inscription is unusual, but it is actually placed at a point which agrees with its position in the chronology of Sennacherib’s reign as portrayed in the text. Furthermore,

⁹⁰⁰ Hurowitz 1992: 82, 93. For the connection between military victory and temple building across the Ancient Near East, see Kapelrud 1963. I discuss the topos of victory resulting in an act of creation or reordering in Mesopotamian literature in Chapter 4.

⁹⁰¹ RINAP 3/2 223: 34.

⁹⁰² The most pronounced example of this comes from Ashurbanipal’s “annals”. It has long been noted that although this king’s campaign accounts are numbered sequentially, they are not actually arranged chronologically (Grayson 1980b: 245; Olmstead 1916: 53; Smith 1871: 322; Spalinger 1974a: 316). Less obvious examples include the order of the events in Ashurnasirpal II’s Throne-Base Inscription (RIMA 2 A.O.101.2; Dewar 2017a: 76-82), or the conflation of Sennacherib’s first two campaigns to Babylonia in the Nebi Yunus Inscription (for which see Chapter 7).

chronological order is not the only ordering of the narrative in the inscriptions, and in the example of Bavian it is the deviation from the standard tripartite structure that is unusual, not any form of anachrony.

All of this demonstrates the need for a differing understanding of narrative order. For this I turn to Hornblower's narratological analysis of Thucydides.⁹⁰³ Rather than discuss narrative order in terms of "anachrony", Hornblower prefers to use the term "narrative displacement", which he defines as:

the technique by which an item in Thucydides loses or occasionally gains ... its impact by being placed at a point other than we'd expect it.⁹⁰⁴

The significance of this definition is that Hornblower accepts that, even though his own examples all relate to the placement of events outside of chronological order,⁹⁰⁵ there are other organising principles about which a text might be structured. This understanding of narrative displacement is especially useful for Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, which are frequently geographically ordered, but presented as being chronologically ordered.⁹⁰⁶

The Ideological Importance of the Archery Contest

Having considered these theoretical points, we can now return to analysing the archery contest in the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. To understand the importance of the archery contest in this text, the historical context of this inscription must be considered. The text dates to the period between the death of Urtaku in 664 BC and the second Elamite campaign in 653 BC.⁹⁰⁷ At this time, Ashurbanipal had yet to conquer Elam and incorporate it into his empire. Furthermore, the first Elamite campaign, portrayed as an Assyrian victory in the inscriptions, appears to have in fact resulted in a stalemate. The Assyrian army had forced back the invading Elamites to the Babylonian-Elamite border, but had not entered into Elam itself.⁹⁰⁸ In

⁹⁰³ Hornblower 2011: 59-99.

⁹⁰⁴ Hornblower 2011: 68.

⁹⁰⁵ Hornblower 2011: 68-79.

⁹⁰⁶ See n. 901 above for literature on the structure of Ashurbanipal's "annals".

⁹⁰⁷ For the dates of these events, see Frame 1992: 119 n. 93, 122-23 n. 112; Gerardi 1987: 127-30; 144-45.

⁹⁰⁸ RINAP 5/1 3: iv 43-48; Waters 2000: 45-46.

addition, Ashurbanipal waited to punish Urtaku's allies in Gambulu until after he had defeated Teumman nine years later.⁹⁰⁹

There were some positives for Ashurbanipal to take from this campaign. Urtaku's death in the same year was a clear demonstration of the Assyrian king's divine support. However, Teumman's accession meant that the Elamite throne was now held by someone who appears to have been a prominent anti-Assyrian voice during Urtaku's reign.⁹¹⁰ This was tempered by the fact that Urtaku's heirs had taken refuge in Assyria. It seems that Ashurbanipal had planned to install Ummanigaš on the Elamite throne even before Teumman's aggression led him to do so.⁹¹¹ Later inscriptions portray Teumman's demands that Ashurbanipal hand over the Elamite princes as the primary motivation for the outbreak of war between the two kings,⁹¹² and the reliefs depicting the campaign portray installing Ummanigaš as its main objective.⁹¹³ The flight of the Elamite princes to Assyria was therefore an important outcome of the first Elamite campaign.

In this context, the account of the lion hunt which precedes the archery contest with the Elamite princes also takes on ideological significance with reference to Elam. This episode is unique, and contains a long and unusual prologue which describes the causes of the plague of lions in some detail. This passage begins with the phrase *Adad zunniššu umaššira Ea upaṭṭira nagbišu*, "Adad released his rains, Ea opened his springs".⁹¹⁴ The concept of Adad and Ea bringing rainfall and new water sources appears frequently in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions.⁹¹⁵ It also appears in Ashurbanipal's coronation hymn,⁹¹⁶ the only occurrence of the motif in an Ashurbanipal text earlier than the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. However, this motif is normally used to demonstrate the agricultural and economic prosperity experienced by Assyria during Ashurbanipal's reign. The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* does not portray the gods bringing water as bringing prosperity in the fashion of Ashurbanipal's later inscriptions.

⁹⁰⁹ RINAP 5/1 3: vi 10-85.

⁹¹⁰ ABL 328: obv. 10-15; Gerardi 1987: 132; Waters 2000: 46-47.

⁹¹¹ Gerardi 1987: 149-50.

⁹¹² RINAP 5/1 3: iv 80-v 4; SAA 3 31: ii 7'-13'.

⁹¹³ Waters 2000: 51 n. 62.

⁹¹⁴ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 24.

⁹¹⁵ RINAP 5/1 3: i 27-28; 4: i 22; 5: iii 9'-10'; 7: i 81'; 8: i 21'-22'; 10: iv 8-9; 11: i 45.

⁹¹⁶ SAA 3 11: 20-21.

Instead it produces conditions which allow a significant threat against the people of Assyria to form.

This passage therefore provides an interesting form of rationalisation for negative events which had not been explicitly stated in any previous Assyrian royal inscription; the conditions which brought prosperity to the empire also brought about new threats to its people. This observation is particularly interesting when considered within the broader narrative of the inscription. The chaos and death resulting from the plague of lions is a negative event, but one with an ultimately positive result, as Ashurbanipal heroically overcomes the animals and goes on to demonstrate his archery skill against the Elamite princes. This episode follows immediately after the first Elamite campaign, a similarly negative event with a positive outcome in the death of Urtaku and the flight of the Elamite princes to Assyria. Both of these episodes further Ashurbanipal's relationship with the Elamite princes by making them indebted to him and allowing him the opportunity to assert his superiority over them. The reliefs from the North Palace give another example of the Elamite princes becoming indebted to Ashurbanipal. Ummanappa is rescued from a lion,⁹¹⁷ neatly paralleling the rescue of the Elamite princes from Teumman. Reade views the relief of Ashurbanipal and the prostrated Elamites at the hunt as representative of the Assyrian king having performed a similar rescue,⁹¹⁸ but Barnett instead interprets this scene as showing Ashurbanipal testing his bow.⁹¹⁹

The Lion Hunt as Allegory

The structure of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* suggests an additional facet to its message. Several Assyrian display inscriptions contain two separate episodes which are presented as parallel to, or the opposite of, one another. The most prominent of these is Sennacherib's Bavian Inscription, wherein the rebuilding of Nineveh is paralleled with the destruction of Babylon,⁹²⁰ and I have argued elsewhere that the inscription on the throne-base of Ashurnasirpal II draws parallels between the formation of the royal zoo and the settling of captives at Kalḫu.⁹²¹ Similar parallels appear on a smaller scale within passages of other inscriptions. For example, the

⁹¹⁷ Gerardi 1988: 25-26; Weissert 1997a: 341 n. 7; Russell 1999: 201.

⁹¹⁸ Reade 1976: 99.

⁹¹⁹ Barnett 1976: 51-52, pl. LI.

⁹²⁰ Galter 1984: 163-67; Van De Mieroop 2003: 8-9.

⁹²¹ Dewar 2017a: 65-66.

description of Merodach-baladan II in Sennacherib's First Campaign Cylinder is the antithesis of Sennacherib's titles in the same text.⁹²² Furthermore, in the account of the first Elamite campaign from Ashurbanipal's Prism B, Urtaku invades Babylonia on the basis of lies told to him by Bēl-iqīša the Gambulian, Nabû-šuma-ēreš the *šandabakku* of Nippur, and his eunuch Marduk-šuma-ibni. In contrast to this, Ashurbanipal does not blindly believe the Babylonian messenger who comes to tell him of the Elamite aggression, but sends an envoy to verify the account of Urtaku's betrayal before retaliating, as discussed in Chapter 5.

In light of this and the parallels between the lion hunt and the first Elamite campaign discussed above, it appears that the two episodes described in the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* were intended to be viewed as a related pair. At least part of the lion hunt account seems to be fictitious. The portrayals of the lion hunt from Ashurbanipal's reliefs depict the lions as being released from cages for the hunt,⁹²³ and the landscape described as the location for the hunt in the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* could apply equally well to some parts of the royal gardens created by Sennacherib as it could to a location in the wild.⁹²⁴ The prologue to the hunt is at best a gross exaggeration, and is possibly a complete fabrication. This lends support to the suggestion that it was written to complement the account of the first Elamite campaign.

Divine Influence on Individual's Decisions

The divine causation of the plague of lions is another interesting element of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. In light of the parallels between the lion hunt and the first Elamite campaign, I feel that a similar divine causation was also intended to be implied for Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia. The motif of the gods influencing a foreign ruler's thoughts and actions appears several times in texts from the reign of Ashurbanipal. Prism B describes Teumman as attacking without divine approval because Ištar had altered his decision.⁹²⁵ Similarly in Prism A the Arab king Jaute' comes out of hiding and turns himself over to Ashurbanipal because Aššur altered

⁹²² Frahm 2003: 145.

⁹²³ Barnett 1976: Pls. IX, XIII, LI.

⁹²⁴ For these royal gardens, see Amrhein 2015: 91-108; Thomason 2001: 80-91.

⁹²⁵ RINAP 5/1 3: v 21-24. The term used in the text, *ṭēmu*, might alternatively carry a meaning of "reason" or "intelligence". However, this reading does not change the significance of the passage for the current purpose; Teumman attacks because Ištar has altered his mind or his thoughts to some extent.

his decision.⁹²⁶ A letter from the god Aššur to Ashurbanipal also seems to state that the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn revolt was pre-ordained by the gods, although the exact meaning of this passage is obscured by a break in the tablet.⁹²⁷ Finally, the letter ABL 1165, attributed to Ashurbanipal by Ito, contains some musings on why the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn revolt occurred. The letter's author suggests that the Babylonians may have rebelled because Aššur had planned for the land of Akkad to be destroyed.⁹²⁸

Three of these four examples involve a god causing a ruler to become hostile towards Assyria so that Ashurbanipal may defeat them in battle. The result of this is that negative events form part of a divine plan intended to glorify the Assyrian king and add new territory to his empire. This concept bears similarities to the way in which the spread of lions across the land is attributed to the gods in the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. It would also fit well as part of the rationale for the first Elamite campaign. Urtaku's invasion was a negative event which ultimately ended in a positive result, the flight of the Elamite princes to Assyria. The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* begins with a description of the divine support given to Ashurbanipal during his development and education,⁹²⁹ before moving on to state that the gods judged his case against Urtaku.⁹³⁰ After the account of the first Elamite campaign and its aftermath, we are then told that Adad and Ea brought rain and opened the springs, thus causing the plague of lions.⁹³¹ What becomes clear from this is that the gods' involvement in Ashurbanipal's life is a constant theme of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. Even negative events, such as the plague of lions, are divinely orchestrated and will produce positive results; no matter the obstacle, Ashurbanipal will meet it, overcome it, and excel because of it.

Ashurbanipal appears to have had a keen interest in the reasons why events occurred. The tablet L₃ contains a lament to the gods, written in the style of *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi* and other similar texts,⁹³² asking why both the king and the land were

⁹²⁶ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 5-7. Again, the term used in the text is *ṭēmu* (see n. 925).

⁹²⁷ SAA 3 44: obv. 13-15.

⁹²⁸ Ito 2015: 106.

⁹²⁹ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 4-14.

⁹³⁰ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 15.

⁹³¹ *Grosse Jagdinschrift* 24-32.

⁹³² Cf. Oshima 2014: 78-114; SAA 3 12.

beset with problems in spite of Ashurbanipal's good conduct.⁹³³ Furthermore, a significant portion of Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh was dedicated to divination and omens,⁹³⁴ and this king's passion for the genre of omen literature is demonstrated by the fact he had himself written into the canon of historical omens.⁹³⁵ The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* represents his first attempt in his inscriptions to answer the question of why negative events had occurred. It therefore highlights some key facets of the thinking of Ashurbanipal and his scribes which influenced the ways in which these events are described in the inscriptions.

The Elamite Rebellions Viewed through the Lens of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*

These ideological points garnered from the *Grosse Jagdinschrift* provide some insights into the logic at work in the accounts of rebellions in Elam in later inscriptions. The gods supported individuals hostile towards Assyria in usurping the Elamite throne because this provided further chances for Ashurbanipal to gain glory. Ashurbanipal did not defeat any of the Elamite usurpers in combat,⁹³⁶ but military victory was not the only method by which a king could demonstrate his superiority over his enemies. Submission without warfare was equally viewed as a demonstration of a king's power, as discussed in Chapter 5. Thus the earliest account of a sequence of rebellions in Elam, from Prism B, ends with Indabibi submitting to Ashurbanipal due to his fear of the Assyrian king's mighty weapons.⁹³⁷ Indabibi would later himself rebel against Assyria and be subsequently overthrown in a rebellion, and the majority of the Elamite rebellions do not end with the new ruler submitting to Ashurbanipal.⁹³⁸

Each new poor ruler allowed for a fresh demonstration of the gods' support of the Assyrian king, regardless of whether or not that ruler had submitted to Ashurbanipal. Miller provides a possible explanation for this succession of "bad" Elamite kings when she discusses Ashurbanipal's decision to mutilate the corpse of Nabû-šuma-ēreš, who had already died from a divinely inflicted disease several years earlier. This episode leads her to conclude:

⁹³³ Streck 1916: 250-52. However, it should be noted that the same concerns appear in a hymn from the reign of Ashurnasirpal I (von Soden 1974-77: 39-44 Vs. 41-Rs. 83).

⁹³⁴ Fincke 2004: 57-58.

⁹³⁵ Starr 1985: 61-64.

⁹³⁶ RINAP 5/1 3: vii 29-42; 6: ix 40''-52''; 11: v 23-40, x 6-16.

⁹³⁷ RINAP 5/1 3: vii 61-76.

⁹³⁸ For an overview of events in Elam described in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, see Gerardi 1987: 120-213.

It seems that divine punishment was not necessarily the final word ... As a king delegated to enact justice, Ashurbanipal clearly could not abdicate his duty, requiring the gods to take over his role for him.⁹³⁹

A similar argument can be made for the sequence of Elamite usurpers; each successive Elamite ruler must be aggressive in order to provide further incentive for a future Assyrian invasion of Elam, as Ashurbanipal must eventually re-conquer that country by his own hand. However, this is not always the case. In other regions, these displays of divine support for Ashurbanipal in the inscriptions are often followed by the submission of other foreign rulers. The most extreme example of this comes from the Ištar Temple Inscription, where Tugdamme the Cimmerian is struck down by the gods with a wasting disease.⁹⁴⁰ Following this event, we are told that all of Ashurbanipal's other enemies submitted to him willingly.⁹⁴¹

Negative Events and the Structure of Later Inscriptions

The *Grosse Jagdinschrift* is only one of several inscriptions of Ashurbanipal which present Urtaku's invasion as a positive event which allowed the Assyrian king to achieve great successes. In Prisms B and C, Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia is portrayed as the beginning of a series of events which eventually lead to the conquest of Elam and Gambulu,⁹⁴² and in Prism C also the submission of Urartu.⁹⁴³ Prism C adds a second pivotal event to the narrative. Following the conquest of Gambulu, the text recounts the beginning of the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn rebellion.⁹⁴⁴ This rebellion then results in the deterioration of order in Elam,⁹⁴⁵ and the series of rebellions which occur there each bring Ashurbanipal closer to direct military involvement in the region, as discussed in Chapter 5. Neither of these texts includes the lion hunt account, which is unique to the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*. I would suggest that the reason for this relates to the purpose of this episode in the text. Prior to the second Elamite campaign, Ashurbanipal used the lion hunt in place of a military victory against Teumman, which had yet to occur at this point. After Teumman's

⁹³⁹ Miller 2017: 288.

⁹⁴⁰ RINAP 5/1 23:157-58.

⁹⁴¹ RINAP 5/1 23: 160-61.

⁹⁴² RINAP 5/1 3: iv 15-vi 85; 6: v 24-vii 47'.

⁹⁴³ RINAP 5/1 6: vii 20'-28'.

⁹⁴⁴ RINAP 5/1 6: vii 48-viii 18'.

⁹⁴⁵ RINAP 5/1 6: viii 1''-ix 52''.

defeat, this episode was no longer required as the Assyrian scribes could now point to a concrete Assyrian victory in Elam.

This concept of the changing importance of events in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions from recension to recension has been recently commented on by Miller, who dubs this phenomenon "polysemy".⁹⁴⁶ This concept of events having various meanings and significances depending upon the narrative in which they are placed has much in common with Hayden White's ideas concerning the "emplotment" of events within historical narratives; an event gains its meaning in relation to the narrative in which it is placed.⁹⁴⁷ Miller's case-study for this practice within the inscriptions is the differing narratives of the second Elamite campaign and the Gambulian campaign in Prisms A and B, the epigraph tablets, and the reliefs.⁹⁴⁸ Her chart of the events featured in these sources highlights the level to which Prism A deviates from the narrative of the earlier prisms.⁹⁴⁹ This is a feature which is present throughout the text, and Cogan has identified various ways in which this text differs from Ashurbanipal's earlier annals.⁹⁵⁰

The result of this is that Prism A still features the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn revolt as a pivotal event, but the structure of the narrative and its place within it are significantly altered in comparison to Prism C. The campaign accounts from Prism B are borrowed by Prism C,⁹⁵¹ so that the new material and second pivotal event in Prism C are a continuation of the narrative of Prism B rather than an alteration of it. Prism A on the other hand alters much of the material. Several campaigns are omitted whilst others are greatly abbreviated.⁹⁵² The account of the rebellion in Babylonia also appears to differ from earlier accounts. The beginning of the episode is missing from Prism C, but in Prism Kh only Ummanigaš appears to have been named as a rebellious ally of Babylon.⁹⁵³ In Prism A the rebellion is also joined by Gutī, Amurru, and Egypt.⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁴⁶ Miller 2017: 277-78.

⁹⁴⁷ White 1978a; 1978b; 1978c. For views on the polyvalent meanings of historical events which reject White's constructivist approach to historiography, see Beckman 2005: 344-47; Carroll 2001: 253-54; Evans 1997: 75-84.

⁹⁴⁸ Miller 2017: 277-306.

⁹⁴⁹ Miller 2017: 382-87.

⁹⁵⁰ Cogan 2014: 71-82.

⁹⁵¹ RINAP 5/1: 107.

⁹⁵² RINAP 5/1: 222; Cogan 2014: 71-82.

⁹⁵³ RINAP 5/1 7: vii 36-45.

⁹⁵⁴ RINAP 5/1 11: iii 100-106.

The Narrative Geography of the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn Rebellion

This list of rebels takes on increased significance when it is considered in light of the changes made to the campaign accounts preceding the rebellion. Prism A omits the campaign to Qirbit, the defeat of the Urartian governor Adaria, the first Elamite campaign, and the submission of Rusa.⁹⁵⁵ This leaves the targets of the pre-revolt campaigns in Prism A as:

- Egypt
- Tyre and Arwad, and the submission of Gyges
- Mannea
- Elam and Gambulu

These locations match almost exactly with the Babylonian allies listed in the account of the rebellion, as is demonstrated in Fig. 3. These campaigns are arranged moving clockwise from the southeast Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. By contrast, the list of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's allies is given in the reverse order, moving anticlockwise from the Persian Gulf to the southeast Mediterranean. The result is that Ashurbanipal's brother is portrayed as having systematically reversed his previous conquests. He follows this reversal by withholding Ashurbanipal's offerings from the Babylonian temples, and depriving the cultic centres which his brother had built.⁹⁵⁶ Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is therefore presented as a sort of "anti-Ashurbanipal", annulling and undoing the Assyrian king's achievements.

Campaign(s)	Region	Direction	Rebel in this direction under Šamaš-šumu-ukīn	Position in List of Rebels
1 st and 2 nd	Egypt	Southwest	Egypt	4
3 rd	The Levant and Anatolia	West	Amurru	3
4 th	Mannea	East	The Gutī	2
5 th	Elam and Gambulu	Southeast	Elam	1

Fig. 3. The geographical locations of Ashurbanipal's first five campaigns in Prisms F and A and of Babylonia's allies during the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn rebellion in Prism A.

⁹⁵⁵ Cogan 2014: 71.

⁹⁵⁶ RINAP 5/1 11: iii 112-17.

Although the Elamites did support Babylonia during the revolt in reality,⁹⁵⁷ there is no record of the other regions listed joining Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's cause,⁹⁵⁸ and the later Ištar Temple Inscription makes no mention of them in this context.⁹⁵⁹ The rebellion is therefore extended from its actual extent so that it encompasses not just Babylonia, but the entirety of Ashurbanipal's empire. All of the Assyrian king's conquests have been turned against him. The following section, concerning the quelling of rebellion amongst the Babylonians, Elamites, and Arabs,⁹⁶⁰ is therefore the narrative of Ashurbanipal's re-conquest of his empire.

Artificially Constructing Universal Rebellion

The concept of "universal rebellion" against a king is most associated in the Ancient Near East with the legendary figure of the Old Akkadian ruler Naram-Sîn, who boasted of putting down a rebellion by all the four quarters of the earth.⁹⁶¹ In his own inscriptions, this event was a heroic achievement, but later texts sometimes take a more negative view of this king, and of the causes of the rebellion.⁹⁶² Elsewhere in the Ancient Near East, universal rebellion appears most frequently in Hittite texts. Hattušili I describes in his "Manly Deeds" how a Hurrian invasion of Hatti during his absence on campaign led the entire kingdom to rebel, with only Hattuša remaining loyal.⁹⁶³ Similarly, Muršili II stresses the outbreak of rebellion across the empire upon the death of his predecessor Arnuwanda II,⁹⁶⁴ and the subsequent re-conquest of Hatti's territory gives this young and inexperienced ruler an ideal arena in which to prove himself. The motif also appears in Darius the Great's inscription at Bisitun, in which the Persian king, having overthrown the imposter king Gaumâta and claimed the throne, is beset by rebels from across the empire.⁹⁶⁵

In Assyrian royal inscriptions, the concept of universal rebellion may also have been adopted by the scribes of Šamšī-Adad V in his account of the civil war against his

⁹⁵⁷ Frame 1992: 133-35; Waters 2000: 60-66.

⁹⁵⁸ Frame 1992: 133.

⁹⁵⁹ RINAP 5/1 23: 108-109.

⁹⁶⁰ RINAP 5/1 11: iii 128-x 39.

⁹⁶¹ RIME 2 E2.14.3: iii 15-32; 8: ii 1'-5', iii 1'-4'; 10: 5-9; 29: 5-7. For the ideological dimensions of the "great revolt" in Naram-Sîn's inscriptions, see Westenholz 2000: 106-107.

⁹⁶² For example Cooper 1983: 54-57 lines 94-148; Glassner 2004: 266-67. However, Westenholz (1983: 332-33) has highlighted the more favourable portrayal of this king in other literary texts.

⁹⁶³ Imparati 1965: 44-47 I 23-26; Saporetti 1965: 77, 80 Vs. 10-12.

⁹⁶⁴ Götze 1933: 15-23.

⁹⁶⁵ Schmitt 1991: i 26-iv 31.

brother Aššur-daʾin-apla.⁹⁶⁶ The final three toponyms in the list of rebel cities, Amedu, Tīl-abnī, and Ḫindānu, are set apart from the rest of the list of rebels.⁹⁶⁷ Reade, in his analysis of the rebellion, disregards these three toponyms for this reason, and due to their remoteness from the capital.⁹⁶⁸ In fact, each of these cities was located at the edge of Šamšī-Adad's empire: Amedu in Bīt-Zamani to the north,⁹⁶⁹ Tīl-abnī on the Euphrates to the west,⁹⁷⁰ and Ḫindānu bordering Suḫu in the Middle Euphrates region to the southwest.⁹⁷¹ These regions may well have rebelled against Assyria, but their locations and their separation from the preceding list suggest that they were not allies of Aššur-daʾin-apla, but were included in the narrative due to their locations, which extended the rebellion to the edges of the empire.

The Šamaš-šumu-ukīn Rebellion within the Structure of Prism A

Prism A ends its account of Ashurbanipal's re-conquest of his empire by having the captive Elamite kings Tammarītu, Pa'e, and Ummanaldašu, and the Arabian king Jaute' pull Ashurbanipal's chariot during the Akitu festival.⁹⁷² This event marks Ashurbanipal's triumph following the defeat of the rebellion in Babylonia. Elam and the Arabs had been Babylonia's main allies during the rebellion, and are therefore paraded in front of the Assyrian people during this time of celebration. Šamaš-šumu-ukīn himself had died in a fire.⁹⁷³ Whilst this terrible fate was a fitting punishment for the mastermind of this universal rebellion,⁹⁷⁴ it meant that Ashurbanipal was unable to include his brother in this display. However, by placing his yoke on his brother's allies, Ashurbanipal was able to demonstrate that the rebellion was over. Whilst the text may have mentioned additional regions earlier, the defeat of the Babylonian, Elamite, and Arabian kings signified the end of the rebellion. The restoration of order to these other regions is assumed to have been achieved. The result of this is that the structure of Prism A is split into two parts. Firstly Ashurbanipal conquers the entire known world, represented by his campaigns to Egypt, the Levant, Mannea,

⁹⁶⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 39-53.

⁹⁶⁷ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 49-50.

⁹⁶⁸ Reade 1981: 157.

⁹⁶⁹ Parpola and Porter 2001: Map 3 D3.

⁹⁷⁰ Bagg 2007: 253.

⁹⁷¹ Parpola and Porter 2001: Map 9 D2.

⁹⁷² RINAP 5/1 11: x 17-39.

⁹⁷³ RINAP 5/1 11: iv 46-52.

⁹⁷⁴ The implications of death by burning in Mesopotamian thought are discussed in Chapter R.

and Elam and Gambulu. Following this, Šamaš-šumu-ukīn causes all of these regions which Ashurbanipal had conquered to rebel, and fighting against this rebellion forms the main narrative of the second half of the inscription.

The Submission of Sarduri and the Achievement of Universal Conquest

Interestingly, there is no mention in the pre-rebellion section of the inscription of any conquests in the north. This contrasts with earlier editions of the annals, wherein the Urartian governor Andaria is defeated and beheaded by the people of Kullimmeri,⁹⁷⁵ and the Urartian king Rusa submits to Ashurbanipal following the sack of Ša-pî-Bēl at the conclusion of the Gambulian campaign.⁹⁷⁶ Prism A omits both of these episodes, and Urarṭu only appears at the very end of the text, when Rusa's successor Sarduri submits to Assyria following a triumphal display celebrating Ashurbanipal's victories against the Elamites and the Arabs.⁹⁷⁷ Part of the reason for these omissions is the streamlining of the first half of Prism A discussed above. Furthermore, the inclusion of Urarṭu in the second half of the text gives symmetry to its structure; four regions are conquered in the first half of the text, four regions rebel under Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, and four regions are conquered in the second half.

However, this symmetry is not absolute. Whilst the regions in the first half of the text and the list of Babylonia's allies match up as demonstrated above, the same cannot be said for the campaigns in the second half of the text. The early campaigns are undertaken to the southwest, west, east, and southeast. This presents a division of the four quarters roughly equivalent to that identified by Liverani in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II of a "Zagros front" to the north and east and a "Euphrates front" to the south and west, each of which extended from the Babyonian border to the Mediterranean.⁹⁷⁸ Liverani's model is based on the "trajectories" of geographical descriptions in the form "from GN₁ to GN₂".⁹⁷⁹ However, this dynamic conception of the empire along two "trajectories" between Babylonia and the Mediterranean also results in a static ordering of the world around four regions similar to those in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, the Mediterranean in the west, the Middle Euphrates region in the southwest, Babylonia in the southeast, and the polities of the Zagros

⁹⁷⁵ RINAP 5/1 3: iv 6-14; 4: iv 1-8; 6: v 13-23; 7: iv 66''-74''.

⁹⁷⁶ RINAP 5/1 6: vii 20'-28'; 7: vii 11-20.

⁹⁷⁷ RINAP 5/1 11: x 40-50.

⁹⁷⁸ Liverani 1999-2000: 61 fig. 2.

⁹⁷⁹ Liverani 1999-2000: 59-65.

Mountains in the east or northeast. The directions are the same, but Ashurbanipal's scribes extend the southwestern point from the Middle Euphrates to Egypt, and the southeastern point from Babylonia to Elam.⁹⁸⁰ This orientation for the earth's quarters also appears to be present in Papyrus Amherst 63, where the gifts given to Sarmuge (Šamaš-šuma-ukīn) come from Media in the east, Elam in the southeast, Egypt in the southwest, and, if Steiner and Nims' interpretation is correct, Tyre in the west.⁹⁸¹ We might therefore view the southwest, west, east, and southeast as fairly common points for the world to be ordered around in late Neo-Assyrian thought.

This geographical ordering differs from that of the second half of Prism A. The four regions in this section are situated to the southeast (Elam), the south (Babylonia), the west and southwest (the Arabs),⁹⁸² and the north (Uraṭu). Such alterations to the axes around which the world is oriented are not unheard of in the inscriptions. Liverani has highlighted Tukultī-Ninurta I's alteration of the avenue from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, traditionally the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf respectively. This king never reached the Mediterranean, which lay beyond Hittite territory, but claimed the title "king of the Upper and Lower Sea" by equating the Upper Sea with Lake Van.⁹⁸³ Similarly, I have previously demonstrated that Shalmaneser III's throne-base inscriptions are ordered around the major bodies of water which he reached on campaign, the Mediterranean in the west, the Sea of Nairi or the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates in the north, the Sea of Zamua in the east, and the Persian Gulf in the south.⁹⁸⁴ Interestingly, Ashurbanipal's four regions also align with bodies of water: Amurru with the Mediterranean, Egypt with both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea,⁹⁸⁵ Mannea and Media with either Lake Urmia or the Caspian,⁹⁸⁶ and Elam with the Persian Gulf.

⁹⁸⁰ Alternatively, the ordering of Prism A can be viewed along the lines of Liverani's model as producing a front along the Mediterranean between Egypt and Lydia in the west, and a second along the Zagros between Mannea and Elam in the east.

⁹⁸¹ Steiner 2003: 324; Steiner and Nims 1985: 73; 2017: 77 xix 3-6.

⁹⁸² All of Ashurbanipal's Arabian campaigns occurred in relation to the west (Eph'al 1982: 142-65), as opposed to those of Esarhaddon, who did campaign into the far south (RINAP 4 1: iv 53-77; Eph'al 1982: 133-37).

⁹⁸³ Liverani 1990: 48-50.

⁹⁸⁴ Dewar 2017a: 82-84, 86-87 tables 2-3.

⁹⁸⁵ For the designation of Egypt as "Meluḥḥa" stemming from an equation of the Red Sea with the Persian Gulf, see Liverani 1990: 53.

⁹⁸⁶ For the connection between these regions and an eastern Great Sea in Assyrian texts, and the possible identification of this sea as the Caspian, see Diakonoff 1985: 66; Herzfeld (ed.) 1968: 196; Reade 1995: 38; Yamada 2005: 37-38.

All of this demonstrates that bodies of water played an important role in Assyrian conceptions of the world's quarters. However, the regions in the second half of Prism A possess a different ordering principle. These regions provide the names for the points of the compass in Babylonian scholarship: Elam, Akkad, Amurru, and Subartu.⁹⁸⁷ The occurrence of Elam and Akkad in the second half of Prism A is self-evident, and the text stresses that the Arabian campaigns were enacted in defence of Amurru.⁹⁸⁸ This point is reinforced by the geography of the campaigns themselves.⁹⁸⁹ Finally, Subartu, the north, encompassed both Assyria and Urartu.⁹⁹⁰ The result of this is that these four regions also represent the four quarters of the earth, but do so in a different fashion to the regions in the first half of the inscription.

I would argue that this shift of the world's axes in Prism A was motivated by events in Egypt. At some point after 663 BC, but prior to the writing of Prism A, Psammetichus I had rebelled against Assyrian rule, and Egypt was never re-conquered by Assyria.⁹⁹¹ Ashurbanipal could not therefore present the re-conquest of the exact same regions that are listed as the rebels, but the inclusion of Urartu allowed for a different description of the conquest of the four quarters, one that avoided the subject of Egypt altogether.

The decision to omit the earlier contact with Urartu from Prism A has an effect on the narrative and the ideological message of the text. Ashurbanipal describes how the previous kings of Assyria and Urartu had written to one another as brothers.⁹⁹² Now Sarduri writes to him like a son writing to his father, and adopts submissive language in his communications.⁹⁹³ The kingdom of Urartu, once Assyria's greatest rival,⁹⁹⁴ has been reduced to the status of an Assyrian vassal. Cogan has suggested that Sarduri's submission is placed at this point to demonstrate the contrasting fates of those kings who resisted Ashurbanipal, and those who submitted peacefully.⁹⁹⁵ I am inclined to agree with this to an extent, but follow Tadmor in seeing the fact that this

⁹⁸⁷ Hallo 1980: 189-90; Parpola 1983: XXIII.

⁹⁸⁸ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 15-29.

⁹⁸⁹ For the geography of Ashurbanipal's Arabian campaigns, see Eph'al 1982: 142-65.

⁹⁹⁰ Parpola 1983: XXIII.

⁹⁹¹ For an assessment of the Assyrian sources relating to the early years of Psammetichus' reign, see Spalinger 1976: 133-37.

⁹⁹² RINAP 5/1 11: x 41-42.

⁹⁹³ RINAP 5/1 11: x 45-50; Hurowitz 2013: 266-67. This father-son metaphor is displayed in ABL 1242, where Ashurbanipal addresses Sarduri as his "son" (SAA 21 78: obv. 2).

⁹⁹⁴ For the history of conflict between this state and Assyria, see Barnett 1982: 328-65; RIA s.v. *Urartu* [§2].

⁹⁹⁵ Cogan 2014: 81-82.

event is placed after the Akitu as bearing further ideological implications. Within the narrative of Prism A, Ashurbanipal is not stated to have previously conquered or received tribute from his northern neighbour, as discussed above. The submission of Sarduri therefore forms the “final piece” in his conquest of the known world.⁹⁹⁶ A similar situation can be found in Sargon II’s annals. Having conquered Babylon, Sargon receives the tribute of Dilmun (Bahrain) and Jadnana (Cyprus),⁹⁹⁷ two islands at the extreme edges of the Assyrian “mental map”.⁹⁹⁸

The fact that Ashurbanipal’s final conquest was the last surviving great king outside of Assyria, now that Elam had been annexed, added to the prestige of this achievement. Furthermore it had occurred voluntarily following the triumphant celebration of the victory over Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and his allies. This meant that by quelling the rebellion, Ashurbanipal had not only re-conquered his territory following an empire-wide rebellion, but had expanded it as a result. The post-rebellion campaigns are all focused on the south, east, and west, the submission of Sarduri therefore gave a more “even coverage” for Ashurbanipal’s re-conquest of the known world; his post rebellion conquests now consist of Babylon in the south, Elam in the southeast, the Arabs in the west, and Urarṭu in the north.

At a glance, the impact of the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn rebellion may seem greatly understated in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions and reliefs. The inscriptions cover the events in Babylonia very concisely, and are more concerned with the campaigns against Elam and the Arabs.⁹⁹⁹ The reliefs are similarly lacking in material on Babylonia by comparison to the propensity of scenes relating to Elam.¹⁰⁰⁰ On closer inspection, the rebellion in Babylonia formed a key part of the narrative of Prism A. The result of the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn rebellion in Prism A was that it allowed Ashurbanipal to achieve things which no previous Assyria king had done before. Not only had Urarṭu submitted, but Ashurbanipal had also sacked Susa, retrieving the

⁹⁹⁶ Tadmor 1999: 60.

⁹⁹⁷ Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 383-84, 391, 393-95.

⁹⁹⁸ For the position of these islands in the Neo-Assyrian conception of the world, see Liverani 1999-2000: 65-67. For the concept of the “mental map” and its application to the Ancient Near East, see Liverani 1999-2000; Pongratz-Leisten 2001b.

⁹⁹⁹ RINAP 5/1 11: iii 70-x 39.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The exception to the absence of the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn rebellion from the reliefs is the depiction of Assyrian soldiers presenting the Babylonian royal regalia to Ashurbanipal from Room M of the North Palace (Novotny and Watanabe 2008: 105-18).

statue of the goddess Nanāja after over one thousand years of captivity in Elam,¹⁰⁰¹ and entering sacred groves which no outsider had ever seen before.¹⁰⁰² In making this negative event into a “blessing in disguise”, Ashurbanipal adopted the same ideological viewpoint as he had previously taken in the case of the invasion of Babylonia by Urtaku in the Grosse Jagdschrift and Prisms B and C.

Excursus: A Possible Influence on the Structure of Prism A

The structure of Prism A can be summarised as two series of pseudo-annalistic campaign accounts separated by a pivotal event. This pivotal event, the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn rebellion, allows the king to achieve unparalleled military success in the second section of campaign accounts. I would suggest that there is another Assyrian inscription which shares a similar structure. Ashurnasirpal II’s annals from the Ninurta Temple at Kalḫu also contain two series of annalistic campaign accounts separated by a major event from this king’s reign, the construction of the Ninurta Temple.¹⁰⁰³ Lambert has dismissed this structure as resulting from poor editing,¹⁰⁰⁴ a common explanation for peculiarities in Ashurnasirpal’s inscriptions.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, the titles given to Ashurnasirpal in this building account already pre-empt the campaigns which occur after it.¹⁰⁰⁶ It would be unusual for a scribe to pay this sort of attention to detail in the epithets of the building account, but not in the much more obvious instance of the overarching structure of the texts. Furthermore, I have demonstrated elsewhere that Ashurnasirpal’s Throne-Base Inscription manipulates the order of events from the annals in order to give them a new significance.¹⁰⁰⁷ This suggests that we should consider the possibility of Ashurnasirpal’s scribes also experimenting with the order of events in the annals.

¹⁰⁰¹ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 107-125.

¹⁰⁰² RINAP 5/1 11: vi 65-69.

¹⁰⁰³ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 131-135. Although the majority of the exemplars of this text were written across several series of stone slabs, the entire text was also written on a single slab from the altar (M 27 in Finkel and Reade’s appendix to Reade 2002: 207-209). This allows us to be certain of the unusual structure of the text. It appears from Layard’s and Rawlinson’s notes that there was a second exemplar of the inscription on the reverse of this slab, but that this exemplar ended with the last line of the description of the tribute received from Carchemish and Patina (RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 76; Reade 2002: 207-208). The other editions of Ashurnasirpal’s annals on the Great Monolith (RIMA 2 A.O.101.17) and from the Šarrat-nipḫi Temple (Al-Juboori 2018) do not include the second half of the narrative and possess a more usual tripartite structure.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Lambert 1974: 107.

¹⁰⁰⁵ For example, Grayson 1976: 138-39; Schramm 1973: 36.

¹⁰⁰⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 125-131.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Dewar 2007a: 79-82.

The campaign accounts after the building account form their own distinct narrative sequence, with a definite sense of progression from one to the next. Following a show of strength campaign down the Ḫabur and the Euphrates, Ashurnasirpal defeats the governor of Suḫu and his Babylonian allies in battle.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Middle Euphrates region then forms the setting for the next campaign, which was carried out in response to a rebellion in Suḫu, Laqe, and Ḫindānu.¹⁰⁰⁹ Azi-ili, one of the ringleaders of the rebellion, escapes into Bīt-Adini,¹⁰¹⁰ and this country is then the target of the next campaign.¹⁰¹¹ Following the campaign to Bīt-Adini, Ashurnasirpal's next campaign sees him march through this land to Carchemish and Patina, before undertaking ceremonial expeditions to Mount Lebanon and the Mediterranean coast.¹⁰¹² The final campaign of this section, against Bīt-Zamāni,¹⁰¹³ is the only one which does not fit into this progression. Another peculiarity of the second annalistic section is that only the first and last campaign accounts are dated.¹⁰¹⁴ In light of the strong narrative progression from each of these campaign accounts to the next, I feel that this is a deliberate stylistic choice on the part of the scribe, intended to further emphasise the connection between these campaigns. By contrast, the final campaign recorded in the annals had no connection to the preceding four, and was therefore presented with the year in which it occurred.

A second strategy by which events in the post-building account section are tied together can be found at the end of the Suḫu campaign. This campaign account ends with the following passage:

šalam bunnanīja ēpuš lītī u danānī ina libbi alṭur ina āl Suri ušēziz Aššur-nāšir-apli šar ša tanattašu danānu kajjānuma ana ḫuribte tarrušu pānušu ana šitaprušu ḫutennišu iṣāḫa libbašu

I made an image of my features, I wrote on it my victory and might (and) I erected it in the city of Suru: "Ashurnasirpal, king whose praise is mighty (and)

¹⁰⁰⁸ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 16-24.

¹⁰⁰⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 26-48.

¹⁰¹⁰ Liverani 1992: 94; RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 38-45.

¹⁰¹¹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 50-56.

¹⁰¹² RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 56-92. There is some disagreement between scholars as to whether this account describes a single campaign or two campaigns conflated into a single account (Brinkman 1968: 393-94; de Filippi 1977: 28; Dewar 2017a: 78-79; Grayson 1976: 139-40; Liverani 1992: 119; Schramm 1973: 27-29).

¹⁰¹³ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 92-126.

¹⁰¹⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 1, iii 28, iii 50, iii 56, iii 92.

constant, whose face is fixed towards the desert, whose heart rejoices at the letting fly of his *ḫutennu*".¹⁰¹⁵

In the subsequent campaign account, after Ashurnasirpal has been informed of the rebellion in the Middle Euphrates region, he reaches Suru by traversing the desert (*ḫuribtu*).¹⁰¹⁶ The quoted inscription therefore pre-empts the early events of the next campaign; Ashurnasirpal attentively looks out across the desert in the embedded text, and the main narrative demonstrates this by having him set out across the desert in response to the rebellion. The rebels, trusting in their remote distance from Kalḫu, have failed to take into account Ashurnasirpal's readiness to take to the desert. The Assyrian king then gains the advantage by taking this quicker but more difficult route to Suru.¹⁰¹⁷ This provides a further link between the two campaigns.

This observation suggests a possible revision to the translation usually given for the quoted inscription. The word *ḫutennu*, a hapax legomenon, is interpreted by the CAD, Brinkman, and Grayson as a javelin or some other form of missile weapon.¹⁰¹⁸ However, Ashurnasirpal's speedy response to the rebellion by charging across the desert suggests interpreting the term in light of *ḫetennu*, a term denoting part of a chariot.¹⁰¹⁹ The phrase *šitaprušu ḫutennišu*, "the letting fly of his *ḫutennu*", which Brinkman interprets as a reference to Ashurnasirpal's fondness for hunting,¹⁰²⁰ would then describe the speed at which Ashurnasirpal's chariot sets off across the desert.

These four campaigns resulted in Ashurnasirpal reaching the Mediterranean, a feat that had not been achieved since the reign of Aššur-bēl-kala approximately 200 years earlier.¹⁰²¹ This was a crowning achievement of Ashurnasirpal's reign, and took pride of place in both the inscription from his throne-base¹⁰²² and an epical poem in praise of him.¹⁰²³ These achievements were much more impressive than those of the king's earlier campaigns, which were mostly limited to the mountains to

¹⁰¹⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 24-26.

¹⁰¹⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 28-9.

¹⁰¹⁷ For the topos of the heroic individual setting out into the desert in other texts from the Ancient Near East, see Liverani 2004d.

¹⁰¹⁸ Brinkman 1968: 185; CAD s.v. *ḫutennu*; RIMA 2: 214.

¹⁰¹⁹ The CAD separates *ḫutennu* and *ḫetennu* into two separate entries, translated as "a missile" (s.v. *ḫutennu*), and "part of a chariot" (s.v. *ḫetennu*) respectively, whilst the AHw places them both under one entry, tentatively translated as "Deichselspitze" (s.v. *ḫe/utennu*, *ḫutnû*).

¹⁰²⁰ Brinkman 1968: 185 n. 1132.

¹⁰²¹ RIMA 2 A.O.89.7: iv 1-3.

¹⁰²² RIMA 2 A.O.101.2: 25-31.

¹⁰²³ LKA 64; Prosecký 2001: 431-33.

the north and east of Assyria, with a single foray into the Middle Euphrates region in response to a rebellion in Bīt-Ḫalupe.¹⁰²⁴ The post-building account campaigns are targeted against a more prestigious class of enemy. The battle against Suḫu saw Ashurnasirpal defeat a Babylonian army and is portrayed as resulting in the subdual of Babylonia as far as Chaldea,¹⁰²⁵ and Bīt-Adini, Carchemish, and Patina were some of the wealthiest and most important states in the west.¹⁰²⁶ Within the narrative of the annals, these great successes do not occur until after Ashurnasirpal has built the Ninurta Temple. This gives a simple, but powerful message; these achievements were only possible because of Ashurnasirpal's piety and industry in creating a new temple at his new capital.

Whilst the structure and narrative of Ashurbanipal's Prism A and Ashurnasirpal's annals are very similar in some ways, there is a major difference in the nature of the pivotal events which allow these rulers to achieve greater things. Ashurnasirpal's construction of the Ninurta Temple is positive event that clearly demonstrates his good qualities as a ruler. Ashurbanipal instead uses this same device with much more negative events, Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia and the rebellion in Babylon. In Prism A, Urtaku's invasion was apparently viewed as unnecessary to the narrative, and the text was restructured to make the Babylonian rebellion the only pivotal event. In the Ištar Temple Inscription, the putting down of the rebellion is separated out somewhat from the Elamite and Arabian campaigns, which in turn are just two of several campaigns which resulted in the submission of other rulers.¹⁰²⁷ Perhaps the most important event in this text is the death of Tugdamme the Cimmerian,¹⁰²⁸ which results in every remaining insubmissive ruler submitting to Ashurbanipal.¹⁰²⁹ This text therefore ends with Ashurbanipal having achieved universal conquest, but in a

¹⁰²⁴ Liverani 1992: 87-93.

¹⁰²⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.101.2: iii 23-24. This statement of the extent of the Assyrian king's influence implies that the post-building account narrative follows his journeys to the Upper and Lower Seas, a common topos in Mesopotamian royal discourse (Maeda 2005: 5-7, 20-21; Yamada 2005: 31-32). However, Ashurnasirpal never reached the Persian Gulf, and never goes so far as to state that this is the case; his inscriptions never mention the Lower Sea, and only the most northern Babylonian cities are included in his geographical lists of conquests (RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 125-31).

¹⁰²⁶ Liverani 1992: 70-71, 73; Winter 1983: 185-87.

¹⁰²⁷ RINAP 5/1 23: 96-100, 108-113. Uaite' is the only king out of the Arab and Elamite rebels to be described as an ally of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn in this text (RINAP 5/1 23: 111-12).

¹⁰²⁸ RINAP 5/1 23: 155-59.

¹⁰²⁹ RINAP 5/1 23: 160-61.

different fashion to Prism A, and with differing significance placed on individual events.

7. The Obscuration and Omission of Rebellions in the Royal Inscriptions

Thus far, this dissertation has focused on those campaign accounts which explicitly state the occurrence of rebellions against Assyria. Generally, overcoming rebellion was viewed as a task with heroicising and mythologising elements which portrayed the king in a positive light, as discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 has discussed the king's concern that specific rebellions might reflect negatively on him, and the fact that in these instances it was deemed necessary for these events to be portrayed slightly differently. These rebellions were still deemed suitable for inclusion in the royal inscriptions. However, this was not the case for every rebellion. Several rebellions recorded in other sources do not appear in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. In other instances, the campaign is recorded in the inscriptions, but the fact that it was carried out in response to a rebellion is obscured. Frahm has highlighted the fact that rebellions which Assyria was unsuccessful in putting down are excluded from the royal inscriptions.¹⁰³⁰ An obvious example of this is the warlord Mugallu in Anatolia during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, whom divination reports show was a serious concern for Assyria in the west,¹⁰³¹ but who does not appear in inscriptions until the reign of Ashurbanipal.¹⁰³² However, this does not account for all of the omitted rebellions, as many of them were successfully quelled. Because of this, the reasons for omission or obscuration of rebellions in the royal inscriptions are deserving of in depth study.

Shalmaneser I in Hanigalbat

I will begin this chapter with the earliest identifiable example of the omission of rebellion from the Assyrian royal inscriptions, from the inscriptions of Shalmaneser I. The pseudo-annalistic inscription of this king recounts four campaigns, three of which are explicitly stated to have been carried out in response to rebellion.¹⁰³³ The one campaign which is not portrayed as being in response to a rebellion is that undertaken against Šattuara II of Hanigalbat.¹⁰³⁴ This contrasts with the historical reality. Hanigalbat had previously been conquered by Adad-nārārī I, as is discussed

¹⁰³⁰ Frahm 2016: 81-82.

¹⁰³¹ SAA 4 1-12.

¹⁰³² Frahm 2016: 81-82; PNA s.v. Mugallu: 761-62; RINAP 5/1 3: ii 67.

¹⁰³³ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 22-55, 88-106.

¹⁰³⁴ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 56-87.

in Chapter 5, and had therefore broken away from the Assyrian camp either late in this king's reign, or early in that of Shalmaneser I.¹⁰³⁵

I would argue that the reason for this omission can be found in the nature of Middle Assyrian control over Ḫanigalbat. Contrary to the image presented by the royal inscriptions, it appears that Assyria's grip on its western frontier was actually rather weak.¹⁰³⁶ Forces hostile to Assyria appear to have held Mount Kašijari, modern Tur Abdin, and it has been suggested that these enemies represented the remnants of the Ḫanigalbatean state.¹⁰³⁷ This interpretation is given support by the fact that Uasašatta is not actually included among the members of the royal family deported to Aššur by Adad-nārārī I, suggesting that he escaped capture.¹⁰³⁸ It has been suggested that evidence of Assyria's relatively low level of control over the region can also be found in the fact that the primary Middle Assyrian administrative centre in the west was located at Dūr-Katlimmu on the lower Ḫabur, as opposed to one of the more prominent administrative centres of the Mittani from further north.¹⁰³⁹ When all of this is considered alongside the fact that Ḫanigalbat had realigned itself with Ḫatti against Assyria by the early years of Shalmaneser's reign, the problematic nature of the west for Assyria during this period is abundantly clear. In light of these problems, it seems likely that Shalmaneser omitted any reference to rebellion in relation to Ḫanigalbat to obfuscate some embarrassing truths about the resistance to Assyrian rule in the region.

The Lack of Rebellion Accounts in the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III

Not all omissions of rebellion represent an attempt by the Assyrian king to save face like the example discussed above. One of the most obvious examples of the occurrence of rebellion being overlooked in the Assyrian royal inscriptions comes from the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III. In spite of the fact that several of this king's campaigns were clearly undertaken in response to rebellions, they are infrequently portrayed as such. For example, no justification is given for the campaign against

¹⁰³⁵ Harrak 1987: 164-66. Bryce (2005: 275) places this rebellion after the death of Adad-nārārī I, but this is by no means certain.

¹⁰³⁶ Brown 2013: 99-104.

¹⁰³⁷ Brown 2013: 103-104; Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996: 37-38.

¹⁰³⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 45-47.

¹⁰³⁹ Brown 2013: 104.

Carchemish and Bīt-Agusi in the tenth regnal year,¹⁰⁴⁰ even though these kingdoms had already submitted to Assyria in the second regnal year.¹⁰⁴¹ Annual tribute had been imposed on both states at that time, and the second campaign against them was presumably intended to reinstate this tribute, but this is not explicitly stated.¹⁰⁴² The reasoning behind this lack of reference to rebellion is quite clear; Shalmaneser's campaign accounts are often lacking in detail.¹⁰⁴³ The earliest inscriptions from his reign provide more information, but the accounts in these texts are generally of campaigns against regions which had not been conquered by previous kings, and which were consequently not rebelling.¹⁰⁴⁴ The later inscriptions, perhaps due to concerns of space, omit the majority of details about most campaigns,¹⁰⁴⁵ and justifications for the onset of campaigns are very rarely included in any of Shalmaneser's inscriptions.

Only two episodes are portrayed as rebellions. The first of these is the outbreak of civil war in Babylonia in the eighth regnal year, which is the only time that the terms *nabalkutu* and *ḥammā'u* appear in Shalmaneser's inscriptions.¹⁰⁴⁶ The second is the murder of Lubarna by his people in the 28th regnal year,¹⁰⁴⁷ which does not contain any words specifically describing rebellion, but is an account of the population of a city killing their ruler. Interestingly, neither of these accounts is about rebellions directly against Assyria. The rebellion against Lubarna is a perfect example of the topos of the murder of a foreign ruler by his people, as discussed in Chapter 5, and was perhaps explicitly portrayed as a rebellion for exactly that reason. The civil war in Babylonia was a more delicate affair. In the inscriptions and reliefs of Shalmaneser, Babylonia was portrayed as Assyria's equal and ally. The image of the Assyrian king clasping the hand of his Babylonian counterpart Marduk-zākir-šumi I appears on the front of Shalmaneser's throne-base from the Room T1 at Fort Shalmaneser,¹⁰⁴⁸ as well as on an alabaster jar from north Syria.¹⁰⁴⁹ The placement

¹⁰⁴⁰ RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 85-86.

¹⁰⁴¹ RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 18-29.

¹⁰⁴² Yamada 2000: 168.

¹⁰⁴³ Grayson 1976: 137-38; Yamada 2009: xv-xvi.

¹⁰⁴⁴ For the content of Shalmaneser's inscriptions, see Yamada 2000: 10-67.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Yamada 2000: 77-85, 108-13, 120-23, 130-36, 143-48; 2009: xv-xvi.

¹⁰⁴⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.102.5: iv 1-4; A.O.102.6: ii 42; A.O.102.8: 23'-24'; A.O.102.10: ii 32; A.O.102.14: 74; A.O.102.16: 46; A.O.102.59: 45.

¹⁰⁴⁷ RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 147-48; A.O.102.16: 269'-71'.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mallowan 1966: 447; Reade 1979: 333.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Fortin 1999: 111.

of the image on the throne-base, in between scenes of tribute from the western and southern peripheries of the known world, places Babylonia alongside Assyria as part of the centre. In addition, I have argued elsewhere that the structure of Shalmaneser's throne-base inscriptions also demonstrates this view of Babylonia as part of the centre.¹⁰⁵⁰ Because of this privileged status afforded to the region, Shalmaneser's scribes included the details of the civil war in order to explain the campaign to Babylonia and the subsequent religious pilgrimage to its major cities.

There is some contention surrounding this view of Shalmaneser's portrayal of Babylonia. Several scholars have proposed that the gesture of the two kings clasping hands is a demonstration of Assyrian dominance,¹⁰⁵¹ but the strong symmetry of the composition and its difference to the usual image of Assyrian dominance over a kneeling or prostrated foreign king argue against this interpretation.¹⁰⁵² It has also been suggested that the term "Karduniaš", the Kassite name for Babylonia, which continued to be used in Assyria into the first millennium,¹⁰⁵³ carried a pejorative meaning by way of highlighting Babylonia's history of foreign rule.¹⁰⁵⁴ However, Karduniaš is very rarely attested in Assyrian texts other than the royal inscriptions.¹⁰⁵⁵ This distribution of attestations is similar to that of "Guti", an archaising term for the peoples of the Zagros to the east and northeast of Assyria, which is attested in first millennium Assyria primarily in the royal inscriptions.¹⁰⁵⁶ Karduniaš is therefore better viewed in this specific context as simply an archaising toponym harking back to the Middle Assyrian Empire.

Rebellions by Assyrians

Another instance in which rebellions are omitted is when those rebellions occurred within Assyria itself. It is clear from the Eponym Chronicle that revolts within Assyria were not an infrequent occurrence; thirteen of the 136 extant brief accounts of a year's events from this text record the occurrence of a rebellion in Assyria.¹⁰⁵⁷ In

¹⁰⁵⁰ Dewar 2017a: 69-70.

¹⁰⁵¹ For example Karlsson 2016: 192-93; Oates 1963: 21-22.

¹⁰⁵² For example, the images on the Black Obelisk (Michel 1954-59: Tafel 6) and Esarhaddon's Zincirli and Til Barsib stelae (Porter (ed.) 2003: plates 15, 17, 28).

¹⁰⁵³ RIA s.v. *Karduniaš*.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Brinkman 1968: 259; Karlsson 2016: 194.

¹⁰⁵⁵ RIA s.v. *Karduniaš*.

¹⁰⁵⁶ RIA s.v. *Gutium* §10. Guti also appears frequently in first millennium scholarship as either the northern or eastern point of the compass.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Millard 1994: 56-61.

spite of this, only three rebellions within Assyria are recorded in the royal inscriptions. This count excludes the rebellion by Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, as he is a king of Babylonia, and his support as described in the inscriptions consists exclusively of non-Assyrians.¹⁰⁵⁸ One of these episodes, the overthrow of Ašīnum by Puzur-Sīn,¹⁰⁵⁹ can be discounted for the purpose of the current discussion as it is portrayed as the expulsion of a foreigner who is not the rightful king. It therefore has more in common with compositions such as the literary texts recording the expulsion of the Gutians from Sumer by Utu-ḫegal,¹⁰⁶⁰ or of the Assyrians from Babylonia by Nabopolassar.¹⁰⁶¹ The other two rebellions within Assyria in the inscriptions are both recorded in the context of accounts serving as forms of apology.¹⁰⁶² The earlier example comes from the inscriptions of Šamšī-Adad V, which describe the rebellion of Aššur-daʾin-apla.¹⁰⁶³ The later example is Esarhaddon's "apology" describing his return from exile to defeat his rebellious brothers.¹⁰⁶⁴ Both of these rebellions begin before the accession of the incumbent ruler, and were therefore "inherited" by him rather than starting under him.

Assyrians Rebelling under the Incumbent King

The only rebellion by Assyrians which began in the reign of the incumbent king and is mentioned in the royal inscriptions comes from an account of an uprising in Ḫalziluḫa in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II. The city-ruler, Ḫulāja, rebels together with his people, Assyrians who were settled in the region by Shalmaneser I or II.¹⁰⁶⁵ This would mean that these Assyrians had settled in the region, located near to Bīt-Zamāni, in the thirteenth century BC. Since this time, the empire of the Middle Assyrian period had been lost to various groups, and Ashurnasirpal represents the last in a line of kings who undertook the re-conquest of this previously

¹⁰⁵⁸ RINAP 5/1 7: vii 36-45; 11: iii 96-106. In reality, the situation was less clear cut, with several Babylonian cities and some elements within the Chaldaean and Aramaean tribes apparently remaining loyal to Assyria (Frame 1992: 134-35).

¹⁰⁵⁹ RIMA 1 A.O.1001: 1-14.

¹⁰⁶⁰ RIME 2 E2.13.6.4.

¹⁰⁶¹ BHLT: 80-86.

¹⁰⁶² On this term, and its application to texts from the Ancient Near East, see Hoffner 1975; Knapp 2015; Tadmor 1983.

¹⁰⁶³ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 39-44.

¹⁰⁶⁴ RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11.

¹⁰⁶⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 102-103. It is unclear to which king of this name this passage refers. Baker (PNA s.v. *Salmānu-ašarēd* [1c]: 1072), Bryce (2009: 281), Lipiński (2000: 150), and Schachner (2018: 109-10) identify him as Shalmaneser I, whilst Liverani (1992: 37) instead identifies him as Shalmaneser II.

held territory.¹⁰⁶⁶ The early Neo-Assyrian kings make several references to Assyria's losses during the preceding period of decline.¹⁰⁶⁷ Similarly, Ashurnasirpal describes how the Assyrians living in Tušḫa had previously been forced to migrate to Šubru in times of hardship.¹⁰⁶⁸ These examples of the collapse of order in the past are rectified by the incumbent king, who recaptures and rebuilds the lost cities, and brings the lost Assyrians back into their homes.¹⁰⁶⁹ The narrative progression from a “good” more distant past, to a “bad” more recent past, to a “good” present is fairly common in Ancient Near Eastern historiography, and has been frequently commented on in the scholarship.¹⁰⁷⁰ Both the rebuilding of Tušḫa and the rebellion in Ḫalziluḫa occurred in the same campaign, and the topic of Assyria's decline under previous kings therefore has a particularly strong presence in this section of the annals.

The flight of the Assyrians to Šubru presents the decline of the Middle Assyrian Empire as an inversion of the norm. The situation in an Assyrian-held city had deteriorated to the point that its inhabitants had found the mountainous north to provide better living conditions. The mountains were frequently viewed as a strange and hostile environment,¹⁰⁷¹ and were the domain of demons and monsters in Mesopotamian mythology.¹⁰⁷² By fleeing to the north, the inhabitants of Tušḫa had therefore effectively become “de-Assyrianised”. The same logic can be applied to the rebellious Assyrians in Ḫalziluḫa. The fact that this group had risen against Assyria was a symptom of the slow decline of the Eleventh Century, and therefore represented a facet of another inherited problem for the incumbent king. The event therefore did not reflect badly on Ashurnasirpal. Instead this king had solved problems which had first presented themselves long before his reign.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Liverani 2017: 118-20; Yamada 2000: 1.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Karlsson 2016: 198-99.

¹⁰⁶⁸ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 21-25.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Karlsson 2016: 198-99.

¹⁰⁷⁰ For example, Fales 1979: 7-9; Hoffner 1975: 52-53; Liverani 2004a: 31-36; 2004c: 151-52; 2004e: 69-74; Zaccagnini 1981: 260-61.

¹⁰⁷¹ Barbato 2010: 175-77; Dalley 2016: 26, 29-34. For the hostility of peripheral landscapes more generally in Assyrian thought, see Barbato 2010: 189-90; Karlsson 2016: 125-29.

¹⁰⁷² Wiggerman 1992: 155-58.

“Assyrianisation” and the Nature of Foreigners in Assyrian Thought

At this juncture, it would be useful to consider what qualities distinguished Assyrians and foreigners from one another, at least in the context of the royal inscriptions. The question of the distinction between Assyrians and non-Assyrians is exceedingly complex.¹⁰⁷³ However, Fales has characterised the royal inscriptions as demonstrating a far less nuanced idea of “Assyrianness” than other texts.¹⁰⁷⁴ He views the royal mission to “Assyrianise” foreign subjects as at odds with the diverse and metropolitan make-up of the Assyrian heartland.¹⁰⁷⁵ A result of this is that the state of being Assyrian is applied uniformly to the inhabitants of the Assyrian heartland in the inscriptions.¹⁰⁷⁶ By contrast, those living in the peripheral provinces were viewed as still undergoing a process of assimilation to Assyria.¹⁰⁷⁷ Liverani has defined a goal of this process as:

“the subjection of people to the same obligations (in taxes and corvée) as the inhabitants of the imperial heartland, without distinction between old and new provinces or between the “metropolitan” center and newly conquered and colonized regions”.¹⁰⁷⁸

To Liverani, this process is “more simple and banal” than the processes of assimilation found in later empires, being entirely focused on practical considerations of tax and tribute rather than the adoption of aspects of culture.¹⁰⁷⁹ He cites the apparent lack of differentiation in status between inhabitants of the Assyrian heartland and the more peripheral provinces as evidence of this, and argues that, from the reign of Sennacherib onwards, distinctions between Assyrians and non-

¹⁰⁷³ See the studies on the subject by Fales (2009-10; 2013; 2017b), Machinist (1993), and Parpola (2004b). For art-historical approaches to Assyrian conceptions of identity and alterity, see Cifarelli 1998; Feldman 2011.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Fales 2009-10: 203. Viewed through the “trialectics of spatiality” developed by Soja (1996: 53-82), building on the work of Lefebvre (1991: 33), the inscriptions’ “secondspace” representation of the world as containing clear-cut boundaries between the habitations of Assyrians and non-Assyrians differs from the lived “thirdspace” conception (demonstrated in other, less ideologically-charged, sources) of the Assyrian heartland as a culturally diverse region.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Fales 2013: 73.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Fales 2009-10: 203-204; Liverani 2017: 180.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Liverani 2017: 180.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Liverani 2017: 208.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Liverani 2017: 206-208. This is not to say that the Assyrians completely ignored the question of how to integrate local culture in conquered territories into the empire, but they did not do so through “a policy of enforced assimilation to Assyrian customs and norms” (Herrmann 2018).

Assyrians are only present in “non-celebrative” texts, documents other than the royal inscriptions.¹⁰⁸⁰

The differing treatment of rebellions in the Assyrian heartland and the peripheral provinces in the royal inscriptions demonstrates that this assessment is not entirely accurate. Whilst there is an acknowledgment in many texts that the Assyrian people are just as likely to rebel as foreigners, this acknowledgement is far less pronounced in the royal inscriptions. This is not surprising in light of the points discussed above. The king’s authority and divine support are what protects against rebellion, and these traits are felt strongest closest to his capital. A strong Assyrian ruler should at the very least have full control over the people of Assyria proper. This is clearly demonstrated in a letter to Esarhaddon from Dadî, a temple official from Aššur, concerning the unruly actions of Assyrian shepherds under his jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸¹ In this letter Dadî asks how foreigners will act towards the king if even Assyrians do not fear him.¹⁰⁸² Liverani quotes this letter as an example of Assyrians being seen as just as likely to rebel as foreigners are.¹⁰⁸³ However, this text clearly demonstrates that Assyrians are less rebellious than foreigners; if Assyrians do not respect the king, then the other peoples of the known world, being of a rebellious and insubmissive nature, must pay him no heed whatsoever.¹⁰⁸⁴ The important factor is that the Assyrian people should fear (*palāḫu*) their king, and thus remain obedient.¹⁰⁸⁵ Foreigners, because of their insubmissive character and poor judgement, may not fear the incumbent king regardless of his good kingship and divine support.¹⁰⁸⁶ Subjugated peoples in peripheral provinces, who are not yet fully Assyrianised, are caught between these two poles of good and bad conduct, and are prone to occasional lapses of judgement resulting in rebellion.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Liverani 2017: 206. For the term “celebrative texts”, see Liverani 2017: 99-100.

¹⁰⁸¹ SAA 13 19.

¹⁰⁸² SAA 13 19: rev. 2-6.

¹⁰⁸³ Liverani 2017: 207.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Dadî’s rhetorical question may seem to a modern audience to be insultingly blunt. Instead it highlights the severity of the shepherds withholding their sheep from the temple; this instance of tax evasion is an act of rebellion, and should it go unpunished it could result in further acts of rebellion. A similar “slippery slope” argument can be found in a letter by an official named Nādin-Aššur, who reports to the king that the scribes of the governor of Barḫalzi are not performing their duties and should be punished (SAA 13 31: rev. 1-10).

¹⁰⁸⁵ Fear of the gods and the king is also highlighted as an important aspect of being Assyrian by Fales (2009-10: 203).

¹⁰⁸⁶ On poor judgement and lack of fear and reverence for the Assyrian king as a frequent characteristic of Assyria’s enemies, see Fales 1982: 427-28.

<u>Citation</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Event Reported</u>	<u>King's Location when Receiving the Report</u>
RIMA 2 A.O.100.5: 4-8	Tukultī-Ninurta II	War against Bīlasi(?) ¹⁰⁸⁷	Unspecified(?)
RIMA 2 A.O.100.5: 11-29	Tukultī-Ninurta II	Aggression by an individual in Nairi	Unspecified
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 74-76	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in Bīt-Ḫalupe	Katmuḫu
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 101-103	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in Ḫalziluḫa	Nineveh
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 15-19	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in Nirbu	Returning from Nairi
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 23-25	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in Zamua	Unspecified
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 49-50	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in Zamua	Nineveh
RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 26-28	Ashurnasirpal II	Rebellion in the states in the Middle Euphrates region	Kalḫu
RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 147-48	Shalmaneser III	Rebellion in Patina	Kalḫu
RINAP 3/1 1: 5-16	Sennacherib	Rebellion in Babylonia	Not specified ¹⁰⁸⁸
RINAP 5/1 3: i 60-62	Ashurbanipal	Rebellion in Egypt	Nineveh
RINAP 5/1 3: iv 30-43	Ashurbanipal	Urtaku's invasion of Babylonia	Nineveh
RINAP 5/1 3: v 16-24	Ashurbanipal	Aggression by Teumman	Arbela

Fig. 4. Rebellions reported to the Assyrian king.

Rebellion and the Absence of a Good Ruler

Liverani has previously noted the connection between the occurrence of “evil” and the king’s absence in the Ancient Near East, which means that this evil did not manifest under his jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸⁹ The above discussion has shown that this was certainly the case in Assyrian ideology. Rebellions occurred in relation to the king’s temporal or spatial displacement; either these events occur before his reign, or else are situated at the periphery. In other instances, the king is similarly absolved of responsibility for events because he had not yet been made aware of them, but responds immediately upon being informed.¹⁰⁹⁰ From the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II onwards, the Assyrian royal inscriptions occasionally contain examples of the king being informed of a rebellion by messenger, particularly in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II.¹⁰⁹¹ There is a tendency for the king to state his location at the time

¹⁰⁸⁷ The relevant passage is broken, and it is unclear whether it describes a rebellion or some other event.

¹⁰⁸⁸ See the discussion of this passage above.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Liverani 2004c: 153 n. 9.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Liverani 2004c: 153 n. 9.

¹⁰⁹¹ See Fig. 4.

when he received this message.¹⁰⁹² This location is almost always a major Assyrian city. In one instance, the rebellion in Bīt-Ḫalupe, the event is introduced whilst Ashurnasirpal is on campaign in Katmuḫu, at the opposite end of his empire.¹⁰⁹³

In two of episodes from his inscriptions, Ashurnasirpal is on campaign close to the location of a rebellion when it breaks out. In these instances, no report is received.¹⁰⁹⁴ In one instance, a rebellion by the nobles of Bīt-Zamani,¹⁰⁹⁵ the exact location of the king is not specified, but his last stated location during the campaign is Tušḫa, in Nairi.¹⁰⁹⁶ At first glance, the second episode, a rebellion in the land of Nirbu, may appear to begin whilst Ashurnasirpal is in that region. At the end of a campaign to Tušḫa in Nairi, during which he had already conquered the land of Nirbu, Ashurnasirpal states that:

*ina tajārtija ša mātāt Nairi māt Nirbu ša libbi Kašijari ittabalkat tišīt ālānišunu
ūtaššerū ana Išpilipria āl dannūtišunu u šadû maršu ittaklūma*¹⁰⁹⁷

Grayson translates this as:

On my return from the lands Nairi, the land Nirbu which is within Mount Kašijari rebelled. They abandoned their nine cities (and) trusted in the city Išpilipria, their fortified city, and a rugged mountain.¹⁰⁹⁸

This translation is misleading. It seems to suggest that the rebellion broke out upon Ashurnasirpal's arrival back at Nirbu. This is not necessarily the case; *ina tajārtija*, "on my return march", usually denotes actions which occur during the return to Assyria from campaign.¹⁰⁹⁹ As a result, the use of the term here does not dictate that the rebellion began when Ashurnasirpal was in Nirbu, but that it happened at some

¹⁰⁹² This motif is represented in the "Proppian" framework of Badali *et al.* (1982: 20-22), and Younger (1990: 72-73), by the sequences A¹B or a¹B. It should be noted that Younger's statement that disorder in the inscriptions is "usually given in the form of a report (*tēmu*)" (Younger 1990: 73) is only correct for Ashurnasirpal II. The motif of disorder being reported to the king is far less prevalent in the texts of other kings.

¹⁰⁹³ Parpola and Porter 2001 Map 3: E3; Map 9: C1.

¹⁰⁹⁴ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 15-19, ii 118-25.

¹⁰⁹⁵ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 118-25.

¹⁰⁹⁶ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 117.

¹⁰⁹⁷ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 15-17.

¹⁰⁹⁸ RIMA 2: 203.

¹⁰⁹⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.87.3: 26-28; A.O.101.17: 102-103; RIMA 3 A.O.102.1: 37-40; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35: i 15'-20'; RINAP 3/1 3: 14-16, 33; RINAP 5/1 11: iii 50-69, v 41-62, v 126-vi 6, ix 115-21.

point between his leaving Nairi and his arrival in the rebellious region. A clearer translation might be:

During my return march from the lands of Nairi, the land of Nirbu within Mount Kašijari rebelled. They left their nine cities (and) trusted in Išpilipria, their fortified city, and a difficult mountain.

The result that this observation has for the narrative is that Ashurnasirpal conquers Nirbu, moves on Tušḫa to renovate that city,¹¹⁰⁰ and then returns to Nirbu to find that its inhabitants have rebelled in his absence. Once again, Ashurnasirpal was most likely not present at the time of the rebellion.

However, in both of these episodes, Ashurnasirpal was close to the region in question when the rebellion began. Perhaps the mountainous nature of this region, the name of which translates literally as “the land of the mountain pass(es) within Mount Kašijari”,¹¹⁰¹ justified the king’s proximity at the onset of rebellion; the rugged terrain imposed a greater “chronological distance” on the otherwise short geographical distance.¹¹⁰² In both instances, Ashurnasirpal is in Nairi, the northernmost point campaigned to in the annals. This further emphasises his remoteness from the rebellions, even though he may be relatively near to them as the crow flies.

This importance of the king’s location upon hearing of rebellion highlights the fact that being unaware of the evil is a result of the king’s absence; if he had been present in the region where it occurred, he would have known about it already. The result of this is that, in the royal inscriptions, rebellion did not occur within the Assyrian heartland, where the incumbent king ruled at that time, and where he lived for the majority of the year. By contrast, provinces outside of the Assyrian heartland were separated from the capital by great distances or inhospitable terrain,¹¹⁰³ and were therefore susceptible to outbursts of rebellion.

Of course, this connection between the king’s absence and rebellion raises the question of why the king went on campaign at all if his presence was vital to the maintenance of order. The answer to this problem is the gods’ support for the king.

¹¹⁰⁰ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 2-12.

¹¹⁰¹ Liverani 1992: 37-38.

¹¹⁰² For this terminology, see Hurowitz 2013: 266-67.

¹¹⁰³ Barbato 2010: 190.

Divine abandonment is frequently cited as the cause of hardship for a city or its ruler in Mesopotamian literature.¹¹⁰⁴ By contrast, the incumbent king had the full support of the great gods, who allowed him the security to leave the land on campaign safe in the knowledge that his subjects would remain loyal to him. The presence of a good king ensured the presence of the gods, and the presence of the gods allowed for the temporary absence of the king on campaign.

A Governor's Views on Rebellion: The Case of Šamšī-ilu

There is therefore no mention in the inscriptions of rebellions occurring in Assyria during the reign of the incumbent king, in spite of ample evidence demonstrating that such events did happen. The “ideal” rebellion occurred on the periphery, where the people were unruly and untrustworthy, not in the heart of Assyria itself. One unusual text which reflects these attitudes towards rebellions in Assyria itself is the inscription of the *turtānu* Šamšī-ilu on the gateway lions from Tīl-Barsib.¹¹⁰⁵ The narrative of this text is primarily concerned with Šamšī-ilu's victory over Argišti of Urarṭu, who had attempted to incite rebellion in the province of Gutī. The actions of Argišti are translated by Grayson thus:

*ušbalkitma n[ī]š[ē] a[na] māt Gutī ī[kṣ]ur tamḥāru uštēšer gimir ummānātišu
ina qereb šadê ana naqrabi inūqa*

He (Argištu) rebelled and assembled the people together at the land of the Gutī. He put his (forces for) battle in good order (and then) all his troops marched into the mountains for battle.¹¹⁰⁶

Before I can discuss the significance of this text, it is necessary to address some problems with Grayson's translation. The verb *šubalkutu*, “to cause (someone) to rebel”, is otherwise only attested as a transitive with the object being those incited to rebel.¹¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, it is elsewhere always a causative when referring to rebellion.¹¹⁰⁸ In spite of this the verb in this passage has been consistently translated

¹¹⁰⁴ Cooper 1983: 29-30.

¹¹⁰⁵ This text was given partial editions by King (1909: 186) and Thompson (1912: 66-73), before being edited in full by Thureau-Dangin (1930: 11-21; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 141-51), and most recently by Grayson (RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010).

¹¹⁰⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 12-13.

¹¹⁰⁷ CAD s.v. *nabalkutu* [4d].

¹¹⁰⁸ CAD s.v. *nabalkutu* [4d and 5a].

into English as “he rebelled”, or “he revolted”.¹¹⁰⁹ A meaning “he incited rebellion” would be more accurate. Thureau-Dangin instead translates this passage as “...souleva en vérité les populations, contre le pays de Gutis les enrégimenta. Il prépara le combat...”,¹¹¹⁰ making the verb transitive. However, the reading of *ana māt Gutī ikšur* as “contre le pays de Gutis les enrégimenta” is also very unusual. The form *ana* GN *kašāru* is otherwise unattested, and in addition we should expect a direct object for the verb *kašāru*.¹¹¹¹

There are two solutions which might resolve these problems, but neither of them is entirely satisfactory. The verb *ikšur* in this instance might instead relate to *tamḫāru*, “battle”; the phrase *kašāru tāḫazu*, “to prepare for battle”, appears fairly frequently following *šubalkutu* in Akkadian literature.¹¹¹² This would give a translation as:

He caused the people to rebel, and prepared for battle *for* the land of the Gutī.
He put all of his troops in order, (and) they went forth into the mountains to the battlefield.

However, this would result in a series of three consecutive clauses in which the verb precedes the object. Furthermore, the presence of the particle *-ma* in *ušbalkitma* would make the inverted word order of this clause somewhat awkward. The use of *ana* in this context would also be slightly unusual. Whilst these observations do not exclude this solution absolutely, they do make it less likely.

Alternatively, *ušbalkitma* could here be a transitive verb with an unexpressed object, presumably the people appearing in the next clause, giving a translation as:

He caused (them) to rebel, and gathered the people to the land of the Gutī.
He prepared for battle (and) all of his troops went forth into the mountains to the battlefield.

The verb *šubalkutu* is elsewhere never attested with an unexpressed object when describing rebellion.¹¹¹³ However, this translation contains fewer unusual elements than the alternative, and we might therefore lean towards accepting it as the more accurate of the two options.

¹¹⁰⁹ Dalley 2000: 85-86; RIMA 3: 223; Thompson 1912: 73; Younger 2003: 278.

¹¹¹⁰ Thureau-Dangin 1930: 20; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 150.

¹¹¹¹ CAD s.v. *kašāru*.

¹¹¹² CAD s.v. *kašāru* [2d].

¹¹¹³ CAD s.v. *nabalkutu* [4d].

The text is badly damaged, and Thureau-Dangin concedes that his reconstruction is in places very uncertain.¹¹¹⁴ There are no clear photographs of the inscription, but Thureau-Dangin's copy of the better preserved exemplar shows that in his reconstruction *n[ī]-š[ī] a[na]* the latter two signs are represented by just the heads of two horizontal wedges.¹¹¹⁵ Regardless of the exact translation of this text, a further problematic point is presented by the question of the identity of the rebels. This group is labelled *nišē*, "the people", but it is unclear *which* people this is. There are a group of *nišē* mentioned earlier in the text, in the epithet section, where Šamšī-ilu is described as: *mušamqit māt Muski u māt Uraṭu šālilu nišēšu*, "(one) who overthrows the land of Muski and the land of Uraṭu, who carries off their people".¹¹¹⁶ However, this passage forms part of the epithet section, and is separated from the incited rebellion by two more epithets describing victories over Aramaean tribes along the Tigris in northern Babylonia.¹¹¹⁷ This makes a connection between the people mentioned in the epithets and in the campaign account unlikely.

This leaves two viable options; the people of the Assyrian empire are incited to rebel, or the people of Šamšī-ilu's province in particular are incited to rebel. I feel that the context suggests *nišē* refers to the people of Šamšī-ilu's province as opposed to the people of the empire. Gutī was a part of Šamšī-ilu's territory, and the inscription explicitly states that this is the case.¹¹¹⁸ The campaign account follows a narrative of Argišti inciting rebellion, then invading Gutī. It therefore seems most likely that the rebels of the text are the Gutī.

In spite of this, it is clear that the aggression in this episode is all undertaken by Argišti or his troops, and there is no mention of any punishment for the rebels. During the account of the battle, the opposing army consists of Argišti, his troops (*ummānātešu*), and his people (*puḥuršu*).¹¹¹⁹ This differs from royal inscriptions in which people are incited to rebel against Assyria by a foreign power.¹¹²⁰ In these episodes there is always some level of reaction against the rebels. Rebel cities are

¹¹¹⁴ Thureau-Dangin 1930: 11, 17 n. 9 and 10; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 147 n. 1 and 2.

¹¹¹⁵ Thureau-Dangin 1930: 14; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 143 fig. 41.

¹¹¹⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 10.

¹¹¹⁷ For the location of the Utu'u, Rubu'u, Ḫadalu, and Labdudu tribes in this region, see Brinkman 1968: 283-84; Fuchs 1993: 422; Lipiński 2000: 483; RIA s.v. *Itu'*: 221; Zadok 1985a: 63; 1985b: 331.

¹¹¹⁸ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 9.

¹¹¹⁹ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 13-18.

¹¹²⁰ For example, Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 78-83, 101-103.

besieged and burned, leaders are executed, and peoples are deported to other provinces.¹¹²¹ By contrast, the only event occurring in the aftermath of Šamšī-ilu's victory over Argišti is the capture of the Urartian king's camp and possessions.¹¹²²

The result of this is to nearly completely remove the rebels from the narrative, and to exonerate them of any wrongdoing. There are two possibilities as to what had occurred in reality in this instance, either there was a rebellion in the region, but the involvement of the inhabitants was downplayed in the inscription, or the scribe has invented an instance of rebellion where one had not occurred in order to add to the heroicising aspect of the inscription.¹¹²³ In either case, the passage is written in a way which avoids incriminating the inhabitants of the province, who are not hostile in spite of the reference to rebellion.

This peculiarity is most likely due to the fact that this inscription was not commissioned by an Assyrian king, in whose perspective Gutī was a peripheral region of the empire. For Šamšī-ilu, Gutī was a province under his own direct jurisdiction. Siddall has questioned the level of control which the *turtānu* could have held over this region.¹¹²⁴ However, the important consideration for our current purposes is that the inscription presents Gutī as part of Šamšī-ilu's jurisdiction, regardless of the historicity of this claim. As governor, Šamšī-ilu had been appointed by the king to enact the Assyrian ideological mission of ordering and restructuring the world outside of the Assyrian heartland.¹¹²⁵ As discussed above, rebellion in Assyrian royal ideology was not something which occurred within the well-ordered and peaceful imperialist centre, but in the chaotic and disordered periphery. The occurrence of rebellion in a province would therefore imply that the governor of that province had failed in his task of ordering his territory and Assyrianising his charges. Furthermore, there is some evidence for governors of the early Neo-Assyrian period being viewed locally as petty kings in their own right. Adad-it'i, the governor of Guzāna, is described in the Aramaic version of the bilingual inscription on the Tell

¹¹²¹ The punishment of rebels by the Assyrian king is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

¹¹²² RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 18.

¹¹²³ For the mythologising and heroicising features present in this inscription, see Dalley 2000: 85-86. These aspects of royal inscriptions are discussed in Chapter 4.

¹¹²⁴ Siddall 2013: 120-21.

¹¹²⁵ Liverani 2012: 185-86.

Fekheriye Statue as *mlk* “king”.¹¹²⁶ Suriano has offered a different interpretation of the title *mlk*, and views it as frequently carrying the meaning of “tribal chieftain” as opposed to “king”.¹¹²⁷ However, this argument relates to the question of to whom the term is applied in texts, not the meaning and connotations of the word itself.¹¹²⁸ Furthermore, Millard and Bordreuil have highlighted the fact that the scribe could have used terms specifically meaning “governor” in the Aramaic if they had wanted to.¹¹²⁹

Zaia has demonstrated that both Šamšī-ilu and Bēl-Ḥarran-bēlī-uṣur, another governor of the late pre-Sargonid Neo-Assyrian period, avoided adopting topoi from the royal inscriptions which would present them as kings of Assyria in their own right.¹¹³⁰ For example, she highlights the fact that these two officials address the curse formulae of their inscriptions to *mannu arkû*, “whichever later one”, as opposed to *rubû arkû*, “a later prince”,¹¹³¹ and avoid the standard royal inscriptional topos of divine election to office.¹¹³² Zaia does not include the inscription of Adad-it’i in her study, but both of these peculiarities are also present in that text.¹¹³³ This is true of both the Akkadian version of this text, which presents Adad-it’i as a governor, and of the Aramaic, which gives him the title *mlk*, “king”, demonstrating that these alterations to topoi from the royal inscriptions for gubernatorial contexts were made in order to avoid portraying an Assyrian governor as the king of Assyria in particular, not as a king more generally. In fact, the Antakya Stele also addresses its curses to *mannu arkû*.¹¹³⁴ This text was a boundary stele set up by Adad-nārārī III and Šamšī-ilu between Arpad and Hamath, and as such the individuals most likely to alter it were the rulers of those two states. The kings of Arpad and Hamath were therefore the particular audience for whom the curses were primarily intended. This

¹¹²⁶ Greenfield and Shaffer 1983: 110; Millard and Bordreuil 1982: 138-39;

¹¹²⁷ Suriano 2007: 169-71.

¹¹²⁸ A modern comparison would be the term “president”, which can denote both the democratically elected leader of a republic and the unelected leader of a dictatorship.

¹¹²⁹ Millard and Bordreuil 1982: 139. Cf. the use of the term *skn* in a piece of Aramaic graffiti from Hamath (CAL s.v. *skn n.m. governor, majordomo*), which is mentioned by Millard and Bordreuil, but without giving a reference. For the title *skn* in other West Semitic languages, see Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995 s.v. *skn*₂. For the related title *sgn*, see Gibson 1975: 18; Kaufman 1974: 97.

¹¹³⁰ Zaia 2018b: 209-15.

¹¹³¹ Zaia 2018b: 215.

¹¹³² Zaia 2018b: 209-11.

¹¹³³ The significance of the use of *mannu arkû* over *rubû arkû* in this text has previously been noted by Dušek and Mynářová 2016: 15.

¹¹³⁴ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2: 13.

observation means that *mannu arkû* in this context refers to foreign kings. This in turn suggests that the distinction between *rubû arkû* and *mannu arkû* is one between Assyrian royalty on one hand, and Assyrian governors and foreign rulers on the other.

When one considers the fact that a foreign vassal ruler and an Assyrian governor would be effectively performing the same duties, it is not surprising that a governor's position would be viewed as comparable to that of a local ruler.¹¹³⁵ The Middle Assyrian official overseeing Assyria's western territories was designated as the *šar māt Ḫanigalbat*, "king of Ḫanigalbat".¹¹³⁶ Centuries later, Ashurbanipal would describe his Egyptian vassals as both *šarrāni*, "kings", and *pīḫāti*, "governors", in his inscriptions.¹¹³⁷ There are several other examples of the blurred lines between governor and king in the early Neo-Assyrian period. The rulers of Suḫu bore the title *šaknu* "governor", but also described themselves as possessing *šarrūtu* "kingship".¹¹³⁸ The inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II suggest a similar situation in Laqê, where Ḫamatajja is labelled *šaknu*, but the rebellious Laqeans raise Aḫi-jababa to *šarrūtu* over themselves after Ḫamatajja's murder.¹¹³⁹ All of this suggests that early Neo-Assyrian gubernatorial ideology concerning rebellion was very close to royal ideology surrounding the same subject. A province was effectively its governor's "kingdom", and his presence there ensured its stability and order. As a result, the occurrence of negative events within a province would reflect poorly on its governor. Just as the Assyrian king avoided mention of rebellion within the Assyrian heartland, a governor might also avoid reference to revolts occurring in his own provincial "kingdom".

Šamšī-ilu's position apparently differed slightly from that of other Assyrian governors of the time. He adopts the title *šāpiru*, "overseer", rather than *šaknu*,¹¹⁴⁰ a distinction which Postgate views as stemming from his territories position outside of the

¹¹³⁵ In a similar vein, Liverani (2004e: 59-60) observes an equivalent status of vassal rulers and the Hittite nobility in the Šunaššura Treaty. For the similarities between the roles of vassal ruler and governor, see Liverani 2017: 179-80.

¹¹³⁶ Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996: 28-29; Dalley 2000: 81-83; Faist 2010: 19.

¹¹³⁷ RINAP 5/1 11: i 110; Dalley 2000: 84.

¹¹³⁸ For example, RIMB 2 S.O.1002.2: i 1-7.

¹¹³⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: i 75-76.

¹¹⁴⁰ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 9.

traditional “Land of Aššur”.¹¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, the reasons discussed above demonstrate that a rebellion in Gutī would have reflected far more negatively on Šamšī-ilu than it would have done on the king. However, the *turtānu* needed to explain his reasons for doing battle with Argišti. Every other account of an official leading a campaign portrays that individual as acting upon the command of the king, to whom the most ideologically important actions of that campaign are often still attributed. This phenomenon has been observed by Yamada in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III,¹¹⁴² but is also present in the inscription of Shalmaneser IV from the back of the Pazarcık Stele. Here Šamšī-ilu is stated in the third person to have marched to Damascus,¹¹⁴³ but the reception of tribute is described in the first person,¹¹⁴⁴ as is the re-establishment of the border of Kummuḥ on the return journey.¹¹⁴⁵ The shift from third to first person in this text has led to some uncertainty over the perspective of the narrative.¹¹⁴⁶ I understand this change of perspective as another example of actions on campaign being divided between the official leading the army and the absentee king.¹¹⁴⁷ Šamšī-ilu’s inscription differs from these other examples in that the *turtānu* was not campaigning against far-flung regions, but was protecting his own province. This act was clearly part of the duty of every Assyrian governor, and did not require him to attribute part of his actions to the king. However, it did require him to state the reason why there was a need to protect his province.

The ideological need to highlight the necessity of self-defence whilst also avoiding portraying a rebellion as having occurred in the province could have been achieved by simply having Argišti invade. However, Šamšī-ilu’s scribes adopted a far more interesting and unusual solution; Argišti incites rebellion, but no rebellion actually happens. Just as Sennacherib, a good king with a just heart, was not swayed into disinheriting Esarhaddon by the lies told by his other sons,¹¹⁴⁸ the Gutī, who have been Assyrianised and made orderly by their governor, are not swayed by the lies told by Argišti. The identity of Šamšī-ilu’s steadfast subjects makes his achievements

¹¹⁴¹ Postgate 1992b: 251.

¹¹⁴² Yamada 2000: 328-32.

¹¹⁴³ RIMA 3 A.O.105.1: 4-5.

¹¹⁴⁴ RIMA 3 A.O.105.1: 6-10.

¹¹⁴⁵ RIMA 3 A.O.105.1: 11-13.

¹¹⁴⁶ PNA s.v. *Šamšī-ilu* [1c]; RIMA 3: 239-40.

¹¹⁴⁷ The view that the first person perspective in this text must be that of the king is also stated by Donbaz (1990: 10) in the original edition of the text.

¹¹⁴⁸ RINAP 4 1: i 23-31.

in ensuring their loyalty and orderliness all the more impressive. The Gutí were rebels *par excellence* in Mesopotamian literature, as discussed in Chapter 6. The *turtānu* was therefore able to demonstrate his exceptional qualities as a governor through the good conduct of his traditionally wild and rebellious charges.¹¹⁴⁹ This is a unique approach to a unique situation in Assyrian inscriptions which, whilst not an account of rebellion from an Assyrian *royal* inscription, gives a useful insight into Assyrian understandings of the nature of rebellion, and of both royal and gubernatorial authority.

Rebellion in the Inscriptions of Sennacherib¹¹⁵⁰

Perhaps the most pronounced examples of the omission or obscurity of the occurrence of rebellion come from the inscriptions of Sennacherib. This king's reign was overshadowed by rebellion. Only three of the twelve military campaigns recorded in his extant inscriptions were directed against regions which had not already been brought into the Neo-Assyrian Empire by his predecessors, his sixth and seventh campaigns into Elam and a campaign against the Arabs in 690 BC. None of these campaigns resulted in territorial gains for Assyria.¹¹⁵¹ The rest of Sennacherib's campaigns were undertaken against regions which had been under Assyrian rule during the reign of Sargon II, often with the aim of suppressing rebellion. In spite of the frequency of rebellions against Sennacherib, words explicitly referring to rebellion are surprisingly rare in his inscriptions. In the corpus of Sennacherib's inscriptions there are only five distinct passages containing the words *nabalkutu*, *seḫû*, *sîḫû*, *bartu*, or *bārānû* in reference to rebellion.¹¹⁵² Two other passages describe hostilities by a ruler stated to be an Assyrian vassal¹¹⁵³ and the overthrow of a ruler bound by a treaty to Assyria by his nobles.¹¹⁵⁴ Only two of the passages which make direct reference to rebellion in Sennacherib's inscriptions do not come from accounts of two specific series of events, the campaigns to Ḫilakku and Til-Garimme in 696 and 695 BC and the eighth campaign, culminating in the

¹¹⁴⁹ A similar situation presents itself in the Idrimi Inscription, where the eponymous king-to-be is hosted by the Suti in the desert, thus overcoming this dangerous group, who might normally be expected to murder or rob a lone traveller (Liverani 2004d: 93).

¹¹⁵⁰ An earlier version of this section was previously published as an article in the *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* (Dewar 2017b).

¹¹⁵¹ Tadmor 1999: 61.

¹¹⁵² RINAP 3/1 1: 5; 17: iv 61; 22: v 17; 23: v 9; RINAP 3/2 146: 1-6; 147: 1-6; 213: 5.

¹¹⁵³ RINAP 3/1 17: v 1-8.

¹¹⁵⁴ RINAP 3/1 4: 42-43.

Battle of Halule in 691 BC. The concentration of almost all direct references to rebellion in accounts of just two series of events suggests that there is significance to their usage here in contrast to their absence from the rest of Sennacherib's inscriptions. This peculiarity has not been noted in previous scholarship, and the reasons for its occurrence are therefore in need of analysis.

The lack of direct references to rebellion is particularly noticeable during Sennacherib's third campaign, directed against the rebellious cities of Syro-Palestine. Frahm has suggested that the fourfold payment made by the kings of Amurru on this campaign represented the tribute which these states had withheld over the previous years of Sennacherib's reign,¹¹⁵⁵ and is therefore an allusion to the rebellion in the region. However, if we are to follow this interpretation, then this allusion is subtle, and the fourfold tribute is only mentioned in relation to the states which surrendered to Sennacherib without combat. The episode is instead portrayed more as several foreign kings giving tribute to the king on campaign, a common motif in the inscriptions of earlier Neo-Assyrian kings.¹¹⁵⁶ Because of this, it is unlikely that the reference to fourfold tribute was an intentional effort by Sennacherib's scribes to highlight the presence of rebellion in the region.

The motif of a conquered enemy being forced to shoulder the *nīru* "yoke" of either the god Aššur or the Assyrian king appears in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I onwards,¹¹⁵⁷ and is particularly prevalent in the inscriptions of Sargon II.¹¹⁵⁸ However, Sennacherib's usage of the term differs from that of his predecessors. Whereas Sargon refers to rebels as casting off the yoke,¹¹⁵⁹ Sennacherib states that they had never submitted to his yoke in the first place. For example Hezekiah of Judah is labelled as *ša lā iknušu ana nīrija* "(one) who did not submit to my yoke".¹¹⁶⁰ This designation is also given to Šidqâ of Ashkelon,¹¹⁶¹ the

¹¹⁵⁵ Cogan 2008: 114; Frahm 1997: 59, 104; RINAP 3/1: 64 n. 38.

¹¹⁵⁶ For example RIMA 2 A.O.100.5: 41-115; A.O.101.1: ii 12-15, ii 21-23, iii 55-83; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: ii 82-86; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 14: 10-12, 15: 1-5

¹¹⁵⁷ RIMA 1 A.O.78.1: iii 4-5; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: ii 54-55, ii 93-94, iii 85-86; RIMA 3 A.O.104.4: 2'; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 5: 11.

¹¹⁵⁸ Fuchs 1993: *Stier* 15; *XIV* 8, 20, 27; *Ann* 76, 423; *Prunk* 22-23, 70, 116; *S1* 22-23; *S2* 18; *S3* 22-23, 37-38; *S4* 18, 54, 89.

¹¹⁵⁹ Fuchs 1993: *Ann* 189; *Prunk* 28, 55.

¹¹⁶⁰ RINAP 3/1 22: iii 19.

¹¹⁶¹ RINAP 3/1 22: ii 60-62.

city of 𒄩rimme on the Assyrian-Babylonian border,¹¹⁶² which is alternatively described as having not submitted to Sennacherib's ancestors in the First Campaign Cylinder,¹¹⁶³ and the captives who Sennacherib used as an indentured workforce during his renovation and expansion of Nineveh.¹¹⁶⁴ By simply stating that these regions and peoples had not submitted to his yoke, Sennacherib avoided highlighting the occurrence of rebellion, concealing their previous interactions with Assyria in the process. Furthermore, this implied an expansion of the empire during his reign, something which did not occur in reality. This ideological stance contrasts sharply with preceding Assyrian kings, who were often quick to specify when a rebellion had occurred.¹¹⁶⁵

This approach also differs from that of Sennacherib's successors. Both Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal frequently mention rebellions in their inscriptions.¹¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, there are only two instances of a king stating that an enemy had not submitted to his own yoke from after the reign of Sennacherib. Both of these instances, describing Ummanaldašu (𒄩umban-ḫaltaš III) of Elam¹¹⁶⁷ and the land of Gambulu, under its ruler Dunānu,¹¹⁶⁸ come from the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. These rulers' predecessors had both been enemies of Ashurbanipal whose reigns had been ended by events other than an Assyrian campaign, and whose aggression towards Assyria had already been specified in the inscriptions. Dunānu's father Bēl-iqīša is stated to be an Assyrian vassal who conspired with the Elamites and threw off the Assyrian yoke, but had died before an Assyrian campaign to Gambulu could be undertaken.¹¹⁶⁹ In Elam, Ashurbanipal had placed Ummanigaš (𒄩umban-nikaš II) on the throne following the defeat of Teumman.¹¹⁷⁰ It is clear from several texts that Ashurbanipal now saw Elam as a part of his empire.¹¹⁷¹ Every hostile Elamite king after this point was therefore a rebel. There was no need in either of these instances to explicitly state that rebellion had occurred, as this was made clear in the preceding

¹¹⁶² RINAP 3/1 3: 18.

¹¹⁶³ RINAP 3/1 1: 58.

¹¹⁶⁴ RINAP 3/1 1: 71.

¹¹⁶⁵ See Tables 1-5.

¹¹⁶⁶ See Tables 1-5.

¹¹⁶⁷ BIWA A: v 92.

¹¹⁶⁸ BIWA B: vi 20.

¹¹⁶⁹ BIWA B: iv 59-61.

¹¹⁷⁰ BIWA A: iii 44-47.

¹¹⁷¹ Frame 1992: 123-124; Waters 2000: 57-58.

narrative. In Sennacherib's annals, there was no such previous history given to provide context for the third campaign.

The Impact of Sargon's Death

Sennacherib had ample reason for disconnecting himself from the past. In 705 BC Sargon II had campaigned against Gurdî of Kulummu in Tabal and had been killed on campaign.¹¹⁷² His body was never recovered and this was viewed as a bad omen in Assyria. Although Sargon had all the appearances of being a model Assyrian king, it was thought that he must have committed some great wrongdoing against the gods for which he had suffered divine retribution.¹¹⁷³ The pseudo-autobiographical text the Sin of Sargon identified this transgression as Sargon's religious policy regarding Babylonia.¹¹⁷⁴ However, this text was most likely written decades after Sargon's death as part of Esarhaddon's revision of events surrounding the destruction of Babylon.¹¹⁷⁵ In the immediate aftermath of Sargon's death, his supposed transgression would not have been obvious to Sennacherib and his scholars.

In order to avoid unwittingly mimicking Sargon's transgressions and receiving a similar divine punishment, Sennacherib disassociated himself from his father completely. Sargon's name is absent from nearly all of Sennacherib's inscriptions,¹¹⁷⁶ and his newly-built capital Dur-Šarrukīn was abandoned in favour of Nineveh.¹¹⁷⁷ Sennacherib's deliberate avoidance of mentioning rebellion can now be added to the list of ways in which he disassociated himself from his father. All of the regions and peoples which Sennacherib describes as having not submitted to his yoke bear a connection to Sargon or events resulting from his death. Hezekiah and Šidqâ had opportunistically seized upon the confusion in Assyria as a chance to rebel.¹¹⁷⁸ Similarly Ḫirimme had been under Assyrian control during Sargon's reign,

¹¹⁷² Glassner 2004: 174-75.

¹¹⁷³ Frahm 1999: 76-77, 2014: 201-203; Tadmor et al. 1989: 29.

¹¹⁷⁴ SAA 3 33: obv. 17'-18'. The exact nature of the "sin" is obscured by the fragmentary nature of the text. For the interpretation that Sargon was guilty of exalting the gods of Assyria over those of Babylon, see Tadmor et al. 1989: 45-46. For the alternative restoration that he favoured the gods of Babylon and neglected those of Assyria, see Tadmor et al. 1989: 33; Frahm 1997: 228.

¹¹⁷⁵ Tadmor et al. 1989: 45-48; Porter 1993a: 144-45; Frahm 1997: 228; Weaver 2004: 63-65.

¹¹⁷⁶ The only possible appearance of Sargon's name in a Sennacherib inscription comes from the fragment RINAP 3/1 135, though neither king's name has survived (see Frahm 1997: 194-95).

¹¹⁷⁷ Frahm 2014: 202-203.

¹¹⁷⁸ Becking 2004: 52; Mayer 2004: 172-173; Fales 2014: 232.

as is demonstrated by a Babylonian economic document written in a city Ḫarimmu in Sargon's fourth year as king of Babylon.¹¹⁷⁹ Finally, the workforce at Nineveh is present in inscriptions dating to before Sennacherib had campaigned to the regions mentioned as the workers' places of origin. It is therefore likely that these workers were captives taken during Sargon's campaigns.¹¹⁸⁰

Sargon's death was seized upon by many of Assyria's conquered subjects as an opportunity to win freedom from Assyrian imperialism, most notably in Babylonia and Syro-Palestine. Such unrest resulting from Sargon's death painted a very bleak image for Sennacherib. From a Mesopotamian viewpoint, his father's supposed punishment could be viewed as having extended into his reign, resulting in rebellions against Assyria upon his accession. The connection between Sargon's supposed transgressions and the rebellions in Babylonia and the west would not have been a difficult one to make. This gave Sennacherib further incentive to avoid referring to rebellion in his inscriptions.

The First Campaign Cylinder goes against this general pattern by describing Merodach-baladan II as a *bārānû*, "rebel".¹¹⁸¹ However, this follows immediately after a statement that Sennacherib's reign began "amid obedience and peace".¹¹⁸² The descriptions of Merodach-baladan as a rebel and of the peace within the empire upon Sennacherib's accession were both removed in later editions of the annals, wherein the account of the first campaign is greatly reduced in length. The fact that the reference to the peaceful start to Sennacherib's reign was deemed obsolete in the shorter account of the first campaign suggests that its purpose was to disassociate the rebellion in Babylon from Sargon's death.

Some Exceptions to the Rule

Although Sennacherib often avoids mentioning rebellion in his inscriptions, there are some episodes in his annals which he does explicitly state to be rebellions. The first of these is a revolt by the nobles of Ekron against their king Padî during Sennacherib's third campaign. Padî is stated to have been bound by a treaty to Assyria. As a loyal Assyrian vassal he was overthrown by the anti-Assyrian faction

¹¹⁷⁹ Brinkman and Kennedy 1983: 13; Holloway 2002: 106 n.117.

¹¹⁸⁰ Russell 1991: 227.

¹¹⁸¹ RINAP 3/1 1: 6.

¹¹⁸² RINAP 3/1 1: 5.

within Ekron, who then handed him over to Hezekiah of Judah and joined the rebellion.¹¹⁸³ Paḏî was reinstated by Sennacherib at the end of the campaign, honouring the treaty between the two rulers. This episode differs from those discussed above in that it was not a rebellion against Assyria, but against an Assyrian vassal instead, and fits the pattern of accounts of successful rebellions against foreign kings discussed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, it fitted into an annalistic tradition of accounts of an Assyrian king protecting or avenging his vassals.¹¹⁸⁴ It portrayed Sennacherib in a positive light as a just ruler who acknowledged the stipulations of his treaties, and was therefore an acceptable detail for him to include in his annals.

The second set of events which Sennacherib explicitly states to be rebellion occur during the account of his campaigns to Anatolia in 696 and 695 BC. Kirua, the ruler of the city of Illubru, incited rebellion amongst the inhabitants of Ḫilakku, classical Rough Cilicia. He also gained support from the cities Ingirâ and Tarzu, classical Anchiale and Tarsus respectively.¹¹⁸⁵ Kirua is described as *ardu dāgil pānija*, “a servant who waited on me”, or Assyrian vassal.¹¹⁸⁶ The verb used for his actions in inciting rebellion is *šubalkutu*, “to cause (someone) to rebel”.¹¹⁸⁷ In the 695 BC campaign, Gurdî is described as *šar āl urdūti* “king of a vassal city”,¹¹⁸⁸ and as readying his troops on the border of Tabal, at the edge of the Assyrian Empire.

These choices of wording make it very clear that Sennacherib did not intend to obscure the presence of rebellion in Anatolia as he had done for the rebels during his third campaign. To understand the reasons for this, we must explore the context of the Anatolian campaigns. The accounts of the Ḫilakku and Til-Garimme campaigns are two of the more striking passages in Sennacherib’s annals. Neither campaign was undertaken by Sennacherib in person. This by itself is not unheard of in the Assyrian royal inscriptions; Shalmaneser III’s inscriptions record campaigns

¹¹⁸³ RINAP 3/1 22: ii 73-81.

¹¹⁸⁴ Oded 1992: 61-81.

¹¹⁸⁵ Parpola and Porter 2001: 11, 17; Bagg 2007: 115, 251-52.

¹¹⁸⁶ RINAP 3/1 17: iv 63.

¹¹⁸⁷ RINAP 3/1 17: iv 65.

¹¹⁸⁸ Parpola (1970a: 373) and Grayson and Novotny (RINAP 3/1: 136) read this passage as “king of the (otherwise unattested) city Urdutu”. The reading “king of a vassal city” was first proposed by Heidel (1953: 150-51), and is followed by Aro-Valjus (1999 :431), by Hawkins (2000: 285) and, contrary to Grayson and Novotny (RINAP 3/1: 136 n. v4), by Frahm (1997: 88). It should be noted that *urdūtu*, “servitude”, is an Assyrianism. The word is usually written logographically (CAD s.v. *ardūtu* [2g]), but an inscription of Shalmaneser I gives it syllabically in the Babylonian form *ardūtu* (RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 43).

led by his *turtānu* Dajjān-Aššur during the latter years of his reign.¹¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Šamšī-ilu led several campaigns during his long term of office;¹¹⁹⁰ Šamšī-Adad V's second campaign was undertaken by his *rab ša rēši* Mutarriš-Aššur;¹¹⁹¹ Sargon II was not present during several of his campaigns;¹¹⁹² and the same is true for Ashurbanipal.¹¹⁹³ What is more unusual is that the 696 and 695 BCE campaigns are not present in the inscription on the Chicago and Taylor prisms,¹¹⁹⁴ the subsequent extant edition of Sennacherib's annals.

The two campaigns were both targeted against the same general area, the borders of Tabal, a region which was lost by Assyria after Sargon's death.¹¹⁹⁵ It has been suggested that the Gurdî of this campaign should be equated with Gurdî of Kulummu against whom Sargon fought his last campaign, and Kulummu has been identified as an alternative form of Garimme by some scholars.¹¹⁹⁶ This makes it likely that Til-Garimme was the location of Sargon's death, and would explain why Sennacherib did not undertake either of these campaigns in person. Even if the equation of Kulummu and Til-Garimme is not correct, Til-garimme was still a border region of Tabal, an area now tainted by its association with Sargon's death. Sennacherib was keen to avoid the fate which had befallen his father, and therefore avoided travelling to this region which was so closely tied to Sargon's untimely end. This viewpoint had been compounded by a campaign "against the Kulummeans" at the beginning of Sennacherib's reign, known only from one copy of the Eponym Chronicle. This campaign appears to have ended in failure.¹¹⁹⁷ Hilakku also bore a strong connection with Tabal as it had been given by Sargon as part of a dowry to Ambaris of Bīt-Purutaš, one of the largest Tabalian kingdoms, upon the latter's marriage to Sargon's daughter.¹¹⁹⁸

Because of the connections between Sargon and these two regions on the borders of Tabal, Sennacherib was quick to give reasons for sending his army to such

¹¹⁸⁹ RIMA 3 A.O.102.14: 141-90; Yamada 2000: 221-22.

¹¹⁹⁰ RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010: 11-18; A.O.105.1: 4-10.

¹¹⁹¹ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: ii 16-34.

¹¹⁹² Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 385-389.

¹¹⁹³ *Large Egyptian Tablets* obv. 6'-rev. 11.

¹¹⁹⁴ RINAP 3/1 22.

¹¹⁹⁵ For the history of this region, see Hawkins 2000: 426-28; Melville 2010; and Weeden 2017.

¹¹⁹⁶ Frahm 1999: 75-76 n. 12; Lanfranchi 2000: 23-24, n. 68.

¹¹⁹⁷ Frahm 1999: 83-84.

¹¹⁹⁸ Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 194-98.

places. In the case of Til-Garimme, Sennacherib stresses that Gurdî is an Assyrian vassal who prepared for hostilities against Assyrian territory. His actions were a rebellion against Assyria, and Sennacherib's campaign was therefore carried out in self-defence. In H̱ilakku, justification for campaigning was similarly achieved by stressing that Kirua and his neighbours had rebelled. To offset the negative connotations of the rebellion, the inscription states that Kirua's gods had abandoned him.¹¹⁹⁹ This was proof that his rebellion could not have been divinely ordained, and thus had no connection to Sargon's transgressions. This statement of an enemy's gods abandoning them bears parallels to a passage from the annals of Sargon II in which Merodach-baladan II is described as *šar māt Kaldī ša kī la libbi ilāni šarrūt Bābili [īpušu]*, "the king of Chaldea, who exercised the kingship of Babylon without the consent of the gods".¹²⁰⁰ Merodach-baladan had seized the Babylonian throne during the confusion in Assyria resulting from Sargon's usurpation of the Assyrian throne.¹²⁰¹ The passage is therefore a similar attempt to disassociate an Assyrian king's transgressions from a subsequent rebellion.

Sargon's Death and Sennacherib's Anatolian Campaigns

Evidence for the close connection between the accounts of the H̱ilakku and Til-Garimme campaigns, and Sennacherib's concerns about his father's death can be found in the differing treatment of them in different editions of Sennacherib's annals. The two campaigns undertaken in 696 and 695 BC are recorded in Sennacherib's annals on the Heidel and King prisms, both dated to the month Abu (V) of 694 BC, and on two undated prism fragments.¹²⁰² A greatly abbreviated account of these campaigns appears in an inscription on four winged, human-headed bull colossi from the South-West Palace at Nineveh.¹²⁰³ This inscription summarises the events of Sennacherib's reign up to the first half of his sixth campaign, giving it a *terminus post quem* of 694 BC.

Nearly all later versions of the annals do not include the 696 and 695 BC campaigns. Their only definite appearance in annals written after 694 BC is in the Nebi Yunus Inscription, an abbreviated version of the annals which gives an account of these

¹¹⁹⁹ RINAP 3/.1 17: iv 63.

¹²⁰⁰ Fuchs 1993: Zyl 18; *Ann* 21.

¹²⁰¹ Brinkman 1964: 12-13.

¹²⁰² RINAP 3/1 17.

¹²⁰³ RINAP 3/2 44.

events similar, but not identical, to that used on the bull colossi from the South-West Palace.¹²⁰⁴ The inscription includes an account of the Battle of Ḫalule, fought in 691 BC, and must therefore have been written in that year or later. A further two texts from 691 BC or later also appear to contain accounts of the two Anatolian campaigns, but are badly broken in the relevant sections.¹²⁰⁵ No other inscriptions from after 694 BC make any mention of these two campaigns.

The “Sin of Sennacherib”

To understand the reasons for the omission or presence of the 696 and 695 BC campaigns in different version of Sennacherib’s annals, the other ways in which the Nebi Yunus Tablet differs from the other post-694 BC annals must be examined. In contrast to the other inscriptions written after 694 BC, the Nebi Yunus Inscription omits the installation of Sennacherib’s son, Aššur-nādin-šumi, on the Babylonian throne in 700 BC. Of the other two post-694 BC inscriptions which may contain accounts of the 696 and 695 BC campaigns, one omits Aššur-nādin-šumi’s coronation,¹²⁰⁶ whilst the relevant section is missing from the other.¹²⁰⁷

Sennacherib’s scribes included both the Anatolian campaigns and Aššur-nādin-šumi’s accession to the Babylonian throne on the King and Heidel prisms,¹²⁰⁸ and the bull colossi from the South-West Palace.¹²⁰⁹ However, these events do not appear together in any inscriptions written after 694 BC.

694 BC is a significant year in the history of Sennacherib’s reign. In the month Tašrītu (VII) of that year, only two months after the creation of the King and Heidel prisms, an Elamite army invaded Babylonia. Aššur-nādin-šumi was captured and taken to Elam, where he was presumably executed. The throne was taken by Nergal-ušēzib, a pro-Elamite puppet-ruler.¹²¹⁰ This resulted in a series of further campaigns by Sennacherib against Babylonia and Elam, culminating in the Battle of Ḫalule in 691 BC and the subsequent siege and destruction of Babylon from 690 to

¹²⁰⁴ RINAP 3/1 34. This inscription is not, strictly speaking, a “true” annals series, as the first campaign account conflates the events of the first and fourth campaigns. However, the rest of the narrative follows the chronological order of the campaigns.

¹²⁰⁵ RINAP 3/1 26; RINAP 3.2 143. Like the Nebi Yunus Inscription, RINAP 3.1 26 conflates the first and fourth campaigns into a single campaign account. The relevant section is not extant in RINAP 3.2 143.

¹²⁰⁶ RINAP 3/1 26.

¹²⁰⁷ RINAP 3/2 143.

¹²⁰⁸ RINAP 3/1 17: iv 13-17.

¹²⁰⁹ RINAP 3/2 44: 11-13.

¹²¹⁰ Glassner 2004: 196-99.

689 BC.¹²¹¹ These events also differ in the Nebi Yunus Inscription and other versions of the annals. The Chicago and Taylor prisms call Nergal-ušēzib: *Šūzubu mār Bābili ša ina ešīti māte bēlūtu māt Šumeri u Akkadi ramānuš uterru*, “Šūzubu (Nergal-ušēzib), a citizen of Babylon who, during the confusion in the land, had taken the lordship of the land of Sumer and Akkad for himself”.¹²¹² The Nebi Yunus Inscription instead describes how Nergal-ušēzib was installed by the Elamite king.¹²¹³ Furthermore, the Chicago and Taylor prisms state that Sennacherib led the army against Nergal-ušēzib himself, but the Nebi Yunus Inscription states that he did not accompany the army on the second half of his sixth campaign.¹²¹⁴ This version of events agrees with Babylonian sources,¹²¹⁵ and can therefore be taken as the more accurate account of the campaign. This gives two very different accounts of Sennacherib’s sixth campaign: one in which the king personally led the army against an independent king, and one in which he sent his troops to defeat a pro-Elamite puppet king in his absence.

These differences between the two versions of the annals partially explain the omission of the 696 and 695 BCE campaigns from the Chicago and Taylor prisms. The fact that the capture of Aššur-nādin-šumi occurred just one year after the campaigns to the borders of Tabal would have been a troubling issue for the scribes composing Sennacherib’s inscriptions. As discussed above, the 696 and 695 BC campaigns were already a delicate subject for Sennacherib due to Tabal’s association with Sargon’s death. That these campaigns had been almost immediately followed by Aššur-nādin-šumi’s capture could be seen, from a Mesopotamian viewpoint, as evidence that the loss of Sennacherib’s eldest son was a direct consequence of the two Anatolian campaigns. The events of 694 BC were Sennacherib’s punishment for interfering in regions tainted by their association with Sargon’s death.

If Sennacherib were to mention the Anatolian campaigns and the installation of Aššur-nādin-šumi on the Babylonian throne in the same inscription, then it would highlight the supposed negative impact of the 696 and 695 BC campaigns. The

¹²¹¹ Brinkman 1973: 91-94; Frahm 2014: 209-210.

¹²¹² RINAP 3/1 22: iv 46-48.

¹²¹³ RINAP 3/1 34: 27-29.

¹²¹⁴ RINAP 3/1 34: 29-36.

¹²¹⁵ Glassner 2004: 198-99.

scribes who wrote Sennacherib's inscriptions took two different approaches to solving this problem. The first solution, adopted in the Nebi Yunus Inscription, was to omit the reference to Aššur-nādin-šumi. This allowed the author to include all of Sennacherib's campaigns without highlighting the perceived negative effects of the 696 and 695 BC campaigns. The second solution was to omit the 696 and 695 BC campaigns, and to give a more vague account of the sixth campaign. The 696 and 695 BC campaigns were not part of Sennacherib's "official" numbering of his campaigns and could thus be easily and inconspicuously removed from the narrative. The sixth campaign on the other hand was not only a numbered campaign, but had also resulted in the capture of a Babylonian king and therefore could not be cut out of the annals. However, the description of the confusion in which Nergal-ušēzib seized the throne is much vaguer than the account of the Elamite king placing him upon it. This obscured the nature of Nergal-ušēzib's accession and its connection with Aššur-nādin-šumi's capture.

It may seem counter-intuitive for there to have been different editions of the annals which differ from each other on details such as this, since comparing them could easily demonstrate the discrepancy. However, disagreements between Assyrian royal inscriptions on historical details were commonplace. For example Bēl-ibni, the native Babylonian whom Sennacherib had originally installed as king of Babylon is mentioned in the earlier editions of the annals,¹²¹⁶ but disappears from inscriptions after he was replaced with Aššur-nādin-šumi.¹²¹⁷ Contradictions such as this were not viewed as a problem by Assyrian scribes; the primary concern was the narrative portrayed within a single inscription.¹²¹⁸

Sennacherib is the Assyrian king whose inscriptions perhaps best demonstrate the concern that rebellion could be viewed as punishment by the gods.

Rebellion occurring as a form of divine punishment is a common literary trope in Mesopotamian literature.¹²¹⁹ Rebellion sometimes also appears as a form of divine retribution in Assyrian inscriptions, as discussed in Chapter 6, but the victim is never the Assyrian king himself. The negative connotations of rebellion as a result of poor

¹²¹⁶ RINAP 3/1 1: 54.

¹²¹⁷ RINAP 3/1 16: 49-58; Liverani 1981: 256-57.

¹²¹⁸ For conflicting narratives in different recensions of Ashurbanipal's annals, see Miller 2017: 382-87.

¹²¹⁹ See for example the Cuthaeen Legend of Narām-Sîn (Westenholz 1997: 263-368), the Weidner Chronicle (Glassner 2004: 263-69), and the Babylonian Fürstenspiegel or "Advice to a Prince" (BWL: 112-15).

kingship were not a major concern for the majority of Assyrian kings, who frequently refer to rebellions against themselves in their inscriptions. The effect which Sennacherib's anxieties about punishment for his father's misdeeds had on his annals is a rare example of such concerns being present in Assyrian royal inscriptions. The circumstances of Sargon's death, particularly the lack of his body for burial, were unprecedented in Assyrian history. Sennacherib therefore had much more reason to fear divine punishment, and to worry about the negative connotations of rebellion than did any of his predecessors.

This does not mean that Sennacherib completely avoided mentioning rebellion. The account of the battle of Halule in the Chicago, Taylor, and Jerusalem prisms makes several references to rebellion.¹²²⁰ The reason for this relates to the heroicising aspect of Assyrian royal inscriptions. Sennacherib clearly viewed the battle as a major achievement of his reign,¹²²¹ and as a result it forms the centrepiece of the later editions of his annals, where it is portrayed in an elevated literary style.¹²²² Here rebellion appears in the fashion usually seen in Assyrian royal inscriptions, as an obstacle which is heroically overcome by the Assyrian king,¹²²³ and which bears parallels with the Mesopotamian combat myth,¹²²⁴ as discussed in Chapter 4. Despite his anxieties concerning how rebellions against him would be perceived, Sennacherib still understood the ideological importance of rebellion in the correct context. Rebellion was a central aspect of the Mesopotamian combat myth, but could also occur as a punishment for poor kingship. This dichotomy between the positive and negative connotations of rebellion gives a new and fascinating insight into Sennacherib's royal inscriptions and the considerations which influenced their composition.

Sinning Must Run in the Family: Rebellion in the Inscriptions of Esarhaddon

Sennacherib may have had more reason to fear the negative connotations of rebellion than his predecessors, but Esarhaddon had even more reason to do so. Not only had his grandfather died in inauspicious circumstances, but his father had

¹²²⁰ RINAP 3/1 22: v 17-24; 23: v 9-16.

¹²²¹ Levine 1982: 51.

¹²²² Luckenbill 1924: 17; Weissert 1997: 191.

¹²²³ Radner 2016: 46.

¹²²⁴ Lambert 1986a: 55; 2013: 202-209, 449-51; Wiggerman 1992: 152-59; Annus 2002: 94-100, 109-21.

been assassinated,¹²²⁵ and he himself had needed to fight for his right to the throne. Any concerns which Sennacherib held concerning his father's "sin" were doubled for Esarhaddon, whose father and grandfather had both been struck down for their sins.

In spite of this, Esarhaddon does mention several rebellions in his inscriptions. In addition to his apology, describing his brothers' attempts to usurp the throne,¹²²⁶ several texts describe Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, governor of the Sealand, as *bārānû* and *nabalkattānu*, and as not upholding his treaty.¹²²⁷ Similarly, Abdi-Milkūti of Sidon, Asuhili of Arzâ, and Ba'alu of Tyre all cast off the yoke of Aššur,¹²²⁸ whilst an individual named Uaba incites rebellion amongst the Arabs against their king Jata'.¹²²⁹ Finally, Esarhaddon's Letter to the God concerns the refusal of the Šubrian king to obey the Assyrian king's orders to hand over fugitives seeking refuge in his territory.¹²³⁰

These examples may appear to indicate that Esarhaddon did not avoid mentioning rebellion in the way that his father did. However, it is interesting to note that the inscriptions containing these examples which can be reliably dated, Nineveh A,¹²³¹ and Esarhaddon's Letter to the God,¹²³² both come from 673 BC or later.¹²³³ Most of the undated inscriptions containing explicit mentions of rebellion can also be placed at or after this date with confidence. Nineveh D contains the Apology,¹²³⁴ and Tadmor has argued that its use of the *girru* formula for numbering the campaigns identifies it as part of his Nineveh S, which he places later than Nineveh A.¹²³⁵ Fragment A mentions the defeat of Ba'alu of Tyre,¹²³⁶ an event which occurred during the Egyptian campaign in 671 BC,¹²³⁷ Fragment F contains the Egyptian

¹²²⁵ For the specifics of Sennacherib's death, see Parpola 1980: 171-75.

¹²²⁶ RINAP 4 1: i 8-ii 11.

¹²²⁷ RINAP 4 1: ii 40-41, ii 53-56; 3: i 20; 30: obv. 8'-10'; 31: obv. 3.

¹²²⁸ RINAP 4 1: ii 67; 6: ii 12'; 30: obv. 17'; 34: obv. 14'.

¹²²⁹ RINAP 4 1: iv 23-24; 6: iii 16'-18'; 31: rev. 7-8. Alternatively, the Til-Barsib Stele (RINAP 4 97: 16) describes Uaba as taking the kingship for himself.

¹²³⁰ RINAP 4 34.

¹²³¹ RINAP 4 1.

¹²³² RINAP 4 34.

¹²³³ RINAP 4: 6.

¹²³⁴ RINAP 4 6: i 1'-15'.

¹²³⁵ Tadmor 2004: 273-74.

¹²³⁶ RINAP 4 30: rev. 1'-11'.

¹²³⁷ For a reconstruction of the events of this campaign, see Radner 2008b: 308-11.

campaign itself,¹²³⁸ and the Tīl Barsib Stele depicts a captive Egyptian, possibly the prince Ušnaḥuru.¹²³⁹

The dating of two texts containing explicit reference to rebellion, Nineveh C and Fragment B,¹²⁴⁰ is far less certain. The only significant information for determining a date for these texts comes from their description of interactions with the Arabs. Fragment B contains the rebellion by Uaba,¹²⁴¹ Nineveh C does not.¹²⁴² This campaign must have been undertaken sometime in the period of 676 to 673 BC, but the exact date is uncertain.¹²⁴³ This might suggest that Fragment B has a *terminus post quem* of 676 BC, and Nineveh C has a *terminus ante quem* of 673 BC. However, the absence of an event from the inscriptions may not always provide a reliable date, as the death of Hazael is included in Nineveh B,¹²⁴⁴ written in Ajjāru (II) of 676,¹²⁴⁵ but not in Kalḥu B,¹²⁴⁶ written three months later.¹²⁴⁷ Eph'al has stated that no new editions were written by Esarhaddon between Nineveh B and Nineveh A, as there were no military achievements which needed to be added to the inscriptions.¹²⁴⁸ However, this is based on the fact that he ignores Uaba's revolt in his analysis of Esarhaddon's inscriptions.¹²⁴⁹ It is therefore possible that two rebellions are explicitly stated to have occurred in texts from before 673 BC, those by Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir and Uaba.

These two rebellions were not “bad” rebellions to include in the inscriptions. The rebellion in the Sealand is stated in Nineveh A to have begun *ina daliḫti māt Aššur*, “during the confusion in the land of Aššur”, placing it before Esarhaddon's accession.¹²⁵⁰ The beginning of the account in Nineveh C is missing. However, the extant passage is identical to the account in Nineveh A,¹²⁵¹ and the rebellion was

¹²³⁸ RINAP 4 34: obv. 7'-rev. 19.

¹²³⁹ Thureau-Dangin 1929: pl. XXXVI. Ušnaḥuru is named in the inscriptions as a captive taken during the conquest of Egypt (RINAP 4 98: rev. 43-45).

¹²⁴⁰ RINAP 4 3 and 31.

¹²⁴¹ RINAP 4 31: rev. 7-8.

¹²⁴² RINAP 4 3: iii 1'-12'.

¹²⁴³ Eph'al 1982: 125-26.

¹²⁴⁴ RINAP 4 2: iii 1-8.

¹²⁴⁵ RINAP 4 2: vi 44a-45a.

¹²⁴⁶ RINAP 4 78.

¹²⁴⁷ RINAP 4 78: 45b, 45c.

¹²⁴⁸ Eph'al 2014: 58.

¹²⁴⁹ Eph'al 2014: 64-65.

¹²⁵⁰ RINAP 4 1: ii 42.

¹²⁵¹ RINAP 4 1: ii 53-60; 3: i 16'-28'.

therefore likely placed before Esarhaddon's reign in Nineveh C as well. The rebellion amongst the Arabs was against an Assyrian vassal, and therefore did not hold the negative connotations of a rebellion against the Assyrian king himself. No rebellions starting in Esarhaddon's reign and directly targeted against him are explicitly stated to have occurred in inscriptions from before 673 BC.

673 BC is an important year in Esarhaddon's reign for the current purpose, as it was in this year that the Apology was composed.¹²⁵² Another major event of this year was the sack of Šubria, which has been interpreted as ideologically significant by several scholars. Leichty and Na'aman have both suggested that this campaign resulted, directly or indirectly, in the capture of Esarhaddon's fugitive brothers, who had escaped north following their sibling's accession.¹²⁵³ Alternatively, Eph'al, Knapp, and Tadmor all view it as a display of royal power intended to quieten dissent in Assyria following Esarhaddon's failed invasion of Egypt.¹²⁵⁴ They view the failed Egyptian campaign as a major impetus for the composition of the Apology, which was intended to reassert Esarhaddon's authority.¹²⁵⁵ Of course, these two theories are not mutually exclusive, but the evidence for the brothers taking refuge in Šubria is scarce, and we can only speculate on the historicity of this suggestion.

It is tempting to also tie the Apology to the capture of Esarhaddon's brothers. The absence of the Apology from earlier inscriptions may well have been due to the fact that the brothers remained alive and well. Their capture would then have prompted the inclusion of the Apology in the inscriptions. However, this line of argument heads deep into the realms of speculation. Not only is evidence for this event limited to a Biblical reference to Sennacherib's assassins fleeing to Ararat,¹²⁵⁶ leaving much room for uncertainty over events after this point, but the dating of the campaign to Šubria is also uncertain. The two chronicles containing the event assign it to different months in 673 BC, either Ṭebētu (X),¹²⁵⁷ or Addaru (XII).¹²⁵⁸ Esarhaddon's Letter to the God also gives the date of a battle during the siege of Uppume, but this date has been read differently by the text's two most recent editors. Borger reads the month

¹²⁵² RINAP 4 1: vi 75a-75g.

¹²⁵³ Leichty 1991: 56-57; Na'aman 2006: 4-5.

¹²⁵⁴ Eph'al 2005: 99-100; 2014: 59-60; 2016: 125; Knapp 2016: 182-87, 192-95; Tadmor 1983: 41-43.

¹²⁵⁵ Eph'al 2014: 58-59; 2016: 125; Knapp 2016: 182-90; Tadmor 2004: 271-72.

¹²⁵⁶ Isaiah 37:38.

¹²⁵⁷ Glassner 2004: 200-201.

¹²⁵⁸ Glassner 2004: 208-209.

as Kislīmu (IX),¹²⁵⁹ whilst Leichty reads Ulūlu (VI).¹²⁶⁰ These dates place the conquest of Šubria somewhere between two and eight months after the Apology was written in Du'ūzu (IV) of 673 BC.¹²⁶¹ Without any more concrete information, there is little that can be stated for certain on this matter.

The failed Egyptian campaign is the most obvious defeat suffered by Esarhaddon prior to the writing of the Apology, but it was by no means the only event which may have threatened his position. Esarhaddon appears to have been plagued by ill health,¹²⁶² and the substitute king ritual was enacted at least three times in the years preceding the writing of the Apology.¹²⁶³ There were also several other military setbacks in the years preceding the Apology. The Esarhaddon Chronicle records a campaign to Melid in 675 BC which is not included in the annals, presumably because it ended in failure.¹²⁶⁴ This is the only reference in the historiographic texts to Esarhaddon's struggles against the Anatolian warlord Mugallu, who exstipicity reports demonstrate was a serious thorn in the Assyrian king's side. This individual had conquered Melid at some point in Esarhaddon's reign, and successfully held the city until his death in the reign of Ashurbanipal.¹²⁶⁵ Mugallu's conquest of Melid is highly significant for the negative message which it might have conveyed. Til-Garimme had previously been a royal city of Melid during the reign of Sargon II. The loss of Melid was therefore yet another example of the cursed status of this region, and of its connection to the divine punishment of the Sargonid line.

Furthermore, the Babylonian Chronicle records that the Elamites had invaded Sippar in the same year.¹²⁶⁶ Again this event does not appear in any of the inscriptions, presumably meaning that it resulted in an embarrassing defeat for Assyria. All of these events result in a situation in 673 BC wherein:

- The king's two immediate predecessors have both met with violent ends.

¹²⁵⁹ Borger 1956: 104.

¹²⁶⁰ RINAP 4: 82.

¹²⁶¹ Knapp 2016: 184.

¹²⁶² Radner 2003: 169-70. For attempts to diagnose the specific condition which Esarhaddon suffered from, see Parpola 1983: 230-36; Roth 1985: 309 n. 3. On the problems with these retrospective diagnoses, see Leven 2004: 380-82.

¹²⁶³ Parpola 1983: xxiii. Parpola's table is confusing, as the text LAS 30 (Parpola 1970b: 21) describes a substitute king ritual in either 679 or 674 BC, not in both years. For the date of these letters, see Parpola 1983: 516.

¹²⁶⁴ Glassner 2004: 208-209.

¹²⁶⁵ PNA s.v. *Mugallu*: 761-62.

¹²⁶⁶ Glassner 2004: 200-201.

- The king is sickly and physically weak (or at least something of a hypochondriac).
- The “curse” on the Sargonids with regards to central Anatolia has manifested itself once again.
- In addition to Melid, the king has also met with failure in response to an Elamite invasion of Sippar.
- Finally, the king has undertaken a disastrous campaign to Egypt.

The failed invasion of Egypt clearly played an important part in the weakening of Esarhaddon’s position, but in light of the preceding events it was simply the last in a long line of negative occurrences for this king. At first, these concerns led Esarhaddon to avoid any mention of rebellion in his inscriptions. Following the attempted invasion of Egypt, the king took a different, more proactive approach in order to reinforce his authority. Šubria was invaded and annexed, the succession treaties were drawn up, and the Apology was drafted.¹²⁶⁷

The studies of Tadmor, Eph’al, and Knapp on the *Sitz im Leben* of the Apology all assume that it was intended for propagandistic purposes.¹²⁶⁸ As discussed in Chapter 1, the inscriptions were almost certainly primarily intended for an audience of future kings and the gods. In this context, I find the Apology to be more geared toward ensuring a correct royal legacy for Esarhaddon. By recording his extraordinary route to power, the king demonstrated that he was a good ruler with divine support, not the remote, sickly, and paranoid *Unheilsherrscher* that he might otherwise have been remembered as.¹²⁶⁹

The passage also held a message for its divine audience. The gods had clearly demonstrated their support for Esarhaddon on previous occasions, and he had behaved impeccably during this time. In spite of this, they had still subjected him to some unknown disease that his doctors could neither diagnose nor combat.¹²⁷⁰ Furthermore, Esarhaddon may have undertaken the substitute king ritual in Ulūlu (VI) of 674 BC. Parpola has revised the dates of letters which he had previously

¹²⁶⁷ Eph’al 2016: 125.

¹²⁶⁸ Eph’al 2014: 58-59; Knapp 2016: 185-92; Tadmor 1983: 38-45.

¹²⁶⁹ For the term *Unheilsherrscher*, see Chapter 2.

¹²⁷⁰ For the chief physician’s inability to diagnose the king’s illness, see SAA 10 315: 7-12.

placed at this point to the year 679 BC,¹²⁷¹ meaning that there is no textual evidence for the ritual being carried out at this time. However, if we are to follow Parpola's interpretation of this ritual, a total lunar eclipse whilst Jupiter was not visible would be a portent of the death of the kings of Amurru, Subartu (Assyria), Elam, and Akkad (Babylonia) and require a substitute king.¹²⁷² This event, combined with the king's illness and military setbacks, was not an appropriate reward for the perfect manner in which he had conducted himself, as portrayed in the inscriptions. The gods needed reminding of this point,¹²⁷³ and the Apology aided in doing just that.

The Apology appears to have allowed Esarhaddon's scribes the freedom to mention rebellion where they had not felt able to do so previously. Tadmor noted this detail in relation to the campaign against Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, arguing that it served to emphasise the punishment that might befall those who would break the loyalty oaths.¹²⁷⁴ As discussed above, this event is placed before the beginning of Esarhaddon's reign. The result of this is that the new king's "first" two campaigns are carried out in response to rebellions with their origins in the period of his exile from the land. When taken as two parts of a larger narrative, the episodes relate how Esarhaddon overcame rebellions in both Assyria and Babylonia in order to claim his birthright.¹²⁷⁵ Only after he has demonstrated the legitimacy of his claims to the thrones in both Nineveh and Babylon does he face a rebellion which begins in his own reign, that of Abdi-milkūti of Sidon.¹²⁷⁶

Excursus: Sources Relating to the Conspiracy of Sasî

The unrest within the land during Esarhaddon's reign eventually led to the execution of many of the king's magnates in 670 BC.¹²⁷⁷ The catalyst for this event appears to have been a conspiracy led by an individual named Sasî, who was proclaimed king by a slave girl in a prophetic vision.¹²⁷⁸ There have been several attempts to

¹²⁷¹ Parpola 1983: 516.

¹²⁷² Parpola 1983: XXII-XXIV, 403-404.

¹²⁷³ For the gods' imperfect memories and the need to remind them of past examples of good conduct, see Altman 2004: 50.

¹²⁷⁴ Tadmor 1983: 46-47; 2004: 271-72.

¹²⁷⁵ For the motif of the triumphal return of the rightful heir elsewhere in Ancient Near Eastern literature, see Liverani 2004c: 148-56; 2004d: 86-96.

¹²⁷⁶ RINAP 4 1: ii 65-67.

¹²⁷⁷ Glassner 2004: 202-203, 208-209.

¹²⁷⁸ SAA 16 59: rev. 2'-5'. A second letter to the king from the same sender also mentions Sasî in relation to rebellion (SAA 16 60).

reconstruct the events resulting in these executions.¹²⁷⁹ A letter to Esarhaddon from Kudurru, a scribe apparently living in exile from Assyria, has also been viewed as recording aspects of the same conspiracy. Kudurru states that several high-ranking officials, including the *ša muḫḫi āli*, “city overseer”, had made him read omens in Harran to determine whether the *rab ša rēši* would take the kingship.¹²⁸⁰ The conspirator Sasî is also given the title *ša muḫḫi āli*,¹²⁸¹ and an individual named Sasî is named as overseeing several scholars, including a Kudurru.¹²⁸² Nissinen therefore views the Sasî proclaimed king by the slave girl, the unnamed *ša muḫḫi āli* in Kudurru’s letter, and the Sasî overseeing the scholars as the same person.¹²⁸³ Radner also views the two events as part of the same conspiracy, but does not identify all of these individuals with one another.¹²⁸⁴

These studies have often taken nearly every sign of discord during Esarhaddon’s reign to relate to this conspiracy. This approach is exemplified by Nissinen, who writes:

Since neither the chronicles nor the inscriptions include any records of other revolts against Esarhaddon between 672 and 669, the texts dating to this period of time and presupposing a conspiracy against him are most probably to be connected with this event, provided that no data prove otherwise.¹²⁸⁵

A problem inherent in this approach is that the dating and interpretation of the letters can at times fall prey to circular logic. A letter mentions rebellion, and should therefore date to shortly before 670 BC; because the letter is dated to this point in time, it must relate to Sasî’s conspiracy.¹²⁸⁶ The equation of Sasî’s act of insurrection

¹²⁷⁹ Dietrich 1970: 50-56; Nissinen 1998: 127-50; Radner 2003: 172-76.

¹²⁸⁰ SAA 10 179: obv. 11-rev. 11’.

¹²⁸¹ SAA 16 59: rev. 11’-12’. Note that the first half of the name is missing ([...] -*si-i* ^{lú} *šá*-UGU.URU), but the reference to Sasî in the proceeding lines in the same context make it likely that this refers to Sasî.

¹²⁸² SAA 11 156 obv. 14-19; SAA 16 17: obv. 6-11.

¹²⁸³ Nissinen 135-50.

¹²⁸⁴ Radner 2003: 172-74.

¹²⁸⁵ Nissinen 1998: 128.

¹²⁸⁶ For the letters which Nissinen identifies as relating to this conspiracy, see Nissinen 1998: 128-46. A second problem with the study by Nissinen in particular is an assumption that several individuals named Sasî in texts from the reign of Esarhaddon are in fact the same person. For example, on the basis of the existence of a Sasî, a mayor named as a witness in several documents, who was still alive after 670 BCE (SAA 6 314: rev. 10; SAA 14 129:1; 477: rev. 1), Nissinen (1998: 145-50) imagines a series of events in which this man was an “undercover agent” who infiltrated the conspiracy under orders from Esarhaddon, and was therefore spared from execution. It is instead far more likely that there were several officials during the reign of Esarhaddon who bore this fairly common name (for other individuals called Sasî, see PNA s.v. *Sāsî*).

with the conspiracy in Kudurru's letter is possible on the basis of the shared location in Harran and the role of a *ša muḥḫi āli* in that city in both episodes. However, it should be noted that the two episodes present different individuals as the true, divinely selected king, Sasî in one, and the *rab ša rēši* in the other. Whilst this observation does not necessarily disprove a connection between the two conspiracies, it would be strange for two allied members of the same group to both claim rightful kingship in ways which were so clear to the other and still remain allies.¹²⁸⁷

In reality the letters from Esarhaddon's reign give a rather muddled idea of who is loyal to the king or not, and there are many examples of officials shifting suspicion onto their colleagues.¹²⁸⁸ We must therefore question whether these letters all relate to a single conspiracy, or whether some simply represent competition between officials casting aspersions on their peers in order to gain favour in the eyes of an increasingly mistrustful king.¹²⁸⁹ The dating of some of these texts can therefore be questioned. A similar situation presents itself in relation to the archaeological record. Radner ties the destruction of Sam'al to the rebellion by Sasî.¹²⁹⁰ However, the dated documents from the site give a *terminus post quem* for the destruction of the city as 676 BC.¹²⁹¹ A date for the destruction in 670 BC is possible, but a more likely date would seem to be the campaign to nearby Melid in 675 BC.¹²⁹²

The Rebellious Actions of Sillaja

Sasî's conspiracy and the execution of the magnates occurred several years after the latest dated extant inscriptions of Esarhaddon. It is therefore absent from all of Esarhaddon's inscriptions, although as a rebellion in the Assyrian heartland it would presumably have been omitted regardless. However, this episode was not the first sign of rebellion against Esarhaddon, and there are several references in the letters to the rebellious actions of individuals in Babylonia, particularly by a man named

¹²⁸⁷ Radner's reading of the *rab ša rēši* taking (*našû*) the kingship as this official acting as a kingmaker (2003: 173-74 n. 66) is possible, but uncertain. It may equally be the case that the events involving Kudurru and Sasî represent two separate conspiracies against Esarhaddon.

¹²⁸⁸ For example, SAA 16 29: obv. 4-rev. 7; 71: obv. 3'-4'; 78: obv. 4-rev. 5; SAA 18 204: e. 28-rev. 13.

¹²⁸⁹ On Esarhaddon's somewhat paranoid disposition throughout his reign, see Radner 2003: 166-70.

¹²⁹⁰ Radner 2003: 175.

¹²⁹¹ von Luschan 1943: 136-37.

¹²⁹² Lipiński 2000: 246-47; RLA s.v. *Mugallu*: 406.

Şillaja.¹²⁹³ This individual was involved in various actions against Assyria and the more pro-Assyrian cities in Babylonia at the time. In the letters he is accused of theft,¹²⁹⁴ accepting misappropriated silver,¹²⁹⁵ plotting or threatening to kill several individuals,¹²⁹⁶ opposing the rebuilding of Babylon,¹²⁹⁷ obstructing Nippur's access to water from the Banītu canal,¹²⁹⁸ and seeking out others with anti-Assyrian sentiments amongst the Babylonian governors and tribal leaders.¹²⁹⁹

In spite of this long list of crimes, there is no evidence of any response to Şillaja's actions. Dietrich argued that such a response is represented by a campaign to Šamēlē,¹³⁰⁰ mostly likely the city of that name in Bīt-Amukāni,¹³⁰¹ which is recorded for the year 674 BC in the Esarhaddon Chronicle.¹³⁰² However, there is no evidence to connect Şillaja with Bīt-Amukāni.¹³⁰³ The only reference to Şillaja's death comes from a text attacking an individual named Bēl-ēṭir.¹³⁰⁴ This text sets some of its events before the death or disappearance of a Şallaja, the Assyrian form of Şillaja.¹³⁰⁵ The lack of references to Şillaja after 675 BC suggest that his career as an opponent of Esarhaddon came to an end at this point, but the reasons for this are unclear. The lack of reference to this rebel in the inscriptions may indicate that Esarhaddon's attempts to deal with him were met with little success.

Alternatively, the insurrection was too closely tied to one of Babylonia's traditional major cities. Şillaja appears to have held close ties to Nippur as both its ally and its enemy dependent of the political leanings of the *šandabakku* at the time.¹³⁰⁶ If ABL 1131 is to be attributed to him, rather than another individual of the same name, then the gods listed in the salutation, Enlil, Ninurta, and Nusku, also suggest that he had

¹²⁹³ For an overview of the sources relating to this individual, see Frame 1992: 84-87; PNA s.v. *Şillāia*: 1174.

¹²⁹⁴ SAA 18 54: rev. 19-20.

¹²⁹⁵ SAA 10 112: rev. 3-8.

¹²⁹⁶ SAA 18 54: rev. 16-18; 69: obv. 1-6.

¹²⁹⁷ SAA 10 169: rev. 7-9.

¹²⁹⁸ SAA 18 70: rev. 5-10.

¹²⁹⁹ SAA 10 2: e. 20-rev. 7.

¹³⁰⁰ Dietrich 1970: 56.

¹³⁰¹ Brinkman 1984: 81 n. 397; Frame 1992: 88 n. 182. Fecht (1958: 116-19) argues for a location in Egypt, but this identification is linguistically problematic (Spalinger 1974b: 300-301).

¹³⁰² Glassner 2004: 208-209.

¹³⁰³ Frame 1992: 87-88.

¹³⁰⁴ SAA 3 29.

¹³⁰⁵ SAA 3 29: obv. 2.

¹³⁰⁶ Frame 1992: 86-87.

ties to Nippur.¹³⁰⁷ This may provide the context for Šillaja's opposition to the reconstruction of Babylon; the diminishment of Nippur's agricultural land and water supply as a result of the rebuilding of that city has been put forward as the primary motivation for the anti-Assyrian stance apparently taken by several of the *šandabakkū* during Esarhaddon's reign.¹³⁰⁸ Šillaja's possible connection to Nippur may suggest that the deportation of the *šandabakku* Šuma-iddin in 675 BC was related to the end of Šillaja's career as a rebel against Assyria.¹³⁰⁹

By contrast, the two Babylonian campaigns in Esarhaddon's inscriptions stress the non-Babylonian character of his opponents. In the case of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, emphasis is placed on his descent from the infamous Chaldaean rebel Merodach-baladan II, and on his position as governor of the Sealand, the territorial holdings of the Chaldaean tribe Bīt-Jakīn.¹³¹⁰ Similarly, Šamaš-ibni is described as king of Bīt-Dakkūri *ša qereb māt Kaldī ajjāb Bābili*, "which is in the land of Chaldea, an enemy of Babylon".¹³¹¹ Furthermore, the chronicles record that Šamaš-ibni was deported to Assyria together with DN-aḥḥē-šullim, the *šandabakku*,¹³¹² but this detail is omitted from the inscriptions.¹³¹³ The actions of the two Chaldaean rebels also stress their un-Babylonian nature. Both commit crimes against traditional Babylonian urban centres. Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir besieges Ur¹³¹⁴ and Šamaš-ibni takes away land from the cities of Babylon and Borsippa.¹³¹⁵ Frame has suggested that Šamaš-ibni's actions may also be described in the letter ABL 403,¹³¹⁶ which similarly emphasises the non-Babylonian nature of its recipients.¹³¹⁷

These descriptions of the Chaldaean rebels portray a divide in the south between the loyal citizens of the traditional cities of Babylonia, and the rebellious Chaldaean tribesmen who sought to do them harm. Such a model is clearly ahistorical,¹³¹⁸ but it

¹³⁰⁷ Frame 1992: 84-87.

¹³⁰⁸ Brinkman 1984: 76; Cole 1996: 53-54; Frame 1992: 66-67, 79-80, 83-87.

¹³⁰⁹ Glassner 2004: 200-201, 208-209.

¹³¹⁰ RINAP 4 1: ii 40; 2: ii 24, ii 32-33. For the connections between Bīt-Jakīn and the Sealand, see Frame 1992: 40-42.

¹³¹¹ RINAP 4 1: iii 62-63; 2: ii 34-36.

¹³¹² Glassner 2004: 200-201, 208-209. The theophoric element of this name is missing from both the Babylonian Chronicle and the Esarhaddon Chronicle.

¹³¹³ RINAP 4 1: iii 62-70; 2: ii 34-45.

¹³¹⁴ RINAP 4 1: ii 42-45.

¹³¹⁵ RINAP 4 1: iii 63-66; 2: ii 36-39.

¹³¹⁶ Frame 1992: 80-81.

¹³¹⁷ SAA 18 1: obv. 2, obv. 8-12, obv. 16-rev. 4.

¹³¹⁸ Brinkman 1977: 315, *contra* to Dietrich 1970: 5.

does fit a traditional Assyrian worldview of the centre and the periphery. As king of Babylonia, and restorer of Babylon, Esarhaddon was keen to stress that any problems in the region were caused by non-Babylonian elements peripheral to Babylonia proper. A similar conception of the south is demonstrated by Shalmaneser III's throne-base inscriptions, wherein Babylonia is placed alongside Assyria as part of the centre, with Chaldaea forming part of the periphery.¹³¹⁹ A rebellion centred on Nippur did not conform to this conception of Babylonia's place in the empire, and was therefore omitted from the inscriptions.

The effectiveness of this omission can be seen in Porter's view of Esarhaddon's military interventions in Babylonia, which she labels as being of "minor importance",¹³²⁰ in spite of the fact that this king sent troops to Babylonia four times in his twelve-year reign.¹³²¹ By comparison, Sennacherib, whose reign is to Porter the time when "the destructive cycle of Babylonian revolts and Assyrian punitive campaigns reached a climax",¹³²² campaigned to Babylonia five times in the first sixteen years of his reign.¹³²³

The Campaign to Šamēlē

The separation of Šillaja's insubordination from the campaign to Šamēlē results in there being another rebellion which is not mentioned in the royal inscriptions. If we take the Šamēlē from this episode to be the city in Bīt-Amukāni, as seems most likely, it is surprising that it is not included in the inscriptions. Unlike Nippur, Bīt-Amukāni was firmly placed in the Chaldaean periphery. Furthermore, victory over Bīt-Amukāni would have given Esarhaddon successful campaigns against all three of the most prominent Chaldaean tribes. The year number in the date of this campaign is uncertain, and Brinkman suggests that it could be read as "eighth year" (673 BC), rather than "seventh year" (674) BC.¹³²⁴ This would place the campaign eight months after the earliest exemplars of Nineveh A, and just two months before

¹³¹⁹ Dewar 2017a: 70.

¹³²⁰ Porter 1993a: 5.

¹³²¹ Glassner 2004: 200-203, 206-209.

¹³²² Porter 1993a: 3.

¹³²³ RINAP 3/1: 10 table 1.

¹³²⁴ Brinkman 1990a: 95 n. 128.

the latest exemplar.¹³²⁵ The absence of the episode from this inscription would seem to support the later date, although this is far from conclusive.

Position in List	Assyrian Heartland	West and North-West	South and South-East	Location Unknown
1	Nineveh	-----	-----	-----
2	Adia	-----	-----	-----
3	Šibaniba	-----	-----	-----
4	Imgur-Enlil	-----	-----	-----
5	-----	-----	-----	Iššabri
6	-----	-----	-----	Bit-Šašširia
7	-----	-----	-----	Šimu
8	Šibhiniš	-----	-----	-----
9	Tamnuna	-----	-----	-----
10	Kipšuna	-----	-----	-----
11	Kurbail	-----	-----	-----
12	-----	Tidu	-----	-----
13	-----	Nabulu	-----	-----
14	-----	Kaḥat	-----	-----
15	Aššur	-----	-----	-----
16	-----	Urakka	-----	-----
17	-----	-----	Sallat	-----
18	-----	Ḫuzirina	-----	-----
19	-----	-----	Dur-balati	-----
20	-----	Dariga	-----	-----
21	-----	-----	Zaban	-----
22	-----	-----	Lubdu	-----
23	Arrapha	-----	-----	-----
24	Arbail	-----	-----	-----

Fig. 5. The list of rebels against Šamšī-Adad V separated out by region (the route from Babylonia northwards into Assyria is underlined and in bold). After Dewar 2015: 11 fig. 3.

Šamšī-Adad V and Babylon: Obscuring Foreign Support

One final account of rebellion which I suggest demonstrates Assyrian anxieties about presenting the putting down of rebellion in the correct fashion is the record of the civil war against Aššur-da'in-apla in Šamšī-Adad V's inscriptions.¹³²⁶ It may seem at first glance that there is little information which can be garnered from this text beyond the few comments made by Reade,¹³²⁷ and the possible "stretching out" of the rebellion to cover the whole empire discussed in Chapter 6. The list of rebel cities appears at first glance to have no logical ordering principles. However, I have previously demonstrated that, when separated out by region, this list forms two distinct groups.¹³²⁸ The first group, consisting of the Assyrian heartland and the west, was

¹³²⁵ RINAP 4 1: vi 75b-c, g.

¹³²⁶ RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 39-53.

¹³²⁷ Reade 1981: 157-58.

¹³²⁸ Fig. 5.

the primary focus of my previous study on this inscription.¹³²⁹ The second group of cities is perhaps the more striking, as it forms an itinerary beginning at the cities of northern Babylonia, and working northwards to Arrapha and Arbail.¹³³⁰

There are several interesting points to note in these findings. This Assyrian civil war included fighting in cities in Babylonia. Furthermore, the scribe ordered these cities in the list to create the route from Babylonia to eastern Assyria. However, this series is broken up by the interspersed cities from the west.¹³³¹ All of these points suggest the possibility that Babylonia may have been involved in this conflict, providing support to Šamšī-Adad.¹³³² This is a theory which has been commonly held in the scholarship due to the existence of a treaty between Šamšī-Adad V and Marduk-zākir-šumi.¹³³³ The order of the lists of cities in the annals gives some support to this proposed reconstruction of events.

Babylonian involvement in putting down the revolt would explain the jumbled order of cities in the list. Putting down rebellion was a heroic act for the king to undertake, but only when it was done without external aid. In fact, aiding a foreign ruler in defeating their enemies was a sign of superiority over that individual. Asking for aid from a foreign ruler was a sign of submission which implicitly acknowledged the greater ability of that ruler to deal with the specific problem. Conversely, by giving aid when required, a king could demonstrate their superiority and their magnanimity. Thus Shalmaneser III took great pains to stress his involvement in Babylonia. Similarly the governor of Suḫu, Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur emphasises the submission of Adad-da''ānu, the governor of Laqe, who begs for protection from the marauding Ḫatallu tribe of Aramaeans.¹³³⁴ Conversely, Marduk-zākir-šumi's support was something Šamšī-Adad could never admit to in his inscriptions. Because of this, instead of geographically ordering the list of rebel cities, the Assyrian scribes elected to muddle

¹³²⁹ Dewar 2015: 9-12.

¹³³⁰ Dewar 2015: 10-11.

¹³³¹ Fig. 5.

¹³³² For the similar suggestion that Šamšī-Adad's western front during the civil war might have been overseen by the *turtānu*, see Dewar 2015: 9-12; Fuchs 2015: 81. Of course, the inclusion of the Babylonian cities in the list of rebels also suggests that at least some Babylonians also supported Aššur-da''in-apla. One might expect this point to be stressed in the text, demonstrating that the rebels were reliant on a foreign power rather than the support of the gods (see Chapter 6). That this is not the case might also suggest that Šamšī-Adad V enjoyed Babylonian support during the civil war, and therefore preferred to avoid the subject altogether.

¹³³³ Brinkman 1968: 204-205; 1990b: 96-97; Grayson 1975: 243; 1982: 269-70; SAA 2: XXVI-XXVII. In contrast, Siddall (2013: 85) takes a more cautious view of the evidence. For an edition of the treaty itself, see SAA 2 1.

¹³³⁴ RIMB 2 S.O.1002.2: i 30-32.

together the two separate geographically ordered itineraries which they possessed into a single list with no apparent logic to its structure.¹³³⁵ This then served to obscure the Babylonian involvement in these events.

¹³³⁵ For the proposal that itineraries and “campaign diaries” were recorded by Assyrian scribes during military campaigns, see Grayson 1981: 42; Reade 1981: 154-55. For possible examples of such itineraries, see ARI: 94-95 Adad-nerari II 6*.

8. Repercussions for Rebellion

The fact that the Assyrian royal inscriptions and reliefs portray a range of brutalities committed against Assyria's enemies is well known. Violence has frequently been the predominant aspect of Assyrian society highlighted in popular history and popular culture,¹³³⁶ a situation furthered by the Biblical portrayal of this ancient power.¹³³⁷ Olmstead's description of Ashurnasirpal II's "calculated frightfulness" has become famous within the discipline.¹³³⁸ However, in spite of this, the range of studies on the portrayal of violence in the inscriptions has been relatively limited. One of the most notable text-based studies of violence in Assyria, that of Saggs on the treatment of prisoners of war,¹³³⁹ is concerned with the circumstances under which captives were executed or mutilated in reality, and not the contexts in which these events are presented in the narratives of the inscriptions.¹³⁴⁰ Furthermore, Saggs lumps rebellion together with other instances in which an enemy initiates hostilities against Assyria,¹³⁴¹ and his conclusions are therefore not specific to rebellion. Aside from the occasional investigation of specific aspects of Assyrian violence, a study on impalement by Radner,¹³⁴² one on "corpse abuse" by Richardson,¹³⁴³ and one on metaphors used in describing violence by Van De Mieroop,¹³⁴⁴ the majority of scholarship on Assyrian portrayals of violence has focused on the reliefs.¹³⁴⁵ Baker has studied the destruction of architecture in both the Assyrian royal inscriptions and the reliefs.¹³⁴⁶ However, she does not make any comment on the differing treatments of different types of Assyrian enemies, nor does she mention rebellion. The result of this is that there has been no real study of the punishments meted out in response to rebellions, and whether these punishments differ at all from punishments against enemies who are not rebels.

¹³³⁶ For example, the "History" section of the Wikipedia page for flaying (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaying> date accessed: 19 Dec. 2018) devotes as much space to the practice in Assyria as it does to the rest of human history, whilst some authors writing popular history have compared the Assyrian kings and their empire to Hitler and Nazi Germany (Anglim 2002: 12; Kriwaczek 2010: 208).

¹³³⁷ Saggs 1982: 85.

¹³³⁸ Olmstead 1918: 224-25.

¹³³⁹ Saggs 1982.

¹³⁴⁰ The problems resulting from this approach will be discussed below.

¹³⁴¹ Saggs 1982: 87, 91.

¹³⁴² Radner 2015.

¹³⁴³ Richardson 2007: 196-200.

¹³⁴⁴ Van De Mieroop 2015.

¹³⁴⁵ For example, Bahrani 2008; Bersani and Dutoit 1979; Rede 2018. Miller (2017) studies violence in both the reliefs and the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal.

¹³⁴⁶ Baker 2014.

There are many punishments in the inscriptions which occur extremely frequently, and in nearly all circumstances. The looting and destruction of cities and the massacre of enemy soldiers appear in many of the campaigns in which the Assyrian army is met with resistance, and in all periods.¹³⁴⁷ This is hardly surprising, as these events might be expected to form some of the most basic events of military campaigns. The cutting down of an enemy city's orchards also appears both in response to rebellions, and in campaigns against previously unconquered cities.¹³⁴⁸ This is also unsurprising, as removing of these resources was an important aspect of siege warfare throughout the history of the Ancient Near East,¹³⁴⁹ this tactic was utilised in Iraq as recently as the Nineteenth Century AD.¹³⁵⁰ By contrast, some punishments are more unusual, and it is these less common forms of repercussions that this chapter will focus on: the unusually thorough destruction of enemy cities, flaying, impalement, the burning of captives, and other forms of mutilation of both living and dead enemies.

The Symbolically Thorough Destruction of Enemy Cities

The language describing the destruction of enemy cities is usually very stereotyped, consisting of demolishing and burning them, or turning them into ruin mounds.¹³⁵¹ Often this account contains a simile relating to the deluge.¹³⁵² Wright states that destruction of cities is only undertaken as a last resort,¹³⁵³ but in fact brief, formulaic accounts of the destruction of cities are commonplace in the inscriptions.¹³⁵⁴ Rather than being restricted to episodes of “unrelenting rebellion”,¹³⁵⁵ these actions are

¹³⁴⁷ Examples of city destruction include RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 35-36, 50-51; A.O.77.1: 37-38, 50-53, 77-78; A.O.78.1: ii 37-39, iii 16-17; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: iii 12-13, iii 64-65, iii 83-85; A.O.98.1: 27, 33-34, 43; A.O.99.2: 92-96; A.O.100.5: 16, 36, 124-25; A.O.101.1: i 53-54, i 65-66, i 72; RIMA 3 A.O.102.1: 16-17, 22-23, 32-33; A.O.103.1: ii 29-30, ii 58-59, iii 36; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 7: 10; Tiglath-pileser III 8: 8-9; Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 57, 65; RINAP 3/1 22: i 77-78, ii 16-19; RINAP 4 1: iii 52-53; RINAP 5/1 11: iii 68-68, v 104-10.

Examples of violence towards enemies include RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 74, 103-104; A.O.78.1: ii 31-36, iii 44; RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: i 77-82, ii 13-16; A.O.98.1: 12-15, 39-41; A.O.100.5: 50, 124; A.O.101.1: i 52-53, i 90-93, i 111; RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: i 16-17, i 24-25; A.O.103.1: iii 39-40; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 7: 7; Tiglath-pileser III 20: 9'-10'; RINAP 3/1 22: iii 8-10, v 80-vi 12; RINAP 4 1: iii 31-38; RINAP 5/1 11: i 135-ii 4, iii 36, iv 66-76.

¹³⁴⁸ For example, during Šamšī-Adad V's Babylonian campaigns (RIMA 3 A.O.103.2: iii 35').

¹³⁴⁹ Cole 1997: 30-36; Wright 2008: 448-55.

¹³⁵⁰ Cole 1997: 34-35.

¹³⁵¹ See the overview of destruction and appropriation of cities by Baker (2014: 48-53).

¹³⁵² For examples, see CAD s.v. *abūbu* [1b].

¹³⁵³ Wright 2015: 150.

¹³⁵⁴ For examples, see n. 1346. above.

¹³⁵⁵ Wright 2015: 150.

often targeted against cities which are not portrayed as having rebelled.¹³⁵⁶ By contrast, a few campaign accounts describe the destruction of a city in more original terms, and include actions beyond the usual tearing down and burning of a site. Adad-nārārī I, Shalmaneser I, and Ashurbanipal sow plants over the ruins of Irridu, Arinu, and the cities of Elam respectively.¹³⁵⁷ Shalmaneser and Ashurbanipal both transport earth from the ruined cities to Aššur,¹³⁵⁸ whilst Sennacherib similarly transports earth from Babylon to Nineveh,¹³⁵⁹ and Ashurbanipal further allows animals to graze at the site of the devastation.¹³⁶⁰ Similarly, Tiglath-pileser I scatters a type of stone over the ruins Ḫunusu, before inscribing an account of his deeds on bronze lightning-bolts, and placing them in a structure erected at the site,¹³⁶¹ and Sennacherib famously flooded the city of Babylon.¹³⁶²

These episodes all go beyond the practical considerations of demolishing and burning a city, and introduce elements which are clearly symbolic or ritualistic in character. Of course, rituals are themselves practical when considered from the viewpoint of those who believe in their efficacy. I simply mean to signify that these acts, which are absent from other destruction accounts, are superfluous to the basic acts of city destruction, knocking down, or setting fire to, structures. These ritual or symbolic acts in the inscriptions also differ from the usual accounts of city destruction in the extent to which the site is destroyed. The stock phraseology of city destruction includes descriptions of cities reduced to ruin mounds,¹³⁶³ which then served as a marker of a city's location. By contrast, the above examples frequently refer to the destruction of the very tell on which a city stood, and Sennacherib explicitly states that at Babylon this act was a deliberate attempt to make the city's site unrecognisable.¹³⁶⁴ These events were unusually severe and intensive examples of the destruction of cities, and I will therefore refer to them as acts of “symbolically thorough” destruction.

¹³⁵⁶ For example, the land of Luḫuti in north Syria, which had not been conquered by the Assyrians prior to its cities being burned and demolished by Ashurnasirpal II (RIMA 1 A.O.101.1: iii 83-84).

¹³⁵⁷ RIMA 1 A.O.76.3: 15-51; A.O.77.1: 47-53; RINAP 5/1 11: vi 78-80.

¹³⁵⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 47-53; RINAP 5/1 vi 96-98.

¹³⁵⁹ RINAP 3/2 168: 38-39.

¹³⁶⁰ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 103-106.

¹³⁶¹ RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: v 99-vi 21. For the identification of Ḫunusu as modern Ḫinis, see Nashef 1982: 131; Postgate 1995: 7.

¹³⁶² RINAP 3/2 223: 52-54.

¹³⁶³ For examples, see CAD s.v. *tillu* A [a2'].

¹³⁶⁴ RINAP 3/2 168: 38. The significance of destroying a city's tell will be discussed in more detail below.

All of these accounts of symbolically thorough destruction are the result of rebellions. Irridu is destroyed following the rebellion of Uasašatta,¹³⁶⁵ Arinu is described as having rebelled against previous kings,¹³⁶⁶ Ḫunusu was situated in Qumānu which is described as having been conquered in the immediately preceding campaign account,¹³⁶⁷ Babylonia had previously been conquered, and is described as rebelling immediately before the Battle of Ḫalule,¹³⁶⁸ and Elam had been conquered following Ashurbanipal's victory at Tīl Tuba,¹³⁶⁹ meaning that any aggression towards Assyria after that point was an act of rebellion. Furthermore, all of the symbolically thorough acts of destruction seem to have carried particular significance. Irridu was a royal city of Ḫanigalbat, and therefore the seat of a former major international power.¹³⁷⁰ Arinu should most likely be equated with Mušašir (Uartian Ardini),¹³⁷¹ which was a major cultic centre in the north, and would later become an important centre for Uartian state religion.¹³⁷² Tiglath-pileser I apparently placed a great deal of importance on his campaigns to Mušri and Qumānu, as is evidenced by the existence of a poem commemorating these campaigns.¹³⁷³ Babylon was obviously of major importance to Assyria, and its destruction was a hugely significant event of Sennacherib's reign.¹³⁷⁴ Finally, the sack of the Elamite cities marked the final conquest of Assyria's last major imperial rival in the region.

The majority of these episodes date to the Middle Assyrian period, and it seems likely that many of the actions described by Adad-nārārī I, Shalmaneser I, and Tiglath-pileser I were practices from the Late Bronze Age which did not survive into the Neo-Assyrian period. This supposition is supported by the parallels presented by Hittite texts, which will be discussed below. The two Neo-Assyrian examples do not disprove the idea. Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon was a unique situation which does not share the common features of the other examples, and Ashurbanipal likely resurrected these practices as a result of his famously antiquarian leanings and

¹³⁶⁵ RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 4-17.

¹³⁶⁶ RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 46-48.

¹³⁶⁷ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: v 82-98.

¹³⁶⁸ RINAP 3/1 22: v 17-37.

¹³⁶⁹ See Chapter 6 for references.

¹³⁷⁰ See Chapter 5.

¹³⁷¹ Radner 2012: 245-46.

¹³⁷² Radner 2012: 253-54.

¹³⁷³ Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990: 3-6.

¹³⁷⁴ For the significance of Babylonia to the Sargonid kings, and the significance of Sennacherib's actions in destroying Babylon, see Machinist 1984-85: 355-361.

penchant for reviving extinct literary and iconographic motifs.¹³⁷⁵ The significance of the chronological range of these events will be discussed below.

Destruction as Reversion to Nature

Several of these episodes contain instances of sowing the destroyed site with plants or scattering minerals over it. For Adad-nārārī and Shalmaneser, this plant is *kudimmu*,¹³⁷⁶ often identified as a type of cress.¹³⁷⁷ For Ashurbanipal, the objects scattered are *ṭabtu*, “salt”, and *saḫlû*, another word usually translated as cress.¹³⁷⁸ Tiglath-pileser scatters *ṣīpu*, a type of stone or mineral.¹³⁷⁹ The connection between these acts and the practice of “salting the earth” has long been observed.¹³⁸⁰ The practice of sowing salt over a ruined city has clear roots in the process of salinisation due to irrigation farming.¹³⁸¹ Salt has also been connected to the plants *kudimmu* and *saḫlû*. The CAD defines *kudimmu* as “a kind of salt or lye obtained from a plant”,¹³⁸² presumably due to both its culinary usage as a spice or condiment and its symbolic usage at the ruins of cities in place instead of, or in addition to, salt. By extension, it has sometimes been assumed that both *kudimmu* and *saḫlû* were scattered on ruins due to their salty or alkali nature, and the terms are translated as “salty plants” by Grayson,¹³⁸³ whilst Liverani takes *kudimmu* to simply mean “salt”.¹³⁸⁴

This scientific explanation is not entirely necessary, as the act is clearly symbolic. Furthermore, the descriptions of *saḫlû* in the text *Šammu šikinšu*, a collection of descriptions of plants, states that it has thorns or barbs (*kakku*).¹³⁸⁵ This feature does not fit an identification of *saḫlû* with cress, or with any of the other plants with which it has sometimes equated.¹³⁸⁶ Instead it seems enough that the plants bear an

¹³⁷⁵ For this aspect of Ashurbanipal’s self-representation, see May 2013: 199-209.

¹³⁷⁶ RIMA 1 A.0.76.3:36, 51; A.0.77.1: 51.

¹³⁷⁷ Gevirtz 1963: 57; Thompson 1949: 55, 59; Wright 2008: 429 n. 25.

¹³⁷⁸ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 79. For the identification of *saḫlû* as cress, see AHW s.v. *saḫlû(m)*; CAD s.v. *saḫlû*; Thompson 1949: 55-56. For the alternative identification of *saḫlû* as *Lycium barbarum* (wolfberry), see Haas 2003: 349-50. For the suggestion that *kudimmu* is an Assyrian word for the Babylonian *saḫlû*, see Gevirtz 1963: 57 n. 3.

¹³⁷⁹ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: 14. Weinfeld (1972: 111) suggests lime, brimstone, or pitch as possible identifications.

¹³⁸⁰ Gevirtz 1963: 57-61; Weinfeld 1972: 109-11.

¹³⁸¹ Fink 2015: 5-6.

¹³⁸² CAD s.v. *kuddimmu*.

¹³⁸³ RIMA 1: 136, 183. The AHW (s.v. *kudd/ttimmu(m)*) also gives a meaning of “ein Salzkraut?”.

¹³⁸⁴ Liverani 2017: 149-50.

¹³⁸⁵ KADP 33: obv. 12.

¹³⁸⁶ Böck 2009: 108-109.

association with areas which are either uncultivated or unsuitable for farmland. Ashurbanipal's statement that he grazed animals at the site of the devastation further stresses a reversion to an uncultivated state.¹³⁸⁷ This return to a natural landscape is also stressed in Sennacherib's account of his destruction of Babylon, in which the flooding of the city transforms it into a meadow in the floodplain.¹³⁸⁸ By reducing the city's tell to ground level, Sennacherib has completely removed all evidence of its occupation, causing it to revert to an untouched landscape. The flooding of the city is therefore another, far more extreme, example of this motif.

The topos of salting the earth or sowing seeds at the site of a conquered city is not restricted to Assyrian texts. From Hittite sources, the early king Anitta of Neša sows the site of Ḫattuša with a plant represented by the Sumerogram ZÀ.AH.LI, the Sumerian form of *sahlû*,¹³⁸⁹ and Ḫattušili I is described as performing a similar act at the city of Ulma.¹³⁹⁰ In the Hebrew Bible, the ill-fated usurper Abimelech salts the earth of his capital Shechem, which he destroys during the repression of a rebellion by his people.¹³⁹¹ The similarities between these episodes were highlighted by Gevirtz in 1963.¹³⁹² Pongratz-Leisten argues that the inclusion of the motif in Adad-nārārī's account of the destruction of Irriḫ is a result of his scribes intentionally borrowing elements of Hittite royal discourse in order to send an ideological message about the new Hittite-Assyrian border.¹³⁹³ The later instances in Assyrian sources of this motif occurring in regions far removed from this border make this suggestion far less likely.¹³⁹⁴ Furthermore, Adad-nārārī's inscription may be the first instance of this motif in Assyrian inscriptions, but it is also the first real campaign account in Assyrian inscriptions.¹³⁹⁵ We cannot discount the possibility that this was a practice adopted by earlier Assyrian kings of the Late Bronze Age which we have no record of due to the lack of campaign accounts for most of these kings. It may

¹³⁸⁷ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 104-105.

¹³⁸⁸ RINAP 3/2 223: 54.

¹³⁸⁹ Neu 1974: 12-13 line 48.

¹³⁹⁰ Saporetto 1965: 46-47 obv. i 36-37. The specific plant used in this instance is obscured by a break in the text.

¹³⁹¹ *Judges* 9:45. The salting of Carthage by the Romans, although sometimes assumed to have occurred, is not attested in ancient texts (Gevirtz 1963: 60-61 n. 2; Ridley 1986; Warmington 1988), and is therefore discounted here as a modern invention.

¹³⁹² Gevirtz 1963: 56-59.

¹³⁹³ Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 160.

¹³⁹⁴ Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 160) does not mention Tiglath-pileser I's destruction of Ḫunusu, and sees the motif as only used by Adad-nārārī I and Shalmaneser I before being resurrected by Ashurbanipal.

¹³⁹⁵ Grayson 1981: 38; RIMA 1: 135.

Assyrian

	Adad-nārārī I	Shalmaneser I	Tiglath-pileser I	Ashurbanipal
Salt				X
<i>ṣīpu</i> -stone			X	
<i>saḥlû</i>				X
<i>kudimmu</i>	X	X		
Earth carried off		X		X
Curse on future settlers			X	

Hittite

	Anitta	Ḫattušili I	Muršili II
Salt			
<i>ṣīpu</i> -stone			
<i>saḥlû</i>	X	X	
<i>kudimmu</i>			
Earth carried off			
Curse on future settlers	X		X

Biblical

	Jericho	Abimelech
Salt		X
<i>ṣīpu</i> -stone		
<i>saḥlû</i>		
<i>kudimmu</i>		
Earth carried off		
Curse on future settlers	X	

Figure 6. Symbolically thorough destruction of conquered cities in Assyrian, Hittite, and Biblical Sources.

well have entered into Assyria from the Hittite sphere, but that does not require Pongratz-Leisten's proposed ideological statement.¹³⁹⁶

One common thread between the Biblical, Hittite, and Assyrian examples of plants or minerals being scattered on ruins is that all of the relevant cities are destroyed following a rebellion. Anitta destroys Ḫattuša only after he has waged war against Ḫatti for a second time.¹³⁹⁷ The same is true of Ḫattušili's destruction of Ulma.¹³⁹⁸ Furthermore, the campaign to Ulma immediately follows a description of the outbreak of universal rebellion against the Hittite king.¹³⁹⁹ Abimelech also destroys Shechem in response to a rebellion led by the Shechemite commoner Gaal, son of Ebed.¹⁴⁰⁰ The conqueror has attempted to rule the city in question, but the frequent insubmissive actions of its inhabitants has led them to the conclusion that ruling over the city is not a tenable situation. The rebel city was therefore symbolically "unmade" and returned to nature through the use of salt, water, or plants associated with low-lying, uncultivated land.¹⁴⁰¹

Cutting off His Nose to Spite His Face: An Excursus on Abimelech and Shechem

The model described above fits the Assyrian and Hittite sources well. However, the Biblical example of Abimelech salting Shechem does not appear at first glance to conform to this understanding of the practice. In fact, it is altogether strange that a ruler should salt his own capital city, regardless of its inhabitants' revolt against him. The answer to this would seem to lie in Abimelech's position as a popularly-selected usurper, and the curse cast upon him by the exiled Jotham that he and his people shall destroy each other.¹⁴⁰² Irwin has described the message of the fable of the trees told by Jotham as being:

¹³⁹⁶ Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 160) also suggests that, because the plant used by Anitta is written with a Sumerogram, the practice may have a Babylonian origin. However, there is no evidence for any such practice in Babylonia.

¹³⁹⁷ Neu 1974: 12-13 lines 44-48.

¹³⁹⁸ Imparati 1965: 46-47 obv. i 33-35.

¹³⁹⁹ Imparati 1965: 44-47 obv. i 22-32.

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Judges* 9:26-45. For Gaal's name and patronymic ("Loathsome, son of Slave") as a signifier of his non-royal extraction, see Davidson 2008: 162; Irwin 2012: 451 n. 21; Schneider 2000: 143.

¹⁴⁰¹ A similar reversion to nature is present in the Roman act of ploughing the ruins of a city to symbolise its total destruction (Stevens 1988: 39-40). For the suggestion that this practice also existed in Ancient Greece, see Rykwert 1976: 70.

¹⁴⁰² *Judges* 9:1-20.

that the people of Shechem have placed themselves in an untenable situation; having embarked on their chosen path, they will encounter violence if they accept the rule of Abimelech but also if they eventually reject it.¹⁴⁰³

The rebellion places Abimelech in an equally untenable situation. The rebels seize control of the city, leaving the king in a position where he can either capitulate and lose his throne, or defeat the rebels by storming Shechem. He chooses to storm the city, reinforcing this action by destroying it and salting the ruins. However, in doing so, he has utterly destroyed the seat of his kingship, effectively dethroning himself, and setting the stage for his ignominious death.¹⁴⁰⁴

Abimelech's response to the rebellion is violent in the extreme even though he is fighting against his own people, to whom he is related by blood on his mother's side. However, this is in keeping with his prior actions in slaughtering his seventy paternal half-brothers in order to seize the throne.¹⁴⁰⁵ His inherently violent nature ultimately leads him to destroy his own kingship, and it is telling that he is killed by the otherwise peaceful and productive combination of a woman using a millstone.¹⁴⁰⁶ The usurper's position was never tenable, and ultimately he brings about the downfall of his people, an act which in turn causes his own downfall.¹⁴⁰⁷

Carrying off the Earth of a City

In addition to sowing the site of Arinu with plants, Shalmaneser I also carries off a mound of the city's earth to Aššur.¹⁴⁰⁸ Ashurbanipal similarly transports earth from the cities of Elam to Assyria,¹⁴⁰⁹ and Sennacherib's throws some of the earth of Babylon into the Euphrates, and piles up some in his new *akītu*-house at Nineveh.¹⁴¹⁰ This motif also has parallels from other periods. Both the Weidner Chronicle and a chronicle of the reigns of early kings describe Sargon as taking

¹⁴⁰³ Irwin 2012: 450.

¹⁴⁰⁴ The observation that Abi-melech "himself destroys his regime" has previously been made by Assis (2005: 168).

¹⁴⁰⁵ *Judges* 9:5-6.

¹⁴⁰⁶ *Judges* 9:52-53; Bal 1988: 220-21; Schneider 2000: 148. Abimelech's death at the hands of a woman is also presented as shameful (Bal 1988: 25, 217-18; Stone 2007: 195-97).

¹⁴⁰⁷ The destruction of Shechem may have been intended to be comedic, an interpretation which Davidson (2008: 106-39) has suggested for several other episodes from *Judges*.

¹⁴⁰⁸ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 51-53.

¹⁴⁰⁹ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 96-98.

¹⁴¹⁰ RINAP 3/2 168: 38-47.

earth from Babylon to pile up as a duplicate of that city outside of Akkad.¹⁴¹¹ It seems most likely that this “copy” was not of the city itself, but of the tell upon which it sat.¹⁴¹² The settlement mound was one of the key features associated with urban settlement in the Ancient Near East. By piling up the earth from a city’s tell at their capital, the conqueror effectively transported the city itself.

There are several possible motivations for this act of transportation. The city’s history and the marker of its location were lost, erasing it from its original location. Instead it was subsumed into the conquering land. Just as city’s gods, goods, and people were carried off to the centre, so too was the city itself. The act therefore carries an element of the collecting of foreign peoples, gods, animals, and resources which was a common practice in Assyrian imperialism.¹⁴¹³

There may also have been religious considerations for carrying off a city’s earth. This act is only applied to important cult centres. Babylon was the centre of Mesopotamian religion and culture. Arinu, if equated with Muṣaṣir,¹⁴¹⁴ was the seat of the god Ḫaldi and a major religious site for the countries to Assyria’s north. Even if this identification is incorrect, Arinu is described in Shalmaneser’s inscriptions as a “holy city” (*kiṣṣu*).¹⁴¹⁵ Finally, Ashurbanipal states that the cities which he takes soil from are all *maḥāzē*, “cultic centres”.¹⁴¹⁶ The religious importance of these sites may have complicated their destruction.

In light of the religious importance of the cities involved in these episodes, it is possible that carrying off the earth represented an effort to ensure that some amount of the destroyed site remained extant. This would then allow the conqueror to avoid the divine wrath associated with destroying an important religious site. A similar attempt to “balance out” the destruction of an important cult centre can be seen in Sennacherib’s Bavian Inscription, in which the destruction of Babylon is paralleled with the preceding rebuilding of Nineveh. The creation of a new metropolis and major cult centre allows for the destruction of the old one.¹⁴¹⁷ To an extent, this balance of

¹⁴¹¹ Glassner 2004: 266-67 line 60; 270-71 lines 18-19.

¹⁴¹² Grayson 1975: 153-54 n. 18f.

¹⁴¹³ For these acts of collecting, see Liverani 2017: 66-78; Thomason 2005: 119-99.

¹⁴¹⁴ Radner 2012: 245-46.

¹⁴¹⁵ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 46.

¹⁴¹⁶ RINAP 5/1 11: vi 97.

¹⁴¹⁷ See the discussion of the structure of this text in Chapter 6.

building and destruction is present in nearly all Assyrian royal inscriptions,¹⁴¹⁸ but is particularly emphasised in this instance.

The act also served to create a monument at the Assyrian capital memorialising the event; Shalmaneser describes the act of piling up the earth before the gate of Aššur as being performed *ana aḥrāt ūmī* “for later days”.¹⁴¹⁹ At the same time, the city was erased from its original context, and Sennacherib explicitly states that part the carrying off Babylon’s earth was carried out *aššu qaqqar āli šuāti lā mussī*, “so that that city was unidentifiable”.¹⁴²⁰ Just as the reversion of the site to nature destroyed its history, so too did transporting the earth of its tell to the capital. In the case of Babylon, the act carried greater ideological weight, as the transfer of Babylonian soil to the new *akītu*-house was symbolic of Babylon’s importance as the religious and cultural centre of the Mesopotamian world being transferred to Nineveh.¹⁴²¹

Tiglath-pileser’s Lightning Bolts

Tiglath-pileser I ends his account of the destruction of Ḫunusu with a passage which is unique in the Assyrian royal inscriptions:

*birqī siparri ēpuš kišitti mātāti ša ina Aššur bēlija akšudu ālu šuātu ana lā
šabāte u dūrīšu lā rašāpi ina muḥḥi alṭur bītu ša agurrī ina muḥḥišu aršip birqī
siparri šātunu ina libbi ušēšib*

I made bronze lightning bolts (and) wrote on (them) the conquests of the lands which, with Aššur, my lord, I had conquered and (a command) to not inhabit that city, nor re-build its walls. I built a house of baked brick atop it (the city), (and) installed those bronze lightning bolts inside.¹⁴²²

There are several aspects of this episode which require comment. Hurowitz and Westenholz have suggested that the bronze lightning bolts are replicas of the standard of the god Adad.¹⁴²³ This interpretation is certainly a possibility; an association between a storm-god and lightning bolts is an obvious connection to make. The identification of the god in question as Adad seems reasonable. This

¹⁴¹⁸ Van De Mieroop 2010: 426.

¹⁴¹⁹ RIMA 1 A.O.77.1: 53.

¹⁴²⁰ RINAP 3/2 168: 38.

¹⁴²¹ Van De Mieroop 2003: 9.

¹⁴²² RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: vi 15-21.

¹⁴²³ Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990: 34-35.

deity is both a storm god and frequently associated with destruction in the royal inscriptions, particularly under the name *Adad ša riḫṣi*, “Adad of Destructive Weather”.¹⁴²⁴

Adad has been identified as one of the two gods, together with Nergal, represented by standards in Ashurnasirpal’s reliefs,¹⁴²⁵ and a connection between these two gods and Assyrian military standards is confirmed by the involvement of these two gods and their priests in an Assyrian war ritual.¹⁴²⁶ Deller and Pongratz-Leisten read the inscription on the seal of Aššur-šuma-iddina as describing its owner as the priest of “Nergal and Adad of Going on Campaign” (*ša ḥarrāni/ḥūli epāše*), and cite this as further evidence for these gods’ role in warfare.¹⁴²⁷ Lambert has argued that the signs *šá KASKAL DÙ*, are more likely an erroneous writing of *šá KASKAL-ni*, “of (the city) of Ḥarran”, a fairly common error,¹⁴²⁸ whereas a theonym *DN ša ḥarrāni/ḥūli epāše* does not conform to the naming practices for Mesopotamian gods.¹⁴²⁹ He cites other examples in which the determinative URU is missing from city names in Assyrian texts to demonstrate that this reading is not especially problematic.¹⁴³⁰ However, *KASKAL-ni* could equally be read as the common noun *ḥarrāni*, giving these gods the epithet “of the campaign” instead. Both interpretations are feasible, and more information is needed to properly settle the problem.

Whatever the case may be, the evidence from the ritual text demonstrates that Nergal and Adad played an important role on campaign. This is a logical role for these two deities, as they are both associated with destructive forces, violent storms

¹⁴²⁴ The term *riḫṣu* is given two differing meanings by the dictionaries, either “destruction, devastation” (CAD s.v. *riḫṣu* A), or “Überschwemmung”/“flood(ing)” (AHw s.v. *riḫṣu(m)*; CDA (s.v. *riḫṣu(m)* I). It is clear from context that *riḫṣu* here denotes a destructive force created by a storm-god. On the etymology of the word, see Wasserman 2008: 705-708.

¹⁴²⁵ Seidl 1993: 61. The association of Nergal with at least one of the standards is further confirmed by the equation of this god with *Urigallu*, the “divine standard” which goes before (*ālik pānija/maḥrija*) the king on campaign (RIA s.v. *Nergal* A: 216; RIMA 2 A.O.98.1: 48; A.O.101.1: ii 25-26, ii 27-28, ii 50, iii 52, RIMA 3 A.O.102.2: i 44, ii 70, ii 96). The epithet, *ālik maḥri*, “one who goes in front”, is also given to Nergal/Palil (SAA 2 2: vi 19; RINAP 5/1 54: 2), and is the literal meaning of the logographic spelling of Palil as ^dIGI.DU. Other deities did possess their own *urigallu* in the south during the Neo-Babylonian period (RIA s.v. ^d*Urigallu*: 415), but there is no evidence to suggest that the *urigallu* in Assyrian texts is associated with any gods other than Nergal/Palil.

¹⁴²⁶ Pongratz-Leisten et al. 1992: 341-44. The discussion of military standards in this section will focus on their religious symbolism. For a study of the practical purposes of military standards for combat, see Vidal 2009.

¹⁴²⁷ Pongratz-Leisten and Deller 1991: 49-50.

¹⁴²⁸ Lambert 1991a: 11.

¹⁴²⁹ Lambert 1991b: 84.

¹⁴³⁰ Lambert 1991b: 83.

and the violent ending of human life.¹⁴³¹ However, the standard which Seidl associates with Adad contains no lightning bolt, whilst the one which she attributes to Nergal contains a device which she characterises as both a spearhead flanked by wavy lines and a trident.¹⁴³² This “trident” bears some resemblance to the lightning bolts sometimes carried by gods in Mesopotamian Art, most famously in a relief from Kalḫu depicting Ninurta battling against a monster, possibly Anzû.¹⁴³³ In fact, the analogues identified by Seidl for this “trident” in the Aššur-šuma-iddina seal are clearly lightning bolts.¹⁴³⁴

Despite Seidl’s attempts, the close relationship between Adad and Nergal, and their shared aspects of iconography lead Wiggerman to argue that it is not possible to identify which god each standard belonged to.¹⁴³⁵ The bull and the lion were symbols of both these gods,¹⁴³⁶ so the appearance of a lion on one standard is not a helpful identifying feature. Kühne suggests that the lion’s horns represent the close connection between the two gods, but argues for an identification of the standard with Nergal.¹⁴³⁷ However, the hybrid symbolism of the horned lion does nothing to tip the argument in favour of an identification of this standard as belonging to Nergal; the same “ligature” of symbols could equally well fit on the standard of either god, as would surely be the point of such a gesture. If the “trident” is in fact a lightning bolt,

¹⁴³¹ For Nergal as being specifically associated with the violent ending of human life, see RIA s.v. *Nergal A*: 221.

¹⁴³² Seidl 1993: 61. Kühne (2017: 280-81) instead identifies the central prong as a sword, a symbol of Nergal (RIA s.v. *Nergal A*: 223-26).

¹⁴³³ Layard 1853: pl. 5. For the identification of this monster as Anzû, see Harmanşah 2013: 129 fig. 42; Moortgat-Correns 1988: 121 Abb. 3; Watanabe 2002: 134. Some scholars have suggested that the god’s opponent in this relief is Asakku (Ataç 2010: 194-95; Black and Green 1992: 36; Gane 2012: 121-22). However, the physical appearance of the “lion-dragon” in the relief has many parallels to textual descriptions of Anzû, being a hybrid of a bird and a lion (George 2003 VII: 169-70). Furthermore, Wiggermann (1992: 150, 162) has argued that Asakku was essentially formless, and that none of the fantastical creatures in Mesopotamian art should be identified with it. A Cyclops being stabbed by a god on a terra cotta plaque from Khafaje, identified as Asakku by Van Dijk (1983: frontispiece), has instead been equated by George (2012: 422-24) with the *igitelû*, “monoculus”, mentioned as slain by Nergal in a birth omen dating to the First Dynasty of the Sealand (George 2013a 26: rev. 34’), and there are therefore no certain depictions of Asakku. Regardless of this, Asakku’s body is described as, or associated with, stone in some texts (Wee 2016: 166 obv. 5), and Foster (1999: 27-33) has identified it as the personification of a volcano. This lithic quality does not fit well with the furred and feathered beast currently under discussion, although this is far from definitive evidence against the identification of this monster with Asakku. In light of these considerations, the monster in the relief is more likely Anzû than Asakku, but this identification is not certain. There are various Ancient Near Eastern monsters slain by Ninurta or other warrior gods (for examples see Wiggermann 1992: 143-85), and it is therefore entirely possible that the lion-dragon in the relief is a third being distinct from both Anzû and Asakku.

¹⁴³⁴ Moortgat-Correns 1988: 123 Abb. 5; Seidl 1993: 61.

¹⁴³⁵ RIA s.v. *Nergal B*: 225-26.

¹⁴³⁶ Green 2003: 85; RIA s.v. *Nergal B*: 223.

¹⁴³⁷ Kühne 2017: 281.

then the identification of this standard with Adad is more likely. Even if Ashurnasirpal's standard does not depict a lightning bolt, there is some variation in the appearance of standards depicted across the Neo-Assyrian period,¹⁴³⁸ and it is possible that the divine standards in use some two hundred years earlier under Tiglath-pileser I contained iconographical differences from their Neo-Assyrian descendants.

The possibility that one of Ashurnasirpal's standards depicts a lightning bolt makes an identification of the lightning bolts at Hunusu with copies of a divine standard more appealing. Further support is provided by the frequent equation of the *kakki Aššur*, "Weapon of Aššur", with a divine standard,¹⁴³⁹ and depictions of the Assyrian kings' ritual activities in remote regions and in military encampments demonstrate that standards played a cultic role on campaign.¹⁴⁴⁰

However, an episode from Tiglath-pileser III's annals in which a *mulmullu parzilli zaqtu*, "pointed iron arrow", inscribed with the *lītāt Aššur*, "might of Aššur", is placed in the city of Bīt-lštar suggests that in this instance, the symbol of Aššur used was a weapon, or representation of a weapon, rather than a standard of the type depicted in the reliefs.¹⁴⁴¹ An Assyrian war ritual also involves an arrow (*šiltāḥu*) of Aššur, which is held by the campaign-priest of Nergal, carried in Nergal's chariot, and instructed to kill Assyria's enemies.¹⁴⁴² In light of this ritual and Tiglath-pileser III's description of the arrow deposited at Bīt-lštar, it seems more likely to my mind that the *kakki Aššur* was a physical representation of a weapon rather than a standard. Old Babylonian sources would seem to provide some measure of support for such thinking, as both the specific symbols of gods (the dog of Gula, the axe of LUGAL.KI.DUN_x.NA) and the less descriptive *kakki DN* are taken out into the countryside for the purpose of swearing oaths during legal disputes.¹⁴⁴³

¹⁴³⁸ Pongratz-Leisten et al 1992: Taf. 51, 63, 67.

¹⁴³⁹ For example, Cogan 1974: 53-55; Holloway 2002: 176-77; Unger 1965.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Pongratz-Leisten et al. 1992: Taf. 55 and 62.

¹⁴⁴¹ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 28: 6-7; Holloway 2002: 161-62.

¹⁴⁴² Pongratz-Leisten et al 1992: 342-43. Holloway (2002: 161-62, 332 n. 84) mentions both the arrow at Bīt-lštar and the one featured in the ritual, but does not make a connection between the two. Deller (Pongratz-Leisten et al 1992: 297-98) does identify the arrow used in the ritual as the Weapon of Aššur, and further equates all of the king's weapons on campaign with the Weapon of Aššur.

¹⁴⁴³ Harris 1965: 217-20. For divine weapons at Mari, Emar, and Ugarit, see Vidal 2012: 450-53.

These considerations suggest that the term *kakki* DN is perhaps better understood as referring to a smaller portable divine symbol, and that the Assyrian examples of divine symbols placed in foreign cities were not the military standards depicted in the reliefs. The existence of a gold lightning bolt discovered in the German excavations at Aššur provides further evidence that the *birqu* placed at the ruins of Ḫunusu were not replicas of a military standard.¹⁴⁴⁴ Pace Hurowitz and Westenholz,¹⁴⁴⁵ Tiglath-pileser placed more than one of these objects at Ḫunusu, as shown by the use of the demonstrative adjective *šâtunu*, “those”. This might also support an identification of the *birqu* as representations of lightning bolts rather than military standards; Assyrian storm gods wielding lightning bolts always carry one in each hand.¹⁴⁴⁶ Storm gods are also usually depicted with lightning bolts in both hands in first millennium Mesopotamia more generally; a Babylonian cylinder seal belonging to the god Adad depicts him in this style,¹⁴⁴⁷ as does a stele of Šamaš-rēša-ušur, governor of Suḫu.¹⁴⁴⁸ This differs from Syro-Hittite depictions of storm gods, who usually carry a single lightning bolt in one hand, and an axe, or some other implement, in the other.¹⁴⁴⁹ However, one of the gods on the Middle Assyrian seal impressed on Esarhaddon’s succession treaties carries a lightning bolt in one hand, but the object in his other hand has a long, straight handle, and does not appear to be a second lightning bolt.¹⁴⁵⁰

It is possible the two “volutes” on the standard from Sargon II’s reliefs, known only from illustrations,¹⁴⁵¹ could be two separate lightning bolts. Admittedly the illustration of this relief depicts the volutes as joining in a knot below the figure of the deity, a motif which is otherwise unknown for lightning bolts in Mesopotamian art, but this detail does not outright exclude the possibility that the volutes are lightning bolts, and without the original relief it remains uncertain whether this was the case.

Nevertheless, the possibility that some earlier standards may also have depicted multiple lightning bolts cannot be discounted. Regardless of whether the *birqu* from

¹⁴⁴⁴ Andrae 1905: Abb. 6-8; 1938: Tafel 20a.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990: 34-35.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Bunnens 2006: 116-17.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Collon 1987: 133 no. 563; Finkel and Fletcher 2016: 240 fig. 20a. For the inscriptions on this object, see RIMB 2 B.6.31.1; RINAP 4 118.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Cavigneux and Ismail 1990: 401 fig. 3.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Bunnens 2006: 37-42, 111-35.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Collon 1987: 132-33 no. 160.

¹⁴⁵¹ Pongratz-Leisten et al. 1992: Taf. 63.

the inscription represent models of lightning bolts or a military standard of Adad, it appears that they were intended as symbolic representations of the weapons of a storm god.

Cursing the Ruins and Sanctifying the Site

The Weapon of Aššur is described as being placed in the temples of conquered cities several times by Sargonid kings.¹⁴⁵² In this light, we might consider the possibility that the *bītu* constructed by Tiglath-pileser to hold the lightning bolts should be read not as “house”, but as “temple”.¹⁴⁵³ If this is the case, then we might compare Tiglath-pileser’s destruction of the city to other examples of ruined cities being consecrated in the Ancient Near East.¹⁴⁵⁴ The motif also appears in Hittite texts. Muršili II gives the ruins of the Kaška settlement Timmuḫala to the Storm God:

Weil [ferner] Timmuḫala mir *verhaßt* war, [es ferner] ein ungünstig gelegener Ort (ist), weihte ich Timmuḫala [dem] Wettergott, meinem Herrn, und erklärte es für sakrosankt. [Und ich] setze ihm Grenzen, und sie wird kein bewohnen.¹⁴⁵⁵

Similarly, Anitta forbids the future settlement of the ruined Ḫattuša:

Whoever after me becomes king and resettles Ḫattuša, [let] the Stormgod of the Sky strike him.¹⁴⁵⁶

Baker suggests a further connection between the lightning bolts and an association of storm gods with abandoned, desolate places in the Late Bronze Age, and particularly with the Hittite “Storm God of the Ruin Mound”.¹⁴⁵⁷ Finally, a similar episode appears in the Hebrew Bible upon the destruction of Jericho. Joshua devotes the ruined city to YHWH and declares a curse on any who would rebuild and resettle it.¹⁴⁵⁸

¹⁴⁵² For a list of these episodes, see Holloway 2002: 151-59 table 4.

¹⁴⁵³ This possibility has previously been raised by Holloway (2002: 124).

¹⁴⁵⁴ Baker 2014: 50.

¹⁴⁵⁵ KUB XIX 37: 15-19, trans. Götze 1933: 169.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Neu 1974: 12-13 lines 49-51, trans. Hoffner 2003: 183.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Baker 2014: 50; van Gessel 1998: 659, 780.

¹⁴⁵⁸ *Joshua* 6:16-19. From the classical world, similar bans on the re-settlement of ruined cities are described for Kriśa following its destruction by the Amphictyonic League (Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 109-12) and for Carthage following its destruction by Rome (Appian *Foreign Wars* 8.20.135).

For many of these examples, the purpose of turning over a ruined site to a deity was to declare it sacrosanct. For Timmuḫala this is simply stated to be the aim in the text. In the case of Jericho the Israelites swear an oath to leave the site uninhabited.¹⁴⁵⁹ Tiglath-pileser's actions at Ḫunusu fit firmly within a broader Bronze Age tradition of symbolically thorough destruction of cities. As is the case for the sowing of salt or plants on the ruins of a city, the consecrating of a destroyed site to a god bears a strong connection to rebellion. Timmuḫala had rebelled against Muṣili along with all of Ḫatti's other subjects at the beginning of his reign,¹⁴⁶⁰ and the rebellions by Ḫattuša and Qumānu have been addressed above. Only in the case of Jericho is there no occurrence of rebellion.

The Destruction of Divine Statues

Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon takes a step which goes far beyond anything carried out in the Middle Assyrian examples of symbolically thorough destruction; his soldiers not only destroy the city, but also destroy the statues of the gods.¹⁴⁶¹ This action is also carried out by Ashurbanipal in Elam.¹⁴⁶² The cultic statues of deities bore a great deal of religious significance, being the physical representations of those gods within the city. The statues received offerings, and played a vital role in religious festivals.¹⁴⁶³ This was particularly true of the Babylonian Akitu festival at the New Year, in which the statues of Marduk and several other gods were taken in procession between the major Babylonian cultic centres.¹⁴⁶⁴ Without the presence of the cult statues, none of this was possible.

Normally, the Assyrian kings achieved this effect through the act of "godknaping", carrying off foreign gods to Assyria.¹⁴⁶⁵ This was a reversible process; for example, several Arabian gods which Sennacherib had captured during his campaign to Adumutu were returned to the Arab ruler Hazael by Esarhaddon.¹⁴⁶⁶ Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal's destruction of cult statues differed from godknaping in that it

¹⁴⁵⁹ *Joshua* 6:26.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Götze 1933: 16-21.

¹⁴⁶¹ RINAP 3/2 168: 36-37.

¹⁴⁶² RINAP 5/1 11: v 119-20.

¹⁴⁶³ For an overview of the function of cult statues in Mesopotamia, see RIA s.v. *Kultbild*: 313-14.

¹⁴⁶⁴ For a reconstruction of the activities carried out on each day of this festival, see Bidmead 2002: 45-106.

¹⁴⁶⁵ For this term, see Livingstone 1997: 167. For studies on the Neo-Assyrian deportation of the divine images from conquered cities, see Holloway 2002: 144-51; Zaia 2015.

¹⁴⁶⁶ RINAP 4 1: iv 1-16.

was less reversible. Of course, in practice another cult statue could be created; the loss of a statue meant that the god in question had abandoned the city for a time, not that they would never return. Marduk's statue, either the original or, if it was destroyed along with the other Babylonian cult statues, a replacement,¹⁴⁶⁷ was returned by Ashurbanipal,¹⁴⁶⁸ and the Sun God Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina describes a situation in which the statue of Šamaš at Sippar was replaced first with a golden disc, and later with a new statue.¹⁴⁶⁹ However, the statue in the Sun God Tablet is not described as destroyed, but simply disappears due to divine displeasure.¹⁴⁷⁰ This statue is only remade after the gods allow a clay depiction of Šamaš to be discovered, upon which the likeness of the new statue can be based.¹⁴⁷¹ The message of finality conveyed by smashing (*šubburu*) the statues of the gods is quite clear. Babylon and the cities of Elam will never be rebuilt, so their gods are gone forever. The destruction of cult statues is elsewhere never mentioned in the royal inscriptions, and the fact that Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal explicitly state that this event actually occurred, as opposed to making a more vague reference to divine abandonment, emphasises the severity of the destruction enacted upon Babylon and Elam. However, the two events differ in that Ashurbanipal claims to have destroyed the statues of Elamite gods himself,¹⁴⁷² whereas Sennacherib attributes the smashing of the statues to his soldiers.¹⁴⁷³ This may represent an effort by Sennacherib to distance himself from this act,¹⁴⁷⁴ which was more drastic due to the central position of Babylon within Mesopotamian religion and culture.¹⁴⁷⁵

¹⁴⁶⁷ Frame 1992: 103; Porter 1993a: 123 n. 266.

¹⁴⁶⁸ RINAP 5/1 6: i 18'-23'. On the significance of the return of Marduk's statue to Babylon, see Porter 1993b.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Woods 2004: 83-85 Col. I 1-IV 11. For recent studies on this object and its significance, see Finkel and Fletcher 2016: 231-41, 245-46; Woods 2004: 23-82.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Woods 2004: 83 Col. I 9-12.

¹⁴⁷¹ Woods 2004: 85 Col. III 11-25.

¹⁴⁷² RINAP 5/1 11: vi 27-29.

¹⁴⁷³ RINAP 3/2 223: 47-48.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Frame 1992: 53. However, VA 8248 (RINAP 3/2 168: 36-37) does attribute the destruction of Babylon's gods to Sennacherib personally.

¹⁴⁷⁵ A similar act of religious destruction is described in Ashurbanipal's Prisms A and F. Here he states that when he destroyed the ziggurat of Susa, he removed its *qarnū*, "horns" (RINAP 5/1 11: vi 29). There is a close connection between horns and divinity across the Ancient Near East, and there are various mentions or depictions of horns atop of religious buildings (for example, Lambert 2013: 112-15 VI 62-65; Potts 1990: 33-38). By dehorning the ziggurat, Ashurbanipal symbolically removed its function as a religious building, before literally removing that function by physically destroying the structure.

Cruel and Unusual Punishment

The above discussion has demonstrated that unusually thorough acts of the symbolic destruction of cities bore a strong connection with rebellion in Assyria and in other cultures of the Ancient Near East. The next point that should be addressed is whether the same can be said of punishments enacted upon people. The royal inscriptions describe a wide variety of brutal methods of mutilation and execution which people are subjected to, with the greatest variety of these punishments being displayed in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II and Ashurbanipal.¹⁴⁷⁶

Saggs has argued for a correlation between the severity of a punishment and the actions of the enemy receiving it:

So far as I have been able to trace, there is no certain instance of mass execution of prisoners other than in cases of an enemy which had initiated an attack against Assyria, or a vassal which had rebelled and not made immediate submission at the approach of the Assyrian army.¹⁴⁷⁷

The fact that there are “no certain instances” which go against Saggs’ schema is hardly surprising considering the nature of the source material. If a toponym in an inscription has not been attested in prior texts, there is always the possibility that there were earlier mentions of it which have not survived. Furthermore, statements that no prior king had ever set foot in a region cannot be taken without a healthy dose of scepticism, as Saggs’ himself points out.¹⁴⁷⁸ The veracity of his argument is therefore difficult to assess. What can be said is that there are several instances in which mass executions are enacted in regions which do not seem to have been previously invaded, so far as the record allows us to see. The western polity Luḫuti is situated across the Euphrates in a part of the world which Assyrian kings had not reach since the reign of Aššur-bēl-kala some two hundred years before, and is not attested in any earlier inscriptions, but its inhabitants are impaled with no reference

¹⁴⁷⁶ Bagg 2016: 59 figure 6.1; Miller 2017: 88 n. 38. However, it should be noted that Bagg’s table demonstrating the types of atrocities in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions is not complete. For example, Bagg claims that Ashurnasirpal II is the only Neo-Assyrian king to record the burning of captives in his inscriptions (Bagg 2016: 59-60), but this action also appears in some inscriptions from early in the reign of Shalmaneser III (RIMA 2 A.O.102.2: i 17).

¹⁴⁷⁷ Saggs 1982: 91.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Saggs 1982: 90-91.

to any aggression on their part.¹⁴⁷⁹ This episode therefore raises questions as to the veracity of Saggs' conclusions.

Similarly, Larbusa in the plain of Mount Nimuš,¹⁴⁸⁰ a region which Ashurnasirpal describes as *ša ašaršunu mamma lā ēmuru*, "(a place) which no one had seen",¹⁴⁸¹ which is not attested in any earlier inscription and is not described as the aggressor, nevertheless sees its people's heads hung on trees and its inhabitants' children burned alive by the Assyrians.¹⁴⁸² That this was not a rebellion seems less certain than in the case of Luḫuti. Ashurnasirpal's immediate predecessors had campaigned to the regions around Mount Nimuš,¹⁴⁸³ and the claims by Assyrian kings to be the first to reach a region are to be approached with scepticism, as discussed. However, these two examples detract somewhat from Saggs' conclusion.

Regardless of what the situation may have been in reality, the Assyrian royal inscriptions do not always present episodes of violence against captives as falling into the categories given by Saggs. In some instances, such as the Larbusa episode, explicit statements are made which go against Saggs' conclusions. Here we find a serious problem with Saggs' argument; if the mass execution of captives was only undertaken in the situations which he outlines, why would Ashurnasirpal include these details alongside a statement that no one had ever before seen the region in

¹⁴⁷⁹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: iii 83-84.

¹⁴⁸⁰ This mountain is better known as the point at which Ūta-napišti's ark runs aground after the flood in the Epic of Gilgameš (George 2003 XI: 140-42). For the reading of the name as "Mount Nimuš", as opposed to "Mount Nišir", see Lambert 1986b: 185-86. Annus (2000) argues that the name of the mountain upon which Noah is commanded to construct an ark in the Nag Hammadi text *The Hypostasis of the Archons* supports a reading as Nišir rather than Nimuš. This evidence is not especially convincing; George (George 2003: 516 n. 252) highlights the variety of names given to the mountain in the flood myth, and points to Mount Siryon (Anti-Lebanon) as a more likely derivation of the name Sir. Finkel (2014: 280) points to a possible derivation of the name Nišir from *našāru* as further evidence for this reading. This may suggest that this was the name of the mountain, but may equally provide the logic behind writing the name Nimuš in an ambiguous way. A similar proposal has previously been put forward by Parpola (2014: 470). However, his reading of the text as containing a hidden meaning which conveyed esoteric knowledge relating to the cult of Ištar (Parpola 2014: 471-78) relies heavily upon his theories on Neo-Assyrian religion more generally, which have been convincingly argued against by Cooper (2000, see Chapter 4). It is more likely that the ambiguous spelling of the name of the mountain instead represents an attempt at providing an etymology for the name Nimuš based on the polyvalency of cuneiform signs. This type of logic is common in Mesopotamian scholarship (for examples, see the texts edited in Livingstone 1986).

¹⁴⁸¹ RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 39. This statement could be a pun on the reading Nišir discussed in the preceding footnote. However, this statement lays a claim to the heroic priority of Ashurnasirpal in reaching the plain of Nimuš regardless of whether or not it also demonstrates the scribe's wit.

¹⁴⁸² RIMA 2 A.O.101.1: ii 43.

¹⁴⁸³ The mountain is to be located in the Zagros range, and is most likely Pir Omar Gudrun near Suleimaniyah (George 2003: 216; Liverani 1992: 516). Adad-nārārī II claims to have conquered various lands in this region (RIMA 2 A.O.99.2: 23-25).

question? If Saggs' theory is correct, then recording the massacre of the children of Larbusa but giving no mention of any hostilities perpetrated by inhabitants against Assyria would indicate to the inscriptions' audiences that a previous Assyrian king had already conquered the city. By doing so, Ashurnasirpal would have highlighted the statement of his heroic priority in reaching Larbusa as being of doubtful accuracy. I would therefore argue that there is no clear pattern linking violent punishments with rebellion in the inscriptions.

Mutilation and Execution in the Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal

There is an exception to this lack of pattern; nearly all of the unusual mutilations and executions of enemies in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions relate to rebellions.¹⁴⁸⁴

However, there are two exceptions; both Teumman and the Urartian governor Andaria are beheaded, and their heads brought back to Assyria,¹⁴⁸⁵ but neither of them are rebels against Assyria. The correlation between corpse mutilation and rebellion in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions may be partly due to the nature of his campaigns. The majority of this king's opponents on campaign were rebels,¹⁴⁸⁶ and this may present a misleading image of the relationship between rebellion and mutilation in the minds of Ashurbanipal and his scholars.

Where there does seem to be a connection between rebellion and punishment is the mutilation of Ashurbanipal's enemies by the gods. The *šandabakku* Nabû-šuma-ēreš dies of the ailment *aganutillû*,¹⁴⁸⁷ usually identified as dropsy or edema.¹⁴⁸⁸ Similarly the Cimmerian leader Tugdamme dies from a horrific, and vividly described, wasting disease.¹⁴⁸⁹ Both of these individuals had broken treaties with Assyria, and were struck down as a result.¹⁴⁹⁰ Furthermore, it appears that both are disfigured by their diseases before death. The death of Tugdamme is compared to a piece of wax

¹⁴⁸⁴ For example, the mutilation of the corpse of Nabû-bêl-šumāti (RINAP 5/1 11: vii 45-50) or the grinding down of the bones of Nabû-šuma-ēreš (RINAP 5/1 3: vi 79-85).

¹⁴⁸⁵ RINAP 5/1 3: iv 6-14, v 93-95, vi 42-47, vi 57-60.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Of the regions and peoples campaigned against in the prism inscriptions, only Elam under Urtaku and Teumman was definitely not already subject to Assyria, whilst Qirbit does not appear in the inscriptions of any other king, and its ruler is described as having not submitted to any earlier king (RINAP 5/1 6: iv 10'-11').

¹⁴⁸⁷ RINAP 5/1 3: iv 56-57.

¹⁴⁸⁸ For example, AHW s.v. *aganutillû*; BIWA: 223; CAD s.v. *agannutillû*; RINAP 5/1: 67; Scurlock and Andersen 2005: 170. The identity of this condition is suggested by the elaboration on its Sumerian-derived name in this passage of Ashurbanipal's annals as *mê malûti*, "full water".

¹⁴⁸⁹ RINAP 5/1 23: 157-59.

¹⁴⁹⁰ For divine intervention in rebellion more generally, see Chapter 6.

melting, and he is described as biting off his own hands whilst in a frenzied state.¹⁴⁹¹ In the case of Nabû-šuma-ēreš, if his condition was a form of dropsy,¹⁴⁹² then we would expect him to have experienced swelling in the affected areas of his body. This was apparently not enough punishment for the *šandabakku*, as his sons were forced by Ashurbanipal to grind their father's bones to dust following the Gambulu campaign.¹⁴⁹³ It would therefore seem that Tugdamme's death was sufficient punishment for a rebel, whilst the death of Nabû-šuma-ēreš by dropsy was not. The difference between these two episodes appears to be that the Cimmerian king's ailment completely destroyed his body. Whilst the *šandabakku* received some disfigurement, his body was left intact. The death of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn may also represent an example of a rebel mutilated by the gods, as it is possibly the gods who are portrayed as casting him into a fire.¹⁴⁹⁴

The new topos of the gods mutilating the corpses of rebels in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions is closely tied to the breaking of treaties. There is a connection between the fate of Ashurbanipal's enemies and the curses in Assyrian vassal treaties.¹⁴⁹⁵ This link is made explicit in the inscriptions in relation to the Arabian campaigns:

*ušamqit Erra qardu sunqu ina birišun iššakinma ana būrišunu ēkulū šīr
mārīšun arrāti mala ina adêšun šaṭru ina pittī išīmūšunūti Aššur Sîn Šamaš
Bēl u Nabû Ištar ša Ninua Ištar ša Arba'il ilāni rabūti bēlīja*

Heroic Erra felled them. Famine was placed amongst them. They ate the flesh of their children out of hunger. As many curses as were written in their treaty, Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl and Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, (and) Ištar of Arbela, the great gods, my lords, accordingly decreed for them.¹⁴⁹⁶

Furthermore, the description of Tugdamme melting like wax bears parallels to one of the curses from the Sefire Treaties.¹⁴⁹⁷ Frequently, the demise of rebels against Ashurbanipal is presented as the result of them breaking their treaties with Assyria, and treaties and oaths take a far more prominent position in this king's inscriptions

¹⁴⁹¹ RINAP 5/1 23: 157-58.

¹⁴⁹² On the problems with diagnosing ailments in ancient sources, see Chapter 7 n. 1262.

¹⁴⁹³ RINAP 5/1 3: vi 79-85. This event is also depicted in a relief from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh (Barnett et al. 1988: pl. 289).

¹⁴⁹⁴ See Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Cogan 2014: 74.

¹⁴⁹⁶ RINAP 5/1 3: viii 17-23.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Gibson 1975: 32-33 i A 37-38.

than in those of his predecessors.¹⁴⁹⁸ This is part of a general trend towards the divine resolution of conflicts without the need for military conflict. For example, several enemies are routed by the mere mention of Ashurbanipal's name.¹⁴⁹⁹ Liverani has interpreted the increase in divine intervention in campaign accounts from Ashurbanipal's reign as "a premonition of collapse" of the empire.¹⁵⁰⁰ Another factor which may have inspired the new topos is the fact that Ashurbanipal seems to have not accompanied the army on at least some campaigns, to Egypt and Qirbit for example,¹⁵⁰¹ and several of the victories described in his inscriptions are stated to have been achieved by his governors or vassals. For example, the people of Kullimmeri defeat Andaria,¹⁵⁰² and the Qedarite ruler Ammi-ladīn is defeated by the Assyrian vassal Kamās-ḥalta of Moab, who achieves victory by speaking Ashurbanipal's name.¹⁵⁰³ The magical punitive power of his treaties, his name, and his divine support all allowed Ashurbanipal to have some part in events in the inscriptions in which he would otherwise play no part. This purpose is demonstrated by the fact that both Nabû-šuma-ēreš and Tugdamme had died before Assyria could enact retribution upon them for their actions. The prevalence of the topos in inscriptions throughout Ashurbanipal's reign argues against Liverani's alternative suggestion that it represents "the vice of an old king who prefers to let the gods act on his behalf".¹⁵⁰⁴

The Implications of Destroying Cities and Corpses

The two forms of destruction discussed above, the bodily and the architectural, share a position as punishments with a high level of severity. For cities, symbolically thorough acts of destruction prohibited their resettlement; a destroyed city could usually be rebuilt, but the divine ban imposed upon the site by these acts removed of this possibility.¹⁵⁰⁵ The focus on reversion to nature also emphasised a destruction of social memory. A city's tell was built up of the centuries of occupation on that site,

¹⁴⁹⁸ Liverani 2017: 141-42.

¹⁴⁹⁹ RINAP 5/1 4: viii 36-42; 11: ii 119.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Liverani 2017: 142.

¹⁵⁰¹ *Large Egyptian Tablets* obv. 15'-18', rev. 17.

¹⁵⁰² RINAP 5/1 3: iv 6-14.

¹⁵⁰³ RINAP 5/1 3: viii 32-42.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Liverani 2017: 142.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Of course, this gesture is symbolic, and in reality there are several examples of cities sanctified in such a way, and then later rebuilt. For example, following its destruction by Anitta, Ḫattuša would later become the capital of the Hittite Empire, and Arinu recovered from its destruction by Shalmaneser I to appear in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I and Adad-nārārī II (RIMA 2 A.O.87.1: v 77-78; A.O.99.2: 34-35).

and was a defining feature of the Mesopotamian urban landscape. Furthermore, the continuation of urban institutions such as palaces and temples also played key roles in the construction of memory,¹⁵⁰⁶ as did the monuments and inscriptions placed in and around them. When Shalmaneser I removes the earth of Arinu, or Sennacherib reduces Babylon to a meadow, the accompanying loss of those cities' occupation mounds represents the unmaking, rather than simply the destruction, of these sites. By contrast, most destroyed cities were simply reduced to ruin mounds, leaving their history and urban landscape *in situ*, albeit in a state of ruin.

Jonker has described the connection between remembrance and place thus:

Memories are only activated and preserved by connecting the memory to real places; when there is a change in the framework into which the memory no longer “fits”, that marks the beginning of “forgetting”.¹⁵⁰⁷

The reduction of the tell to ground level completely erased many of the “material frameworks” for remembrance present in an urban centre, and therefore represented an act of “forced forgetting”.¹⁵⁰⁸ When a monument is erected upon the site, then the city is remembered, but only in terms of its military defeat at the hands of the king. The “constructed past” created by the inhabitants is erased in favour of a new “countermemory”.¹⁵⁰⁹

- This city resisted Assyria.
- The might of Aššur and his king destroyed it.
- It should never be rebuilt.

Any great achievements of the ruler or people of the city are erased, and their only surviving role in history becomes that of the failed rebel. The transportation of earth back to Assyria similarly served to simultaneously destroy the memory of a city whilst also creating a monument at the Assyrian capital to its defeat and destruction at the hands of the Assyrian king. In the case of Sennacherib at Babylon, the earth of the city is also transported to the Persian Gulf where it arrives at Dilmun (Bahrein) at the

¹⁵⁰⁶ Jonker 1995: 67-70.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Jonker 1995: 67. Jonker's approach to memory is strongly influenced by the work of Halbwachs (1992; Jonker 1995: 16-29).

¹⁵⁰⁸ On this term, see Schwartz 2013: 507; Connerton 1989: 12-15.

¹⁵⁰⁹ For the concept of countermemory, see Schwartz 2013: 507.

very edge of the known world.¹⁵¹⁰ Upon seeing it, the Dilmunites promptly submit to Assyria.¹⁵¹¹ The transportation of the city's earth therefore allows the message of its destruction to be carried well beyond the boundaries of the site itself.

Wright has commented on the aspect of city-destruction as the destruction of social memory, but treats Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon as a representative example of a destroyed city, when this deed was in reality a hugely significant and abnormal episode in Assyrian history. He therefore applies the concept to all destruction of cities by the Assyrians.¹⁵¹² As I have demonstrated here, this symbolic meaning was only particularly emphasised in relation to specific events, all of which relate to rebellion.

In order to fully understand the implications of corpse mutilation and abduction in Assyrian thought, we must explore some aspects of Mesopotamian beliefs concerning the afterlife. The most informative sources for this purpose are Tablet Twelve of the *Epic of Gilgameš* and its Sumerian precursor *Gilgameš and the Netherworld*,¹⁵¹³ in which Enkidu's ghost describes the afterlives of individuals who died in various different circumstances. These descriptions of the netherworld highlight some important concepts for the current discussion. A proper burial is a requirement for reaching the afterlife. For example, Enkidu tells Gilgameš that an unburied person's soul will wander as a restless ghost,¹⁵¹⁴ whilst an individual who dies in a fire will not inhabit the underworld because the smoke will carry their soul off into the sky.¹⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, the quality of an individual's afterlife is partially dependent upon what state their interred body is in. For example, being skewered by a mooring pole, falling off a roof, being mauled by a lion, and suffering from leprosy

¹⁵¹⁰ For Dilmun as the remotest point at the southeast of the Assyrian "mental map", see Liverani 1999-2000: 65-67.

¹⁵¹¹ RINAP 3/2 168: 39-44.

¹⁵¹² Wright 2015: 149-50.

¹⁵¹³ The most recent full editions of these texts are those of George (2003) and Gadotti (2014).

¹⁵¹⁴ George 2003 XII: 150-51. This seems to differ entirely from the Sumerian version (Gadotti 2014: 160 line 289a), in which the deceased is instead covered with something, what exactly being obscured by a break in the tablet.

¹⁵¹⁵ Gadotti 2014: 160 lines 305-306. Some anti-witchcraft texts instead relate death by burning with being consigned to the underworld (Abusch 2002: 69-76), but the resulting afterlife is likely still an exceedingly unpleasant one for the evil witch subjected to it.

are all circumstances which both damage the body and lead to a reduced quality of afterlife.¹⁵¹⁶

The result of these considerations is that destroying an individual's corpse or denying them a proper burial were particularly harsh punishments in Assyrian thought. The burning of a city's adolescents might be viewed as even more cruel and severe. Not only did this act deny its victims any form of afterlife, it also adversely affected the afterlives of their older relatives. The souls of the dead were reliant on offerings from their surviving relatives in order to acquire food and enjoy the netherworld in relative comfort.¹⁵¹⁷ By obliterating the souls of their children, the Assyrian king ensured that the adult population of a defeated city or region were robbed of good afterlives.

Destroying the Body and Destroying the City: Assyria's First and Last Resorts

All of these considerations demonstrate that symbolically thorough city-destruction and corpse mutilation had a great deal in common. These actions were a step above the usual methods for destroying urban centres and human life, and both had wider implications for the afterlives of their victims, in the shape of a city's history on one hand, and the literal afterlife of an individual on the other. In spite of this fact, the two acts are applied somewhat differently in the inscriptions. Only a small subset of rebel cities are subjected to symbolically thorough destruction, whilst corpse mutilation is enacted frequently on rebels and non-rebels alike. We should therefore consider the reasons for the disparity in the application in the inscriptions of these two similar acts.

The disparity between the treatment of enemy cities and people can be primarily attributed to the importance of the city within the Mesopotamian concept of empire. In the Mesopotamian worldview, cities were the only possible location for political power,¹⁵¹⁸ and the existence of cities in a conquered region was therefore a necessity for good administration. The result of this is that the primary unit of provincial administration was what Liverani calls the "cantonal module" of a city and

¹⁵¹⁶ Gadotti 2014: 159-60 lines 279-82 and 285-86a. Gadotti (2014: 294 n. 281-282) interprets "falling from a roof" in this context as a reference to epilepsy. Impalement by mooring pole is the only one of these fates appearing in the extant text of the Twelfth Tablet of the Standard Babylonian Epic (George 2003 XII: 144-45).

¹⁵¹⁷ See Chapter 1 n. 193.

¹⁵¹⁸ Van De Mieroop 1997: 48-52.

its surrounding agricultural landscape.¹⁵¹⁹ Cities were the only locations with the agricultural surpluses required to house large groups of workers outside of food production, such as the administrative personnel necessary for the collection of tax and its transferral to the imperial centre.¹⁵²⁰ The extent of the land which could be administered by a single city was limited by geographical and technological constraints, and Liverani has estimated the average extent of the territory administered by a “cantonal module” to be approximately twenty kilometres.¹⁵²¹ Without the existence of cities in conquered regions, the system of tribute and taxation would fall apart.

This meant that to destroy a city was a decision with serious implications for Assyria. Usually, a destroyed city could be rebuilt in the future to rectify the problem. The destruction and subsequent rebuilding of cities is therefore a common inclusion in Sargonid inscriptions.¹⁵²² By contrast, a city destroyed in a symbolically thorough fashion could not, or at least should not, be rebuilt. These acts were not to be taken lightly, and it is no surprise that they only occur in the inscriptions to resolve rebellions. Only if the usual Assyrian methods of imperial domination and control had failed to pacify a conquered population does the king reach for the more definitive solution of permanently destroying their city.¹⁵²³ The implications of symbolically thorough destruction for the empire may explain the decreased occurrence of this motif in the Neo-Assyrian period, when Assyria began its transformation into a true territorial empire. Conversely, Liverani has noted the increased importance of rebuilding conquered cities in the inscriptions of the Sargonid period, a time when Assyrian governance of conquered territory became increasingly focused on annexation and the installation of provincial governors.¹⁵²⁴ All of this means that Wright is correct in his conclusions on city destruction¹⁵²⁵ if we are to apply them more narrowly to symbolically thorough destruction, rather than all episodes of destruction of enemy cities.

¹⁵¹⁹ Liverani 2017: 179-80.

¹⁵²⁰ Van De Mieroop 1997: 142.

¹⁵²¹ Liverani 2017: 179.

¹⁵²² Liverani 2017: 149.

¹⁵²³ Liverani (2017: 151) has made a similar suggestion in relation to the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib and of the cities of Elam by Ashurbanipal.

¹⁵²⁴ Liverani 2017: 182-83.

¹⁵²⁵ See pp. 223-24.

Unlike the destruction of a city, the mutilation of an enemy's corpse did not harm Assyria's empire in any real way. In fact, the killing of anti-Assyrian leaders or their soldiers had several very real benefits for the successful governance of the region. Displays of flayed skins, impaled corpses, severed heads, and other such grisly trophies formed a potent demonstration of the dangers of opposing the might of Assyria. Furthermore, killing enemy leaders allowed for the installation of a new, pro-Assyrian ruler in the shape of either another member of the city's elite or, increasingly in the Sargonid period, an Assyrian provincial governor. Killing enemy soldiers also served a practical purpose by reducing the number of fighters capable of facing Assyria in battle in the future, reducing the likelihood of rebellion, and making any revolt which did occur easier to put down. Killing adolescents ensured that the reduced military capability of the conquered region would be extended to a second generation, further cementing Assyria's dominance over the region.

In addition to the practical considerations of discouraging future rebellion and resistance against Assyria, the practice of corpse mutilation is simply far more widespread across Mesopotamian culture than city destruction is. An urban centre will only be destroyed in a few limited scenarios, primarily warfare. Conversely, punishments involving the mutilation or destruction of an individual's corpse are applied for various crimes in the Ancient Near East. Burning is frequently the fate decreed for the witch in *Maqlû* and other anti-witchcraft texts,¹⁵²⁶ and sometimes appears as a punishment in law codes.¹⁵²⁷ Impalement also appears a punishment for various transgressions, from murdering one's husband¹⁵²⁸ to building on the footprint of Sennacherib's main road through Nineveh.¹⁵²⁹ Resisting Assyrian imperialism was just one in a long list of crimes deserving of such punishments, whereas city destruction was only applied in instances of rebellion.

Non-Violent Repercussions for Rebellion

Thus far, this chapter has concerned itself with punishments which cause structural damage to a city, destroy the landscape, or inflict physical harm upon its inhabitants. Several actions which the Assyrians undertook in the aftermath of campaigns were

¹⁵²⁶ Abusch 2002: 67-69.

¹⁵²⁷ For example, Roth 1997: 85 ix 51-65.

¹⁵²⁸ Roth 2007: 110 xxxii 61-66.

¹⁵²⁹ RINAP 3/1 38: 24-27.

not physically violent in the same way, most prominently the deportation of populations to other parts of the empire, and the enlisting of foreign troops into the Assyrian army.¹⁵³⁰ However, neither of these actions was restricted to the case of rebellions. To give just a few examples, Sargon II deports to Samaria captives from several Arabian tribes whom he states had never given tribute to any previous king.¹⁵³¹ Similarly, Esarhaddon carries off captives from Patušarri and Bazu, two regions which he is keen to stress that he was the first king to ever reach.¹⁵³²

This lack of exclusive connection between this practice and rebellion is hardly surprising, as it served important roles within the functioning of the empire. Oded has identified seven different purposes for which deportations were carried out. One of these purposes is as a punishment for rebellion, but many of the rest are concerned with the acquisition of manpower for military or agricultural purposes.¹⁵³³ Both of these forms of workforce required constant expansion to match the territorial expansion of the empire; the more territory controlled by Assyria, the more manpower required for its effective running.¹⁵³⁴ Furthermore, deportations did not result in the destruction of a city, and were therefore like the physical punishments enacted on captives, in that they were not severe enough to be reserved for a last resort against sustained rebellion.

The situation for the enlistment of captives in the Assyrian army in the royal inscriptions appears to be slightly more complex than that of other forms of deportation. Explicit references in the campaign accounts to captives being added to the Assyrian army first appear during the reign of Sargon II.¹⁵³⁵ This practice was likely already adopted before this point; Dalley has highlighted the presence of Nubian cavalry in the Assyrian army in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III.¹⁵³⁶ Some of Dalley's findings should be questioned. For example, the men with "semi-Urartian" names in Akkadian containing the theophoric element Ḫaldi need not be Urartians,

¹⁵³⁰ For a list of the instances of deportation of conquered peoples, including for conscription into the army, see Oded 1979: 116-35.

¹⁵³¹ Fuchs 1993 *Ann.* 120-23.

¹⁵³² RINAP 4 1: iv 46-77.

¹⁵³³ Oded 1979: 41-74.

¹⁵³⁴ Oded 1979: 54.

¹⁵³⁵ For example, Fuchs 1993 *Ann.* 15, 75,

¹⁵³⁶ Dalley 1985: 44.

as she suggests.¹⁵³⁷ Ḫaldi's primary cultic centre at Muṣaṣir was located outside the borders of Urartu, and his appearance in these names may instead be indicative of his place in the pantheons of various cities and countries in the region.¹⁵³⁸

Furthermore, it is always problematic to use onomastics alone as an indicator of nationality or ethnicity,¹⁵³⁹ and we should therefore be sceptical of the claim that individuals with Ḫaldi names must be Urartians.

In spite of these problems with Dalley's study of foreigners in the army, it is clear from the Horse Lists from Nimrud that the conscription of soldiers from conquered regions was common practice.¹⁵⁴⁰ This is reinforced by the statements at the end of inscriptions of Sennacherib on the total number of troops added to the *kiṣir šarrūti*, "royal band", from all the regions he had campaigned to.¹⁵⁴¹ However, all of the instances from the inscriptions of Sargon and Ashurbanipal of troops from conquered regions joining the *kiṣir šarrūti* occur in the aftermath of rebellions. Sargon adds troops to the *kiṣir šarrūti* following the rebellion by Jau-bi'di¹⁵⁴² and the annexation of Carchemish.¹⁵⁴³ Similarly, Ashurbanipal adds Elamites to the *kiṣir šarrūti* following the final sack of Susa¹⁵⁴⁴ and the inhabitants of Acco following his Arabian campaigns.¹⁵⁴⁵ To understand this feature of the inscriptions properly, we must explore the context of these instances of conscription. All of these occurrences of the topos occur in conjunction with the removal of a vassal ruler or with the installation of an Assyrian governor.

The *kiṣir šarrūti* is usually viewed as an army under the direct control of the king, as opposed to auxiliary forces provided by provinces or vassal rulers.¹⁵⁴⁶ In this light, we might understand the explicit references to the conscription of conquered peoples into the *kiṣir šarrūti* by Sargon and Ashurbanipal as an elaboration on the process of annexation. The people of annexed territories are treated like Assyrians in every way, including contributing towards the *kiṣir šarrūti*. The relation between

¹⁵³⁷ Dalley 1985: 42-43.

¹⁵³⁸ Radner 2012: 246.

¹⁵³⁹ Beckman 2013: 205.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Dalley and Postgate 1984: 173 §§D-E, 187 iii 18-23.

¹⁵⁴¹ RINAP 3/1 4: 59; 15: v 10-13; 16: v 33-36; 17: v 15-18.

¹⁵⁴² Fuchs 1993: *Prunk.* 35-36.

¹⁵⁴³ Fuchs 1993: *Ann.* 75.

¹⁵⁴⁴ RINAP 5/1 11: ix 122-28, vii 58-81.

¹⁵⁴⁵ RINAP 5/1 11: vii 2-5.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Deszö 2016: 16; Oded 1979: 52-53; Postgate 1979: 211.

conscription and rebellion is indirect; a vassal kingdom is annexed because of rebellious actions on the behalf of its ruler, and the annexation results in the conscription of that kingdom's inhabitants into the *kišir šarrūti*.

Tying up Captive Kings to Guard the Gate

One particular type of deportation deserves further discussion here. There may be some correlation between rebellion and the Sargonid practice of tying up a captive king at the gates of Nineveh, usually alongside some combination of dogs, pigs, and bears. The practice first appears during the reign of Sennacherib, who places the Babylonian usurper Nergal-ušēzib in fetters outside the citadel gates at Nineveh alongside a bear.¹⁵⁴⁷ Esarhaddon performs a similar action for two rebel kings. Asuhīli of Arza is placed alongside a bear, a dog, and a pig,¹⁵⁴⁸ as is the Arab would-be usurper Uaba, although no animals are mentioned in this instance.¹⁵⁴⁹ Finally, Ashurbanipal does the same for two Arab rulers, Jauta'/Uaite' is placed at the gate with a bear and a dog,¹⁵⁵⁰ and Ammi-ladīn the Qedarite is also chained at the gate wearing an *ulli kalbi* "dog collar".¹⁵⁵¹

The examples from the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon all clearly relate to rebellions. Nergal-ušēzib had overthrown Sennacherib's son, Aššur-nādin-šumi, with Elamite support,¹⁵⁵² Uaba had attempted to overthrow Jata' as king of the Arabs,¹⁵⁵³ and Asuhīli is described as throwing off the yoke of Aššur in Fragment A,¹⁵⁵⁴ although the texts which describe his punishment do not include this detail.¹⁵⁵⁵ The Jauta'/Uaite', son of Hazael, from Ashurbanipal's inscriptions is identical with the Jata', son of Hazael, from Esarhaddon's inscriptions.¹⁵⁵⁶ Ammi-ladīn is presented as the successor of Jauta'/Uaite', and continues the Qedarite rebellion against Ashurbanipal.¹⁵⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴⁷ RINAP 3/1 34: 35-36.

¹⁵⁴⁸ RINAP 4 1: iii 39-42.

¹⁵⁴⁹ RINAP 4 1: iv 29-31.

¹⁵⁵⁰ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 11-14.

¹⁵⁵¹ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 28-29.

¹⁵⁵² See Chapter 7.

¹⁵⁵³ RINAP 4 1: iv 23-24.

¹⁵⁵⁴ RINAP 4 30: obv. 17'.

¹⁵⁵⁵ RINAP 4 1: iii 39-42; 2: i 57-63; 3: ii 11'-15'.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Eph'al 1982: 146-47; Gerardi 1992: 70-71; PNA s.v. *Jata'* [5].

¹⁵⁵⁷ RINAP 5/1 3: viii 32-33.

We therefore have a situation in which this punishment is only used in response to rebellions. There are clear symbolic meanings which can be read into the action in this context. Mesopotamian mythology frequently sees rebellious demons or monsters given a new purpose in service to the gods who defeat them, each becoming an apotropaic symbol associated with its vanquisher.¹⁵⁵⁸ The same applies to the human adversaries of the Assyrian king. The rebels listed above are “repurposed” as guardians at the gates of cities or palaces. This symbolism is made clear by Ashurbanipal’s use of the verb *naṣāru*, “to guard”, to describe the captured rebel’s function at the gate.¹⁵⁵⁹ Ammi-ladīn is placed in a dog collar to further reinforce the metaphor.¹⁵⁶⁰ The city gate was a prominent public space in Ancient Near Eastern cities,¹⁵⁶¹ and was the site of a variety of legal proceedings and punishments.¹⁵⁶² It was also a place where the captured king would be most broadly visible to the public, and there is a strong element of public humiliation to enacting the punishment in this space. In addition, one suspects that being chained in close proximity to a live bear may not be the most pleasant arrangement.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Ataç 2015: 326-27; Wiggermann 1992: 152-57. See the discussion of rebellion in the combat myths in Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁵⁹ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 13-14, viii 29.

¹⁵⁶⁰ RINAP 5/1 11: viii 28.

¹⁵⁶¹ May 2014: 77-78, 108-109.

¹⁵⁶² May 2014: 100-104.

Conclusions

The History of the Idea of Rebellion in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

From the discussion in the preceding chapters of this dissertation on various aspects of Assyrian portrayal of rebellion, it is possible to construct a brief history of the development of this concept in Assyrian thought and its representation in the inscriptions. Throughout the Assyrian inscriptional tradition, the trappings of epical literature were applied to accounts of the putting down of rebellion for the purpose of presenting these rebellions as positively connoted, as discussed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, Chapter 5 has identified some ways in which rebellion was portrayed in the inscriptions developed and changed over time. Middle Assyrian inscriptions almost always portray rebellions as consisting of the undifferentiated mass of a conquered region's populace, and only name individual rebel leaders in a few unusual circumstances. As the practice of binding conquered rulers to vassal treaties becomes more prevalent during the Neo-Assyrian period, individual rebel leaders are more frequently named in the inscriptions. In all periods, rebellions within the Assyrian heartland which occurred during the reign of the incumbent ruler were omitted from the inscriptions, as discussed in Chapter 7. The unique nature of Sargon's death led Sennacherib to obscure the occurrence of various rebellions, and Esarhaddon's inscriptions omit rebellions carried out by natives of the cities of the Babylonian centre, which he distinguishes from the rebellious Chaldean periphery.

By far the greatest change in how rebellion is emplotted into the narratives of the Assyrian royal inscriptions comes from the reign of Ashurbanipal. Some episodes in texts from the reign of this ruler display a different attitude towards events which might at first appear to cast him in a negative light, as argued in Chapter 6. These rebellions and other negative events are presented in a manner which, interpreted through the lens of the *Grosse Jagdinschrift*, suggests that they were divinely ordained in order to give Ashurbanipal an opportunity to achieve further glory by defeating them. This development is understandable in light of the breaking off of good relations between Assyria and Elam by Urtaku and the rebellion in Babylonia by Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, two events which held particularly negative connotations due to the previous good relations that each of these individuals had enjoyed with Assyria. Furthermore, the portrayal of the rebellion in Babylonia as decreed by the

gods gave this event a more meaningful purpose as the catalyst for wars resulting in the final conquest of Elam and the submission of Urartu, which completed Ashurbanipal's act of universal conquest (at least, so far as Prism A is concerned). To achieve this effect, structural elements which had been experimented with in the inscriptions of earlier kings were adapted in Prism A to produce a cohesive narrative of universal conquest followed by universal rebellion, and finally universal reconquest.

These elements of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions are just one part of a broader trend, discussed in Chapter 6 and 8, towards a focus on divine retribution as opposed to defeat in battle as the primary method by which Assyria's enemies are laid low in this king's reign. Whilst the figure of the king remains central to these narratives, it is his piety alone, not in combination with his military prowess, which is frequently his contribution to his enemies' defeat. A combination of Ashurbanipal's absence from at least some of his campaigns, the fighting of a war on several fronts against the Babylonians, Elamites, and Arabs, and the extent to which the empire had grown by this point all contributed towards a shift in the presentation of kingship and its role in the proper governance of empire. This, together with the potentially embarrassing developments in Elam and later in Babylonia led Ashurbanipal to develop a new approach to these events. Sometimes, rather than commanding the king to wage war against a specific polity, the gods instead made the ruler of that polity become hostile towards Assyria, allowing the Assyrian king to retaliate and achieve yet another victory. I know of no comparable example from the inscriptions of later Mesopotamian rulers.

Rebellion was always met with harsh punishment, but Chapter 8 has demonstrated that the physical punishments enacted on captured rebels or the mutilation of their corpses did not normally differ much from those meted out for any other form of violent opposition or resistance to Assyrian imperialism. Where the punishments for rebels do differ from those for other forms of resistance, this is usually through the performance of symbolic acts, such as chaining up the rebel leaders at the gate of a major Assyrian city. Where the repercussions for rebellion in the inscriptions do stand out is in the performance of symbolically thorough acts of destruction, such as sowing salt or certain types of seeds on the ruins, or transporting the earth of a city back to the capital. These actions were intended to remove all memory of a city and

to ensure that it would never be inhabited in the future. This carried heavy economic and logistical implications for Assyrian administration of an area, and therefore only appears in response to prolonged rebellion, when governing a city has proven untenable.

In the reign of Ashurbanipal, we see a shift towards punishments resulting in the mutilation of rebels or their corpses being enacted by the gods as a result of the breaking of treaties with the Assyrian king. Once again, this is part of a broader trend under Ashurbanipal towards a reduced involvement of the king in military campaigns in favour of a situation in which victory is achieved through divine intervention resulting from his piety and his enemies' wickedness as opposed to Assyria's military might.

Positive and Negative Connotations, and the Use of Binary Oppositions

Many of the broad changes in the presentation of accounts of rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions described above relate to the growing importance of treaties in Assyrian royal ideology throughout the course of the Neo-Assyrian period. However, it would be overly simplistic to reduce all differences in how rebellions were portrayed in the inscriptions down to concerns relating to the role of treaties in the Assyrian Empire. This dissertation has demonstrated that the Assyrian royal inscriptions display a complex, multi-faceted view of rebellion which cannot be condensed into the single topos of treacherous enemies who rise up against, and are subsequently vanquished by, the Assyrian king. Rebellion was a delicate subject for inclusion in the royal inscriptions. Whilst some rebellions could be quite easily placed in the narrative framework of the heroic king vanquishing the treacherous rebels in the style of the Mesopotamian combat myth, others could not be so easily fit into this general framework, or would risk portraying the king in a negative light if they were presented in the stereotypical fashion. The Assyrian kings and their scribes employed various techniques to mitigate this risk.

The distinction between rebellions which reflected poorly on a ruler and those which did not, introduced in Chapter 2, has proved to be a useful departure point from which to begin to consider the reasons why a king might wish to portray a specific rebellion in a certain fashion, as discussed in Chapters 4 to 6, or even omit it from the annals altogether, as discussed in Chapter 7. This dissertation has demonstrated

that there is not simply a distinction between those rebellions which are “positive” and those which are “negative”. Instead, the question for the king and his scribes was if and how a specific rebellion could be emplotted into the narrative of a specific inscription in such a way as to carry positive connotations. For example, the perceived relationship between the capture of Aššur-nādin-šumi and the rebellions in Til-Garimme and Hilakku meant that the crown prince and the Anatolian campaign are never mentioned in the same Sennacherib inscription from after his son’s death, as discussed in Chapter 7. Conversely, the narrative “polysemy” of events meant that a single event could be presented in several different ways, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 6 for the differing accounts of the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn rebellion in Ashurbanipal’s Prism A and this king’s earlier inscriptions.

Similarly, throughout the entirety of the Assyrian inscriptional tradition, it is clear that the common conception of the Enemy in Assyrian thought as a single, homogeneous concept is overly simplistic. Chapter 5 of this dissertation has demonstrated that this binary opposition obscures a range of different Assyrian portrayals of the rebellious Other. Various different factors, such as the level of success achieved by the rebels prior to their defeat and the connotations carried by the particular region in which the rebellion took place were taken into consideration when the king and his scribes decided how best to present a specific rebellion in the inscriptions. Different contexts required different presentation, and the stated distance of the king from the rebellion at its onset, identifying specific groups within society as the instigators, and various details concerning the structuring of the narrative were among the tools available for presenting a given rebellion as positively connoted. Thus, even the most stereotyped inscriptions of Assyrian kings, such as those of Ashurnasirpal II, offer a great deal of information on the ways in which various factors affected how rebellions were presented in these texts.

This is not to say that the basic premise “Assyrians good, foreigners bad” is not on display in the royal inscriptions, but the universal quality which some scholars have imparted on these oppositions between the Assyrian king and his enemies has resulted in a situation where all of Assyria’s enemies are viewed as being portrayed in a single, monolithic image of the Enemy of Assyria. This approach takes a useful analytical tool and imposes it far too rigidly. Certainly the inscriptions are consistent in portraying the Assyrian king as a model ruler whilst portraying his enemies in a

negative light. However, this does not mean that all of these enemies conform to a single figure of the Enemy. Instead, the ways in which a group of rebels were portrayed, and the question of which members of that group were assigned the role of instigator of the revolt, differed depending on context.

Beyond Ideology and Rhetoric

The majority of this dissertation has focused on the rhetorical strategies by which the Assyrian royal inscriptions presented their implied authors to the gods and future kings as model rulers. However, it would be foolish to think that every single narrative element of these texts could be reduced to attempts to present the king in the best possible light. We can see this quite clearly in a few of the case studies in this dissertation. For example, the possible allusions to *Enūma eliš* in the account of the Battle of Ḫalule discussed in Chapter 4, if they are in fact allusions to a specific text, are unlikely to have been included in Sennacherib's annals out of some ideological motive to change perceptions of the destruction of Babylon, as argued by Weissert. Instead, I would suggest that an important element in such allusions, as well as in the more literary passages of the royal inscriptions more generally, was the artistic expression of the scribes writing these documents. In Chapter 1 I have argued against the scribal elite being a particular audience for the royal rhetoric of the inscriptions. However, this group was indeed one of the inscriptions' largest real audiences, and it is not hard to imagine that the authors of these texts used them to demonstrate the quality of their prose and the extent of their knowledge of cuneiform literature.

Similarly, the changing involvement of Ashurbanipal, the gods, the Elamite people, and the Elamite usurper in each of the successive campaigns recorded in Prisms B, C, G, and Kh discussed in Chapter 5 adds little to the rhetorical power of the narrative. Instead, I would view this progression as representative of a scribe experimenting with the structure of these texts, something which clearly occurred regularly in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. "Ideological criticism" is an important aspect of the study of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, but it is not the only one. This dissertation, being focused on elements of these texts closely related to war and conquest, has heavily focused on the ideological elements of these texts. However, the methodologies and approaches applied here are equally well suited to deal with

other, less ideologically-charged elements of the inscriptions. This might prove to be an interesting avenue for future research.

Processive Explanation and the “Holistic Approach”

Frequently, this dissertation has viewed an individual Assyrian royal inscription as a single, cohesive text, and has analysed the structure of multiple campaign accounts as part of a single narrative whole, an approach which I have outlined in Chapter 2, and have elaborated further in Chapter 6. In doing so, I have considered the ways in which the structuring of inscriptions allowed the kings to processively explain events from their reigns by properly emphasising important elements within these texts. This approach has proven productive.

I am not the first scholar to approach the Assyrian royal inscriptions as cohesive texts; Cogan, Tadmor, and Hurowitz have written several studies on the macrostructure of royal inscriptions, a method of analysis which Hurowitz describes as “holistic”.¹⁵⁶³ The studies by these scholars have overwhelmingly focused on Sargonid inscriptions, as stated in Chapter 2. This might suggest that earlier texts lack the more complex structural elements of later inscriptions. However, my analysis of the relationship between the two campaigns to Ḫanigalbat in the inscriptions of Adad-nārārī I in Chapter 5 and of the role of the building account for the Ninurta Temple in Ashurnasirpal II’s annals in Chapter 6 demonstrates that at least some Middle and early Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions also show clear signs of interrelationships between separate campaign accounts and of more complex structural elements than might at first appear. Further research is required to better understand the ordering principles of these texts.

Rebellion: An Assyrian King’s Worst Fear?

Although the inscriptions frequently presented rebellion as being heroically overcome by the Assyrian king, and Ashurbanipal went as far as to dress them as “blessings in disguise” gifted to him by the gods, it was easy for the king to portray these events in such a fashion after the threat had been dealt with. In reality, rebellion was always something to be avoided. The practice of mass deportation so characteristic of Sargonid governance of conquered territories was motivated in part by a desire to

¹⁵⁶³ Hurowitz 2013: 225.

reduce the likelihood of rebellion in the provinces.¹⁵⁶⁴ Rebellion was therefore a topos which, while incredibly common in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, would have preferably never needed to be included in these texts. Assyrian concerns about averting rebellion would ultimately prove justified, and the empire would fall to a rebellion by the combined forces of the Babylonians and Medes.¹⁵⁶⁵

The Assyrian kings wished to portray rebellions as not resulting from their own misdeeds. However, this is exactly how the downfall of the Assyrian Empire has frequently been viewed by other cultures. It was blamed on Assyrian mistreatment of Israel and Babylon in the Hebrew Bible and the inscriptions of Nabonidus respectively,¹⁵⁶⁶ whilst both Ctesias and Layard see it as the result of moral decline of the ruling class.¹⁵⁶⁷ Even today, Assyria's treatment of its subjects is sometimes cited by scholars as a reason for the empire's collapse. Consider, for example, a recent statement on the subject by Frahm:

As recently stressed by Bagg (2013: 305-308), Assyria was an “empire without a mission” that sought to achieve maximum profits, in the form of tribute, taxes, and labor, through a policy based on minimal investments, both logistically and ideologically. Except for order and freedom from strife, the Assyrian state had little to offer to the various polities it had subjugated in the course of the centuries – and it had often alienated these polities by spreading fear and terror. The people ruled by Assyria had therefore few incentives to remain loyal when the empire came under attack.¹⁵⁶⁸

It could be argued, therefore, that all the careful consideration by Assyrian scribes how best to present rebellions in the narrative of the royal inscriptions was ultimately something of a failed enterprise. The royal inscriptions only succeeded in sustaining the official narrative for posterity so long as the buildings they were placed in remained standing, and with major cities of Assyria abandoned, those narratives

¹⁵⁶⁴ Oded 1979: 43-48.

¹⁵⁶⁵ The events of the fall of Assyria are recorded in a Babylonian chronicle (Glassner 2004: 218-225 lines 1-75).

¹⁵⁶⁶ Machinist 1997: 186-88.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Machinist 1997: 188; Malley 2012: 124.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Frahm 2017: 193. This interpretation has been challenged by Herrmann (2018: 494-520). Furthermore, Frahm's argument above is weakened by Kuhrt's observation (1995: 545) that the Assyrians “received considerable support from their subjects” during the final conflicts with Babylonia, and “at no point is there a hint that Nabopolassar was welcomed as a liberator” from Assyrian rule.

were usurped by the less favourable ones preserved in the biblical and classical traditions.

Table 1. Attestations of *nabalkutu* and derived terms in relation to rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.¹⁵⁶⁹

Assyrian King	Reference	Written Form	Identity of Rebels	Notes
Adad-nārārī I	RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 16	<i>ib-bal-ki-ta-ma</i>	Uasašatta of Ḫanigalbat	
Shalmaneser I	RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 28	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu-ni-ma</i>	Uruaṭri	
	RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 48	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu</i>	City of Arinu	Rebellion happens before (<i>ina maḥra</i>) Shalmaneser's reign, symbolically thorough destruction of city
	RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 90	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu-ni-ni-ma</i>	The Qutu	Ventive form is unusual
Tukultī-Ninurta I	RIMA 1 A.0.78.1: iii 34	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	Šubarū	Rebellion occurs during reign of Shalmaneser I
Aššur-bēl-kala	RIMA 2 A.0.89.1: rev. 12'	<i>lu(?) [b]-ba-la-ka-tu</i>	Unknown	Context unclear
Ashurnasirpal I(?)	RIMA 2 A.0.101.18: 31'	URU.MEŠ- <i>ni</i> BAL.MEŠ	The cities Amlatti, Šaburam, Ruzidak, Bugu, and Ustu	There is some debate over which king named Ashurnasirpal commissioned this monument. ¹⁵⁷⁰ I tentatively identify this text as an inscription of

¹⁵⁶⁹ I take the text edited by Grayson as RIMA 1 A.0.75.8 to be a chronicle rather than a royal inscription, and it is therefore not included here.

¹⁵⁷⁰ For Ashurnasirpal I, see Reade 1975: 130-50. For Ashurnasirpal II, see Sollberger 1974: 232-34. The argument can be boiled down to the fact that the style of the artwork suggests an earlier date for this monument, whilst the references to the land of Gilzanu and to the Bīt-natḥi shrine suggest a later one. Ultimately, the almost complete lack of inscriptions or monumental art from the reign of Erība-Adad II until the early Neo-Assyrian period means that neither of these arguments is certain. The gap in the record means that statements such as: "horses from Gilzanu, or for that matter Gilzanu itself, are first mentioned by Tukulti-Ninurta II, Aššurnasirpal II's father, and there is no evidence that the practice, if practice there be, goes back to Aššurnasirpal I" (Sollberger 1974: 233) have little value for determining the date of the monument. It is possible that Gilzanu was first encountered by Assyria earlier than the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta II, but that a lack of surviving sources has obfuscated this fact. I find it more likely that Gilzanu and Bīt-natḥi might appear in a text dating to the murky period of Assyrian history that is the late eleventh century BCE, rather than having a situation in which the quality and style of monumental art changed quite drastically in the period from the early years of Ashurnasirpal II's reign to his relocation of the capital to Kalḫu just a few years later.

				the earlier of these two kings.
Adad-nārārī II	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 51	<i>ib-bal-kit</i>	Muquru the Temannu	
Ashurnasirpal II	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 75	<i>it-ta-bal-kát</i>	The city of Sūru in Bīt-Ḫalupe	Revolt against Ḫamataja, their governor
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 103	<i>i-ta-bal-ku-tú</i>	The Assyrians in Ḫalziluḫa and Ḫulaja, their city-ruler	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 16	BAL- <i>kát</i>	Nirbu in Mount Kašijari	Nirbu conquered earlier in the campaign, rebels on Ashurnasirpal's homeward journey
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 24	BAL- <i>kát</i>	Nūr-Adad of Dagara	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 118	BAL.MEŠ-šú- <i>ma</i>	The nobles of Amme-ba'li of Bīt-Zamani	Revolt against Amme-ba'li
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 27	<i>it-ta-bal-ku-tú</i>	All the people of Laqe, Ḫindanu, and Suḫu	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.17: ii 50	<i>i-ta-bal-kát</i>	Nirbu in Mount Kašijari	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.17: ii 79	<i>i-ta-bal-kát</i>	Nūr-Adad of Dagara	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.17: iii 110	[<i>ib</i>]- <i>bal-ki-tu-šú'-ma</i>	The nobles of Amme-ba'li of Bīt-Zamani	Revolt against Amme-ba'li
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.19: 86	<i>ib-bal-ki-tú-ma</i>	The nobles of Amme-ba'li of Bīt-Zamani	Revolt against Amme-ba'li
Ashurnasirpal II(?)	RIMA 2 A.0.101.21: 8'	KI- <i>ia lu ib-bal-kit</i>	Unclear	Text very broken, attribution uncertain
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.22: 8'	<i>it-ta-bal-ku-tu</i>	The city of Tille(?)	Attribution uncertain
Shalmaneser III	RIMA 3 A.0.102.5: iv 1	KI-šú <i>ib-bál-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi

	RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: ii 42	<i>it-ti-šu lu BAL-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi
	RIMA 3 A.0.102.8: 23'-24'	<i>it-ti-šú lu ib-bal-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi
	RIMA 3 A.0.102.10: ii 32	<i>it-ti-šú ib-bal-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi
	RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 74	<i>it-ti-šu ib-bal-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi
	RIMA 3 A.0.102.16:46	<i>it-ti-šú 'lu' [ibbalkit]</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi, restoration certain on the basis of the other accounts of Shalmaneser's first Babylonian campaign
	RIMA 3 A.0.102.59: 45	<i>it-ti-šú ib-bal-kit</i>	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between Marduk-bēl-usāte and Marduk-zākir-šumi
Šamšī-Adad V	RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: i 41	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Aššur-da''in-apla	Civil war in Assyria, Aššur-da''in-apla incites the land to rebel against Shalmaneser III

Šamšī-ilu (non-royal)	RIMA 3 A.O.104.2010	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Argiši of Urarṭu	See Chapter 7 for discussion on the reading and translation of this text
Tiglath-pileser III	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 7: 12	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu</i>	The city of Erinziašu	Rebelled with Bisiḥadir of the city of Kišesu
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 21: 13'	<i>it-ti-ia ṛit'-ta-[bal-kiṭ]</i>	Mitinti of Ashkelon	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 22: 8'	[... <i>it-ti-ia it-ta-bal-ki...</i>]	Mitinti of Ashkelon	Restored by Tadmor on the basis of RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 21: 13'
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35: i 21'-22'	<i>ṛna'-bal-kat-tú a-na KUR aš-šur DÙ-ma</i>	Mati'el of Arpad	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 36: 9'	<i>ib-bal-kit-tu-ma</i>	Possibly the land of Lusía and several other lands whose names are now lost	Context broken. Fuchs (2003: 50*) instead interprets <i>nabalkutu</i> here as referring to troops crossing a mountain or river
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 37: 23	KUR <i>na-bal-ku-ṛtu</i>	The land of Ḫalziatbar	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39: 20	<i>it-ti-ia BAL-ma</i>	Sarduri of Urarṭu	Unusual for Sarduri to be portrayed as a rebel, see discussion in Chapter 6
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 41: 16'	<i>ṛit'-ti-ia ib-ṛbal'-[kiṭ]-ṛma</i>	Sarduri of Urarṭu	Unusual for Sarduri to be portrayed as a rebel, see discussion in Chapter 6
Sargon II	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 25	[... <i>it-ti-ia</i>] <i>ṛuš'-[bal]-k[it-ma...]</i>	Ilu-bi'di of Hamath	Incites various western polities to rebel, restored on basis of

				Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 33-34
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 85	<i>it-ti-ia uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Ullusunu of Mannea	Incites neighbouring rulers to rebel
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 110	<i>ib-ba[l]-ki-tu it-ti-ia</i>	The lands of Bīt-Sangibuti, Uriqatu, Sikris, Šaparda, and Upparia	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 34	<i>it-ti-ia uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Ilu-bi'di of Hamath	Incites various western polities to rebel
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 71	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu-šu-ma</i>	Five districts of Ellipi	Rebel against Dalta of Ellipi
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 123	<i>it-ti-ia uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Merodach-baladan II	Incites the Suti to rebel
	Gadd 1954: 177 iii 44	<i>ib-bal-[k]-tu-šu-ma</i>	Five districts of Ellipi	Rebel against Dalta of Ellipi
	Frahm 2013: 46 lines 10-11	<i>it-ti-ia [ušbalkitma]</i>	Ilu-bi'di of Hamath	Incites various western polities to rebel, restored on basis of Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 33-34
	Lauinger and Batiuk 2015: 63 A 27863 lines 3'-4'	<i>[it]-ti-ia</i> GNs <i>[ušbalkitma]</i>	Ilu-bi'di of Hamath	Incites various western polities to rebel, restored on basis of Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 33-34
	Mayer 1983: 98 line 310	<i>ib-bal-ki-tu it-ti-ia</i>	Urzana of Mušašir	
Sennacherib	RINAP 3/1 17: iv 65	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Kirua, city ruler of Illubru	Kirua incites the population of Ḫilakku to rebel
Esarhaddon	RINAP 4 1: ii 54	<i>na-bal-kàt-ta-nu</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 1: iv 24	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Uabu	Uabu incites the Arabs

				to rebel against their king, Jata'
	RINAP 4 6: iii 18'	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Uabu	
	RINAP 4 30: 8'	<i>na-bal-kāt-ta-nu</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 31: obv. 2'	<i>na-bal-[kāt-ta-nu...]</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 31: rev. 8	<i>uš-bal-kit-ma</i>	Uabu	
Ashurbanipal	RINAP 5/1 3: i 91	<i>ša ib-bal-ki-tú</i>	The cities Sais, Mendes, and Tanis	
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 31	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 39	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	The servants of Tammaritu	Overthrow Tammaritu, Indabibi becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 86	<i>it-ti-šú ú-šá-bal-kit-ma</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Incites the Arabs to join him in rebellion
	RINAP 5/1 4: i 76	[ša] <i>ib-bal-ki-tú</i>	The cities Sais, Mendes, and Tanis	
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 33	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 44	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	The servants of Tammaritu	Overthrow Tammaritu, Indabibi becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 91	[<i>it-ti-šú ú-šá</i>]- <i>bal-kit-ma</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Incites the Arabs to join him in rebellion
	RINAP 5/1 6: viii 3''	[...EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>]	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 31; 4: vii 33
	RINAP 5/1 6: viii 14''	<i>EDIN-[uš-šú] ib-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	The servants of Tammaritu	Overthrow Tammaritu, Indabibi becomes king

				of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 6: ix 49''	[...še-er] PN <i>ib-bal-ki-tu</i>	The people of Elam	Overthrow Indabibi, elect Ummanaldašu as king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 7: vii 17'	[...EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 31; 4: vii 33
	RINAP 5/1 7: vii 30'	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	The servants of Tammaritu	Overthrow Tammaritu, Indabibi becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 7: ix 6	[še-er P]N <i>ib-bal-ki-tu</i>	The people of Elam	Overthrow Indabibi, elect Ummanaldašu as king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 7: x 7-8	<i>it-[ti-šú] ú-šá-^ˉbal^ˉ-kit-[ma]</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Incites the Arabs to join him in rebellion
	RINAP 5/1 8: viii 8''	[...EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kiṭ^ˉ-ma^ˉ</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 31; 4: vii 33
	RINAP 5/1 8: viii 20''	EDIN- ^ˉ <i>uš^ˉ-[šú ib-bal-ki]-tu-ma</i>	The servants of Tammaritu	Overthrow Tammaritu, Indabibi becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 8: ix 33'	^ˉ <i>še^ˉ-[er PN] ^ˉib^ˉ-[bal-ki-tu]</i>	The people of Elam	Overthrow Indabibi, elect Ummanaldašu as king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 9: iii 10	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš
	RINAP 5/1 9: iii 19	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Indabibi	Usurps kingship of Elam from Tammaritu

	RINAP 5/1 11: iii 100	<i>uš-bal-kit</i>	Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Incites the people of Akkad, Chaldea, Aram, and the Sealand to rebel
	RINAP 5/1 11: iv 1	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Tammaritu	Usurps kingship of Elam from Ummanigaš
	RINAP 5/1 11: iv 11	EDIN- <i>uš-šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	Indabibi	Usurps kingship of Elam from Tammaritu
	RINAP 5/1 11: ix 94	UGU- <i>šú ib-bal-ki-tu</i>	The troops of Uaite'	Overthrow Uaite'
	RINAP 5/1 11: x 10	UGU- <i>šú ib-bal-kit-ma</i>	The Elamites	Overthrow Ummanaldašu
	RINAP 5/1 13: viii 21	UGU- <i>šú ṛ ib'-bal-ki-tu-ma</i>	The Cimmerians	Overthrow Tugdamme
	RINAP 5/1 17: i' 3'-4'	<i>še-e-ṛ er'ṛ</i> [GN <i>ib</i>]- <i>ṛ bal'-ki-tu-ma</i>	The people of Elam	Overthrow Indabibi, elect Ummanaldašu as king of Elam

Table 2. Attestations of *sehû*, *sîhu*, *bartu*, and *bārānû* in relation to rebellion in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

Assyrian King	Reference	Written Form	Identity of Rebels	Notes
Šamšī-Adad V	RIMA 3 A.O.103.1: i 40-41	<i>si-ḫu bar-tu ... ú-šab-ši-ma</i>	Aššur-daʾin-apla	Aššur-daʾin-apla incites the cities of Assyria to rebel against Shalmaneser
Adad-nārārī III	RIMA 3 A.O.104.5: 6	<i>šá i-si-ḫu-ma</i>	The kings of Ḫatti	
Tiglath-pileser III	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35: i 21'-22'	<i>bar-tu' ... a-na KUR aš-šur DÙ-ma</i>	Matī'el of Arpad	
Sargon II	Fuchs 1993: Zyl. 32	<i>ba-ra-a-nu-ú</i>	Itti the Allabrian	
Sennacherib	RINAP 3/1 1: 6	<i>ba-ra-nu-ú</i>	Merodach-baladan II	Rebels after Sennacherib has ascended the throne in a period of peace (see Chapter 7)
	RINAP 3/1 22: v 17	<i>is-se-ḫu-ma</i>	Mušēzib-Marduk	
	RINAP 3/1 22: v 24	<i>ú-šab-šu-u si-ḫu</i>	The supporters of Mušēzib-Marduk	Incite rebellion in the marshes
	RINAP 3/1 23: v 9	<i>is-se-ḫu-ma</i>	Mušēzib-Marduk	
	RINAP 3/1 23: v 16	<i>ú-šab-šu-ú si-ḫu</i>	The supporters of Mušēzib-Marduk	Incite rebellion in the marshes
	RINAP 3/2 146: obv. 4	<i>i-na si-ḫi ù [bar-ti...]</i>	The Babylonians	Describes the climate in which Mušēzib-Marduk enters Babylon and is elected to kingship by the people
	RINAP 3/2 146: obv. 8	<i>ša si-ḫi i-pu-šú</i>	The Babylonians	
	RINAP 3/2 147: obv. 4	<i>[...i-na si-ḫi ù bar-ti...]</i>	The Babylonians	Describes the climate in which Mušēzib-Marduk enters Babylon and is elected to kingship by

				the people, restored on the basis of RINAP 3/2 146: obv. 4
	RINAP 3/2 147: obv. 8	[...ša si-ḫi i-pu-šú...]	The Babylonians	Restored on the basis of RINAP 3/2 146: obv. 8
	RINAP 3/2 213: 6	ba-ra-nu-ú	Merodach-baladan II	Rebels after Sennacherib has ascended the throne in a period of peace (see Chapter 7)
Esarhaddon	RINAP 4 1: i 82	e-piš si-ḫi ù bar-ti	Esarhaddon's brothers	
	RINAP 4 1: ii 54	ba-ra-nu-ú	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 30: obv. 8'	ba-ra-nu-ú	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 31: obv. 2'	[...ba-ra]- ^ṛ nu ^ṛ -u	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	Restored on the basis of RINAP 4 1: ii 54; 30: obv. 8'
	RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: Left edge 4	^ṛ si-ḫi ^ṛ	The cities of Šubria	Part of a description of conditions in Šubria in the aftermath of Esarhaddon's campaign there
Ashurbanipal	RINAP 5/1 3: iii 78	si-ḫu UGU-šú ú-šab-šú-u	The people of Mannea	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 41-42	šá si-ḫu UGU-šú ú-šab-šú-u	Indabibi	Indabibi, one of the servants of Tammaritu who rebelled against him, becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 46-47	šá si-ḫu UGU-šú ú-šab-šú-ú	Indabibi	Indabibi, one of the servants of Tammaritu who rebelled against

				him, becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 6: iv 71''	<i>si-ḫu</i> UGU-šú ú-šab-šú- <i>u</i>	The people of Mannea	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign
	RINAP 5/1 6: viii 16''	<i>ša si-ḫu</i> UGU-šú ú-šab-šú- <i>u</i>	Indabibi	Indabibi, one of the servants of Tammaritu who rebelled against him, becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 7: iv 38''	[<i>si-ḫu</i> UGU-šú ú-šab-šú- <i>u</i>]	The people of Mannea	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: iii 78; 6: iv 71''
	RINAP 5/1 7: vii 32'	<i>ša si-ḫu</i> [UGU-šú ú-šab-šú- <i>u</i>]	Indabibi	Indabibi, one of the servants of Tammaritu who rebelled against him, becomes king of Elam
	RINAP 5/1 7: viii 62'	<i>e-piš si-ḫi bar-ti</i>	Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's soldiers	
	RINAP 5/1 8: viii 22''	[<i>ša si-ḫu</i> UGU]-šú ú-šab-šú- <i>u</i>	Indabibi	Indabibi, one of the servants of Tammaritu who rebelled against him, becomes king of Elam, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 41-42; 4: vii 46-47; 6: viii 16''
	RINAP 5/1 8: viii 21''''	<i>e-piš si-ḫi bar-ti</i>	Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's	

			soldiers	
	RINAP 5/1 9: ii 39	<i>si-ḫu e-li-šú ú-šab-šu-ú</i>	The people of Mannea	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign
	RINAP 5/1 9: iii 76	<i>ba-ra-nu-u</i> ¹⁵⁷¹	Tammaritu	
	RINAP 5/1 11: iii 8	<i>si-ḫu UGU-šú ú-šab-šú-u</i>	The people of Mannea	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign
	RINAP 5/1 11: v 16	<i>ta-se-ḫu-u</i>	The land of Elam	
	RINAP 5/1 11: v 31	<i>ba-ra-nu-u</i>	Tammaritu	See footnote to RINAP 5/1 9: iii 76 above
	RINAP 5/1 13: iii 1''	<i>si-ḫu UGU-šú ú-[šab-šú-u...]</i>	The people of Mannea(?)	Rebel against Aḫšeri following Ashurbanipal's Mannean campaign, Novotny and Jeffers' restoration (RINAP 5/1: 276) suggests a possibility that Ualli, Aḫšeri's son, is the subject of the verb, rather than the people of Mannea

¹⁵⁷¹ Novotny and Jeffers (RINAP 5/1: 199) translate the clause *libbi Tammaritu ekṣu bārānû ibrûma* as "(Aššur and Ištar) saw the dangerous (and) rebellious thought(s) of Tammaritu". However, the fact that *bārānû* is a noun rather than an adjective would suggest to me that a translation as "they saw the heart of Tammaritu, a dangerous (man), a rebel", is more suitable.

Table 3. Attestations of *ḥammā'u* in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

Assyrian King	Reference	Written Form	Identity of Rebels	Notes
Shalmaneser III	RIMA 3 A.O.102.5: iv 4	MAN ḥa-ma-'i	Marduk-bēl-usāte	Civil war in Babylonia between the brothers Marduk-zākir-šumi and Marduk-bēl-usāte
Sargon II	Fuchs 1993: <i>Zyl.</i> 9	ḥa-am-ma-mi	N/A	See discussion in Chapter 3
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Bro.</i> 21	ḥa-am-ma-me	N/A	See discussion in Chapter 3
	Fuchs 1993: <i>R.</i> 10	ḥa-am-ma-mi	N/A	See discussion in Chapter 3
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 5	[ḥa-am-ma-mi...]	N/A	See discussion in Chapter 3, restored on the basis of Fuchs 1993: <i>Zyl.</i> 9
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 14	ḥa-am-ma-mi	N/A	See discussion in Chapter 3
Sennacherib	RINAP 3/2 149: rev. 14	LUGAL NÍ.GI	Šūzubu (either Nergal-ušēzib or Mušēzib-Marduk)	
Esarhaddon	RINAP 4 1: i 46	^{lu} ḥa-am-ma-'e-e	Esarhaddon's brothers	
	RINAP 4 1: i 82	^{lu} ḥa-am-ma-'e-e	Esarhaddon's brothers	

Table 4. Instances of the withholding of tribute in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

Assyrian King	Reference	Written Form	Identity of Rebels	Notes
Tukultī-Ninurta I	RIMA 1 A.0.78.1: iii 35	<i>ta-mar-ta-šú-nu ik-lu-ú</i>	All of Šubar and Kašijari	Rebellion occurs in the reign of Shalmaneser I
Tiglath-pileser I	RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: i 90-91	<i>ša GUN ù ma-da-ta a-na^d aš-šur EN-ia ik-lu-ú</i>	The land of Katmuḫu	
	RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 91-92	<i>ša GUN-su-nu ù ma-da-ta-šu-nu ú-šàm-si-ku-ni</i>	The lands of Alzu and Purulumzu	
	RIMA 2 A.0.87.12: 4'-5'	<i>ša GUN ù ta-ma[r-ta ana Aššur bēlija iklû(?)...]</i>	The land of Qummenu(?)	Very broken, restored on the basis of RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: i 90-91
Aššur-dān II	RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: 47-48	<i>[...m]a-da-tu a-na aš-šur EN-ia [iklû]</i>	Unknown	
	RIMA 2 A.0.98.2: 18'	<i>ˁGUNˁ ma-da-tu a-na [Aššur bēlija iklû(?)]</i>	Kundibḫale of Katmuḫu	Very broken, restoration uncertain
Adad-nārārī II	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 85-86	<i>GUN ma-da-tu a-na aš-šur EN-ia ik-lu-ú</i>	The cities Sikkur and Sappanu	Had withheld tribute since the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta I
	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 96	<i>ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ šim-da-at^{giš} ni-ri-ia lu ı̂k-lu-u</i>	The cities of the land of Ḫabḫu in the vicinity of Kummū	
Ashurnasirpal II	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 50	<i>ma-da-tú u ka-du-ru šá aš-šur EN-a lu ik-lu-ú</i>	The rulers Ameka and Araštua of Zamua	
	RIMA 2 A.0.101.17: iii 28-29	<i>ma-da-tú u ka-du-ru šá aš-šur EN-a lu ik-lu-ú</i>	The rulers Ameka and Araštua of Zamua	
Shalmaneser III	RIMA 3 A.0.102.20: 8-9	<i>GUN u ma-da-tú ša aš-šur EN-ia ikk-lu-ú</i>	Aḫunu of Bīt-Adini	
Sargon II	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 68	<i>a-na la na-še-e GUN ir-ša-a [nī]-id a-ḫi</i>	Kiakki of Šinuḫtu	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 241-42	<i>a-na la na-še-e bīl-te [...]</i>	Azuri of Ashdod	

	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 257	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-tuš</i>	Merodach-baladan II	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 28	<i>ik-lu-u ta-ma-tuš</i>	Kiakki of Šinuḫtu	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 79	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-tuš</i>	Tarḫunazi of Melid	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 90-91	<i>la na-še-e bil-ti ŠÀ-šu ik-pu-ud-ma</i>	Azuri of Ashdod	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 113	<i>bil-tu man-da-at-tú na-dan šat-ti-šú ú-ša[b]-ṭil-ma ik-la-a ta-mar-tuš</i>	Mutallu of Kummuh	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 122-23	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-tuš</i>	Merodach-baladan II	
	Kapera 1976: 94 Fragment III 4	[... <i>ik-la-a</i>] ^r <i>ta`mar-tuš</i>	Mutallu of Kummuh(?)	See the discussion in Kapera 1976: 94-99
	Gadd 1954: 172 iii 45-46	<i>man-da-a-ti AN.ŠAR be-lí-ia na-dan šat-ti-šú-nu ik-lu-ú</i>	The Ellipians	Revolt against Dalta, tribute is stopped
	Gadd 1954: 179 iv 27	[... <i>la na</i>]-še-e bil-ti [...]	The Samaritan	
	Gadd 1954: 180 iv 52-53	[... <i>bil</i>]-tu man-da-at-tu [... <i>ik-l</i>]-a-a ta-mar-tuš	Kiakki of Šinuḫtu	
	Gadd 1954: 185 vi 21	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-tuš</i>	Merodach-baladan II	
	Mayer 1983: 98 lines 311-12	<i>it-ti ta-mar-ti-šu ka-bit-te la iš-ši-qa GÌR^{II}-ia bīl-tu ma-da-at-tu ta-mar-ta-šu ik-la-ma</i>	Urzana of Muṣaṣir	
Ashubanipal	RINAP 5/1 3: iii 89-90	<i>ma-da-at-ta-šú maḥ-ri-tú šá ina tar-ši LUGAL.MEŠ AD.MEŠ-ia ú-šab-ṭi-lu</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 85	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-ti</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 4: iii 12'-13'	<i>ma-da-at-ta-šú maḥ-^rrī -[tú šá ina tar-ši LUGAL.MEŠ AD.MEŠ-</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns,

		<i>ia] ú-šab-ṭi-lu</i>		restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: iii 89-90
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 90	<i>[ik-la-a ta-mar-ti...]</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 85
	RINAP 5/1 6: v 2-3	<i>[ma-da-at-ta-šú maḥ-ri-tú] ṣá ina tar-ši LUGAL.MEŠ AD.[MEŠ-ia ú-šab-ṭi-lu...]</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: iii 89-90
	RINAP 5/1 7: iv 55''-56''	<i>ma-da-at-ta-šú maḥ-ri - [tú šá ina tar-ši LUGAL.MEŠ] AD.MEŠ- ia ú-šab-ṭi-lu</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns, restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: iii 89-90
	RINAP 5/1 7: x 6	<i>ik-la-a [ta-mar-ti]</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 85
	RINAP 5/1 9: ii 50-51	<i>ma-da-at-ta-šú maḥ-ri-ti ša ina ter-ši LUGAL.MEŠ AD.MEŠ- ia ú-šab-ṭi-lu</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns
	RINAP 5/1 11: iii 23-24	<i>ma-da-ta-šú maḥ-ri-tú šá ina ter-ši LUGAL.MEŠ AD.MEŠ- ia ú-šab-ṭi-lu</i>	The Manneans	Ualli recommences the tribute abandoned in previous king's reigns
	RINAP 5/1 11: vii 90	<i>ik-la-a ta-mar-ti man-da- ta-šú ka-bit-tú</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 23: 126	<i>[...ik]-lu-u ta-[mar-ta-šú]</i>	Natnu, king of the Nabajadians	Restoration uncertain

Table 5. Instances of the breaking of treaties and oaths in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.¹⁵⁷²

Assyrian King	Reference	Written Form	Identity of Rebels	Notes
Adad-nārārī II	RIMA 1 A.0.99.2: 50	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>e-tiq-ma</i>	Muquru the Temannu	
Tiglath-pileser III	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 12: 3'	[... <i>ina a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL].MEŠ <i>iḫ-ti</i>	Tutammu of Unqi	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 20: 18'	<i>ša ma-mit</i> ^d <i>ša-maš te-ti-qu-ma</i>	Samsi, queen of the Arabs	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 21: 12'	[... <i>ina a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>iḫ-ti...</i>]	Mitinti of Ashkelon	Restored on the basis of RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 22: 8'
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 22: 8'	<i>ina a-de-[e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>iḫ-ti...</i>]	Mitinti of Ashkelon	
	RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47: 19	<i>i-na a-^rde'-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>iḫ-ti-ma</i>	Zaqiru of Bīt-Ša'alli	
Sargon II	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 24	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ [...]	Ilu-bi'di	In the context of the rebellion in Hamath, and therefore should describe Ilu-bi'di and/or the other rebels disregarding the oath
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 68	<i>a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>i-miš-ma</i>	Kiakki of Šinuḫtu	

¹⁵⁷² Tadmor and Yamada translate the word *uḫaṭṭa* in Tiglath-pileser III's Iran Stele (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35: 22') as "(he) violated (his loyalty oath)" (RINAP 1: 84). However, the lack of an object for this verb suggests that a more appropriate translation would be "he sinned/committed a crime". For this reason, this episode is not included in this table. In addition, Padi of Ekron, is described in Sennacherib's accounts of the rebellion in Ekron as *bēl adê u māmīt ša māt Aššur*, "an individual bound by treaty and oath to the land of Aššur" (for example, RINAP 3/1 22: ii 74-75). However, Padi himself does not rebel, and this episode is therefore also excluded from this table.

	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 72	<i>i-na a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>iḫ-ṭi-ma</i>	Pisiri of Carchemish	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 149	<i>ša ma-mit</i> ^d <i>aš-šur ù</i> ^d AMAR.UTU <i>e-ti-qu-ma</i>	Urzana of Muṣaṣir	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 256-57	<i>a-de-e ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>e-bu-uk-ma</i>	Merodach-baladan II	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 79	<i>a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>e-bu-uk-ma</i>	Tarḫunazi of Melid	
	Fuchs 1993: <i>Prunk.</i> 122	<i>a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>i-bu-uk-ma</i>	Merodach-baladan II	
	Frahm 2013: 46 line 9	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ [...]	Ilu-bi'di	In the context of the rebellion in Hamath, and therefore should describe Ilu-bi'di and/or the other rebels disregarding the oath
	Levine 1972: 34 ii 6	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.[MEŠ GAL].MEŠ [...]	Ilu-bi'di	In the context of the rebellion in Hamath, and therefore should describe Ilu-bi'di and/or the other rebels disregarding the oath
	Mayer 1983: 76 line 92	<i>la pa-li-ḫu ma-mit</i> EN EN.EN	Rusa of Urarṭu	
	Mayer 1983: 82 line 148	<i>ša</i> ^d <i>a-šur šàr</i> DINGIR.MEŠ <i>la ú-kab-</i> <i>bi-du ma-mit-su</i>	Rusa of Urarṭu	
	Mayer 1983: 98 line 309	<i>e-ti-iq ma-mit</i> DINGIR. MEŠ	Urzana of Muṣaṣir	
	Mayer 1983: 98 line 310	<i>i-na a-de-e</i> ^d <i>a-šur</i> ^d UTU	Urzana of Muṣaṣir	

		^d AK ^d AMAR.UTU <i>iḫ-tu-ma</i>		
Esarhaddon	RINAP 4 1: ii 41	<i>la na-šir a-de-e</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	
	RINAP 4 1: ii 55-56	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>ša e-ti-qu</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	After fleeing to Elam, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir is killed because he broke his treaty
	RINAP 4 3: i 20'	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL. ^r MEŠ ^r [<i>ša</i>] <i>e-ti-qu</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	After fleeing to Elam, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir is killed because he broke his treaty
	RINAP 4 30: obv. 10'	[... <i>ma-mit</i> ^d <i>aš-šur</i>] EN- <i>šu la iṣ-šur-u-ma</i>	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	After fleeing to Elam, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir is killed because he broke his treaty
	RINAP 4 31: obv. 3'	^r <i>ma-mit</i> ^r DINGIR.MEŠ ^r GAL [?] .MEŠ [?] ^r [<i>ša e-ti-qu...</i>]	Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	After fleeing to Elam, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir is killed because he broke his treaty
	RINAP 4 33 Tablet 2: i 23	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>šá e-ti-qu</i>	The king of Šubria	Part of a speech by the king of Šubria admitting his crimes and saying he will change his ways
Ashurbanipal	RINAP 5/1 2: iv 5'-6'	<i>a-de-e</i> AN.ŠAR ù DINGIR.MEŠ ^r GAL ^r .[MEŠ EN].MEŠ- <i>ia</i> <i>e-ti-qu-ú-ma ip-ru-šur</i> <i>ma-mit-šun</i>	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 2: iv 36'-37'	<i>ša iḫ-tu-ú ina lib-bi</i> [<i>a-de-e</i> GAL.MEŠ]	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 3: iv 56	<i>la na-šir a-de-e</i>	Nabû-šuma-ēreš,	

			<i>šandabakku</i> of Nippur	
	RINAP 5/1 3: vi 89	<i>la iṣ-ṣu-ru a-de-e ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ	Ummanigaš	
	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 82	<i>ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭi-ma</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 4: iv 26'	<i>la na-šir a-de-e</i>	Nabû-šuma-ēreš, <i>šandabakku</i> of Nippur	
	RINAP 5/1 4: vi 99	<i>la iṣ-ṣu-ru a-de-e ma-</i> <i>mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ	Ummanigaš	
	RINAP 5/1 4: vii 86	[... <i>ina a-de-ia</i>] <i>iḥ-ṭi-ma</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 82
	RINAP 5/1 6: ii 4''	<i>ina a-[de-ia iḥ-ṭu-u la</i> <i>iṣ-ṣu-ru ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ]	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 7: ii 20''; 8: 14'-15'; 11: i 118-19
	RINAP 5/1 6: v 82	<i>la na-šir a-de-e</i>	Nabû-šuma-ēreš, <i>šandabakku</i> of Nippur	
	RINAP 5/1 7: ii 20''	<i>ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭu-u la iṣ-</i> <i>ṣu-ru ma-mit</i> [DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ]	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 7: ii 41''	<i>ša iḥ-ṭu-ú ina a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 7: v 25	[... <i>la na</i>]- <i>šir a-de-e</i>	Nabû-šuma-ēreš, <i>šandabakku</i> of Nippur	
	RINAP 5/1 7: x 1	<i>ina a-de-ia [iḥ-ṭi-ma]</i>	Jauta', king of the Arabs	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 3: vii 82
	RINAP 5/1 8: 14'-15'	<i>ina [a-de-ia] iḥ-ṭu-u</i> [<i>la iṣ-ṣu-ru ma-mit</i> DINGIR].MEŠ	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	

		GAL.MEŠ		
	RINAP 5/1 9: iii 8	<i>ša a-de-ia la iṣ-ṣu-ru</i>	Ummanigaš	
	RINAP 5/1 11: i 118-19	<i>ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭu-u la iṣ-ṣu-ru ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 11: i 132-33	<i>šá iḥ-ṭu-u ina a-de-e</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	RINAP 5/1 11: iii 97	<i>ša la iṣ-ṣu-ru a-de-ia</i>	Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	
	RINAP 5/1 11: vii 18	<i>ša ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭu-ú</i>	Nabû-bēl-šumāti	
	RINAP 5/1 11: vii 85	<i>ša ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭu-ú</i>	Uaite' (Jauta'), king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 11: vii 93	<i>la iṣ-ṣu-ra a-de-ia</i>	Uaite' (Jauta'), king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 11: viii 50	<i>ni-iš</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ <i>la ip-làḥ-ma</i>	Abī-jate', king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 11: ix 54	<i>ša a-de-ia la iṣ-ṣu-ru</i>	Uaite', king of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 11: ix 72	<i>a-de-e</i> GAL.MEŠ <i>šá</i> AN.ŠÁR <i>la ni-iṣ-ṣu-ru</i>	The Arabs	Part of a (hypothetical) conversation between two Arabs about why evil has befallen them
	RINAP 5/1 11: x 89	<i>ša ina a-de-ia iḥ-tu-u</i>	The kings of the Arabs	
	RINAP 5/1 13: viii 34	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ EN.MEŠ- <i>ia</i> <i>ip-ru-uṣ-ma</i>	Tugdamme the Cimmerian	
	RINAP 5/1 23: 104	[šá] <i>ina a-de-ia iḥ-ṭu-ú</i>	Nabû-bēl-šumāti	
	RINAP 5/1 23: 142	<i>i-šit ma-mit</i> DINGIR- <i>ú</i> - <i>ti-šú-nu</i> GAL- <i>te</i>	Mussi of Tabal	
	RINAP 5/1 23: 155-56	<i>ma-mit</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL- <i>MEŠ</i> [EN.MEŠ- <i>ia</i> <i>ip-ru-uṣ</i>]- <i>ma</i>	Tugdamme the Cimmerian	Restored on the basis of RINAP 5/1 13: viii 34

	<i>Large Egyptian Tablets</i> obv. 38'	<i>a-de-e AN.ŠAR u</i> DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ EN.MEŠ- ^ˁ <i>ia</i> ^ˁ [e]- <i>ti-qu-</i> <i>ma ip-ru-šu ma-mit-sún</i>	Necho, Šarru-lū-dāri, and Paqruru, kings of Egypt	
	<i>Large Egyptian Tablets</i> obv. 50'	<i>ša</i> ^ˁ <i>iḫ</i> ^ˁ - <i>ṭu-ú ina a-de-e</i> GAL.MEŠ		

Table 6. Foreign rulers deposed in rebellions in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

<u>Assyrian King</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Deposed Ruler</u>	<u>Fate of Deposed Ruler</u>	<u>Deposer(s)</u>	<u>Replacement Ruler</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Reference(s)</u>
Ashurnasirpal II	Sūru, Bīt-Halupe	Ḫamatājja	Death	The people of Sūru	Aḫi-jababa, son of a nobody	Aḫi-jababa brought from Bīt-Adini and placed on throne by the people, the nobles and elders surrender	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 74-99.
	Bīt-Zamāni	Amme-ba'īl	Death	The nobles of Amme-ba'īl	Bur-Ramānu, <i>bēl-ḫiṭṭi</i>	Bur-Ramānu is flayed and replaced with Ilānu, the nobles surrender	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 118-125; 19: 85-97.
Shalmaneser III	Cities on the banks of the Baliḫ	Giammu	Death	Giammu's people	N/A	The people kill Giammu out of fear of Shalmaneser's weapons	RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: ii 19-22.
	Patina	Lubarna	Death	The people of Patina	Surri, a "non-lord of the throne"	Surri dies of fear, the people surrender	RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 146-56.
Sargon II	Tu'munu	The sheikh of Tu'munu	Imprisoned and sent to Babylon	The people of Tu'munu	N/A	Tu'munû are uprooted and settled in Ḫatti	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 20-21.
	Mannea	Aza	Death	Governors of Uišdiš, Misandia, and Zikirtu (at the behest of Ursa)	Not specified in annals, Ullusunu in Prunk.	Ursa incites governors to rebel against Sargon and Aza, the Mannans flee to Mt. Uauš and abandon the body of Aza, place Ullusunu	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 78-84, <i>Prunk.</i> 36-39.

						on the throne	
	Ḫarḫar	Kibaba	Exile(?)	The Ḫarḫarians	Dalta of Ellipi	Kibaba pursued by his people, who then write to Dalta, S. defeats then deports them	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 96-97.
	Karalli	Sargon's eunuchs	Driven out	The Karallians	Amitašši	A. is a brother of former ruler Aššur-le'i	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 165-68.
	Gurgum	Tarḫulara	Death	Mutallu	Mutallu	T. killed by his son M. (<i>Prunk.</i> adds without Sargon's permission), Sargon conquers and deports him	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 234-41, <i>Prunk.</i> 83-89.
	Ashdod	Aḫimti	Unspecified	The Hittites (i.e. the inhabitants of Ashdod)	Jadna, a "non-lord of the throne"	Aḫimti installed by Sargon after rebellion by Azuri	Fuchs 1993: <i>Ann.</i> 244-47.
Sennacherib	Ekron	Padî	Imprisoned and sent to Judah	The nobles of Ekron	N/A	The nobles then seek the support of Egypt against Sennacherib	RINAP 3/1 4: 42.
Ashurbanipal	Mannea	Aḫšēri	Death	The people of Mannea	Uallî	Rebellion due to Aššur and Ištar, afterwards his son Uallî sits on the throne (not placed by the people)	RINAP 5/1 3: iii 76-92.
	Elam	Ummanigaš II	Death	Tammarîtu II	Tammarîtu II	Rebellion caused by the gods	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 29-33.
	Elam	Tammarîtu II	Exile	The Elamites (incited by Indabibi)	Indabibi	Rebellion as a result of Ashurbanipal's prayers	RINAP 5/1 3: vii 33-42.

	Elam	Indabibi	Death	The Elamites	Ummanaldašu III	Rebellion due to fear of Ashurbanipal	RINAP 5/1 6: ix 40''-52''.
	Elam	Tammarītu II	Exile	The gods	Unspecified	T. placed on throne after U. III flees, but then T. rebels himself	RINAP 5/1 11: v 23-40.
	Elam	Ummanaldašu III	Exile	The Elamites	Unspecified	Rebellion caused by the gods upon U.'s return from hiding in the mountains	RINAP 5/1 11: x 6-16.
	The Land of the Arabs	Jaute'	Exile	The Arabs	Unspecified	Jaute's troops hear of Ashurbanipal's divine support and overthrow him out of fear	RINAP 5/1 11: x 90-102.

Abbreviations

AAA = *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*.

ABL = Harper, R.F. 1892-1914. *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*. Chicago.

ABZ = Borger, R. 1981. *Assyrisch-babylonische Zeichenliste*. Naukirchen-Vluyn.

AcAntHung = *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*.

AfO = *Archiv für Orientforschung*.

AHw = *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*.

AMI NF = *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, Neue Folge*.

ANES = *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*.

AnSt = *Anatolian Studies*.

ArOr = *Archiv orientální*.

ArtBull = *The Art Bulletin*.

BaM = *Baghdader Mitteilungen*.

BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.

BHLT = Grayson, A.K. 1975. *Babylonian Historical Literary Texts*. Toronto and Buffalo.

BiOr = *Bibliotheca Orientalis*.

BIWA = Borger, R. 1996. *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*. Wiesbaden.

BSR = *Bulletin for the Study of Religion*.

BWL = Lambert, W.G. 1960. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford.

CAD = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*.

CAL = *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*. <http://cal.huc.edu> (date visited: 22 Dec. 2017).

CBQ = *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

CDA = Black, J., George, A., and Postgate, N. 2000. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. Second (Corrected) Printing. Wiesbaden.

CPh = *Classical Philology*.

CRAI = *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*.

CSMSJ = *Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies Journal*.

CTU 1 = Salvini, M. 2008. *Corpus dei Testi Urartei, Volume I: le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia, I testi*. Roma.

CTU 2 = Salvini, M. 2008. *Corpus dei Testi Urartei, Volume II: Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia, Thesaurus*. Roma.

ePSD2 = *electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary*. Second Edition.
<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/epsd2/> (date visited: 6 Dec. 2019).

ETCSL = Black, J.A., Cunningham, G., Ebeling, J., Flückiger-Hawker, E., Robson, E., Taylor, J., and Zólyomi, G. 1998-2006. *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*. <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/> (date visited: 1 Dec. 2017).

FO = *Folia Orientalia*.

Grosse Jagdinschrift = Novotny, J., and Jeffers, J. 2015-17. 'Large Hunting Inscription', <http://oracc.org/rinap/rinap5/Q003772> (date visited: 30 Nov. 2017).

HeBAI = *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*.

IEJ = *Israel Exploration Journal*.

Idrimi = Lauinger, J. 2017. *The Electronic Idrimi*.
<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/aemw/alalakh/idrimi/> (date visited: 21 Nov. 2018).

JAH = *Journal of Ancient History*.

JANEH = *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History*.

JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.

JAR = *Journal of Anthropological Research*.

JARCE = *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt*

JBL = *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

JCS = *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*.

JHIL = *Journal of the History of International Law*.

JNES = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

JQR = *Jewish Quarterly Review*.

JRAS = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

JSS = *Journal of Semitic Studies*.

KADP = Köcher, F. 1955. *Keilschrifttexte zur assyrisch-babylonischen Drogen und Pflanzenkunde*. Berlin.

KBo = *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*.

KUB = *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*.

Large Egyptian Tablets = Novotny, J., and Jeffers, J. 2015-17. 'Large Egyptian Tablets (=Harran Tablets)', <http://oracc.org/rinap/rinap5/Q003773> (date visited: 26 Nov. 2018).

LKA = Ebeling, L. 1953. *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin.

MDAIK = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo*.

MDOG = *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-gesellschafts zu Berlin*.

MSL 12 = Civil, M. 1969. *The Series lú = ša and Related Texts*. Roma.

MZL = Borger, R. 2010. *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon*. Second Edition. Münster.

NABU = *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*.

NEA = *Near Eastern Archaeology*.

OED = *Oxford English Dictionary*.

OrNS = *Orientalia, Nova Series*.

OrSu = *Orientalia Suecana*.

OTE = *Old Testament Essays*.

P&P = *Past and Present*.

PAPS = *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*.

PNA = *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*.

PSBA = *Proceedings of the Society of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*.

PTL = *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature*.

QJS = *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

RA = *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*.

RB = *Revue Biblique*.

RechA NS = *Recherches Archaeologiques, Nouvelle Serie*.

RIMA 1 = Grayson, A.K. 1987. *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.

RIMA 2 = Grayson, A.K. 1991. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.

RIMA 3 = Grayson, A.K. 1996. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.

RIMB 2 = Frame, G. 1995. *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157-612 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.

RIME 1 = Frayne, D.R. 1998. *Presargonic Period (2700-2350 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.

- RIME 2 = Frayne, D.R. 1993. *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.
- RIME 4 = Frayne, D.R. 1990. *Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BC)*. Toronto, Buffalo, and London.
- RINAP 1 = Tadmor, H., and Yamada, S. 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726-722 BC), Kings of Assyria*. Winona Lake.
- RINAP 3/1 = Grayson, A.K., and Novotny, J. 2012. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC), Part 1*. Winona Lake.
- RINAP 3/2 = Grayson, A.K., and Novotny, J. 2014. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC), Part 2*. Winona Lake.
- RINAP 4 = Leichty, E. 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)*. Winona Lake.
- RINAP 5/1 = Novotny, J., and Jeffers, J. 2018. *The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668-631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630-627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626-612 BC), Kings of Assyria, Part 1*. Winona Lake.
- RIA = *Reallexicon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*.
- SAA 1 = Parpola, S. 1987. *The Correspondance of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West*. Helsinki.
- SAA 2 = Parpola, S., and Watanabe, K. 1988. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. Helsinki.
- SAA 3 = Livingstone, A. 1989. *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. Helsinki.
- SAA 4 = Starr, I. 1990. *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*. Helsinki.
- SAA 5 = Lanfranchi, G.B., and Parpola, S. 1990. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern Provinces*. Helsinki.
- SAA 6 = Kwasman, T., and Parpola, S. 1991. *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part I: Tiglath-pileser III through Esarhaddon*. Helsinki.
- SAA 9 = Parpola, S. 1997. *Assyrian Prophecies*. Helsinki.
- SAA 10 = Parpola, S. 1993. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Helsinki.
- SAA 13 = Cole, S.W., and Machinist, P. 1998. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. Helsinki.
- SAA 14 = Mattila, R. 2002. *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II: Assurbanipal through Sin-šarru-iškun*. Helsinki.
- SAA 15 = Fuchs, A., and Parpola, S. 2001. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III: Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*. Helsinki.

SAA 16 = Luukko, M., and Van Buylaere, G. 2002. *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*. Helsinki.

SAA 18 = Reynolds, F. 2003. *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon, and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-šarru-iškun from Northern and Central Babylonia*. Helsinki.

SAA 21 = Parpola, S. 2018. *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part 1: Letters from Assyria, Babylonia, and Vassal States*. Helsinki.

SAAB = *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*.

SCO = *Studi Classici e Orientali*.

SHG = *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*.

StMes = *Studia Mesopotamica*.

StOr = *Studia Orientalia*.

UET 1 = Gadd, C.J., Legrain L., Smith, S., and Burrows, E.R. 1928. *Ur Excavations, Texts I: Royal Inscriptions*. London.

VAB 4 = Langdon, S. 1912. *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. trans. R. Zehnfund. Leipzig.

VT = *Vetus Testamentum*.

WO = *Die Welt des Orients*.

ZA = *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*.

ZAR = *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte*.

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