

Series Archaeologica

Pascal Attinger / Antoine Cavigneaux /
Catherine Mittermayer / Mirko Novák (eds.)

Text and Image

Proceedings of the 61^e Rencontre
Assyriologique Internationale,
Geneva and Bern, 22–26 June 2015



PEETERS

TEXT AND IMAGE



ORBIS BIBLICUS ET ORIENTALIS. Series Archaeologica

Founded by Othmar Keel

Editorial Board: Susanne Bickel, Mirko Novák, Thomas C. Römer, Daniel Schwemer
and Christoph Uehlinger

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and the Institute of Religious Studies, University of Zurich.

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Proceedings of the 61^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale,
Geneva and Bern, 22–26 June 2015

edited by

Pascal Attinger, Antoine Cavigneaux, Catherine Mittermayer,
Mirko Novák

and

Alexander Ahrens, Patrick M. Michel, Grégoire Nicolet,
Susanne Rutishauser, Alexander E. Sollee, Claudia E. Suter,
Johanna Tudeau

Editorial layout by Sabine Ecklin

Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis publishes monographs, multi-author volumes and conference proceedings in the fields of Biblical Studies (Hebrew Bible and Septuagint), Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Egyptology broadly understood (including archaeology, history, iconography and religion). The editorial board and affiliated institutions reflect the series' interdisciplinary outlook and high academic standards. Manuscripts may be submitted via a member of the editorial board. They are examined by the board and subject to further peer review by internationally recognized scholars at the board's discretion. Distribution, subscriptions and audience are worldwide. Past volumes are archived at the digital repository of the University of Zurich (www.zora.uzh.ch).

Senior editor: Christoph.Uehlinger@uzh.ch



Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Orientalische Altertumswissenschaft
Société suisse pour l'étude du Proche-Orient ancien
Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies



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Foreword

The present volume, number forty in the *Series Archaeologica* of *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, is the first to appear with the imprint of a new publishing house, the prestigious Uitgeverij Peeters based in Leuven, Belgium. The editors of *OBO* look forward to this new cooperation and hope that this exceptional volume will be followed by many others during years to come.

OBO was founded in 1973 by Othmar Keel, professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible studies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, following a suggestion by his teacher and colleague Dominique Barthélemy. Since the series was edited under the auspices of the University of Fribourg's Biblical Institute, that it should be published by the local University Press (Universitätsverlag Freiburg / Editions universitaires, Fribourg), itself associated with Fribourg's major (Catholic) printing house (Imprimerie St-Paul), was an almost natural decision. Cooperation with local companies would prove to be extremely practical for many years when printed books were either typeset or printed offset from typewritten manuscripts. From the very beginning and regardless of confessional boundaries, however, the renowned German (Protestant) publisher Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in Göttingen was associated with the series and assured its international distribution for more than four decades, at times joined by the French Editions du Cerf for the francophone market and Eisenbrauns for North America.

The local anchorage of the series *and* its worldwide distribution have long represented a trademark of *OBO*. Studies on the Hebrew Bible, ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern iconography and a particular focus on ancient glyptics reflect the scholarship of Othmar Keel, his students and an ever-increasing network of colleagues all over the world with whom he entertained strong academic and personal ties. Textual criticism, studies on the history of the biblical text and on Old Testament theology represent another of Fribourg's specialized competences in research, associated with Dominique Barthélemy, Adrian Schenker, their students and colleagues worldwide. Both dimensions have contributed, each in its own way, to grant the series a wide intellectual outlook and horizon.

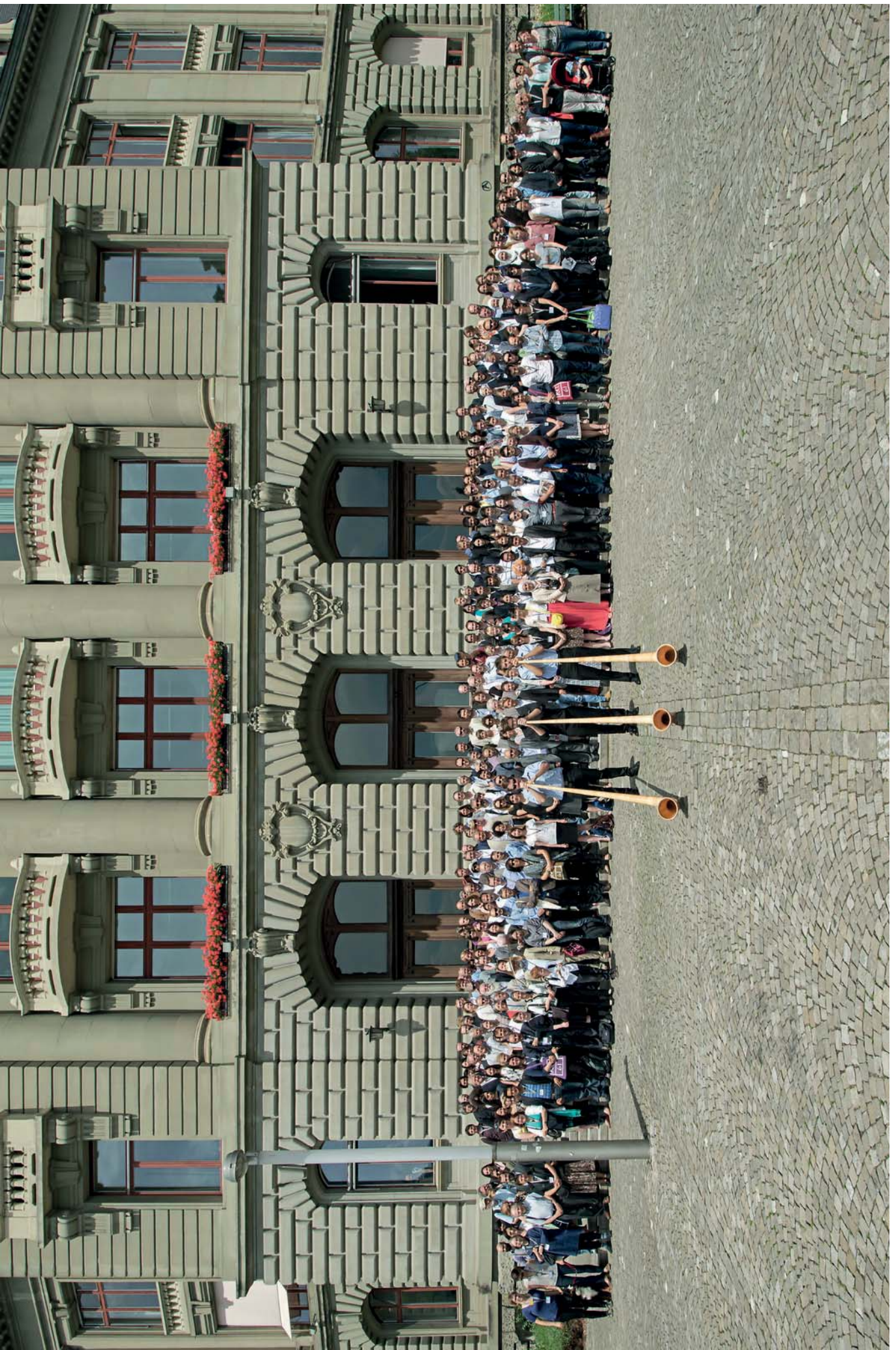
1980 saw the offspring of a large-format *Series Archaeologica*, first motivated by the publication of the French Ecole Biblique's excavations at Tell Keisan but soon enlarged by catalogues of and historical studies on artefactual primary data, especially scarabs, seals, amulets and other so-called minor arts. *OBO*'s multi-disciplinary reputation grew with the support of the Institute of Egyptology of the University of Basel (1982), the Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies

(1983) and the Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Languages of the University of Bern (1985). In 2005 the series eventually became the property of the once again Fribourg-based Bible+Orient Foundation. More than anything, however, *OBO* has flourished thanks to the companionship of its authors, who represent all related disciplines in more than thirty countries worldwide.

The series' management and editorial responsibilities were successively passed on to a second generation of scholars since the mid-1990s, and the bunch of supporting institutions has been further enlarged. But *OBO*'s purpose and programme have largely remained the same – and so did the publishers (although University Press was renamed Fribourg Academic Press in 2006). This said, as everyone knows, the digital revolution introduced tremendous changes in the business of printing and publishing. Our local publisher had to face considerable challenges, not least when several of its printing partners disappeared within only a few years. Still we did not expect that the management of St-Paul Holding would suddenly declare, without further notice, the dissolution of Academic Press by the end of 2017.

The editorial board has tried to deal as creatively as possible with this unfortunate situation. I am grateful to Susanne Bickel, Mirko Novák, Thomas Römer, Daniel Schwemer and Catherine Mittermayer (who will join the editorial board in 2019) for their valuable support in navigating the transition. One of our concerns has been to reorganize *OBO* in a way that will hopefully facilitate another generational change in a few years. This includes new provisions in view of electronic publishing in line with the Open Access strategies of major funding agencies, most notably the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences. By the end of 2018, all volumes published so far will be available for download at the digital repository of the University of Zurich (www.zora.uzh.ch). The Board of Trustees of the Bible+Orient Foundation courageously followed our suggestion to hand over to the Swiss Society of Ancient Near Eastern Studies the main responsibility for the series. We then approached a number of highly respected European publishing houses, inviting them to submit offers in view of *OBO*'s continuation. After a thorough evaluation of the offers received, the editorial board decided to opt for a partnership with Peeters Publishing. We are confident that all disciplines involved in our series will be equally well served by the new publisher and look forward to the future of *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*.

Christoph UEHLINGER



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Alexander Tschäppät (1952–2018), former mayor of Bern, opens the RAI reception in the Town Hall of Bern.

Preface

The 61^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale was hosted by the Universities of Geneva and Bern and took place 22–26 June 2015. After the 1960 Rencontre in Geneva, this was the second time that the annual conference was held in Switzerland.

In Switzerland, the study of the Ancient Near East, broadly defined, lies within the scope of the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Orientalische Altertumswissenschaft (SGOA, www.sgoa.ch), which is part of the Schweizerische Akademie für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW, www.sagw.ch). The SGOA covers not only the fields of Near Eastern Archaeology and Assyriology, but also Egyptology and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. The two core disciplines of Ancient Near Eastern Studies are taught at two Swiss universities: The University of Geneva offers programmes for the study of philology, while both archaeology and philology can be studied at the University of Bern.

The study of the Ancient Near East at Geneva University goes back to Alfred Boissier (1867-1945), who is considered the first Swiss Assyriologist. He published a great number of text editions, some of which are still relevant. We owe him the collection of cuneiform tablets in the Musée d'art et d'histoire as well as the collection of Assyriological literature in the Bibliothèque de Genève that was made available to the university. During World War II, Edmond Sollberger studied under Boissier and earned his doctorate with a study on the Sumerian verb. Sollberger went on to become a curator at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva for some years before he accepted a position at the British Museum. For many years, the field of Assyriology at the University of Geneva was represented by a lecturer, Françoise Bruschiweiler, before the chair of "Languages and Civilization of Mesopotamia" was established in 1997. Antoine Cavigneaux held this chair for eighteen years. In 2015, he was succeeded by Catherine Mittermayer.

The University of Bern is the only one in Switzerland where Near Eastern Archaeology is represented by a full professorship. This chair was created in 1982 and offered to Markus Wäfler, who became the first professor for Near Eastern Archaeology in Switzerland. After his retirement, Mirko Novák was appointed to the chair in 2011. Alongside archaeology, Ancient Near Eastern Philology is also taught at the Institute for Archaeological Sciences of the University of Bern; for many years

Pascal Attinger was in charge of this discipline, since 2017 it is Johanna Tudeau. The institute's well-equipped library has been built upon a branch of the library of Fritz Lieb, an illustrious professor of theology in Basel, who in his will donated this collection of books relating to the Ancient Near East to the Swiss university that would first create a chair for Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology.

Organising a meeting which involved moving from one venue to another was unusual but there were a few precedents: Harvard and Yale in 1998, Helsinki and Tartu/Tallinn in 2001, or Moscow and St. Petersburg in 2007. This arrangement was chosen for a number of reasons: first, to present the different focuses of research of both Swiss institutes to an international audience; second, to promote the discipline in both places; and third, to divide the operational tasks and workload between the two institutes. A particularly attractive aspect of this approach was the passage from one linguistic environment to another, thus highlighting the polyglot landscape of Switzerland.

The first two days of the conference (22–23 June) took place in Geneva and were concluded by a reception at the Musée d'art et d'histoire. The transfer from Geneva to Bern by bus on Wednesday (24 June) included a stop in Fribourg to visit the renowned Bibel + Orient Museum, which hosts a large collection of Near Eastern seals and sealings. The second half of the conference began on the evening of the same day with two public lectures and a second reception in the city hall, attended notably by the then mayor of the city and president of the canton of Bern, Alexander Tschäppät. The conference continued 25–26 June and was immediately followed by a SGOA conference entitled "Philology and Archaeology – Dialogue in Crisis" on 27 June. The VLIP (Very and Less Important People) party, formerly "LIP", which has become *de rigueur* at Rencontres, took place on Thursday evening (25 June) at the Kornhauskeller in the Old Town of Bern (UNESCO World Heritage Site).

The theme of the 61^e Rencontre was "Text and Image". This topic was chosen with the intention to bridge the chasm between philologists and archaeologists, which has deepened in recent years, and to stimulate anew the cooperation and the dialog between both disciplines. Text and image are often combined on artefacts and complement each other in their communicative function; these artefacts present ideal starting

points for the outlined endeavour. At the same time, “text” and “image” can also be understood as synonyms for philological and archaeological sources respectively. The talks were good examples of how fruitful and productive close cooperation between Assyriologists and Archaeologists can be. Examples of successful bridge-building between the two disciplines were also presented at the aforementioned SGOA conference “Philology and Archaeology – Dialogue in Crisis”, which represented a detailed discussion on the drifting apart of Ancient Near Eastern philology and archaeology.

Keynote speakers that introduced the general theme of the 61^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale included Irene Winter (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA) and Ariane Thomas (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France) in Geneva, and Nicholas Postgate (University of Cambridge, Great Britain) and Frans Wiggermann (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands) in Bern. Andrew George (SOAS University of London, Great Britain), Cécile Michel (CNRS Nanterre, France), Julian Edgeworth Reade (formerly British Museum, Great Britain), Johanna Tudeau (University of Bern) and Irene Winter spoke at the SGOA conference.

Alongside the main theme, the 61^e Rencontre also provided, as is usual at this conference, an open forum for presentations on current research topics – for example, excavation reports or purely philological studies – as well thematic workshops. The proceedings of some workshops have already been published elsewhere as, for example, “Levantine Ivories of the Iron Age: New Perspectives” organised by Claudia E. Suter in *Altorientalische Forschungen* 42/1 (2015), pp. 27–125, “The Future of Ancient Near Eastern Studies” organised by Sabina Franke in *Altorientalische Forschungen* 43 (2016), pp. 159–217, and “Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East” organised by Sara Kipfer in *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 285 (2017).

On 25 June, an extraordinary session entitled “Strategies of Restoration and Reconstruction: Museums, Heritage Sites and Archaeological Parks in Post-War Countries” organised by the international network *shirín* (Syrian Heritage in Danger: an International Research Initiative and Network) was held within the framework of the Rencontre thanks to separate financial support from the Federal Office for Civil Protection, Section Protection of Cultural Property, the Federal Office of Culture, and the Johanna Dürmüller-Bol Foundation. The session preceded the statutory meeting of the interna-

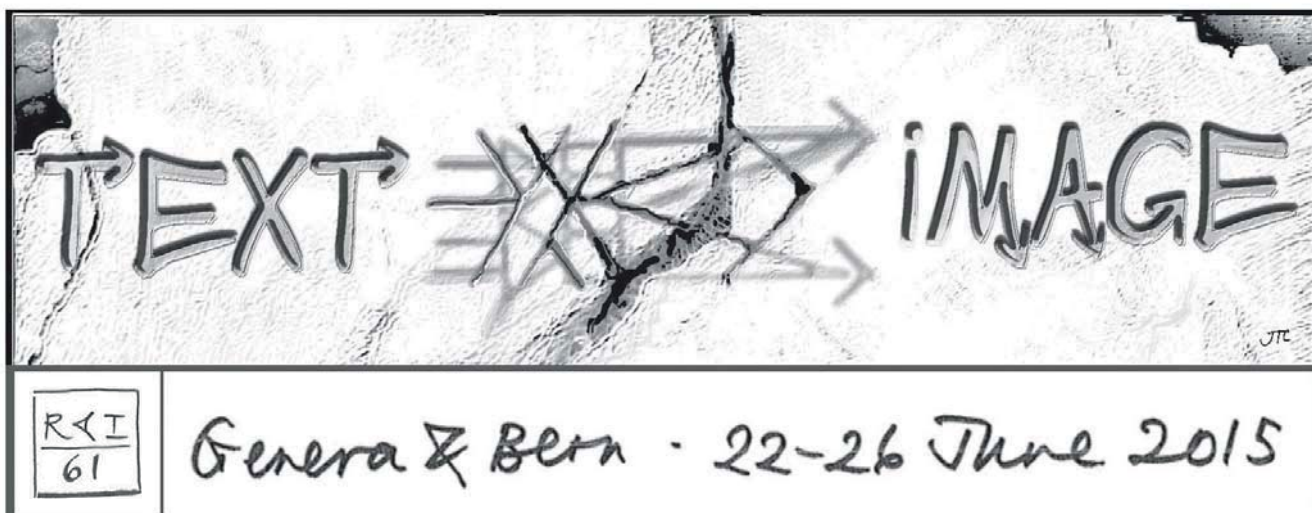
tional committee of *shirín* (shirin-international.org). Twenty invited speakers and an audience of well over 150 people from many countries took part in this extraordinary session. The large number of guests from Iraq and Syria was especially gratifying.

A total of 339 individuals from 32 countries took part in the 61^e Rencontre, including the organising committee, helpers, invited guests as well as the members of the honorary committee; 74 were from Switzerland alone. In addition to the keynote speakers, the invited guests included representatives of the antiquity authorities of Syria (Lina Quteifan and Ahmed Deeb), Iraq (Ahmad Kamil), Iraqi Kurdistan (Abubaker Zengin), and Turkey (Zülküf Yılmaz).

This Rencontre was made possible by the financial support of the Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, the Schweizerische Akademie für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Orientalische Altertumskunde, the University of Geneva through its Faculté des Lettres, its Département des Sciences de l’Antiquité, its Commission Administrative, and the Société Académique de Genève, the Ernst and Lucie Schmidheiny Foundation, other generous anonymous donors in Geneva, the Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève, the Burggemeinde of Bern, the Bern city government, the University of Bern and its Philosophisch-historische Fakultät.

The conference’s administrative office and all correspondence related to the organisation of this Rencontre were in the competent hands of Sabine Ecklin. Further helpers in Geneva and Bern were Emmanuelle Bender, Sebastian Borkowski, Michelle Brunner, Manuel Ceccarelli, John Chaney, Emmert Clevestine, Sarah Dermeh, Max Gander, Nicole Gäumann, Jonathan Gerber, Joëlle Graber-Pesonen, Joëlle Heim, Maylawi Herbas, Margaret Jaques, Mariam Khachatryan, Fabienne Kilchör, Alexandra Kull, Lucas Lador, Florian Lippke, Moira Looney, Michael Mäder, Hannah Mönninghoff, Marthe Nicolet, Karia Novoa Martin, Sébastien Tolosa, Adriana Urango and Sebastian von Peschke. Ekin Kozal and Mohamad Fakhro looked after the invited guests from Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.

Particularly warm thanks are due to Sabine Ecklin, who not only maintained the conference’s administrative office, but also coordinated and handled the editing and layout of the present volume and executed this task with her characteristic perfectionism.



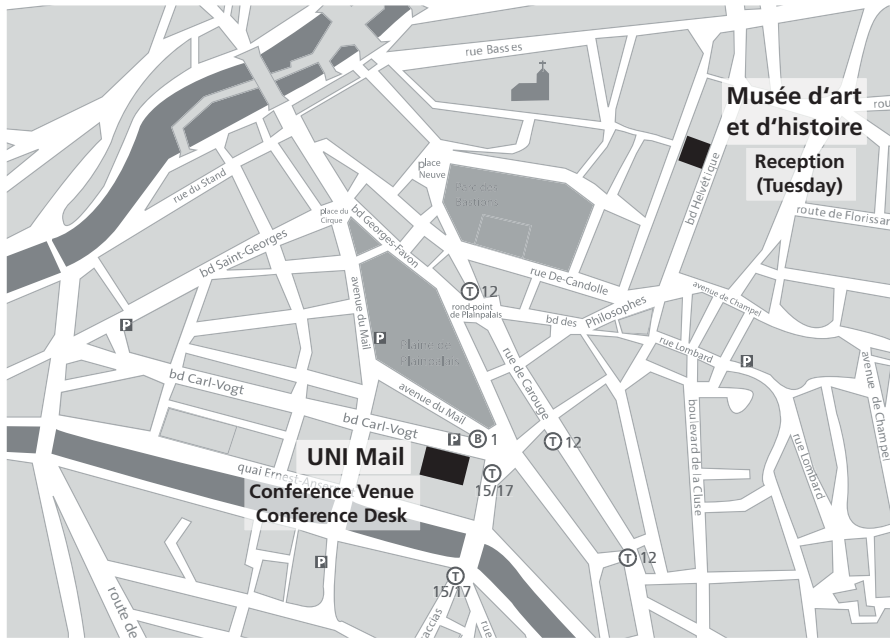
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Genera & Bern - 22-26 June 2015

The Programme



City Map Geneva



Musée d'art et d'histoire
Reception (Tuesday)

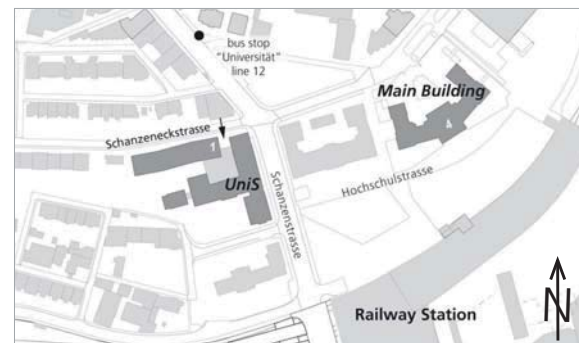
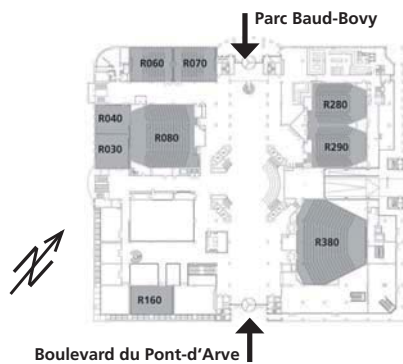
Musée d'art et d'histoire
Rue Charles-Galland 2
1206 Genève

Uni Mail
Boulevard du Pont-d'Arve 40
1211 Genève



Opening Hours of Conference Desk

	Sunday 21 st June	Monday 22 nd June	Tuesday 23 rd June	Wednesday 24 th June	Thursday 25 th June	Friday 26 th June
8.30 – 12						
12 – 15						
15 – 17		Geneva: Uni Mail R160	Geneva: Uni Mail R160		Bern: UniS in front of room A003	Bern: UniS in front of room A003
17 – 18	Geneva: Uni Mail, R160			Bern: UniS in front of room A003		
18 – 19						



Monday

22nd June 2015 (Geneva)

Welcoming Session & Opening Session in Geneva

Room	R380
08.30	Registration
09.30 –	Jean-Dominique Vassalli (Rector, University of Geneva)
10.10	Nicolas Zufferey (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Geneva) Cécile Michel (IAA president) Antoine Cavigneaux (local organizer RAI 61, University of Geneva)
10.10 –	Irene Winter
10.35	Image as Text and Text as Image: The Interplay Between Sign and Design
10.35 –	Ariane Thomas
11.00	Ecrit et image: hommage à Pierre Amiet
11.00 –	
11.30	Coffee break

morning

4

22nd June 2015 (Geneva)

Monuments I:

The Object as Medium

Historical Geography

Levant

Iran

Projects

Chair: M. Novák

Chair: S. Garfinkle

Chair: V. Matošian

Chair: A. Özfirat

Chair: B. N. Porter

Room	R280	R060	R080	R070	R290
11.30 –	Frances Pinnock	Aslihan Yurtsever	Herbert Niehr	Gérard Gertoux	Vanessa Juloux
12.00	Representations of Stelae in the Palace Glyptic of Early Syrian Ebla	Hittites in North-Central Anatolia: Current Evidence	Questions of Text and Image in Sam'al (Zincirli)	Dating the Reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes	An Open Scientific Collaboration for Studying Relationships Between Entities and their Agency
12.00 –	Lance Allred	Paul Gauthier	Cory Crawford	Alison Betts	Michael Dick
12.30	The Form and Function of Sin-iddinam's Canal Inscription	Not the Aššur you're Thinking of: On the Location of Aššur Province in the Middle Assyrian Kingdom	Envisioning the Soul at Zincirli: Image, Text, and Personhood on the Katumuwa Stele	New Perspectives on Zoroastrianism in Chorasmia: The Akchahan-kala Wall Paintings	Mis Pi: From Clay to Silicon
12.30 –	Nicolas A. Corfú , Joachim Oelsner	Sebastian Borkowski	Emanuel Pfoh	Michele Minardi	Ulrike Felsing
13.00	Beschriftete Hundestuetten	Von Sümpfen, Königen und Rebellen: Zur Wahrnehmung und Darstellung der südmesopotamischen Feuchtgebiete	Feudalism and Vassalage in the Ancient Levant?	Excavations in Ancient Chorasmia: The Central Monument of Akshakhan-kala	Die Koexistenz von chinesischen und westlichen visuellen Kulturen in zeitgenössischen Infografiken
13.00 –					
14.30					

Lunch break

lunch

5

Monday

22nd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Monuments II: Representing Royalty and War	Gods and Myths	W1 Levantine Ivories of the Iron Age	W2 Mesopotamian Incantation Literature
	Chair: P. Matthiae	Chair: D. Katz	Chair: C. Suter	Chair: W. Farber
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
14.30 – 15.00	Beate Pongratz-Leisten Tigrisian Royal Representati- on: Text and Image Between Tradition and Innovation	Karen Sonik Myth and Art in Mesopotamia	14:20 Introduction Silvana Di Paolo An Holistic Approach: What the First Millennium BC Levantine Ivories Tell us and what they Could Tell us about Production	Nadezda Rudik A New Interpretation of an Old Incantation and Its 'Sitz im Leben'
15.00 – 15.30	Daniel Bonneterre Quelle place reste-t-il pour Zimri-Lim à l'ombre du dieu de l'orage ?	Paola Poli On the Black and White De- coration: A Simple Opposition of Two Colours or an Aniconic Manifestation of an Ancient Myth?	Giorgio Affanni et al. Protocol for the Study of Ancient Ivory: The Case of the Arslan Tash Ivories	Nathan Wasserman Piercing the Eye: On an Old Babylonian Love Incantation and the Preparation of Kohl
15.30 – 16.00	Davide Nadali , Lorenzo Verderame Neo-Assyrian Statues in Context	Evelyne Koubková Black Heads and Shining Beards	Dirk Wicke From Ivory to Bronze: Artistic Interactions across Media	Andrew George Mesopotamian Incantations in the Schøyen Collection
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break			

afternoon

6

22nd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Monuments II: Representing Royalty and War	Gods and Myths	W1 Levantine Ivories of the Iron Age	W2 Mesopotamian Incantation Literature
	Chair: P. Machinist	Chair: G. Farber	Chair: C. Suter	Chair: H. Stadhouders
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
16.30 – 17.00	Dishad A. Marf Who 'Destroyed' Muşafir?	Barbara N. Porter Gods That Float and Gods With Wheels: Boats and Cha- riots as Non-Anthropomorphic Deities	Liat Neah The Search for Local Identity: Questions on the Continuity of Levantine Ivories from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age	Elyze Zomer Lost in Translation: An Intro- duction to the Corpus of Middle Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations
17.00 – 17.30	Mehmet-Ali Ataç Identifying the Big Bird in the Battle Reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II	Guido Kryszat Der Gott Assur und das assy- rische Pantheon in der frühen altassyrischen Zeit	David Kertai In the Realm of Images: The Use of Ivories within Late Assyrian Palaces	Frank Simons 'Šurpu' VIII: The Lost Incantations
17.30 – 18.00	Jacob Lauinger Sargon II at Tell Tayinat: Text and Image of a Neo-Assyrian King in the West	Frauke Weiershäuser 'Erra plotted evil' - images of destruction in the Song of Erra	Marian Feldman Consuming Ivories in the Iron Age Levant	Daniel Schwemer The rapadu-Flower Dyes the Steppe: An Akkadian Incan- tation from Early Hellenistic Babylonia
18.00 – 18.30	Chikako E. Watanabe , Jamie Novotny Identifying the Four Foreigners Paying Homage to Assurbanipal in BM ME 124945-6	Daniel Bodi The Divine 'Image' and 'Shadow' in Iconography, Inscriptions and Philology	Irene Winter Response	
19.00 – 21.00	IAA Meeting (Board) im Landolt			

evening

7

Tuesday

23rd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Assyria	W3 International Relations	W4 Analog Life, Digital Image	W5 The Heavenly Bodies in Image and Text
	Chair: M.-A. Ataç	Chair: S. F. Adalı	Chair: A. Archi	Chair: W. Monroe
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
09.00 –	Anastasia Moskaleva	Serdar Ş. Güner	8:50 Introduction	Karen Sonik
09.30	Some Observations on the Royal Inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta I	The Balance of Power and Geopolitics in the Hittite-Egypt-Mitanni System	Stephanie Rost , Adam Anderson Contextualizing Umma: The Social and Physical Geography of the Umma Province of the Ur III State (2112-2004 BC)	'The Stars, Like Dust': Envisioning Celestial Bodies and Imag(in)ing Constellations
09.30 –	Alexander Edmonds	Lucas G. Freire	Rune Rattenborg	John Wee
10.00	The Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III at Mila Mergi Revisited	System and Society: The Near East in the Second Millennium BCE	Scaling the Early State: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Scale and Extent of Middle Bronze Age Institutional Households	Houses of Secret and the Meanings of Planetary Exaltations
10.00 –	Sanae Ito	Emanuel Pfoh	Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum , Christian W. Hess	John Steele
10.30	Assurbanipal's Egalitarianism	Reconsidering International Relations in the Levant During the Late Bronze Age	Texts, Tells, and Semantic Mapping: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of Upper Mesopotamia	Drawing Images in Astronomical Texts
10.30 –	Coffee break			
11.00				

morning

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23rd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Assyria	W3 International Relations	W4 Analog Life, Digital Image	W5 The Heavenly Bodies in Image and Text
	Chair: G. Frame	Chair: L. Freire	Chair: H. D. Baker	Chair: W. Monroe
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
11.00 –	Ann Shafer , Yan Jia	Alex Aissaoui	Adam Anderson	M. Willis Monroe
11.30	Mapping Assyria from the Center to the Edge: A Comparative Study of Space and Rhetoric in the Balawat Doors	A Near Eastern States System Before Age: Comparing the 'Greek Poleis System' with 'Ancient Near Eastern State Formation System'	Scalable Contextuality for Cuneiform Tablets: Macro and Micro narratives from Aššur-nādā to Šišahšušar	Paradigm and Model in Astral Thinking
11.30 –	Amitai Baruchi-Unna	Selim F. Adalı	Edward Stratford	Mathieu Ossendrijver
12.00	Reporting the Content of Divine Positive Response (annu kēnu) in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions	What is Policy Impact? Questioning Narratives of Political Events in the Last Century of the Assyrian Empire	Portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF) Analysis as an Augmentation of Literacy Studies and Social Network Analysis in the Old Assyrian Trade	Evidence for Geometrical Methods in Babylonian Procedure for the Motion of Jupiter
12.00 –	Kazuko Watanabe	Peter Machinist	Shai Gordin	Discussion
12.30	What are 'Esarhaddon's Succession Oath Documents'?	Respondent to the papers presented	The Cult of Ea in Babylon: Naming Practices and Social Trends during the 'Long Sixth-Century' (626–484 BCE)	
12.30 –	Lunch break			
14.00				

lunch

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Tuesday

23rd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Architecture	Nuzi	W4 Analog Life, Digital Image	W6 Iconography and Iconology
	Chair: M. van Ess	Chair: J. C. Fincke	Chair: J. Miller	Chair: H. U. Steymans
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
14.00 – 14.30	Lucia Mori , Federico Manuelli „The King at the Gate”: Monumental Fortifications and the Rise of Local Elites at Arslantepe at the End of the 2nd Millennium BCE	Anne Löhnert , Hannah Mönninghoff Storage Facilities and Their Administration in the Palace of Nuzi	Seraina Nett Sheep, Grain, and Bureaucrats: Approaches to the Analysis of Economic Institutions in the Ur III Empire	Raffaele Argenziano L'iconologie de Panofsky entre la continuité et les changements
14.30 – 15.00	Paolo Matthiae Le rapport entre texte et image dans les reliefs de Khorsabad: tradition et innovation un siècle et demi après Assurnasirpal II	Benedetta Bellucci Composite Creatures on Seal Impressions of Nuzi	Giulia Torri Hittite Inventory Texts (CTH 241-250): A Reassessment	Francesca Onnis Charles Clermont-Ganneau: A Methodology of Iconology Before Panofsky
15.00 – 15.30	Johanna Tudeau , Alexander Sollee Step by Step: Correcting our Mental Image of the Mušlālu	Véronique Pataï Textes et images à Nuzi : le cas du scribe Ith-āpiḫe fils de Taya	Discussion	Othmar Keel , Florian Lippke Problems of Iconographic Interpretation when Starting from a Text: A Case Study

15.30 –
16.00

Coffee break

afternoon

10

23rd June 2015 (Geneva)

	Architecture	Nuzi	W4 Analog Life, Digital Image	W6 Iconography and Iconology
	Chair: M. Lebeau	Chair: J. C. Fincke	Chair: G. Nicolet	Chair: H. U. Steymans
Room	Geneva, Uni Mail R280	Geneva, Uni Mail R290	Geneva, Uni Mail R060	Geneva, Uni Mail R070
16.00 – 16.30	Heather D. Baker A Neo-Babylonian Plan of a Temple and its Captions: BM 68840+ Reconstructed	Brigitte Lion , Philipp Abrahami Orders of Textile Works at Nuzi (With a Focus on JEN 314)	Michele Cammarosano , Gerfrid G.W. Müller 3D Digitization and Analysis of Cuneiform Texts: Methods, Results, Perspectives	Patrick Wyssmann Teaching Iconographic Analysis and Iconology According to the Fribourg School at Bern and Zurich
16.30 – 17.00	Monica Palmero Fernandez Recontextualising Religious Experience and Ritual in the Early Dynastic Period: The Temple at Tell Agrab as a Case Study	Jeanette C. Fincke The Nuzi Apprenticeship Contracts	Jacob Dahl , Hendrik Hameeuw , Klaus Wagensonner Looking both Forward and Back: Imaging Cuneiform	Pavel Zupan , Hans Ulrich Steymans An Archer Aiming at a Dragon or Ninurta's Fight Against Anzu: Constellations Perceived as a Link Between Image Text
17.00 – 17.30	Natalie N. May „True image of the God”: Adoration of the King's Image, Imperial Cult and Territorial Control	Paola Negri Scafa „If the Earth Quakes...”: The Nuzi Text SMN 3180	Ilya Khait Cuneiform Labs: Annotating Akkadian Corpora	Discussion

19.00 – Reception at the Musée d'art et d'histoire

22.00 Music: Samir Mokrani, musique du Yémen, chant et luth qanbūs

evening

11

Wednesday

24th June 2015 (Fribourg)



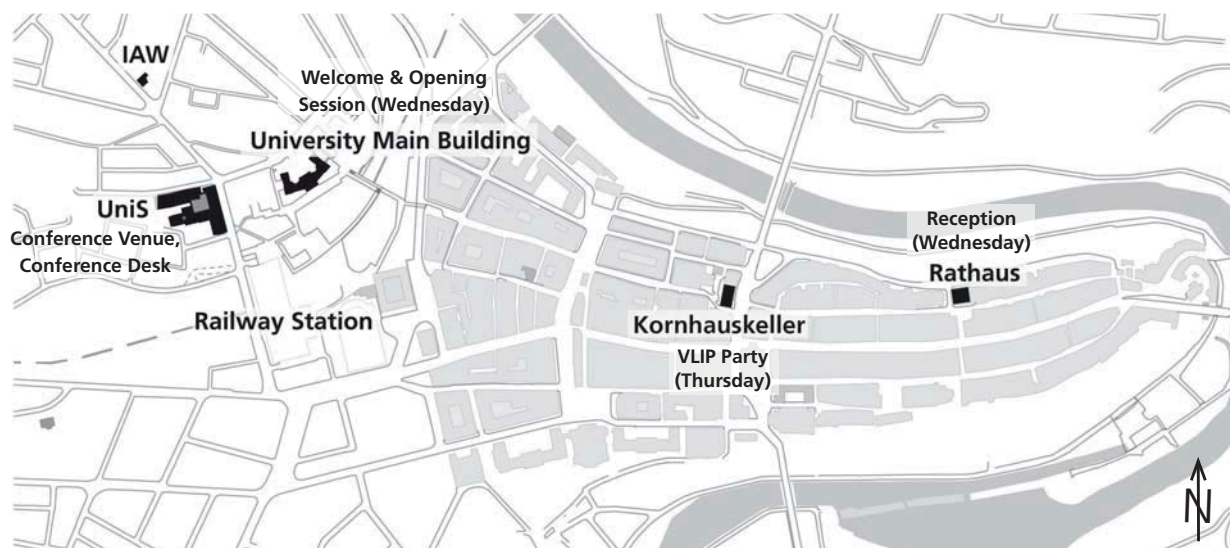
Fribourg Visit, Welcoming Session & Opening Session in Bern

09.00	Departure from Geneva, transport to Fribourg	Meeting point: Quai Ernest-Ansermet 26, 1205 Genève
10.30 – 12.30	Visit to Fribourg (Bible + Orient Museum)	
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break	
13.30	Departure from Fribourg	Meeting point: Université de Fribourg (MISÉRI-CORDE), Rue de Rome 1, 1700 Fribourg
15.00 – 18.00	Registration	
15.30 – 17.30	IAA General meeting (for all members)	Room: Bern, UniS A003
18.00	Martin Täuber (Rector, University of Bern)	
18.30	Virginia Richter (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Bern) Mirko Novák (local organizer RAI 61, University of Bern)	Room: Bern, University Main Building 201
18.30	Frans Wiggerman	
19.00	Where am I?	
19.00	Nicolas Postgate	
19.30	Bridging the Gap – in Retrospect and Prospect	
20.00 – 23.00	Reception at the Rathaus in Bern, Music: Nedjma-Trio Welcome address: Reto Nause (Member of the City Council)	

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City Map Bern



Uni Schanzeneck (UniS), Schanzeneckstrasse 1, 3012 Bern
 University Main Building, Hochschulstrasse 4, 3012 Bern
 Institute for Archaeological Sciences (IAW), Länggass-Strasse 10, 3012 Bern

Kornhauskeller, Kornhausplatz 18, 3011 Bern
 Rathaus, Rathausplatz 2, 3011 Bern

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Thursday

25th June 2015 (Bern)

RAI 61		W8 Descriptivism and Probative Metaphor	W7 The Visualization of Emotions	Film
Chair: M.-L. Thomsen	Chair: M. Geller	Chair: S. Kipfer		
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A-126
09.00 – 09.30	Camille Lecompte , Sophie Cluzan Sur quelques aspects de la Figure aux Plumes	Mark Geller The Image of Babylonian Medicine within Medical History	Dominik Bonatz Der stumme Schrei: Kritische Überlegungen zu Emotionen als ein Untersu- chungsfeld der altorientali- schen Bildwissenschaft	08.45 – Introduction by 09.00 Alexei Jankowski, son of Igor Diakonoff
09.30 – 10.00	Ari Kamil Une nouvelle archive privée d'un marchand sumérien à l'époque d'Ur III	Annie Attia Eye Anatomy and Symp- toms: Images and Realities	Elisabeth Wagner-Durand Response	09.00 – Film (1 st screening): 09.55 L'éthique de Kirkenes – un film biographique sur Igor Diakonoff
10.00 – 10.30	Bonka Nedeltscheva The Movement of Text and Image Within the Layout of Envelopes Throughout Mesopotamian History	Henry Stadhouders ,How Much is that Doggie in the Window, Woof Woof?— Retrieving the Pedigree of an Orphaned Figurine	Florian Lippke : Analyzing Emotions in Ancient Media: Between Skepticism and Conceptual Autonomy Phillip M. Lasater : The Snark Hunt for ,Emotions'	10.00 – Film (2 nd screening): 10.55 L'éthique de Kirkenes – un film biographique sur Igor Diakonoff
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break			

morning

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25th June 2015 (Bern)

RAI 61		W8 Descriptivism and Probative Metaphor	W7 The Visualization of Emotions	Extraordinary session: Strategies of Reconstruction
Chair: P. Delnero	Chair: H. Stadhouders	Chair: S. Kipfer		
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
11.00 – 11.30	Sébastien Rey , Julien Chanteau The Sumerian King-Priest: Anatomy of a Paradoxical Concept	Strahil V. Panayotov Healing in Images and Text: The Sickbed Scene	Izak Cornelius ,The Smile on your Face... There's a Truth in your Eyes'. The Iconography of Emotions in the Ancient Near East	11.30 – Cynthia Dunning , Denis 11.45 Genequand , Mohamad Fakhro , Mirko Novák Introduction
11.30 – 12.00	Christoph Schmidhuber Patterns in the Epithets of Old Babylonian Sumerian Inscriptions	Maddalena Rumor Purging Pollution: sikillu in Mesopotamian and Graeco-Roman Purification Rituals	Silvia Schroer Response	11.45 – Jean-Bernard Münch 12.00 Welcome address
12.00 – 12.30	Oded Tammuz Boomerang in Image and Text	Eric Schmidtchen Depicting Demons' Activity Through Symptom Descrip- tions	Panel discussion with Margaret Jaques , Andreas Wagner , Wolfgang Zwickel	12.00 – Maamoun Abdulkarim , 12.20 Lina Qutifan Protecting Heritage Sites in Syria: Tasks and Perspectives
12.30 – 13.00	Marie-Louise Thomsen Ningirsu, Ninurta und Sirius in sumerischem Kontext			12.20 – Ahmad Deeb 12.40 The Status of Syrian Museums
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break			12.40 – Lunch Break 13.40

lunch

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Thursday

25th June 2015 (Bern)

	Sumerian II	Hittite and Anatolia	W7 Representing the Senses	Extraordinary session: Strategies of Reconstruction
	Chair: K. Volk	Chair: J. Hazenbos	Chair: A.-C. Rendu Loisel	
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
14.00 –	Luděk Vacín	Patrick Michel	Kiersten Neumann	13.40 – Ahmad Kamil
14.30	All the King's Adamindugas: Textual Images of Ur III Sovereigns as Managers of the Universe	Construire l'image: dire les rites	Sensing the Sacred in the Neo-Assyrian Temple: The Sights, Smells, and Sounds of the Divine Meal	14.00 The Iraqi Museum Between 2003 and 2014: Experiences in Recreation: The Status of Mosul Museum
14.30 –	Catherine Mittermayer ,	Maksim Kudrinskii ,	Ludovico Portuese	14.00 – Qais Hussein Rashid
15.00	Fabienne Kilchör	Ilya Yakubovich	The Throne Room of Ashurnasirpal II: A Multisensory Experience	14.20 The Status of Archaeological Sites in Iraq under ISIS Occupation
	Text als Bild: 'Graphic Reading' am Beispiel der sumerischen Rangstreitgespräche	Sumerian and Akkadian Elements in Hittite: Ideograms, Logograms or Heterograms?		14.20 – Youssef Kanjou ,
15.00 –	Paul Delnero	Yağmur Heffron	Diana Stein	14.40 Mohamad Fakhro
15.30	Images of Love and Loss: Dumuzi and Inana in Myth and Ritual	Lightly Toasted: Cross-Interpretation Between a kârum Period Burial and the Hittite Royal Funerary Ritual Text, šalliš waštaiš	Architecture and Acoustical Resonances: The 'Tholoi' at Arpachiyah Reconsidered Within a Wider Context	The National Museum of Aleppo: Threats and Strategies for Safekeeping
15.30 –	Coffee break			14.40 – Marc-André Renold
16.00				15.00 Illicit Art Object Trade
				15.00 – Karin Pütt , Diana Miznazi
				15.30 Preparation for Post-Conflict Syria

afternoon

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25th June 2015 (Bern)

	Sumerian II	Hittite and Anatolia	W7 Representing the Senses	Extraordinary session: Strategies of Reconstruction
	Chair: N. Brisch	Chair:	Chair: A. Hawthorn	
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
16.00 –	John Lynch	Şevket Dönmez	Elke Friedrich	16.00 – Cheikhmous Ali
16.30	Underworld Narratives in Context	An Overview on Üçtepe (Tushan?) Excavations: The 1988–1992 Seasons	Semantic Examination of Akkadian Verbs of Perception	16.10 Alep d'hier et d'aujourd'hui
16.30 –	Jacob Klein	Aynur Özırat	Sara Manasterska	16.10 – Michel Al-Maqdissi
17.00	Temple Hymns in Sumerian Literature: An Overview	Dolmens in the Amuq Plain: Kızılkaya-Hatay Survey	Looking and Seeing in the Neo-Assyrian Letters	16.30 Site Recreation and Management Strategies: Requirements and Resources
17.00 –	Monica Philips	İlknur Taş	Shiyanthi Thavapalan	16.30 – Lutz Martin
17.30	Images in Epithets: Textual Imagery in the Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns	An Akdağmadeni Glass Girdle Seal	The Missing Shade of Blue	17.00 Vorderasiatische Museum Berlin and the Tell Halaf Museum
17.45 –	Rehearsed reading of play: 'Ashurbanipal' by Selena Wisnom			17.00 – Hiba al-Bassir
19.15				17.20 Museum Object Restoration
20.00 –	VLIP (very and less important people) Party Kornhauskeller			17.20 – Marc Lebeau
02.00				17.40 The shirīn Initiative: Science vs. Darkness. A utopian view?
				17.40 – Carine Simoes
				18.00 La restitution de biens culturels illégalement sortis du pays
				18.00 – Discussion: Creating Strategies: How, Who and Where?
				19.30

evening

17

Friday

26th June 2015 (Bern)

	Identities I: Human beings	W9 Tales of Royalty	W10 Math & Realia	Akkadian
	Chair: A. Guinan	Chair: N. May	Chair: M. Ossendrijver	Chair: A. George
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
09.00 – 09.30	Lena Fijalkowska Images Painted with Words: The Imagery of Legal Texts from Emar and Ekalte	08:50 Introduction Elisabeth Wagner-Durand 'Pious Shepherd' and 'Guardian of Truth' - In Search for the Narrative Visualization of the Kings' Piety and Righteousness	Cécile Michel Weighing Units, Standards and Weight Artefacts During the Old Assyrian Period	Martin Worthington Ea's Trick Message to Uruk, Revisited
09.30 – 10.00	Simone Pittl The Disabled Body in the Selected Ancient Near Eastern Omentexts	Nicole Brisch The Wise King?	Hagan Brunke Equivalencies: The Neo-Sumerian Administrative Evidence	Jo Ann Scurlock ,enuma eliš' Meets the So-called Babylonian Map of the World: An Image and Its Text
10.00 – 10.30	Nikita Artemov Strategies of Dehumanization: The Image of the Enemies in Mesopotamian Literature and Hebrew Poetry	Frauke Weiershäuser Response paper plus discussion	Carlos Gonçalves The Size of the Things: Metrological Practices in the Old Babylonian Diyala	Selena Wisnom Stress Patterns in Akkadian Poetry: A Comparative Approach

10.30 –
11.00

Coffee break

morning

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26th June 2015 (Bern)

	Identities II: Women	W9 Tales of Royalty	W10 Math & Realia	Akkadian
	Chair: B. Lion	Chair: C. Crawford	Chair: H. Baker	Chair: M. Worthington
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
11.00 – 11.30	Jana Matuszak The Image of the Ideal Wife According to Sumerian Didactic Literature	Julia Linke Building, Arts, and Politics: 'Hidden' Narration in Early Dynastic Votive Plaques	Camille Lecompte Procedures for Estimating the Fields' and Gardens' Surfaces in Pre-Sargonic Documents from Girsu	Eleanor Robson Managing Labour, Imagining Elephants: Scribal Production in a Mid-Second Millennium Agricultural Centre
11.30 – 12.00	Elisa Roßberger Showing Off: Gestures of Display in Old Babylonian Terracotta Plaques	Claus Ambos Narratives of Building Activities as an Element of Royal Legitimation	Stephanie Rost The Administration of Irrigation Systems in the Umma Province of the Ur III State (2112-2004 BC)	Gösta Gabriel Fate Between Speech and Scripture – A Systematic View on the Akkadian Concepts of Šimtu and Naming/Names
12.00 – 12.30	Susandra van Wyk The Secret Crime of the nadītu Priestess in § 110 of the Laws of Hammurabi	Marlies Heinz Response paper plus discussion	Robert Middeke-Conlin Estimating Volume: Methods for Assessing Volume Exhibited and Suggested in Two Old Babylonian Tabular Administrative Texts	Julian Reade Timber for Khorsabad: Alternative Realities

12.30 –
14.00

Lunch break

lunch

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Friday

26th June 2015 (Bern)

	Seals	W9 Tales of Royalty	W10 Math & Realia	W11 The Future of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
	Chair: D. Stein	Chair: D. Nadali	Chair: J. Steele	Chair: S. Franke
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
14.00 –	Manuel Ceccarelli	Barbara Couturaud	Pierre Chaigneau	14.00 – Eva von Dassow
14.30	Bemerkungen zur Funktion der fürbittenden Gottheit	The Image of the King by the End of the Early Bronze Age: Changes in the Figurative Representation of the Fighting Hero	A Procedure Text on Volume Calculations: BM 85196	14.10 Destroyers of Civilization: Daesh and the 21st Century University
14.30 –	Maria Sologubova	Carlos Langa Morales	Laurent Colonna d'Istria	14.10 – Ann Guinan , Judy Bjorkman
15.00	The Goddess Gula on Kassite Seals: Correlation Between Visual and Textual Evidence	Der Feldzugsbericht in Šu-Sins Königsschriften im Vergleich mit Verwaltungs-urkunden	The Fractions 1/3 and 2/3 in the Šakkanakku Period and their Genesis	14.20 Why Mesopotamia Matters
15.00 –	Serdar Yalcin	Dominik Bonatz	Grégoire Nicolet	14.20 – Hans Neumann
15.30	Identity Construction Through Text and Image in Babylonia: The Priests of Enlil and Their Seals	Response paper plus discussion	A Mathematical Class at 'Chantier K' in Mari	14.30 Der Alte Orient in der Schule
				14.40 – Jon Taylor
				14.50 Wedge-Shaped Bridges: A Museum Perspective on Communicating Assyriology
				14.50 – Ariane Thomas
				15.00 Repenser la présentation des Antiquités orientales au Musée du Louvre
				15.00 – Discussion
				15.30
15.30 –	Coffee break			
16.00				

afternoon

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26th June 2015 (Bern)

	Seals	W9 Tales of Royalty	W10 Math & Realia	W11 The Future of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
	Chair: H. U. Steymans	Chair: Linke/Wagner-Durand	Chair: E. Clevenstine	Chair: S. Franke
Room	Bern, UniS A-122	Bern, UniS A201	Bern, UniS A022	Bern, UniS A003
16.00 –	Anne Goddeeris	Discussion	Natalie N. May	16.00 – Eleanor Robson
16.30	No Image Available: Sealing Old Babylonian Contracts		Text and Architecture: YBC 5022 and BM 15285 as 'Manuals of an Architect'	16.10 The Ancient Middle East Online
16.30 –	Melissa Ricetti	Discussion	Christine Proust	16.10 – Andrew Jamieson
17.00	Identification Through Image and Legend: Inscribed Seals from Kārūm Kaniš Level II		Making Equivalent Volume, Brickage and Capacity in Old Babylonian Mathematical Texts	16.20 Community Engagement and Near Eastern Archaeology
17.00 –	Oya Topçuoğlu		Discussion	16.20 – Selena Wisnom
17.30	When One is Not Enough: Multiple Seal Ownership in the Late Old Assyrian Period			16.30 Bringing Assyria to the Stage
				16.40 – Lanah Haddad
				16.50 The Assyrian Empire: A Board Game in Arabic and Kurdish
				16.50 – Gösta Gabriel
				17.00 Design Thinking and the Ancient Near East
				17.00 – Discussion
				17.30
17.30 –	Closing session			
18.00				

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The Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies warmly invites you to take part in this debate:
Philology and Archaeology – Dialogue in Crisis

Saturday

27th June 2015 (Bern)

The Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies (SGOA = Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Orientalische Altertumswissenschaft) coordinates and supports the exploration of Ancient Near Eastern cultures (including Ancient Egypt) at Swiss universities. It combines the chairs for Egyptology, Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and Languages, Ancient History and Bible Studies of the Old Testament (including Archaeology of Palestine and Semitic Studies) based in Switzerland in a working community which is not only open to scholars and teachers, but also to students and other people who are interested in the Ancient Near East and the Bible.

Scientific conferences and study trips, which, if applicable, may also be organized in cooperation with museums, are means through which SGOA contributes to spread the knowledge regarding the Ancient Near Eastern origins of our own culture amongst a wider audience.

Three scientific conferences, which have an interdisciplinary scope or serve the presentation of new and newest finds and studies in the individual disciplines, are held annually. A newsletter, which members receive free of charge once a year, provides information on further and other current developments within the field of Ancient Near Eastern studies.

Room	Bern, UniS A003
Moderator	Irene Winter
09.30	Welcome note (Antoine Cavigneaux, SGOA president)
09.35 – 09.55	Andrew George Interdisciplinary Collaboration Between Institutions and Organisations in London
10.00 – 10.20	Cécile Michel The IAA, an Association for Scholars Working in Cuneiform Studies and Near Eastern Archaeology
10.25 – 10.45	Julian Reade Combining Different Kinds of Historical Information
10.45 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 11.30	Johanna Tudeau Presenting the Berner Altorientalistik Forum
11.30 – 12.30	Plenary session

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**UNIVERSITÄT
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V I L L E D E
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**Fondation
Ernst et Lucie Schmidheiny**

**SOCIÉTÉ
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de Genève**

Opening sessions

Hommage à Pierre Amiet : écrit et image dans l'Antiquité orientale

Avec respect et gratitude

Ariane Thomas

Abstract: Approximately ten years ago, Pierre Amiet left an unpublished work on “text and image” in the Ancient Near East from the 4th to the 1st millennium BCE. With his full consent, we present a synthesis of his larger reflection, based on this work that he generously entrusted to us. Thus, we wish to pay homage to Pierre Amiet who significantly contributed to a better understanding of the Ancient Near East and to the department at the Louvre which he led.

Keywords: Pierre Amiet, Louvre, écrit, image, Orient ancien.

Introduction

Cette conférence a été donnée en l'honneur de Pierre Amiet à partir d'un travail qu'il avait mené précisément sur le thème de l'écrit et de l'image dans l'Antiquité orientale et qu'il avait bien voulu nous confier, l'estimant inachevé bien que déjà très abouti. D'entente avec les organisateurs de cette Rencontre, nous avons voulu saisir cette occasion pour lui rendre hommage, lui qui nous a toujours reçu avec une immense générosité, toujours aussi passionné que passionnant et désireux de transmettre autant que possible son très grand savoir.

Avec son formidable soutien, mais surtout avec la plus grande humilité, nous avons donc préparé une synthèse en tâchant le plus possible de rappeler en même temps les nombreux ouvrages, articles, cours et autres travaux de sa longue et fertile production scientifique qui a commencé en 1950¹, comme la première des Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, à laquelle il assista à Paris.

Nous commencerons par un rapide retour sur les premières études ayant tenté de relier images et textes pour mettre en avant la contribution de Pierre Amiet en faveur d'une analyse indépendante de l'iconographie. Nous présenterons ensuite quelques exemples choisis dans ses travaux démontrant que l'image est largement indépendante de l'écrit qu'elle a souvent précédé dans l'expression de telle ou telle notion. Nous aborderons enfin quelques-unes des nombreuses réflexions de

Pierre Amiet sur les liens étroits, mais autonomes, entre image et écrit avant de finir sur quelques exemples où textes et images semblent davantage concorder.

1 Vers une analyse indépendante de l'iconographie pour une analyse critique des textes

« Toute la tradition issue de l'Antiquité classique, grecque et romaine, a largement admis que les arts figuratifs avaient trouvé l'essentiel de leur inspiration dans une littérature dûment établie au préalable, fondée sur l'écrit. C'est ce que semble attester d'entrée de jeu la prédilection des Grecs pour l'illustration des mythes fondateurs de leurs cités, connus par les poèmes homériques et Hésiode, notamment, alors même que se maintenait très fortement la tradition orale. Prenant le relais en Orient hellénisé, l'art juif, dans sa première attestation connue de la synagogue de Doura Europos, allait inaugurer une tradition rigoureusement identique en se conformant à l'écriture biblique. Et cette tradition se perpétua dans l'art chrétien, même si des thèmes initialement empruntés à l'Antiquité païenne avaient pu recevoir des interprétations symboliques, ou être adoptés à titre simplement décoratif. Le texte écrit est apparu ainsi désormais comme premier par rapport à l'image qui n'en pouvait être que l'illustration à laquelle en somme, l'historien de la pensée pouvait fort bien ne pas s'intéresser. »²

On a donc supposé qu'il en était de même dans l'Orient ancien, l'image n'étant que l'illustration inspirée de textes transmis par la tradition orale de manière suf-

¹ Il est sans doute inutile de rappeler ici qu'il fut conservateur au département des Antiquités orientales du Musée du Louvre à partir de 1961, où il fut appelé par André Parrot, qui dirigeait alors le département à la tête duquel il succéda en 1968 jusqu'à sa retraite en 1988, bien qu'il ait activement poursuivi ses travaux scientifiques après cette date.

² Les propos cités ici sont ceux de Pierre Amiet, extraits de ce travail non publié, de même que pour les autres citations sans référence dans la suite du présent article.

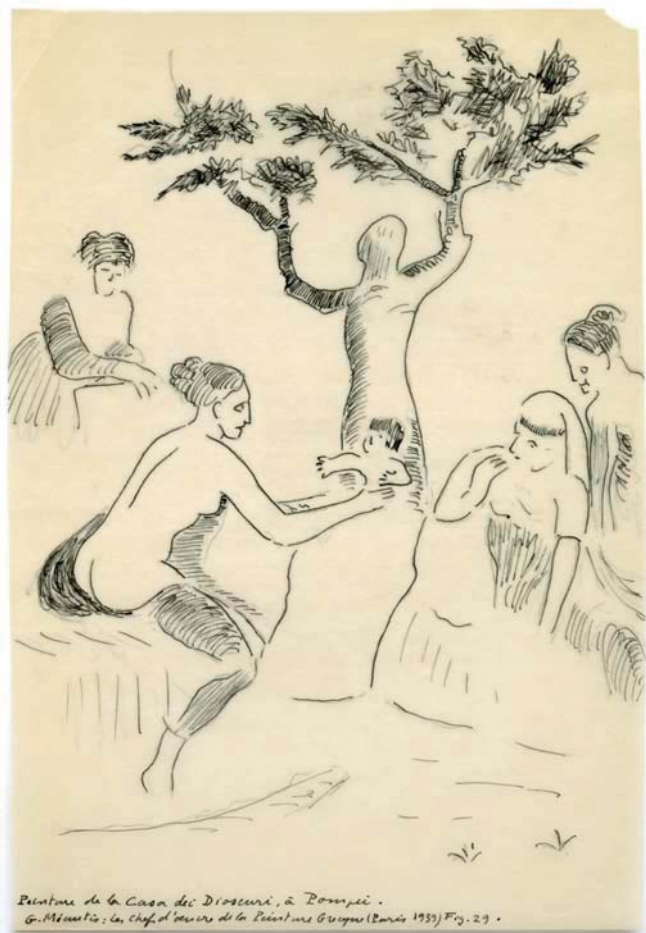


Fig. 1 : Dessin de Pierre Amiet d'après une fresque de Pompéi (d'après Rizzo, 1929, pl. 120).

fisamment stable jusqu'à leur mise par écrit, suivant l'idée exagérée d'une certaine permanence de la culture mésopotamienne sur les trois mille ans de son époque historique. C'est ce que Pierre Amiet appelle le « concordisme abusif ». Ainsi on a voulu reconnaître la figure héroïque de Gilgameš dans le personnage maîtrisant des lions, pourtant anonyme, représenté sur certains sceaux et plaquettes³ ou sur des bas-reliefs assyriens⁴. De même, on a identifié Ereškigal comme la déesse nue, ailée, aux pattes de rapace et maîtresse des animaux sur une fameuse plaque mésopotamienne⁵, mais est-ce toujours elle sur une plaque iranienne dont l'iconographie est pourtant très semblable⁶ ? Par ailleurs le mythe de Nergal et d'Ereškigal aurait été illustré par des scènes d'abattage d'un arbre mythique selon une interprétation d'un sceau-cylindre conservé au Louvre⁷ proposée

dès 1910⁸ et toujours admise en 2013⁹. Cependant, Pierre Amiet suggère qu'il pourrait tout aussi bien s'agir d'un mythe qui se retrouverait dans le monde gréco-romain, alors que les textes mésopotamiens, puis intermédiaires, seraient perdus : peut-être la naissance de Dumuzi/Adonis par rapprochement avec une littérature et une iconographie bien postérieures, à savoir Panyasis au V^e siècle avant J.-C.¹⁰ et une fresque de Pompéi dont Pierre Amiet a fait le croquis (fig. 1)¹¹. Il n'empêche que jusqu'à aujourd'hui, ces rapprochements d'images avec les textes, qui seuls nous livrent des noms et des histoires, restent tentants pour essayer de décoder l'iconographie. Paradoxalement, dans l'Antiquité, cette dernière pourrait avoir été plus parlante au plus grand nombre que la difficile écriture cunéiforme, alors que les images sont aujourd'hui plus complexes à bien des égards, maintenant que nous n'avons plus le même environnement, ni surtout le même imaginaire collectif. Mais alors que le regard antique est en quelque sorte perdu, beaucoup d'orientalistes ont interprété l'iconographie de l'Orient ancien par rapprochement avec les textes connus, oblitérant les différences ou problématiques de cette pratique. Ainsi, « l'histoire fabuleuse d'Etana sembla correspondre sans conteste à l'envol d'un aigle porteur d'un homme au-dessus d'une bergerie, sur un ensemble de sceaux-cylindres »¹². Mais Pierre Amiet relève que « l'écrit narre la chute de l'imprudent [...] [alors que] rien dans l'iconographie connue maintenant par une bonne série de documents, n'évoque cet échec¹³ ; elle semble plutôt relater le contraire, avec l'admiration des bergers devant le miracle ». Selon lui, c'est « H. Frankfort qui allait porter à sa perfection ce type de démarche en 1939 en soulignant qu'il interprétait des sceaux du 3^e millénaire à l'appui de l'*Enuma Eliš* « alors que l'existence même de Babylone et de son dieu Marduk à cette époque était problématique. » Après la guerre, des essais plus critiques analysèrent l'iconographie à part entière pour en faire un outil de critique des textes. Ce furent notamment les contributions de « la savante spécialiste » Mme Douglas Van Buren¹⁴ et du jeune Pierre Amiet¹⁵, qui venait tout juste d'achever son mémoire à l'École du Louvre sur « L'aigle dans l'art et la religion de la Mésopotamie archaïque des origines à la fin du 3^e millénaire ». Dès 1950, Mme Van Buren incitait à faire « la critique textuelle des mythes babyloniens en utilisant les documents iconographiques plus anciens, témoins d'une tradition moins adultérée » que les écrits ayant substitué Marduk ou Ninurta à Šamaš,

3 Smith 1875 frontispice. On note par ailleurs qu'un de ces sceaux se vit d'abord identifié comme représentant Gilgameš et Noé (Smith 1875 : 257) puis, alors que l'on progressait dans la connaissance de l'Orient ancien, comme Gilgameš et Šin ou Šamaš (Ward 1910 : 43, fig. 110).

4 Amiet 1988 : 405, fig. 604–605.

5 Collon 2005.

6 Amiet 1977a : n° 130. De la même manière, Pierre Amiet (1960 : 215–221) s'est interrogé sur l'identification du dieu des eaux dans la glyptique retrouvée dans le palais de Mari, suivant qu'il faille la rattacher plutôt aux textes mythologiques postérieurs connus au Levant et en particulier à Ugarit ou bien plutôt aux textes mésopotamiens.

7 Amiet 1976a : n° 105.

8 Ward 1910 : 149, fig. 399.

9 Ponchia/Luukko 2013 : couverture avec ce sceau.

10 Pierre Amiet se réfère à Contenau 1941 : 47.

11 Ce qui nous permet de rappeler qu'il est aussi un grand dessinateur ayant livré notamment d'innombrables dessins de sceaux.

12 Voir Amiet 1976a : 138, fig. 119 ; Amiet 1996 : fig. 4.

13 Bien que l'on estime désormais qu'il s'agit d'un échec relatif, la seconde tentative ayant pu réussir (Haul 2000).

14 Van Buren 1950 : 159–174 ; 1953 : 47–58 ; 1954 : 24–41. Elle a notamment montré (1950 : 173, pl. X, fig. 4) que le vainqueur est Šamaš et non Marduk ou Ninurta.

15 Amiet 1950 (son tout premier article) ; 1952 : 149–167 ; 1953b : 183–185.

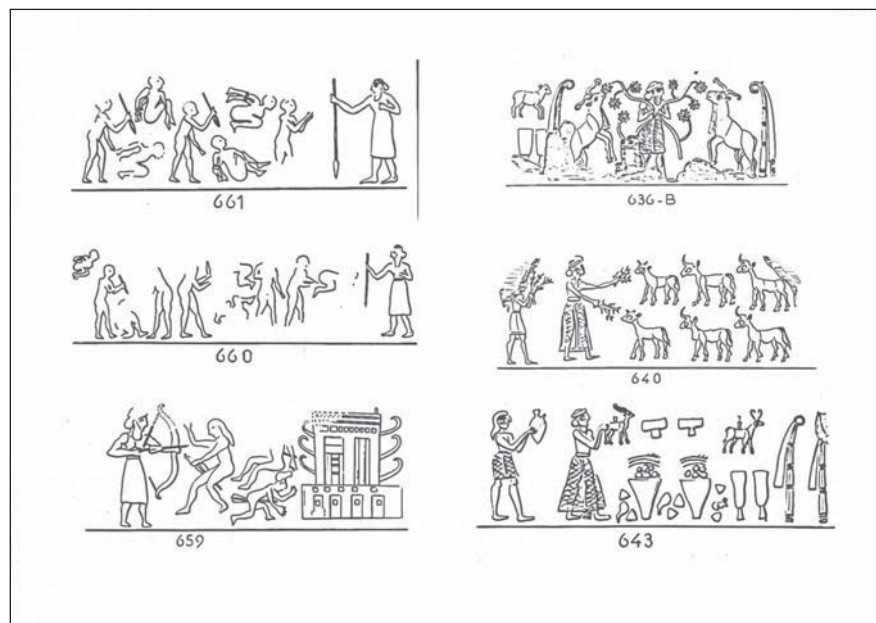


Fig. 2 : Dessins de sceaux et empreintes de sceaux ; époque d'Uruk (Amiet 1982, pl. 43, n° 636-B, pl. 44, n° 640, 643, pl. 46, n° 659, pl. 47, n° 660, 661, 636 b).

comme *vainqueur* de l'oiseau malfaisant ». Et cependant [selon Pierre Amiet] elle n'a[vait] pas été [assez] loin [...] [car il s'agissait pour lui] de constater qu'à l'époque présargonique, l'homme-oiseau se présentait de façon parfaitement pacifique, [...] « n'évoqu[ant] en rien ni jamais le méchant dieu Zû et son mythe ». L'analyse indépendante des images pouvait donc révéler des versions antérieures différentes de celles écrites plus tardivement (dans des contextes historiques précis), voire attester d'un vrai changement mental par rapport à certaines figures mythologiques qui sinon nous serait inconnu. En somme « [...] l'iconographie se trouvait devoir être prise en considération dans une reconstitution de l'évolution de la pensée religieuse, et il n'était plus possible de plaquer simplement une image sur un texte supposé premier pour constater la concordance pré-supposée, dans une démarche définissable comme un concordisme abusif. » La recherche dans ce domaine semble d'ailleurs avoir été assez largement découragée au départ.

2 L'image avant ou sans l'écrit, l'image comme outil pour une étude critique des textes

A côté du fait que la tradition orale a grandement évolué avant d'être mise par écrit, les textes mésopotamiens – aussi variés et instructifs soient-ils – ne sont qu'un filtre opéré par les scribes et leurs autorités, qui plus est lacunaire du fait de pertes irrémédiables – sans compter tout ce qui reste encore à découvrir. L'iconographie apparaît donc dans certains cas comme le témoin de récits jamais écrits (ou disparus) et non pas seulement transformés au fil du temps. C'est notamment le cas de la figure du maître des animaux, puis surtout du « roi-prêtre », à laquelle s'est particulièrement attaché Pierre Amiet. Avant tout écrit, au 5^e millénaire avant notre ère, on assiste ainsi à l'expression en image d'un

concept d'autorité avec « la multiplication d'un « maître humain, mais souvent monstrueux » des animaux »¹⁶. Selon Pierre Amiet, cette figure perdure à l'époque historique et se retrouve jusqu'au 1^{er} millénaire sous la forme de génies bienfaisants dans les plaines urbanisées¹⁷, mais aussi chez les nomades¹⁸. Par ailleurs, d'après des empreintes de Suse I⁹, la figure du maître des animaux aurait une filiation directe, quoique complexe, avec ce qu'il a proposé d'identifier comme un « roi-prêtre » à l'époque d'Uruk. Rappelons seulement que selon lui, cette appellation, qu'il a d'abord proposée en 1953²⁰, ne désignerait finalement que la figure identifiée à l'Uruk III final, tandis qu'auparavant, l'iconographie refléterait plutôt des « chefs de guerre » (et peut-être de clans)²¹. Ces derniers feraient place à l'Uruk III « à un Roi-prêtre proprement dit, certainement unique [...] [qui se présente comme un] « bon pasteur » » (fig. 2). Selon Pierre Amiet, cette nouvelle iconographie²² témoignerait d'un changement majeur, pourtant absent des textes qui font alors leur apparition dans la même sphère dont émanent les images en question, à savoir que « [d]e même que les pasteurs transhumants proto-élamites ont pris le pouvoir à Suse », les pasteurs au-

16 Voir Amiet 1980 : fig. 1578, qui en un des plus beaux exemples. Pierre Amiet souligne par ailleurs qu'une mythologie apparentée a été élaborée autrement dans le décor peint sur la grande surface offerte par l'épaule d'une jarre apparentée à celles de Tépé Sialk, à l'est du Luristan (Amiet 1979 : 342, fig. 15-17).

17 Par exemple Amiet 1972 : n° 2163 ; voir aussi plus loin par exemple Amiet 1992 : 147-156.

18 Par exemple au Luristan Amiet 1976b : n° 181. A ce sujet, Pierre Amiet soulève la question du lien entre un style visuel et l'absence d'écriture comme reflets d'un certain mode de pensée. « Cette fantaisie débridée brave la rigueur, l'effort de rationalité même, de l'iconographie élaborée dans les civilisations de l'écriture. »

19 Voir Amiet 1966 : 62-63.

20 Amiet 1953a : 23 puis 1957 : 123 et 1961 : 29.

21 Voir par exemple Amiet 1977a : 354, fig. 228 ; Amiet 1980 : pl. 47, n° 660-661 et 659 ; Amiet 1987 : 101, fig. 2.

22 Voir par exemple Amiet 1980 : pl. 43.



Fig. 3 : Tablette proto-élamite avec empreinte de sceau-cylindre ; Suse, mission J. de Morgan 1901 ; époque de Suse III, argile, H. 21,1 cm. ; Musée du Louvre, département des Antiquités orientales, inv. Sb 2801 (© RMN - Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux).

raient pris le pouvoir à Uruk et « imposé leur déesse » [...] [dans un complexe religieux qui serait le véritable ancêtre de l'*Eanna* de la tradition historique. Le] « < troupeau sacré > [serait] plutôt celui de leur chef devenu Roi-prêtre, en somme tout comme la chèvre a été attribuée au dieu éponyme des Amorites, dans l'iconographie babylonienne. Ce rapprochement [...] met en évidence une des constantes majeures de l'histoire orientale [...] [à savoir] l'omniprésence du nomadisme, paradoxalement civilisateur lors de chaque sédentarisation. »²³ « **L'absence dans les textes contemporains d'Uruk de titre de fonctions correspondant à celle du Roi-prêtre** (malgré l'existence de listes de personnes, ancêtres des répertoires lexicaux) ne saurait justifier la négation de son existence, attestée par l'analyse du répertoire iconographique de la période finale. Texte et images coexistent donc ici mais ne peuvent être confrontés pour s'éclairer mutuellement parce que les uns et les autres relatent des domaines différents de la vie de leurs créateurs. »

Toujours sans textes à confronter là-dessus, selon Pierre Amiet, l'iconographie révèle non pas seulement des changements historiques, mais des mutations ou évolutions mentales dont les textes ne font pas état parce qu'ayant d'autres fonctions. Il s'est ainsi intéressé tout particulièrement à la question de l'apparition d'une conception anthropomorphe des divinités, dont la voie aurait été ouverte d'abord par la cérémonie du mariage sacré qu'il identifie sur une **série de scènes de rencontre du roi-prêtre et d'une femme** à la fin du 4^e millénaire²⁴. « **Et ce roi-prêtre** [...] apparaît comme le modèle du dieu anthropomorphe sumérien »²⁵.

Il est impossible de citer ici l'ensemble des travaux de Pierre Amiet et nous évoquerons seulement en dernier exemple son analyse de l'iconographie du 3^e millénaire

avant J.-C. comme révélatrice de « l'avènement d'une cosmologie mythique encore simpliste »²⁶, illustrée selon lui par l'apparition du thème du dieu-bateau, lequel est alors sans exact parallèle écrit connu à ce jour.

3 Liens étroits mais autonomes entre image et écrit, deux formes d'expression de la pensée à la fois solidaires et largement indépendantes : quelques pistes

Il n'empêche que s'ils n'expriment pas souvent la même chose au même moment, écrit et image sont étroitement liés dans l'Orient ancien, alors même que « l'écriture [y] est née de la reproduction, par croquis plus ou moins schématisés, des choses de ce monde »²⁷. A ce sujet se pose la question du symbole, qui est un code graphique, à mi-chemin entre image et écrit, sur lequel il faut s'être entendu collectivement. Pierre Amiet s'est notamment intéressé à une empreinte de *Ĝamdat Našr* portant des noms de cités représentés par un symbole graphique²⁸. L'image emblème de la déesse Inanna est apparue sur les monuments figurés de l'époque d'Uruk avant de devenir également son idéogramme. On peut aussi évoquer les symboles, iconographique et écrit, des cornes et de l'étoile divines, qui sont réunis par exemple sur la stèle du divin *Narām-Sîn*²⁹.

Par ailleurs, Pierre Amiet s'est également interrogé sur la corrélation possible entre l'apparition et le développement concomitant d'iconographie et de styles nouveaux avec celle d'une nouvelle écriture. On reconnaît ainsi l'apparition d'images nouvelles de manière contemporaine à celle d'une écriture inédite à l'Uruk final III, de même qu'en parallèle, en Susiane pour la culture proto-élamite³⁰ (fig. 3).

En allant plus loin, la question peut également se poser du lien entre la codification iconographique opérée à la fin du 3^e millénaire, qui s'accompagne vite de l'appauvrissement des thèmes représentés. C'est notamment le cas des sceaux qui, à partir de l'époque néo-sumérienne, puis à l'époque amorrite, représentent essentiellement des scènes de présentation avec intercession ou bien des scènes de victoire³¹, en parallèle de l'accroissement et de la diversification des textes. Pierre Amiet, souligne que cette « iconographie [très répétitive et appauvrie de la période amorrite] est massivement indépendante de la littérature que les scribes sumériens, et leurs émules akkadiens, ont [pourtant] porté[e] alors à son apogée. [...] Le thème de la présentation (avec intercession le plus souvent) semble pour-

26 Amiet 1997a : 107, fig. 19.

27 Avant l'apparition de l'écriture même, des images avaient pu exprimer autrement que l'écrit proprement dit des choses, en particulier la céramique peinte et la glyptique (Bottéro/Kramer 1993 : 43).

28 Matthews 1993 : fig. 10, n° 64.

29 Amiet 1988 : fig. 49.

30 Voir par exemple Amiet 1986 : n° 49/6 ; 1980 : n° 585 (sur laquelle on retrouve l'énigmatique « triangle hirsute » (peut-être une sorte d'idéogramme).

31 Voir par exemple Amiet 1972 : n° 1769 ; 1973 : n° 280.

23 Amiet 2002 : 102.

24 Voir Amiet 1980 : pl. 45.

25 Amiet 2013 : 122.



Fig. 4 : Stèle kudurru ; Suse, mission J. de Morgan 1898 ; époque kassite, règne de Meli-Šipak II (1186-1172 avant J.-C.) ; calcaire noir ; H. 65 cm. ; Musée du Louvre, département des Antiquités orientales, inv. Sb 22 (© RMN - Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / René-Gabriel Ojéda).

tant solidaire d'une forme de piété personnelle spécifique de la nouvelle élite des scribes ou plus largement des lettrés [en réaction à Akkad] de l'époque néo-sumérienne [puis amorrite]. » A ce sujet, Pierre Amiet a également fait observer l'absence d'influence des grands textes recueillis dans les bibliothèques, comme celle fameuse d'Assurbanipal, sur l'iconographie assyrienne (tant dans les grands décors que sur les sceaux, etc.), même s'il ne faut pas négliger que de nombreux vestiges perdus faussent quelque peu notre idée³².

Mais outre ces possibles corrélations entre, d'une part l'apparition et le développement d'un style iconographique et d'une écriture spécifiques, et d'autre part l'« appauvrissement » de l'iconographie et l'essor de la production écrite, on constate une relative dissociation entre image et écrits, y compris sur les mêmes œuvres. Par exemple le kudurru de Meli-Šipak II (fig. 4) porte l'image de 24 symboles divins, alors que le texte ne cite que huit dieux ; ou encore l'autel de Tukulti-Ninurta I figure le symbole du dieu Nabû, tandis que l'inscription mentionne le trône du dieu Nusku³³. Ceci soulève

³² En revanche, Pierre Amiet constate l'inspiration commune autour de la gloire de la famille royale visible sur le décor de briques émaillées (Amiet 1976d) et inscrite sur la majeure partie des textes qui nous sont parvenue de cette époque médio-élamite.

³³ Voir Amiet 1997b : 111. De même, Pierre Amiet souligne que la



Fig. 5 : Stèle dite « des vautours », face dite « mythologique » ; Tello, mission E. de Sarzec 1881 ; époque des Dynasties archaïques, règne d'Eannatum ; calcaire ; H. 180 cm. ; Musée du Louvre, département des Antiquités orientales, inv. AO 16109, AO 50, AO 2346, AO 2348 (© RMN - Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Hervé Lewandowski).

la question de l'usage de l'écrit par rapport à l'image, de ses destinataires (notamment pour savoir qui était réellement en mesure de lire), ainsi que de la division du travail sur les œuvres mêlant images et écrit.

4 Quelques exemples de concordance relative entre image et écrit

Image et écrit n'en sont pas moins deux expressions complémentaires, produits de leur époque et pour une même élite, pour une très large part des sources dont nous disposons. Au-delà de leur indépendance avérée et des corrélations indirectes montrant leur interaction en même temps que leur relative autonomie, ces deux modes d'expression ne semblent concorder exactement que sur certains types précis de monuments, « [...] seuls certains thèmes mythologiques ou historiques, tels que celui de la victoire royale, pouvant être communs aux deux modes d'expression [...] ». C'est en effet tout particulièrement le cas des monuments commémorant la victoire royale. Citons notamment la fameuse stèle dite

stèle d'Untaş-Napiriša (Amiet 1966 : n° 282) est inscrite au nom d'Inšušinak en montrant tous les codes visuels du dieu Napiriša. Sans doute à dessein, cela démontre un jeu d'autonomie entre le discours écrit et visuel.



Fig. 6 : Gilgameš debout piétinant la tête d'Humbaba ; Tall Asmar (?), H. de Genouillac 1930 ; époque amorrite ; terre cuite peinte ; H. 17,3 cm. ; Musée du Louvre, département des Antiquités orientales, inv. AO 12475 (© RMN - Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux).

« des vautours » (fig. 5), dont le motif du filet en particulier se retrouve tant en image que dans le texte. On le retrouve également sur un fragment de stèle de victoire akkadienne³⁴ dont l'iconographie a été rapprochée d'un texte narrant comment Sargon livre à Ištar les vaincus³⁵. Plus tard, sur l'obélisque noir de Salmanazar III³⁶, les lignes de textes fonctionnent comme des légendes du sujet représenté, bien que texte et image à l'époque assyrienne aient des liens souvent plus complexes comme l'a notamment mis en avant J.-M. Durand³⁷.

A côté de cette combinaison de l'écrit et de l'image pour commémorer la victoire royale, on connaît ce qui semble bien être de rares illustrations assurées de grands textes, et notamment de l'histoire de Gilgameš, sur des plaquettes ou une figurine de Gilgameš³⁸ (fig. 6). Citons encore des représentations de la tête d'Hum-

baba³⁹ qui correspondent si bien à la description écrite suivant laquelle « si les circonvolutions des entrailles (ressemble) à la tête de Ĥu-wa-wa, c'est le présage de Sargon qui devint maître du pays. »⁴⁰ Ceci pose d'ailleurs la question de savoir ce qui, de l'image ou du texte, a influencé l'autre, sachant que des images ont pu être inspirées par des récits oraux ensuite mis par écrit sous l'influence en retour des images suscitées. Mais l'on a assurément perdu d'autres images qui devaient fonctionner comme des illustrations de textes (sans compter les images que l'on ne comprend pas suffisamment), comme le suggère la mention écrite sur le temple Akītu d'Assur, calqué sur celui de Babylone, dont le décor des portes, apparemment en bronze, aurait illustré le combat créateur du dieu Assur (substitué à Marduk de Babylone) contre Tiamat, personnification du chaos⁴¹. Par ailleurs, Pierre Amiet a noté l'existence d'un sceau paléo-babylonien⁴² représentant « un géant nu qui se tient lui-même par les pieds ; sur son corps est disposée une plate-forme sur laquelle se déploie [...] une scène de culte dont la figure principale est le dieu au vase jaillissant. Or le *Poème de la Création Enuma Eliš*, rédigé certes à la fin de ce même millénaire, relate comment, en prélude au drame majeur du combat de Marduk, son père Ea enchaîna et mit à mort son propre géniteur, Apsu, personnifiant l'Océan primordial, puis « sur Apsu, il fixa sa demeure ». C'est bien une telle conception mythique de l'ordre du monde que paraît illustrer [ce] cylindre [...]. Cependant cette image ne suggère pas que le corps étendu soit le cadavre du dieu primordial. Le rapprochement littéraire est donc approximatif. »

Outre ces vraisemblables, quoique rares illustrations de textes, en l'absence de portraits au sens moderne, à savoir physiquement ressemblants, l'image est certifiée (et protégée en principe) par l'inscription. En cas de ré-usage, il semble qu'une inscription ajoutée ait pu « suffire » à changer l'identité de l'œuvre, ce qui semble attester d'un certain pouvoir de l'écrit sur l'image qui, elle, ne change pas. L'image semble alors donner le code d'un statut tandis que l'inscription la complète en l'individualisant et en la protégeant de ses malédictions. Citons par exemple la statue d'Ešpum⁴³ (fig. 7), serviteur de Maništušu d'Akkad, qui s'appropriera une ancienne statue par le seul pouvoir de l'écrit sans modifier l'image.

Enfin, on pourrait évoquer les concordances entre certains textes et images décrivant notamment des rituels. C'est ainsi que l'on peut rapprocher les textes des cylindres du prince Gudea et des fragments de stèles du même Gudea, par exemple à propos des rites de fondation. De même, certains épisodes de construction illus-

34 Amiet 1976a : 76, 125, fig. 6.

35 Spycket 1945.

36 Amiet 1977a : fig. 589–590, 593.

37 Durand 1979.

38 Dont il existait une série, puisque sont connus des fragments comparables à cette figurine, qui est la seule à être entièrement conservée. Voir par exemple Barrelet 1968 : 350, n°667, pl. LXIII.

39 Voir par exemple Van Buren 1930 : n° 1070.

40 Thureau-Dangin 1925 : 23.

41 Luckenbill 1924 : 140.

42 Legrain 1951 : n°246. Voir aussi Amiet 1953b : 181, fig. 1.

43 Amiet 1976c : 55, pl. VII 1 et 2. Dans d'autres cas, dépourvus d'inscriptions, c'est bien l'image retaillée qui permet d'usurper l'identité initiale de l'image. Voir par exemple un monument kassite dont la figure de dévot a été retaillée à l'élamite, peut-être pour Šutruk-Nahhunte (Amiet 1988 : 100, fig. 58).

trés sur des reliefs néo-assyriens peuvent être reliés à des textes contemporains.

Conclusion

En conclusion, « [...] Frankfort⁴⁴ et ses émules, [...] ont cédé trop souvent à la tentation du *concordisme*, en acceptant de pseudo-concordances entre l'imagerie et ses modèles littéraires présumés. Frankfort y fut amené par la conviction que seul l'écrit était premier et que notre seule possibilité d'interpréter chaque image résidait dans la découverte du texte dont elle serait l'illustration. Or, nous avons été amenés à constater la profonde indépendance de l'iconographie en général, et tout particulièrement celle des sceaux, vis-à-vis des textes aussi bien que des « modèles » monumentaux totalement anéantis et dont, partant, l'existence même est incertaine. [...] L'indépendance de l'iconographie s'explique par le fait qu'elle a été élaborée à partir d'une époque antérieure à l'invention de l'écriture [...]. Dès lors, une tradition très ferme était instaurée, qui se développa d'autant plus vigoureusement qu'elle possédait ses moyens d'expression spécifiques et une nombreuse clientèle capable de s'y référer immédiatement. »⁴⁵ Bien que difficiles à coordonner, textes et images sont sans doute plus complémentaires que véritablement autonomes et peuvent donc s'éclairer l'un l'autre à condition d'être bien reconnus et étudiés comme des expressions spécifiques, quand bien même les liens sont parfois flous. Selon Pierre Amiet, il faut donc « [...] reprendre la recherche à frais nouveaux, en rejetant au départ tout concordisme, c'est-à-dire tout préjugé de dépendance de l'image par rapport à des textes, en préférant une analyse à la fois indépendante et parallèle, en préliminaire à une confrontation féconde » pour enrichir notre compréhension des différents aspects de la pensée antique dans sa complexité originelle comme dans son évolution dans le temps. Nous espérons que



Fig. 7 : Statuette d'orant usurpée par Ešpum, serviteur de Maništušu ; Suse, mission J. de Morgan 1906 ; époque des Dynasties archaïques (statuette), époque d'Akkad (inscription) ; calcaire, coquille, bitume ; H. 31,2 cm. ; Musée du Louvre, département des Antiquités orientales, inv. Sb 82 (© RMN - Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Jérôme Galland).

cette modeste contribution aura permis de mieux rappeler le rôle et le travail considérables de Pierre Amiet pour mieux comprendre et les textes et les images de l'Orient ancien « avant que l'écrit ne conditionne l'art de l'image... ».

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⁴⁴ Pour lequel Pierre Amiet garde la plus grande admiration.
⁴⁵ Amiet 1977b : 108-109.

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Bridging the gap – in retrospect and in prospect

Nicholas Postgate

Abstract: Interaction between Mesopotamian archaeologists and philologists has never been easy, and this paper looks at a variety of cases illustrating more or less successful approaches. The simplest examples try to identify a lexeme in Akkadian and/or Sumerian with a biological species or kind of stone or metal. Correct identification, e.g. of hybrid equids, sesame, or soft fruit, or of emery and haematite, opens the door to a better understanding of the role of these natural entities in Mesopotamian culture. More complex is the correlation of iconography with textual sources. Ur III cylinder seals showing presentation scenes with an enthroned deity or king clearly reveal the symbolism bound up in the attire of gods and kings, and this is reflected in lines from the “*Ewe and the Grain*”. Less clear cut is the significance of the nude female on Old Babylonian plaques and cylinder seals, but here too an enumeration of the recurrent iconographic elements (and of absent attributes) enables a comparison with written sources, suggesting that we should see these ladies as fundamentally human, even if they display some divine features. This brief sketch underlines the value to be gained by involving specialists in the different relevant fields, rather than succumbing to the temptation to resolve questions from a single stand point by the application of common sense and intuition.

Keywords: Lexical identifications, equid hybrids, apples and apricots, deified king presentation scene, nude females.

The gap we are trying to bridge is enshrined in the *Realexikon der Assyriologie* where you will find plenty of entries divided into “Philologisch” and “Archäologisch”.¹ This of itself ensures that a distance is maintained between the two approaches. Regrettable, since progress is best made when they are blended together. Of course, it reflects the practicalities of the editorial process: individual authors have their expertise one side or the other of the gap, and as everyone is working against the common enemy, time, each author will tend to remain within their familiar home territory.

Yet it is a shame, because, to extend the geographical metaphor, some incursions into unfamiliar if not actually hostile territory can be thoroughly rewarding. Let me take two examples which I was fortunate enough to witness back in the 1980s. Assyriologists for good etymological reasons had always rendered *šamašsamū* as “sesame”, but then in 1966, in the light of the apparent scarcity of archaeological evidence for sesame seeds, the world’s leading Near Eastern palaeobotanist, Hans Helbaek, proposed that the plant in question was in fact linseed, still widely consumed in East Asia. This

was accepted in subsequent volumes of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, even though it ran counter to an article published in 1968 by F.R. Kraus, in which he reviewed the Old Babylonian textual evidence for the cultivation of the plant which he still assumed was sesame (Kraus 1968). At the second meeting of the Sumerian Agriculture Group in Cambridge in 1984 a number of contributors discussed the evidence, and the meeting reached a firm conclusion in favour of the Kraus position. Perhaps most significant was the documentary evidence analysed by Hartmut Waetzoldt, which showed that the plant written *še-giš-i₃* in Ur III texts was a summer crop (Waetzoldt 1985), because this agreed 100% with the agronomists’ evidence presented by Dorothea Bedigian that sesame “is a warm-season crop, and must be planted after any danger of frost is past” (Bedigian 1985: 159). The evidence of the seasons, already alluded to by Kraus, was supported by the Old Babylonian data assembled by Stol (1985), and there was also the complementary consideration presented by Waetzoldt that Sumerian *gu* “flax” (i.e. linseed when viewed as a fibre) is present in the Ur III texts and as to be expected, was cultivated in winter. Taken altogether the case in favour of sesame appears to be overwhelming, and one can only regret that Hans Helbaek did not seek collaboration with the philologists before he made his attempt to abolish it.

My second example comes from the animal kingdom. In 1982 two zoo-archaeologists, Richard Mead-

¹ The text is substantially unchanged from the talk delivered in Bern, but it has only been possible to include a few of the illustrations. Sincere thanks to Dr. Urs Winter for his generous permission to use illustrations from his book *Frau und Göttin*. The seals published in Porada 1948 are here illustrated from photographs supplied by the Pierpont Morgan Library.

ow and Hans-Peter Uerpmann, convened a meeting entitled “Symposium on the Upper Pleistocene and Holocene Distribution and Discrimination of Equids in the Palearctic Region with Special Emphasis on the Middle East”. Although the initiative came from the side of the natural scientists, archaeologists and philologists were invited, and discussions involved all three disciplines. Two light bulb moments have remained in my memory. The first is when the zoological fraternity heard with great surprise that the philologists had all along assumed the humble domestic donkey was present in 3rd millennium Mesopotamia, whereas the zoologists had been operating on the assumption that it only moved from Africa to the Middle East much later. And the philologists were just as surprised that their colleagues were surprised. When Sumerologists had seen the sign ANŠE in their texts, and unhesitatingly translated it as “donkey” – since that is certainly what it stood for in later cuneiform – it had never occurred to them that the donkey might not yet have arrived on the Mesopotamian scene. It seemed to be the least of their lexical problems with the equids of early Mesopotamia.

There certainly were unresolved terminological problems with the equids of the 3rd millennium, which Kazuya Maekawa and Yuris Zarins had been grappling with. There were too many equids – there were anše-edin(-na), safely identified with the onager, anše-ŠUL-gi (Early Dynastic), anše-LIBIR (Akkadian) and anše-BAR×AN. Since the horse did not reach Mesopotamia until Ur III times, when it arrives as anše-si₂-si₂, why were the Sumerians apparently exploiting three species of equid when there should have been only two available – the donkey and the onager? Well, part of the solution was provided by Zarins’ proposal that the BAR×AN (now read kunga) is a hybrid; this was 100% convincing palaeographically, since it equates to the later logogram sometimes transcribed as ŠU₂.MUL, and it fitted perfectly with Old Akkadian texts showing that these animals were managed in the same herd as onagers and donkeys.²

This suddenly flooded the situation with light. It followed that the inhabitants of South Mesopotamia were deliberately breeding donkey × onager hybrids, and the expert knowledge of zoo-archaeologists like Juliet Clutton-Brock and Richard Meadow supplied us with examples in history of deliberate cross-breeding with onagers, especially in Rajasthan. Proof that such hybrids were possible existed in the flesh and one used to be resident at Schönbrunn in the 1920s.

As well as resolving our terminological difficulties, identification as a hybrid solved some wider issues. Zeuner, the pre-eminent zoo-archaeologist of the previous generation had maintained that onagers were untameable, and so was puzzled that they seemed to be towing chariots on the Standard of Ur. Furthermore, the osteology of some of the equid skeletons from buri-

als gave us dimensions which fell between the domestic donkey and the onager. If in each case they were the hybrids and not pure onagers, they would have possessed some of the strength and speed of the onagers, but also some of the docility of the humble donkey. And why was it that in later centuries Šamaš’ chariot was towed by mules (*parû*)? This hardly seemed appropriate to his dignity, but now we know: in the centuries before the introduction of the horse – which could offer speed, strength and docility – these onager × donkey hybrids were the paramount draft animals and the epitome of elite transport.

What these two examples have in common is that well-informed persons from different disciplines were brought together in the same room. Not just “an archaeologist” and “a philologist”, but also “a natural scientist”. It seemed to be much more productive than individual scholars sitting in their ivory towers and reaching out by trying to acquaint themselves with the facts on the other side. The zoologists held in their heads a whole range of facts and theories about equids, not just the one fact that the philologist was minded to look for, and vice versa.

Methodologically these two examples are fairly straightforward. A straight choice between linseed and sesame, and with the equids, the simple procedure of lining up Sumerian or Akkadian terms on one side of the page, and the modern terminology for species of equid on the other, and trying to match them up. This process is self-explanatory, but it still needed its advocates. In 1965 Benno Landsberger penned his article called “Tin and lead: The adventures of two vocables” (Landsberger 1965). He started from the foundation tablets from the palace of Sargon at Ḫorsābād, where physical examples of different materials were recovered, and the texts inscribed on them listed these materials for us. Having struggled to resolve the competing claims of tin and lead, *annuku* and *abāru*, he winds up with the comment that “The so-called distribution method, namely to apportion the available names to known objects etc., as was first attempted in my study, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamiens* (1932), with regard to the species of wild animals of Mesopotamia, has not, in my opinion, been sufficiently imitated.” (1965: 295–296).

Of course Landsberger was right. Few serious attempts had been made to use his so-called distribution method, and even after his article the equids are a rare example of its successful application. Of course any attempt to identify plants, animals, stones etc. is working with a list of potential candidates, even if the list is subconscious and not spelled out. What Landsberger does not stress, though, is that a successful result not only gives the lexicographer the correct translation of a technical term, but also provides the historian with the identity of the plant, animal, or stone, along with its varied range of attributes, which offers the opportunity to incorporate it into the complex mosaic of the Mesopotamian material world, with all the details of its occurrence and modes of exploitation.

² E.g. A.3397 cited Zarins 2014: 275. However I cannot join Zarins in supposing that the horse was already present before the Ur III period.

Another lexical data set which is far from resolved is the vocabulary for fruit. Several terms still remain to be definitively identified with a modern species, but the cause célèbre is the apricot. Gelb in the *Kraus Festschrift* in 1982 established that along with figs the fruit known as ḥašḥur was dried and threaded onto strings. In the second half of his article he floats the idea (which was not in fact new) that the word meant not “apple” but “apricot”. His principal reason seems to be that today in the land of Sumer and Akkad apricots are grown much more than apples. It is only in an addendum (Gelb 1982: 484) that he is able to acknowledge that strung dried apples had been recovered from tomb PG 1054 at Ur, traditionally ascribed to Meskalamdug.³ The prime reason for the original conventional translation “apple” was probably the cognates or loan-words in Syriac, but if these are ignored then it is true that apricots might be a candidate. We need a new admanduga between “the apple and the apricot” and are left wondering how to arbitrate between the rival contenders.

Both the etymological and the archaeological evidence provide an a priori case for the apple, and put the burden on proof on the apricot. At present we lack any historical or archaeological evidence demonstrating the presence of the apricot in our territory before Classical times. Anyone who wants to translate ḥašḥur as “apricot” has to provide us with a different word for “apple” and it is not clear what that would be. In the circumstances, Powell (2003–2005) is right to stay with “apple”, but it is not inconceivable that, as with sesame, fresh archaeo-botanical samples may yet yield up apricot stones or identifiable timbers to demonstrate the presence of apricot trees. This then is a case where bringing the different disciplines together did not resolve the issue.

I mentioned stones. There is one Mesopotamian text par excellence we can draw on, *Lugal-e*. After Ninurta has triumphed over the *asakku*, he decrees the fates, or if you like determines the roles, of the stones, taking account of whether they had opposed him or taken his side. Thus emery, *šammu*, identified by Wolfgang Heimpel, was on the losing side and is doomed to be perpetually ground down. By contrast, even we, 4000 years later, can appreciate the happier fate of the diorite/dolerite used to sculpt Gudea’s statues, or of haematite, for which the god decrees: “The divine rites of Utu shall become your powers. Be constituted as a judge in the foreign lands. The craftsman, expert in everything, shall value you as if gold.” (ETCSL *Lugale* ll. 505–508). Here then we have a case of mutual reinforcement of the philological and the archaeological evidence which provides a wealth of information beyond the mere 1:1 identification of stone and lexeme: *Lugal-e* tells us of the high esteem in which the fine black stone of Gudea’s

statues was held, and of the craftsmen’s appreciation of the technical qualities of the satin-smooth fine-grained dark grey haematite which made it the ideal stone for seals and weights. Here we have the desirable situation that the characteristics attributed to the stones in the literary tradition are recognizable in the material remains.

Staying with seals, we can find a similar situation in the case of the Ur III presentation seals. It is well known that in addition to scenes showing the owner being introduced to a deity by his personal god, some Ur III seals have an identically structured scene in which the god is replaced by the king. This undoubtedly reflects the deification of the king (as expressed in the DINGIR determinative in front of Ibbi-Sin’s name), and the two scenes have often been compared before, but using two examples from the reign of Ibbi-Sin I want to underline how the fine details of these scenes convey their message by identifying the principal actors. By so indicating the significance or the emic quality of the differences between the two scenes, these details coincide with the evidence of the texts. Put another way, what is really distinctive about this particular example is that there is a set of standardized attributes in the iconography which are precisely matched in the textual sources. So, in the traditional scene (**Fig. 1**) we see the deity, with horns of divinity, seated on the usual altar-base, with his right arm extended and an empty palm. He is dressed in a flounced robe (Falbelgewand), of a type that went out for humans at the start of the Akkad Dynasty – but gods were always conservative in their fashion sense. In the other scene (**Fig. 2**), although the suppliant and the introducing deity are virtually identical in clothing and stance, the king is noticeably different: he has instead of the horns a hemispherical hat similar to that worn by Gudea and his dynasty, and instead of the flounced robe, a plain dress with a decorated border, also adopted by members of the Lagaš Dynasty. Instead of an altar base he is seated on a stool covered with a sheepskin rug, and instead of the extended palm, he holds out a cup, as the king does in other Ur III glyptic scenes.

All this makes a very clear statement: he is not wearing the characteristic dress of the gods, but the uniform of the king. Not merely his robe, but his hat and his sheepskin throne are the prerogatives of the king and the hat and the sheepskin are mentioned in the debate between the “*Ewe and the Grain*”. In primeval days “Uttu (the patron deity of weaving) had not been born, no royal turban was worn” (“uttu nu-ub-tu-ud men nu-il₂ l. 17). Then the sheep enumerates the splendid uses to which her fleece is put: “The flounced (rug), my textile of white wool, makes the king joyful on his dais, my fleece swishes against the body of the great gods” (zulumḥi (SIG₂.SUD) tug₂ siki babbar-ra-ḡu₁₀/ lugal barag-ga-na im-mi-in-ḥul₂-e / bar-ḡu₁₀ su diḡir gal-gal-e-ne-ka mul-ma-al im-mi-ib-za ll. 107–109)⁴. In other words, the sheep has supplied both the fleecy

3 Ellison et al. 1978. However I am grateful to Alexandra Fletcher for referring me to Dr M. Nesbitt (Kew), who has re-examined these specimens from PG1094 with other specialists, and is of the opinion that identification as some kind of apple is far from certain.

4 My thanks to Pascal Attinger for suggesting this construction of ll. 107–108.



Fig. 1: Ur III introduction scene with deity (Porada 1948: no. 277; photographic credit: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).



Fig. 2: Ur III introduction scene with king (Porada 1948: no. 292; photographic credit: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).



Fig. 3: Old Babylonian scene with "naked lady" (Porada 1948: no. 477; photographic credit: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).

Iconographical attribute	Comment	Implications
full frontal nudity	not attested for goddesses	not divine
absence of horns	horns standard for deities	not divine
symmetrical shoulder-length hair-do	unique to nude females	<i>kezrētum</i> distinguished by hair-do
standing on plinth	not altar, but indicator of ritual context	active in temple
occasional jewellery	also worn by goddess on Burney plaque	cf. “prostitute’s beads” in Ninegalla Hymn

Table 1: Some attributes of the nude female.

rug which covers the king’s stool on his seal, and the flounced robe which the gods were still wearing in the divine presentation scene. The inscription on the royal seal names Ibbi-Sin and gives him the divine determinative: what is striking, though, is that this is the only specific marker of his deified status on the seal. Although the presentation scene as a whole shows him in the *role* of a god, the details make it clear that he does not qualify for all the visual attributes accorded to other gods, but remains in the eyes of the artist a very human deity.

These divine kings are exceptionally endowed with well recognized attributes whose symbolic significance can be expressed both in the iconography and in the literature. Let me finish with a character whose identity is not so universally accepted, the nude female.⁵ She is a frequent motif on clay plaques but also on Old Babylonian cylinder seals (Figs. 3, 5–7) and has been the subject of extended studies, notably by Felix Blöcher (1987) and Urs Winter (1983). The 64000 dollar question is: is she divine or human? Roger Moorey discussed her in his Schweich Lectures. He wrote that “[s]he is difficult both to categorize simply or to place in context convincingly. When shown in frieze on cylinder seals with other figures her image is almost defiantly isolated or self-contained” (2003: 31), and he hesitated to identify her as either a deity or a human, or in his terms “natural or supernatural”. His hesitation is understandable. Put simply, she looks like a human but she behaves like a deity, just like the deified kings of Ur III. Although Urs Winter wrote that “auch dort, wo die Hörnerkrone fehlt [...] gibt es eindeutige Hinweise auf ihre Göttlichkeit” (1983: 192) he later acknowledges that “Die einzig mögliche Alternative bleibt somit, dass es sich bei der “nackten Frau” um Teilnehmerinnen am Kult handelt, um Musikantinnen, Priesterinnen und Hierodulen. Bei einigen Kategorien von Figürchen [...] ist diese Möglichkeit nicht von der Hand zu weisen” (1983: 193). Zainab Bahrani also favours the divine option, and wrote “This type of nude female has generally been seen as the goddess Ishtar in her ‘fertility aspect’, or as one of her sacred prostitutes, an interpretation which is problematic, and clearly not valid in all cases” (1996: 9). Neither of these scholars is 100% certain that these ladies are divine, and I believe that Henri Frankfort was on the right track back in 1939 when he wrote “She has long

5 Avoiding the nude females found all across the Near East and into Anatolia in the 2nd and early 1st millennium, my comments apply solely to Mesopotamia in the early 2nd millennium.

been known as the “naked goddess”, but there is no reason to consider this figure as a deity.” After pointing out that she never wears a horned crown, and that there are no other goddess figures who are shown naked, he concludes “that the naked woman is of the rank of the priest and represents either a priestess or merely a female worshipper who had honoured the deity by once serving as a hierodule in the temple” (1939: 160).

Frankfort bases his brief argument principally on her lack of divine horns. This is a perfectly valid position, but I think it can be reinforced by observing some other details which are summarized in **Table 1**.

Taking these in turn, we can begin by noting that full frontal nudity is very unusual for either human or divine females in other iconographic contexts. Nude females who are certainly goddesses are very rare, but there is of course one famous divine figure on the unique Old Babylonian terracotta once known as the Burney plaque, and now rechristened “Queen of the Night” (Fig. 4).⁶ As with the other nude females, it is hard to imagine any reason for her almost total nudity other than to signify her participation in, or readiness for, sexual activity. I believe that Thorkild Jacobsen was typically close to the truth when he described this as a “cult-relief at the house-altar of an ancient bordello” (Jacobsen 1987: 6).⁷

With her horned headdress no one doubts that “the Queen of the Night” is a deity, although which deity remains under discussion, but unlike her, whether she is Ištar or someone else, just like the Ur III kings our nude females do not have horns and this makes it hard to see them as goddesses.⁸

On the cylinder seals especially, but also on the plaques, the nude females regularly have thick tresses falling down each side of their head and curling out at the shoulders (Figs. 3, 5–7). This reminds us that in Old Babylonian times some female staff serving in Ištar Temples were called *kezertum*, a word referring to a

6 For rare parallels see Collon 2005: 14–23.

7 Incidentally, Dominique Collon (2005: 41–42) points out that in her descent to the Netherworld Inanna-Ištar is known to have stripped off almost all her clothing, which would result in the state of nudity we see here. I am not sure if it has ever been suggested that the entire Descent narrative is a complicated aetiological motif introduced to account for her appearances as a nude goddess.

8 A nude female on one of the seals published by Porada (1948: no. 502) is described by her as having a horned mitre, but this does not seem to be certain. There are very many without horns.

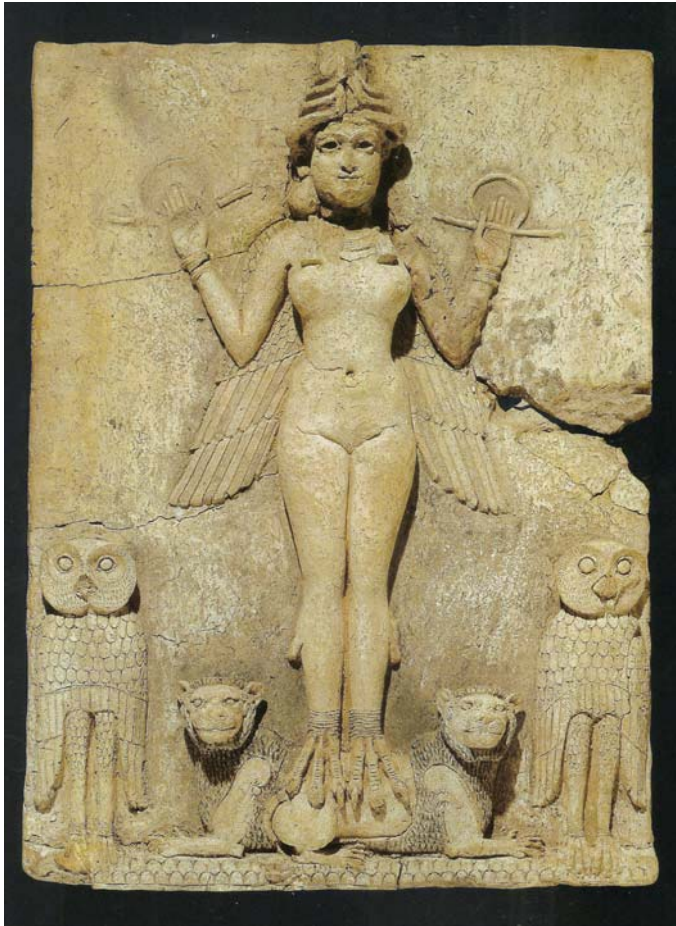


Fig. 4: Burney Plaque or “Queen of the Night” (after Collon 2005; © The Trustees of the British Museum).



Fig. 5: Old Babylonian scene with “naked lady” and other motifs (Porada 1948: no. 480; photographic credit: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York). The impression illustrated in Porada 1948 shows more clearly the two vertical elements below the podium on which she stands.

distinctive hairdo (see e.g., Spaey 1990), and it is possible others had special hairdos, like the *ḥarimtum* and the *šamḫatum* who are mentioned in Gilgameš as the personnel of Ištar in the same breath as the *kezertum*. A millennium and more later Herodotus mentions a special headdress worn by women waiting in the temple courtyard.⁹

We call them nude females, but they are not completely unadorned because they are still wearing a

necklace (see Fig. 6). So too does the “Queen of the Night” and Jacobsen (1987) was the first to observe that in a Ninegalla hymn (early 2nd millennium) Ištar was addressed as a prostitute, with the line “the beads of a prostitute are set around your neck, you are one who seizes a man from the tavern” (nus kar-kid gu₂-za i₃-im-du₃ eš₂-dam-ta lu₂ mu-dab₅-me-en).¹⁰

On seals (but not usually on plaques) she often stands on a plinth or podium (see Figs. 5–7). Gods may of

⁹ On *kezertum* in particular and other terms see Yoffee 2005: 116–130.

¹⁰ Inana D 112–113; transliteration and translation after Cooper 2006–2008: 17.



Fig. 6: Old Babylonian scene with “naked lady” wearing necklace (Winter 1983, Abb. 91).

course be shown seated on an altar in the shape of a temple, but this is not an altar; it is quite like the dais or *barag/parakku* on which the Ur III deified kings are sitting, but it is often stepped. It must ultimately be a stylized representation of an architectural element, and here it must be informing us of the naked lady’s environment, and surely be some component of a temple or other cultic structure.

So to sum up we are looking for a female, with a consistent reason for being naked, on plaques occasionally stretched out on a bed, with a characteristic hairdo and jewellery round her neck, and her base in a religious building. No one of these details is decisive by itself, but the cumulative effect is convincing. It is one of those cases like the *Ahhiyawa*, where if we didn’t know of the *kezertum* and the *harimtum* we would have to invent them. The iconography is reminiscent of the Ur III royal presentation scenes in that we see humans looking like humans but in a social situation where they assume the role of a deity. Where in society do we have nude women behaving like this? The answer must be, in the service of *Ištar* and perhaps of other female deities, like *Mullissu* (*Ninlil*) as *Herodotus*, calling her *Mylitta*, informs us. So I follow *Frankfort* in believing that these ladies are the well attested temple ladies who stand in for *Ištar* in her role as the goddess of sexual activity as part of their service in the temple, just as a human female must have impersonated *Inanna* in the *Isin Dynasty* *hieros gamos*. Everyone knew that they were really humans, just as everyone knew that the Ur III kings were not real gods, and so neither the kings nor the ladies get even a single pair of horns to symbolize true divinity. On the other hand they are carrying out one of the goddess’s functions and are given a cultic context and shown in the appropriate state of undress.

* * *

To sum up, with *Landsberger*-style lexical identifications like sesame and the onager hybrids it is clear that pinpointing an animal or a botanical species is most successful when not only the philologist but also the archaeologist and the natural scientist join forces. While

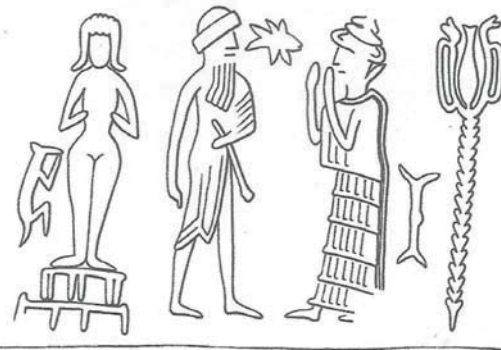


Fig. 7: Two Old Babylonian seals with “naked lady” on plinth (Winter 1983, Abb. 94 and 95).

individuals may draw on data from outside their core expertise, getting people from the different disciplines together in the same room was what really worked. And in each case the correct identification doesn’t stop short at a *Linnaean* definition or a geological identification, but can open up a range of insights about *Mesopotamian* life and letters.

Rather different are correlations in what one might call the conceptual sphere, illustrated by the Ur III seals and the naked ladies. These call in the first instance for the collaboration of the art historian with the philologist, but their evidence needs to be assessed by the historian of thought, which for *Mesopotamia* has been a rare enterprise. It is true that much of the iconographic record appears to have no counterpart in the textual sources. Yet the instances where there is an obvious correlation between the two data sets can sometimes provide a *Rosetta Stone*, or I should say a *Behistun* inscription, to allow us to decipher the symbolism of iconography in cases where no textual counterpart is available.

All the same, there will remain situations where there is no intersection of text and image, as for example the friezes of crossed animals on *Early Dynastic* cylinder seals or the virtual absence of *Dumuzi* from both *Akkadian* literature and the iconography. This must be the kind of thing in the mind of *Dominique Collon*, when she wrote (2007: 50 fn. 17): “*Albenda* is right that the texts can help us understand the iconography. Unfortunately, text and picture belong to different traditions, and all too often it is impossible to correlate the two”. Yet we must try to bring them together. *Jean Bottéro*,

cited by our hosts in their 1st Circular, wrote that “both the archaeologist and philologist have access to only half of the total object of historical research: the complete human of the past”. I agree with the sentiment, but it seems to me that neither the philologist nor the archaeologist has access to anything approaching 50% of the total. We might do better to visualize the Mesopotamian world, or Bottéro’s complete Mesopotamian human, not as a coin with two faces, but rather as a three dimensional body with numerous external facets,

of which the iconography and the textual evidence are just two. Each facet presents to us some aspects of the entity within, but it is only in rare cases that those same components also reappear on one of the other facets. Our task is to try to reconstruct the complete entity which is only partially visible to us via one or more facet, rather than to seek for direct correspondences between what the textual and the iconographic facets are showing us at first sight.¹¹

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¹¹ This is admittedly just a more three-dimensional way of expressing the following sentiment: “the entire evidence of the documentary sources should be marshalled against the entire evidence of the archaeology, otherwise scholars from one side will continue to make brief raids across the frontier to plunder choice bits of information which happen to suit their current concerns. It is in finding a way to match the two different data sets, not single items from each set, that progress will be made” Postgate 1990: 230.

Papers

Quelques contrats de commandes d'étoffes à Nuzi

Philippe Abrahams et Brigitte Lion

Abstract: The present paper aims to study six contracts dealing with orders for textile work. Four of them were found in room 34 of the house complex in the “Eastern Suburban Area”. HSS 5, 36 and HSS 5, 95 belong to the archive of Ilānu son of Tayuki. Their formulary contains most of the information expected in this type of text in order to ensure that the parties involved fulfill their respective obligations. One can find indications concerning the quantity of raw material given to the weaver, the name of the fabric, its measurements, the date of delivery and the penalty in case of failure to meet the completion deadline. HSS 5, 6 and HSS 13, 18 belong to a different archive, that of Akkuya son of Katiri. In both contracts, the order concerns a decorated *ḥullānu*-fabric and seems to be couched in the framework of an antichretic loan: the weaver in charge of producing the fabric has to deliver the final product to his creditor together with the barley that he had previously borrowed from him. His situation as a debtor doesn't prevent him from receiving a salary, but he receives it at a very low rate. JEN 314 comes from room 13 of the house of Tarmi-Tilla, the grandson of Tēhip-Tilla, located in the “Western Suburban Area”. This contract presents some very interesting peculiarities. One notes the high value of the fabric (a *kusītu* decorated with trim woven of different colors and a *ḥullānu*). Moreover, in addition to a precise description, a model is provided to the weaver as the means to guarantee that the final product corresponds exactly to the client's wishes. Finally, the commitment of the craftsman is obtained not only through the contract stipulations but by way of an oath. The last contract, HSS 15, 140+, originates from a house in the southwestern area of the main mound in the vicinity of the palace, more precisely room P 35 where loom weights were found. Its most interesting feature consists in the fact that the “client” and two of the four witnesses are probably weavers. The situation reflected in this contract might thus concern the subcontracting of a work assignment.

Keywords: *artartennūtu*, fired brick, *ḥullānu*, *kusītu*, loom weigh, model, *naḥlaptu*, oath, penalty, *sasullu*, *šuhḥelu*, textile, *tidennūtu*, wage, weaver, work contract.

Les tablettes de Nuzi constituent une source importante pour l'histoire du travail dans le Proche-Orient ancien. Les archives palatiales et les archives familiales livrent de multiples noms de métiers, akkadiens et hourrites, attestés dans divers contextes¹. On y trouve aussi des contrats de travail passés avec des nourrices (Schneider-Ludorff 2009), ou avec des artisans pour fabriquer des briques (Mayer 1977; Lion/Sauvage 2005), des flèches et d'autres types de produits, comme des étoffes et des vêtements.

Les commandes de produits textiles apparaissent sous deux formes. D'une part, des notes administratives, formulées comme des reçus, précisent la quantité de matière première remise à un artisan, parfois avec des indications complémentaires : la formule *ana epēši*, « pour faire », l'indication du produit à livrer, ainsi que la mention « contrat de livraison », *iškāru*². De telles

notes, le cas échéant scellées par l'un des intervenants (artisan, donneur d'ordre, intermédiaire), se trouvent dans les archives administratives du palais et de grandes maisons, comme celle du prince Šilwa-Teššub, qui utilisent directement le travail de leurs esclaves, mais recourent aussi à des artisans spécialisés. D'autre part, les archives familiales livrent des contrats entre deux parties, le client et l'artisan. Les clauses peuvent indiquer non seulement le produit à fabriquer, mais aussi la date de livraison, le salaire, voire la pénalité imposée à l'artisan qui ne livrerait pas le travail dans le délai imparti. Comme pour les autres types de contrats, des témoins sont présents et scellent la tablette ; l'artisan peut aussi la sceller puisqu'il s'engage envers son client, mais cela n'est pas systématique.

Le présent article concerne essentiellement cette seconde catégorie de documents : des contrats trouvés

1 Pour les tablettes du palais, voir Mayer 1978; Abrahams/Lion 2012.

2 Sur l'*iškāru*, notamment à Nuzi, voir Postgate 2013 : 360; Rou-

gemont 2015 : 215–227; Lion 2107 : 55–57; Rougemont 2017 : 81–88.

dans des maisons, relevant des archives de riches familles³. Il propose trois études de cas qui montrent la grande variété des situations ; de ce fait, les formulaires employés sont très divers pour répondre à ces cas particuliers. Le contrat très fragmentaire HSS 15, 140+, qui concerne une commande de fabrication passée entre tisserands, sera également étudié en dernier lieu.

1 Deux commandes passées par la famille d'Ilānu fils de Tauki

Les archives de la famille d'Ilānu fils de Tauki proviennent d'une maison de la petite butte située au nord-est du tell central (« Eastern Suburban Area »), pièce 34⁴. Elles ont fourni quatre contrats de travail : deux concernent la fabrication de briques pour Ilānu (HSS 5, 97 et HSS 5, 98)⁵, deux autres celle d'étoffes.

1.1. HSS 5, 95, commande d'une étoffe-sasullu

Traduction⁶ :

Puhi-šenni fils d'Enšukru a reçu 14 mines de laine d'Ilānu fils de Tauki *ana artartennūti*. Après la moisson, au début du mois *kurilli* (iii), Puhi-šenni rendra à Ilānu une étoffe-sasullu de bonne qualité, pesant 6 mines, de 15 coudées de long et 5 coudées de large. S'il ne rend pas l'étoffe au mois *kurilli*, il sera redevable d'un vêtement-*naḥlaptu*⁷ pesant 2 mines.

4 sceaux : ceux du scribe, de 2 témoins, Aba fils d'Enšukru (donc frère de Puhi-šenni) et une femme, et de Puhi-šenni (le tisserand).

Le formulaire de ce contrat est calqué sur celui des reconnaissances de dettes. Mais dans le cas d'un emprunt, l'emprunteur doit rendre ce qu'il a reçu, avec ou sans intérêt ; ici, l'artisan, Puhi-šenni, reçoit un produit brut et doit le rendre transformé en produit fini : entre la réception de la laine et la remise de l'étoffe, il a dû tisser l'étoffe en question.

La locution *ana artartennūtu*, construite sur un terme hourrite, n'est pas comprise ; il n'en existe que deux at-

testations, toutes deux dans les commandes de textiles de cette archive, HSS 5, 95 et HSS 5, 36. Elle doit donc selon toute vraisemblance se rapporter à un processus opératoire. Dans HSS 5, 36 (ci-dessous), ce n'est pas la laine mais une étoffe (TUG₂) qui est traitée de cette façon. En rapport avec cette locution, on relève aussi une occurrence unique du terme *artartenna* qualifiant un vêtement-*naḥlaptu* dans HSS 13, 277⁸.

Le type d'étoffe-sasullu n'est, lui non plus, pas autrement connu (le terme est un hapax). Les dimensions, de 15 coudées sur 5, soit environ 7,5 m de long sur 2,5 m de large, sont souvent attestées à Nuzi : C. Zaccagnini a relevé une dizaine d'autres descriptions d'étoffes donnant exactement ou presque les mêmes mesures (Zaccagnini 1981). Cela pourrait correspondre à la longueur d'un métier horizontal, type de métier attesté archéologiquement à Nuzi par la découverte de deux paires de supports dans la maison dite « Group 24 »⁹. Un métier vertical serait aussi envisageable (Breniquet 2008 : 149–175). La largeur paraît cependant dépasser les dimensions estimées de ces métiers (horizontaux ou verticaux) et il est donc possible qu'elles correspondent à deux bandes d'étoffes réunies. Quant au poids de 6 mines, soit environ 3 kg, il correspond là encore à ceux relevés par C. Zaccagnini pour les étoffes de cette dimension.

Le salaire de Puhi-šenni n'est pas mentionné, mais il reçoit 14 mines de laine et doit livrer un produit qui en pèse 6. La différence de 8 mines, soit environ 4 kg, pourrait représenter son salaire¹⁰. Cependant on ignore sous quelle forme la laine lui est remise : s'il s'agit de laine déjà filée, prête à être montée sur le métier et tissée, Puhi-šenni peut effectivement garder 8 mines ; en revanche, s'il s'agit de laine brute qui doit encore être nettoyée, étirée et filée, elle subit une perte de poids au cours de ces opérations, et celle-ci se répercute sur le salaire de l'artisan¹¹.

Le mois de livraison, iii (mai/juin) (Mayer 1978 : 218 ; Cohen 1993 : 368), est indiqué – mais pas l'année,

3 Il en existe d'autres exemples que ceux présentés ici. Ainsi BM 102374, qui provient d'Arraphe et se rattache peut-être à l'archive de la famille Wullu, pourrait être un contrat de fabrication d'étoffes (traduction et translittération : Grosz 1988 : 146 et 160). On y trouve en effet le verbe « tisser » (l. 5 : *maḥāšu*), la commande et son poids, partiellement préservés (l. 3 et 7 : 7 TUG₂ *šeḫtunu* = environ 49 sicles = 332 g.) et la mention d'argent (l. 7 : KU₃ [...]) peut-être en référence au salaire. Il mérite donc d'être signalé, mais son état fragmentaire ne permet pas d'en dire davantage.

4 Dosch 1976 ; sur la maison et les archives, voir Pedersén 1998 : 28 ; Lion 1999 : 48.

5 Dosch 1976 : 203–204, n^{os} 131 et 132 ; Mayer 1977 : 196–197 ; Lion/Sauvage 2005 : 81.

6 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 202, n^o 130. Translittération et traduction : Zaccagnini 1981 : 349–350 n^o 1 et n. 2.

7 Ce mot, construit sur une racine *ḥalāpu* qui signifie « couvrir », « vêtir », a fait l'objet de diverses traductions, de « couverture » à « chemise ». Pour une mise au point récente sur le *naḥlaptu*, voir Durand 2009 : 67–72 et 161–162 ; Michel/Veenhof 2010 : 227–228 et 236–237 et Beugeard 2010 : 287. Le *naḥlaptu* peut être réalisé en laine ou en lin. Des *naḥlaptu* en lin sont par exemple mentionnés dans HSS 14, 260 = 607 : 15 (M 79) et dans HSS 15, 169 : 9 (L 27). NB : L'indication entre parenthèses correspond au lieu de découverte de la tablette.

8 Voir les références bibliographiques pour ces deux termes dans Richter 2012 : 49–50. HSS 13, 277 = Adš 500 est une liste d'étoffes (TUG₂ / <GU₂>.E₃.A.MEŠ, cf. CAD A/2 : 310a) indiquant le nom des artisans qui les ont fabriquées (DU₃-uš). Le document est scellé par Šilwa-Teššub et provient de la pièce A 26 de sa maison. L. 8 : 1-nu-tu₄ <GU₂>.E₃.A.MEŠ *ar-ta-ar-te-na*, 'EN.KUR-ni DU₃-uš. Il est probablement question, dans HSS 13, 98 = Adš 504 (A 26), du même Bēl-šadūni, qui se voit confier (*ana qāti nadin*) différents tissus et vêtements ; il n'est pas précisé s'il s'agit de leur faire subir le même traitement, mais cela reste envisageable compte tenu de la « spécialité » de Bēl-šadūni dans HSS 13, 277 par rapport aux autres tisserands mentionnés dans ce texte.

9 Starr 1937 : pl. 118 A et B, trouvés respectivement en F 14 et F 24 ; cf. Starr 1939 : 218–219. Starr 1937 : pl. 30 présente une photographie d'une personne travaillant sur un tel métier à Yorgāntappe (Yorghān Tepe), à la fin des années 1920 ou au tout début des années 1930 (la photographie ne permet pas d'estimer la longueur du métier, mais sa largeur paraît assez faible, inférieure à 1 m). Sur le métier horizontal, voir Breniquet 2008 : 135–149.

10 Sur ce point, nous ne suivons pas Zaccagnini 1981 : 349 n. 2 qui suggère de corriger la quantité reçue en « 6 ?! (text : 14) ».

11 Sur les différentes opérations de préparation de la laine documentées dans les textes de Nuzi, voir Abrahami 2014 : 291–299.

tablette	client	artisan	produit fourni	produit à livrer	procédé de fabrication ?	date de livraison	pénalité	sceaux
HSS 5, 95	Ilānu f. Taiuki	Puhi-šenni f. En-šukru	14 mines de laine	1 étoffe- <i>sasullu</i> 6 mines 15 × 5 coudées	<i>ana</i> <i>artartennūti</i>	après la récolte début <i>kurilli</i> = iii	1 <i>naḥlaptu</i> de 2 mines	SAG.KI scribe 2 témoins Puhi-šenni
HSS 5, 36	Ili-ma-ahi f. Ilānu	Utu-andul f. Hamanna	1 TUG ₂ , H.I.A.	1 TUG ₂ , <i>damqū</i> 6 mines 15 × 10 coudées	<i>ana</i> <i>artartennūti</i>	début <i>ḥinzuri</i> = iii	1 <i>naḥlaptu</i> de bonne qualité de 2 mines	Urhi-Teššub f. Šata scribe 6 témoins Utu-andul

Tab. 1: Tableau comparatif des données de HSS 5, 95 et HSS 5, 36.

comme cela est habituel à Nuzi. Le contrat n'étant pas daté, on ignore de combien de temps Puhi-šenni dispose pour fabriquer l'étoffe. La laine étant prélevée sur les moutons au printemps (les dates attestées vont de mars à mai/juin, voire plus tard) (Abrahami 2014 : 288–290), s'il faut compter le temps de traitement et le temps de tissage, il est peu probable que Puhi-šenni ait fabriqué l'étoffe *sasullu* avec la laine de l'année ; il a dû recevoir plutôt de la laine recueillie l'année précédente.

La pénalité prévue si le produit fini n'est pas remis en temps voulu consiste dans la fabrication, en supplément, d'un vêtement-*naḥlaptu*. Ce travail diminue du même coup le salaire de l'artisan : le *naḥlaptu* pesant 2 mines, il ne garderait, dans l'hypothèse la plus favorable, que 6 mines de laine.

Parmi les témoins qui scellent le contrat figure un frère de Puhi-šenni. Ce dernier scelle également, puisqu'il s'engage à faire le travail. La tablette était conservée par Ilānu, le client.

1.2. HSS 5, 36, commande d'une étoffe de bonne qualité

Traduction¹² :

Ainsi (parle) Utu-andul fils de Hamanna : « J'ai reçu 1 étoffe (1 TUG₂.H.I.A) d'Ili-ma-ahi fils d'Ilānu *ana artartennūti*. Au début du mois *ḥinzuri* (iii), je donnerai à Ili-ma-ahi 1 étoffe (1 TUG₂) de bonne qualité. Le poids de l'étoffe (sera) de 6 mines, sa longueur de 15 coudées et sa largeur de 10 coudées, je (la) donnerai au mois convenu. Si, au mois convenu, je ne donne pas l'étoffe à Ili-ma-ahi, <je serai> redevable d'un vêtement-*naḥlaptu* de bonne qualité, vêtement-*naḥlaptu* d'un poids de 2 mines, en plus de l'étoffe¹³. »

La tablette a été écrite à la porte Tiššae de la ville de Nuzi.

8 sceaux: ceux du scribe, de 6 témoins et d'Utu-andul.

Le contenu d'HSS 5, 36 ressemble beaucoup à celui de HSS 5, 95, mais le client est cette fois Ili-ma-ahi fils d'Ilānu, ce qui le place une génération plus tard. Le formulaire est celui d'une déclaration de l'artisan, Utu-andul. Le produit reçu, une étoffe, pose la question du type de travail demandé à l'artisan : doit-il réparer une étoffe ancienne, abîmée, pour en faire une étoffe « de bonne qualité » ? Doit-il récupérer la laine d'une ancienne étoffe pour en faire une neuve ? Le produit demandé est, comme dans HSS 5, 95, une étoffe (mais il n'est pas précisé ici qu'il s'agisse d'un *sasullu*) ; le poids est le même, 6 mines, tout comme la longueur, 15 coudées. En revanche, il est deux fois plus large, 10 coudées (environ 5 m), ce qui suppose l'assemblage de plusieurs bandes. Il est étonnant qu'une étoffe deux fois plus large que celles fréquemment documentées à Nuzi pèse le même poids, il faut alors supposer un tissage produisant une étoffe très légère.

Le salaire de l'artisan n'est, à nouveau, pas évoqué. Faut-il supposer qu'il récupère une partie du produit qui lui a été remis comme c'est probablement le cas dans le contrat précédent, ou qu'il reçoit par ailleurs des versements non mentionnés dans cette tablette ?

Le mois de livraison est le même (le mois iii, qui apparaît cette fois sous son nom akkadien) et la pénalité en cas de délai de livraison est, elle aussi, identique : le tissage d'un vêtement-*naḥlaptu* de 2 mines.

1.3. Tableau comparatif des données de HSS 5, 95 et HSS 5, 36 :

Voir Tab. 1.

1.4. Les artisans

Les noms de Puhi-šenni et Utu-andul, avec les mêmes patronymes, apparaissent ailleurs dans la documentation de Nuzi, mais aucune des occurrences ne donne d'indications sur leurs activités de tisserands.

Puhi-šenni fils d'En-šukru, avec deux de ses frères, Turari et Paite, et un quatrième homme, Hutuya fils d'Urhiya, reçoit 6 ANŠE d'orge comme paiement supplémentaire (*utāru*) pour un champ de 7 ANŠE situé à Nuzi, d'après HSS 9, 33 = AdŠ 553 (A 23) ; la tablette

12 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 211, n°137. Translittération et traduction : Zaccagnini 1981 : 351 n°7 et n. 9.

13 Ll. 13–17 : 1-*nu-tu₄ na-aḥ-la-ap-tu₄ SIG₅ (...) i-na muḥ-ḥi TUG₂.H.I.A a-a[š₂-bu]*. Le scribe a peut-être mélangé deux formulations. D'une part, une correction *ina muḥḥi<ya> ašbu* permet de retrouver la formule attendue « je dois un vêtement-*naḥlaptu* », une formulation classique à Nuzi, cf. CAD A/2 : 404a, s.v. *ašābu* 3c ; dans cette hypothèse, TUG₂.H.I.A renverrait alors au *naḥlaptu*. D'autre part, la formulation *ina muḥḥi TUG₂.H.I.A* pourrait aussi se traduire par « en plus de l'étoffe (commandée) ». La traduction adoptée cherche à rendre compte de la combinaison de ces deux formulations (mais de ce fait, *ina muḥḥi* est traduit deux fois !).

porte les sceaux de Puhī-šenni et des trois autres hommes qui reçoivent l'orge¹⁴. Le même Puhī-šenni fils d'En-šukru est témoin dans HSS 19, 91 (C 28), une déclaration d'Akap-šenni qui donne sa fille Ašten comme fille adoptive à son épouse¹⁵.

Utu-andul fils de Hamanna apparaît dans une liste du palais, HSS 15, 18 : 37 (N 120), parmi des militaires armés d'arcs servant dans « l'aile droite ». Dans JEN 538 : 10, 15 (maison de Tarmi-Tilla, 13), il est débiteur, avec Turari fils de Puhīya, de Tarmi-Tilla et Zike, les fils de Šurki-Tilla (et petits-fils de Tehip-Tilla).

Ces deux artisans semblent de statut libre, mais Utu-andul a pu être enrôlé en cas de besoin dans l'armée.

Il existe également un Puhī-šenni tisserand, serviteur du palais, mentionné dans la liste HSS 14, 593 : 11 (R 76), mais sans patronyme ; or le nom est très courant et il peut parfaitement s'agir d'un homonyme du fils d'En-šukru.

2 Le triste destin d'une famille d'artisans : les contrats du tisserand Tai-Tilla

Les tablettes provenant de la pièce A 34 ne relèvent pas toutes des archives d'Ilānu et un autre dossier concerne la famille d'Akkuya fils de Katiri (Pedersén 1998 : 28 ; Lion 1999 : 48). Parmi elles, deux tablettes, HSS 13, 18 et HSS 5, 6, impliquent les mêmes personnes, Pirazza/ina fils de Pai-Tilla¹⁶ et le tisserand Tai-Tilla fils de Nahiya¹⁷ ; deux autres, AASOR 16 94 et HSS 5, 40, liées à la même affaire, concernent Zike, le fils du tisserand¹⁸.

2.1. HSS 13, 18 : une commande de textile comme intérêt d'un emprunt

Traduction¹⁹ :

Déclaration de Tai-Tilla fils de Nahiya, il a dit ceci devant les témoins : « Je dois 1 ANŠE 5 BAN₂ d'orge à Pirazzana fils de Pai-Tilla ; et après la moisson, je rendrai le capital. De plus, j'ai reçu 1 BAN₂ d'orge comme salaire et je ferai une étoffe-*hullānu*, en raison de [mon service comme *tid*]ennu auprès de [Pirazzana], avec ses

ornements. Et je la [donnerai] à Pirazzana au début du mois *hu*[...]. Si je ne la donne pas au jour [convenu, je verserai...] à [Pirazzana]. »

(lacune)

6 témoins dont le scribe, 6 sceaux.

Tai-Tilla déclare donc être débiteur de Pirazza/ina, à qui il a emprunté de l'orge ; il doit le lui rendre, sans qu'il soit question d'intérêts. La première partie de la déclaration se présente donc comme une reconnaissance de dettes. La suite ressemble à un contrat de travail : il reconnaît avoir reçu un salaire (*igru*), il doit faire une étoffe-*hullānu* décorée et s'engage à payer une pénalité s'il ne la donne pas à la date convenue²⁰. Mais les deux affaires sont liées : si la restitution [*tid*]ennu est correcte, Tai-Tilla s'engagerait à faire ce travail dans le cadre d'un contrat de *tidennūtu*, un type de prêt avec gage dans lequel le produit du gage, s'il s'agit d'un bien immobilier, ou le travail du gage, s'il s'agit d'une personne, représente l'intérêt du prêt. Tai-Tilla, tisserand, payerait donc à Pirazza/ina, comme intérêt du prêt d'orge, une étoffe-*hullānu* qu'il fabrique lui-même, une situation qui est apparemment confirmée par AASOR 16, 94 (cf. ci-dessous, § 2.4). Qui, du commanditaire ou de l'artisan, doit fournir la laine ? Sur ce point, ni le présent contrat, ni HSS 5, 6 (ci-dessous, § 2.2), ne donne d'indication explicite.

La mention d'un salaire pourrait s'expliquer par le fait que le travail demandé à Tai-Tilla représente plus que l'intérêt du prêt. Mais le différentiel serait très faible, car ce salaire semble extrêmement bas. A titre de comparaison, dans HSS 15, 332 (F 4), le salaire payé pour la fabrication d'un *hullānu* correspond à une brebis et 1 ANŠE d'orge (soit 10 BAN₂)²¹. On constate aussi d'après HSS 13, 369 que la fabrication de cette étoffe, dans le cadre du service *ilku*, donne droit à un versement d'1 ANŠE d'orge²². On ignore combien de temps Tai-Tilla met à fabriquer cette étoffe, mais son salaire est aussi inférieur à la ration que touche mensuellement un artisan tisserand du palais (de 2 BAN₂ par exemple dans HSS 14, 593). C'est également le cas par rapport au montant des rations du personnel de Šilwa-Teššub : 1 BAN₂ constitue la ration mensuelle des petits garçons et des jeunes filles, alors que les adultes touchent 2 BAN₂ pour les femmes et 3 pour les hommes (Wilhelm 1980 : 22).

14 Puhī-šenni et son frère Turari apposent le même sceau : Stein 1993 : 49 et 312–313, sceau n° 340 ; il est différent de celui apposé par Puhī-šenni sur HSS 5, 95.

15 Le texte est translittéré et traduit par Breneman 1971 : 101–102, n° 34 ; commentaires dans Cassin 1994 : 136–137 ; pour les adoptions de femmes, voir Grosz 1987 et Fincke 2012.

16 Cet homme est aussi connu par HSS 9, 21 = AdŠ 622 (Maison de Šilwa-Teššub, A 13), une adoption immobilière par laquelle il cède une maison à Nuzi à Kubasa, serviteur de Šilwa-Teššub.

17 En dehors du présent dossier, Tai-Tilla apparaît aussi comme témoin dans JEN 9 : 35 et 41 (maison de Tarmi-Tilla, pièce 13), une adoption immobilière en faveur de Tarmi-Tilla, fils de Šurki-Tilla (et petit-fils de Tehip-Tilla).

18 Les opérations impliquant Tai-Tilla et son fils Zike sont schématisées dans la figure ci-dessous § 2.4. L'arbre de la famille Zike-Ellu-Akawatil est donné de façon très partielle et uniquement pour la branche qui est en contact avec Tai-Tilla et son fils. Sur les relations très complexes au sein de cette famille, voir Cassin 1994, en particulier les tableaux 1a–1d p. 132–133 et Lion 2004 : 564–566.

19 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 107, n° 73.

20 Le *hullānu* est identifié à un châle ou à une couverture. Il est très fréquemment mentionné dans la documentation de Nuzi, cf. CAD H : 229, AHw : 354a et Gaspa 2017 : 52 ; JEN 314 donne l'indication de son poids, cf. ci-dessous § 3.

21 Ce document enregistre les déclarations du donneur d'ordre et de l'artisan quant au fait que l'étoffe-*hullānu* a bien été fabriquée et le paiement du salaire (*igru*) effectué. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'un contrat en tant que tel. L'artisan est Hutanni serviteur du *mār šarri* (« fils du roi ») Urha-tati. Son archive a été étudiée par Negri Scafa 2012 : 216–217, 220, 222 et 253. Sa profession n'est mentionnée dans aucun des documents le concernant. Néanmoins, qu'il ait été tisserand ne fait aucun doute d'après HSS 15, 332. Un (autre ?) Hutan[ni] apparaît dans une liste du palais enregistrant les noms de 31 tisserands et *kāširu* (HSS 13, 483 : 2 (R 76) cf. HSS 13 : 103).

22 Nouvelle édition par Maidman 2010 : 169 n° 72.

tablette	Montant du prêt	salaire (igru)	produit à livrer	date de livraison	pénalité	témoins et sceaux
HSS 13, 18	1 ANŠE 5 BAN ₂ d'orge	1 BAN ₂ d'orge	1 <i>ḥullānu ša ašar</i> [Pirazzana ana tide]nnu itti birmišu	mois : - <i>ḥu[ri]</i> = x (déc.-jan.) ? - <i>ḥu[talše]</i> = xii (fév.- mars) ?	[...]	6 témoins dont le scribe Šimanni fils d'Ak.diġir.ra. 6 sceaux dont 5 sont ceux des témoins
HSS 5, 6	2 ANŠE d'orge	1 BAN ₂ d'orge	1 <i>ḥullānu ḥarauz- zuḥlu (...) birmešu- nu kīmê Pirazzina iqabbi</i>	mois <i>šeḥli</i> = viii (oct.- nov.)	2 bons moutons	5 sceaux dont celui du scribe Sîn-šadûni

Tab. 2: Tableau comparatif des données de HSS 13, 18 et HSS 5, 6.

La date à laquelle le textile doit être remis est cassée : il peut s'agir du mois *ḥu[ri]* (x) ou *ḥu[talše]* (xii) ; elle est différente de la date de remboursement du prêt, fixée après la moisson.

2.2. HSS 5, 6 : encore une commande de textile liée à un emprunt

Traduction²³ :

Ainsi (parle) Tai-Tilla fils de Nahiya : « j'ai reçu en prêt 2 ANŠE d'orge de Pirazzina fils de Pai-Tilla ; à la moisson, je donnerai le capital, 2 ANŠE d'orge, à Pirazzana. » Ainsi (parle encore) Tai-Tilla : « J'ai reçu de Pirazzana 1 BAN₂ d'orge comme salaire et je ferai une étoffe-*ḥullānu ḥarauzzuḥlu* pour Pirazzina, pour le mois *šeḥli* (viii) et je la donnerai à Pirazzana. Si je ne la donne pas au mois *šeḥli*, je verserai 2 bons moutons à Pirazzina ». Ses ornements, comme Pirazzina dira, de la même façon, Tai-Tilla (les) fera.

Ainsi (parle) Pirzu fils de Zaruru : « j'ai reçu en prêt 1 ANŠE d'orge de Pirazzina fils de Pai-Tilla ; à la moisson, je donnerai le capital, 1 ANŠE d'orge, à Pirazzina. »

5 sceaux dont celui du scribe.

Si on laisse de côté la troisième déclaration, celle de Pirzu, un autre débiteur, HSS 5, 6 présente une situation très proche de HSS 13, 18. Tai-Tilla emprunte une quantité d'orge plus élevée, 2 ANŠE, et le formulaire de prêt ne mentionne pas d'intérêt. Il s'engage par ailleurs à fabriquer une étoffe-*ḥullānu* décorée pour son créancier, à livrer au mois *šeḥli* (viii), toujours pour un salaire de 1 BAN₂ d'orge. Le *ḥullānu* est qualifié de *ḥarauzzuḥlu*, un hapax que le contexte ne permet pas d'éclairer²⁴. Il n'est pas fait mention de *tidennūtu*, mais la similitude des deux textes suggère une situation identique.

2.3. Tableau comparatif des données de HSS 13, 18 et HSS 5, 6 :

Voir Tab. 2.

²³ Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 106, n°72.

²⁴ Richter 2012 : 132 ; le AHw : 324 rapproche ce terme de *ḥarwarahḥuzzu* et traduit : « ein Landarbeiter », peut-être en raison d'une étymologie le reliant au mot hourrite *ḥarba*, « paille ? », cf. Richter 2012 : 134. Cependant, cette traduction convient ici difficilement, surtout si l'on tient compte de la valeur du *ḥullānu* qui, de plus, est orné, ce que l'on n'attend pas pour une étoffe utilisée pour le travail.

La date de livraison du textile est différente dans les deux documents, de même que le scribe et presque tous les témoins : seul un témoin est commun aux deux contrats, Arhu fils d'Arip-apu. Il est donc probable qu'il s'agisse de deux affaires successives, et que Tai-Tilla soit un artisan pauvre, obligé de s'endetter par deux fois, et pour un montant plus élevé la seconde, auprès du même créancier.

D'après une autre tablette trouvée dans la même pièce, HSS 5, 88²⁵, Tai-Tilla s'est aussi endetté auprès d'un autre homme, Ziḡna-Adad fils de Šarišše, à qui il a remis un champ en *tidennūtu*. Il est difficile de mettre ces textes en ordre, d'autant plus que le scribe et les témoins de HSS 5, 88 sont tous différents de ceux des deux autres textes. Mais l'on pourrait penser que Tai-Tilla a commencé par mettre en gage son champ (HSS 5, 88) et que, n'ayant pu le dégager, il ne lui est par la suite resté que ses capacités de tisserand à offrir comme gage (HSS 13, 18 et HSS 5, 6).

2.4. La déchéance économique d'une famille

HSS 13, 18 précède HSS 5, 6 – et la situation économique de Tai-Tilla a donc empiré, puisqu'il emprunte un montant d'orge plus important dans le second texte²⁶. L'ordre des deux documents se déduit en effet d'un troisième, AASOR 16, 94, qui rappelle les termes de HSS 5, 6. Il s'agit du remboursement de la dette de Tai-Tilla, qui a dû mourir, par son fils Zike.

Traduction d'AASOR 16, 94²⁷ :

Ainsi (parle) Piriazzana fils de Pai-Tilla : « Le père de Zike fils de Tai-Tilla, (c'est-à-dire) Tai-Tilla, me devait une étoffe-*ḥullānu* et 2 ANŠE d'orge. Maintenant, nous

²⁵ Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 104-105, n°71.

²⁶ Arhu fils d'Arip-apu est le seul témoin qui est présent dans les deux contrats. Ce qui ne plaide pas en faveur d'une situation selon laquelle ces deux prêts auraient été contractés de façon rapprochée. Les prêts sont rédigés par des scribes différents. Le scribe de HSS 13, 18, Šimanni fils d'AK.DIĠIR.RA, est de la 4^{ème} génération de la famille d'Apil-Sîn ; d'après Stein 1993 : Fig. XL, il est contemporain de la 4^{ème} génération de la famille de Šilwa-Teššub. Sîn-šadûni, qui écrit HSS 5, 6, n'est pas mentionné avec son patronyme ; mais il s'agit probablement du fils d'Amur-Šarri ; d'après Stein 1993 : Fig. XLI, il est contemporain des générations 3 et 4 de la famille de Šilwa-Teššub.

²⁷ Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 108, n°74.

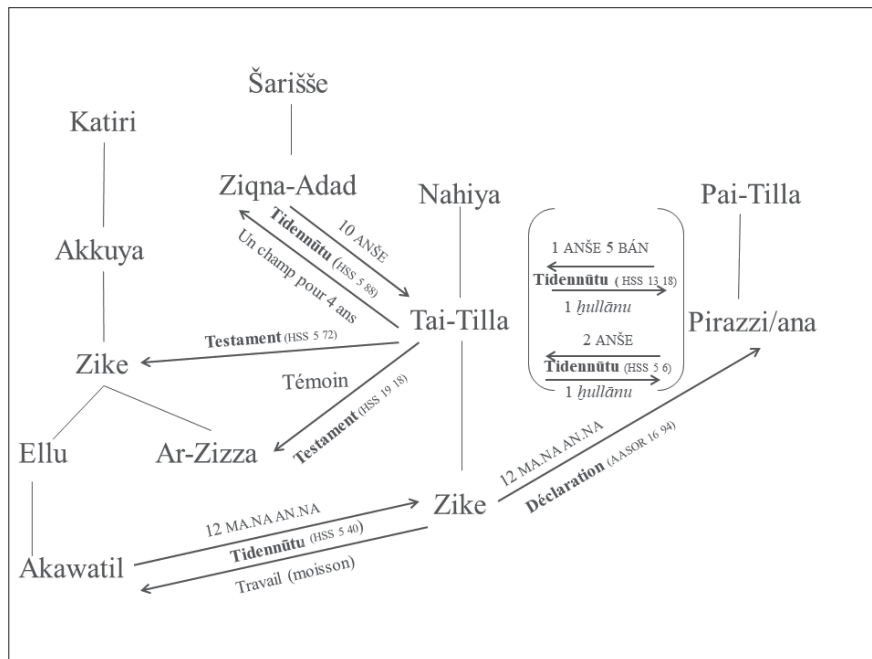


Fig. 1 : Les documents impliquant Tai-Tilla et son fils Zike.

avons fait un accord : pour les 2 ANŠE d'orge et pour une étoffe-*hullānu*, j'ai reçu de Zike 12 mines d'AN.NA et je suis payé ». Celui qui contestera payera 1 bœuf.

5 sceaux et nom du scribe (précédé de ŠU).

Le fils a hérité des dettes du père, et on voit qu'ici les 2 ANŠE, soit la somme empruntée dans HSS 5, 6, et l'étoffe-*hullānu*, sont mises sur le même plan, ce qui renforce l'idée que ce travail était demandé comme intérêt de la dette (cf. *supra* § 2.1 HSS 13, 18). L'ensemble est converti en 12 mines (soit 6 kg) d'AN.NA, un métal dont on traduit fréquemment le nom par « étain » mais qui, dans la documentation de Nuzi comme dans les textes médio-assyriens, pourrait correspondre au plomb (Lion 2013 : 134, n. 28.) ; c'est probablement aussi le cas ici.

La façon dont Zike s'est procuré ces 12 mines d'AN.NA est connue par HSS 5, 40²⁸, provenant également de la pièce A 34. Il s'agit d'une déclaration de Zike, qui se donne lui-même en *tidennūtu* à Akawatil fils d'Ellu et s'engage à travailler pour lui, en particulier à moissonner, en échange de 12 mines d'AN.NA, soit exactement la somme qu'il rembourse à Pirazza/ina. Zike aliène donc la seule chose qui lui reste, sa force de travail, mais il ne semble pas pratiquer le métier de tisserand, alors même que les professions étaient souvent transmises au sein des familles (Fincke 2015). Il ne peut sortir de la maison d'Akawatil qu'une fois remboursées les 12 mines d'AN.NA ; on voit mal cependant comment il pourrait gagner une telle somme et il risque de devoir travailler de longues années chez Akawatil. Le scribe et quatre témoins d'AASOR 16, 94 se retrouvent dans HSS 5, 40 ; un cinquième témoin d'AASOR 16, 94, Tehip-Tilla, n'apparaît pas dans HSS 5, 40, en revanche son père Zilip-Tilla y est présent. Une telle conjonction fait penser que les deux textes sont très proches dans le temps, ils

ont peut-être été rédigés le même jour, au même endroit, la grand porte de Nuzi, mentionnée dans HSS 5, 40 et dont le gardien, Kinni, est présent dans les deux documents. Tout cela montre que les deux opérations sont étroitement liées.

La tablette HSS 5, 40 a dû être conservée par Akawatil fils d'Ellu. Pirazza/ina, une fois la dette de Tai-Tilla éteinte par son fils, a pu remettre à celui-ci les deux tablettes concernant les dettes de son père, HSS 13, 18 et HSS 5, 6 ; de même Zike devait-il conserver AASOR 16, 94, établissant qu'il ne devait plus rien à Pirazza/ina. Zike, entré dans la maison d'Akawatil, a pu entreposer ses tablettes chez lui. Cela expliquerait que ce dossier ait été trouvé avec les siennes, dans la pièce A 34.

Les familles de Zike et d'Akawatil se connaissaient depuis plusieurs générations, comme le montrent deux autres tablettes trouvées dans la même pièce. Tai-Tilla, le père de Zike, avait été témoin de deux testaments, celui du père d'Ellu et grand-père d'Akawatil, nommé Zike lui aussi (HSS 5, 72 : 58²⁹), et celui d'Ar-Zizza, un frère d'Ellu et oncle d'Akawatil (HSS 19, 18 : 45, 58³⁰).

Enfin HSS 5, 19³¹, trouvée aussi en A 34, enregistre une autre affaire concernant Zike et Akawatil. C'est une déclaration de Tae fils de Puhuya, selon laquelle Zike a été condamné à lui payer 36 moutons ; Tae l'a livré à Akawatil comme garantie (*ana qātāti*), et Akawatil rend finalement Zike à Tae. Il est possible que cette tablette (scellée par Tae et probablement conservée par Akawatil) soit la dernière chronologiquement, et qu'Akawatil ait transféré Zike, incapable de payer 36 moutons, à Tae.

28 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 101, n° 68. Traduction : Eichler 1973 : 126, n° 3.

29 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 29–30, n° 17. Translittération, traduction et commentaire des ll. 13–16 : Wilhelm 2005 : 177.

30 Translittération et traduction : Paradise 1972 : 70–73 (n° 15). Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 61–62, n° 39. Commentaire : Paradise 1987 : 204–207. Translittération, traduction et commentaire des ll. 40–44 : Wilhelm 2005 : 177.

31 Translittération : Dosch 1976 : 102, n° 69.

3 JEN 314, un contrat pour faire un vêtement de grande qualité

La tablette JEN 314 provient de la maison de Tarmi-Tilla, petit-fils de Tēhip-Tilla, pièce 13³². Un tisserand, Zike fils de Širwiya, s'engage à faire un vêtement *kusītu* avec un *hullānu*, chaque année, pendant 5 ans, pour Tarmi-Tilla.

Traduction³³ :

Zike fils de Širwiya a reçu de Tarmi-Tilla fils de Šurki-Tilla un vêtement-*kusītu* de bonne qualité x x x (et une?) étoffe-*hullānu* dont le poids est de 2 *kuduktu*, la décoration du vêtement-*kusītu* est de couleur rouge-*kinahḫu*, rouge-*tawar<ri>we*, *tamkarḫu* et brun-*šurathu*. Et Zike, dans la maison de Tarmi-Tilla, s'est engagé par serment à donner à Tarmi-Tilla, au mois *šeḫli* (viii), chaque année durant 5 ans, un vêtement-*kusītu* (qui appartiendra) à Tarmi-Tilla. Les restes du vêtement-*kusītu* (appartiendront) à Tarmi-Tilla. S'il ne fait pas chaque année, au mois *šeḫli* un vêtement-*kusītu*, Zi[ke donnera] un bœuf à Tarmi-Tilla. Lorsque [5 ans] auront passé, (Zike) rendra à Tarmi-Tilla le vêtement-*kusītu*, selon la teneur de la tablette. (S'il ne fait pas [le travail], [...] Zike chaque année, un mois, lui-même, personnellement, il moissonnera³⁴. Ce vêtement-*kusītu* d'un poids de 2 *kuduktu* [...].

[Cette tablette a été] écrite [...].

7 témoins dont le scribe Hutiya.

8 sceaux : ceux des témoins, du scribe et de Zike.

Ce contrat engage l'artisan pour une période longue, 5 ans, et lui impose de fabriquer chaque année un vêtement à livrer au mois *šeḫli* (viii), soit octobre-novembre. Zike, le tisserand, est lié par serment à son employeur³⁵. La fourniture de la matière première n'est pas mentionnée, pas plus que le salaire de l'artisan. En revanche une pénalité est prévue s'il ne livre pas les vêtements : elle consiste non à faire un travail supplémentaire, mais à payer un bœuf. A la fin du contrat, une autre pénalité est envisagée, qui impose apparemment à Zike de faire la moisson (pour Tarmi-Tilla ?), mais la

tablette est abîmée et on comprend mal dans quel cas Zike serait soumis à cette obligation.

Le vêtement commandé est un habit de luxe. Le *kusītu*, attesté dans la documentation assyrienne, est un vêtement cher (Michel/Veenhof 2010 : 234 et Gaspa 2017 : 53–54). Ici, il est multicolore, ou comporte des décorations multicolores en laines teintées, donc précieuses. Les couleurs sont indiquées : *kinahḫu* et *tawar-riwe*³⁶ correspondraient à des tons rouges, *šurathu* à du brun et la couleur *tamkarḫu* n'est pas identifiée³⁷. Zike semble recevoir un ensemble qui consiste en deux pièces, un *kusītu* et une étoffe-*hullānu*, mais ce dernier élément n'apparaît plus par la suite. L'ensemble pèserait 2 *kuduktu*, soit environ 1,328 kg³⁸, et c'est également le poids indiqué à la fin du texte mais pour le *kusītu* uniquement.

Les précisions données ne sont cependant pas suffisantes pour réaliser le vêtement et Tarmi-Tilla fournit à Zike un modèle qu'il devra rendre au bout des 5 ans. Cette façon de procéder, en recopiant fidèlement un produit fini, était déjà attestée à Nuzi, grâce à une inscription sur une grande brique cuite, trouvée dans la petite pièce R 88 du palais, au sud-est de la grande cour M 100 : « Cette brique cuite au four, on fera ses compagnes comme celle-ci. Comme celle-ci, on les formera et on les ajoutera ». G. Wilhelm, qui a republié et étudié cette inscription, commente : « The text reveals that the brick functioned as a model for the production of kiln-fired bricks. To the best of my knowledge the inscription is unparalleled ». Le présent contrat fournit un parallèle, mais pour la fabrication de vêtements³⁹.

Les « restes » (*šuhḫelu*)⁴⁰, peut-être les chutes de tissu s'il s'agit d'un vêtement façonné, appartiennent à Tarmi-Tilla. Dans ce cas, Zike effectuerait un travail de couturier ou de tailleur en plus de celui de tisserand. Les chutes de tissu doivent permettre à Tarmi-Tilla, à l'avenir, de faire réparer les vêtements s'ils sont abîmés ou usés.

L'artisan, Zike, porte un nom très courant ; il est identifié par le nom de sa mère, Širwiya, ce qui est rare ; il s'agit peut-être d'une femme qui a élevé seule son fils. Zike apparaît dans trois autres documents comme « fils de Širwiya », sans que le nom de sa mère soit nécessairement précédé du déterminatif féminin⁴¹. Il est témoin

32 Sur les tablettes provenant de cette pièce, voir Pedersén 1998 : 25–27 et Lion 1999 : 44, avec la bibliographie antérieure.

33 Une translittération est donnée ci-après, en annexe.

34 *ramanu* et *pagru* sont rarement attestés en hendiads, et surtout dans des textes littéraires (cf. CAP P : 16 et 17a, CAD R : 118b). Le sumérogramme ŠE.GUR₁₀.KU₅ = *eṣēdu* « moissonner » semble d'un usage peu courant à Nuzi, cf. CAD E : 340 f.

35 HSS 15, 137, un texte très mal conservé de la pièce L 2 du palais, formalise également l'engagement de l'artisan dans le cadre d'un contrat de commande. Le terme *māmītu* en est absent mais une série de clauses en *šumma* suggère la tenue d'un serment, de même que la forme déclarative : Ar-Zizza reçoit 6 étoffes-*hullānu* et un vêtement-*ituššu* appartenant au palais pour coudre (*kubbū*), avec leurs décorations (*aššiyanni*). Il s'engage à ne pas prendre de retard (l. 6. *iktalāšunu*). L'engagement est d'abord transcrit sous forme d'une déclaration de Kinnanni (l. 1). Par la suite la possibilité qu'Ar-Zizza ne respecte pas son engagement et le paiement d'une pénalité semblent être envisagés (l. 9 : *šumma 'ar-zizza 'x' iklūšu[nu...]' 'x' gamrūtu*). Plus loin (ll. 20–25), l'engagement est à nouveau formulé mais cette fois comme une déclaration d'Ar-Zizza. Le document est scellé par Tuliya.

36 La lecture *ta-wa-ar-<ri>we* est proposée par le CAD T : 22a.

37 Sur la laine teintée et ses diverses couleurs, voir Abrahami 2014 : 294–299.

38 Le *kuduktu*, mesure utilisée à Nuzi pour la laine, serait équivalent à 80 sicles, soit environ 664 g. Voir sur la question Abrahami/Lion 2015.

39 Wilhelm 2009. Le terme traduit ici par « compagnes » est *šutāpu*, qui désigne un partenaire commercial.

40 Le terme est un hapax d'origine hourrite (Richter 2012 : 404). Le AHw : 1261b transcrit le mot avec *-hé-* et le traduit par « risque » (« Risiko ? »). Le CAD Š/3 : 206b transcrit *šu-uh-x-lu* indiquant que « The reading of the word is uncertain since the third sign (collated) is damaged but is probably *-hé-* ». Le signe sur la copie correspond à un *-he₂*- presque complet. Il est probable que la tablette à cet endroit ait été en meilleur état au moment de la copie. Le CAD propose le sens contextuel de « leftover raw materials » que nous avons retenu ici.

41 Le nom Širwiya est assez rare. Comme mère de Zike, Širwiya est mentionnée dans JEN 314 : 9 et sans déterminatif dans HSS

dans HSS 9, 21 = AdŠ 622 : 36 et 46 (Maison de Šilwa-Teššub, A 13), un contrat d'adoption immobilière par lequel Pirazza/ina fils de Pai-Tilla cède une maison de Nuzi à Kubasa, serviteur de Šilwa-Teššub (cf. ci-dessus § 2 et n. 16). Dans deux tablettes du palais trouvées en R 76, HSS 13, 33 : 16 et HSS 14, 593 : 2, il fait partie de groupes de tisserands qui reçoivent des rations d'orge. HSS 13, 33 précise qu'il s'agit de tisserands de Nuzi et HSS 14, 593 de serviteurs du palais. Or, dans la relation contractuelle entre Tarmi-Tilla et Zike, le palais n'apparaît pas ; Zike prête serment en son nom propre, dans la maison de Tarmi-Tilla, et scelle la tablette JEN 314. Un serviteur du palais pourrait donc travailler, de façon apparemment autonome, pour un client.

4 HSS 15, 140+, un cas de sous-traitance ?

HSS 15, 140+ est une commande pour la fabrication d'un vêtement-*naḥlaptu* dont la livraison doit intervenir après la moisson, à l'instar de HSS 5, 95 (cf. *supra* § 1.1). Le début de la tablette est endommagé. Il manque à peu près 7 lignes, soit presque toute la face ; seule subsiste la fin de la déclaration de Kai-Tilla selon laquelle il a reçu quelque chose, probablement la laine nécessaire à la réalisation de son travail. Il est possible que cette déclaration ait été précédée par celle de Hezzurri, le donneur d'ordre, à l'instar du formulaire que l'on rencontre dans le règlement final d'un contrat de commande⁴².

Traduction⁴³ :

[...pour un vêtement-*naḥla*]ptu [...], j'ai reçu. 1 *kuduktu ditto*⁴⁴ 20 sicles de laine, Hezzurri donn[era à] Kai-Tilla. Kai-Tilla fabriquera 1 vêtement-*naḥlaptu* d'1 *kuduktu* (érasure) après la moisson (et) le donnera à Hezzurri.

4 sceaux dont celui du scribe Hutiya fils d'Arip-Šarri

La différence entre les poids de laine (20 sicles) représentée peut-être le salaire pour le tissage du vêtement. Kai-Tilla est connu par trois tablettes provenant du quartier au sud-ouest du palais. Le présent document aurait été trouvé en P 35, la pièce principale de la grande maison formant le « Group 3 », où l'activité de tissage

est d'ailleurs documentée par la découverte de poids de métier à tisser (Starr 1939 : 273). Provenant de la pièce P 400 du « Group 2 », HSS 15, 223, scellé par Kai-Tilla, est un reçu attestant que des produits tinctoriaux lui ont été remis (Abrahami 2014 : 296). D'autre part, Kai-Tilla est enregistré comme tisserand dans HSS 16, 460, une tablette issue de K 184 (« Group 10 »), une liste de 7 hommes qui reçoivent chacun 2 mines d'AN.NA et sont placés sous la responsabilité d'un « chef de 10 »⁴⁵.

Ce qui rend particulier le contrat HSS 15, 140+ est que Hezzurri et deux des hommes qui scellent le document peuvent être rattachés au milieu des tisserands : Akip-Šarri fils de Pui-Tae et Kelip-Ukur fils de Hanatu⁴⁶ ; ce dernier traite avec des personnes de haut rang et occupe des fonctions managériales au sein du groupe des tisserands du palais⁴⁷. En dehors du scribe et d'Arim-mušni qui scelle également le contrat, on constate donc que le cercle professionnel de HSS 15, 140+ est remarquablement homogène. On peut se demander si la situation documentée ici ne correspondrait pas à un travail en sous-traitance, Hezzurri faisant accomplir par un autre tisserand (Kai-Tilla) la fabrication d'un vêtement et prenant, entre autres, deux de leurs collègues pour témoins.

Les situations et les statuts des artisans étaient à Nuzi, très divers. Le palais et certaines grandes maisons avaient leurs propres esclaves, exerçant parfois des métiers spécialisés, comme les tisserands. Mais des personnes privées pouvaient aussi en employer, passant pour cela des contrats avec des artisans indépendants ou, comme cela a été observé avec JEN 314, avec un artisan du palais qui s'engageait en son nom propre. Certains d'entre eux, hautement qualifiés, étaient capables de faire des vêtements complexes et de grande qualité, et pratiquaient peut-être, en plus du métier de tisserand, celui de tailleur. Ils pouvaient jouir d'une situation économique confortable comme l'a montré P. Negri-Scafa dans son étude sur les archives du quartier à l'ouest du temple, à propos de Hutanni serviteur du *mār šarri* (« fils du roi ») Urha-tati et de Tehip-Šarri fils d'Itti-Šarri (Negri Scafa 2012 : 220–222 et 225–226). Mais la spécialisation n'allait pas toujours de pair avec une position sociale importante : on le voit par l'exemple de

9, 21 : 36, HSS 13, 33 : 16 et HSS 14, 593 : 2. Une (autre ?) ⁴²Širwiya appartenant au personnel du palais est enregistrée parmi les bénéficiaires de rations dans deux tablettes de la pièce R 76 du palais (HSS 15, 510 : 6 et HSS 14, 535 : 12). Le déterminatif masculin précède ce nom dans JEN 671 : 16 : ⁴³Širwiya (« fils » de Šellapai). Il s'agit cependant d'une femme : dans JEN 666, 34, ce nom, associé au même patronyme (également indiqué comme « fils ») est en effet noté avec le double déterminatif (⁴⁴dis.munus). Sur cette pratique, cf. Abrahami 2011. On connaît un autre tisserand du palais identifié par son matronyme : Iwišti fils de ⁴⁵Yamaštu (HSS 13, 46 : 1) (R 76). Une Yamaštu impliquée dans la production textile est attestée dans deux textes du palais (HSS 14, 114 et HSS 14, 146), cf. Abrahami 2014 : 292. S'il s'agit bien de la même personne, on aurait là un cas intéressant de transmission de la profession de la mère vers le fils.

⁴² HSS 15, 332, ci-dessus n. 21.

⁴³ Translittération et joint par Fincke 1998. Le fragment de tablette complétant HSS 15, 140 n'a pas de numéro SMN.

⁴⁴ La longue cassure qui précède ne permet pas de comprendre à quoi fait référence KI.MIN.

⁴⁵ Kai-Tilla est suivi d'Aurturra, un *ašlakku*. Figurent également un portier (*abultānu*) et quatre autres hommes sans indication de profession. Le document est scellé par le héraut (*nāgīru*) Herri. Du fait de son contenu, on pourrait penser à une erreur d'attribution pour l'origine de cette tablette et la rattacher au palais. C'est probablement le cas de HSS 16, 378 censé provenir de la même pièce, cf. Abrahami/Lion 2012 : 5. La dernière tablette issue de K 184, HSS 16 433, semble par contre bien provenir de cette pièce, cf. Morrison 1987 : 187 et 201.

⁴⁶ Negri Scafa 2012 : 227, en particulier pour la prosopographie de Kelip-Ukur, qui est probablement à identifier au tisserand (sans patronyme) travaillant pour le palais, tout comme Hezzurri et Akip-Šarri, cf. Mayer 1978 : 170–171.

⁴⁷ Negri Scafa 2012 : 227 et en particulier les deux listes de la pièce R 76, HSS 13, 46 (qui porte son sceau) et HSS 16, 350, où il apparaît comme responsable de groupes de jeunes tisserands.

la famille de Tai-Tilla, dont on suit le processus de paupérisation.

Le formulaire des contrats de commande d'étoffe contient un certain nombre de clauses qui en précisent les modalités : quantité de laine remise, désignation du produit fini, date de la livraison, pénalité de retard et salaire. L'accord est conclu devant des témoins qui scellent la tablette. Le tisserand peut également y apposer son sceau mais ce n'est pas systématique. Sur chacun de ces points, on constate des variantes. Par exemple, il arrive que la laine pour fabriquer l'étoffe ne soit pas mentionnée et de ce fait, on ne sait pas s'il revenait au client de la fournir au tisserand ou bien si ce dernier se la procurait. Un point particulièrement intéressant concerne la caractérisation du produit attendu. On trouve l'indication du nom (*sasullu*, *hullānu*, *kusītu*) et parfois aussi le terme générique (TUG₂), la qualité (*damqu*), les dimensions, le poids, les couleurs ainsi que la mention de décorations (*birmu*). Outre ces informations inscrites dans le contrat, le client peut aussi donner des indications plus précises oralement : HSS 5, 6 y fait explicitement référence. Un autre moyen de procéder consistait à confier au tisserand l'habit à réaliser qui lui servait alors de modèle et qu'il devait restituer une fois le travail terminé (JEN 314). Les pénalités de retard à la livraison consistent pour le tisserand à fournir au client des animaux (bœuf, moutons) ou un travail relevant directement de ses compétences (tisser une étoffe supplémentaire) ou pas (moissonner). L'engagement du tisserand à réaliser son travail est stipulé par les termes du contrat. JEN 314 présente toutefois une procédure quelque peu exceptionnelle puisqu'il prête serment « dans la maison » de son client. Le salaire n'est pas toujours indiqué, ce qui paraît étonnant, mais peut-être explicable par le recours à un barème conventionnel. Dans un cas au moins, la référence au salaire est implicite puisque le tisserand reçoit plus de laine qu'il n'en a besoin pour réaliser l'étoffe : il a donc dû en garder une partie pour son usage personnel. On relève aussi le cas où le salaire versé est anormalement bas mais l'explication, dans ce contexte, tient au fait que la commande intervient dans le cadre d'un prêt *tiddennūtu*. Un autre cas de figure est représenté par HSS 15, 140+. L'étude prosopographique tend, en effet, à montrer que les parties impliquées (le « client », le fabricant, et deux des quatre témoins) appartiennent au milieu des tisserands, ce qui suggère un travail en sous-traitance.

Alors que de nombreux métiers sont mentionnés dans les recueils de lois de la fin du III^e et du début du II^e millénaire av. J.-C., il n'en va pas de même au Bronze Récent⁴⁸. Le corpus de Nuzi fournit cependant un remarquable ensemble de contrats qui vient éclairer

l'histoire du travail pendant cette période ; les textes présentés ci-dessus en offrent un bref aperçu⁴⁹.

Annexe : JEN 314

- Obv. 1. *il-te-en-nu-tu₃ TUG₂ ku-si₂-[tu]*
 2. *SIG₅-qa₂ NA x NA hu-la-an-nu ša*
 3. *2 [ku]-duk-tu₄ ina šu-qu₂-ul-ti-šu-nu*
 4. *bi-ir-me-šu-nu ša ku-si₂-ti*
 5. *ša ki-na-aḥ-ḥu ša ta-wa-ar-<ri>-we*
 6. *ša ta-am-ka₄-ar-ri u₃*
 7. *ša šu-ra-at-ḥu*
 8. *ša ¹tar-mi-til-la DUMU šur-ki-til-la*
 9. *¹zi-ke₂ DUMU ¹ši-ir-wi-ia*
 10. *il-te-qe₃ u₃ ¹zi-ke₂*
 11. *a-na 5 MU.MEŠ-ti il-te-en-nu-tu₃*
 12. *ku-si₂-ti ša ¹tar-mi-il-la*
 13. *i-na MU-ti u₃ i-na MU-ma*
 14. *¹zi-ke₂ i-na E₂-it ¹tar-mi-til-la ma-ma-ti*
 15. *DU₃-uš-ma i-na ITI-ḥi še-eḥ-li*
 16. *a-na ¹tar-mi-til-la i-na-an-din*
 17. *šu-uḥ-ḥe₂-lu ša ku-si₂-ti ša*
 18. *¹tar-mi-til-la-ma šum-ma ku-si₂-tu₃*
 19. *i-na MU-ti u₃ i-na MU-ma*
 20. *i-na ITI-ḥi še-eḥ-li la DU₃*
 21. *1 GU₄ [¹zi-[ke₂] a-na ¹tar-mi-til-la [SI₃]*
 22. *im-ma-ti-mi-e [5 MU].MEŠ-ti*
 23. *SA₅-¹la-ma¹ il-te-en-nu-tu₃ ku-si₂-tu₃*
 24. *ša KA ṭup-pi₂ a-na*
 T. 25. *[¹tar]-mi-til-la GUR-ru*
 26. *[šī-ip]-ra la DU₃-uš*
 Rev. 27. *[] ¹zi-ke₂*
 28. *i-na MU-ti u₃ i-na MU-im-ma*
 29. *1 ITI-ḥi ina ra-ma-ni-šu ina BAD-[šu]*
 30. *ŠE.GUR₁₀-KU₅ ku-si₂-tu₃ ša-a-šu¹*
 31. *2 ku-duk-[tu₄] ina šu-qu₂-ul-ti-[šu ...]*
-
32. *[]-ti*
 33. *[] ša a-[]*
 34. *[] ša]-ṭi₃-ir*
 35. *IGI [wu-ur-te]-šup DUMU tar-mi-te-šup*
 36. *IGI ut-[ḥap]-ta-e DUMU a-kip-ta-še-en-ni*
 37. *IGI zi-ra-ar-til-la DUMU en-na-ma-ti*
 38. *IGI zi-li-pa-pu DUMU hu-ia*
 39. *IGI hu-ti-ia DUB.SAR-ru₃*
 40. *IGI te-ḥi-ip-til-la DUMU te-eš-šu-ia*
 41. *IGI in-ni-qa-a-a DUMU IR₃-ku-bi*
 42. *NA₄^min-ni-qa-a-a NA₄^mzi-ra-ar-til-la*
 43. *NA₄^mzi-li-pa-pu NA₄^mwu-ur-te-šup*
 44. *NA₄^mte-ḥi-ip-til-la NA₄^mut-ḥap-ta-e*
 45. *NA₄^mzi-ke₂ NA₄^mhu-ti-ia DUB.SAR*

Note : La présente étude est réalisée dans le cadre du GDRI *Ancient Textiles from the Orient to the Mediterranean* (ATOM) <http://www.mae.u-paris10.fr/gdri-atom-presentation>.

48 *Les Lois Assyriennes*, seul recueil de cette époque pour la Mésopotamie, abordent dans la tablette M, très incomplète, la question de la responsabilité du batelier et du nettoyeur de vêtements en cas de perte (d'un bateau, de sa cargaison, du vêtement à nettoyer) : Cardascia 1969 : 328-333 ; Roth 1995 : 189-190.

49 En ce qui concerne les métiers dans la documentation médio-assyrienne, voir Jakob 2003 ; dans la documentation médio-babylonienne, voir Sassmannshausen 2001.

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Demonization of enemies in Mesopotamian literature

A case study in verbal imagery

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Abstract: The occasional demonization of enemies in Mesopotamian literature and, specifically, in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, is usually associated with the opposition between the cosmic center, identical with the seat of the king, and the inimical and chaotic cosmic periphery which was to be subdued. A closer investigation of the contexts in which enemies are compared with demons shows that such verbal images are neither directly related to royal ideology nor to cosmic geography.

Keywords: Enemy images, demonization, similes, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, legitimation of power.

1 The Gutians in the *Curse of Agade* and the *Victory of Utu-ḫeḡal*¹

It has been argued by Volkert Haas and several other scholars that according to the Mesopotamian worldview, the steppes and mountainous territories outside of the Mesopotamian plain belonged to a cosmic periphery closely associated with destructive and inimical forces of chaos. The nomadic peoples living there were seen as manifestation of those forces, a quality which made them similar to demons and wild animals.² One of the literary passages which could be cited in proof of this is the description of the Gutians in the *Curse of Agade* (l. 154–161):³

They who do not resemble any people, who are not counted among the countries,
The Gutians, people who do not know any bondage,
(Endowed with) human reason,⁴ (but having) canine intentions and the appearance of monkeys,
Enlil brought them out of the mountains.
In vast numbers like sparrows⁵ they are sweeping the ground:
Their arms are stretched over the plain for him (Enlil) like a snare for animals.

Nothing escapes their arms.
Nobody is spared by their arms.

The first three lines of the passage seem to imply that the Gutians, although they do share common origin and cognitive abilities with other humans, are ignorant of the moral norms fundamental to the life of a human community. I guess this is what is expressed by the words “canine intentions”⁶. There is something basically *inhumane* about their moral nature, which the passage’s animal similes help to express. A similar image is conveyed by the beginning lines of the *Victory of Utu-ḫeḡal*, a literary and historical composition relating the expulsion of the Gutian occupants from Sumer. Hardly incidentally, it also begins with an animal metaphor comparing the enemy to snakes inhabiting the mountains (l. 1–14):⁷

Gutum, the quick-darting serpent of the mountains⁸,
Who rebelled⁹ against the gods,

1 I owe special thanks to Prof. Pascal Attinger for his helpful feedback and valuable suggestions as well as to Sanya Azam (University of Bristol) for checking my English.

2 Haas 1980; Liverani 1979: 306–314. Cf. Maul 1999: 211; Wiggermann 1996: 210–212 and *passim*.

3 Cooper 1983: 56–59, 164–167, 249; Attinger 2007/2015; ETCSL 2.1.5.

4 Other possible translations: ‘of human origin’ (cf. *Enmerkar and En-suhkeš-ana* 135) or ‘of human nature’ (dim₂-ma lu₂-lu₇^(hu)). The obvious problem of the interpretation of this line is the unclear semantic relationship of the terms dim₂-ma, ḡalga and ulutim₂ in the present context (cf. Attinger 2007/2015, 9 fn. 82).

5 For the meaning of buru₅^{mušen}, see Veldhuis 2004: 229–231 with further literature.

6 An alternative reading is ‘compassion (like that) of dogs’ (arḫuš ur-re instead of ḡalga ur-re or ḡalga ur-ra, l. 156).

7 Frayne 1993: 284; ETCSL 2.1.6.

8 muš-ĠIR₂ can either be read as muš-ḡiri₂ (lit. ‘a knife-like snake’) or as muš-ul₄ ‘quick-darting snake’. The meaning would be almost identical (cf. the Greek ἄκων ‘javelin’, ‘dart’ and ἄκοντις ‘quick-darting serpent’) – unless one would interpret muš-ḡiri₂ as a compound meaning ‘snake-scorpion’ (courtesy of Pascal Attinger; for ḡiri₂ ‘scorpion’, cf. Nungal A 16). For the expression muš-ĠIR₂-ḫur-saḡ-ḡa₂(-k), cf. muš-ĠIR₂ kur-ra(-k) in the *Curse of Agade* 267, 276, the “quick-darting serpents of the mountains” that made the towpaths along the canals of the destroyed city of Agade impassable, as well as Lugalbanda I 360, 370 (numbering according to ETCSL). A similar epithet is used in the *Lamentation over Sumer and Ur* 145 where the Gutians are metaphorically referred to as muš kur-ra(-k) ‘serpents of the mountains’.

9 Cf. Šulgi B 299 (lu₂-a₂-zi-ga-bi), where the meaning ‘rebel’ seems certain. The literal meaning of lu₂-a₂-zi-ga might be ‘man of a raised hand (=somebody who raised his hand (against))’. Douglas Frayne’s rendering “who acted with violence against the gods” (Frayne 1993: 284; cf. lu₂ a₂-zi-ga ‘homme violent, homme brutal, violent’ in Attinger, *Lexique*, 6, s.v.

Who carried off the kingship of Sumer to the foreign land¹⁰,
 (Who) filled Sumer with evil¹¹,
 (Who) took away the wife from one who had a wife,
 (Who) took away the child from one who had a child,
 (Who) put evil and violence into the land.

The last lines – “who took away the wife from one who had a wife, who took away the child from one who had a child” – are strongly reminiscent of the description of the demonic creatures called *ĝulla* (the word was later adopted into Akkadian as *gallû*), who accompanied Inanna on her way out of the netherworld in the myth of *Innana's Descent* (l. 303f.):

They tear the wife who is in the lap of her husband
 away from him,
 They make children leave their father's knees.¹²

According to the myth, the mercilessness of *ĝulla* (called “evil ones” in *Dumuzi's Dream*) is the result of their inability to have a share in joys of human life (they neither eat nor drink; they also do not have sex or children)¹³; their behavior is therefore rooted in their demonic nature.

Thus, in both passages, the Gutians are portrayed as creatures having non-human (and *inhumane*) qualities.¹⁴

The image of the Gutians in the *Curse of Agade* has often been compared to the descriptions of the Amorites in Sumerian literature (who are portrayed as people who do not know agriculture, construction of houses, religious worship and burial rites)¹⁵. However, as Jerrold Cooper rightly observed, these two ethnic groups are depicted in two very different ways.¹⁶ The

nomadic Amorites were apparently thought to be culturally inferior to the civilized peoples (which, indeed, does not seem strange in a culture that considered the introduction of agriculture, worship and kingship to represent the beginning of human history, and, to some extent, also the creation of the world!)¹⁷, but they are never portrayed as wicked oppressors.¹⁸ In the *Curse of Agade*, they are listed among the nations who traded with Agade and profited from the mutually friendly relationship.¹⁹ The Gutians remain the only ethnic group that is demonized in Sumerian literary texts. I guess it is hardly a coincidence that they were also the only ethnic group foreign to Mesopotamia that managed to conquer a part of the Mesopotamian territory and keep it under control over an extended period of time²⁰ in the third millennium BC.

Another important point is that the purpose of this ‘demonization’ or ‘dehumanization’ (which was, to judge from the administrative documents, rather restricted to the literary discourse)²¹ was not so much to legitimate excessive violence against the Gutians (Utu-hengal's only military aim was apparently to expel the invaders from Sumerian cities, and although he put king Tirigan and his family in fetters, he chose not to kill the captives²²). Its purpose was rather to help interpret the events theologically and explain to the posterity the shameful fact that the glorious kings of Agade were succeeded by uncivilized barbarians.²³

Interestingly, the kings of Agade continue to face demon-like adversaries in the later Akkadian literature (it is not surprising to find a Gutian king among them)²⁴.

a₂-zi(-ga) is, to my mind, theologically problematic (can the gods be seen as objects of human violence?).

10 Or ‘mountains’ (kur).

11 Or ‘wickedness’, ‘enmity’ (niĝ₂-a-erim₂).

12 Sladek 1974: 141; ETCSL 1.4.1. The duplicates have divergent formulations with the same sense (Sladek 1974: 140f.) which is probably an indication that the lines are a literary topos. Cf. *Forerunners to Uduĝ-hul* v 475f. (Geller 1985: 46; the passage is identical with the reading of duplicates T [=N 983] and V [=CBS 13902; PBS 5, 22] cited in Sladek, *ibid.*).

13 *Innana's Descent to the Nether World* 295–302.

14 The image of the mountain serpent in the *Victory of Utu-ĥeĝal* might convey an additional connotation, since it seems to suggest a comparison between the Gutians and a mythical monster representing the forces of chaos, defeated and slain by Ninurta (or another god with similar functions) whose role is, by implication, played in the narrative by the king Utu-hengal himself. Two elements indicate that muš-ĜIR₂-ĥur-saĝ-ĝa₂(-k) are not just snakes inhabiting the mountains: their defiant and violent behaviour towards the gods (line 3) as well as their carrying off the kingship of Sumer to the inimical and foreign mountain regions (ll. 4–6), an action very similar of that of Anzu in the Akkadian myth about Anzu and Ninurta (cf. *Anzu* OB 1 and 20, Vogelzang 1988: 96; *Anzu* i 81–84 and 106–111 // 127–132 // 148–153, Vogelzang 1988: 33–37). The closing lines of the *Victory of Utu-ĥeĝal* seem to describe the killing of the “mountain serpent” by the king of Uruk who brings the stolen kingship back to Sumer subsequently (ll. 124–129), and thus fit neatly into the mythic paradigm. Note that both episodes (the mountain serpent carrying the kingship away, Utu-hengal killing the serpent and returning the kingship to Sumer) frame the entire composition (ll. 1–6 // ll. 124–129).

15 Cf. *The Marriage of Martu* 127–138.

16 “Both are described as subhuman, but in somewhat different

terms. The Gutians are characterized as savage, beastlike imbeciles, whereas the Amorites are usually curious primitives, less horrible, if every bit as threatening militarily, than the Guti” (Cooper 1983: 30).

17 *Biłgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld* 1–13; *The Debate between Grain and Sheep* 1–42; *The Rulers of Lagaš* 1–37; *The Song of the Hoe* 1–35. For the continuity of the tradition in later periods, cf. KAR 4 (Lisman 2013: 60–64, 330–346 with further literature).

18 Cooper 1983: 30–32.

19 *Curse of Agade* 46f.

20 Even though it is unclear how long the Gutian dominance lasted and how far it stretched (Edzard 2004: 93, 96), it must have continued long enough to leave a lasting imprint on the collective memory (a period of approximately 40 years – roughly corresponding to the lifespan of one generation – might represent a reasonable estimate, see Hallo 1957–1971: 714).

21 Westenholz 1997: 246.

22 This seems a reasonable inference from the passage *Victory of Utu-ĥeĝal* 115–123 (Frayne 1993: 287).

23 This is especially clear in the case of the *Curse of Agade*, but is valid for the *Victory of Utu-ĥeĝal* as well, where the emphasis on the bestial and demonic qualities of the invaders is additionally aimed at highlighting Utu-hengal's merit and conveying the idea that he would not have been able to expel the aggressors without Enlil's sanction and the support of other deities. Thus, it is correct to say that the imagery stressing the bestiality of the Gutians is a rhetorical device contributing to the legitimation of Utu-hengal's *claims to political dominion* over (the whole of) Sumer (cf. his adoption of the title ‘king of the four quarters’: Utu-ĥeĝal 1: 5, 2: 6, 3: 5; Frayne 1993: 280–283). However, it would be wrong to say that its primary aim was to legitimize *military actions* themselves (which hardly needed any legitimation) or physical violence.

24 „He who is not flesh nor blood“ (*la ši-ru-um la da-mu-um šu₂*). *Gula-AN and the Seventeen Kings against Naram-Sin* ii' 17'; Westenholz 1997: 254f.

The *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin*²⁵ provides not only the most powerful literary image of such enemies²⁶, but also the most beautiful example of how the figure of a semi-demonic enemy could be used for literary instruction of the reader in the matters of religion, politics, theology and common sense: contrary to what one might expect if one follows the patterns of ‘royal/war ideology’, the royal protagonist does not triumph over the wild enemy with non-human features endangering the whole Oikumene, but, instructed through the divine oracle to refrain from any military action²⁷, finally accepts the will of gods and even gives a pacifistic admonition to a future ruler.

2 Dehumanization of enemies as an ideological and propagandistic tool in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions?

The text corpus most commonly discussed in connection with the Mesopotamian ‘royal ideology’, ‘war ideology’ and the conceptual legitimation of violence towards the enemies is, of course, the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Their images of enemies have been usually characterized as stereotyped and ideologically biased. The statement made by Frederick Mario Fales in his article “The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: ‘The Moral Judgment’” published in the volume *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* may be considered representative (at least as far as the general tendency typical for a part of scholarship is concerned): “[...] there is only one Enemy – with a capital letter – appearing in and out of Assyrian royal inscriptions. With this seeming paradox, I mean to state that the many *topoi* as regards antagonists to Assyrian kingship may – to a very large extent – be considered as tassels of a single coherent political ideology of *nakrūtu*, shared among the collective authorship of annalistic texts; and that the different figures of opponents that appear in the texts themselves, the various Ursās and Teummans, Marduk-apal-iddinas and Inib-Tešubs [...] are [...] described as separate manifestations of a unitary ideology of enmity”.²⁸

In my opinion, this view is problematical for a number of reasons.

Of course, the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions draw upon a limited set of traditional *topoi*, set phrases and rhetorical devices. However, most of these *topoi*, which demonstrably go back as far as the third millennium BCE, are not restricted to the genre of royal inscriptions and seem to stem, at least partially, from literary compositions addressing the mythic and legendary past. This alone is enough to cast doubts on their ideological background.²⁹ It is important to remember

that the primary target audience of the royal inscriptions was future kings, gods and scribal elites.³⁰ I guess that – although the intentions of the kings might have been complex – they were, in general, more interested in eternalizing their deeds and making them known to posterity than in what we nowadays call ‘propaganda’ (meaning deliberate manipulation of public opinion in order to maintain power).³¹

Another important point is that, given the adherence of the authors to the conventional codes of expression, the royal inscriptions display, in fact, surprising variety. Neither their style nor content nor rhetorical strategies remained unchanged (sometimes they even change within the same reign and vary between different groups of inscriptions). The scribes seem to have chosen the epithets and similes describing the enemy as carefully and deliberately as the kings chose the way they treated the conquered enemies.

In his article “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire” (published in the volume *Power and Propaganda*), Mario Liverani associated the animal similes in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions with the imperialistic view according to which the conquered foreign peoples were allegedly regarded as subhuman.³² However, if every comparison with the non-human world were to be seen as an instance of dehumanization, one would have to assume that the Assyrians dehumanized them-

‘Ideologie’ in *Duden*, meaning 2). For a broader and somewhat vague and ambiguous usage typical for Assyriological publications of the last decades, see Reade 1979; Holloway 2002; Bonatz 2005; Pongratz-Leisten 2015; Vedeler 2015; Sazonov 2015. For the origin and the early history of the term, see Choe 1997. Note that C. Geertz seems to have considered ‘ideology’ basically a modern phenomenon which appeared in the moment when political power lost its traditional religious legitimation (Geertz 1973: 219–220). As H. Choe convincingly showed, the concept of ‘ideology’ was originally developed by Karl Marx in the context of his analysis of bourgeois society (Choe 1997: 121, 131–141, 182–184 and passim). Most recently, J.F. Quack argued against using the term to refer to representations of power in the ancient world due to the “possibly fallacious or distorted associations” (Quack 2017: 1).

30 Cf. Frahm 1997: 36. That the primary audience of the inscriptions were future rulers is clear enough from the addresses to the “later prince” in the final parts of many of them: cf. Ashurnasirpal II 28: v 13–16 (Grayson 1991: 286); Chicago Prism vi 73–83 (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 185f). Cf. the analysis of the audience and function of the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs in Russell 1991: 223–240 (see esp. 239f.) and Reade 1979. The unpractical ‘triangular’ prisms from Ninawā (Nineveh) inscribed with Sanherib’s titles and epithets (Sennacherib 27; Grayson/Novotny 2012: 211–213) show, however, that E. Frahm is right in assuming that the royal inscriptions served the purposes of scribal training as well (Frahm, *ibid.*).

31 Cf. the emphasis on the “memorial function of the stele” and “striving after immortality which the successive palaces embody” in Reade 1979: 340f. He is certainly correct in stating that the king “needs no justification for what he does” “in normal circumstances” (*ibid.*, 332). If it is not too bold to use a Sumerian composition praising the most famous of the Ur III kings as hermeneutic glasses to interpret the function of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, one might refer to the programmatic incipit Šulgi B 1–8 (Castellino 1972: 30): the alleged master of propaganda and indoctrination Šulgi (cf. Michalowski 1987: 63–68) left no doubt that the hymns written in praise of his achievements were intended to secure his immortality in the memory of future generations.

32 Liverani 1979: 310 and passim.

25 Westenholz 1997: 263–368.

26 SB Țupšenna 31–71 (*ibid.*, 308–315).

27 SB Țupšenna 129–145 (Westenholz 1997: 322–327).

28 Fales 1987: 425. It should be noted, however, that the author calls his proposition “interpretative hypothesis” (*ibid.*). The same view is expressed in Zaccagnini 1987: 410.

29 Here, I use the word ‘ideology’ in its narrower sense of ‘a (political) doctrine in which ideas are used to attain political or economic goals’ (cf. the definition of the German counterpart

selves comparing the king and his troops with a flood covering the country³³, fog³⁴, lions in rage³⁵, wild bulls³⁶, eagles³⁷, vipers³⁸ and even swarms of locusts. The locust swarm simile which is used in the royal inscriptions *both* with reference to the enemy troops *and* with reference to the Assyrian army³⁹ shows that not everything we perceive as offensive had derogatory connotations in the context of the Mesopotamian literary tradition.⁴⁰

33 Adad-nārārī II 2: 18 (GIM *a-bu-be*, Grayson 1991: 148); Ashurnasirpal II 19: 15 (*e-du-u₂ gap-šu*, Grayson 1991: 257); Tiglath-pileser III 47: 2 (*a-bu-biṣ*, Tadmor/Yamada 2011: 118); Sargon II's *Annals* 289 (*a-bu-biṣ*, Fuchs 1994: 149). For the mythical connotations of the flood metaphor, see Maul 1999: 210. For its age and origin, cf. E-anatum's *Stele of the Vultures* x 1–4 (Frayne 2008: 131) and Lugalbanda I 28, 51.

34 Chicago Prism ii 15 (GIM MURU₉, Grayson/Novotny 2012: 174). The same metaphor is applied to the Urartian army (the number of whose soldiers is huge “like a thick cloud”, GIM MURU₉) in Grayson 1996, 233: 11. Cf. Lugalbanda I 30 (*murū₉-gen₇*).

35 Sargon II's *Display Inscription* 40 (Fuchs 1994: 203); Sanherib's *First Campaign* (Frahm 2003: 135). Cf. Adad-nārārī II 2: 15 (Grayson 1991: 147).

36 Chicago Prism i 71 (*ri-ma-niṣ*, with a possible allusion to the *Epic of Gilgamesh* I 64 [SB]); iv 2 (GIM AM *ek-di*); Grayson/Novotny 2012: 173, 178. Note that a little further in the description of the fifth campaign, Sanherib is compared to a mountain goat leaping on rugged slopes and peaks (Chicago Prism iv 6).

37 Sargon II's *Display Inscription* 129 (*a-ra-niṣ*, Fuchs 1994: 228). Cf. Chicago Prism iii 77–79 (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 178): here, the settlements of the native population inhabiting the area of Mount Nipur are compared to the “nests of eagles”.

38 Tiglath-pileser I ii 76 (*ki-ma ṣib-be*, of the king leading his soldiers through mountain passes); Grayson 1991: 16; *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* iv 42 (of Assyrian soldiers attacking the enemy); Machinist 1978: 110. In mythological texts, *ṣibbu* appears as both Ninurta's weapon and epithet (Angim 142; Lugale 3; CAD 17/2, 375, s.v. *ṣibbu* A).

39 Enemy army: Šamši-Adad V 1 iv 35 (*ki-ma BURU₅.ḪI.A.MEŠ*; Grayson 1996: 188); Chicago Prism v 56 (*ki-ma ti-bu-ut a-ri-bi*; Grayson/Novotny 2012: 182). Assyrian king/army: Sargon II's *Annals* 86 (*ki-ma [ti-bu-ut] a-ri-bi*; Fuchs 1994: 98, 317); *Display Inscription* 73 (*a-ri-biṣ*; *ibid.*, 214, 347); Sanherib's *Bull* 4 93 (*a-ri-biṣ*; Grayson/Novotny 2014: 84). Cf. *Curse of Agade* 158, where the Gutian hordes attacking Sumer are compared to a swarm of sparrows (*buru₅^{musen}*) sweeping the ground, and *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave* 32, where the army of Uruk setting out on a campaign against Aratta is compared to a swarm of rooks (*buru₄-dugud^{musen}*) rising to attack spring crops. Taking into account that the signs NAM (=bir₃) and BURU₅ were occasionally confused (Borger 2010: 73 and 279, no. 135), the variant forms of the Akkadian nouns *erbū* ‘locusts’ and *āribu* ‘raven, crow’ are sometimes hard to tell apart (AHw. 68, s.v. *āribu*, NB), the Sumerian *buru₅* was later equated (and translated) with the Akkadian *erbū/arbū/erebu/aribu* ‘locusts’ (cf. Lugale 94), and that the *tertium comparationis* is probably identical in all cases, it is tempting to assume that the passages from the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions mentioned above were inspired by older Sumerian literary compositions (or their Akkadian translations).

40 It is important to remember that our perception, judgement, associations and even emotional reactions to certain images are culturally determined and should not therefore be uncritically accepted as guidelines in the analysis of cultural phenomena of the ancient world. Thus, no modern ruler would call himself “fierce” and “merciless” and boast of these qualities; however, Tukulti-Ninurta I and Ashurnasirpal II did (*Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* iv 41 [Machinist 1978: 110]; Ashurnasirpal II 1: 19 and parallel passages; Ashurnasirpal II 26: 41 [Grayson 1991: 195; 281]; *ušumgallu ekdu* ‘ferocious dragon’ seems to have been Ashurnasirpal II's favourite way to refer to his own person, and if one believes his inscriptions, the name was entirely appropriate – by the way, it is not without irony that the king who showed Ninurta more devotion than any of his predecessors and successors repeatedly compared himself

Obviously, the locust swarm simile served to visualize the idea of a great multitude set out to devastate the country, but was not meant to express any moral judgement. To be sure, only foreigners and foreign kings are compared to waterfowls, deer, foxes, fish and bats, and only the Assyrian king is compared to a lion. However, this is hardly surprising given that many animal similes occur in the context of hunt imagery and that the inscriptions were composed to glorify the king and his military prowess. It is only natural that, in contrast, his enemies are represented as weak and frightened. It is important to note that the animal similes characterizing the enemies in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions are always attached to verbs and serve to describe either the treatment of the enemies (“I slaughtered them like sheep”) or their behavior in a particular situation (“they fled like deer”).⁴¹ However, in contrast to the passage from the *Curse of Agade* quoted above, they do *not* imply any statement on their inherent moral nature.⁴²

3 Instances of demonizing the enemy in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions

There are several – admittedly very few – passages in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions that clearly demonize the enemy. In accordance to the tradition already visible in the *Victory of Utu-ḫeḡal*,⁴³ the enemies are compared to the *gallū*-demons in all pertinent passages.

The first instance of a demonization of this kind occurs in the *Display Inscription* of Sargon II from Ḫorsābād (Khorsabad). The relevant passage (ll. 121–124)⁴⁴ reads:

Marduk-aplu-iddina, member of Bīt-Yakin tribe,⁴⁵ the king of the land of Kaldu, the seed of murder, the likeness of an evil *gallū*-demon (*hi-ri-iṣ GAL₅-LA₂ lem-ni*), who does not respect the word of the Lord of lords, put his trust in the Gulf, the massive flood, broke his oath sworn by the great gods and withheld his tribute. He turned to Humbanigaš, the king of Elam, for help, incit-

to one of Ninurta's mythic adversaries slain by the god!). They were not unwilling to grant these qualities to their opponents as well: Ashurnasirpal II accords the kings of the “dangerous highlands” the very same epithets (Ashurnasirpal II 26: 44; *MAN.MEŠ-ni ek-du-te la pa-du-te*, Grayson 1991: 281).

41 Sanherib's *First Campaign* 35 (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 34).

42 Of course, every single simile should be considered individually. It is possible that certain comparisons (e.g. with pigs or bats) did have abusive or contemptuous undertones, whereas others (e.g. frequent bird similes) did not. It is probably a universal phenomenon that animal names usually have positive or negative emotional connotations when applied metaphorically to human beings (thus, *bitch*, *dog*, *swine* and *minx* bear negative connotations in modern English, while *tiger*, *bear*, *puppy* and *ladybird* are positively connoted (Schneider 2003: 152)), and we have, of course, to reckon with the possibility that connotations specific to everyday language (which are almost impossible for us to access due to the absence of records) were intentionally evoked by the scribes. However, feelings of contemptuous superiority, bad as they are, do not necessarily imply any racist attitude or ‘ideology’.

43 See above.

44 Fuchs 1994: 225f., 350.

45 Lit. ‘the son of Yakin’.

ed the Sutis, people of the steppe, to rebel against me, and geared up for battle. He marched into the land of Sumer and Akkad, and ruled it 12 years against the will of the gods of Babylon, the city of the Enlil of gods.

The formulation *hiriš galli lemni* “the likeness of an evil *gallû*-demon” is unparalleled in earlier literature. The evil *gallû* is, of course, borrowed from Mesopotamian incantations, but the whole phrase seems to be a literary invention by the scribe.⁴⁶ It is remarkable that the first enemy unambiguously demonized in the Assyrian royal inscriptions is not the king of some far-away uncivilized nation but the ruler of neighboring Babylonia, who for the first time managed to unite the West Semitic tribes of the southern Mesopotamia in order to oppose the Assyrians and portrayed himself as the savior of the country from the Assyrian threat.⁴⁷ The fact that he was a Chaldean – one of those tribal newcomers to Babylonia who integrated only too well into the native economy and political life,⁴⁸ – and a chieftain who was loyal to Sargon’s predecessors (the only Chaldean chieftain who was awarded the title ‘king’ by them – he is still called ‘king’ in the quoted passage!),⁴⁹ as well as the fact that he had successfully organized an Elamite attack on Assyria,⁵⁰ must have contributed to the irritation he evoked in the ambitious Assyrian king who apparently felt an acute need to legitimize his own rule⁵¹ (and perhaps some of his military enterprises). In fact, the passage reveals why Marduk-aplu-iddina received a demonizing epithet in an unconcealed manner: He managed to remain on the Babylonian throne for twelve years. Even though he was not a dangerous enemy from the military point of view, he was certainly the greatest challenger of Sargon’s policies.

The epithet *hiriš galli lemni* is once again applied to Marduk-aplu-iddina – together with such epithets as

“the evildoer, the seed of murder”, “evil enemy, a rebel with a mind full of lies, an evildoer for whom righteousness is an abomination”⁵² – in Sanherib’s inscription recounting his first Babylonian campaign.⁵³ The context is largely the same: Marduk-aplu-iddina’s appeal to the Elamite king for help, his successful organization of an anti-Assyrian coalition among the West Semitic tribes of Babylonia, the attack of the Assyrian army, the capture of the capital and retributive actions directed against the rebellious Aramaean and Chaldean tribes.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that the expression, together with all the other vilifying epithets, disappears from the account of the first campaign against Marduk-aplu-iddina in the later recensions of Sanherib’s annals already beginning with the Bellino Cylinder.⁵⁵

Later, Ashurbanipal accords the Elamite king Teumman the epithet *tamšil galli* which can be regarded as a translation of the phrase *hiriš galli* in more conventional Akkadian.⁵⁶ To be sure, Ashurbanipal provides a much better theological justification for this characterization by accusing Teumman not only of illegitimate accession, but also of plans to exterminate the previous king’s entire family as well as a part of the Elamite military elite.⁵⁷ However, one could ask, whether the “insolent messages” sent by Teumman to Ashurbanipal

46 CAD 6, 199, s.v. *hirišu* A (2). The phrase is only found in Sargon’s *Display Inscription* (Winckler Sar. pl. 34: 122) and in a version of Ashurbanipal’s inscription alluding to it (CT 35, 46 K.13440: 3). PSBA 38 pl. 7: 12 can be discarded as evidence, since [*ana hi-ri-iš*] is conjectured.

47 Brinkman 1973: 91; Brinkman 1964: 10f (cf. the description of the anti-Assyrian coalition led by Marduk-aplu-iddina in Sanherib’s *First Campaign* 10–15 [Frahm 2003: 142]). Brinkman 1964: 14; Iraq 15, 133: 8–18.

48 Brinkman 1979: 226.

49 Brinkman 1964: 12, and fn. 36 (LUGAL *Tam-tim*). Cf. LUGAL KUR *Kal-di* in Sargon’s *Display Inscription* 122 (Fuchs 1994: 225) and LUGAL KUR *Kar₂-dun-ia-aš₂* in Sanherib’s *First Campaign* 6 (Frahm 2003: 134). The changing designation of the territory ruled by Marduk-aplu-iddina in the Assyrian sources seems to reflect both changing political reality and changing attitudes.

50 Brinkman 1964: 13.

51 The inscriptions of Sargon II as well as his famous letter to Aššur (Mayer 2013) provide telling evidence regarding the king’s quest for legitimation, and Marduk-aplu-iddina’s demonizing epithets in the *Display Inscription*, together with many other literary features abounding in Sargon’s texts (cf. Renger 1986: passim), are probably to be seen in connection with it. In the description of his campaign against Babylonia (starting with the passage cited above), Sargon makes significant efforts to present himself as a benevolent and thoughtful monarch having special concern for the welfare of Babylonians and their temples and even taking measures to repopulate the devastated territory of Bit-Yakin (*Display Inscription* 134–143; Fuchs 1994: 229–232, 352f.).

52 *First Campaign* 6, 10 (Frahm 2003: 134f., 142). E. Frahm correctly pointed out that “the epithets that characterize Marduk-aplu-iddina in this passage are antithetical to those that Sennacherib claims for himself in ll. 1–3” (Frahm 2003: 145).

53 *First Campaign* 17 (ibid., 136).

54 It is interesting to note that, although Sanherib’s inscription recounting his first campaign against Marduk-aplu-iddina and his allies obviously draws on the literary account of Sargon’s Babylonian campaign in *Display Inscription* 121–143, it already shows a conspicuous shift in political attitude. In contrast to his father, Sanherib chooses to emphasize the retribution he imposes on the rebels (mentioning, however, – in contrast to some of his predecessors and successors – pillage, destruction and taking captives rather than anything which could be considered war crimes – mass killing is only mentioned in connection with Hirimmu, *First Campaign* 58, and it is far from clear whether the difficult *ba-ḥu-la-te* refers to the city’s military population or its subjects in general [cf. AHW. 96, s.v. *baḥūlātu*; ibid. 117, s.v. *ba’ulātu*; CAD 2, 182–184, s.v. *ba’ulātu*]) as well as his personal contribution to the military success (*First Campaign* 21–24) rather than any acts of benevolence (thus, the fact that he did not deport the Babylonians which is noted by the Babylonian Chronicle [Chronicle 1 ii 19; Grayson 1975: 77] finds no explicit mention in the narrative – although it can be deduced *ex negativo*). The description of the entry into Babylon (found in the inscriptions of both kings) reveals the contrast between Sargon’s and Sanherib’s attitude towards the “Babylonian problem” in an especially striking manner: Both of them say their faces radiated when they entered the city (*Display Inscription* 141; *First Campaign* 30 [*i-na nu-um-mur pa-ni*]), however, whereas Sargon ‘seizes the hand’ of Marduk, conducts the festive procession to Bit-Akiti and makes generous donations to various Southern Mesopotamian temples, Sanherib hastens to plunder Marduk-aplu-iddina’s palace (cf. Frahm 2003: 149, comm. to line 30).

55 Cf. Sennacherib 3: 5–7 (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 51).

56 Prism B iv 74 = C V 80 (*tam-šil GAL₂-LA₂*; Borger 1996: 97, 223).

57 Prism B iv 74–86 = C v 80–92 (ibid.). It is not stated explicitly that Teumman planned to kill the “archers” (¹⁰²ERIM.MEŠ ⁸⁸PAN) and the “nobles” (DUMU.MEŠ *ba-ne₂-e ša* KUR ELAM. MA⁸⁹). This may, nevertheless, be derived from the formulation that they had fled ‘from Teumman’s killing’ (*la-pa-an da-a-ki te-um-man*) (B iv 83–86).

– which the latter repeatedly mentions in his inscriptions⁵⁸ – might have been one of the reasons to characterize Teumman as “the image of a devil” as well.⁵⁹ Be that as it may, the epithet applied to Teumman was as exceptional as the treatment he received from Ashurbanipal who not only decapitated the Elamite king (which was already quite an exceptional measure!),⁶⁰ but also paraded his head.⁶¹

Most scholarly analyses of ‘demonization’ of enemies in the Ancient Near East refer, however, to another passage in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions that might, ironically, be less if at all relevant to the topic, since the crucial word in it – *gallû* – is a doubtful conjecture. The text in question is a copy of Ashurbanipal’s dedicatory inscription to Marduk originally engraved upon the “golden incense altar” in the temple Esagila in Babylon. It mentions “Tugdammê, king of Umman-manda”, who is described as *tab-nit ti-GEME₂ tam-šil DINGIR[...]* “the offspring of Tiamat, likeness of [...]”. M. Streck conjectured [*gallê?*]. This reading was accepted by Luckenbill, CAD and many scholars, with the result that what was origi-

nally a tentative restoration is often cited as a part of the text (without brackets).⁶² However, Streck’s restoration is to be considered highly unlikely, since the word *gallû* is never written with the divine determinative in Akkadian.⁶³ Thus, the only passage where the subject of ‘demonization’ is what it is expected to be according to the model outlined by Volkert Haas⁶⁴ – a member of a far-away uncivilized (nomadic) nation belonging, from the Mesopotamian point of view, to the cosmic periphery – is, curiously enough, the passage that should probably be discarded as evidence!⁶⁵

The last and at the same time least conventional and by far most disquieting instance of demonizing (and dehumanizing) the enemy occurs in the account of the eighth Sanherib’s campaign in the famous annalistic inscriptions from the royal armory in Ninawā (Nineveh, Taylor/Chicago Prism and Jerusalem Prism).⁶⁶ In this text, not the antagonistic kings of Babylon or Elam, but the citizens of Babylon themselves (*mārī Bābili*) are called “evil *gallû*-demons” (*gallê lemnūti*).⁶⁷ The passage

58 Prism B iv 97; v 2,25; vi 60 (and parallel passages).

59 It is difficult to assess the exact meaning of *mērehtu* (pl. *mēreḫē-ti*) in this context (cf. AHW. 645 ‘Aggressivität, Vermessenheit’; CAD 10/2, 21 ‘insolence’), and, of course, it is impossible to know what exactly the Elamite king wrote, although Prism B iv 96f. seems to qualify his repeated requests to extradite the political refugees as ‘insolence’. The way the narrative of the second war with Elam is constructed in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions suggests that the king’s refusal to extradite the Elamite refugees was the *casus belli* (cf. esp. Prism C v 93–107 [Borger 1996: 97]), the fact that makes the divine displeasure with Teumman understandable and provides an indirect legitimation for his humiliating death (at least for the readers endowed with certain theological sensitivity). It should be noted, however, that the ‘insolence’ alone, as the case of Tammaritu, one of Teumman’s successors (who received a position at Ashurbanipal’s court after his repentant submission without regard to his former ‘insolent’ statements) clearly shows (Prism A iv 12–40 and parallel passages; Borger 1996: 42f., 234), was a sufficient reason neither for according one demonizing epithets nor for an execution. Another point that can be inferred from the Tammaritu episode is that one should probably not take the epithet ‘insolent’ at its face value, since there, it is used to characterize Tammaritu’s comprehensible indignation about the manner Ashurbanipal had treated his predecessor Teumman (Prism A iv 13–17; l. 14 *mi/me-ri-iḫ-tu*).

60 If one does not take the occasional flaying (or putting to the sword) of rebellious governors, nobles and tribal chieftains into account (the practice favoured by Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II), the killing of kings of independent (or even vassal) states (let alone the mutilation of their corpses) is almost never reported in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, one notable exception being the decapitation of Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, by Esarhaddon (Esarhaddon 1 ii 74 and parallel passages; Leichty 2011: 16 and passim) who subsequently paraded the head of Abdi-Milkūti, together with the head of his ally Sanda-uarrī, in the streets of Ninawā (Esarhaddon 1 iii 32–38 [Leichty 2011: 17]; for the unique citation of an Assyrian victory chant in the passage, see Tadmor 2004), thus providing a model for the later treatment of Teumman’s corpse by his son Ashurbanipal.

61 Prism B vi 1–3; vi 50f., 66–69. One should consider the possibility that it was, in fact, not the way Teumman had treated Ashurbanipal, but rather the way Ashurbanipal finally treated the Elamite king that was the real cause for the latter’s demonization in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions – the Assyrian king who was well-trained in divine matters must have felt that the continuous desecration of Teumman’s corpse was problematic from a religious point of view and therefore needed some kind of legitimation.

62 Streck 1916: 280; Luckenbill, ARAB 2, 385; CAD 5, 19, s.v. *gallû* c).

The question mark used in Streck’s edition disappears in Luckenbill, and neither Volkert Haas nor Stefan Maul use brackets in the citation when discussing the passage (Haas 1980: 43; Maul 1999: 329). W. von Soden wisely omitted the reference in his lexicon (AHW. 275, s.v. *gallû(m)*), and Borger does not propose any restoration in his new edition of Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions reading *tam-šil AN* [(K 120+ 20 in Borger 1996: 202). It is, of course, an overstatement to say that “Ashurbanipal’s scribes often used *tamšil gallê* when referring to enemy kings” (Weissert 1997: 193 fn. 14).

63 AHW. 275; CAD 5, 18f., s.v. *gallû*.

64 Haas 1980.

65 Of course, the characterization of Tugdammê as *tabnūt Tiāmat* “the offspring of Tiamat” clearly alluding to the *Cuthean Legend* of Naram-Sin (cf. *Tiāmatu ušēniqšunūti* ‘Tiamat suckled them’ in SB Ṭupšenna 34; Gurney, AnSt. 5, 98; Westenholz 1997: 308) can itself be seen – at least to some extent – as an instance of ‘demonization’ or ‘dehumanization’ (cf. the description of the enemy hordes in MB Ṭupšenna 5’–12’, 21’–24’ and SB Ṭupšenna 31–36; Westenholz 1997: 286f., 308–310; note, however, that the demon-like enemies turn out to be humans in SB Ṭupšenna 65–71). Importantly, the allusive comparison of the Cimmerian king and his troops with the bestial enemy hordes of the *Cuthean Legend* (cf. his designation as the ‘king of the seed of destruction’ in Ashurbanipal’s large limestone inscription from the Ištar temple, ll. 142f., alluding to the divine oracle for Naram-Sin which predicted the destruction of the enemy hordes [Borger 1996, 285: 142f.; cf. SB Ṭupšenna 130]) served neither the legitimation of any military actions nor the legitimization of Ashurbanipal’s power (nor even the denigration of the Cimmerians and their ruler in the first place!), but rather was intended to use the literary plot of the *Cuthean Legend* as an interpretive frame explaining the (unexpected) fall of Tugdammê and the disappearance of the Cimmerian threat which was apparently not related to any significant military efforts on the part of the Assyrian king and could therefore be ascribed by him to the friendly intervention of the gods (Adali 2011: 128–132). The literary allusions to the *Cuthean Legend* helped – together with references to the king’s prayers, dream visions inspired by deities, the king’s responses to them and the like – to present Ashurbanipal as a wise and pious king relying on the gods and their help rather than on military power.

66 Chicago Prism v 17 – vi 35; Jerusalem Prism v 9 – vi 30. Grayson/Novotny 2012: 181–184, 198–201; Borger, BAL³ (2006), 82–85, 138–140.

67 It is also a big difference whether one is called “the image/likeness of a demon” – like Marduk-aplu-iddina or Teumman in the passages treated above – or plainly ranked among the “demons”. The latter is clearly beyond the limits of conventional

opening the campaign report shows them siding with the rebellious Mušēzib-Marduk (ironically called Šūzubu ‘the Saved’) who is portrayed as a cowardly parvenu with the whole scum of society rallied around him:

On my eighth campaign, after Šūzubu had rebelled and the citizens of Babylon, evil *gallū*-demons (DUMU.MEŠ KA₂.DINGIR.RA^{ki} GAL₅.LA₂.MEŠ *lem-nu-ti*), had locked the city gates, they plotted to wage war. Arameans, fugitives, runaways, murderers, (and) robbers (^{mu2}*a-ra-me ḫal-qu mun-nab-tu₂ a-mir da-me ḫab-bi-lu*) rallied around Šūzubu, a Chaldean, a person of lowly status, a coward⁶⁸, a servant who belonged to the governor of the city Laḫīru, and they went down into marches and incited rebellion.⁶⁹

The series of unflattering expressions following the term “Arameans” in the passage⁷⁰ might suggest that “evil *gallū*-demons” is but an insulting epithet intended to present the citizens of Babylon as creatures capable of most reprehensible deeds – for example, of bribing the king of Elam with gold taken from the treasury of Esagila in order to persuade him to form a military coalition against the Assyrians (and thus combining sacrilege with disloyalty towards the legitimate ruler), which is reported just a few lines later.⁷¹ At a deeper semantic level, it seems to allude to the narrative of *Enūma eliš*, and, specifically, to the capture of the “host⁷² of demons” (*milla gallē*) who were the army of Tiamat by Assur in the Assyrian version of the myth.⁷³ One might ask, whether the scribes composing the inscription were aware of the deep irony in calling the citizens of the city of Marduk by the name of the demonic hordes vanquished by the god who established the world order and legitimized his universal kingship through this victory and thus provided a model for the Mesopotamian kings.

At any rate, the use of the epithet “evil *gallū*-demons” with reference to the citizens of the religious and political capital of Babylonia is as extraordinary and unique⁷⁴ as the ensuing poetic account of the battle of Halule. The latter describes the fight against the Babylonian-Elamite coalition in mythical terms, as a battle against the forces of chaos.⁷⁵ The devilizing (and, at

same time, ridiculing) of the king’s adversaries in this text was, in a way, as exceptional as the allegedly total destruction of Babylon and its temples through Sannherib’s army in 689 BC.⁷⁶ It does seem that the powerful and violent language of this account⁷⁷ prepared, in a certain way, the destruction of Babylon which followed about a year and a half after the inscription was composed.^{78, 79}

The evidence presented above permits to draw a number of conclusions concerning the ‘demonization’ of enemies in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Firstly, its earliest instance occurs in the *Display Inscription* of Sargon II, which is thoroughly in line with the tendency (observed by J. Renger) to the dramatic increase of literary elements (borrowed, to a large extent, from epic poetry) in royal inscriptions during the reign of this king.⁸⁰ Secondly, comparing the king’s enemies with demons is – contrary to the view conveyed by Volkert Haas⁸¹ – not related in any way to the conceptual patterns dealing with the ‘cosmic periphery’ (whatever ‘cosmic periphery’ might mean), since the target of demonizing epithets are no far-away nomadic peoples, but rather well-known political antagonists who had caused much trouble to the respective king and towards whom he had good (and of course, different in every individual

language in literary Akkadian.

68 Lit. ‘who has no knees’ (*ša la i-šu-u₂ bir-ki*).

69 Chicago Prism v 17–24 (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 181).

70 R. Borger interprets *ḫal-qu mun-nab-tu₂ a-mir da-me ḫab-bi-lu* as attributive appositions to *Arame* (BAL³, 138f.). If he is right, the passage is one of the most outspoken examples of ethnic stereotypes in Mesopotamian literature.

71 Chicago Prism v 31–37.

72 The precise meaning of the noun *milla* (which is a *hapax* in Akkadian) is unknown (AHw. 652; CAD 10/2, 69, s.v. *millu*).

73 *Enūma eliš* iv 116 (*mi-il-la gal-le-e*). Weissert 1997: 193, and fn. 14; *ibid.*, 195; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 309, 311.

74 “To be sure, nowhere before throughout the history of Assyrian royal rhetoric has an enemy of Assyria been presented as a *gallū*-demon *par excellence*; the farthest a royal scribe would go was to name him ‘copy of a demon’ [...]” (Weissert 1997: 193).

75 There are at least five literary allusions to *Enūma eliš* in the narration of the campaign, most of them occurring in the description of the battle (Chicago Prism v 29 *a-na la si-ma-ti-šu₂*; v 62 *u₂-ša₂-a-lu* ^{si5}TUKUL.MEŠ-*šu₂-un*; v 66 *ur-ru-ḫi-iš*; v 69 *ra-šu-u₂-a*; v 73 *pa-ri-i nap-ša₂-ti*; cf. *Enūma eliš* iv 82; iv 92; ii 146;

iv 58; iv 31). See Weissert 1997: 193–195 and *passim*. Equally significant is the allusion to the *Erra Epic* iv 35 in Chicago Prism vi 4 (*u₃-mun-ni-šu₂-nu*; Weissert 1997: 196). For further possible intertextual references in the account, see Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 311–319.

76 Bavian Inscription 43–54; Grayson/Novotny 2014: 316f. Cf. esp. lines 53f.: “So that in the future, the site of the city and (its) temples will be unrecognizable, I dissolved it (Babylon) in water and annihilated (it), (making it) like a meadow”. See further Sennacherib 168: 36–44 in Grayson/Novotny 2014: 248. For the ridiculing of the enemy kings and the ‘sheikhs of Chaldea’ in the account of the battle of Halule, see Chicago Prism vi 24–32.

77 Cf. the massacre scene in Chicago Prism vi 2–12, where several traditional rhetorical topoi are skillfully combined and elaborated with the addition of some innovative images, resulting in a description whose poetic force matches that of Homer’s *Ilias*: “I slit their throats like sheep (and thus) cut off their precious lives like thread. Like a flood in full spate after a seasonal rainstorm, I made (the blood of) their veins flow over the broad earth. The swift thoroughbreds harnessed to my chariot plunged into floods of their blood (just) like the river ordeal. The wheels of my chariot, which lays criminals and villains low, were bathed in blood and gore. I filled the plain with the corpses of their warriors like grass. I cut off (their) lips and (thus) destroyed their pride. I cut off their hands like the stems of cucumbers in season.” (Grayson/Novotny 2012: 183).

78 The date of the Taylor Prism (20th of Addaru 691 BC) must be quite close to the date of the composition of the text, since the battle of Halule took place in 691 BC (Weissert 1997: 191, and fn. 3). Note that the Chicago Prism was inscribed just a few months before the capture of the city (it is dated to the 4th month of 689 BC, whereas Babylon fell on the first day of the 9th month in the same year), when the siege was already in progress (Frahm 1997: 16).

79 Weissert 1997: 202.

80 Renger 1986: 121–128.

81 Haas 1980: 41–44, esp. 43.

case) reasons to feel a special aversion.^{82, 83} Third, one cannot postulate any *direct* connection between the literary rhetoric demonizing the enemy and the legitimization of violence. The case of Tugdammê is particularly instructive in that respect. Neither Sargon II nor Sanherib ever managed to capture Marduk-aplu-iddina, and it is rather unlikely that they would have killed the Chaldean king if they had seized him. To be sure, the killing of Teumman and the mutilation of his corpse on behalf of Ashurbanipal as well as the destruction of Babylon through Sanherib's troops were, in fact, instances of excessive violence that went far beyond the limits of the customary or generally accepted, so that at least a certain parallel between the verbal and the physical violence can be seen in both cases. However, it should be noted that Ashurbanipal's annalistic in-

scriptions were composed *after* the events described in them (which are, therefore, seen retrospectively) had taken place, whereas the Taylor and Chicago Prisms were inscribed *before* the destruction of Babylon which is, at best, anticipated in the account of the eighth campaign.⁸⁴ Obviously, there is no general rule according to which calling someone a demon and putting this person to the sword (or not) must be related to each other.

Finally, if one considers both the rare passages associating the enemies with *gallû* in royal inscriptions and the descriptions of the Gutians in the *Curse of Agade* and the *Victory of Utu-hegal*, one is tempted to conclude that they were not, in fact, the foreign, the unknown and the wild which were demonized. They were rather those who challenged and made one feel powerless, humiliated and inept.

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⁸² This must have been the way Sargon II felt towards Marduk-aplu-iddina, who managed to oust the Assyrians from southern Mesopotamia for a period of 12 years through the military help of the Elamites and his diplomatic skills (cf. Renger 1986: 127: "Passagen [...] über Merodachbaladan, in denen man die ohnmächtige Wut und den Zorn über den gewitzten Gegner mitschwingen sieht"), but also the way Sanherib felt towards the Babylonian elites, who were probably responsible for the death of his son Aššur-nādin-šumi (Frahm 1997: 15, and fn. 55), as well as the way Ashurbanipal (for reasons one can speculate about) felt towards Teumman.

⁸³ There can be no doubt, of course, that the Assyrian kings presented themselves as the "guardians of the world order" (*Hüter der Weltordnung*, Maul 1999) and that the way they conceptualized their power was, to some extent, modelled on the myths describing the struggle of Ninurta (or of another god assuming his role) against monsters representing the forces of chaos (even though it might be significant that the bulk of conclusive literary evidence for such conceptual modelling – if one leaves aside the royal names like Tukulti-Ninurta and Ashurnasirpal II's obsession with this deity – dates to the time of the Sargonid Dynasty). However, the images of kingship inspired by the Ninurta mythology and the demonizing epithets discussed above are, apparently, two very different animals.

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⁸⁴ Cf. the discussion in Weissert 1997: 200–202 as to why the versions of Sanherib's annalistic inscriptions produced after the destruction of Babylon in 689 BC contain neither lengthy poetic descriptions of the events nor demonizing epithets. He expresses "a suspicion that after the destruction of Babylon there was no longer a need to portray his inhabitants in such menacing colours as in 691 B.C., when the account for the prism edition of eight campaigns was composed" (*ibid.*, 200).

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Identifying the big bird in the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II

Mehmet-Ali Ataç

Abstract: On the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) from his throne room at Nimrūd, there appears a big bird in the upper fields of a number of the scenes, comparable in size and position to the winged disk, with which it seems in irregular alternation. Even though this bird may be thought of as a bird of prey of the battlefield, upon close examination one observes that like the winged disk itself, it is charged with meaning. This paper juxtaposes two possible approaches to understanding the bird; one textual, referred to here as “text and image;” and the other semiotic, designated “image and image.” I present these two tracks as not mutually exclusive. The textual track draws on the royal inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, with an emphasis on Ninurta as an eagle god; while the semiotic track addresses cross-cultural visual data from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. The latter approach revolves especially around the ancient Egyptian visual evidence in the form of scenes on Ramesside historical reliefs that feature the solar disk in association with the vulture and the falcon. In the conclusion, I circle back to “text and image,” proposing a connection between the bird and the notion of the “royal fortune/destiny.”

Keywords: Assyrian and Ramesside battle reliefs, Anzû, eagle, falcon, Ninurta, royal fortune/destiny, vulture, winged disk.

1 Introduction

On the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) from his throne room at Nimrūd, there appears a big bird in the upper fields of a number of the scenes, comparable in size and position to the winged disk, with which it seems in irregular alternation.¹ Even though this bird may be thought of as a bird of prey of the battlefield, upon close examination one observes that like the winged disk itself, it is an active participant in battle, providing encouragement for the army (Fig. 1). While the winged disk is invariably in proximity with the king, this bird rather appears close to the other components of the army. However, in one unique relief, the bird occurs in direct association with the king himself, hovering a little ahead of him (Fig. 2).

This bird is too regularly and prominently depicted to be just a bird of prey of the battlefield. It clearly has a distinctive role in the imagery of the reliefs, which deserves further investigation. In this paper, I juxtapose two possible approaches to understanding the bird; one textual, to which I refer as “text and image;” and the other semiotic, which I call “image and image;” present-

ing them as not mutually exclusive. In pursuing the textual track, I rely on the royal inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II. As for the semiotic track, I draw on cross-cultural visual data from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East.

2 Description and analysis

Across the extant series of battle reliefs on the south wall of the throne room of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, the bird appears a total of seven times, more numerous than the winged disk, which occurs as few as four times. In one instance, the bird appears twice on the same slab (Panel 3b); and in another it occurs along with the winged disk in the same scene (Panel 11a). The enormous size of the bird, especially in proportion to the figures around it, is an indication that it is an eagle, or a bird of the eagle family (Fig. 3). The bird, however, may also be a vulture, given that in a few instances it appears to peck at the fallen and dead enemy of the battlefield (Panels 3b and 11a).² Both of these species of birds are formidable and majestic creatures, comparable in size, and with a supernatural impact on the con-

1 For an overview of the occurrences of the bird in relation to the winged disk along the south wall of the throne room (Room B) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, see the line drawings of panels B 11-3 in Meuszyński 1981: pl. 2.

2 See Budge 1914: pls. XIV–XVIII. In his descriptions of the relief scenes, he refers to the bird as a bird of prey pecking out or feeding on body parts of the fallen enemy.



Fig. 1: Detail of Panel 8a from Room B (throne room) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, showing the big bird in association with the Assyrian army. London, British Museum (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

sciousness of ancient societies in the wider Near East from the Neolithic onward.

It is fair to think of an affinity between the bird and the winged disk; since the winged disk, too, in great likelihood incorporates the wings and tail of an eagle (Fig. 4) (Pering 1932–1933: 287–288, Annus 2002: 161–162). The winged disk, however, displays greater linear waviness, perhaps an indication of its fully ethereal quality in contrast to the bird, which, after all, is a fully natural figure. This affinity between the winged disk and the bird led Birger Pering (1932–1933: 287) to associate both with an eagle god of ancient Mesopotamia, the likeliest candidate for which appeared to him as Ninurta. Pering surmised that in light of the importance of the god Ninurta for Ashurnasirpal II, in the art of this king, the winged disk must stand for Ninurta. In his study on Ninurta in the royal ideology of ancient Mesopotamia, Amar Annus (2002: 162) has found this identification plausible, conceding that otherwise, the Assyrian winged disk is more likely to stand for the head deity Aššur.³ Underlying the Assyrian winged disk, nevertheless, is ultimately the ancient Egyptian winged solar disk, which also incorporates the wings of a falcon (Frankfort 1970⁴: 134–135), a bird of the eagle family, even though a resemblance between the vulture's and falcon's wings is certainly the case in ancient Egyptian

art (Fig. 5).⁴ In the end, the Assyrian winged disk is a complex signifier, encompassing multiple associations, among which Ninurta, side by side with Aššur and the sun god Šamaš, is certainly not to be dismissed as a valid signified.

That both the winged disk and the bird are shown in active assistance to the Assyrian forces in battle certainly strengthens an allusion to Ninurta as a warrior hero god in the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (Figs. 1–4) (Pering 1932–1933: 288). Within this framework, the bird may more specifically be a reference or allusion to Anzû, a being coextensive with Ninurta, or at least an attribute of this god (Winter 1985: 14), which may be represented in the art of earlier ancient Mesopotamia as a lion-headed eagle.⁵ The emphasis on Ninurta and Anzû in the art of Ashurnasirpal II may be observed further in the monumental relief slabs from the entrance of the Ninurta Temple at Nimrūd depicting what

³ See also Shahbazi 1974: 135 and note 6, on the Assyrian winged disk as Aššur or Ninurta.

⁴ The solar associations of the winged disk are almost pre-iconographic no matter how much it may have been given new meaning by the Assyrians after its adoption from Egypt, on which see Pering 1932–1933: 281. For studies on the Assyrian winged disk and related matters, see most recently, Ornan 2005; Ataç 2010a; Pongratz-Leisten 2011.

⁵ Even though it is clear that the lion-headed eagle represents a formidable numinous force in the religious consciousness of ancient Mesopotamia during the third millennium BCE, its equation with Anzû is far from certain. On this issue, see Braun-Holzinger 1980–1983: 96, Kvanvig 1988: 374–375. A study of the depiction of the lion-headed eagle in ancient Mesopotamian art may be found in Fuhr-Jaepelt 1972.



Fig. 2: Detail of Panel 5b from Room B (throne room) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, showing the big bird in association with the king. London, British Museum (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

may be the battle of Ninurta against Anzû. Within the narrative format of the throne room reliefs, however, and in a period when the figural type of the lion-headed eagle had long disappeared, Anzû may have been alluded to in the battle reliefs of the Northwest Palace by the big bird.

3 Text and image

In going through the royal inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II to search for possible referents for the big bird, one is struck by two recurrent formulaic passages. The first passage reads: “The troops were frightened (and) took to a rugged mountain. Since the mountain was exceptionally rugged I did not pursue them. The mountain was as jagged as the point of a dagger and therein no winged bird of the sky flew. *They had placed their fortress like the nest of the udinu-bird within the mountain which none of the kings my fathers had approached* (emphasis added)” (Grayson 1991: 197, RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 48–50).⁶ The CAD defines the *udinu* bird curtly as “a bird,” and the CDA refers to it as “a mountain bird,” while the AHW poses the question whether the word is to be translated as “a vulture” (“*ein Geier?*”). The second recurrent passage, found both in the Ninurta Temple inscription and on the Nimrūd monolith, reads: “The city was exceptionally difficult; it was surrounded by two

walls; its citadel was lofty like a mountain peak. With the exalted strength of Aššur, my lord, with my massive troops, and with my fierce battle I fought with them. On the second day, before sunrise, I thundered against them like the god Adad-of-the-Devastation (and) rained down flames on them. *With might and main my combat troops flew against them like the Storm Bird* [Anzû]. I conquered the city (emphasis added)” (Grayson 1991: 210, RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 104b–107).⁷ The exact identity of the *udinu*-bird not being clear, the second formulaic passage that resembles the Assyrian troops to Anzû may be thought of as a more directly plausible textual reference to the big bird of Ashurnasirpal II’s battle reliefs. Both passages, nevertheless, feature the imagery of difficult mountainous terrains, such as associated with Ninurta in ancient Mesopotamian myth.

Both the battle and the hunt are royal activities within the heroic domain of Ninurta, and allusions to this god and his chief emblem Anzû in the historical narrative program of Ashurnasirpal II’s reliefs would not be out of place (Watanabe 1998; Watanabe 2000; Annus 2002: 94–108; Ataç 2010b: 262–267). A straightforward text and image approach may indeed lead to such a perspective in understanding the bird, even though one could certainly disagree. Despite its offering a culturally specific and contextual explanation, I find I am not fully satisfied with an interpretation in the strictly

⁶ Another occurrence of this formula can be found in Grayson 1991: 240–241, RIMA 2 A.0.101.17.

⁷ The identical passage can be found in Grayson 1991: 250, RIMA 2 A.0.101.17 (“Nimrud Monolith”).



Fig. 3: Detail of Panel 9a from Room B (throne room) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, showing the big bird in association with the Assyrian army. London, British Museum (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

“text and image” track solely along the Ninurta-Anzū axis, and would like to explore additional dimensions. Rather than disproving or replacing a potential Ninurta-Anzū paradigm, I propose to enhance this reading through conceptual implications that may not be readily available in the “text and image” model. To that end, I browse the intercultural world for occurrences of big birds, in association with royalty, battle, and the hunt, comparable to Ashurnasirpal II’s bird, the “image and image” track. In the conclusion, I hope to circle back to “text and image” with what I hope would be the gains of “image and image.”

4 “Image and image”

As the original home of the winged disk, Egypt would be the most natural place to start such a survey. In fact, Egypt is a much stronger force in the forging of a distinctive Assyrian imperial narrative art than is ordinarily acknowledged.⁸ The phenomenon of battle- and conquest-oriented historical narrative in the visual arts, with its chief paradigms of the royal chariot and walled cities as the objects or settings of imperial conquest, is

the creation of the Egyptian Ramesside era (1307–1070 BCE), and Assyria adopted it as early as its Middle Assyrian period (ca. 1350–1000 BCE) (Pittman 1996: 348–349; Ataç 2013). In looking at Egypt for understanding Assyrian art better, the point would not be to “egyptianize” Assyrian art, but rather to appreciate the creative genius of the Assyrian artistic tradition in its engagement with the deep-seated implications of images beyond the level of borrowed motif. In this respect, on the one hand there is an inherent affinity between ancient Egyptian and Assyrian artistic traditions beyond matters of form and style, and on the other the two systems of representation had historical interaction over the centuries of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age.

We can first note how the Egyptian winged disk as such is never part of Ramesside historical narrative scenes. In Egypt, the winged disk is invariably a discrete motif, often articulating doorways and lintels (Fig. 5). In Egyptian historical relief, we rather see only the solar disk, without the wings, but often accompanied with one of the royal birds, mostly the vulture, but sometimes both with the vulture and the falcon, the falcon being the quintessential royal and solar bird in ancient Egypt (Fig. 6). The outstretched wings of both birds, always rendered majestically, are comparable in morphology.⁹ This is the type of wings that characteriz-

⁸ See, nevertheless, Breasted 1932: 269–271; Pittman 1996: 348–349; Feldman 2005: 148–149. Breasted and Feldman see the era of Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) and Aššur-bāni-apli (Ashurbanipal, 668–627 BCE), during which there were Assyrian military campaigns to Egypt, as the crucial period for the interaction, whereas Pittman acknowledges the impact of Ramesside relief sculpture on the earliest phases of Assyrian historical narrative in the visual arts.

⁹ On the vulture as a quintessentially “shamanic” bird in the Neolithic period of the ancient Near East, especially as inferred from its appearance in the wall paintings of Çatalhöyük, see Lewis-Williams 2004: 42 and Hodder 2006: 137–138, 196. On



Fig. 4: Detail of Panel 5a from Room B (throne room) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrūd, showing the winged disk. London, British Museum (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

es the Egyptian winged disk as well. Egyptian art, however, distinguishes these two birds' wings primarily by color and the curved middle feature of the vulture's wings (Figs. 5–6); and it is clear on the basis of form and color that the wings of the solar disk are those of the falcon rather than the vulture, even though the affinity between the two birds remains valid (Fig. 5).

An Assyrian awareness of the vulture as a majestic and quasi-mythical bird as well may be seen on a unique relief originally located at the palace of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE) at Nimrūd, showing the bird not only in its role of a bird of prey of the battlefield, but also perhaps again with an undertone of a divinely appointed agent of aid and encouragement in battle for the Assyrian army, especially given its size (Fig. 7). This relief also presents a bird quite different in appearance from that of Ashurnasirpal II's battle reliefs, leading one to wonder if Ashurnasirpal II's bird may be an eagle rather than a vulture after all. At this stage of the present research, however, I demur from making a definitive statement about the species of Ashurnasirpal II's bird, as either the eagle or the vulture is a plausible identification. The possible emphasis on both birds of huge size in Assyrian battle scenes parallels the pairing or alternation found in Egypt between the falcon and the vulture.

Thus, the ancient Egyptian visual tradition does not see any point in adding wings to the sun disk when the royal birds are present with it in historical relief. By this token, the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II have on the one hand increased the distance between the bird and the solar disk, keeping them nevertheless in apposition, and on the other favored some kind of redundancy by keeping both the bird and the wings of the solar disk in historical narrative. In the meantime, the Assyrian reliefs have embedded both the bird and the disk in a much more realistic and organic manner in the narrative than the Egyptian visual tradition, which still maintains both the sun disk and the royal birds as entities of a distinguished hieratic order. In this regard, I would argue that the bird and winged disk configuration of the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II cannot be understood properly without recourse to Egypt. In this earliest phase of Neo-Assyrian art, it is plausible that the Assyrian artist looked more directly to Egypt than did his successors in these fundamentals.

Beyond Egypt, we can now turn to the Eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age for select depictions primarily in the Levantine artistic traditions. Examples may be multiplied, especially upon a consideration of glyptic evidence from the Late Bronze Age (Porada 1981–1982). A bird comparable in size to that of Ashurnasirpal II appears in a hunt scene on a gaming board from Enkomi on Cyprus from the Late Bronze Age (Frankfort 1970⁴: 261). From the position of

the role of the eagle in shamanism, see Eliade 2004²: 157.



Fig. 5: Painted wall relief from the north upper portico of the Temple of Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE, Dynasty 18) at ad-Dair al-Bahri (Deir el-Bahri), depicting the winged disk underneath a lintel, with the vulture hovering above (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

the bird above the harness, we can tell that it is not a target of the hunt, which rather aims at other animals in front of the chariot. As such, we can consider this bird, too, as an auspicious token, an element of aid and encouragement or a harbinger of success in the hunt. On an ivory inlay from Megiddo, also from the Late Bronze Age, depicting a “victorious homecoming and feast,” this time we see the winged disk in the same position, perhaps signaling the successful outcome of battle (Frankfort 1970⁴: 270).

In the Iron Age, a relief from the Neo-Hittite culture of Tall Ḥalaf features a hunt scene incorporating the bird in the same position (Moortgat 1955: Tafel 41a). The object of the hunt, the defeated lion, is under the chariot, whereas the bird is again prominently shown in association with the hunter. Also from the Iron Age are two seventh-century bronze bowls in the Phoenician tradition. One is from Cyprus featuring an Assyrian genius killing a lion with a large bird hovering above him (Frankfort 1970⁴: 330). The other is from Nimrūd, showing the Horus falcon hovering in front of a man with a lance or spear; the figural group is part of a larger hunt scene that also includes a chariot (Frankfort 1970⁴: 326–327). The Cypriot bowl parallels another Egyptian formula, that of the pharaoh with only the royal bird without the sun disk, seen, for instance, on some of the historical reliefs of Sety I (Epigraphic Survey 1986: pls. 14 and 17c). The relief from the Northwest Palace throne room showing Ashurnasirpal II without

the winged disk and only the bird may also be thought of as commensurate with this formula (Fig. 2).

In light of these examples, we can observe that the trope of the big bird in battle and hunt both predates and postdates the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II. The trope is in great likelihood a derivative within the larger intercultural Eastern Mediterranean world of the age-old Egyptian paradigms of the royal and/or solar birds. Within this intercultural world, it may be fair to conclude that the bird is some kind of good luck or good fortune bird that bears the sense of a successful outcome to the two quintessentially heroic royal activities, the battle and the hunt. Heroic activity in the ancient Near East in the form of expeditions to outlandish mythical lands and overcoming difficult divine forces is in essence for one to make a name or make an eternal name. It has implications of defeating the restrictions of the worldly domain and of a destiny bordering on or merged with the divine. The chief exemplar for this heroic destiny in ancient Mesopotamia is Gilgameš, whose exploits are presented as those that are meant to make a name, especially as a recompense for the inevitability of death, the primary problem of the more-than-semi-divine hero.¹⁰ Gilgameš, too, with his companion

¹⁰ The paradigmatic passages in this regard may be found in the Sumerian poem *Bilgames and Ḥuwawa* and Tablet 3 of the Old Babylonian version of the *Epic of Gilgameš*: “O Enkidu, since no man can escape life’s end, / I will enter the mountain and set up my name. / Where names are set up, I will set up my name, / where names are not yet set up, I will set up gods’

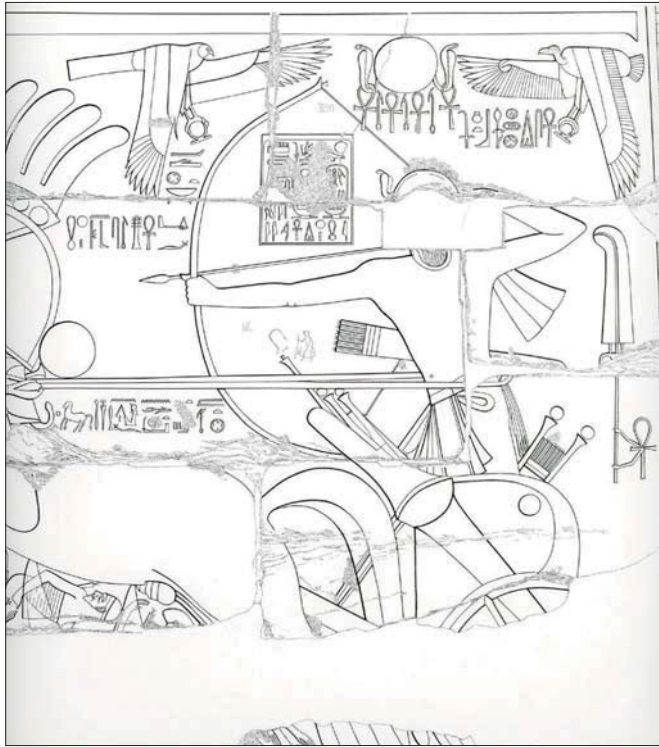


Fig. 6: Line drawing of relief from the north exterior wall of the great Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak, showing Sety I (1306–1290 BCE, Dynasty 19) in his chariot returning with Shasu prisoners (after Epigraphic Survey 1986: pl. 6).

Enkidu, hunts lions and faces Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven in battle to defeat them. The ancient Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean images of the hunt and battle we have looked at may also have featured their birds as a token of such a favorable destiny at this higher level, cast or presented in the mold of success in the hunt and battle.

It is noteworthy that the royal birds of Egypt flanking the solar disk and hovering above the king also hold the hieroglyph for eternity, and in this respect, they are much more than protective birds (Fig. 6). In ancient Egypt, the royal destiny is one of solar or celestial divinity, expressed best with the solar Horus falcon, positioned, or in ascent, above the *serekh* form of the royal name, which goes back to the era of the earliest kingship in ancient Egypt.¹¹ As such, we may be dealing with millennial concepts, with roots in ancient Egypt and a wide dissemination in which different cultures accommodated them in differing but cognate ways.

In ancient Iranian lore, the notion of royal glory or fortune, *khvarna*, which has implications of solar brilliance, is also conceived of in the form of a bird of the eagle family with outstretched wings (Shahbazi 1974: 138; Soudavar 2003: 23). Some scholars have seen this concept embedded in the Achaemenid Persian (550–331 BCE) winged disk (Shahbazi 1980: 121, 134–135; Soudavar 2003: 93), which, like the Assyrian winged disk, may

names" (George 2003³: 151); "If I should fall, let me make my name: 'Gilgamesh joined battle with ferocious Huwawa!'" (George 2003³: 110).

¹¹ An insightful and speculative discussion, especially in relation to the carving on the ivory comb of Djnet, may be found in Goedicke 1975: 206–207.

have multiple referents attached to it, among which is the supreme deity Ahura Mazda. *Khvarna* in the form of a bird, such as a falcon, is also associated with the "Iranians in arms" or the "warrior class" (Shahbazi 1980: 138, 143). Scholars who have investigated the concept and imagery of *khvarna* in the Achaemenid Persian visual record have pointed to an ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian background to the development of the relevant imagery, concluding that the Persians adopted intercultural imagery to accommodate primarily Iranian concepts (Shahbazi 1980: 139). We often tend to think that motifs travel or get transferred among cultures through contact, and each host culture then suits them to its own very distinctive concepts. In light of the foregoing analysis, however, I would propose that it is because the relevant concepts are cognate among our array of cultures in the first place that image transfer is warranted.

5 Conclusion

To return to the bird of Ashurnasirpal II, what we may be looking at embedded here in the typical Assyrian narrative medium is what I would venture to refer to as the bird of royal destiny or royal fortune. I would argue that the "image and image" track is essential in probing that immense grey area in cultural history, or the history of ideas, in search of concepts expressed by images, which are part of the culture, but not available in texts as a ready package. In light of the data offered by a possible "image and image" track, if we now circle back to "text and image" and the possible allusions to Ninurta and Anzû in the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II, we may note that the notion of the royal destiny is not absent in ancient Mesopotamian culture at all and that Ninurta has a part in it. The process of the fixing of destiny for the king was a crucial aspect of the royal rituals, especially in ceremonies of enthronement and investiture, in ancient Mesopotamia from the third millennium BCE onward; and Ninurta, as the son of Enlil, certainly belonged to the assembly of the gods, which determined the royal destiny. This destiny is one of success and longevity, with implications of an eternal reign.

When we investigate the royal inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II from this vantage point, we may note a few passages. One unique passage from the Ninurta Temple inscription adds to a series of royal titles the statement that "these destinies came forth at the command of the great gods and they properly fixed (them) as my destinies," followed by an account of divine approval bestowed on the king by Ištar, Enlil, Aššur, and Šamaš. A recurrent passage from this king's royal inscriptions also emphasizes the royal destiny: "[Great gods], who decree the destinies (and) make great the [(...) sovereignty of] Ashurnasirpal, attentive prince, worshipper of the great gods..." (Grayson 1991: 316–317, RIMA 2 A.O.101.47: 5b–7). Finally, an address to the god Ninurta refers to him as "the god without whom no decisions



Fig. 7: Relief slab from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III showing Assyrian cavalymen charging with a vulture above the horses. Wall n, Panel 3, found in the Southwest Palace at Nimrūd. London, British Museum (photo: Mehmet-Ali Ataç).

are taken in heaven and underworld” (Grayson 1991: 229, RIMA 2 A.0.101.3: 6).

In conclusion, in this paper I have proposed a reading of the big bird of the battle reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II as connected with royal fortune, or the royal destiny, presented in the typical Assyrian mode of success in battle. Such a reading may not be reached through a strictly

text and image track, whereby one might primarily look for mentions of birds in contemporary Assyrian texts. It requires a semiotic detour, an exploration of the image world in its own right, within an intercultural context, before it can be reconnected with potential textual references, which might otherwise remain untapped or dormant for investigation.

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Composite creatures on seal impressions of Nuzi

Benedetta Bellucci

Abstract: Seal impressions on the Nuzi tablets show a great number of different images. Among those, the representations of composite creatures – ‘monsters’ and ‘demons’ – are numerous. This group of impressions is particularly interesting because of peculiarities in the iconography of well-known creatures, such as the griffin, which is often represented with a crest on the head of a bird, as well as in the formation of unique *Mischwesen* as, for example, griffin-demons or bull-men with fish tails. The role of composite creatures in scenes depicted on Nuzi seals requires further investigation with attention to the rare representations that seem to have had a narrative intent. In this paper I present the material and its main characteristics. Hints and problems connected to the aim of this kind of representation, such as their possible relation with known tales or myths in written sources, will be addressed.

Keywords: Seals, Nuzi, composite creatures, monsters, demons, griffin, hyper-composites.

The representation of composite creatures is a very interesting subject in the art of the Ancient Near East, which is attested through all its periods and for all its civilizations.^{1, 2} By mixing the body parts of different animals, of animals and humans or of humans and inanimate objects, a number of peculiar iconographies were created and applied to represent gods, monsters and demons.³

1 Monsters, demons, composite creatures: definitions

For the purpose of this study, I use the terms ‘monster’ and ‘demon’ applied to visual representations.⁴ Monsters are fabulous animals (winged animals) and hybrids composed of animal parts. Demons are partly human hybrids that are usually represented standing upright. Exceptions exist as is the case of the sphinx, which comprises a human head and a lion’s body, sometimes winged. Although it walks on four paws, the human head makes it a demon. These modern definitions are based only on the characterization of these creatures in art. In the same way, the names by which we refer to these creatures are modern inventions, sometimes based on the creature’s main visual characteristic (e.g., goat-fish), and sometimes based on names adopted from a different tradition, such as the sphinx and the griffin of Ancient Greek literature. There are no connotations of good or bad behaviour of creatures which are defined as monsters and demons. However since the use of these terms might generate confusion and imply negative behavioural connotations, scholars usually avoid their use in favour of words like ‘hybrids’, ‘composite creatures’ or the German *Mischwesen*. Although I am well aware of this issue, I will retain the use of the terms ‘monster’ and ‘demon’ in my own research and analysis, because these terms allow a more

1 The present contribution is far from being an exhaustive analysis of the interesting and promising topic of the representation of composite creatures in Nuzi. Several issues are left untreated, or only generally addressed due to constraints of time and space, together with a desire to explore issues more deeply myself before attempting to share my conclusions. A paper, *Composite Creatures on Seal Impressions of Nuzi. Part 2*, will be dedicated to questions left unanswered here.

2 From the Neolithic period, the human-bird hybrids in Göbekli Tepe, dating to ca. 9000 BCE, are the first known examples (although debated, see Schmidt 2006: 210–218; Wengrow 2014: 40–41). Such examples of composite beings in prehistoric art remained isolated and are not largely represented in art of Mesopotamia before the Late Ubaid/Uruk periods.

3 Gods represented in art as composite creatures are rare and usually limited to lesser gods, with the exception of Underworld deities (chthonic gods and goddesses), represented with theriomorphic features until the end of the Old Babylonian period (Wiggermann 1993–1997: 233). Since the animal parts that comprised this group of deities were usually snake features, they are indicated as snake gods. Boat gods (human-boat hybrids) are also included in the group of the third millennium underworld deities (see Wiggermann 1997). Other significant examples of human-inanimate object hybrids are mountain gods, present in Hittite carvings of Late Bronze Age, and the sword god represented on a wall in Chamber B of the rock-cut shrine of Yazılıkaya. For mountain gods see Bonatz 2009 with previous bibliography. For the sword god see Seeher 2011: 112–115 with previous bibliography.

For the use of the terms ‘monsters’ and ‘demons’, see above.

4 As proposed by E. Porada (Porada 1987: 1). On problems related to the use of these words, in particular monster, see now Verderame 2013; Sonik 2013: 107–109; Wengrow 2014: 24–28, with previous bibliography. For a discussion on the use of the term demon (and *daimon*) see Sonik 2013: 109–113.

Composite Creature	Description	AdŠ	T	PA
Antelope- and Gazelle-monster	Winged antelope or gazelle	11	3	1
Bird-monster	Horned bird	3	0	0
Bull-monster	Winged bull	11	6	2
Double-headed eagle	Double-headed bird	1(?)	0	0
Goat-fish monster	Goat head, fish tail	1	0	0
Goat-monster	Winged goat	8	1	1
Griffin	Bird head, lion body (sometimes bull)	76	87 (1 or 2 double-headed)	5
Griffin head	Griffin head	2	0	0
Ibex-monster	Winged ibex	0	3	0
Lion-monster	Winged lion	17	19	5
Lion-monster (2)	Lion head, fish tail	1 (?)	0	0
Lion-dragon	Lion with long neck, sometimes feather tail or long forked tail, wings	63	37	4
Mouflon-monster	Winged mouflon	3	0	0
Snake-dragon	Snake-head, long neck, animal body covered with scales	0	1	0
Snake-monster	Snake, enormous dimensions	1	1	0
Stag-monster	Winged stag	1 (lion tail)	0	0
Unidentifiable monster		38	5	3
	<i>Most of demons have wings, even if not specified in description</i>			
Antelope-demon	Upright, antelope head and lower body, human torso	1	0	0
Bird-man	Human head and body, wings, talons	3	2	0
Bird-demon	Double-headed, bird heads and human torso	0	4	0
Bull-demon	Bull head, human torso	9	17 (1 double-headed)	0
Bull-demon (2)	Bull head, human torso, fish tail	3	0	0
Bull-demon (3)	Double-headed, only one of a bull. Human torso and bull lower body	2	0	0
Bull-demon (4)	Bull head, bird body, legs and tail, human arms	0	1	0

immediate differentiation between the two categories from a visual perspective.

2 Composite creatures and seals: previous literature

Composite creatures have been investigated in numerous studies that explore their creation, taxonomy, historical development, theology, mythology and their use in art and iconography through the employment of different methods of analysis based on philology, iconography, iconology, anthropology, and cognitive psychology.⁵

A number of new publications devoted to hybrids have been released in recent years, among them monographs, such as Wengrow's *Origins of Monsters*,⁶ exhibition catalogues,⁷ and proceedings of conferences and workshops.⁸

Images of composite creatures can be found over the millennia throughout the art of the Ancient Near East. In different epochs of art new hybrids were created, some of which became codified and either remained within the artistic tradition of a population or were transferred to other traditions, while others remain attached to particular locations and eras. Codified *Mischwesen* were subject to variations in iconography, motifs and

5 General works on monsters and demons in the Ancient Near East are: Black/Green 1992; Green 1993–1997; Mander 2011; Mander 2013; Verderame 2013; Sonik 2013; Wiggermann 1992; Wiggermann 1993–1997; Wiggermann 2011. Monographs dedicated to precise creatures and their iconography: Bisi 1965; Demisch 1977; Dessenne 1953; Fuhr-Jaepelt 1972; Green 1986.

For monsters and demons as symbols in cognitive anthropology see Sperber 1975. For monsters and demons in antiquity see Farkas et al. 1987; Prieur 1988, and Baglioni 2013.

6 Wengrow 2014.

7 Westenholz 2004.

8 Baglioni 2013; Verderame 2013.

Bull-demon (5)	Human-headed bull ("Bull of Heaven")	0	1	0
Bull-man	Human head, horns or horned cap, human torso, bull lower body	19	35	0
Griffin-demon	Griffin head, human torso, bull or human lower body	17	26 (3 possible masks)	1
Griffin-demon (2)	Griffin head, human torso, fish tail	4	0	
Griffin-demon (3)	Double-headed, griffin heads, human torso, bull or human lower body	8 (1 only one head of a griffin)	0	
Goat-demon	Double-headed, goat heads, human torso and goat lower body	2 (1 only one head is of a goat)	0	
Horse-demon	Double-headed, only one of a horse. Human torso, horse lower body	1	0	0
Ibex-demon		0	1	0
Lion-demon	Lion head, human torso, animal or human lower body	11 (2 with additional scorpion tail)	16 (3 double-headed)	2
Lion-demon (2)	Lion head, human torso, bird tail	1	0	0
Lion-demon (3)	Double-headed, lion heads, human torso and animal (lion?) lower body	16 (1 only one head of lion)	0	0
Lion-man	Human head, human torso, lion lower body	2	0	0
Merman	Human-head and torso, fish tail	4	1	0
Scorpion-man	Human head and body, scorpion tail	1 (with issues)	1	0
Snake-demon	Human-head, wings, snake tail and bird talons	1	1 (possibly 2)	0
Sphinx	Human head, lion body	56	48	13
Unidentifiable demons		19	1	0

Fig. 1: Types and quantity of composite creatures within the three principal published archives: Šilwa-Teššup (AdŠ), Tehip-tilla (T) and Pula-Ḫali (PA).

patterns, as well as in their quantity compared to other images. Seals made of durable materials and carved with images, along with their impressions on a range of soft surfaces (clay tablets and the surfaces of vases and stoppers) are the medium *par excellence* through which images of monsters and demons not only survived to the modern age, but were also transmitted to other cultures in ancient times.⁹

In order to remain effective as administrative tools, seals needed to carry readily distinguishable symbols for the official signing of goods and documents, and composite creatures increased the possibilities for seal designers.

Nuzi glyptic is known through seal impressions on tablets belonging to private and public archives; only a small number of cylinder seals were found during the excavation campaigns.¹⁰ The two main publications of seal impressions on tablets from Nuzi are well-known: while the seal impressions of the archive of the Tehip-Tilla family were studied by Porada, who published a monograph on the subject in 1947,¹¹ those of the archive of prince Šilwa-Teššup's family were published by Stein.¹² In addition, tablets from the archives of the

¹⁰ Starr 1939: 444–445 and plates.

¹¹ Porada 1947. The catalogue does not include drawings of most of the seal impressions, and photographs are often too poor to be trusted in terms of detail. Descriptions are often provided for groups of seal impressions rather than for single images, for obvious limitations of space.

¹² Stein 1993a; Stein 1993b. The catalogue includes excellent

⁹ Wengrow 2014: 67.

family of Pula-Ḫali were examined by Lion in 2001 with a section dedicated to seal impressions by Stein.¹³ A selection of seal impressions on tablets from the Palace archive and less known family archives (Wullu archive, Zike and others) belonging to the Yale Babylonian Collection were also published by Stein.¹⁴

3 Monsters and demons in Nuzi

Seal impressions on the Nuzi tablets show many representations of composite creatures of various types, encompassing codified hybrids as well as new formations. In terms of well-known hybrids, the iconographies present some peculiarities.

The table in Fig. 1 lists hybrids (named by their conventional names), their description and the number of seal impressions bearing their image in the published Nuzi archives. Composite creatures are listed in alphabetical order according to a conventional name, beginning with those falling into the category of ‘monsters’ as defined above. Among the monsters one encounters fabulous beasts, such as winged bulls, goats, antelopes and lions, together with lion-dragons and griffins, which are the most common. Although in some cases we cannot be sure of the smaller details of the iconography of certain creatures, it is possible to identify specific compositions such as the lion-fish monster, which has a lion’s head joined to a fish’s tail.¹⁵ Among the demons, a number of composites are known because of the spread to Near Eastern seals of other periods and styles (such as bull-men, lion-demons, sphinxes and griffin demons), while others are new creations, including the so-called ‘hyper-composites’. The most frequently represented demon is the sphinx.

3.1. The griffin

To illustrate the variability in the iconography of Nuzi composite creatures, we can examine more closely the development of one of the most frequently represented hybrids: the griffin.¹⁶ Griffins are composites with a lion’s body and a bird’s head, usually a bird of prey. They are usually winged. The name of the creature in the Ancient Near East is unknown, although an identification with a creature called *kuribu* is a possible consideration.¹⁷

drawings and pictures. The difference in the clarity of details between the catalogues has to be taken into account when looking for elements to identify composite creatures, and could have affected their counting.

13 Lion/Stein 2001. The catalogue includes drawings and pictures, but seal impressions are very fragmented.

14 Stein 1987.

15 Stein 1993b: no. 550.

16 On the griffin, see Bellucci 2013 with previous bibliography.

17 The name appears in a Neo Assyrian text called ‘Vision of the Netherworld’ (Livingstone 1989). An Assyrian prince sees in a vision the Netherworld and the court of its ruler, the god Nergal. Among them, Namtartu, wife of Namtar, is described as having the head of a *kuribu* (Vo. 43). The meaning of this word is still unclear, Wiggermann (1993–1997: 243) links the term with Semitic *gārīb*, ‘crow’, while Westenholz (2004: 33), suggests that it is connected to the Akkadian verb *karābu* ‘to pronounce formulas of blessings’. In general, see *kuribu* CAD



Fig. 2: Examples of variations in the iconography of the griffin at Nuzi (drawing: B. Bellucci after Stein 1993b: nos. 14, 714, 398, 677).

Griffins were represented in Egypt, Mesopotamia, in the Iranian area, and in Anatolia and the Levant. Because of this, it is difficult to confidently position chronological changes within the iconography. Between the fourth and the third millennium BCE one encounters representations of composite beings with a lion’s body and a bird of prey’s head in Susa, Egypt and Syria.¹⁸ As the oriental influx was very strong in Egypt during this period, it seems probable that the motif originated in Elam and reached Egypt via commercial trade routes.¹⁹ The Egyptian griffin was also represented in the Near East, although the common iconography for the griffin in that area probably originated in Syria during the 2nd millennium BC and spread to Mesopotamia and the Aegean around the 14th century BC.²⁰ The second half of the 2nd millennium BC was a period of great popularity for the griffin; it was represented widely in Mittanian

K: 559; AHw: 510; CDA²: 168.

18 Teissier 1987: 31–32; Flagge 1975: 9.

19 Flagge 1975: 10–11; Teissier 1987: 46–49. The development of the griffin motif in Egypt is complicated and requires attention. It must be remembered that there are three types of griffins, among those one is strictly connected to the royalty (Horus head, common in the Old Kingdom, see Flagge 1975: 12) a second has a negative connotation and is linked to the god Seth (Flagge 1975: 15–18), and a third type was mainly decorative and spread in the New Kingdom. In texts, the three griffins bear different names.

20 Black/Green 1992: 101. In Akkadian and Old Babylonian glyptic the griffin is absent (Bisi 1965: 47–49). Oldest examples in Anatolia are seen on seal impressions on Cappadocian tablets from *karum* Kaniš (Özgüç 1959: pl. 5d; Bisi 1965: 111–112.). Its common iconography shows a hooked beak usually closed, a curled plume on the back of the head and a lifted forepaw (Özgüç 1959: 51). These features, with the addition of wings, are typical of griffins in Old Syrian glyptic too (Otto 2000: nos. 5, 14 dating to 1800 BCE).

glyphic, leading a number of scholars to connect this to the Hurrian influx.²¹

The morphology of the griffin shows variations from the typical form (lion body, raptor head). For example, griffins with a bull's body appear in images of the Ancient Near East and in Nuzi as well (Fig. 2).²²

Most of the examples from Nuzi show a crested head, with a single or a multiple crest, and often a plume on the back of the head.²³ On the basis of the presence of crests, plumes (long or short) and the appearance of the beak, the heads of Nuzi griffins have been interpreted as peacocks rather than birds of prey.²⁴ The same appearance can be seen on seal impressions showing griffins from the contemporary levels of Tall ar-Rimāḥ.²⁵

In Nuzi iconography, the griffin is represented seated or recumbent in most of the cases (70%).

3.2. 'Very composite creatures', hyper-composites²⁶

From a very well-known and popular composite being we can move on to consider more peculiar creatures, composed from a greater number of different animal parts. The table (Fig. 1) lists the hybrids in Nuzi glyptic for the first time. Their description introduces previously unknown iconographies. Among them are demons with a bull's head, a human torso and a fish's tail (Bull-demon 2),²⁷ others with a griffin's head, a human torso and fish's tail (Griffin-demon 2)²⁸ one with a bull's head, a bird's body, legs and tail and human arms (Bull-demon 4).²⁹ Some icons are two-headed demons with heads of different animals such as a creature defined in Fig. 1 as 'horse-demon' although only one head is that of a horse (the second head is that of a lion) on a human torso and equine lower body.³⁰

3.3. Motifs and themes

The roles of composite creatures in the seal impressions of Nuzi are various and are not the same for all creatures. Both monsters and demons can sometimes appear aggressive. Most have an apotropaic function, but some, such as the bull-man, tend to be used more often as protective beings (for example for the winged disk standard, or on an inscription). Demons which were new creations in Nuzi glyptic, are involved in similar scenes. Seal impressions from Nuzi show a predominance of scenes that include the winged or wingless

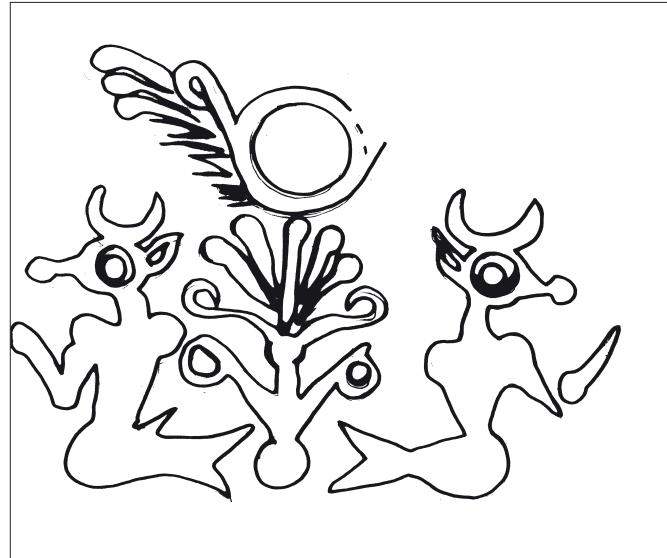


Fig. 3: Hyper-composites
(drawing: B. Bellucci after Stein 1993b: no. 14).

disk standard, or sacred trees, flanked usually by anti-thetic supernatural creatures or animals.³¹

Griffins are suitable examples for indicating the double role of composite creatures in motifs and themes. While the griffin is the most common hybrid depicted as attendant of the disk-standard and flanking other standards and sacred symbols,³² in a number of Nuzi seal impressions it is attacking a victim.³³ This 'negative' aspect is in stark contrast to the griffin's normal 'positive' role as guardian. This dual role was already present by the fourth millennium BCE, and thus dates back to the formation phase of the iconography of the griffin, which suggests that the creature possessed symbolic connotations, even if these were not clearly linked to any acknowledged mythological or religious context.³⁴

As noted by Stein, the choice of representing a particular kind of composite creature in a specific role was related to the rank of the owner of the seal.³⁵ Exploring the group of seals depicting the disk standard, Stein was able to detect differences in social status among the owners. High ranking functionaries, for example, chose to employ deities and demons as guardians of disk standards, while on administrators' seals the same role is entrusted to animals or monsters.³⁶

21 See Frankfort 1954: 67–68. It is impossible to establish clear features for this 'Hurrian art'. On this debated question see, among others, Barrelet 1984; Pecorella 2000. Griffins are commonly represented on Kassite and Middle Assyrian seals too (for examples see Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996: no. 205; Beran 1957: no. 9).

22 Stein 1993b: no. 714.

23 Stein 1993b: nos. 22, 188, 240, 395, etc.

24 Stein 1993a: 213.

25 Triple-crested is Parker 1975: no. 43.

26 Wengrow 2014: 75–76.

27 Stein 1993b: nos. 14, 403, 437.

28 Stein 1993b: nos. 130, 440, 544, 718.

29 Porada 1947: no. 870.

30 Stein 1993b: no. 53.

31 Stein 2010: 360; Stein 2009: figs. 7, 8.

32 Stein 1993b: nos. 15, 431, 536 (flanking a mountain). Flanking the sacred tree: Porada 1947: nos. 856–865, 869.

33 Stein 1993b, nos. 416, 677; Matthews 1997: no. 3 (from Tall Birāk/Tell Brak).

34 Rova 2005: 20. In a small number of representations dating to the epoch of Old Assyrian colony in Cappadocia, the griffin is aggressive and attacks humans (Özgüç 1965: 30–31, Fig. 7; 72 and pl. 24: 74). For these examples was proposed a link to a specific Kaniš deity, although the paucity of samples does not allow confirmation (Özgüç 1965: 72; Özgüç 1991: 301).

Negative/positive roles for griffins are evident also in contemporary sites and transfer to later Kassite and Middle Assyrian glyptic.

35 Stein 1993a: 106–124; Stein 2010.

36 Stein 1993a: 123.

3.4. Notes on the chronology of composite creatures in Nuzi

Composite creatures are represented on seal impressions on tablets that belonged to different scribal generations.³⁷ A higher number of monsters and demons were observed on documents dating to scribal generation SG3, which corresponds to the end of the Tehip-tilla archive and the moment of greatest use in the Šilwa-Teššup archive.³⁸ In absolute chronology, this moment corresponds to the 14th century BCE, a moment in history which did not favour the Mittanian kingdom, which was no longer in a central role in relation to the Hittites and Assyrians. These crisis years resulted in a trend towards a larger diffusion of scenes involving composite creatures flanking a disk standard. The theme, known from older Syrian prototypes and probably originating in Egypt, was enriched by new motifs involving monsters and demons of Mesopotamian origin. The flourishing of representations of known monsters and demons, together with the creation of new composite creatures, are evidence of individual choices and were probably based on local superstitions.³⁹

4 Monsters and demons in Mittanian and late second millennium BCE glyptic

Seal impressions from sites in the area controlled by the Mittanian kingdom show variations in the quantity of hybrids images. Among Alalah seals and seal impressions,⁴⁰ for example, the number of composite creatures is quite low. Interesting examples also come from Tall Birāk (Tell Brak),⁴¹ but once again not significant in numbers.

A site comparable to Nuzi with regard to the quantity of seal impressions bearing monsters and demons is Emar, modern Meskene, located on the Euphrates. At Emar there are representations of composite creatures in all the different glyptic styles attested by impressions on tablets.⁴² The Mittanian group of seal impressions shows the same kind of monsters and demons as in

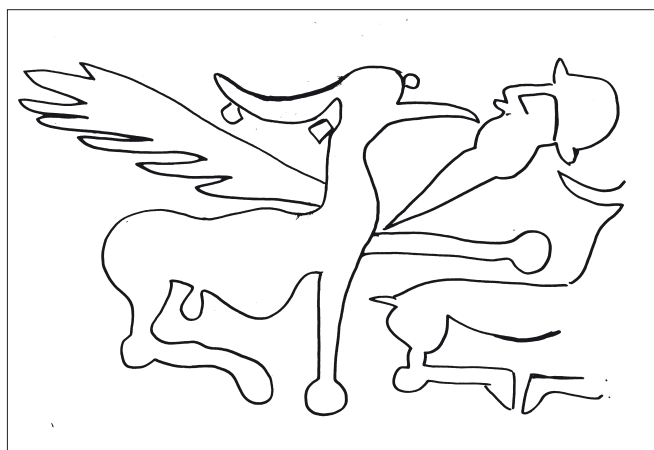


Fig. 4: Griffin at Emar, Mittanian group of seal impressions (drawing: B. Bellucci after Beyer 2001: no. E72).

Nuzi, with similar iconography and roles. Maintaining the griffin as leading example, one can observe that the monster is common in the Mittanian glyptic of Emar.⁴³ The Emar griffin shows an iconography that is closer to Syrian types. Distinctive features such as the triple crests are rare in Emar.⁴⁴ In contrast, motifs are typically Mittanian and the griffin is often depicted flanking standards. A small selection shows the griffin menacing other animals and men.⁴⁵

The frequent depiction of griffins in Emar – although not as frequent as in Nuzi – and the fact that impressions from the Mittanian levels of other sites, such as Tall Birāk, Alalah, Tall Munbāqa and Tall al-Ḥadīdī, seldom offer representations of composite creatures other than griffins (two from Tall Birāk, two from Alalah, one from Tall Munbāqa and Tall al-Ḥadīdī)⁴⁶ put this hybrid in a peculiar position among monsters. The revival of the griffin in the Late Bronze Age, and in particular in Mittanian glyptic, was linked by scholars to a Hurrian influence.⁴⁷ This link, however, has proven difficult to justify, and the status of the griffin and of composite creatures in general on seal images remains unclear.

What have Emar and Nuzi in common? The two sites are very different in terms of both history and geography, and the comparison seems tenuous, although the common tendency to represent monsters and demons in high quantities might have had a similar origin. This could be associated with the fact that the sites were both located on the Piedmont route, a route that linked the territories of modern Iran and Anatolia.⁴⁸

37 The largest archive – the Tehip-tilla archive – comprises five generations of the family as well as five generations of active scribes. These scribal generations are indicated with the abbreviation SG followed by the number of the generation (1–5). Since most archives can be put in relation to these scribal generations, they are used to create a relative chronology. See Stein 1987: 227–228 and scheme in Fig. 1, Stein 1993a: 17, with previous bibliography.

38 Stein 1993a: 105.

39 See Porada 1987: 1–2 for a schematic description of the chronology of monsters and demons that underlines the tendency to create images of hybrids in turbulent times.

40 For Alalah glyptic see Collon 1975; Collon 1982.

41 Matthews 1997.

42 Emar glyptic is known through impressions on tablet or other clay objects. The more comprehensive publication was completed by D. Beyer in 2001 and comprises 380 seal designs reconstructed through a greater number of impressions (about 850 in total). Seal designs were divided into groups by the author on the basis of their styles. Among those groups, group E represents Mittanian style seals. On the topic of images of monsters and demons at Emar see Bellucci 2009.

43 This includes 14 images of griffin, on nine different seal impressions.

44 Beyer 2001: no. E60.

45 For example, Beyer 2001: no. E72.

46 Respectively: Matthews 1997a: nos. 3, 6; Collon 1982: nos. 108, 95; Werner 2004: no. 4568; Dornemann 1980: pl. 2 fig. 7.

47 See above, paragraph 3.1.

48 On the Eastern provenance of a selection of motifs on seals and the link to the commercial routes heading West see Stein 2001. On the modes on image transfer applied to the composite creatures in the Ancient Near East see Wengrow 2014: 88–107 (in particular 94–99).

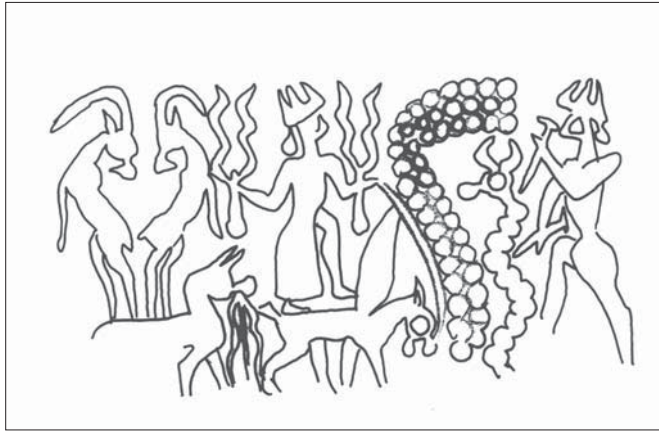


Fig. 5: Snake-monster in narrative scene
(drawing: B. Bellucci after Stein 1988: fig. 11).

5 Text and images: myths involving composite creatures

The identification of known myths through the narrative images in art is a fascinating topic, although one that is beset with difficulties.⁴⁹ Scholars were able to detect a few examples within Nuzi seal impressions in which composite creatures were used to narrate a tale or a myth. In two of the three following examples composite creatures represent the function of an enemy in a mythological contest.

5.1. Snake monster

A seal impression in the Tehip-tilla archive⁵⁰ and dating to the 14th century BCE bears the image of three monsters. Two are lion-dragons, although each has different features, and one is a snake-monster represented as a horned snake of enormous proportions (see Fig. 1). The snake-monster, which is being attacked by a naked human figure, is probably a mythological creature which can be interpreted as the dragon/serpent *Ḫedammu*, one of the sons of the god *Kumarbi*, and enemy of the storm god *Teššup*. The myth of *Ḫedammu* belongs to the *Kumarbi* cycle and has a Hurrian origin. The text is known to us from 13th century BC tablets from *Hattuša*.⁵¹ The myth narrates the origin of a terrible monster⁵² whose sole aim it is to eat and destroy the world and defeat the Storm God *Teššup*. The goddess *Ištar* tricks the creature by seducing it and helps *Teššup* maintain his hegemony. The end of the tale is missing and can only be tentatively reconstructed. Interestingly, the image in Fig. 5 shows variations on the preserved version of the story of *Ḫedammu*'s defeat which could represent a local development of the myth.⁵³

⁴⁹ Green 1997; Sonik 2014.

⁵⁰ Porada 1947: no. 738; Stein 1988: fig. 11. Cf. Porada 1992: figs. 1, 1a.

⁵¹ For a synopsis of the myth see Hoffner 1990; Pecchioli Daddi/Polvani 1990.

⁵² The determinative that accompanies his name defines the creature as a form of snake, although it is evident from the tale that he is son of two deities. See Bellucci 2008, 138 with previous bibliography.

⁵³ See Stein 1988: 176–177; Porada 1992; Bellucci 2008: 137–146 with further bibliography.



Fig. 6: Bull-demon in narrative scene (drawing: B. Bellucci after Lambert 1987: fig. 23 and Porada 1947: no. 774).

5.2. Human headed bull

A second impression from the Tehip-tilla family archive shows a scene involving two warriors attacking a composite creature: a winged bull with a human head (Fig. 6).⁵⁴ Although the rendering differs from other groups of this kind known from previous times, this image is commonly understood as being an illustration of the slaying of the Bull of Heaven by *Gilgameš* and *Enkidu*. This episode of the adventures of *Gilgameš* is preserved in Tablet VI of the Babylonian epic,⁵⁵ and tells of the struggle of *Enkidu* with the fierce Bull of Heaven, sent by the goddess *Ištar* to destroy the city of *Uruk* after *Gilgameš* humiliated her. Following the intervention of *Gilgameš* himself, the Bull is killed, but the slaughter of the sacred creature brings a sentence of death for the hero *Enkidu*.

5.3. Four hyper-composites

The seal of *Iṭḫi-Teššup*, king of *Arrapha*, preserved on four impressions in the archive of *Šilwa-Teššup* and dating to the 14th century is well known and shows a number of composite creatures that are unique. Whilst it is easy to identify the representation of the Storm-god *Teššup* on the lion-dragon, his typical mount in Nuzi glyptic, there are problems in defining the demons on the seal. *Wiggermann* has recently demonstrated that these four figures represent the development of a group of four demons codified in the Old Babylonian period as the four winds.⁵⁶ Winds are described as three brothers and a sister in the *Adapa* legend (Middle Babylonian but based on a more ancient version). Older texts mention winds and their names or attitudes, and through them it was possible to infer some of their physical characteristics and link them to the four demons in Fig. 7.⁵⁷ The female winged figure with the lower body of a snake is the South wind (also previously suggested by Stein),⁵⁸ the bending man with wings and bird talons

⁵⁴ Porada 1947: no. 774; Lambert 1987: fig. 23 Plate 8.

⁵⁵ See George 2003: 475–476.

⁵⁶ *Wiggermann* 2007: 147.

⁵⁷ See *Wiggermann* 2007: 127–129.

⁵⁸ Stein 1988: 197.



Fig. 7: Four hyper-composites (drawing: B. Bellucci after Stein 1993b: no. 659).

is the West wind, the lion headed demon spitting fire with a bird's lower body is the East wind, while the naked man with claws, a fire tongue and tail is the North wind. The two-headed griffin-demon is recognized as an *hyposthesis* of the goddess Šauška, who is represented naked beneath the Storm-god.⁵⁹

6 Conclusions and desiderata

This introduction to the theme of monsters and demons on Nuzi seals has raised a number of questions that have been addressed only cursorily over the preceding

pages. Following one specific composite creature, the griffin, we tried to make generically valid assumptions for the use of images of monsters and demons in the Nuzi glyptic. In order to do so we drew comparisons with the representation of monsters and demons in Emar, and left open the question of a common origin for the tendency to represent composite creatures. The high quantity of images of composite creatures is the most obvious clue to a particular sensibility of such representations. The reasons for this in Nuzi and Emar will require further study and represent an interesting challenge for future research.

⁵⁹ Stein 1988: 180–181.

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Herméneutique de l'action pour l'étude des relations entre les entités animées et leur *agency* au Proche-Orient ancien : *Hypatia et alii*¹

Vanessa Bigot Juloux

Abstract: What are the shared criteria across civilisations of the Ancient Near East for studying relationships between animated entities, and their agency? Influenced by the work of Tesniere, Anscombe, and Davidson, I postulate that verbal lexemes of narrative corpi, in their inflected form, are the shared criteria; these criteria are saved in the Hypatia database, with objective (context, sphere) and subjective (i.e. intentionality, emotion, constraint) variables. Then, as the starting point for studying relationships between animated entities and their agencies, a set of statistical computations, based on all these stored data, are performed. By combining pragmatism, pragmatics, empiricism, and philosophy of action, I analyze the results of the statistical computations according to the Popperian theory of deduction with the final goal of proposing an hermeneutic of action.

Keywords: Ugarit, agency, philosophy of action, hermeneutics, hermeneutics of action, pragmatism, pragmatics, empiricism, digital humanities, quantitative method, deontic power.

Quels sont les critères communs aux civilisations du Proche-Orient ancien pour étudier les relations entre les entités animées² et leur *agency*³? Comment organiser ces critères pour comprendre et mesurer de manière efficace ces relations?

Influencée notamment par les réflexions de Donald Davidson et de Karl Popper, je propose une méthodologie expérimentale au carrefour de cinq approches, lesquelles permettront une herméneutique⁴ de l'action :

philosophie de l'action, l'empirisme (radical), le pragmatisme, la pragmatique et la philologie⁵.

Paul Ricœur (1986 : 21) a écrit à juste titre « que le réel est passé, au sens propre du mot, invérifiable ». Autrement dit, les différentes études sur la littérature narrative⁶ apportent chacune des éléments non vérifiables, avec une argumentation construite à partir de la formation initiale du chercheur et des acquis scientifiques. Cependant, en considérant l'hypothèse de K. Popper⁷ selon laquelle la logique déductive des sciences dures peut être appliquée aux sciences humaines, il serait

1 *In memoriam* à ma mère, Madeleine Bigot-Bovia. Cet article est un résumé de la méthodologie utilisée pour ma thèse. Cependant, la plateforme « Hypatia », présentée ci-après (§2) fait partie d'un projet annexe, qui partage une méthodologie expérimentale commune. Dans le cadre de ma recherche doctorale, un tutoriel des pratiques numériques utilisées est disponible en *Open access* (<https://zenodo.org/record/1202468>). Certaines composantes méthodologiques y ont été ajoutées. J'exprime mes plus sincères remerciements à Brigitte Lion et Juan Pablo Vita pour leurs remarques bienveillantes. Il va de soi que le contenu relève de mon entière responsabilité.

2 Ma volonté première étant de limiter l'influence due à l'origine divine ou mortelle d'un personnage de fiction, j'ai privilégié l'emploi du substantif « entité », puisqu'il ne permet pas de distinguer l'une ou l'autre des origines. Évidemment, une entité peut être soit animée, soit inanimée — notamment dans la culture sumérienne. Ici, il est question d'entités animées. Cependant, rien ne s'oppose à l'adaptation de la méthodologie aux entités inanimées.

3 Je privilégie la définition de Caroline MacKenzie 2012 : 2 : « [...] pour qualifier une personne qui est engagée dans un comportement d'*agency* : [ê]tre capable d'agir ; [p]ouvoir agir ; [v]ouloir agir. Et, il est important de le souligner, ces trois éléments sont obligatoirement présents en tout acte d'*agency*. »

4 Sur l'origine de l'herméneutique, lire l'excellente introduction historique écrite par Wilhelm Dilthey, introduction rééditée en 1996.

5 Principales influences : 1. Donald Davidson pour la philosophie de l'action ; 2. William James pour l'empirisme : qui « fait porter l'explication sur la partie, l'élément, l'individu, et traite le tout comme une collection » (2007a : 58) ; par ailleurs, sur le principe de l'empirisme, Karl Popper (1998 : 54) considère (dans sa « connaissance conjecturale ») que « seule l'expérience est capable de nous aider à nous faire une idée sur la vérité ou la fausseté des énoncés portant sur des faits » ; 3. William James (2007b) et Popper (1998) pour le pragmatisme ; 4. Herbert Paul Grice pour la pragmatique. 5. La philologie, quant à elle, pourra être abordée dans chacune des précédentes approches, mais surtout s'inscrit dans un processus d'interprétation propre à l'herméneutique défendue par Dilthey (1996 : 237–238, 248–250).

6 Je m'en tiendrai ici à la littérature narrative, mais tout autre genre est évidemment envisageable.

7 Popper 2011 : 117 : « Dix-neuvième thèse : dans les sciences, nous travaillons avec des théories, c'est-à-dire avec des systèmes déductifs. Et ce pour deux raisons. Premièrement, une théorie ou un système déductif est un essai d'explication, et par là, un essai pour résoudre un problème scientifique ; deuxièmement, de par les conclusions qu'elle autorise, une théorie, donc un système déductif, peut faire l'objet d'une critique rationnelle. Elle est donc un essai de résolution soumis à la critique rationnelle. » Voir aussi Popper 1998 : 283–288.

alors possible, en se servant notamment de variables quantifiables, de proposer une alternative, certes tout aussi invérifiable, mais plus en adéquation avec l'intention du locuteur, en fonction des acquis historiques, sociaux, culturels et politiques, donc contemporains ou antérieurs à la fiction de l'auteur. Ces variables quantifiables permettraient surtout de mesurer certaines informations à des fins ethno-anthropologiques, telles que les relations entre les entités animées et leur *agency*.

Ma démonstration sera articulée en quatre parties : (§1) introduction aux principales orientations méthodologiques, aux contours, à la philosophique de l'action et à la pragmatique, (§2 et 3) présentation de la base de données Hypatia et manipulation des données, (§4) herméneutique nourrie par le pouvoir déontique, l'empirisme et la déduction poppérienne.

1 Introduction à la méthodologie

1.1. Préambule

Dans les corpus narratifs des ères politico-culturelles étudiées⁸, les personnages tiennent une place déterminante dans le cheminement de l'intrigue. Aussi, me suis-je interrogée d'abord sur les motivations d'un auteur⁹ pour faire interagir tel ou tel personnage, en fonction de critères tels que les contextes et les sphères — que je nomme « variables » — ; c'est justement à partir de ma réflexion sur les motivations que je me suis tout naturellement intéressée aux problématiques dont il est ici question.

Par contexte, j'entends la situation dans laquelle se déroule un événement : une guerre, un combat, un rituel, un banquet... Par sphère, il s'agit du lieu au sens large où se déroule un événement : à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur de la maisonnée ou de la sphère d'influence¹⁰ — on sait qu'en fonction de la sphère, les interactions d'un individu peuvent varier¹¹.

La fiction et l'histoire (la reconstruction du passé) ont en commun les contextes et les sphères : une guerre dans un texte de fiction ou dans un événement histo-

rique reste une guerre au sens propre du mot : la notion de conflit est identique. Il en va de même pour une sphère intérieure ou extérieure¹².

C'est dans un contexte particulier que se déroulent des phénomènes à travers lesquels sont exprimés les interactions entre des entités animées.

D'un point de vue historique ou sociologique, lorsqu'un phénomène¹³ se produit, les questions suivantes s'enchaînent : pourquoi untel a-t-il agi de la sorte ? Quelle fut son intention initiale ? Son action est-elle volontaire ? Quelle est sa caractéristique affective ? Est-il satisfait du résultat ?

Lorsqu'il s'agit d'un récit narratif, une nouvelle question s'impose : l'intention du locuteur, question qui ne sera ici qu'effleurée — je me concentrerai plutôt sur les moyens mis en œuvre par le locuteur pour exprimer son intention entre autres croyances (non métaphysiques) et émotions. Cependant, on ne peut, à ce stade, laisser de côté les outils à la disposition du locuteur, issus de son apprentissage, ou de son expérience personnelle, ou encore de l'intersubjectivité (ci-après §4).

Chacune des réponses sera donc étudiée en fonction d'un contexte et d'une sphère, selon un schéma suivant une même trame, dans laquelle co-existent des entités animées X et Y (optionnel) :

Dans le schéma directeur (**fig. 1**), la sphère n'est pas commune à X et Y, mais elle peut aussi l'être.

A ce stade de mon argumentation ne seront pas détaillées plus avant les variables de subjectivité (intentionnalité et affectivité), ni les variables d'objectivité (contexte, sphère), sinon que la subjectivité appartient au domaine de l'herméneutique et que l'objectivité¹⁴ peut être « quantifiable ».

Au sujet du phénomène, peut-il être mis en relation avec un fait empirique, toujours selon un contexte et une sphère ? Cette question fait écho à Ricœur, qui a souligné le problème entre l'histoire, la fiction et le temps¹⁵. L'histoire fait référence au vécu d'un ou de plusieurs individus à un instant T, dans un lieu et un contexte particuliers.

Aristote, déjà, avait posé les bases d'une réflexion sur le fait empirique : dans *la Poétique*, selon la lecture de Ricœur¹⁶, la tragédie (et l'épopée) recrée des actes de la vie, autrement dit une réalité fictive, en s'appuyant sur le couple *mimésis-muthos*, la fable et l'intrigue, où le *muthos* est « l'agencement des faits¹⁷ ». Aristote considé-

8 Les civilisations du Proche-Orient ancien dans lesquelles j'inclus volontairement l'Égypte et le Hatti, et qui s'étendent d'Elam au Levant.

9 Selon le père de « l'herméneutique moderne » (Grondin 1993 : 82), Friedrich Schleiermacher postule que « [...] pour comprendre la pensée de l'auteur, il faut pouvoir remonter à la décision « séminale », épouser « la conviction de l'écrivain », il faut pouvoir se saisir de la perspective dans laquelle un auteur a voulu dire quelque chose » (source : Berner 1985 : 53).

10 Volontairement, je n'emploie pas l'expression de sphère domestique (héritée de J.-J. Rousseau), qui est née au lendemain de la Révolution française (Heuer/Verjus 2002), notamment parce qu'elle a une dimension juridique, et ce n'est pas ici l'objectif de cette étude, bien que certains aspects juridiques ne devront pas être ignorés au §4.

11 Communication non publiée de la RAI 2013 au cours du séminaire Gender, Methodology and Assyriology co-organisé par Saana Svård et Agnès Garcia Ventura : Eleonora Ravenna/Maria Rosa Oliver, Who imposes and who disposes? Ordering the disorder in the palace of Mari. Gender relationships and the Assyriological perspective.

12 Bien qu'il y ait des nuances importantes en fonction des contextes politico-juridiques afférents à l'histoire des civilisations (par exemple voir note 11).

13 Dans sa dimension philosophique au sens large : « Ce qui apparaît, ce qui se manifeste aux sens ou à la conscience, tant dans l'ordre physique que dans l'ordre psychique, et qui peut devenir l'objet d'un savoir » (définition disponible en ligne : <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/phénomène>).

14 Harari 2015 : 145 : « Un phénomène objectif existe indépendamment de la conscience et des croyances humaines. »

15 Voir Ricœur 1986 : 15.

16 Voir Ricœur 1983 : 70.

17 Ibid. : 73.

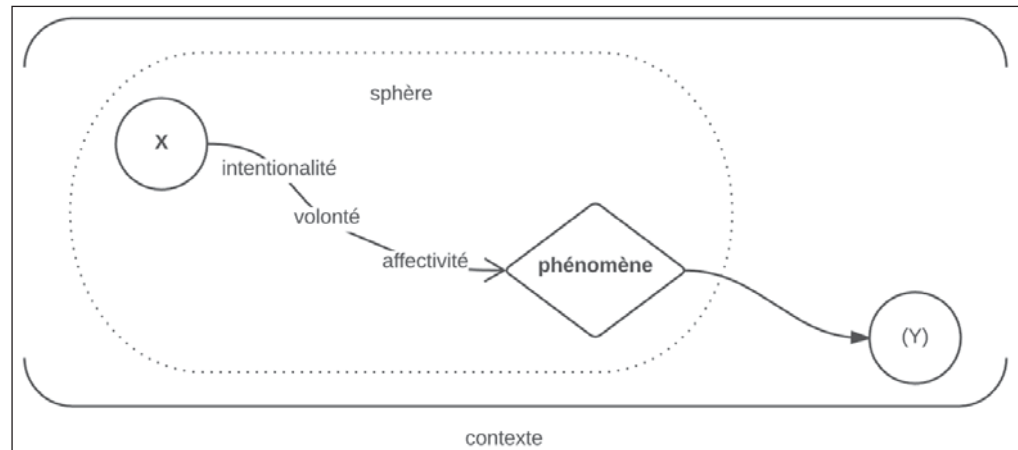


Fig. 1 : Schéma directeur.

rait l'action comme le poumon du récit, alors que l'entité animée est subordonnée à l'action. De mon point de vue, se pose alors la question de la source de l'acte « imité », ou tout à moins de ses analogies, toujours en considérant les variables objectives précédemment énoncées. Ces analogies sont plurielles : à la fois sémantiques et factuelles¹⁸, en fonction d'une part d'une catégorie de lexèmes, d'autre part à partir d'éléments politico-historiques.

A titre d'exemple, et pour introduire quelques éléments méthodologiques, voici un extrait de KTU 1.3, 2: 4b–16¹⁹, qui non seulement traduirait les caractéristiques guerrières de 'Anatu, mais aussi témoignerait de l'influence notable de cette dernière — que l'auteur aurait jugé utile de rapporter :

18 Prenons par exemple les chansons de geste, dans lesquelles selon Auerbach 1968 : 143 : « [...] les chevaliers remplissent une fonction dans un contexte politico-historique ; ce contexte est simplifié et déformé dans un sens légendaire, mais néanmoins il subsiste dans la mesure où les personnages qui prennent part à l'action assument une fonction dans le monde réel [...] »

19 A. Traduction personnelle. Une traduction annotée, avec une discussion des différentes hypothèses, sera incluse à ma thèse ; aussi ne m'attarderai-je pas davantage ici à une argumentation philologique. B. Ce texte est extrait du *Cycle de Ba'lu et de 'Anatu* (KTU 1.1–6), qui aurait été écrit par le scribe 'Ilimilku d'Ugarit. KTU 1.1–6 comprendrait six tablettes KTU 1.1 à KTU 1.6 auxquelles il faut ajouter KTU 1.10. Toutefois, l'ordre canonique ne fait pas l'unanimité. Entre autres suggestions, celle de Nicolas Wyatt : il suggère d'ajouter KTU 1.10 entre KTU 1.3 et KTU 1.4 (1998) et place KTU 1.2, 3 avant KTU 1.2, 1. C. Ce cycle met en avant l'accès au trône d'un héritier et sa légitimité — Aaron Tugendhaft (2012 : 370) propose une toute autre hypothèse : « I believe the epic employs kinship as a metaphor for international politics. [...] Ugarit's experience as a vassal-state subservient to Hatti constituted the basis for its poetic representation of politics. ». Deux clans s'opposent, celui de 'Ilu (Yammu, 'Attaru, 'Athiratu) et celui de 'Anatu (Ba'lu) — tout comme Vine (1965 : 148), je suppose que le clan de 'Anatu symboliserait les Amorites (cette hypothèse est largement développée dans ma thèse). 'Ilu cherche à imposer d'abord Yammu, mais est contraint d'accepter finalement Ba'lu. Toutefois, à la suite d'un épisode mettant en scène la mort de Ba'lu lors d'un combat avec Môtu (dont on pourrait croire qu'il adhère au camp de 'Ilu), 'Attaru accède brièvement au trône, avant le retour de Ba'lu. J'examinerai dans ma thèse une autre hypothèse sur la soi-disante mort de Ba'lu, laquelle pourrait être interprétée comme un combat entre la vie et la mort, à la suite d'une blessure ou d'une maladie qui aurait pu lui être fatale.

*w tqry . ḡlmm b št . ḡr .
w hln . 'nt . tmḥš . b 'mq . n
ḥtšb . bn²⁰ qrytm
tmḥš . lim²¹ . ḥp y[m]
tšmt . adm . šat . špš
[...]
'kt rišt . l bmtḥ .
šnst kpt . b ḥbšh .
[...]
b ksl²² . qšth . mdnt*

et/alors elle intercepte les deux princes au pied de la montagne
et 'Anatu combat dans la vallée.
Une nouvelle fois, elle combat avec ardeur les fils d'Ugarit,
elle anéantit le clan (venant) des bords de mer,
elle décime les hommes de l'Est.

[...]
Elle a attaché les têtes sur son dos,
elle a ceint les mains à sa taille²³.

[...]
Avec la puissance²⁴ de son arc, (elle les expulse) de la ville.

Evidemment, les analogies sémantiques et factuelles, qu'elles soient historiques ou non, sont soit contemporaines, soit antérieures au texte. Elles sont connues de l'auteur, soit parce qu'il les a vécues, soit parce qu'il en a eu connaissance au cours de sa formation, ou bien par des témoignages (oraux ou écrits). Je m'intéresse plus particulièrement à la relation d'une entité animée vis-à-vis d'une ou de plusieurs autres entités selon les variables subjectives et objectives — dans l'exemple

20 Gray 1979 : 317 n. 11 : « *bn qrytm* may mean 'the sons of the two cities' [...]. But as the verb is reflexive and intransitive it is best taken to mean 'between the two cities' [...] ».

21 « Other alternatives suppose: 'prince, hero, powerful', 'DN lim [: Ba'lu]' or 'li'imite'; for a summary of opinions cf. De Moor UF 1 1969 183; id., SP 97; Lipiński UF 3 1971 90f.; Caquot/Szyncer TOu 1 89ff.; Craigie ZAW 90 1970 376ff.; Gray UF 11 1979 319f. n. 28 [...] » (Olmo Lete/Sanmartín, A dictionary of the Ugaritic language in the alphabetic tradition [= HdOr. 67, 2003] 488).

22 Voir Held 1965 : 403–404.

23 Parallèle possible avec avec KTU 1.13, 7.

24 Held 1965 : 404 : « [...] and derived meaning may come to connote 'strength' ».

précédent, la relation de l'actant (X), 'Anatu, avec le(s) récepteur(s), le clan des bords de mer, les hommes de l'Est, les deux princes (Y)²⁵. Les occurrences sémantiques qui caractérisent la relation sont déterminantes pour proposer l'agency de X.

1.2. Quel élément syntaxique favorise l'analyse d'une relation entre deux entités animées X et Y ?

Dans les textes ugaritiques²⁶, la notion de phrase²⁷ au sens propre est absente ; les groupes syntaxiques (ou groupes de mots²⁸) sujet, verbe, complément sont laissés au libre arbitre du traducteur, et dépendent étroitement de l'ordre statique²⁹ — l'état fragmentaire de certains textes rend cet ordre particulièrement compliqué.

Selon Tesnière, le verbe est l'élément le plus important d'une phrase, et bien que cet avis ne soit pas toujours partagé³⁰, j'ai opté en faveur de ce postulat.

Le verbe, qui « du point de vue sémantique, exprime une action faite ou subie³¹ », agit comme un élément connecteur entre un sujet (l'actant) et le complément (récepteur) — un sujet³² est actif ou passif. Non par ses caractéristiques grammaticales, mais bien par ses caractéristiques sémantiques, le verbe occupera *de facto* une place essentielle dans l'étude des interactions par sa fonction de connecteur entre l'actant et le récepteur.

1.3. De l'analyse sémantique à la philosophie de l'action

Le concept de « procès » d'un verbe, tel que défini initialement par Antoine Meillet³³, a contribué fortement

à mon intérêt pour la notion de l'action, plus particulièrement dans sa dimension philosophique.

Le *Trésor de la langue française* (TLF) définit une action comme étant « une opération d'un agent (animé ou inanimé, matériel ou immatériel) envisagée dans son déroulement »³⁴ ; on peut aisément postuler que c'est un acte d'une entité animée X vers une entité animée Y³⁵ — autrement dit les acteurs se juxtaposent à l'action représentée par le lexème verbal.

Cette action appartient à un champ sémantique qui précise une orientation sur la signification des types de phénomènes engagés par l'entité X. Les différents champs sémantiques sont alors classés selon un modèle taxinomique qui peut varier selon les langues (§2).

Pourquoi analyser une action, et comment procéder ?

Analyser l'action, c'est avant tout considérer un phénomène social³⁶ dans lequel interagissent plusieurs entités animées selon des codes propres à une culture³⁷ ; en d'autres termes, c'est procéder à une observation de la société, quel que soit le genre d'écrits (ou de récits oraux). Les réflexions engagées sur la philosophie de l'action permettent d'apporter un socle commun à l'observation d'un phénomène dans lequel prend part une ou plusieurs entités aux origines culturelles communes ou non.

La philosophie de l'action a depuis longtemps été débattue dans la sphère scientifique³⁸, mais la contribution de Donald Davidson a probablement soulevé le plus d'intérêt, après celle d'Elisabeth Anscombe, qui avait donné une nouvelle impulsion à la philosophie analytique de l'action.

Le concept d'action est révélateur d'une méthodologie de l'observation, invitant à mener une enquête sur la raison (« pourquoi... ? »³⁹ parce que) d'une action, notamment en abordant deux caractéristiques essentielles (selon Anscombe et Davidson à quelques différences notables) que sont la pro-attitude (désir⁴⁰, trait de caractère, volonté, sens du devoir, obligation) et la croyance (savoir et conjecture) — les deux étant étroitement liées à l'empirisme et faisant partie intégrante de

25 Tout au long de la réflexion, l'entité animée X sera l'actant et l'entité animée Y le récepteur — les parenthèses indiquent que Y peut être optionnel.

26 Bien que la plateforme Hypatia s'adresse à tout chercheur souhaitant travailler sur les relations entre les entités animées (en particulier pour les corpus de langues flexionnelles à brisure interne, langues flexionnelles-fusionnelles, ainsi que le sumérien), je me concentrerai sur le corpus ugaritique sur lequel je travaille dans le cadre de ma thèse.

27 « Le plus souvent, la communication comprend plusieurs phrases. Chacune de celles-ci a son intention propre et est suivie d'une pause importante. Dans le langage écrit, cette pause importante est généralement représentée par un point. » (Grévisse §210).

28 Lire à ce sujet le commentaire de Tesnière (1959 : 25–27), le père de la grammaire de dépendance.

29 Tesnière (ibid. : 51) : « L'ordre statique est l'ordre logique et systématique de classement des éléments du langage dans l'esprit du sujet parlant antérieurement à toute mise en œuvre dans la phrase. Ce sera par exemple celui des paradigmes de la déclinaison et de la conjugaison dans la grammaire. [...] L'ordre statique est celui des déclinaisons et des conjugaisons. C'est celui que préconisent en général les maîtres de langues anciennes qui recommandent avant tout de savoir les paradigmes d'une façon imperturbable. »

30 Entre autre par Guiraud 1979.

31 Voir Grévisse §738.

32 Sous la forme d'un substantif propre, commun (ou appellatif), ou personnel (attaché au paradigme flexionnel du verbe).

33 Meillet 1982 (1921) : 175 : « Le Verbe indique les « procès », qu'il s'agisse d'actions, d'états ou de passages d'un état à un autre ». Le Grévisse (§738) précise que « le verbe exprime un procès, quelque chose qui se déroule dans le temps. »

34 Disponible également en ligne : <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/action>.

35 Ou bien, comme le note Ricœur 1986 : 168 : « Les actants sont définis par les seuls prédicats de l'action », qui sont classés selon leur signification sémantique.

36 Voir Ricœur 1986 : 216, et 1983 : 110 : « agir, c'est toujours « agir » avec d'autres ».

37 Geertz 1973 : 17 : « Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior — more precisely, social action — that cultural forms find articulation. »

38 On peut compter parmi les précurseurs Aristote (recherches sur les actes volontaires et involontaires : *Ethique à Nicomaque*, III), Descartes, Wittgenstein.

39 Voir Anscombe 2002 : 45–47 ; alors que pour Ricœur 1983 : 109 : « Les actions renvoient à des motifs qui expliquent pourquoi quelqu'un fait ou a fait quelque chose [...] ». Voir également Ricœur 2009 (1950) : 95 : « Le propre d'une cause est de pouvoir être connue et comprise avant ses effets ».

40 Voir Ricœur 1986 : 191

l'herméneutique (§4). Il convient, malgré tout, de faire la distinction entre le désir et l'acte de volonté. En effet, le désir n'influe pas sur l'acte de volonté ; qu'il y ait désir ou non, l'acte sera effectué, s'il doit l'être (obligation, devoir, libre arbitre). Je souscris ainsi pleinement au postulat d'Olivier Massin⁴¹, qui avance deux principes : 1. La faillibilité (§2) : il peut échouer — Yammu combat contre Ba'lu, mais Yammu est vaincu⁴² ; 2. l'effectibilité : il est plus proche de l'action que ne l'est le désir — 'Anatu retient Ba'lu qui cherche à s'opposer violemment aux ambassadeurs, bien qu'elle ne ressente aucun désir particulier d'« agir » ainsi⁴³.

Alors qu'Anscombe distingue deux concepts clés, volontaire et intentionnel (dans le sens de prédictif), de mon point de vue, il faut ajouter deux sous-catégories (variables) à une action volontaire : sous la contrainte⁴⁴ ou non — dans tous les cas, sans effet de surprise⁴⁵.

Par exemple, j'assène un coup de poing à une personne en réponse à une agression physique ; certes, j'ai bien agi volontairement, mais en réponse à une contrainte physique.

A l'inverse, si je déclare la guerre à quelqu'un, motivée par des raisons particulières, c'est une action volontaire et intentionnelle. Bien qu'elle puisse être sous la contrainte (en réponse, par exemple, à une menace imminente), c'est bien le « pourquoi » d'Anscombe qui permet ici de suggérer les raisons (d'agir), celles qui motivent ma déclaration de guerre.

Ainsi, dans l'hypothèse où l'action de X serait volontaire, qu'elle soit sous la contrainte ou non, trois questions majeures se posent : la raison de X, son intentionnalité et la conséquence d'« agir », qui relève ou non de sa responsabilité⁴⁶, pour servir les intérêts de qui :

- X ;
- X et autre(s) (ce qui peut inclure aussi Y + autre(s) ou simplement Y) ;
- autre(s) (*idem*).

Mais lorsque je (X) tombe dans un trou que je n'ai pas vu, mon action est involontaire, de ce fait, non intentionnelle (non prédictive).

Donc une action, représentée par « son » verbe, (précédemment caractérisée comme phénomène) peut être soit volontaire, soit involontaire — information non

41 Massin 2014 : 81.

42 KTU 1.2, 2: 24–25. Toutefois, la question de sa mort reste de mon point de vue incertaine ; il aurait pu être fait prisonnier (KTU 1.2, 4: 30, *šbyn*, notre captif), ou incapable de réagir à la suite d'une blessure. Le reste de la colonne est fragmentaire.

43 KTU 1.2, 1: 40. Plus explicitement, je prends mes médicaments, mais n'en ressens aucun désir.

44 Selon le TLF (disponible en ligne : <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/contrainte>) : 1) « Violence physique ou morale exercée contre une personne afin de l'obliger à agir contre sa volonté », 2) « État de domination exercé par les circonstances sur une personne en la mettant dans la nécessité d'agir malgré soi ». Voir aussi Ricœur 1986 : 190.

45 Ici, je me range volontiers du côté de Wittgenstein.

46 Ricœur 1983 : 109 : « [...] ces agents peuvent être tenus pour responsables de certaines conséquences de leurs actions. »

dépourvue de sens pour évaluer l'*agency* d'une entité animée.

Toutefois, la notion d'intentionnalité d'Anscombe interpelle, car tel qu'elle la conçoit, elle fait appel à l'induction⁴⁷, et est au demeurant incomplète — bien que cette notion implique conséquemment de considérer des éléments empiriques, qui ne peuvent évidemment être négligés. Aussi, ajouterai-je une précision utile (surtout pour l'interprétation) : l'implicature⁴⁸ d'Herbert Paul Grice, en fonction de l'énoncé, *utterance*⁴⁹ — qui complète la méthodologie de l'observation (*infra*). Ainsi, se limiter seulement à la sémantique serait une erreur pour analyser l'intention, puisqu'il faut aussi prendre en compte les systèmes symboliques⁵⁰ qui « sont des interprétants internes à l'action⁵¹ », lesquels sont inhérents à la fois au contexte (de l'intrigue) et à la culture (de l'auteur ou de celle rapportée par ce dernier). Prenons par exemple l'expression « Il est midi » qui peut être comprise de différentes manières :

- C'est l'heure de déjeuner.
- En réponse à la question : « Quelle heure est-il ? » — indication du temps.
- L'heure de partir, si l'heure du départ avait été précédemment fixée à midi.

Cependant, il faut admettre qu'au cours du processus d'enregistrements des lexèmes verbaux dans Hypatia, il n'est pas toujours aisé de considérer à sa juste valeur la notion d'implicature — en particulier pour les métaphores⁵². Néanmoins, et en fonction des éléments jusqu'à présent introduits, le raisonnement lié à l'observation est ceux de la **fig. 2**.

Plus concrètement, à partir de l'exemple précédent (KTU 1.3, 2: 4b–16), 'Anatu (X) livre (action) un combat (contexte) dans la vallée (sphère extérieure) contre le clan des bords de mer et des hommes de l'Est (Y), l'action serait observée selon le schéma de la **fig. 3**.

Quelle est l'intention de 'Anatu dans le combat qu'elle mène au pied de la montagne ? Son intention est-elle liée à un phénomène empirique ? Pour quelle(s) rai-

47 D'après le TLF : « Type de raisonnement consistant à remonter, par une suite d'opérations cognitives, de données particulières (faits, expériences, énoncés) à des propositions plus générales, de cas particuliers à la loi qui les régit, des effets à la cause, des conséquences au principe, de l'expérience à la théorie. ». Voir Popper 1998 : 49, 73–76.

48 Voir le dictionnaire philosophique de Stanford disponible en ligne : <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/grice/#ConImp>, voir aussi Longhi/Safarti 2011 : 78 et Reboul/Moeschler 1998 : 51–52.

49 A. Bracops 2006 : 68 : «... which provides information on what the speaker wishes to communicate. » ; B. Avis également exprimé par Schleiermacher, rapporté par Jean Grondin (1993 : 89) « les hommes ne pensent pas toujours la même chose sous les mêmes mots ».

50 Ricœur 2013 (1969) : 35; 425 : « J'appelle symbole toute structure de signification où un sens direct, primaire, littéral, désigne par surcroît un autre sens indirect, secondaire, figuré, qui ne peut être appréhendé qu'à travers le premier. », sachant que le symbole est « prisonnier de la diversité des langues et des cultures et à ce titre, reste contingent : pourquoi ces symboles et non point d'autres ? ».

51 Voir Ricœur 1983 : 114.

52 Précision qui peut être sélectionnée dans Hypatia (§2).

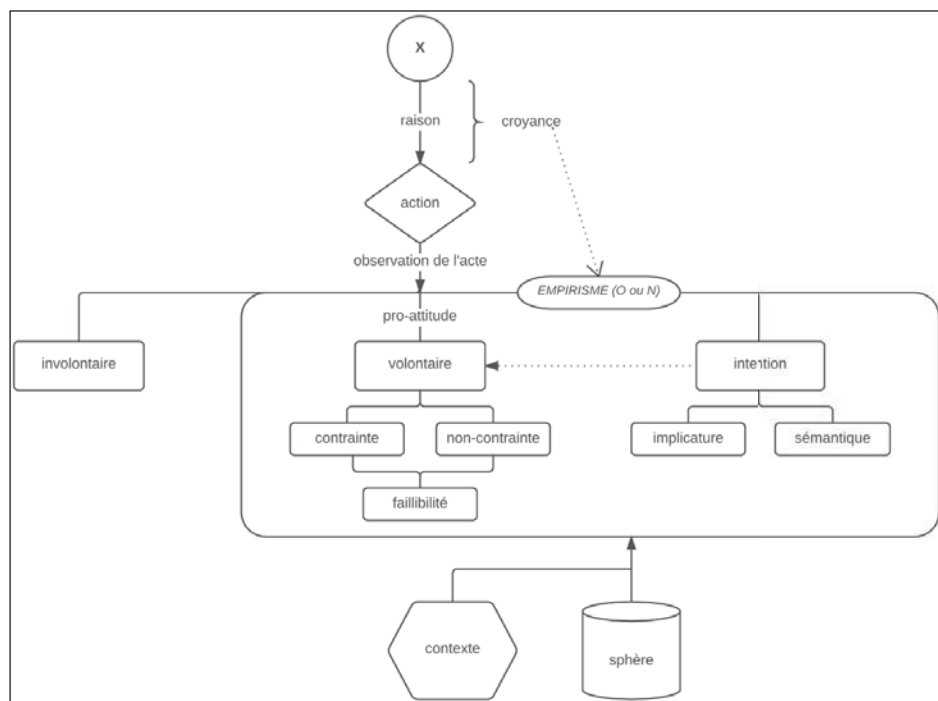


Fig. 2 : Raison d'agir.

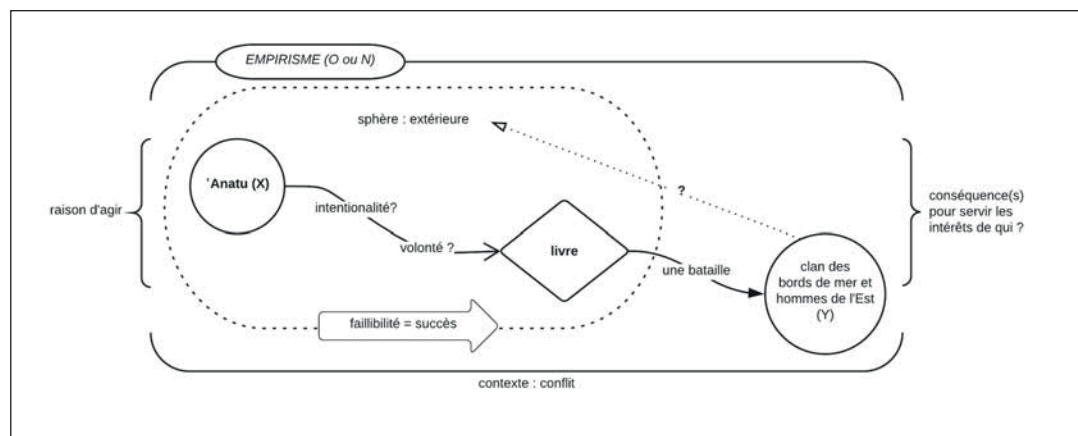


Fig. 3 : Raison d'agir : processus de réflexion pour KTU 1.3, 2: 7-8.

son(s) ? Est-ce en relation avec un événement antérieur qui l'aurait conduite à « agir » ainsi et dans lequel elle ou ses proches auraient été impliqués ? Une vengeance ? Ou au contraire, les raisons n'auraient-elles aucun lien étroit avec les intrigues qui précèdent cette action ? Qui tire profit des conséquences de l'action de X ? 'Anatu, sa maisonnée, sa maisonnée et autre(s) ? Peut-on évaluer son affectivité dans l'action d'« agir » ? Il pourrait être suggéré que 'Anatu mène (action) un combat dans la vallée contre Y pour venger (raison) l'honneur de Ba'lu qui aurait échoué (événement antérieur) contre Yammu⁵³.

C'est bien dans l'interprétation que seront confrontés des éléments de réponse.

D'autres critères s'ajoutent aux précédents : une entité a-t-elle le pouvoir, le devoir et la capacité d'effectuer une action particulière (§4) ? Michon⁵⁴ va plus loin en distinguant « le pouvoir de choisir, de décider, et de former une intention ». Il appelle ce pouvoir de choisir le libre arbitre qui serait alors incompatible avec le déterminisme⁵⁵.

Cette notion est intéressante par l'interrogation qu'elle suscite sur l'action effectuée individuellement,

⁵³ On ne peut affirmer avec certitude l'ordre des tablettes, notamment du fait de leur caractère fragmentaire (voir note 19). Comment interpréter alors les passages suivants : 1) le texte KTU 1.3, 3 rapporte que 'Anatu aurait tué Yammu et ses acolytes, pourtant 2) l'hypothèse que Ba'lu ait eu le dessus sur Yammu a été retenue (KTU 1.2, 4). Cependant, n'ayant aucune preuve tangible d'un combat entre 'Anatu et Yammu (texte perdu ?), ne peut-on considérer un instant que Yammu ait aussi été engagé au côté du clan des bords de mer (considérant l'origine « marine » de Yammu) dans la bataille décrite au pieds de la

montagne ? Ce serait à la suite du semi-échec de Ba'lu — qui aurait failli à sa mission, tuer Yammu — que 'Anatu aurait mené cette bataille et par la suite organisé un combat singulier (KTU 1.3, 2: 23–30a, Vidal, 2006 : 710), combat dont elle serait sortie victorieuse.

⁵⁴ Michon 2011 : 10. Voir aussi Ricœur 2009 (1950) : 24 : « Le vouloir, c'est d'abord ce que je décide, le projet que je forme ; il contient le sens de l'action à faire par moi, selon le pouvoir que j'en ai. »

⁵⁵ Voir Michon 2011 : 21 et Popper 1998 : 337–348.

en d'autres termes elle permet d'aborder le concept d'*agency* — l'un des buts recherchés étant indiscutablement de déterminer le degré de légitimité d'une action d'une entité animée X.

D'autre part, X agit-elle selon des facteurs non choisis, conséquence d'une expérience antérieure à l'action dont il est précisément question ? Elle ne pourrait agir autrement qu'en livrant un combat (option 1), sinon X devrait :

- accepter la défaite (option 2) ;
- signer un protocole avec une tierce partie qui lui garantirait protection (option 3) ;
- opter pour d'autres alternatives pacifiques dont on ne peut mesurer de manière tangible l'issue (option 4).

Mais alors si X opte pour l'option 1, tout en sachant qu'elle a d'autres options (2, 3, 4), pourrions-nous conclure à sa faculté individuelle de décider (par la « voix » de l'auteur) ? Avait-elle finalement le choix pour sortir la tête haute du conflit qui l'oppose à Y ? Si tel est le cas, cela sous-entendrait qu'il y aurait eu délibération (fonctionnant étroitement avec le libre arbitre⁵⁶), ce que nous sommes bien incapables de prouver⁵⁷.

Pour tenter de se prononcer sur sa faculté individuelle, il serait opportun de considérer les éléments politico-historiques antérieurs ou contemporains, afin d'étudier l'hypothèse de facteurs empiriques.

Parmi d'autres possibilités d'approches, je me concentrerai sur l'enregistrement de données mesurables, dont j'essayerais de prouver la véracité : celui-ci consiste (toujours pour l'extrait précédent) à entrer les lexèmes verbaux dans Hypatia, avec X (chef de guerre) et Y, dans un contexte de conflit, en fonction de variables subjectives — certes, disposons-nous seulement de suffisamment de sources écrites ? Il faudra se satisfaire des témoignages disponibles aujourd'hui (textes épistolaires, textes considérés comme historiques comme les Chroniques babyloniennes par exemple), et opérer une comparaison quantifiable avec les textes narratifs, en considérant aussi les influences culturelles qui justifieraient de se rapprocher de telle ou telle civilisation plutôt qu'une autre.

En conclusion de cette première partie, abstraction faite de la délibération en l'état bien trop sommaire, une action peut être accomplie (ou envisagée) pour des raisons d'agir particulières, en fonction d'un contexte, d'une sphère, avec une intention faisant référence à des phénomènes empiriques, communs ou non à l'historicité.

⁵⁶ Michon 2011 : 75.

⁵⁷ De mon point de vue, une des deux hypothèses tangibles serait que la responsabilité morale de X soit le fruit du libre arbitre de l'auteur en considérant son choix de l'action de X et du pouvoir d'agir autrement ; dans le cas contraire, la seconde hypothèse serait alors privilégiée, l'auteur rapporterait des faits relatifs à l'histoire. C'est sans doute à ce niveau que ce situerait la délibération. Aussi conviendrait-il de s'interroger sur les motivations de l'auteur.

2 Hypatia : une base de données collaborative

Après cette introduction méthodologique sont abordés les processus d'enregistrement des données primaires, variables et autres informations annexes, dans la base de données Hypatia⁵⁸. Ces données sont (1) soit saisies à partir d'un formulaire (méthode la plus aisée, surtout pour les utilisateurs non familiers avec les langages « informatiques »), (2) soit issues d'un fichier XML-TEI⁵⁹. Les explications des informations à saisir s'appuieront majoritairement sur le formulaire de saisie (1), par souci de clarté, laissant ainsi de côté les spécificités propres au développement⁶⁰ (1 et 2).

Le formulaire de saisie comprend trois étapes (je ne développerai pas l'étape 3, principalement des variables annexes, qui est spécifique à la référence du fragment et à l'auteur supposé et n'a donc aucune variable subjective et objective). Certaines informations sont obligatoires, d'autres optionnelles (*). Il va sans dire que le maximum d'informations saisies est recommandé pour un traitement optimal⁶¹.

⁵⁸ Hypatia est une plateforme collaborative, développée sous l'impulsion des problématiques de mon projet de recherche doctorale, problématiques qui ne se limitent pas à mon corpus. Pour le moment, Hypatia (<http://hypatia.corpus-ane.science>) est disponible uniquement à partir d'un navigateur et d'une connexion internet. Il est envisagé un développement ultérieur d'une application probablement sous l'environnement Java.

⁵⁹ A. Ces données sont encodées selon une syntaxe préétablie pour que leur importation en soit facilitée. Ensuite, elles sont copiées sur le serveur de Hypatia dans l'attente d'un traitement automatisé, pour être intégrées à la base de données. Les détails techniques de toutes ces étapes seront développés dans un tutoriel accessible en ligne. B. Pour mes recherches doctorales, j'ai choisi de limiter le développement au corpus de ma thèse (KTU 1.1-6, 8, 10), pour tester la véracité des variables (ainsi que d'autres) dans le cadre de l'herméneutique de l'action. De ce fait, je me suis concentrée sur l'encodage XML-TEI (et XSL pour permettre l'affichage dans un navigateur au format HTML). En outre, j'ai réalisé un tutoriel XML-TEI détaillé, disponible en accès libre (<https://vbigot-juloux.github.io/hermeneutics-of-action/UserManual/out/webhelp/index.html#process.html>). A partir des données encodées en XML-TEI, une édition numérique annotée du corpus, ainsi qu'un lexique des lexèmes verbaux seront prochainement accessibles en ligne.

⁶⁰ A. Pour l'élaboration de la base de données et l'affichage des données dans un navigateur, voici les langages utilisés : UML, MySQL, PHP, Javascript, CSS 3, XHTML 5. Je suis redevable à Christophe Jourdan, que je remercie vivement, pour avoir contribué de manière importante à la programmation ; sans sa précieuse implication, la version actuellement en ligne de Hypatia ne serait très probablement pas encore disponible. B. XML-TEI et Simple XML pour les données encodées destinées à être importées dans la base de données Hypatia. Que ce soit pour 1 ou pour 2, des exemples de codes sources sont disponibles sur GitHub (<https://github.com/vjuloux/Hypatia>).

⁶¹ En cours de développement : visibilité pour tous, visibilité pour un groupe d'utilisateurs auquel est rattaché l'utilisateur, sachant qu'il peut appartenir à un ou plusieurs groupes, à des fins d'interaction (débat, critiques, partages d'informations) entre certains utilisateurs pour une donnée primaire ou bien une variable.

Fig. 4 : Ajout d'un morphème sous sa forme flexionnelle et son analyse succincte.

Au préalable, en fonction des précédentes notions abordées, voici un tableau récapitulatif des différentes données et variables qui serviront à l'interprétation :

Données primaires	Lexème verbal sous sa forme flexionnelle, entité X et entité (Y)
Variables objectives	Contexte P, sphère N
Variables subjectives	Affectivité, degré du type d'affectivité, conséquence pour qui, degré du désir, entité active ou passive, type d'intentionnalité volontaire, action contrainte ou non, faillibilité

Les variables non subjectives et non objectives sont appelées variables annexes ; elles n'ont pas d'incidence particulière sur l'analyse des relations entre les entités X et Y, ni sur leur *agency*. Elles trouveront leur utilité à des fins comparatives entre les corpus, civilisations, cultures et langues : transcription, profil, royaume, souverain, datation du royaume, sexe biologique du souverain, auteur présumé, type de l'auteur, sexe biologique⁶² de l'auteur, date de l'auteur, type de corpus (ou texte), datation du corpus (ou texte), référence du corpus (ou du texte, et non de la citation précise).

2.1. Première étape : analyse des données philologiques et informations sémantiques

Dans un premier temps, l'utilisateur devra procéder à l'enregistrement des informations liées au lexème verbal (fig. 4).

- Saisie obligatoire : indication de la source à partir de laquelle est extrait le lexème (corpus ou publication⁶³), sélection de la langue à partir d'une liste non-exhaustive⁶⁴, taxonomie et sous-taxonomie verbale à partir d'une liste préétablie pour chaque langue, racine verbale, type (verbe, adjectif, substantif⁶⁵), personne grammaticale, nombre grammatical, genre grammatical (masculin, féminin, neutre) — excepté pour le sumérien —, schème.
- Saisie non-obligatoire : 1. relative au lexème : glyphe (précision selon les cas, restitution ou incertain), forme écrite, importation de l'image précise du glyphe (relatif au passage analysé), forme normalisée, forme vocalisée, précisions sur la métaphore, traduction, traduction de la racine verbale et sa vocalisation, catégorie sémantique (animée, inanimée⁶⁶), aspect verbal, type de morphèmes, préfixe, suffixe, infixe ; 2. variables subjectives : émotion/sentiment (liste préétablie), affectivité (de X dans l'« agir »).

⁶³ Je ne développerai pas plus en avant ce choix dans cet article, sinon qu'il s'agit d'utiliser ce formulaire pour les références bibliographiques. L'utilité est double : 1. précision de la page exacte à partir de laquelle des informations précises peuvent être obtenues (exemple : pour le lexème sous sa forme flexionnelle *mḥṣt*, Greenstein 2006 : 95) ; 2. Mise en commun des références, partant du principe que les références des uns peuvent intéresser les autres, et cela pour un lexème précis.

⁶⁴ Dans la première étape, les choix dans les listes sont majoritairement fonction de la langue sélectionnée.

⁶⁵ Pour le moment, seule le type « verbe » est actif, notamment parce qu'il permet de travailler sur la problématique actuelle.

⁶⁶ En particulier pour l'analyse de textes sumériens, en cours de développement.

⁶² Il faut distinguer le sexe biologique (inné) du sexe social (acquis), lequel est déterminé en fonction de l'*agency*.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'ENTITY'. It is organized into three main sections:

- General Information:** Includes radio buttons for 'Does the inflectional morpheme have a relation with an entity?' (yes/no) and 'Representative entity' (yes/no/unknown/broken). There are also fields for 'Name entity representative' and 'Role'.
- About entity "1":** Contains fields for 'Anonym entity*', 'Transcription', 'Name' (with 'Anatu' entered), 'Determiner', 'Biological sex' (female), 'Profil' (divine), 'Suggestion of social gender' (male), and 'Gram. function' (subject).
- For agency:** Includes 'Sphere' (outside), 'Context' (battle), and 'Tag' (war, strategy).
- About the kingdom:** Includes 'Kingdom' (Ugarit), 'Century from' (14 BCE) and 'to' (12 BCE), 'Date from' and 'to' (select), and 'Sovereign' and 'Sex'.

At the bottom right, there are 'Back' and 'Next' buttons.

Fig. 5 : Ajout d'informations relatives à une entité (sujet du verbe).

2.2. Seconde étape : analyse des données relatives aux entités X et (Y) et sur le royaume dont serait « originaire » l'auteur

Dans un second temps, l'utilisateur entrera les données relatives au traitement d'information liées directement à l'action de l'entité X vis-à-vis de l'entité (Y) (fig. 5).

- Saisie obligatoire : entité anonyme ou non.
- Saisie optionnelle : 1. Généralités : préciser si le lexème verbal est lié à l'entité X, est-ce l'agent du verbe ?, transcription (logogramme akkadien ou sumérien), anthroponyme, déterminatif, sexe « biologique », profil (apparence anthropomorphe, divin, humain, objet, non identifié), suggestion du sexe socialement construit, fonction grammaticale (sujet, complément); 2. Agency : sphère (intérieure, extérieure), contexte, rôle (actif, passif), entité Y, conséquence (qui en tire profit), degré du désir, type d'intentionnalité volontaire, action contrainte ou non, faillibilité⁶⁷; 3. Royaume : nom du royaume, datation, souverain, sexe biologique connu du souverain.

Les données enregistrées se présentent sous forme de tableaux liés les uns aux autres :

- Aperçu synthétique des lexèmes verbaux par langue : sommes de tous les paradigmes sous leur forme flexionnelle, des racines verbales, des verbes, des entités X, des fragments (= la donnée primaire verbale), des genres du lexème verbal, des entités (répartition par sexe « biologique »).
- Détails des verbes sous leur forme flexionnelle : racine verbale, genre, forme flexionnelle, enti-

té, entité active (X), entité passive (Y), contexte, sphère, publication.

- Données pour une entité X par langue : rôle, intentionnalité, sphère, contexte, taxonomie (catégorie), sexe « biologique », lexème verbal sous sa forme flexionnelle, référence, commentaires (sur le rôle, la sphère, le contexte, l'intentionnalité).
- Données sur le genre du lexème verbal sous sa forme flexionnelle : traduction, glyphe (fichier image), genre, entité active (X), entité passive (Y), contexte, sphère, support du matériel, référence, tags, commentaires (sur le genre, le nombre, le rôle, la sphère, le contexte, l'intentionnalité).
- Aperçu pour chaque entité X (qui peut aussi devenir Y, le récepteur) : entité, sexe « biologique », répartition des verbes par taxonomie (catégorie) et leur répartition dans chaque sous-catégorie, contexte, sphère, rôle (actif, passif).

Ce sont autant de données primaires et variables qui seront étudiées grâce aux données enregistrées dans Hypatia.

3 Les statistiques : préparation à une herméneutique de l'action

L'intérêt majeur d'Hypatia réside dans la manipulation computationnelle des données primaires et variables saisies (ou importées). Les résultats statistiques sont essentiels pour répondre aux problématiques de l'analyse d'une action effectuée par une entité. Il va de soi que toute erreur de formule invaliderait *de facto* l'interprétation (§4).

Je n'entrerai pas dans les détails techniques de calculs⁶⁸ et me limiterai à des exemples de combinai-

⁶⁷ Ces deux dernières variables sont actuellement disponibles dans la version XML-TEI. Toutefois, cette précision peut être apportée dans les commentaires du formulaire de saisie.

⁶⁸ Ils seront développés dans un tutoriel accessible en ligne.

sons pour manipuler les données dont les résultats sont exprimés en pourcentage.

Le développement statistique connaît deux phases : l'une déjà disponible, la seconde en cours de développement, laquelle sera expérimentée pour ma thèse ; elle permettra d'améliorer notablement les performances par rapport à la phase 1. La différence entre les deux phases⁶⁹ réside principalement dans l'ajout de nouvelles variables objectives (notamment le contexte) et des variables subjectives, ainsi que du langage de développement, de la multiplicité des graphiques, du partage des données manipulées et de la possibilité pour un utilisateur de soumettre et de partager d'autres formules.

Dans sa première phase de développement, Hypatia permet d'effectuer certaines statistiques pour une entité (active) X ou pour un sexe « biologique » :

- 1.a. La distribution d'une entité X dans une sphère N et par taxonomie (catégorie A) pour un langage et un ou plusieurs textes appartenant à un corpus. L'objectif est de montrer par ordre croissant dans quelle taxonomie verbale (champ sémantique) l'entité X est plus active, en fonction d'une sphère donnée. Voici quelques exemples de manipulations de données pour une entité X à partir d'une catégorie A :
- 1.b. Catégorie A pour une entité X dans une sphère N comparée à toutes les catégories A par rapport à l'entité X : selon une sphère donnée N, quel est le champ sémantique dans lequel X est la plus active, sans distinction de sphère, par rapport à l'ensemble des catégories sémantiques dans laquelle X est active. Autrement dit : X (taxonomie « agir » A) dans N / (taxonomies) de X.
- 1.c. Catégorie A pour une entité X dans une sphère N comparée à toutes les catégories de toutes les entités X : selon une sphère donnée N, quel est le champ sémantique dans lequel X est la plus active par rapport à l'ensemble des catégories sémantiques dans lesquelles toutes X sont actives pour une sphère N. Autrement dit : X (taxonomie « agir » A) dans N / (taxonomie « agir » A) de total X dans N.
- 1.d. Sous-catégorie A₁, sans distinction de sphère, pour une entité X comparée au total des sous-catégories A₁ par rapport à toutes les entités : sans distinction de sphère, quelle est la sous-catégorie sémantique A₁ dans laquelle X est la plus active comparée à toutes les sous-catégories sémantiques A dans toutes les sphères. Autrement dit : X

(sous-taxonomie A₁ « agir » A) / (sous-taxonomies « agir » A) de total X dans toutes les N.

- 1.e. Sous-catégorie A₁, dans une sphère N, pour une entité X comparée au total des sous-catégories pour toutes les entités X : selon une sphère N, quelle est la sous-catégorie sémantique A₁ dans laquelle X est la plus active comparée à toutes les sous-catégories sémantiques A dans toutes les sphères. Autrement dit : X (sous-taxonomie A₁ « agir » A) dans N / (sous-taxonomies « agir » A) de total X dans N.

Pour la distribution par sexe « biologique », les formules suivent la même logique ; il faut remplacer X par sexe « biologique » (qui inclut la somme de toutes les entités X d'un sexe donné).

Dans la phase 2, de nouveaux calculs s'ajouteront pour mettre en évidence en fonction de champs sémantiques et de sous-catégories sémantiques par ordre croissant :

- Pour une entité X ou pour un sexe « biologique », selon un contexte P dans une sphère N (ou non) en distinguant (ou non) des variables subjectives.
- Pour une entité X vis-à-vis d'une entité Y⁷⁰, selon un contexte P dans une sphère N (ou non) en distinguant (ou non) des variables subjectives.

En résumé, Hypatia montrera des tendances exprimées en pourcentage à partir d'un champ sémantique dans laquelle une entité X est plus active en fonction d'un contexte P et d'une sphère N. Ensuite, chaque sous-catégorie d'un champ sémantique apportera des précisions sur le type d'actions pour une entité, qui seront interprétées en fonction des variables objectives (N et P) et subjectives.

4 Préambule à l'interprétation

Evidemment, les données brutes des statistiques⁷¹ ne peuvent en l'état être considérées, sinon pour servir à une interprétation des relations entre les entités X et Y et leur *agency*. Elles doivent être avant tout comprises comme activateur d'interprétation. A partir de considérations épistémologiques, les statistiques serviront à illustrer mon argumentation, dont la philosophie de l'action est le socle principal.

4.1. Postulats préliminaires à l'interprétation

Une première étape consiste à postuler qu'aucune interprétation n'ait encore été émise ; mon observation sera alors vierge de toute influence issue des études déjà effectuées, à laquelle j'ajoute la méthode de non-compréhension, privilégiant ainsi un des aspects

⁶⁹ Phase 1, calculs à partir de PHP ; phase 2, calculs à partir de R, et l'utilisation du serveur Shiny de R Studio. Une 3^e phase est envisagée à des fins comparatives en fonction des variables subjectives et objectives par rapport à des variables annexes (langage, datation, type de corpus). Je remercie tout particulièrement Daniel Stockholm (maître de conférence en sciences de la vie et de la terre de l'École pratique des hautes études) pour la qualité de sa formation à R, ses conseils et sa disponibilité, ainsi que Jean-Baptiste Camps (École nationale des chartes) pour ses conseils avisés pour la manipulation de données XML-TEI dans R.

⁷⁰ Uniquement possible pour le moment à partir de données enregistrées dans un fichier Hypatia XML-TEI.

⁷¹ La dimension collaborative pourrait largement contribuer à mettre en parallèle les données primaires et variables saisies ou importées dans Hypatia ; elles peuvent être utilisées pour analyser un extrait d'un texte, un corpus, des corpus à des fins comparatives, en fonction de cultures et civilisations diverses contemporaines ou antérieures au(x) texte(s) étudié(s).

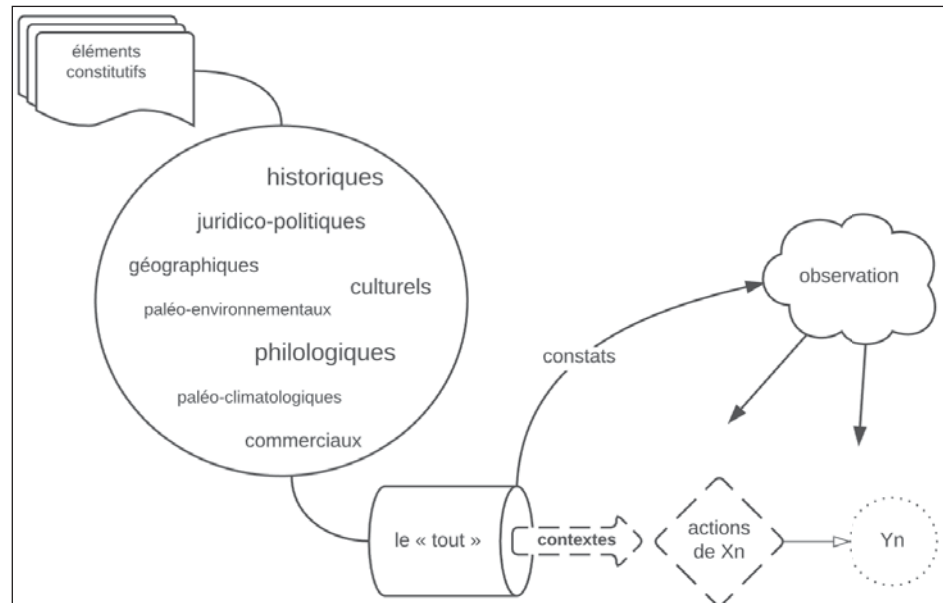


Fig. 6 : Processus d'observation d'une action effectuée par X, à partir du « tout ».

fondamentaux de l'approche schleiermachérienne, qui m'apparaît comme étant la plus raisonnable : « l'herméneutique repose sur le fait de la non-compréhension du discours », favorisant ainsi la volonté de comprendre, même les éléments les plus élémentaires.⁷²

Cette étape initiale permet ainsi d'être au plus proche de la méthode critique de Popper, c'est-à-dire « la méthode de recherche des erreurs et de leur élimination au service de la recherche de la vérité, au service de la vérité⁷³ » — à commencer par l'analyse de mes propres hypothèses —, sans prétendre à aucune certitude.

Cette observation première ne pourra être considérée comme telle qu'en une ébauche préliminaire à une herméneutique de l'action. Elle représente la couche embryonnaire d'un raisonnement méthodologique.

Considérons maintenant la maxime de l'herméneutique selon laquelle « les parties ne peuvent être comprises que si elles sont mises en relation avec le tout auquel elles appartiennent » (Gens 2002 : 61). Ce « tout », je ne le comprends pas comme l'« essentiel », mais plutôt comme une diversité d'éléments constitutifs qui forment une unité. Ces éléments sont historiques, philo-

logiques, juridico-politiques, commerciaux, paléo-environnementaux, paléo-climatologiques, géographiques et culturels — je m'abstiendrai d'approfondir les concepts métaphysiques, ayant été largement discutés, sinon le rôle des divinités dans le cadre de politiques d'expansions territoriales —, formant une unité qui créditera ou non la première observation. Ce « tout » marquera le point de départ de la seconde étape. Ce « tout » se rapporte notamment à l'expérience humaine, en tant qu'individu, en tant que membre actif d'une société, en tant que spectateur, victime ou non, de certains événements paléo-environnementaux et paléo-climatologiques. Ce « tout » a influencé directement ou non tout auteur, quel que soit le genre d'écrits (il en va de même pour l'oralité) dont il est à l'origine.

Ainsi les entités X seront replacées dans leur contexte, qui appartient *de facto* au « tout ». C'est bien en considérant ce « tout » que les interactions entre X et Y pourront être (ré)évaluées (fig. 6).

Partant de cette prémisse, le concept de réfutabilité empirique de Popper serait, de mon point de vue, fort approprié pour accompagner la précédente maxime. Et bien que selon la pensée ricœurienne, le passé soit invérifiable *in situ*, la réfutabilité empirique pourrait permettre d'éliminer ou de conforter certaines hypothèses (interprétations⁷⁴) aujourd'hui admises, tout du moins à titre expérimental, pour le *Cycle de Balu et de 'Anatu* — d'abord parce que les hypothèses sont limi-

72 Berner 1995 : 56. « La compréhension exacte implique que l'on prenne même ce qui est de plus facile comme pouvant détenir la clef de difficultés ultérieures [...] L'opération de l'herméneutique ne doit pas commencer là où la compréhension devient incertaine [...] car d'habitude, lorsque la compréhension devient incertaine, c'est qu'elle a déjà été négligée plus tôt. » (ibid. : 57). Voir également Grondin 1993 : 91. Toutefois, je n'adhère pas pleinement à la dimension du « comprendre » comme finalité, cette dimension me paraissant de loin trop catégorique surtout pour la lecture d'un texte ancien ; tout au plus peut-on expliquer, proposer des significations, interpréter un phénomène. D'ailleurs, Schleiermacher lui-même dit que « pour comprendre, il me faut interpréter » (ibid. : 67) ; comprendre c'est reconstruire (Grondin 1993 : 92). Par la suite, il semble être toutefois moins catégorique en s'orientant vers une herméneutique divinatoire (ibid. : 94). Pour ma part, je m'en tiendrai donc à l'interprétation.

73 Popper 2011 : 23, 69 et ibid. : 77-83, en particulier p. 79 le « rationalisme critique ».

74 Pour conforter la réfutabilité empirique, en particulier pour l'interprétation, cf. Geertz 1973 : 23 : « The famous studies purporting to show that the Oedipus complex was backwards in the Trobriands, sex roles were upside down in Tchambuli and the Pueblo Indians lacked aggression (it is characteristic that they were all negative — “but not in the South”), are, whatever their empirical validity may or may not be, not “scientifically tested and approved” hypotheses. They are interpretations, or misinterpretations, like any others, arrived at in the same way as any others, and as inherently inconclusive as any others, and the attempt to invest them with the authority of physical experimentation is but methodological sleight of hand. »

tées dans le temps (notamment parce que le savoir est conjectural⁷⁵), ensuite parce que nombre d'entre elles ont été élaborées à partir d'un empirisme qui flirte avec les croyances androcentriques judéo-chrétiennes, donc postérieures au *Cycle de Balu et de 'Anatu*⁷⁶; or nous postulons⁷⁷ que le monde divin fait écho au monde des mortels...

4.2. Observation à partir du pouvoir déontique de Searle

Le raisonnement méthodologique comprendra plusieurs strates, dont j'évoquerai maintenant les caractères principaux, qui nourriront une nouvelle interprétation des relations entre les entités — il ne sera pas ici question d'interprétation, à proprement parler, d'un texte en particulier, mais bien d'une introduction aux diverses notions clés.

Dans §1, mon argumentation s'est limitée à expliquer pourquoi et comment le raisonnement de la philosophie de l'action peut contribuer à l'observation, grâce notamment à la sélection de données primaires et variables enregistrées dans Hypatia. Toutefois, pour répondre aux problématiques, la philosophie de l'action seule ne suffit pas et doit être complétée par des approches inhérentes à celle-ci.

Le pouvoir déontique, tel que défini par John Searle⁷⁸, pourrait s'avérer pertinent, partant du principe que ce pouvoir contribue à la création des droits et des obligations entre une entité X et autre(s), et du pouvoir de X sur Y. Ce pouvoir sous-entend un pouvoir collectif, à l'inverse du pouvoir physique. Cependant, jouir d'un pouvoir collectif n'empêche pas l'utilisation d'un pouvoir physique, l'inverse n'étant pas possible.

En considérant KTU 1.3, 2:4b, les actions « agir » avec violence ne signifient pas nécessairement ne pas être habilité à agir ainsi — prenons l'exemple de la seconde guerre mondiale, les États-Unis ont riposté violemment contre les Japonais lesquels avaient tués des milliers d'Américains à Pearl Harbor ; le gouvernement

étasunien était habilité à agir ainsi, porté par le peuple américain.

Dès lors, l'intentionnalité de X entre-t-elle dans le cadre d'un pouvoir collectif, ou d'un pouvoir physique ? Ce pouvoir collectif est-il unanime ou est-il le fait d'un groupe d'individus ? D'autre part, être habilité contribue à une dimension légitime de l'« agir » de X. Les droits octroient le pouvoir d'agir, et les obligations le droit d'« agir » (pro-attitude), alors que l'intentionnalité se rapproche plus de la volonté d'« agir ».

Toutefois, ces critères déontiques doivent être considérés en fonction des occurrences des lexèmes verbaux appartenant à un champ sémantique. En effet, si une action A_1 de X_1 dans P_1 et N_e ⁷⁹ a un nombre d'occurrences limité, alors l'action n'est pas assez pertinente pour se prononcer sur le pouvoir déontique. C'est pourquoi, il faut procéder à une analyse philologique succincte des lexèmes du champ sémantique A auquel appartiennent les actions A_n ⁸⁰, lequel est aussi lié aux variables objectives P et N. Le nombre A_n est-il pertinent en fonction de la somme des actions de X_1 par rapport à X_n ? Le critère de pertinence est relatif à la dimension du corpus et au nombre total d'occurrences selon que l'on considère la somme d'une donnée primaire verbale (ou variable) ou alors la somme des données primaires verbales (ou variables) dans un ou tous les champ(s) sémantique(s). Voici un exemple fictif⁸¹, à partir du verbe à la forme *Gt mħš*, se battre (A_1) et des données chiffrées de Hypatia (§3), qui permettrait de définir par ordre croissant le niveau d'implication de X_n pour ouvrir la réflexion à l'un des pouvoirs déontiques :

- À partir du champ sémantique de destruction A, grâce aux données brutes fournies par Hypatia :
 - Occurrences totales A_1 : 13% dans le champ sémantique de destruction
 - Répartition des 13% A_1 par genre grammatical : suffixé au féminin 70%, au masculin 30%
 - Répartition du genre grammatical A_1 :
 - 70% féminin pour X_n : X_1 80%, X_2 20% (X_1 'Anatu, X_2 Puğatu⁸²)
 - 30% masculin pour X_n : X_1 100% (Balu)
 - Répartition de A_1 par contexte P : 80% bataille, 20% combat singulier ; répartition A_1 par sphère N : 70% N_e , 30% N_i .
 - Répartition de A_1 par genre dans chaque contexte P et sphère N — je ne développerai pas plus pour éviter de complexifier l'exemple.

75 Popper 2011 : 23 : c'est le « savoir scientifique ». Voir aussi Popper 1998 : 146–147.

76 Au sujet de 'Anatu, cf. Amico Wilson 2013 : 179 : « Quite frequently, this study, though, has examined Anat from the perspective of assumptions that cannot be justified, assumptions biased by Western notions of womanhood that are more androcentric than Ugaritic culture may have been. [...] (scholar) assumes all females must be married or at least sexually paired with male god. »

77 Il ne peut être question d'employer le verbe « savoir », car cela répondrait à trois conditions, développées par Popper 2011 : 61 : « premièrement la vérité de ce que j'affirme savoir ; deuxièmement la certitude que j'en ai ; troisièmement, l'existence de raisons suffisantes. » Il est important de considérer ici le caractère de la certitude, notamment parce qu'il serait antinomique à la pensée socratique sur le savoir.

78 Searle 1998 : 133 : « La raison d'être des pouvoirs déontiques est de régler les relations entre les gens. Dans cette catégorie, nous imposons des droits, des responsabilités, des obligations, des devoirs, des privilèges, des habilitations, des sanctions, des autorisations, des permissions, et autres phénomènes déontiques du genre. » Méthodologie initiée dans mon mémoire de master 2.

79 Il existe d'innombrables contextes P_1 à P_n , dont le nombre et la signification varient selon des cultures. Sphère extérieure (N_e), sphère intérieure (N_i).

80 {-n} est égal à la somme de ce qui le précède, par exemple la somme de tous les lexèmes verbaux appartenant au champ sémantique A.

81 Ne disposant pas encore de toutes les données pour analyser mon corpus, il s'agit bien évidemment de données fictives pour illustrer la pertinence des statistiques qui serviront à étayer l'argumentation ultérieure.

82 Entité appartenant à la légende d'Aqatu, attribuée au scribe 'Ilimilku.

- A partir de tous les champs sémantiques :
 - Occurrences totales : 5% A₁
 - La répartition par genre grammatical de l'occurrence *mħş* A₁ ne serait ici pas assez pertinente, il serait préférable de comparer les genres grammaticaux dans le champ sémantique de destruction, idem pour les répartitions par contexte et sphère.

La pertinence dépend aussi de l'objectif recherché. Dans le précédent exemple, je cherche à voir la répartition croissante du féminin et du masculin par occurrence et par champ sémantique en fonction des contextes et des sphères, et ensuite la même répartition, mais avec les entités X_N. Cette répartition, pour chacune des occurrences A_N, contribuerait ainsi à l'observation de chacun des critères déontiques, en m'appuyant sur l'implication et sur les événements antérieurs pour chacune des occurrences verbales. Est-ce que X₁ a le devoir, le pouvoir, l'obligation d'agir en conséquence tant sur Y_N que dans un périmètre géopolitique, considérant aussi la dimension juridique, en particulier la contrainte du sexe « biologique » ?

Je suggère aussi que le pouvoir déontique permettrait d'articuler une argumentation éclairée sur l'*agency*.

4.3. Indéterminisme et intersubjectivité

Cependant, il ne faut pas entrer pour autant dans un schéma de théories prévisibles (tel que le béhaviorisme). En effet, l'*agency* introduit aussi la notion d'indéterminisme (défendue entre autre par Popper 1998 : 337) et du libre arbitre⁸³, aucune action ne serait dans ce cas prévisible. Pourtant, Hypatia pourrait bien mettre en évidence des schémas types⁸⁴ : X effectuerait une action en fonction d'une sphère, d'un contexte, auxquels s'ajoutent les variables subjectives. Bien qu'il serait alors possible de trouver des éléments d'un déterminisme philosophique du Traité de la nature humaine de Hume (trad. A. Leroy, 1946 : 261) « des causes semblables produisent toujours des effets semblables⁸⁵ » — cela reviendrait alors à affirmer que lorsque X est dans un contexte P et une sphère N, *ergo* l'action est

toujours A. Quel serait le degré de certitude⁸⁶ d'une telle affirmation ? Ne serait-ce pas négliger les variables subjectives aux combinaisons plurielles, privant ainsi X d'un libre arbitre ? Ce sont bien ces variables mesurables qui soutiendraient l'hypothèse d'un libre arbitre de X d'agir (action) d'une certaine manière en fonction de variables factuelles objectives. Autrement dit, il est essentiel de considérer les variables subjectives dans l'étude du pouvoir déontique.

La question du libre arbitre, si elle transparait dans le pouvoir déontique, mérite qu'on y consacre un peu de temps.

Bien que je ne considère pas ici l'intention de l'auteur, certains phénomènes intersubjectifs (tels que la propagande) auraient pu être sélectionnés volontairement par l'auteur, dictés peut-être par une tierce personne, dans le cadre d'intrigues dont les entités sont soit passives, soit actives. Peut-on parler d'ailleurs du libre arbitre d'un auteur dans le choix de faire interagir consciemment⁸⁷ un personnage ? Ou bien s'agit-il d'une alternative délibérée influencée par héritage politico-culturel ?

— On peut aussi adopter un raisonnement contre-factuel, dont la spécificité première est de s'interroger sur une issue (ou plusieurs) tout autre que celle choisie par l'auteur : quelle(s) aurai(en)t été la/les conséquence(s) si l'entité animée avait agit autrement ? Evidemment, la réponse n'est pas toujours aisée et est le plus souvent sujette à la subjectivité ; cependant, elle pourrait donner des arguments probants pour apporter des éléments de réponse à la problématique actuelle. —

Quelle est la part d'éléments intersubjectifs dans le texte ? La notion d'intersubjectivité, telle que définie par Yuval Noah Harari (2015 : 145), se prête, me semble-

83 Par opposition au déterminisme, Michon 2011 : 44 : « le déterminisme exclut que l'agent soit la source ultime de l'action » ; tout comme il postule que l'indéterminisme est tout aussi incompatible avec le libre arbitre. Popper 1998 : 345 : « Si le déterminisme est vrai, le monde tout entier est une horloge parfaite dont le fonctionnement sans faille inclut tous les nuages, tous les organismes, tous les animaux et tous les hommes ». Certes, comment parler de libre arbitre de X dans un récit narratif puisque ses actions dépendent de la volonté d'un auteur ? Aussi, faut-il rappeler la problématique de l'*agency* de X à des fins prioritairement ethno-anthropologiques, autrement dit tenter d'évaluer l'influence de l'empirisme sur la fiction, ou l'inverse (en particulier pour la propagande, l'intersubjectivité — voir ci-après). Voir aussi Ricœur 1986 : 192, 194.

84 En particulier grâce à sa dimension collaborative.

85 Traduction par les successeurs de Hume, résumée par Popper 1998 : 337 : « [N]os actions, nos volitions, nos goûts, nos préférences sont psychologiquement « causés » par nos expériences antérieures (les « motifs ») et, au bout du compte, par notre hérité, et notre propre environnement ».

86 Le concept de certitude de certaines théories, en particulier sur le Proche-Orient ancien, sera développé dans ma thèse à partir notamment des travaux de Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Dewey et Karl Popper.

87 Au sujet de la « conscience », William James la réfute au profit de l'empirisme, car la conscience est nourrie d'expériences vécues ou héritées par le « connaître » : « La conscience connote un genre de relation externe, et ne dénote pas une façon d'être spéciale ou un matériau spécial de l'être. La particularité qu'ont nos expériences de ne pas seulement être mais d'être connues — particularité qu'on prétend expliquer en les qualifiant de « conscientes » — s'explique mieux par leur relations les unes aux autres qui sont elles-mêmes des expériences. » (2007a : 48) ; sa réflexion est résumée en six thèses, dont voici les trois premières : « 1. La conscience, telle qu'on l'entend ordinairement, n'existe pas, pas plus que la matière... 2. Ce qui existe et forme la part de vérité que le mot « conscience » recouvre, c'est la susceptibilité que possèdent les parties de l'expérience d'être rapportées ou connues. 3. Cette susceptibilité s'explique par le fait que certaines expériences peuvent mener les unes aux autres par des expériences intermédiaires nettement caractérisées, de telle sorte que les unes se trouvent jouer le rôle de choses connues, les autres celui de sujets connaissants. » (ibid. : 171–172). Cette précision prend tout son sens dès lors qu'il est considéré que ce sont les expériences (vécues ou rapportées) de l'auteur qui aurait impulsé telles ou telles actions, nous permettant ainsi de considérer la « compréhension subjective et historique » développée par Schleiermacher (Berner 1995 : 77) qui « cherche à comprendre le discours à partir de la vie de celui qui discourt, vie étant à prendre dans un sens très vaste. »

t-il, tout autant aux croyances antérieures ou contemporaines à l'auteur :

« Est intersubjectif ce qui existe au sein de communication qui lie la conscience subjective de nombreux individus. Qu'un individu change de croyances ou même meure est sans grande importance. Mais si la plupart des individus du réseau meurent ou changent de croyances, le phénomène intersubjectif changera ou disparaîtra. Les phénomènes intersubjectifs ne sont ni des impostures malveillantes ni des charades insignifiantes. [...] Nombre des moteurs les plus importants de l'histoire sont intersubjectifs : loi, argent, dieux et nations. »

Autrement dit, l'intersubjectivité pourrait être liée à une source commune, dont l'initiateur agit ou non de son libre arbitre, et le libre arbitre *de facto* des entités X serait dicté par une ambition politique, à moins que celui-ci ne soit le témoignage de phénomènes historiques. Parmi ces phénomènes, lesquels serait le fruit de faits empiriques ? Impossible de ne pas rebondir sur la pensée nietzschéenne⁸⁸ pour définir un « fait », dont on pourrait très bien considérer la dimension interprétative pour les textes affiliés à l'histoire⁸⁹. Autrement dit, tout ne relèverait que de l'interprétation d'un ou de plusieurs individus.

4.4. Empirisme

En considérant la dimension empirique, existe-t-il des phénomènes identiques tant dans la littérature que dans les témoignages historiques contemporains ou antérieurs, propres à Ugarit ou à d'autres royaumes ou empires du Proche-Orient ancien⁹⁰ ?

Considérons à nouveau le comportement indéniablement violent qui est commun à 'Anatu et à un souverain dans un contexte conflictuel ; quelle est la trame commune ? Il faut s'orienter entre autres exemples vers les témoignages épistolaires, les annales royales assyriennes ou les Chroniques des dynasties d'Akkad, d'Ur III et de Babylone. Or, pour ces dernières, nous ne pouvons affirmer sans doute possible que le souverain ait agit comme le décrit le scribe⁹¹. Tout au plus pouvons-nous envisager une expérience commune — ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'elle ait été vécue en même temps. Par expérience, il faut comprendre la dimension guerrière du souverain sur un champ de bataille dont l'objectif primaire est indéniablement la victoire ; pour autant, on ne peut évidemment conclure que les motifs de la bataille soient identiques, sinon l'objectif assurément.⁹²

Ainsi, à titre d'exemple, le lexème *mḥš*⁹³, qui décrit l'action de tuer de 'Anatu, est également utilisé en contexte de guerre en akkadien⁹⁴ — *mḥš* appartient au champ sémantique de destruction (par la violence, violence dans un conflit), comme le sont *ḥšb*, *šmt*, *kly*, *mḥš*, *ṭbh*⁹⁵. Dans l'extrait traduit précédemment, le cadre exposé (délibérément ou non) par l'auteur satisfait à l'étude d'une herméneutique de l'action : un combat sur un champ de bataille (contexte), à l'extérieur de la sphère, mené par une entité active X, à l'issue duquel il y a des morts et des prisonniers (Y). Les lexèmes verbaux qui se succèdent, ainsi que les compléments et entités Y, confortent à la fois le cadre et l'objectif d'anéantissement. Les motifs de 'Anatu, s'ils restent obscurs en l'état, pourraient trouver des explications en analysant les raisons qui auraient poussé les entités X dans les témoignages (antérieurs ou contemporains) écrits de civilisations voisines en contexte et sphère comparable, sans s'attacher en premier lieu au sexe « biologique » de chacune des entités X — confortant ainsi l'importance d'un verbe, en particulier l'analyse de son genre grammatical. Viennent alors une série de questions : comment est perçue l'action violente du souverain (X) en pareil événement (du point de vue du scribe, mais aussi grâce aux vestiges exhumés par l'archéologie) ? Son acte est-il légitimé ? Son acte relève-t-il d'un quelconque pouvoir déontique ? Le souverain jouit-il d'un pouvoir collectif ? Quelles sont « ses » relations juridico-politiques avec les villes envahies et les prisonniers (Y) ? Quelles sont les variables subjectives communes avec le passage du texte de fiction ?

Sans pour autant créditer formellement l'hypothèse d'un mimétisme de faits historiques, la frontière entre empirisme et mimétisme pourrait s'avérer étroite, tant le premier stimulerait le second. Aussi serait-il plus prudent de parler de percept d'un mimétisme, surtout pour la distinction de parallèles comportementaux entre deux individus, essentiellement parce qu'aucun des comportements ne peut être vérifié.

L'intérêt à la fois d'un empirisme et d'un mimétisme relatif réside en particulier dans la ressemblance entre des facteurs comportementaux et des états cognitifs qui, replacés dans un contexte historique, peuvent tout aussi bien créditer un degré de légitimité :

Elle a attaché les têtes sur son dos,
elle a ceint les mains à sa taille.

Ce sont autant d'éléments pertinents⁹⁶ (dont quelques uns peuvent être comparés à certaines attestations la-

88 Nietzsche 1978 (1885–1887) : 305 : « pas de faits, seulement des interprétations ».

89 Glassner 2004 : 6 : « History was an activity of the mind. Dipping into the ocean of events, or cutting particular swatches from the fabric of history, the learned writer made selections, manipulated facts, and constructed narratives. »

90 Les commentaires dans Hypatia sont là pour l'indiquer, ainsi que le croisement avec des lexèmes identiques saisis par d'autres utilisateurs, d'où la dimension collaborative de la base de données.

91 *Supra* Glassner.

92 Par exemple, Shalmaneser I A.0.77.10: 56–87 (Grayson 1987 : 183–184), Tukulti-Ninurta I A.0 78 1 iii 30–iv 23 (Grayson

1987 : 235–236).

93 KTU 1.3, 2: 5–6, 19, 23, 29 ; 1.3 3: 46 ; 1.3, 5: 23.

94 *maḥāšu* (CAD M/1, 77) : h) *to give battle, to defeat an enemy* ; g) ainsi qu'une idée forte de destruction, *to smash* ; EA 245: 14 : *ma-ḥa-šu-u₂*.

95 *ḥšb* ('Anatu, KTU 1.3, 2: 6, 20, 24, 30), *šmt* ('Anatu, KTU 1.3, 3: 39), *kly* ('Anatu, KTU 1.3, 3: 46, Ba'lu, KTU 1.2, 4: 27), *mḥš* ('Anatu, 1.3, 3: 38, 41, 43, 45), *šql* (Ba'lu, KTU 1.4, 6: 41), *ṭbh* (Ba'lu, KTU 1.4, 6: 4). Chacune des nuances seront étudiées et comparées en fonction des contextes et des sphères dans une traduction annotée (en cours).

96 Voir notamment la violence d'Utu-Ḥegal, Glassner 2004 : 98, 99 n. 8.

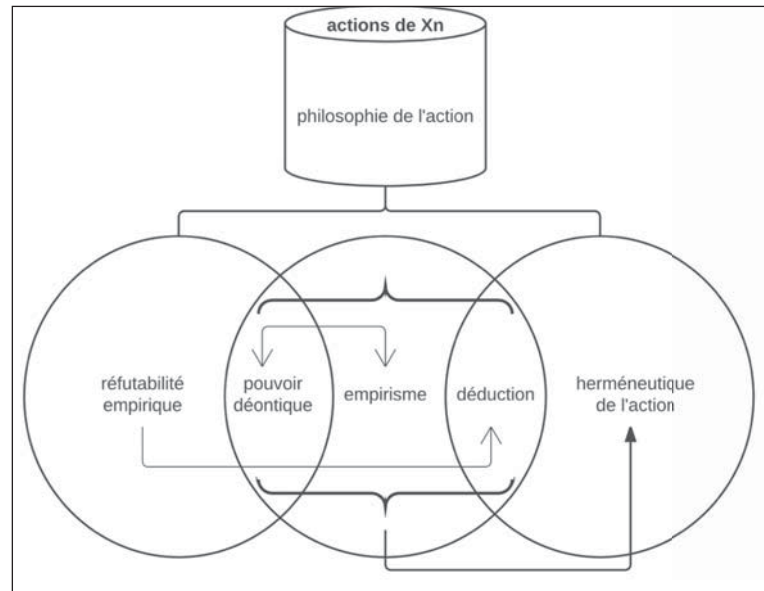


Fig. 7 : De la philosophie de l'action à l'herméneutique de l'action.

pidaires comme la Stèle des Vautours) pour affirmer la légitimité d'un roi, en tout cas celle d'un chef.

On pourrait également envisager des expériences conjonctives ou un empirisme radical⁹⁷. Dans ce cas, il n'est pas impossible que l'auteur⁹⁸ ait développé tout ou partie de son récit en fonction d'une source primitive issue soit :

- d'une expérience personnelle vécue, comme acteur ou spectateur ;
- de la connaissance acquise au cours de sa formation ;
- du témoignage d'une tierce personne ;
- d'un phénomène intersubjectif.

Cette approche expérimentale permettra-t-elle aussi de mettre en évidence des liens entre la littérature narrative et l'histoire ? Permettrait-elle, par exemple, de conforter l'hypothèse avancée par Christine Neal Thomas (2013 : 1) — qui a étudié notamment le concept d'agency dans les textes épistolaires d'Ugarit — : « [N]ot only did royal women have significant roles in these arenas, but the relative positions of royal men were shaped by their relationships to royal women. »

Cette réflexion a mis en évidence de nombreuses interrogations relatives à notre compréhension des actions d'une entité animée, implicitement des motivations du scribe/auteur. Une observation plurielle des actions, en particulier à des fins anthropologiques fa-

vorise une herméneutique de l'action qui est conditionnée par une juxtaposition d'approches philosophiques liées intrinsèquement les unes aux autres, comme l'illustre la **fig. 7**.

La réflexion tout autant que les diverses approches philosophiques ont largement contribué à définir les données primaires, les variables objectives et subjectives. Leurs manipulations computationnelles diverses doivent être considérées dans leur ensemble comme un outil analytique, destiné in fine à observer sous plusieurs angles les relations des entités animées dans les textes narratifs.

La déduction poppérienne⁹⁹, dernière étape du processus préliminaire à l'herméneutique de l'action, permettra de réévaluer certaines hypothèses proposées dans des études antérieures à partir des résultats statistiques. Une première hypothèse issue de la déduction poppérienne, ainsi que les données quantitatives (les statistiques) permettront de développer une l'herméneutique de l'action afin de théoriser l'agency d'une entité animée et légitimer ses actes.

Hypatia permet ainsi de préparer en amont des données quantitatives (donc mesurables) pour étayer une herméneutique de l'action. Une utilisation collaborative favoriserait, grâce aux variables annexes, des analyses comparatives des actions pour une entité animée donnée et sa légitimité, notamment en contexte politique.

97 James 2007a : 58 : « Pour être radical, un empirisme ne doit admettre dans ses constructions aucun élément dont on ne fait directement l'expérience, et n'en exclure aucun élément dont on fait directement l'expérience. »

98 Ricoeur 1986 : 158 : « [...] l'auteur est institué par le texte, qu'il se tient lui-même dans l'espace de signification tracé et inscrit par l'écriture ; le texte est le lieu même où l'auteur advient. »

99 Voir Popper 1998 : 54, 56.

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The divine “image” and “shadow” in iconography, inscriptions and philology

Daniel Bodi

Abstract: The link between the Akkadian and general Semitic terms for “image” *šalmu/šelem* and “shadow” *šillu/šēl* is either considered to be problematic or unproven and has often been contested. The etymology of *šelem* has been something of a philological quibble combined with the issue of identifying the correct initial sibilant. Adducing elements from iconography, philology, history of art and the probable use by ancient sculptors and artists of the common technique of projected shadow “*ombre portée*” in drawing images, this article will suggest how to explain the change from a shadow *šillu/šēl* that is a two-dimensional black outline with no details being only a semi-representational image to a concrete, three-dimensional statue *šalmu/šelem* in the round “*ronde-bosse*.” The article argues that the common Semitic terms for “image” and “shadow” belong to the same semantic field.

Keywords: image, shadow, parasol, Wen-amun, *Šamaš Sippar Tablet*, proverbs, Aḫīqar, Genesis 1:27.

Note: The following comparative Semitic philological data on image and shadow can be found in Eybers 1972: 23–36 and Clines 1974: 19–25. Akk. *šalmu* “image, statue (in the round), relief drawing, shape,” CAD S: 82. Akk. *šillu* “shadow, covering.” Heb. *šelem* “image,” *šēl* “shadow.” God provides *šēl* “shadow, protection” for humans (Pss 91:1; 121:5; Isa 25:4); verb *šālal* “to give shade.” The term “image” appears only in Imperial Aramaic *šalmā* hence it was probably borrowed from Akkadian. In Bib. Aram. one finds *šēlal* “shadow;” in Dan 4:9 where the beasts of the field are in the shadow לל of a tree. In Neh 3:15 *šēlal* “covering, roofing” (the gate) indicates Aramaic influence on post-exilic Hebrew. Eth. *šll* “to be dark.” Ug. *zl* “give shade.” Arab. *zālma* IV “to be dark”; *zalla* II “to shade”; Modern Arab. مظلة [*mizalla*] “umbrella, cover, parachute” *zill* = ظل = “shadow, protection” (with initial *zā*), Wehr 1976³: 582.

1 The 11th century BCE Egyptian Wen-Amun and the shadow of the king of Byblos

A.L. Oppenheim (1947: 7–11) was the first who put the research on the right track concerning the meaning of being in the “king’s protective shadow.” He pointed out the legal implications of this expression and brought into play the famous NA proverb of human subjects being in the shadow of the king. Wen-Amun, an official of the temple of god Amun-Rē at Karnak was sent on a mission to Gubla-Byblos on the Phoenician coast to procure cedar logs from Lebanon for the making of the

ceremonial barge of the god Amun-Rē.¹ Wen-Amun had little money and no clout and his mission suffered from an inadequate support either in purchasing value, credentials, or armed force. Egypt’s power at the close of the XXth and the beginning of the XXIst Dynasty in the 11th century BCE disintegrated as the country split into small states divided by several rulers. Egypt was too weak to command respect abroad, and the conversations of Wen-amun with the various rulers of Phoenician cities and of Cyprus, afford a unique description of the Mediterranean world of that time (Gardiner 1961: 311). The papyrus that W. Golénischeff (1899: 74–102) bought in Cairo, is now in the Moscow Museum. It comes from el-Hibbeh in Middle Egypt.²

Wen-amun travelled to Gubla-Byblos with a statue of his god for whose ceremonial barge he went to fetch timber, a portable statue called “Amun-of-the Road.” He kept it on the boat and then hid it in a tent on the beach.³ He waited for 29 days before he received an audience with the Phoenician prince due to a “miracle.” Zakar-Baal, the prince of Byblos, was making offerings to his gods when a youth, possessed by the god and in a trance, prophesied about the god Amun and his messen-

1 The syncretistic formula Amun-Rē combines the hidden and the visible divine aspects of the god who is occasionally represented as a ram head with a solar disk; Hornung 1986: 78; Assmann 1983.

2 The text in hieroglyphs with a translation and a commentary is available online: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/rectrav1899/0086?sid=c4a41db95ebe42b8fd423e4c1f1b082b>

3 Wilson 1969³: 26 n. 12, “Just as images of gods led the Egyptian armies into battle, so the emissary of the temple had an idol, a ‘traveling Amon,’ to make his mission successful.”

ger waiting in the Byblos harbor. After this convenient supernatural manifestation in favor of the Egyptian envoy Wen-amun, the prince of Byblos accepts to receive him. There finally follow protracted negotiations and haggling. Zakar-Baal of Byblos decides to send the keel, the bow-post, the stern-post and seven planks to Egypt followed with the reception of some payment. The cedar logs were cut but remained another season in the mountains. The delivery of the goods was not coming along promptly. This is when the second important incident in his favor occurs as described in Wen-Amun's report:

"In the third month of summer they dragged them (the cedar logs) to the shore of the sea. The prince came out and stood by them, and he sent to me, saying: 'Come!' Now when I have been brought into his presence, the shadow of his sunshade fell on me. Then Penamun, a butler of his, intervened, saying: 'The shadow of Pharaoh, your lord, has fallen upon you.' And he was angry with him and said: 'Leave him alone'" (Lichtheim 2003: 92).

As in the NA proverb analyzed below the mention of the "shadow" occurs in the context of an audience in the presence of the ruler. The parasol-bearer of the prince Zakar-Baal has an Egyptian name and apparently he helped his compatriot, the unfortunate envoy Wen-amun. His statement provoked the anger of the prince Zakar-Baal who was now under obligation to protect Wen-amun's life and show him favor.

The Egyptian attendant in the service of Zakar-Baal makes a remark about the shadow of the Pharaoh identifying it with the shadow of Zakar-Baal's umbrella that covered Wen-amun. This ironic joke or skillful maneuver saved Wen-amun's life and mission as it stated that Wen-amun now enjoyed Zakar-Baal's shadow i.e., legal protection. One of the constituent elements of the Sea Peoples, the Tjekker⁴, who seem to have been sea pirates were demanding that Zakar-Baal delivers Wen-amun to them so that they may kill him. They had claims against Wen-amun and eleven ships of the Tjekker waited outside of the Byblos harbor to catch him. The prince of Byblos requested that Wen-amun not be killed while in his city of Byblos and on his territory, and to be left unharmed while he is in his port. Wen-amun was under his legal protection, the shadow of his parasol had fallen on him. An OB letter states something similar about a man who entered the shadow of a particular city and no claims could be made against him: *ana ši-li₂ Akšak(?)^[ki] i-te-ir-ba-am mamman la i-ša-si₂-iš-[x]* "he entered into the shadow/protection of the city of Akšak, nobody can make claims against him" (CT 29, 3a: 14, CAD Š: 191). When someone is in the shadow of the king or in the city over which the shadow of the king is spread then that person is enjoying legal protection, no attempt can be made on his life.

Oppenheim explained this incident in light of the Assyrian concept of the protective and beneficial shadow of the king, reflecting the king's social function. Iconographically, this notion was expressed by the royal parasol carried by an attendant over the king. Being *ina šilli ša šarri* "in the shadow of the king" was a status that entitled people in the royal entourage to special privileges.

The notion of the protective and beneficial shadow of the god and of the king is well attested in ancient Near Eastern iconography and texts.

1.1. The parasol-bearer – a *rābišu* "commissioner" in EA 106: 38

The parasol-bearer is found in 14th century BCE Amarna letter 106: 38 in connection with Gubla-Byblos. Rib-Hadda of Byblos begins his letter to the Pharaoh referred to as the "Sun" by stating that "Gubla is [from] ancient times the loyal city of my lord, the Sun of all countries..." and then asks for advice and assistance in respect to the protracted siege of the city of Šumur, by having the Pharaoh send his parasol-bearer: "...may he send Yanḫamu as its commissioner (^{lu2}MAŠKIM=*rābišu*), Yanḫamu the parasol-bearer of the king *mušallil šarri* (LUGAL), my lord. I have heard it reported that he is a wise man and (that) everyone loves him." (ll. 38–40).⁵

In Amarna times the part of the land of Canaan that was under Egypt's rule was divided in two provinces according to N. Na'aman (1981: 183), or maybe three provinces according to W. Helck (1979: 264), or four (so Redford 1984: 26. The issue hinges around the status of Šumur mentioned above in EA 106 and its principal territory of Amurru). The administrators of the Egyptian provinces in Canaan were called *rābišu*. The first was stationed in Gaza and his province covered the Phoenician coast, the second was stationed in Amurru, and the third was in Kumidu, administering an area from Qadeš in southern Syria down to Hazor, over to the Damascene region and into northern Transjordan. Although in EA texts the term *rābišu* also stands for other high officials, in the case of Rib-Hadda of Byblos and with reference to Šumur, it may well refer to the high commissioner.

This Amarna letter shows that the parasol-bearer was not just a simple attendant. The person could be a highly trusted civil servant of the king. It means that what happened to Wen-amun was not just a flippant or irresponsible behavior of the parasol-bearer. It was probably a decisive "*coup de pousse*," a nudge in the right direction where Zakar-Baal's parasol-bearer with an Egyptian name Penamun provided a helping hand for another fellow Egyptian, the stranded Wen-amun.

4 The Tjekker together with the Sheklesh, the Weshesh, the Danaoi (Danaoi of the *Iliad*), the Peleset (who gave their name to Palestine) were part of the Sea Peoples. In the Medinet Habu reliefs the Peleset and the Tjekker have feathered head-dresses and round shields; Gardiner 1961: 284; Redford 1992: 246.

5 Moran 1992: 179. See also n° 289 n. 3 on p. 333. The term *mušallil* is a D-stem participle from *šullulu* "to provide shade."

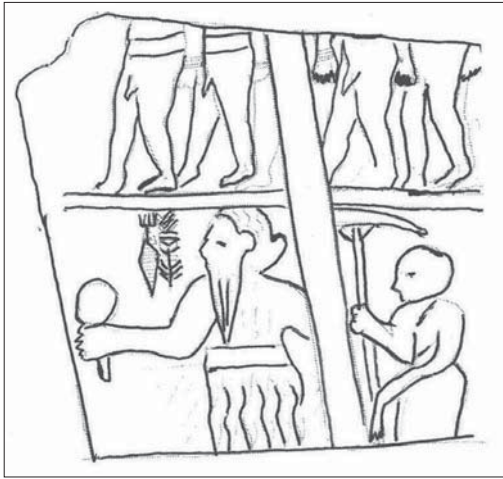


Fig. 1: Detail of Sargon's victory stele (after Nassouhi 1924: 66).

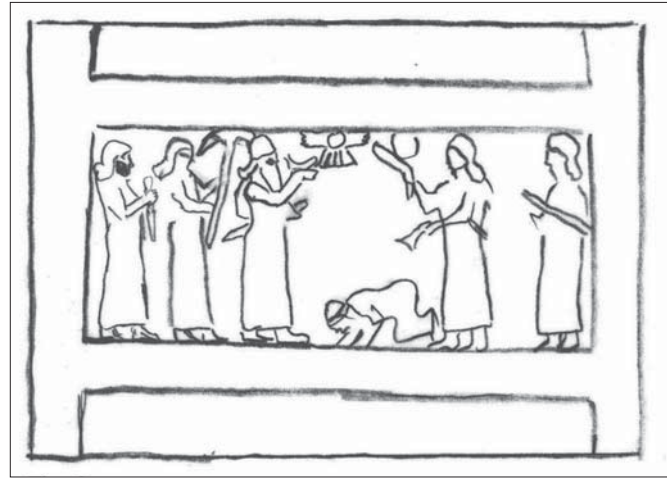


Fig. 2: Detail of the Black Obelisk (after ANEP 120 n° 351).

1.2. The shadow of the god Šamaš protecting Gilgameš

In the Yale OB Gilgameš tablet before going to fight Huwawa, Gilgameš prays to Šamaš asking for protection (OB III v 216–221):

216 Gilgameš was kneeling [*in the presence of*] Šamaš
217 the word he was saying [...]
218 “I am going, O Šamaš, to the place [*of Huwawa,*]
219 let me come through safely, [*keep me*] alive!
220 Bring me back to quay of [*Uruk-Main-Street!*]
221 Place (your) shadow/protection [*over me!*]” *ši-il-[l]*
am šu-ku-u[n e-li?-ia]
(George 2003, vol. 1: 203/205).

In the prayer of Gilgameš the invocation of the shadow of Šamaš stands for the divine protection over his life as he is about to undertake a perilous journey. Šamaš was not only the sun, protector of life, but was also providing legal protection, responsible for the execution of judgment.

From the divine realm the shadow as a metaphor for protection is applied to the king as found in OB Hammurabi Codex where it occurs as an inclusion being mentioned in the Prologue and in the Epilogue. In the Prologue, Hammurabi states that he is “the shade/protection of the land” *šulūl mātim* ii 31, while in the Epilogue he again speaks of his protective shadow over his city: (CH xlvi 46) *ši-li ṭābum ana ālī-ya tariš* “my good shadow/comforting protection is cast over my city” (CAD Š: 191). The terms *šillu* “shade, shadow, covering” and *šullulu* “to roof, to provide shade/protection” are related.⁶

1.3. The parasol on Sargon I victory stele (2334–2279 BCE)

The oldest iconographic representation of the royal parasol is found on Sargon I victory stele fragment, originally from Susa and now in the Louvre Museum (Nassouhi 1924: 66). The scene represents the victory procession, the meaning of this parasol is that the people over whom Sargon I rules live in the protective shadow of the victorious king. The umbrella or parasol is an independent royal symbol carried by an attendant over the king. Behind Sargon I there is a parasol-bearer followed by five identically dressed figures, wearing *kaunakes* (Fig. 1).

1.4. The parasol of King Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE)

The Assyrian King Shalmaneser III is represented on a Black Obelisk from Nimrud, now in the British Museum, with a parasol over his head. Several elements important for our study are present on this relief: The parasol-bearer standing behind the King Shalmaneser and the winged disk in front of the king. According to P. Villard (2001: 98) and D. Parayre (1987: 319–360; 1990: 269–314), the winged-disk, symbol of the god Assur, might not be a local origin. It might have come from Egypt where one finds a winged sun and could have been transmitted to the Assyrians through Mitanni (Van Driel 1969; Mayer-Opificius 1984: 189–236). The winged disk has some bearing on solar Yahwism in Judah. From *ca.* the 8th century BCE, the winged solar disk appears on Hebrew seals connected to the royal house of Judah.⁷ On the Black Obelisk (ANEP 120 n° 351), the

6 The adjective *šullulu* “dark, obscure” occurs in the passage where Esarhaddon boast of having learned the “obscure Sumerian” *kamlu naklu ša Šumeru šullulu Akkadū* “the artfully/cunningly written text in Sumerian, dark/obscure Akkadian.” On this text, see Bodi 2015: 61–112, (65–68): “Knowledge and Wisdom Under the Patronage of an Assyrian King.”

7 Many of these are seals and jar handles from King Hezekiah's reign, together with the inscription *lmlk* (“belonging to the king”). Hezekiah's royal seals feature two downward-pointing wings and six rays emanating from the central sun disk, and some are flanked on either side with the Egyptian ankh symbol of life. Cf. also Mal 4:2: “For you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.” The context here is the day of judgement, when Yahweh will judge the wicked and shelter his faithful followers from harm. The imagery of the Egyptian winged sun disk likely lies behind this pas-



Fig. 3: Detail from a relief of Tiglath-Pileser III (after Reade 1983: 34, fig. 44).

second panel from the top on the first side depicts Shalmaneser under a parasol and a man, usually identified with King Jehu kneeling before him and paying tribute in 841 BCE. In conjunction with the annalistic inscription of his campaign against the Aramean coalition, the parasol over Shalmaneser implies that the Assyrian king is spreading his political and military protection over the land of “Hatti” as the newly conquered territories in the West were conventionally designated (RIMA 3, A.0.102.88) (Fig. 2).

1.5. The parasol of King Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE)

The alabaster relief of King Tiglath-Pileser III from Nimrud (BM 118908, Reade 1983: 34, fig. 44), represents the king in a chariot. On his left stands a chariot rider and behind him stands an attendant who carries a parasol above the king’s head (Fig. 3).

1.6. The parasol of the Persian King Darius I (522–485 BCE)

At Persepolis, the Persian King Darius I (Ghirshman 1963: 186, fig. 233), represented himself on a relief in the same manner following and adopting the long tradition of Mesopotamian kings since the time of Sargon I. It confirms the remarkable continuity of an extremely old ancient Near Eastern royal symbol and iconographic tradition of representing the king under the shadow-providing parasol as the symbol of protection (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Detail from a relief of Darius I (after Ghirshman 1963: 186, fig. 233).

2 The Šamaš Sippar Tablet and the canopy as the functional equivalent of the parasol

This 9th century BCE schist tablet (BM 91000 tablet with a bas-relief and a cuneiform text, BBSt., pl. XCVIII, XCIX), was discovered *in situ*, during a dig. The clay box with the tablet and the two (or three) molds were found under the ground floor at the SE corner of the Šamaš *cella*, room n^o 170 according to the excavator H. Rassam, Layard’s *maître d’œuvre*. The assemblage was excavated in 1881 at Abū Ḥabbah, and proved that site’s identification with ancient Sippar, located 25 km SW from Baghdad. On the sides of the clay coffer is a cuneiform inscription (BM 91004, in NB characters pl. CII) which reads *ša-lam* ^dŠamaš *bēl Sippar*^{ki} *a-šib-bi E-bab-bar-ra* “Image of Šamaš, the lord of Sippar, who dwells in Ebabbara” (King 1912, 2: 120–127). Inside the inscribed earthenware box (BM 91004, BBSt., pl. CI), two clay molds of the tablet’s relief were found (BM 91001 and 91002, BBSt., pl. C), one with a cultic text on its reverse (BM 91002), describing the garment offerings to Šamaš. The two clay molds are in the possession of the British Museum and a third mold was identified in Istanbul.⁸ According to the lengthy study of C. Woods, the box and some of the molds are probably dateable to the reign of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE), three centuries after the stone tablet dating from the time of Nabû-apla-iddi-

sage, as does the notion of the sun god Šamaš as judge; Deutsch 2002: 42–51. 2003; Smith 1990: 29–39. In his solar form Yahweh assumes an aspect of the sun god Šamaš, see Taylor 1993.

⁸ Hormuzd Rassam was negotiating with the Ottoman authorities so maybe he gave it to them or maybe the British Museum subsequently sent it to Istanbul, providing the latter with duplicates.

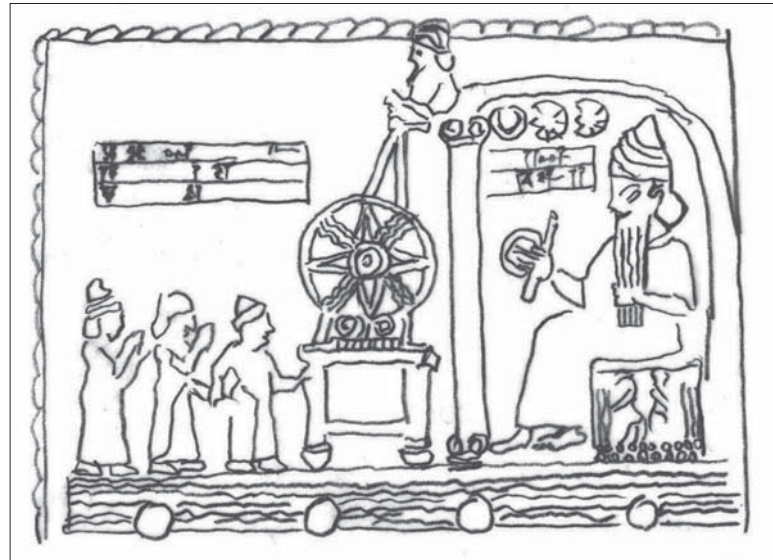


Fig. 5: The relief from the *Šamaš Sippar Tablet* (after Andrae 1930: 42, fig. 30).

na (887–855 BCE).⁹ The entire assemblage is considered to be a *pia fraus* (Powell 1991: 20–30; Seidel 2001: 121–132), serving to provide legitimation for Šamaš sanctuary and its cult and as such has some bearing on King Josiah’s discovery of the Torah scroll in the Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs 22) (Na’aman 2011: 51).

However, two elements can be adduced in support of another historical reconstruction. First, using a photograph of the clay mold (BM 91002) F. Joannès (1991: 84–85), correctly read the royal name in the inscription on the reverse as ^dNA₃-IBILA-MU which corresponds to Nabû-apla-iddina, and not to Nabû-apla-ušur (^dNA₃-IBILA-URU₂) as L.W. King and earlier scholars read. The correctness of Joannès’ reading was confirmed by I. Finkel’s collation at the British Museum. Second, M.-Th. Barrelet who studied the various procedures in the making of Mesopotamian clay reliefs and figurines, explained the two clay molds as equivalents to the negatives of the pre-digital photographs. She characterizes them as “*une empreinte en creux*” (Barrelet 1968: 39b), i.e., a hollow impression or engraving having a form of a mold in burnt clay (terracotta). Building on these two insights, D. Charpin (2002: 189) argues that the *Šamaš Sippar Tablet* is more than just a document of a royal grant, an entitlement *narû* or *kudurru* as Slanski has it.¹⁰ Since the box containing the *Šamaš Sippar Tablet* and two clay molds were buried, it makes more sense to attribute the whole (clay coffer, inscribed tablet and molds) to the 9th century BCE, as a provision made by Nabû-apla-iddina in case that the statue of Šamaš would

be destroyed or carried away again. By digging up the box and its content it would be possible to reproduce once again the divine statue from the *Šamaš Sippar Tablet* relief and the clay hollow molds.

The cuneiform inscription on the tablet recounts the vicissitudes of the Šamaš cult at Sippar from the time of the invasion of the Suteans (considered as belonging to the Aramean tribes) in the 11th century BCE until the full restoration of the cult around 857 BCE. The text is dated in the thirty-first year of Nabû-apla-iddina. As a result of the Sutean disturbances, the statue of the god was destroyed or lost along with many of the physical appurtenances of the cult. The divine statue *šalmu* was in all probability stolen and carried away by the Aramean invaders in keeping with the well-established practice in warfare. The temple rites at Sippar fell into desuetude. Simbar-Šipak (1025–1008 BCE), the first king of the Second Sealand Dynasty, searched unsuccessfully for the statue and other cult items and eventually provided a temporary solution by erecting an object which had been the presence of, or in front of, Šamaš, *ni-ib/p-ḥa ša pān Šamaš ušatrišamma* and reestablishing regular offerings to the god (*sattukkī-šu ukīn*) even in the absence of the statue (BBSt. n^o 36, I 18-20). J.A. Brinkman (1976: 183) has demonstrated that the term *nipḥu* stands for the sun disk, the divine symbol of the god Šamaš, set up for the cult purposes. According to the text, after Nabû-šuma-ušarši, a *šangû* priest of the Ebabbar temple, found a kiln-fired clay mold with the relief of Šamaš on the banks of the Euphrates and brought it to the King Nabû-apla-iddina who was able to re-fashion Šamaš cultic statue and re-instate regular cultic offerings of food, drink and garments. The relief depicts three figures approaching a stool with a sun disc on the other side of which sits Šamaš on a throne. In the *cella* the Šamaš statue is depicted under linen curtains. The term ^{gis}IG AN-e or *dalat šamê* is a canopy with linen curtains. Some texts mention the *kitû ša dalat šamê* “the linen of the canopy” (BM 72810: 14, Nbn 1121: 12

⁹ Woods 2004: 23–103 (esp. 24, 46 and 82). “The *raison-d’être* of the SGT is to establish, under binding contract, the revenues and privileges of the Ebabbar cult as restored by Nabû-apla-iddina. As a legal document, or more precisely, a stipulation of a royal entitlement, the text is rather typical, in regard to content, structure, and phraseology, of the so-called *kudurru* corpus to which it undoubtedly belongs” (p. 40).

¹⁰ Slanski 2002: 95–114 (105–112). “But by seeing the corpus as genre with distinct textual and visual characteristics, it is clear that the Šamaš Tablet is an Entitlement *narû*” (p. 108).

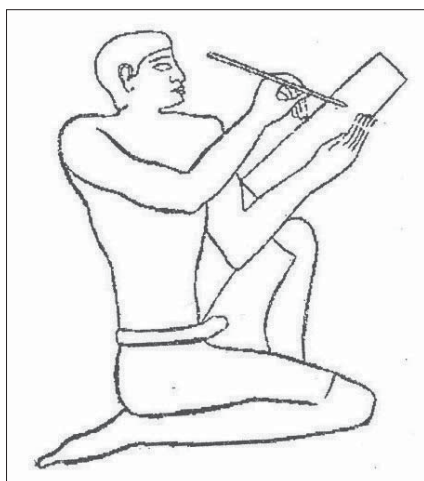


Fig. 6: Drawing of an Egyptian scribe with inverted hands (after Pottier 1937: 266, fig. 3).

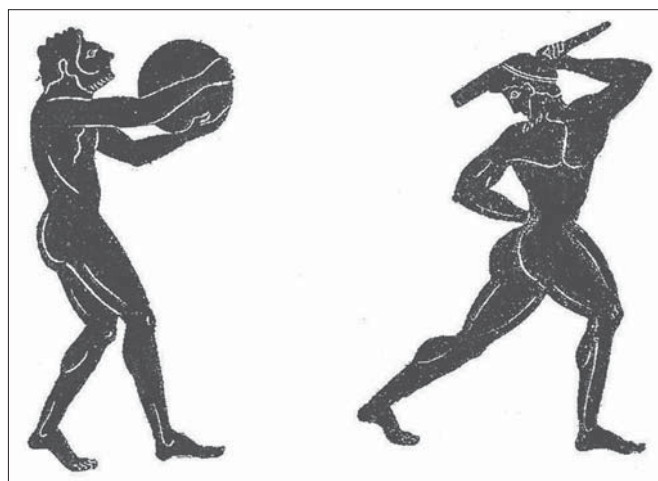


Fig. 7: Drawing of a Discobolus and of Hercules with inversed hands (after Pottier 1937: 274 fig. 1 and 2).

and Camb 415: 9).¹¹ Already in 1930 the archaeologist W. Andrae suggested to see these linen curtains as a sort of baldachin: “Es ist der schon angeführte ‘Baldachin’, unter dem der Sonnengott auf der Tafel aus Sippar thront, an dem die Palmstammstütze wohl eine gebogene schwere Matte hochstützt” (Andrae 1930: 42). We may suggest that the baldachin might be a functional equivalent of the parasol, symbolizing protection that the god Šamaš provides.

For the sake of space here we will quote just a few key lines from the cuneiform inscription (BM 91000 BBSt. 36):

i 8 u_2 - $\dot{h}a$ - li - qu GIŠ.ĤUR^{MES} (The Suteans) “destroyed the GIŠ.ĤUR= $u\dot{s}ur$ tu “drawing, plan, design” (of Ebabbar).

i 16 Simbar-Šipak (1025–1008 BCE) couldn’t find the $\dot{s}alam$ “statue” of Šamaš

i 18 He substituted the Šamaš statue by a sun-disk ($niphu$) as a symbolic equivalent

iii 2 Nabû-apla-iddina (887–855 BCE) $u\dot{s}ur$ $u\dot{s}ur$ ātīm(-GIŠ.ĤUR^{MES}) “is the one who draws the (temple) outlines” ($u\dot{s}ur$ D-stem present 3ms $\dot{v}e\dot{s}e\dot{r}u$)

iii 19 u_2 - $\dot{s}ur$ - ti $\dot{s}al$ - mi - $\dot{s}u_2$ “a drawing of his (Šamaš) statue”

iii 20 $\dot{s}ir$ - pu $\dot{s}a_2$ $\dot{h}a$ - $a\dot{s}$ - bi “a fired piece of clay” ($\dot{h}a\dot{s}abum$ I “to break off”; $\dot{h}a\dot{s}bum$ III “pottery, terracotta, potsherd,” either an engraving/impression [Barrelet] or “a kiln-fired clay mold showing a relief with his [Šamaš] likeness” Lambert); Woods: “a fired clay (impression).”

iii 21 GAR- $\dot{s}u_2$ u si - ma - ti - $\dot{s}u_2$ “of his appearance and attributes”

iii 22 ina e - bi - ri “(was found) across” (the banks of the Euphrates).

The verb $e\dot{s}e\dot{r}u$, related to $u\dot{s}ur$ tu, besides meaning “drawing the lines” also refers to drawing images or mural decorative paintings, to mold figurines using wheat and water, to draw the outline of a royal silhou-

ette in view of creating a bas-relief (Glassner 2012: 32). If the ancient Mesopotamian sculptors used the technique called “*ombre portée*” “projected shadow,” having just a mold was enough to reproduce a figurine model and from it the contour of a larger divine statue. Replicating either a real model or producing a fabricated one as it might have been the case with this *pia fraus*, allowed the king to rebuild a sanctuary, refashion a cult statue and re-establish the accompanying rites providing them with legitimation (Fig. 5).

3 Sumerian origins of the idea of a replica

The entire concept of a form, drawing, image, outline, replica goes back to Sumerian times. One has to bear in mind this particular Mesopotamian *Weltanschauung* in order to understand both the Šamaš relief from Sippar and the Assyrian king being the exact replica of the god. This is expressed with the term *mašālu* “making a replica.”¹² In the 21st century BCE according to Gudea of Lagaš in his project of erecting a sanctuary (Cylinder A vi 21–24; Edzard 1997: 72), the goddess Nisaba the patron of writing, while holding a stylus of shining metal in her hand, was consulting a tablet covered with stars (*dub-mul*) on her knees. One understands that she is consulting a celestial configuration that bears a message concerning the building of the temple. This mode of writing prompted by the constellation of stars requires the intervention of a technician, the god Nindub “the lord of the tablet,” who reproduced the exact replica se_3 - se_3 - g = *mašālu* of Nisaba’s message on a new lapis lazuli tablet in order to make it accessible to humans. “He was engraving all the details of the ground-plan of the House/Temple” (A vi 5). The content of this message designated by the term ($\dot{g}e\dot{s}$ - $\dot{h}ur$) = $u\dot{s}ur$ tu does not refer to a cuneiform sign but to a drawing, a form, a plastic image, or a model (Glassner 2012: 33). Glassner

¹¹ Quillien 2014: 288; Zawadzki 2006; Ornan 2005.

¹² CAD M/1: 355, *mašālu* 4. *muššulu* “to make similar, to copy, to make of equal rank or value” 5. *muššulu* “to be equal, to match.” cf. Hebrew מַשָּׁל [*māšal*] “similitude, parable.”

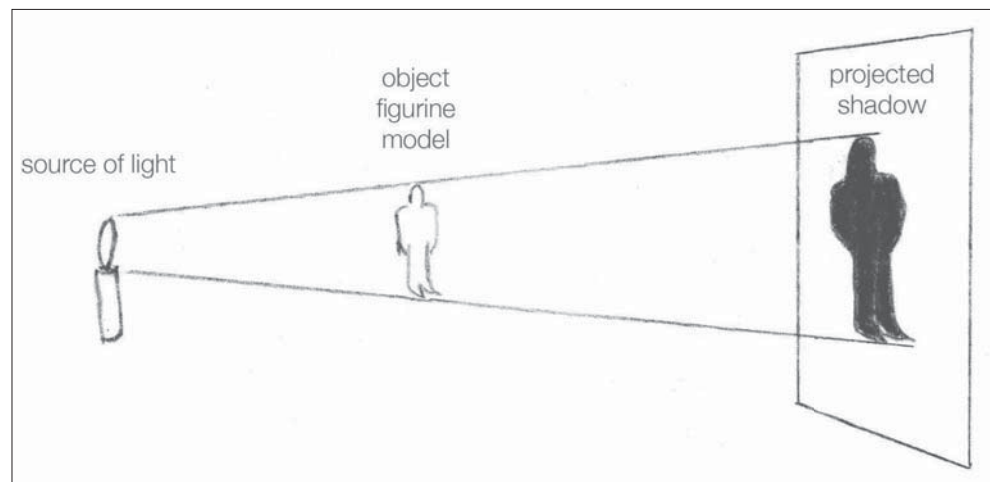


Fig. 8: Illustration of the technique of projected shadow.

points out a paradox: the author of the text avoids using the term (sar) “to write” though Nisaba is the patron goddess of writing! She is not appearing here in her role as a scribe. The process is that of drawing outlines and the two gods are involved in the process are Nisaba and Nin-dub. The ground-plan of the temple is being drawn, maybe using the technique of “*ombre portée*” or projected shadow? The process implies the use of a source of light and the drawing of the contours of a shadow.

When asking for the meaning of his dream about the construction of a temple for the god Ningirsu, Gudea consults his sister Nanše who is the “dream-interpret-er among the gods” and he sets his bed next to the statue of the goddess Gatumdu (A iii 14–15): “You are a broad sunshade (an-du₃-šulūlu), I will seek cool in your shadow.” She is also called ^dlama the “protecting genius” (A iii 21; iv 8).

4 Drawing of bas-reliefs and contours of sculptures using the technique of projected shadow

The archaeologists and art historians G. Perrot and C. Chipiez (1915, vol. 6: 733–734, Figs. 325, 328, 329, 330) and the great specialist of Greek classical art, E. Pottier,¹³ whose career was associated with the Louvre Museum at the end of the 19th and the first part of the 20th century, have argued that the beginning of classical sculptures started with the technique of projected shadow or “*ombre portée*.” They trace it to the most primitive Mycenaean Greek sculptures dating from the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE. These art historians suggested that the use of the same technique can be detected in Egyptian and Assyrian art as well. In this they were followed by contemporary art historians who state that the Egyptian artist started drawing by simply

13 Pottier 1937 (1898): 262–295. On p. 264, Pottier shows drawings of “freakish” Hercules with body correctly outlined but with inverted hands and toes on his feet. These are found on Greek “black pottery” reflecting Oriental influence. The drawing reflects the same anatomical anomaly as the Egyptian scribe on p. 266, implying that the same technique of projected shadow was used in both cases. See our Figs. 6, 7, and 8.

outlining in charcoal the contours of a man’s shadow on a wall (Boulangier 1969: 18). This is confirmed with depictions of Egyptian scribes where the general contour of the body is accurately drawn while the hands with the fingers are inversed, giving the scribe a freakish appearance, indicating that the details were added subsequently on a previously drawn outline. The same process is assumed for the beginning of art in Assyria. The projected or cast shadow was used for the first stage of a full relief carving on a slab of wood or stone in which the relief is carved. In Assyria contours would be chiseled out (Paley 1983: 49–58).

The Sorbonne philosophy professor P.-M. Schuhl,¹⁴ tried to explain Plato’s allegory of the cave with the moving shadows on the inner wall of the cave observed by entrapped human as basically a philosophical transposition of σκιαγραφία, from σκία “shadow” γραφία “writing,” a well-known technique of drawing with the right distribution of light and shadow used by ancient Greek sculptors and potters (Figs. 6, 7, and 8).

5 The Neo-Assyrian proverb SAA 10, 207 and its implications

The above discussion on the image, the shadow as divine and royal protection and the replica has a direct bearing on an Assyrian proverb. Adad-šumu-ušur, the king’s exorcist in a letter dating from 669 BCE writes to Assurbanipal responding to his request whether the day was propitious (l. 16 *ṭāb*) for the visit of two of his children. The exorcist reflects royal ideology with a specific view of the king’s persona as the warranty of legal protective power and transmitter of beneficial, prosperity-bringing influence of king’s shadow on his immediate family, his children and grandchildren and beyond on the subjects of his land.

14 Schuhl 1947: 83–85 (Fig 3); 1952: 58–59. “The daughter of Boutades, a Sikyonian potter at Corinth, who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew in outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by a lamp. Her father, having pressed clay onto this, made a relief that he hardened by exposing it to fire along with the rest of his pottery” (Pliny *Hist.Nat.* 35.151–152).

16 *ta-a-ba a-dan-niš ana e-le-e*
It is (really) very auspicious to go (now)

17 *ina pa-an LUGAL be-li₂-ia*
to the king, my lord.

e.18 LUGAL *be-li₂ am-ru*
The king, my lord is the chosen one

19 *ša DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ šu-u*
of the great gods;

20 GIŠ.MI *ša₂ LUGAL EN-ia₂*
the shadow of the king, my lord,

r.1 *ina UGU gab-bi de-iq*
is pleasant for everything.

2 *šu-nu le-e-lu-u-ni*
let them come up and run around

3 *ina GIŠ.MI DUG₃.GA da-an-qi*
in the sweet and pleasant shadow

4 *ša₂ LUGAL EN-ia₂ li-du-lu*
of the king, my lord.

5 *ne₂-me-el-šu₂-nu LUGAL be-li₂*
May the king my lord, see them prosper,

6 *le-e-mur DUMU-DUMU.MEŠ-šu₂-nu*
and may their grandchildren

7 *ki-i an-ni-im-ma ina pa-an*
in like manner run around in the presence

8 LUGAL *be-li₂-ia li-du-lu*
of the king, my lord.

9 [*š*]a *qa-bu-u-ni am-me-u₂*
The well-known proverb says:

10 [*m*]a-a GIŠ.MI DINGIR *a-me-lu*
“Free man/noble (*amēlu*) is (in) the shadow of god (*šil ili*)”

11 [*u*] GIŠ.MI LU₂ *a-me-le-e*
[and] a slave (*amēlu*) is (in) the shadow of a noble (*amēlu*).

12 [*a*]-*me-lu*: LUGAL *šu-u₂*
The king, he is

13 [*k*]al *mu-uš-šu-li ša₂ DINGIR*
the perfect replica/likeness of the god!¹⁵

Quoting the opinion of F.W. Geers and T. Jacobsen, H. Frankfort points out the juristic implications of the term “shadow” in this proverb. The context deals with the question when it is propitious to give audience and would be related the protective “overshadowing” of a client by the power of his patron in a lawsuit. The lines 12–13 explain that the king represents the protection which God provides—the king is the executor of God’s protection. The nobles (*amēlu*), in their turn, represent the protection which the king extends over his subjects. This function of the nobles is expressed in l. 11 (Frankfort 1978: 406 n. 35).

15 Parpola 1993: n° 207, 166; e.18 *amru* from *amāru* “to see, behold”; r.1 *gabbu* “all”; 3 DUG₃.GA = *tiābu*; 4 *lidūlu*, *duālu* “to run about, serve”, or “to wonder around” “to bustle about” (said of little dogs) or of grandchildren around the king as here, see Oppenheim 1942: 119–133 (p. 130 n. 1); l. 10 *mā* particle introducing direct speech.

Elsewhere as in the *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* the king is said to be “the eternal image of Enlil” *šu-u₂-ma ša-lam* ^dEnlil(BE) *da-ru-u* (Rm 142, F column Y l. 10, Lambert 1957–1958: 50) pointing out to the special, superior status of the king. In the proverbs and texts, one should also take into account the probable presence of the so-called “Babylonian hermeneutics” where scholars manipulate the polyvalence of Sumerograms used for statue, image, and play with the corresponding multiple equivalences in Akkadian.¹⁶

The quoted proverb contains a gradation that reflects the social stratification of the Assyrian society. The king is at the top of the social pyramid, he alone is the perfect replica of the god, the free man is the shadow of god while the slave is the shadow of the free man. Our understanding of the proverb is confirmed by the way it is probably quoted in the Aramaic Aḥiqar proverb n° 15 (l. 92) dating from 403 BCE, and found in Elephantine, Egypt:

[א/ר]מלך למחזה כשמש ויקיר הדרה לדרכי ארקא בניח[ר/א]

“Beautiful is the king to see like Šamaš/sun and precious is his glory to (them that) tread the earth (as) [free] men/nobles (= *bny ḥrn*)” (Porten-Yardeni 1993: 36).¹⁷

The end of the Aramaic proverb should be reconstructed *bnyḥrn* with two words written as a single one referring to *bny ḥrn* “free, noble men.” In l. 216 the same expression “free, noble man” is also written as a single one *brḥrn*. (= *br ḥrn*.) It is compared to JA *bar ḥôrîn* and Syriac *bar ḥîrā* “free-born, freedman, noble.” The existence of Assyrian proverbs comparing the king to Šamaš and mentioning free men confirms that this 5th century BCE Aḥiqar proverb stands in continuation of ancient Assyrian proverbs. The Aramaic proverb expresses the legal status of the king as the shining sun providing protection to the free men or nobles of the land.

The social stratification reflected in the Assyrian and the Aramaic proverbs has a direct bearing on the biblical statement found in the Creation account about humankind (*hā-’ādām*) being created in the image of God. The meaning of (*hā-’ādām*) is inclusive of males and females as found in Gen 1:27, “God created humankind (*hā-’ādām*) in his image (*b^ešalmô*), in the image of God (*b^ešelem* ^l*lōhîm*) he created them, male and female he

16 On “Babylonian Hermeneutics,” see Cavigneaux 1987: 245–255. For complete bibliography on this topic, see Bodi 2010: 177–207. Cf. Sumerograms n° 681 *mi, ge₆; šil₂; ge₆ šalāmu* “dark,” *sag.ge₆ salmāt qaqqadi* “humans, lit. dark-headed ones;” *šil₂ = šillu* “shadow, protection;” n° 469 *giš-mi šillu* “shadow” in SAA 10, 207; ^{is}*ša-šilli* “umbrella”. Akkadian assonance *šalāmu, šalmu* “image, statue” brings to mind corresponding Sumerograms n° 112 NU (used in the bilingual Tell Fekherye inscription 850 BCE, ll. 19 and 20 NU = Aramaic ll. 1, 15 *dmwt* and *šlm* ll. 12, 16); n° 573 ALAN for statue. Akkadian equivalences are providing the connecting link.

17 Word-play between the king compared to the sun or to the god Šamaš. The splendor of the king, as beheld by his subjects, is compared to the brilliance of the sun-god Šamaš. “The short, balanced phrases suggest that the saying is poetic. Similar imagery relating to royal splendor is found in Neo-Assyrian literature”; Lindenberger 1982: 112.

created them.”¹⁸ The novelty of the Hebrew perspective can be perceived in light of the Near Eastern background discussed above. The Hebrew Creation account plays off against the background of this Near Eastern royal ideology giving it a broader application by offering a more egalitarian perspective attributing to both males and females the same royal and noble status of being in the image of God. Similar occurrences of the NA proverb state that the Assyrian king is the image of the god Bēl (*ša-lam* ^d*Bēl-ma*, SAA 10, 228: 18–19), and the image of the god Šamaš (*ša-al-mu ša* ^dUTU; LAS 143). Moreover, the legal punishment concerning those who shed human blood is again related to human beings made in the image of God: “Whoever sheds the blood of human beings (*hā-’ādām*), by humans (*bā’ādām*) shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God (*bēšelem* ^ʔ*tōhīm*) he made humankind (*hā-’ādām*),” (Gen 9:6). The relationship between the punishment and the image of God makes sense only if one grasps the intimate relationship between the image, the shadow and legal protection. Being created in the image of God means being legally protected, implying living in the creator’s shadow.¹⁹

Conclusion

The above discussion pointed out the presence of the particular Mesopotamian *Weltanschauung* in respect to

building or rebuilding sanctuaries and divine statues (Gudea, and *Šamaš Sippar Tablet*). In order to ensure legitimation, the king’s action must rely on a model, where the temple or the divine statue is perceived as a replica or an image. The probable use of the technique of projected shadow would confirm that the terms “image” *šalmu/šelem* and “shadow” *šillu/šēl* belong to the same semantic field. Šamaš as sun, judge, provider of justice and legal protection with its rays and shadow was adopted in iconography and texts from Egypt, to Canaan (EA), Judah (Hezekiah and solar Yahwism), to Mesopotamia (Gilgameš and NA proverbs). Furthermore, the expression of being in the shadow of the god Šamaš (Gilgameš, Pharaoh, Assyrian king) carries with it the idea of legal protection and beneficial influence. This royal ideology is reflected iconographically in the representation of the ruler with his parasol bearer as attested from the time of Sargon I down to Darius I. In the NA proverb only the king is in the image of the god, his subjects live in his protective shadow. The novelty of the Hebrew perspective in the Creation narrative is the attribution of royal and noble status to entire humankind.

Figures: All illustrations drawn by D. Bodi.

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¹⁸ My translation pays attention to the fact that the word “humans, human beings” (*hā-’ādām*) is written with the definite article indicating a generic, collective term. The date of the redaction of the Hebrew account should probably be placed between the time of the NA proverb and the end of the Exile.

¹⁹ On the implications for the biblical Creation story, see Heintz 2015: 245–264, ch. 14: “Ressemblance et représentation divines selon l’A.T. et le monde sémitique ambiant.”

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La cuisse de Baal

Analyse d'un rituel d'intégration

Daniel Bonneterre

Abstract : Comparative observations on the famous stele give clues to a better understanding of the Syrian kingship. Details on the stele establish a genealogical affinity between the king and a major cosmic deity. The outstanding figure of the storm god is depicted with customary attributes, brandishing a spear in one hand and a club in the other hand. A careful look also reveals, in a discrete space, close to the thighs, a small figure standing directly on a platform and peacefully witnessing divine powers in action. This figure cannot be interpreted as anyone other than the local king. His humble position facing the lap of the storm god is not by chance, but stands as a regular inclination, suggesting a divine filiation. Interestingly enough, parallels can be drawn from the well documented Mari Letters.

Keywords : Bronze Age period, comparative studies, Ugarit, storm god, Baal stele of Ugarit, royal statues, symbolism, kingship, divine filiation, Mari letters.

*Pour le mal qu'il avait
machiné contre les dieux
ses enfants : il entourait
de son bras la nuque de
Mummu, lequel s'assit
sur ses genoux, et Apsû
l'embrassa.*¹

Lors de la Rencontre assyriologique de Gent en 2013 Pierre Bordreuil a présenté une analyse détaillée de la *Stèle de Baal au foudre* en montrant ses rapports avec les grands mythes d'Ougarit (*Baal et la Mer* et *Baal et la Mort*)². Le monument expose les grands principes de la mythologie tels qu'ils étaient conçus dans la sphère du clergé et des princes au second millénaire avant notre ère. Si la figure dominante du dieu de l'orage écrase littéralement toute adversité, l'œil averti peut relever, dans un espace réservé, la présence d'un petit personnage debout qui assiste pacifiquement aux manifestations énergiques de la puissance divine : ce personnage ne peut être interprété autrement que comme la figure du roi de la cité. La position humble du roi devant les genoux du dieu n'est, à mon avis, aucunement fortuite. Elle correspond à des critères idéologiques bien établis. Des parallèles significatifs peuvent en effet être dégagés en sollicitant la documentation des Archives de Mari.

Un texte de la correspondance d'Alep³ montre avec netteté combien l'emplacement situé à la hauteur des genoux du dieu, voire sur ses cuisses, constituait une préoccupation certaine. La place était prestigieuse et

même ardemment convoitée par les rois désireux de s'y faire représenter. Afin d'accéder à la logique qui préside à l'organisation spatiale des statues de culte, et y ajouter des éléments de contextualisation, il m'a semblé pertinent de mettre le sujet « *outside the box* » et ainsi suivre les voies ouvertes par des disciplines incontournables, telles que l'anthropologie historique et le comparatisme.

Commençons par la figure du dieu de l'orage. Sa représentation ne se borne pas à une symbolique abstraite, ni à une esthétique lointaine, vidée de toute physiologie. Une large documentation iconographique et textuelle en atteste⁴ : Baal est un dieu puissant que l'on craint et qui est présenté par des traits d'une force physique supérieure⁵. Cette force revêt l'allure d'un homme jeune, à la stature solide, muni d'attributs de virilité⁶. Le dieu se tient droit et mène son action avec une énergie rayonnante. Car, Baal, le « Seigneur de la terre » ou Hadad/Addu⁷, le dieu est un dieu éblouissant et terriblement bruyant. On l'appelle le « Tonnant » (*ḥadādu*)⁸. On l'entend rugir tel un fauve. On le voit dans le ciel à travers ses éclairs⁹. On s'empare sur terre des glaces qu'il a produites¹⁰. Le dieu rayonne (*ba'ālu*) et participe

4 Amiet 1992 ; Cornelius 1994.

5 Green 2003 : 154-173.

6 Collon 1972 ; Green 2003.

7 Le nom d'Hadad/Addu (ou Adda) est l'expression akkadienne du dieu de l'orage, exprimé par le logogramme IM (sum. Iškur), connu aussi sous la forme hourrite de Tešub.

8 CAD H 22a, où « La tempête gronde (*iḥaddud*) comme un flot déferlant » est expliqué par « Adad hurle sans discontinuer du matin au soir ».

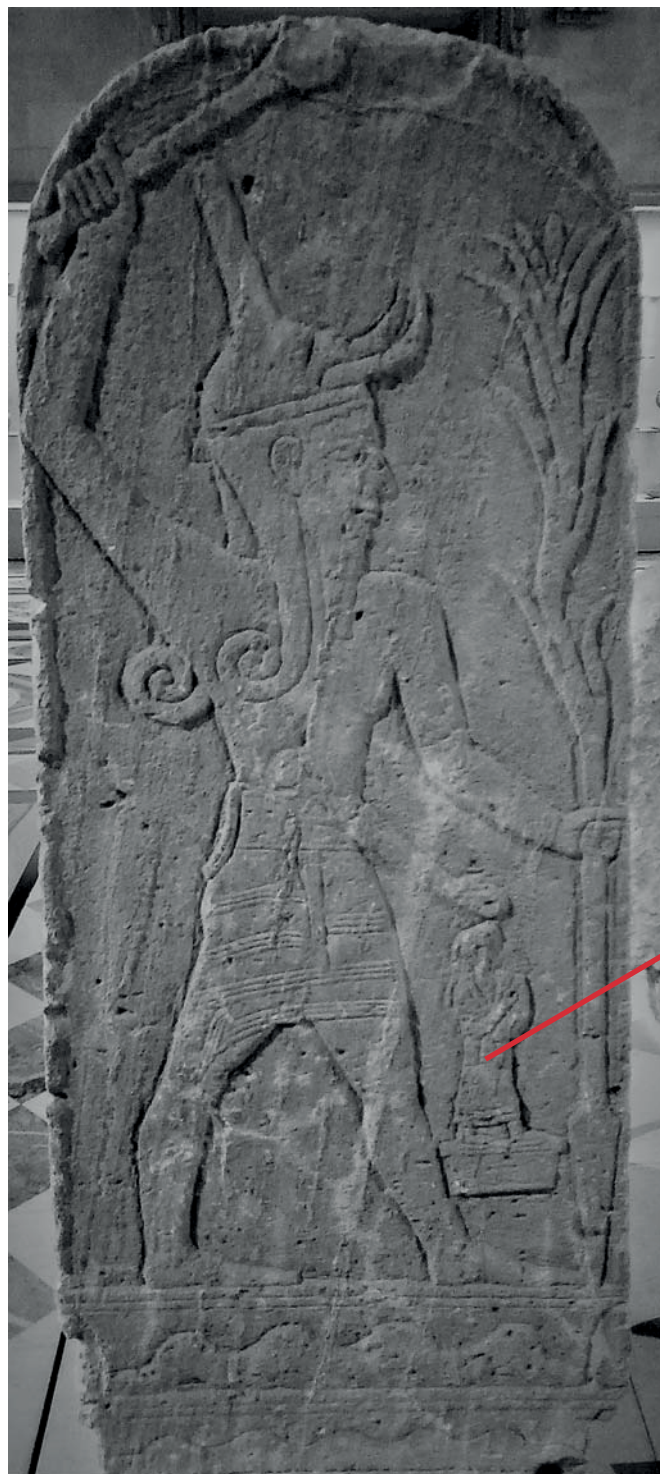
9 Les textes d'Ougarit décrivent le dieu chevauchant les nuages (*rkb 'rpt*), et maîtrisant foudres, nuages et tonnerres, voir Caquot/Sznycer 1974 : 74.

10 Bonneterre 2013.

1 *Enūma eliš* 1, 52-54, trad. Bottéro dans Bottéro/Kramer 1989 : 606.

2 Bordreuil (à paraître).

3 Voir plus bas, l'apport des textes.



La place
réservée au roi

Stèle de Baal au foudre, Ra's Šamra, Musée du Louvre
AO15775 (photo : D. Bonneterre).

par ses pluies à la fécondité et la fertilité des terres et des troupeaux. Sa puissance est extrême, c'est pourquoi le dieu s'impose comme l'exécuteur de la violence et comme une entité protectrice de la royauté.

Le culte du dieu de l'orage a connu dans le monde syrien antique une grande diffusion. On consultait le dieu dans ses grands sanctuaires : à Alep, Alalakh, Ugarit, Qatna, Mari, Terqa, Kallassu, et dans plusieurs autres localités qui constituaient de grands pôles d'attraction¹¹ en raison de ses manifestations oraculaires et de la protection qu'il accordait aux réfugiés.

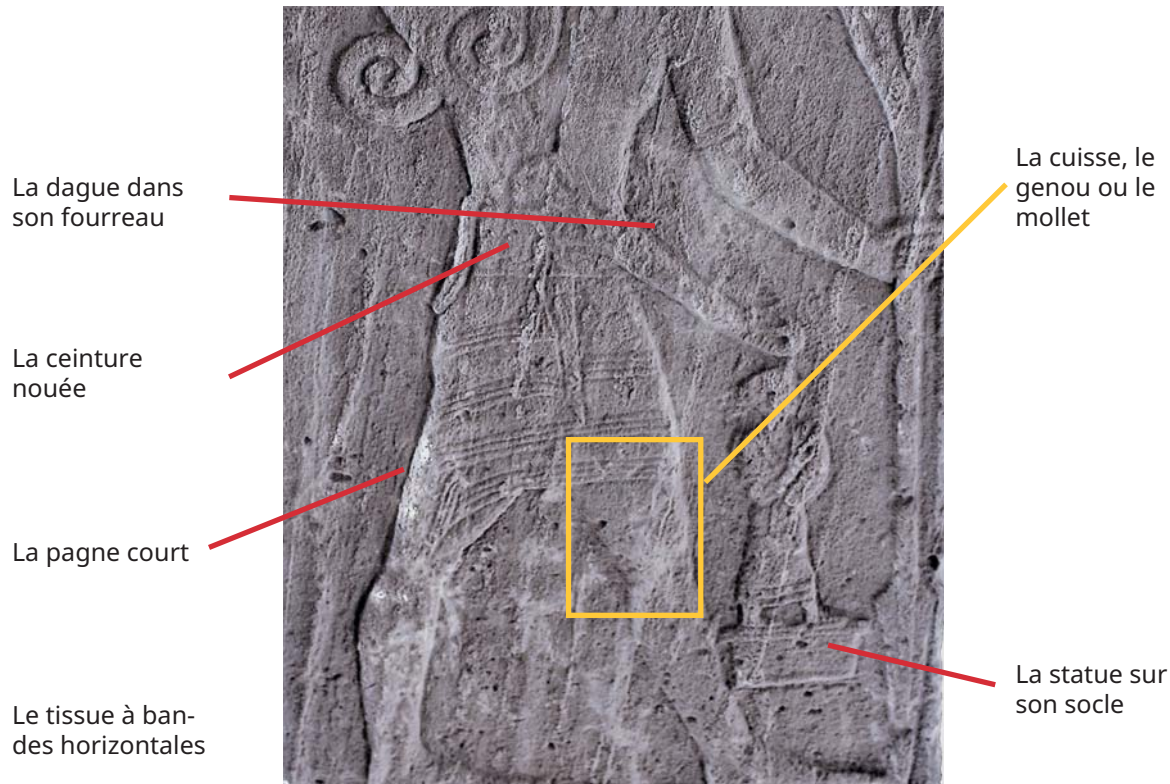
¹¹ Durand 2007 : 204 ; id. 2008 : 205 ; Schwemer 2008a : 155.

1 L'apport de l'iconographie : la stèle de Baal au foudre

Sans reprendre l'analyse de la stèle qui a été largement discutée¹², il est utile de rappeler que, pour une majorité des spécialistes et pour son découvreur, la stèle appartient à l'époque amorrite¹³. Il n'y a pas lieu de redou-

¹² Schaeffer 1933 et id. 1949, Bordreuil 1991 et id. 2003.

¹³ Aux environs du XVII^e siècle av. J.-C., donc à une époque pratiquement contemporaine du roi Zimri-Lîm de Mari. La stratigraphie, au moment de la découverte en 1934, était encore imprécise, mais le rapport de fouille de Schaeffer (1949 : 122) situe la stèle entre 1900 et 1750 av. J.-C.



Détail de la stèle de Baal, Ra's Šamra, Musée du Louvre AO15775 (photo : D. Bonnetterre).

ter ici l'anachronisme ni l'excursion en la situant dans le champ syro-mésopotamien du XVII^e siècle. Même si l'apparence égyptisante de la stèle peut faire illusion, elle s'inscrit dans une tradition de l'art syrien, comme le montre un large répertoire de sceaux cylindres d'Ougarit et d'Alalah¹⁴. Mais ce qui retient notre intérêt, c'est que le sculpteur y a mêlé réalisme et allégorie.

Sur la stèle le dieu de l'orage est représenté tel un guerrier, dans une attitude de domination. Debout, il exprime son aisance corporelle : le corps en extension, l'équilibre assurée sur ses deux jambes, avançant vers la droite, la tête haute, brandissant une masse d'armes et pointant vers le sol une lance qui se transforme en un rameau de feuillage. Il porte des attributs notables : une coiffe élaborée (une calotte conique prolongée vers le haut)¹⁵ ainsi que son costume sont d'un faste délicat, comme ceux des guerriers en parade. Il est vêtu d'un pagne court dont on devine la couleur multicolore, noué sur la hanche par une fine ceinture. De grande importance est cette ceinture souple, ou plutôt ce cordonnet dont le nœud retombe devant et s'achève par un gland à franges¹⁶. Le tissu du pagne est représenté avec minutie par quatre bandes horizontales, elles-mêmes triplées de façon à suggérer la qualité du textile. Baal porte à la taille une dague dans son fourreau. Ses pieds

¹⁴ Collon 1972 ; Amiet 1992 ; Green 2003 : 154–165 ; Schwemer 2008.

¹⁵ La coiffe est ornée de cornes débordantes tendues vers la droite, tandis que, sur la partie inférieure du casque, de longues mèches tombent en deux volutes sur les épaules en arrière.

¹⁶ Sur la symbolique des ceintures et des vêtements à franges, voir Maertens 1978 : 46–50.

nus reposent sur deux socles superposés décorés dans un premier registre, d'une ondulation en relief représentant quatre montagnes, sans doute les quatre coins du monde, et décoré plus bas d'une seconde ondulation, cette fois incisée en six vagues suggérant la mer.

1.1. La figure du roi et son infériorité

Tel qu'indiqué plus haut, dans l'espace délimité entre le corps du dieu et la lance, et en dessous du poignard, on aperçoit le roi d'Ougarit qui se trouve en quelque sorte à l'ombre du dieu de la cité. Le sculpteur, soucieux de conserver la prééminence de la divinité, lui a réservé un espace modeste aux côtés du dieu. Parce qu'il devait s'inspirer d'un modèle iconographique conventionnel, le sculpteur a représenté le roi sur un socle, pour être en vue. Le roi se tient dans une attitude figée, tel qu'il convient pour une figurine¹⁷. Vêtu d'un vêtement sacerdotal, ce roi-prêtre offre l'image d'une grande sérénité en assistant à la manifestation rayonnante du dieu de l'orage.

Le lieutenant du dieu, incarnation fonctionnelle du pouvoir, est confiné à l'intérieur d'un espace significatif (entre l'aine et le mollet). Physiquement sous la domination de Baal, le roi tient la main levée comme pour prêter un serment. L'épée qui s'appuie sur sa tête tient en respect le souverain. Le jeu des armes, comme instruments de pouvoir, mais aussi la corporalité du dieu (comme si le roi « sortait de la cuisse » de Baal), constituent me semble-t-il, l'un des moyens expressifs

¹⁷ Ces postures obéissent non seulement à des besoins politico-religieux semblables, mais également à des canons artistiques communs. Barrelet 1971 : 29.

privilegiés pour évoquer une filiation prestigieuse ainsi qu'une continuité d'ordre dynastique.

Tout est soigneusement planifié pour exprimer, sur deux plans, la complémentarité des entités célestes et des réalités terrestres. D'un côté, un dieu en mouvement qui déploie une énergie pour mettre en correspondance le ciel, la mer et la terre ; et de l'autre, et à l'opposé, l'image d'un roi respectueux et vigilant. Plusieurs attributs divins et emblèmes sacrés se retrouvent associés pour souligner, dans leurs dimensions cosmiques et dans leurs implications politico-religieuses, les prérogatives de Baal, singulièrement la fonction du combat. En dépit de la violence exprimée, la stèle reflète l'harmonie désirée, celle de la primauté du sacré sur le politique.

2 L'apport des textes

2.1. De la pratique rituelle au récit

Dans les archives de Mari, le dossier de la correspondance d'Alep montre combien les rois sont appelés à entrer en liaison avec ce dieu garant de l'exercice du pouvoir¹⁸. Les lettres envoyées depuis les sanctuaires du dieu Adad rapportent les commandements et injonctions adressés aux souverains, notamment à Zimrî-Lîm. Certains documents évoquent son pèlerinage à Alep, d'autres documentent la vénération pour le dieu de l'orage¹⁹. Lors de son sacre à Terqa, le roi de Mari avait reçu du dieu les armes sacrées qui lui avaient assuré la victoire²⁰. Ces armes lui transféraient une redoutable puissance cosmique. Le dieu l'avait aidé dans la reconquête de son trône ; Zimrî-Lîm en retour lui offrait, comme marque de dévotion, des sacrifices, et une superbe statuette. Le don de cet ex-voto était estimé suffisamment important pour être retenu dans les annales et que Zimrî-Lîm lui consacre une de ses années de règne²¹.

Avant de nous interroger sur l'emplacement de la statue, il est utile d'évoquer sa fabrication (puisque tout vestige a disparu). Elle est, semble-t-il, documentée par des textes économiques qui précisent les quantités de métal²². Le cuivre constituait l'essentiel tandis que l'argent était appliqué sur le visage et les mains. L'ensemble laisse penser qu'il s'agissait d'une figurine de taille réduite pouvant être placée (et déplacée) sur les genoux de la divinité²³.

Une lettre de Mari²⁴ évoque justement la question de la place de la statue du roi à l'intérieur du temple. La lettre, écrite par un haut fonctionnaire en poste à Alep : Warad-ilišu, rapporte les commandements donnés par Zimrî-Lîm : la statue doit le représenter, et être

déposée sur « les genoux » d'Addad (sur la statue assise (*ašābu*) du dieu)²⁵. Mais, pour Yarîm-Lîm le roi d'Alep, il n'est pas question de remplacer la statue du dieu Šamaš qui s'y trouve déjà. On s'interroge s'il faut placer la statuette de Zimrî-Lîm face au dieu ou bien à l'opposé du dieu, sur le seuil ou encore sur le socle.

Le document est instructif en ce qu'il informe de la disposition des statues se trouvant tantôt à l'intérieur du sanctuaire, tantôt sur le seuil. Même sans disposer de tous les détails, on comprend que la mise en place des statues fait l'objet d'âpres discussions. Un premier niveau de questionnement concerne la prééminence des statues royales aux côtés des dieux, une situation qui n'est pas sans rappeler la place réservée à la table du roi où chacun des convives désire se trouver au plus proche du roi, et si possible face à lui²⁶. Un second niveau d'investigation situe la hiérarchie et la perspective cosmique des représentations en place : dieu de l'orage, dieu solaire et divinisation du roi. Faute de temps, laissons de côté ces dimensions qui excéderaient le cadre de cette étude, et concentrons-nous sur les détails les plus significatifs.

2.2. L'argumentation autour de l'installation de la statue : du récit à la pratique rituelle

L'argumentation du haut fonctionnaire mérite notre attention. Elle nous fait savoir qu'un sacrifice pour le roi a eu lieu et que les devins ont pris lecture des entrailles. Tout est parfait. La statue du roi Zimrî-Lîm pourrait être mise en place sur les genoux du dieu d'Alep, si seulement cette place n'était pas déjà occupée. Déplacer la statue de Šamaš, voilà qui est impensable. La statue de Šamaš, de plus, semble être d'une valeur (en métal précieux) supérieure à celle envoyée par Zimrî-Lîm (confectionnée avec du cuivre et peu d'argent). Mais pour établir sa priorité, Zimrî-Lîm fait valoir un argument de taille : c'est en qualité de familier du dieu qu'il souhaite recouvrer sa place sur le bas-ventre de la divinité :

« Moi, dit-il, j'ai grandi sur les cuisses d'Addu (*ina paḫal* «IM *anāku arbī*)²⁷. » Soucieux de défendre les intérêts de son maître, l'émissaire mariote, reprend les paroles du roi et met l'emphase sur le pronom personnel *anāku* ; laissant peut-être entendre que le roi du Yamḫad, Yarîm-Lîm, lui, ne peut se prévaloir d'une telle origine. Le diplomate passera sous silence les qualités de la statue envoyée et le rang du roi qui, de toute façon, ne peut être qu'inférieur à celui du dieu solaire.

Un autre document de Mari fait connaître de façon parallèle et complémentaire les liens qui unissaient Zimrî-Lîm au dieu de l'orage ; il s'agit d'une lettre²⁸

18 Durand 2002.

19 Durand 2000 : 83–84 ; 2002 : 134–135.

20 A.1258+ dans Charpin 1992 ; Durand 1997 : 103–110 ; Durand 2002 : 135.

21 « L'année où Zimrî-Lîm a offert sa statue au dieu Addu d'Alep », voir Charpin/Ziegler 2003 : 258.

22 Voir Dossin 1952, rééd. id. 1983 : 304.

23 On peut ici évoquer l'« adorant de Larsa », Musée du Louvre AO 15704.

24 M 7161 dans Durand 2002 : 43–46.

25 Le contexte ne laisse pas de doute sur la position assise du dieu, voir Barrelet 1974 : 51 ; CAD A/1, 386.

26 Lafont 1985 : 166–169.

27 En découle une sorte de filiation réelle ou fictive. Le dieu de l'orage (honoré en plusieurs lieux) est celui qui a (re-) placé Zimrî-Lîm sur son trône.

28 Lettre écrite par Nûr-Sîn (A1121+A2731) dans Dossin 1952 ; Dossin 1983 : 304–305 ; Lafont 1984 ; Durand 2000 : 130–133 ;

rapportant l'oracle du dieu de l'orage dans un de ses grands sanctuaires, Kallassu. Le dieu de l'orage déclare ceci : « Ne suis-je pas Addu le seigneur de Kallassu qui l'ai élevé dans mon giron (*ša ina birît paḥalliya urab-bûšuma*) et qui l'ai fait revenir sur le trône de la maison de son père ?²⁹ ».

On retrouve sur les deux documents des paroles identiques : le roi a grandi sur les *paḥallum* du dieu de l'orage. Cette expression pose des problèmes d'interprétation plus grands que sa traduction. S'agit-il d'une expression imagée ou au contraire s'agit-il d'un rite particulier impliquant les parties sexuelles du dieu ?³⁰. Le terme de *paḥallum* est tantôt traduit par giron ou cuisses³¹, tantôt par testicules³². Force est d'avouer que l'étymologie n'est d'un secours que bien relatif. Reconnaissons toutefois que le vocabulaire des parties du corps et celui des substances qu'il produit, que ce soit dans les langues sémitiques³³ ou en français³⁴ est d'une grande ambiguïté. Mais l'essentiel, me semble-t-il, concerne ce qui entoure le rite d'agrégation.

L'image d'un roi qui dit avoir grandi dans le « giron » (*ina burki*) du dieu est courante, mais aucunement claire³⁵. Il est connu qu'en akkadien le corps se présente comme une métaphore complète³⁶.

3 L'apport de l'ethnologie et du comparatisme

3.1. Les usages politiques du corps

Les Anciens voyaient la sexualité, la conception et la naissance comme des actes humains, mais également comme le résultat d'une volonté divine. Les dieux mécontents pouvaient provoquer la stérilité, la naissance anormale, les malformations ou pire, faire mourir la mère en couche. Les dieux satisfaits pouvaient au contraire par leur regard bienveillant faire naître un bel enfant, fort et intelligent. Tandis que la naissance et son attente étaient tout entourées de crainte et de prières pour appeler la fertilité parfaite, le crédit accordé à la divinité était plus considérable. Afin

Durand 2002 : 137–140 ; Green 2003 : 171–172.

29 Le texte est repris dans FM 7, 39 (Durand 2002 : 139) avec une traduction différente : « (moi) qui t'ai élevé sur le haut de mes cuisses... ».

30 De toute évidence le verbe grandir (*rabû*) ne peut pas se comprendre au sens littéral ; grandir, c'est se développer, c'est aussi s'élever et s'ennoblir, voir CAD R, 36–47, (particulièrement par. 3', p. 40 pour Mari).

31 CAD P, 20.

32 Durand 2002 : 136–137, à partir du syriaque et de plusieurs dialectes sud-arabiques.

33 Dhorme 1963 : 157 ; Durand 2006.

34 Pour l'origine du mot « testicules », comme métaphore du lat. *testis*, témoin, voir Rey 1992 : 2110a. Quant au mot « couille », il est aussi dérivé d'une métaphore désignant le sac de cuir, voir Rey 1992 : 510. Il est intéressant de rappeler que le mot « giron » renvoie originellement à un pan du vêtement allant de la ceinture au genou, qui métaphoriquement a fini par désigner l'entre-jambes, voir Rey 1992 : 890. De la même manière, la langue anglaise entend le terme « lap » de façon euphémistique comme giron, genoux, sein et pan du vêtement.

35 Voir les nombreuses références citées dans CAD B, 256b.

36 Dhorme 1963 ; Cassin 1986 ; Livingstone 2007 : 101–103 ; Steiner 2012.

de contrer sortilèges, malédictions et mauvais œil, il était judicieux de savoir lire les signes envoyés par les dieux aux hommes³⁷, mais aussi de quérir leur protection, et peut-être même, à des moments précis, s'asseoir au plus proche de leurs parties intimes, sachant leurs pouvoirs magiques. On sait combien les souverains revendiquent leur filiation avec les dieux. Leur corps physique, comme souvent, n'est pas seulement engendré par un père et une mère mais aussi par d'autres entités³⁸. Car, avant même sa naissance, le souverain concentre sur lui le regard porteur de vie. Il est l'objet du regard des dieux, celui que les divinités ont choisi dans le sein de leur mère, il est la semence éternelle de royauté³⁹. Leur conception et leur naissance sont, comme dans de multiples sociétés, à la fois naturelles et surnaturelles⁴⁰.

3.2. Les genoux et leur dimension symbolique

Retournons vers la question des genoux. Dans le système de la symbolique corporelle de l'Antiquité, les genoux (et les cuisses) occupaient une place vitale, une place qui se prêtait à un large champ d'expression. Leur sens métaphorique, souvent ambigu, désignait le siège d'un mystérieux liquide de vie⁴¹. Ils indiquaient par euphémisme les parties génitales, parce qu'ils étaient considérés comme source de force, et même de vitalité sexuelle sublimée⁴².

Les langues indo-européennes ne font pas mystère de ce fait. Le mot « genou », altération du latin classique *geniculum* et *genu*, est à rapprocher de la racine indo-européenne ^oGNE, naître, « selon l'usage ancien de se faire reconnaître sur les genoux de son père⁴³. » En grec, comme en français (les gens), le *génos* désigne le groupe familial (lat. *gens*) d'un ancêtre commun réel ou mythique⁴⁴. Il désigne une catégorie quelconque, classe, groupe ou famille et a fini par distinguer le sexe, le genre (en anglais : *the gender*).

L'imposition d'une identité (don du nom, circonscription, etc.) qui consistait à placer l'enfant sur les genoux d'un parrain était en Grèce ancienne, à Rome, et dans le monde de la Bible, une pratique que l'on pourrait définir comme un rite d'agrégation. La paternité se marquait en plaçant le nouveau-né sur les genoux

37 Sur les naissances anormales voir Stol 2000 ; Walls 2007 ; Leichty 1970 ; Rochberg 2004 : 87–92.

38 Stol 2000 : 147–170 ; Frahm 2010.

39 Les rois sont souvent comparés à Marduk dans l'*Enūma eliš* 1, 82–92, voir aussi Lambert 1971.

40 Héritier-Augé 1985 ; Arnaud 1996 : 127.

41 Sur ce point, les observations consignées par Plinius l'Ancien sont très précieuses : « Selon les préceptes des nations, les genoux revêtent une certaine dimension religieuse. Les suppliants les touchent, tendent leurs mains vers eux, les adorent comme des autels, peut-être parce qu'il s'y trouve un principe vital (c'est moi qui souligne). En effet, dans l'articulation des deux genoux, il y a sur la partie antérieure, à droite et à gauche, une cavité double en forme de bouche ; si elle est transpercée, le souffle vital s'en écoule comme il s'écoulerait de la gorge tranchée. » Plin., *N.H.* 11, 103.

42 Bradley 1970 ; Onians 1999 : 217.

43 Sur les cuisses/genoux √ du grec γένυ, voir Rey 1992 : 881.

44 Benveniste 1969 : 314–317.

de son père, ou de son parent proche. Ulysse, peu de temps après sa naissance, fut placé sur les genoux de son grand-père par sa mère⁴⁵. Le dieu Dionysos connaît une gestation semblable, puisque Zeus arrache l'enfant de sa mère pour le coudre à l'intérieur de sa propre cuisse. À Rome on attribue une vertu analogue aux genoux du dieu capitolin, qui sont supposés participer de la construction identitaire⁴⁶.

Dans le monde de la Bible, le récit de la Genèse documente également cette pratique d'intégration au clan familial : Rachel qui n'a pas donné d'enfant à Jacob lui offre les services de sa servante pour qu'elle enfante à sa place (litt. sur ses genoux)⁴⁷. Au terme de sa vie, Joseph convoque ses frères, ses arrière-petits-enfants qui sont « nés » sur les genoux⁴⁸. Pareillement, Abraham sur ses vieux jours convoque son serviteur et régisseur de son domaine et lui fait prêter un serment solennel en lui demandant de placer sa main sous sa cuisse, espace et réservoir de fécondité⁴⁹.

En Mésopotamie, quantité d'images et de comparaisons évoquent cette force qui réside dans le liquide des jointures⁵⁰. Pour les lettrés assyro-babyloniens, les genoux d'un dieu ont même des propriétés égales à celle du cèdre (*erēnu birkāšu*) : l'élévation, la résistance et surtout une résine qui dégage une odeur plaisante⁵¹. Genoux, et cuisses qui en sont le prolongement, entre-jambes, ainsi que parties génitales (les termes sémitiques ne sont jamais très clairs), peuvent être compris comme un ventre masculin pouvant donner naissance, c'est-à-dire une seconde naissance⁵².

Dans des sociétés complexes, comme l'étaient les sociétés du Proche-Orient ancien, le fonctionnement de l'ordre hiérarchique passait, presque inévitablement, par une communication non-verbale⁵³. Les marques de soumission et les salutations respectueuses (proskynèse⁵⁴), exprimées par des contractions du corps, comme le fait de s'incliner, de ramasser son corps et de baisser la tête au niveau des genoux, tous ces gestes exprimaient des relations de pouvoir⁵⁵. Les genoux, comme espace de sensibilité, traduisaient la déférence. Prenons un exemple dans la mythologie d'Ougarit. Le cycle de *Baal et la Mer* rapporte une réunion de divinités. Les dieux s'apprêtent au banquet, mais en voyant

arriver l'ambassade du Juge Nahar ils se prosternent, laissant « tomber leur tête sur leurs genoux⁵⁶. »

La même tradition avec les mêmes membres du corps est encore perceptible dans le monde mésopotamien où genoux et cuisses expriment l'idée de soumission, de vassalité, voire de supplication⁵⁷. Quelquefois, il est question de s'installer sur les genoux d'un roi ou d'une divinité dans le but d'obtenir une reconnaissance de statut. La mythologie donne à voir cette combinaison de rituels dans un passage de l'*Enūma eliš*. On y voit le grand dieu Apsû, satisfait de son page Mummu et désirant le nommer vizir⁵⁸. Apsû le couvre de marques d'affection et, selon les termes du mythe, « l'entoure de ses bras et le fait asseoir sur ses genoux⁵⁹. » Ce comportement envers son serviteur, sous sa forme extérieure, est caractérisé par des traits d'affection, mais n'y voir que cela serait un contresens.

3.3. Le rite de supplication par le toucher des genoux

C'est certainement le monde gréco-romain qui documente le plus clairement les rites de supplication consistant à toucher les genoux⁶⁰. Ces rites de supplication, illustrés dans les arts, par les tragédies et par les frises sculptées, sont d'une grande importance pour comprendre les relations de pouvoirs de l'époque⁶¹. Relevant tout à la fois des techniques du corps et des techniques du langage, la supplication (gr. *ικετεία*, lat. *supplex*) se définit comme « un corps d'observances formelles et sanctionnées ayant pour objet une demande d'hospitalité ou d'asile, une demande associée le plus souvent aux actes religieux⁶² ». Qu'il soit exilé ou fugitif, le suppliant se réfugie au pied d'un autel ou d'une statue et par une supplication précise et codifiée, par une prière appuyée, par une offrande (par exemple un rameau d'olivier), par un contact physique (en prenant les genoux, en les baisant), demande protection dans le sanctuaire du dieu. En implorant la magnanimité du seigneur des lieux, une sorte d'immunité, un droit sacré et infrangible lui sera normalement accordée⁶³.

45 Hom., *Od.* 19, 401.

46 Le jeune Romain, rapporte Servius, lors de son initiation pour entrer dans le monde adulte et solliciter un patronage de haut rang, le jeune Romain doit se rendre devant le dieu de l'orage, *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*, et déposer sur les genoux du dieu assis une couronne de laurier. Serv. Georg. 4. 49 : <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>

47 Gn 30, 3.

48 Gn 50, 23.

49 Gn 24, 2-9.

50 Par exemple, à Mari, un serviteur né dans le sérail déclare sa loyauté au roi de cette façon : « n'ayant pas d'autre maître, et ni ailleurs où fuir 'je suis si faible, mes genoux ne me suivent plus... » A.1258+ l. 10' dans Charpin 1992 : 7 ; Durand 1997 : 105.

51 Livingstone 2007 : 103 ; CAD E, 274-278.

52 Dhorme 1963 : 156-157.

53 Gruber 1980 ; Malul 1988.

54 Joannès 2007.

55 Jirku 1953 : 372 ; Layton 1983.

56 Caquot/Szzyner 1974 : 130-131, l. 21-32 ; Kruger 1995.

57 CAD B, 256-257 s. v. « *birku* 2a-b ».

58 Sur le dieu Mummu, voir Heidel 1948 et Krebernik, RIA 8 : 415-416, s. v. Mummu.

59 *Enūma eliš* 1, 52-54, trad. d'après Bottéro 1989 : 606.

60 *L'Iliade* présente un parallèle remarquable de ce rite de supplication avec le cas de Lycaon, l'un des fils de Priam. Lycaon a été fait prisonnier et vendu. Racheté, il reprend le combat, mais, alors qu'il coupait tranquillement des rameaux d'un figuier, il tombe de nouveau entre les mains d'Achille. La peur panique s'empare de lui : « il veut à tout prix toucher ses genoux, et son cœur par-dessus tout souhaite échapper à la mort cruelle ... D'une main, il saisit les genoux, suppliant ; de l'autre, il retient sa pique acérée, ...(et dit) « Je suis à tes genoux, Achille, aie pour moi respect et pitié ; pour toi, fils de Zeus, je suis un suppliant, j'ai droit à ton respect. Tu es le premier chez qui j'ai mangé la mouture de Déméter, le jour où tu m'as pris dans mon bon vergier... ». Hom., *Il.* XXI 65-85, trad. Mazon 1967.

61 Crotty 1994 ; Kazanskaya 2013.

62 Kazanskaya 2013 : 2.

63 Kazanskaya 2013 : 9.

Conclusion

Le dialogue entre l'image et le texte offre parfois des perspectives inattendues, étonnantes et même des rebondissements saisissants. Ainsi, la célèbre *Stèle de Baal au foudre* qui illustre la grandeur et la vitalité du dieu de l'orage, et qui place à l'ombre du dieu, à la hauteur de ses genoux, une figuration réduite du roi d'Ougarit soulève des questionnements nombreux. Cet emplacement réservé, et en retrait, de la statue du souverain était destiné à rappeler l'ascendant divin sur la conception monarchique. Placé aux côtés du dieu, à la hauteur de ses cuisses, le souverain se trouvait dans son giron, littéralement. Ce qui permettait à l'observateur antique de constater que la divinité accordait sa protection au roi de la cité.

L'importance de cette pratique trouve des échos à travers la documentation de Mari. Quelques textes

évoquent l'institution consistant à déposer sur les genoux d'un dieu assis une statue royale. Pour comprendre les entours de cette cérémonie faisant intervenir les parties intimes du corps, les textes du corpus mythologique et les témoignages antiques, gréco-romain et biblique, ont contribué à mettre en lumière une dimension à peine perceptible sur la *Stèle de Baal au foudre*.

Au total, nous avons pu observer que les genoux étaient symboliquement associés à l'accueil du suppliant et qu'ils illustraient, tel un autel naturel, un rite identique (sinon proche) : l'enfant sur les genoux (et les cuisses) d'un père adoptif ou encore d'une divinité qui joue le rôle de père adoptant. En poursuivant cette piste (qui n'est peut-être qu'une hypothèse de plus), je reste interrogatif devant plusieurs autres scènes et décors officiels mettant en correspondance un souverain et la hanche/cuisse d'une divinité masculine.

Appendice : M.7161 (= FM 7, no. 17) face et tranche 1-3*

Face

- 1 *a-na be-li₂-ia qi₂-bi₂-ma*
- 2 *[u]m-ma IR₃-i₃-li₂-šu IR₃-ka-a-ma*
- 3 *u₄-um šu-uh-hi-im a-na ha-la-ab^{ki} e-ru-ub*
- 4 *wa-ar-hu-um U₄ 7.KAM is-su-uh-ma U₄ 7.KAM*
- 5 *ni-qu₂-um ša be-li₂-ia [i]n-na-qi₂*
- 6 *tu₂-bu-um um-ta-al-li u₃ ALAM ša be-li₂-ia*
- 7 *ma-ha-ar ^dIŠKUR uš-zi-iz ša-ni-tam aš-šum ma-za-az ALAM*
- 8 *a-na ia-ri-im-li-im wu-u₂-ur-ti be-li₂-ia*
- 9 *ki-a-am u₂-ša-an-ni um-ma be-li₂-ma i-na pa-ni-tim*
- 10 *i-na pa-ha-al ^dIŠKUR a-na-ku ar-bi*
- 11 *i-na-an-na ALAM be-li₂-ia a-na pa-ha-al-li ^d[IŠKUR]*
- 12 *li-iz-zi-iz an-ni-tam aq-bi-šum-[ma]*
- 13 *^hia-ri-im-li-im ki-a-am i-pu-[la-an-ni]*
- 14 *u[m-ma š]u-u₂-ma i-na pa-ha-a[l-li ^dIŠKUR]*
- 15 *[ALAM KU₃.BABBAR ša] ^dUTU ša iz-za-az-[zu]*
- 16 *[a-yi-i-iš] iz-za-az ^hu₃ [LU₂.MAŠ₂.ŠU.GID₂.GID₂.MEŠ]*
- 17 *[^dIŠKUR li-i]š-ta-lu um-[ma-a-mi a-yi-iš]*

Tranche

- 18 *[li-iz-zi]-iz ALAM KU₃.BABBAR ki-i [i-na IGI DINGIR-lim]*
- 19 *[lu-u₂ i-na p]u-ut DINGIR-lim i-na aš₂-ku-[pa-tim]*
- 20 *[u₃-lu-ma] i-na ^hga^h-ba^h-[tim ...]*

(1) Dis à mon Seigneur : ainsi (parle) Warad-ili-šu, ton serviteur. (3) Je suis entré à Alep, le jour du šuhhum. (4) C'était le 7 courant du mois. C'est (bien) le 7 (5) que le sacrifice de mon Seigneur a été fait. (6) Le « Bonheur/Bon gré » a été obtenu sur tous les points et (7) j'ai fait se tenir debout (6) la statue de mon Seigneur (7) devant Addu. Autre chose : à propos de la place de la statue, (9) j'ai répété (8) à Yarim-Lim les directives de mon Seigneur (9) ainsi : « Mon Seigneur a dit : » Jadis, (10) j'ai grandi sur le bas-ventre d'Addu. » (11) Maintenant, donc, la statue de mon Seigneur (12) doit se tenir debout (11) sur le bas-ventre d'Addu. » (12) Voilà ce que je lui ai dit. (13) Yarim-Lim m'a répondu : « Sur le bas-ventre d'Addu, (15) [la statue d'argent] de Šamaš qui s'(y) tient, (16) où se tiendra-t-elle ? Alors, les Devins (17) doivent interroger Addu, en ces termes : (18) « Où pourrait se tenir la statue d'argent ? Qu'en est-il ? Face au dieu, (19) ou bien à l'opposé du dieu, sur le seuil, ou encore, sur le [socle]... ? »

(Les directives de mon seigneur, tout ce dont mon seigneur m'avait chargé, j'en ai donné rapport détaillé à Yarim-Lim. À ce rapport il m'a répondu favorablement et sans désagrément...etc.)

* La transcription et la traduction reproduisent celles du site www.archibab.fr à la date du 26/01/2016.

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“Of marshes, kings, and rebels”

On the perception and representation of southern Mesopotamian wetlands at the Neo-Assyrian royal court

Sebastian Borkowski

Abstract: Several military campaigns led the Neo-Assyrian kings towards southern Mesopotamia and the Susiana where they found themselves amidst a landscape dominated by wetlands, ranging from marshes and *hawrs* (a specific type of wetland in southern Iraq; arab. *hwr*; pl. *ḥwār*; lit. marsh-lake) to riverine forests and seasonal floodplains, and *sabkhas* (saline marine marshes; arab. *sbkh*) as well as mudflats under tidal influence. The Assyrians’ perception of this specific environment was preserved in royal inscriptions and on bas-reliefs in the Neo-Assyrian palaces. Different Akkadian terms signifying wetlands occur in the royal inscriptions, whereas the visual depictions are distinguished by means of composition and iconography. By analysing both the geographical and topographical value of information given by the Akkadian terms *agammu* and *apu*, and by linking them to the depictions of the bas-reliefs from the Southwest- and North-Palace at Ninive, I argue for an intended usage of these specific Akkadian terms by the Neo-Assyrian scribes, and consequently for a distinctive perception of wetlands by the Assyrians. In comparison with current Iraqi and Iranian wetlands, I conclude that *agammu* referred to *hawrs* in the regions of Bīt-Dakkūri and Bīt-Yakīn, commonly depicted as reed thickets surrounding open water, whereas *apu* signified reed thickets in the riparian zones of the Rūd-e Dez and Rūd-e Kārūn in Ḫūzestān.

Keywords: Southern Mesopotamia, Susiana, wetlands, landscape, Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

1 Introduction¹

During the 1st millennium BC, the landscapes of southern Mesopotamia and the Susiana were the setting of various military campaigns conducted by the Assyrian kings. Even today, meandering and bifurcating rivers with levees rising over the alluvial plain, extensive permanent or seasonal marsh and lake areas, and the tidal influence at the head of the Persian Gulf dominate the topography of these distinctive regions. Annual and daily cycles of floods and tides affect these wetlands, and temporarily reshape the landscape; so do long-term factors, like sedimentation, avulsion, alterations in sea level, human interference, etc. All of these factors contribute to a dynamic, non-stable topography (Pournelle

2013: 14–20; Wilkinson 2013: 128–131; Sanlaville 2002; Kubba/Jamali 2009; Kubba 2009: 72–88).

Both royal inscriptions as well as bas-reliefs preserved the Neo-Assyrian rulers’ perception of the contemporary landscape. The verbal accounts of the royal achievements – despite the report of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība’s artificial wetland in the vicinity of Ninive (e.g. Grayson/Novotny 2012: 145, no. 17 viii 46–59) – lack exhaustive descriptions of wetlands, and most references are reduced to a single term. Nonetheless, the usage of different Akkadian terms indicates distinct perceptions of the southern Mesopotamian and Susianan wetlands, which are also visible on the bas-reliefs. By evaluating and comparing both media, it is indeed possible to attribute them not only to different geographic regions but also to distinguish between different wetland habitats.

While the textual and the visual corpora of the Neo-Assyrian material culture were consulted early and often to reconstruct the ancient environment (e.g. Hansman 1978; Cole 1994; Cole/Gasche 2007), little attention has been paid to an intended usage of diverse Akkadian terms, like *agammu*, *appāru*, and *apu*, until now; these are commonly translated merely as ‘marsh’ or ‘swamp’. By taking into account an intended usage and a distinguishing perception and representation of

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Additional abbreviation: Or.Dr. = Original Drawings, 7 folio volumes of drawings of Assyrian antiquities. London, British Museum, Department of the Middle East, Departmental Archives.

wetlands, it will be demonstrated that these sources provide an even more precise picture of the landscape of the Ancient Near East.

2 Modern wetland definitions and the Mesopotamian wetlands

As wetlands comprise a diversity of dynamic ecosystems and show geographic peculiarities, no universal definition on wetlands has been established in the scientific discourse yet. Particular disciplines and research fields commonly employ definitions directed towards their own interests, resulting in ecologic and geologic definitions next to such focusing on economic and legal factors (Mitsch/Gosselink ²⁰⁰⁷: 40; Whigham 2009: 43–44). Different definitions also lead to different approaches towards classifying single wetland habitats. Nevertheless, most classifications rely on hydrology, vegetation, and soil as main factors to distinguish one habitat from another (Mitsch/Gosselink ²⁰⁰⁷: 27–29; Whigham 2009: 43–44).

Further difficulties, especially regarding wetland habitats, are caused by national and linguistic borders as well as by misleading usage of terms denominating a respective habitat (Mitsch/Gosselink ²⁰⁰⁷: 31–34; Whigham 2009: 44, 48). While, for instance, the English scientific literature on wetlands distinguishes between marsh and swamp (Maltby 1991: 9–11; Whigham 2009: 44–46; Keddy ²⁰¹⁰: 5),² the German language lacks this differentiation, translating both commonly as ‘Sumpf’.³

Since this article focuses mainly on freshwater marshes, *hawrs*, and riparian zones of rivers; wetlands in general can be broadly defined, e.g. as the entirety of topographic zones between open water and solid land, including semi-permanent inundated or flooded land.⁴ It is, however, more important to understand wetlands

as multi-faceted and dynamic ecosystems subject to anthropogenic and natural influences. Particularly, if the dimension of time has to be considered, as it is the case when talking about wetlands in the 1st half of the 1st millennium BC, precise statements on the location, extent, permanence and periodicity, or overall character of a certain wetland, are not, or – due to the low density of scientific samples – only rarely and sporadically possible with certainty.⁵

Therefore, the following summary on modern marshes and riverine wetlands in southern Iraq and Ḥūzestān is meant to illustrate the main characteristics of these topographical features in order to afterwards compare them to the Neo-Assyrian textual and visual sources.

2.1. Rivers and riparian zones

The Euphrates and Tigris rivers, their tributaries, and the vast network of river branches, once they have entered the interior fluvial delta and start to bifurcate, dominate the Mesopotamian alluvial plain (e.g. Sallaville 2002: 136–138). Likewise, the extent of the alluvial plain that reaches out towards Lower Ḥūzestān is governed by meandering rivers from the Zagros Mountains. Today, the Rūd-e Karḥe ends in the al-Hawīza Marshes (also referred to as al-Muraiṣ Marshes), while the Rūd-e Kārūn, joined by the Rūd-e Dez in Upper Ḥūzestān, flows towards the Ṣaṭṭ al-‘Arab. Further east, the Rūdḥāne-ye Kūpāl and Rūdḥāne-ye Ġarrāḥī disperse into the Ṣādḡān Marshes, leaving only the easternmost Rūd-e Zohre to reach the Persian Gulf directly (Heyvaert/Verkinderen/Walstra 2013: 495; Scott 1991: 156).

Both, the Iraqi and Iranian rivers, are fed by autumn and winter rains, as well as the melting snow in spring, which causes floods and inundation in the alluvial plain during the spring months (Waetzoldt 1981: 161; Heyvaert/Verkinderen/Walstra 2013: 495).

In addition to the seasonal lakes and marshes of the floodplains, the rivers themselves and their riparian zones form another dynamic wetland habitat. The vegetation alongside riverbanks is divided into different zones depending on the respective river’s water level, ranging from submerged plants to floating, emergent, and upland plant communities. These plant communities are subject to seasonal rises and falls in the river’s water level, leading to changing succession patterns (e.g. Décamps/Naiman/McClain 2010: 182; Aber/Pavri/Aber 2012: 89–99).

Throughout today’s Near East, riverine communities of willow (*Salix*), oriental plane (*Platanus orientalis*), Euphrates poplar (*Populus euphratica*), tamarisk (*Tamarix*), bramble (*Rubus sanguineus*), cattails (*Typha*), reeds (*Phragmites*), rushes (*Juncus*), and clubrushes (*Scirpus*) are common (Gilbert 1995: 157). Poplar and willow favour river bends and islands on the Euphra-

² Marshes are commonly defined as: ‘[...] wetlands dominated by herbaceous vascular plants, the stems of which emerge above the water surface. Marshes occur in areas that are frequently or continuously inundated with water and they are most often associated with mineral soils that do not accumulated peat.’ (Whigham 2009: 44). Whereas, swamps are defined as: ‘Wetlands that are covered intermittently or permanently with water, and are dominated by trees or shrubs, [...]’ (Whigham 2009: 45).

³ While in German the term ‘Sumpf’ signifies a specific wetland type in general, the term ‘Marsch(-land)’ is limited to the topography of the North Sea and refers primarily to the alluvium that has been reclaimed from the sea by means of dykes, i.e. polder. Nevertheless, ‘Marsch(-land)’ is also used as an equivalent to the English ‘marsh(-land)’ in German scientific literature on the Ancient Near East.

⁴ See also the often-cited definitions of the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat* from 1971, or of the *US Fish and Wildlife Service*, published in 1979 (e.g. Whigham 2009: 43; Mitsch/Gosselink ²⁰⁰⁷: 35, 37). A classification of Iraqi wetland habitats is provided by Evans 2002: 210–211 who distinguishes between eight major-types distributed all over southern Mesopotamia: ‘permanent freshwater lakes’, ‘permanent freshwater marshes’, ‘rivers, streams, canals and irrigation channels’, ‘permanent ponds, mainly man-made irrigation ponds and duck-hunting ponds’, ‘seasonal freshwater marshes’, ‘seasonally flooded mudflats and semi-desertic steppe’, ‘irrigated land and seasonally flooded arable land’, and ‘shallow, brackish to saline lagoons’; see also Wilkinson 2013: 123.

⁵ These wetlands can, therefore, not be treated isolated from the discourse on the reconstruction of ancient river courses or the shifting of the Persian Gulf coast (e.g. Wilkinson 2003: 79–80, 82–87; Wilkinson 2013: 129; Aqrabi/Evans 1994: 772–773).

tes in southern Iraq; both grow less frequently along the Tigris. Tamarisk, together with grasses, sedges, and shrubs provide the undergrowth of the riverine thickets and might stretch out further into the plain (Naval Intelligence Division 1944: 190–191; Guest 1966: 83–84, 91). A dense vegetation of shrubs and trees, for instance, has been reported along the Rūd-e Dez between Dezful and the confluence with the Rūd-e Kārūn. This forest of poplar, tamarisk, and others spread in a belt of about four to five kilometres from the riverbanks into the plain (Adamec 1989: 11).

Anthropogenic measures like cultivation and clearing have, however, removed the natural vegetation along large parts of the riverbanks (Naval Intelligence Division 1944: 189), and concerning the banks of the Rūd-e Kārūn towards the city of Ahvāz an almost complete loss of the former brushwood cover has been recorded in the 20th century (Adamec 1989: 396).

2.2. Marshes and *hawrs*

The most famous wetlands of modern Iraq are the so-called *Mesopotamian Marshes*, a vast wetland complex that consists of the al-Ḥammār Marshes along the lower Euphrates, the al-Hawīza Marshes at the eastern margins of the lower Tigris, which are also fed by the Rūd-e Karḥe and stretch across the Iraq-Iran border, as well as the al-Qurna Marshes (also referred to as Central Marshes) between the Euphrates and Tigris at the head of their confluence in the Šaṭṭ al-‘Arab (Brasington 2002: 154; Kubba 2009: 80; Hritz/Pournelle/Smith 2012: 40). Over the last decades, the *Mesopotamian Marshes* gained international publicity because of the almost complete degradation and, more recently, due to the approaches towards the restoration and recreation of these wetlands (e.g. Partow 2001; Nicholson/Clark 2002; Kubba 2009).

Naturally, these *hawrs* (arab. *hwr*; pl. *ḥwār*; lit. marsh-lake) comprise permanent freshwater-to-brackish marshes dominated by reeds (*Phragmites australis*) and shallow bodies of open water, with even deeper lakes – like the al-Ḥammār Lake (Pournelle 2003: 269; Aqrawi/Evans 1994: 757; Brasington 2002: 154). During the spring flood (April–May) and the following months, these *hawrs* stretch out into seasonal marshes at their margins. Their total land-cover and character may, however, vary according to short-term fluctuations in the flood extent (Brasington 2002: 160–161, tab. 2–3). In the al-Qurna Marshes, for example, the floodwater recedes by June; in September and October the water level is at its lowest point.⁶

The evolution of the shoreline of the Persian Gulf represents an issue that needs to be considered, when trying to reconstruct ancient wetlands in southern Iraq. No scientific consensus has been reached as to when the present sea level was reached and suggestions range between the beginning 2nd millennium BC or sometime

during the 1st millennium BC (Aqrawi/Domas/Jassim 2006: 197; Sanlaville/Dalongeville 2005: esp. 18–20). Radiocarbon dates from sediment-cores have demonstrated that the Haur al-Ḥammār and the Haur al-Hawīza (also referred to as Haur al-Murais) developed at a rather recent date around the 7th–8th century AD.⁷ Brackish lagoons preceded both marshes (Baeteman/Dupin/Heyvaert 2004: 206–210; Eger 2011: 59; Aqrawi/Evans 1994: 772–773). On the other hand, a lagoon in the area of the Haur al-Ḥammār has been dated to the 1st millennium BC (Aqrawi/Domas/Jassim 2006: 197).

Despite these problems, older marshes, roughly dated to the 1st millennium BC, have been identified by Harris/Adams (1957) along the lower Euphrates near az-Zubeidiya; likewise, radiocarbon dates from sediment-cores suggest the existence of a former marsh area at the south-eastern margins of the al-Hawīza Marshes during the 16th–14th century BC, before the area came under tidal influence and gave way to a pond (Baeteman/Dupin/Heyvaert 2004: 208, 210; Eger 2011: 59 fn. 25; see also Sanlaville 2002: 143–144). Furthermore, Cole (1994) argued that by this time a permanent marsh formed in the region of Borsippa due to a shift of a branch of the Euphrates on the basis of textual evidence from the 8th–6th century BC.⁸

3 Akkadian terms referring to different kinds of wetlands

It has already been stated that the scribes of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions employed a distinguished vocabulary regarding wetlands. A chronological overview of the usage and occurrence of Akkadian wetland terms in the royal inscriptions is given in Fig. 1.⁹

While the employment of this vocabulary varied strongly in terms of quantity as well as in its informative value and usage from one king to another, it is noteworthy that nearly all attestations refer to southern Mesopotamia or the Susiana – the only exceptions are comparisons of foreign landscapes with these wetlands, the metaphorical expression of the treatment of non-loyal behaviour (Streck 2009–2011: 188 ad § 7.2),¹⁰

7 Eger 2011: 59; Baeteman/Dupin/Heyvaert 2004: 208–210; for the formation of the Haur al-Ḥammār a date around AD 600 has already been proposed by Lees/Falcon 1952: 27.

8 For further historical accounts on the formation of marshes in Mesopotamia, see for instance Beaulieu 1988; Cole 1994; Eger 2011: 60–62.

9 All instances cited in the respective entries of the CAD and AHw. were taken into account.

10 Compare Šarru-ukīn II's account of Urartu's woodlands in his letter to Aššur (Mayer 2013: 120 iii 228; p. 124 iii 266; p. 130 iii 327), as well as Aššur-nāšir-apli II's and Aššur-aḫu-iddina's similes on the smashing of rebellious vassals and enemies (e.g. Grayson 1991: 195, no. A.0.101.1: 22–23; and Leichty 2011: 185, no. 98: 32–33). One might also add Sīn-aḫḫē-erība's account of the recreation of Babylonian wetlands near Ninive (e.g. Grayson/Novotny 2012: 145, no. 17 viii 46–59) to these exceptions, but the usage is probably to be explained as a verbal reference to the Babylonian original. Note, however, that the visual representation of wetlands was not limited to southern Mesopotamia and the Susiana, since – for instance – Syrian riverine wetlands were depicted on the bronze bands of the Balāwāt Gates

6 See Ochsenschlager 2004: 8–9 for a detailed account of the annual flood cycle in the al-Qurna Marshes around al-Hibā, ancient Lagaš.

	<i>agammu</i>	<i>apu</i> / GIŠ.GI	<i>appāru</i> / AMBAR	<i>ṣuṣû</i>	<i>kupû</i>
Aššūr-nāšir-apli II		X			
Šarru-ukīn II		X			
Sīn-aḥḥē-erība	X	X	X	X	X
Aššūr-aḥu-iddina	X	X	X		
Aššūr-bāni-apli		X		X	

Fig. 1: Chronological overview of Akkadian wetland terms mentioned in the corpus of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

or compound words like ŠAḤ.GIŠ.GI, logographic for *šaḥapu* (lit. boar of the reed thickets). Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that in the case of Aššūr-bāni-apli no wetland terms occur in the canonical versions of the royal inscriptions on prisms, but only on archival tablets (e.g. Bauer 1972: 74 v. 10–12; pp. 87–88 r. 3, and most probably r. 9, 11). A similar restricted use of the term *agammu* is observed within the inscriptions from Aššūr-aḥu-iddina's reign (e.g. Leichty 2011: 75, no. 30: 13'; and p. 77, no. 31: 9').

With regard to the cases mentioned above, it is often impossible to draw precise conclusions on the distinction of Akkadian wetland terms because of the absence of sufficient textual evidence.

In this contribution, therefore, I will focus on the Akkadian terms *agammu* and *apu*, and also on the textual sources that allow for a geographic and topographic analysis.

3.1. *agammu* = *hawr* (area of marshes, shallow bodies of open water, and lakes)

The Akkadian term *agammu* goes back to the Sumerian term /agam/, which denotes a rather artificial marshy or lake-like reservoir for water in the vicinity of an agricultural area in sources of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC (Civil 1994: 130–131). An understanding of the meaning of Sumerian /agam/ might be provided, as already suggested by Deimel (1934: 8, s.v. *agam*₂), by the only lexically attested writing A×UŠ₂ and its interpretation as a 'dead', i.e. standing, body of water.

Concerning the 1st millennium BC, one has to consider that by this time the term *agammu* had already disappeared from written sources of everyday life and was only used in the Neo-Assyrian kings' royal inscriptions. In this context, the term may have to be understood as a 'poetic archaism' with a shifted meaning, as argued by Stol (1988: 174).¹¹

of Aššūr-nāšir-apli II and Salmānu-ašarēd III (for BM ASH II, bands L4, L5, R4, and R5 see Barnett et al. 2008: 33–34, 41–42, and figs. 13–16, 29–32; for Gate C, band VIIb see Schachner 2007: pl. 37b; see also Bleibtreu 1980: 75).

11 A more common term for *hawr* in the everyday language of the 1st millennium BC might be *appāru*. This term occurs as a pendant to *agammu* in the royal inscriptions (e.g. §2 and §4) and also indicates the area of the *Mesopotamian Marshes* on the *Mappa Mundi* (BM 92687), see Horowitz 2011: 21, 27–29, and his pls. 2 and 6 for a copy and a photo of the obverse. A more precise statement, however, would require a study of its

According to the determinative ^{id2}, which is attested in all instances under Sīn-aḥḥē-erība (e.g. Grayson/Novotny 2012: 177, no. 22 iii 53; p. 51, no. 3: 6; p. 34, no. 1 34; pp. 177–178, no. 22 iii 68; and Grayson/Novotny 2014: 107, no. 61: 2), as well as its attestation as a variant to A^{mes} on two archival tablets dating to the reign of Aššūr-aḥu-iddina,¹² Neo-Assyrian *agammu* still denominates some kind of a body of water. With regard to the description of an artificial wetland in the vicinity of Ninive conducted by Sīn-aḥḥē-erība, Civil (1994: 130–131) argued that the use of the term *agammu* still held part of its former agricultural meaning.¹³ Considering the southern Mesopotamian landscape described in Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's royal inscriptions, *agammu* may have had another meaning, as demonstrated by the following four instances. In accordance with the previously described *Mesopotamian Marshes* and the depictions on Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's bas-reliefs (see below), a translation of *agammu* as *hawr* is proposed.

In the canonical royal inscriptions of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība, *agammu* is related to the area of the Chaldean tribe Bīt-Dakkūri and the dwelling place of Mušēzib-Marduk (also referred to as Šūzubu in the written sources):

§1^{iii 52}(...) *i-na me-ti-iq ger-ri-ia* ⁵³ša m⁵⁴šu-zu-bi^{luz}kal-da₃-a-a a-šib qe₂-reb ^{id2}a-gam-me ⁵⁴i-na uru⁵⁵bi-it-tu-u₂-tu aš₂-ta-kan BAD₅.BAD₅-šu₂ (RINAP 3/1: no. 22 iii 52–54).

'(...) In the course of my campaign, I defeated Šūzubu (Mušēzib-Marduk), a Chaldean who lives in the *hawrs*, at the city of Bittūtu.'¹⁴

The region of Guzummanu is located in the same geographical area (Dietrich 1957–1971: 720) and is mentioned in the description of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's 1st Babylonian campaign as the refuge of Marduk-apla-iddina II:

§2⁶*i-na MURUB₄ tam-ḥa-ri šu-a-tu e-zib KARAŠ-su e-diš ip-par-šid-ma a-na kur⁵⁶gu-zu-um-ma-ni in-na-bit qe₂-reb*

own. Likewise, (locally) used terms like *tāmtu* could refer to larger marsh and lake-like wetlands, as demonstrated by Cole 1994: 95, esp. fn. 76 with cited references; see also Waetzoldt 1981: 164; CAD T, 155–156 s.v. *tāmtu* 2; AHw. 3, 1353–1354 s.v. *tiamtu(m)*. Note, however, that *māt tāmti* (*Sealand*) refers rather to a geo-political entity than to a topographical feature.

12 Compare the non-canonical versions in Leichty 2011: 75, no. 30: 13'; and p. 77, no. 31: 9' to the canonical version found on prisms, e.g. Leichty 2011: 18, no. 1 iii 72.

13 For the hydraulic purpose of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's *agammu*, see Bagg 2000: 184.

14 Translation by Grayson/Novotny 2012: 177; with minor alterations in italics.

^{id2}*a-gam-me u₃ ap-pa-ra-a-te e-ru-um-ma na-piš-tuš e-ṭi₂-ir* (RINAP 3/1: no. 3: 6).

‘In the midst of that battle he abandoned his camp. He fled alone and escaped to the land of Guzummanu, (where) he entered the *hawrs* and marshes and (thereby) saved his life.’¹⁵

Likewise, the city of Saḥrīna, referred to in a caption from the Southwest-Palace at Ninive, can with great probability be located in the area of the aforementioned Bīt-Dakkūri:

§3 ¹md30-PAP.MEŠ.SU MAN ŠU₂ MAN ^{kur}*aš-šur* ²*šal-la-at* ^{id2}*a-gam-me* ³*ša* ^{uru}*sa-aḥ-ri-na* ⁴*ma-ḥa-ar-šu e-ti-iq* (RINAP 3/2: no. 61: 1–4).

‘Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria. The booty from the *hawrs* of the city Saḥrīna passed before him.’¹⁶

All of these attestations of the term *agammu* refer to the same geographical region in the area of the Bīt-Dakkūri and the greater vicinity of Borsippa. Based on these sources, Cole (1994: esp. 89–90) already argued, that an extensive and probably lake-like wetland area came into existence in this region during the late 8th or 7th century BC.

However, the occurrence of *agammu* is not only limited to this region, but is further related to Bīt-Yakīn on the ancient coast of the Persian Gulf:

§4 ⁱⁱⁱ65)(...) ŠEŠ^{meš}-šu₂ ⁶⁶NUMUN E₂ AD-šu₂ *ša u₂-maš-ši-ru a-ḥi tam-tim* ⁶⁷*a-di si-it-ti UN^{meš} KUR-šu₂ ul-tu* ^{kur}E₂-^m*ia-kin*, ⁶⁸*qe₂-reb* ^{id2}*a-gam-me u ap-pa-ra-a-te u₂-še-ša-am-ma* ⁶⁹*šal-la-tiš am-nu* (...) (RINAP 3/1: no. 22 iii 65–69).

‘(...) I brought his brothers, the seed of his father’s house, whom he had abandoned at the shore of the sea, together with the rest of the people of his land, out of the land Bīt-Yakīn, which is in the *hawrs* and marshes, and I counted (them) as booty. (...)’¹⁷

In both of these geographical regions of southern Mesopotamia the same or at least comparable topographical features were present and thus led to the usage of *agammu* in Sin-aḥḥē-erība’s royal inscriptions. The occasional pairing with *appāru*, i.e. ^{id2}*agammē u appārati*, as seen above (§2 and §4), cannot be explained with satisfaction at this point. Nonetheless, this phenomenon does not appear to be related to geographical or topographical issues, but rather seems to be consequently used to distinguish between Marduk-apla-iddina II and

Bīt-Yakīn on the one hand and Mušēzib-Marduk and Bīt-Dakkūri on the other.

3.2. *apu* = reed thicket (along riverbanks/ riparian zones)

Regarding the designation of wetlands, the Akkadian term *apu* is the most persistent one within the corpus of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Next to its syllabic writing, its logographic writing GIŠ.GI – well known from the older Sumerian textual tradition – was employed, too. Its etymology may therefore be understood as a combination of “tree” (GIŠ) and “reed” (GI). A relation between reed and trees is further affirmed in Šarru-ukīn II’s account on his 8th campaign against Urartū, when he calls upon the similarity of the Urartean mountain forests with *apu* (see Mayer 2013: 120 iii 228; p. 124 iii 266; p. 130 iii 327), as a metaphor for their impassability (Streck 2009–2011: 188 ad § 7.2). A similar association can be drawn from a cuneiform tablet dated to the reign of Aššūr-bāni-apli (BM 98982), which describes the dwelling places of ferocious lions by repeatedly pairing GIŠ.GI with ^{gis}TIR (see Bauer 1972: 87–88 r. 3, and most probably r. 9, 11).

Because of the association with trees and forests, as well as the following attestations that relate *apu* to rivers, the term *apu* is to be understood as signifying a reed thicket growing along riverbanks, probably together with other shrubs and trees, as it is also indicated by the recent vegetation of riparian zones mentioned above.

An inscription on an orthostat from Šarru-ukīn II’s palace at Ḥorsābād attests a more precise location of an *apu*. It describes the flight of Gambulian people into the reed thickets along the Uqnū river, during the conquest of the city of Dūr-Athara:

§5 ²⁷²(...) *si-it-ta-ti-šu₂-nu ša [lapa]n* ^{gis}TUKUL^{meš}-*ia ip-par-šid-[du]* ²⁷³^{id2}*uq-nu-u₂ mar-šu u₃ qa-ne₂-e a-pi a-na ki-den-nu-t[i iṣbatu(?)]* ‘x-x’ *ka-šad URU šu₂-a-tu* ²⁷⁴*iš-mu-ma it-ru-ku lib-bu-šu-un* (...) (Fuchs 1994: 140, II:H2,7–9 = Ann. 272–274).¹⁸

(...) Their remains, who had fled [fro]m my weapons and who [had sought] refuge at the inaccessible Uqnū river and in the reeds of the reed thickets, their heart pounded, as they heard of the capturing of this city. (...)

The Uqnū river is most probably to be identified with the Rūd-e Kārūn in Upper Ḥūzestān, as demonstrated by Cole/Gasche (2007: 27–28; Frame 2015: 354–355) and an ancient branch of the united streams of Rūd-e Karḥe, Rūd-e Dez, and Rūd-e Kārūn (Cole/Gasche 2007: 30) in Lower Ḥūzestān on the basis of ancient and medieval textual sources.¹⁹

Another geographical attestation of *apu* is given by a cuneiform tablet from the reign of Aššūr-bāni-apli

15 Translation by Grayson/Novotny 2012: 51; with minor alterations in italics. See also e.g. Grayson/Novotny 2012: 34, no. 1: 34.

16 Translation by Grayson/Novotny 2014: 107; with minor alterations in italics. The caption was inscribed on slab 4 in room LXX of the Southwest-Palace (Or.Dr. IV, 49), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 131–132, pl. 466, no. 646a. The identification of this city was discussed by Russell 1991: 153 and by Cole 1994: 90 fn. 46–47; see also Frahm 1997: 128. At this point, the actual location of Saḥrīna is of less importance, since both arguments point towards the same area; that is placing Saḥrīna in the region of the Bīt-Dakkūri.

17 Translation by Grayson/Novotny 2012: 177–178; with minor alterations in italics.

18 For the tentative reconstruction of the missing signs see Fuchs 1994: 140 ad Ann. 272 and Ann. 273, n. 1–2.

19 Despite of this, the Uqnū has been also identified with an ancient branch of the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 466–467) and other rivers (see Frame 2015: 354–355; Fuchs 1994: 466). In Lower Ḥūzestān, the Uqnū was also called Ulāya in Neo-Assyrian times, and Eulaios, Eulaeus, or Pastitigris, less common also Choapses and Tigris in Greek sources (Cole/Gasche 2007: 30, and fn. 158).

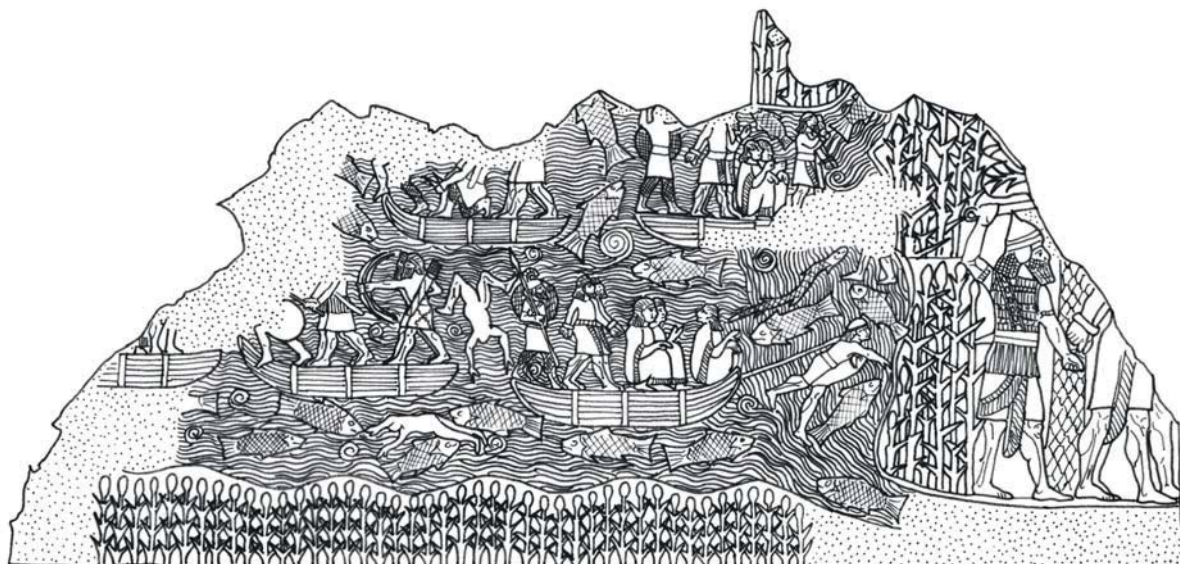


Fig. 2: Bas-relief from the Southwest-Palace at Ninive, room LXX, slab 1 (line drawing based on Or.Dr. IV, 42 as published in Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: pl. 463, no. 643a).

(K 2524). It narrates a massacre of fugitives who tried to escape by hiding in a reed thicket:

§6^{vs. 10}[... ta]-ḫa-zi ip-par-ši-du-ma a-na šu-zu-bu na-pi-š-ti-šu₂ i-ru-bu qe₂-reb GIŠ.GI¹¹[... -n]i-ia ŠAḫ.GIŠ.GI-iš il-mu-u₂-šu₂-nu-ti ki-ma pa-la-a-tu₂ ina GIR₂.AN.BAR u₂-pat-tu-u ŠA₃^{bi}-šu₂-un¹²[... -t]i ma id-du-u₂ pa-gar-šu₂-un GIŠ.GI iq-mu-u₂-ma da-mi-šu₂-nu ub-bal ra-ṭa-niš (Bauer 1972: 74 v. 10–12).

[...] they fled from the [ba]ttle and went inside the reed thicket to save their¹ (lit. his) lives. [...] they (= the Assyrian soldiers) encircled them (= the fugitives) like marsh boars. They opened their stomachs with the iron sword as if with axes. [...] truly, they threw their corpses [(in the river²)] and set the reed thicket on fire. It (the river²) swept away their blood like a drainage pipe.²⁰

The description of the bloodshed is followed by a fragmentary list of captured cities. Nevertheless, enough is preserved to relate this passage to the events of Aššūr-bāni-apli's 5th campaign against Elam, since a similar array of city names occurs in the class A and F prisms.²¹ Furthermore, the account of the 5th campaign against Elam mentions the presence of a river, namely the Idide, the modern Rūd-e Dez. This makes it even more plausible that the massacre mentioned above relates to this specific military campaign.²² As will be seen later, it

is most probable that this episode was also depicted on bas-reliefs in Aššūr-bāni-apli's North-Palace at Ninive.

4 The depictions of wetlands on Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs

Ancient Near Eastern art is known for the use of a distinct flora and fauna to indicate specific geographical regions. In the art historical interpretation of the Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs, the depiction of date palms and reed canes is to be understood as a visual marker for the Babylonian landscape (Reade 1979a: 91; Russell 1991: 153; Bagg 2006: 184), while reed canes alone could also hint at an Elamite landscape; furthermore, reed canes suggest the presence of marsh areas (Bleibtreu 1980: 234–235).

4.1. Bas-reliefs of the Southwest-Palace

Relief cycles that incorporate date palms and reed canes were executed by Sīn-aḫḫē-erība as well as Aššūr-bāni-apli²³ in several rooms and courtyards of the Southwest-Palace at Ninive (i.e. H, XIX, XXVIII, LI, LXIV and LXX).²⁴ The better preserved of these relief cycles, i.e. those discovered in rooms XXVIII²⁵, LXIV²⁶,

²⁰ The translation is based on the reading *rāṭāniš* in favour for *rādāniš* (like a cloudburst), as suggested in CAD R 59 s.v. *rādāniš*, because it strengthens the argumentation for the presence of a watercourse. For a contrary, nonetheless possible interpretation, see the translation by Bauer 1972: 74 v. 12: '[...] ... warfen sie ihre Leichen, zündeten das Röhricht an, und ihr Blut trocknete aus wie ein Wolkenbruch.'

²¹ See Bauer 1972: 74 v. 16–19, and compare to Borger 1996: 49–50, A v 63–92 = A §50–51. Concerning the preserved city names, Bauer 1972: 75 already linked the passage to Aššūr-bāni-apli's campaigns against Ummanaldašu III.

²² The Ulāya, modern Rūd-e Karḫe, is the only other river mentioned in the prism inscriptions regarding Aššūr-bāni-apli's Elamite campaigns, see Gasche/Cole 2007: 55–60.

²³ The bas-reliefs of court XIX and corridor XXVIII are most likely to be attributed to the reign of Aššūr-bāni-apli (Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 84 fn. 1; pp. 88 and 91 fn. 1), but a date during the reign of Sīn-šarru-iškun has also been proposed (Reade 1979a: 109–110).

²⁴ Further depictions of the Babylonian landscape can be found in rooms III and LXIX of the Southwest-Palace (Russell 1991: 153–155, 160; Reade 1979a: 91–92) as well as courtyard J and throne-room M of the North-Palace (Reade 1979a: 104; Barnett 1976: 43–46). Note that, given the incomplete preservation of the relief cycles here, reed thickets do not seem to be an omnipresent feature for the representation of the landscape of Babylonia.

²⁵ Slabs 2, 3, and 4 (BM 124774a, BM 124774b, and BM 124774c; Or.Dr. IV, 34–35), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: pls. 234–239, no. 340 and pls. 240–241, no. 341.

²⁶ Slabs 5 and 7 (Or.Dr. IV, 33), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 129, pl. 450, nos. 611, 613.

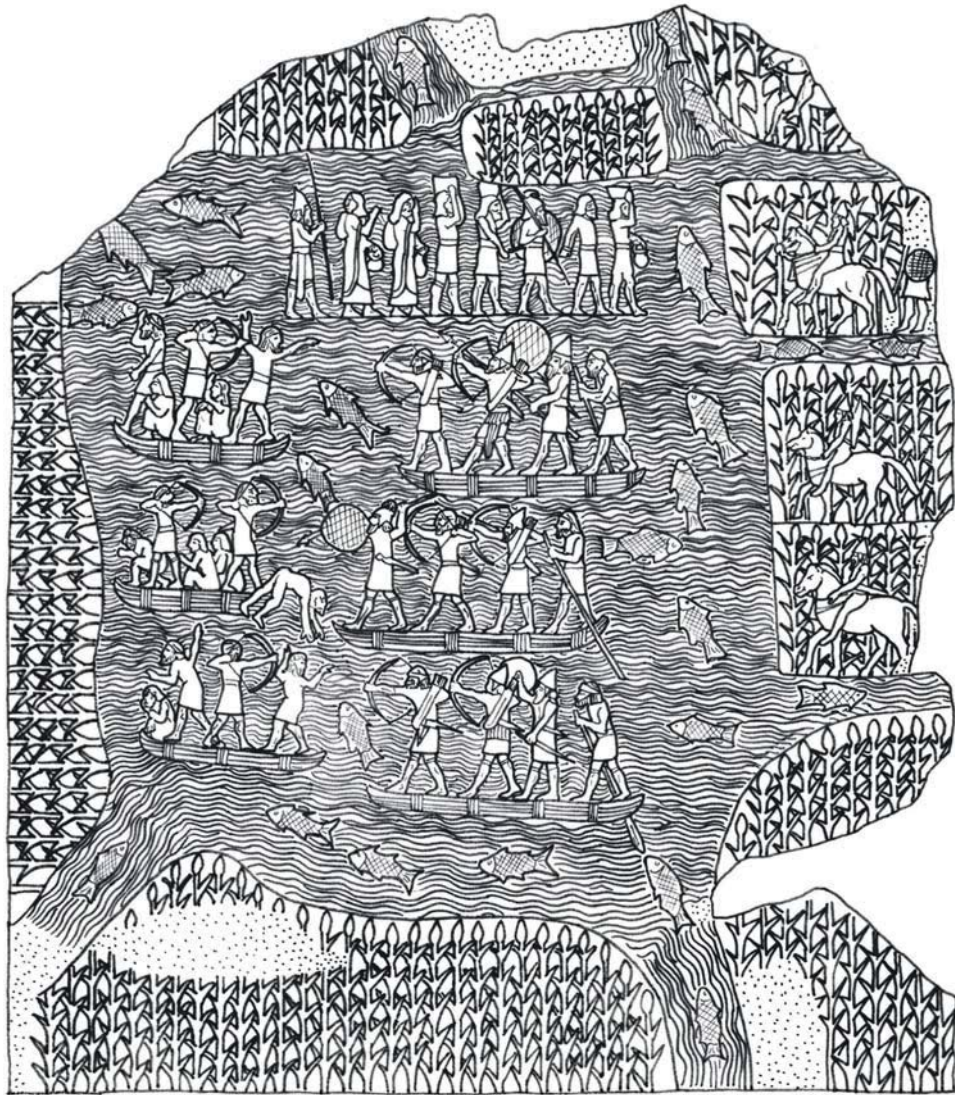


Fig. 3: Bas-relief from the Southwest-Palace at Ninive, court LXIV, slab 5 (line drawing based on Or.Dr. IV, 33 as published in Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: pl. 454, no. 611a).

and LXX²⁷, show bodies of open water encircled by reed thickets. Floating islands of reeds giving shelter to Chaldeans were added on the reliefs of Aššūr-bāni-apli (Figs. 2–4).²⁸ Despite this, and minor variants in the stylistic depiction of the reed canes,²⁹ the rendering of the Babylonian landscape follows the same iconographic scheme under both kings. While the reliefs of corridor XXVIII can be attributed to the reign of Aššūr-bāni-apli due to several stylistic elements (Russell 1991: 150–151), their historical context remains uncertain. The remain-

ing reliefs dating to the time of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība are commonly related to his 1st (Russell 1991: 153–155) and/or 4th campaign (Reade 1979a: 91).

Of special importance for a more precise localization of the depicted landscapes are the reliefs found in the small room LXX, as one of them (slab 1, see Fig. 2) shows the iconographic scheme described above, while a caption on another slab (see above, §3) bears the useful information that the reliefs of this room illustrate that ‘the booty from the *hawrs* (^{id2}*agammē*) of the city Saḥrīna passed before him (i.e. Sīn-aḥḥē-erība)’.³⁰

As mentioned above, the city of Saḥrīna is to be located somewhere along the Euphrates river between Babylon and Borsippa, in the area of the Chaldean tribe Bīt-Dakkūri. Therefore, room LXX does not only hint at the geographic region depicted on these bas-reliefs, but, furthermore, illustrates how the topography of this region was visually perceived at the Assyrian royal court

27 Slab 1 (Or.Dr. IV, 42), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 131, pl. 463, no. 643.

28 The only verifiable exception is the depiction of a reed belt along a ditch or water channel in court XIX (slabs 12 and 11 [BM 124825a+b; Or.Dr. I, 72]), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 82, pls. 206, 207, no. 282 and pls. 208, 209, no. 283. Reed without date palms, but with conifers instead, is further depicted in court VI (slabs 59/60 [BM 124822] and 61 [BM 124824; Or.Dr. IV, 50]), see Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: 66–67, pl. 106, no. 147 and pls. 108, 109, no. 148). It serves as background scenery for the transport of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība’s bull colossi, probably in the vicinity of Ninive (Jacobsen/Lloyd 1935: 35 fn. 20; also Reade 1979b: 332; Russell 1991: 258–260; Bagg 2006: 184–187).

29 Bleibtreu 1980: 248–249 distinguishes between two different styles in the representation of reed canes under Sīn-aḥḥē-erība and Aššūr-bāni-apli.

30 It is very unlikely that the caption on slab 4 does not refer to the landscape on slab 1, whereas different geographical regions are evidently only represented in the courts VI and LXIV, which give enough room for a more complex ideological programmatic, see Russell 1991: 169–171.

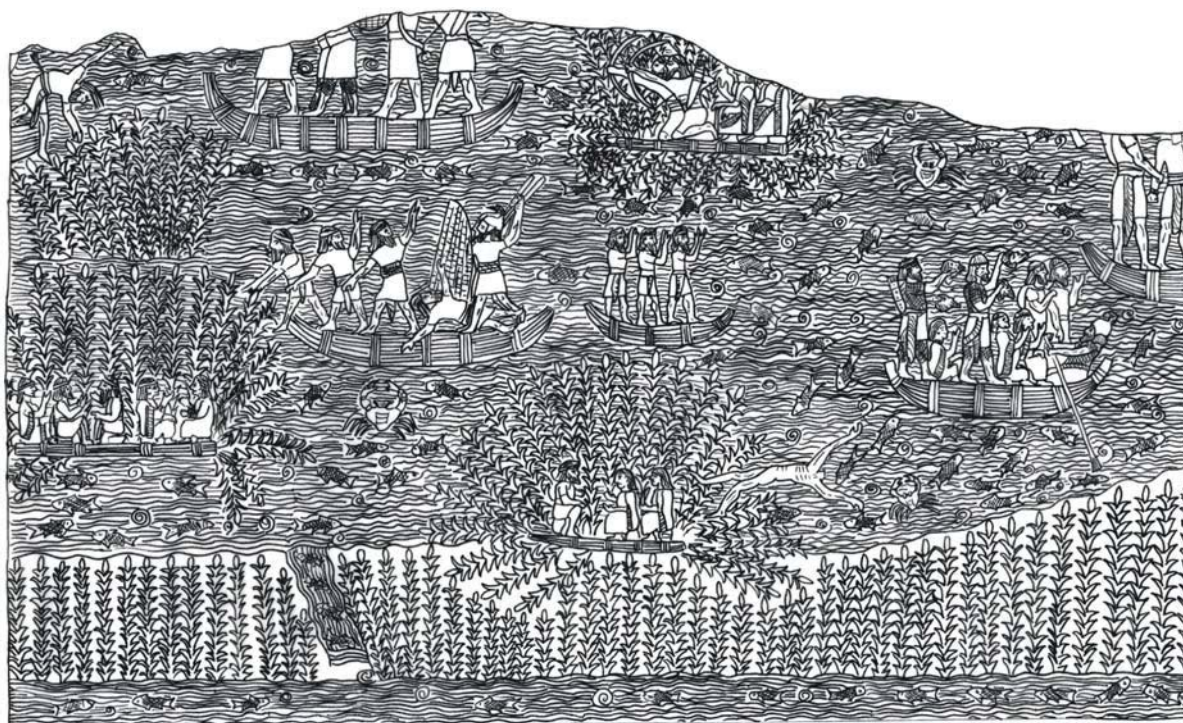


Fig. 4: Bas-relief from the Southwest-Palace at Ninive, corridor XXVIII, slab 3 (line drawing based on Or.Dr. IV, 34 as published in Barnett/Bleibtreu/Turner 1998: pl. 236, no. 340a).

and that this landscape was referred to with the term *agammu*. From an iconographical point of view, it is most probable that the reliefs of court LXIV (Fig. 3) and corridor XXVIII (Fig. 4) were perceived as visual representations of a landscape referred to as *agammu*.

Concerning the reliefs of court LXIV, illustrating the 1st and/or 4th campaign of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība, this conclusion is further strengthened by historiographical reasoning. The same seems to be plausible for the other reliefs from the reign of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība that are linked to his Babylonian campaigns, i.e. in courtyard H and room LI. Due to the lack of captions, it is impossible to determine whether these reliefs referred to the geographical region of Bīt-Dakkūri or Bīt-Yakīn, on the coast of the Persian Gulf.³¹

In the case of Aššūr-bāni-apli's reliefs in corridor XXVIII, the royal inscriptions do not allow for a precise localization within southern Babylonia. Once again, however, one could argue on the basis of the iconographical similarity to Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's reliefs that either the region of Bīt-Dakkūri or Bīt-Yakīn is represented here. According to the account of Aššūr-bāni-apli's Babylonian campaign (e.g. Borger 1996: 39–45, A iii 70–iv 109 = A §32–42), the cities mentioned on the prisms – Sippar, Babylon, Borsippa, and Kutha (Borger 1996: 41, A iii 130 = A §35) – would seem to favour the previous.

4.2. Bas-reliefs of the North-Palace

Depictions of wetlands were not just limited to the Southwest-Palace, but can also be found in three rooms of Aššūr-bāni-apli's North-Palace at Ninive (i.e. F, S, and its upper storey S¹). At first sight, these reliefs differ from the previous ones in that they lack date palms as well as representations of open water. In case of the reliefs of rooms S and S¹, this can be explained by the fact that these reliefs refer to the artificial environment around the city of Ninive, which can be seen as part of a hunting scene in room S as well as an idyllic habitat of game and boars in room S¹ as the lowest register of the famous 'Garden-Scene' (Albenda 1976; 1977; Bagg 2006: 184–187).

Room F is the bathroom of a suite and bears an almost completely preserved bas-relief cycle thematically centred around the capturing of the Elamite city of Ḥamanu – as stated by a caption on one of the slabs –³² and one further, albeit unidentified, Elamite city (Barnett 1976: 39–41, pls. 16–21).³³ The relief cycle is most probably a visual narration of Aššūr-bāni-apli's 5th Elamite campaign (Nadali 2007: 62). The landscape surrounding the cities is characterized by a river and reed thickets growing next to it, as it is shown on slabs 1–2

³² Slab 3 (BM 124531), see Barnett 1976: pl. 17. Its caption cites: ¹uruḥa-ma-nu URU LUGAL-u-ti ša₂ ^{ku}NIM.MA^{ki} ²al-me KUR-ud aš₂-lu-la ša-lat-su (Barnett 1976: 40, ad pl. 17): 'Ḥamanu, royal city of Elam, I surrounded, I conquered, I carried of its plunder.' (Russell 1999: 200). The city of Ḥamanu is mentioned in one further caption on a slab from room S¹, see Russell 1999: 200. This time, the city is situated on a mountaintop and neither a river nor a reed thicket is depicted, see Jacoby 1991: 116–117, figs. 4 and 5.

³³ Nadali 2007: 63–64, and fn. 20 proposes Bīt-Luppi, as an identification of the city on slab 15, as suggested by an inscription on a plaque.

³¹ Russell 1991: 153–155 considers an overall depiction of the 1st campaign, being more extensive and successful than the 4th, more probable. Should this be the case, the pictorial evidence would thus lack any representation of the wetlands along the Persian Gulf.



Fig. 5: Bas-relief from the North-Palace at Ninive, room F, slab 15; lower register (line drawing based on Or.Dr. VII, 6 as published in Barnett 1976: pl. 21, slab 15).



Fig. 6: Bas-relief fragment probably from the North-Palace at Ninive, Room F (line drawing based on photograph published in Barnett 1976: pl. 21, frag. D).

and 4–6 in the upper register, and slabs 10 and 14–15 in the lower register (Barnett 1976: pls. 16–18 and 20–21; **Fig. 5**). On these bas-reliefs, Elamite refugees together with their cattle are hiding in between the dense reed thickets, while Assyrian soldiers attack the cities and deport captured Elamites; the river carries off dead bodies.

Furthermore, the only fragmentary preserved portion of a slab – probably belonging to slab 15 (Barnett 1976: 40, pl. 21) –, today in the University Museum of Durham (DUROM.1950.5), shows an Assyrian ambush on hidden Elamites (**Fig. 6**).

The illustrated landscape differs in so far from those on the reliefs of the Southwest-Palace, previously outlined, as neither reed thickets surrounding bodies of water nor (floating) islands of reeds are depicted. Date palms are also missing here. Hence, the landscapes shown in the Southwest-Palace and the North-Palace at Ninive have little in common, despite the occurrence of reed canes, and probably do not render the same topographical reality.

That such differences in the representation of wetlands are related to geographical and even topographical peculiarities is implied by the above-mentioned

caption in room F of the North-Palace that places the scenery somewhere in the Susiana.

There is no direct evidence on how the represented landscape of room F was referred to by the Assyrians, but the previously cited description of a massacre inside a reed thicket might give a hint (see above, §6). As mentioned before, this text passage might possibly be related to Aššūr-bāni-apli's 5th campaign against Elam and its king Ummanaldašu III. The bas-relief cycle refers, as well as K 2524 (§6) and the account in the canonical prism inscriptions, to the city of Ḥamanu. All three sources are also related to military actions alongside a river. The prisms' inscription states that the Rūd-e Dez served as the line of battle between the Assyrian and Elamite troops. The account on tablet K 2524 vividly narrates a massacre inside a reed thicket (GIŠ.GI) probably growing along a river, and the bas-reliefs in room F depict a successful Assyrian assault on Elamite cities at a river, while the fragment in Durham shows a massacre in a reed thicket.

All three sources in all probability relate to the same event, highlighting different details of it; furthermore, they demonstrate that the wetlands depicted in room F – and the landscape they represent – were referred to by the Akkadian term *apu*.

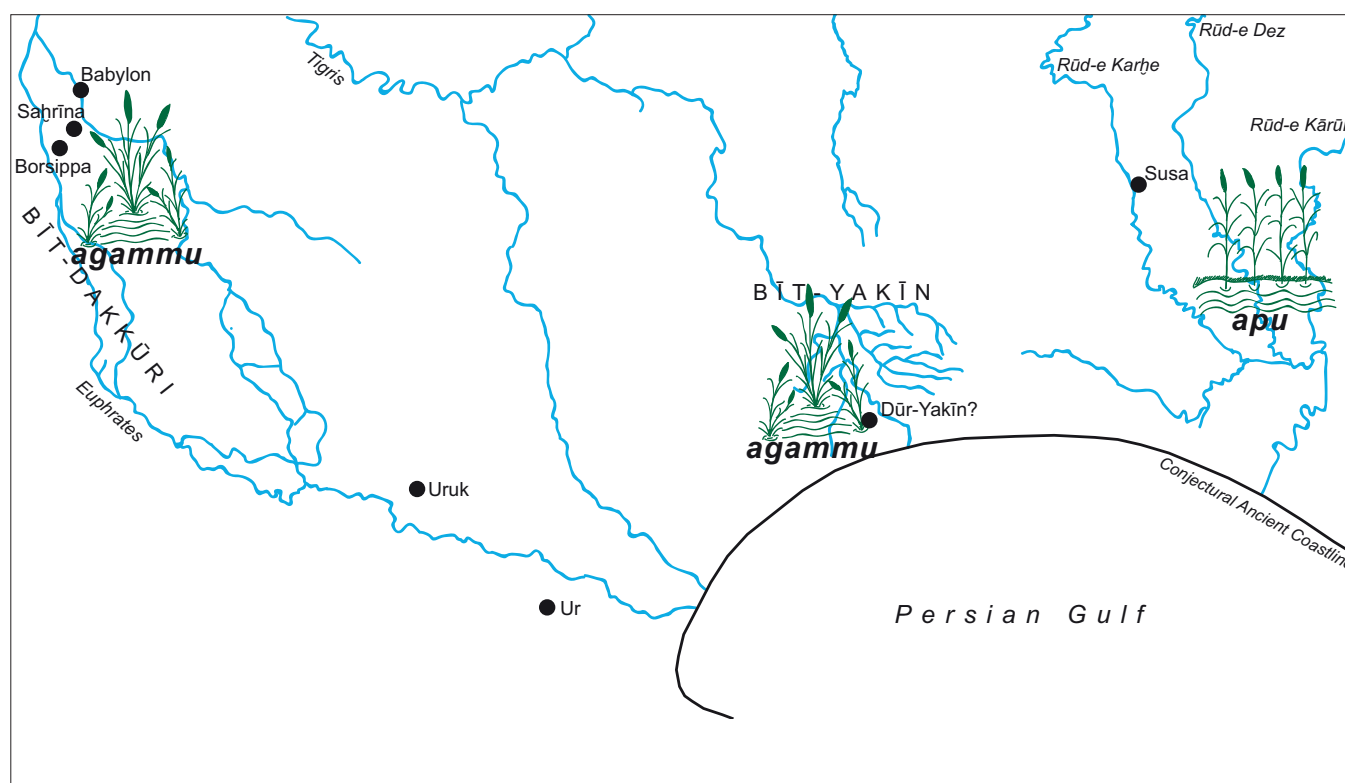


Fig. 7: Map of southern Mesopotamia and the Susiana and the locations of *hawrs* (*agammu*) and riverine wetlands (*apu*) according to the Neo-Assyrian sources (map based on Parpola/Porter 2001: 10, 16, 17).

5 Conclusion

Based on written and visual sources, it has been argued that a differentiated perception and representation of wetlands existed at the Neo-Assyrian royal court. In the corpus of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, the terms *agammu* and *apu* designate two different kinds of wetlands found in the regions of southern Mesopotamia and the Susiana. Both terms can be linked to certain visual representations of landscapes found on the bas-reliefs from the Southwest- and the North-Palace at Ninive. This combination of textual and visual sources allows for more precise statements regarding the physical appearance of the denoted wetlands.

The Akkadian term *agammu*, which was used in the inscriptions of Šin-aḫḫē-erība relating to his campaigns against Marduk-apla-iddina II and Mušēzib-Marduk, signifies a landscape similar to today's *hawrs* at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. This comparison is based on the association with water in the written and visual sources, as well as the depiction of dense reed thickets surrounding these bodies of water.

On the other hand, because of its connection to trees, forests, and rivers in the royal inscriptions, the Akkadian term *apu* refers to riparian zones and the reed vegetation along riverbanks. This assumption is confirmed by reed thickets growing along a watercourse depicted on bas-reliefs that illustrate Aššūr-bāni-apli's campaigns through the Susiana.

This verbal and visual distinction between specific landscapes derived from the varying regional topographies witnessed by the Assyrians on their military campaigns. Therefore, the visual representation follows the Assyrian tradition of distinguishing between different regions by iconographic and visual means.

Furthermore, both media form a valuable historical source for the study of Ancient Near Eastern topography during the 1st half of the 1st millennium BC. They do not only give geographical information on the location of wetlands, but also provide an insight into the nature of these wetlands (Fig. 7).

According to the royal inscriptions and bas-reliefs dating to the reign of Šin-aḫḫē-erība, *hawrs* (*agammu*) occurred along the Euphrates in the region of ancient Borsippa and the Bit-Dakkūri, and also at the coast of the Persian Gulf in the territory of Bit-Yakīn. The location of the *hawrs* depicted in the reign of Aššūr-bāni-apli might either be in one of these areas or even somewhere else in the region of southern Mesopotamia, as no written accounts specify their exact geographic localization. However, Aššūr-bāni-apli provides more information on reed thickets (*apu*) along riverbanks, relating them to the Rūd-e Dez (Idide). Prior to this, Šar-ru-ukīn II had already reported on such riverine reed thickets in the region of today's Hūzestān along the Rūd-e Kārūn (Uqnū).

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Bemerkungen zur vermittelnden Gottheit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der sumerischen Königshymnen

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to: a) present an overview of the evidence available for the motif of the ‚interceding god‘ in the Sumerian royal hymns and inscriptions; b) to trace its development from the middle of the third millennium to the middle of the second millennium; c) to compare textual and visual materials. I suggest that the proliferation of the so called ‚presentation scene before a god‘ in the Old Akkadian period is due to the transposition into the ritual level of the role of the ensi of the Old Akkadian administration, who stood between the cities and the Akkadian king. This led to a major development of the figures of lower gods mediating between humans and higher gods. The interceding god plays an important role in the Sumerian royal hymns. The kings of the Ur III empire needed the legitimation of Ellil (and An) for their superregional empire. These gods, however, were not directly connected with Ur. The mediation between the Ur III kings and the high gods Ellil (and An), often performed by the city-god Nanna, was a form of religious legitimation, which bridged the gap between the king and Ellil (and An). This motif was maintained in the Old Babylonian period.

Keywords: Presentation scene, intercession, mediation, ritual, legitimation of kingship, king, Ellil, An, city god, interceding god, anthropomorphism, concept of deity.

1 Grundsätzliches zur vermittelnden Gottheit

In diesem Beitrag werde ich einige Aspekte der vermittelnden Gottheit besprechen.¹ Dabei werde ich vor allem die sogenannten sumerischen Königshymnen berücksichtigen. Auf die Formulierung des Motivs in Beschwörungen, Mythen und Gebeten werde ich nicht eingehen.

Unter dem Begriff ‚vermittelnde Gottheit‘ verstehe ich jene Gottheit, die zwischen einem Menschen und einer Gottheit *meist* höheren Ranges vermittelt, die sich für ihren Schützling einsetzt, für ihn ein gutes Wort einlegt usw.²

Seltener vermittelt sie zwischen Gottheiten. Das Motiv der vermittelnden Gottheit ist bekanntlich in der sogenannten *Einführungsszene* bildlich dargestellt.³ Die eigentliche Einführungsszene zeigt eine Gottheit, die das Handgelenk eines Beters umfasst und ihn vor eine höhere, meist thronende Gottheit führt.⁴ Eine Sonderform der Einführung ist die Darstellung der einführen-

1 Die Abkürzungen richten sich nach dem *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. Darüber hinaus wird folgende Abkürzung verwendet: CUSAS 17 = A.R. George. (ed.) 2011. Wenn nicht anders angegeben, werden die sumerischen Texte nach der online-Edition des *Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (ETCSL): <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk> zitiert. Für die Königsinschriften gilt Folgendes: altsumerische Königsinschriften = Frayne 2008; altakkadische Königsinschriften = Gelb/Kienast 1990; Königsinschriften der ‚zweiten Dynastie‘ von Lagas = Edzard 1997; altbabylonische Königsinschriften = Frayne 1990. Ich danke Prof. P. Attinger für seine Anmerkungen und S. Borkowski, M.A, für das Korrekturlesen des Manuskripts.

2 Erfolgt die Vermittlung gegenüber einem höheren Gott, so kann man von einer ‚Interzession‘ sprechen. Ist der Vermittler der höhere Gott, so interzediert er nicht, sondern erteilt einen

Befehl, vgl. zur Definition Rossier 1996: 8–15 vor allem S. 12. Die Vermittlung ist ein Schema, das nicht nur auf das Handeln einer Gottheit beschränkt ist, denn als Vermittler können auch Menschen dienen. In einigen Königshymnen wird die Schicksalsentscheidung für den König von den ‚Rezitierenden‘ selbst gefordert, s. z.B.: *Ur-Ninurta C 52–53* ⁴nin-urta [n]am du₁₀ mu nam-til₃-la / du-ri₂-še₃ [nu]-kur₂-ru nam-e-eš tar-mu-ni-ib „ein gutes Schicksal, Jahre des Lebens, die sich auf ewig nicht ändern, bestimme Ur-Ninurta als Schicksal!“ (Aufforderung an Ninurta); *Rīm-Sîn E* (ein Gebet an den Mondgott zugunsten Rīm-Sîns). Hierzu gehört auch die Vermittlung des *āšipu* zwischen Patienten und Göttern. Zum *āšipu* als Vermittler in den *namburbi*-Ritualen s. ausführlich Broida 2015: 51–99. Natürlich dienen auch die Priester und der König als Vermittler zwischen Menschen und Göttern, s. z.B. Sallaberger 2002. Das Thema der Vermittlung zwischen Menschen sowie zwischen Menschen und Göttern in Mesopotamien hat Charpin 2017 behandelt; Charpins Aufsatz basiert auf einem Tagungsbeitrag, der zwar ein Jahr vor der 61. RAI gehalten wurde, jedoch erst 2017 erschienen ist.

3 S. dazu ausführlich Haussperger 1991 und Rohn 2011: 65–85 und 214–220.

4 Einführungen zum König sind nicht Gegenstand dieser Untersuchung.

den Gottheit, die dem Beter vorangeht, ihn jedoch nicht an der Hand nimmt. Steht hingegen die Gottheit hinter dem Beter, so wird die Darstellung je nach seiner Handhaltung als Adorations- bzw. Audienzszene bezeichnet.⁵ Eine genaue Präzisierung hinsichtlich der Handhaltung des Beters ist für die folgende Untersuchung jedoch von untergeordneter Bedeutung und ich werde darauf nicht näher eingehen.

Aus den Texten geht klar hervor, dass das Motiv der Vermittlung nicht unbedingt mit einer Einführung einhergeht. Eine Gottheit kann sich für den König bei Ellil einsetzen, ohne ihn vor Ellil zu führen.

In der sogenannten Adorations- bzw. Audienzszene ist die Vermittlung allerdings auf eine Art Begleitung beschränkt. Tatsächlich bieten mehrere Texte Belege dafür, dass die Lamma-Schutzgöttin den Bittsteller begleitet bzw. ihm folgt. Sie scheint also eher einen allgemeinen Beistand zu bieten (Spycket 1980–1983: 454 Fig. 2). Eine spezielle Art von Vermittlung, auf die hier nicht näher eingegangen werden kann, erfolgt in den Beschwörungen des sogenannten Marduk-Ea-Typs. Dort tritt Marduk vor Enki, um Anweisungen für die Heilung des Patienten einzuholen. Hier liegt also eine Vermittlung zugunsten des Erkrankten vor.⁶

2 Vermittlung und vermittelnde Gottheit von der Ur III-Zeit bis in die altbabylonische Zeit

Das Vermittlungsmotiv kommt häufig in den Königshymnen⁷ vor.⁸ Die Belege lassen sich folgendermaßen unterteilen:

1. Die vermittelnde Gottheit redet den Hauptgott an und fordert ihn auf, ein günstiges Schicksal für den König zu bestimmen bzw. ihm die Regalia und das Königtum zu verleihen. Dabei werden Formen des Imperativs verwendet.

2. Eine direkte Rede der vermittelnden Gottheit liegt nicht vor, jedoch handelt sie offensichtlich zugunsten des Königs. Ihre Handlung bewirkt die Legitimierung des Königs, die Verleihung des Königtums oder einen allgemeinen Beistand seitens des Hauptgottes.

Im Folgenden werden nun einige Belege vorgestellt. Dabei werde ich aus praktischen Gründen jene Texte besprechen, in denen das Motiv der Vermittlung am deutlichsten in Erscheinung tritt.

In der Königshymne *Sulgi F* tritt Sulgi vor den Mondgott Nanna, den Stadtgott von Ur, der sich dann auf den

Weg nach Nippur macht, um die me an ihren Platz, d.h. wohl Ur, zurückzubringen (*Sulgi F* 69–70):⁹

69 ^dnanna-ar mu-na(-an)-ku₄ me(-e) ki-be₂(-e) ge₄-ge₄(-de₃)

70 ħul₂-la-da na-du₍₁₁₎-du₍₁₁₎ (...)

69 Vor Nanna trat er (Sulgi) ein. Die me an ihren Ort zurückzubringen

70 versprach er (Nanna) ihm mit Freude.

Daraufhin fordert Nanna von Ellil die Schicksalsentscheidung für den König (*Sulgi F* 80–83):

80 iri-ġa₂ igi mi-ni-il₂(/mi-in-i₃-il₂) uri₂^{ki}-ma nam mi-ni-tar^{ar}(/bi₂-i₃-in-tar)

81 lugal si sa₂-a ša₃ ku₃-ġu₁₀(/-ge) bi₂-i₃-pa₃(/pa-de₃-ġa₂)

82 'lugal' sipa sul-gi sipa zi ħi-li guru₃^(ru)-am₃

83 nam du₁₀ tar^(ar)-mu-ni-ib₂' kur ħa-ma-da-ab-GAM.GAM-e

80 „Auf meine Stadt habe ich hingeschaut, Ur habe ich das Schicksal entschieden.

81 Den rechten König habe ich in (mein) reines Herz berufen.

82 Der König, der Hirte, Sulgi, der rechte Hirte trägt Liebreiz.

83 Entscheide ihm ein gutes Schicksal! Möge er mir das Fremdland unterwerfen.“

Anschließend kehrt Nanna nach Ur mit Ellils Zustimmung zurück und überbringt sie dem König. Ebenfalls ist es Nanna, der in *Sulgi G* den Wunsch nach einem königlichen Erben für die Stadt Ur vor Ellil äußert (*Sulgi G* 15–20). In diesem Zusammenhang ist auch der Text *Nannas Reise nach Nippur* zu erwähnen. Dort setzt sich nämlich der Mondgott bei Ellil für Ur ein.¹⁰ Obwohl kein bestimmter König namentlich erwähnt wird, wurzelt diese Komposition wohl in der Königsideologie der Ur III-Zeit.

In *Sulgi P* bittet Ninsumun, Sulgis mythische Mutter, An um die Verleihung des Königtums an Sulgi. Zuerst wendet sie sich an den Himmelsgott und bringt ihm ihr Anliegen vor (*Sulgi P* a 11–14):

11 aja-ġu₁₀ an lugal diġir-re-ne-me-en₃

12 kalam niġ₂-daġal-ba igi mu-ni-il₂

13 saġ gegge u₈-gen₇ lu-a-ba

14 sul-gi gu₂-saġ⁷-ba ma-ni-šud⁷ sipa' zi-bi ħe₂-am₃

11 „Mein Vater An, König der Götter bist du!

12 Auf die Weite des Landes habe ich das Auge erhoben,

13 unter seinen ‚Schwarzköpfigen‘, die wie Mutterschafe zahlreich sind,

14 hat Sulgi für mich den Nacken unter ihren Häuptern herausragen lassen,¹¹ sein¹² legitimer Hirte sei er!“

Dann fordert sie das Königtum für Sulgi (*Sulgi P* b 2):

b 2 [...] nam-lugal ba-mu

9 Zitiert nach Lämmerhirt 2012.

10 *Nannas Reise nach Nippur* 326–352.

11 Vgl. Wilcke 2002: 78 mit Anm. 28; ich danke Prof. Attinger für diesen bibliografischen Hinweis.

12 D.h. des Landes. Möglich auch „ihr (= der Menschen) Hirte sei er!“.

5 Vgl. die Zusammenstellung der vorgeschlagenen Definitionen in Rohn 2011: 65f.

6 Zu den Beschwörungen dieser Art vgl. zuletzt Ceccarelli 2015.

7 Für eine einfachere Verständlichkeit wird hier die konventionelle Bezeichnung ‚Königshymne‘ verwendet, wenngleich nach klassischer Terminologie ‚Hymne‘ ein Preislied auf einen Gott ist, während ein Preislied auf einen König ein ‚Enkomion‘ ist; vgl. z.B. Burkert 1994: 9f.; Edzard 1994: 19–21.

8 Die Beleglage spricht gegen Lämmerhirts Aussage, „die Einholung von Enlils ‚placet‘“ durch Nanna in *Sulgi F* sei „eher unüblich“, s. Lämmerhirt 2012: 14.

b 2 „weise¹³ (Sulgi) das Königtum zu!“

In diesem Text wird auch die Einführungsszene deutlich geschildert: Ninsumun umfasst das Handgelenk des Königs und führt ihn in den Tempel, allerdings nicht zu einem höheren Gott, sondern zum Königsthron (*Sulgi P* c 12–15):

12 ^dnin-sumun₂-na-ke₄ sul-gi lugal u[r]i₂^{ki}-ma-ka
13 kišeb-la₂ zi-da-ni im-ma-an-[dab₅]
14 e₂-gal-maḥ-ni-še₃ ul-la mi-[ni-in-tum₂-m]u?
15 para₁₀ maḥ an ku₃-ge mu-ḡa₂-ra-a [mi-ni-in-tuš]

12–13 Ninsumun [fasste] das rechte Handgelenk Sulgis, des Königs von Ur,

14 in Freude bringt sie ihn zu ihrem Egalmaḥ.

15 Auf dem erhabenen Thron, den der glanzvolle An gegründet hat, hat sie ihn Platz nehmen lassen.

Die Beschreibung der Einführung entspricht den bildlichen Darstellungen auf den Rollsiegeln. Dort erkennt man genau, dass die einführende Gottheit das Handgelenk des Bittstellers fasst (**Abb. 1–4**).¹⁴

Auch in den Inschriften Gudeas von Lagas handeln einige Gottheiten als Vermittler für den Herrscher. Bekanntlich beginnt Zylinder A mit der Schilderung von Gudeas Traum. Dann wird berichtet, wie der Herrscher die Göttin Našše um Rat bei der Deutung seines Traumes ersucht. Zuerst besucht er jedoch den Tempel des Ningirsu und dann jenen der Ġatumdu. Dort bittet er die Göttin, die er sowohl Mutter als auch Vater nennt, um ein gutes Zeichen und um den Beistand ihres Schutzgeistes und Schutzgottes (Gud. Zyl. A iii 18–21):

18 iri-še₃ i₃-du-e ḡešgem-ḡu₁₀ ḥe₂-sa₆
19 kur a-ta il₂-la niḡen₆^{ki}-še
20 u₂-du₁₁ sa₆-ga-zu igi-še₃ ḥa-ma-DU
21 ^dlamma sa₆-ga-zu ḡiri₃-a ḥa-mu-da-DU¹⁵

18 „Ich werde zur Stadt gehen, möge mein Zeichen gut sein!

19 Zum Berg, der aus dem Wasser emporsteigt, zu Niḡen,

20 möge dein guter Udug-Schutzgeist mir vorangehen.

21 Deine gute Lamma-Schutzgottheit möge mit mir auf den Weg gehen.“

Die begleitende Lamma-Schutzgottheit ist auf Gudeas berühmtem Siegel (**Abb. 1**) mit ihrer typischen Handhaltung hinter dem Herrscher dargestellt.¹⁶

In Gudea Statue E vii 22–viii 15 erfüllt Ningešzida, Gudeas ‚persönlicher‘ Gott,¹⁷ die Funktion des Vermitt-



Abb. 1: Nach Delaporte 1920: T. 108.

lers. Er tritt vor BaU mit den Brautgaben, die Gudea vorbereitet hatte (vii 18–viii 21). Dadurch soll Gudea ein langes Leben gesichert werden (Gud. St. E viii 9–15):

9 nam-til₃-la-na
10 u₄-bi sud-a-da
11 diḡir-ra-ni
12 ^dnin-ḡeš-zi-da
13 ^dba-U₂
14 e₂ iri-ku₃-ga-<ka>-na
15 mu-na-da-ku₄-ku₄

9–10 Auf dass die Tage seines (= Gudeas) Lebens lang werden,

11 ist sein Gott

12 Ningešzida

13 zu BaU

14 in ihren Tempel der ‚reinen Stadt‘

15 damit (= mit den Brautgaben) eingetreten.

Die bekannteste Darstellung Ningešzidas als Vermittler finden wir auf Gudeas Siegel (**Abb. 1**): Der Gott umfasst das Handgelenk des Herrschers und führt ihn zu einem thronenden Gott. Dieser hält in den Händen zwei Gefäße, aus denen Wasser sprudelt. Die Identität des Gottes ist allerdings nicht eindeutig. Aufgrund der Gefäße mit heraussprudelndem Wasser wurde er oft mit Enki identifiziert, doch ist eine Identifikation mit Ningirsu nicht ausgeschlossen.¹⁸ Weitere Darstellungen Ningešzidas als einführender Gott findet man auf Bruchstücken der Stelen Gudeas (**Abb. 2**).¹⁹

Interessanterweise findet man in der Königshymne *Išme-Dagan A* Ellil als vermittelnde Gottheit zwischen dem König und dem obersten Gott An. Nach Ellils Vermittlung übergibt An dem König die Regalia (*Išme-Dagan A+V* 58–60):

58 enim du₁₁-ga ^dnu-nam-nir-ra-ta
58a ka-ta e₃-a ^den-lil₂-la₂-ta(/-še₃)

13 S. für das Fehlen des Dativs im Imperativ Klein 1981: 22 Anm. 100.

14 Vgl. Haussperger 1991: 69 mit Anm. 231 und S. 133.

15 Für u₂-du₁₁ sa₆-ga und ^dlamma sa₆-ga, die Gudea begleiten, vgl. Gud. Zyl. B ii 9–10; vgl. auch *Lugalbanda I* 234f.

16 Zu Lamma vgl. Spycket 1980–1983 und zuletzt Asher-Greve/Westenhof 2013: 192–199.

17 Der Begriff ‚persönlicher Gott‘ ist umstritten. Beim sogenannten ‚persönlichen Gott‘ handelt es sich oft um einen ‚Familien-gott‘, s. Jaques 2015: 297–314 und van der Toorn 1996: 66–93; vgl. die Zusammenfassung der Forschungsgeschichte in Streck 2003–2005: 424–429. Ob Gudea die Verehrung Ningešzida von seinem Vater ‚erbt‘, lässt sich nicht sagen. Mit Sicherheit ‚vererbt‘ er sie seinem Sohn Ur-Ningirsu, vgl. *Ur-Ningirsu II* 6.

18 Zur Frage der Identifikation s. Suter 2000: 67. Für die Interpretation des thronenden Gottes mit Ningirsu könnten einige Belege sprechen, in denen Ningirsu in Zusammenhang mit Wasser vorkommt. Wenn z.B. in Zylinder B geschildert wird, was Gudeas Eintreten vor Ningirsu bewirken soll, wird als allererstes erwähnt, dass fließendes Wasser die Flüsse füllen möge: Gud. Zyl. B xiv 25 i₇-de a-NI-le si-a-da „Damit fließendes Wasser die Flüsse füllt(, ... tritt Gudea vor Ningirsu ein)“; vgl. noch Gud. Zyl. A ix 20 ḡe₂₆ ^dnin-ḡir₂-su a ḥuš ge₄-a „ich, Ningirsu, der das wütende Wasser zurückgehalten hat“; s. auch Zyl. A viii 21–26; xi 11–15; Zyl. B ii 17; vgl. auch die Wasserregulierung des Tigris durch Ninurta in *Lugale* 334–359.

19 Vgl. Börker-Klähn 1982: Nr. 35 und Nr. 41.

59 an-ne₂ gu₃ zi-de₃-eš ġa₂(-a)-ar ħa-ma-an-de₂
60 šibir ešgiri šu-ġu₁₀ ħe₂(-em)-ma(-an)-šum₂

58 Auf Nunamnirs Wort hin,
58a auf Ellils Aussage hin,
59 hat mich An in rechter Weise fürwahr berufen,
60 mir Stab und Zügel in die Hand gegeben.

Im selben Text übernimmt auch Ninurta die Rolle des Vermittlers. Obwohl die entsprechende Stelle einige grammatikalische Schwierigkeiten bereitet, scheint Ninurta Ellil für die Angelegenheiten des Königs wohlwollend gestimmt zu haben (*Išme-Dagan A+V* 81–83):

81 ^dnin-urta ur-saġ kala-ga ^den-lil₂-la₂-ke₄
82 ^dnu-nam-nir enim-ma ħa-ma-ni(-in)-gub
83 enim sa₆-ga ^den-lil₂ ^dnin-lil₂-la₂ ġa₂-ar ħu-mu(-un)-na-aġ₂²⁰

81 Ninurta, der starke Held Ellils,
82 hat mir Nunamnir in der Angelegenheit wahrlich beistehen lassen,
83 Ellils und Ninlils gutes Wort hat er mir dargereicht.

In *Išme-Dagan B* wird beschrieben, wie BaU Išme-Dagan in das Enamtila Ellils mit einem Opferlamm eintreten lässt. Dabei muss bemerkt werden, dass der Göttin BaU in dieser Königshymne zahlreiche Eigenschaften der Göttin Ninisina zugeschrieben werden, so dass man eher von einer synkretistischen Gestalt als von der bloßen Göttin BaU sprechen sollte. Nachdem die Göttin den König vor Ellil geführt hat, fordert sie von Ellil eine günstige Schicksalsentscheidung (*Išme-Dagan B* 34–42):

34 e₂-nam-til₃-la e₂ ^den-lil₂-la₂-še₃
35 'sila₄' babbar udu enim-ġar sa₆-ga gaba-na im-mi-tab
36 nun* ^diš-me-^dda-gan ze₄-e im-me-ni-ku₄
37 K.L.LUGAL.GUB nam-til₃-la-da im-da-e-gub
38 kur-gal ^den-lil₂-ra giri₁₇ šu mu-ne-ġal₂
39 aia ^dmu-ul-lil₂ u₃-mu-un gal kur-kur-ra
40 ^diš-me-^dda-gan-na na-aġ₂ ze₂*-eb*²¹ tar*-m[u*]-ni*-x*-ib* x*²² / e-ne-er mu-ne-du₁₁
41 ^den-lil₂ lugal kur-kur-ra-ke₄ igi nam-til₃-la saġ-ki zalag-ga-ni mu-un-ši-in-bar
42 ^diš-me-^dda-gan-na nam mu-ni-ib₂-tar-re

34 Für das Enamtila, das Haus Ellils,
35 hat er (Išme-Dagan) an seiner Brust ein weißes Lamm, ein Schaf für ein günstiges Orakel festgehalten.
36 Den Fürsten Išme-Dagan hast du (BaU) dort hineingebracht.²³

20 -na-aġ₂ in drei Manuskripten (A ii 36; B ii 32; C+ iv 7'–10') ist äußerlich schwierig, vielleicht {n+aġ₂}? Textkürzel nach Attinger 1993: 42; alle Fragmente von B sind jetzt auf CDLI einsehbar (P260877); zu C und den dazugehörigen Joins s. Frayne 1998: 10f. und Attinger 2008: 129. Vgl. -na-aġ₂ für -an-aġ₂ in *Lugalbanda II* 313 (AA) // 379 (AA), s. Wilcke 1969: 118f., 124f.

21 Nach Kollationen von CBS 7184 Rs. 7 (PBS 10/2, 14; Foto: CDLI P262216) scheint eher ze₂-eb als de₃-eb- (so ETCSL) vorzuliegen. Auch wenn das Ende der Zeile epigrafisch schwierig bleibt, handelt es sich dabei um einen Imperativ des Verbs nam du₁₀ tar und nicht um eine Emesal-Form des Prekativs von nam tar.

22 de₃-eb-pa₃ (so ETCSL) ist epigrafisch ausgeschlossen.

23 Vgl. Klein 1981: 35. Diese literarische Beschreibung entspricht der ikonografischen Darstellung der Einführungsszene auf Rollsiegeln, s. Haussperger 1991: 69 mit Anm. 231 und S. 133.

37 Am Königsort des Lebens hast du ihn zum (Kult-) Dienst hingestellt.

38 Zum großen Berg Ellil hast du gebetet:
39 „Vater Ellil, großer Herr aller Länder,
40 bestim[me] Išme-Dagan ein gutes Schicksal!“, hast du ihm gesagt.

41 Ellil, der König aller Länder, hat ihn mit seinem lebens(spendenden) Blick, mit seinem leuchtenden Antlitz angeschaut, (daraufhin)

42 bestimmte er für Išme-Dagan das Schicksal!

Die Einführung eines Bittstellers mit einem vor der Brust gehaltenen Lamm ist auf den Rollsiegeln häufig dargestellt (**Abb. 2** und **3**).

In der Königshymne *Išme-Dagan Q* legt Nuška bei Ellil und Ninlil ein gutes Wort für den König ein (*Išme-Dagan Q* b 11//15):

11//15 enim sa₆-ga ^diš-me-^dda-gan-na ka ku₃-zu ħe₂-em-tum₃

11//15 (Nuška,) dein reiner Mund möge ein gutes Wort für Išme-Dagan²⁴ einlegen.

Die Vermittlung durch Nuška überrascht nicht, denn als Ellils Wesir dient er von Haus aus als *der* Vermittler vor Ellil in menschlichen als auch in göttlichen Angelegenheiten.²⁵

In einer Königshymne für den König Lipit-Eštar tritt Ninisina vor Ellil. Sie spricht ihn an und fordert eine günstige Schicksalsentscheidung sowie ein langes Leben für den König (*Lipit-Eštar E* 13, 15):

13 [igi ħul₂]²⁶-la-zu mu-un-ši-bar na-aġ₂ zi tar-mu-ni-ib
15 [^dnu]-nam-nir nun ^dli-pi₂-it-eš₄-tar₂-ra nam-til₃ u₄ sud-ra₂ saġ-e-eš rig₇-ba-ab

13 „Du (= Ellil) schautest ihn mit deinem [Freudensblick] an, nun bestimme ihm ein gutes Schicksal!²⁷
15 [Nu]namnir, schenke dem Fürsten Lipit-Eštar ein Leben langer Tage!“

Vor diesem Hintergrund lässt sich auch die Komposition *Ninisinas Reise nach Nippur* verstehen.²⁸ Die Legitimation des Königs von Isin ist wohl der Zweck von Ninisinas Reise zu Ellil, denn der König, der namentlich nicht erwähnt wird, bereitet ein Festmahl für die Göttin nach ihrer Rückkehr nach Isin vor.

24 Wörtlich „das gute Wort des Išme Dagan“. Der Ausdruck kann auch als *genitivus subjectivus* verstanden werden (d.h. Išme-Dagans Wort, das Nuška den Göttern überbringt); s. unten zu *Lipit-Eštar D* 35. Hinsichtlich der vermittelnden Funktion Nuškas ändert sich nichts.

25 Vgl. Nuškas Rolle als Vermittler zwischen der Versammlung der Igi und jener der Anunnaki in *Atra-ḫasis I* 76–165. In *Ellil und Sud* a 28–102 vermittelt Nuška zwischen Ellil und Nisaba bei der Werbung um die Göttin Sud (freundlicher Hinweis Prof. Attinger). Zu göttlichen Wesiren als Vermittlern vergleiche auch Ninsuburs und Papsugals Rolle in *Innanas Gang zur Unterwelt* und *Ištars Höllenfahrt*.

26 ETCSL: [igi nam-til₃]-la. Dafür gibt es auf der Tafel nicht genug Platz. Ich danke Prof. Attinger für diesen Hinweis; die Ergänzung folgt seinem Vorschlag.

27 UET 6/I 97, vgl. Tinney 1996: 52f.

28 Vgl. Wagensonner 2008.

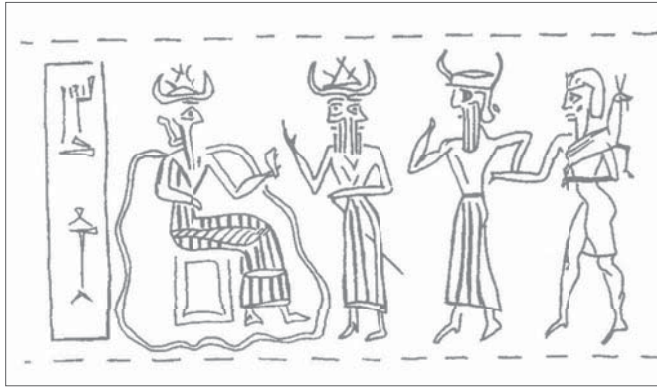


Abb. 2: Altakkadisches Rollsiegel (British Museum BM 129482; Rohn 2011: Taf. 43 Nr. 513; Zeichnung: K. Rohn).



Abb. 3: Altakkadisches Rollsiegel (British Museum BM 122125; Rohn 2011: Taf. 44 Nr. 526; Zeichnung: K. Rohn).

In der Königshymne *Ur-Ninurta A* führt Innana den König zu An und Ellil (*Ur-Ninurta A* 12–13):

12 e₂-kur ki-tuš ku₃ an ^den-lil₂-la₂ ni₂ su zi
guru₃^{ru}-še₃
13 lugal-ra šu-ni im-ma-an-dab₅ sun₅-na-bi mi-ni-
in-ku₄

12 Ins Ekur, in Ans und Ellils reine Residenz, die mit Schrecken und Schauer beladen ist,
13 ließ sie (Innana) den König – sie hatte seine Hand ergriffen – demütig eintreten.

Daraufhin bittet Innana die zwei Götter darum, Ur-Ninurta die Herrschaft über die Menschheit zu verleihen (*Ur-Ninurta A* 20):

20 nam-sipa zi-ġal₂ uġ₃ šar₂-ra du-ri₂-še₃ saġ-e-eš
rig₇-ga-na-ab-z[e]₂-en

„schenkt ihm für die Ewigkeit das Hirtenamt über die Lebewesen, über die zahlreichen Leute.“

Hinsichtlich der Beschreibung der Einführung ist auch *Lipit-Eštar D* 9–11 besonders interessant. Dort führt die Muttergöttin Nintur den Gott Ninurta zu Ellil und spricht zu seinen Gunsten:

9 kišeb-la₂ zi-da-zu im-ma-an-dab₅ ama-zu ^dnin-
tur₅-re
10 e₂-kur eš₃ maḥ-a mi-ni-in-ku₄-re-en aia-zu ^den-
lil₂-ra
11 [mu-n]a-ab-be₂ dumu šu ġar ge₄-zu nam gal tar-
mu-ni-ib

9 Dein rechtes Handgelenk hat sie ergriffen, deine Mutter Nintur,
10 in das Ekur, das erhabene Heiligtum, hat sie dich eintreten lassen, zu deinem Vater Ellil
11 [sagt sie: „Deinem rächenden Sohn entscheide ein großartiges Schicksal!“

Im selben Text finden wir dann Ninnibru, die sich für Lipit-Eštar bei ihren Gatten Ninurta einsetzt (*Lipit-Eštar D* 33–35):

33 ^dnin-urta ur-saġ ^den-lil₂-la₂ para₁₀-za dur₂ ġar-bi
34 ġešdam₂-zu NIN zi ^dnin-nibru^{ki} gu₂-da mu-ri-in-
la₂
35 enim sa₆-ga ^dli-pi₂-it-eš₄-tar₂-ra-da u₄ šu₂-še₃
ḥa-ra-da-DU

33 Ninurta, Held Ellils, nimm Platz auf deinem Thron!²⁹
34 Dich hat deine Gattin, die rechte Herrin Ninnibru, umarmt.
35 Mit einem guten Wort für Lipit-Eštar möge sie täglich vor dir stehen.

Die Vermittlung finden wir auch in einigen Texten Sîn-iddinams von Larsa. In *Sîn-Iddinam A* 13a–14 lesen wir:

13a ^dsu'en-e ^den-lil₂ ^dnin-lil₂-ra 'gu₃ mu-ne'-[de₂-e]
14 nam ^dsu'en-i-din-'nam' sud-ra₂-še₃' tar-re-e-de₃
šū mu-un-ne-mu₂-mu₂

13 Su'en sprach zu Ellil und Ninlil.
14 Er bat sie darum, Sîn-iddinams Schicksal für die Zukunft zu bestimmen.

In einer Bauinschrift Sîn-iddinams lässt sich die Vermittlung zugunsten des Königs belegen. In CUSAS 17 Nr. 37³⁰ bitten Nanna und Utu, die Stadtgötter von Ur und Larsa, die großen Götter um die Königswürde für den König. Nannas Eingreifen lässt sich damit erklären, dass die vorliegende Inschrift anlässlich des Baus der Stadtmauer von Ur verfasst wurde (CUSAS 17 Nr. 37 iii 15–18):

iii 15 u₄ an-ne₂ ^den-lil₂ ^den-ki-ke₄
iii 16 a-ra-zu ^dnanna ^dutu-ta
iii 17 nam-lugal larsa-ma
iii 18 ma-ni-in-šum₂-mu-uš-a

iii 15 Als An, Enlil und Enki
iii 16 mir auf flehentliches Bitten von Nanna und Utu
iii 17 das Königtum über Larsa
iii 18 gegeben hatten(, ...)

In einer Bauinschrift anlässlich des Bau des Ešahula, Nanājas Tempel, durch Rīm-Sîn und Kudur-mabuk erscheint Nanāja selbst als vermittelnde Göttin zwischen den beiden Bauherren und dem Paar An und Innana (Rīm-Sîn I. 3: 21–28):

21 ^dna-na-a
22 NIN ^dlamma-ke₄
23 u₃-mu-ne-ḥul₂
24 nam-lugal ša₃-ḥul₂-la
25 bala nam-sa₆-ga
26 ^dlamma šu-a ge₄-ge₄

29 Aufforderung durch die Rezitierenden, s. Anm. 2.
30 Vgl. Volk 2011.

27 ki an ⁴innana-ta
28 al ħu-mu-un-ne-de₃(-eb₂)-be₂

21 Nachdem sich Nanāja,
22 die Herrin der Lamma-Schutzgottheit,
23 über sie (= Kudur-mabuk und Rīm-Sîn) gefreut hatte,
24 forderte sie²⁸⁾ von An und Innana²⁷⁾ ein freudenrei-
ches Königtum,
25 eine Regierungszeit der Zufriedenheit
26 und eine Lamma-Schutzgottheit, die (sie) bewahrt.

Dass Nanāja ausgerechnet von An und Innana Königtum und Schutzgöttin verlangt, hängt gewiss damit zusammen, dass sie als deren Tochter galt.³¹ Bei diesen zwei Bauinschriften erscheint die Vermittlung als eine Gegenleistung der jeweiligen Gottheiten für die Bautätigkeit der Herrscher.

Als Hauptgott der Stadt Larsa ist Utu von Haus aus den Königen dieser Stadt nah. Aus diesem Grund führt er Rīm-Sîn zu An und Ellil in einer neulich veröffentlichten Inschrift dieses Königs³² (CUSAS 17 Nr. 51: 18–19):

18 unken diġir-re-e-ne-ka šu-ġu₁₀ im-mi-in-⁴dab₅⁷
19 iġi an den-lil₂-la₂-še₃ ħu-mu-u[n-DU?]

18 In der Versammlung der Götter nahm er (= Utu)
meine Hand,
19 er [führte⁷] mich vor An und Ellil.

Die Vermittlung lässt sich auch in Königshymnen der ersten Dynastie von Babylon nachweisen.

In *Ḥammurapi D* wendet sich Marduk an An, Ellil und Enki und fordert eine günstige Schicksalsentscheidung für den König (*Ḥammurapi D* 11–12):

11 sipa ša₃-ga-zu nam-en kalam-ma AK-de₃ mu-e-
ni-⁴in-⁴[...]
12 nam-a-ni gal-le-eš tar-re-en-ze₂-en KA ku₃-za x
[...]

11 „Der Hirte eures¹ Herzens, damit er die Herrschaft
über das Land ausübt, [...],
12 Bestimmt auf großartige Weise sein Schicksal, mit
euren¹ reinen Äußerungen [...]!“

In der Königshymne *Samsu-iluna E* erscheint Nuška in der Rolle des Vermittlers zwischen dem König und Ellil und Ninlil. In den Zeilen 36–38 führt Nuška den König zu Ellil und Ninlil:

36 ⁴nuska sugal₇-maġ ⁴en-lil₂-la₂-ke₄
37 kadra-zu šeg₁₂ e₂-kur-ra-še₃ ħul₂-la ħe₂-ni-ib-ku₄-
⁴ku₄⁷
38 saġ-ki zalag-ga ⁴en-lil₂ ⁴nin-<lil₂>-la₂-ke₄ an-ta
ħe₂-bi₂-ib-gi₄-gi₄-in

36 Nuška, Ellils Großwesir,
37 möge dein Geschenk ins Ziegelwerk des Ekurs freu-
dig hineinbringen,
38 sodass du (deine Bitte) zu Ellils und Ninlils strahlen-
dem Antlitz richten kannst.

Interessante altbabylonische Belege für das Motiv der vermittelnden Gottheit kommen in einigen Götterbrie-

fen vor, die Privatpersonen betreffen. Als Beispiel sei hier AbB 13, 164 zitiert:

1 a-na be-el-ti-ia ⁴ni[n]-mu[g]
2 qi₂-bi₂-ma
3 um-ma ⁴nin-urta-qar-ra-ad wa-ra-ad-ki-ma
4 qa₂-ba-ki ⁴i-šum i-še-mi
5 a-na an-ni-tim ħi-ṭi-tim
6 ša ub-[a]m qa₂-ta-ti-ia
7 it-ti ⁴i-šum li-qe₂-a

1 Zu meiner Herrin Ninmug
2–3 sprich: folgendermaßen (spricht) Ninurta-qarrād,
dein Diener.
4 Išum hört auf das, was du sagst.
5 Wegen dieses Frevels,
6–7 den ich begangen habe, nimm, du und Išum, mei-
ne Hände!

Im Laufe der spätaltbabylonischen Zeit wird die Einführungsszene immer seltener auf Rollsiegeln dargestellt. Das Motiv ist durch Siegelabrollungen zwar auch auf Tontafeln der Zeit Abi-Ešuhš und Ammiditanas belegt,³³ jedoch ist die Adorationsszene zu dieser Zeit viel verbreiteter. Noch seltener erscheint die Einführungsszene in der Glyptik der kassitischen Zeit.³⁴

Hier sei noch darauf hingewiesen, dass das Motiv der Vermittlung auch in den späteren *šūila*-Gebeten häufig anzutreffen ist.³⁵ Wie bereits Meyer bemerkt hatte, gibt es allerdings auch Belege für höhere Gottheiten, wie Šamaš und Ea, die zwischen dem Beter und seinem ‚persönlichen‘ Gott vermitteln, damit sich dieser seinem Schützlingen wieder nähert.³⁶

3 Vermittlung und vermittelnde Gottheit in der altakkadischen und frühdynastischen Zeit

In den Inschriften der altakkadischen Könige ist das Motiv der vermittelnden Gottheit meines Wissens nicht belegt.

In der literarischen Komposition *Innana B* (= *Nin-mešara*), die die Überlieferung Enġeduana, Sargons Tochter und Nannas en-Priesterin, zuschreibt, kommt eine Vermittlung zugunsten Enġeduanas vor. Die en-Priesterin, die vom Aufrührer Lugalane ihres Amtes enthoben und aus Ur vertrieben wurde, wurde sogar vom Mondgott verlassen.³⁷ Infolgedessen wendet sich Enġeduana an Innana, damit diese den Gott An dazu auffordert, die Missstände zu beseitigen, sodass ihr gutes Verhältnis zum Mondgott wiederhergestellt wird.³⁸ (*Innana B* 74–75):

74 nam-ġu₁₀ ⁴su'en lugal-an-ne₂
75 an-ra du₁₁-mu-na-ab an-e ħa-ma-tuġ-e

33 Vgl. Colbow 1996.

34 Ein Beispiel ist Matthews 1992: Nr. 189.

35 Vgl. die Zusammenstellung in Meyer 1976: 230–239.

36 Vgl. Meyer 1976: 230, 236–239.

37 Vgl. Zgoll 1997: 132f.

38 Vgl. Zgoll 1997: 122–124. An soll Lugalane bestrafen und Innanas Größe, d.h. Akkads Herrschaft, erneut bestätigen.

31 Vgl. Westenholz 2004: 311.

32 George 2011: 108–111.

Die folgenden Tabellen fassen die Belege zusammen:

(Die Tabellen erheben keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit. Es werden allerdings auch Belege aufgelistet, die in der Diskussion nicht besprochen wurden.)

Begünstigter	Vermittler	Hauptgott	Grund	A. ^{a)}	E. ^{b)}	Text
Enannatum I	Sulluḫša	Innana	Leben			5 iii 6–iv 8
Enannatum I	Sulluḫša?	Lugalurub	Leben			10 iii 7–10
Enmetena	Sulluḫša	Ninḡirsu; Našše	Leben			1 vi 1–8
Enmetena	Sulluḫša	Ninḡirsu	Leben			11 iii 5–iv 4
Enmetena	Sulluḫša	Ellil	Leben			17 iv 2–10
Enmetena	Sulluḫša	Ninḡirsu	Leben			27 iv 4–9
IriKagina	Ninsubur	Ninḡirsu	Leben			6 iv 10–v 5
IriKagina	Sulluḫša	Ninḡirsu	Leben			8 iv 6–v 4
IriKagina	Sulluḫša	Ninḡirsu	Leben			9 12'–17'
Enḫeduana	Innana	An	Gutes Verhältnis zum Mondgott; Bestrafung von Lugalene; Innanas (/Akkads) Herrschaft	✓		<i>Innana B</i> 74–76
Sulgi	Nanna	Ellil	Schicksal; Königtum	✓		<i>Sulgi F</i> 69–70; 80–83
Sulgi	Nanna	Ellil	Königlicher Erbe	✓		<i>Sulgi G</i> 15–20
Sulgi	Ninsumun	An	Königtum	✓	(✓) ^{c)}	<i>Sulgi P</i> a 11–b 2; c 11–16
Gudea	Udug; Lamma	Našše	Beistand			Gudea Zyl. A iii 18–21
Gudea	Ninḡešzida	BaU	Leben			Gudea St. E vii 22–viii 15
Išme-Dagan	Ellil	An	Stab; Zügel			<i>Išme-Dagan A+V</i> 58–60
Išme-Dagan	Ninurta	Ellil; Ninlil	Beistand			<i>Išme-Dagan A+V</i> 81–83
Išme-Dagan	BaU	Ellil	Schicksal; Regalia	✓	✓	<i>Išme-Dagan B</i> 35–42
Išme-Dagan	Nuška	Enlil	Beistand			<i>Išme-Dagan Q</i> b 11//15
Lipit-Eštar	Ninnibru	Ninurta	Beistand			<i>Lipit-Eštar D</i> 33–35
Lipit-Eštar	Ninisina	Ellil	Schicksal; Leben	✓		<i>Lipit-Eštar E</i> 4–15
Ur-Ninurta	Innana	An; Ellil;	Schicksal	✓	✓	<i>Ur-Ninurta A</i> 11–28
Sîn-iddinam	Su'en	Ellil; Nilil	Schicksal; Leben	✓		<i>Sîn-Iddinam A</i> 13a–25
Sîn-iddinam	Nanna; Utu	An; Ellil; Enki	Königtum			CUSAS 17 Nr. 37 iii 15–18
Rīm-Sîn	Utu	An; Ellil	Königtum	✓	✓	CUSAS 17 Nr. 51: 18–30
Rīm-Sîn	Udug; Lamma; diḡir gub-ba; diḡir ku ₄ -ra ^{d)}	Nanna; Nin-gal	Beistand; Leben			<i>Rīm-Sîn D</i> 7–13
Rīm-Sîn; Kudur-Marduk	Nanāja	An; Innana	Königtum; Schutzgott			<i>Rīm-Sîn I</i> 3: 21–28, 40–47
Ḥammurapi	Marduk	An; Ellil; Enki	Schicksal; Königtum	✓		<i>Ḥammurapi D</i> 11–13
Samsu-iluna	Nuška	Ellil; Ninlil	Königtum		(✓) ^{e)}	<i>Samsu-iluna E</i> 36–38

a) A. = Anrede.

b) E. = Einführung.

c) Ninsumun führt den König zum Thron, nicht zu einer Gottheit.

d) Zur Vermittlerrolle der diḡir gub-ba- und diḡir ku₄-ra-Gottheiten s. Charpin 2017: 247f.

e) Inhaltlich handelt es sich um eine Einführung. Das übliche Bild der vermittelnden Gottheit, die das Handgelenkes bzw. die Hand des Königs fasst, liegt jedoch nicht vor.

Tab. 1. Vermittlung zwischen Menschen und Gottheiten.

Gott	Vermittler	Hauptgott	Grund	A.	E.	Text
Ninurta	Nintur	Ellil	Schicksal	✓	✓	<i>Lipit-Eštar D 9–11</i>

Tab. 2. Vermittlung zwischen Gottheiten.

Vermittler	Hauptgott	Grund	Text
Ninmug	Išum	Bitte um Erlösung	AbB 13, 164
Amurru	Šamaš	Beistand gegen Feinde	AbB 12, 99
Gott meines Vaters (/Gott, mein Vater?) (Ninsubur)	Ištar	Bitte um Erlösung	Groneberg 1986: 101f.
Gott meines Vaters (/Gott, mein Vater?)	Marduk	Bitte um Erlösung	AbB 9, 141

Tab. 3. Vermittlung in den Briefen.

Die folgende Tabelle bietet einen chronologischen Überblick über die Verteilung des Motivs der Einführungsszene und der vermittelnden Gottheit:

Periode	Texte		Bilder	
	Vermittlung <i>ohne</i> Einführung	Vermittlung <i>mit</i> Einführung	Vermittlung <i>ohne</i> Einführung	Vermittlung <i>mit</i> Einführung
Frühdynastisch IIIa				1 ^{a)}
Frühdynastisch IIIb	✓			
Altakkadisch	1 ^{b)}		✓	✓
Ur III	✓	(1 ^{c)})	✓	✓
Isin/Larsa/altbab.	✓	✓	✓	✓

a) S. **Abb. 4**: Einführende und Eingeführte sind Göttinnen.

b) *Innana B 74–76*: Die Vermittlung erfolgt hier nicht zugunsten des Königs.

c) *Sulgi P c 11–16*: Ninsumun führt den König zum Thron, nicht zu einer Gottheit.

Tab. 4. Chronologische Zusammenstellung.

74–75 „berichte An mein Schicksal (bezüglich) Su'en
(und) Lugalane!
75 An möge es mir lösen!“

Dass hier Innana aufgerufen wird, wundert nicht, ist sie doch die Stadtgöttin von Akkad, der Hauptstadt des Reiches. Von daher muss sie die Herrschaftsansprüche der Dynastie gegen aufrührerische Städte aktiv unterstützen. In der Glyptik dieser Zeit ist die Einführungsszene ein beliebtes Thema. Šamaš, Ea, Ištar und Tišpak kommen oft als Hauptgott vor.³⁹ In vielen Fällen können wir die höhere Gottheit jedoch nicht namentlich identifizieren.⁴⁰

³⁹ Vgl. Rohn 2011: 66–81.

⁴⁰ Die Inschriften auf den Siegeln tragen nur in wenigen Fällen zur Identifikation der dargestellten Gottheiten bei, s. Rohn 2011: 218–220.

Noch schwieriger ist es, die Identität der einführenden Gottheit festzustellen.⁴¹ Eine Ausnahme ist Eas Wesir Isimu, der aufgrund seines Doppelgesichtes erkennbar ist (**Abb. 2**).⁴² In einem Fall lässt sich durch die Beischrift der Hauptgott mit Ninazu und der Vermittler mit dessen Wesir Ibaum identifizieren (**Abb. 3**).⁴³ Diese Belege sprechen allerdings dafür, dass auch in anderen

⁴¹ Am Beispiel Gudeas darf man annehmen, dass in einigen Fällen der ‚persönliche‘ Gott bzw. der Familiengott als Vermittler dient.

⁴² Vgl. Rohn 2011: 66f.

⁴³ Vgl. Rohn 2011: Nr. 526. Text der Inschrift: *a-na i-ba-um / KIŠIB PIRIG.GUNU₃ / be-li₂-BALA / a-na-'a₃-si-su / a-na-'a₃-si / ur^anin-a-zu / DUMU-su / A MU.NA.RU* „Dem (Gott) Ibaum hat Bēli-pala (das) Siegel aus ‚buntem Löwen(-Stein)‘ für sein Leben und das Leben Ur-Ninazus gewidmet.“ Siehe dazu Rohn 2011: 220.

Fällen der Wesir der höheren Gottheit als Vermittler dienen kann.⁴⁴

In den Königsinschriften aus Lagas ist das Motiv der Vermittlung in einer sehr knappen Form belegt. Es wird mehrmals berichtet, dass Sulluḫša, der Familiengott der Herrscher,⁴⁵ vor Ningirsu bzw. Našše, Ellil, Innana oder Lugalurub für das Leben des Herrschers beten soll.

Man vergleiche z.B. Enmetena 17 iv 5–10:

5 ^dsul-luḫša

6 nam-til₃

7 en-mete-na-ka-še₃

8 u₄ ul-la-še₃

9 ^den-lil₂-la

10 giri₁₇ šu ḫe₂-na-ḡal₂

5–10 Sulluḫša möge für das Leben des Enmetena zu Ellil für immer beten.

Sulluḫša bittet Ningirsu weder um die Verleihung der Regalia noch um die Schicksalsentscheidung für den Herrscher. Er setzt sich lediglich für sein Leben ein. Wenn auch nur im Ansatz liegt also eine Vermittlung vor. Aus dieser Zeit sind mir keine bildlichen Darstellungen der Einführungsszene bekannt.

Aus der jüngerfrühdynastischen Zeit kenne ich nur eine Darstellung aus Ur, die sich dem Motiv der Einführungsszene zuweisen lässt. Sie zeigt eine Göttin, die das Handgelenk einer anderen Göttin umfasst, um sie vor jemanden (oder etwas) zu führen (Abb. 4).⁴⁶ Vor wen oder was die Göttin geführt wurde, war wohl auf einem anderen Täfelchen dargestellt, und die gesamte Darstellung lässt sich heute nicht mehr rekonstruieren.

4 Schlussbetrachtungen

4.1. Das Motiv der Vermittlung

Die Vermittlung durch eine niedrige Gottheit dient im Allgemeinen dem Zweck, den Abstand zwischen dem Bittsteller und einer höheren Gottheit zu überbrücken. Dadurch kann ein Mensch eine Bitte erfolgreich stellen, sich den Beistand in einer Angelegenheit sichern, sich den Willen einer Gottheit zuverlässig aufschlüsseln lassen⁴⁷ oder Informationen zur korrekten Durchführung einer Beschwörung einholen.

Ausgangspunkt für weitere Erwägungen ist die Überlegung, dass die Götterwelt die Strukturen der menschlichen Welt widerspiegelt. Infolge der Konzeptualisierung einer anthropomorphen Gottesvorstellung bestimmen die Formen der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen nicht nur die Formen der Interaktion der Götter untereinander, sondern auch die Modi der Begegnung zwischen Menschen und Göttern.⁴⁸ Dieses

⁴⁴ Der Vermittler muss also nicht, wie oft angenommen wurde, der ‚persönliche‘ Gott des Bittstellers sein.

⁴⁵ Zu Sulluḫša als Familiengott vgl. Edzard 1993: 203f. und van der Toorn 1996: 74.

⁴⁶ S. dazu zuletzt Braun-Holzinger 2013: 175f. Relief 15.

⁴⁷ So vermag Gudea den Traum, in dem Ningirsu zu ihm spricht, nicht allein zu deuten.

⁴⁸ Vgl. hierzu Gladigow 1979 vor allem S. 41–50 und 55–58.

Erklärungsmodell lässt sich auch auf das Motiv der Vermittlung anwenden.^{49, 50}

Wenn auch nur spärlich sind Einführung und Vermittlung bereits in der frühdynastischen Zeit belegt. Dies ist allerdings auch zu erwarten, denn sie spiegeln eine selbstverständliche Realität der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen wider. Es gibt nämlich keinen Grund zu bezweifeln, dass auch damals eine Person zwischen zwei Menschen vermitteln und sie einander vorstellen konnte. Andererseits besitzen wir mehrere jünger- und spätfrühdynastische Darstellungen von Beter bzw. Opferbringern, die ohne vermittelnde Gottheit vor eine thronende Gottheit hintreten (Abb. 5).⁵¹

Die altakkadische Zeit kann als Wendepunkt betrachtet werden, denn die Einführungsszene zählt ab dieser Zeit zu den beliebtesten Themen der Glyptik. Dies kann auf ein neues Verständnis der Begegnungsmöglichkeit mit den Göttern hinweisen. Es scheint, als ob jetzt ein selbständiger, direkter Zugang zur Gottheit als nicht mehr praktikabel betrachtet wurde. Ganz materialistisch könnte man sagen, dass der Bittsteller den direkten Zugang als nicht erfolgversprechend genug betrachtete, denn die offizielle Vermittlung rückt jetzt in den Mittelpunkt. Der Grund für die Ausformulierung und die Ausbreitung der Einführungsszene kann in der soziopolitischen Veränderung der altakkadischen Zeit liegen. Mit der altakkadischen Zeit endete der politische Horizont der mesopotamischen Kleinstaaten. Die einzelnen Städte sind jetzt administrative Zentren einer überregionalen politischen Struktur. Dies bedeutet, dass die politische Hauptautorität, d.h. der König, buchstäblich weit entfernt von den jeweiligen Städten ist. Andererseits impliziert es einen bürokratischen Apparat, in dem der ensi₂ als ein *Vermittler* zwischen dem Kö-

⁴⁹ Bereits 1923 hatte Friedrich Heiler in seiner Untersuchung zum Gebet darauf hingewiesen, dass das in den Gebeten verschiedener Religionen wiederkehrende Motiv der Vermittlung (‚Interzession‘) zwischen Beter und höherer Gottheit der Vermittlung zwischen Bittsteller und dem Herrscher entspricht, s. Heiler 1923: 126–128. Zur Vermittlung zwischen Menschen sowie zwischen Menschen und Göttern in Mesopotamien s. Charpin 2017. Zu der Vermittlung zwischen Menschen als Vorbild für die Vermittlung zwischen Menschen und Gott in der hebräischen Bibel s. ausführlich Rossier 1996: 4–6 und 339–342 und Broida 2015: 7f.

⁵⁰ Ein weiteres mesopotamisches Beispiel sind die Übereinstimmungen zwischen dem *šuilu*-Ritual und der Zeremonie der Audienz, d.h. der Zeremonie der Begegnung zwischen einem Bittsteller und einem Höhergestellten, die Annette Zgoll in der Komposition *Der arme Mann von Nippur* hat nachweisen können, vgl. Zgoll 2003. Zum Thema der Audienz als Vorbild für die Begegnung mit JHWH in der hebräischen Bibel vgl. ausführlich Hartenstein 2008.

⁵¹ Für weitere Darstellungen dieser Art aus der jünger- bzw. spätfrühdynastischen Zeit s. Braun-Holzinger 2013: Reliefs 2, 5, 10; Siegel 1–4, 9, 10, 13. Auch die viel ältere Darstellung des Opferzugs zu einer weiblichen Figur (Göttin (Innana?) oder Priesterin) auf dem berühmten Steingefäß aus Uruk gehört zur Typologie des direkten Zugangs, s. zum Gefäß zuletzt Braun-Holzinger 2013: 33f. Auch diese Art der Begegnung mit den Göttern geht wohl auf menschliche Begebenheiten zurück. Die Siegel in Braun-Holzinger 2013: Nr. 18 und 19 können Libationen vor Menschen (Herrscher oder Priester?) darstellen. Nach Braun-Holzinger 2013: 56 ist es auch möglich, dass die Figuren, vor denen libiert wird, Götter ohne Hörnerkrone sind.



Abb. 4: Früdynastisches Einlagetäfelchen aus Ur (British Museum U. 2862; Wolley 1955: 170 Taf. 38; Braun Holzinger 2013: 175f. Relief 15; Zeichnung: M. Ceccarelli).

nig und den Städten dient.⁵² Die *Vermittlung* als solche erlangte eine so zentrale Rolle, dass sie auch die Form der Begegnung zwischen Menschen und Göttern grundlegend beeinflusste und zu einem beliebten ikonografischen Motiv der Glyptik wurde.⁵³

4.2. Die Vermittlung zwischen Herrschern und Gottheiten

Die gesammelten Belege für die Vermittlung zwischen Herrschern und Gottheiten zeigen im Laufe der Zeit einige eindeutige Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Endabsicht der Vermittlung sowie der angebeteten Gottheiten. In den altsumerischen Königsinschriften geht es um das fortwährende Beten (*šu giri₁₇ ḡal₂*) für das Leben des Herrschers durch seinen Familiengott.⁵⁴ Die angebeteten Gottheiten gehören zum lokalen Pantheon.⁵⁵

In alle späteren Belegen rücken vor allem Ellil und An in die Rolle der Hauptgötter. Das wichtigste Anliegen ist jetzt die Legitimation des Königs, welche durch

52 Möglicherweise war auch der altsumerische Herrscher nur unter gewissen Umständen der Bevölkerung zugänglich. Der politische Horizont war jedoch auf lokaler Ebene beschränkt, so dass eine Vermittlungsfunktion zwischen dem Herrscher und den Untertanen, die im Umfang mit jener der altakkadischen *ensi₂* vergleichbar wäre, fehlte.

53 Zajdowski 2013 nimmt an, dass soziopolitische Veränderungen die Entwicklung der Bankettsszene zur Einführungsszene bewirkten. Sie fokussiert dabei die Änderung der Ikonografie (von sitzenden zu stehenden Figuren), aber sie lässt die Funktion der vermittelnden Gottheit unerklärt.

54 So bereits Heiler 1923: 127.

55 So ist auch Gudeas Fall zu bewerten, falls der Gott in **Abb. 1** nicht mit Enki, sondern tatsächlich mit Ninḡirsu zu identifizieren ist. Nur bei Enmetena ist der höhere Gott Ellil, s. Enmetena 18 i 2"–3".

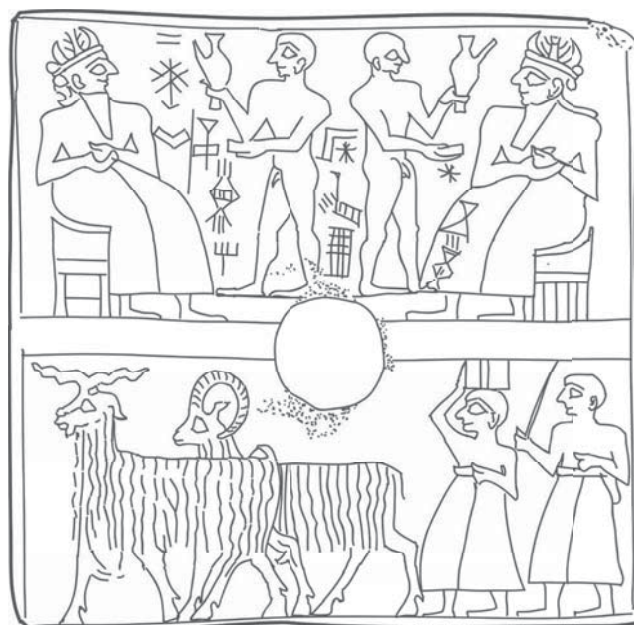


Abb. 5: Früdynastische Weihplatte aus Nippur (Archäologisches Museum Istanbul Nr. 1944; Boese 1971: 184f. Nr. 8; Braun Holzinger 2013: 172 Relief 7; Zeichnung: M. Ceccarelli).

die Verleihung der Regalia, des Königtums und eine entsprechende Schicksalsentscheidung erfolgt.

In Sulgis Königshymnen handelt zumeist Nanna als Vermittler. Auch Ninsumun, die mythische Mutter des Königs, konnte diese Funktion ausüben. Unter anderen spielen Ninisina, Nuška und Ninurta, d.h. die Stadtgöttin von Isin, Ellils Wesir und Ellils Sohn, die Rolle des Vermittlers in den Königshymnen der Könige von Isin. Ist einmal Ninurta der höhere Gott, so dient seine Gattin Ninnibru als Vermittlerin.⁵⁶ In den Königshymnen von Sîn-iddinam handeln Utu und der Mondgott als Vermittler, während in jenen von Rīm-Sîn auch die Udug- und Lamma-Schutzwesen dem König ihren Beistand bieten können. Einmal wendet sich Nanāja an ihre Eltern An und Innana. In einer Königshymne Ḥammurapis dient Marduk, der Stadgott von Babylon, als Vermittler.

Bei den vermittelnden Gottheiten handelt es sich also immer um Gottheiten, die entweder dem König oder aber dem höheren Gott in irgendeiner Weise nahe stehen. Oft spielen die Stadtgottheiten oder der Wesir der Hauptgottheit diese Rolle. Natürlich kann auch der ‚persönliche‘ Gott bzw. der Familiengott diese Funktion übernehmen, wie Gudeas Inschriften und Darstellungen bezeugen. Die Vermittlung findet oft im Rahmen der Königsinvestitur statt (Verleihung des Königtums und der Regalia), sie kann aber auch bei anderen Anlässen, z.B. dem (Wiederauf)bau eines Tempels oder der Stadtmauer, erfolgen. In diesen Fällen ist es die Gottheit

56 Asher-Greve/Westenholtz 2013: 294 sprechen von der Übertragung von „feminine‘ qualities, such as interpretation, meditation, and empathy“ auf die Göttinnen. Die Vorstellung einer weiblichen ‚sozialen Kompetenz‘ der Göttinnen (so Asher-Greve/Westenholtz) erklärt sehr gut, weshalb die Gattin des Hauptgottes als Vermittlerin dienen kann. Vgl. auch das alttestamentliche Bild der idealen (Ehe)frau in Spr 31,10–31, vor allem 26: „Sie tut ihren Mund auf mit Weisheit, und auf ihrer Zunge ist gültige Weisung“ (Lutherbibel 1984).

des Tempels oder die Stadtgottheit der entsprechenden Stadt, die sich quasi als Gegenleistung für den König bei höheren Göttern einsetzt.

4.3. Die Vermittlung und das Königtum

Warum vermittelt eine Gottheit zwischen dem König und den Hauptgöttern? Im altsumerischen Lagas wurde das Königtum über die Stadt in der Regel von Göttern des lokalen Pantheons verliehen.⁵⁷ Dagegen wird die Herrschaft über ein Gebiet, das über das Stadtgebiet hinausgeht, von Ellil (und An) gegeben.⁵⁸

Während der lagasitische Herrscher mit den Göttern seiner Stadt in engem Kontakt stand und vom Stadtgott Ningirsu direkt ausgewählt wurde,⁵⁹ war der neusumerische König nicht unmittelbar mit Nippur und somit mit Ellil verbunden. Es existierte ein ‚Abstand‘ zwischen dem König und den Hauptgöttern.⁶⁰ Dies ist mit

jenem Abstand vergleichbar, der einen Bittsteller vom König bzw. von der höheren Gottheit trennte. In dieser Hinsicht lässt sich der Sinn der Vermittlung erklären: Er liegt in der Überbrückung des Abstandes zwischen dem König und Ellil (und An), der mit der neuen Königs-ideologie entstanden ist. Die Vermittlung gehört also zu den religiösen Strategien der Königslegitimation,⁶¹ wobei diese hier in zwei Schritten erfolgt: Auserwählung durch Nanna und Bestätigung durch Ellil (und An).⁶²

In der nachfolgenden Isin-Larsa-Zeit besitzt keins der ‚Reiche‘ eine überregionale Dimension. Die Auserwählung durch die Stadtgottheit und die Legitimation durch Ellil (und An) bleiben jedoch ein wichtiges Motiv der Königshymnen.⁶³ Dies hängt wohl damit zusammen, dass sich die Könige von Isin⁶⁴ und, in geringerem Umfang, von Larsa⁶⁵ an der Königsideologie des Ur-III-Reiches orientierten.

57 Das Königtum (nam-lugal) wird verliehen von: **Ningirsu**: Eannatum 1 v 13–17; IriKagina 1 vii 29–viii 4. **Našše**: Enmetena 23 13–16. **Lugalurub**: Enannatum 18 ii 8–iii 1; Enannatum 19 ii 13–iii 4. Das Zepter (ġidru) wird von **Ningirsu** verliehen: Eannatum 10 iii 7–8; Lugalanda 2 i 4'–5'.

58 Wenn Enmetena berichtet, dass er das Zepter von Ellil bekommen hat (Enmetena 18 i 4"–8"), so unterstreicht er die Legitimität seines ausgedehnten Einflussgebietes oder zumindest seiner Ansprüche darauf; vgl. Selz 1992: 200–203; Sallaberger 1997: 149 mit Anm. 8 sieht hier lediglich die Möglichkeit für den Stadtfürsten, als Folge der Ausdehnung seines Gebiets, Ellil unter die Götter zu zählen, die ihn unterstützen. Für Ellil als Übergeber der Fremdländer s. auch Franke 1995: 64 mit Anm. 127 und 84f.

59 Vgl. IriKaginas Aussage, Niġirsu habe seine Hand aus der Mitte von 36 000 Menschen gefasst (IriKagina 1 vii 29–viii 6).

60 Leider sind keine Königshymnen der altakkadischen Könige überliefert, somit können wir nicht wissen, ob das Motiv der Vermittlung zwischen dem König und Ellil bereits damals formuliert wurde. Die altakkadischen Königsinschriften unterstreichen jedoch Ellils Rolle als Hauptgott des Reiches, vgl. z.B. die Verleihung des Königtums durch Ellil in Rim. C 1: 6–9; 6 75–80 oder die Verleihung des Zepters in Sar. C 12: 5–10 und Man. C 3: 5–12; Zu Ellils Rolle in der Königsideologie der altakkadischen Zeit vgl. Cooper 2001: 137f.; Westenholz 1999: 49 und Zgoll 1997: 42f. Zu Ans Rolle s. Westenholz 1999: 30; Zgoll 1997: 43; Franke 1995: 96f.

61 Zu den Strategien der Königslegitimation vgl. Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 42–58. Sie unterscheidet vier Topoi und Motive der Königslegitimation: göttliche Abstammung; Vorbestimmung (in der Regel durch die Stadtgottheit); Auserwählung (in der Regel durch Ellil), Unterstützung und Gaben der Götter; Investitur. Zu der „religiös determinierten Fundierung des Königtums“ s. auch Sallaberger 2002: 85 und 87–89.

62 In diesem Zusammenhang soll auch noch auf die Prologe der Kodexe von Ur-Namma, Lipit-Eštar und Hammurapi hingewiesen werden. Dort übergeben An und Ellil das Königtum über Ur, Isin und Babylon immer zuerst den jeweiligen Stadtgottheiten, Nanna, Ninisina und Marduk. Erst nach diesem ersten Schritt erfolgt die Ernennung des Königs. Zu den Codizes von Ur-Namma und Lipit-Eštar s. zuletzt Wilcke 2014.

63 Nippur gehörte abwechselnd zu Isin und Larsa. Besaßen die Herrscher Nippur tatsächlich, so konnten sie sich auch auf die Stadt selbst beziehen, andernfalls bezogen sie sich nur auf Ellil, s. Sallaberger 1997: 159.

64 Vgl. Sallaberger 1997: 156–163 und Tinney 1996.

65 Vgl. Sallaberger 1997: 160.

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Beschriftete Hundestatuetten aus Mesopotamien

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Abstract: In this paper figurines of dogs especially of terracotta with inscription are investigated. There are two groups: a) Figurines in connection with the healing goddess Gula, b) Apotropaic figurines. Examples of the first group bear inscriptions with a dedication to Gula. Examples of the second group bear apotropaic inscriptions. The inscriptions of the latter group have exact correspondence with ritual texts. An overview of the preserved examples is given and the colors of the figurines are also discussed. For a known example an improved reading of its inscription is proposed and a hitherto unknown example is presented. For the scarce discovery of such inscribed figurines the possibility of painted cuneiform text is proposed. This small group of artefacts is a very good example of correspondence of archaeological objects and cuneiform texts.

Keywords: dog figurine, inscription, ritual text, Gula, apotropaic.

1 Einleitung

Das Thema der 61. RAI „Text and Image“ fassen wir eng – nämlich „Text on Image“. In Mesopotamien wurde eine beträchtliche Anzahl von Hundestatuetten aus Terrakotta gefunden. Bei manchen sind Farbreste erhalten und einige tragen auch einen Keilschrifttext. Seltener sind Exemplare aus Stein oder Metall, wobei die erhaltenen Exemplare aus Metall nie mit einer Inschrift versehen sind (Braun-Holzinger 1984: 90–93). In diesem Beitrag geht es vor allem um die beschrifteten Hundestatuetten aus Terrakotta.¹

Die Texte auf den Hunde-Statuetten erlauben die Unterscheidung von zwei Gruppen: a) Statuetten im Zusammenhang mit der Heilgöttin Gula, deren Attributier der Hund ist (Fuhr 1977; Böck 2014: 38–44), sowie anderen Heilgottheiten; b) Apotropäische Hundestatuetten mit Wächterfunktion.

2 Statuetten im Zusammenhang mit Gula

Zuerst sei auf die Objekte mit Bezug zu Gula eingegangen. Durch Beischriften ist diese Gruppe recht gut zu fassen. Um einen Eindruck zu gewinnen, sei zur Einstimmung ein andersartiges Artefakt herangezogen: ein Kudurru-Relief, auf dem neben der sitzenden Göttin – identifiziert durch die keilschriftliche Beischrift Gula – ihr Hund zu erkennen ist (**Abb. 1**).² Die Kudurru-Inschrift ist zwar wegemeißelt, aus stilistischen

Gründen ist aber eine Datierung in die späte Kassitenzeit möglich.

Der Göttin (Böck 2014; Steinert 2014; Charpin 2011: 407–412; Charpin 2015), die auch unter anderen Namen wie Nin-Isina „Herrin von Isin“, Ninkarrak³ usw. verehrt wurde, können als Motivgaben auch Hundefiguren dargebracht werden. Auch wenn es hier vor allem um Tonstatuetten geht, sei zunächst ein Exemplar aus Stein herangezogen, das in Tello ausgegraben worden ist.⁴ Bemerkenswert daran sind nicht nur das Material, Steatit, sondern auch die selten bezeugte Pose eines liegenden Hundes und das relativ hohe Alter des Objekts. Es trägt auf dem Rücken eine sumerische Weihinschrift an die Göttin, die hier den Namen Nin-Isina „Herrin von Isin“ trägt. Sie ist in zwei Abschnitte unterteilt, die letzten drei Zeilen sind um 90° gedreht und in Richtung des Schwanzes geschrieben. Das Stück wurde von einem Kultsänger gestiftet für das Leben des Königs Sumu-el, eines Herrschers der Dynastie von Larsa im 19. Jh. v. Chr., und gehört damit zu den frühesten bekannten Beispielen für beschriftete Hundestatuetten, die einer Heilgöttin geweiht wurden. Wie andere Objekte im alten Mesopotamien trägt der Hund einen Namen, nämlich: zi-ša₃¹-gal₂-la <<U₂>> u₂-nam-ti-la „für die Lebewesen die Pflanze des Lebens“. Die Lesung ergibt sich, wenn in der vorletzten Zeile mit Ilmari Kärki⁵ das im Text geschriebene KI zum ähnlichen Zeichen ŠA₃ emendiert wird. Der Terminus zi-ša₃-gal₂-la,

1 Für Hinweise auf einige Literaturstellen danken wir P. Attinger, Bern.

2 V. Scheil, MDP 10: 95, Tf. 13,2 = Seidl 1989: Nr. 50 (S. 35–36, neues Foto: Tf. 22a); jetzt: Paulus 2014: 877 Nr. 152 (OI 25). Nach Umzeichnung: Toscanne 1917: 194, vgl. S. 193 Anm. 4.

3 Ebenfalls mit einem Hund verknüpft: Heimpel 1972–1975: 496, § 7.1 a–b.

4 L. Heuzey, in: Cros 1910: 160–166, Tf. 5; Meissner 1919: 176, n. 1, 178; Durand 1977: 32; Seidl 1989: 141.

5 Kärki 1980: 4–5 Sumuel 4. S. auch die Bearbeitungen von Durand 1977: 32–34 und Frayne 1990: 133–134, E4.2.7.2001, weiter Charpin 2011: 407–412.



Abb. 1: Kudurru aus Susa (Musée du Louvre SB 31) mit Gula und ihrem Hund, späte Kassitenzeit (nach Toscanne 1917: Abb. 65).

die Entsprechung zum akkadischen *šikin* bzw. *šiknāt napišti(m)* „Lebewesen“, ist gut bezeugt.

Die übrigen hier betrachteten Beispiele sind sämtlich aus Ton und einige Jahrhunderte jünger. Gula erbaute man Tempel an zahlreichen Orten, so in Isin (sie ist ja die Herrin dieser Stadt), Nippur, Ur, Umma, Lagaš, Larša, Uruk, Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Assur.⁶ Terrakottahunde wurden an verschiedenen Stellen gefunden, so z.B. in Sippar und in den Schreinen der Gula in Isin, Nippur und ‘Aqar Qūf (Dūr-Kurigalzu) (Böck 2013).

Im Vergleich zu den anderen hier vorgestellten Statuetten ist die Weihgabe eines höheren Beamten aus Nippur – ein sitzender Hund, dessen Vorderteil abgebrochen ist –, mit einer Länge von 46 cm auffallend gross.⁷ Die sumerische Inschrift verläuft vom Schwanz in Richtung Kopf. Das Stück wurde in Sippar gefunden, obwohl die handelnde Person in Nippur zu Hause war.⁸

6 So Frankena 1957–1971: 696. Zum dort fehlenden Sippar s.u. S. auch Böck 2014: 7–14.

7 British Museum BM 1881,0701.3395.

8 Neue Übersetzung: Paulus 2011: 20–21. Zu den Fundumständen: Walker/Collon 1980: 106. E. Sollberger hatte bei der Edition (1968), ebenso wie bei einer zweiten Inschrift, die denselben Beamten nennt, damit argumentiert, dass die Stücke zu Gruppen gehören, die viel bzw. überwiegend Sippar-Material

Unter den mehreren Hundert Figurinen aus ‘Aqar Qūf/Dūr Kurigalzu sind auch zahlreiche Hunde zu finden. Beschriftet sind nur drei davon, allesamt stehend (Ali Mustafa 1947: 22 Nr. 19, 37, 39). Unseres Wissens sind die Aufschriften nie bearbeitet worden.

In Isin wurde die beschädigte Statuette eines stehenden Exemplars mit einer Weihung auf dem Rücken ausgegraben (Hrouda 1977: 43, Tf. 9, IB 18). Sie lautet (nach Edzard/Wilcke 1977: 90):

„Zu Gula, der Herrin vom Egalmah
der Herrin über das Leben,
der grossen Ärztin...,
die Atem des Lebens schenkt,
seiner Herrin,
hat Ili...daja
gebetet, und sie hat sein Gebet erhört.
...Atanah-ili...
hat (diesen) Hund geweiht.“

Bei seinen Ausgrabungen in Sippar fand Vincent Scheil 1894 u.a. mehrere Hundestatuetten aus Ton, die ins Archäologische Museum von Istanbul gekommen und heute dort ausgestellt sind (Scheil 1902: 90–92). Ein Ex-

enthalten; s. auch CBT 6 (1986), XXXI (zu 81-7-1) bzw. XXXVI (zu 82-7-14).



Abb. 2: Terrakotta-Hundestatuette aus Sippar, H: 12 cm
(nach Scheil 1902: Nr. 13).

emplar trägt eine Aufschrift, auf die näher eingegangen werden soll, da aufgrund eines neuen Fotos gegenüber der Erstpublikation von Scheil eine verbesserte Lesung vorgeschlagen werden kann (**Abb. 2, 3**):

1. *a-na* ⁴ME-ME(=Gula) GAŠAN(=*bēlti*)-š₂
Für Gula, seine Herrin,
2. *kalab*(UR-GI₇) *haš-bi* DU₃(=*ipuš*)-*ma* BA-eš(=*iqēš*)
machte und weihte er den Hund aus Terrakotta.

Wir lesen sowohl auf Zeile 1 wie auch auf Zeile 2 am Ende jeweils ein Zeichen mehr als Scheil (Scheil 1902: 90–92 Nr. 13). Die beiden letzten Zeichen sind eventuell durch Reinigungsarbeiten wieder sichtbar geworden. Die Stilisierung dieser Aufschrift entspricht einem Typ, der auf verschiedenartigen geweihten Objekten bezeugt ist. Im Übrigen ist zu bemerken, dass die Weihungen an die Heilgöttin keinem festen Formular folgen.

Die übrigen in Sippar ausgegrabenen Beispiele sind unbeschriftet.

Obwohl über die Rolle dieser Göttin im persönlichen Leben wenig bekannt ist, könnte man annehmen, dass sie als Heil- und Hausgöttin von Privatpersonen viele Votivgaben in Form von Hundestatuetten, ihrem Attributtier, erhielt.

In Grabungsberichten sind wiederholt Tierstatuetten zu finden, die nur als „Quadruped“ ohne nähere Bestimmung bezeichnet werden. Es ist durchaus denkbar, dass ein Teil davon Hundevotive an Gula darstellen, aber aufgrund ihrer geringen handwerklichen Qualität nicht eindeutig als solche zu erkennen sind. Derartige Votivgaben sind in Mesopotamien oft nur rudimentär ausgearbeitet.

Hinweise auf beschriftete Hundestatuetten mit Bezug auf die Heilgottheit Gula gibt es auch in Inschriften Nebukadnezars II. In zwei Bauinschriften, die von einer Erneuerung des Ninkarrak(Gula)-Tempels E-ulla in Sippar sprechen, wird erwähnt, dass dabei Hunde aus



Abb. 3: Detail von Abb. 2 (Foto N. Corfù).

Ton gefunden wurden, die mit dem Namen der Gula beschriftet waren.⁹ Ob die je zwei Hunde aus Gold, Silber und Bronze, die als Gründungsgabe beim Bau eines Gula-Tempels in Babylon genannt werden, beschriftet waren, ist nicht bekannt.¹⁰

Erwähnung verdient auch ein spätachämenidischer literarischer Text aus Nippur, datiert Artaxerxes II. Jahr 40, 4. Tebet = 24. 12. 364 v. Chr., heute im Louvre unter der Inventarnummer AO 17662 aufbewahrt.¹¹ In Z. 10 und Z. 27 werden zusammen mit Göttern in Gula-Tempeln, wahrscheinlich in Nippur, jeweils fünf farbige Hunde genannt: ein weisser (*pešū*), ein schwarzer (*šal-mu*), ein roter (*sāmu*), ein mehrfarbiger bzw. scheckiger (*burrumu*), ein grüner (*arqu*).¹² Mehr wird über diese nicht ausgesagt, aber diese Aufzählung kann als Überleitung zur zweiten Gruppe von Hundestatuetten dienen: jenen apotropäischen Charakters.¹³

3 Apotropäische Hundestatuetten

3.1. Ritualtexte

Statuetten dieser Art mit Farben begegnen in mehreren Ritualtexten. Eines der Beispiele ist in der „Lamaštu“-Serie zu finden, von der W. Farber eine neue Edition vorgelegt hat (Farber 2014). In dieser Sammlung von Beschwörungen und Ritualen zur Abwendung des Schadens, den die Krankheitsdämonin Lamaštu anrichten kann, ist mehrfach ein Ritual zur Anfertigung von Hundestatuetten überliefert: in der sogenannten *pirsu*-Rezension im 2. Abschnitt Z. 61–83 sowie praktisch gleichlautend in der Ritualtafel (*pirsu* 3) Z. 1–28/29, und in etwas abweichender, verkürzter Formulierung in der sogenannten *tuppi*-Rezension der Serie (Z. 61*–69a* = Ritual 7*).¹⁴ Danach sollen u.a. sieben Hundefigurinen

9 Langdon, VAB 4, 110–111, Nbk 13 Kol. iii 38–49; 144–145, Nbk 16 Kol. ii 18–24, zu den Texten s. auch S. 21–23, bzw. S. 31; vgl. auch Meissner 1919: 178. Der Hinweis auf die Hunde ist in VAB 4, 182–183, Kol. ii 36–46, iii 5–6, sowie S. 194–195, Nbk 27a (S. 194–195, s. auch S. 37–38, 9; Errichtung von Gula-Tempeln in Borsippa) ausgelassen.

10 Langdon, VAB 4, 164–167 Nbk 19 Kol. vi 20–22 (Wadi-Brisa Inschrift).

11 Veröffentlichung: Nougayrol 1947: 33–38; zur Datierung Oelsner/Durand 1982.

12 Zu den Farben vgl. Ebeling 1957–1971: 19–20; s. auch Unger 1957–1971: 24–25, und s.u. sub 4.

13 Nebenbei bemerkt ist Gula als Hausgöttin auch mit dem Schutz des Hauses verknüpft (Scurlock 2003: 102, 104, 106), was durch ihr Attributtier, den Hund, einleuchtend ist.

14 Zu den Versionen Farber 2014: 16–25; erstere bezeugt in Ninive und Sultantepe, letztere in Assur und Babylonien.



Abb. 4: Fünf stehende Terrakotta-Hundestatuetten aus dem Nordpalast in Ninive, 7. Jh. v. Chr., British Museum BM 30001-30005, L: 6,5–7,5 cm (© Trustees of the British Museum).

zur Sicherung von Fenstern und Türen angefertigt und im Hause an verschiedenen Stellen rechts und links deponiert werden. Sie sind mit Gips bzw. Holzkohle – also weiss bzw. schwarz – zu bemalen und erhalten Namen, die durch Kombination der verschiedenen Textstellen praktisch vollständig zu rekonstruieren sind. Sie lauten:

Die beiden Hunde des äusseren Tores heissen: *Šaruḥ-tībšu* „mächtig ist sein Angriff“, und *Ušur-mūša-ṭurad-Mārat-Anu* „Bewache die Nacht, vertreibe die Tochter Anus (= Lamaštu)“, die beiden Hunde des inneren Tores: *Urruḥ-tībšu* „schnell (= überraschend?) ist sein Angriff“, und *Ana-maššartīka-lā-[te]ggi* „Deine Wachsamkeit erlahme nicht“, die beiden Hunde an der Tür des Schlafraums: *ē tamtal(l)ik-epuš-pīka* „du sollst nicht überlegen – öffne dein Maul“ und *Sikip-lemna[.....]* „stosse weg den Bösen“ (es ist unklar, ob danach noch etwas verloren ist, das zum Namen gehört).

Der siebente Hund heisst *Sīn-rē'i-kalbi* „(Der Mondgott) Sin ist der Hirte der Hunde“ und soll nach der *pirsu*-Rezension in „die Öffnung gegenüber der Tür“ gesetzt werden, in der anderen Version ist die Stelle beschädigt.

Ein weiteres Ritual ist seit langem bekannt und wiederholt bearbeitet worden. Eines der vorliegenden Exemplare bildet die gut erhaltene neuassyrische Tafel VAT 8228 aus Assur, veröffentlicht von E. Ebeling als KAR 298 (Ebeling 1920–1923).¹⁵ Es handelt sich dabei um einen „Auszug“ (*nishū*) aus einer längeren Komposition mit dem Titel *Šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu* „to block the entry of the enemy in someone's house“ (so der letzte Bearbeiter: Wiggermann 1992: 91) oder wörtlich im Deutschen „den Fuss des Übels vom Haus eines Menschen fernhalten“. Der Text enthält ausführ-

liche Anleitungen zur Herstellung von Statuettengruppen aus Holz und Ton, die teilweise farbig bemalt und mit vorgegebenen Texten beschriftet werden sollen. Vollständig erhalten ist der Abschnitt zur Anfertigung von 10 farbigen Hunde-Statuetten nur im genannten Assur-Exemplar Rs. Z. 17–22.¹⁶ Diese Hunde sind zum Schutz des Hauses unter der Laibung im äusseren Tor des Gebäudes zu vergraben. Die Farbgebung entspricht der in AO 17662, allerdings mit Umstellung von *bur-rumu* „mehrfarbig/scheckig“ und *arqu* „grün/gelb“. Je zwei Exemplare erhalten die gleiche Farbe, so dass sich zwei Serien à fünf Stück ergeben, die für die rechte bzw. die linke Seite bestimmt sind. Als Namen sollen sie erhalten.¹⁷

Weiss/ mit Gips	<i>ē tamtallik epuš pīka</i>	<i>ē tamtallik ušuk</i>
	Überlege nicht, mach dein Maul auf	Überlege nicht, beisse dein Maul auf
Schwarz	<i>aruḥ napištīšu</i>	<i>dan rigimšu</i>
	Vernichte sein Leben	Stark ist sein Gebell
Rot	<i>ṭarid ašakki</i>	<i>kāšid ajjābi</i>
	Vertreiber des Ašakku-Dämons	Fänger des Feindes
Grün/ gelb	<i>sākip irti lemni</i>	<i>munaššik gārīšu</i>
	Bezwinger der Brust des Feindes	Beisser seines Feindes
Mehrfarbig/ scheckig	<i>mušērib damqāti</i>	<i>mušēšū lemnēti</i>
	Heranbringer des Guten	Herausbringer des Schlechten

¹⁵ Neuere Übersetzungen: Rittig 1977: 151–174; Wiggermann 1992: 41–104.

¹⁶ Im längeren Text entsprechen die Zeilen 191–205: Wiggermann 1992: 14–15.

¹⁷ Zu den akkad. Farbbezeichnungen s.o. Anm. 12.



Abb. 5: Drei sitzende Terrakotta-Hundestatuetten aus Kiš, Nebukadnezar II., AM Kish 1924.302-304, H: 6 cm (nach Langdon 1924, 91, Tf. XXVII.1).

Einzig der Name eines der weissen Hunde kommt sowohl hier als auch im Lamaštu-Ritual vor: *ē tamtallik epuš pīka* „Überlege nicht, mach dein Maul auf“.

Beim ersten der weissen Hunde steht das Verb (*malāku(m)* im Gt-Stamm) im Vetitiv, im Gegensatz zum zweiten, wo der Imperativ verwendet wird (wörtlich: „du sollst nicht überlegen, öffne dein Maul“).

Der As/šakku- Dämon „the one who strikes the arm“, der auf dem ersten roten Hund erwähnt wird, verursacht Schmerzen und Krankheiten (Leick 1998: s.v. „Asag“) – speziell Kopfschmerzen und Frieren (Böck 2007: 127, 170, 173, 208; Böck 2014: 34–38).

In einem weiteren Text (Zimmern 1901: 162–163, Nr. 50; Gurney 1935: 54–55) werden vier Hunde genannt, deren Namen (Rs. Kol. i 1–4) leider nicht erhalten sind. Doch es zeigt sich auch hier, dass Hundestatuetten in Ritualen weit verbreitet waren. Durch die Namensgebung wurden sie „lebendig“ (Gelb 1956: 69; Edzard 1998–2001: 100, § 7).

3.2. Erhaltene Statuetten mit Inschrift

Bei verschiedenen Ausgrabungen wurde eine Anzahl beschrifteter Hundestatuetten gefunden, die in diesen Zusammenhang gehören. Mit Inschriften apotropäischer Art, die mit den genannten Namen übereinstimmen, gibt es sowohl stehende als auch sitzende Hunde, jedoch keine liegenden. Am längsten bekannt sind fünf Exemplare mit Farbbresten¹⁸ aus dem Nordpalast in Ninive, die sich heute im British Museum befinden (Abb. 4).

Sie wurden unter einer Reliefplatte links im Eingang von Raum S der Anlage gefunden (Barnett 1976: 18–19,

49–50, Tf. XLVa; Green 1995: 116) und tragen folgende apotropäische Kurztexte:

BM 30003	weiss ^{a)}	<i>ē tamtallik epuš pīka</i>	„Überlege nicht, mach dein Maul auf“
BM 30005	schwarz ^{b)}	<i>dan rigiššu</i>	„Stark ist sein Gebell“ ^{c)}
BM 30002	rot ^{d)}	<i>kāšid ajjābi</i>	„Fänger des Feindes“
BM 30004	grün ^{e)}	<i>munaššik gārīšu</i>	„Beisser seines Feindes“
BM 30001	weiss mit roten Flecken ^{f)}	<i>mušēšū lemnūti</i>	„Herausbringer des Bösen“

a) Green 1995: Nr. 75; Gadd 1922: 159.

b) Green 1995: Nr. 77; Gadd 1922: 159.

c) Rittig 1977: 117, 198.

d) Green 1995: Nr. 74; Gadd 1922: 159.

e) Green 1995: Nr. 76; Gadd 1922: 159.

f) Green 1995: Nr. 73; Gadd 1922: 159. Die Art der Bemalung hier zeigt, wie *burrumu* (sonst „vor allem weiß und schwarz“, Ebeling 1957–1971: 19–20) in diesem Zusammenhang zu verstehen ist.

Ein Vergleich dieser Stücke mit VAT 8228 = KAR 298 aus Assur zeigt, dass mit Ausnahme von BM 30003, einem weissen Exemplar für die rechte Seite, die Aufschriften denen entsprechen, die im Ritualtext für die linke Seite vorgesehen sind, hier also Übereinstimmung zwischen beiden besteht. Da nach Angaben der Ausgräber die Figurinen offenbar zusammen gefunden wurden, ist zu unterstellen, dass beim Errichten des Nordpalastes in diesem Fall eine Verwechslung erfolgt ist. Über entsprechende Exemplare auf der anderen Seite des Tores ist nichts bekannt.

Aus Babylonien sind zwei sitzende Beispiele mit Aufschrift bekannt (Abb. 5), die in Kiš ausgegraben wurden.

Die Aufschriften entsprechen den bisher besprochenen Beispielen und lauten:¹⁹

<i>aruḥ napištīšu</i>	<i>munaššik gārīšu</i>
„Vernichte sein Leben“	„Beisser seines Feindes“
(= schwarz rechts)	(= grün links, mit Farbbresten ^{a)})

a) „Blau“ nach Langdon 1924: 91, s.u. sub 4.

Ein drittes in Kiš gefundenes Exemplar ist stark beschädigt (Abb. 5). Die Ähnlichkeit mit den beiden anderen Stücken legt die Vermutung nahe, dass es ebenfalls beschriftet war und somit auch hier Reste einer vergleichbaren Serie vorliegen (Langdon 1924: 91, Tf. XXVII.1; Rittig 1971: 118–119, Nr. 16.2.2–4).

Als weiteres Beispiel kann hier ein bisher unbekanntes Exemplar eines stehenden Hundes mit einer Aufschrift im babylonischen Duktus vorgestellt werden (Abb. 6).

18 Zu den akkad. Farbbezeichnungen s.o. Anm. 12.

19 Zu den akkad. Farbbezeichnungen s.o. Anm. 12.



Abb. 6: Stehende Terrakotta-Hundestatuette im Privatbesitz, neubabylonisch, L: 4,4 cm (Foto: N. Corfù mit Publikationserlaubnis des Besitzers).

Das unvollständig erhaltene Stück befindet sich in Privatbesitz und wird hier mit Genehmigung des Eigentümers bekannt gemacht.²⁰ Die erhaltenen Masse sind: L: 4,4 cm, B: 2,6 cm und H: 2,3 cm.

Farbreste und Inschrift entsprechen VAT 8228 = KAR 298 weiss 1 und BM 30003, einem der obigen fünf Exemplare im British Museum. Die Inschrift lautet:

1. *ē tam-ta-lik*
Überlege nicht,
2. *e-pu-uš pi₂-ka*
mach dein Maul auf

Auffällig ist die Schreibung des Wortes *pû* „Mund“ mit dem Syllabogramm BI = *pi₂*.

Obwohl kein Zusammenhang mit unserer Denkmälergruppe besteht, sei noch auf eine interessante Parallele verwiesen: eine fragmentarische Statuette eines Vierfüßers, die in Assur gefunden wurde. Die Aufschrift unterscheidet sich von den bisher genannten Beispielen:

- dup-pir ri-qi SAG.ĤUL.ĤA.ZA*
Geh weg, entferne dich, „Unterstützer des Bösen“.

Die Nennung des Dämonen SAG.ĤUL.ĤA.ZA, der auch unter der akkadischen Übersetzung *mukil rēš lemuttim* bekannt ist,²¹ erlaubt den Schluss, dass es sich – wie schon vor Jahrzehnten erkannt wurde²² – eher um einen Löwenkentauren handelt.²³

Soweit zu den erhaltenen Beispielen beschrifteter Hundestatuetten.

4 Die Farben

In der literarischen Überlieferung wird neben den Texten für die Beschriftung auch festgelegt, dass und wie die Hundestatuetten zu bemalen sind. Die verwendeten Farben entsprechen dem mesopotamischen „Farbkanon“ (Landsberger 1967) wie er u.a. auch in der lexikalischen Liste *Ĥar-ra/Ur₅-ra = ĥubullu* mehrfach bezeugt ist, so für Hunde.²⁴ Dieser Reihung Weiss, Schwarz, Rot, Scheckig und Grün-Gelb folgt die Nennung von Hunden auf der oben erwähnten Nippur-Tontafel aus spätachämenidischer Zeit (AO 17662), wobei es sich um die Auflistung von Gottheiten und verschiedenen Objekten in Gula-Heiligtümern handelt.²⁵ Im Unterschied dazu sind in der Ritualanweisung für apotropäische Hunde (VAT 8228 = KAR 298) die beiden letzten Termini umgestellt. Dahinter dürften jedoch keine inhaltlichen Differenzen stehen. Es sei erwähnt, dass die Farbe „blau“ von Beispielen, die inschriftlich der Gruppe *arqu* zuzuordnen sind, bei der Veröffentlichung auch als „blau“ bezeichnet wurde.²⁶ Wie andere Völker des Altertums unterschieden weder Sumerer noch Akkader Grün von Blau (James/van der Sluijs 2008: 67).

20 Für die Publikationserlaubnis sei hier bestens gedankt.

21 Nach dem Beitrag von W. Farber 1975 ist nicht jeder akkad. Beleg per se mit dem Dämonen gleichzusetzen; s. auch id. 1993–1997.

22 Rittig 1977: 112–113, Nr. 14.1.; s. auch Farber 1975: 90 mit Anm. 4.

23 Nach Klengel-Brandt 1968: 26, erlaubt der fragmentarische Zustand des Objekts keine Entscheidung darüber, ob es sich um einen Hund, einen Löwen oder ein Fabelwesen handelt.

24 B. Landsberger, MSL VIII/2, 13, Tafel XIV 89–93; s. auch id. 1967; s. auch o. Anm. 12. Auch im sumerischen Text „Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata“ kommen in Z. 457–459 Farben von Hunden vor: Mittermayer 2009: 142–143, 286 (mit Verweis auf Ä.W. Sjöberg, ZA 83 [1993] 10 mit Anm. 4).

25 Bei Anm. 10.

26 S. o. Anm. 12, zu „blau“ s. Unger 1957–1971: 24, §2, zu „gelb“ s. Unger 1957–1971: 24–25, §3 und zu „grün“ s. Unger 1957–1971: 25, §4; zur Symbolik von Farben ferner Zanon 2012.

5 Bemerkung zur Häufigkeit beschrifteter Statuetten

Da Abwehrrituale im alten Mesopotamien eine grosse Bedeutung besaßen, was nicht zuletzt die obigen Ritualtexte zeigen, sollte man erwarten, dass beschriftete Hundestuetten in grösserer Zahl zu finden sind. Vielleicht lässt sich die geringe Anzahl tatsächlich bekannter Statuetten mit Inschrift dadurch erklären, dass die Inschriften auf Terrakottastuetten auch aufgemalt waren und deshalb nicht erhalten sind. Vereinzelt Beispiele für aufgemalte Keilschrift sind bekannt.²⁷ Da in den Anweisungen der Ritualtexte nichts davon steht, dass die Tonfiguren zu brennen seien, kann auch dieser

Umstand erklären, dass nur wenige Exemplare erhalten blieben. In Grabungsberichten wird teilweise von Bergungsschwierigkeiten berichtet.²⁸ Aus dem Text VAT 8228 = KAR 298 geht hervor, dass die Ritualobjekte und auch die Rituale nur für begrenzte Zeit als wirksam gedacht waren. Dafür spricht die teilweise Verwendung von Holz als Material für Gruppen von Ritualfiguren. Explizit steht in VAT 8228 = KAR 298 auf Zeile 40 der Rückseite, dass das Ritual für ein Jahr wirksam ist (Rittig 1977: 161–162, 170).

Die untersuchte „Denkmäler“-Gruppe ist zwar nicht gross. Sie ist aber ein schönes Beispiel dafür, wie sich Texte und materielle Funde ergänzen.

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²⁸ Ungebrannte Statuetten fand z.B. Scheil in Sippar, die meist beim Bergen oder auf dem Transport zerfielen: Scheil 1902: 91; ähnlich auch die Berichte aus Ur: Woolley 1926: 692–695; id. 1965: 94.

²⁷ Meissner 1925: 344.

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An overview on the excavations at Üçtepe Höyük (ancient Tuşhan)

The 1988–1992 excavation seasons

Şevket Dönmez

Abstract: This paper presents the results of the excavation campaigns 1988–1992 at Üçtepe in the province of Diyarbakır, identified with the ancient city of Tuşhan. Various aspects of the material culture of the site as well as questions pertaining to the historical geography of the region are discussed and evaluated.

Keywords: Diyarbakır, Üçtepe, Kuruḥ monoliths, Neo Assyrian period, historical geography.

1 Introduction

Üçtepe Höyük is situated to the 40 km southeast of Diyarbakır city center (Fig. 1) and immediately to the west of the village of Üçtepe (formerly also called Kurkh, Kerh or Kerh-i Dicle), which is located ca. ten kilometers southwest of the center of the city of Bismil (Figs. 2–3). Archaeological work at Üçtepe Höyük was first conducted by John G. Taylor, the British ambassador residing in Diyarbakır, in the years 1861–1863, and 1866.¹ In his articles published, Taylor mentions that he had visited “a fortress with basalt walls”. In the southwest corner of this fortress, of which no traces survive today, he discovered two steles, which date to the Neo-Assyrian period and are known in the scholarly literature as the “Kuruḥ Monoliths”, and which were transported to the British Museum. These steles date to the reigns of the Neo-Assyrian kings Ashurnasirpal II (Figs. 4; ca. 883–859 BC) and his son Shalmaneser III (Fig. 5; 858–824 BC).² In 1907, Albert T. Olmstead conducted research at Üçtepe Höyük, while surveying the regions of the river banks of the Tigris River.³ In following years, however, research – with the exception of a few surveys – in the region stopped and almost came to a halt until 1986. In this year, surveys in the Tigris Valley east of the city center of Diyarbakır started by an academic committee headed by Veli Sevin. The excavations at Üçtepe Höyük started in 1988, with the assumption – as one of the largest mounds in the southern part of the Tigris River – that the site could actually be the ancient city of Tuşha or Tuşhan⁴, the center of a

border province with the same name, which is known to have been founded by Ashurnasirpal II, and being mentioned in the Assyrian sources quite often.⁵

The excavations at Üçtepe Höyük, which were continuously conducted in difficult conditions for the duration of five excavation seasons until 1992, led to a number of important results regarding the architecture, pottery, material culture, burial traditions, and historical geography of the specific region during the Neo-Assyrian period. Choosing Üçtepe Höyük for a multidisciplinary archaeology research project was mainly due to the fact that the Kuruḥ Monoliths were discovered here. Altogether, twelve trenches were excavated in various parts of the mound, i.e. three trenches in the northwest (Trenches I, VI, VII), one in the north (Trench V), five in the southeast (Trenches II, IV, X, III, XII), one in the south (Trench IX), and one in the west (Trench VIII) of the site were (see Fig. 6).

Layers dating to the Roman Imperial period, the Hellenistic period, the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian periods, as well as the Middle and Late Bronze Ages were recovered in the northern and northwestern trenches; remains of the Hellenistic period and the Neo-Assyrian period were exposed in southern trenches. In seven out of twelve trenches excavated (i.e. Trench I in the northwest, Trench VIII in the west, Trench IX in the south and Trenches III, IV and X in the southeast), structural layers dating to the Neo-Assyrian period were detected. Trenches III and X of these were executed in a step-trench technique, three distinctive architectural layers of the Neo-Assyrian period were exposed here.

Altogether, thirteen structural layers (phases) were identified at the site. These phases show an almost un-

1 Taylor 1865: 21–23; Taylor 1868: 356–361.

2 For the monoliths, see Luckenbill 1926: 595–611; Grayson 1972–76: 631–643.

3 Olmstead 1918: 227–229.

4 For the ideas regarding the localization of Tuşhan, see also Anastasio/Lebeau/Sauvage 2004: No. 290.

5 For the excavations at Üçtepe, see Sevin 1989; Sevin 1990: 103–123; Sevin 1993: 175–191; Sevin 1994: 399–416; Sevin 1995: 449–450; Köroğlu 1998; Özfirat 2007.

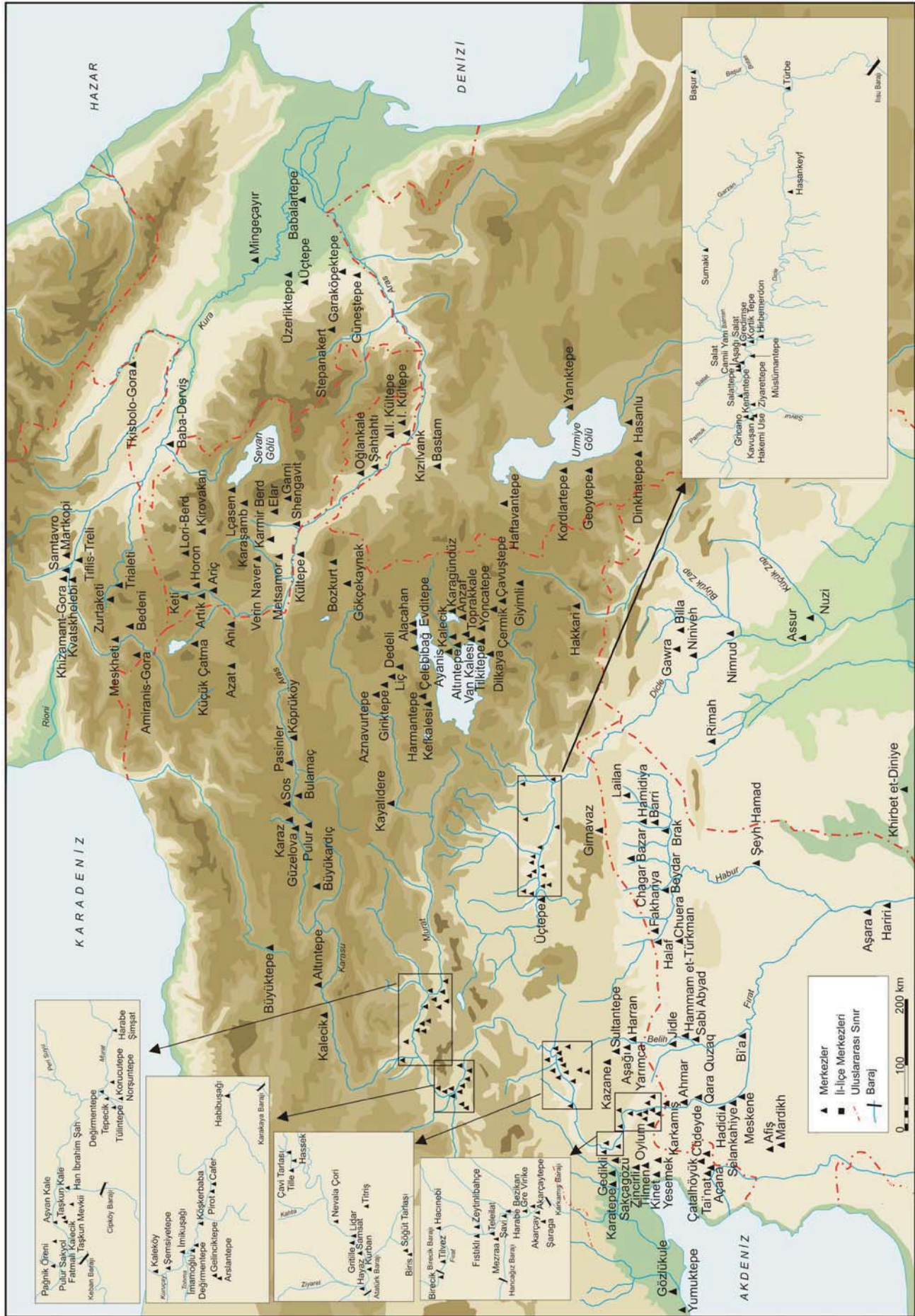


Fig. 1: Üçtepe and other Iron Age settlements of the Eastern and Southeastern Turkey (courtesy of Aynur Özfirat).

Structural layers (Phases)	Period	Date
1-4	Roman Imperial period	2 nd -4 th (?) century AD
5-6	Hellenistic period	4 th -1 st century BC
7-8	Neo-Assyrian period	8 th -7 th century BC
9	Middle- (Neo-?) Assyrian period	10 th -11 th century BC
10	Late Bronze Age	Middle 2 nd millennium BC
11	Middle Bronze Age (Colony period)	First half of the 2 nd millennium BC
12(A-B?)-13	Early Bronze Age	Late 3 rd millennium BC

Table 1: Stratigraphy and chronology of Üçtepe Höyük.

interrupted sequence from the late Early Bronze Age to the Roman Imperial period. However, considering the fact that the excavations did not reach the bedrock and also the existence of a small amount of pottery finds

dating to this period, the earliest habitation of the settlement seems to date to the alaf period (Early Chalcolithic period). The stratigraphy of Üçtepe Höyük can be summarized as shown in **table 1**.



Fig. 2: General view of Üçtepe Höyük, from east, Tigris Valley (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).



Fig. 3: General view of Üçtepe Höyük, from northwest (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).



Fig. 4: Kuruḥ Monolith, Ashurnasirpal II (courtesy of Ednan Güler, British Museum).



Fig. 5: Kuruḥ Monolith, Shalmaneser III (courtesy of Ednan Güler, British Museum).

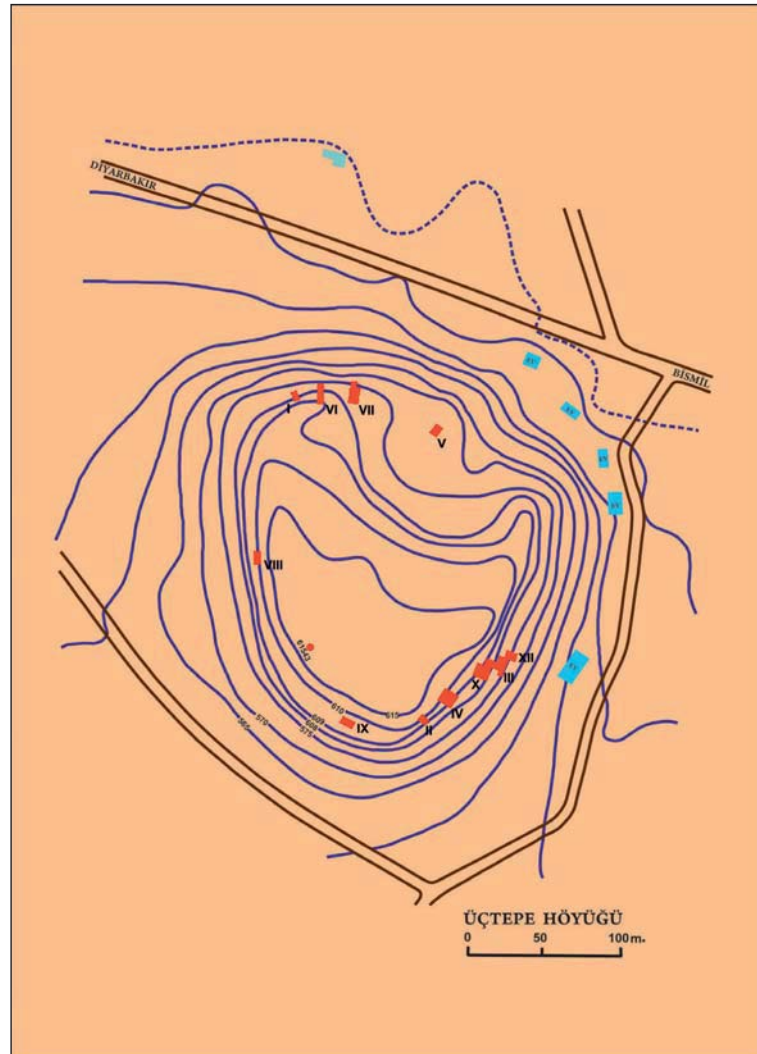


Fig. 6: Topographical plan of Üçtepe (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).



Fig. 7: Fresco fragments, Neo-Assyrian period (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).



Fig. 8: Nipple based goblet, terracotta (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).



Fig. 9: Nipple based goblet base fragments, terracotta (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).

2 Neo-Assyrian architecture

Still today, the main focus of the excavations at Üçtepe Höyük lies on the Neo-Assyrian period and questions regarding the historical geography of this specific period. It is difficult to give a definitive answer to the question what kind of a building, or buildings, the monumental walls belonged to that were recovered in the eastern and northern area of Üçtepe Höyük, and which are considered the most important architectural finds of the Neo-Assyrian structural layers. However, if one looks the data that were collected carefully, some important insights regarding the use and function of this architecture can indeed be determined. As we have mentioned above, the wall on the eastern slope, and exposed in three trenches, reaches the length of 44.50 m in a north-south direction. This clearly evokes the possible existence of a citadel wall. Also, some of the artefacts recovered from these architectural remains, especially fragments of frescoes as well as tiles, are elements normally employed and found in palaces, tem-

ples or larger mansions, with such important buildings mostly encountered within citadels walls (Fig. 7). The throne room and some of the rooms adjacent to the courtyard of the provincial palace at Til Barsip (Tall al-Aḥmar), which was built during the reign of Shalmaneser III, and which was mainly used by the provincial governor Šamši-ilu in mid-8th century BC, as well as the royal quarters of the palace of Ḥadatu (Arslantaş) with its finds that can be dated to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, were also ornamented with frescoes. Similarly, sometimes also the palaces in provincial capitals were tiled with stone plates, as was the case at Til Barsip, and sometimes with terracotta plates, as at Ḥadatu and Sam'al (Zincirli). Üçtepe Höyük clearly can be considered the most important Neo-Assyrian settlement of the region, but the Hellenistic and Roman period occupational layers covering the Neo-Assyrian period layers – at average reaching a height of approximately six–seven meters –, prevented the excavation and subsequent examination of this period in a larger area. Still, the evidence gathered so far is comparable



Fig. 10: Wall block, basalt, from Üçtepe Village (courtesy of Veli Sevin, Üçtepe Excavations Archive).

to the other provincial capitals in terms of monumental structures attested at the site. Next to the structure with massive walls, which encompasses the northern and eastern parts of the site, also other buildings seem exist. Trench I and VIII, located at the northwestern edge of the höyük, yielded remains of a graveled courtyard which shows that the structures built here were also more modest in size. So far, an archaeological survey has never been conducted in the Lower City of Üçtepe Höyük, but it is clear that it most probably must have been inhabited, as also Assyrians living in Tuşhan are mentioned frequently in various sources.

3 Pottery of the Neo-Assyrian period

The Neo-Assyrian pottery found at Üçtepe Höyük is a continuation of Middle Assyrian period types. Two distinct groups were observed within the corpus. The pottery of the first group is identified with well-known Assyrian types, the second group is Neo-Assyrian domestic pottery. The first group shows thin, high quality wares that were identified to belong to the so-called “Palace Wares”. The clay used for this pottery, which mostly consists of nipple based goblets, are usually well fired with thin tempering (Figs. 8–9). Goblets are with slight outward brims, and are in flattened global or oval form. The forms mostly show relief decoration, and in one case impressed decoration. The pottery belonging to the second group, clearly Middle and Neo-Assyrian period domestic wares, are plain surfaced with dense plant-temper. Bowls are the most common form in this group. They feature a simple brim, and a pronounced and sometimes sharp shouldered, crested, flat or circular bottom. Bowls were all shaped on potter’s wheel

and come in various dimensions; there are several examples with grooves under the brim in this group.

4 Summary

The identification of Üçtepe Höyük with ancient Tuşhan has been an important topic of scholarly discussion in recent years.⁶ It has been suggested that the Assyrian provincial capital Tuşhan is not to be located at Üçtepe Höyük, where the two Assyrian steles (Kuruḥ Monoliths) have been recovered, but at Ziyaret Tepe, which is located ca. 20 kilometers to east as crow flies. It has also been suggested that Üçtepe Höyük is to be identified with another settlement called Taidu or Tidu. However, the five years of expedition at Üçtepe Höyük do not support these claims.

The name of a certain “Aḫuni of Tuşhan” has been mentioned in some of the cuneiform tablets found in *Dunnu-ša-uzibi* (Giricano)⁷, located just northwest of Ziyaret Tepe. Finding the name of Tuşhan in such a close proximity to Ziyaret Tepe caused the suggestion of identifying Tuşhan with Ziyaret Tepe. Nonetheless, this proposal does not necessarily need to comply with

⁶ Matney/Roaf/MacGinnis 2002: 519–520; Matney et al. 2002: 47–89.

⁷ Schachner 2002: 564–565. Note that while K. Köroğlu originally had put forward an identification of Tuşhan with Üçtepe Höyük (Köroğlu 1993; Köroğlu 1998), he later joined the Ziyaret Tepe excavations and has recently started voicing the identification of Tuşhan with Ziyaret Tepe, see MacGinnis et al. 2014: 34–41; Matney/Köroğlu 2007: 12–14; Matney et al. 2007: 23–73; Matney et al. 2008: 155–170; Matney et al. 2009a: 37–84; Matney et al. 2009b: 155–170; Matney et al. 2011: 67–14; Matney et al. 2015b: 125–176; Matney et al. 2013a: 303–330; Matney et al. 2013b: 241–252; Matney et al. 2010: 315–329; Matney et al. 2012: 313–324; Matney et al. 2014: 329–341; Matney et al. 2015a: 255–272.

the archaeological realities of 1st millennium BC, since the name of Aḫuni of Tuşhan, which was found at *Dunnu-ša-uzibi* (Giricano) could, after all, relate to Ziyaret Tepe as well as to Üçtepe Höyük 20 km to the west.

Furthermore, according to some scholars, J.G. Taylor is thought to have discovered the Kuruḫ Monoliths not at Üçtepe Höyük, but at Ziyaret Tepe.⁸ Clearly, it is impossible for this extraordinary diplomat to confuse the places he visited and where such important finds were made. Besides, we must also consider the fact that Üçtepe Höyük is located closer to the Karaca Dağ mountain range, the source of the basalt which is also mentioned for the construction of the citadel walls. The worked basalt blocks that can be seen in Üçtepe Village, can be considered evidence for the existence of a wall mentioned by J.G. Taylor (**Fig. 10**).

All in all, the excavations at Üçtepe Höyük have undoubtedly shown that the settlement clearly was an important capital with a strong Assyrian cultural influence during the first quarter of the 1st millennium BC. In light of all this, it is emphasized here that the identification of Üçtepe Höyük with the Assyrian provincial capital Tuşhan is more likely than its identification with Ziyaret Tepe.

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⁸ Radner/Schachner 2001: 731–732.

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“I was swollen with hunger and he kept me alive”

The imagery of the legal texts from Emar

Lena Fijałkowska

Abstract: Images may be created in many different ways, such as painting, drawing, carving; they can also be evoked with words. Although legal texts are not exactly known for their vivid depiction of the world, some of them are less rigid than the others. This is particularly the case of documents originating from peripheral regions, such as the Syrian city of Emar. The article aims to analyze the imagery of these texts, found in the presentation of the facts of the case as well as in legal clauses. Documents concerning family law are of particular interest, since frequently it looks as if the scribes simply noted what the parties dictated; hence lively stories of famine, poverty, distress. Those verbal images allow us a rare glimpse “behind the scenes”, showing real people hidden behind the names from legal formulas, their problems and their feelings, otherwise rarely mirrored in documents of this kind.

Keywords: Emar, imagery, legal texts, Late Bronze Age, law in the Ancient Near East.

The title of this paper, “imagery of legal texts”, might *prima facie* sound like an oxymoron. After all, legal documents of any period are not exactly known for their vivid language and elaborate imagery. In fact, they are usually, and not without reason, considered rigid, deeply boring and difficult to understand, being formulated in some sort of “legalese”, a language accessible only to the initiated with little in common with the spoken tongue.¹

Much of this is also true for legal texts from the Ancient Near East. Regardless of their age of origin, the recurring words in most of their descriptions are “formulaic” and “standardized”.² Usually, such a description is pretty accurate; for instance, most sale contracts from any given period will probably differ in names of the protagonists, the objects of sale and the price, but not in much more; the same is true of other text types. However, it happens sometimes that this pattern is broken, or perhaps never came into being in the first place. In such, arguably rare but all the more precious cases, one

can suddenly see people of flesh and blood, with their problems, feelings and worries, emerging from the otherwise rather impersonal formulas.

A case in point is provided by the Syro-Hittite texts from Emar. The Emarite juridical documents are written according to two different scribal styles – so-called Syrian and Syro-Hittite.³ The former is the older, local one, the latter probably developed only under the Hittite rule.⁴ The most conspicuous differences between the two concern the format of the tablet, the manner of sealing, and palaeography; however, also the legal content may vary significantly. It is most obvious in the sale contracts, whose formularies differ considerably. Those differences include the operative section as well as most clauses, the only part pretty much identical in both kinds of texts being the description of the real estate.⁵ Moreover, each of the styles was used by a separate group of people. For instance, all the transactions concluded by members of the royal family and by the city authorities are Syrian, whereas contracts with the diviner’s family as protagonists belong to the Syro-Hit-

1 Author’s note: Following abbreviations are used for Emar texts: AuOr = Arnaud 1987; ASJ 10 = Tsukimoto 1988; ASJ 13 = Tsukimoto 1991; Emar = Arnaud 1986; RE = Beckman 1996b; Sigrist = Sigrist 1993; Subartu 17 = Cavigneaux/Beyer 2006; TBR = Arnaud 1991; Westenholz = Goodnick Westenholz et al. 2000. In fact, things got so far as to provoke campaigns of „plain language movement”, trying (mostly in vain) to bring lawyers to write in a way understandable for the general public without the need of translation. In 2009 in the U.S., the „Plain Writing Act” was passed, ordering federal agencies to use „clear Government communication that the public can understand and use” (Publ. Law 111-274, see <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ274/html/PLAW-111publ274.htm>, accessed 22.08.2016).

2 See for instance: Westbrook 2003a: 64; Westbrook 2003b: 400; Slansky 2003: 508; Márquez Rowe 2003: 700; Radner 2003: 901; Oelsner/Wells/Wunsch 2003: 944.

3 The characteristics of both styles have been thoroughly analyzed by numerous scholars. See for instance Wilcke 1992; Seminara 1998; Di Filippo 2008; Démare-Lafont 2010.

4 The chronology of the Emar texts is still heavily under discussion. Since the groundbreaking study of A. Skaist it has been recognized that the Syrian style is the older one, but, at the same time, there is an overlap between the two formats. However, it is still not clear how large this overlap is, and the controversy has been ongoing ever since. For more details, see Skaist 1998; Skaist 2005a and 2005b; Adamthwaite 2001: 3–25; Cohen/Singer 2006; Cohen/D’Alfonso 2008; Di Filippo 2004; Di Filippo 2008; Fleming 2008; Démare-Lafont/Fleming 2015.

5 However, it should be noted that nearly a half of Syro-Hittite sale texts do not contain any real estate description. For a detailed analysis of the sale contracts see Fijałkowska 2014b.

tite style. On the top of that, people appearing in contracts of one style, either as parties or as witnesses, are absent from documents of the other one.

One often stressed difference between the two styles is the formulaic character and rigidity of the Syrian one versus the “free” character of the Syro-Hittite format. It is quite obvious in the sale texts; there exists just one formulary of the Syrian documents, with few divergences, whereas among the three times less numerous Syro-Hittite sale contracts at least seven different formularies may be discerned, plus several atypical deeds.⁶ Even more interesting are documents concerning the enslavement and antichretic pledge of humans, all of them but one being Syro-Hittite. This is also where the “imagery” part enters the discussion, since precisely these texts, in accordance with the character of the Syro-Hittite format (if, indeed, it is a format at all), are neither rigid nor formulaic. Actually, they are anything but, and several of them provide us with an unexpected insight into the life of Emar inhabitants, presented in a very evocative and sometimes moving way. Unfortunately, this insight is rather saddening, as happy moments did not find any comparable reflection in legal texts.

In seven texts, a transaction of self-enslavement is concluded. None of them is written in the form of self-sale, known for instance from the Ur III period.⁷ In fact, there was obviously no fixed formulary for this kind of transaction, given that every document is different. What they have in common, however, is a justification of the transaction, mostly concluded “in the year of duress”, said duress being further explained as follows:

“In the year of duress, when [x a of grain] was worth 1 (shekel) silver”.⁸

“In the year of duress, when 3 *qû* of grain were worth 1 shekel silver”.⁹

“In the year of duress, when the TAR₂-WU troops besieged the city of Emar”.¹⁰

“In the year when the TAR₂-WU troops besieged the city, 1 *qû* of grain was worth 1 shekel of silver”.¹¹

The same clause is found in one contract of human antichretic pledge (so-called *amelûtu* contract¹²), in an adoption and in a sale of a child into slavery by its mother:

6 There are ca. 130 Syrian real estate sales and 45 Syro-Hittite ones. D. Fleming and S. Démare-Lafont go as far as to assert that in fact there was no “Syro-Hittite” style, since this group of documents adheres to no fixed framework and their formulation varies according to the needs of the parties. See Démare-Lafont/Fleming 2009.

7 See Steinkeller 1989: 32.

8 Emar 121: 1. *i-na* MU KALA.GA š[a x qa ŠE^{mes}] 2. *a-na* 1 [GI]N₂ KU₃.BABBAR^{mes} *iz-za-az*.

9 ASJ 13, 37: 2. *i-na* MU KALA.GA *ki-i* 3 SILA₃ ŠE^{mes} *a-na* 1 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR 3. *iz-za-az*.

10 TBR 44: 2. *i-na* MU KALA.GA ša ERIM^{mes} TAR₂-WU 3. ^{uru}E-mar *il-mi-ma*. On the identity of the TAR₂-WU see Arnaud 1991: 11; Astour 1996; Adamthwaite 2001: 105; Zaccagnini 1995.

11 TBR 25: 2. *i-na* MU ERIM^{mes} TAR₂-WU 3. URU^{ki} *la-mi*₃ 1 qa! ŠE^{mes} *a-na* 1 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR^{mes}.

12 On this type of contract, a kind of antichretic pledge whereby the debtor, often together with his family, entered into the servitude of his creditor in exchange for his annulling a part of

“In the year of duress, when 3 *qû* of grain was worth 1 shekel of silver”.¹³

“In the year of duress, when 2 *qû* of grain were worth 1 shekel of silver”.¹⁴

“In the year of duress, when 3 *qû* of grain were worth [x] shekel of silver”.¹⁵

This image of distress is supplemented with further details. Usually, it is explained that the owner of the newly enslaved person paid their debts, but several documents are more elaborate. Thus, we can see a woman who failed to pay her debts and was “seized by her creditors”; the new owner paid them off.¹⁶ In another case, the creditors seized and sold the wife of the debtor.¹⁷ The situation could be even worse than that, since some Emarites found themselves on the verge of hunger death:

“I did not have anyone to take care of me. Now, Zu-Aštarti, son of Ahi-malik, son of Kutbu, paid my debt of 25 shekels of silver and, in the year of duress, he kept me alive with bread and water”.¹⁸

“I was swollen from hunger and Bulalu kept me alive”.¹⁹

“In the year of distress, Dagan-kabar, son of Dagan-tali’, son of Hima kept me alive” (antichretic pledge of self).²⁰

Under such disastrous circumstances, the poorest of the poor, such as abandoned or widowed women, could be forced to sell their children so that they survive.²¹ As one such woman explained:

“My husband is now old, our children are small. There is no one to prevent them from dying (by starvation). I

the debt, minimum service period being usually the life of the creditor and his wife, see especially Skaist 2001; Yamada 2013; Fijałkowska 2014a.

13 Sigrist 2: MU KALAG.GA 2. ša 3 ŠE^{mes} *a-na* GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR *iz-za-az*.

14 TBR 74: 7. *i-na* MU KALAG.GA ša 2 qa ŠE^{mes} *a-na* 1 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR^{mes}.

15 ASJ 10, text E: [*i-na* MU] KALAG.GA ša 3 SILA₃ ŠE 2. [*a-na* 1 GI]N₃ KU₃.BABBAR^{mes} *iz-za-az*.

16 ASJ 13, 36: [^{1d}NIN]-*si-ma-ti* DUMU.MI, *Al-um-mi* DUMU.MI, Šap-*ta*₂ 2. [*hu-bu-la-a*]t EN^{mes} *hu-bul₂-la-ti-ši iš-šab-tu!*-si 3. [*u₃ š*]ul-lu-mi-šū-nu ul *il-e* – Dagan-simati, daughter of Al-ummi, daughter of Šapta, is indebted, and her creditors seized her; she cannot pay them back.

17 TBR 26: ^{md}KUR-*ta-li-i’* DUMU *Ta-i* 2. *hu-bu-ul e-ni-na* EN-lu-*u₃!* 3. *hu-bu-ul-la-ti* DAM-šū *iš-ša-ab-tu₃-ši* 4. *a-na* 70 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR^{mes} SAM₃.TIL.LA 5. *a-na* SAG.DU-š*ma a-na* GEME₂ 6. ša ^mBu-la-li DUMU *Ar-wu it-ta-nu-ši* – “Dagan-tali’ son of Ta’e had debts. Now the creditors seized his wife and for 70 shekel silver, the full price, of her own will, sold her to Bulalu son of Arwu”.

18 ASJ 13, 37: 3. ša *i-pal-la-ha-an-ni ia-nu i-na-an-na* 4. ^mZu-Aš-tar-ti DUMU *A-hi-ma-lik* DUMU *Kut-be* 25 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR 5. *hu-bul₂-li-ia ul-tal-lam* *u₃* MU KALA.GA *iš-tu* NINDA^{mes} 6. *u₃* A.MEŠ *ub!-tal-li-ša-an-ni*.

19 TBR 25: 5. *a-na bu-bu-ti* 6. *nu-pu-uh* *u₃* ^mBu-la-li 7. *ub-tal-li-ša₂-anni-mi*.

20 Emar 86: 3. ^{md}KUR-GAL DUMU ^dKUR-*ta-li-i’* DUMU *Hi-ma* 4. *i-na* MU KALA.GA *ub-tal-li-ša₂-ni-mi*.

21 Sometimes it was possible to pledge the children instead of selling them, especially if a surety was available. Still, if the parents died without repaying the debt, the pledged children would become slaves. This is the case in Emar 205; in another text, Subartu 17, a new surety appears and the girl is able to temporarily avoid enslavement. For the latter see Cavigneaux/Beyer 2006 and Yamada 2013 for corrected reading.

sold my daughter Ba'la-bi'a as daughter to Anat-ummi, wife of Šegal son of Ikku. I could feed my children in the year of duress".²²

Another mother in despair had to look far away from the city in order to find a buyer for her son:

"Dagan-ilī made her son, Zu-Eia, board a boat, and Dagan-bāni made him leave the boat in the city of Tuttul; for x shekel silver, the full price, she sold him into slavery of his own free will".²³

What emerges from these fragments is a very sad, but also very clear picture of war, enormous inflation and people dying of hunger. As calculated by M. Adamthwaite, the prices increased 100 to 300 times. No wonder many had to turn to extreme measures in order to survive and keep their families alive; certainly even this way not everyone will have succeeded.²⁴ However, it is interesting to notice that all those turbulent events are hardly mirrored in other contracts from Emar, especially the numerous real estate sales, which, as already mentioned, in their Syro-Hittite variety are also rather free in form. There is just one such real estate sale mentioning "the duress".²⁵ Otherwise it occurs in several Syrian sales in a much more laconic form, such as "ana dannati", "ina MU dannati" and similar, reminiscent more of date formulas than of anything else.²⁶ Therefore, the question arises, why such elaborate imagery (elaborate especially for usually concise legal texts) was used precisely in transactions concerning humans. It should certainly be assumed that, barring rare exceptions, legal texts do not give information without reason, and this reason is usually one of legal and not just of stylistic importance.

An interesting parallel to the Emar texts may be found in the Neo-Babylonian period, in the famous

"siege-documents" from Nippur, made during the siege of the city in the third year of Sin-šar-iškun and studied by Oppenheim.²⁷ Although written some 600 hundred years later and far away from Emar, they contain a strikingly similar imagery, at least at first sight:

"[In the third year of] Sin-šar-iškun, king of Assyria, [the town of Nippur] was under siege. Exit through the gate was [impossible]. The equivalent (was) one *sūtu* of barley.... The town [was...], the people [so]ld the[ir] children for [money]".²⁸

"During (the time when) the gate of Nippur was closed (and when) the equivalent (of what could be bought for one shekel of silver was) one *sūtu* of barley".²⁹

As noted by Oppenheim, similar formulas may be found in several texts dating from the siege of Babylon by Aššurbanipal, including a self-sale of a woman in order to receive food and survive famine.³⁰ The wording of those phrases, evoking suggestive images of war and starvation, is reminiscent of literary texts pertaining to general calamities.³¹ Therefore, it constitutes an example of the influence Akkadian literature had even on such an outwardly remote genre as legal documents. But these para-literary clauses also fulfil an important legal function, sanctioning otherwise impermissible transactions and barring redemption claims based on the low price.

However, similar imagery notwithstanding, this explanation applies only partly to the Emar texts. Although the inflation clause is fairly identical, the general pattern of use of all discussed formulas differs in many respects from the Neo-Babylonian one. First of all, an elaborate justification of the transaction, usually mentioning war, duress, and famine is consistently present not, as one might expect, in sales of children, but in self-enslavements. Out of seven such texts, four contain the expanded clause of duress, military siege and/or inflation,³² and six explain the salutary role played by the new owner, including paying debts of the just acquired slave, and in two cases, even saving his life.³³ On the other hand, sales of children apparently did not require, or at least not always, such justification. It is included only in two out of five or six of them, both

22 Emar 216: *ma-a* ^{lu₂}*mu-ti₄-ia il-t[a-bi-ir]* DUMU^{meš}-ni 4. *še-eh-ru ša u₂-bal-la-aṭ-s[u-nu u₂-ul i-šu]* 5. *u₂* ^{fd}NIN-bi₄-a DUMU.MI₂-ia a-na Š[AM₂] 6. a-na DUMU.MI₂-ša ša A-nat-um-mi DAM ^mŠe-gal DUMU Ik-ki 7. at-ta-din-ši DUMU^{meš} *še-eh-ru-ti i-na MU dan-na-ti* 8. *u₂-bal-li-iṭ*. This text is a part of a series concerning this unfortunate family, finally forced to sell all their children to the wealthy and powerful diviner. The story has, however, a happy end, at least for the boys. It turns out that they received a good education and became scribes, as proven by the colophones of several tablets. See Zaccagnini 1994; Cohen 2005. For the reading see Durand/Marti 2003.

23 ASJ 10, text E: 2. ^{fd}KUR-DINGIR-li₃ 3. [x] x ^mZu-e-ia DUMU-ši a-na ^šMA₂ 4. [t]u-še-li-šu₂ u₃ iš-tu ^šMA₂ 5. ^mKU]R-[b]a-ni <i-na> ^{uru}Tu-tul₂ u₂-še-ri-da-šu₂ 6. [a-na x G]IN₂ KU₃BABBAR^{meš} ŠAM₃TILL.A a-na IR₃-ut-[t]i? 7. [iš-tu SAG.D]U-š[u]-[ma] ta-ta-din-šu₂.

24 Adamthwaite 2001: 133–179.

25 *ana* MU.1.ti *dan-na-ti* – TBR 65, a woman with her four children selling the paternal house. For an analysis of this text see Westbrook 2001.

26 For a list of attestations see Zaccagnini 1995; Fijałkowska 2014: 167–168. Three Syrian sales (out of ca. 130) mention a war, using a wording similar to the self-enslavements: TBR 9: 21. *i-na* KUR₂.KUR₂ KALA-ti ša! Hur-ri: 22. BAD₃ *il-mi-ma* – "During the terrible war, when the Hurrians besieged the city walls"; RE 70: 28. *i-nu-ma* LUGAL ERIN₂^{meš} Hur-ri 29. ^{uru}Šu-ma^{ki} *i-pu-uš* – "When the king of the Hurrian troops fortified the town of Šuma". For the reading of RE 70 see Durand/Marti 2003: 151–152. RE 77: 35. MU^{kam} LUGAL ERIN₂^{meš} Hur-[ri] 36. ^{uru}E-mar^k[i] *i-la-mi-in?* – "The year when the Hurrian king besieged the city of Emar".

27 Oppenheim 1955.

28 2NT 297: [x x x ^{md}] X X X LUGAL-iš-kun LUGAL KUR Aš-šur^{ki} 2. [EN.LIL₂^{ki}] *la-mi-i-ma ši-ti* KA₂.GAL 3. [x x x K]IL.LAM ša₂ BAN₂.TA.AM₃ ŠE.BAR URU 4. [x x x] x UN^{meš} DUMU^{meš}-š[u₂-n] a-na 5. [KU₃.BABBAR *ip-š*]u-ru.

29 2NT 300: 4. ... *e-di-li* 5. KA₂ ša₂ EN.LIL₂^{ki} KIL.LAM 6. ša₂ BAN₂.TA.AM₃ ŠE.BAR.

NT 301 contains an identical clause. Translations follow Oppenheim 1955: 88–89.

30 Oppenheim 1955: 76.

31 Ibid: 78–79.

32 TBR 25, TBR 44 (duress only), ASJ 13, 37; Emar 121. The remaining documents are ASJ 13, 36, Emar 215, Sigrist 1.

33 The only text without this information is TBR 44. Saving the life of the debtor: TBR 25, ASJ 13, 37.

being cases of desperate mothers acting alone.³⁴ Other sales of children mention “the year of duress” at most.³⁵

Another important difference between the Neo-Babylonian and Emarite documents consists in the character of images evoked by their clauses. In Emar, they do not seem to originate from a literary topos. They are not, either, a part of a general, somewhat “fixed” description of the situation, since even the amount of grain worth a shekel of silver changes. On the contrary, they vary from case to case and seem to refer to genuine, and very difficult, experiences of the parties, such as being alone and starving (ASJ 13, 37), finding oneself on the verge of starvation, saved in the last moment (TBR 25), or, perhaps even worse, being a destitute mother without any support, unable to feed her little children (Emar 216). In other words, in these texts we can find an accurate and dramatic, though of course incomplete description of the crisis period (or periods); the images they contain are perfectly true and, though laconic, unfiltered through the literary sieve.

It seems correct to assume that the duress clauses had a legal function, just like their Neo-Babylonian counterparts. However, judging by the pattern presented above, it is valid to speculate that in Emar, it is self-enslavement that was the least acceptable kind of transaction, always requiring justification and allowed only under special circumstances. On the other hand, children sales, though rare, were more easily accepted and deemed problematic only if concluded by the mother alone instead of the head of household, who was apparently seen as acting within his rights. This is well shown by two documents pertaining to the same family. In the first one, the woman acts alone and explains her reason, in the second one both parents sell not just one but all four children, and there is no justification.³⁶

Now, why condemn self-enslavements, if condemned they were? For one, it might be a question of status. The default contract in the case of severe financial problem would have been *amelūtu* – personal antichresis, often binding for life but not depriving the pledger of his status of free citizen. Giving up one’s freedom for good would thus require truly special circumstances in order to be valid. It is also possible that self-enslavement was a type of contract new to the Emarite legal practice, hence the complete lack of fixed formulary, as if the scribe mostly noted what the parties were telling him.

What remains is the problem of duress clauses in other documents – an *amelūtu* contract, one sale of an adult, one adoption, with no general pattern of use.³⁷ In

my opinion, it may be a case of “better safe than sorry” – if the scribe was not sure whether the clause was necessary, he would insert it just in case, exactly the way contemporary notaries do. Another explanation is also possible, and does not exclude the former one. After all, scribes (as notaries), were human too, and could be shaken by the surrounding misery to the point when it influenced their work and ended up recorded also in those legal texts it did not belong to.

However, the documents of the “free” Syro-Hittite format are not the only ones to exhibit vivid imagery; also Syrian scribes would sometimes, though rarely, become quite eloquent. In most cases what we get are just small distortions of the rigid Syrian style, suddenly enlivening an otherwise monotonous document. An example that suggest itself is one of the “tablet clauses”, that is final contract clauses concerning the transmission of the tablet and invalidation of previous documents pertaining to the same matter. In Syrian real estate texts the invalidation clause is usually completely fixed, stating that “if another tablet turns up, it will be broken”.³⁸ But twice, the scribe changed the usual formula, specifying that the “former tablet” would appear in the possession of the sellers (named by names), thus indicating how little trust the parties had for each other.³⁹ Moreover, there is one text which, though displaying all the formal features of the Syrian style, is written as if the scribe simply noted what was told him, interspersing the main thread with formal clauses only when absolutely necessary.⁴⁰ The document records an adoption of two abandoned children, and instead of simply registering the fact of adoption and perhaps also mentioning the precarious situation of the children, it recounts at length a sad familial history of a disowned and then deceased father and of his progeny thrown out on the street during the “year of war”, finally saved by the adopter.⁴¹ The aim thereof was certainly legal – to

a man who supported her in the year of duress. A mention of duress may also be found in Subartu 17, concerning a girl given as *amiltūtu* - female antichrestic pledge. The text is not entirely clear, but it seems that the man presenting himself as her new surety is said to have provided for her during the year of famine and hostility. See Yamada 2013 for the text and discussion.

38 *šum-ma ṭup-pu ša-nu-u₂ e-li u₃ he-pi₂*; Emar 8 and 10 (expropriations), RE 3, RE 9, Emar 137, TBR 10, TBR 55, TBR 57, Emar 141, Westenholz 5 and 6 (real estate sales).

39 TBR 62: 37. *šum-ma ṭup-pu ša DUMU^{meš} A-tu-ud-da* 38. *u₃ DUMU^{meš} Mi-i-mi i-la: 39. u he-pi₂.*

Emar 158: 29. *šum-ma ṭup-pu ša-nu-ma* 30. *i-na* ^{§15}PISAN *ša DUMU^{meš} 31. ^mA-hi-šar-ri i-li u he-pi.*

40 Emar 256.

41 1. *iš-tu u₄-mi an-ni-im!* 2. ^mAd-du DUMU A-wi-ru₃ 3. *il-ia!-am iq-bi a-nu-um-ma ^mHu-la-u₂ DUMU-ia* 5. 2 ^{§15}ha-aṭ-ṭa₂-šu 6. *še-eb-ra-at u₂-ul DUMU-ia šu-ut* 7. *u₃ i-na-an-na ^mHu-la-u₂ e-mu-ut* 8. *u₃ MI₂.NITA₂^{meš}.šu* 9. *a-na ri-bi-ti ša-al-u₂* 10. *a-na MU^{ka_m2} ša KUR₂^{meš} nu-ku-ur-ti* 11. *u₃ ^mA-bi₂-ka-pi₂ DUMU Ha-am-s[i₂ i-la]-mi-du-ni* 12. *MI₂.NITA₂^{meš}.šu ša ^mHu-[la]-u₂ [DUMU Ad]-du* 13. *iš-tu ri-bi-[ti]* 14. *iš-ši-šu-nu* – “From this day, Addu, son of Awiru, said as follows: “My son Hulau, his two staffs are broken. He is not my son anymore”. Now Hulau is dead and his children were thrown out on the street, in the year of war. But Abi-kapi son of Hamsu found out about it. The children of Hulau son of Addu, he took them from the street.” For a commentary to this text see Bellotto 2009: 147–149.

34 ASJ 10, text E, Emar 216. The other documents include Emar 7, Emar 83, Emar 217 and TBR 52. The age of the child is given only in Emar 83 and Emar 217 (sales of breastfed children, in the latter text together with its three siblings), but it seems probable that parents or, in TBR 52, uncles, sell minor children.

35 Emar 83, TBR 52.

36 Emar 216, Emar 217.

37 Sigrist 2 (*amelūtu*), TBR 74 (adoption), AuOr 5, 12 (sale of daughter-in-law) A mention of duress (*i-na MU^{hi-a-ti} dan-na-ti*) occurs also in a Syrian style adoption, carried out by ¹Wae, adopting

protect the adopter, who in fact acquired three servants for the cost of their board and keep, from claims of the children's family. However, since this text is unique in the Emar archives, it may well be that the scribe had no model contract at his disposal, hence the simple retelling of the protagonists' story, instead of the usual sequence of fixed formulae. In other words, what we see here, as well as in the Syro-Hittite texts discussed above, is legal practice in the making, and scribes reacting to new legal realities as quickly and as well as they could. It is precisely to that fact that we owe glimpses

into everyday life in the Late Bronze Age, normally absent from legal documents.

To sum up, legal texts from Emar dating from the period of severe crisis contain unexpectedly vivid descriptions of the plight of its people. These descriptions play an important legal role, but at the same time, they show us glimpses of individuals dealing with an ongoing disaster in their own ways, striving to survive and to save their families. Unfortunately, happy moments of life did not leave any comparable trace, and thus the Emar archives leave us with depressing images of starving people and crying children in our heads.

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The Nuzi apprenticeship contracts

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Abstract: A search of the Nuzi texts for tablets referring to apprenticeships has produced five tablets. The professions concerned are the “profession of a weaver” (*išparūtu*, JEN 572, HSS 19, 44), the “trade of a barber” (*gallābūtu*, EN 9/3, 87), the “trade of a smith” (*nappāhūtu*, HSS 19, 59), and the trade about which a “silver smith” (*nappāhu* ša KU₃.BABBAR, EN 9/1, 257) would have instructed his apprentice. These four contracts will be examined and compared with the Neo- and Late Babylonian apprenticeship contracts.

Keywords: Nuzi; apprenticeship; contract; JEN 572; EN 9/1, 257; EN 9/3, 87; HSS 19, 44; HSS 19, 59; craft; silver smith; smith; weaver; barber; *huttumumma epēšu*; *lummudu* “to teach (someone something)”; Neo-Babylonian period; Achaemenid period.

1 Introduction¹

One of the most striking aspects of the Nuzi texts (roughly mid 15th to mid 14th century BCE) is the variety of legal documents that are introduced by “Tablet of ...” (*ṭuppi x*), by which the following genitive stipulates the subject of the agreement, such as adoption (*mārūti*, lit. “sonship”), marriage (*riksi*, lit. “binding”), exchange (*šupe* “ulti) or agreement (*tamgurti*). Some contracts are drawn up as records of statements, “Statement of ...” (*lišān-šu* ša PN), or declarations, “Thus says ...” (*umma* PN), of both parties involved. These contracts cover all possible legal procedures concerning family members, real estate and movable property. Although the majority of them deal with adoption, marriage and inheritance, a very few refer to a child or an adult being entrusted to a craftsman as an apprentice to learn a profession or trade.² The keyword of these agreements is the verb *lummudu*, “to teach (someone something)”. Such apprenticeship contracts are well known from the Neo- and Late Babylonian period that are dated around 800–950 years later. Mariano San Nicolò presented his study of these contracts to the *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften* in 1950. His study enables us to compare the formulations and stipulations of the five Nuzi apprenticeship contracts with the later ones. This comparison shows a shift in customs for these agreements, a shift that could well be due to the cultural background of the peoples involved generated by different political situations and social conditions. While the Nuzi texts

refer to a Hurrian society that incorporated a few Babylonians and Assyrians, the Neo- and Late Babylonian ones refer to a society basically consisting of Babylonians, Assyrians assimilated into the new society after 612 BCE, and Achaemenids, i.e. Persians, the new rulers from 539 BCE onwards.

2 The corpus of Nuzi apprenticeship agreements

There are five Nuzi contracts referring to an apprenticeship (see **figure 1**). One apprentice is taught (*lummudu*) to be a barber (*gallābūtu*; EN 9/3, 87), two to be weavers (*išparūtu*; JEN 572, HSS 19, 44), one to be a regular smith (*nappāhu*; HSS 19, 59) and another a silversmith (*nappāhūtu* ša *kaspi*; EN 9/1, 257). All except one (JEN 572) of these texts are in a fragmentary state of preservation, so conclusions on the formulations and stipulations of the agreements are tentative.

3 The five Nuzi tablets that include an apprenticeship agreement

Only two Nuzi apprenticeship contracts have been edited before, so for an overview we offer transliterations and translations of all five tablets.

I. The contract for the apprentice silversmith (*nappāhu* ša *kaspi*) (EN 9/1, 257) is the only one dealing with the apprenticeship and nothing else.³

1 This is the reworked version of my paper with the same name presented during the session on “Nuzi” of the 61 *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Geneva, on June 23, 2015. I would like to thank the organizers of the RAI for allowing us to convene for this session and for including the papers presented in the proceedings of the RAI.

2 For an overview of four of the five Nuzi apprenticeship contracts see Fincke 2015.

3 EN 9/1, 257 (obv. 1) [EME-šu š]a ^mta-a+a [DUMU xx xx]-ta-i [0] (2) 'a-na pa'-[ni] ši-bu-ti an-[nu-ti] (3) ki-a-[am] iq-ta-b[i] (4) 'a-ar-ta-še-en-ni [0] (5) DUMU na-na-a-e-ri-i[š] (6) na-ap-pa₂-ha 'ša' KU₃.BA[BABBAR] (7) u₂-la-am-ma-'da₂'-[an-ni] (8) ki-ma i-dī₃-ia [...] (9) 1 GUD SIG₅ na-as₂-qu₂ [...] (10) 30 MA.NA ZABAR.MEŠ [0] (11) 5 UDU.MUNUS.MEŠ ^ma-ar-[t]a-še-en-ni (12) a-[n]a ^mta-a+a [i-na]-din (13) um-ma ^ma-a[r-ta-še]-en-ni-ma [0] (14) ki-i 30 A 'xx'-x[x] 'u₂'-la-am-ma-[as-su₂] (15) u₃ ši-ip-'ra'-i[ša] E₂-ia (16) ^mta-a+a [i]-pu-uš-[š]u (17) um-m[a ^ma]-'ar-ta'-[še-en-ni-ma] (lo. edge 18)

Profession	Akkadian	Text	State of preservation
Barber	<i>gallābūtu</i>	EN 9/3, 87	fragmentary
Weaver	<i>išparūtu</i>	JEN 572 HSS 19, 44	complete fragmentary
Smith	<i>nappāhūtu</i>	HSS 19, 59	fragmentary
Silversmith	<i>nappāh(ū)tu ša kaspi</i>	EN 9/1, 257	fragmentary

Figure 1: The apprenticeship contracts from Nuzi.

1–3: [Statement of] Taya, [son of ...]tai. In front of th[ese] witnesses he has said thus:

4–7: “Ar-tašenni, son of Nana-ēriš, the (trade of a) **silversmith he will teach [me].**”

8–12: “As my wage [...] 1 good quality bull, [...] 30 minas of bronze, (and) 5 female sheep, Ar-[t]ašenni [will gi]ve to Taya.”

13: Thus (said) A[r-taš]enni:

14: “For 30 ... **I will teach [him],**”

15–16: “and Taya will perform my work at (lit. of) my house.”

17: Thu[s (said) A]r-ta[šenni]:

18–20: “[The (trade of a)] silver[smith I will teach him], and [...]

(remainder lost, except for incomplete list of witnesses and seal impressions on reverse)

This apprentice receives a wage (8–12), probably for performing the instructor’s duties at his house (15–16). In line 14, some kind of payment to the instructor for the duration of the apprenticeship is fixed, but the traces copied in EN 9/1 are not clear enough for us to know what was actually paid. A closer inspection of the tablet may help.

This is the only agreement made with the instructor without involving the apprentice’s father or guardian, so the apprentice cannot have been a child, but must have been a legally responsible adult. He might have already been trained as a regular smith and becoming a silversmith was an advanced qualification. That may be why he was able to work for his instructor at his house or workshop and be paid for doing so.

II. From what is preserved of HSS 19, 59 we see that a father will pay for his son to become an apprentice smith (*nappāhūtu*).⁴

[na-ap-pa₂-ha ša] (19) KU₃.BABBAR^{u₂}-[la-am-ma-as-su₂] (20) u₃ [...] (rev. list of witnesses; seal impressions).

4 HSS 19, 59 (beginning of obverse is lost) (1') [xx xx xx xx xx xx x]x 'xx' [...] (2') DUMU-ia^{m a-rī}-[g]le-mar (3') a-na na-ap-pa-hu-ti (4') a-na^{m te-eš-šu-ma-ti} DUMU še-er-ta-mi-lu SUM-nu (5') im-ma-ti-me-e^{m a-ri-g[e-m]ar} (6') u₃^{m te-eš-šu-ma-ti} i a-[na nappā-hu-ti] (7') u₃-la-am-ma-a[s]-su₂-nu (8') ki-i-ma ra-m[a-ni] [x]x [xx xx xx xx]-ia (9') u₃ 30 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR^{a-na-an-d}[in u₃ ig-r] i-šu (10') a-na^{m te-eš-šu-ma-ti} [0] (11') 'i-na-an-din' [...] (rest of

0'–4': [Thus said ...: “...] My son Arik-kemar **is given to (learn the) trade of a smith to Teššu(p)-mati**, son of Šertamilu.”

5'–7' : “As soon as Teššu(p)-mati **teaches (rather has taught) Arik-kemar the trade of a smith,**”

8'–11': “for myself [...] my [...] and 30 shekel of silver I will giv[e, and] his [wag]e to Teššu(p)-mati [...] I will give.”

(remainder lost)

The father will pay 30 shekels of silver to the instructor when the apprenticeship has been successfully completed, and in addition will pay the instructor a wage. Thus, the instructor is paid for his time and efforts during the training period and for endorsing the qualification.

III. In EN 9/3, 87 the apprenticeship agreement for a barber (*gallābūtu*) is embedded in a real adoption contract.⁵

1–3: [Statement of Ke]l^{teššup}, son of [...]ya. In [front of the(se)] people he has said (thus):

4–5: “[Ari]m-mušše, the slave [of Na]n^{nip-teššup}, son of Urḫiya, (is the one that)”

6–8: “[Na]n^{nip-teššup} **in order [to t]each (him) the trade of a barber has given (lit.: I have taken) into my hand(s),**”

8–9: “and [I] have made him (my) son.”

9–11: “And no[w], [A]ri-mušše has ta[ken] my [daugh]ter!? (as wife).”

12–13: “[And] I, together with ..[...] [...] have given.”

14: “[... s]ilver [...]”

(rest of the text of the contract and the list of witnesses is lost)

obverse and beginning of reverse are lost; rest of the list of witnesses; seal impressions).

5 EN 9/3, 87 (obv. 1) [EME-šu ša^{m ke-e}]l^{te-šup} (2) [DUMU xx xx x]x-ia^{a-na} (3) [pa-ni LU₂].MEŠ iq-ta-bi (4) [m a-ri-i]m-mu-uš-še IR₃ (5) [ša^{m na}]n^{nip-te-šup} DUMU ur-ḫi-ia (6) [u₃^{m na}]n^{nip-te-šup} a-na ga[l]-la-bu-ti (7) [a-na lu]um-mu-di₃ a-na ŠU-ia (8) [i-le-e]q-qe₃ u₃ a-na na-a-ri (9) [e]-ta-pa-aš-šu i-na-a[n-na] (10) [m a-ri-im-mu-uš-še] [0] (11) [na-a]r<-ti>^{ia} iḫ-t[^{a-as-su₂}] (12) [u₃ a-n]a-ku it-ti^{m/1}[...] (13) [xx xx xx x]x-RU ad-d[in ...] (14) [xx xx xx K]U₃.BABBAR.MEŠ [...] (rest of obverse is lost; beginning of reverse is lost; rest of the seal impressions). For the transliteration of this text see also Fincke 2015: 566.

(seal impressions)

The instructor Kel-teššup initially took on the slave Arim-muše as an apprentice barber, and adopted him as his son at the instigation of Nanip-teššup, the slave's owner. Subsequently Arim-muše took the daughter of his adoptive father as his wife – *aḫāzu* clearly means to take as a wife. The silver mentioned in line 14 is more likely to have been a payment connected with this wedding than a fee for the apprenticeship. Since the instructor had already adopted the slave as his son any payment due for then apprenticeship would have already been made.

IV. JEN 572 is an example of a real adoption contract in combination with an agreement for an apprentice weaver (*išparūtu*). As the only completely preserved documents of the five Nuzi apprenticeship contracts, its four-part structure is immediately apparent: the contract itself with stipulations (obv. 1–21, rev. 37–41); a statement by the apprentice's father (obv. 21–rev. 31); a statement by the instructor (rev. 32–36); the names of the witnesses and their seal impressions (rev. 42–left edge 53).⁶

1–5: Ḫui-tilla, son of Wardēya, gave Naniya, his son, into adoption to Tirwiya, slave of Enna-mati.

5–7: And Tirwiya will let Naniya take a wife and **teach him the profession of a weaver**.

8–10: As long as Tirwiya lives, Naniya together with his wife will behave respectful towards him.

11–14: As soon as Tirwiya dies, Naniya will take his wife and go wherever he wants to.

15–21: If Tirwiya **does not teach** Naniya **the profession of a weaver**, Ḫui-tilla will come and take back his son Naniya. [And T]irwiya will give 5 sheep a[s] [compensation] to Ḫui-tilla.

21–22: Statement of [Ḫu]i-tilla; he said (thus):

23–25: “[No]w [I have] taken 5 sheep [from] Tirwiya.”

26–27: “[And N]aniya will behave respectful towards Tirwiya”

28–31: “and will make him *ḫuttumumma* (just) [I]k[e (one of) his son(s). And Tirwiya will make Naniya[a] *ḫuttumumma* (just) like (one of his his son(s).”

32: [Thu]s (said) [T]i[rw]iya:

32–33: “[N]aniya is indebted to me.”

34–36: “Whenever I die, Naniya will take his wife and go wherever he wants to.”

37–39: Whoever among them breaks the contract will pay 1 mina of sil[ver] and 1 mina of gold.

40–41: The tablet is written after the *šudūtu* in the cit[ry] gat[e].

(list of witnesses and seal impressions)

Lines 8–14 stipulate lifelong respect or obedience from the apprentice and his future wife for his instructor and a duty to stay in his house as long as he lives (8–14); these stipulations are repeated in the instructor's statement (32–36). They are clauses pertinent to the real adoption contract and can be separated from the terms of the apprenticeship agreement. There it is the instructor who has a duty to teach the apprentice to become a weaver (5–7). If he fails to do so the apprentice's biological father can take his son back and is entitled to receive compensation of 5 sheep (15–21), exactly the same that the instructor gave to the father when adopting his son (23–25). What is striking is that the instructor will not receive any payment for his teaching efforts. It seems that by taking his apprentice as his adopted son, with the implications for a lifetime of service and obedience towards the instructor, obviated the need for any payment. Indeed, instead of receiving a fee, the instructor gave 5 sheep to the father of his new apprentice. It is also remarkable that the father confirmed in his statement that his son has the duty to be respectful or obedient – depending on how one translates *palāḫu* – towards his instructor and to treat him *ḫuttumumma*.

The Hurro-Akkadian phrase *ḫuttumumma epēšu* consist of a Hurrian infinitive in *-umma* and a form of the Akkadian verb *epēšu*, “to make *ḫuttum*”. This expression occurs in penalty clauses in contracts for real adoption⁷ usually in the sentence “they will put him into prison and make him *ḫuttumumma*”. Some contracts replace the Hurro-Akkadian expression in this context by *kir-bān-šu iheppi*, “he (the adopter) will break his clod of earth”, an expression indicating that someone is to be expelled from the family and become an outlaw. In fact these two expressions do not mean the same, as can be seen from the contract Sumer 32 no. 2. Here, the Hurro-Akkadian expression is phrased as an action of the adopted son: “they will put him into prison; as long as he (i.e. the adopted son) makes *ḫuttumumma*, he (i.e. the adopter) will not break his clod of earth”.⁸

6 JEN 572 (obv. 1) *ḫu-i-til-la DUMU wa-ar-te-e-a* (2) *u₃ ḫna-ni-ie DUMU-šu* (3) *a-na ma-ru-ti* (4) *a-na ḫti-ir-wi-ia IR₃ ša en-na-ma-ti* (5) *it-ta-din u₃ ḫti-ir-wi-ia* (6) *ḫna-ni-ia aš-ša-ta u₂-ša-aḫ-ḫa-as-su₂* (7) *u₃ a-na iš-pa-ru-ti u₂-la-ma-ma-as-su₂* (8) *a-dī₃-i ḫti-ir-wi-ia bal-tu₄* (9) *u₃ ḫna-ni-ia it-ti aš-ša-ti-šu-ma* (10) *i-pal-la-aḫ-šu-nu-ti* (11) *im-ma-ti-me-e ḫti-ir-wi-ia im-tu-ut* (12) *u₃ ḫna-ni-ia aš-ša-as-su₂* (13) *i-le-eq-qe₃-e-ma u₃ a-šar* (14) *ḫa-du₂-u₂ 'i-il-la-ak* (15) *šum-ma ḫti-ir-wi-ia ḫna-ni-ia* (16) *a-na iš-pa-ru-ti la u₂-la-am-ma-as-su₂* (17) *u₃ ḫu-i-til-la i-ma-aq-qu₂-ut-ma* (18) *'u₃ ḫna-ni-ia DUMU-šu i-le-eq-q[e₃]* (19) [*u₃ ḫti-ir-wi-ia* 5 UDU.MEŠ *ki-m[a]* (20) [*u₂-ti-ma a-na ḫu-i-til-la* (21) [*i-na-a)n-din u₃ EME-šu* (lower edge 22) [*ša ḫu-i-til-la iq-ta-bi* (23) [*a-an-n)i-mi* 5 UDU.MEŠ (rev. 24) [*ša ḫti-ir-wi-ia* (25) [*el]-qe₃-e-mi* (26) [*u₃ ḫna-ni-ia ḫti-ir-wi-ia*] (27) [*i]-pa-la-aḫ-šu* (28) [*u₃ k[i-m]e-e* LU₂.DUMU-šu (29) *ḫu-ut-tu₃-mu-um-ma i-pu-uš* (30) *u₃ ḫti-ir-wi-ia ḫna-ni-ia*] (31) [*ki-me^e-e²* DUMU¹ *š₂*, *ḫu-ut-tu₃-mu-um-ma ip-pu-u[š]* (32) [*um-ma*] [*t]i-i[r-w]i-ia-ma* [*na]-ni-ia* (33) *a-na i[a-š]i-ma² ḫu-ub-bu-ul-mi >im-ma-mi<* (34) *im-ma-ti-me-e a-[na]-ku im-tu₃-ut-mi* (35) *u₃ ḫna-ni-ia aš-ša-as-su₂* (36) *li-il-qe₃-e-ma u₃ a-šar ḫa-du-u₂ li-il-li-ik-mi* (37) *ma-an-nu ša i-na be-ri-šu-nu* (38) KI.BAL-qa-tu₄ 1 MA.NA KU₃.[BABBAR] (39) *u₃ 1 MA.NA GUŠKIN u₂-ma-at-la* (40) *ḫup-pi EGIR-ki šu-du-ti* (41) *ina a-b[u-u]l-li 'ša-ḫi₃-ir* (list of 7 witnesses; seal impressions of witnesses). See also Breneman 1971: 226–227 text no. 102 (only lines 1–14).

7 See Dosch 1987.

8 Sumer 32 no. 2 lines 16–17: *a-du₃-i ḫu-ud-du-mu-um-ma DU₃-uš*

The word *huttumumma* goes back to a root *hutt-* followed by a root extension =*um* or =*om* of unknown significance. The one Hurrian root *hut-* with an established meaning is translated “to praise, to reverence, to revere”. This would correspond to the duty of a son to “obey” his father and mother or to “behave respectfully” towards them, corresponding to Akkadian *palāhu*. If this meaning lies behind *huttumumma epēšu* the translation would be “as long as he (i.e. the adopted son) is obedient (or behaves respectful), he (i.e. the adopter) will not expel him from the family”. However, because *hut-* is written with only one “t” whereas the “t” is doubled in the Hurro-Akkadian expression, this explanation remains uncertain.

V. The adoption agreement in HSS 19, 44 establishes a companionship between the natural sons of a father and his adopted son, who is required to instruct the eldest son to be a weaver (*išparūtu*).⁹ The text runs as follows:¹⁰

1–3: [Tablet of sonsh]ip of [Zilip-še]n[ni], son of Qanē. He took [Mul-teššup], son of Kinzia, [as son.]

5–9: [Thu]s (says) [Z]ilip-šenni: “Whatever [fie]lds and houses I received from the [house o]f my father, (these) are given [to] my sons. And Mul-teššup is not given a share.”

9–14: “Whatever fields and houses I acquired for money, earnings, possessions (of animals) (and) whatever there is (of me), Z[ilip-š]en[ni], is given to Mul-teššup and my sons. And they will share equally, there is no principle and no minor (heir) among them.”

15–19: As long as [Z]ilip-še[n]ni lives, from [...] Mul-teššup will bear the [*ilku*-duty], and whatever first-

class? (animals) of Zilip-šenni (there are), Mul-teššup will h[av]e (them).

19–21: The eldest son of Zilip-šenni, Mul-teššup **will teach him the profession of a weaver.**

22–26: Zilip-šenni will (arrange that) Mul-teššup can m[ar]ry a [w]ife; barley, garments and [year]ly allotment(s), [year] for year together with his children a[...] he (i.e. Zilip-šenni) give to them.

26–28: Whenever (Zilip-šenni) dies, the [...] of Z[ilip-šenni] Mul-teššup will not ta[ke]’ ...]

29–33: (too fragmentary)

34–36: And [...] **Mul-teššup will teach the eldest so[n] of Zilip-šenni the profession of wea[ver] ...**

37–end: [...] Thus (say) the sons of Z[ilip-šenni] (38) (the rest is too fragmentary)

This contract is most likely a real adoption by which the adoptive father establishes companionship between his adoptive children and the newly adopted son. The crucial stipulation is that part of his legacy will be divided equally between all the children and that each heir will have the same rights and duties (9–14).¹¹ But the adopted son is the only one who is to be responsible for the *ilku*-duty, and he is consequently reimbursed by receiving first-class animals (15–19). This stipulation applies during the lifetime of Zilip-šenni, the adoptive father (15). As part of this agreement adopted son, Mul-teššup, is obliged to teach the eldest son of his adoptive father, Zilip-šenni, the profession of a weaver (19–21; 34–36). Since the tablet is very fragmentary it remains unclear whether or not a clause was included in case Mul-teššup failed in his duty to teach the son. The adopted son was evidently a single man at the time of this agreement, and his adoptive father agrees to arrange a marriage and to supply the new family with yearly allotments of food and garments (22–26). Such an arrangement could be seen as part of the adoption contract, or as compensation for giving instructions in weaving.

4 Formal features of the Nuzi apprenticeship agreements

Despite the fragmentary statement of most of the contracts, the following features and peculiarities regarding the relevance of the apprenticeship as a legal regulation and the form of the agreements can be noticed (see **figure 2**).

Only one tablet is clearly a contract that focuses exclusively on an apprenticeship with no other transactions involved (EN 9/1, 257, silversmith). Since only the middle part with the apprenticeship agreement is preserved in HSS 19, 59 (smith), it is possible that the tablet began with another agreement. The remaining three contracts mention apprenticeship as part of other arrangements (JEN 572 and HSS 19, 44, weaver; EN 9/3, 87, barber). Two are real adoptions with apprentice-

(17) *ki-ir-ba-an-šu la i-ḫe-ep-pi₂*.

9 This text has first been edited by Paradise 1972: 129–132 text 31. For the correct interpretation as a companionship agreement see Dosch 1993: 100–101, 106. I would like to thank Paola Negri-Scafa for drawing my attention at this text, which had escaped my notice.

10 HSS 19, 44 (obv. 1) [tup-pi₂ DUMU/ŠEŠ-t]i ša (2) [mzi-lip₂-še-e]n-ni DUMU qa-ne-e (3) [mmu-ul-te-šup] DUMU ki-in-zi-ia (4) [ana DUMU/ŠEŠ-ti] i-te-pu-uš (5) [um-m]a [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-ni-ma mi-nu-um-me-e (6) [A.ŠA₃.M]EŠ-t[u₃] ‘u₃’ E₂.H.A.M[EŠ] ša iš-tu₄ (7) [E₂ š]a a-bi-[i]a ša ‘el-qu u₃ ša’ (8) [a-na] DUMU.MEŠ-ia na-ad-nu u₃ mmu-ul-te-šup (9) [l]a su₂-um-mu-uh₃ mi-nu-um-me-e A.ŠA₃ (10) ‘E₂.H.A.MEŠ ša a-na ši-mi el-qu-u₂ (11) (erasure) ma-na-ḫa-tu₄ mar-ši-it-tu₄ mi-im-mu šu-un-šu [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-[ni] (12) a-na mmu-ul[l]-te-šup u₃ a-na DUMU.MEŠ-ia na-ad-nu (13) >na-ad-nu< ‘u₃’ mi-it-ḫa-ri-iš i-zu-uz-zu (14) GAL u₃ TUR ṭ-[n]a ŠA₃-bi-šu-nu ia-nu (15) a-di₃-i [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-[n]i ‘baṭ-ṭu₄ (16) u₃ i-na ‘xx xx xx xx’ [xx xx] (17) mmu-ul-[te-šup il-qa il]-‘la-ak’ (18) u₃ mi-nu-me-e n[a-as]-ku ša [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-[i] (19) u₃ mmu-ul-te-šup n[a-šu]-u₂ DU[MU-š]u GAL (20) ša [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-ni mmu-ul-te-šup-ma (21) a-na U[š.B]AR.MEŠ u₂-la-am-ma-ad-šu-nu-ti (22) [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-ni mmu-ul-te-šup (23) [aš]-‘ša-ta ‘u₂’-š[a-a] ḫ-[ḫa]-as-su₂ ŠE.BA.M[EŠ] (24) lu-bu-ul-ta u₃ ša-ad-du-‘uq’-[qa ina MU-t]i (25) u₃ MU-ti it-ti še-er-ri-šu ‘ki’-[ma xx xx] (26) ṭ-[n] a-an-din-na-aš-šu-nu-ti šum-m[a] (lo. edge 27) ṭ-[ma-at u₃ [x] x ša [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-ni] (28) [m]mu-ul-te-šup[la] u₂-š[a-...] (29–33 too fragmentary) (34) u₃ x[x x]x x[x mmu-ul-te-šup] (35) DU[MU] GAL ‘ša’ [m]Zi-lip₂-še-en-ni a-na U[š.BAR.MEŠ] (36) [u₂]-la-ma-du₄ ‘...’ (37) [x[x x]x] um-ma [DU]MU.MEŠ [š]a [mz]i-lip₂-še-en-ni (39) (the rest of the tablet is too fragmentary for a transliteration, but one can see that statements are recorded).

11 See Dosch 1993: 101.

Formal features		Texts	
Subject of the contracts	Only apprenticeship agreement	EN 9/1, 257	
	Only apprenticeship agreement is preserved (middle of the tablet)	HSS 19, 59	
	Real adoption + apprenticeship agreement	JEN 572	
	Real adoption + apprenticeship agreement + marriage (?) agreement	EN 9/3, 87	
	Real adoption / companionship + apprenticeship agreement + marriage agreement	HSS 19, 44	
Stating the apprenticeship agreement	Records of statements	HSS 19, 59; EN 9/1, 257; EN 9/3, 87	
	Include a statement, but not on the apprenticeship	JEN 572; HSS 19, 44	
	Statement of	both the apprentice and the instructor	EN 9/1, 257
		the instructor	EN 9/3, 87
		the apprentice's father	HSS 19, 59

Figure 2: Formal features of the Nuzi apprenticeship agreements.

ship agreements whereby the adopted son becomes an apprentice. One adopted son is to be trained as a weaver (JEN 572). The other is to be trained as a barber (EN 9/3, 87), but here a marriage agreement is included in which the apprentice takes the daughter of the instructor as his wife. The third contract is a real adoption establishing companionship between the natural sons of a father and his adopted son, who is required to teach the eldest son in the family how to weave. Since the instructor was a single man the father will find him a wife (HSS 19, 44).

Apprenticeship can be the sole element of a contract or part of a more complex arrangement. Both types of contract begin with "Tablet of ..." followed by statements (see above the introduction and **figure 2**). Most of

these apprenticeship agreements, but not the two concerning weavers (JEN 572; HSS 19, 44), are phrased as statements. The statements of the apprentice and the instructor are preserved for the silversmith (EN 9/1, 257). Only the statement of the instructor is preserved in EN 9/3, 87 (the barber), and only the statement of the apprentice's father is preserved in HSS 19, 59 (the smith). In the only complete contract we find the statements of the apprentice's father and the instructor about the adoption element and monetary compensation, but not about the apprenticeship (JEN 572; weaver). In the other contract for a weaver, which is fragmentary, again we find statements not on the apprenticeship but on family matters (HSS 19, 44).

Clauses and payments		Text
Way of expressing the apprenticeship agreement	A has taken B, C's slave, from C in his hand for teaching him (B) the trade of a barber and has adopted him (B) as son	EN 9/3, 87
	C has given his son B as a son to A; A will teach B the profession of a weaver	JEN 572
	C has taken A as son; A will teach C's oldest son the profession of a weaver; C will give a wife to A	HSS 19, 44
	B, C's son, is given to A [by C] to learn the trade of a smith; A will teach B the trade of a smith	HSS 19, 59
	A will teach me (B) the trade of a silversmith	EN 9/1, 257
Payment included	C has taken 5 sheep from A (i.e. for the adoption of C's son?)	JEN 572
	C will give to A and his (future) wife a yearly allowance of barley, garments and allotment(s) (i.e. as part of the adoption/companionship)	HSS 19, 44
	After B has been taught, C will pay 30 shekels of silver and give a wage [...] to A	HSS 19, 59
	B will receive a wage from A for performing A's work at his house (as part of the training?)	EN 9/1, 257
	A is teaching his profession to B for a payment	
Penalty	Penalty in case of not teaching: C will take B back and A will pay 5 sheep	JEN 572
		Not preserved in EN 9/3, 87
		Lost in EN 9/1, 87; HSS 19, 44 and 59; EN 9/1, 257

A = instructor; B = apprentice; C = father or guardian of the apprentice

Figure 3: Legal regulations (clauses and payments) of the Nuzi apprenticeship agreements.

Nuzi (mid 15 th –mid 14 th century BCE)	Babylonia (7 th –5 th century BCE) (dates of the contracts are added in brackets)
Barber (<i>gallābūtu</i>) (EN 9/3, 87)	
Smith (<i>nappāḥūtu</i>) (HSS 19, 59)	
Silversmith (<i>nappāḥ(ūtu) ša kaspī</i>) (EN 9/1, 257)	
	Special cultic performer (<i>kurgarrūtu</i>) and cultic dancer (<i>ḥuppūtu</i>) (629/8)
	Sack-maker (<i>sabsinnūtu</i>) (552/1)
	Builder (<i>arad ekallūtu</i>) (540/539)
Weaver (<i>išparūtu</i>) (JEN 572; HSS 19, 44)	Weaver (<i>išparūtu</i>) (537/6)
	Baker (<i>nuḥatimmūtu</i>) (532/1; 496/5)
	Lauderer (<i>pušammūtu</i>) (531/0)
	Lapidary (<i>purkullūtu</i>) (531/0)
	Knotter of ceremonial garments (<i>kāšir lamḥuššūtu</i>) (526/5)
	Merchant's assistant (<i>šamallūtu</i>) (514/3)
	Leatherworker (<i>aškāpūtu</i>) (505/4)

Figure 4: Trades open to apprenticeship.

5 Differences and similarities in these five Nuzi apprenticeship agreements

These five agreements all have slightly different phrasing for the apprenticeship arising from the different circumstances surrounding the agreement (see **figure 3**). However, regardless whether apprenticeships were arranged by the father (JEN 572; HSS 19, 44; 59) or the guardian of the apprentice (EN 9/3, 87) or by the apprentice himself (EN 9/1, 257), the instructor is always required to *lummudu*, “to teach”. In HSS 19, 59 another phrase is added in addition implying teaching (see above II.).

Significant differences appear about payments. In JEN 572, the instructor pays the apprentice’s father after adopting his son (see above). In HSS 19, 59, the father pays the instructor a fee and a wage at the end of the apprenticeship. In EN 9/1, 257 the apprentice is paid a wage by the instructor; apparently this apprentice was already basically qualified and could do some work for the instructor, but the instructor was to teach him more specialised techniques for a defined payment (see above). Only one tablet (JEN 572) includes a penalty for a failure to teach, stipulating that the instructor will have to pay the father twice as much as he had paid him earlier for adopting his son.

6 Professions taught according to apprenticeship contracts from both periods under consideration

Before the results from the Nuzi agreements can be compared with the apprenticeship contracts from the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, it is pertinent to give an overview of the professions they show that were open to an apprenticeship.¹² Eleven contracts mention nine different professions (see **figure 4**). Three tablets from the Neo-Babylonian period (629/8–540/39 BCE) mention four professions (*kurgarrûtu*, *huppûtu*, *sab-sinnûtu* and *arad ekallûtu*). All the others date to the Achaemenid period (539/38–496/95 BCE).

Since an apprenticeship agreement for a weaver is attested in both periods the Late Babylonian contract will now be looked at in more detail (Cyrus 64).¹³

1–5: Nuptâ, daughter of Iddin-Marduk, descendant of Nûr-Sîn, has given Atkal-ana-Marduk, slave of Itti-Marduk-balâtu, son of Nabû-aḥḥē-iddin, descendant of Egibi, **for the profession of a weaver for 5 years** to Bêl-êṭir, son of Aplâ, descendant of Bêl-eṭêru.

6: He will teach him the complete profession of a weaver.

7–9: Year for year Nuptâ will give each day 1 QA of bread and a garment to Atkal-ana-Marduk.

9–11: **If he does not teach him the profession of a weaver**, he will give for each day 1 seah of barley as his (the apprentice’s) *mandattu*.

11–12: (Whoever) breaks the contract will give ½ minas of silver.

12: Witness.

(names of 3 witnesses and the scribe)

17–18: Babylon, month *tašritu*, day 20, year 2 of Kuraš, king of Babylon, king of the countries.

¹² See San Nicolò 1950: 4–5.

¹³ Cyr. 64 (537/6 BCE): (obv. 1) ¹*nu-up-ta-a* DUMU.MUNUS-su ²*ša*₂ ³MU-⁴AMAR.UTU A ⁵ZALAG₂-⁶30 (2) ⁷*at-kal-a-na*-⁸AMAR.UTU LU₂-⁹*qal-la* ¹⁰*ša*₂ ¹¹KI-¹²AMAR.UTU-DIN (3) A-¹³*šu*₂ ¹⁴*ša*₂ ¹⁵AG-¹⁶ŠEŠ.MEŠ-MU A ¹⁷*e-gi-bi a-na* LU₂-¹⁸*iš-pa-ru-tu* (4) *a-di* 5 MU.MEŠ *a-na* ¹⁹EN-KAR-ir A-²⁰*šu*₂ (5) ²¹*ša*₂ ²²*ap-la-a* A ²³EN-e-²⁴*te*₃-ru *ta-ad-di-in* (6) ²⁵*iš-pa-ru-tu gab-bi u₂-lam-mad-su [a-di]* (7) ²⁶*dup-pi dup-pi* UD-mu 1 QA NINDA.HI.A ²⁷*u₃* (8) ²⁸*mu-šep-tum* ²⁹*nu-up-ta-a a-na* ³⁰*at-kal-a-na*-³¹AMAR.UTU (9) ³²*ta-nam-din ki-i iš-pa-ru-tu* (lo. edge 10) ³³*la ul-tam-mi-du-uš* UD-mu BAN₂ ŠE.BAR (11) ³⁴*man-da-at-ta-šu₂ i-nam-din na-bal-kat₂-ta-nu* (rev. 12) ³⁵½ MA.NA KU₂.BABBAR ³⁶*i-nam-din* LU₂-³⁷*mu-kin-nu* ... (13–15: (3 witnesses and the scribe) (16) ... TIN. TIR.KI ITU.DU₆ UD.20.KAM₂ (17) MU 2.KAM₂ ³⁸*ku-ra-aš₂* LUGAL TIN.TIR.KI (18) LUGAL KUR.KUR.

Structure and clauses of the apprenticeship agreements		Nuzi (5 examples)	Neo- / Late Babylonian (11 examples)
Contractual form		Statement(s) or part of other contracts	Contract or statement(s)
Combined with an adoption or other agreement	Real adoption + apprenticeship	✓(EN 9/3, 87; JEN 572)	--
	Real adoption/Companionship + apprenticeship	✓ (HSS 19, 44)	--
Way of expressing the apprenticeship agreement	A is to teach B the trade of ...	✓	--
	A is to teach B for n years the trade of ...	--	✓
	A is to teach the complete trade of ...	--	✓
Payments to the apprentice (B)	B will receive a wage from A	✓ (EN 9/1, 257)	--
	C will give to B bread and garments	--	✓
Payments to the instructor	C will pay silver to A (as his) wage	✓ (HSS 19, 59)	--
	C will give A yearly barley, garments and allotments [companionship + apprenticeship]	✓ (HSS 19, 44)	--
	B gives a payment to A	✓ (EN 9/1, 257)	
Payments to the apprentice's father	A gives a payment to C [adoption + apprenticeship]	✓ (JEN 572)	--
Penalty for non-performance of the instructor	If A does not teach (B): C will take B back and A pays a compensation	✓ (JEN 572))	--
	If A does not teach (B) the trade, he has to pay ... for each day	--	✓
General penalty clause	Usual penalty clauses for breaking the contract / witnesses / seal impressions	✓	✓

A = instructor; B = apprentice; C = father or guardian of the apprentice

Figure 5: Structure and clauses of the apprenticeship contracts.

7 Comparing the apprenticeship contracts from both periods

The apprenticeship agreements from Nuzi when compared with the Neo- and Late Babylonian ones show differences and similarities (see **figure 5**).

Three of the five Nuzi contracts are phrased as statements, including the only one concerned exclusively with an apprenticeship. Not all the Neo- and Late Babylonian contracts are phrased as statements.

Combining real adoption with apprenticeship in an agreement is found only in the three examples at Nuzi.

The Nuzi texts simply state that the instructor is to teach a specific trade, but the Neo- and Late Babylonian ones also specify exactly how long the apprenticeship will last. Later contracts include a clause to ensure the instructor will teach the trade completely. In Nuzi this must have been taken for granted.

In the one Nuzi contract which mentions a wage paid to the apprentice by the instructor special circumstances applied and the apprentice entered into this agreement alone.

In the Neo- and Late Babylonian period, food and clothes for the apprentice are always provided by his father or legal guardian during his apprenticeship at the instructor's house.

Only in Nuzi do we find a contract mentioning of a payment by the father to the instructor, or one by the instructor to the father, because of special circumstances outlined above.

A Penalty clause for not teaching the apprentice is attested in only one Nuzi text, but perhaps it has been lost from the other damaged Nuzi tablets. In the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods such a clause was standard, with compensation paid for any day the apprentice was not taught.

In the Nuzi and the Neo- and Late Babylonian agreements the penalty clause for breaking the contract, a list of witnesses and their seal impressions was standard. If and when more apprenticeship agreements from the Nuzi period and region are found it should be possible to say more about the customs of the Hurrians there.

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Decreeing fate and name-giving in *enūma eliš*

Approaching a fundamental Mesopotamian concept with special consideration of the underlying assumptions and of the condition of possibility of human knowledge

Gösta Gabriel

Abstract: The divine decrees of fate determined the course of the world according to the Ancient Near Eastern worldview. For this reason their examination exposes a central aspect of ancient Mesopotamian thought. *Enūma eliš* comprehensively reports on various occasions in which gods decree fate or name an entity, which makes it a diagnostically conclusive source. The paper focuses on the processes of decreeing fate and naming in this text and aims to identify their underlying assumptions. For this, it works as closely as possible with the text and carefully applies speech act theory and the theory of linguistic signs to the ancient material. It reveals a complex mechanism of propositional and illocutionary acts that are fundamental to the divine verdicts, especially in the case of name-giving. Furthermore, it can identify a specific empiric technique based on sign reading (*cuneiform empiricism*) that also works as template model in divination. Finally, *enūma eliš* informs about the creation of the system of signifiers and signified underlying divination. In this way, it exposes the ontological structure behind the divinatory practice and, thus, shows the epistemic ideas of how and why this technique could be used successfully. In summary, investigating the concept of decreeing fate and naming reveals a high complexity of ancient thought that corresponds with philosophy to a large extent.

Keywords: Concept of fate, *enūma eliš*, names, naming, speech acts, cuneiform empiricism.

1 Introduction¹

The fundamental importance of the concept of fate becomes apparent when we focus on the prevalent paradigm of the Ancient Near Eastern worldview in comparison to ours today. Nowadays we perceive the world as something that is determined by natural law. Because of its quantitative characteristics one can measure it, i.e. we can grasp natural laws by using numbers. This enables us to profoundly explain the past, present, or future course of the world by knowing its causes and rules. Consequently, we can call this worldview the *par-*

adigm of natural law and number (Gabriel 2014: 417). In ancient Mesopotamia, another concept prevailed. The gods determined the course of the world, and then wrote their decisions into (almost) every part of it. One could read about their verdicts, e.g., in the night sky (there called *šitir šamē*² “heavenly writing”), in the liver of a sheep, or in the behaviour of a passer-by (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012: 113).^{3, 4} As the decisions were something that could potentially⁵ be read (instead of quantitatively measured) one can name this worldview the *paradigm of divine decision and writing* (*ibid.*, see also Van De Mieroop 2016: 10, 219).⁶ The main instru-

1 This article is a largely modified and more systematised version of a paper given at the 2015 Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI) in Bern and of chapter 5 (Festsprechung(-sakt) (=šimtu) und Name(nsgebung)) of my interpretative study on *enūma eliš* (2014). I am especially grateful to Annette and Christian Zgoll for their invaluable comments and advice while I wrote the book on *enūma eliš*. I owe Piotr Steinkeller many thanks for sending me the manuscript of his paper at the 2014 RAI before its publication. I also thank Martin Worthington for his excellent feedback and suggestions during the 2015 RAI and during my stay at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. Generous funding by the Graduate School for Humanities (GSGG) at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen enabled both stays. That is why I owe them my gratitude, too.

2 See for example Rochberg 2004: 1f.

3 These are solely examples of the broad array of divinatory techniques that were used in the Ancient Near East (e.g. Wilhelm 2015: 63; Van De Mieroop 2016: 89f.).

4 Alternatively, one can also understand the unprovoked signs (e.g. constellations) as symptoms of a possible future (Koch 1995: 11; Steinkeller in preparation).

5 Liturgical texts like *uru₂-am₃-ma-ir-ra-bi* show an awareness of the limits of the human mind to decipher everything (Frahm 2011: 40). For discussion of this text and of a corresponding passage of the so-called *Babylonian Theodicy* see Frahm 2011: 40 fn. 147.

6 Understanding this Mesopotamian concept of empiricism helps to analyse ancient science (including divination) in its contemporary epistemic context and, hence, to grasp it be-

ment that the gods use to determine the course of the world is the decision of fate (Akkadian *šimtu*), which puts it parallel to the modern concept of natural law. Hence, this study wishes to contribute to our understanding of fundamental ideas of Ancient Near Eastern thought.⁷

For this purpose, the analysis aims to reconstruct the ancient ideas regarding the processes that form the determination of fate and to explore their underlying premises. The combination of explicit and implicit information will provide the basis of a conceptualising reconstruction of the ancient Mesopotamian worldview. This embraces ideas on the fundamental nature of the world and on the condition of possibility under which humans can gain knowledge about it (i.e. on epistemology).

2 Material

Ancient Near Eastern discourses were not explicitly exposed in tractates, but implicitly encoded in myths (e.g. Wilcke 1999: 103–105, George 2013: 48).⁸ What is more, mythical texts contain rational thought (C. Zgoll 2014: 185), which makes them an appropriate choice to investigate Mesopotamian complex ideas on the nature of the processes determining the world.

This article focuses on the Babylonian mythical account *enūma eliš*, which was highly likely composed during the second half of second millennium BC.⁹ It

yond pejorative labels like hocus-pocus (Selz 2002: 659–660, Van De Mieroop 2016: 6–10). What is more, Selz sees that modern science inclines to the principle of “embeddedness” and, thus embraces a logic fundamental to Ancient Near Eastern scientific thought (ibid. 674, see also e.g. Rochberg 2011: 618). The use of mathematical models to predict astronomical phenomena (especially in the second half of the first millennium BC) derived from the attempt to read the signs in the sky. It thus represents a late development and had no impact on the general way the world was perceived (Rochberg 2011: 619). As a consequence, mathematical astronomy was just a secondary aspect of Ancient Near Eastern science. Additionally, the physical cause was of no importance, but analogous connections between signs and consequences can be observed (ead. 2015: 238f.) (also see §§ 7.2. and 8.3.). Indeed, the Mesopotamian scientific system is heavily based on the polysemy of the writing system. That is why its spread was limited to cultures that used cuneiform (Van De Mieroop 2016: 10).

7 See especially Rochberg 2015 who puts ‘the Mesopotamian rationale’ into a diachronic and transcultural picture in the absence of Western normative concepts of what rationality should look like. She also gives an overview of research on Mesopotamian thought (Rochberg 2015: 218–228). Furthermore, Marc Van De Mieroop (2016) explores Ancient Near Eastern contemplation – especially as transmitted by lists – on the structure of the world and the possibility of human knowledge, which he understands as the Mesopotamian way of a “Philosophy before the Greeks”.

8 It is important to distinguish between a source and the ancient practice that produced this source. A list, for example, does not necessarily entail that the underlying thoughts were also linear. That is why it is crucial to differentiate the convention to express ideas and the ideas themselves (Hilgert 2009: 300–302). Therefore, a mythical text can display thought that we would not classify as ‘mythical’ (whatever this may be, cf. e.g. C. Zgoll 2014; id. 2016).

9 The exact time is still disputed. Whereas for example Wilfred G. Lambert (1984: 4–7; 2013: 439–444) argues in favour of the

narrates the rise of the Babylonian god Marduk who eventually becomes the new king of the gods.

This text represents a diagnostically conclusive basis for three main reasons:

- First, it provides many cases of determination of fate, including many examples of name-giving.¹⁰ This becomes apparent by the observation that the Akkadian lexeme *šimtu* (“fate, destiny”) is attested 35 times in the text, which makes it the third most frequent noun in total (Gabriel 2014: 249).¹¹ It is also worth stressing that determination of fate occurs in the text when something decisive happens, so that all milestones are marked by such an act.
- Second, as it is an epic text, it elaborately reports on actions, agents, patients, means and context. This facilitates the reconstruction of the processes.
- Finally, *enūma eliš* represents a single text and by this a specific view on the phenomenon, yet it is built up by many traditional mythical stories (e.g. Lambert 2013: 202–207; Seri 2014; Gabriel 2014: 10) that were reshaped to narrate the rise of the new divine king. By doing so, the text also informs on more traditional and more general ideas on decreeing fate. However, such generalising measures need to be applied carefully and ask for further research (see § 9.1.).

3 Research in Ancient Near Eastern studies

3.1. On destiny

Jean Bottéro (1998: 189) called the Akkadian lexeme *šimtu* (“fate”, “destiny”) “le terme le plus fort et, [...] le plus riche et significatif” of ancient Mesopotamian religion. Jack Lawson (1992) tried to grasp the concept of fate; however, his study was biased by an ancient Greek perspective. Kai Lämmerhirt and Annette Zgoll (2009–2011) provided an overview of the phenomenon of fate in the written sources and of respective research. The most important Mesopotamian terms are *nam-tar* (Sumerian) and *šimtu* (Akkadian). In line with Claus Wilcke (2007), Lämmerhirt and C. Zgoll stressed the legal nature of the decision of fate which allows people to acquire knowledge of the divine verdict by divination and, then, to make an appeal (Lämmerhirt/Zgoll 2009–2011: 150f.). What is more, they showed a close relationship between decreeing fate and naming (ibid. 152f.). Brigitte Groneberg (2008) investigated the function of the *Tablet of Destinies* in the *Epic of Anzû*.

The most systematising approach stems from Piotr Steinkeller (2018) who mainly focused on Sumerian

Isin II period, Walter Sommerfeld (1982: 175) assumes a Kassite origin. An overview of the scholarship concerning the date of composition is provided in Gabriel 2014: 10 fn. 3.

10 Naming does not only comprise the 50+2 names in the end, but also three earlier names of Marduk, the names of Apsû (as part of the world) and Bābil (Babylon), and three names of Marduk’s bow.

11 After the terms *ilu* (“god”) and *abu* (“father”).

sources. He sketched a model of a clock, into which he placed the three predominant Sumerian terms: *geš-ḫur* represents “the cosmic geometry, the blueprints that organize the me into one coherent system”; *me* (“forces” or “absolutes”) are “the clock’s constituent parts”; and finally *nam-tar* stands for “the power (main spring) that makes the clock tick” (ibid. 10). Finally, he differentiated between sign and fate. Whereas a sign is a herald of a potential disaster, destiny means that the future has been unchangeably determined. On the one hand, even the divine king could not change the course of an event as soon as “it was decided and activated” (ibid. 18). On the other hand, rituals could be successfully used to dissolve an evil portent as they were directed against a sign, which communicated mere potentiality instead of necessity. Steinkeller, thus, sketches an ancient Mesopotamian worldview that embraces both deterministic and non-deterministic elements (ibid. 18–20). By contrast, Janice Polonsky (2002: 585–607), Claus Wilcke (2007: 234, 236), as well as Kai Lämmerhirt and Annette Zgoll (2009–2011: 152) saw a general changeability of destiny and hence the idea of a non-deterministic cosmos.

In my recent interpretative study on *enūma eliš*, I investigated the divine actions of decreeing fate and name-giving (Gabriel 2014: 249–315). I identified declarative speech acts as a tool to process the determination of destiny. Additionally, I was able to show that naming and decreeing fate form part of a joint ontology. Finally, since I catalogued agents, actions, patients and means, I provided an overview of all cases of determining destiny and naming in the entire text. Although I had already begun to systematise the underlying ideas, the outcome just represents a starting point to the study of this article.

3.2. On speech acts

The Biblical scholar Erwin Koschmieder coined the term “Koinzidenzfall” (case of coincidence) to describe a performative oral action (1945).¹² This approach largely influenced the Assyriological discussion of performativity. In the first instance, Wolfgang Heimpel and Gabriella Guidi (1969: 149–152) identified the preterite as its grammatical correlate, stressing that performativity derives from a set of actions that embraces more than just the speech act. Werner Mayer (1976: 185f.) arrived at the conclusion that there is no specific form to describe a performative speech act. He assumed that various forms of expressions were used in parallel. Michael P. Streck (1995: 92, 157) has shown that both preterite and perfect can express a *Koinzidenzfall* in Late Babylonian, and Nathan Wasserman (2003: 169f.) identified a larger set of grammatical forms in Old Babylonian incantations, which embraces non-modal (preterite and perfect) and modal (e.g. precative and imperative) forms. Finally, Sergej Loesov (2005: 118f.)

¹² For a thorough comparison of the approaches of Erwin Koschmieder (*Koinzidenzfall*), and John L. Austin and John Searle (Speech Act theory) see Wagner 1997: 51–58.

discussed performativity in Akkadian in a broader linguistic context. He supposed that in Akkadian – as in other languages – there is a standard grammatical form (the preterite), which accompanies other less frequent forms (e.g. the perfect).

In addition, Werner Mayer (1976: 183f.) stated that a *Koinzidenzfall* consists of a speech that uses *verba dicendi* not only to report on an action, but also to represent the action itself. It applies to actions, in which one can insert the word “herewith”, in which the speaker speaks in the first person of her-/himself, and in which the speech relates to the present. Michael P. Streck (1995: 158f.) points to the distinction between actions that are merely described by an utterance (e.g. “I am sending you this letter.”) and the *Koinzidenzfall* proper in which *verba dicendi* are used.

Finally, Wolfgang Schramm’s (1998: 321f.) study of performativity in Sumerian incantation exposed a distinction between the precative (/ḫa-/) and the performative (/iri-/) in the Sumerian language. Whereas the former tells the ritual agent what to do, the latter describes the speech act itself. The Akkadian equivalents in bilingual texts are either perfect or precative (ibid. 320f.), which correlates with findings on the performative in Akkadian (see above). Ultimately, he rather prefers the framework of speech act theory (see also § 4.1.) over Koschmieder’s *Koinzidenzfall* since it takes the entire context of the action into consideration (ibid. 320f. fn. 25).

3.3. On the ontology of writing

Stefan M. Maul (1999: 14) investigated the phenomenon of first millennium BC scribes deliberately using the polysemy of cuneiform writing to communicate ideas about the nature of an object.¹³ He described this interpretative technique as a method to find the *Wort im Worte* (“word in the word”), and, hence, to understand the true nature of the accordingly denominated object (see also Van De Mierop 2016: 10).

Gebhard Selz (2002: 659f.) expanded Maul’s study in two ways. First, he showed that the mechanics of this hermeneutical practice had probably already been in use from the third millennium BC onwards. Second, he identified an underlying premise according to which signs possess a substantive characteristic that connects them with the real world. Reading these signs, hence, means to do empirical research and, hereby, achieve a deeper knowledge of the cosmos (ibid. 673f.).¹⁴ For this he coined the term *Babilism* (ibid. 648).¹⁵ Marc Van De

¹³ For example, the Akkadian word *tinūru* (“oven”) was written *ti-ZALAG₂*, consisting of the phonetic element /ti/ and the Sumerogram *ZALAG₂*, whose Akkadian equivalent is *nūru* (“light”). In this way the writing gives the correct phonetic pattern and at the same time it puts the oven next to light and, thus, in a more general sense assigns it to the domain of fire (Maul 1999: 7). Stefan M. Maul (1999: 16–18) also provided an overview of his examples and the interpretative procedures applied.

¹⁴ See also Rochberg 2011: 618.

¹⁵ It relates to the name of the city of Bābil that was etymologised (*bāb ilim* “Gate of the god”) and secondarily “sumerised” (*ka₂-diġir-ra^{ki}*) (Selz 2002: 648).

Mieroop (2016: 9f.) understood this practice as Mesopotamian epistemology that reveals the truth about the world on an empirical basis.

For example, Jean Bottéro (1977: 26), Jean J. Glassner (2000: 202), and Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum (2012: 104, 110f.) stressed the importance of the graphic level of writing as a medium with which to communicate additional information.¹⁶ Furthermore, Cancik-Kirschbaum (2012: 113f.) drew a parallel between cuneiform signs and omens that both work as a medium to provide information about the otherwise invisible mechanics of the world. These hermeneutic principles were also applied in the case of commentary literature that spread in the first millennium BC, and the literate class was fully aware of the distinctiveness of this procedure. The sa-ge₁₇.g commentary (SBTU 1, 27 r. 21–22), for example, shows how the polysemy of the writing system was used to deduce various meanings from the written representation of a term and how this technique was applied in a divinatory context (Frahm 2011: 38). The same procedure can also be perceived in the case of astral omens (e.g. Reiner 1995: 116; Rochberg 2015: 232–238) and literary texts (e.g. Van De Mieroop 2016: 73–76).

The phenomenon of the Neo-Assyrian *astroglyphs* represents another example of the link between nature and writing according to the emic view. Stellar constellations (Akkadian: *lumāšu*) were interpreted as signs with a distinct meaning, so that kings could write their name by means of depictions of these constellations (Roaf/A. Zgoll 2001: 265–268). Andrew R. George (2010: 327–329) investigated the semiotic references of the divine omen of raining *kukku* (“bread-cake”) in the story of the flood in the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš*. He identified the same underlying principles to create a relationship between signifier and signified in literature as in omen compendia and commentaries.

Finally, Marc Van De Mieroop (2016: 78f.) considered that the function of cuneiform writing can be described by Jacques Derrida’s term of *différance* for two reasons. First, the graphic information is more crucial than the acoustic. Second, successive signs determine – and hence “defer” – the appropriate reading of a proceeding sign.

4 Theoretical approaches

Since mythical texts encode their inherent information in various ways, this asks for an appropriate methodology to deduce the emic ideas. That is why this article follows Benno Landsberger’s (1926: 357f.) approach of *Eigenbegrifflichkeit* (conceptual autonomy) and, hence,

it explores modern theories and carefully applies them to the ancient material. As a consequence, speech act theory according to John Searle (§ 4.1.) and Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of linguistic signs (§ 4.2.) were chosen to investigate the emic ideas about the nature of decreeing fate in *enūma eliš*. They proved to be an appropriate terminological apparatus to fully describe the ancient concept. What is more, they facilitate detecting the underlying assumptions and thus gain access to the implicit ideas.¹⁷

4.1. Speech act theory¹⁸

First, John Searle (1969: 24–27) differentiated *utterance*, *propositional*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary acts* as part of a speech act. The first consists of producing sound on the basis of the phonetic and grammatical rules of the used language. The second produces a reference to a signified (e.g. “X”) and attaches predications to this entity (e.g. “X is large.”). A speech act also possesses an illocutionary aspect, which means that it consists of an action that has power, e.g., in a social context. For example, a speaker can raise a question, make a promise, or command another person. The reaction to – or the outcome of – the illocutionary act is the perlocution (e.g. someone answers, someone holds to a promise, or someone executes a command).

Searle, furthermore, distinguished between various forms of the illocutionary act. Two variations are of special interest for this article, the *declarative* and the *directive* speech act.

A declarative speech act produces the reality that it expresses in its proposition (Searle 1982: 36–39). For example, when a Christian priest says in a church “I now pronounce you husband and wife” she/he creates the reality of a marriage. On the human level this requires an institution that enables this change, for example, the church (ibid. 38). The priest talks not as a private person but as a representative of the church and, thus, creates a new reality. On the divine level, however, a declarative speech act does not require an institution, as one can see, for example, in *Genesis* 1:3 “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”¹⁹ (ibid.).

This last example represents an equivocal case to the *directive* speech act by which one tries to make or get another person to do something. In this example, God commands. That is why it looks like a directive speech act. However, God’s command has no intermediate addressee who creates light for him. Instead His speech appears to have a direct causal connection with its outcome. God’s speech, hence, works both as the single and as the direct cause of the world’s transformation. In contrast, a directive speech act makes another person do something. In a transitive case, this second action is directed at a third party, which is, hence, indirectly affected by the speech act.

¹⁶ They build on Ignace J. Gelb’s (1963: 15) seminal study on the nature of writing in which he demonstrated that writing is more than just a representation of speech as it also possesses a graphic dimension that communicates semantics. Marc Van De Mieroop (2016: 79–80) went even further and concludes that it was never the intention of cuneiform writing to reproduce speech, but to communicate information on the graphical level. This became especially important after the Old Babylonian period (Van De Mieroop 2016: 83).

¹⁷ For a discussion of this approach see § 9.2.

¹⁸ For the comparable concept of the case of coincidence see § 3.2.

¹⁹ Translation according to the King James Bible.

4.2. Linguistic signs

According to the theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, each linguistic sign is made up of a sound pattern (*acoustic signifier*) and its meaning or concept (*signified*). A sign receives its meaning by demarcation from the signified concept of other signs and not by intrinsic reference to a physical object (Schmitz 2002: 40–42). The meaning (signified) of the English sound pattern (acoustic signifier) “chair”, for example, is determined by differentiation from adjacent terms like “sofa” or “stool”. Thus, meaning is created only linguistically.

If one adapts this model to cuneiform writing, one needs to introduce a third category – the graphical *image* of a sign (“Schriftbild”) (Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012: 104). So one gets three aspects of a cuneiform sign: acoustic signifier, visual signifier (*image*) and signified (Gabriel 2014: 23). Every sign can have a different function and the model can also explain this. A syllabic sign consists of both a sound pattern and an image. A determinative does not have an acoustic signifier²⁰ but relates to a signified. A logographic sign, finally, consists of all three: sound, image, and meaning (ibid) (see Fig. 1).

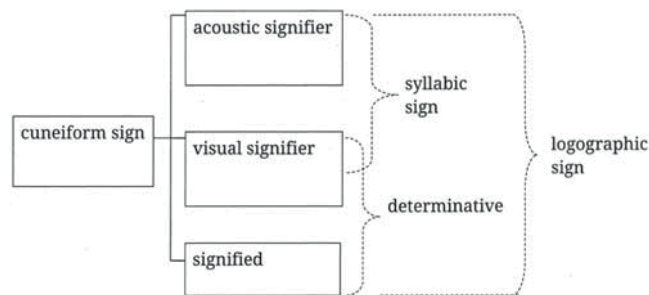


Fig. 1: Elements of cuneiform signs.²¹

5 Decreeing fate as a speech act

The specific oral character of decreeing fate becomes explicit in one passage of *enūma eliš*. In the first assembly of the gods Marduk is elevated for the first time. At the end of their speech, the assembled gods state the following (En. el. IV 21):

šimatka bēlum lū maḥrat ilānīma

“Your *šimtu*, Lord, it is to be like the one of the gods.”²²

The term *šimtu* is used in this case to denote the power to decide fate²³ that was transferred to Marduk during his first elevation (Gabriel 2014: 337–339).²⁴ The gods’

²⁰ Based on the assumption that determinatives were not uttered (e.g. Gelb 1963: 102).

²¹ This diagram was first displayed in Gabriel 2014: 23.

²² Edition: Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 203; Lambert 2013: 86; transliteration and translation: Gabriel 2014: 260.

²³ The term *šimtu* is used in *enūma eliš* to denote three different aspects related to fate. First, it describes the action of decreeing fate (i.e. the declarative or directive speech act; most times as part of the phrase *šimta šīamu* “to decree fate”). Second, it stands for the outcome of this action (i.e. destiny). Finally, it relates to the power to perform such acts (as here) (Gabriel 2014: 250f., see also below).

²⁴ This first elevation merely equips Marduk with limited power

command does not mention an intermediate agency to make Marduk’s power over *šimtu* equal to theirs. Instead, their speech act seems to relate directly to his power, which turns this speech act into a declarative one.

From a legal perspective it is the institution of the divine assembly that brings their decrees into effect.²⁵ Hence, this example deviates from the example of the Christian god as this speech act is still linked to a legal body that enables the declaration.

What Marduk’s new power contains, and how it can be executed, is made clear by the quoted speech, which continues as follows (En.el. IV 22–24):

abātum u banū qibi liktūna
epšu²⁶ pika liʾabit lumāšu
tūr qibišumma lumāšu lišlim

“To destroy and to create, command (and) it is to be(come) permanent.

Through the action of your mouth the constellation is to be destroyed.

Command it (i.e. the constellation)²⁷ a second time and the constellation is to be(come) whole again.”²⁸

The imperatives (*qibi* “command!” IV 22, *tūr qibi* “command again!” IV 24) show that the gods make Marduk perform certain deeds. That is why it represents a directive speech act. The gods use precatives (*liktūna* “it is to be(come) permanent” IV 22, *liʾabit* “it is to be destroyed” IV 23, *lišlim* “it is to be(come) whole” IV 24) to describe the perlocution of Marduk’s ordered actions. Possibly they thus connect his speech acts with an effect and transfer a specific power to him.²⁹

After receiving the gods’ order, Marduk does what they told him to do. He destroys the constellation purely by his voice, and recreates it afterwards in the same way (En. el. IV 25f.):

iqbīma ina pišu iʾabit lumāšu
itūr iqbišumma lumāšu ittabni

related to time and range. He receives the potency to decide fate, but he still needs the consent of the assembly to do so (Gabriel 2014: 338). His elevation consists of a treaty (*promotion treaty*) between him and Anšar’s gods that binds his permanent promotion to the four tasks he has to accomplish. First, he needs to fight off the danger coming from Tiāmtu and her consorts. Then, he has to provide the gods’ sanctuaries with food, install their shrines in his home, and differentiate between the guilty and the innocent when using violence (ibid. 335f.).

²⁵ This at last applies to the case that when Marduk is *allowed* to use this power. That he is *able* to wield it derives either from his innate competencies or from a transfer of the capability by the divine decree (see also fn. 24). The latter case is more similar to the example of God in *Genesis*.

²⁶ The term *epšu* very likely represents a locative adverbialis that denotes an instrumentalis in this case (“through the action (of ...)”). Line IV 25 – which runs very parallel to IV 22f. – supports this reading since it states *ina pišu* (“through his mouth”) (see below).

²⁷ The Akkadian dative *-šum* refers to the constellation.

²⁸ Edition: Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 203; Lambert 2013: 86; transliteration: Gabriel 2014: 260f.; new translation.

²⁹ This would mean that the illocutionary act also embraced a declarative dimension.

He commanded through his mouth and the constellation was destroyed (through his mouth).³⁰
He commanded it (i.e. the constellation) a second time and the constellation was created (again).

As one can see, Marduk uses a speech act to create and to destroy. His commands become reality immediately without an explicit intermediary, which makes his utterance a declarative speech act.³¹ The gods' speech explicates this quality of a *šimtu* speech act (IV 8):

šušqû u šušpulu šī³² lû qātka

“To elevate and to lower – it (i.e. your order, IV 7)³³ is to be your hand.”

In this way the gods make it clear that Marduk is now able to act by commands that are equivalent to actions normally performed through his hands. This line shows that the authors of *enūma eliš* were probably aware of the nature of declarative speech acts as actions that have a direct effect on non-linguistic reality.

Although Marduk acts in the assembly of gods, this assembly only functions as witness to his decrees.^{34, 35} Since it does not enforce Marduk's actions, he destroys and creates by himself.³⁶ His two speech acts, hence, display his newly acquired power to decide fate.

This power consists of the permission and the ability to change the world through declarative speech acts. In line IV 21 the text uses the term *šimtu* to denote this power. The same pertains to the gods' decree (IV 22–24) as the text notes (En. el. IV 33):

išmūma ša bēli šimātuš ilānū abbēšu

They, the gods, his fathers, decided the fates for the Lord.³⁷

The gods' speech act is described by the phrase *šimāti šīamu* (“to decide fates”). This shows that both the power to decide fate and the decree itself are called *šimtu* whereas the act of decreeing is called *šimta šīamu* (“to decide fate”).

In respect to language, the agents use precatives (IV 21–24) and imperatives (IV 22, 24) to speak efficaciously. When one takes the other divine speeches in *enūma eliš* into consideration as well, there is no specific relationship between the grammatical form and the illocutionary character of the speech act (declarative or directive).³⁸ Instead, the choice of the form depends on the addressee.³⁹

In summary, on the illocutionary level, the process of determining destiny in *enūma eliš* consists of directive or declarative speech acts⁴⁰ that are generally performed in the assembly of gods. When Marduk destroys and recreates the constellation, this also happens in the divine assembly but now they are only witnesses to his supreme power. Marduk is, hence, able to perform declarative speech acts without the need of an enforcing institution.

6 Writing in decreeing fate

After Marduk defeated Tiāmtu and created the world, mankind, and Bābil (Babylon), the gods elevate him a third and last time. This also happens in an assembly of

30 This line can also be read as *apokoinou* since the instrumentalis *ina pišu* (“through his mouth”) may also relate to both predicates in line IV 25 (*iqbi* “he commanded” and *i'abit* “it was destroyed”). This reading is supported by the position of both predicates, which are assembled around the instrumentalis.

31 More arguments in favour of this interpretation are: First, the descriptions in the gods' command to Marduk (IV 22–24) do not mention any intermediary. Second, the gods connect his oral actions with a specific effect, which becomes apparent by their use of the precatives (see above). Third, the text describes the change of status of the constellation in passive terms so that there is no specific agent. Finally, the gods tell Marduk to directly command the constellation (*qibišumma* IV 24), which he does (*iqbišumma* IV 26). In summary, the relationship between Marduk's speech acts and their effects seems to be causally direct without an intermediary. Consequently, they very likely represent declarations and not directives.

32 The feminine pronoun *šī* (“it”) refers to the term *qibitka* (“your order”) in the preceding line (IV 7), which is grammatically feminine, too.

33 See also fn. 32.

34 The text goes even further, since when the 50 great gods transfer 50 names to Marduk it makes him embody the 50 great gods and, subsequently, he represents the divine assembly (Gabriel 2014: 350).

35 The same holds true for the other uses of his newly achieved power in the text: anthropogenesis and the creation of Bābil (Gabriel 2014: 367–370).

36 Despite this parallelism, *enūma eliš* does not entail monotheism but henotheism as the other gods still exist. The question of monotheism and henotheism is largely discussed in the literature (e.g. Lambert 1997: 159; Dietrich 2006: 146–152; Kämmerer 2011: 80). A summary of the research can be found in Gabriel 2014: 350f.

37 Edition: Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 205; Lambert 2013: 86; transliteration and translation: Gabriel 2014: 252.

38 For example: Kingu's decree in I 161f.; the entire decision of fate of Marduk's first elevation (IV 3–24); Marduk's second elevation after Tiāmtu's defeat and cosmogony (V 109f., 112, 115f.); or Marduk's command to deliver the guilty god to justice (VI 13–16).

39 If she/he is a person, present and not the speaker her-/himself the speaker uses the imperative. If it is an object or the addressee is absent, then this relates to a precative. Finally, if the speaker relates to her-/himself we find a precative (1st singular) or a cohortative. Quite often precatives point to objects that belong to the (indirect) patient of the decree, which is expressed by possessive pronouns. As in the case of line IV 21 in which Marduk's *šimtu* becomes equal to the one of the gods that eventually elevates Marduk. There are also cases of indicative predicates (e.g. IV 3, 5, 11, 13). It seems to me that they also represent directives or declarations despite their pretended matter of fact character – similar to the sentence of the Christian priest (“I now pronounce you husband and wife”, also see § 4.1.). Finally, all grammatical forms can be negated.

40 In accordance with Walter J. Ong (2005), the idea of powerful divine words can possibly be traced back to the still highly oral chirographic culture of ancient Mesopotamia. In oral societies, words are sounds, and all sounds are linked to some dynamic source that produces it. As a consequence, all sounds are power-driven and related to events that can be energetic and forceful. In such an environment it is a logical step to attribute power to words themselves, too (Ong 2005: 32). Finally, these powerful words belong to the divine sphere whose agents use commands and decrees to set the course of the world. The investigation of *enūma eliš*, however, reveals an important written aspect in the context of decreeing fate and naming (see § 6.).

gods in which Anu stands up and raises Marduk's bow.⁴¹ Then he gives it three names (En. el. VI 88–90).

imbīma ša qašti kīam šumiša
išu arik lū ištēnumma šanū lū kašid
šalša šumša ^{mul}BAN *ina šamē ušāpi*

He (Anu) named the bow as follows: “‘The wood is long.’ is to be its first and ‘He is to be successful.’ is its second, its third name is ‘(Star-) bow’.” He makes (the (Star-) bow)⁴² emerge in the sky.⁴³

Anu performs a speech act by which he names the bow. This, subsequently, represents a declarative speech act since Anu's utterance changes reality, i.e. now the bow possesses three new names. The text summarizes his actions as follows (En. el. VI 92):⁴⁴

ultu šimāti ša qašti išīmu ^dAnum

After Anu had decided the fate for the bow, ...⁴⁵

This line proves again that the authors of *enūma eliš* understood naming as a variation of decreeing destiny (see also § 5.). Possibly they made this connection because both comprise declarations.⁴⁶

The declarative dimension of divine name-giving, however, has an even larger scope. To understand this, we need to distinguish between the speech act of naming and the ‘speech act’ of the name. Regularly, Mesopotamian names were not just a string of sounds (and signs), but also possessed a proposition. When a god gave the name, the proposition of the name's ‘speech act’ was imagined as necessarily true. Consequently, naming is declarative as it adds new predications (i.e. attributes) to the same referred entity, i.e. to the named. Since the predications had to be true, the name-bearer automatically received the qualities expressed by them. As a result, names, given by gods, correctly display reality, and naming creates a new reality. Finally, divine naming consists of two declarations: giving names and transforming reality.

This mechanism can be shown by the example of the third name of the bow. At the moment when Anu names the weapon “(Star-) bow” (^{mul}BAN), he trans-

forms it into a star. A stylistic feature of the text underlines this connection. The term ^{mul}BAN (“(Star-) bow”) stands in central position of line VI 90 (which consists of two sentences) and can, therefore, relate to both sentences at the same time. First, it is part of the copula “its third name (is)” (*šalša šumša*) and, subsequently, it is this “third name”. Second, the predicate *ušāpi* (“he makes emerge”) uses ^{mul}BAN as a direct object, i.e. “he makes the (Star-) bow emerge.” This double usage of the term represents the stylistic feature of an *apokoinou*.⁴⁷

Additionally, it underlines the dual nature of a name as both a denomination of the bow (according to Searle: *the reference*) and a correct description of its characteristics (according to Searle: *the predication*). This ontological usage of the stylistic feature of an *apokoinou* can also be found in two further cases of name-giving for Marduk, i.e. when he receives the name Asalluḫi for the first time (En. el. VI 101) and when he is given the name Ea from Ea (En. el. VII 140).

In summary, we see that there is some implicit speech act theory in *enūma eliš* as Searle's approach helps to describe the nature of divine naming as a declaration (illocutionary act) by means of the specific nature of reference and predication (propositional act). Furthermore, line IV 8 revealed that parts of this knowledge should be considered as explicit.

Anu's action, however, embraces more than the oral level since the third name solely works in writing. When Anu gives this name he changes the determinative of the Sumerogram ^{mul}BAN (Akkadian: *qaštu*, English: “bow”) from *ḡeš* (“wood”) to *mul* (“star”). In this way he adds the star-quality to Marduk's bow. This operation is only written, and not spoken, for a determinative possesses no sound value (see § 4.2.).

First, this raises the question of where Anu's speech might end. The modal particle *lū* (“(it) is to (be)”) indicates that at least the first name is part of a speech act for the particle functions as part of the first predicate (*lū ištēnumma* “it is to be the first (name)” VI 89).⁴⁸ The other two names are described in the indicative, which allows for them to belong to the narrative level. There are, however, further indications that they are still part of Anu's utterance. Lines VI 89f. are highly condensed (see also below). They, therefore, use ellipses (cf. GAG § 184). One can possibly read the first particle *lū* as part of all three predicates. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the term for “name” (*šumša* “his (i.e. the bow's) name” VI 90) is positioned at the end of the increasing sequence of numbers (first, second, third), and

41 It is an interesting question why Anu picked Marduk's bow as addressee for his naming. On the one hand, it is surely related to the outcome (perlocution) of this naming (see below and especially § 7). On the other hand, the bow represents Marduk's first creation after his first elevation (if one counts the revival of the constellation as part of the elevation, see also § 5) and it played a crucial role in Marduk's victory over Tiamtu. It is, thus, closely linked to Marduk and can, hence, symbolize him (Gabriel 2014: 303) – similar to a garment in divination (Radner 2005: 178).

42 The term ^{mul}BAN is part of an *apokoinou* and, hence, used twice in this sentence (see below). This stylistic figure of an *apokoinou* is prominent in the text of *enūma eliš* (e.g. I 92, VI 78, VII 143, 147).

43 Edition: Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 264f., Lambert 2013: 114; transliteration and translation: Gabriel 2014: 299.

44 Subclauses that begin with *ultu* or *ištu* respectively (both: “after”) are regularly used in *enūma eliš* to summarise preceding events and, thus, to indicate the beginning of a new sequence of the storyline (Gabriel 2014: 179).

45 Edition: Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 265; Lambert 2013: 114; transliteration and translation: Gabriel 2014: 239.

46 Or directives respectively (in the case of determining fate).

47 The *apokoinou* is only possible because the text uses a Sumerogram (^{mul}BAN) that does not generally differentiate nominative (as in the name, i.e. Akkadian *qaštu*) and accusative (as in the case of the use as direct object, i.e. Akkadian *qašta*). All copies of the text write the Sumerogram here (Gabriel 2014: 299). Alternatively, one can read the second sentence as a zero anaphora, but this would not explain the special position of ^{mul}BAN in line VI 90. Finally, the text frequently uses the stylistic feature of an *apokoinou* (see below and Gabriel 2014: e.g. 175f., 236, 319).

48 The second use of *lū* in VI 89 (*lū kašid*) pertains to the second name and not to the sentence's predicate.

so it relates to all three. Even if the particle *lū* does not belong to the second and third name-giving, (declarative or directive) *šimtu* speech acts can also comprise indicative predicates.⁴⁹ In the light of these observations I favour the idea that Anu's speech ends with the third name (^{mul}BAN “(Star-) bow”, VI 90).

This solution is, however, also problematic since the change from ^{ges}BAN (“(wooden) bow”) to ^{mul}BAN (“(Star-) bow”) only works on the written level (see above). In that case, the text blends two ideas, i.e. that naming is a speech act and that it has a written nature. It would be intriguing to know how Mesopotamians imagined the written quality in relation to the utterance. Unfortunately, the text remains silent on this point, which asks for further reasoning.

There could be a relation to the *Tablet of Destinies* (*tuppi šimāti*), since Anu receives the tablet after Marduk took it away from Kingu.^{50, 51} Accordingly, Anu's act of name-giving can be understood in the way that his command is simultaneously recorded on the *Tablet of Destinies*. His declarative speech act, hence, also comprises another declarative or directive speech act,⁵² i.e. his decree is written down.⁵³

The seemingly easiest solution, however, would be to assume that the authors of *enūma eliš* perceived the proposition of a name to have become signified by a sequence of linguistic signs. These signs do not only possess acoustic (sound), but also visual (image) signifiers (see § 4.2.). As a result, naming does not only embrace attaching a new sequence of sounds, but also causes changes in the referring sequence of graphemes. However, both levels of the signifiers of a name's proposition are not necessarily affected by the declarative act of name-giving.

49 See fn. 31.

50 In contrast to the *Epic of Anzū* the tablet plays a minor role in *enūma eliš*, though (Gabriel 2014: 264–268).

51 A further indication can be found in Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions: there, the Neo-Assyrian king provides an account of Marduk's decree for the city of Babylon (e.g. Leichty 2011: 196, 203, 236). In the beginning Marduk decided that the city should be abandoned for 70 years after having been destroyed by Sennacherib. Then, however, he changed his mind and swapped the order of the two cuneiform signs for “70”, to make it “11” (Bodi 1991: 205; Saggs 1988: 117; West 1997: 379; Leichty 2011: 196; Richardson 2012: 238; id. 2014: 475; Eshel 2015: 42 fn. 3; Zaia 2015: 33; Steinkeller in preparation).

52 This depends on whether the speech is written down automatically or whether another person/entity writes it down on Anu's command.

53 In regard to speech act theory this means that the propositional act is now also recorded in visual signs. The utterance act is replaced by the static existence of writing. The illocutionary act has, however, changed since the signs do not name anymore, but report on the bow's names, which inter alia may indicate that the bow had actually received them from Anu. As we can see, putting the speech act into writing not only replaces the utterance act, but can also have an impact on the illocutionary act.

7 Interpreting signs

7.1. Cuneiform empiricism

When Anu gives the bow its third name, the level of graphematic signifiers is affected. The change of ^{ges}BAN (“(wooden) bow”) to ^{mul}BAN (“(Star-) bow”) is only perceivable in writing. Independent from this, the name's proposition consists of true predications referring to the name-bearer. It is, consequently, possible to decode (the change of) fate as expressed by the name's proposition by means of cuneiform reading. But reading is not only limited to pronouncing the phonetic sign values, and by this repeating the utterance act of Anu, but also comprises the hermeneutical analysis of the polysemy of each cuneiform sign (see § 3.).⁵⁴

This can be shown by a striking example that can be found in the above-noted passage in which Anu gives Marduk's bow three names. Special attention is now given to the first name the bow receives (En. el. VI 89):

išu arik lu ištēnumma šanū lū kašid

“‘The wood is long.’ is to be its first and ‘He is to be successful.’ its second (name).”⁵⁵

How did Anu arrive at the name, ‘The wood is long’ (*išu arik*)? Here, the lexical list *Antagal C*⁵⁶ gives a helpful hint. It mentions the lexeme ^{ges}GID₂.DA/*ariku* in the same section as the Akkadian terms *tilpānu* (“bow”)⁵⁷ and *qaštu* (also “bow”). Even if these lexemes were not synonymous, they would have belonged to the same semantic group (i.e. (partially wooden) ranged weapons).⁵⁸ As a consequence, it is a straightforward step to replace *qaštu* by its (quasi-) synonym *ariku*. In the next step all parts of the Sumerogram of *ariku*, i.e. ^{ges}GID₂.DA, are understood as a Sumerian sentence: *ĝeš gid₂.a-a*. Originally this probably just meant “long wood”, but the phrase is interpreted differently in this case. It is understood as consisting of the Sumerian noun *ĝeš* (wood), the adjective *gid₂.a* (“long”) and the abbreviated copula *-a(m₃)* (“NN is”).⁵⁹ Hence, it reads “The wood is long”. In the end, this sentence is translated into Akkadian.⁶⁰ The result is the static sentence *išu*

54 For related research see § 3.2.

55 For references consult fn. 43.

56 The relationship between *enūma eliš* and this list as presented in the following does not suffice to state literary dependence of the former on the latter. This would require an in-depth investigation of the chronology of the manuscripts and further indications of intertextuality. We can, however, assume that the idea of (quasi-) synonymy of both terms underlies both the list and *enūma eliš*.

57 For the meaning “bow” instead of “spear” see Groneberg 1987 as well as Arkhipov 2012: 127f.

58 In the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* the term *tilpānu* is used in conjunction with the verb *maḥāšu* (“to beat, hit”) (XII 18f., 37f.). According to Werner Mayer it is not clear whether this describes throwing a spear or shooting a missile (CAD T: 434). The potential double meaning of *tilpānu* as “bow” and “spear” was first shown in Thureau-Dangin 1927: 142f.

59 This interpretation understands the ending *-a* as both the nominalisator (*-a*) at the end of the adjective and the abbreviated copula (*-a(m₃)*).

60 This reconstruction of the logical steps seems to be more appropriate than the one given in Gabriel 2014: 299f.

arik (“The wood is long.”), which Anu gives to the bow as its first name.

This is a good example of how the interpretative method works. It uses the whole range of polysemy that is delivered by cuneiform writing. Firstly, the system knows three different sign functions. A sign can be read as a determinative, a syllabic, or a logographic sign (see § 4.2.). Secondly, cuneiform is part of a bilingual Sumer-Akkadian world, so two different languages can be applied to the same signs. Finally, words partially belong to semantic clusters and can, thus, be used as synonyms.

Thus, Anu’s choice is based on a thorough interpretative process of a synonymous Sumerogram of the term *qaštu*, which is transformed into an Akkadian sentence.⁶¹ In accordance with the case of the bow’s third name this operation also requires the level of graphematic signifiers (see § 6.). Whereas the name “(Star-) bow” (^{mul}BAN) can only be fully perceived in writing, the name “The wood is long” (*išu arik*) is the outcome of interpreting cuneiform signs. Because of this procedure one can call upon the exegetic method to gain the bow’s first name, which is *cuneiform empiricism*.⁶²

Equivalent processes of cuneiform empiricism can be found in all cases of name-giving in *enūma eliš* (Gabriel 2014: 268–307) and have been also discerned in ancient commentaries on the text (Bottéro 1977; Frahm 2010; id. 2011; Frahm/Jiménez 2015).

In the case of the bow’s first name, Anu uses the manifold polysemy of cuneiform writing to express further aspects of the nature of the name bearer (*qaštu* = *arikt*₂^{es}GID₂.DA = *išu arik*), i.e. he exposes additional true predications in reference to an identical object. He thus expands the propositional value of the term “bow” (*qaštu*). Anu does, however, not only expose additional information, but he also uses this information as the bow’s name. He, hence, makes the relationship between referred object (“bow”) and predication (“The wood is long”) permanent and permanently explicit.

7.2. Omen

After the name *išu arik* (“The wood is long.”), Anu gives the bow a second name, *lū kašid* (“He shall be successful” or “He is indeed successful.”). First, it becomes ap-

parent that the name cannot refer to the bow (*qaštu*) for the latter is in Akkadian feminine. The name, rather points to a grammatically male being that needs to be identified.

At this point it is worthwhile to consult the *multābiltu*-catalogue that forms the tenth chapter of the canonical extispicy series *bārūtu* and gives general guidance on how omens work (Koch 2005: 10).⁶³ At its very beginning the catalogue states the general relation between length (*arikt*₂) and success (*kašittu*), which is then underlined by an omen example (*multābiltu* I 1).

*arikt*₂⁶⁴ *kašittu šumma manzāzu arikma padāna [ikš]ud rubū ina ḥarrān illaku ikaššad*

Length means success (as in): When the ‘presence’ is long and [reaches] the ‘path’, then the ruler will be successful on the campaign, which he runs.⁶⁵

Both ‘presence’ (*manzāzu*) and ‘path’ (*padānu*) are *termini technici* that refer to distinct parts of the omen liver (Veldhuis 2011: 73f.). In the context of *enūma eliš*, the example can easily be translated as a reference to Marduk, the victor, over Tiāmtu.^{66, 67} More generally spoken it very likely stands metonymically for his rise to divine kingship.⁶⁸ The second name, consequently, expresses something about the nature of Marduk and, thus, points to a third party.⁶⁹

⁶³ Here the same applies as in the case of *Antagal C*; it is still too early to talk about literary dependence (see fn. 56 and Gabriel 2014: 300). For discussion of the principles found in the *multābiltu*-catalogue see Rochberg 2015: 220.

⁶⁴ It is probably no accident that the term used here is homo(io)phonous with the synonym of *qaštu* whose Sumerogram was used to deduce the first name of the bow. Both are read as *arikt*₂ and both derive from the Semitic root *rk*.

⁶⁵ Edition: Koch 2005: 90f.; transliteration and translation: Gabriel 2014: 301.

⁶⁶ En. el. IV 34–38 appears to support this interpretation. After the gods elevated Marduk the first time they send him to defeat the enemy Tiāmtu. The text describes his mission as follows: “They make him take the road of well-being and acceptance, (they make him take over) the campaign.” (*uruḥ šulme u tašmē ušašbitūšu ḥarrāna*, En. el. IV 34). The recurrence *ḥarrānu* (“campaign”) is a rather weak link, but it becomes more convincing by the fact that Marduk creates his bow just after this line (i.e. in En. el. IV 35–38) (Gabriel 2014: 301f.). Also from an intertextual point of view the omen probably points to Marduk. The astronomical series MUL.APIN relates the ‘(Star-) bow’ (^{mul}BAN) with the (human) king (Hunger/Pingree 1989: 42 I ii 44).

⁶⁷ It is an interesting question what this would mean for intertextuality. Is the *multābiltu*-catalogue older than generally expected or do both texts follow an (implicitly or explicitly) known rule of extispicy that was put down in writing in the first millennium BC as part of the *multābiltu*-catalogue? Should the latter have been the case, there would be no direct literary dependence in any direction. Also see § 9.2.

⁶⁸ After Anu’s naming the gods install Marduk’s throne, upon which he is then seated. Following this event, the gods declare themselves to be his natural and permanent subordinates (VI 93–100) (Gabriel 2014: 345–349).

⁶⁹ If one accepts the idea that both names represent an omen, it is unlikely that the proposition of the second name only refers to the bow. Since naming, however, implies that the predication of the name points to the name-bearer, we need such a reference. This would, indeed be possible on the grammatical level when we assume that the name’s proposition *lū kašid* (“He/she/it is to be successful.”) relates to the grammatically male term *išu* (“wood”) in the first name and to Marduk at the same time.

⁶¹ A first-millennium *mukallimtu* commentary on tablet VI of *enūma eliš* appears to support this argumentation as it equates the name *išu arik* with the Sumerogram ^{es}GID₂.DA and the Akkadian term *arikt*₂[u] (Gabriel 2014: 299f.; see also Kämmerer/Metzler 2012: 265 fn. 1; Lambert 2013: 120, 137).

⁶² One can object that it is not necessary to coin another term besides *Wort im Worte* (Maul 1999) and *Babilism* (Selz 2002) to describe an almost identical idea. The advantage of the established terms is that they grasp the emic concept as precisely as possible. As this study aims to connect ancient thought and modern terminology, it prefers the term *cuneiform empiricism*. First, it puts the ancient approach in parallel with empirical research conducted in modern science (see § 1). Therefore it is in line with Selz’s research, which also understands the method as empirical (Selz 2002: 673f.). Second, the term still focuses on the specific character of the ancient practice that tries to read and interpret signs (instead of measuring the world). At least in the context of this study the term *cuneiform empiricism* appears to be advantageous.

Name	specific action	general scope
<i>išu arik</i> "The wood is long."	a) Reasons for choosing the name: Anu applies interpretative measures (<i>cuneiform empiricism</i>) to achieve the proposition <i>išu arik</i> ("The wood is long") from the cuneiform representation of <i>qaštu</i> or <i>ariktu</i> ("bow"). b) Name-giving: By providing a name, Anu attaches the outcome of the interpretation to the object that the interpreted cuneiform refers to.	a) Reasons for choosing of the name: Since the first name functions as protasis of the portent (consisting of the first two names), Anu establishes <i>cuneiform empiricism</i> as role model for achieving a protasis. b) Name-giving: Anu makes the success of this technique permanent.
<i>lū kašid</i> "He is to be successful."	a) Reasons for choosing the name: Anu applies the rule according to which length means success to the first name (<i>išu arik</i> "The wood is long."). b) Name-giving: Anu roots the outcome of the application of the rule in the same object (i.e. the bow). He, thus, connects both names with each other. The result is an omen. Accordingly, the proposition of the apodosis points to a third party (here: Marduk).	a) Reasons for choosing the name: Anu establishes the general relationship between protasis and apodosis. b) Name-giving: Anu makes the connection between protasis and apodosis permanent.
^{mul} BAN "(Star-)bow"	a) Reasons for choosing the name: Anu changes the determinative from <i>ĝeš</i> ("wood") to <i>mul</i> ("star"). The Akkadian term <i>qaštu</i> ("bow") remains unchanged. b) Name-giving: Since the proposition of the name has to be true, Anu adds the quality of being a star to the bow.	a) Reasons for choosing the name: - b) Name-giving: Anu creates the possibility to see the carrier of the portent in the sky. As a result, the sign is generally readable.

Tab. 1: Naming Marduk's bow as creation of the reference system of divination.

As a result, the first rule of the *multābiltu*-catalogue and its example help us understand that the bow's first two names represent an omen for Marduk. Its logic is as follows: The graphematic signifiers of the synonym of ^{ĝeš}BAN/*qaštu* (i.e. ^{ĝeš}GID₂.DA) are understood as a Sumerian sentence that is translated into Akkadian (*išu arik*, "The wood is long."). The outcome of this application of cuneiform empiricism forms the protasis. Then, the text applies a deductive rule according to which length means success. So the interpretative divinatory process ends up with the apodosis that "He (i.e. Marduk) is to be successful," which communicates his status as the new divine king. In this way, Anu creates an omen for Marduk (Gabriel 2014: 305f.).⁷⁰

In general, there seems to be no physical causal link between a protasis and its apodosis, but, instead, an analogous (e.g. on the semantic or graphematic level) relationship (Heeßel 2005: 17f.; Rochberg 2015: 220f.). *Enūma eliš* shows that there is a further way in which sign and event were imagined as being linked. Both names belong to the same object of reference (i.e. the bow). Since the names are the perlocution of a divine declarative speech act their propositions are necessarily true. The power that creates the connection with the named and the necessity of truth is the power of the gods to decree fate. It is, eventually, this divine power

that causally connects the protasis and apodosis and makes the omen work.

7.3. Creation of the reference system of divination

Whereas the first two names of the bow represent an omen, the bow is transformed into a star by the third name it receives from Anu. It therefore becomes both eternal and visible in the sky.

Subsequently, the short passage about Anu naming Marduk's bow has a large scope: First, Anu applies the interpretative technique of cuneiform empiricism when he reaches the first name. Through naming, he attributes the predication of the name's proposition to the bow. Then he links the interpretation's outcome with an implication by either applying or inventing the general divinatory rule that length means success. Finally, he turns the carrier of the names' proposition (i.e. of the omen) into a star.

The importance of Anu's deeds becomes apparent when we look at their context. After the creation of the world, of mankind, and Bābil, the gods assemble in this newly built city for the first time. The gods then install the cult and, thus, inaugurate Bābil as the functional centre of the world (Gabriel 2014: 232–236). It is after these actions and in this assembly that Anu gives the bow new names. This context underlines the significance of the omen. However, the content of this scene may be even richer.

Through his deeds, Anu for the first time ever establishes a relationship between a *protasis* and an *apodo-*

As a result, the proposition could have a double reference from a grammatical perspective.

⁷⁰ As a consequence, Anu's illocutionary act does not only comprise name-giving, but also creating an omen for Marduk.

Action	Illocutionary act		Outcome / perlocution
	Type	Naming?	
divine speech act	directive	no	The addressee executes the task expressed in the speech act's proposition. In the transitive case this has an effect on a third party.
	declarative	no	The speech act's proposition becomes true.
		yes	The named bears a new name. The name's proposition becomes a true predication of the name bearer.

Tab. 2: Types of divine decrees of fate.

sis. There are no other omens before this in the text of *enūma eliš*. Both *protasis* and *apodosis* are propositions of the names of the same object (i.e. the bow). When Anu named it, he, hence, not only linked signifier and signified, but also made this relationship stable as both are rooted in the same object.⁷¹ When he, then, transforms this object into a star, he makes this link eternal. What is more, this transformation means that the carrier of the portent becomes a graphic entity readable in the night-sky.

To summarise, by naming Marduk's bow Anu creates a permanent system of signifier and signified that can be read in the sky – i.e. he creates the system that enables and underlies astral divination.

The exact procedure is shown in **Tab. 1**.

Altogether, Anu creates the *šītir šamê* (“heavenly writing”) as a system of signs that can be read by any literate person (i.e. by astrologers). These signs carry portents and, hence, provide information about entities beyond the medium (e.g. the king). What is more, this creation of the underlying system of astrology can be metonymic to the creation of the system of signs of divination in general. In any case, since the medium carries information on divine verdicts, Anu makes them accessible for mankind. He creates the possibility of divination and, thus, the possibility for men to get information on what the gods want. Finally, it is his power that guarantees the validity of the information of the signs and makes the system work (also see § 7.2.).

8 Summary

The text of *enūma eliš* provides many cases in which the gods decree fate or in which they name something/somebody. The article focuses on the first meeting of the divine assembly when the gods provide Marduk with the power to decree fate, and it analyses Anu's deeds when he names Marduk's bow three times. The outcome of this investigation is representative for the other cases of decreeing fate in *enūma eliš* (cf. Gabriel 2014: 307–315) and will be likewise summarised in the

following. What is more, divine verdict and naming are understood as fundamental processes that determine the course of the world. They, thus, represent fundamental ideas of the Ancient Near Eastern worldview and, eventually, comprise a piece of Mesopotamian philosophy.

8.1. Divine speech act

In general, there is a divine verdict at the beginning (see **Tab. 2**). This speech act is either directive or declarative. In the first case, the speaker commands somebody to perform a certain task. When it is a transitive action this deed can have an impact on non-personal reality. In this way the divine speech act changes the world indirectly (via the medium of an intermediary). In the case of a declarative speech act, speaking itself transforms the non-personal world. This applies when Marduk destroys a constellation and then re-creates it through his speech act only.

The same holds true in the case of naming, which has a larger scope, though. First, the naming speech act transforms reality as the named now bears a new name. Second, the name bearer receives new predications as part of the name's proposition. Since this propositional act is automatically true, the name bearer also receives the characteristics expressed by the name. This is the second way how divine name-giving works as a declaration. As a consequence, we must distinguish between the speech act of name-giving and the ‘speech act’ of the name itself. When fate is determined without naming this second level does not exist (**Tab. 2**).

On the grammatical level, no distinction between directive and declaration could be perceived (see § 5.). What is more, there is no special grammatical expression that distinguishes both classes of speech acts from other ones. Modal forms are, however, frequently used. These results are in line with the findings of e.g. Mayer (1976: 185f.) and Wasserman (2003: 169f.) (see § 3.2.). In summary, these linguistic results could indicate that it is more important what the gods say and less how they say it.

Finally, line IV 8 reveals that the text's authors possessed an explicit knowledge of the nature of declarative speech acts. Marduk's “command” (*qibītu* IV 7) is

⁷¹ Anu probably uses name-giving instead of other means of decreeing fate since the former enables him to establish a permanent connection between medium, signifier and signified through the name bearer (also see § 8.3.).

described as his “hand” (*qātu* IV 8). Both have a direct effect on the non-linguistic world.

8.2. Interpreting signs

Enūma eliš demonstrates in the case of the name ^{mu}BAN (“(Star-) bow”) that a new proposition of the name could also be achieved by changes at the written level. Anu can do so since not only do the acoustic signifiers of a name produce meaning, but also the graphematic ones. This especially applies to the case of determinatives, which were soundless, but informed on affiliation to a specific ontological class (e.g. (partially) wooden objects or stars). A name, hence, does not only consist of a string of sounds, but also of a sequence of visual signs. Furthermore, the example of the third name of the bow shows that ‘name’ could also stand for the usual term of an object (e.g. ^{es}BAN/*qaštu* “bow”).⁷²

As a consequence, Mesopotamians⁷³ epistemologically believed that one could investigate the written representation of a name to understand its full scope of meaning (see also Van De Mieroop 2016: 7–9). The first name of the bow represents an example in which cuneiform signs were investigated. Examining the possibilities, which the cuneiform representation could express, provides the interpreter with the knowledge of further predications relating to the named. As the propositions of names given by the gods are perceived as necessarily true, this exploration reveals additional characteristics of the nature of the investigated named object/subject. That is why the term *cuneiform empiricism* describes this ancient practice appropriately.

What is more, divine decisions were put into writing as well. Either the divine (directive or declarative) speech act or its outcome was recorded in various media (see § 1.). *Enūma eliš* reports on how Anu made the new constellation “(Star-) bow” a carrier of the portent of Marduk’s rise to kingship. This sign of the *šītir šamē* (“heavenly writing”) can be read by means of astrology, i.e. divination.

There is a major difference between divination and cuneiform empiricism. The latter only reveals information on the named object/subject. The name produces a distinct and constant reference from the written representation to the name-bearer. In the case of divination, the religious expert asks for information on a potentially variable addressee depending on the question the expert raises. In general, the target of this information is different from the carrier of the sign.⁷⁴

8.3. Mythical epistemology

When Anu constructs the first portent ever with the bow’s first two names, and transforms the carrier of the omen into a constellation by the third name, he creates the system of signifier and signified that enables and

underlies astrology. More generally speaking, he creates the system fundamental to any form of divination.

Mythical texts typically narrate single events that can, however, also be construed as generic (Stekeler-Weithofer 2006: 39–42; C. Zgoll 2016). As a consequence, *enūma eliš* exposes the mechanism that constructs a relationship between signifier and signified in divinatory practice. Subsequently, it can be read as a source of the ideas that form the basis of divination.

First, cuneiform empiricism serves as a role model to interpret signs in such a way that the outcome can be used as a protasis. The authors of *enūma eliš*, hence, understood analysing cuneiform and analysing the signs of an omen as being equivalent.⁷⁵

Second, there are certain general deductive rules that connect a protasis with a distinct apodosis. The relation “length means success” is known to us from an extispicy catalogue that is probably younger than *enūma eliš*. Since the latter text uses the same concept in the context of an astral omen, it is very likely that this rule also applied to other forms of divination (see also § 9.2.).

Third, by turning the carrier of the signifier into a star, Anu makes the portent visible worldwide. Visibility means readability, as the seeing person can gain the apodosis by using the analytic tools of (cuneiform) exegesis and by applying deductive rules to its outcome.

Fourth, since Anu uses name-giving, he creates a constant and stable connection between protasis (“The wood is long”), apodosis (“He is to be successful.”), and medium (“(Star-) bow”). As a result, this omen does not only work once, but has general validity. The instrument of name-giving as divine decree constructs this stable system of signifier and signified and guarantees its function. This example shows how divine verdicts work in a very similar way as natural laws in modern science; they make up the laws that regulate the world’s processes.

Finally, the system underlying divination was created by Anu according to *enūma eliš*. It reveals that the god deliberately puts the complex network of medium, signifier and signified into being. He wants humans to know about divine decisions. He creates the possibility for mankind to grasp divine will and so, eventually, to understand the course of the world and its causes. This also means that the mythical text *enūma eliš* elaborates on the condition of the possibility of human knowledge, which lastly makes it a piece of ancient epistemology. It reflects upon the reasons for why and how humans can gain insights into the mechanism of the world.⁷⁶

⁷² Stefan M. Maul (1999) and Gebhard Selz (2002) provide more examples beyond *enūma eliš*.

⁷³ Or at least the composers of *enūma eliš*.

⁷⁴ For the double reference of the bow’s second name see fn. 71.

⁷⁵ Whereas the fundamental system that enables divination has to be created, the functioning of cuneiform empiricism was taken for granted. In *enūma eliš* the latter was, thus, perceived as more fundamental to the world than the sign system underlying divination. Marc Van De Mieroop (2016: 10) notes that it was Marduk who created the relationship between signifier and signified. However, this procedure had already been employed before Marduk’s birth when Ea named the first cosmic part Apsū (Gabriel 2014: 272f.).

⁷⁶ Marc Van De Mieroop (2016: 7–9) has already touched the epistemological aspect of *enūma eliš*, but only relates it to Marduk’s

9 Outlook

9.1. Generalisability

Analysing *enūma eliš* reveals its specific ideas in the first instance. Since the text also works with traditional motifs (see § 2.), it very likely also embraces more general Mesopotamian beliefs. Still, further studies would be required to explore the generalisability of the outcome of this article.

A part of the flood account in the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* serves as a first positive indication. After the diluvian hero survived and thanked the gods for the rescue with a sacrifice, the gods smell the aroma of the burnt incense and come to the place. Then Enlil says the following (Gilg. XI 203f.):

ina pāna ^mŪta-napišti amēlūtumma
eninna ^mŪta-napišti u sinništašu lū emū kīma ilī nāšī-
ma

“In the past Ūta-napišti was (one of) mankind, but now Ūta-napišti and his woman are to become like us gods!”⁷⁷

It is immediately obvious that Enlil transforms the diluvian hero from a human into a godlike being and, subsequently, line XI 204 describes a divine decree of fate. Enlil uses a declarative speech act to change the hero's nature. On the grammatical level we identify a precative (*lū emū* “they are to become”).

There is, however, more in this passage. The hero of the deluge bears the name Atramḥasīs in the flood story in the *Epic of Gilgameš*. Chronologically, this is the first time that the name Ūta-napišti is used. In consequence, Enlil does not only determine the flood hero's fate by a declarative speech act, but also gives him a new name (Galter 2005: 275; George 2010: 331f. fn. 2; Chen 2013: 178f.).⁷⁸ The act of name-giving is not marked by any specific grammatical form (e.g. a precative as in XI 204), which makes it difficult to detect.

When Enlil gives the flood hero a new name, the name's proposition becomes a true predication of the named, i.e. “He (or I) found life.” (George 2003: 153).⁷⁹ This means that Ūta-napišti eventually became immortal. Accordingly, the proposition of the declarative speech act in XI 204 and of the name Ūta-napišti are equal.

50+2 names at the end of the text. He understands this part as distinct from the mythical narrative. My study on *enūma eliš*, however, shows that names and their interpretation are spread over the entire text (Gabriel 2014: 268–307). Furthermore, the 50+2 names are also narratively integrated in the mythical account (ibid. 175).

⁷⁷ Transliteration: George 2003: 716f.; translation: Gabriel.

⁷⁸ A Late (or Neo-)Babylonian version of the *Epic of Atramḥasīs* supports this interpretation (George 2010: 331f. fn. 2). On the fragmentary tablet MMA 86.11.378A the texts states (v 17): *at-t(a-m)a* ^mzi-su₃-ud-ra lu-u UD.ZI(Ūta-napišti)^{im} [šum₃-ka] “You were Ziusudra, but let [your name] (now) be Ūta-napišti.” (transliteration according to: Lambert 2005: 198 v 17; translation: George 2010: 332 fn. 2).

⁷⁹ For the general discussion of this name see George 2003: 152–155 as well as id. 2015.

This example shows that the authors of the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* also perceived decreeing fate and naming as equivalent. What is more, the divine agent uses a declarative speech act that consists of naming (first declaration) and a standard decree of fate (second declaration). The new nature is expressed by the propositional act of the divine decree (*lū emū kīma ilī nāšīma* “They are to become like us gods.”) and by the propositional act of the name (*Ūta-napišti* “He (or I) found life.”) in a semantically equivalent way.

A comprehensive study on the Mesopotamian ideas on the divine process of determining the course of the world will very likely identify further parallels, and also deviations, from *enūma eliš*'s concept.

9.2. Implicit ‘philosophy’?

This article reads the text of *enūma eliš* as a source of complex Mesopotamian thought.

For this, this study worked as closely as possible with the text.⁸⁰ It additionally aimed to detect the underlying premises that were implicitly encoded in the text and it, thus, receded from the textual basis. Consequently, the investigation of the potential underlying assumptions is the most delicate part. In this context it is worth wondering how aware the authors of *enūma eliš* were about these concepts – if they were at all. There is a bifurcation of extreme scenarios that sketch the possibility space of interpretation:

1. No relation case: There is no knowledge of the premises at all. The reconstructed concepts derive from standard patterns of human thinking or from mere accident. That is why investigating the underlying assumptions does not enable insights into ancient thought at all.
2. Strong relation case: The authors are fully aware of the premises and reflect upon them. Hence, they have developed a comprehensive theory of the hidden patterns and processes of the world. They exchange views orally and put the outcome into mythical accounts (and other sources).

Although I personally favour a view closer to the second position, a comprehensive answer requires more research on a broader textual basis. It would aim to collect more hints on how explicit the knowledge was. For example, the relationship “length means success” is implicitly applied in *enūma eliš*, but is made explicit in the *multābiltu*-catalogue. As the latter is very probably younger it could mean that the knowledge became explicit later. It could, however, also mean that already *enūma eliš*'s authors were aware of this rule, but did not see a necessity to write it down explicitly as they knew

⁸⁰ Unfortunately, I could not detect a specific grammatical construction that indicates a declarative (or directive) speech act. Most often one can find precatives or other modal forms, but also indicative predicates are possible (see fn. 39). This sets limits to identify such acts on the grammatical level (see §§ 3.2. and 8.1.).

it. The deliberate construction of the first omen by the bow's two names seems to point to the latter.

As we are still only beginning to grasp Mesopotamian ideas, it is difficult to classify epistemic practices on non-Mesopotamian terms like 'philosophy'. Marc Van De Mieroop's studies of Mesopotamian epistemology answers the question of a Babylonian philosophy in the affirmative (2016, forthcoming). It can be found especially in lexical and omen lists. His recent work represents an important step towards better understand-

ing the complexity of Ancient Near Eastern thinking and has sparked a vivid discussion on the status of Mesopotamian epistemic practices (esp. Frahm forthcoming; Gabriel forthcoming). Since the ideas on the processes of divine determination of fate are fundamentally important for the ancient worldview (see §§ 1. and 8.3.), their comprehensive study may add to the general picture of Mesopotamian intellectuality that may help to answer whether there was such a thing as an implicit Mesopotamian philosophy.

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Dating the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes

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Abstract: The pivotal date of 465 BCE for the death of Xerxes has been accepted by historians for many years without notable controversy. However, according to Thucydides, Themistocles met Artaxerxes, who had succeeded Xerxes, his father, just after the fall of Naxos which occurred after the fall of Skyros at the beginning of the archonship of Phaedo in 476 BCE, according to Plutarch. Thus, the meeting with Themistocles would have occurred soon after 475 BCE, not 465. The present Achaemenid chronology is mainly derived from official Babylonian king lists, which ignore coregents and usurpers appearing in dated contracts. In addition, according to the astronomical tablet BM 32234, the death of Xerxes is dated 14/V/21 between two lunar eclipses, one on 14/III/21 (26 June 475 BCE), which was total, and a second on 14/VIII/21 (20 December 475 BCE), which was partial. Likewise, the death of Artaxerxes I is fixed precisely by Thucydides just before a partial solar eclipse (21 March 424 BCE) which would imply an absurd co-regency of Darius II with a dead king for at least one year. In fact, Plutarch and Justinus described a long co-regency of Artaxerxes but with his first son Darius B (434–426), not Darius II, which occurred before two short reigns, those of Xerxes II (2 months) and Sogdianus (7 months), before the reign of Darius II. The title of Xerxes (496–475) in Egypt and the data of Diodorus confirm the co-regency of 10 years with Darius, as do Elephantine papyri with many double dates both in civil and lunar calendars.

Keywords: Chronology, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, Achaemenid rulers, dating by means of calendars, Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East, 27th Dynasty.

Xerxes' death is unanimously dated to the year 465 BCE by mainstream historians who mainly rely upon the official Babylonian chronology, recorded in the King List such as tablet BM 34576 (copy dated 99 BCE; see Boiy 2001: 645–649). The testimony of Thucydides, however, dates this event to the year 475 BCE. In addition, a careful chronological analysis of Babylonian astronomical tablets allows to pinpoint Xerxes' death on August 24 in 475 BCE. Why do mainstream historians prefer to rely on the Babylonian royal lists to establish the Achaemenid chronology rather than on the evidence from Greek historians who clearly mentioned several usurper kings as well as co-regencies? Despite the fact that some records (Persepolis Fortifications) mention the building of a palace for Xerxes (Farkas 1974: 51–54) as early as 496 BCE (year 26 of Darius I), some scholars dispute this evidence which supports a co-regency between Darius and Xerxes (Kuhrt 2009: 304). Herodotus, for example, knew that Xerxes was appointed king (*basilus*), not just Crown prince¹, during the reign of his father Darius (The Histories VII: 2–5). It is obvious that the concept of usurper kings is political, not historical (who decides their legitimacy?). According to Pierre Briant (1996: 983–984), the new palace in Babylon that

appeared in the year 26 of Darius cannot be linked with the accession of Xerxes because “*a king never shares power*”!

The fundamental question for historians concerning the testimonies from Herodotus and Thucydides, two of the greatest among the classical historians, is: are they reliable regarding the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes?

According to Thucydides:

“Themistocles manifested a desire to visit the king of Persia (...) The storm caused the vessel to drift towards the camp of the Athenians who then besieged Naxos (...) Accompanied by a Persian coast, then he penetrated into the interior of the country and sent to Artaxerxes, who had succeeded Xerxes, his father a letter” (The Peloponnesian War I: 98, 137).

Therefore, he reports the fall of Naxos to have happened after the one of Skyros. According to Plutarch, the latter is dated to the beginning of the archonship of Phaedo in 476 BCE (Life of Theseus §§35, 36). Thus, the meeting with Themistocles seems to have occurred soon after 475/474. Furthermore, Themistocles died under the archon of Praxiergos (471 BCE) according to Diodorus Siculus (Historical Library XI: 54–60), and Herodotus situated the transfer of power from Darius to Xerxes at the time of the Egyptian revolt (The Histories VII: 1–4), four years after Marathon (486 BCE) and the change Xerxes / Artaxerxes shortly after the storming of Eion (dated

¹ The same term “appointed king” is used by Herodotus (The Histories I: 208) to describe the co-regency between Cyrus and Cambyses.

epoch	450 BCE	400 BCE	250 BCE	50 BCE	150 CE	200 CE	300 CE	400 CE
historian	Herodotus	Ctesias	Manetho	Diodorus	Ptolemy	Clement	Eusebius	Sulpice
Cyrus II	29	30			9	30	9 [30]	31
Cambyses II	7 + 5 m.	18	3 / 6		8	19	8	6
Bardiya	7 m.	7 m.	7 m.					7 m.
Nebuchadnezzar III	(5 m.)							
Nebuchadnezzar IV								
Darius I	36	31	36		36	46	33	36
Bēl-šimanni								
Šamaš-erība								
Xerxes I	??	??	21	20	21	26	11/21*	21
Artaban	[-]	[-]	7 m.	[-]			7 m.	7 m.
Artaxerxes I	(475 BCE)	42	40 / 41	40	41	41	40	41
Xerxes II		45 days	2 m.	2 m.			2 m.	2 m.
Sogdianus		6 m.+15 d		7 m.		7 m.	7 m.	7 m.
Darius II		35	19	19	19	8	19	19
Artaxerxes II				43	46	42	42	62
Artaxerxes III			26	23	21	3	21	23

Fig. 1: Ancient lists containing information on the reigns of Achaemenid rulers from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes III.

476 BCE), the last event in the reign of Xerxes before Artaxerxes ascended to the throne (The Histories VII: 106–107). Even though Herodotus gives many precise details, he surprisingly “forgot” to state the length of Xerxes’ reign (21 years according to the King List, quoted by Claudius Ptolemy) as well as Artaban’s short reign (Fig. 1). This raises several questions:

First: is the information given by Herodotus more reliable than the information given by the Babylonian royal lists? The transition between Cambyses II and Darius I is complicated due to the involvement of several usurpers (including Bardiya) and co-regencies. According to the trilingual inscription of Bisitun:

“A magus, Gaumata by name, rebelled in Paishiyauvada. A mountain, by name Arakadri, from there 14/

year	month	regnal year				
522	1	X	7	11/X/07; 14/X/07; 24/X/07; 30/X/07		
	2	XI		1/XI/07; 28/XI/07; 30/XI/07		
	3	XII	0	3/XII/07; 4/XII/07; 14/XII/00	King of Babylon, King of Lands	
	4	I	8	1	2/I/08; 5/I/08; 23/I/08; 19/I/01	King of Lands
	5	II	0		xx/II/00	King of Babylon, King of Lands
	6	III			3/III/00; 6/III/00; 23/III/01; 26/III/01	
	7	IV			9/IV/01; 15/IV/00; 19/IV/01; 21/IV/01; 23/IV/01; 25/IV/00; 28/IV/01	
	8	V	1		1/V/01; 3/V/01; 6/V/01; 9/V/01; 20/V/01; 21/V/01	
	9	VI			3/VI/01; 6/VI/01; 10/VI/01; 13/VI/01; 15/VI/01; 19/VI/01; 20/VI/01	
	10	VII	0		1/VII/01; 10/VII/01; 14/VII/00; 17/VII/00; 20/VII/00	King of Babylon
	11	VIII			20/VIII/01; 7/VIII/00; 10/VIII/00; 24/VIII/00	
	12	IX			7/IX/01; 20/IX/00; 21/IX/00; 26/IX/00;	
521	1	X	0	2/X/00; 6/X/00; 14/X/00; 15/X/00; 19/X/00; 26/X/00;		
	2	XI		9/XI/00; 15/X/00; 20/XI/00; 27/XI/00;	King of Babylon, King of Lands	
	3	XII		4/XII/00; 13/XII/00; 19/XII/00; 21/XII/00; 22/XII/00; 23/XII/00; 24/XII/00;		

Fig. 2: List of dated tablets from month X, year 7 of Cambyses to month X accession year of Darius II.

year	month	regnal year	king			
523	1	X	6 Cambyses II King of Babylon, King of Lands (King List)			
	2	XI				
	3	XII				
	4	I		7		
	5	II				
	6	III				
	7	IV			<i>(Lunar eclipse dated July 16, 523 BCE)</i>	
	8	V				
	9	VI				
	10	VII				
	11	VIII				
	12	IX				
522	1	X	8 Cambyses II / Bardiya King of Lands			
	2	XI			<i>(Lunar eclipse dated January 10, 522 BCE)</i>	
	3	XII			0	
	4	I		1	Bardiya King of Babylon, King of Lands	
	5	II		2		
	6	III		3		
	7	IV		4		
	8	V		5		1
	9	VI		6		0
	10	VII		7		0 Nebuchadnezzar III (Nidintu-Bēl) King of Babylon
	11	VIII		8		
	12	IX		9		0 Darius I King of Babylon, King of Lands (King List)
521	1	X	10	1 1 Nebuchadnezzar IV (Arakha) King of Babylon		
	2	XI	11			[0]
	3	XII	12			
	4	I	13			
	5	II	14			
	6	III	15			
	7	IV	16			
	8	V	17			
	9	VI	18			
	10	VII	19			
	11	VIII	20			
	12	IX				
520	1	X	2			
	2	XI				
	3	XII				
	4	I				
	5	II				
	6	III				

Fig. 3: List of reigns of Achaemenid rulers from month X, year 6 of Cambyses to month III year 2 of Darius II.



Fig. 4a: Photo of a bas-relief of king Darius before his Crown prince Xerxes (photo by Alamy Ltd).



Fig. 4b: Photo of a bas-relief of king Darius before his Crown prince Xerxes (after Pritchard 1969: Fig. 463).



Fig. 5: Photo of a bas-relief of Marduk-zākīr-šumi, king of Babylon, with king Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria (after Pritchard 1969: Fig. 821).

XII had gone when he rebelled. He lied thus to the people: 'I am Bardiya, son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses.' Then all the people became rebellious against Cambyses; they went over to him, both Persia and Media, as well as the other peoples. He seized the kingship; 9/IV, then he seized the kingship. After that Cambyses died his own death (no date!). 10/VII, then I, with a few men, killed that Gaumata the magus, and his foremost followers" (Kuhrt 2009: 140–157).

The transition between Cambyses II and Darius I is complicated, but it can be reconstructed thanks to nu-

merous tablets dated by year and month (Fig. 2; see also Zawadzki 1994: 127–145).

This reconstitution (Fig. 3) shows that Herodotus' information is excellent: Bardiya² was regarded both as a coregent of Cambyses II (The Histories III: 61–63) and as a new king, while Darius I regarded him as a usurp-

² Bardiya is called Mardus by Aeschylus (472 BCE), Smerdis by Herodotus (450 BCE), Artaxerxes by Ezra (Ezr 4:4-24), Tanyoxarkes by Ctesias (400 BCE), Mergis by Justinus (2nd century CE), etc.

er. He reigned for 7 months (The Histories III: 66–67), from March to September 522 BCE, and the revolt lasted exactly 20 months (The Histories III: 152–153) from April 522 BCE to November 521 BCE. These 5 months during the reign of Cambyses II are abnormal because the reigns of the Persian kings were always counted in number of years, except when a usurper ruled Nebuchadnezzar III in this case). Consequently, it appears Herodotus was very well informed.

Apart from the general lack of trust in the accuracy of the classical historians’ accounts (often unjustified), Xerxes’ co-regency has also been challenged because of the following inscription, which he must have commissioned while his brothers Hystapes and Arsames were still alive:

“King Xerxes says: Darius had other sons, the good pleasure of Ahuramazda was that Darius my father made me the greatest after him. When Darius my father left the throne, with Ahuramazda, I became king on the throne of my father” (XPf §4; see Lecoq 1997: 255).

It should furthermore be pointed out that several carved reliefs at Persepolis (Fig. 4a, b) show that Xerxes was designated as crown prince, several years before Darius’ death. According to the conventional representation of kings, the king sitting on the throne was Darius and Xerxes, the Crown prince, stood behind him (Herzfeld 1932: 8). Conventionally, kings are always depicted taller than all other officials (who are themselves exactly the same size) on Assyrian and Babylonian bas-relief

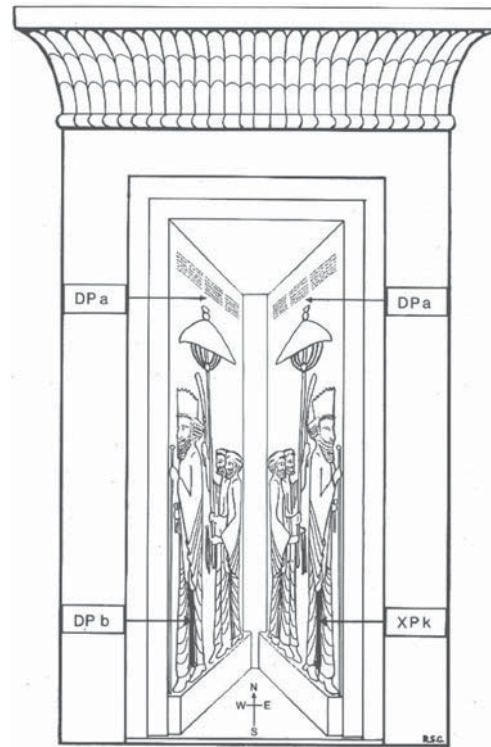


Fig. 6: Drawing of a bas-relief of king Darius opposite his Crown prince Xerxes with their names (after Herzfeld 1932: Fig. 3–4).

(cf. Czichon 1992: 170–172; Hrouda 1965: 17–18). For example, Marduk-zākir-šumi I (left), king of Babylon and Shalmaneser III (right), king of Assyria, are both greater than their officials (Fig. 5). At Persepolis, Darius and

year	month	Darius I (year 36)	Xerxes I (accession)	
486	4	I	13/I/36; 27/I/36	
	5	II	7/II/36	
	6	III		[-]/III/[00] ^a
	7	IV	16/IV/36	
	8	V	5/V/36; 9/V/36; 27/V/36	11/V ² /00 ^b
	9	VI	22/VI/36; 24/VI/36	
	10	VII	[2]7/VII/36	
	11	VIII	--/VIII/36 ^c ; 15/VIII/36 ^d	22/VIII/00
	12	IX	10/IX/36 ^e ; 10+x/IX/36 ^f	13/IX/00
	485	1	X	06/X/00; 7/X/00; 22/X/00
		2	XI	09/XI/00; 27/XI/00
		3	XII	12/XII/00; 21/XII/00; 24/XII/00; 27/XII/00
4		I	5/I/01; 7/I/01; 15/I/01; 16/I/01; 22/I/01; 23/I/01	
5		II	3/II/01; 8/II/01; 10/II/01; 17/II/01; 28/II/01	

a. Strassmaier 1893: Pl.21 (EKBK 21 = BM 60599).
 b. San Nicolò M./Ungnad A. 1934: Neubabylonische Rechts- und Verwaltungsurkunden übersetzt und erläutert. Vol. 1, part 4, p. 544, tablet no. 634, VS 6, 177 (VAT 4397)
 c. McEwan G.J.P. 1984: Late Babylonian texts in the Ashmolean Museum (= OECT 10), pp. 12, 72 no. 159.
 d. MacGinnis 1995: no. 80 (BM 77850).
 e. MacGinnis 1995: no. 81 (BM 71941).
 f. BM 72574

Fig. 7: List of dated tablets from month I, year 36 of Darius I to month II year 1 of Xerxes.

date of contract	1st scribe of Sippar	2nd scribe of Sippar	3rd scribe of Sippar
Xer [-]/III/[00]	Marduk-mukīn-apli	Bēl-ittannu	Marduk-bēlšunu
Xer 7/X/00	Marduk-mukīn-apli	Marduk-bēlšunu	Iddin-Nabû
Xer 27/XI/00	Marduk-mukīn-apli	Marduk-bēlšunu	Iddin-Nabû

Fig. 8: List of dated tablets of Marduk-mukīn-apli from month III to month XI, accession year of Xerxes.

Xerxes are the same size and wear the same crown. The king on his throne cannot be Xerxes (Shapur Shabhazi 2004: 99, 145–146), because in that case Darius behind him would have been his coregent. In addition, he is mentioned explicitly on some inscriptions as “son of Darius” (XPk), opposite to “Darius the king” (DPb) (Lecoq 1997: 100, 127, 259). Furthermore, both carved “kings” (in fact the king and his crown prince) are not only identical in appearance but they also have equal positions (Fig. 6). For a long time, the lack of the title “Crown prince” for Xerxes was an argument used to deny his co-regency with Darius, but the recent publication of an Elamite tablet from Persepolis (NN 1657), dated to Darius’ “3rd month, 24th year” (=May/June 498 BCE), provides the earliest dated reference to a ‘Xerxes (HALše-ir-ša₂)’ who can hardly be a person other than the future Achaemenid King (Rossi 2012: 445–458). W.F.M. Henkelman, the editor of the tablet, comments:

“And although our text does not state Xerxes’ rank, it does indicate that he had at least attained a position of some importance. Parthian men, spear bearers, were assigned by him. The term used, *dama*, suggests in this context a role in the chain of command, perhaps as (a) commander in the important satrapy of Parthia. Since the Parthian men were travelling from the King to Parthia, and were carrying a sealed authorisation from the King, they may have been initially dispatched by Xerxes to report to his father. Having done so, they were now heading back with the King’s response. The context makes the scribe’s silence on Xerxes’ title (or the fact that he was Darius’ son) eloquent: his position was apparently well-known” (Henkelman 2010: 29–31).

If we arrange the dated contracts according to the Babylonian royal lists (Fig. 7), we find that Darius must have died around 10/ IX/ 36 (8 December 486 BCE). Xerxes would have then started to rule around [-]/III/00 (June 486 BCE). The accession year in the tablet BM 60599 dated [-]/III/[00] of Xerxes is deduced from the prosopography of the scribes of Sippar, Marduk-mukīn-apli and Marduk-bēlšunu, who only appear in contracts from the reign of Xerxes (Graziani 1986: 4–9, 14–17, 124) dated 7/X/00 and 27/XI/00 (Fig. 8). In addition, the title “King of Babylon, king of Lands” (Rollinger 1999: 9–12) appears only in years 00 (10 times) and 01 (15), then disappears until year 12 (once). Furthermore, the title “King of Babylon” alone was only used sporadically (Rahim Shayegan 2011: 260). Consequently, according to the King List, Xerxes was co-regent from Darius’ 35th year onwards, but this chronological reconstruction generates many contradictions.

The prosopography of the officials of Ebabbara’s administration (MacGinnis 1995: 114–134. Bongenaar 1997: 78–81) shows that Marduk-mukīn-apli and Marduk-bēlšunu were scribes (*tupšarru*) from year 28 of Darius to year 2 of Xerxes. The third scribe of the contract, Bēl-ittannu was more than a scribe because he was the chief of the temple administration (*šangû*). He was used as a scribe only for the accession of Xerxes, afterwards he made the receipt for the offering of Xerxes in his letter dated [-]/III/01 of Xerxes (VS 6, 179). He was still *šangû* in a contract dated 21/III/01 of Xerxes (BM 65378) and one dated 17/III/29 of Darius (BM 64022). Consequently, it would be more logical to assume a synchronism: Year 26 of Darius (rather than Year 36) = Year 0 of Xerxes (consequently Year 29 of Darius = Year 3 of Xerxes, i.e. 2 years after Year 1 of Xerxes rather than 10 years after Year 29), which is confirmed by the letter BM 42567 (see Fig. 18).

For this historical debate, another aspect that has to be taken into account is that there is evidence suggesting that the Babylonian revolt at the beginning of Xerxes’ reign (year 11) could not have occurred at the beginning of his co-regency (year 1). Indeed, following the Battle of Marathon (in 490 BCE), Herodotus describes a climate of insurrection in the Persian Empire (The Histories VII: 1–4). Ctesias said after the death of Darius:

“Xerxes decided to make war upon Greece (...) Thence he proceeded to Ecbatana, where he heard of the revolt of the Babylonians and the murder of Zopyrus their satrap” (Persica F13§§25–26).

Arrian situated the Babylonian revolt at the time of his campaign against the Greeks (Anabasis of Alexander III: 16: 4; VII: 17:2), which according to Herodotus began in the spring of 485 BCE (The Histories VII: 20). Strabo says that Xerxes razed the temple of Bēl Marduk (Geography XVI: 1:5) probably in retaliation of these brief Babylonian revolts.³ Herodotus, however, only says that Xerxes robbed the temple of Marduk and killed the priest who tried to prevent it (The Histories I: 183). These two brief rebellions at the beginning of the reign of Xerxes confirm the co-regency because during his accession and his first year of reign, Xerxes was welcomed by the Babylonians (at least 3–5 dated contracts from different cities including Babylon are known for each month, between X/00 and X/01 of Xerxes). Consequently, the two Babylonian revolts, just after the death

³ Herodotus wrote:

“the year after Darius death (in 485 BCE), Xerxes attacked the [Babylonian?] rebels” (The Histories VII: 7).

king	tablet	year	date	place	titulature
Xerxes	BSCAS 32, no. 2	11	02/I/11	[Uruk]	?
	JCS 1, 350 no. 2	485 BCE	05/IV[?]	Babylon?	?
Bēl-šimanni	AfO 19, no. 23	-	14 ⁺ /V/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon and of lands
	VS 6, 331	1	01/VI/00	Dilbat	King of Babylon
	BM 87357	1	11/VI/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon
Šamaš-eriba	LB 1718	-	04/V/00	Sippar(!)	King of Babylon and of lands
	BM 25897	-	22/VI/00	Borsippa	King
	BM 96414	1	24/VI/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon, king of lands
	VS 3, 178	-	25/VI/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon
	BM 67297	-	25/VI/00	Sippar	King of Babylon and of lands
	BM 94878	-	09/VII/00	Kiš	King of Babylon, king of lands
	VS 5, 116	-	21/VII/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon
	ZA 3, 157f.	-	22/VII/00	Babylon	King of Babylon and of lands
	VS 6, 173	-	23/VII/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon, king of lands
	BM 22072	-	24/VII/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon
	VS 6, 174	-	29/VII/00	Borsippa	King of Babylon
Xerxes	OECT 10, 176	11	05/IX/11	Ḫursag-kal.	King of lands
	JCS 28, no. 38	11	24/XI/11	Sippar	-

Fig. 9: List of dated tablets from month I to month XI, year 11 of Xerxes and year 1 as “usurper”.

of Darius, imply that Xerxes’ accession could not have taken place at that time. Plutarch, who confirms Ctesias’ account, states that after the death of Darius the kingdom of Xerxes was challenged in a climate of insurrection (very different from the period of accession 10 years earlier):

“When Xerxes was declared king, Arimenes immediately did him homage and placed the crown upon his head; and Xerxes gave him the next place to himself. Being offended with the Babylonians, who rebelled, and having overcome them, he forbade them weapons” (Sayings of kings and commanders 173c).

If Arimenes challenged the kingdom of Xerxes that means he (Xerxes) was already king. In addition, the Babylonian revolt early in his reign had obviously worried Babylonian scribes, as is indicated by a trilingual inscription at Persepolis:

“King Xerxes says: When I became king, among the nations that are written above there is one that rebelled, then Ahuramazda gave me his support and thanks to Ahuramazda I beat these people and I put it back in its place” (Lecoq 1997: 257).

Xerxes probably did not name the Babylonians because this old people constituted a prestigious historical foundation of Achaemenid power, thus it would have been embarrassing to admit such an insurrection. The translation of the Babylonian inscription is also indicative of the awkwardness as it replaces the offending people by “these countries have rebelled,” combining the revolt that had taken place at the time of Darius with the two Babylonian rebels Nebuchadnezzar III and Nebuchad-

nezzar IV. The information from Ctesias and Plutarch overlap, making it possible to locate the two brief reigns of Bēl-šimanni and Šamaš-eriba in the year 485 BCE or early in the effective reign of Xerxes after the death of Darius. According to the book of Esther there was a plot to kill Xerxes which was thwarted in the 11th year of his reign, we read:

“Bigthan and Teresh, two officials of the king’s court — the porters — were outraged and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. But the thing came to be known to Mordecai, and he soon revealed to Esther the queen. Then Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. The case was therefore sought and finally discovered, and both were hanged on a pole (...) Shortly afterwards (...) In the 1st month, that is the month of Nisan, of the 12th year of King Ahasuerus” (Est 2:21–3:7).

The serious accusation against the Jews is dated to the 12th year of the legal reign of Xerxes (Est 3:7–10), at the beginning of his effective reign (Ezr 4:6).

Cameron (1941: 314–325) notes that the accession of Xerxes and his first year are well represented in Babylon, accordingly he does not place the revolt during the first two years since the Babylonians had clearly recognized Xerxes in his early steps, but Waerzeggers (2003–2004: 150–172) notes that the tablet BM 96414, dating the accession of Šamaš-eriba clearly mentions the 1st year of Xerxes.

If the Babylonian revolts occurred during year 1 of Xerxes’ reign, the chronological order of various con-

View toward horizon from 32°33'N
44°26' E, azimuth 280°
Tue -484 Apr 9 19:00 UTE

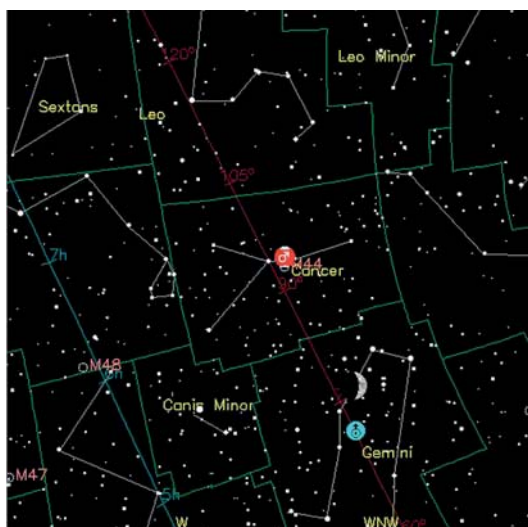


Fig. 10: Astronomical simulation of the sky of Babylon on 9 April -484 (485 BCE) (<http://www.fourmilab.ch/cgi-bin/Yourhorizon>).

tracts (Everling, 2013: 112–113)⁴ indicates that they took place when the king had already been fully accepted in Borsippa, which would be quite illogical. In fact for the Babylonians the legitimate king was Šamaš-erība. For the Babylonian scribe, Xerxes, an Achaemenid, was a usurper in his 1st year of reign, not a legitimate king in his 11th year of reign (Fig. 9). To avoid this conclusion some historians have speculated that the Babylonian revolts were at their maximum around 484/483 rather than 485 BCE, but this assumption is contradicted by three points:

- sion, which is known to have been the case for Xerxes (The Histories VII: 7; Persica F13 #25–26).
3. An astronomical fragment (JCS 1 [1947]: 350 no. 2) enables us to date these Babylonian revolts. Although the data is fragmentary it describes a revolt, clearly dated 05/IV/[?] during Xerxes' reign (line 3 of the tablet), which stands in perfect agreement with Bēl-šimanni's tablet (BM 87357). The astronomical fragment (see Horowitz 1995: 61–67) reads:
 - 2) [...] [...]
 - 3) [...] the month of Tammuz (IV), the 5th day [...]
 - 4) [...] to Babylon went [...]
 - 5) [...] the troops of Elam [...]
 - 6) [...] the region of Mars which to [...]
 - 7) [...] M[ars] into Cancer ente[red ...]
 - 8) [...] fle]d and into the river jumped and [...]
 - 9) [...] to] Borsippa went, destroyed the city [...]

The historical notices appear to be related to a conflict between Babylon and Elam (Media and Persia). Line 4 indicates that the troops, and/or others, went to Babylon. Line 5 mentions the troops of Elam, and line 8 apparently refers to a military defeat. In line 9 a group of people go to Borsippa. Lines 6–7 date these events to a year when the planet Mars was in the vicinity of Cancer during the month of Tammuz (IV). Observations of Mars in this context may be more than coincidental since the planet Mars is not only the planet of Nergal, the Babylonian god of war, but is also often associated with Elam in astrology (see Horowitz 1995).

The fragment must refer to an astronomical omen rather than belong to an astronomical diary for two reasons: most information comes from a chronicle rather than an astronomical record (in which historical events are rare); given that the constellation of Cancer

BCE	year		Spring equinox	1/I (Nisan)	1/II	1/III	1/IV	1/V (Ab)
486	-485	Adar2	26 March	18 March	16 April	16 May	14 June	14 July
485	-484		26 March	5 April	4 May	3 June	2 July	1 August
484	-483	Adar2	26 March	25 March	23 April	23 May	21 June	21 July
483	-482		26 March	12 April	12 May	10 June	10 July	9 August

Fig. 11: Astronomical calculations of day 1 from months I to V, 486 to 483 BCE.

1. If the first Babylonian revolt occurred in 484 BCE, this year would have been the 2nd regnal year of Xerxes, but two tablets of Šamaš-erība are clearly dated year 1 of Xerxes.
2. Greek historians describing the succession Darius/Xerxes all indicate that some Babylonian revolts occurred just after the death of Darius, not two years later. In addition, that chronology sounds logical because revolts usually occur just after the death of a king in the wake of a contested succes-

covers 20° of the sky (Levy 1995: 144) it needs 20 days to be crossed by a planet, which makes it impossible to date an observation to a specific day. For Babylonian observers, Mars was visually entering in a constellation when it was crossing its centre. An astronomical simulation⁵ (Fig. 10, 11) indicates that Mars was in the centre of the constellation of Cancer around April 9th 485 BCE (= -484 in astronomy), i.e. during the 1st month of Babylonian year (Nisan) and again⁶ on March 6th 468

4 http://okor.btk.pte.hu/sites/okor.btk.pte.hu/files/files/SEAL/sea-l_3_jeverling_materials_vol1.pdf.

5 The simulation is based on the data from <http://www.fourmilab.ch/cgi-bin/Yourhorizon>.

6 The coincidence occurred after 17 sidereal years or 9 sidereal

IV'
 1' ina '18¹ [...]
 2' 40 GAR Í[R u ZÁLAG] 'TÚG' AN 'GAR'
 3' ina KI 4-ĀM ár šá PA ád KIN DIR
 4' IZI 14¹ 'Hi-šá¹-ár-šú DUMU-šú GAZ-šú
 (blank)
 5' APIN 14 13 GE₆
 6' GIN TA DIR E
 7' '4¹-ú HĀB-rat 'Á¹ [x]
 8' u MAR ŠÚ 8² [...]
 9' ZÁLAG 'x¹ [...]

1' at '18⁰² [...]
 2' 40° onset, ma[ximal phase, and clearing]. The “garment of the sky [rain-clouds]” was there.
 3' In the area of the 4 rear stars of Sagittarius it was eclipsed.
 Month VI was intercalary
 4' Month V, the 14², Xerxes —his son killed him.
 5' Month VIII, the 14th, 13° after
 6' sunset, [the moon] came out of a cloud,
 7' 1/4 of the disk on the [...]
 8' and west side was covered. 8⁰² [onset² and]
 9' clearing [...]

Fig. 12: Astronomical tablet BM 32234 which contains two lunar eclipses and Xerxes' death dated 14/V/21.

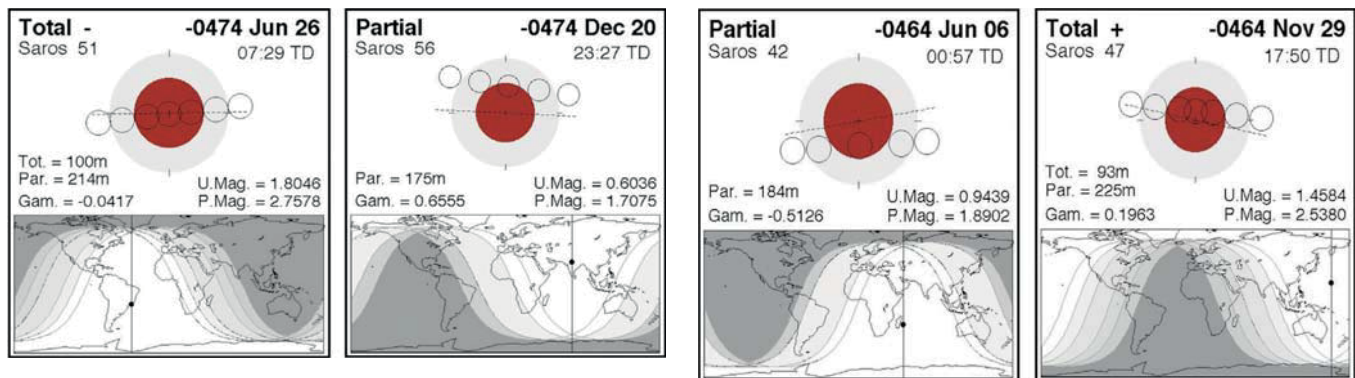


Fig. 13: Astronomical simulation of the lunar eclipses of 475 and 465 BCE (<http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCLEmap/-0499--0400/LE-0474-06-26T.gif>; <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCLEmap/-0499--0400/LE-0474-12-20P.gif>; <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCLEmap/-0499--0400/LE-0464-06-06P.gif>; <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCLEmap/-0499--0400/LE-0464-11-29T.gif>).

BCE. Given that after the death of Darius appeared dissatisfaction with Babylon, this omen early in the reign of Xerxes (year 11) had logically predicted wars (which happened soon after).

An astronomical tablet (BM 32234; see Hunger 2001: 20–21, 396) contains 2 lunar eclipses and dates the death of Xerxes to 14/V (Fig. 12). Given that the 2nd partial lunar eclipse is dated 14/VIII (November/ December), it is easy to check what year it occurred⁷. A complete analysis of these 2 eclipses (when they began and ended and how much area of the moon was darkened. P = Partial; T = Total; N = Penumbral) advocates the year 475 BCE, not 465 BCE as is commonly assumed (Stolper 1988; Stolper 1999: 9–12).

The analysis of these astronomical observations illustrates two points: the Babylonian measures were excellent, but their lack of precision could reach 1 hour, that is to say around “a span (15°)”, and the way of describing eclipses depended on their nature, either partial or total. It is easy to verify that the two lunar eclipses, which occurred in 475 BCE, first total then partial, were in reverse in 475 BCE, first partial then total (Fig. 13, 14). According to modern astronomical data, only the beginning of the 1st eclipse (26 June 475 BCE) could be observed (Fig. 15). In addition, the weather

was rainy (“The garment of the sky was there”). Observations had therefore been difficult, thus the two durations of eclipse, 40° and [8°], were due to a guess. In 30% of cases (on average), the Babylonians completed their observations with values calculated (Huber/de Meis 2004: 7) according to some theories that remain poorly understood (Swerdlow 1998: 44–45). Despite some difficulties of observation the results obtained by the ancient Babylonian astronomers for the two lunar eclipses of 475 BCE are remarkably good, while there are 5 major disagreements that speak against dating the event to 465 BCE.

A second way of checking the data in the astronomical tablet BM 32234 is the wording:

“In the area of the 4 rear stars of Sagittarius it [the moon] was eclipsed [1st eclipse].”

Babylonian astronomers used a reference system based on a local observer⁸. The darkness of the sky appears

⁸ Stars position in the sky were measured according to their altitude, or elevation, in degrees between the horizon (0°) and the zenith (90°) and their azimuth in degrees from north (0°), east (90°), south (180°) or west (270°). Altitude is the angle above the observer's horizon and azimuth is the angle measured clockwise from north along the horizon to the point on the horizon that lies beneath the star. Meridian is an imaginary great circle that passes through the zenith from north to south, dividing the sky in two: the eastern and the western halves. It is important to be aware of this line because when an object crosses it, it has reached its maximum height in the sky. The sun crosses the line

⁷ years of Mars (17x365.26 = 6209 days - 26 days = 9x687). <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/LEcat5/LE-0499--0400.html>.

BCE	date of eclipse	according to the tablet	type of eclipse	mag.	according to the tablet	agreement
475	26 June	[14 III]	Total	1.80	total	OK
	20 December	14 VIII	Partial	0.60	0.25 (1/4)	OK
465	5 June	[14 III]	Partial	0.94	total	NO
	29 November	14 VIII	Total	1.46	0.25 (1/4)	NO

Fig. 14: Astronomical calculations of the lunar eclipses of 475 and 465 BCE.

		partial eclipse	eclipse not observed at Babylon	total eclipse			
(local time in Babylon; LT = UT +2:58)							
first eclipse	1 st start partial	2 nd start total	3 rd end total	4 th end partial	mag.	sunrise	sunset
26 June 475 BCE	4:05	5:02	6:42	7:39	1.82	5:02	19:06
5 June 465 BCE	21:51			0:55	0.94	5:00	18:59
second eclipse							
20 December 475 BCE	20:24			23:20	0.61	7:02	17:00
29 November 465 BCE	14:25	15:31	17:05	18:11	1.46	6:47	16:55
first eclipse	according to	475 BCE	gap	465 BCE	gap		
	BM 32234	26 June		5 June			
1 st onset	[-]	13° before sunrise	[-]	43° after sunset	[-]		
1 st -2 nd onset	[-]	14°	[-]		[-]		
2 nd -3 rd onset	[-]	25°	[-]		[-]		
3 rd -4 th onset	18°	14°	4°			NO	
1 st -4 th onset	40°	54°	14°	46°	6°		
second eclipse	20 December		29 November				
1 st onset	13° after sunset	51° after sunset	38°	38° before sunset		NO	
			-	17°		NO	
			-	24° ##		NO	
			-	17°		NO	
1 st -2 nd onset	[8°]	44°	36°	57°	49°		

Fig. 15: Astronomical calculations of the timeline by hours of the lunar eclipses in 475 and 465 BCE.

when the sun is 6° below the horizon. Given that the full celestial sphere (360°) is covered in a 24-hour day (or $24 \times 60 = 1440$ minutes), each celestial degree corresponds to a duration of 4 minutes ($= 1440/360$). For example, the technical indication “14° after sunset” means “[the eclipse began] 56 minutes ($= 14 \times 4$) after sunset”,

likewise “14° before sunrise” means “[the eclipse began] 56 minutes before sunrise”. Paradoxically a lunar eclipse in the Babylonian astronomical records might have started slightly before sunset or ended slightly after sunrise, which normally is not observable, but as the beginning and end of eclipses are symmetrical, Babylonian astronomers used to add some appropriate calculations to their observations. With astronomy software it is possible to see the sky at one point and at a given time⁹ (Fig. 16). One can see that in 475 BCE the

of the meridian around noon every day. We say that the sun, or any star, culminates when it crosses the meridian. A meridian covers a total angle of 180° (-90° to 90°) and the horizon a total angle of 360°. Babylonian astronomers measured the sky with their hands knowing that when one reaches out, the little finger has an apparent width of 1° and a span (distance between the ends of the thumb and little finger) has an apparent width of 15°. Thus the moon, just as the sun, has an apparent width of 0.5° (or 30'). Each zodiac constellation has an apparent diameter of around 15°, “a span”, so there are 12 constellations in the celestial vault.

⁹ The observations were performed in Babylon (latitude: 32°33' or 32.55°North; longitude: 44°26' or 44.43° East; <http://www.astro.com/cgi/aq.cgi?lang=e>). In 475 BCE Universal Time: -474-06-26 0:00; Azimuth: 230°; Field of view: 45°; in 465 BCE Universal Time: -464-06-06 0:00 <http://www.fourmilab.ch/cgi-bin/Yourhorizon>.

View toward horizon from 32°33'N
44°26' E, azimuth 230°
Mon -474 Jun 26 0:00 UTC

View toward horizon from 32°33'N
44°26' E, azimuth 280°
Mon -464 Jun 6 0:00 UTC

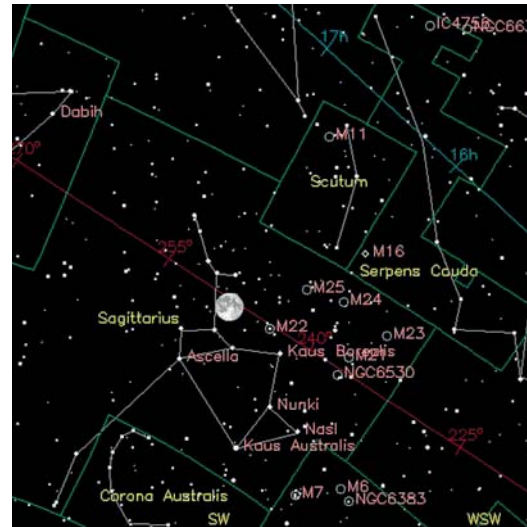
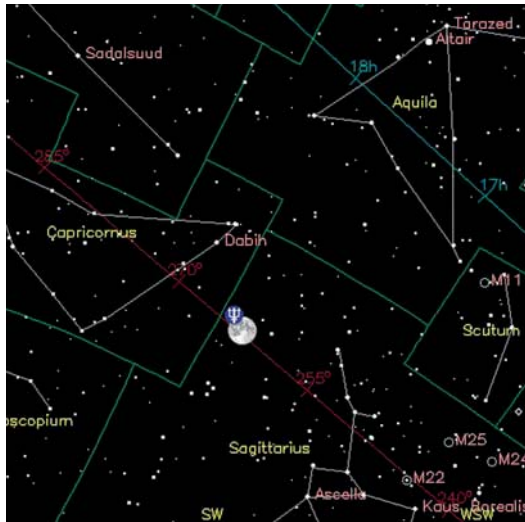


Fig. 16: Astronomical simulation of the sky of Babylon on 26 June -474 (475 BCE) and 6 June -464 (465 BCE) (<http://www.fourmilab.ch/cgi-bin/Yourhorizon>).

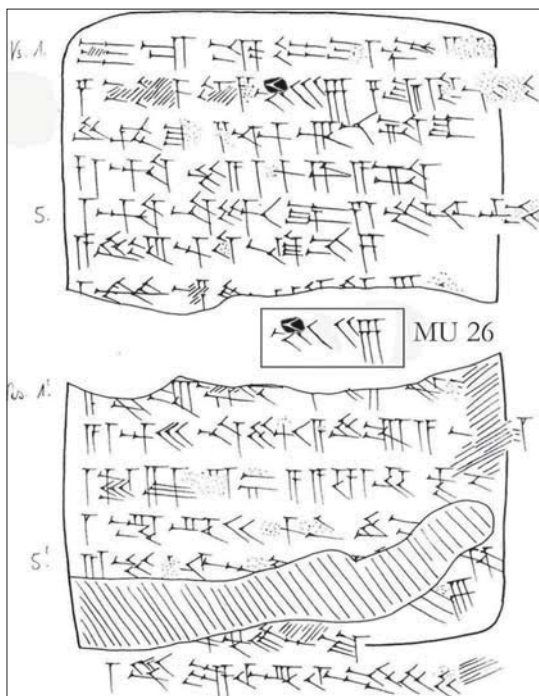


Fig. 17a: Drawing of the tablet BM 42567 dated 24/[-]/00 of Xerxes and year 26 of Darius I (after Jursa 1999: Pl. 44; edited by G. Gertoux).

moon was 20° behind Sagittarius and in 465 BCE it was inside. According to the astronomical tablet the first lunar eclipse [total] was: “in the area of the 4 rear stars of Sagittarius [in 475 BCE]”. Consequently, according to astronomical data, Xerxes died (14/V/21) on Wednesday 23 August 475 BCE and his accession was 21 years earlier in 496 BCE, which was Year 26 of Darius I. Despite Pierre Briant (1996: 536) denying the co-regency for ideological reasons, he admits that Xerxes was crown prince long before Darius’ death, because if Xerxes had been appointed as crown prince just before the death of Darius, one would have to admit that Darius had

waited a long time since he was already 72 years old in 486 BCE¹⁰. By this time, Xerxes was 35 years old (the marriage of his parents dated back to the accession of Darius in 522 BCE) whereas he was 25 in 496 BCE. Consequently, these chronological points involve a choice before 490 BCE. Therefore, it appears that Xerxes was indeed crown prince as well as co-regent simultaneously.



Fig. 17b: High definition photo of the sign “year 26” in the tablet BM 42567 (photo by G. Gertoux; courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

The letter BM 42567 (Fig. 17a) dated 24/[-]/00 by Xerxes (lines 6' and 7') is also dated to year 26 of Darius (line 2). In his transcription Jursa (1999: 138, 206–207, Plates VII, XLIV) chose to read “year 36” but in his drawing we can read: MU 26 “year 26” (2 heads of nail and 6 vertical nails). The sign for the word “year (MU)” appears in the lines 2, 4 and 5'. It is formed by one horizontal nail and by four heads of nail. The text reads:

¹⁰ According to Herodotus, Darius, the eldest son of Hystaspes, was barely 20 years old in 538 BCE (The Histories I: 136, 209) and he died at the age of 72 (Ctesias, Persica F13§23). These data are consistent and give the same lifetime to Darius (558–486 BCE).

personage	date of the letter	responsibility	tablet
Ribāta	05/ X/24 of Darius	delegate of the chef	BM 64067
	26 of Darius; 24/[I-IV]/00 of Xerxes	(delegate of the chef)	BM 42567
	20/IX/26 of Darius	(delegate of the chef)	BM 79514
	25/IX/26 of Darius	delegate of the chef	BM 49999
	07/ X/00 of Xerxes	(chef)	BM 75070
	27/XI/00 of Xerxes	chef	BM 75396
	07/IX/30 of Darius	prebendary and witness	BM 74644
	02/IV/31 of Darius	prebendary and witness	BM 74636
Bēl-rēmāni	22/IV/07 of Cyrus	scribe	CT 56, 194
	[-]/ I/02 of Darius	scribe	VS 5, 60
	18/VII/06 of Darius	scribe	BM 74605
	[-]/[-]/18 of Darius	scribe	BM 70233
	08/ X/24 of Darius	scribe	VS 3, 135
	24 /[I-IV]/26 of Darius	scribe	BM 42567
	07/V/26 of Darius	prebendary	VS 3, 138-139
	16/VII/26 of Darius	prebendary	BM 74560
	15/III/32 of Darius	prebendary	BM 75232
	22/VII/33 of Darius	prebendary	VS 3, 154
	06/ X/34 of Darius	prebendary	BM 74569
4+/XII/34 of Darius	prebendary	BM 74549	
23/XII/35 of Darius	prebendary	VS 5, 109	
Itti-Šamaš-balātu	24 /[I-IV]/00 of Xerxes	canal inspector	BM 42567
	11/IX/00 of Xerxes	canal inspector	EKBK 22:3

Fig. 18: List of tablets of three Babylonian officials written from year 24 of Darius I to accession year of Xerxes.

“6 *kur* [253 l] of dates, an assessment of imposed tax (ZAG.LU), a claim of god Šamaš, for year 26 [of Darius], under the responsibility of Itti-Šamaš-balātu, the canal-inspector, at the disposal of Ribāta, son of Šamaš-iddin of the family of Maštukata, has Šamaš-nāšir, son of Mušebši-Marduk, of the family of Šangû-Šamaš, by order of Ina-tēši-eṭer [...] (about 2–3 lines missing, then follows the witnesses and lastly the date-line) Day 24 of month ?, the accession [00] year of Xerxes, king of lands”.

From the photo (Fig. 17b), we can read MU 26¹¹, because on the drawing, the digit 2 is formed by 2 heads of nail and the digit 6 is formed by 6 vertical nails. The year 26 refers to an imposed tax paid at once during the accession of Xerxes, not one levied 10 years earlier.

The reading “year 26 [of Darius]” is also confirmed by the prosopography of some officials mentioned in the letter. For example, the career of Ribāta son of Šamaš-iddin of the Maštukata family, as head of bakers (Chef), of Bēl-rēmāni son of Mušebši-Marduk family of Šangû-Šamaš, a scribe of the temple, and of Itti-Šamaš-balātu, as inspector of the canal, can be dated. This

chronological reconstruction is based on a progressive career and the circumstance that the lucrative activity of prebendary was a financial reward for the servants of the king (Démare-Lafont 2010: 3–17). Without the co-regency of Xerxes with Darius from the latter’s year 26 onwards, the careers of several top officials would become implausible. Ribāta, for example, would have overseen the bakers from year 24 to 26 of Darius and then would have stopped for 10 years before returning to service only for the accession of Xerxes. Similarly, Bēl-rēmāni officiated as a scribe from year 7 of Cyrus to year 26 of Darius, and would have, too, stopped for 10 years before returning to service for the accession of Xerxes (that seems unlikely). Furthermore, Ribāta who was a prebendary (a hereditary position) from 07/IX/30 of Darius would be demoted as chef for Xerxes accession and Bēl-rēmāni who was prebendary from 07/V/26 of Darius would also be demoted as scribe for Xerxes’ accession. As Bēl-rēmāni was scribe until 24/[-]/26 and then prebendary from 07/V/26, the month [-] of that letter must be between I and IV (Fig. 18).

Another letter (BM 75396; cf. Graziani 1986: 6–9; MacGinnis 1995: 63–64, plate 23) dated 27/XI/00 of Xerxes relates a settlement of accounts for the following year

11 A large zoom is needed to see chips from nails and to distinguish the reading “MU 26”.

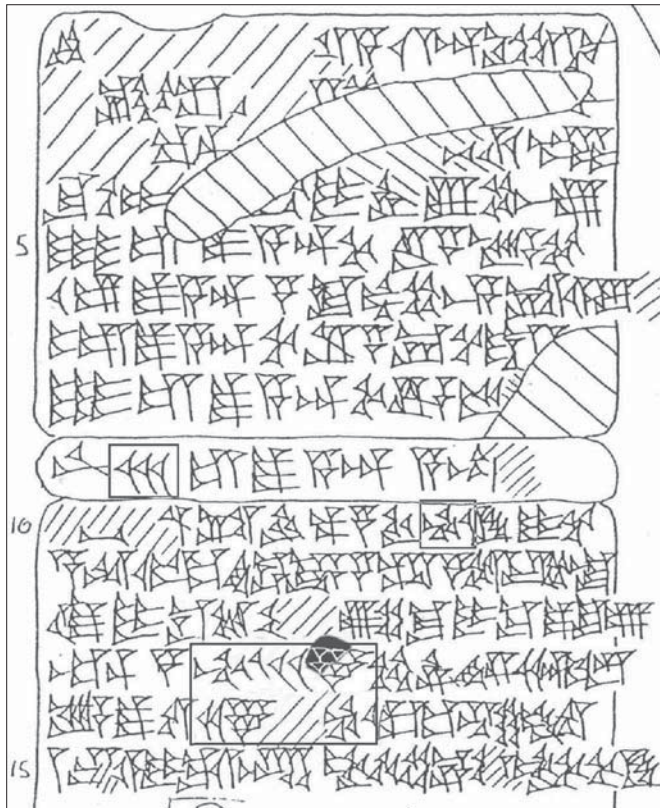


Fig. 19a: Drawing of tablet BM 75396 dated from 27/XI/00 of Xerxes to 1/I/27 of Darius I (after MacGinnis 1995: Pl. 23, no. 85; edited by G. Gertoux).

- 1 [Letter of Marduk-mu]kin-apli and Marduk-bēšunu,
- 2 the scri[bes], to [Birūqāya],
- 3 [master of] the *sūtu*-taxe [of Šamaš-(temple)]. Bēl and Nabū
- 4 health [and (long) life to] our brother, may they ordain
- 5 9 *kur* of emmer, (as offering) for the month of Addaru
- 6 10 *kur* of emmer in *kupputu* and [*kupputu*] of Addaru month
- 7 2 *kur* of emmer, (as offering) to the temples
- 8 9 *kur* of emmer, (as offering) for the mon[th ..]
- 9 [or a] total of 30 *kur* of emmer to
- 10 [Ribā]ta, the chef, give (him).
- 11 Until there is a settlement of accounts, that you will do
- 12 as you (always) done,
- 13 on (the payment of) the *sūtu*-taxe of **year [2]7** we will count it.
- 14 Month of Šabātu, **day 27**, accession year
- 15 of Xerxes King of Babylon, King of lands.

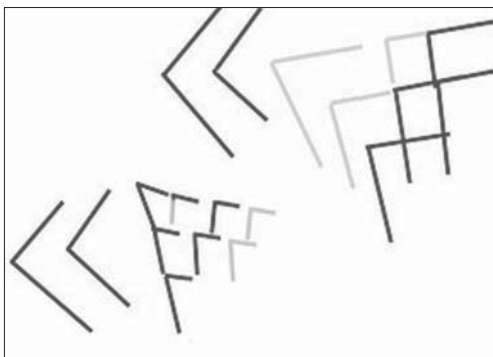


Fig. 19b: High definition photo and drawing of the sign “year 27” of Darius I on tablet BM 75396 (photo and drawing by G. Gertoux; courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

dated year 27 (of Darius). When Strassmaier published this letter, he translated: “year 27 [of Darius]” (Strassmaier 1893: 20–21) but Stolper (1983: 229 note 33) preferred to read “year 37” because the original reading

would have involved a 10-year co-regency. Graziani preferred to correct 37 into 36 assuming a scribal error (Graziani 1986: 9 note 7). This last assumption is unlikely because this was an important contract in which the figures indicating the quantities and dates were crucial and, therefore, carefully checked because the accuracy of amounts of money and dates of payment were crucial. In any case the two readings, 36 or 37, are illogical since at the supposed date of writing of that letter (27/XI/[36]) king Darius had been dead for two months and a half (he died around the 10/IX/36) and therefore could no longer have been ruling. Furthermore, Ribāta who was a prebendary from 07/IX/30 would have had to be demoted to the position of chef in the last year of Darius (unlikely because prebendary became hereditary)!

Despite his reading “37”, John MacGinnis (1995: Pl. 23 no. 85) published a drawing which suggests that the reading MU [2]7 “year 27” (line 13) is more likely. The number “27” appears also in line 14, the number “30” in line 9, and the sign MU “year” in lines 10 and 14 (Fig. 19a). On the photo the number [2]7 looks badly damaged (Fig. 19b), but four vertical nails out of seven appear clearly and three vertical nails may be guessed. The first “7” in line 13 is bigger than the second one in line 14. Consequently, there was a co-regency of 10 years between Darius I (522–486 BCE) and Xerxes I (496–476 BCE). The prosopography of treasurers during the transition of reign enables us to see the co-regency of 10 years. The dates of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (PF) range between years 13 and 28 of Darius’ reign (cf. Hallock 1969: 74.), whereas the Persepolis Treasury Tablets (PT) were written between year 30 of Darius and year 7 of Artaxerxes I (Cameron 1948:

BCE	Darius I		treasurer	tablet	vice treasurer	z. archive
510	12					
509	13			<i>Grand Palace for Darius</i>		
508	14		Irshena R.	PF 280, 239		
507	15		Irshena R.			
506	16		Irshena R.			
505	17		Irshena R.			
504	18		Irshena R.			
503	19		Shuddayauda R.	PF 490, 642	(Irshena R.)	19
502	20		Shuddayauda R.		(Irshena R.)	20
501	21		Shuddayauda R.		(Irshena R.)	21
500	22		Shuddayauda R.		(Irshena R.)	5/IX/22
499	23		Shuddayauda R.			23
498	24		Shuddayauda R.			24
497	25		Shuddayauda R.			25
496	26	0 Xerxes I	Shuddayauda R.	(BM 42567)	<i>New Palace for Xerxes</i>	18/VIII/26
495	27 VIII-XII ₂	1	Baratkama R.	PF 864-868, 879,		27
494	28 I-VI	2 VI-XII	Baratkama R.	PF 1120	Darkaush / Shakka	28
493	29	3 IV-XII			Darkaush / Aspathines	29
492	30	4 III-X			Darkaush /Shakka	10/XI/4
491	31	5				5
490	32 IV-XII	6 IX-XII	Baratkama	PT 2, 9	Appishmanda / Artataxma	6
489	33 (XII ₂ /32)	7 II	Shakka C.	PT 1, PT 24	Baratkama R.	7
488	34	8				
487	35	9				
486	36 IX	10 IX	Vahush R.		Shakka	
485		11				
484		12 XII	Vahush T.		Artataxma	
483		13				
482		14				
481		15 X	Vahush T.		Çıvavahush	
480		16 IV-XI	Vahush T./ R.		Çıvavahush	
479		17				
478		18 XII	Vahush T.		Çıvavahush	
477		19 IX-XI	Vahush T./ R.		Megadates / Artataxma	
476		20 XII	Uratinda T		Artataxma	
475	0	21		(BM 32234)		
474	1 IV	Artaxerxes I	Uratinda R.			
473	2					
472	3		Barisha R.			
471	4					
470	5					
469	6					
468	7 X		Barisha T.		Marezza	

Fig. 20: List of treasurers and vice treasurers from year 12 of Darius I to year 7 of Artaxerxes I.

14–17, 33; Cameron/Gershevitch 1965: 186). The last three contracts from Zababa-šar-ušur's archive (Joanès/Lemaire 1996) should also be mentioned here. The treasurer of the Persepolis tablets had either the title *šaramana* "Person in Charge" (R.) or *kašabara* "Treasurer" (T.) and exceptionally a more prestigious title *sadabatiš* "Chief of hundred" (C.) while the Vice treasurer carried the title "Responsible" (Fig. 20).

The succession of treasurers is in perfect agreement with the co-regency of 10 years, since without it, we would have the following improbable succession: Baratkama (495–490)/ Shakka (489–487)/ Baratkama (486–480)/ Shakka (479–476), in addition, the renewal of Zababa-šar-ušur's contracts, which were renewed every 4 years, would spread over an asymmetrical period of 18 years. As was the case with Bardiya, Xerxes began his reign on two occasions, first as co-regent with an accession dated III/00 and again as sole king after Darius' death dated 10/IX/10 (Fig. 21).

After Xerxes had been killed (14/V/21 or August 24, 475 BCE) there was no king anymore because Artabanus was only his legal representative. Herodotus wrote:

"Have no fear, therefore, on this score; but keep a brave heart and uphold my house and empire. To thee, and thee only, do I intrust my sovereignty" (The Histories VII: 52), but Artabanus is never mentioned as coregent: "For in the three following generations of Darius the son of Hystaspes, Xerxes the son of Darius, and Artaxerxes the son of Xerxes" (The Histories VI: 98).

Justinus and Aristotle even suggest clearly that Darius (A), the eldest son of Xerxes, was the designated heir (Briant 1996: 581–583). A contract under Artaxerxes I, refers to a previous arrangement dated IX/21 of Xerxes (Figulla 1949: 15 text n 193.), or 4 months after his death, and not to Artaxerxes accession, which had just been recognized. An Elephantine Papyri (B24) is dated: [17] Thoth, year 21 (of Xerxes), accession year of Artaxerxes (Porten 1996: 164–165). As the 17 Thoth corresponds to January 5th (10/IX/21), the accession year of Artaxerxes must have been around 1–10/IX/00 (between December 25th, 475 BCE and January 5th, 474 BCE). Xerxes must have been dead because after the 1st Thoth he would have begun his 22th year of reign in Egypt (Fig. 22). Those who refuse this co-regency are obliged to admit the following improbabilities:

1. A batch of tablets belonging to the domain of Mardonius is dated to Xerxes' years 3–10 (i.e. 483–476 BCE), but according to Herodotus, Mardonius died in August 479 BCE at the Battle of Plataea (The Histories IX: 81–84). Stolper (1992: 211–221) suggested that until 476 BCE people continued to talk about him posthumously for a few years (at least three!) as if he were still alive, but this explanation is unlikely because a contract always referred to an owner who was alive.
2. Xerxes prepared his expedition against Greece for 4 whole years, stocking up on supplies and building an impressive fleet of about 1,200 fighting

ships and 2000 transport vessels. Xerxes' expedition is dated 480 BCE:

"From the date of submission of Egypt, Xerxes took four whole years to assemble his army and supplies needed and he took the field at the end of the 5th year [spring 480 BCE], with immense forces" (The Histories VII: 20).

A document called "customs registry" contains accounts of maritime traffic from the port of Memphis (or Naucratis) showing the amount of customs duty payable to the "king's house" (cf. Bresciani 1995: 97–108). These important contributions which were sent to the Persian king are dated from 11th to 15th year of Xerxes (Porten/Yardeni 1993: 195–203). A royal receipt dated year 13 of Xerxes (10/I/13) also mentions these requisitions (cf. Stolper 2001: 26–35). These preparations are to be linked with the passage from the Book of Esther, which describes some events in the 12th year of Ahasuerus (Est 3: 7). According to this text, Xerxes (Ahasuerus) imposed forced labour¹² on the land and the islands of the Sea (Est 10: 1), which refers to the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean and the maritime regions of the empire. Consequently, Xerxes prepared his expedition from his 11th to 15th year of reign (485–481 BCE), not his five first years of reign (Fig. 23).

It seems understandable why Herodotus as well as Ctesias had not been able to give a date for Xerxes' reign, because this king ruled 21 years from 486 to 475 BCE! Similarly, an Alexandrian Chronicle attributed to Eusebius gives accurately 11 years for Xerxes' reign (486–475 BCE), but a few pages later (Scaligeri 1658: 58–95, 71, 78): *Xerxes reigned 20 years and Artaban 7 [months] which gives 21 years*. Obviously this chronological imbroglio had consequences for the chronology of the reign of Artaxerxes I. According to the conventional chronology based on the Babylonian King List, supplemented by information from ancient historians like Herodotus, Manetho, etc., the 41-year reign of Artaxerxes I and the 19-year duration of Darius II's rule were separated by two short reigns: 2 months for Xerxes II and 7 months for Sogdianus. However, the discovery of the Murašû archives (Stolper 1985: 13–24) completely changed the previous reconstitution since a co-regency of several months (up until month XII; see Donbaz/Stolper 1997) appeared between Artaxerxes I and Darius instead of a period ruled by two usurpers (Fig. 24; cf. Depuydt 1995: 86–96). Some scholars have suggested that scribes who had dated contracts in the year 41 of Artaxerxes were unaware that Darius had already ascended to the throne (Kugler 1907; 1913: 312), but this is unlikely (Lewis 1977: 70–72). Despite being aware of this difficulty, some scholars have suggested reducing

¹² The Hebrew word *mas* can be translated as "tribute" or "forced labour", but since the regions in question were already paying tribute, the translation "forced labour" is more appropriate.

year	month	regnal year						
496	1	X	25	Darius I				
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	26					
	5	II			Darius I / Xerxes I			
	6	III	***			0	***	BM 42567 dated 24/[III?]/00 and year 26
	7	IV						BM 30589 dated 20/III/26 (Xerxes' New Palace)
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						
	11	VIII						BM 30980 dated 4/VIII/26 (New Palace)
	12	IX						
495	1	X						
	2	XI				***	BM 75396 dated 27/XI/00 to 01/I/27	
	3	XII						
	4	I	27	1				
	5	II						

Fig. 21a: List of dated tablets, years 26 and 27 of Darius I and years 10 and 11 of Xerxes.

the duration of the co-regency by reading XI instead of IV, but Stolper (1983: 223–236) acknowledges:

“Leichty (1974) as Walker (1979) observed that although the sign of the month is more like that ŠU than ZIZ, it is partially broken, damaged along the bottom and right edge”.

Thus, the reading 25/IV/41 accession of Darius (BM 33342) seems most likely. He added that since Artaxerxes I died around 424 BCE in March at the end of his 40th year of reign, the Babylonian scribes were well aware of his death in the 12th month of this year.

To resolve the contradiction with the narratives from Greek historians, Stolper suggested that Darius II was immediately accepted in Babylon (from April 424 BCE) along with Xerxes II, while Sogdianus was only recognized in Persia shortly before being assassinated. Although it is generally accepted, that reconstitution (Fig. 25) does not appear plausible, as it implies a co-regency with a dead king for at least one year! Thucydides pinpoints the death of Artaxerxes I precisely just at the end of the 7th year of the Peloponnesian War and before a partial solar eclipse in March 424 BCE according to his chronological system (The Peloponnesian War IV: 50–52). Astronomy confirms the existence of the eclipse (annular eclipse of magnitude 94%)¹³ dated March 21, 424 BCE. However, as the 1st of Nisan (= 1st crescent appearing after the equinox) was on April 20 in 424, Artaxerxes I could not have begun his 41st year, because the spring equinox was on March

25 in 424 (Julian calendar)¹⁴. As there was an intercalary month (Stigers 1976: note 47. Hunger 2001: 227) in the year 40 of Artaxerxes I, year 41 should be synchronized with the equinox. Moreover, even if the 1st Nisan was on March 22, Artaxerxes I died before that date as Thucydides puts his death before the solar eclipse of March 21. Although Artaxerxes died in March 424 the co-regency with his son Darius lasted until March 423. Indeed, tablet CBS 5506 is a contract dated --/VI/41 and was intended to take effect in the 1st month of the year 42, and tablet CBS 4986 (dated 17/VII/41) is an obligation to pay dates and grain to the next harvest in the 7th month [current year] and the 2nd month of the year 42 (Stolper 1983: 229 note 34). The most logical solution is therefore to consider that Artaxerxes I was still alive during his 41st year. This fits especially if one assumes that the 41st year was 434, not 424 BCE (Fig. 26).

Co-regency Artaxerxes/Darius according to Greek historians

Plutarch and Justinus have effectively described a co-regency between Artaxerxes and his son Darius, but as the king is identified with Artaxerxes II, the story of these two historians are not taken into account. Although Plutarch speaks about the life of Artaxerxes II in his introduction, his description does not match the end of his reign, which appears to have happened smoothly according to Diodorus Siculus (Historical Library XV:93), but rather that of Artaxerxes I with its fratricidal strife between his sons: Xerxes II, Sogdianus and Ochos, the future Darius II, not to be confused with

13 <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE-0499-0400.html>.

14 <http://www.imcce.fr/fr/grandpublic/temps/saisons.html>.

year	month	regnal year						
486	1	X	35	9	Darius I / Xerxes I (Hišiaršu)			
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	36	10				
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV			***	Bertin 2857 dated 23/IV/10 (Babylon)		
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						
	11	VIII			***	CT 4, 34 dated 24/VIII/10 (Babylon)		
	12	IX						
485	1	X			10	[0]	Xerxes I / [Xerxes as new king]	
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	11	1	BSCAS 32, no. 2 dated 02/I/11 [Uruk]			
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V				0	Xerxes I / Bēl-šimanni	
	9	VI				0	Xerxes I / Šamaš-erība BM 96414 dated 24/VI/00 year 1 of Xerxes	
	10	VII						
	11	VIII					Babylonian revolts (Esther 2:21–3:7)	
	12	IX				***	OECT 10, 176 dated 5/IX/11 (Kiš)	
484	1	X						
	2	XI				***		JCS 28, 38 dated 24/XI/11 (unassigned)
	3	XII						
	4	I	12	[2]				
	5	II						

Fig. 21b: List of dated tablets, years 26 and 27 of Darius I and years 10 and 11 of Xerxes.

Darius B, the eldest son of Artaxerxes I. Confusion of kings among some historians is due to the frequent occurrence of identical names (several Darius) and family trees of kings Artaxerxes which are similar (Briant 1996: 586–589, 793, 1029).

There was a 3-year co-regency at the end of the reign of Artaxerxes II, but his successor Ochus (II), the future Artaxerxes III, ascended the throne without difficulty. By contrast, according to Plutarch it was not Ochus I (the future Darius II) who was not co-regent with his father (Artaxerxes I) and ascended the throne after eliminating Sogdianus:

“But Artaxerxes (I), being now advanced in years, perceived that his sons were forming rival parties among his friends and chief men with reference to the royal succession. For the conservatives thought it

right that, as he himself had received the royal power by virtue of seniority, in like manner he should leave it to Darius (B). But his youngest son, Ochus (future Darius II), who was of an impetuous and violent disposition, not only had many adherents among the courtiers, but hoped for most success in winning over his father through the aid of Atossa. For he sought to gain Atossa’s favour by promising that she should be his wife and share the throne with him after the death of his father. And there was a report that even while his father was alive Ochus had secret relations with Atossa. But Artaxerxes was ignorant of this; and wishing to shatter at once the hopes of Ochus, that he might not venture upon the same course as Cyrus and so involve the kingdom anew in wars and contests, he [Artaxerxes] proclaimed Darius, then 50 years of

year	month	Egy.	regnal year		
475	1	X	21	20	Xerxes I (Egyptian and Babylonian reckoning)
	2	XI			
	3	XII			
	4	I		21	Xerxes I / Darius A (Total lunar eclipse of June 26, 475 BCE) (Xerxes' death on August 24, 475 BCE)
	5	II			
	6	III			
	7	IV			
	8	V			
	9	VI		(21)	
	10	VII			2
	11	VIII			3 (Partial lunar eclipse of December 20, 475 BCE)
	12	IX			4
474	1	X	1	0	5 Artaxerxes I / Artabanus
	2	XI	(22)		6 (met by Themistocles)
	3	XII			7
	4	I		1	Artaxerxes I
	5	II			
	6	III			
	7	IV			
	8	V			

Fig. 22: Transition from year 21 of Xerxes to year 1 of Artaxerxes I.

age¹⁵, his successor to the throne, and gave him permission to wear the upright “kitaris,” as the tiara was called (...) Accordingly, it was adding fire to fire when Tiribazus attached himself to the young prince and was forever telling him that the tiara standing upright on the head was of no use to those who did not seek by their own efforts to stand upright in affairs of state, and that he was very foolish if, when his brother was insinuating himself into affairs of state by way of the harem, and his father was of a nature so fickle and insecure, he could suppose that the succession to the throne was securely his (...) Accordingly, Darius put himself in the hands of Tiribazus; and presently,

15 Several commentators have corrected the number 50 into 30, because Plutarch says a little later that Darius (B) was a young man at his enthronement (less than 25 according to *Cyropaedia* I: 2:13), which is confirmed by Justinus (*Epitome of the Philippic History* X: 1–3). In fact, the number 50 refers to Artaxerxes' age, not to Darius' age. According to *Esther* 2: 16–18, king Xerxes married Esther in the 10th month, the 7th year of his reign (489 BCE) and according to Ctesias:

“Xerxes married the daughter of Onophas, Amestris (Esther). He was born a son Darius (in 488 BCE), a second, 2 years later, Hystaspes, then Artaxerxes (in 485 BCE) and two daughters Amytis, who took the name of his grandmother, and Rhodogune” (*Persica* F13§24).

Consequently Artaxerxes was 11 years old when Xerxes died in 475 BCE, 50 in 434 BCE when Darius (B) was enthroned, and 62 when he died in 423 BCE (Plutarch says Artaxerxes reigned 62 years). According to Justinus, Artaxerxes was barely out of childhood (11) and Darius was already in adolescence (14) when Xerxes was murdered (*History* III: 1).

when many were in the conspiracy, an eunuch made known to the king the plot and the mention of it, having accurate knowledge that the conspirators had resolved to enter the king's chamber by night and kill him in his bed. When Artaxerxes heard the eunuch's story, he thought it a grave matter to neglect the information and ignore so great a peril, and a graver still to believe it without any proof. He therefore acted on this wise. He charged the eunuch to attend closely upon the conspirators; meanwhile he himself cut away the wall of his chamber behind the bed, put a doorway there, and covered the door with a hanging. Then, when the appointed hour was at hand and the eunuch told him the exact time, he kept his bed and did not rise from it until he saw the faces of his assailants and recognised each man clearly. But when he saw them advancing upon him with drawn swords, he quickly drew aside the hanging, retired into the inner chamber, closed the door with a slam, and raised a cry. The murderers, accordingly, having been seen by the king, and having accomplished nothing, fled back through the door by which they had come, and told Tiribzuz and his friends to be off since their plot was known. The rest, then, were dispersed and fled; but Tiribazus slew many of the king's guards as they sought to arrest him, and at last was smitten by a spear at long range, and fell. Darius, together with his children, was brought to the king, who consigned him to the royal judges for trial. The king was not present in person at the trial, but others brought in the indictment. However, the king ordered clerks to take down

year	king	historical event		reference
502	Darius	20	(lunar eclipse 19 November 502 BCE)	Almagest IV:9.11
501		21		
500		22	Atossa (Udusana) is mentioned	PF 0163
499		23	Hystaspes is governor of Parthia	PF 1596
498		24	Xerxes is governor of Parthia	PF-NN 1657
497		25		
496	Darius / Xerxes	26- 0	building of Xerxes' New Palace (BM 30589)	BM 42567
495		27- 1		BM 75396
494		28- 2		
493		29- 3	end of the Ionian revolt (Herodotus VI:17-18,31)	Esther 1:3
492		30- 4		
491		31- 5	(lunar eclipse 25 April 491 BCE)	Almagest IV:9.11
490		32- 6	battle of Marathon (August 490 BCE)	
489		33- 7	Xerxes married Esther (December 489 BCE)	Esther 2:16-17
488		34- 8	birth of Darius A	Persica F13§24
487		35- 9		
486		36-10	0 death of Darius I (8 December 486 BCE)	
485	Xerxes	11	1 birth of Artaxerxes (I)	Persica F13§24
484		12	2 war preparations during 5 years (Herodotus VII:1-4)	Esther 3:7; 10:1
483		13	3 (3)	(Mardocai is dead)
482		14	4 (4)	
481		15	5 (5)	
480		16	6 battle of Salamis (September 480 BCE)	
479		17	7 battle of Plataea (August 479 BCE)	
478		18	8	
477		19	9	
476		20	10 siege of Eion, fall of Skyros (Plutarch, Life of Theseus §§35,36)	
	Artaxerxes I	0 - 21	11 battle of Naxos (the last one during Xerxes' reign)	BM 32234
474		1	Themistocles met Artaxerxes (Thucydides I:98,137)	
473		2		
472		3	performance of Aeschylus' play (<i>end of Xerxes' empire</i>) "The Persians"	
471		4	death of Themistocles (Diodorus XI:58:3-60:1)	
470		5	battle of the Eurymedon (Plutarch, Cimon 8;12)	

Fig. 23: Reconstruction of kings and their respective reigns from year 20 of Darius to year 5 of Artaxerxes I.

in writing the opinion of each judge and bring them all to him. All the judges were of one opinion and condemned Darius to death, whereupon the servants of the king seized him and led him away into a chamber near by, whither the executioner was summoned. The executioner came, with a sharp knife in his hand, wherewith the heads of condemned persons are cut off; but when he saw Darius, he was confounded, and retired towards the door with averted gaze, declaring that he could not and would not take the life of a king.

But since the judges outside the door plied him with threats and commands, he turned back, and with one hand clutching Darius by the hair, dragged him to the ground, and cut off his head with the knife. Some say, however, that the trial was held in the presence of the king, and that Darius, when he was overwhelmed by the proofs, fell upon his face and begged and sued for mercy; but Artaxerxes rose up in anger, drew his scimitar, and smote him till he had killed him; then, going forth into court, he made obeisance to the sun

year	month	Artaxerxes I (year 41)	Darius (accession)		
424	4	I			
	5	II			
	6	III			
	7	IV	25/IV/00		
	8	V	5/V/41; 20/V/41		
	9	VI	1/VI/41; 25/VI/41		
	10	VII	4/VII/41; 16/VII/41		
	11	VIII	6/VIII/41		
	12	IX	1/XI/41; 12/IX/41	14/IX/00; 29/IX/00	
	423	1	X		
		2	XI	17/XI/41	4/XI/00; 15/XI/00
		3	XII	14/XII/41; 20/XII/41	9/XII/00; 22/XII/00

Fig. 24: List of dated tablets of year 41 of Artaxerxes I and the accession year of Darius (B).

year	month	year of reign				
424	1	X	40	Artaxerxes I		
	2	XI				
	3	XII		1	[Artaxerxes I] / [Xerxes II]	
	4	I	41	0	2	
	5	II			1	[Artaxerxes I] / Darius II / [Sogdianus]
	6	III			2	
	7	IV			3	
	8	V			4	
	9	VI			5	
	10	VII	***		6	Contract CBS 4986 dated 17/VII/41 to be paid on II/42
	11	VIII			7	
	12	IX				[Artaxerxes I] / Darius II
423	1	X				
	2	XI				
	3	XII				
	4	I	(42)	1	Darius II	
	5	II				
	6	III				

Fig. 25: List of dated tablets from year 41 of Artaxerxes I to year 1 of Darius I according mainstream historians.

and said: “Depart in joy and peace, ye Persians, and say to all whom ye meet that those who have contrived impious and unlawful things have been punished by great Orosmasdes.” Such, then, was the end of the conspiracy. And now Ochus was sanguine in the hopes with which Atossa inspired him, but he was still afraid of Ariaspes, the only legitimate son of the king remaining, and also of Arsames among the illegitimate sons” (Life of Artaxerxes 26:1–30:5).

According to Justinus:

“Artaxerxes (I), king of Persia, had 115 sons by his concubines, but only 3 begotten in lawful wedlock, Darius (B), Ariarathes, and Ochus (Darius II). Of these the father, from paternal fondness, made Darius king during his own lifetime, contrary to the usage of the Persians, among whom the king is changed only by death; for he thought nothing taken from himself that he conferred upon his son, and expected greater enjoyment from having progeny, if he saw the in-

year	month	regal year				
434	1 X	40				
	2 XI					
	3 XII					
433	4 I	41	Artaxerxes I			
	5 II					
	6 III					
	7 IV			0	Artaxerxes I / Darius B (Artaxerxes is 50 years old and Darius B ca. 25)	
	8 V					
	9 VI			CBS 4986 dated 17/VII/41 to be paid on II/42		
	10 VII				***	
	11 VIII					
				12 IX		
	433			1 X	(42)	1
				2 XI		
				3 XII		
4 I						
5 II						

Fig. 26: List of dated tablets from year 41 of Artaxerxes I and accession year of Darius B.



Fig. 27: High definition photo of the tablet BM 65494 dated 4/IV/50 of Artaxerxes I (photo by G. Gertoux; courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

	Transcription	Translation
4'	EN.LIL ₂ .KI ITI ŠU UD 4-KAM ₂ MU 50-KAM ₂	Nippur month IV, day 4, year 50 of
5'	^m Ar-tak-šat-SU LUGAL KUR.KUR	Artaxerxes king of lands.

signia of royalty adorning his son while he lived. But Darius, after such an extraordinary proof of his father's affection, conceived the design of killing him. (...) Artaxerxes, from fondness from his children, said at first that he would do so, but afterwards, from a change of mind, and in order plausibly to refuse what he had inconsiderately promised, made her a priestess of the sun, an office which obliged her to perpetual chastity. The young Darius, being incensed at this proceeding, broke out at first into reproaches against his father, and subsequently entered into this conspiracy with his brothers. But while he was meditating destruction for his father, he was discovered and apprehended with his associates, and paid the

penalty of his guilt to the gods who avenge paternal authority. The wives of them all, too, together with their children, were put to death, that no memorial of such execrable wickedness might be left. Soon after Artaxerxes died of a disease contracted by grief, having been happier as a king than as a father. Possession of the throne was given to Ochus" (Epitome of the Philippic History X: 1–3).

The length of the reign of Darius B can be deduced from two elements: the disappearance of year 9 in Murašû's archives (Stolper 1985: 23–24) and the appearance of a contract (BM 65494) clearly dated 4/IV/50 of Artaxerxes I (Fig. 27). The death of Artaxerxes I is precisely dated by Thucydides (early March 424 BCE) which stands in

year	month	year of reign							
425	1	X	[49]	8	Artaxerxes I / Darius B (Darawušu)				
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I	50	(9)	Artaxerxes I (Artakšatsu)				
	5	II							
	6	III				Tablet BM 65494 dated 4/IV/50 of Artaxerxes I			
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII							
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
424	1	X					Artaxerxes' death (he was 62 years old) just before a solar eclipse		
	2	XI							
	3	XII		1		[0]	(51)	Xerxes II (Solar eclipse dated March 21, 424 BCE)	
	4	I	2	[1]					
	5	II	1	[0]	Sogdianus				
	6	III	2						
	7	IV	3						
	8	V	4			tablet LBAT 1426 col. ii 2'-3' dated 14/VI/[51] (Lunar eclipse dated September 28, 424 BCE)			
	9	VI	5						
	10	VII	6						
	11	VIII	7						
	12	IX		0		Darius II (Umakuš), first tablet of Darius II dated 14/IX/00			
423	1	X		1					Tablet CBM 12803 dated 20/XII/51 and accession of Darius II
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I							
	5	II							
	6	III							

Fig. 28: Reconstruction of reigns of Achaemenid kings from year 8 of Darius B to year 1 of Darius II.

agreement with the account of Diodorus of Sicily who wrote:

“When Stratocles when archon in Athenes [July 425 to June 424] Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, died after a reign of 40 years, and Xerxes succeeded to the throne and ruled for a year (...) King Xerxes (II) died after a reign of 1 year, or, as some record, 2 months; and his brother Sogdianus succeeded to the throne and ruled for 7 months. He was slain by Darius (II), who reigned 19 years” (Historical Library XII: 64:1; 71:1).

The last dated contract of Darius B is the papyrus of Elephantine B42, dated on 6 Tishri/ 22 Paoni, year 8 of Darius (25 September 426 BCE; cf. Porten 1996: 234–236) that means Darius probably died at the beginning

of 425 BCE. As Artaxerxes' death can be dated xx/XI/50 and the first tablet of Darius II (Donbaz/Stolper 1997: 22) is dated 14/IX/00 (25 December 424 BCE), the following chronology may be suggested (Fig. 28): Artaxerxes I (475–434 BCE), Darius B (434–426 BCE), Artaxerxes I (426–425 BCE), Xerxes II (425–424 BCE), Sogdianus (424 BCE), Darius II (424–405 BCE).

The story of Ctesias which is about the hectic transition between Artaxerxes I and Darius II seems very reliable, because many names that appear in the archives of Murašû are the same as those mentioned by him (Lenfant 2004: CVI–CVII). Furthermore, the chronological details given in his story appear to be accurate:

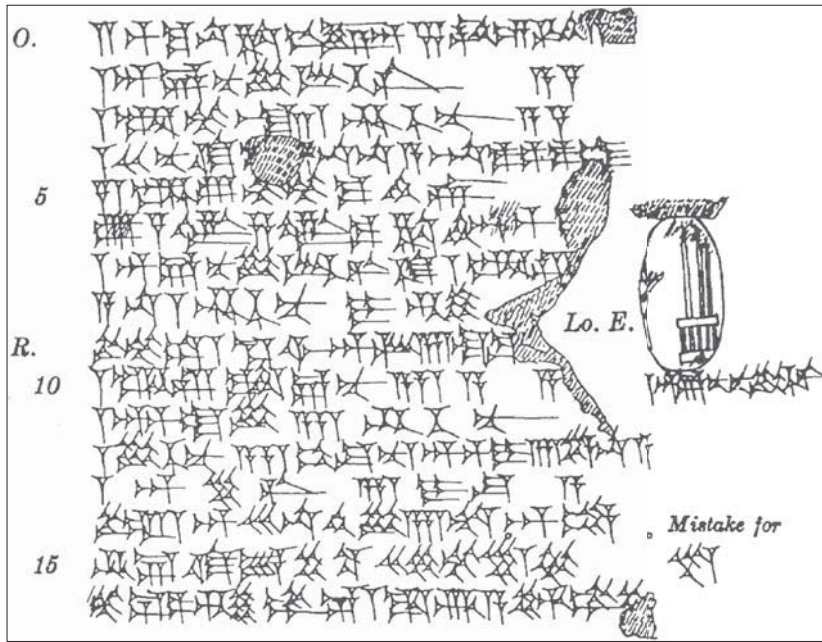


Fig. 29: Drawing of the tablet CBS 12803 dated 20/XII/51 of Artaxerxes and accession year of Darius II (after Clay 1908: Pl. 57).

Transcription	Translation
1 2 ½ MA.NA KU ₃ .BABBAR ŠAM ₂ 5 GUN SIKL.ĪLA	2 ½ mines of silver, price of 5 talents of wool
2 ^{md} Dan-nu-ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šu ₂ -DU ₃ A ša ₂	Dannu-aḥḥēšu-ibni son of
3 ^{md} EN-MU ina qat ₂ ^{md} EN-šu ₂ -nu A ša ₂	Bēl-iddin received from the hand of Bēlšunu, son
4 ^m Man-nu-ki-i ^d Na-na-a ina na-aš ₂ -pa-aš ₂ -tum	of Mannu-kî-Nanâ the order
5 ša ₂ ^{md} En-lil ₂ -MU-MU ma-ḫi-ir	of Enlil-šum-iddin.
6 u ₂ -ša ₂ -az-za-az-ma KU ₃ .BABBAR-’a 2 ½ [MA.NA]	He will deliver silver, that is 2 ½ mines
7 ^{md} Dan-nu-ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šu ₂ -DU ₃ KI ^{md} En-lil ₂ -[MU-MU]	Dannu-aḥḥēšu-ibni with Enlil-šum-iddin
8 a-na ^{md} EN-šu ₂ -nu i-nam-[din]	paying for Bēlšunu
(... names of 5 witnesses)	(... names of 5 witnesses)
15 (...) ITI.ŠE U ₄ 20-KAM ₂ MU 51-KAM ₂	(...) month XII, day 20, year 51 [of Artaxerxes I],
16 mu sag-nam-lugal-e da-ri-a-muš lugal kur-[kur]	accession year of Darius king of lands.

“Artoxerxes dies in his turn, having reigned 42 years (...) After the death of Artoxerxes (I), it was the reign of his son Xerxes (II), who was the only legitimate son he had by Damaspia — the life she had left the day Artoxerxes was dead. Bagorazos took into Persia the body of the father and mother. Artoxerxes I had seventeen bastards, including Sogdianus, Alogoune son of the Babylonian female, Ochos and Arsita, the son of Cosmartidene also Babylonian. Later, Ochos [Darius II] ascended to the throne (...) Concerning Ochos, his father, during his lifetime, had appointed him satrap of Hyrcania and gave him a woman named Parysatis, who was the daughter of Artoxerxes I and own sister of Ochos. Sogdianus had conciliated the eunuch Pharnakyas, who came in the hierarchy, after Bagorazos, Menostanes and others. While Xerxes became drunk at a party and he slept in the palace, they come and kill him, 45 days after the death of his father. It happened so that their two bodies were transported together into Persia (...) Sogdianus becomes king and Menostanes becomes his chief of thousand. Bagorazos was gone, then returned to Sogdianus. As an old feud brewing between them, saying that he had left there the remains of his father without his consent,

Bagorazos was stoned on the order of Sogdianus. The army was deeply distressed. The king gave him gifts, but the soldiers hated him because he had killed his brother Xerxes and Bagorazos. Sogdianus sends Ochos a message that demand. The other promises to come, but does not show up. The incident is repeated many times. Finally, Ochos surrounded by a large army and is expected to see him prevail. Arbarios, head of the cavalry Sogdianus and Arxan, satrap of Egypt, have defected to Ochos. The eunuch Artoxares comes from Armenia to join Ochos and they cause him to wear the crown in spite of himself. Ochos became king and changed his name to Darius. He pursues Sogdianus with his betrayals and his oaths, following the advice of Parysatis while Menostanes regularly calls Sogdianus not to rely on oaths and not to negotiate with people who seek to deceive him. Sogdianus is convincing nonetheless leaves, he falls into their hands, he is thrown into the ashes and dies after a reign of 6 months and 15 days. Ochos aka Darius, is only one ruler” (Persica F14§46–F15§50).

king in King List	date min	date max	death	king as	reign	King List
Cambyses II	12/VI/00	23/I/08	xx/I/08		530-522	530 -
Bardiya	14/XII/00			co-regent	523-522	
		20/VIII/01	10/VII/01	"usurper"	522	
Nebuchadnezzar III	14/VII/00	2/X/00	xx/X/00	"usurper"	522	
Nebuchadnezzar IV	27/II/01	26/VII/01	xx/VIII/01	"usurper"	522	-522
Darius I	6/X/00	10+/IX/36	[10]/IX/36		522-486	522 -
Xerxes I	[-]/III/[00]	[10/IX/10]		co-regent	496 -	-486
Bēl-šimanni	14+/V/00	04/VI/00	xx/VI/00	"usurper"	484	
Šamaš-erība	04/V/00	29/VII/00	[29]/VII/00	"usurper"	484	
Xerxes I		20/V/21	14/V/21		-475	486 -
Darius A	-	-	[14/V/00]	crown prince	(475)	
Artaban			xx/XII/00	"usurper"	(475)	-465
Artaxerxes I	10/IX/00	20/XII/41			475 -	465 -
Darius B	14/IX/00	6/VII/08	xx/xx/08	co-regent	434-426	
Artaxerxes I		4/VI/50	xx/XI/50		-425	
Xerxes II	-	-	[xx/II/51]		425-424	
Sogdianus			[xx/IX/51]	"usurper"	(424)	-424
Darius II	14/IX/00	2/VI/19	xx/VIII/19		424-405	424-405

Fig. 30: Reconstruction of reigns of Achaemenid kings from 12/VI/00 of Cambyses to xx/VIII/19 of Darius II.

Polyaenus gives another chronological detail:

“After the death of Artaxerxes, his son Ochus [Darius II] realised that he would not immediately have the same authority over his subjects, which his father had. Therefore he prevailed upon the eunuchs, the stewards, and the captain of the guard, to conceal the death of his father for a period of 10 months [from February to November 424 BCE]. In the meantime he wrote letters in his father’s name, and sealed them with the royal signet, commanding his subjects to acknowledge Ochus as their king, and to pay homage to him. When this decree had been obeyed by all his subjects, Ochus announced the death of his father, and ordered a general mourning for him, according to the custom of the Persians” (Stratagems of war VII:17).

When the cuneiform tablet CBS 12803 (Fig. 29) was published by Albert T. Clay (1908: 34, Pl. 57), he believed that the date 20/XII/00 of Darius II and year 51 of Artaxerxes I was a scribal error. On his facsimile of the tablet CBM 12803 (Clay 1908: Pl. 57) he added a drawing with the comment “*Mistake for [41]*” beside the cuneiform sign [51] whereas he had explained earlier (page 13 of his article) that a mistake (a scribal error) in a date was not possible because in this kind of commercial contract, figures for prices and maturity dates were very important and therefore were carefully written. In fact, the date “51 years” is entirely logical since Darius regarded himself as the successor to his father Artaxerxes I, who began to reign from 475 BCE, not his brothers Xerxes II and Sogdianus he considered as usurpers. In fact, the Babylonian King lists were expurgated of all

November																														December 475 BCE																													
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27																										
Lunar cycle																																																											
Mesore															Epagomen					Thoth																																							
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8																										
Arahsamna										Kislimu (Babylon)																																																	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22																										
Marheshwan															Kislev (Elephantine)																																												
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8																										

Fig. 31: Synchronisms among three calendars of Elephantine (Egyptian, Babylonian and Jewish).

season	BCE	Akhet				Peret				Shemu					
		I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	5	
month	483	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		
Xerxes I	482	14	7	25	25	24	24	23	23	23	22	22	21	21	20
Papyrus B23	481	15	8	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10
	480	16	9	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	30	29	29	28

Fig. 32: The 11 Pahons or I Shemu 11 matches to day 11, column I Shemu, in the 25-year lunar cycle (year 8 of the cycle).

papyrus	year	lunar date	Egyptian calendar	BCE	1 st lunar day	full moon
Darius I						
no. 1	7		6 Mehir	3 Jun. 515		
no. 2	27		2 Epihi	22 Oct. 495		
Xerxes I		1 Elul	11 Pahons (I Shemu)		29 Aug.	30 Aug.
B23	15	18 Elul	28 Pahons	15 Sept. 481		
Artaxerxes I	[0]	1 Kislev	5 epagomen	[475]	19 Dec.	20 Dec.
B24	1	18 Kislev	[17] Thoth	5 Jan. 474		
		1 Kislev	[1] Mesore (IV Shemu)		14 Nov.	14 Nov.
B25/26	6	21 Kislev	[21] Mesore	4 Dec. 469		
		1 Kislev	28 Mesore (IV Shemu)		10 Dec.	11 Dec.
B34	9	7 Kislev	4 epagomen*	16 Dec. 466		
		1 Siwan	6 Pamenot (III Peret)		20 Jun.	21 Jun.
B35	14	20 Siwan	25 Pamenot	9 Jul. 461		
		1 Tammuz	16 Pamenot (III Peret)		29 Jun.	28 Jun.
no. 43	16	18 Tammuz	3 Parmuti	16 Jul. 459		
		1 Ab	[13] Parmuti (IV Peret)		26 Jul.	28 Jul.
B36	16	18 Ab	[30] Parmuti	12 Aug. 459		
		1 Tishri	13 Paoni (II Shemu)		24 Sep.	25 Sep.
B28	16	24 Tishri	6 Epihi	17 Oct. 459		
		1 Kislev	9 Mesore (IV Shemu)		18 Nov.	20 Nov.
B29	19	2 Kislev	10 Mesore	19 Nov. 456		
		1 Ab	6 Pahons (I Shemu)		16 Aug.	17 Aug.
B30	25	14 Ab	19 Pahons	29 Aug. 450		
		1 Elul	3 Paoni (II Shemu)		11 Sep.	13 Sep.
B37	28	7 Elul	9 Paoni	17 Sep. 447		
		1 Tishri	1 Epihi (III Shemu)		8 Oct.	9 Oct.
B38	31	25 Tishri	25 Epihi	1 Nov. 444		
		1 Siwan	18 Mehir (II Peret)		27 May	27 May
B39	38	20 Siwan	7 Pamenotep	15 Jun. 437		
Darius B		1 Tammuz	1 Parmuti (IV Peret)		7 Jul.	8 Jul.
B40	4	8 Tammuz	8 Parmuti	14 Jul. 430		
		1 Elul	1 Paoni (II Shemu)		5 Sep.	5 Sep.
B31	4	30 Elul	30 Paoni	4 Oct. 430		
		1 Tishri	17 Paoni (II Shemu)		20 Sep.	20 Sep.
B42	8	6 Tishri	22 Paoni	25 Sep. 426		

Fig. 33: Synchronisms between the Jewish and Egyptian calendars of Elephantine for year 15 of Xerxes.

papyrus	year	lunar date	Egyptian calendar	BCE	1 st lunar day	1 st crescent
Darius II		1 Kislev	10 Thoth (I Akhet) [9]		14 Dec.	13 Dec.
B32 (no. 40)	8	3 Kislev	12 Thoth [9]	16 Dec. 416		
		1 Shebat	16 Paopi (II Akhet) [14]		18 Jan.	18 Jan.
B33 (no. 41)	13	24 Shebat	9 Hathor [14]	10 Feb. 410		
Artaxerxes II		1 Heshwan	6 Mesore (IV Shemu)		2 Nov.	2 Nov.
B43	1	24 Heshwan	29 Mesore	25 Nov. 404		
		1 Adar	19 Hathor (III Akhet)		18 Feb.	17 Feb.
B44	3	20 Adar	8 Koyak	9 Mar. 402		
Amartaeus						
no. 7	5		21? Pamenhotep	19 Jun. 400		

Fig. 34: Synchronisms between the calendars of Elephantine from year 7 of Darius I to year 5 of Amartaeus.

usurpers and co-regencies because they never mention them (Fig. 30).

The title of Xerxes in Egypt as well as the Elephantine papyri, with many double dates (one in the Egyptian civil calendar and another one in a lunar calendar), confirm the co-regency of 10 years in Darius' reign. These lunar dates are supposed to come from a Babylonian calendar, but this is impossible because the city of Elephantine, in the far south of Egypt, was largely administered by Egyptian officials who used a civil calendar to date their documents. Parker (1950) assumed that the Egyptian lunar calendar began with the 1st invisibility (day after the new moon and just before the new crescent) but as the lunar day 1 is called *psdntyw* which means "shining ones" and the full moon played a major role in Egyptian religious celebrations, it implies that the Egyptian lunar day 1 was a full moon. Consequently, the dated contracts from Elephantine confirm the chronology (Gertoux 2015: 111–130) based on the narrative of Thucydides. Cornelius Nepos already wrote (ca. 55 BCE):

"I know most historians have related that Themistocles went over into Asia in the reign of Xerxes, but I give credence to Thucydides in preference to others, because he, of all who have left records of that period, was nearest in point of time to Themistocles, and was of the same city" (Life of Themistocles IX).

In addition, Herodotus situated the transfer of power from Xerxes to Artaxerxes shortly after the storming of Eion (dated 476 BCE), the last event of the reign of Xerxes before Artaxerxes' reign (The Histories VII: 106–107). It is also noteworthy that the serious accusation against the Jews is dated to the 12th year of the legal reign of Xerxes (Est 3: 7–10), at the beginning of his effective reign (Ezr 4: 6) not his accession as coregent.

For reasons of clarity the scribes of Elephantine (both Jews and Persians) used the Egyptian lunar calendar while replacing the names of months by their Aramaic equivalent, which were familiar to them (and this lunar calendar was based on the Jewish or Aramaic calendar rather than its Babylonian counterpart; see Stern

2000: 159–171. Horn/Wood 1954: 1–20). However, like the Babylonians, they counted the new day after sunset (ca. 18:00) while the Egyptians counted it from the vanishing of stars (ca. 05:00). If a Jewish scribe wrote on 17 Thoth around 16:00 he dated his document on 17 Kislev (Grelot 1972: 174–178), but if he was writing at 20:00 he would have dated it on 18 Kislev (Fig. 31).

An Elephantine Papyri (B24) is dated: "[17] Thoth, which is 17 Kislev, year 21 (of Xerxes), accession year of Artaxerxes". As Xerxes died on 14/V/21 (24 August) the 1st Thoth (I Akhet 1) in 475 BCE is to be equated with December 20th and the 17 Thoth, with January 5th, 474 BCE. The reckoning of regnal years is different depending on which pattern is employed: Egyptian or Babylonian. For example, the 21st year of Xerxes' reign began on 1st Nisan (month I) in Babylon but on 1st Thoth in Elephantine. The 1st Nisan is dated April 14th 475 BCE, which was the 1st lunar crescent after the spring equinox (March 26th), and the 1st Thoth is dated December 20th as well as the 1st Kislev. In the Babylonian pattern the 1st Kislev (month IX) is dated December 6th (1st lunar crescent) while in the Egyptian pattern the 1st Kislev is dated December 20th (full moon). The 20 documents from Elephantine with a dual date enable us to reconstruct the chronology of the reigns of the 27th dynasty (Fig. 33). For example, the papyrus B23 is dated (Fig. 32): *year 15 [of Xerxes] 18 Elul, which is 28 Pahons*, hence the 1st lunar day is dated 11 Pahons (= 28–17), which was a full moon in 481 BCE (30 August). After year 5 of Darius II (419 BCE) when a document is dated between Thoth and Koyak (December to March) the accession year is indicated (Grelot 1972: 198–207), for example (papyrus no. 40): "3 Kislev, year 8 [Babylonian reckoning], which is 12 Thoth, year 9 [Egyptian reckoning] of king Darius". The Egyptian lunar calendar began on the full moon while the Babylonian lunar calendar began on the 1st crescent, consequently the 25-year lunar cycle had to be shifted of 10 years¹⁶ later (Fig. 34).

16 For example, a 25-year lunar cycle began in 439 BCE on the full moon dated I Akhet 1 (11 December), while the new 25-year lunar cycle in 429 BCE began on the 1st lunar crescent dated I Akhet 1 (9 December).

The pivotal date of 465 BCE for Xerxes' death, calculated from Babylonian King lists, has been accepted by historians for many years without controversy despite the fact that Babylonian king lists never mention coregents and usurpers who actually appear in dated contracts (for some of the them). If the narratives of Greek historians are taken into account, mainly those of Thucydides and Herodotus, Xerxes' death must be dated to

475 BCE. In addition, two letters, which are double dated (BM 42567; BM 75396), show that Xerxes' accession occurred in the 26th year of Darius. Finally, a precise investigation of the astronomical tablet BM 32234 show that Xerxes' death must be dated on 24 August 475 BCE, between the total lunar eclipse dated on 26 June and the partial lunar eclipse dated on 20 December.

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Une nouvelle archive privée d'un marchand de l'époque d'Ur III

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Abstract : Among the large collection of cuneiform documents now kept in the archaeological museum of Sulaimāniya (Iraqi Kurdistan) is a small batch of a hundred tablets which are the private archives of an individual of the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur (XXIst century BC), who was completely unknown until now: his name was Ešidum. And his archival documents – some are edited here for the first time – are more or less related to those, well known, of two other « businessmen » of that time: SI.A-a and Tūram-ilī. Ešidum had the title of « merchant » (dam-gar₃). Most of the operations documented in its archives consist of barley and silver loans. But he also proceeded to sales and purchases and was involved in agricultural activities. This article is an introduction to these documents in Sumerian language and presents the results of the research to determine the possible geographical origins of the archive. Ešidum activities during the 17 years of his career (from year 5 of Amar-Suen to year 3 of Ibbi-Sin) are studied, and possible links with the other two archives of SI.A-a and Tūram-ilī are considered. Compared to the huge quantity of administrative records of the Ur III period, private merchants archives remain few in number, but this is precisely what makes them so valuable. In addition to a recent overview on this topic (Garfinkle 2012), our research aims to better understand what could be a merchant doing business on his own account at the end of the third millennium B.C.

Keywords : Mésopotamie, cunéiforme, néo-sumérien, archive privée, marchand, Adab.

1 Introduction¹

Parmi les documents cunéiformes de l'importante collection désormais conservée au musée de Sulaimāniya (Kurdistan irakien) se trouve un petit lot d'une centaine de tablettes², qui constituent les archives privées d'un individu de l'époque de la III^e dynastie d'Ur, personnage qui était jusqu'à présent complètement inconnu : un dénommé Ešidum.

La documentation écrite actuellement connue et datant de cette époque se compose, on le sait, d'une masse considérable de tablettes (100.000 ?) qui sont surtout des archives administratives illustrant la façon dont les instances officielles géraient les richesses du royaume d'Ur. En regard de ces grands lots d'archives provenant notamment de Ĝirsu, Umma, Drehem, ou Ur, les archives de nature personnelle ou familiale sont par contraste assez rares, au contraire de ce qui se passera à l'époque suivante. On ne connaît guère que quelques centaines de textes, ce qui semble bien maigre face aux dizaines de milliers de tablettes contemporaines issues du secteur « institutionnel ».

Ces archives privées sont souvent des archives de marchands ou d'hommes d'affaires qui gardaient sans doute trace, à leur domicile, des transactions qui les faisaient vivre. Le statut de ces individus à l'époque d'Ur III a donné lieu depuis plus d'un demi-siècle à de nombreuses discussions, notamment pour déterminer dans quelle mesure leurs activités étaient ou non sous contrôle de l'administration.

Ešidum relève donc de cette catégorie d'individus. On a pu mettre en évidence et réunir ses « papiers personnels », désormais conservés au musée de Sulaimāniya, mais qui sont hélas d'origine inconnue. On a malgré

¹ Ma communication à la RAI de Genève et cet article sont tirés de ma thèse de doctorat intitulée « *L'archive d'Ešidum, un entrepreneur du temps des rois d'Ur (XXI^e siècle avant J.-C.) d'après les textes cunéiformes inédits conservés au musée de Suleymaniye (Kurdistan irakien)* », thèse soutenue publiquement à l'université de Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne), en juillet 2015, sous la direction de M. Bertrand Lafont.

² C'est le Dr. Farouk Al-Rawi qui, en entreprenant le catalogue de la collection du musée de Sulaimāniya, a réussi en premier à identifier ces tablettes au nom d'Ešidum. Ces documents cunéiformes sont arrivés dans les collections de ce musée à la suite d'achats effectués à la fin de l'année 2008 et au début 2009. Ils sont répertoriés sous les numéros d'inventaire SMT 3012 à 3158 (le sigle SMT signifie Slemani Museum Tablets), la plupart ayant été catalogués à la fin de l'année 2011. Sur la collection des tablettes cunéiformes du musée de Sulaimāniya, voir en dernier lieu l'article de A. George (George 2016) : notre travail se situe très précisément dans la perspective dressée par cet auteur dont nous partageons entièrement l'opinion.

tout tenté de déterminer son origine et ses interactions avec son environnement politique et social.

Cette archive individuelle est constituée d'une centaine de tablettes. C'est la troisième de ce genre connue à Ur III. Les deux autres lots connus jusqu'ici sont ceux du « chef-berger » (na-gada) SI.A-a et celui du « chef des marchands » (ugula dam-gar₃) Tūram-ilī, qui ont tous deux fait l'objet d'une importante étude récente³. Ces trois archives sont par ailleurs à peu près contemporaines et il n'est pas impossible que certains liens existent entre elles. Ainsi, notre nouvelle archive offre une troisième occasion de mieux comprendre la vie de ces « hommes d'affaires » à l'époque d'Ur III, la rareté de ce genre de lots de documents en faisant tout l'intérêt.

2 Provenance des tablettes

Le « dossier d'Ešidum » compte à ce jour 96 documents au moins. On voit la plupart du temps cet individu agir comme homme d'affaires faisant des opérations de crédit, comme simple témoin dans des actes juridiques, ou encore comme partie prenante de transactions de nature économique. C'est au moment de faire la liste de tous les documents mentionnant le nom d'Ešidum qu'il est apparu possible de rassembler en un même lot les différents textes dans lesquels il apparaît comme acheteur ou bénéficiaire d'une transaction, et ceux où il apparaît comme marchand ou prêteur. Tous ces textes appartiennent manifestement à cette archive personnelle.

L'une des questions les plus importantes est bien sûr celle de l'origine géographique de cette archive. Les tablettes provenant dans leur totalité de fouilles clandestines, il est malheureusement impossible de préciser leur origine exacte, mais on verra qu'il est possible de tirer certaines conclusions à ce sujet à partir d'indices livrés par les textes eux-mêmes.

3 Date de l'archive

La centaine de tablettes attribuées à Ešidum ne représentent probablement qu'une partie de ses archives, et pourraient à l'avenir être complétées par de nouvelles découvertes. S'il est impossible de déterminer avec précision combien de temps Ešidum vécut et exerça ses activités, on constate que, sur les 96 documents identifiés à ce jour comme appartenant à ses archives, le plus ancien est daté de l'an 5 du règne d'Amar-Suen (2042 av. J.-C.) et le plus récent de l'an 3 d'Ibbi-Sîn (2026 av. J.-C.) : cela représente une période de 17 années, situées dans la seconde moitié de l'histoire d'Ur III.

4 Nature des textes

La grande majorité des textes de cette archive concerne des contrats de prêt consentis par Ešidum à divers individus : il s'agit de reçus actés par ces derniers, conservés par Ešidum, et qui enregistrent la réception ou la

livraison de plusieurs produits ou matériaux prêtés : il s'agit le plus souvent d'argent ou d'orge, mais pas seulement.

Cette archive comporte d'autres catégories de documents comme des achats, des reçus, des reconnaissances de dette, des listes de noms propres et des lettres. On peut au total les répartir en six catégories

1. 79 textes de prêts consentis par Ešidum : ils représentent la catégorie la plus fréquente.
2. 12 textes d'achats effectués par Ešidum, les biens achetés étant divers (esclaves, terrains, bétail).
3. 2 listes de noms propres.
4. 1 reconnaissance de dette.
5. 1 texte concernant la prise en charge de terres agricoles à mettre en culture.
6. 1 lettre.

26 tablettes sont encore enfermées dans leur enveloppe scellée. Cela représente un peu plus de 25 % de l'archive. 81 tablettes sont scellées, soit quatre documents sur cinq. Les empreintes de sceau sont généralement de piètre qualité.

On ne connaît malheureusement aucun sceau d'Ešidum, ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'il n'en possédait pas, mais simplement qu'il n'a pas gardé dans ses archives personnelles de documents portant sa propre signature. Un texte est important car il peut intriguer : il s'agit d'une tablette (SMT 3134) où l'on découvre un second Ešidum, distinct de notre marchand. Pour distinguer les deux personnages homonymes présents dans ce texte, le scribe donne le patronyme du second : il s'agit de « Ešidum fils de Nūriya ».

L'archive d'Ešidum ne concerne que les transactions qu'il a effectuées pendant ses 17 ans d'activité. Elle ne couvre donc qu'une seule génération. Mais on ne connaît ni ses ascendants, ni ses descendants, ni ses collatéraux.

La plupart des tablettes de cette archive présentent d'emblée plusieurs points communs très généraux :

- Leur format est à peu près carré, avec des dimensions plus ou moins semblables, de 5 à 7 cm, sur 5 cm, l'épaisseur variant 1,5 à 2 cm. Les textes sont donc de petite dimension (ils tiennent pour la plupart dans la paume d'une main), lorsqu'il s'agit de petits contrats de prêt. On soulignera aussi que ce lot de textes ne comporte aucune « grande » tablette, ni aucune écrite sur plusieurs colonnes (il n'y a donc aucun bilan récapitulatif).
- Ce sont presque tous des textes qui enregistrent des transactions entre deux ou plusieurs personnes. Leur forme de rédaction est plus ou moins identique, avec listes de témoins. Les formulaires utilisés sont en général bien connus à Ur III et ne réservent pas de surprise.
- Leur écriture est en général assez peu soignée (sauf pour les contrats de vente), parfois fautive, avec de nombreux usages « non orthographiques » comme

³ Garfinkle 2012.

on le verra dans les notes aux quelques exemples de textes édités ci-dessous.

- L'état de conservation des tablettes s'avère en général assez bon en dépit de quelques cassures et dégradations ; elles sont en majorité non cuites.

5 Onomastique et anthroponymie

Nos textes nous permettent de relever les noms propres d'au moins 425 personnes différentes. Il s'agit principalement de témoins intervenant dans les transactions impliquant Ešidum, de bénéficiaires, d'acheteurs, de vendeurs, ou de collaborateurs de ce dernier. Cependant, l'analyse des éléments d'anthroponymie n'apporte pas d'éléments suffisamment discriminants pour pouvoir identifier leur cité d'origine. Aucun de ces anthroponymes n'est en effet propre à une ville en particulier de l'époque Ur III.

On peut distinguer trois groupes linguistiques d'anthroponymes parmi ceux qui figurent dans les transactions commerciales d'Ešidum : les noms sumériens, ceux d'origine akkadienne, et ceux du type « Banana names », conformément à la terminologie adoptée entre autres par I.J. Gelb ou H. Limet. On remarque néanmoins une assez haute fréquence des noms akkadiens et des *Banana names*, sachant que ces derniers se trouvent plus souvent, selon G. Emberling⁴, dans les documents de la région de la Diyālā et du Ḥamrīn.

6 Particularités graphiques et philologiques.

Toutes les tablettes de cette archive sont rédigées en sumérien, mais ce lot de textes a la particularité de comporter de nombreux termes et expressions en akkadien, comme par exemple le *iddin lā iddin* du texte édité ici sous le n°5. Plusieurs indices montrent que le sumérien n'était sans doute pas la langue maternelle d'Ešidum et que le lieu d'origine de nos textes était un endroit où la langue akkadienne était devenue prédominante⁵.

On constate par ailleurs que certains noms ou termes sont écrits de façon inhabituelle par rapport aux usages de l'époque d'Ur III. Si on ajoute à cela le manque de soin dans l'écriture que l'on a déjà souligné, cela laisse penser que ces petits textes de prêt ont été rédigés dans un environnement assez éloigné des principaux centres de pouvoir du royaume sumérien⁶ et par des scribes qui n'étaient pas issus des écoles de l'administration royale. Il faut cependant souligner que cette constatation ne s'applique qu'aux textes de prêts. Les contrats de vente, au contraire, sont écrits dans une très belle écriture standardisée.

7 Une ménologie particulière

Si l'on jette un coup d'œil d'ensemble sur les noms de mois utilisés pour dater les textes de cette archive, ce

qui frappe tout d'abord, c'est l'apparent manque d'homogénéité de ces noms du mois. Ceux-ci ne peuvent en effet pas être remplacés d'emblée dans l'un des calendriers connus à l'époque d'Ur III⁷. Les tentatives d'identification de la provenance des deux archives de SI.A-a et de Tūram-ilī qui ont été faites ces dernières années se sont fondées en particulier sur la base de considérations relatives à la ménologie. La situation de notre archive est à cet égard tout à fait comparable, et l'on retrouve d'ailleurs plusieurs noms de mois identiques dans ces trois archives.

Le nombre de mois attestés dans cette archive s'élève à douze. On pourrait donc penser, à première vue, qu'il s'agit au total des douze mois d'un nouveau calendrier couvrant toute une année et qui était en usage dans la ville où Ešidum a vécu (voir **Tab. 1**; classés par ordre alphabétique).

On constate que deux systèmes ménologiques ressortent tout particulièrement dans ce tableau : celui d'Adab et le *Reichskalender* d'Ur III. On en a donc conclu que l'origine d'Ešidum se trouvait vraisemblablement dans la région d'Adab, d'autant que les liens qu'il a entretenus avec des membres de la famille ou des proches du gouverneur (ensi₂) d'Adab – liens attestés dans plusieurs de nos textes, comme ci-dessous les textes n°4 et 8 – nous rattachent à l'horizon de cette ville. Mais Ešidum ayant été amené, par ses activités, à se déplacer, il a pu utiliser différents calendriers en fonction du lieu de rédaction des textes ou de l'origine de ses interlocuteurs. Puisque tous les mois qu'il a utilisés appartiennent, soit au calendrier d'Adab, soit au *Reichskalender*, on peut en conclure que ce marchand utilisait le premier quand il réalisait ses affaires dans sa province d'origine, et le second dès qu'il était à l'extérieur, puisque par définition ce *Reichskalender* était « valable » et compris dans l'ensemble de l'Empire d'Ur III.

Mais il faut noter par ailleurs que l'ordre des mois du calendrier d'Adab continue à poser problème⁸. Et nos textes nous ont poussé à réfléchir à de nouvelles possibilités de classement de ces mois, notamment pour la place à attribuer au nom de mois *ezem-^dINANNA.ZA-nun* (voir note au texte n°3).

8 Les activités d'Ešidum

L'intérêt de ce dossier laissé par Ešidum s'est trouvé accru lorsque l'on a découvert qu'il portait le titre de « marchand » (dam-gar₃). Si notre personnage, désormais identifié explicitement comme étant un « homme d'affaires », pratiquait essentiellement de « petits » prêts d'orge et d'argent, il procédait aussi à des ventes et achats. Cependant, l'impression qui ressort de la nature de ces acquisitions est qu'elles sont entrées davantage dans un processus d'enrichissement personnel que dans un cadre purement d'activités commerciales.

4 Emberling 1995 : 102.

5 Owen 2010 : 106–108.

6 Lafont 2006 : 74.

7 Cohen 2015.

8 Pour les discussions en cours, voir en dernier lieu Such-Gutiérrez 2013 : 320–340, Molina 2014 : 38, et Cohen 2015 : 193–203.

Noms de mois	N° d'inventaire SMT ^{a)}	Calendriers connus où le nom du mois est attesté
iti ab-e ₃	3107, 3016	Adab, Nippur
iti du ₆ -ku ₃	3028, 3015, 3154	Adab, Nippur
iti ezem- ^d INANNA.ZA-nun	3020	Adab
iti ezem- ^d INANNA	3692, 3537, 3035, 3086, 3040, 3054, 3065, 3121, 3138, 3061, 3098, 3128, 3083, 3037, 3016, 3101	
iti ezem- ^d nin-MUG	3526, 3107, 3667, 3101	Adab
iti ezem- ^d šul-gi	3667, 3053	Partout
iti ezem-ki-an-na	3115	<i>Reichskalender</i> , Irišağrig ^{b)}
iti ki-an-na	3073, 3079, 3158	
iti ezem-ma-an-na	3064	
iti ezem-me-ki-ğal ₂	3110	<i>Reichskalender</i>
iti ġa ₂ -udu-ur ₄	3115, 3109	Adab
iti še-kiğ ₂ -ku ₅	3119, 3124, 3018	Partout
iti šu-eš-ša	3038	<i>Reichskalender</i>
iti šu-ğar	3018	Adab, Irišağrig
iti u ₅ -bi ₂ ^{mušen} -gu ₇	3053	<i>Reichskalender</i>

Tab. 1 : Les noms de mois attestés dans l'archive d'Ešidum.

a. Dans ce tableau, on utilise seulement les numéros d'inventaire préliminaires du Musée de Sulaimāniya.

b. En considérant qu'il s'agit du même mois que le mois bien connu noté iti ezem-an-na.

Et l'un des principaux apports du dossier des archives d'Ešidum est d'illustrer une nouvelle facette jusqu'ici assez peu attestée du rôle d'un marchand à l'époque d'Ur III : celle d'un « banquier », s'enrichissant par la pratique du crédit.

Pour cette pratique des prêts d'argent et d'orge, il est intéressant de voir qu'Ešidum rejoint tout à fait ce que l'on savait déjà par les archives de Tūram-ilī et de SIA-a. Il y a donc là désormais un faisceau d'indices qui montrent que l'époque d'Ur III a connu l'émergence d'une nouvelle catégorie d'entrepreneurs privés, notamment attestés dans la partie nord du royaume. Ainsi peut-on considérer qu'Ešidum, SIA-a et Tūram-ilī ont été en quelque sorte les pionniers d'un système et de pratiques qui finiront par s'imposer à l'époque paléo-babylonienne. On remarquera néanmoins que le volume des affaires traitées par Ešidum apparaît assez faible, comme le montrent les très petits montants de la plupart de ses transactions et les prêts à très court terme, souvent sans intérêt, qu'il a consentis.

En ce qui concerne la fixation du taux d'intérêt pour les prêts d'argent et d'orge et dans celle du prix des marchandises de première nécessité, on sait que les interventions du pouvoir royal étaient assez contraignantes. Ainsi les taux d'intérêt annuels étaient-ils réglementairement fixés à 33 % pour l'orge et à 20 % pour l'argent. Il est alors intéressant de constater qu'Ešidum ne respectait qu'en partie ces règles, pratiquant

notamment à plusieurs reprises des prêts d'argent à un taux de 25 %. Cela montre que ces opérations se réalisaient dans une large mesure en dehors du marché réglementé et qu'elles n'étaient pas (ou étaient peu) contrôlées. Cette constatation est un autre argument en faveur d'un lieu d'origine de cette archive assez éloigné du contrôle de l'État.

9 Transcription et traduction commentées de quelques textes de l'archive

Ce n'est pas le lieu de présenter ici l'intégralité des textes de l'archive, ce qui sera fait avec la publication de ma thèse de doctorat. Un choix a simplement été fait ici pour donner un aperçu de la nature et du contenu des textes.

Texte 1 (T-3035 SM 4482)

Tablette non scellée. Dimensions en mm : 21 × 37 × 39.

Date : Amar-Suen 5

Résumé : Reçu d'argent prêté sans mention d'intérêt.

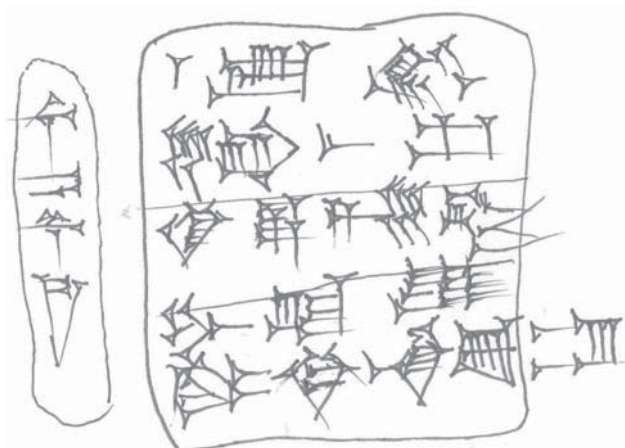
Transcription :

Face

- 1 1 gin₂ ku₃-babbar
- 2 še-bi 1(aš) gur
- 3 ki e-ši₂-dum
- 4 bu-la-lum



SM-T-3035 face.



SM-T-3035 revers.



Texte 1 (photographies et copies: A.Kh. Kamil).

- 5 *dumu di-na-zu-um*
- Rev.
- 6 *šu ba-ti*
- 7 *<iti> ezem-^dINANNA šum₂-mu-dam*
- 8 *mu lugal-bi! <i₃>-pa₃*
- 9 *igi [e]_r³-ra-dan*
- 10 *igi ur-^dsuen*
- 11 *mu en-^dinanna / ba-ḥun*
- Côté
- 12 *igi a-wi-li₂*

Traduction :

Bulalum fils de Dinazum a reçu d'Ešidum 1 sicle d'argent, sa valeur en orge étant de 300 litres. Il a juré par le nom du roi de les rendre au mois ezem-INANNA. Par devant Erra-dān, Ur-Suen, (et) Awīli. L'année où le grand prêtre d'Inanna a été intronisé.

Notes :

L'un des intérêts de ce texte est de confirmer explicitement ici l'usage dans les transactions de la valeur standard et officielle de l'orge par rapport à l'argent (1 gur d'orge = 1 sicle d'argent). Mais dans l'ensemble de l'ar-

chive d'Ešidum, on observe que les prix varient entre 300 et 540 litres d'orge pour 1 sicle d'argent. On trouve exceptionnellement dans le texte SMT 3078 (date cassée) que le prix a pu atteindre 780 litres d'orge pour 1 sicle d'argent. Dans la majorité des cas, chez Ešidum, le prix est de 540 litres d'orge pour 1 sicle d'argent.

L. 3 : Le nom d'Ešidum se présente dans nos textes sous différentes graphies, (*e-ši₂-dum* graphie habituelle pour la majorité des textes ; *e-ši₂-^{du}dum* ; *e-ši₂-du-um* ; *e-ši-dum* ; *e-ši₂-du₆-um* ; *e-ši₂-di₃-im* ; *e-ši₂-da*), ce qui ne laisse pas d'intriguer et semble montrer que, non seulement ce marchand ne rédigeait pas lui-même ses tablettes d'affaires (sinon il aurait vraisemblablement toujours utilisé la même orthographe), mais en plus que certains scribes auxquels il a eu affaire ont pu avoir une certaine hésitation face à son nom, signe sans doute de leurs connaissances très minimales en matière d'écriture « standard ». Le nom de notre personnage a initialement été lu « *e-zi-tum* » par Farouk Al-Rawi (et souvent ailleurs aussi dans les archives d'Ur III, comme on l'observe en consultant les bases BDTNS et CDLI). La lecture

« *e-ši₂-dum* » s'est imposée à nous lors de la découverte de l'écriture avec le signe cunéiforme ŠI (et non pas ŠI₂). Ce nom est à rapprocher de la racine akkadienne *ešē-du*, « récolter, moissonner »⁹. Ešidum est donc étymologiquement un « moissonneur »¹⁰. On note d'ailleurs la présence de nombreux autres noms d'origine akkadienne dans notre lot de textes. Dans une tablette (SMT 3087) le nom est « décliné » au génitif, nouvelle marque de l'environnement akkadien de nos textes.

L. 12 : Le dernier témoin est écrit sur la tranche gauche, après la date, ce qui est une position inhabituelle. Peut-être ce témoin s'est-il présenté après que le scribe eut écrit la formule habituelle à la fin de tablette avec le nom de l'année. C'est aussi le cas dans un autre texte (SMT 3073).

Texte 2 (T-3075 SM 4505)

Tablette non scellée. Dimensions en mm : 20 × 44 × 51.

Date : Šū-Sîn 5.

Résumé : Reçu d'orge prêté sans intérêt.

Transcription :

Face

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | 2(aš) še gur |
| 2 | [maš ₂] nu-tuku |
| 3 | [ki <i>e-ši₂-dum</i> |
| 4 | AN.I.[x] <šu ba-ti> |
| 5 | egir buru ₁₄ -še ₃ |

Rev.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | gi ₄ -gi ₄ -dam |
| 7 | igi ħu-bi-bi |
| 8 | igi lugal-'a-a' |
| 9 | mu lugal-[bi i ₃ -pa ₃] |
| 10 | mu us ₂ -sa bad ₃ ba-du ₃ |

Traduction :

Ilum-išar (?) a reçu d'Ešidum 600 litres d'orge, (prêt) ne portant pas intérêt. Il a juré par le nom du roi de les restituer après la moisson.

Par devant Ĥubibi (et) Lugal-aya.

L'année qui suit celle où la muraille a été construite.

Notes :

L. 2 : Ce texte est en mauvais état. Il s'agit d'un prêt sans intérêt, comme Ešidum en a souvent fait.

L. 3 : Il reste seulement le signe [dum] du nom Ešidum à la fin cette ligne.

L. 4 : La disposition de cette ligne sur la tablette n'est pas claire : au début on voit clairement les deux signes AN et I (pour Ilum-išar ?), mais à la fin on voit la trace d'un signe inconnu. Pour donner du sens à ce texte, il nous a semblé qu'il fallait ajouter le terme <šu ba-ti> à la fin de cette ligne.

L. 5-6 : Comme on peut s'y attendre, la plupart des textes de prêt fixent, pour le remboursement, une date précise juste après la moisson.

Texte 3 (T-3150 SM 4545)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 16 × 40 × 46.

Date : Šū-Sîn 3.

Résumé : Reçu d'argent prêté sans mention d'intérêt.

Transcription :

Face

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | 1 gin ₂ ku ₃ -babbar |
| 2 | še-bi 1(aš) 3(barig) še gur |
| 3 | ki <i>e-ši₂-dum</i> -ta |
| 4 | šu-i ₃ -li ₂ |
| 5 | šu ba-ti |

Rev.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 | igi ur- ^d šul-pa-e ₃ |
| 7 | 1 <i>ma-la-lum</i> |
| 8 | 1 <i>en-nam</i> - ^d iškur |
| 9 | mu sa-us ₂ (sic) ma ₂ -dara ₃ -abzu ba-ab-du ₈ |

Côté

- | | |
|----|--|
| 10 | egir buru ₁₄ -še ₃ iti ezem- ^d INANNA |
|----|--|

Sceau :

- | |
|------------------------------------|
| šu-i ₃ -li ₂ |
| dumu ħu-ba-[x] |

Traduction :

Šū-ilī a reçu d'Ešidum 1 sicle d'argent, sa valeur en orge étant de 480 litres.

Par devant Ur-Šulpa'e, Malalum, (et) Ennam-Adad.

L'année qui suit celle où le bateau Bouquetin de l'apsu a été calfaté.

(C'est à rendre) au mois ezem-INANNA, après la moisson.

(Sceau de Šū-ilī).

Notes :

Il s'agit d'un prêt sans mention d'intérêt. Mais la valeur de l'argent est estimée en orge. Peut-être parce que, dans ce texte, le bénéficiaire reçoit un somme d'argent destinée à acquérir de l'orge. On a vu que la valeur de l'argent n'est pas toujours la même par rapport à l'orge dans cette archive.

L. 10 : l'expression courante *egir buru₁₄-še₃ iti ezem-^dINANNA* est écrite sur la tranche gauche et sans la forme verbale habituelle. Sans doute le scribe n'a pas eu la place sur le revers pour écrire toute l'expression attendue. La date du remboursement est donc indiquée comme étant le mois ezem-^dINANNA. Dans une quinzaine de nos textes, ce mois apparaît dans cette situation en lien explicite avec la moisson (*buru₁₄*). Cela devrait permettre d'attribuer à ce mois sa place correcte dans le calendrier agricole, et donc dans l'année, juste après la moisson. Ce mois est aussi mentionné dans l'archive de Tūram-ilī. C'est un mois commun à ces archives pour le moment du remboursement.

Texte 4 (T-3113 SM 4529)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 19 × 48 × 60.

Date : Šū-Sîn 8.

Résumé : Reçu d'argent et d'orge, prêtés sans mention d'intérêt.

Transcription :

Face

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | ½ ma-na [ku ₃ -babbar] / 1(aš) 3(barig) še gur |
| 2 | še-bi 1(u) 2(aš) gur |

⁹ Gelb 1952 : 70.

¹⁰ CAD E : 338-341. Hilgert 2002 : 228.



SM-T-3113 face.



SM-T-3113 revers.



Texte 4 (photographies et copies: A.Kh. Kamil).

3 ki e-*ši*₂-*dum*-ta
 4 [ur]-^dšul-gi-ra
 5 [šu] ba-ti

Rev.

6 u₄ 3-kam
 7 šum₂-mu-dam
 8 mu lugal in-pa₃
 9 mu ma-gur₈-m[ah₃] / ba-d[im₂]

Sceau :

ur-^dšul-gi-ra
 dub-sar
 dumu ḥa-ba-lu₅-ge₂
 ensi₂ adab^{ki}

Traduction :

Ur-Šulgira a reçu d'Ešidum 20 sicles d'argent (et) 480 litres d'orge. Leur valeur en orge est de 3600 litres. Il a juré par le nom du roi de les rendre au 3^e jour. L'année où le magnifique bateau a été fabriqué. (Sceau de Ur-Šulgira).

Notes :

Cette tablette, bien qu'abîmée, est importante pour plusieurs raisons :

- Tout d'abord, il s'agit d'un texte de prêt sans intérêt sur une courte période de trois jours.
- Le total du prêt porte sur 20 sicles d'argent et 480 litres d'orge : c'est l'une des plus grosses quantités d'argent mentionnées dans cette archive.
- Il n'y a pas de témoins.

- Et surtout, la personne qui bénéficie de ce prêt, est le fils de Ḫabaluge, gouverneur bien connu par ailleurs de la ville d'Adab et qui apparaît ici pour la première fois (voir aussi texte n°8). Cet indice est donc très bien venu pour confirmer l'origine vraisemblable de notre archive (Adab).

Texte 5 (T-3128 SM 4538)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 24 × 51 × 71.

Date : Šū-Sîn 7.

Résumé : Reçu d'argent et d'orge prêtés sans intérêt.

Transcription :

Face

- 1 3 gin₂ ku₃-babbar
- 2 1(aš) še gur maš nu-tuku
- 3 ki e-ši₂-dum
- 4 šu-i₃-li₂ šu <ba-ti>
- 5 egir-buru₁₄-še₃
- 6 šum₂-mu-dam
- 7 <iti> ezem-^dINANNA-še₃
- 8 mu lugal in-pa₃

Rev.

- 9 i-ri-bu-um
- 10 še i-di₃-in la
- 11 i-di₃-in-ma?
- 12 igi ša₃-ku₃-ge
- 13 igi i₃-li₂-be-li₂
- 14 1 šu-^ddumu-zi
- 15 1 šu-e₂-a
- 16 1 a-gu-a
- 17 1 NI.NE-da-da simug
- 18 igi mu-bala

Côté

- 19 mu ma-da za-ab-ša-li mu-ḫul

Sceau :

šu-i₃-li₂
dumu šu-^dnin-[x]

Traduction :

Šū-ilī a reçu d'Ešidum 24 grammes d'argent (et) 300 litres d'orge, (prêt) ne portant pas intérêt. Il a juré par le nom du roi de les rendre au mois ezem-INANNA, après la moisson.
Que le grain ait été rendu ou qu'il n'ait pas été rendu, Irībum (en est le garant).
Par devant Šakuge, Ilī-bēlī, Šu-Dumuzi, Šu-Ea, Agua, NI.NE-dada le forgeron, (et) Mubala.
L'année où le pays de Zabšali a été détruit.
(Sceau de Šū-ilī).

Notes :

Ce document est notamment intéressant du fait de l'usage de l'expression en akkadien des lignes 10 et 11 : *i-di₃-in la i-di₃-in-ma*¹¹. Elle correspond aux habituelles formes verbales sumériennes in-na-šum₂ et nu-na-an-šum₂, attestées ailleurs dans cette archive. Cet usage de l'akkadien pour cette clause (« qu'il l'ait donné ou qu'il ne l'ait pas donné ») est unique dans les textes d'Ešidum.

L. 4 : Le scribe a oublié d'écrire ba-ti après šu. Oubli également de iti devant le nom de mois à la ligne 7.

L. 9 : Il s'agit sans doute ici du nom du garant, en lien avec la clause des deux lignes suivantes.

L. 10 : Pour cet usage de l'akkadien *lā*, voir CAD L : 4 (« idiomatic uses between identical words »).

Texte 6 (T-3124 SM 4536)

Enveloppe scellée, non ouverte. Dimensions en mm : 29 × 51 × 57.

Date : Amar-Suen 6 / iti še-kiĝ₂-ku₅.

Résumé : Achat d'une vache.

Transcription :

Face

- 1 1 ab₂-mah₂ ki šeš-kal-la
- 2 e-ši₂-dum in-sa₁₀
- 3 ku₃-bi [x] gin₂ in-na-la₂
- 4 šu-e₂-a lu₂-azlag lu₂-gi/-na-ab-ta-ma-bi

Rev.

- 5 igi šu-^dutu aga₃-us₂ ensi₂
- 6 (une ligne effacée)
- 7 igi ^dutu-i₃-li₂ igi lu₂-u₂-a
- 8 igi šu-^dnin-šubur igi šu-er₃-ra
- 9 igi ur-niĝar^{gar} igi ur-niĝar^{gar} (sic) dub-sar
- 10 iti še-kiĝ₂-ku₅ mu ša-aš-ru^{ki} ba-ḫul

Sceau n°1 :

šeš-kal-la
dumu ur-niĝar^{gar}

Sceau n°2 :

[...]
dumu šu-e₂-a

Traduction :

Ešidum a acheté à Šeškalla une vache laitière. Il a payé [x] sicles d'argent pour son prix, son garant étant Šu-Ea le foulon.
Par devant Šu-Šamaš le soldat du gouverneur, Ša-maš-ilī, Lu-u'a, Šu-Ninšubur, Šu-Erra, (et) Ur-niĝar le scribe.
Le mois še-kiĝ₂-ku₅.
L'année où Šašrum a été détruite.
(Sceaux de Šeškalla et de [...] fils de Šu-Ea).

Notes :

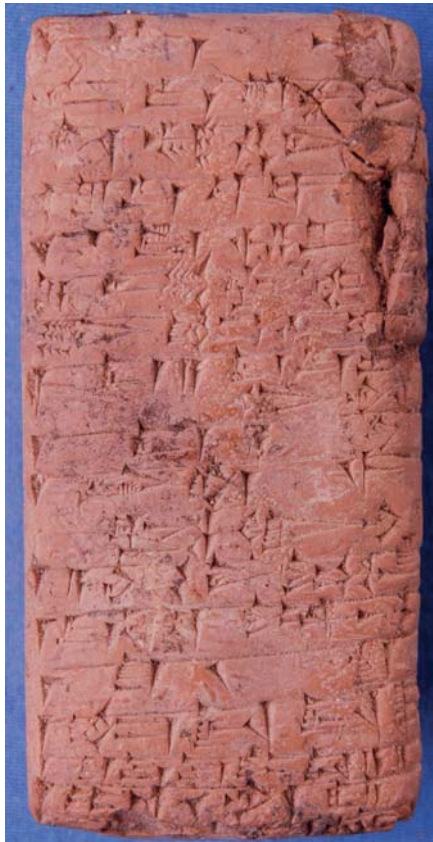
On remarque que plusieurs lignes ont été effacées sur l'enveloppe.

L. 3 : On voit que le prix a été effacé, mais grâce aux textes de la même époque, on pourrait ici restituer peut-être 7 sicles d'argent, prix moyen que donnent par exemple les textes suivants : MVN 16, 714 (Umma, x), SNAT 136 (Ĝirsu, ŠS 4), RA 10, 63 11 (Ĝirsu, Š 32).

L. 4 : Il semble s'agir ici, à la fin de la ligne, d'une façon inhabituelle d'écrire le terme pour « garant », habituellement écrit dans les textes d'Ur III sous la forme lu₂-gi-na-ab-tum₂, ou gab-gi-(n), ou encore lu₂-inim-gi-na¹². Le rôle du garant est peut-être simplement ici d'assurer le bon paiement du prix, ou bien, puisqu'il s'agit d'une vache laitière, que celle-ci produit bien du

¹¹ CAD N1 : 42-43, sous *nadānum*.

¹² Steinkeller 1987: 81.



SM-T-3149 face.



SM-T-3149 revers.





SM-T-3046 face.



Texte 9 face (photographie et copie: A.Kh. Kamil).

lait à l'avenir ou bien qu'elle n'est pas touchée par une maladie grave. Faute de quoi, c'est le garant qui devrait assurer et prendre en charge le paiement du bien.

Texte 7 (T-3040 SM 4486)

Enveloppe scellée + Tablette. Dimensions en mm : 25 × 43 × 48.

Date : Amar-Suen 6.

Résumé : Reçu d'argent prêté à intérêt.

Transcription de l'enveloppe :

Face

- 1 1 gin₂ ku₃-babbar
- 2 maš-bi igi-4-[ġal₂]
- 3 ki e-š₂-dum-ta
- 4 maš-bi (sic)
- 5 šu ba-ti
- 6 igi ba-da
- 7 igi lugal-^dezem
- 8 [igi x]-^diškur

Rev.

- 9 igi <ur>-e₂-mah
- 10 iti ezem-^dINANNA
- 11 gi₄-gi₄-dam
- 12 mu us₂-sa en ^dinanna ba-ḥun

Sceau :

maš-šum
dub-sar
dumu [...]

Traduction :

Mašum a reçu d'Ešidum 1 sicle d'argent, son intérêt étant d'¼ de sicle d'argent.

Par devant Bada, Lugal-ezem, [x]-Iškur, (et) Ur-emaḥ. C'est à rendre au mois ezem-INANNA.

L'année qui suit celle où le grand-prêtre d'Inanna a été intronisé.

(Sceau de Mašum).

Notes :

Presque tous les textes de notre lot qui mentionnent un taux d'intérêt pour un prêt d'argent le fixent à 25 %, ce qui est plus élevé que le taux normal (20 %) à l'époque d'Ur III.

L. 1 : Noter cette façon particulière du scribe pour écrire ku₃-babbar, avec babbar écrit en plus petit : on retrouve cette manière d'écrire dans d'autres textes de cette archive. Il est alors possible que ces textes aient été écrits par le même scribe en un même lieu.



M-T-3046 revers.

Texte 9 rev. (photographie et copie: A.Kh. Kamil).

L. 4 : le scribe a rédupliqué le maš-bi de la l. 2 au lieu d'écrire maš-šum qui est le nom attendu comme l'atteste l'empreinte de sceau.

Texte 8 (T-3149 SM 4571)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 24 × 51 × 107.

Date : Amar-Suen 9.

Résumé : Achat d'esclave.

Transcription :

Face

- 1 1 saĝ nita₂
- 2 šeš-kal-la mu-ni-im
- 3 arad₂ nam-ḥa-ni
- 4 u₃ ur-ba-ba
- 5 11 gin₂ igi-4-ĝal₂ [ku₃-babbar]-še₃
- 6 e-ši₂-dum dam-gar₃
- 7 in-ne-ši-sa₁₀
- 8 igi e₂-a-ma-lik maškim šagina
- 9 1 ĝa₂-a-kam
- 10 1 lu₂-ša-lim / egir šagina
- 11 1 a-gu-ni dumu bu-u₂-za
- 12 1 ur-ba-ba dumu an-na
- 13 1 šu-eš₁₈-tar₂
- 14 1 NE-da-da simug
- 15 1 šu-ma-ma dumu da-a-a

- 16 1 i-di₃-er₃-ra
- 17 1 ur-^ašul-pa-e₃ / dumu ba-zi-da

Rev.

- 18 1 dumu? ur-^aINANNA.ZA
- 19 1 ur-^ašul-pa-e₃ / dumu lu₂-ša-lim
- 20 1 šu-i₃-li₂ dub-sar
- 21 lu₂-inim-ma-bi-me
- 22 igi-bi-še₃ saĝ ba-sa₁₀
- 23 mu lugal ba-pa₃
- 24 šu ḥa-ba-lu₅-ge₂ / ensi₂ adab^{ki}
- 25 mu en-^ananna / kar-zi-da ba-ḥun

Sceau n° 1 :

nam-ḥa-ni
dumu GIR₂-ma-an-šum₂

Sceau n° 2 :

x-x-x
x i₃-li₂-x

Traduction :

Ešidum le marchand a acheté un esclave mâle nommé Šeškalla, esclave de Namḥani et Ur-baba, pour le prix de 11 ¼ sicles d'argent.

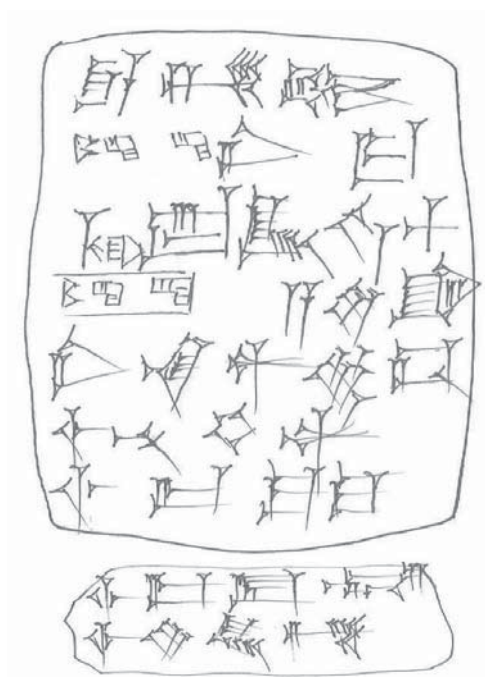
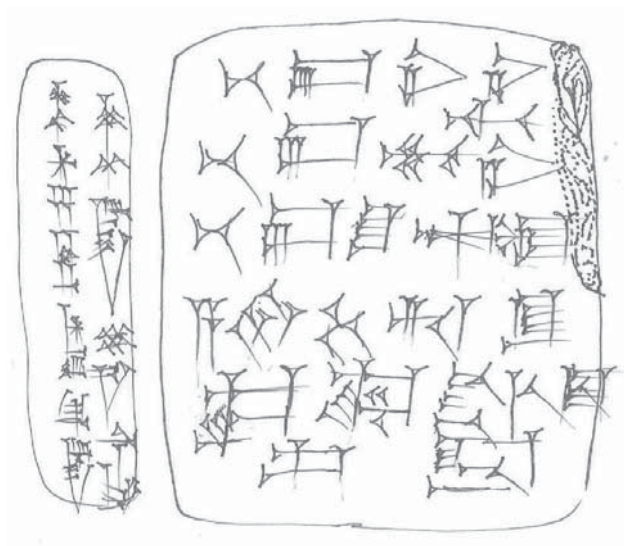
Ea-malik commissaire du gouverneur militaire, Ga-kam, Lu-šalim général en second, Aguni fils de Bu'uzza, Ur-baba fils de Ana, Šu-Eštar, NEdada le forgeron,



SM-T-3157 face.



SM-T-3157 revers.



Texte 10 (photographies et copies: A.Kh. Kamil).

Šu-mama fils de Da'a, Idī-Erra, Ur-Šulpa'e fils de Bazida, le fils de Ur-INANNA.ZA, Ur-Šulpa'e fils de Lu-šalim, (et) Šū-ilī le scribe : ce sont les témoins.

Par devant eux, l'esclave a été acheté.

Un serment a été prêté par le nom du roi.

Sous l'autorité du Ḫabaluge gouverneur d'Adab.
(Sceaux de Namḫani et xxx).

Notes :

Dans l'ensemble du dossier, on voit clairement que l'écriture de ces contrats de vente/achat est bien plus soignée que celle des contrats de prêt. Ce ne sont manifestement pas les mêmes scribes qui les ont écrits. On remarquera le nombre important de témoins, ceux-ci étant par ailleurs des personnalités de l'*establishment*. Plusieurs d'entre elles (et cela est vrai aussi dans le reste de l'archive) appartiennent à la hiérarchie militaire, avec laquelle Ešidum, au vu de la totalité de l'archive, semble tout particulièrement avoir mené ses affaires.

L. 8 : maškim šagina : Ce titre apparaît rarement dans les textes de l'époque d'Ur III : il se retrouve dans un texte provenant de Ĝirsu (YOS 4, 17, § 42).

Texte 9 (T-3046 SM 4567)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 23 × 55 × 115.

Date : Ibbi-Sîn 1.

Résumé : Achat d'esclaves.

Transcription :

Face

- 1 1 saĝ nita₂
- 2 ba-a-ba-a-a mu-ni-im
- 3 1 saĝ munus me-^dnin-isin₂ dumu-ni
- 4 geme₂ arad₂ [i]-šur-i₃-li₂ / dumu lu₂-ša-lim
- 5 ½ ma-na ½ gin₂ ku₃-babbar
- 6 ki i-šur-i₃-li₂
- 7 e-ši₂-dum dam-gar₃

8 in-ši-sa₁₀
 9 1 la-qi₃-pu-um / dumu ga-an-bi
 10 1 ur-e₂-maḥ dumu / dingir-ba-ni
 11 1 šeš-kal-la₂ dumu ab-ba-a
 12 1 na-ba-lu dumu ur-a-a
 13 1 ur-^dšul-pa-e₃ / dumu lu₂-da-ga

Rev.
 14 1 ša₃-ku-ge dumu / ur-du₆-ku₃
 15 1 ur-^dinanna / dumu ba-an-zi
 16 1 puzur₄-i₃-li₂
 17 1 suḥuš-ki-in simug / dumu lu₂-^dinanna
 18 1 ur-e₂-maḥ dub-sar
 19 igi-bi-še₃ saḡ ba-šum₂
 20 mu lugal-bi in-/pa₃
 21 mu ^di-bi₂-^dsuen / lugal

Sceau :

i-šur-i₃-li₂
 dumu lu₂-ša-lim

Traduction :

Ešidum le marchand a acheté pour 20 sicles ½ d'argent à Iššur-ilī un esclave mâle nommé Ba'aba'a et une femme esclave (nommée) Me-Ninisin sa fille ; ce sont les esclaves, homme et femme, de Iššur-ilī fils de Lu-ša-lim.

Lāqīpum fils de Ganbi, Ur-emaḥ fils de Ilum-bāni, Šeškalla fils de Aba'a, Nabalum fils de Ur-a'a, Ur-Šulpa'e fils de Ludaga, Šakuge fils de Ur-duku, Ur-Inanna fils de Banzī, Puzur-ilī, Suhuš-kīn forgeron fils de Lu-Inanna, (et) Ur-emaḥ le scribe : par devant eux l'esclave a été acheté.

Il a prêté serment par le nom du roi.

L'année où Ibbi-Sîn est devenu roi.

(Sceau de Iššur-ilī).

Notes :

L. 11 : On remarquera l'écriture inhabituelle du nom de Šeškalla avec le signe la₂.

Texte 10 (T-3157 SM 4551)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 20 × 48 × 57.

Date : Ibbi-Sîn 1.

Résumé : Parcelles de champ données en loyer.

Transcription :

Face

1 1(eše₃) GAN₂ i₃-li₂-[mi?]/-ti
 2 1(eše₃) GAN₂ mu-ni-[maḥ?]
 3 1(eše₃) GAN₂ šu-^dnin!-[x]
 4 a-ša₃ kur-re-eš₂
 5 apin puzur₄-eš₁₈-tar₂ ugula-ḡeš₂-da

Rev.

6 e-ši₂-dum / i₃-dab₅
 7 1 gin₂ ku₃-babbar maš / a-ša₃-ga
 8 i₃-na-an-šum₂-uš
 9 igi nu-ḥi-diḡir
 10 igi ur-ma-ma
 11 igi ur-e₂-maḥ
 12 igi ša₃-ku₃-ge

Côté

13 mu lugal in-pa₃-<de₃-eš₂>
 14 mu ^di-bi₂-^dsuen lugal

Sceau :

AN-ša-ti
 dumu la-la

Traduction :

– 2,16 ha de champ : Ili-imittī

– 2,16 ha de champ : Muni[maḥ]

– 2,16 ha de champ : Šu-Nin[...]

(S'étendant) jusqu'au domaine Kure (?). « Charrue » de Puzur-Eštar, chef-de-60. Ešidum a pris (cela) en charge. Ils ont donné 8 grammes d'argent (comme) taxe d'irrigation

Il(s) ont prêté serment par le nom du roi.

Par devant Nūh-ilum, Ur-mama, Ur-emaḥ, (et) Šakuge.

L'année où Ibbi-Sîn est devenu roi.

(Sceau de AN-šati).

Notes :

Ce texte illustre un aspect particulier des activités commerciales et financières d'Ešidum. Il montre que ce marchand s'est aussi investi, à partir d'un certain moment de sa carrière, dans le secteur des activités agricoles. Si l'on comprend bien ce texte, Ešidum a pris en charge une terre et l'a divisée en parcelles données en loyer à cultiver à trois personnes qui reçoivent les champs avec tout le nécessaire pour leur mise en culture, en échange du paiement de la taxe de l'irrigation.

Une tablette de Nippur pourrait peut-être aider à mieux comprendre ce texte : il s'agit du texte NATN 166, étudié il y a peu par S. Garfinkle¹³. Dans ce texte il est question des marchands d'Adab (dam-gar₃ Adab^{ki}-me) – et Ešidum en faisait sans doute partie – qui font mettre en culture des terres, conjointement avec des marchands d'Umma et d'Uruk, en rémunérant pour cela des travailleurs (ḡuruš). Mais le contexte général de ce texte n'est pas très clair et il demanderait sans doute à être réétudié.

L. 6 : On ne connaît malheureusement pas le propriétaire de cette terre. S'agit-il d'une terre royale / institutionnelle ? On sait que l'on considère souvent que, à cette époque, toutes les terres cultivables relevaient du seul pouvoir central¹⁴. On voit simplement ici que la terre à cultiver est prise en charge par Ešidum. Tous les éléments nécessaires pour la mise en culture sont fournis par Puzur-Eštar.

L. 7 : maš a-ša₃-ga : il s'agit selon P. Steinkeller¹⁵ de la taxe pour l'irrigation. Elle était payée après la récolte¹⁶.

Texte 11 (T-3026 SM 4475)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 19 × 48 × 56.

Date : Ibbi-Sîn 1.

Résumé : Achat d'un bœuf.

Transcription :

Face

1 1 gu₄ mu 3(aš)
 2 ku₃-bi 4 gin₂ ku₃-babbar

13 Garfinkle 2010 : 131–141

14 Steinkeller 2002 : 115.

15 Steinkeller 1981 : 120–122, et 2002 : 135 ; Ouyang 2010 : 317–349.

16 Maekawa 1977 : 12, et 1986 : 116–123.



SM-T-3026 face.



SM-T-3026 revers.



Texte 11 (photographies et copies: A.Kh. Kamil).

3 ki na-an-ti-a-ta
4 e-ši₂-dum-e
5 in-ši-sa₁₀
6 ku₃-ta i₃-til
7 mu lugal-bi in-pa₃

Rev.

8 igi ša₃-ku₃-ge-še₃
9 igi a-ḥu-du₁₀-še₃
10 igi šu-er₃-ra-še₃
11 igi šu-eš₁₈-tar₂ dam-/gar₃-še₃
12 igi tu-ra-am-i₃-li₂-še₃
13 igi ^dnanna-ku₃-zu dub-sar-/še₃
14 mu ^di-bi-^dsuen / lugal

Sceau n°1 :

na-na-ti-a
dumu ga-an-x

Sceau n°2 :

^d[nanna-ku₃-zu]
dub-sar
[...]

Traduction :

Ešidum a acheté à Nantiya un bœuf de 3 ans, sa valeur étant de 4 sicles d'argent. Il a juré par le nom du roi qu'il a réglé (le paiement) en argent.
Par devant Šakuge, Aḥu-ṭāb, Šu-Erra, Šu-Eštar le marchand, Tūram-ilī, (et) Nanna-kuzu le scribe.
L'année où Ibbi-Sîn est devenu roi.
(Sceaux de Nantiya et de Nanna-kuzu).

Notes :

L. 3 : Remarquer les différences d'écriture entre tablette et empreinte de sceau.

L. 12 : S'agirait-il ici du Tūram-ilī bien connu, étudié par S. Garfinkle dans CUSAS 22 ? Ce serait un témoi-

gnage unique du lien entre nos deux personnages, dont on peut en effet penser qu'ils exerçaient leurs activités non loin l'un de l'autre.

Texte 12 (T-3110 SM 4528)

Tablette scellée. Dimensions en mm : 18 × 44 × 53.

Date : Ibbi-Sîn 3 / iti ezem-me-ki-ĝal₂.

Résumé : Reçu d'argent prêté à intérêt.

Transcription :

Face

1 2 gin₂ ku₃-babbar
 2 maš₂ ĝa₂-ĝa₂
 3 ki e-ši₂-dum-ta
 4 ur-^dšul-pa-e₃
 5 šu ba-ti

Rev.

6 igi ša₃-ku₃-ge-še₃
 7 igi e₂-sa₆-ga dub-sar-še₃
 8 igi a-*hu*-du₁₀-še₃
 9 iti ezem-me-ki-ĝal₂
 10 mu ^di-bi₂-^dsuen
 11 lugal uri₅^{ki} ma-/ke₄ si-mu-ru-um^{ki} mu-*ḥul*

Sceau :

ur-^dšul-pa-e₃
 dumu ur-^dsi₄-an-na

Traduction :

Ur-Šulpa'e a reçu d'Ešidum 2 sicles d'argent, (prêt) portant intérêt.
 Par devant Šakuge, Esaga le scribe, (et) Aḥu-ṭāb.
 Le mois ezem-mekiĝal.
 L'année où Ibbi-Sîn le roi d'Ur a détruit Simurum.
 Sceau de Ur-Šulpa'e.

Texte 13 (T-3063 SM 4499)

Tablette non scellée. Dimensions en mm : 22 × 41 × 62.

Sans date.

Résumé : Achat d'un terrain.

Transcription :

Face

1 2 ½ sar e₂ du₃-a / ^{ĝe}sNE.DU
 2 ki šu-i₃-li₂-ta
 3 13 gin₂ igi-4-ĝal₂ ku₃-še₃

4 e-ši₂-dum^{um}
 5 in-ši-sa₃
 6 igi lu₂-ša-lim / egir šagina
 7 1 a-wi-li₂-a ĥa-za-num₂
 8 1 šu-er₃-ra ĥa-za-num₂
 9 1 puzur₄-^daš₇-gi₄
 10 1 i-di₃-er₃-ra
 11 dumu i-bi₂-zu

Rev.

12 1 šu-eš₁₈-tar₂ dumu bu-za
 13 1 puzur₄-i₃-li₂ šagina
 14 1 ur-e₃-maḥ šeš-a-ni
 15 1 a-ki-a dumu ut-tu-a
 16 mu lugal ba-pa₃

Traduction :

Ešidum a acheté à Šū-ili 2 sar ½ sar (90 m²) d'un bâtiment ..., pour 13 sicles ¼ d'argent.

Par devant Lu-šalim général en second, Awiliya le *ḥazannum*, Šu-Erra le *ḥazannum*, Puzur-Ašgi, Idi-Erra fils de Ibizu, Šu-Eštar fils de Buza, Puzur-ili šagina (général), son frère Ur-emaḥ, (et) Akiya fils de Uttua.

Il a juré par le nom du roi.

Notes :

Est illustré ici un autre volet des activités d'Ešidum : l'achat de terrains bâtis.

L. 1 : Faut-il comprendre ^{ĝe}sNE.DU.<KU> = akk. *šaršabittu*, un « arbre » (selon une suggestion d'A. Cavigneaux) ? Il pourrait alors s'agir d'une maison avec arbre dans la cour (?).

L. 5 : On remarquera la notation phonétique inhabituelle sa₃ (signe ZA) à la place du signe sa₁₀ attendu, pour noter le verbe signifiant « acheter ».

L. 6 : Ce Lu-šalim, général, est très bien connu à Ur III. Sa présence dans notre texte est l'un des indices (peu nombreux) qui permettent de rattacher l'archive d'Ešidum au reste de la documentation d'Ur III. Ce personnage apparaît par ailleurs dans deux autres textes de notre lot. Ce personnage (s'il s'agit bien d'une seule et même personne) a occupé diverses fonctions militaires importantes, successivement : nu-banda₃, egir šagina, šagina et *ḥazannum*¹⁷. On note ailleurs, dans l'ensemble du dossier d'Ešidum, les liens de ce dernier avec les membres de l'*establishment* militaire.



SM-T-3063 face.



SM-T-3063 revers.

Texte 13 (photographies et copies: A.Kh. Kamil).

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Text als Bild

Graphic Reading am Beispiel der sumerischen Rangstreitgespräche

Fabienne Kilchör und Catherine Mittermayer

Abstract: Graphic Reading is an alternative to traditional methods of text analysis. Information designer explain facts and render data into knowledge visualizations. By transforming text into diagrams, large amounts of data can be depicted in an intelligible way without taking up too much space. Visualization techniques such as abstraction, unification, comparing, mapping, filtering and correlation supplement the analysis of the data and provide new perspectives on the material. In the humanities, this approach is not a common method of analysis yet. The following paper represents an interdisciplinary approach between information design and philology and demonstrates the possibilities of Graphic Reading by applying it to two Sumerian disputations. The disputations are analyzed and visualized in respect to their structure and the manner in which the two contenders are presented. Furthermore the techniques of argumentation shall be made visible by the use of graphs. In this case, the latter serve not only to gain new insights, but also as tools to efficiently and accessibly present scientific arguments and communicate information.

Keywords: Graphic Reading, informationdesign, knowledge visualization, Sumerian, disputation poems, argumentation techniques.

Der folgende Beitrag ist eine interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit zwischen der Informationsdesignerin Fabienne Kilchör und der Philologin Catherine Mittermayer. Der erste Teil des Artikels führt in die Thematik ein und erläutert aus Sicht des Informationsdesigns das allgemeine Ziel von Grafiken und Wissensbildern (Kapitel 1, 2). In enger Zusammenarbeit mit der Philologin werden in einem zweiten Teil die Daten für die Analyse aufbereitet: Ausgangslage sind die von C. Mittermayer in ihrer Habilitationsschrift¹ gemachten Untersuchungen zu den sumerischen Rangstreitgesprächen (Kapitel 3). Gemäss des Entwicklungsprozesses einer Visualisierung werden dann Informationsgrafiken entwickelt, um daraus Visualisierungsprinzipien für die Textvisualisierung zu definieren (Kapitel 4, 5). Die Grafiken werden schliesslich aus philologischer Sicht interpretiert (Kapitel 6). Im Ausblick wird auf weitere Anwendungsgebiete der Methode des *Graphic Readings* in der Altorientalistik hingewiesen (Kapitel 7).

1 Informationsdesign

Graphic Reading ist eine Methode der Datenvisualisierung und zeigt grafische Darstellungsformen von Texten mit dem Ziel der explorativen oder konfirmativen Analyse (Schumann/Müller 2000: 5) sowie der Informa-

tionsvermittlung. Die Arbeit besteht darin, Daten zu Informationen zu transformieren und grosse Datenmengen in verständliche Wissensbilder (Boehm 1999) zu überführen. Zudem werden Informationen durch die kompakte Übersicht schneller und zusammenhängender erfassbar. Die Grafiken² erlauben es, viel Information auf wenig Raum bereitzustellen, wobei die Datenstruktur und die Komplexität auf einen Blick sichtbar werden. Die Bilder haben demzufolge einen epistemischen Charakter.

Die Entwicklung von Grafiken impliziert die Selektion der Daten, die Entwicklung der Informationsarchitektur sowie die grafische Umsetzung (Weber 2008). Hierfür bedient sich das Kommunikationsdesign an Werkzeugen aus dem Grafikdesign, der Typografie, aber auch aus der Wahrnehmungspsychologie, der Statistik und der Logik. Die hier entwickelten Wissensbilder (Boehm 1999) dienen der Untersuchung von Texten, um Strukturen, Regelwerke und neue Informationen herauszulesen, neue Fragestellungen zu entwickeln und Hypothesen zu erarbeiten. Das Forschungsparadigma *research through design* (Jonas 2004: 26) orientiert sich am *practice-based design*.

1 „Was sprach der eine zum anderen?“ Argumentationsformen in den sumerischen Rangstreitgesprächen. Die Arbeit wird in der Serie UAVA erscheinen.

2 Die Begriffe Grafik, Informationsgrafik, Diagramm, Visualisierung und Wissensbild werden hier synonym verwendet. Das Ausdifferenzieren der Begriffe würde den Rahmen dieses Beitrags sprengen. Der Artikel orientiert sich an der Terminologie von Burkhard 2005.

Der Begriff des *Graphic Reading* geht auf die sprachwissenschaftliche Technik des *Close Readings*, also der sorgfältigen Interpretation eines Textes, und der von Franco Moretti eingeführten Methode des *Distant Readings* (Moretti 2013) zurück, bei welcher ganze Textcorpora quantitativ miteinander verglichen werden. Das Verfahren der visuellen Hermeneutik wird im Folgenden als *Graphic Reading* bezeichnet.

2 Wissensbilder

Abgeleitet von diesen kunsthistorischen Herangehensweisen geht hervor, wie wirkungsvoll und funktional Bilder auch über phänomenologische Erscheinungen hinaus sein können. Die Methode des *Graphic Readings* untersucht, inwiefern Wissensbilder philologische Analysen unterstützen können. Der bildwissenschaftliche Zugang soll neue Perspektiven der Datenanalyse und das verstärkte Einbinden epistemologischer Prozesse bei der Untersuchung von Bildern aufzeigen. Mit der Frage „Was ist ein Bild?“ konstatierte der Basler Kunsthistoriker Gottfried Boehm 1994 den Wandel als Neuorientierung der Geisteswissenschaften (s. unten). Das Bild erhält einen neuen Status und wird nicht mehr nur traditionell von Kunsthistorikern untersucht, sondern auch von Vertretern anderer Disziplinen in Augenschein genommen. Es gibt inzwischen eine Theologie, Anthropologie, Philosophie, Psychologie, Ethnologie und Kulturgeschichte des Bildes. Hinzu treten die Beiträge weiterer bildbezogener Wissenschaften wie der Kommunikationswissenschaft und der Medienwissenschaften. Selbst für die Mathematik und die Naturforschung ist das Bild zum Thema geworden. Dabei steht das spezifische kognitive und kommunikative Potential bildhafter Darstellungen im Zentrum des Interesses (Bader/Janser/Kwint 2005).

Der Iconic Turn (s. unten) hat massgeblich dazu beigetragen, dem Bild neue spezifische Leistungsmöglichkeiten zuzuschreiben und das Bild als Informationsträger und Kommunikationsmedium zu charakterisieren. Der Iconic Turn wurde nicht zuletzt aus den Neuen Medien hervorgebracht.

Im 21. Jahrhundert spricht man von einer Wende im Bildbereich. Bilder werden wie Text und Schrift als Quelle akzeptiert und bieten durch die Reflexion der Visualisierung die Möglichkeit der Erkenntnisformulierung (Haas 2006). In Umlauf gebracht wird der Begriff des Iconic Turn durch Gottfried Boehm 1994 (Boehm 1994). Die ikonische Wende geht als Gegenströmung zum Linguistic Turn hervor, welcher Ende der sechziger Jahre durch den Philosophen Richard Rorty geprägt wurde (Rorty 1967). Die aus der neuen Bildwissenschaft heraus beschriebene ikonische Wende misst den Bildern Bedeutung und Macht zu und beschreibt das Sehen als aktive Tätigkeit. Boehm nimmt später diesen Begriff des „blickenden Tuns“ wieder auf, wobei der Blick zu einem Anblick wird (Boehm 1999: 219).

3 Primärdaten

Das Ausgangsmaterial für die folgenden Informationsgrafiken bilden die Übersetzungen zweier sumerischer Rangstreitgespräche: *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* (gewöhnlich als *Mutterschaf und Getreide* bezeichnet), ein 193 Zeilen langer Text, sowie *Vogel und Fisch*³, der in der Langversion ca. 201 Zeilen umfasst.⁴

Für die Analyse der Rangstreitgespräche wird der übersetzte sumerische Keilschrifttext Zeile für Zeile in einem professionellen Satzprogramm gelayouted. Jede Zeile entspricht einer fixen Position auf der Y-Achse, wobei die Schrift des Textes in kleiner Grösse und mit einem engen Schriftschnitt gesetzt wird. Dadurch wird der Textblock kompakt und das Auge kann den gesamten Text auf einen Blick wahrnehmen. Dies ist eine Grundvoraussetzung der Datenvisualisierung. Das Gestaltprinzip der Nähe ermöglicht dem Nutzer, Regelwerke aus der Grafik herauszulesen. Diese vertikale Achse ist also fester Bestandteil des Grundrasters und wird für jede Visualisierung eingesetzt. Im Gegenzug können auf der X-Achse ganz unterschiedliche Informationen visualisiert werden.

4 Datenvisualisierung

4.1. Aufbau

In einem ersten Schritt wird der Aufbau der beiden Rangstreitgespräche grafisch dargestellt. Hierfür werden ● *Prolog*, ● *Überleitung 1*, ● *Hauptteil*, ● *Überleitung 2* und ● *Schluss* der Rede mit fünf Grautönen hinterlegt.⁵ Die Farbabstufungen korrelieren mit dem Text (Hell = Anfang, Dunkel = Ende) und unterstützen dabei die logische Leseführung.

Die Länge der Zeilen, sprich die Anzahl Worte in einer Zeile, ist für diese Analyse nicht relevant. Um später auf Grund fehlgeleiteter visueller Wahrnehmung die Information nicht zu verfälschen,⁶ werden alle Zei-

3 Die Texte wurden von Mittermayer im Rahmen ihrer Habilitation neu übersetzt (s. Anm. 1). Für *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* s. auch die Bearbeitung von Alster/Vanstiphout 1987, den Kompositext mit Übersetzung von ETCSL c.5.3.2 (siehe auch Black et al. 2004: 225–229) und weitere Übersetzungen bei Vanstiphout 1997: 575–578 und 2004: 186–194. Für *Vogel und Fisch* s. die Bearbeitung von Herrmann 2010, Kompositext mit Übersetzung von ETCSL c.5.3.5 (siehe auch Black et al. 2004: 230–235) und weitere Übersetzungen von Vanstiphout 1997: 581–584 und 2004: 194–203.

4 Für die verschiedenen Versionen s. Herrmann 2010: 97–98. Es ist schwierig, eine genaue Zeilenzahl für die verschiedenen Versionen festzulegen, da die Manuskripte, insbesondere im Bereich der Reden des Fisches, extreme Abweichungen aufweisen. Die Rekonstruktion der Langversion mit 201 Zeilen und die in diesem Artikel angegebenen Zeilenzahlen für *Vogel und Fisch* basieren auf der Arbeit von Mittermayer (Anm. 1). Neben der Kurz- und der Langversion ist in MS 2110/1 auch ein Zusammenschnitt des Rangstreitgesprächs auf rund 70 Zeilen überliefert; s. dazu Mittermayer 2015.

5 Für diesen Aufbau der Rangstreitgespräche s. Mittermayer 2009: 40–47 mit der Analyse zu *Enmerkara und der Herr von Arata*.

6 Der Informationswissenschaftler Edward Tufte (Tufte 2001: 116) beschreibt diese unnötigen grafischen Elemente, die der Grafik keinen Zugewinn an Informationen liefern, *Chartjunk*, sogenannter Datenmüll (siehe auch Kap. 5).

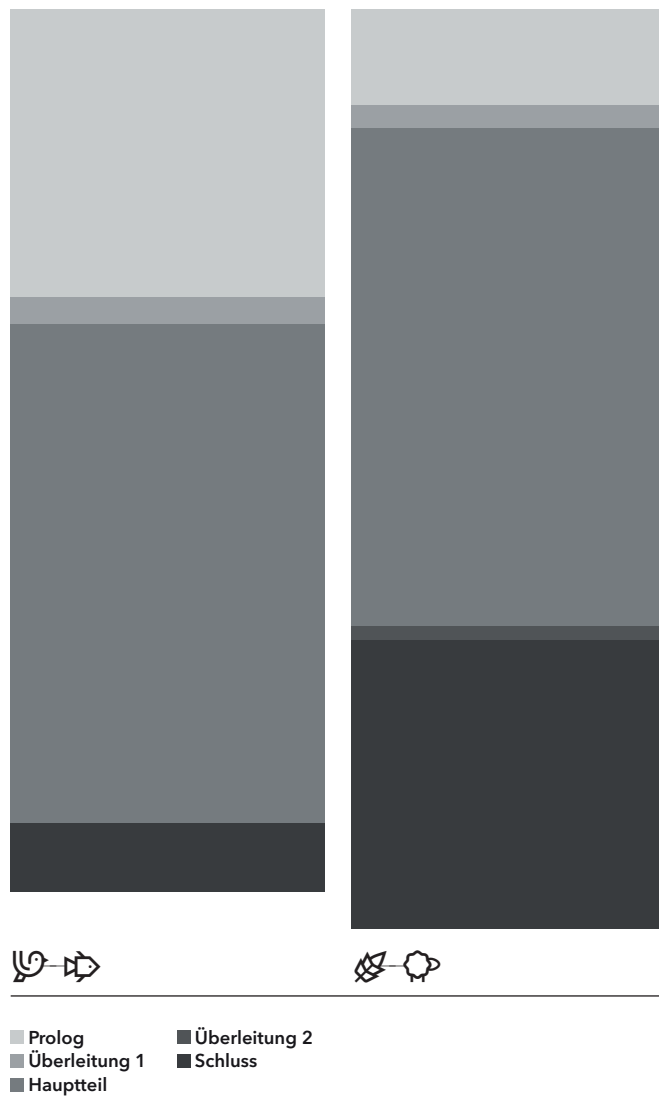


Fig. 1: Aufbau der Rangstreitgespräche *Ezinam und Mutter-schaf, Vogel und Fisch*.

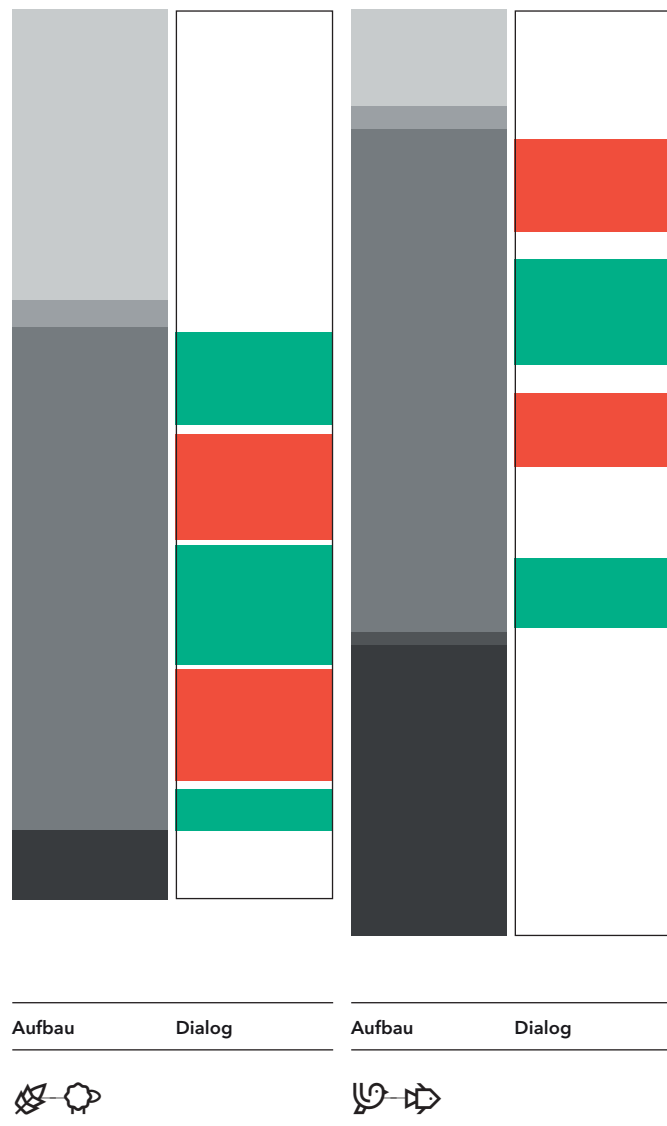









Fig. 2: Balkendiagramm zu Aufbau und Dialog.

len durch identisch lange Balken mit fixer Breite dargestellt. Daraus entsteht ein gestapeltes Säulendiagramm (Fig. 1).

4.2. Wettstreit

Eine zweite Visualisierung hebt die Zeilen der direkten Reden im Wettstreit zwischen Sieger  und Verlierer  grafisch hervor, woraus ein Absenz-Präsenz-Diagramm entsteht. Den Siegern wird dabei die Farbe  Grün zugesprochen und den Verlierern die Farbe  Rot. Um mittels Visualisierung einen Mehrwert an Informationen zu generieren, müssen Informationen korreliert werden. Kausale Zusammenhänge, Mechanismen oder systematische Strukturen sind nur in dem Mass sinnvoll, wie es die Fragestellung an das Material ist. Deshalb haben wir das Diagramm zum Aufbau der Rede neben das Diagramm zum Dialog gestellt (Fig. 2). Durch das Prinzip der Nähe wird beispielsweise deutlich, dass der Wettstreit mit den direkten Reden (—) im Hauptteil () ausgetragen wird.

Für einen Vergleich der Sprechzeiten müssen die einzelnen Reden des Wettstreits von Sieger und Verlierer – wie in einem Säulendiagramm – zusammengefasst werden. Dadurch wird die Häufigkeitsverteilung sichtbar (s. Fig. 15 in Kap. 6.1).

4.3. Eigenschaften

Am Beispiel von *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* werden in einem dritten Balkendiagramm die Eigenschaften verortet, welche dem Sieger ● und dem Verlierer ● in Prolog, Dialog sowie im Schlussteil zugesprochen werden (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Visualisierung des Aufbaus, des Dialogs und der Eigenschaften.

Um diese Eigenschaften im Text nicht nur zu verorten, sondern auch zu differenzieren, damit sie später verglichen werden können, werden Piktogramme (Fig. 4) eingeführt. Die Bildsprache erlaubt eine direkte und somit schnellere Zuordnung der Eigenschaften, als dies mit Worten möglich ist. Bildstatistische Verfahren wurden bereits von Otto Neurath in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Grafiker Gerd Arntz entwickelt. Entstanden ist daraus bereits in den dreissiger Jahren die Wiener Methode der Bildstatistik, besser bekannt unter dem Namen *Isotype* (International System of Typographic Picture Education) (Neurath/Kinross 2009: 47).

Die Semantik der Zeichen wird mit dem Endnutzer besprochen und auf die individuellen Bedürfnisse abgestimmt. Sind die Piktogramme zweckmässig gestaltet, können diese nicht nur im Schaubild, sondern auch im Text eingesetzt werden.

Um die Ergebnisse besser zu vermitteln und dem Druckformat der Publikation gerecht zu werden, wird das Balkendiagramm in Prolog, Dialog sowie Schluss zerlegt und die drei Teile, statt untereinander, neu nebeneinander platziert. Die in den vorangehenden Visualisierungen eingeführten visuellen Codes werden wieder verwendet: Da Farben und Balkenbreite mit den vorangehenden Visualisierungen identisch sind, kann sich das Auge rasch in der zweiseitigen Repräsentationsform orientieren.

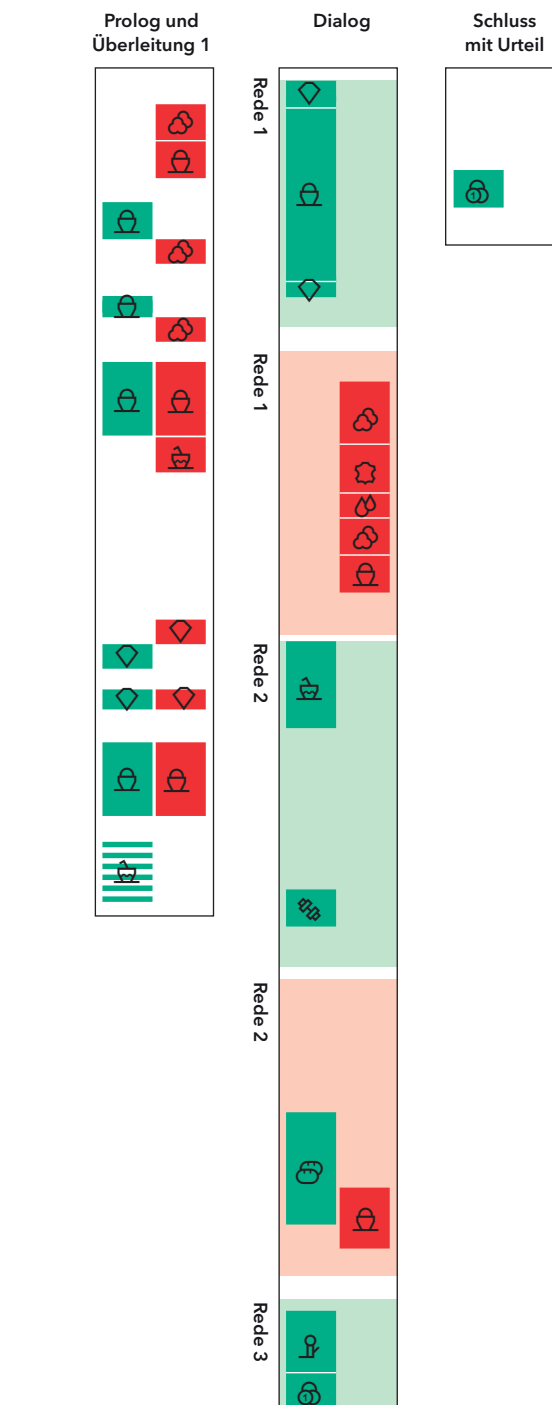


Fig. 4: Eigenschaften in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Diese Eigenschaften können schliesslich für eine Analyse mit den Informationen aus dem Dialog in Relation gesetzt werden (s. Fig. 19 in Kap. 6.2).

4.4. Götter

Die folgende Visualisierung (Fig. 5) repräsentiert anhand von Farbkästchen das Auftreten und die Häufigkeit von Göttern in den Rangstreitgesprächen.⁷ Die Grafik beantwortet die Frage: Welche und wieviele Götter kommen wann und wie oft in einem Rangstreitgespräch vor? In dieser Grafik sind der Prolog und der Schluss (in grau) sowie der Dialog (grün, rot) unterlegt. Dadurch werden die Götter in den Texten kontextualisiert.

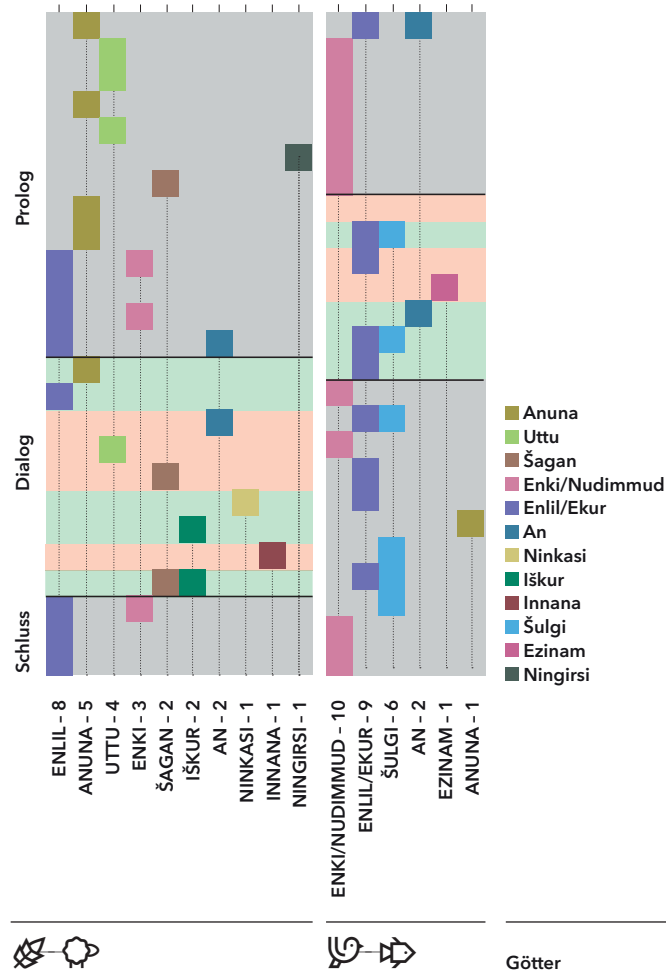


Fig. 5: Götter in *Ezinam* und *Mutterschaf* sowie *Vogel* und *Fisch*.

Um die Häufigkeitsverteilung deutlicher sichtbar zu machen, werden die Kästchen addiert und ein Säulendiagramm (Fig. 6a) entsteht. Um die Relevanz der Informationsarchitektur an einem konkreten Beispiel sichtbar zu machen, werden dieselben Daten in einem Kreisdiagramm (Fig. 6b) dargestellt. Der Kreis, als geschlossene Form, visualisiert die Summe aller Teilstücke deutlicher. Bei der Darstellung einer grossen Anzahl von Teilen wird das Kreisdiagramm jedoch unübersichtlich.

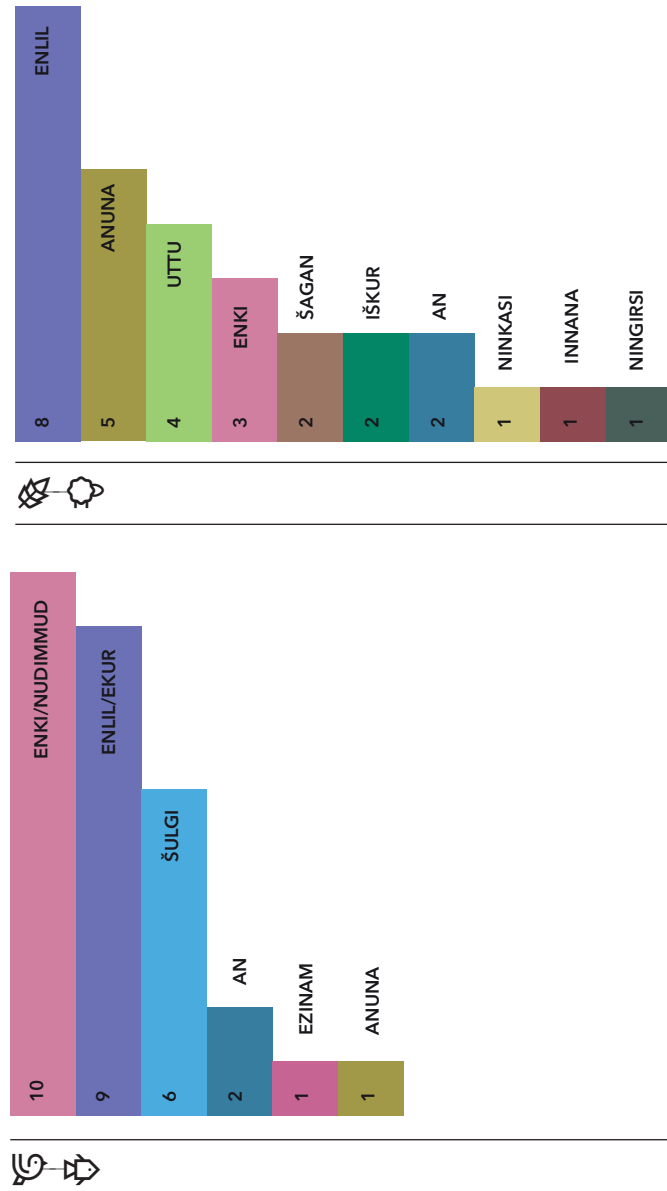


Fig. 6a: Häufigkeitsverteilung der Götter als Säulendiagramm.

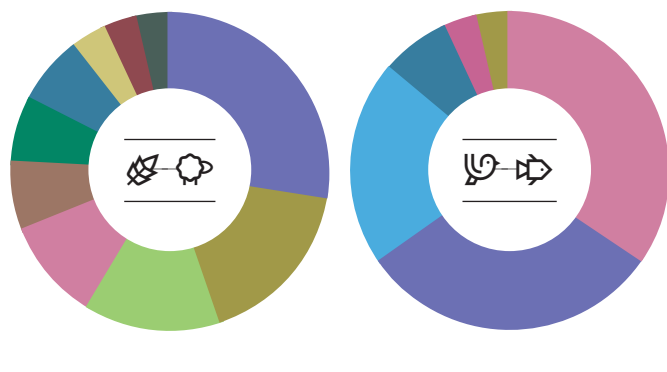


Fig. 6b: Häufigkeitsverteilung der Götter als Kreisdiagramm.

⁷ In *Vogel* und *Fisch* wurden zusätzlich zu den Götternamen auch das Ekur als Referenz für Enlil und der Königsname Šulgi in die Untersuchung aufgenommen.

4.5. Argumentationstechniken

Folgende Grafiken untersuchen am Beispiel von *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* den Einsatz der Argumentationstechniken. Sie beantworten die Frage: Welche Argumentationstechniken werden wann und von wem wie verwendet? Hierfür werden die entsprechenden Zeilen auf der X-Achse mit dem Text korreliert. Es ist zwischen elf Argumentationstechniken zu unterscheiden.

Um die Techniken zu differenzieren, werden die beiden visuelle Variablen (Bertin 1967: 50) *Position* und *Farbe* eingesetzt. Die Farbe ist, zusammen mit der Form, eines der stärksten optischen Differenzierungsmerkmale. Damit die Farben die Argumentationstechniken nicht hierarchisieren, wird die Farbpalette in den Graustufen-Modus umgewandelt (Fig. 7). Sind die Grautöne ähnlich, sind die gewählten Farben für eine Informationsdifferenzierung ohne Gewichtung geeignet.



Fig. 7: Farbcode der Argumentationstechniken.

Nach dem Erstellen der Matrix (Fig. 8), werden die Argumentationstechniken mit der Methode des Close Readings eruiert und die Zeile wird entsprechend eingefärbt.

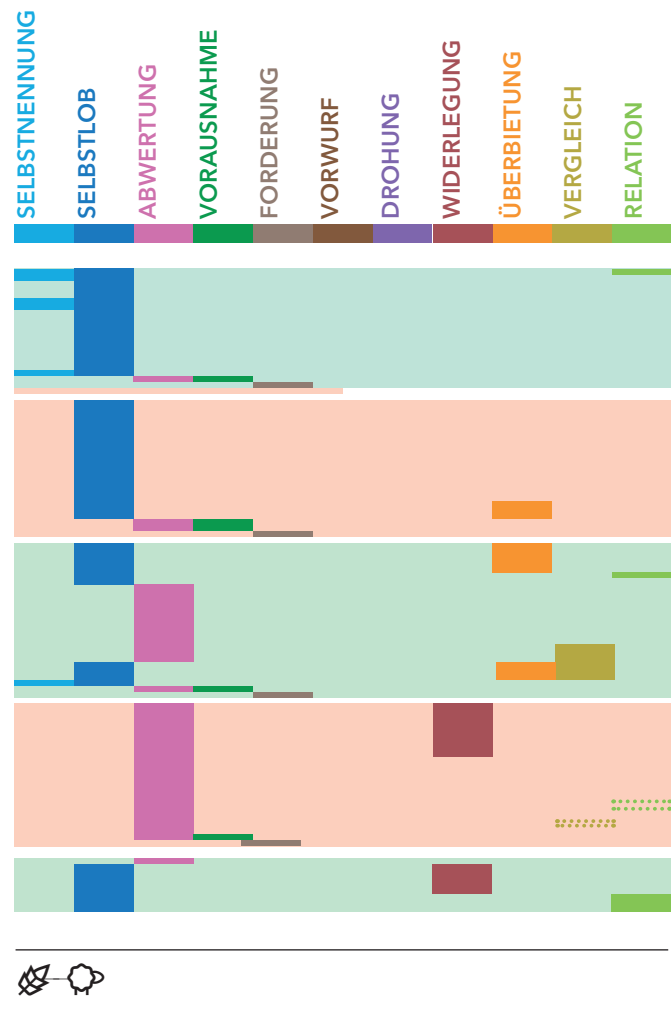


Fig. 8: Argumentationstechniken in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Um aus dieser Visualisierung neue Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen, müssen die Balken auf unterschiedliche Weise zusammengestellt, geordnet und gefiltert werden. Die Informationsarchitektur spielt hierbei eine relevante Rolle. Für diese Grafik (Fig. 9) werden die Argumentationstechniken auf der vertikalen Achse zusammengesoben. Die Techniken haben keine fixe Position mehr, die Farbe jedoch ermöglicht ihre Differenzierung.

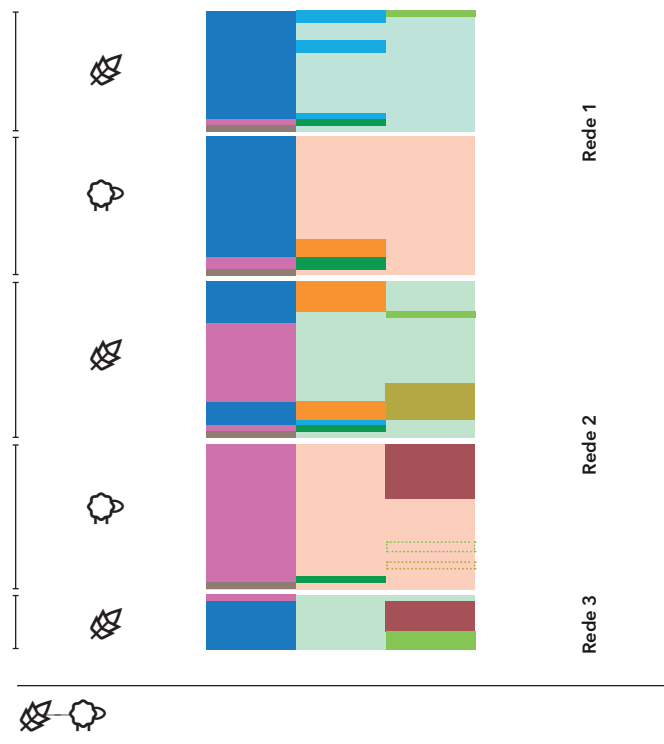


Fig. 9: Gestapeltes Balkendiagramm der Argumentationstechniken in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Auch in diesem Fall können – mit denselben Daten und lediglich durch das Verändern der Informationsarchitektur – neue Informationen sichtbar gemacht werden. So werden in folgenden Säulendiagrammen (Fig. 10) die einzelnen Textpassagen der zwei, resp. drei Reden nebeneinander aufgereiht, wodurch der Median ermittelt werden kann. In *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* liegt der Mittelwert der Argumentationstechniken bei zwei Zeilen, im Rangstreitgespräch von *Vogel und Fisch* bei drei Zeilen. Durch das Einschwärzen und Stauchen des Säulendiagramms wird zudem gut sichtbar, dass viele Argumentationstechniken nur eine Zeile lang sind. Gut sichtbar werden in *Vogel und Fisch* zwei „Ausreisser“. Diese beiden Redemomente könnten in einer weiterführenden Analyse genauer untersucht werden. Wichtig ist für die spätere Auswertung, Mengen von Objekten mit ähnlichen Eigenschaften optisch – durch Einkreisen oder mittels Unterlegung einer Kontrastfarbe oder eines anderen Indikatorensystems – hervorzuheben. Implizites Wissen wird dadurch nicht zuletzt durch das *Storytelling* sichtbar gemacht.

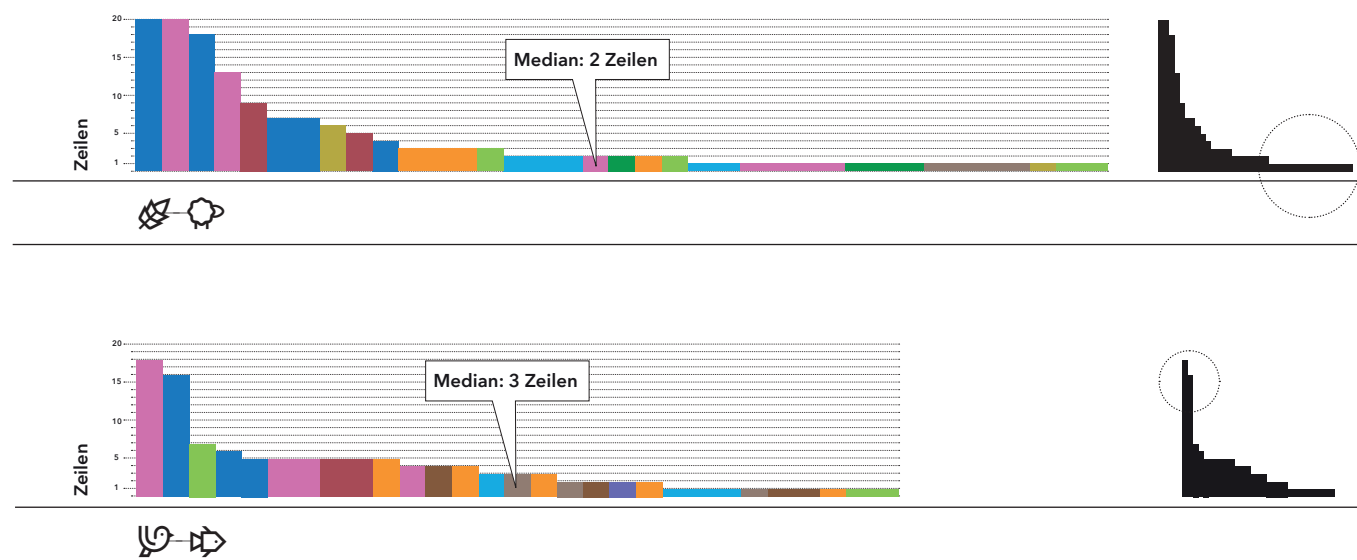


Fig. 10: Säulendiagramm der Argumentationstechniken in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* sowie *Vogel und Fisch*.

Für einen Vergleich der Argumentationstechniken von Sieger und Verlierer werden die Balken einander gegenübergestellt (s. Fig. 22 in Kap. 6.3).

Auch die folgende Grafik visualisiert die Argumentationstechniken. In diesem Präsenz-Absenz-Diagramm (Fig. 11) wird die Anzahl Zeilen der jeweils benutzten Argumentationstechnik nicht mehr gewichtet. Untersucht wird lediglich, welche Technik in welcher Rede von Sieger oder Verlierer eingesetzt wird.

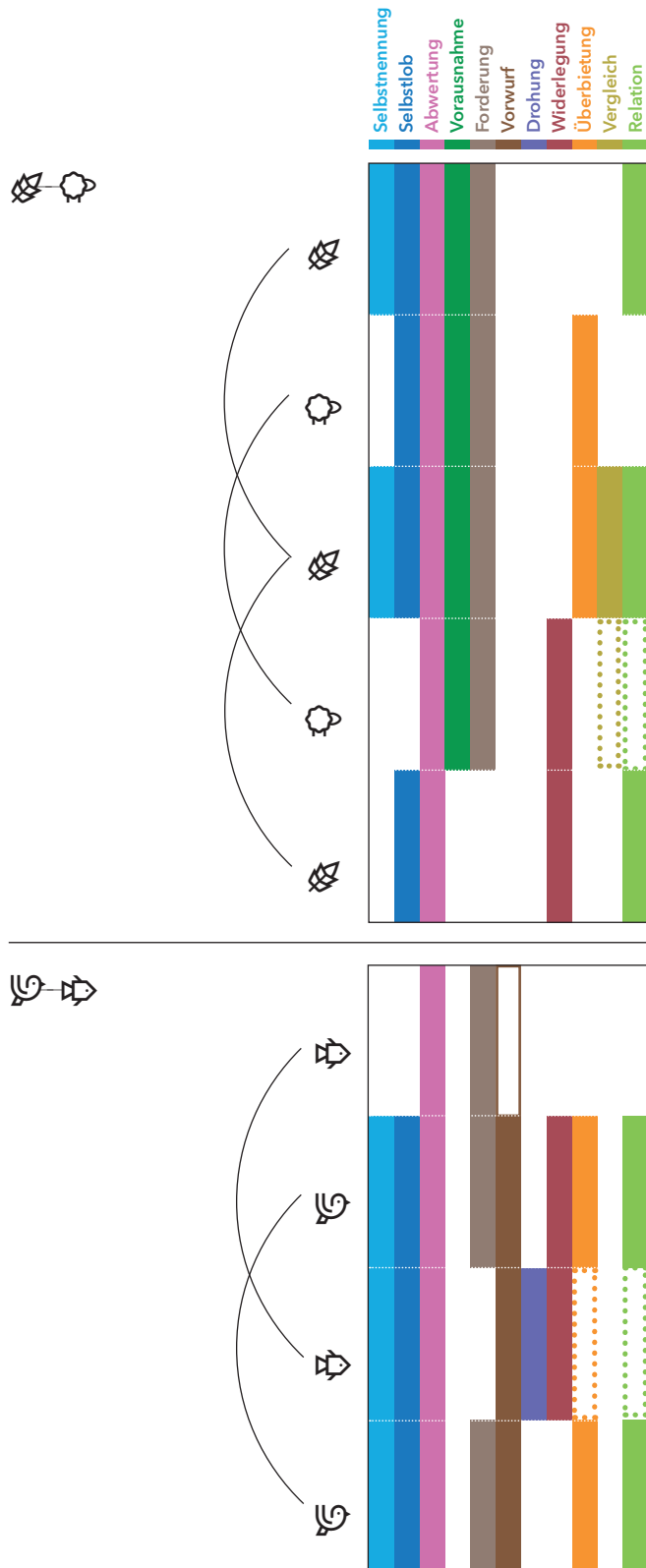


Fig. 11: Auftreten der Argumentationstechniken im Dialog.

Das Präsenz-Absenz-Diagramm dient als Ausgangslage für weitere Fragestellungen. So wird in folgendem Beispiel zusätzlich dargestellt, welche Argumentationstechniken vom Gegner übernommen →, neu eingeführt →, nicht übernommen —• oder falsch verwendet → werden (Fig. 12). Um die Grafik zu komprimieren, werden die beiden inexistenten Techniken (Vorwurf und Drohung) nicht berücksichtigt, sondern weggelassen. Dadurch wird die Grafik noch kompakter und somit übersichtlicher.

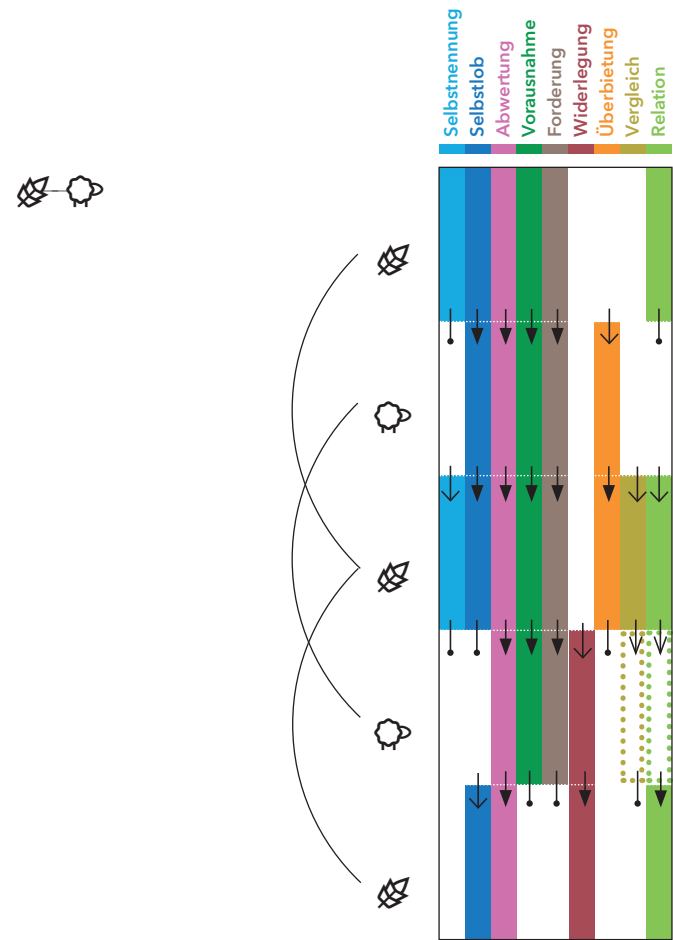


Fig.12: Einsatz der Argumentationstechniken in Ezinam und Mutterschaf.

Aus Sicht des Informationsdesigns wird auf Regelwerke und Clusters aufmerksam gemacht (Fig 13). Wie die Wissensbilder zu interpretieren sind, ist Aufgabe der Philologie.

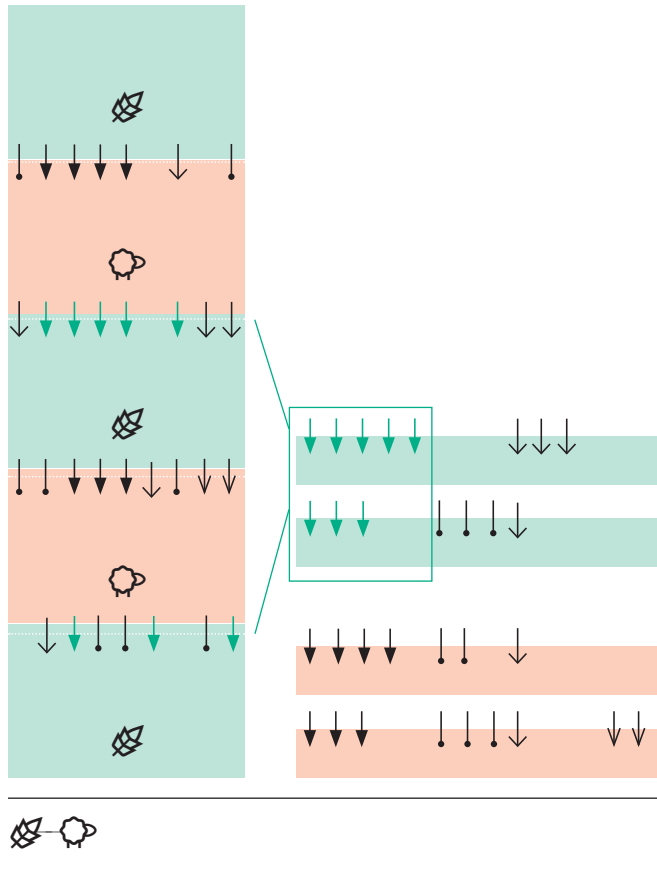


Fig. 13: Summe der Argumentationstechniken, die Ezinam vom Mutterschaf übernimmt.

4.6. Themen

Das folgende Blasendiagramm zeigt, welche Themen wann und wie oft im Rangstreitgespräch zwischen *Vogel und Fisch* vorkommen (Fig. 14). Auf der y-Achse werden die Themen aufgeführt, dieses Merkmal wird zusätzlich mit der Variable *Farbe* differenziert. Auf der x-Achse findet sich der Dialog. Das dritte Merkmal wird anhand der Blasengröße dargestellt und verdeutlicht die Anzahl der Zeilen. Für diese Fragestellung wird zwischen einer ● Zeile oder mehreren ● Zeilen differen-

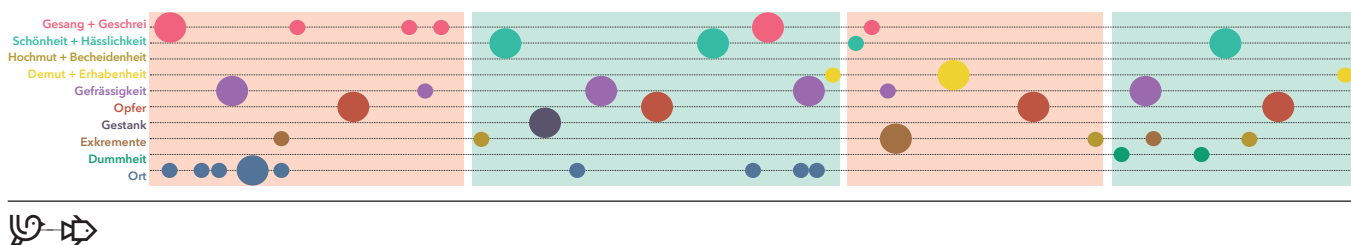


Fig. 14: Blasendiagramm zu den Themen in *Vogel und Fisch*.

ziert. Der Vorteil dieses Diagrammes liegt auch hier in der Anschaulichkeit und Übersichtlichkeit.

Mittels der multivariaten Visualisierung können Ebene für Ebene und je nach Fragestellung noch weitere Informationen hinzugefügt werden. Durch das Verdichten der Wissensbilder werden neue Informationen sichtbar (s. Fig. 24 in Kap. 6.3).

5 Visualisierungsprinzipien

Zusammenfassend werden die angewendeten Visualisierungsprinzipien vorgestellt. Sie leiten sich in gewissen Punkten von den fundamentalen Prinzipien des analytischen Designs (Tuft 2006: 125–140) ab und werden durch spezifische Massnahmen hinsichtlich des *Graphic Readings* ergänzt.

- Die Daten müssen so aufbereitet und vereinheitlicht werden, dass sie kohärent miteinander verglichen werden können.
- Um durch Visualisierungen einen Zugewinn an Informationen zu generieren, müssen Daten korreliert werden. Kausale Zusammenhänge und Strukturen können mit gängigen Methoden des *Close Readings* nur bedingt erkannt werden. Durch die multivariate Statistik und die grafischen Repräsentationen werden Ballungen und Regelwerke sichtbar.
- Zur Informationsarchitektur zählt eine sinnvolle Unterteilung der Daten. Die passende Struktur wird durch einen explorativen Gestaltungsprozess entwickelt, wobei anhand einer Stichprobe Daten gruppiert, gefiltert, unterteilt oder zusammengefasst werden, bis die passende Gestalt gefunden ist.
- Ein wichtiges Gestaltungsprinzip heisst: Komplexität reduzieren und irrelevante Informationen für die spezifische Fragestellung ausblenden. Die Gestalt der Grafik wird aus ihrer Funktion und ihrem Nutzungszweck abgeleitet. Auf die Datenvisualisierung übertragen, kann der Gestaltungsleitsatz der Strömung des Funktionalismus „form follows function“ umformuliert werden, nämlich in den Terminus „form follows data“. Das Gestaltungsparadigma „Reduktion auf das Wesentliche“ kann auf das Informationsdesign übertragen werden.

Der Informationswissenschaftler Edward Tufte prägte den Begriff des *Chartjunks* (Tufte 2001: 117f.). Gemeint sind die visuellen Elemente einer Grafik, die nicht zum Verständnis dieser beitragen oder für den Leser sogar störend sind.⁸ Ein grosser Anteil an Tinte sollte dazu dienen, Daten-Information darzustellen. „Data-Inc“, wie es Tufte nennt, (Tufte 2001: 93) ist unerlässlicher Kern der Grafik. Überprüft werden kann dieses Daten-Tinte-Verhältnis, indem getestet wird, ob das Wegfallen von grafischen Elementen keinen Informationsverlust mit sich bringt.

- Informationsgrafiken ermöglichen es, viele Daten auf wenig Raum darzustellen, wobei Zusammenhänge sichtbar werden, die mit anderen Methoden nicht erkennbar sind. Das Komprimieren der Daten ist deshalb wesentlich.
- Die Grafiken müssen zielorientiert skaliert werden. Der Detaillierungsgrad orientiert sich an der Fragestellung. So ist die Anzahl Zeilen für gewisse Fragen relevant, für andere Analysen reicht es zu wissen, ob eine Information in „einer Zeile“ oder „mehr als einer Zeile“ vorkommt oder sogar nur an- oder abwesend ist.
- Auch das Fehlen von Daten ist eine Information und muss entsprechend gekennzeichnet werden (Lücke im Datensatz, Nullwert etc.).
- Für die Differenzierung der Daten kann auf die visuellen Variablen von Jacques Bertin (Bertin 1967: 51) zurückgegriffen werden: Farbe, Form, Muster, Helligkeit, Richtung und Grösse. Die Variablen – zur Differenzierung oder Gruppierung von Informationen – müssen mit der Fragestellung und den Daten übereinstimmen. So wird beispielsweise das Ampelsystem für die Unterscheidung der Kontrahenten genutzt: der Gewinner wird grün dargestellt, der Verlierer rot. Durch die visuelle Metapher kann der Nutzer die Differenzierung (Rot = Verlierer, Grün = Gewinner) schneller verstehen und sich besser einprägen (Burkhard 2005).
- Unterschiedliche Informationsmodi werden zusammengebracht: Worte, um die Argumentationstechniken zu beschreiben, Farben, um diese zu differenzieren, eine Zeitachse, um die Zeilen aufzulisten, Zahlen, Worte und grafische Elemente, um die Informationen zu beschriften.
- Legenden, Quellenangaben, Datum und Autor dürfen auf den Grafiken nicht fehlen. Die Dokumentation hilft, die Wissensbilder als eigenständige Informationsquelle zu nutzen.
- Narrative Elemente der Leseführung verwenden: Mit Farben können Informationen nicht nur differenziert, sondern auch unterschiedlich gewichtet werden. Schrift ist wie ein Bild zu behandeln, wobei gilt, die Schriftfamilie, -grösse und -auszeich-

nung bewusst zu wählen. Grafische Elemente, wie Linien, können Informationen verbinden, unterstreichen, trennen, gruppieren oder in Form eines Rasters als Hilfslinien dienen. Gestaltet wird entsprechend dem Zielpublikum.

- Die grafische Form sowie die Bildsprache orientieren sich zum einen am Zielpublikum, zum anderen am Format und am Medium. Aufgrund dessen wurde für die Analyse der Rangstreitgespräche ein Grossformat gewählt und die Grafik ausgedruckt. Erst für die Präsentation und die Publikation werden die Grafiken komprimiert und unterteilt.

6 Interpretation

Bei der folgenden Interpretation der Grafiken steht die Frage im Fokus, ob in den beiden untersuchten Rangstreitgesprächen der Gewinner gegenüber dem Verlierer favorisiert wird. Hierfür werden nacheinander die strukturelle, narrative und argumentative Ebene der beiden Texte untersucht.⁹

6.1. Strukturelle Ebene

Auf der strukturellen Ebene der Texte werden die Redezeiten der Kontrahenten mithilfe des gestauchten Balkendiagramms (Fig. 15) miteinander verglichen:



Fig. 15: Redezeit der Kontrahenten.

Es zeigt sich, dass dem Gewinner (●) – sei es durch längere Reden oder durch eine höhere Anzahl Reden – jeweils mehr Zeit zur Verfügung steht als dem Verlierer (●).¹⁰

⁸ Genau wie beim Gestaltungsparadigma „Form follows function“ bedeutet dies jedoch nicht, auf ästhetische dekorative Elemente und Symbolik zu verzichten, solange sie eine Funktion innehaben.

⁹ Diese Annahme liegt als Prämisse der Habilitationsschrift von Mittermayer zugrunde (s. Anm. 1). Für die drei Textebenen s. ebenda Kap. 2.1.

¹⁰ Für eine Diskussion der Redezeiten in den Rangstreitgesprächen vgl. auch Vanstiphout 1990: 298–299.

6.2. Narrative Ebene

Die narrative Ebene umfasst jeweils den Prolog, die Redeüberleitungen und narrative Passagen innerhalb des Dialogs¹¹ und den Schlussteil mit dem Urteil und der Versöhnung (Fig. 16, in grau sichtbar).¹²



Fig. 16: Narrative Ebene der Rangstreitgespräche.

In Auswahl soll auf dieser Ebene zwei Aspekten nachgegangen werden:¹³

- Welche Götter kommen auf der narrativen Ebene zum Tragen, und in welchem Bezug stehen diese zu den im Laufe des Wettstreits genannten Göttern?
- Wie werden die Gegner im Prolog dargestellt?

Im Prolog von *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* ist eine Häufung von Enlil, den Anuna, Uttu und Enki zu erkennen (Fig. 17):¹⁴

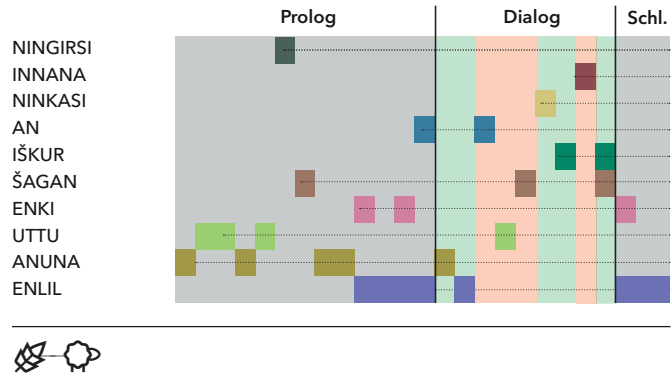


Fig. 17: Götter in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Während Enlil, Enki und den Anuna eine tragende Rolle zukommt, steht Uttu, die göttliche Weberin, lediglich repräsentativ für eine Eigenschaft des Mutterschafs (Wolle). Interessant ist nun, dass *Ezinam* als Siegerin des Wettstreits zwei tragende Figuren in ihrer ersten Rede erwähnt, während das Mutterschaf lediglich seine Repräsentantin ins Feld führt.¹⁵

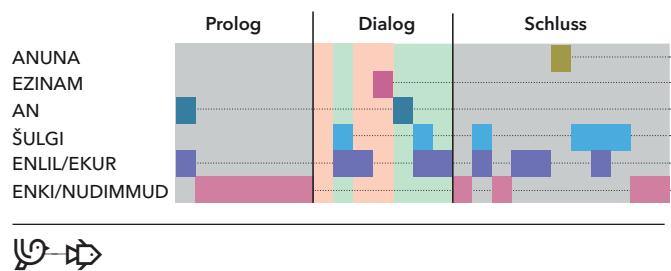


Fig. 18: Götter in *Vogel und Fisch*.

In *Vogel und Fisch* werden im Prolog Enki, Enlil und An genannt (Fig. 18). Während letzterer nur vom Vogel, dem Gewinner des Rangstreits in der zweiten Rede aufgenommen wird, taucht Enlil (direkt oder indirekt über seinen Tempel Ekur) in den Reden beider Kontrahenten auf. Es ist jedoch zu erkennen, dass sich erneut der Vogel häufiger zu diesem Gott in Bezug setzt. Des Weiteren erwähnt auch nur der Vogel König Šulgi, der im Rahmen der Plädoyers eine nicht klar definierbare, aber offenbar wichtige Rolle innehat.¹⁶

Hieraus ergibt sich der Schluss, dass der Sieger jeweils geschicktere und bedeutendere Bezüge herstellt als der Verlierer. Eine wichtige Beobachtung ist ausserdem, dass Enki, dem in beiden Rangstreitgesprächen als (Mit-)Richter eine zentrale Rolle zukommt, nie innerhalb des Dialogs genannt wird.

11 Eine solche narrative Passage findet sich lediglich in *Vogel und Fisch* und stellt deshalb kein konstituierendes Element eines Rangstreitgesprächs dar; anders Vanstiphout 1990: 287–288.

12 Eine Versöhnung findet sich in *Sommer und Winter* sowie in *Dumuzi und Enkimdu*.

13 Ein weiterer interessanter Punkt ist die Charakterisierung der Gegner im Rahmen der Redeüberleitungen innerhalb des Wettstreits; s. dazu die Habilitationsschrift von Mittermayer (Anm. 1) Kap. 4.3.

14 Von einer Häufung wird gesprochen, wenn die Gottheit mindestens zweimal genannt ist.

15 Ein weiterer Unterschied auf der narrativen Ebene ist der Name der Kontrahentinnen: Während *Ezinam* die Vergöttlichung des Getreides repräsentiert, ist das Mutterschaf in der Mehrheit der Texte ein gewöhnliches Tier. Eine Ausnahme hierzu bilden die Texte aus Ur, die beide Kontrahentinnen vergöttlichen.

16 Herrmann 2010: 64 sieht in Šulgi den Richter. Dieses Amt wird jedoch von Enki ausgeübt, s. dazu Zeile 166 (= Redeeinleitung zum Urteilsspruch), die den Bezug zu Enki aus den beiden vorangehenden Zeilen 164–165 aufnimmt.

Die Darstellung der Gegner im Prolog kann gut am Beispiel von *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* untersucht werden (Fig. 19):

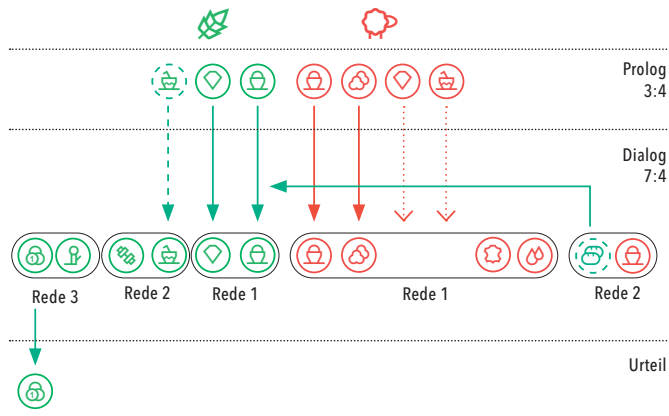


Fig. 19: Eigenschaften in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Für beide Kontrahentinnen werden im Prolog mehrere Eigenschaften aufgeführt. Für Ezinam ist es ihr Aspekt als Nahrung ⊕ und ihre Schönheit ◇, ein weiteres ihrer Produkte, das Bier ⚗, wird indirekt im Rahmen des Streitgrundes (= Überleitung 1) genannt. Dem Mutterschaf werden auf der anderen Seite vier Qualitäten zugeschrieben: Ebenfalls sein Aspekt als feste Nahrung ⊕ und seine Schönheit ◇, des Weiteren Wolle ⚗ und Milch als flüssige Nahrung ⚗. An dieser Stelle könnte man zum Schluss kommen, dass das Mutterschaf als Verliererin auf der narrativen Ebene besser dargestellt wird als Ezinam.

Betrachtet man jedoch, wie die Streitenden mit dieser Vorgabe umgehen, wird deutlich, dass das Mutterschaf seinen Vorteil nicht nutzt. Ezinam greift sämtliche Eigenschaften aus dem Prolog (—→) und aus der Überleitung 1 (- - -→) in ihrer ersten Rede auf. In den folgenden Reden führt sie weitere Aspekte für sich ein wie ihre Stärke ⚔, Demut ⚡ und ihren Wert als Tauschobjekt/Währung ⚖. Das Mutterschaf hingegen nimmt nur zwei der Vorgaben aus dem Prolog auf (—→), zwei weitere bleiben unbeantwortet (·····→). In der ersten Rede fügt es Leder ⚡ und Öl ⚗ hinzu, in der zweiten Rede beginnt es sich zu wiederholen, denn es spricht erneut von seinem Nahrungsaspekt ⊕. Statt für sich ein weiteres Argument anzuführen, spielt es seiner Gegnerin gar eines zu. Denn es nennt für Ezinam das Produkt Brot ⚖,¹⁷ das in dieser konkreten Form von Ezinam nicht angeführt worden war.

Sehr deutlich tritt durch die Grafik zutage, dass Ezinam für jede Rede jeweils zwei Eigenschaften einsetzt, ihr zuletzt genannter Aspekt ist schliesslich auch derjenige, der ihr den Sieg verleiht. Anders verschiebt das Mutterschaf sein Pulver bereits in seiner ersten Rede (vier Aspekte) und muss sich dann in der zweiten wiederholen.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich festhalten, dass das Mutterschaf auf der narrativen Ebene über den Prolog

eigentlich die besseren Voraussetzungen erhält (4:3), dass es aber im Wettstreit weniger daraus macht als Ezinam (4:7). So unterstützt die narrative Ebene indirekt die Gewinnerin, denn diese vermag im Wettstreit im Vergleich zum Prolog zu überraschen, während die Verliererin enttäuscht.

6.3. Argumentative Ebene

Auf der argumentativen Ebene soll – wie der Name der Ebene bereits deutlich macht – untersucht werden, wie die Streitenden zum einen Argumente einbringen und zum anderen mit denen des Gegners umgehen und ob auch hier ein Unterschied zwischen den Kontrahenten erkennbar ist. Hierbei soll in einem ersten Schritt die Verwendung der Argumentationstechniken betrachtet werden, in einem zweiten Schritt der Umgang mit den Inhalten.

Elf Argumentationstechniken können differenziert werden: Selbstlob, Abwertung, Selbstnennung, Voraussetzung, Forderung, Vorwurf, Drohung, Widerlegung, Überbietung, Vergleich und Relation.¹⁸

Das Balkendiagramm (Fig. 20) zeigt, wie die einzelnen Techniken in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* eingesetzt werden:

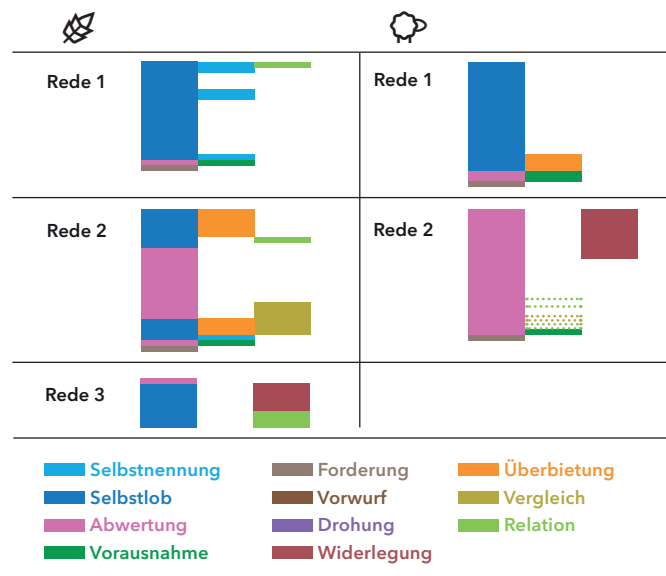


Fig. 20: Argumentationstechniken in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf*.

Als erstes fällt die Häufung des Selbstlobs (●) und der Abwertung (●) auf, die als Basistechniken verwendet werden. Sie erstrecken sich bei beiden Gegnerinnen beinahe über die gesamte Redezeit, lediglich in den jeweils letzten Zeilen der Reden wird eine Forderung (●) ausgesprochen.

Als zweites wird deutlich, dass in den ersten Reden der Kontrahentinnen jeweils das Selbstlob überwiegt. Sie legen ihre Qualitäten dar, die im Rahmen der narrativen Ebene besprochen wurden. Danach sind deutliche Unterschiede in den gegnerischen Reden zu beobachten.

¹⁷ Das Mutterschaf spricht von der Zubereitung des Teiges und vom Backen desselben im Ofen (Z. 155-159).

¹⁸ S. dazu im Detail die Habilitationsschrift von Mittermayer (Anm. 1) Kap. 6.

ten. Während Ezinam auch in der zweiten und dritten Rede ein Selbstlob einbaut und jeweils zwei weitere Qualitäten für sich ins Feld führt, konzentriert sich das Mutterschaf einzig auf die Abwertung der Gegnerin.

Als drittes ist zu erkennen, dass innerhalb des Selbstlobs und der Abwertung weitere Argumentationstechniken eingesetzt werden können. Hierbei fällt auf, dass einzelne Techniken nur bei der siegreichen Ezinam auftauchen. In ihrer ersten Rede verwendet sie mehrfach die Selbstnennung (●), und mit der Relation (●) eröffnet und beschliesst sie den Wettstreit:

Relation 1. Rede:

„Schwester, ich habe den Vorrang vor dir, ich stehe vor dir.“¹⁹

Relation 3. Rede:

„Wenn (dann) einer deine Innereien zum Marktplatz gebracht und dein eigenes Band um deinen Hals gelegt hat, sprechen sie zum ihm <füll mir Gerste in das *ban*-Mass für mein Mutterschaf.“²⁰

Auch das Mutterschaf versucht sich in seiner zweiten Rede an einer Relation. Unglücklicherweise stellt es sich in der Relation jedoch unter seine Gegnerin:

„Auch du bist wie ich etwas Essbares. (Nur) weil man das Auge auf deine Essenz/Kraft richtet, bin ich (deshalb etwa) Zweite?“²¹

Der Einsatz dieser Technik beim Mutterschaf ist deshalb als missglückt zu werten (⋯⋯⋯).

Weitere Argumentationstechniken, die in Spalte 2 und 3 aufgeführt sind, bedingen eine Interaktion mit dem gegnerischen Argument. Als wichtigste sind hier die Überbietung (●) und die Widerlegung (●) zu nennen. Die Überbietung eines gegnerischen Arguments ist eine sehr starke Technik, da sie nicht nur das Argument des Gegenübers zunichte macht, sondern gleichzeitig auch eines zum eigenen Nutzen anführt. Aus der Grafik wird deutlich, dass diese Technik zwar vom Mutterschaf in der ersten Rede eingeführt wird, dass sie später aber weitaus mehr von Ezinam angewendet wird.

Das Mutterschaf setzt stattdessen in seiner zweiten Rede auf die Widerlegung. Diese Technik ist wesentlich schwächer als die Überbietung, da sie dem Sprecher nicht zugute kommt, sondern lediglich ein gegnerisches Argument aufhebt. Es fällt auf, dass das Mutterschaf die Widerlegung im Rahmen der Abwertung einsetzt, d. h. es widerlegt ein Argument der Ezinam. Letztere hingegen setzt die Widerlegung im Rahmen des Selbstlobes ein, was bedeutet, dass sie einen gegnerischen Angriff widerlegt, was wesentlich effektiver und wichtiger ist in einem Rangstreitgespräch.

Wie das Balkendiagramm (Fig. 21) zeigt, wiederholen sich einige der eben gemachten Beobachtungen

19 Z. 71 nin₃ dub-saġ-zu-me-en igi-še₃ ma-ra(-ab)-gub-be₂-en.
20 Z. 176–178 ša₃-tur₃-zu KI.LAM-ka lu₂ u₃-bi₂-in-DU /
u⁹niġ₂-dara₂ ni₂-zu gu₂-za u₃-bi₂-in-la₂ u₈-ġa₂ še^{6es}ba-an-e
si-ma-ab lu₂ lu₂ in-na-ab-be₂.
21 Z. 163–165 u₃ ze₄-e ġe₂₆-e-gen₇ niġ₂-gu₇-u₃-me-en / me-za igi
mi-ni-ib-il₂-la-ke₄-eš / u₃ ġe₂₆-e egir-bi im-us₂-e(n).

auch in Bezug auf den Einsatz der Argumentationstechniken in *Vogel und Fisch*:

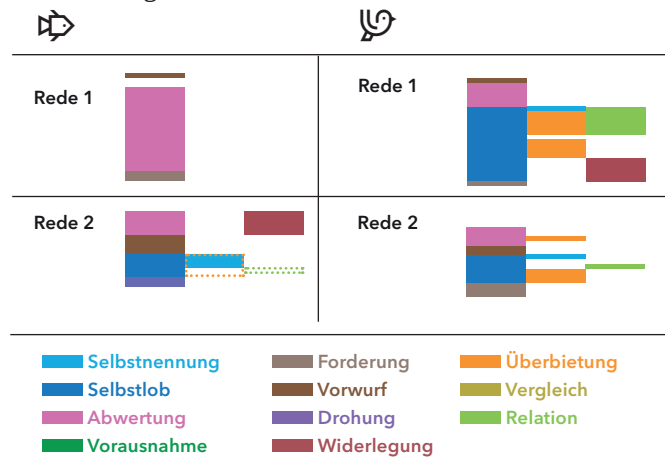


Fig. 21: Argumentationstechniken in *Vogel und Fisch*.

- Beim Verlierer (Fisch) überwiegt die Abwertung, während beim Gewinner das Selbstlob dominiert.
- Selbstnennung und Überbietung tauchen in jeder Rede des Vogels auf, während sich der Fisch nur in seiner zweiten Rede nach dem Vorbild des Vogels an diesen Techniken versucht. Die Selbstnennung gelingt ihm, die Überbietung scheitert jedoch (⋯⋯⋯).
- Die Widerlegung taucht beim Verlierer im Rahmen der Abwertung auf, während sie beim Sieger im Rahmen des Selbstlobes auftaucht.

Für beide Rangstreitgespräche lässt sich festhalten, dass die Argumentationstechniken mehrheitlich im Rahmen des Selbstlobes eingesetzt werden. Dies zeigt, dass der Fokus auf der Selbstdarstellung der Streitenden liegt (bzw. liegen sollte) und nicht auf der Abwertung des Gegners. Letzteres wird von den Verlierern jedoch oft im Übermass getan.

Das folgende Balkendiagramm (Fig. 22) stellt die verwendeten Techniken einander gegenüber:

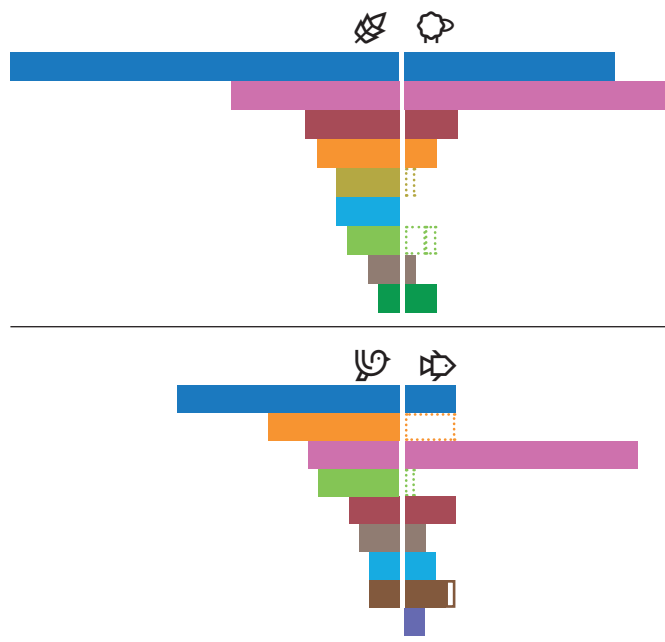


Fig. 22: Argumentationstechniken im Vergleich.

Es wird deutlich, dass beim Sieger das Selbstlob und die Abwertung etwa im Verhältnis 2:1 stehen, während beim Verlierer die Abwertung dominiert. Komplexere Techniken wie Überbietung, Relation und Vergleich (letzterer ist nur in *Ezinam und Mutterschaf* belegt) tauchen vor allem in den Siegerreden auf, der Verlierer setzt sie mehrheitlich falsch ein (leere Balken). In *Vogel und Fisch* wird eine Technik nur vom Fisch verwendet. Die Drohung (●) ist jedoch keine sehr eloquente Argumentationstechnik, sondern eher ein emotionaler Ausbruch. Deshalb kann auch dieser Punkt dem Fisch nicht zum Vorteil gereichen.

Aus der Präsenz-Absenz Grafik (Fig. 23) geht hervor, dass der Sieger mehrheitlich die Techniken der Vorrede übernimmt:

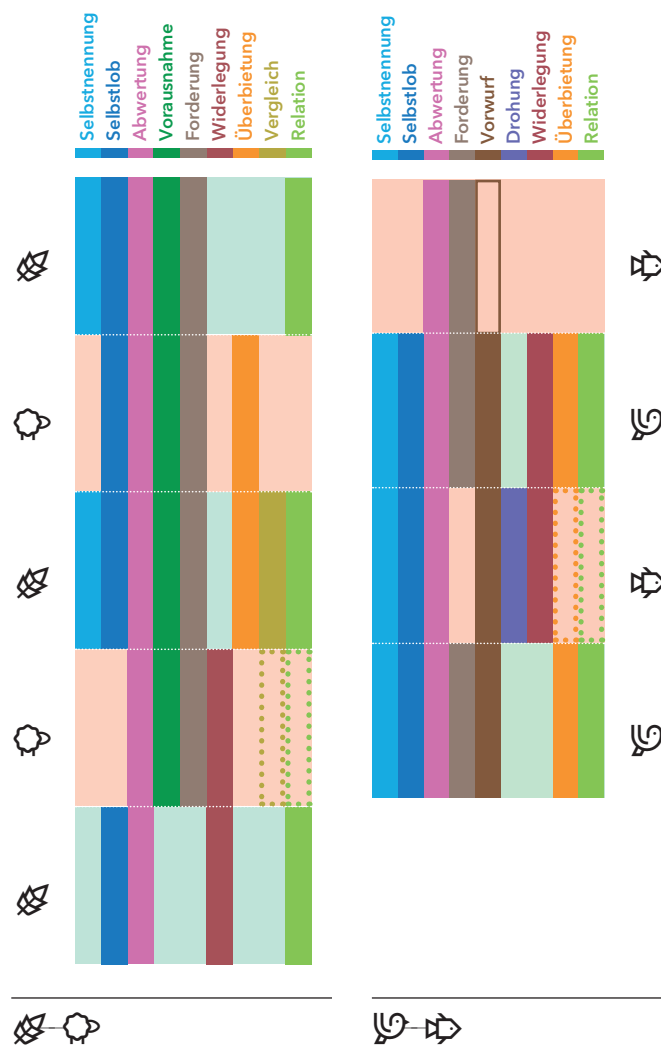


Fig. 23: Übernahme der gegnerischen Argumentationstechnik.

Eine Ausnahme bildet die dritte Rede der Ezinam. Sie ist vergleichsweise kurz und bietet deshalb nicht Raum für alle vorgegebenen Techniken. Eine weitere Ausnahme bildet die Drohung in *Vogel und Fisch*. Der Vogel übernimmt diese Technik nicht und zeigt damit, dass er sich nicht auf das Niveau des Fische herabgibt.

Der Verlierer lässt hingegen immer wieder Techniken des Siegers unbeachtet und nimmt diese nicht auf. Als auffälligstes Beispiel kann die Selbstnennung in

Ezinam und Mutterschaf genannt werden. An anderen Techniken scheitert er, vergleiche hierzu die Relation in beiden Rangstreitgesprächen.

Der inhaltliche Umgang mit den gegnerischen Argumenten kann gut am Beispiel von *Vogel und Fisch* untersucht werden. Die aus dem Blasendiagramm (in Kap. 4.6) weiterentwickelte Grafik (Fig. 24) zeigt beispielhaft, wie die Streitenden die Technik der Widerlegung → und der Überbietung → im Zusammenhang mit den drei debattierten Themen *Gesang + Geschrei* ●, *Schönheit + Hässlichkeit* ● sowie *Opfer* ● einsetzen.

Der Fisch hält dem Vogel in seiner ersten Rede mehrfach sein Geschrei (za-pa-ağ₂) vor. Der Vogel widerlegt dieses Argument jedoch mit dem Hinweis darauf, dass sein schöner Gesang den König erfreut.²² In seiner zweiten Rede greift der Fisch das Thema auf und wirft dem Vogel erneut vor, unreflektiert herumzubrüllen (Z. 85).²³ Er stellt sein Argument jedoch nicht in Zusammenhang mit der Vorrede seines Gegners, es wirkt vielmehr zusammenhangslos. Deshalb wird es auch vom Vogel in seiner letzten Rede nicht weiter aufgenommen.

Das Thema „Schönheit/Hässlichkeit“ wird vom Vogel in seiner ersten Rede eingeführt. Er bezeichnet seinen Gegner als hässlich (Z. 56–57) und stellt dem in Überbietung seine eigene Schönheit gegenüber (Z. 68–71). Der Fisch nimmt das Thema kurz in einer Zeile auf und stellt den Vogel als hässlich dar (Z. 84). Er widerlegt damit die Schönheit des Vogels, kümmert sich aber nicht um den Angriff gegen sein eigenes Aussehen. Der Vogel hingegen lässt die Beleidigung nicht auf sich sitzen. Er weist darauf hin, dass sich selbst an seinem Umhergehen erfreut (Z. 127), womit das Thema Hässlichkeit des Vogels widerlegt ist.

Das letzte Beispiel betrifft das Thema „Opfer“. Der Fisch wirft dem Vogel in seiner ersten Rede vor, als Opfergabe zu dienen (Z. 39–44). Überbietend weist der Vogel in seiner Reaktion darauf hin, dass der Fisch seine Kleinen in den Marschen ihm als Opfergabe darbringt (Z. 62–65). In seiner zweiten Rede möchte der Fisch die Vorgabe des Vogels ebenfalls überbieten. Er trägt vor, dass er Opfergaben ins Ekur bringt, dass er den Hunger des Landes stillt und dass sich der Vogel wie auch das ganze Volk an ihm erfreut (Z. 93–97). Mit dem Hinweis auf die Opfergabe für das Ekur ist eigentlich eine gute Überbietung vorgegeben. Der Fisch macht jedoch den Fehler, dass er gleichzeitig die Abwertung des Vogels bestätigt, indem er sagt, dass auch der Vogel sich an ihm erfreuen würde, was den guten Ansatz der Technik zerstört. Der Vogel überbietet schliesslich in seiner letzten Rede die Vorgabe „Opfergabe für das Ekur“, indem er auf die ausgezeichnete Qualität seiner Produkte verweist, die für das Leben des Šulgi ins Ekur geliefert werden (Z. 129–131).

²² Sein Argument wird durch Enkis Urteil unterstützt, in dem festgehalten wird, dass der Gesang (za-pa-ağ₂) des Vogels die Götter erfreut (Z. 169–170).

²³ Für die Zeilenzählung von *Vogel und Fisch* s. die Habilitationsschrift von Mittermayer (Anm. 1).

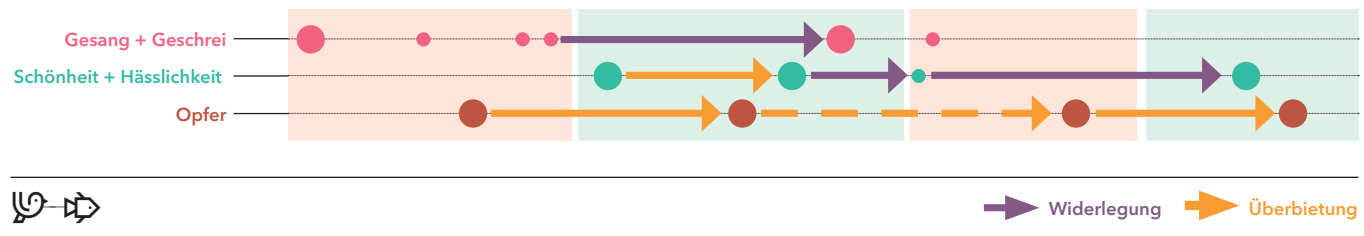


Fig. 24: Widerlegung und Überbietung in *Vogel und Fisch*.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich festhalten, dass sich auf der argumentativen Ebene sowohl beim Einsatz der Argumentationstechniken als auch beim Umgang mit den Themen deutlich die Überlegenheit des Siegers zeigt.

7 Ausblick

Dies war nur ein kleiner Einblick dessen, was mit Hilfe von Visualisierungen der Keilschrifttexte dargestellt und herausgelesen werden kann. Das Anwendungsfeld kann beliebig vergrößert werden:

- Erweiterung des Textkorpus (Einbezug z. B. Schülerstreitgespräche) oder Vergleich mit den akkadischen oder den viel jüngeren mittelalterlichen Exemplaren. Mittels Methoden der Datenvisualisierung kann nicht nur ein Text im Detail untersucht, sondern auch eine Vielzahl an Texten miteinander verglichen werden, da beim Distant

Reading grosse Textmengen gleichzeitig quantitativ und statistisch betrachtet werden.

- Die Methoden der Visualisierung können auch auf andere literarische Gattungen angewendet werden. Hier könnten sie beispielsweise bei Texten mit einer langen Tradierung interessant sein, um Kontinuitäten oder Diskontinuitäten z. B. im Handlungsablauf oder in der Charakterisierung der Protagonisten herauszuarbeiten.
- Auch die Textrekonstruktion wäre sicher ein weiteres spannendes Anwendungsfeld für Visualisierungen.

Die Literaturwissenschaft nutzt bereits statistische Mittel, um den Sprachstil zu untersuchen. Sie analysiert beispielsweise die Häufigkeit von Wörtern innerhalb eines Textes, um Autoren, Gattungen, Werke und Epochen zu charakterisieren oder um anonyme Autoren zu identifizieren. Möglicherweise finden sich auch hier Ansatzpunkte, die in der Altorientalistik anwendbar sind.

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Gilgameš's ghosts

A case for Enkidu's *Catalog of the Dead* as a manual for apprentice exorcists

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Abstract: Enkidu's "*Catalog of the Dead*" from the end of *Gilgameš, Enkidu, and the Netherworld* (GEN) presents a uniquely comprehensive view of the Mesopotamian afterlife. Archaeological evidence indicates that this list was used during scribal education, but the specific value of the text has been unclear. A parallel to Enkidu's *catalog*, a list of ghosts from the OB incantation tablet BM 78185, suggests that the context may have been to train scribes in the vocabulary and knowledge necessary for exorcism and other religious activities involving the dead. This interpretation is also supported by another parallel between the texts. Together, these data argue in favor of reading Enkidu's description of the netherworld as an accurate portrait of ancient Mesopotamian eschatology.

Keywords: Gilgameš, Enkidu, netherworld, dead, ghost, spirit, afterlife, incantation, education, scribe, school, exorcism.

The conclusion of *Gilgameš, Enkidu, and the Netherworld* (or GEN) presents a number of fascinating problems for Assyriologists. Among others, it is the source for the contentious twelfth tablet of the Standard Babylonian version of the *Epic of Gilgameš*; furthermore, it presents a view of the afterlife significantly at odds with that preserved in many other Mesopotamian compositions; and it exhibits a profound level of variation between its exemplars not only in the order of the ghosts in each witness, but also in the presence of any particular ghost in each witness. Gadotti's new edition is a major step forward for scholars interested in this text, but her research has also raised many new questions, many of which remain unanswered.¹

In the final adventure of GEN's sprawling narrative, Enkidu offers to enter the netherworld to recover some of Gilgameš's lost *pukku* and *mekku*.² Unfortunately, he ignores Gilgameš's instructions about how to do so safely, is trapped, and held prisoner by the dead themselves. Gilgameš begs the gods to intercede and somehow, either alive or dead,³ Enkidu returns to share with Gilgameš a report of what he saw. After a short narrative introduction, the remainder of the report is structured consistently: Gilgameš asks Enkidu if he saw a particular type of spirit, and Enkidu responds with a

description of that spirit's condition in the afterlife. The variety of ghosts described offers a surprisingly broad view of the afterlife: there are spirits who enjoy rest and luxury, based upon factors such as their number of heirs, their behavior while living, or their age at death; and there are spirits who suffer endless torment, due to their manner of death, as well as their behavior while living and their failure to produce heirs. *This* vision, in other words, describes a fairly hopeful (and modern!) view of the netherworld: through adherence to social norms while living, one has a reasonably high chance of experiencing (for lack of a better word) a positive afterlife, rather than a negative one.

Unfortunately for the study of Mesopotamian eschatology, the line of argumentation from a literary description of the afterlife to an understanding of Sumerian belief systems is not a straight one. Scholars have certainly used GEN as evidence for their understanding of this system.⁴ Unfortunately, as a general rule, we do not know the original use context or purpose of Mesopotamian literary texts, *especially* the heroic epics. Not only have the surviving copies of cuneiform documents been found only very rarely in a location or context that might indicate an original (i.e., non-scholastic) use, but the contents of the documents themselves have also given us little guidance in this regard.⁵ Since we

1 Gadotti 2014. I follow Gadotti's edition for all GEN line numbers in this paper.

2 Cryptic terms, most likely some form of sporting equipment. However, see footnote 14 for my own thoughts on the topic.

3 There is some debate on this point. In the later, Standard Babylonian version of the *Epic of Gilgameš*, Enkidu explicitly returns as a ghost. Gadotti 2014: 83–91 argues that he is resurrected, however, see Attinger 2015: 236–238 for a review of her argument.

4 E.g., Kramer 1960; Shaffer 1963; Bottéro 1980; Katz 2003; Barrett 2007; Cooper 2009.

5 An excellent summary of the difficulties interpreting the use context of Sumerian literary texts can be found in Rubio 2009: 25–28. Other genres, such as school texts, incantation texts, omen texts, etc. do not present this problem to the same degree, because the content of the texts gives us compelling clues

do not know who the intended ancient audience was, we cannot be sure how these documents would have been interpreted by that audience. Did the recitation of a particular text accompany a religious ritual? Was it strictly for entertainment? Was it a traditional folk-tale, or the recent creation of one (or more?) highly educated scribe(s)? Each of these scenarios is perfectly reasonable, given how little we truly know about the Mesopotamian literary culture; and without knowing which one to prefer, we do not know how to accurately interpret the data contained within the literary texts.

What this means for GEN is that, despite the relatively complete portrait of an afterlife painted by the *catalog*, we cannot immediately assume that it depicted an afterlife *believed in* by a significant portion of the contemporary population of Mesopotamia. We must first demonstrate that relationship through ancient evidence. Luckily, the last few decades have witnessed a transformation in how we understand cuneiform literary texts. One of the most important developments has certainly been the recovery of the curriculum of literary texts used to train apprentice scribes during the OB period.⁶ The scribal school is our only secure environment for many cuneiform literary texts, and apprentice scribes our only secure audience. And although we normally assume this to be a secondary use of the text, this does not mean that it is a *meaningless* use of the text. For example, Tinney (1999: 162–168) has argued that the Tetrad, a group of four simple literary compositions, trained scribes in vocabulary, grammar, and poetic style, based (among other factors) on the occurrence of witnesses of these compositions on learners' tablets and on their grammatical and poetic structure. Veldhuis (2004: 65–66) took that argument a step further by hypothesizing that every literary text that was used in scribal education, trained apprentices in a particular skill necessary to scribal practice. For example, a letter to the mythical king Gilgameš might have taught apprentice scribes the epistolary format. Therefore, Veldhuis (2004: 110–111) has argued that, if we can understand the value of a literary text's contents to the *scribal community*, this will provide us with the data necessary to understand its purpose, at least in an educational context.

Was GEN among those texts used in scribal education? At least in Nippur, the evidence suggests that it was. In Nippur, fifteen fragments of GEN (including one of Enkidu's *catalog*, N14), were found within a structure that scholars have shown was almost certainly a scribal school. Robson has concluded, based on the relative frequency of GEN among the various literary fragments found within this building, that this composition almost certainly performed a curricular role there.⁷ Also, three of the ten surviving Nippur witnesses of Enkidu's *catalog* are one-column extract tablets.⁸ This format is

about how they were used.

6 See Tinney 1999 for a survey of this curriculum.

7 Robson 2001: 52–57. She holds out the possibility that it performed the same function in Ur, but lacks the data to prove it.

8 Gadotti 2014: 132; see Veldhuis 1997: 28–39 and Tinney 1999:

known to have been used in the educational process. Furthermore, based on the *catalog*'s structural similarity to a lexical list, Gadotti (2014: 120–121) has argued that the text *might* have been used in advanced scribal education, but she does not specify for what reason; and she is clearly uncomfortable with that conclusion, citing the difficulty of the grammar and the vocabulary. So, while GEN's instructional use is clear, its purpose has remained a mystery.

A possible solution may be found in BM 78185, an OB forerunner to the later Udug Һul incantation series, which exorcised and banished the restless dead (see **Table 1**).⁹

Many of the gidim, or ghosts, listed in this tablet as potential plagues of the living, bear a striking similarity to the spirits described in Enkidu's *Catalog of the Dead*.¹⁰ For example, lines 16 and 17 of BM 78185 arguably describe the same ghosts as lines 275 and 277 of GEN. Any one of the ghosts in lines 18, 19, or 20 of the incantation may be equated with GEN 289, since they all seem to indicate a lack of burial as the consequence of a death in the wilderness. Line 21 may describe the same spirit as GEN 287, who died in a battle, while lines 23 and 24 both resemble GEN 279. Line 25 may very well describe a man who drowned, like GEN 283.¹¹ The most compelling parallel, however, is certainly line 26, which refers to the lu₂ ur₃-ta ba-šub, the man who fell from the roof, and which corresponds with GEN 281.

Thanks to a number of later parallels,¹² we know fairly well how to interpret the list of ghosts in BM 78185. These spirits are the udug Һul, the restless dead, who attached themselves to the living and nourished themselves on the person's life-force, resulting in illness, suffering, and potentially death. On account of the many such incantation texts from the OB period and later, with clear instructions included for a reader or exorcist, we generally believe that these incantation texts were actually used in a ritual fashion to exorcise spirits, and therefore had a practical function, in addition to any literary functions.¹³ Following Veldhuis' model, the numerous and highly specific correspondences between BM 78185 (with a well-understood context of use) and Enkidu's *catalog* suggest that this portion of GEN, at least, might have belonged to the scribal curriculum to train scribes in the specialized knowledge necessary to be an *āšipu*, or exorcist.

160–161 for a more complete description of the various tablet types. These are Veldhuis' "Type III".

9 Geller 1985: 36–39. BM 78185 (Geller's text H), lines 14–31, corresponding to 311–327 of Geller's edition of UHF.

10 First noticed by Cooper 2009: 27.

11 Although Attinger (2015: 247) has argued that GEN 283 means "the man whom Iškur overturned" (translation by the author from the original "l'homme qu'Iškur a renversé").

12 See Geller 2007 (or the recently released Geller 2016) for an overview of the first-millennium *utukkū lemnūtu* series.

13 It is not clear just how broadly this eschatology extended in Mesopotamia; it may well have been limited to the scribal class or the elite, or it may have applied to the population as a whole. Unfortunately, since we have such little data on the non-literate classes, we cannot speak with any certainty about their religious beliefs.

14	gidim kur-ta 'e ₃ -da' ḫ[e ₂]-me-en	Whether you are a ghost coming from the Netherworld,
15	lil ₂ -en-na ki-'nu ₂ ' nu-tuku ḫ[e ₂]-'me-en'	Whether you are a "wind of the lord" ^{a)} that has no resting place,
16	'ki ²¹ -siki ²¹ ' šu 'nu-du ₇ '-a ḫe ₂ -[me-en]	Whether you are a virgin,
17	'guruš a ₂ ' nu-la ₂ ḫe ₂ -'me-en	Whether you are a young man whose arm is not bound,
18	lu ₂ edin-na 'šub-ba-de ₃ ' ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man who is cast on the steppe,
19	lu ₂ edin-na 'ba-ug ₅ '-ga ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man who died in the steppe,
20	'lu ₂ ' edin-na 'saḫar-nu-dul' ḫe ₂ -me-e[n]	Whether you are a man not covered by earth in the steppe,
21	'lu ₂ ' ^{giš} tukul-a ba-an-gaz ḫe ₂ -me-'en'	Whether you are a man killed by a weapon,
22	l[u ₂ p]eš ₁₀ ba-an!-gul-'la' ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man who was destroyed in a <i>wadi</i> , ^{b)}
23	l[u ₂] 'ur-e' ba-an-gaz ḫe ₂ -me-'en'	Whether you are a man whom a lion killed,
24	l[u ₂] 'ur-e ba'-an-gu ₇ ḫe ₂ -me-'en'	Whether you are a man whom a lion devoured,
25	'lu ₂ ' a-a b[a]-uš ₂ ḫe ₂ -me-'en'	Whether you are a man who died in water,
26	lu ₂ 'ur ₃ -ta ba-šub' ḫe ₂ -me-e[n]	Whether you are a man who fell from a roof,
27	lu ₂ ^{giš} gišimmar-ta ba-ra ⁷ -ni-šub ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man who fell down from a date palm,
28	'lu ₂ ' ^{giš} ma ₂ -ni i ₃ -su ₃ '-a ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man whose ship sank,
29	[lu ₂] 'lag'-a ba-šub' ḫe ₂ -me-en	Whether you are a man at whom a clod was thrown (?),
30	[..] 'x x' [..ḫe ₂]-me-en	Whether you are...

a) Since Geller originally published this, this term has been understood as an epithet for the goddess Inanna. C.f. Edzard/Krebernik 1987–1990; Groneberg 1997: 48; and Keetman 2007: 19. See below for another provocative parallel between *Inanna's Descent*, GEN, and BM 78185.

b) Lit. "a man, having been crushed (by?) a riverbank." But the sign /peš₁₀/ is KI.A, so, the "place of water". It occasionally appears in lexical lists (Using DCCLT numbering, not MSL 13: Nigga, line 569, or OB Kagal, line 515) as /peš₁₀ gul/, "the destroying place of water". Pascal Attinger has also informed me in a personal communication that "peš₁₀-gul = *na-ḫa-al-lum* in SLT 3, ii 14 quoted by DCCLT (the reading by MSL 13, 87:42 is inaccurate)." So, I have interpreted it as a reference to death in a flash flood, or otherwise through a combination of a torrent of water and the fragile walls of a canal or creek.

Table 1: BM 78185: 14–30.

What of the rest? Veldhuis based his model around *Nanše and the Birds*, which has a very short (almost nonexistent) literary introduction to its substantial word list. GEN is the other way around; it has a sprawling introduction, covering divine actions, heroic feats, and sporting matches, before its list of ghosts. However, Pettinato (2000) has observed a strong similarity between the introductions to BM 78185, GEN, and *Inanna's Descent*, specifically, that they all begin with a similarly-phrased descent of a divinity to the underworld. Assuming that the introduction's purpose in BM 78185 is related to the text's ritual purposes, one can speculate that GEN's introduction might also be an indicator for eschatological content, perhaps giving the scribe an early clue as to the purpose of this text. Gilgameš's defeat of the monsters in Inanna's tree could be a heroic "foundation story" for the exorcist's art, and the narrative component of the text as a whole might be a foundation narrative of sorts for the craft and practice of the *āšipu*.¹⁴

14 In this case, productive avenues of research may include exploring the incantation corpus for ritual instruments of exorcism that are related to, or parallel, the *pukku* and *mekku*, or the furniture that Gilgameš builds for Inanna from the wood of the *ḫalub* tree.

If Enkidu's *catalog* was indeed a textbook for exorcistic rituals, however, why is there such variation the different witnesses, especially those from different cities? It is impossible to answer this question with the data that is currently available. Gadotti points out that lists in Sumerian literary compositions often contain a high amount of variability;¹⁵ so this could be a normal practice for literary texts formatted after a lexical list. However, it could also reflect regional differences in eschatology, or it might provide evidence as to how such compositions were usually transmitted from teacher to student, e.g., from memory rather than from physical copies, and even between scribal schools, given the significant differences between the Nippur and Ur recensions. Hopefully, further research into textual composition and variation will shed some light on this question.¹⁶

15 Gadotti 2014: 109.

16 I hope that someone will eventually do a bit of "experimental Assyriology", comparing the types of errors made by students asked to reproduce a list such as this from a copy, from dictation, and from memory, to get some insight into how these composition tablets were produced. I would hypothesize that we would see results similar to the variation observed in Enkidu's *catalog* only from the last method.

In summary, the parallels between GEN's *Catalog of the Dead* and BM 78185 firmly anchor the former in Mesopotamian religious praxis.¹⁷ Also, the use contexts of the discovered GEN fragments suggest that this text was intended to teach the ritual or cultic language and knowledge associated with those beliefs to advanced scribes. This supports the case of those scholars who have used this text as evidence for Mesopotamian religious beliefs.¹⁸ It also suggests that the oft-discussed dichotomy between fear of the dead and providing for the dead is a false one; instead, every offering to the dead

shared both motivations. The dead were members of the family, of the community, and like any other, would respond to their treatment in kind, either benefitting the descendants who supported them, or afflicting the descendants (and innocent passers-by) who ignored them. The border between the worlds of the living and the dead was porous and unclear; and while the dead could not transform back into being alive, passage and interaction across the boundary was nonetheless a regular part of life.

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¹⁷ It seems also likely that the so-called "Incantation to Utu" supports this eschatology; hopefully, a new edition of that text, incorporating the many new witnesses that have been discovered since its last edition, will confirm that.

¹⁸ E.g., Cooper 2009, and contra Gadotti 2014: 110. However, this is not to say that other, apparently contradictory depictions of the subject matter, such as *Inanna's Descent* or Tablet VII of the SB Gilgameš, are inaccurate. More likely, it is the case that Mesopotamian religion supported multiple visions of the afterlife, depending on many factors, including social class, ethnicity, and mood. My argument is only that, through BM 78185, we have concrete evidence for *this* afterlife in Mesopotamian ritual, which is lacking for the others.

Le rapport entre texte et image dans les reliefs de Ḥorsābād

Tradition et innovation un siècle et demi après Assurnāṣirpal II

Paolo Matthiae

Abstract: The North-West Palace of Nimrūd played an important role in the formation of a canon for the royal palaces of Assyria with regard to both the formulation of architectural structures and the distribution of the subjects of wall decorations. This canon was only partially adopted in the Palace of Ḥorsābād at the time of Sargon II. It is true that the citadel of Nimrūd was a strong reference model for the architects of Ḥorsābād, but it is also true that their innovations were very remarkable : they mirrored a new ideological and political concept that was certainly related to Sargon II's strong personality. Mythical-symbolic subjects were eliminated and the diffusion of historical subjects in several rooms of the palace of Ḥorsābād was accompanied by the display of the analytical inscription of the Annals and by the synoptic so-called Display Inscription (Prunkinschrift), which complemented and integrated the carved decorations according to a rule different from that adopted at Nimrūd.

Keywords: Ḥorsābād, Neo-Assyrian art, Neo-Assyrian architecture, annals; Prunkinschrift.

La distribution des espaces du Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd d'Assurnāṣirpal II a joui d'une valeur canonique difficile à nier, aussi bien au niveau de la vision proprement spatiale des salles et des cours que de la fonction des différents quartiers centrés sur une cour¹. Il est certain que cette extraordinaire réalisation architectonique du deuxième quart du IX^{ème} siècle av. J.-Chr., dont on n'aurait jamais imaginé devoir pleurer la perte presque totale de nos jours², a été le véritable modèle du palais de Ḥorsābād, malgré une remarquable réinterprétation et réélaboration des espaces due à la nouvelle sensibilité spatiale de ses architectes³ (parmi lesquels aurait figuré le trésorier Tabšar-Aššur⁴), et

ceci, même s'il est impossible de dire quel rôle elle a joué pour le projet du Palais central de Tiglatpileser III, presque complètement disparu⁵.

Le Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd resta la résidence principale des rois d'Assyrie entre la mort d'Assurnāṣirpal II et la prise du pouvoir par Sargon II. Après cette date, il fut encore le siège de l'administration impériale et du souverain lui-même, jusqu'au 6 Ayyaru 706 av. J.-Chr., quand furent achevés les travaux à Ḥorsābād en préparation de la fête d'inauguration de la nouvelle capitale Dūr Šarrukīn⁶.

1 Moortgat 1967 : 130–132 ; Heinrich 1984 : 102–107 ; Matthiae 1996b : 35–54.

2 La destruction totale à Nimrūd de tous les secteurs du Palais nord-ouest où avaient été laissés *in situ* des reliefs de sujet mythico-symbolique a été documentée par une vidéo de l'Isis/Daesh et a surtout été confirmée par les reprises satellitaires : Matthiae 2015a : 232–247.

3 Dans le projet urbanistique, aussi bien en ce qui concerne la structure générale de la ville selon la conception réalisée par Assurnāṣirpal II sur la modeste ville fondée par Salmanassar I que l'organisation spatiale de la citadelle principale, pour la nouvelle fondation de Dūr Šarrukīn, les architectes de Sargon II se sont inspirés de la situation urbaine de Kalḫu ; Matthiae 1994.

4 Ce grand personnage de la cour de Sargon II, qui fort probablement était le titulaire de l'une des résidences de la citadelle de Ḥorsābād fouillées dans la région sud et ouest (si non dans la région nord, non explorée par la Mission de l'Oriental Institute de Chicago) a eu sans aucun doute le rôle de coordinateur de tous les travaux de Dūr Šarrukīn, comme il apparaît de toute évidence dans la correspondance avec le souverain même,

pour laquelle Parpola (1994) a fourni un important aperçu préliminaire. Perroudon (2011) offre une présentation synthétique des interventions majeures du trésorier à Dūr Šarrukīn, qui furent sollicitées directement par Sargon II.

5 Barnett/Falkner 1962 : 1–7 ; Reade 1968 ; Heinrich 1984 : 143 ; Kertai 2015 : 18–48. Oates/Oates 2001 : 71–74, pour expliquer le manque presque total de restes de ce grand bâtiment résidentiel royal, supposent qu'Asarhaddon, lors de son pillage des reliefs à transférer à son Palais sud-ouest, ne se serait pas limité à cette appropriation des dalles sculptées, mais serait arrivé à détruire même les sols de l'édifice.

6 La date exacte de l'achèvement des travaux et de l'inauguration de la ville de Dūr Šarrukīn est fournie dans la « Chronique éponymique », qui mentionne aussi la date du début des travaux sur le site de Magganuba (717 av. J.-Chr.) correspondant à l'année de l'éponymie du trésorier Tabšar-Aššur ; Glassner 1993 : 169. Dans la documentation épigraphique de Dūr Šarrukīn, seul le mois de Tašritu est mentionné pour la date de conclusion des travaux de la nouvelle capitale, et cette mention se trouve uniquement dans l'inscription de l'un des colosses (Porte k), où l'année n'est pas précisée ; Fuchs 1994 : 307 ; Russell 1999 : 107.

Sur le plan urbanistique, plutôt qu'architectural, la citadelle principale de Kalḫu eut sans aucun doute une influence décisive sur le projet de la citadelle de Dūr Šarrukīn et elle fut le modèle de Ḫorsābād, exactement comme le Palais nord-ouest le fut pour le Palais royal de Dūr Šarrukīn, aussi bien dans le choix des bâtiments à construire que dans la fonction des structures programmées – leur disposition dans les espaces, l'orientation des palais et des temples⁷. Pour ne prendre que des exemples immédiatement évidents dans les deux villes on peut mentionner : la position presque centrale des deux palais royaux, tous les deux en face de la porte principale des deux citadelles ; la présence et la position d'un temple majeur, dans les deux villes dédié à Nabû⁸ ; un ensemble de sanctuaires mineurs voués à diverses divinités et concentrés sur l'un des côtés du palais royal ; les résidences des grands de l'empire (parmi lesquels le seul connu sur base épigraphique est le vizir Sinaḫušur, mais auxquels il faut sans doute ajouter sur base archéologique⁹ le prince héritier Sennacherib), dans les espaces en face et à côté du palais royal. En synthèse, on peut affirmer que les architectes de Ḫorsābād, dans la formulation urbanistique de la citadelle de Dūr Šarrukīn, ont reproduit dans leur projet unitaire beaucoup des caractéristiques qui étaient, au contraire, à Nimrūd le résultat de l'activité de plusieurs rois qui s'étaient succédés dans le temps : ce qui à Kalḫu était dû à un développement historique, devint à Dūr Šarrukīn le sujet d'un projet intentionnel et unitaire, qui considérait Kalḫu comme un modèle à imiter¹⁰.

7 La situation urbanistique et la distribution des palais et des temples de la citadelle de Kalḫu à l'époque de Sargon II, en particulier en ce qui concerne la présence d'un remarquable temple de Nabû, résultat d'une série d'initiatives architecturales qui s'étaient succédées dans le temps pendant presque un siècle et demi depuis la mort d'Assurnasirpal II jusqu'à l'avènement de Sargon II (Heinrich 1984 : 107, 121–128, 143–145), fut rationalisée dans le grand projet de Dūr Šarrukīn, où l'on doit voir une étroite collaboration entre le roi lui-même et son trésorier. Oates/Oates (2001 : 105–139) ont examiné en détail les relations spatiales et fonctionnelles des palais mineurs de la citadelle de Kalḫu avec les temples.

8 La monumentalité des temples dédiés à Nabû, aussi bien à Kalḫu qu'à Dūr Šarrukīn, doit être mise en relation avec des cérémonies particulières dont le roi était le protagoniste et qui sont documentées par l'évidence épigraphique étudiée par Postgate (1974).

9 Comme il est bien connu, l'inscription sur la dalle du seuil de la Résidence L a permis l'attribution de cette maison princière, principale maison de la citadelle de Dūr Šarrukīn, au frère du roi. La présence dans la salle du trône 12 de la Résidence K (la plus imposante après celle de Sinaḫušur) de la grande peinture représentant la présentation au dieu Aššur du prince héritier Sennacherib permet cependant de supposer que cette Résidence K, non complétée, n'était autre que la maison privée de Sennacherib ; Loud/Altman 1938 : 65–69, pls. 88–89. Sur la signification de la peinture de la Résidence K, voir les considérations de Brentjes (1999).

10 Matthiae 1996a : 135–155, où est soulignée la particulière originalité des solutions spatiales des architectes de Sargon II, qui annoncent l'innovative vision architectonique du Palais sud-ouest de Sennacherib à Tall Qūyūḡuq (Ninive), caractérisée par les espaces ouverts et une sorte de fluidité spatiale, et qui probablement n'eut pas de suite dans l'architecture, vraisemblablement plus traditionnelle, du Palais nord de Tall Qūyūḡuq au temps d'Assurbanipal ; Moortgat 1967.

Dans la formulation planimétrique du Palais royal de Ḫorsābād, l'inspiration tirée du Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd, que Sargon II appelle le « Palais de genièvre », est évidente à plusieurs niveaux : dans l'alignement classique entre la majeure cour externe VIII, dite du *babānu*, et la mineure cour interne VI, dite du *bitānu*, avec au centre la salle du trône VII ; dans l'orientation de l'ensemble architectural vers l'est où était l'entrée monumentale à la citadelle et du secteur postérieur du bâtiment projeté dans l'extrême région occidentale de la citadelle ; dans la collocation d'une grande cour antérieure XV devant la cour dite du *babānu*¹¹, avec un changement de l'axe des cours (si, comme il est probable, un dispositif pareil existait dans le Palais nord-ouest dans le secteur antérieur occidental non fouillé¹²) ; et dans la disposition latérale et externe par rapport au palais de l'ensemble des sanctuaires mineurs auxquels on pouvait accéder par un portail secondaire de la cour XV à Ḫorsābād et de la cour dite du *babānu* à Nimrūd. D'autre part, comme il est bien connu, une sorte de synthèse d'éléments spatiaux du Palais nord-ouest d'Assurnasirpal II dans la citadelle principale et de l'*ekal māšarti* de Salmanassar III dans la citadelle mineure de Nimrūd, fut mise en œuvre dans la conception du secteur du bâtiment en ressaut avec trois lignes de pièces, probablement créé, pour la première fois, à Nimrūd dans le *Fort Salmanassar*, dans le secteur postérieur du Palais royal, ainsi que dans l'*ekal māšarti* de Ḫorsābād, le Palais F¹³.

Si donc est évidente, dans plusieurs caractéristiques architecturales du Palais royal de Ḫorsābād, une dépendance au « Palais de genièvre » d'Assurnasirpal à Kalḫu, où – il faut le rappeler – Sargon II résida pendant presque tout son règne, bien des nouveautés caractérisent la distribution des sujets des reliefs qui décoraient la nouvelle résidence que Sargon II même

11 La spatialité tout à fait particulière de la grande cour antérieure XV, dont tous les côtés étaient décorés de pilastres de façon à cacher la présence des portails (aussi bien vers la cour dite du *babānu* que vers celle qui permettait d'accéder au quartier sacré des temples), ou en tout cas à les déguiser et différencier des autres portes qui donnaient sur les quartiers administratifs du côté nord-est ; Matthiae 1996a : 137–142.

12 La présence d'une cour à l'ouest de la grande cour du *babānu* du Palais nord-ouest, dont il n'existe aucun témoignage architectural, serait suggérée par le passage P, qui se trouve au sud de l'ensemble des salles de l'importante aile est de la cour dite du *bitānu* Y, et qui a été interprété comme un accès qui aurait permis de rejoindre les quartiers privés méridionaux du palais directement depuis la cour du *babānu* (ou depuis l'extérieur même du palais, ce qui paraît tout à fait invraisemblable) sans passer par la grande Salle du trône B ; Oates/Oates 2001 : 61, g. 33.

13 Moortgat 1967 : 148–152 ; Matthiae 1996a : 142–143 ; Kertai 2015 : 85–117 : dans toutes ces œuvres, l'accent a été mis sur l'innovative vision spatiale des architectes de Sargon II, qui, sur la base de leur conception syntactique des espaces au lieu de celle paratactique typique de l'architecture de Nimrūd du IX^{ème} siècle av. J.-Chr., ne se sont pas limités à assumer un schéma planimétrique plus ancien, mais l'ont utilisé pour réaliser cet effondrement axial des portes qui est l'une des innovations radicales de leur vision, laquelle est contraire à toute la tradition architecturale mésopotamienne et que l'on trouve aussi dans le Palais F de Ḫorsābād ; Loud/Altman 1938. Sur la création et l'histoire de l'emploi de la dénomination *ekal māšarti* pour indiquer le palais-arsenal, voir Matthiae (2010).

appela « Palais inimitable », nom que Sennacherib reprit de son père pour son fameux Palais sud-ouest de Tall Qūyūnḡuq¹⁴. En fait, les ateliers de sculpteurs de Sargon II maintinrent la tradition décorative du Palais nord-ouest, dans un cas d'une façon documentée, dans l'autre cas probablement. Le premier cas est celui de la décoration de la façade externe principale de la salle du trône VII sur le côté nord-ouest de la cour VIII dite du *babānu* et celle secondaire sur le même côté de la cour externe III de la terrasse externe septentrionale : sur cette façade le sujet, aussi bien à Nimrūd qu'à Ḥorsābād, était la livraison de tributs au roi¹⁵. Le deuxième cas est le sujet de la décoration de la salle du trône des deux palais, qui probablement dans les deux cas devait être une synthèse des gestes militaires les plus importantes du roi, mais à Ḥorsābād, sauf pour un tout petit fragment de scène maritime, rien n'est conservé de cette décoration, dont, pourtant, V. Place a laissé des notes dépourvues de toute documentation graphique¹⁶. Si réellement les indications du deuxième fouilleur français de Ḥorsābād sont fiables, on devrait supposer que dans cette salle du trône VII étaient présents, dans un secteur, des cortèges de grandes dimensions de dignitaires qui rendaient hommage au roi et, sur le reste des parois, des reliefs de type militaire¹⁷, qui pouvaient

être une synthèse des campagnes les plus importantes du règne, avec entre autre peut-être une célébration de la dérouté du roi de Babylone Merodachbaladan II¹⁸. Mais il paraît plus probable que V. Place, dans sa description des restes sculpturaux, ait fait une confusion avec une autre salle du palais, peut-être fort proche, et que la salle du trône, dont la décoration aurait été à peine commencée lors de l'inauguration du palais, ne devait avoir que des reliefs à deux registres du genre narratif, comme le prouve le seul fragment trouvé avec certitude dans la salle¹⁹.

Parmi les innovations majeures apportées par les ateliers de Dūr Šarrukīn à la tradition de la décoration sculpturale néo-assyrienne, et plus particulièrement aux règles établies par les sculpteurs de Kalḡu à l'occasion de la construction du Palais nord-ouest, se trouvent : d'une part, la diffusion dans une large partie du palais royal des thèmes de guerres contre les enne-

campagnes contre le redoutable ennemi babylonien de Sargon II est à exclure, car cette identification est fondée sur le fait que dans le bref trait d'inscription conservé au bord supérieur de la scène apparaît le nom du roi de Babylone ; Th. Jacobsen, dans Loud (1936 : 129). Or, ce reste d'inscription n'est pas une légende, mais seulement un passage d'une inscription du type des *Fastes*, qui à Ḥorsābād est reproduite, dans plusieurs salles, dans l'espace intermédiaire entre les deux registres figurés : la présence du nom de Merodachbaladan II dans ce lieu est tout à fait casuelle et elle n'a certainement rien à faire avec la scène sculptée au-dessous.

14 Fuchs 1994 : 372 ; Roaf (2013 : 330–332) a souligné le fait que la dénomination célèbre (« Palais sans rival »), employée par Sennacherib pour célébrer le Palais sud-ouest de Tall Qūyūnḡuq, est un calque mot à mot du nom inventé par Sargon II pour son palais de Dūr Šarrukīn dans la perspective du concept fondamental selon lequel une résidence royale supérieure à toutes celles antérieures et impossible à imiter par ses propres successeurs est une source de gloire impérissable ; Winter 1993.

15 Botta/Flandin 1849–1850 : pl. 29 (« façade n » de P.-É. Botta) ; Albenda 1986 : 63–64, pls c16–18 ; en réalité le cortège de personnages apportant des cadeaux au roi, précédé par le prince héritier et un groupe de très hauts dignitaires à Ḥorsābād, est fort probablement une procession de fonctionnaires assyriens, comme dans la « façade L » de la cour externe occidentale I, alors que le thème de l'apport de tributs au souverain par des étrangers décorait le côté nord-ouest de la grande cour VIII, dite du *babānu*, dénommé lui aussi « façade n » par P.-É. Botta (Botta/Flandin 1849–1850 : pl. 10 ; Albenda 1986 : 66–67, pls. 19–25) ; pour une hypothèse d'identification des hauts dignitaires qui suivent Sennacherib dans ces reliefs des façades externes et de quelque salles du Palais royal de Ḥorsābād, voir Matthiae 2015b. Les reliefs du Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd se trouvent dans les contributions de Meuszyński (1978) et Meuszyński (1981 : 32, 81–82, pls. 5–6).

16 Place (1867–1870 : 51) dit que dans la salle du trône VII, dont P.-É. Botta n'avait fouillé que la façade externe, appelée par lui « façade n », sans rien explorer de l'espace interne, il trouva, en fort mauvaises conditions, des reliefs avec des figures de cortèges, probablement de dignitaires, mais étrangement il n'a fait exécuter aucune documentation graphique. La seule explication possible de ce comportement inusuel de V. Place selon Russell (1999 : 112–113) est qu'il n'avait pas considéré nécessaire d'avoir des dessins, car il avait décidé de transporter à Paris les restes des reliefs, et que ces restes se sont perdus dans le fameux naufrage du 21 mai 1855 au confluent du Tigre et de l'Euphrate de la barque et des *kéleks* chargés du transport ; des 235 caisses chargées à Bagdad, seulement 23 arrivèrent au Louvre le 1^{er} juillet 1856 ; Parrot 1946 : 81–83.

17 Le fragment trouvé par la Mission de l'Oriental Institute de Chicago est publié par Loud (1936 : 58–60, g. 72), où est proposée l'identification du petit fragment du relief à une des campagnes en Babylonie contre Merodachbaladan II. Toutefois, que la scène représentée où on voit des soldats qui tirent un navire près de la rive soit à mettre en relation avec l'une des

18 La présence conjointe dans la salle VII de cortèges et d'une scène maritime serait non seulement un unicum dans les décorations de toutes les salles du trône des palais néo-assyriens, mais aussi une duplication, particulièrement singulière, des sujet de l'ensemble de la « façade n », avec la seule variation que la scène maritime, au lieu d'être représentée sur toute la hauteur des orthostates, aurait été limitée au registre inférieur. En plus, si réellement dans la salle VII V. Place avait trouvé une série de reliefs fort endommagés avec des processions de dignitaires, il est presque impossible que, lors de la nouvelle exploration américaine, aucun fragment de cette décoration n'ait été mis à jour, d'autant plus que les fouilleurs de Chicago notèrent de façon soigneuse la position de découverte d'une série de fragments de peinture tombés du plafond (Loud 1936 : 56–71) : la quantité de trouvailles de la Mission de Chicago dans la salle VII dépend de la technique particulière de fouille de V. Place, qui avait fait des tranchées le long des parois de la pièce pour une largeur jamais supérieure à 1.50 m ; Place 1876–1870 : 51–52. Pour l'hypothèse d'une confusion faite par V. Place entre la salle VII et une autre pièce voisine avec des cortèges de fonctionnaires, une candidate raisonnable pourrait être la salle 12, la « bathroom » des fouilleurs américains, qui, en effet, y trouvèrent encore *in situ* bien des reliefs assez mal conservés avec des processions de personnages assyriens, déjà mis à jours et dessinés par Botta (Flandin 1849–1850), et évidemment laissés sur place par les deux fouilleurs français à cause de leur état détérioré ; Loud 1936 : 20–28.

19 Le fragment découvert près de l'une des portes de la salle du trône et reproduit par Loud (1936 : g. 72), avec les restes de trois lignes d'une inscription de chancellerie sur le côté supérieur, prouve que dans la salle VII il y avait non seulement, en général, une décoration à deux registres de sujet historique, mais aussi, en particulier, une narration avec des épisodes qui n'étaient pas traités dans les pièces décorées par des sujets du même genre. Contre l'hypothèse d'une célébration d'une des campagnes contre Merodachbaladan II dans les reliefs perdus de la salle VII est aussi le sujet marin, car les guerres contre le roi babylonien, entre 710 et 707 av. J. Chr., n'eurent en aucun cas comme scénario la mer, tandis que cela arriva dans l'Ouest, où Sargon arriva à envoyer à Chypre l'une de ses stèles ; Grayson 1991 : 89–90, 97–100.

mis de l'empire (avec aussi supplices des rebelles et tributs des peuples subjugués²⁰) qui sont à Nimrūd limités aux salles du trône, majeure B et mineure WG²¹ ; d'autre part, l'apparente suppression des décorations de type mythico-symbolique réservées à Nimrūd aux salles du secteur dit du *bitānu*. Cette dernière innovation n'est par ailleurs pas absolument certaine, car on ne peut pas savoir quelle décoration était prévue à Ḫorsābād pour ce dernier secteur du palais en raison de l'interruption inattendue des travaux suite à la mort prématurée du roi²². La première innovation pourrait avoir eu un précédent, au moins partiel, dans la décoration sculpturale du dit « Palais central » de Tiglatpileser III, dont on n'est pas en mesure de restituer le programme figuratif, car la structure architecturale a été totalement perdue, à moins qu'elle ne précède, comme on l'a récemment proposé, le Palais sud-ouest d'Asarhaddon. Celui-ci aurait largement récupéré les restes du palais de Tiglatpileser III, qui, selon ses inscriptions, avait une dimension tout à fait remarquable²³.

En tout cas, il paraît probable que Sargon II ait aboli dans le programme figuratif général de son palais la fracture présente dans le palais de Nimrūd entre le monde terrestre des entreprises militaires des salles du trône et le monde divin de toutes les autres salles auquel étaient en particulier dédiées les pièces de l'ample aile occidentale du secteur dit du *bitānu*, qui avait pour

but de mettre en évidence le rôle du roi, seul médiateur entre monde humain et monde divin selon la conception mésopotamienne²⁴. Au contraire, dans le Palais royal de Ḫorsābād, on créait, de cette façon, une liaison auparavant inconnue et bien définie entre les sujets des reliefs de la salle du trône et de toutes les autres salles décorées de reliefs pariétaux. Le critère décoratif, soigneusement étudié, consistait en une progression chronologique des thèmes militaires, en commençant par les salles au nord-ouest, les premières à avoir été décorées²⁵. En fait, les salles 2 et 5, avec la salle du trône secondaire 8, du grand secteur en ressaut entre les deux cours externes I et III, étaient décorées par les événements des campagnes en Syrie et en Iran, de 720 et 716 av. J.-Chr., alors que les salles 13 et 14, à l'est, l'étaient par les grands succès obtenus dans les campagnes de 715 et 714 av. J.-Chr. en Urartu²⁶.

Il est évident que, comme cela avait été déjà le cas pour l'illustration synthétique de la grande Salle du trône B du Palais nord-ouest de Kalḫu, le texte inspirateur pour les détails de l'évocation figurative, cette fois analytique, des campagnes célébrées dans les salles 2, 5, 13 et 14, fut celui des *Annales* de la chancellerie royale – intégré dans quelques cas à d'autres documents comme *Les lettres au dieu*²⁷ –, qui était relativement riche de détails, contrairement à ce qui était certainement le cas de l'inscription synthétique *Standard* au temps d'Assurnasirpal II et des deux rédactions de l'inscription dite des *Fastes* au temps de Sargon II.²⁸

20 Il est bien difficile d'émettre une quelconque hypothèse sur les innovations possibles qui seraient dues aux sculpteurs de Tiglatpileser III plutôt qu'aux artistes de Sargon II à cause du fait que tous les reliefs de Tiglatpileser III furent découverts amassés au centre de la citadelle avant d'être transférés dans le Palais sud-ouest, ou bien déjà transportés dans cette même nouvelle résidence royale à la suite de l'ordre d'Asarhaddon ; Barnett/Falkner 1962 : 1–7, 20–23. Pourtant, la remarquable quantité de reliefs de guerre de Tiglatpileser III récupérés à Nimrūd ferait penser que déjà ce dernier roi avait donné ordre de décorer par des scènes militaires non seulement une ou deux salles du trône, mais aussi d'autres pièces du palais ; Matthiae 1996a : 75–90.

21 Meuszyński 1981 : 81–82, pls. 5–6 ; Paley/Sobolewski 1987 : 65–79, pl. 5, plans I–II.

22 La localisation des salles du palais de Ḫorsābād qui avaient été complètement décorées par les reliefs lors de la mort de Sargon II impose de retenir que le projet prévoyait de procéder, dans l'exécution du programme décoratif, du nord-ouest vers le sud-est et le nord-est, et de la périphérie septentrionale du complexe architectural vers son noyau central : lors de la mort à la bataille du roi, on était en train de réaliser la décoration de la salle du trône VII avec une célébration visuelle des entreprises majeures du souverain selon la tradition et, probablement, la deuxième tâche importante était d'illustrer dans une, ou plus d'une salle, les campagnes en Babylonie et en Elam, qui manquent complètement dans le programme réalisé des décorations sculpturales.

23 Kertai (2015 79–82) a avancé la thèse attrayante que le palais nommé par les archéologues Palais central de Tiglatpileser III, dont les textes de chancellerie vantent les dimensions sans précédent et, par conséquent, supérieures même à celles du vaste Palais nord-ouest d'Assurnasirpal II, s'étendait jusqu'à la région plus tard occupée par le Palais sud-ouest d'Asarhaddon. Cependant, si réellement le Palais central couvrait une superficie de la façade méridionale du Palais nord-ouest jusqu'à toute l'aire du plus récent Palais sud-ouest, sa dimension ne se serait pas éloignée de celle du grand palais d'Assurnasirpal II. Pour les textes de Tiglatpileser III qui évoquent la construction de son palais royal de Kalḫu, un « palais de cèdre », voir Tadmor/Yamada (2011 : 123–125).

24 Quelle que soit l'interprétation qu'on choisisse de donner à l'ensemble des décorations sculpturales des salles entourant la cour dite du *bitānu*, il est clair que dans cette région du palais, l'idée fondamentale, qui est à la base des réalisations artistiques et de tout le programme figuratif, est que le roi, en vicaire du dieu Aššur, est une sorte de persona sacra, qui garantit, probablement par la consécration et la purification des armes, la faveur constante des dieux envers les décisions, actes et gestes du souverain ; Paley 1977 ; Porter 1993 ; Russell 1998 ; Ataç 2006 ; Russell 2008 ; Porter 2010.

25 L'innovation du programme figuratif du palais de Ḫorsābād, selon laquelle chaque salle devait être décorée avec les gestes d'une seule campagne militaire, constitue la base, avec des variantes parfois non mineures, des analyses de el-Amin (1953 ; id. 1954) et surtout de Reade (1979b), qui suit en général la solide reconstruction chronologique, encore valable aujourd'hui, de l'ensemble des guerres de Sargon II de Tadmor (1958). Dans Reade (1978) et Matthiae (1996a : 121, 132) on trouve une étude détaillée de l'illustration figurative des campagnes de 720 et de 716 av. J.-Chr. des salles 2 et 5.

26 Mayer 1983 ; pour des évaluations historiques du règne de Sargon II, dont les succès en Urartu et plus tard en Babylonie, où le souverain résida en roi de Babylone pour plusieurs mois, couronnèrent la deuxième partie du règne, qui eut son apothéose avec l'inauguration de Dūr Šarrukīn, voir Grayson 1991 : 86–102 ; Kuhrt 1995 : 497–499 ; Liverani 2011 : 685–689.

27 En fait, une partie des épisodes de guerre représentés dans les reliefs de la salle 5 n'apparaissent pas dans le récit des *Annales*, comme l'a constaté Russell (1999 : 120–122). C'est pourquoi il paraît raisonnable de retenir que, probablement pour toutes les campagnes, la chancellerie royale compilait des récits plus détaillés que ceux conservés dans les *Annales*, qui probablement étaient employés pour rédiger des *Lettres au dieu* (comme la fameuse *Lettre* sur la 8^e campagne en Urartu), qui étaient déclamées lors de cérémonies triomphales et qui convergeaient dans des versions réduites des *Annales* ; Oppenheim 1960 ; Tadmor 2004 ; Villard 2008 ; May 2012 ; Nadali 2013.

28 L'inscription dite des *Fastes* de Ḫorsābād (« Prunkinschrift »)

Mais à Nimrūd et à Ḥorsābād, le rapport entre la représentation visuelle de la narration des campagnes militaires et la rédaction textuelle des gestes de la guerre est tout à fait différent. En effet, à Nimrūd, dans la Salle du trône, il n'y avait pas dans la décoration sculpturale une succession d'événements survenus sur un long terme, mais un choix d'épisodes individuels limités dans le temps, fort significatifs et décisifs, comme une bataille victorieuse ou un siège suivi d'une conquête²⁹. À Ḥorsābād en revanche, tous les reliefs d'une salle avaient le but d'illustrer une série d'épisodes différents qui s'étaient déroulés sur toute la durée de la même campagne militaire dans des lieux toujours différents et avec des résultats variables³⁰.

À Nimrūd, chaque événement représenté dans la Salle du trône B avait une unité d'espace et de temps et une signification forte et même symbolique, mais se trouvait dans un ensemble – la décoration de toute la salle – sans aucune unité ni de temps ni d'espace, car il s'agissait de faits appartenant à des campagnes menées dans des régions éloignées dans le temps et l'espace³¹. À Ḥorsābād en revanche, si la situation était la même pour chaque épisode qui, pourtant, n'avait pas une valeur particulière (il s'agissait généralement d'un segment d'un long itinéraire), l'unité spatio-temporelle fondamentale était exactement celle de l'ensemble de la décoration, car tous les reliefs d'une salle illustraient des actions individuelles appartenant toutes à une seule et même campagne militaire d'une seule année³².

D'un autre côté, la relation entre texte et image à Nimrūd et à Ḥorsābād était différente, même si le genre des textes de référence était le même – celui des *Annales*, qui était le plus riche en détails de tous ceux qui sortaient de la chancellerie royale, à la seule exception des *Lettres au dieu* qui avaient une plus grande variété d'éléments narratifs³³. Les salles du trône, d'un côté,

et les pièces qui n'étaient à proprement parler pas des salles de réception de l'autre, n'étaient pas destinées au même type d'usage. En fait, il est clair que la célèbre et admirable Salle du trône B du Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd, en particulier, fut conçue d'une façon intentionnelle pour se prêter à des lectures et des usages à différents niveaux, qui commençaient avec les visiteurs compétents et informés capables de lire les gestes représentés dans les reliefs en identifiant les lieux, temps et protagonistes des actions militaires, et se poursuivaient avec les visiteurs qui, ne disposant pas de connaissances sur les événements suffisamment adéquates pour faire des identifications ponctuelles et précises, devaient subir l'exceptionnelle suggestion des fascinants rythmes, presque musicaux, de la narration épique de la gloire des invincibles armées du roi d'Assyrie³⁴. Pour permettre aux visiteurs informés de comprendre les scènes de guerre qui se déroulaient sous leurs yeux sans aucune pause perceptible, les sculpteurs de Nimrūd eurent l'habileté d'insérer dans chaque scène des détails fort significatifs, qui étaient présents dans la narration des *Annales* et qui étaient uniques, dans la mesure où il n'apparaissaient pas dans d'autres épisodes de guerre et donc étaient spécifiques à un seul événement évoqué dans le texte annalistique³⁵. En outre, l'absence souhaitée de toute légende cunéiforme dans les reliefs (contrairement à ce qui est le cas dans les scènes des décorations des portes en bronze de Balāwāt des mêmes années d'Assurnasirpal II) permettait au visiteur de compétence limitée de s'abandonner librement aux émotions et aux peurs provoquées par la lecture dépourvue de points de référence forts³⁶.

À Ḥorsābād en revanche, là où dans la majorité, ou peut-être dans la totalité des scènes des reliefs de guerre, il y a de brèves légendes cunéiformes qui expliquent quel lieu y figure, les compositions des sièges

dans sa version plus étendue était incisée dans les salles 1, 4, 7, 8 et 10, c'est-à-dire, une seule salle, assez mal conservée (1) avec des scènes de guerre, la salle avec les scènes de chasse (7), deux salles (4 et 8) avec les scènes de punitions et de supplices et un long passage (10) avec les scènes de tributs. La rédaction réduite des *Fastes* avait été utilisée apparemment seulement dans une partie de la salle 14, où il y avait aussi sans doute au moins une partie des *Annales* ; Fuchs 1994 : 75, 189 ; Russell 1999 : 113–114. Il est évident que seulement la petite salle 4, parmi les salles avec des narrations de guerre, contenait l'inscription des *Fastes*. Dans ce cas il est fort probable que le choix des *Fastes* pour cette salle soit dû au fait qu'il n'y avait pas suffisamment d'espace pour une inscription aussi longue que celle des *Annales* ; Russell 1999 : 115.

29 Winter 1981 ; Winter 1983 ; Matthiae 1988.

30 Reade 1978 ; Reade 1979b ; Matthiae 1996a : 121–131.

31 Les scènes de la salle du trône du Palais nord-ouest étaient fort variées, car au sujet, plus fréquent, des sièges victorieux se mêlaient ceux d'une bataille rangée, de la traversée de l'Euphrate, du retour de l'armée assyrienne à son campement, d'une rentrée triomphale probablement dans l'une des grandes villes d'Assyrie, tout ceci dans une succession rythmée, ce qui donnait une formidable impression de force implacable à la machine de guerre d'Assyrie ; Moortgat 1967.

32 En d'autres termes, l'unité spatio-temporelle était, pour ainsi dire, d'une longue durée : la durée d'une entière campagne dans un espace vaste, qui était l'espace de la région où avait été menée la campagne ; Reade 1979b.

33 La lettre la plus fameuse et la mieux conservée de ce genre est

la relation sur la 8^e campagne en Urartu de Sargon II, qui est un chef-d'œuvre reconnu de la littérature akkadienne pour le choix du lexique, la variété des formules stylistiques, la quantité et la qualité des figures rhétoriques ; Oppenheim 1940 ; Renger 1986 ; Vera Chamaza 1992 ; Fales 1991 ; Kravitz 2003. De récentes traductions de ce texte difficile et admirable sont proposées par Mayer (1983) ; Foster (2005 : 790–213) et Mayer (2013).

34 Moortgat (1930) a eu l'intuition de détecter l'extraordinaire rythme assigné par les artistes de Kalḫu à tout l'ensemble des scènes des deux registres de la salle du trône dans une contribution qui a été presque complètement oubliée et sur laquelle Hrouda (2003, 4–5) a de nouveau très justement attiré l'attention.

35 Winter 1981 ; Winter 1983 ; Matthiae 1988 ; Di Paolo 2003 ; Porter 2003 ; Ataç 2006. Dernièrement Roaf (2008) a exprimé des objections sur l'identification de ces procédures d'inspiration et de réalisation des reliefs de la Salle du trône B de Nimrūd, qui pourtant ne sont pas de nature à être mises en doute.

36 La fréquente présence de légendes dans les deux cycles de reliefs en bronze du temple et du palais de Balāwāt fournit une preuve indéniable que déjà à l'époque d'Assurnasirpal II, lorsque l'on souhaitait identifier une ville ou un paysage, on employait largement de brèves inscriptions, ce qui montre aussi que pour la Salle du trône B du Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd, en revanche, on a intentionnellement renoncé à recourir à cet instrument pour faciliter la lecture ponctuelle et analytique des paysages naturels et urbains représentés ; Curtis/Tallis (ed.) 2008 : 30–45, 54–69.

et des batailles sont moins surchargées de détails et sont plus libres et équilibrées, car les inscriptions guident la lecture et la compréhension des scènes et obligent le seul niveau de la lecture informée³⁷. Alors qu'à Nimrūd, ce que l'on cherchait à provoquer dans le visiteur, étranger ou assyrien, était une sensation et une émotion fortes, qui se multipliaient si elles n'étaient pas distraites par le désir ou l'exigence d'identifier l'espace et le temps d'un événement, à Ḥorsābād, la structure de la décoration des salles, plus narrative et moins impressionniste, qui racontait une campagne entière avec sa suite logique d'épisodes, exigeait une succession rationnelle d'épisodes clairement perceptibles dans leur réalité et susceptibles d'une identification rendue accessible par les inscriptions³⁸.

Mais le rapport entre texte et image dans les palais royaux d'Assyrie est toujours complexe et surtout n'était pas le même pour ceux qui ont créé la décoration sculpturale des reliefs et pour ceux qui en font usage. Dans le Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd les *Annales* d'Assurnāširpal II ont été la source directe d'inspiration des sculpteurs de la Salle du trône B, mais l'inscription qui a été insérée entre le registre supérieur et le registre inférieur des narrations figuratives est l'inscription *Standard*, qui ne comprenait pas les détails présents dans les reliefs³⁹. Toutefois, dans cette apparente aporie et asymétrie, il y a une cohérence substantielle, car c'est l'esprit, pour ainsi dire, de la décoration visuelle de la salle du trône qui est synthétique, exactement comme l'est l'esprit de l'inscription *Standard* et, donc, il est tout à fait naturel et compréhensible que dans la salle du trône soit présente, aussi bien dans l'expression vi-

suelle que dans la formulation textuelle, la conception synthétique de la narration des événements et de la célébration de la gloire du roi⁴⁰.

Cette cohérence substantielle ne se retrouve pas à Ḥorsābād et apparemment c'est justement à Ḥorsābād que la contradiction paraît plus évidente en comparaison avec Nimrūd, car l'inscription paraissant entre les deux registres figurés est l'inscription des *Annales*⁴¹ dans toutes les salles où est illustré le développement d'une campagne militaire dont la source pour les faits de guerre devait avoir été encore une fois les *Annales*, intégrée probablement à des textes encore plus détaillés du genre des *Lettres au dieu*, comme à Nimrūd. La cohérence particulière de Nimrūd, que j'ai définie comme substantielle, a clairement été abandonnée à Ḥorsābād, où on a décidé d'adopter, pour ainsi dire, un critère de cohérence différent, en insérant le texte analytique des *Annales* au lieu du texte synthétique des *Fastes* dans les salles dont l'inspiration pour la décoration dérivait du texte des *Annales*⁴². En d'autres termes, à Ḥorsābād, la décision a été d'inscrire dans les salles qui racontaient le récit d'une campagne militaire le texte même de chancellerie qui était la source majeure de la décoration figurative de ces mêmes salles.

Pour mieux comprendre la logique qui a inspiré le placement des inscriptions de chancellerie dans les différents secteurs du palais de Ḥorsābād, il faut rappeler, même si jusqu'à présent on a prêté trop peu d'attention à ce thème, que Sargon II a transmis par sa décoration sculpturale des messages de son règne importants, politiques et idéologiques, qui ne sont pas si évidents dans les textes de chancellerie⁴³. Parmi ces messages

37 Pour les légendes conservées sur les reliefs de Ḥorsābād, voir à présent Russell (1999 : 115–122), où il est entre autres correctement observé qu'à Ḥorsābād, partout où la surface des dalles sculptées est dans un état de conservation relativement bon, les villes sont toujours flanquées d'une épigraphe qui donne leur nom, alors qu'au temps de Tiglatpileser III, la présence des didascalies à côté des villes représentées sur les reliefs du Palais central n'était pas la règle. Cette convention est parfaitement cohérente avec une instruction singulière de Sargon II donnée à Tabšar-Aššur selon laquelle les figures des dignitaires dans les reliefs de Dūr Šarrukīn devaient être accompagnées par une inscription qui devait donner leur nom ; Lanfranchi/Parpola 1990 : 199.

38 Dans le Palais nord-ouest de Nimrūd l'omission intentionnelle de toute légende cunéiforme, la différente et irrégulière extension des compositions sur les deux registres figurés et le fort accent mis sur le mouvement rythmique unitaire de tout l'ensemble de la décoration étaient des éléments de l'expression artistique qui incitaient à une vision unitaire émotive de tout l'ensemble des reliefs plutôt qu'à une lecture précise des épisodes de guerre individuels représentés dans la décoration de la salle du trône ; sans doute les commanditaires et les artistes de Nimrūd ont-ils voulu créer dans la conception et l'exécution du complexe de la décoration sculpturale de la salle du trône des conditions qui laissaient les visiteurs du palais libres de suivre différents niveaux de lecture des reliefs ; Matthiae 1988.

39 Dans la problématique complexe des messages confiés par les rois aux textes et aux images, dans le cadre de ce qu'on appelle usuellement dans les études assyriologiques d'une façon quelque peu inappropriée la « propagande royale », il est clair que les messages confiés à l'expression visuelle étaient parallèles et complémentaires, et non simplement subordonnés, à ceux confiés à l'expression écrite ; Reade 1979 ; Oppenheim 1979 ; Porada 1986 ; Bachelot 1991 ; Winter 1997 ; Matthiae 2014.

40 Villard (1988) a justement souligné qu'il n'y a dans la Salle B du Palais nord-ouest aucun rapport direct et univoque unissant les représentations figurées avec l'inscription séparant les registres et que dans la décoration des scènes de guerre des deux salles palatiales d'Assurnāširpal II avec cette décoration épique-historique est présente une « tension entre la volonté de délivrer un message générique, largement compréhensible et le souci de relater avec réalisme » avec une sorte de complémentarité bien plus que coïncidence entre figuration et textes.

41 En fait, à Ḥorsābād le texte des *Annales* fut inscrit dans l'espace intermédiaire entre les deux registres figuratifs dans les salles 2, 5, 13 et en partie 14, où la décoration sculpturale présentait les succès des campagnes de 720, 716 et 714 av. J.-Chr. en Syrie-Palestine, en Iran occidental et en Urartu ; Russell 1999 : 113–114 ; Frame 2004.

42 Cette décision, certainement de Sargon II et de Tabšar-Aššur, a été prise, car on a voulu mettre sur les mêmes dalles le récit figuratif et le texte qui était sa majeure source écrite. La raison de cette décision, qui ne correspondait pas au critère suivi à Nimrūd pour la salle du trône, fut sans doute dans le fait que, tandis qu'à Nimrūd il y avait entre l'inscription *Standard* et l'ensemble de la décoration sculpturale de la Salle B une correspondance totale, car inscription et décoration étaient toutes les deux synthétiques, dans les salles de Ḥorsābād, la décoration figurative était analytique et concernait une seule campagne et non l'ensemble des entreprises du roi, comme dans la salle du trône de Nimrūd : sur la base de ce raisonnement, on peut retenir avec certitude que, dans le programme final de Ḥorsābād, dans la salle du trône VII, qui ne fut jamais achevée, on aurait, comme à Nimrūd, inscrit les *Fastes* comme complément de la décoration figurative de synthèse des entreprises du roi.

43 Matthiae 2007 ; dans ces messages confiés aux décorations sculpturales plutôt qu'aux textes de chancellerie, une place privilégiée est réservée aux hauts dignitaires de l'empire pour

typiques sont : d'une part, la position privilégiée attribuée à l'aristocratie d'Assyrie, les nobles et les magnats de l'empire qui sont représentés dans les cortèges qui s'avancent vers le roi derrière le prince héritier⁴⁴, dans les chasses légères présentées comme un loisir de la cour et dans les banquets suivant les victoires militaires et les chasses⁴⁵ ; d'autre part, le caractère de dignité et de fierté des peuples qui reconnaissent la seigneurie du grand roi dans la présentation des tributs au souverain sans aucune marque de désespoir, d'angoisse ou d'humiliation, en fort contraste avec ce qui est le cruel destin des rebelles au pouvoir d'Aššur⁴⁶.

Si, pour conclure, on réfléchit aux aspects de la communication visuelle à Ḫorsābād, que l'on désigne souvent à tort par le terme trop moderniste de propagande et qui est marquée par le dessein fort de renouveler les gestes de Sargon d'Akkad⁴⁷, l'on peut retenir que l'asymétrie entre le caractère synthétique de l'inscription des *Fastes* et le caractère analytique des décorations sculpturales était certainement bien perçue par ceux qui ont imaginé le grand projet de Dūr Šarrukīn. Mais

cette asymétrie trouvait une composition unitaire dans la conception du palais royal. Aux yeux des rois, des magnats, des nobles et du peuple d'Assyrie, c'était le palais royal dans son ensemble qui était perçu comme le lieu de la gloire et de la célébration de la royauté en général et d'une royauté juste et pieuse dans les cas spécifiques des règnes individuels. De la même façon les inscriptions du type de l'inscription *Standard* ou des *Fastes*, comme, à quelques différences près, les inscriptions des *Taureaux*, et dans une moindre mesure, les inscriptions des seuils, étaient destinées à célébrer la gloire éternelle du roi, d'une façon qui a de fortes analogies avec la fonction des résidences royales⁴⁸.

Les inscriptions du type *Standard* d'Assurnasirpal II ou des *Fastes* de Sargon II étaient des élaborations des chancelleries royales spécifiquement conçues comme inscriptions palatiales, comme celle des *Taureaux*, et pour cette raison, justement comme les taureaux androcéphales avec leurs inscriptions, étaient présentes partout dans les palais royaux, partout où il y avait une décoration sculpturale, la version textuelle synthétique de la célébration de la royauté trouvait place à côté de n'importe quelle version visuelle synthétique, car l'une était le complément naturel de l'autre.

représenter, d'une façon qu'on peut définir comme physique, l'unisson et la compétence incomparable du gouvernement de l'empire et signifier ainsi d'une façon convaincante la supériorité du gouvernement de l'empire d'Assyrie, typiquement universel, contrairement aux gouvernements nationaux des structures étatiques de l'âge du fer ; Liverani 2011 : 560–565.

44 Dans la contribution de Matthiae (2015b), l'on a essayé de prouver que ces cortèges de hauts dignitaires qui se présentent au roi derrière le prince héritier Sennacherib représentent cette élite de l'administration de l'empire constituée par les membres de ce que l'on a défini comme le cabinet du gouvernement impérial, probablement conçu, selon l'hypothèse de Parpola (1995), à l'image du gouvernement des dieux, étudié en détail par Mattila (2000). Une preuve étonnante de l'intérêt personnel exprimé par Sargon II à mettre en évidence l'ensemble des hauts dignitaires de l'empire dans les reliefs de Ḫorsābād est fournie par une lettre de Tabšar-Aššur au roi, dans laquelle le trésorier répond à une question du souverain, qui avait demandé pourquoi l'on n'avait pas encore écrit les noms des magnats sur leurs représentations dans les reliefs de la nouvelle capitale ; Lanfranchi/Parpola 1990 : 199.

45 Sur ce sujet particulier des reliefs néo-assyriens, qui n'a pas de comparaison dans les décorations pariétales des palais néo-assyriens, voir Matthiae 2012. Les fameuses représentations des chasses royales dans le Palais nord de Tall Qūyūnḡuq, considérées dans le cadre des célébrations triomphales d'Assurbanipal et de cérémonies royales particulières en rapport avec la consécration des successeurs, font l'objet de quelques études récentes : Weissert 1997 ; Schmidt-Colinet 2001 ; Schmidt-Colinet 2005. L'exhibition par Sargon II dans les décorations sculpturales des plus hauts dignitaires de l'empire qui avaient des responsabilités primaires dans l'administration centrale pourrait avoir un lien, difficile à préciser, avec le fait qu'une bonne partie de ces fonctionnaires, probablement dès la deuxième moitié du VIII^e siècle av. J.-Chr., étaient des professionnels de l'administration, une sorte de *homines novi*, plutôt que des membres de l'ancienne aristocratie d'Assyrie ; Radner 2011 : 359–361.

46 On peut aisément constater cette modalité de représentation des tributaires et des alliés de l'empire dans les reliefs de très bonne qualité qui décoraient les deux côtés de l'important passage entre la cour VIII et la cour III (Albenda 1986 : 67–71, pls. 26–34, gs. 45–59), où on trouve aussi l'actuel placement muséal de tous les fragments retirés à Ḫorsābād en petit nombre par la première Mission française et d'une façon systématique par la Mission de l'Oriental Institute de Chicago.

47 Grayson 1991 : 88 ; Van De Mieroop 1999 ; Galter 2014 ; Matthiae 2015b.

48 Winter 1993 ; Matthiae 1996a ; Winter 1997 ; Roaf 2014.

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Text and architecture: YBC 5022 and BM 15285 as “manuals of an architect”

Natalie N. May

Abstract: In all periods of human history, the profession of an architect demanded a wide range of knowledge and abilities: the inspired vision of the artist and expertise in various materials, proficiency in mathematics and organisational skills. Are there cuneiform texts that can be associated with architects and their professional training? After analysing the list of coefficients YBC 5022 and the famous tablet of geometrical problems BM 15285 against the background of archaeological and pictorial evidence, I can show that these texts served as an “architect’s manual.” It has already been suggested based on textual and mathematical grounds that the origins of Babylonian mathematics go back to the Ur III period. I shall argue that this was also the period when the training of architects in exact science started.

Keywords: Architect, architecture, construction, mathematics, lists of coefficients, geometry, stereometry, education, ornaments.

This paper¹ was presented at RAI 61 within the framework of the workshop “Math and Realia” dedicated to the memory of Aizik A. Vaiman.² Vaiman wrote about the use of Sumero-Babylonian mathematics in architecture:

By and large, the applied mathematics of Sumerians and Babylonians was rather the mathematics of “bookkeepers” and “economists” than of “technicians” and “engineers.” The number of man-days required for construction work, the amount of food needed for workers and the construction materials to be supplied, etc. were calculated for a building project. There is no data about any technical computations by ancient builders of quantities characterizing the stability of a construction, the strength of its balks, and so forth.³

1 Due to the limitation in length of RAI 61 contributions, many statements and suggestions are only tackled or mentioned in passing in the present article and will be fully developed elsewhere. BT – siglum of texts excavated in the British excavations of Balawat (Imgur-Ilil), see Parker 1963. I am most grateful to M.E.J. Richardson for immensely improving my English. The remaining mistakes are all mine.

2 http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=vaiman_a_a. (last access 28.08.2016).

3 Vaiman 1961: 207: “В целом прикладная математика шумеров и вавилонян была скорее математикой «бухгалтеров» и «экономистов», чем «техников» и «инженеров». Так, при постройке какого-либо сооружения рассчитывалось количество человеко-дней, необходимое для проведения работ, продуктов питания для содержания рабочих, строительных материалов и т. д. Нет данных, которые свидетельствовали бы о том, что древние строители занимались техническими расчетами для определения величин, характеризующих устойчивость здания, крепость его перекрытий и т. п.” Here and below the quotations from Vaiman’s works were

This is also assumed to have been expected of a Mesopotamian architect in the present contribution. The architect would have been the organizer of a construction project and the designer of a building, including its general concept, decor and minor details. Mastery of the technical aspects of construction derived from age-accumulated know-how, which was sometimes quite sophisticated.⁴ The principles of mechanics and statics were also a matter of empirical knowledge and experience, not of theoretically based computations.

An architect belongs to one of the most ancient professions, and I shall argue that it was not just one of the oldest, but also one for which specialised occupational training has been supplied from earliest times. In Mesopotamia the word *šidim* “builder” is attested as early as Uruk IV and III periods.⁵ In Sumerian it existed on its own and in collocations: *šidim-ḪAR*, “grinder constructor;” *šidim-abzu*, probably “builder, irrigator;” *nu-banda₃ šidim* and *ugula šidim*, “overseer and foreman of master-builders;” *gal-šidim* or *šidim-gal*, “chief builder.”⁶ There is a remarkable abundance of expressions designating specific qualifications and ranks of specialist builders even in the early periods. An inscribed Old Akkadian architect’s seal testifies to

translated into English by the present author and edited by M. Ossendrijver.

4 See, e.g., Weidner 1954: 146; Freydanck 1985: 343.

5 Neumann 1996: 156 with n. 20 and 162 with n. 76.

6 Neumann 1996: 162. The single attestation of *muš-da-ma* applied to humans in Gudea Cylinder B (RIME E3/1.1.7 Cyl.B iii 16) is, apparently, a mark of high literary style. The person working as a *dub-sar šidim*, “builder’s scribe,” is known from the pre-Sargonic and Neo-Sumerian periods.

the high status of its owner and the responsibilities with which he was entrusted.⁷ By the time of Hammurabi the architect's trade was so well established that six paragraphs of the Code concern legal issues which may arise in conjunction with architect's professional risks and honorary.⁸

Akkadian developed an amazingly vast variety of expressions for an architect. The two most common terms, *itinnu* (^{lu}ŠITIM) and *šitimgallu* (^{lu}ŠITIM.GAL),⁹ derive from the Sumerian *šidim* or *dim*₂. The latter word means "to create,"¹⁰ in lexical lists and bilingual texts it is equated to Akkadian *banû* "to build" and "*epēšu*" "to do, make,"¹¹ interchangeable verbs often occurring in the context of construction (fig. 1).¹² Although the word *šitimgallu* is rarely attested in the common language of the Old Babylonian period,¹³ it assumes a grandiloquent nuance in Standard Babylonian in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions of Sargonids and in the building rituals of the first millennium Assyria and Babylonia.¹⁴

7 For the image, see Boehmer 1965: pl. 28 no. 326; for the inscription Edzard 1968–1969: 15.

8 §§228–233 = xlii 56–xlili 3. See Kitchen/Lawrence 2012: 166–167.

9 Borger 2010: 399, no. 686; CAD I/J 296–297 s.v. *itinnu*, especially lexical section and discussion.

10 ETCSL <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/edition2/etcsllemma.php?sortbylemma=lemma&letter=d> (last access 28.08.2016). PSD <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/psd/nepsd-frame.html> (last access 28.08.2016).

11 CAD E 192–193 (lexical section) and 197–200 s.v. *epēšu* 2b and CAD B 84 s.v. *banû*, lexical section.

12 The terms most common in each period are highlighted.

13 An architect (written *šidim-gal* without the determinative) appears as a witness in PBS 8/2 151 (= CBS 7135): 20 (Samsu-iluna 5, receipt for money and sheep), and in PBS 264 (= CBS 7742): 42 (Rim-Sin, year 7 of Isin, legal decision concerning a priestly office; on a tablet which is chipped and *gal* is missing).

In Mari (RA 65, 54 = A. 3562), 19 *šitimgallū* (^{lu}ŠITIM.GAL; xii 54), 31 ^{lu}ŠITIM (xii 68) and 11 apprentices (xii 66) are listed among 955 slaves designated for royal gardens (xii 58–62). This list demonstrates that architects were valuable experts standing out among other slaves. It has an interesting parallel in the NA list of Babylonian deportees, where whole families of architects and chief-architects appear together with a cup-bearer, an engraver and his sister, an architect's wife and a scribe (SAA 7, 154). In the NA list not only professions, patronymics, and family members of professionals are recorded, but the locations of their houses are also indicated.

14 It often appears as an epithet of the god of construction ^dMušda(ma) and the brick god Kulla: Falkenstein 1949: 28; Ambos 2004: 146–147, II.B.2 (= K 4167): 7; pp. 148–149, II.B.2 (= K. 4167): 19, 21; pp. 152–153, II.C.1a (= K 3472): 7; pp. 222–223, II.F.: 35"; for NA royal inscriptions, see Fuchs 1994: 41, Zyl 60 and Clay 1915: 52, 54 = YOS 1 no. 38 ii: 1 (Sargon); RINAP 3/1, 22 vi 57 (Sennacherib); RINAP 4, 104: 35 (Esarhaddon). In all these examples *šitimgallu* is written ideographically. CAD Š/3 129b s.v. *šitimgallu* b quotes VS 3, 93 (= VAT 3106): 18, 21 as an example of the usage of *šitimgallu* as a NB family name. That text should be collated since the reading ^{lu}ŠITIM.GAL as the family name of two individuals is highly improbable. It is a receipt for rental income from a date grove, but *šitimgallu* is not attested in the NB period, with the exception in Nabopolassar's inscription (Da Riva 2013: 83; C 31, 1 ii 21 = 2 ii 26 [= VAB 62 ii 28]), which clearly emulates NA royal rhetoric. Moreover, the word is not found elsewhere as a family name in any period. I note the use of other expressions borrowed from NA royal inscriptions in this cylinder of Nabopolassar, such as DUMU^{mes} UM.ME.A *e-em-qu₂-tim* (ibid.; C 31, 1 ii 17 = 2 ii 22 = [VAB 4, 62 ii 24]) and *talimu* in the next column (Da Riva

The term *itinnu* appears for the first time once as early as in Old Akkadian.¹⁵ In Old Babylonian it is the most common word for an architect and from then on it is found in every dialect of Akkadian. In the Middle Babylonian period *itinnu* already occurs as a family name¹⁶ and in Neo- and Late Babylonian it becomes wide-spread¹⁷ occupational family name of scribes in Sippar, Borsippa, Babylon and Uruk.¹⁸ However, in first millennium Babylonia *itinnu* is only rarely used to designate a builder, being replaced by *arad ekalli*.¹⁹ In Neo-Assyrian *šal(l)ippāiu/šeleppāiu* is used to denote an architect. That word conversely derives from a personal name, corrupted from Šallim-pî-Ea, the construction leader and the "father" of 64 "sons."²⁰

In all periods of human history being an architect has demanded a wide range of knowledge and abilities: the inspired vision of an artist and an expertise in working with various materials, an advanced knowledge of mathematics and mechanical engineering principles, as well as a capacity for skilled organisation. Ancient Mesopotamia demanded the same. The abundance of terminology for specialised builders points to refinements of skill, which in turn led to a hierarchy within the profession. A builder was certainly highly skilled, someone who needed special training including ele-

2013: 85; C 31, 1 iii 15 = 2 iii 6 [= VAB 4 iii 7]; see the discussion in May 2011–2012: 162, n. 31; 163 and below with fns. 27 and 47). I am most grateful to C. Wunsch for sharing her yet unpublished edition of VS 3, 93 and discussing this text with me. For *šitimmaḥḥu*, see MA canonical lu₂ = ša, MSL 12, 131: 79 (= VAT 9717 [copy B]) 79) and Pedersen 1986: 21 (N1 [33]) for further bibliography.

15 See Gelb 1955: 296, no. 40: 16.

16 Brinkman 2006: 28; for *banû* and *itinnu* in MB, see Sassmannhausen 2001: 92.

17 Nielsen 2011: 66.

18 Idem: 69–70 with n. 212, 77 with n. 241, 131, 141, 179 with n. 87, 187–188 with n. 34; Jursa 2005: 217–218, no. 18: 1–2, 4; Kümmel 1979: 35–36. In this connection, note also the Neo-Babylonian family group Rab-banê (Nielsen 2011: 59).

19 Kümmel 1979: 35, 37. *Warad ekalli* (IR₃ E₂.GAL) is once attested in the Old Babylonian period in apposition to ŠITIM in a letter from Awil-Ninurta to Šamaš-ḥasir. That letter concerns Lipit-Ištar, an architect from the town Bīt-asar (or Ea-šar), who is to receive rations of grain and wool from the palace. But according to the king's order he is allotted a field in his town (Hammurabi 31+; TCL 7, 54: 4 = Kraus 1968: 36–37). In Neo-Assyrian *urad ekalli* did not mean an architect, since individuals designated as *urad ekalli* often have other professions (Baker 2017: 218–219).

Note the Hebrew אדריכל derived from Akkadian *arad ekalli*. Interestingly, the same metathesis in the transition of Akkadian *arad* into Hebrew took place in the name of Arad/Urdu-Mullissu, the son and murderer of Sennacherib (Radner 2011: 1407–1408, s.v. Urdu-Mullissu 1), becoming Biblical אֲדָרְמֶלֶךְ (2 Kings 19: 37 = Isaiah 37: 38). Berossus also has metathesis for the name of Urdu-Mullissu (Adramelos *apud* Abydenus 5b [Burstein 1978: 25], see discussion in Parpola 1980: 174). Thus the Aramaic *'ardiklā* is also derived from *arad ekalli* despite H. Kümmel's hesitations (Kümmel 1979: 37, n. 1). For Ahiqar as a *'rdkl' ḥkym*?, "wise builder" (cf. below pp. 258–259 with fns. 24–27), see Moore 2017: 85 with fn. 282. I am grateful to J. Moore for making his yet unpublished dissertation available to me.

20 Apparently he was the chief builder of Kār-Tukulti-Ninurta; see Freydank 1985: 362, VS 21, 17 = MARV 11, 17: 25 and Jakob 2003: 461.

Terms for an architect in Akkadian

Derived from	Oakk	OB	SB	MB	MA	NA	NB
$dim_2 = banû,$ $epēšu$	<i>itinnu</i> only once attested syllabically	<i>itinnu</i> (^{lu2} DIM ₂ / ^{lu2} ŠITIM)	<i>itinnu</i>	^{lu2} ŠITIM (<i>itinnu</i>) Only once attested as a family name	^{lu2} ŠITIM (<i>etinnu</i>)	^{lu2} (gal.)tin foreman of construction as well as canal digging <i>e-tin'</i> (SAAB 5, 25 r. 4-5) ^{lu2} <i>e-tin-na-te</i> (SAA 1, 138: 13)	<i>itinnu</i> very common family name; rarely designates profession
šidim-gal	—	šitimgallu (^{lu2} ŠITIM.GAL)	šitimgallu always but once written ^{lu2} ŠITIM.GAL	—	—	—	See fn. 14
	—	ŠITIM warad ekalli (single attestation, see fn. 19)	—	—	—	—	<i>arad ekalli</i>
<i>mār</i> Šallim-pî-Ea (PN)	—	—	—	—	šal(š)ippāiû/ šal(š)ippāiû/ š/elippāiû	šal(š)ippāiû/ šeleppāiû	—

Fig. 1: Terms for an architect in Akkadian.

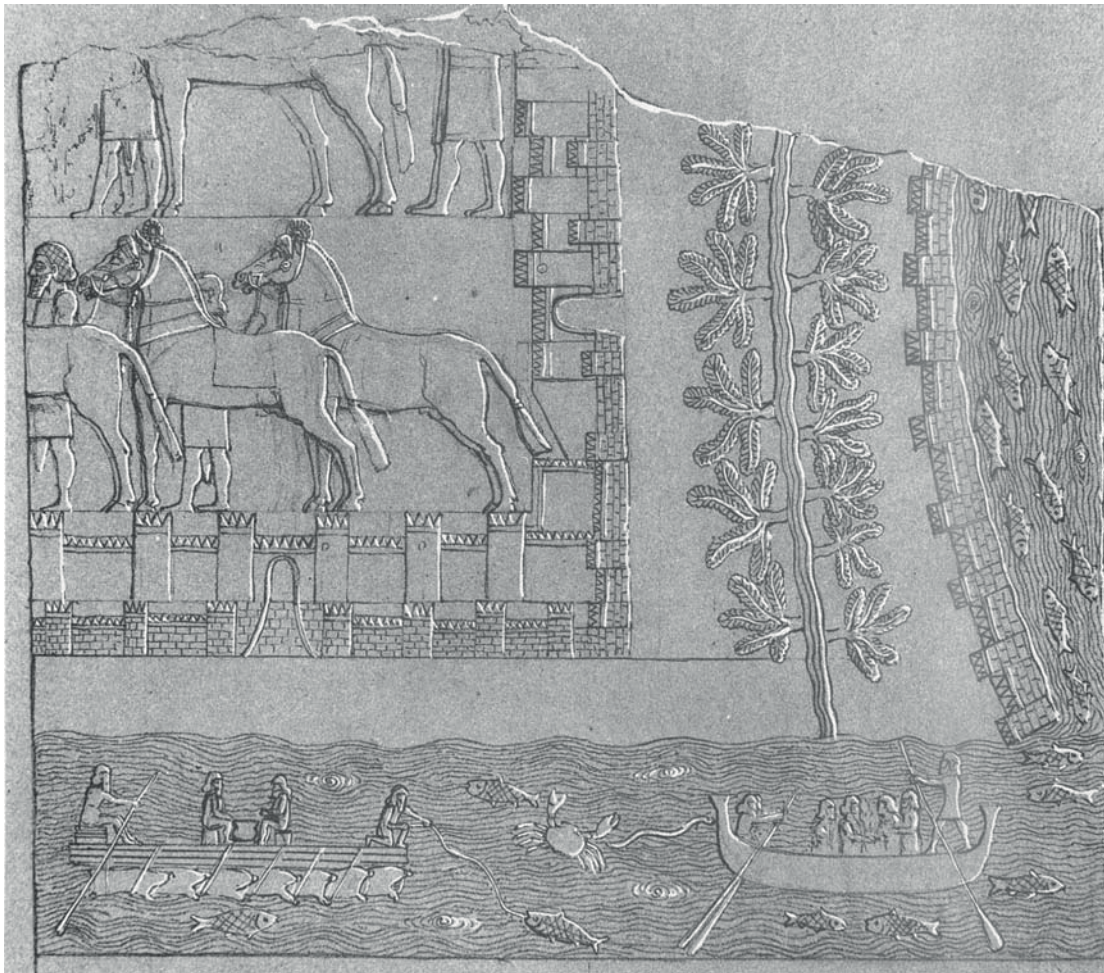


Fig. 2: Room XXII (XX), South-West Palace, Ninive (Sennacherib). Plans and elevations combined in the depictions of fortifications and landscape (after Barnett/Bleibteu/Turner 1998: pl. 226. © Trustees of the British Museum).

ments of the scribal art. Architects, priests and scribes are often listed together in texts from various periods.²¹

21 In the Neo-Assyrian lists of professionals in the palace staff, six architects and six scribes are grouped together (SAA 7, 13). In the Neo-Assyrian texts temple staff and scribes often appear together with architects. On a slave purchase document of the palace scribe Nabû-tuklatū'a, two architects are followed by two scribes in the list of witnesses (790 BCE; Deller/Fadhil 1993: 252–253, no. 9 = ND 684: 6–7 and r. 6'–9'). Issār-šumu-iqīša, the chief architect (¹⁰²GAL' *še-la-pa-a-a*) from Assur in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (742? BCE) appears in a most remarkable list of witnesses on a document for the acquisition of a field by Bābu-šumu-iddina, who was probably some cult official (*zabardabbu*) of Aššur and the ancestor of an important family of scribes and exorcists, the owners of the N4 archive and library (May 2018). Of fourteen witnesses in this list, nine are priests and scholars in high positions: a scribe of the god, a priest of the god (apparently Aššur), a priest of Nabû, the chief *kurgarru*, three physicians, a scribe, and the aforementioned chief architect, who is the third in the list after the scribe and the priest of the god (Deller et al. 1995: 127, no. 136 = VAT 9749 r. 10–e. 1, especially r. 12). The purchase deed itself was found in the N 24 archive (N 24 [11]), also called the archive of the architects (Donbaz/Parpola 2001: 71; Pedersén 1986: 116). Urnī, the chief architect and Ḥaḥḥā, an architect from Imgur-Il-lil appear in the list of witnesses together with two priests and a scribe on a sale deed for a field (BT 106 r. 4–13; 734 BCE). The chief architect is the first in the list. An architect Abi-ul-idi from Assur acts as a witness among members of the staff of the temple of Ištar (A 3201 r. 8; 732 BCE). Note also the tablet for the purchase of a slave by Qurdi-Gula, an architect (¹⁰²se-

Top-ranking builders, whom I here call architects, were associated with wisdom. Enki, the god of wisdom, stands at the side of the god of construction Mušda(ma);²² and Mušda (^dŠITIM) is equated with ^dEa ša itinni in one of the Ninive copies of An = Anum, an explanatory list of gods.²³ Both Kulla and Mušda(ma) were known as the *itinnu* and *šitimgallu* of Ea in building rituals and incantations.²⁴ In one building ritual

lap-pa-a-a) from Assur, where five priests of various deities are followed by the chief architect (¹⁰²GAL' *še-la-pa-a-a*) in the list of witnesses (Deller et al. 1995: 116–117, no. 127 = VAT 8915: 8–9, r. 30–35, 636* BCE). This tablet also comes from the N 24 archive of “architects” (Pedersén 1986: 116, see above), of which Qurdi-Gula is the central figure. See also SAA 7, 154 (fn. 13 above).

For NB and LB see fns. 17 and 18 above.

22 In Enki and the World Order II. 341–348 (esp. 347) it is Enki who makes Mušdama responsible for the entire construction process. Mušdama is called *šidim-gal* of Enlil (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.1.3&display=Crit&char-enc=gcirc#>, last accessed 11.08.2016). In the inscriptions of Sargon II (Fuchs 1994: 41, Zyl 60) Mušda(ma) (^dŠITIM) is an architect of Ea (*šitim-gal-lum*). The god of construction (as well as the brick god) is referred to as an architect of the chief god and reflects the relationship of the most prominent of the earthly architects to their earthly rulers (see also fns. 24 and 76).

23 ^mMuš-da ^dšidim : ^dEa ša i-tin-ni CT 25 48, 9 (= K. 4366 9).

24 For Kulla, see Ambos 2004: 134–135, II. A.3.6, c+4'. In the incantation to Mušda(ma), II.B.2 = K. 4167, Mušda(ma) is called

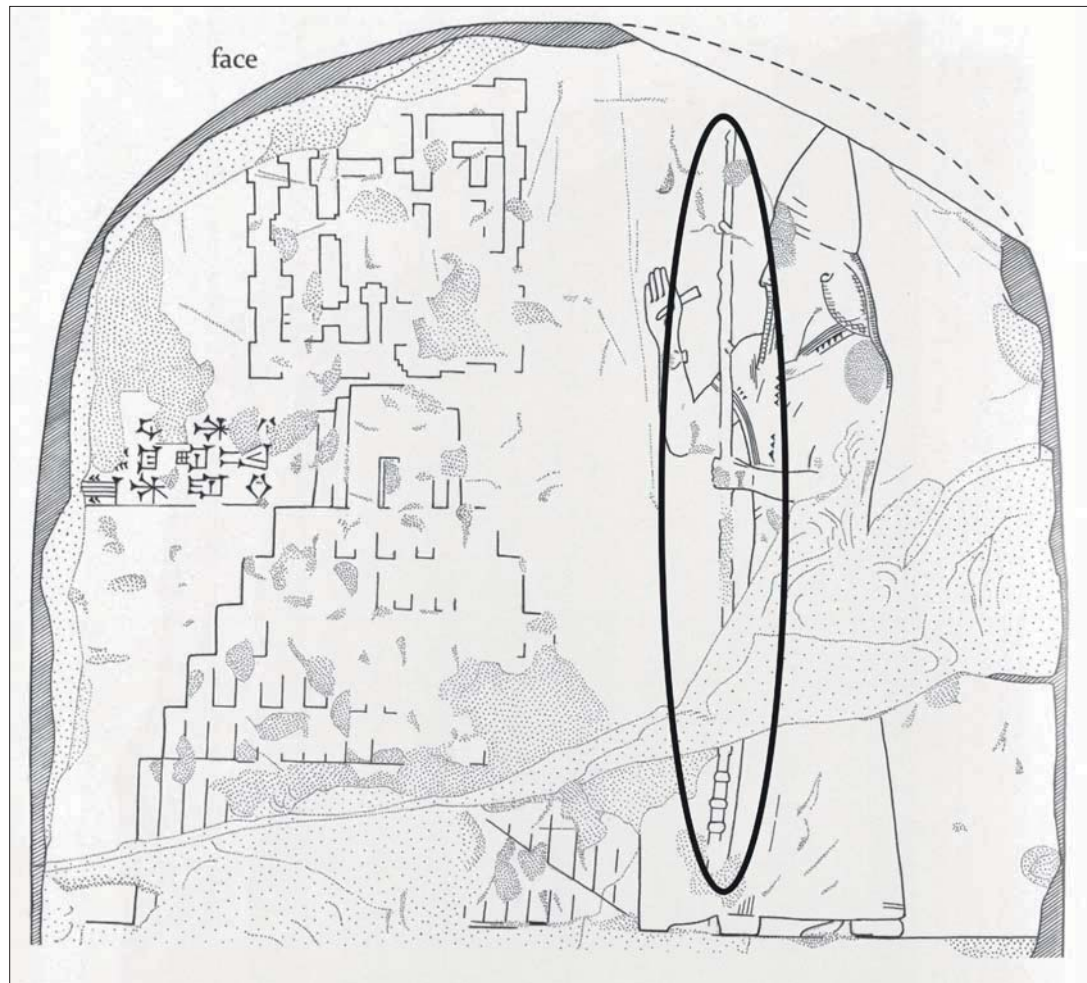


Fig. 3: Stele of Nebuchadnezzar II depicting him as an “architect” of Entemenanki holding the “broken reed” measuring rode(?). The plan and the elevation of the ziqqurat appear beside the king at the left (after CUSAS 17: pl. 64, no. 76. Reproduced with kind permission of David Owen).

in a broken context the following terms are all mentioned together:²⁵ the house of craftsmen or scholars (*bīt ummāni*), plans (*uṣurāte*, GIŠ.ĪUR^{mes}), the wisdom of Ea (*nemēqi* ^dEa), experts (*mudû*), and architects (*itinnû*, ^{lu2}ŠITIM^{mes}).²⁶ Sennacherib claims his “palace without a rival” was built by the skill of “wise architects,” (*šitimgallu enqûte*).²⁷ In Mesopotamia an architect’s skill was tantamount to “wisdom.”

One of the skills of an architect was drafting. The earliest architectural drawings, i.e. plans combined with elevations or simple ground plans, come from the Old Akkadian period.²⁸ The most famous is Gudea’s plan of Eninnu. Gudea’s statues B and F represent him as an architect, holding a tablet, a stylus and a ruler. On the tablet of Statue B is an architectural plan combined with elevation of an enclosure with six gates.²⁹ Combining

a ground plan with an elevation in the same drawing was the Mesopotamian way of representing a three-dimensional structure in a two-dimensional media.³⁰ The idea of representing the architectural and geographical environment by combining a plan and an elevation persisted and is found on Neo-Assyrian reliefs as well (fig. 2). In the Neo-Babylonian period we already find an elevation drawn separately beside a plan, as is done in modern drafts (fig. 3).³¹ By and large most house ground plans do not differ much from modern ones but, even when dimensions are indicated, Mesopotamian plans were not drawn to scale.³² A Neo-Bab-

ŠITIM.GAL of Enlil, but acts on orders of Ea (Ambos 2004: 148–149; II.B.2 (= K. 4167), 19–21 and 17–18 respectively).

25 Ambos 2004: 118–119, II.A.2 (= K. 48+), 6–8 and 12.

26 Unfortunately, both the word modified by *mudû* and the modifier of *itinnû* are lost, but it is clear that two parallel synonymous expressions for expert builders were used.

27 RINAP 3/1, 22 vi 57. *Enqûte* is an epithet often applied to *ummāne* and *tuṣšārru*; see CAD E 151–152 s.v. *emqu* a.

28 Dolce 2000: 373–375, figs. 1–4; Baggs 2011: 568–570 and 578–579, nos. 1–8.

29 That of Statue F is blank; see Suter 2000: 58, RIME 3/1: 30, 46;

Johansen 1978: 10–11 with pls. 19–22 (AO 2 = Statue B) and pls. 28–32 (AO 3 = Statue F). According to Johansen’s description, the unit of measurement on the ruler of Statue B equals 1,6 cm (idem: 10, pl. 22); for Statue F it is 1,6–1,7 cm; the full length of the ruler is 27 cm, of which 24,9 cm has unit indications (idem: 10, pl. 32).

30 The same feature is characteristic of the earliest topographical field plans, like the Sargonic map from Gasur. See Robson 1999, fig. 3.4. For the survey of LB field plans, see Nemet-Nejat 1982.

31 For another example of a ziqqurat elevation, see BM 38217 (Wiseman 1972: 141, 143 with figs. 1 and 2). Note that this tablet also has a colophon, which again links architectural drafts to the scholarly tradition.

32 See Heinrich/Seidl 1967, Dolce 2000, and Baggs 2011 for the overview of Mesopotamian ground plans and, e.g., VAT 7031 = Schneider 1930: pl. 126, no. 504 = Robson 1999: 148, fig. 9.6;

ylonian ground plan of a temple from Sippar seems to outline the bricks,³³ while the dimensions of bricks were standard and related to the area units. Clearly in the Neo-Babylonian period an approach to architectural drafting close to modern was being formulated.

Donald Wiseman provides convincing evidence to show that drawing plans of buildings and fields was a part of a Mesopotamian scribe's mathematical training.³⁴ Very many cuneiform mathematical texts deal with construction.³⁵ There are sets of problems dealing with bricks exclusively, such as the 60 problems in YBC 4608,³⁶ and those in YBC 4607 and so forth. The coefficients lists BM 36776 and U17213b (= UET 5, 859) contain only brick coefficients.³⁷ The set of mathematical problems upon a rectangular prism from Larsa, AO 8862 includes two subsequent architectural problems. In definitions of them both an architect (*itinnu*) demands of a mathematician to compute how many bricks workers from a building gang need to carry over a certain distance and to calculate the grain ration needed for them in proportion to their work-load. Both problems explore proportions.³⁸ The ^{1u2}ŠITIM figures also as a protagonist in Problem 3 in YBC 4673.³⁹ It is a text dealing exclusively with construction problems, mostly for houses but also for dams. The architect and the mathematician have been required to work closely together. Mathematical problems may well have been composed for an architect as the person in overall charge of construction.

Naturally, the question arises if we have cuneiform texts associated with architects which deal with more than brickwork. I turn first to YBC 5022, a list of coefficients presumably also from Larsa.⁴⁰ I will argue that it can be called a "Manual of an Architect." Its caption, IGI.GUB.BA *ša ne₂-pe-eš₂₀-tum*, at first sight appears to be ungrammatical, and an error for *ša nēpeštīm*. But since the text has an apparent nominative for an expected genitive case in three more lines,⁴¹ we have to explain

ša ne₂-pe-eš₂₀-tum as genitive.⁴² Even so, the word *nēpeštum* needs further commentary. Unlike *nēpešum* "procedure, mathematical operation,"⁴³ which is common in mathematical texts, *nēpeštum* is not attested in the context of calculations except here in YBC 5022. Cuneiform mathematicians give the same meaning to *nēpeštum* in YBC 5022 as is given to *nēpešum* elsewhere. Otto Neugebauer and Abraham Sachs transliterate IGI.GUB.BA-*ša ne₂-pe-eš₂₀-tum* and translate "the thing in connection with which the operation is to be performed," or in plain words "of the operation, its coefficient."⁴⁴ Eleanor Robson, taking *epēšum* to mean "to calculate, to perform a calculation," interprets *nēpeštum* as "method of calculation," and translates "coefficients for calculation(?)"⁴⁵ Closer to the truth in my opinion is Wolfram von Soden's suggested translation "Aufstellung," meaning an estimation of costs,⁴⁶ although his translation reflects the content and purpose of the list as a whole rather than the meaning of *nēpeštum* in it. The verb *epēšum* in building inscriptions and rituals etc. usually means "to construct" and occurs more often than *banû*, so *nēpeštum* could mean "workmanship, construction."⁴⁷ From this we may deduce that in YBC 5022 the word means simply "construction," and the caption for this list means "coefficient for construction."

The content of the list confirms this suggestion. According to Robson's general classification of the kinds of coefficients, YBC 5022 includes coefficients of quantity surveying, storage, metals, geometrical coefficients, and some others, as other Old Babylonian coefficient lists do.⁴⁸ A close look into the particular coefficients listed can help us to establish what for these were the ones selected.⁴⁹

Donald 1962: 184 = Robson 1999: 150, fig. 9.7, and de Genouillac 1925, pl. 39 (D.30.R, D.30.F) = Robson 1999: 150, fig. 9.8.

33 See Baggs 2011: 577, no. 32; 585–586 with figs. 32–32b. Note that on the back of this tablet the staircase is indicated within the draft (*ibid.*, fig. 32b).

34 Wiseman 1972: 145.

35 MCT: 91–99, YBC 4067 is a set of problems only related to bricks (OB); YBC 7284 has a coefficient of transformation for the volume of bricks to the units of weight (OB); YBC 10722 includes a problem on brick transportation (OB); in YBC 7997 the brick kiln capacity problem (OB) contains a very high percentage of Sumerograms, and YBC 4067 consists almost only of Sumerograms. See also Nemet-Nejat 1993: 27–35 and Friberg 1996 for the full survey and discussion of the problem texts dealing with bricks and brickwork.

36 MKT 1: 389–402.

37 Robson's lists L and M respectively. The former is LB and the latter is OB (see Robson 1999: esp. 206–207); she notes that the entirely logographic list M "appears to be a short extract from a longer list" (*ibid.* 24).

38 MKT 1: 111–112, iii 32–iv 6 and iv 7–26; both problems are provided with solutions.

39 MKT 3: 29.

40 This text exhibits the same orthographic style of *Pleneschreibung* as the aforementioned AO 8862.

41 Ll. 56b, 59, and 65.

42 TUM can also have a reading *tim₂* in OB, but it is uncertain; see Borger 2010: 319, no. 354 TUM. For the instances of genitive interchanging with nominative in the genitive construction in OB, see, e.g., CAD S 252–253 s.v. *sikkatu* B in *rabi sikkati*.

43 See, e.g., CAD N/2 168 s.v. *nēpešum* 1b, though the CAD collection of usages of *nēpešum* in mathematical texts is rather poor. Note *nēpešum* can also mean "construction."

44 MCT: 132 with n. 298 and apud Robson 1999: 21, n. 14; Vaiman 1961: 37 "их иги-губ-ба операции" ("their IGI.GUB.BA of operation") obviously followed Neugebauer and Sachs.

45 Robson 1999: 21.

46 AHW 778, s.v. *nēpeštum* 6.

47 This is, however correct for the NA period. See CAD N/2 167 s.v. *nēpeštum* 3. For *nēpeštum* as "construction", see RINAP 3/1, 22 vi 54 in the context of ll. 51–58 regarding *šitimgallu enqūte*, and VAB 4, p. 76, iii 14 = Nebuchadnezzar, 1 as *ne₂-pel-ta'-ša'*, collated by P.-R. Berger, apud AHW 778b s.v. *nēpeštum* 5 and CAD N/2 167 s.v. *nēpeštum* 3. In OB *nēpeštum* is commonly attested in conjunction with extispicy (CAD. s.v. *nēpeštum* 1).

48 Robson 1999: 22, table 6. The percentage of quantity surveying coefficients in this list (43%) is one of the largest among the Old Babylonian coefficient lists.

49 In Robson's opinion, this list was compiled from several different lists (Robson 1999: 22).

YBC 5022:⁵⁰

1	IGI.GUB.BA <i>ša ne₂-pe-eš₂₀-tum</i>	Coefficient for construction/workmanship
	4.30 <i>na-az-ba-al</i> SIG ₄	4,30,0, the carriage of bricks
	7.12 <i>na-al-ba-an-ša</i>	7;12, its brickage
	5.24 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> SIG ₄ .AB ₂	5;24, the brickage of a half brick
5	3.22.30 <i>na-az-ba-al-ša</i>	3,22,30, its carriage
	2.42 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> SIG ₄ .AL.UR ₃ .RA	2;42, the brickage of a baked brick
	1.41.15 <i>na-az-ba-al-ša</i>	1,41,15, its carriage
	1.40 <i>na-az-ba-al</i> SAḪAR	1;40, the carriage of earth
	1.12 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> 1 KUŠ ₃ SIG ₄	1;12, the brickage of a 1-cubit brick
10	45 <i>na-az-ba-al-ša</i>	45,0, its carriage
	4.48 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> ½ KUŠ ₃ SIG ₄	4;48, the brickage of a ½-cubit brick
	4.23.36 <i>na-az-ba-al-ša</i>	4,23,36, ⁵¹ its carriage
	9 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> ⅓ KUŠ ₃ SIG ₄	9, the brickage of a ⅓-cubit brick
	8.20 <i>na-al-ba-an</i> IM.DUGUD	8;20, the brickage of clay lumps
15	7.38 <i>na-az-ba-al-ša</i>	7,38,0, its carriage
	7.12 <i>ša</i> SIG ₄ .ANŠE	7;12, of a (regular) brick stack (of standard dimensions)
	3.45 <i>ša</i> IM.DU ₃ .A	0;3,45 of an earth wall
	15 <i>ša</i> ESIR ₂ .ḪA ₅ .RA ₂ .A	0;15, of dried bitumen ⁵²
	30 <i>ša</i> SAG.DU ₃	0;30, of a triangle
20	‘5?’ <i>ša</i> GAN ₂ GUR ₂	0;5, of the area of a circle
	‘1’5 u ₃ 10 <i>ša</i> GAN ₂ U ₄ .SAKAR	0;15 and 0;10, of the area of a “crescent”
	1.12 <i>ra-tu₃-um</i> <i>ša</i> URUDU	1,12, a mold (tube) ⁵³ of copper
	1.30 <i>ra-tu₃-um</i> <i>ša</i> KU ₃ .BABBAR	1,30, a mold (tube) of silver
	1.48 <i>ra-tu₃-um</i> <i>ša</i> KU ₃ .GI	1,48, a mold (tube) of gold
25	2.15 <i>ru-uq-qum</i> <i>ša</i> KU ₃ .GI	2,15, a sheet of gold
	4 <i>ru-uq-qum</i> <i>ša</i> KU ₃ .BABBAR	4,0, a sheet of silver
	2.24 <i>ru-uq-qum</i> <i>ša</i> AN.NA	2,24, a sheet of tin
	2.8 <i>ru-uq-qum</i> <i>ša</i> SU ₃ .AG ₂	2,8, a sheet of SU ₃ .AG ₂ -metal ⁵⁴
	6 <i>ša</i> ⁵⁵ MA ₂ .LA ₂	6,0,0, of a cargo-boat.
30	6.40 <i>ša</i> E ₂ .KIŠIB ŠE	6,40,0, of grain storage
	3.36 <i>ša</i> E ₂ .KIŠIB IN.NU.DA	0;3,36, the storage of straw
	3.45 <i>ša</i> E ₂ .KIŠIB SUḪ ₄	0;3,45, of the storage of <i>matting</i>
	15 <i>ša</i> E ₂ .KIŠIB A	15, of the storage of water

Reverse

	3.20 <i>ša</i> SIG ₄ .AL.UR ₃ .RA	3;20, of baked brick
35	1.52.30 <i>ša</i> SIG ₄ .AL.UR ₃ .RA KI.2	1;52,30, of baked brick (second)
	<1>4.24 <i>ma-aš-qa₂-al-tum</i> <i>ša</i> SIG ₄	<1>4,24,0, weight of a brick
	<<1>>.12 <i>ša</i> ḫa-al-lu-u ₂ -um	<<1>>12, of the ḫallûm ⁵⁵
	14.24 <i>ta-ad-di-tum</i> <i>ša</i> SIG ₄	14,24, a layer of bricks
	45 <i>mu-ut-ta-al-li-ik-tum</i>	45,0, going
40	18 <i>i-im-lu-u₂-um</i>	18, <i>imlûm</i> ⁵⁶
	6 <i>ma-aš-šû-u₂-um</i> [ša] ‘SIG ₄ ’	6, basket [of] ‘bricks’
	1.40 <i>ma-aš-šû-u₂-um</i> <i>ša</i> SAḪAR	1;40, basket of earth
	10 GIN ₂ EŠ ₂ .GAR ₃ LU ₂ .1	10 shekels, work-load of 1 man
	1.20 u ₃ ‘15’ <i>na-az-ba-al</i> A	1;20 and 15, carriage of water

50 The transliteration follows Robson 1999: 202–204. The translation deviates from hers mostly in cases discussed above and below.

51 According to Robson 1999: 85 this is an error. The coefficient should have been 3,0,0.

52 See the discussion in CAD I 311b–312a (s.v. *ittû*) regarding different kinds of bitumen and the various Sumerian terms for it.

53 *Rāṭum* originally meant “channel” including birth canal, strongly connoting a channel “into which something is poured” (CAD R 219–220 s.v. *rāṭum*). In that sense it was used for a metal-casting mold (ibid. 220, s.v. *rāṭum* d). Probably these were tubular molds for ingots of standard dimensions.

54 See Robson 1999: 128, who quotes bibliography for reading SU₃.AG₂ as *elmēšum*, an unidentified precious stone or metal.

55 Robson 1999: 62 reads <<1>>12,0,0 *ša-ḫa-al-lu-u₂-um*. *šahallûm* is a rare word which she left untranslated (cf. CAD Š/1 77a “a milling product”?). The initial *ša* might represent the indirect genitive, resulting in “of the ḫallûm, perhaps some kind of vessel” (CAD Ḫ 45b s.v. *ḫallu* B). For the coefficient emendation here, see Robson 1999: 63 with n. 6.

56 For the detailed discussion, see Robson 1999: 131–133, who also refrains from translating the word.

45	2.13 ʾ20 u ₃ 1:15	ša ^{giš} <<tup>>DUSU	0;0,2,13, 20 and 1,15, of a basket
	ʾ3:[22],ʾ30	ša IM	ʾ3,[22],ʾ30, of clay
	[13].ʾ20	ša GAN ₂ MA ₂ .GUR ₈	0;13,20, of the area of a barge
	ʾ53.ʾ20	ša GAN ₂ ZA ₃ .MI ₂	0;53,20, of the area of a lyre
	ʾ5ʾ2.30 u ₃ 12.30	ša GAN ₂ ʾPAN	0;52,30 and 0;12,30, of the area of a bow
50	26.40	ša GEŠTU ZA ₃ .MI ₂	0;26,40, a concave square
	3.30	ša GAN ₂ ʾPAN KI.2	3;30, of the area of a bow, second
	4.20	ša GAN ₂ U ₄ .SAKAR KI.2	4 (and) 0;20, of the area of a “crescent,” second
	4.36 10	ša GAN ₂ GUR ₂ KI.2	4,36 (and) 0;10, of the area of a circle, second
	45	ša GAN ₂ U ₄ .SAKAR KI.3	0;45, of the area of a “crescent,” third
55	ʾ20.48 6	ša GIR ₄ AD.KID	20, 48 (and) 6, of the reed-worker’s oven for melting of bitumen) ⁵⁷
56a, b	ʾ3ʾ6	IM.BABBAR	ʾ3ʾ6, gypsum;
	54	ša ka-lu-u ₂ -um	54, of orpiment
57a, b	ʾ20ʾ?	ša ESIR ₂ ?	ʾ20ʾ?, of bitumen?;
	20	ša ^{na} ₄ KUR.RA	20, of alum
	ʾ4.48	ša ku-bu-ur-re-e GIŠ	4,48,0, of the thickness of a log
	40	ša DU ₃ ^{giš} šu-rum ⁵⁸	0;40, of building reeds (for dams)
60	12	ma-al-ta-ak-kum ša mu-ši-im	0;12, the water-clock of the night
	4.48	ša E ₂ .KIŠIB ŠE	4,48,0, storage of grain
	24	PI-lu-u ₂ -tum ša GI [(x)]	24, ... of reed [...?]
63a, b	1	ši ₂ -li-ip-tum	1, a diagonal/rectangle; ⁵⁹
	1	zi-it-tum	1, a share;
	1	GI ḤAŠ.A	1, a broken reed
65	57.36	ša eb-lu-u ₂ -um	0;57,36, of a rope
		^d Nisaba	Nisaba

57 See Robson 1999: 135 for the explanation why three separate coefficients should be read here. MCT: 135 “of the wicker-worker’s (asphalt) oven;” ETCSL translates ad-KID as “basket weaver” (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/edition2/etcslemma.php>, last access 28.07.2016) and PSD as “basket weaver, reed worker” in <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/nepsd-frame.html> (last access 28.07.2016) and as “reed worker” in PSD A/3 20–23, s.v. ad-KID. For gir₄ ad-KID, see CAD A/2 495a, s.v. *atkuppu* (lexical section).

58 Attested only here.

59 Robson 1999: 45 translates “rectangle” here. Vaiman 1961: 38, 50 uses the term “diagonal” when discussing this line. Both translations can be correct for *šilipum* (CDA 338a), since a diagonal can stand *pars pro toto* for a rectangle; Vaiman 1961: 50 saw it as the diagonal of a rhombus, a different kind of parallelogram.

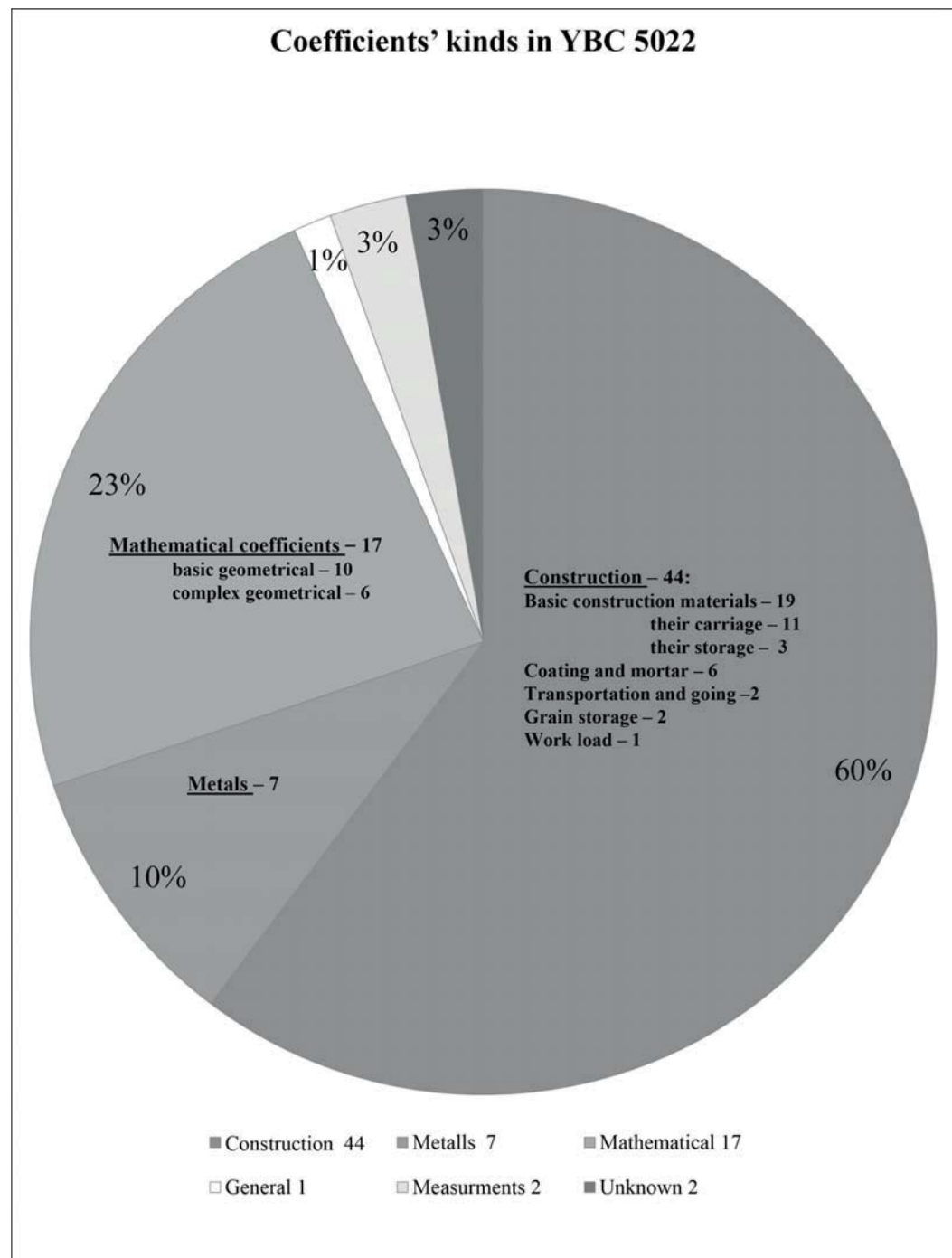


Fig. 4: Coefficients' kinds in YBC 5022.

Of 76⁶⁰ coefficients of this almost intact list, 47 items (about 62%) are actual construction materials (bricks, earth, reeds, clay,⁶¹ logs, water, straw) or concern transporting or storing them (**fig. 4**).⁶² Most (about a quarter) of the coefficients are for bricks as building material.

60 Two numerical values of coefficients with the same title (ll. 21, 44, 49, 52, and 53) are counted as separate coefficients that might have had served different needs in computations. Lines 45 and 55 each apparently contain three coefficients with the same name.

61 A clay coefficient (l. 46) is attested only in this list (Robson 1999: 137).

62 Only three coefficients in this list are not adequately understood (ll. 32, 37, 40). The coefficient for matting storage seems also to be the coefficient of construction. The meaning of *hallûm* and *imlûm* is unknown, but since they appear among coefficients related to brickwork and earthwork they are probably also some type of basic construction material.

All types of brick are mentioned except the $\frac{2}{3}$ brick; the mention of a coefficient for a $\frac{1}{3}$ brick (l. 13) is unique to this list. Of five storage coefficients three deal with building materials: ll. 31–33, water, matting(?), and straw. Thus, in concern of the building materials, their storage and carriage, this list is the most detailed of all Old Babylonian lists of coefficients. The coefficients for work-load in line 43, for the cargo-boat to transport bricks in line 29⁶³ and the three(?) for the reed-workers' bitumen oven in line 55 all relate to construction. The daily distance construction workers covered in transporting building materials is referred to as “go-

63 In conjunction with the cargo-boat used for transporting various types of bricks, see Robson 1999: 113 (BM 85194).

ing” (l. 39).⁶⁴ YBC 5022 includes two grain storage coefficients (ll. 30 and 61) and grain rations for workers were the responsibility of an architect, as we saw earlier in problems in AO 8862. The coefficients at the end of the list (ll. 56–59) relate to the finer building materials than bricks, including bitumen, bundles of reeds,⁶⁵ and wood logs; gypsum, ochre⁶⁶, and alum were used for plaster, paint and dye.

Lines 22–28 form a group of seven coefficients of metals, three of molds (*rāṭum*) and four of sheets (*ruqqum*). The Mesopotamian architect was naturally responsible for the design of a building. He needed coefficients of sheet metal to calculate amounts for plating statues,⁶⁷ doors⁶⁸ and temple cella walls.⁶⁹ Metal architectural details, for which *rāṭum* coefficients would have been needed, can be seen in the famous Early Dynastic copper lintel of the Tall al-‘Ubaid temple.⁷⁰ The correspondence of Sargon⁷¹ and the inscriptions of Sennacherib⁷² describe the luxurious metal work that adorned the palaces of Dūr Šarrukīn and Ninive, where bronze and cooper bulls and lion colossi and sphinxes served as column bases (fig. 5).⁷³ The Gudea Statue B inscription lists gold among the other building materials⁷⁴ and mentions silver, cooper, tin, and bronze for the production of statues.⁷⁵ Finally, from the ritual of the investiture of the divine statue we see that an architect used metals for a statue.⁷⁶

Regarding the geometrical coefficients, Vaiman wrote in conclusion to his article “Interpretation of the Geometrical Constants in the Cuneiform List TMS I from Susa:”

Unfortunately, so far we cannot say for certain the purpose of the Babylonians for computing various

kinds of geometrical constants... . Some if not all the geometrical constants may have been used in computations connected with craftsmanship and construction. This doubtless applies to the coefficients of area and the diameter and radius of a circle.”⁷⁷

The selection of mathematical coefficients⁷⁸ in YBC 5022 is indeed remarkable. There are coefficients of most basic geometrical forms and of more sophisticated ones used in ornaments. The coefficients of the latter are restricted, in fact, to the cuneiform mathematics. There are three groups of mathematical coefficients in this text: lines 19–21; 47–54; in line 63 the coefficients of a share and of a diagonal of a rectangle appear. The first group includes coefficients of a triangle, a circle and a “crescent.”⁷⁹ Two more coefficients of a “crescent” appear in the second group. The importance of such basic shapes as the triangle, rectangle, and circle and its parts for architecture is obvious. Computation for triangles, circles and parts of a circle were necessary for general architectural features in a building and also for decorations and ornaments.⁸⁰

In relation to ornaments, BM 15285 should be discussed.⁸¹ Anne Kilmer in her pioneering research on the design names in Akkadian and Sumerian referred to this outstanding document.⁸² Here I refrain from discussing the obviously ornamental character of the geometric figures represented by the diagrams supplied for each problem in this text, on which Kilmer and Jöran Friberg concentrated,⁸³ but investigate the purpose of composing this set of problems. The tablet contains 40 problem definitions, all starting with “The side of a square is 1 UŠ.” Then follows a description of a figure or set of figures indented into the square. The question in every problem is “What is its or their area?”

64 For parallels and discussion, see Robson 1999: 78–82.

65 Not necessarily for dams, see CAD Š/3 369 s.v. *širu* A c; cf. Robson 1999: 102–106.

66 *Kalū* is most probably ochre; it was used as a coating material together with gypsum, and on its own especially for writing boards; see CAD K 94, s.v. *kalū* c and d.

67 E.g., Zettler/Horne 1998: 51, no.1; 52, no. 2; 53: no. 3; 58, no. 4; and one of two famous table legs in a form of a ram (ibid.: opposite p. 43).

68 For instance, the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III (King 1915, Schachner 2007).

69 RINAP 4, 1 v 38–39 (Esarhaddon); for bronze and tin bands plating columns and silver and gold inlays on statues see RINAP 3/1, 17 vii 20–40 (Sennacherib). For metalworking techniques and the archaeological evidence, see Aruz 2003: 79–88 and passim; for the third millennium Mesopotamia, see Millerman 2008: 7–9 with fig. 8 on Ur cemetery; on Late Assyrian metalwork, see Curtis 2013.

70 E.g., Aruz 2003: 85, fig. 30.

71 SAA 1, 66.

72 RINAP 3/1, 1: 83; 17, iv 89–vii 40.

73 Incredulously, Sennacherib boasts that he was the first king to decorate his palace with bronze and copper bulls and lion colossi, columns and sphinxes serving as column bases; in fact a letter from his father’s treasurer to Sargon (SAA 1, 66) states that similar luxurious bronze work adorned Dūr Šarrukīn.

74 RIME 3/1 Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB vi 33–42.

75 RIME 3/1 Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB vii 49–53.

76 A god (name broken, most probably Mušda(ma) or Kulla) mentioned in connection (the context is badly broken) with gold and silver has the epithet ŠITIM.GAL of Anu; see Ambos 2004: 152–153, II.C.1a (= K. 3472), 7.

77 Vaiman 1963: 86: “К сожалению мы ничего достоверного не можем сказать о цели, которую преследовали вавилоняне, вычисляя различного рода геометрические постоянные Если и не все, то по крайней мере некоторые геометрические постоянные могли использоваться в расчетах, связанных с ремесленным производством и строительной деятельностью (в отношении постоянных площади, диаметра и радиуса круга это несомненно).”

78 The definition of mathematical coefficients here follows Vaiman 1961: 50–51 and includes geometrical coefficients and coefficients of share (proportion) as opposed to the much more numerous group, which he called “empirical constants” (ibid.: 38–50).

79 Friberg 1987–1990: 555 and Robson (e.g., 2000: 38–39) translate “semicircle.” However, neither explains the constants 0;20 and 0;45 of YBC 5022: 52, 54. Rechecking may show that these constants could relate to other kinds of segments.

80 On baked-brick circles semicircles, sectors, and segments used in column construction, as attested from Gudea (at Ġirsu) through the Neo-Assyrian period (at Tall ar-Rimāh); see Robson 1999: 142–145 and Oates 1990, especially 392–395 with pls. 1–2 and fig. 4. For these and even more sophisticated brick shapes, see Kara-indaš’s temple of Inana at Uruk (Jakob-Rost et al. 1990: 95, no. 42).

81 E.g., Robson 1999: 208–217 including a handcopy and references to previous editions.

82 Kilmer 1990: 85–90.

83 Friberg 2007: 164–170. J. Friberg, however, discusses Mesopotamian artistic compositions as based on geometrical figures, while A. Kilmer investigates the ornaments themselves, their origin, and Sumerian and Akkadian terms for them.

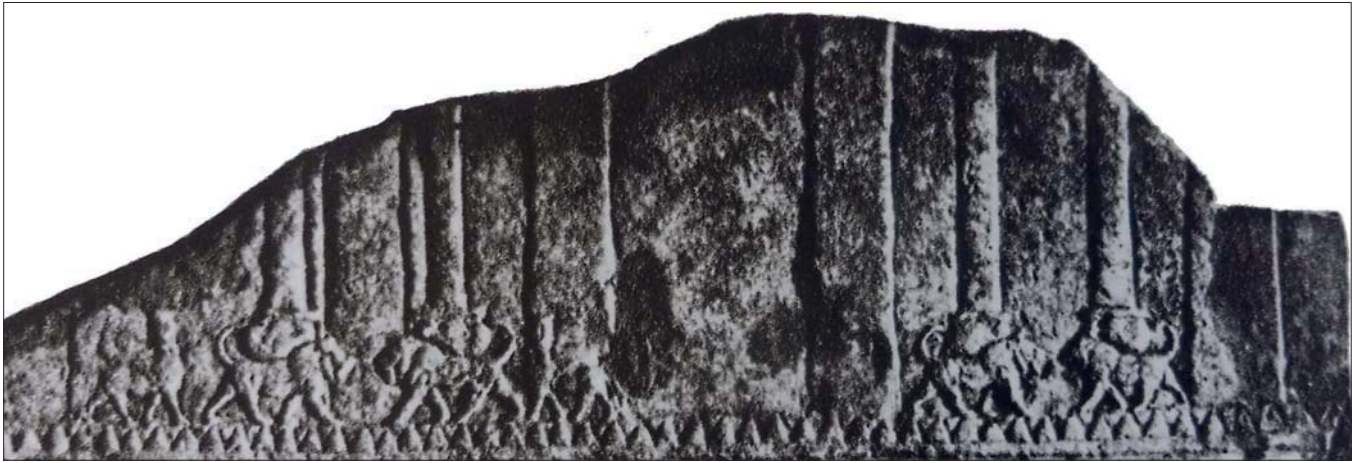


Fig. 5: Column bases in form of lamassu and lions in Sennacherib’s South-West Palace as depicted on the reliefs of the Room H of the North Palace of Assurbanipal. According to RINAP 3/1, 1: 83; 17, iv 89–vii 40 they were made of bronze and cooper (after Barnett 1976: pl. 23. © Trustees of the British Museum).

To clarify the definition, each problem is illustrated with a neat drawing. The only purpose in solving these problems would be to compute the amount of material for ornamenting walls and floors. Ornamental wall coatings involved indented geometrical figures in Mesopotamia from the earliest period.⁸⁴ By knowing the amounts necessary for one square UŠ of a surface, an architect could easily compute what was needed for an entire surface. It is, of course, tempting to claim, that the gigantic rectangle of one square UŠ⁸⁵ suggests that these problems were applied to monumental architecture. However, when converted into other measures,⁸⁶ the same problem solutions can be applied to smaller areas. The principle of similarity of figures was intuitively used in problem solutions.⁸⁷ By scaling computations for areas from a base of one square UŠ for any ornament amounts for surfaces of any dimension can be calculated. Solving these problems gave an architect the material needed for 40 types of ornament. The exotic forms of some of the figures cannot have been of pure geometrical interest and so favour the suggestion that this problem had a practical purpose in computing the area of any ornament. The last problem in BM 15285 discusses areas of concave triangles and squares and of “barges.” The coefficients of two of these ornaments, the concave square and the “barge,” are also given in the list YBC 5022, there together with two coefficients of an area of a bow and an obscure $GAN_2 ZA_3.MI_2$.⁸⁸ The ornaments of concave triangle and concave square (*apsamikku*) paired with the “barge” occur in Mesopotamia

84 See, e.g., Aruz 2003: 18–19, no. 5 and fig. 4 for the clay-cone wall mosaics from the forth millennium Uruk and pp. 85–86, nos. 44a, b for shell-inlayed columns from early Dynastic (III) Tall al-Ubaid.

85 Ca. 360 × 360 m.

86 On the conversion of various units, see Vaiman 1961: 32–34.

87 See, e.g., Vaiman 1961: 110, 126.

88 Robson 1999: 57 suggests that it is $GIŠ.GAN_2 ZA_3.MI_2$ of BM 15285.

from the earliest times through to the first millennium⁸⁹ and probably came from Harrapa.⁹⁰

To sum up, of 76 coefficients of YBC 5022⁹¹ only two are not directly connected with the duties of an architect. These are the coefficient of share⁹² and the coefficient of a water-clock of the night in line 60. But the latter would be of general use in any construction process.⁹³ Apart from two lists of coefficients,⁹⁴ the term “share” is found only in conjunction with the division of property.⁹⁵ The problems involving “share” are progression problems similar to those that an architect was to deal with.⁹⁶ The list ends with the coefficients of a broken reed and a rope, the main tools of the Mesopotamian architect, to be used like a ruler and tape-measure. The “broken reed” might have functioned like a folding ruler. It might be a kind of telescopic measuring rod like the one that Nebuchadnezzar II holds on a stele, where he is represented as an “architect” of Etemenanki (fig. 3).⁹⁷

89 For *apsamikku*-ornaments in the earliest period (Halaf), see Kilmer 1990: 87, fig. 6. For concave triangles and squares as well as “barges” in Assyrian architectural surface decorations, see Albenda 1978, especially fig. 3 and pls. 19–22 and Albenda 2005: 16, pls. 3–4; 25, pl. 4a; 35, pl. 9; 37, pl. 11; 40, pl. 13; 44, pl. 17; 46, pl. 18. Assyrian glazed wall plaques were also shaped as concave squares and were very common in Neo-Assyrian palatial décor (e.g., Curtis/Reade 1995: 103, no. 51). See also the note of P. Albenda on Neo-Assyrian geometrical designs in conjunction with BM 15285 (Albenda 2017).

90 Regarding the Harrapan origin of the *apsamikku*-ornament, see Kilmer 1990: 87 with figs. 6–7 and also Erlenmeyer/Erlenmeyer 1966: 25, figs. 15–16. For *apsamikku* in mathematical texts, see Vaiman 1959 and Robson 2007.

91 Three(?) are unidentified; see fn. 62.

92 *Zittum*, l. 69.

93 Robson (1999: 129–130) relates this coefficient to the astronomical constants based on its use in the NB observations of the moon. There is, however, no evidence for observations of the moon in the OB period.

94 YBC 5022 and A 3553.

95 Inheritance, income, booty, property, payment or delivery; see CAD Z 139–147 s.v. *zittu* 1–4.

96 AO 8862. For the discussion of the progression problems, see Muroi 1988 and most recently Melville 2005.

97 An Old Babylonian copper(?) cubit was excavated at Nippur (*Nippurelle*, Unger 1916: pl. 1). Note that this stele of Nebuchadnezzar II continues the tradition of stele monuments

Building construction was the most developed and important of early Mesopotamian technologies. The overwhelming majority of the early cuneiform mathematical texts relates to building techniques. A great number of early cuneiform mathematical texts in general and OB texts in particular, including problems and coefficient lists, deal with bricks and other building materials. Vaiman pointed to the “importance of the ‘applied’ mathematics” of the Sumerians⁹⁸ for the development of the theoretical mathematics in the OB period.⁹⁹ Since the Ur III period units of volume and area are expressed also as brick units.¹⁰⁰ Computations related to bricks, brickwork, and brick metrology¹⁰¹ resulted in the development of stereometry, which started as calculating the volumes of walls and dams of various shapes.¹⁰² This “brickometry” advanced cuneiform mathematics¹⁰³ as much as the land plots measuring advanced geometry, “measuring the earth.” Many Old Babylonian mathematical texts related to construction are written almost entirely in Sumerograms. Apparently they go back to the Ur III period,¹⁰⁴ but their subject matter originated in the Early Dynastic period if not before.¹⁰⁵

Already in the Early Dynastic period the craft of the master-builder was highly developed, with many branches and a sophisticated hierarchy. The Ur III pe-

riod marked the zenith of monumental construction.¹⁰⁶ To be an architect involved closely connecting with mathematics and with what was considered to be “wisdom.” The prosopography of architects connects them with priests and scribes.¹⁰⁷ Karen Nemet-Nejat lists various kinds of scribes that had diverse specialisations which needed different types of training.¹⁰⁸ An architect needed and must have received advanced mathematical training to become professional. It was suggested by Robson¹⁰⁹ that the Ur III model texts AOT 304 and YBC 9819,¹¹⁰ both dealing with bricks, were used in schools for mathematics tuition. In the OB period schools apparently trained apprentice architects. The brick problem texts YBC 4607, 4608 as well as the list of construction coefficients YBC 5022 seem to have been compiled not only for mathematical education *per se* but also for the mathematical education of architects.¹¹¹ BM 15285 was probably used in teaching computing the areas of decorative ornaments.

The “brickometry,” with its problems and empirical coefficients disappeared, as did its *realia*, but it laid the ground for geometry and stereometry. Not only geometry, but also the designs and decorative techniques of Mesopotamian architecture have persisted in many respects until today¹¹² — *ars longa, vita brevis!*

representing the king as a builder. From the late third millennium, the king is shown on steles, which commemorate his construction projects, receiving measuring tools, a rod and a rope, from a god. This iconographic tradition goes back probably to Ur-Namma (see Suter 2000: 244–251, figs. 33a–34). The measuring rod of Nebuchadnezzar is much more sophisticated; the plan and the elevation of the ziqqurat in front of the king are also an example of the most sophisticated Mesopotamian drafting. The king is represented holding the measuring rod himself, and not as one presented with it by the god. Apparently due to the influence of the iconography of Neo-Assyrian royal steles the king appears as the main protagonist of the depiction, holding a measuring rod like a sceptre. The concept of this stele of Nebuchadnezzar II is the same as that of Statues B and F of Gudea, where the ruler is depicted as an architect with a draft of the temple he had built and a measuring tool.

98 Robson 1999: 2–3 quoting Vaiman 1960 in German; this passage was partly repeated by him in Vaiman 1961: 207 (see above with fn. 3).

99 Vaiman 1961: 207–212.

100 Vaiman 1961: 39–40.

101 Nemet-Nejat 1993: 27–35, Friberg 1996, Robson 1999: 57–110.

102 See also Vaiman 1961: 136–137.

103 See Vaiman 1961: 107 on the terminology for spatial figures as rooted in construction.

104 See Robson’s overview and conclusions (Robson 1999: 138–182).

105 Kilmer 1990: 89–90, Friberg 1978–1979.

106 E.g., the ziqqurat of Ur-Namma (see Jakob-Rost et al. 1990: 25, fig. 12).

107 See fn. 21.

108 Nemet-Nejat 1993: 24–25. Unfortunately, she does not specify the periods for which each scribal profession was attested. Her list includes *šassuku* “field scribe, geometer.” The more precise definition of this profession would be “surveyor.”

109 Robson 1999: 171.

110 Dunham 1982: esp. 28–31.

111 The same was probably the purpose of the OB construction coefficients excerpt U17213b = UET 5, 859.

112 The same geometrical ornaments were widely used for instance in Late Roman *opus sectile* decorations and elsewhere.

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Construire l'image, dire les rites

Essai sur l'iconographie des rituels hittites

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Abstract: This study is part of a wider project using semiology to analyse ritual iconography in the Hittite world. Images appear especially on relief vases and on silver drinking vessels. The meaning of the iconographic programme is not clearly understood and different interpretations could be given. Comparison with religious texts and festival texts can help in the interpretation if we accept that, at Inandık at least, the vase appears in its own iconography in the context of a festival for the Storm God. The present paper will discuss the identification of a building that is attested on the terracotta vases as well as on the silver drinking vessels.

Keywords: Hittite, vase, iconography, rituals, semiology.

1 Introduction

Au sein des études assyriologiques, l'hittitologie est une discipline particulièrement jeune. Les Hittites étaient oubliés jusqu'au début du XX^e siècle de notre ère. Il faut attendre 1906 pour la première campagne de fouilles à Hattuša-Boğazköy, la capitale hittite, et 1915 pour que la langue hittite soit déchiffrée par Bedřich Hrozný (1879–1952). Dans ce contexte, les études sur l'iconographie anatolienne et hittite n'ont été initiées que récemment. Parmi les pionniers on citera Ekrem Akurgal (1911–2002) qui, en 1961, publie *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander*. Dans les années qui suivront, soit entre 1970 et 1990, les études liées à l'art et aux images hittites seront menées entre autres par Sedat Alp (1913–2006), Hans Gustav Güterbock (1908–2000) et Kurt Bittel (1907–1991)¹. On notera également que les découvertes archéologiques des années 1990 et 2000 ont considérablement enrichi et complété le corpus des objets comportant une iconographie. De plus, la publication par Joost Hazenbos en 2003 des textes nommés «Inventaires de culte» datant du XIII^e siècle av. J.-C. et qui donnent des descriptions très précises de l'aspect des statues divines, a permis et motivé les études comparatives entre texte et image en Anatolie hittite. Un premier essai avait été publié en 1973, complété par un second en 1977, par Noëlle Willemaers sous le titre «Contribution iconographique à l'histoire du rituel hittite», et on citera plus récemment en 2011 *Syro-Hittite monumental art and archaeology of performance* d'Alessandra Gilibert.

L'étude qui va suivre propose de traiter en parallèle certains textes rituels en langue hittite remontant au XIII^e siècle avant notre ère, et un ensemble remar-

quable de vases hittites dont les exemplaires les plus anciens remontent au XVI^e siècle avant notre ère.

Les rituels hittites sont bien documentés par le vaste corpus des «Inventaires de culte». Les rituels ici étudiés concernent principalement le dieu de l'Orage, vénéré dans la capitale et dans les campagnes hittites où l'agriculture était dépendante des conditions climatiques. Le corpus iconographique se compose premièrement de vases de stockage et de vases à boire. Le corpus des vases hittites à reliefs ne fait que croître, puisqu'il faut désormais ajouter à l'ensemble des jarres à reliefs polychromes et des vases monochromes².

Lors des fêtes de printemps et d'automne, la divinité était sortie de son temple et conduite dans un sanctuaire pétré en dehors de la ville. On la plaçait alors près de sa pierre dressée et on lui offrait des sacrifices. De plus, la fabrication de pains rituels est attestée dans ce contexte³.

Pour T. Yıldırım⁴, les divers vases de Hüseyindede⁵ (et aussi celui d'Inandık⁶) sont des vases «avec des représentations narratives des fêtes de printemps organisées en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage local dans la campagne Hatti où l'agriculture dépend de la fertilité et de la reproduction». Mais l'identification de nombreux éléments iconographiques (objets du culte et protagonistes) reste problématique et l'interprétation des scènes figurées sujette à de nombreuses hypothèses⁷. Cette iconographie nous plonge dans le monde rituel,

² Strupler 2012: 1–12.

³ Voir par exemple diverses fêtes impériales de Karaḥna (CTH 681).

⁴ Yıldırım 2008: 845.

⁵ Yıldırım 2000: 43–62, et aussi Sipahi 2001: 107–125.

⁶ Özgüç 1957: 57–78.

⁷ Alp 1983: 90–100. Voir aussi McGovern 2003: 175–179; Haas 1994: 523–524 et Yıldırım 2008: 837–850.

¹ Voir dans la bibliographie pour un choix de publications.

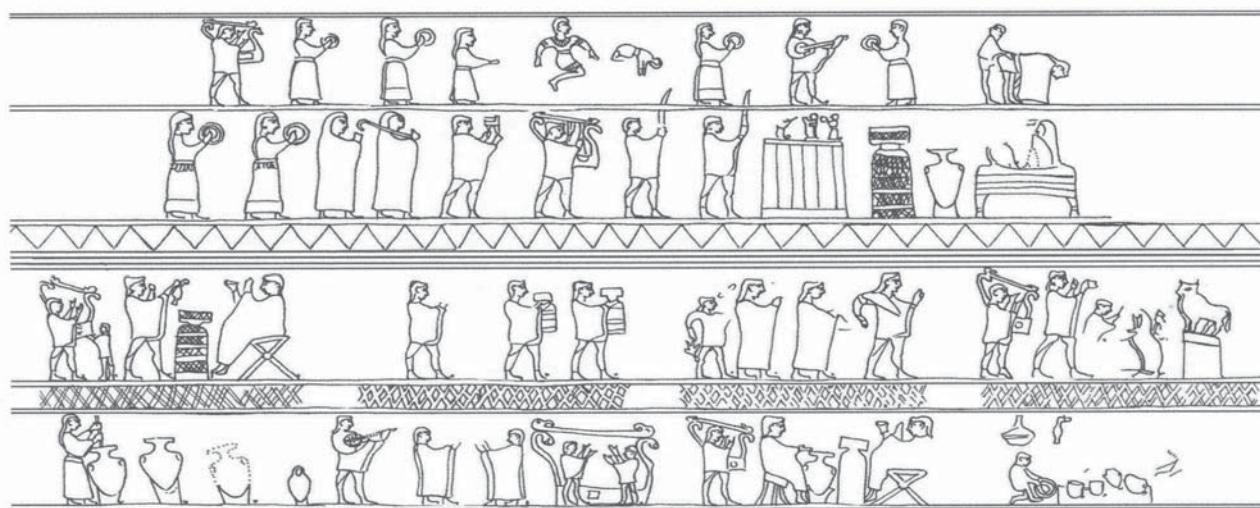


Fig. 1: Frises du vase d'Inandık, Ankara, Musée des civilisations anatoliennes (d'après Özgüç 1988: fig. 64).

avec les actes de libation, les offrandes, la musique et les danses pour «divertir⁸» la divinité.

L'un des éléments les plus intéressants est certainement la représentation même du vase dans les scènes rituelles de son propre décor (Inandık). La mise en abyme ainsi effectuée permet une contextualisation nécessaire à l'interprétation des scènes figurées. Le dialogue opéré entre l'écrit et le figuré offre une lecture de signes iconiques et permettrait une meilleure compréhension de l'objet.

Les scènes figurées sur le vase sont issues d'un répertoire d'actes rituels qui concernent directement le vase et d'autres objets associés. Enfin, la corrélation établie entre les sources iconographiques et épigraphiques permet de postuler une continuité dans les pratiques religieuses hittites sur plusieurs siècles.

2 Le matériel étudié⁹

- vase d'Inandık (Çorum)
- vase de Hüseyindede (Ankara)
- vase à boire en forme de poing (Boston)

Ces vases ont tous en commun l'iconographie d'un rituel se déroulant visiblement en dehors des limites urbaines et comportant des processions et des performances musicales. On note également un rituel de boisson et des libations. Divers éléments se retrouvent sur ces objets: des animaux, un pierre conique à surface sommitale plane¹⁰, une structure architecturale maçonnée et parfois un lit.

Dans le cadre de cet article, seuls quelques extraits du rituel AN.TAḪ.ŠUM pour le dieu de l'Orage seront cités.

Dans l'ensemble de ce corpus matériel, qui s'étend sur une période chronologique de 500 ans, un graphème (signe) retiendra notre attention en particulier: une structure architecturale maçonnée. Cette dernière peut être accompagnée d'un objet conique dont la partie supérieure forme une sorte de table (Inandık, Hüseyindede) ou recevoir des libations (vase en argent de Boston).

3 La méthode

La première étape de l'analyse iconographique consiste à décrire la scène de façon objective, replaçant l'objet dans son contexte avant de proposer une interprétation.

La méthode s'inspire de la «sémiologie» qui considère une image comme un ensemble de signes, posant un rapport de ressemblance avec une réalité concrète ou abstraite. La sémiologie de l'image, c'est donc l'étude des signes qui la composent et la recherche de la sémiologie, c'est-à-dire de sa signification. On rappelle ici que les bases de la sémiologie linguistique ont été posées par Ferdinand de Saussure au début du XX^e siècle à l'Université de Genève¹¹. Dans cette perspective, on distinguera, suivant Saussure, le signifié = ce que représente l'image (l'action rituelle), le signifiant = chaque image et ses composantes (l'objet/graphème) et le référent = ce que l'image représente dans la réalité.

L'analyse des images rituelles comportera donc en premier lieu l'identification des signes ou graphèmes qui composent l'image.

8 Hitt. *dušk-*, cf. par exemple KUB 25.23 i 21–22.

9 Ces artefacts ont également été mis en relation dans la publication de Haas/Koch 2011: 276–280.

10 Michel (sous presse) traite spécifiquement de la représentation de cet objet.

11 de Saussure 1916: 33–34. La synthèse avait été éditée par ses élèves Ch. Bally et A. Sechehaye à partir des notes du cours donné entre 1906 et 1911 à l'Université de Genève. Dans le domaine de l'iconographie, on ferait désormais plus volontiers référence aux théories sémiotiques de Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914).

4 Présentation des images

Les images se trouvent sur deux vases qu'il faut présenter en détail¹². *Le vase d'Inandık* (Fig. 1), découvert en 1966–1967¹³, est un vase à quatre anses placées sur la panse. Le vase, à long col, est haut de 82 cm. Son contour est en S, sa base est circulaire. Sa surface à fond rouge est divisée en 4 registres de scènes figurées en relief moulés et en deux bandeaux d'ornements.

Le premier registre se compose d'une suite de musiciens¹⁴ (avec harpe, timbales, cithare) et d'acrobates, vêtus de robes longues ou courtes, blanches ou noires. On note un couple de personnages dont l'un est plié vers l'avant. Une mince ligne en relief sépare ce premier registre du suivant.

Le deuxième registre se compose d'une suite de personnages (hommes et femmes), parmi lesquels des musiciens mais aussi un porteur de *kalmuř* (sceptre¹⁵) et deux porteurs de faisceaux qui convergent vers une structure rectangulaire sur laquelle se tiennent des musiciens miniaturisés¹⁶. Derrière se dresse un objet conique avec une partie sommitale plane à côté d'un vase. Enfin, un lit est occupé par deux personnages se faisant face. Le vase étant abîmé à cet endroit, on ne voit que la moitié du premier personnage. Un bandeau blanc, sur lequel se succèdent des triangles rouges et noirs en alternance, le sépare du registre suivant. Ce bandeau est souligné par trois cordons fins en relief.

Le troisième registre du vase d'Inandık se compose de deux scènes, dont une suite de personnages se dirigeant vers la droite. La première scène oppose un personnage debout versant un liquide sur un objet conique à partie sommitale plane, devant un personnage assis qui lève une coupe de la main droite. Derrière le personnage debout se tiennent des musiciens. Suivent, à droite du personnage assis, sept personnages, dont deux portent des miniatures de l'objet conique à partie sommitale plane. La scène se termine par quatre personnages, dont le premier sur la gauche est un joueur de harpe/lyre. Les personnages font face à un taureau sur une structure rectangulaire, devant laquelle gît un autre taureau dont la gorge est tranchée par un poignard. Cette scène se trouve au niveau des anses. Elle est séparée de la suivante par un bandeau à fond blanc, parcouru de croisillons rouges et noirs. Cette scène est donc clairement soulignée, par sa situation sur la panse au niveau des anses, et par le fait qu'elle est encadrée par deux bandeaux ornementaux.

Le quatrième et dernier registre se compose de quatre scènes. La première montre une femme brassant le contenu d'un vase qui se situe à côté de deux autres vases. Puis, on retrouve des musiciens. La troi-

sième scène comporte deux personnages assis face à face. Derrière le premier se tient un joueur de harpe. Entre les deux personnages assis se dressent un vase et un objet conique avec une partie sommitale plane. Le personnage à droite lève une coupe de la main droite. La scène finale montre deux personnages entre des vases plus petits.

Ce qui ressort de cette description détaillée est le fait que le troisième registre est mis en évidence et que les scènes dans chaque registre sont délimitées par la direction du regard des protagonistes. On observe aussi que la musique est omniprésente¹⁷: dans les processions et dans les scènes rituelles (nous entrons dans l'interprétation). De plus, on note que la majorité des scènes comporte un objet conique avec une partie sommitale plane. Ce dernier est parfois associé à un vase, parfois à un personnage assis qui tient une coupe dans la main droite.

Les graphèmes isolés sont: les personnages debout (avec instruments), les personnages assis, les animaux (taureaux), une structure architecturale rectangulaire et maçonnée avec des miniatures, un objet conique avec une partie sommitale plane, un vase et un lit.

Le vase de Hüseyindede (Fig. 2), découvert en 1997¹⁸, est morphologiquement semblable au précédent. Sa paroi est en forme de S; sa base est circulaire. Il comporte quatre anses sur la panse. Il est divisé en quatre registres sur fond rouge. Il est haut de 86 cm pour un diamètre de 50 cm.

Le premier registre se compose d'une seule scène regroupant une série de personnages avançant de gauche à droite. La scène commence par un homme debout portant un vase sur le dos et suivant un chariot tiré par un bœuf lui-même guidé par un homme. A l'arrière du chariot ont pris place deux personnages assis. En tête on observe deux groupes de musiciens et de danseuses. Ce registre est séparé du suivant par un fin bourrelet.

Le deuxième registre se compose de façon parallèle au deuxième registre du vase précédent. Une suite de sept personnages (hommes et femmes) converge vers une haute structure rectangulaire. En tête se trouvent deux porteurs de faisceaux. On remarque des musiciens, et aussi un porteur de *kalmuř* et une femme, vêtue de noir, portant un instrument. Derrière la haute structure rectangulaire maçonnée se dresse un objet conique à forme sommitale plane devant un lit. Ici le vase est absent. Sur le lit on observe deux personnages face à face. Celui sur la droite lève une coupe de la main droite. En fin de scène se trouve un homme debout tendant la main gauche en l'air. Cette scène est séparée de la suivante par un épais bandeau blanc, souligné de trois bourrelets.

Le troisième registre se compose de quatre scènes séparées par les anses du vase. Les deux premières scènes contiennent des animaux tirés par des hommes. On voit clairement un cerf sur la deuxième scène. Sur la troisième scène un bouc (?) est mené par un homme

¹² Pour une description interprétée voir aussi Haas/Koch 2011: 276–280.

¹³ Özgüç 1988.

¹⁴ Voir Brison 2014: 196.

¹⁵ Ambos/Krauskopf 2010.

¹⁶ La miniaturisation pourrait indiquer que les personnages représentés doivent être vus comme étant à l'intérieur de la structure et non sur cette dernière.

¹⁷ Brison 2014: 186–189, 196.

¹⁸ Yıldırım 2000 et 2008.



Fig. 2: Vase en terre cuite polychrome, Çorum, Musée archéologique, Hüseyindede, XVI^e siècle (photo: P.M. Michel, avec l'autorisation du musée).

et précédé de deux hommes. La dernière scène montre deux personnes opposées de part et d'autre d'un objet conique à partie sommitale plane. Celui sur la droite est assis et lève la main droite en l'air. Derrière l'homme debout, qui tient une petite cruche dans la main gauche, se tient un joueur de harpe.

Le quatrième registre se compose de quatre taureaux se faisant face par paires.

Ce qui ressort de cette description est identique aux remarques à propos du vase précédent; en particulier le fait que le troisième registre soit mis en évidence et que les scènes dans chaque registre soient délimitées par la direction du regard des protagonistes. On observe aussi que la musique est omniprésente: dans les processions tout comme dans les scènes rituelles.

Les graphèmes isolés sont: les personnages debout (avec instruments), les personnages assis, les animaux (taureau, cerf, bouc), une haute structure rectangulaire maçonnée, un objet conique avec une partie sommitale plane et un lit. On note l'absence du vase.

*Le vase en argent de Boston (Fig. 3)*¹⁹. On ne connaît pas la provenance de ce vase à boire en argent de 10 × 15,5 cm, arrivé en 1976 sur le marché de l'art britannique, et conservé aujourd'hui au Museum of Fine Arts de Boston (2004.2230)²⁰.

Il est orné d'un seul registre dans sa partie supérieure où l'on voit une procession de musiciens progressant de droite à gauche. La scène est encadrée par une structure architecturale rectangulaire et maçonnée sur laquelle des objets semblent posés (numéro 14 sur le dessin). Devant cette structure se tient un personnage levant le bras droit et tenant de la main gauche les brides pour conduire un taureau se dirigeant vers la droite (numéros 1 et 3 sur le dessin). Le personnage et le taureau sont positionnés derrière un objet conique à partie sommitale plane (numéro 4). Devant cet objet (pierre dressée) un homme fait une libation. Derrière lui suit le reste des musiciens avec une harpe et des timbales (numéros 10 à 12). On note encore la présence, au pied de la structure maçonnée, d'un personnage sortant d'une plante et coiffé d'un élément végétal (numéro 13). On remarque enfin la présence d'étoiles (ou rosettes) et d'éléments végétaux dans le fond du décor (numéro 7).

5 Que nous disent les textes rituels?

Les textes rituels pour les célébrations de printemps en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage expliquent précisément comment le couple royal, plus précisément ici le roi, quitte le palais en char, pour se rendre à l'automne à Katapa et au printemps à Ankuwa pour effectuer les rituels²¹.

KUB 20.96 Vs. iii (CTH 635.2, fête de Zippalanda et du Mt. Daḥa)²²

- 19' LUGAL-uš-kan₂ ^{gis}hu-u-lu-ga-an-na-az kat-ta
 20' u₂-iz-zi ta-aš-kan₂ ^{gis}GIGIR-ni ti-ja-zi
 21' ta-aš URU An-ku-wa[-aš] pa-iz-zi

«Le roi descend du chariot et monte sur le char et il va à Ankuwa».

KBo 13.214 Rs. iv[?] (CTH 592.2, fête de printemps de Zippalanda)²³

- 1' [LUGAL-u]š ^{na}[hu-u-wa-ši-ja]
 2' [kat-]ta-an ti-ja[-zi]
 3' ta II ir-ḥa-a-iz-z[i]
 4' ^dU URU Zi-ip-pa-l[a-an-da]
 5' ^dDa-a-ḥa-an-na
 ...
 13' LUGAL-uš-ša-an ^{gis}GIGIR-n[i ti-ja-zi]

«[Le roi] desce[nd] (de monture) [ver]s la [pierre dressée] et sacrifie (aux) deux divinités: le dieu de l'Orage de Zippal[anda] et à Daḥa. (...) Le roi [monte] sur le char».

Cette scène rappelle la première scène du vase à registres de Hüseyindede décrite ci-dessus qui montrait un couple assis à l'arrière d'un chariot.

Au cours de la célébration de l'EZEN AN.TAḤ.ŠUM, divers rites (SISKUR) sont accomplis²⁴, notamment l'ou-

19 Voir Savaş 2008.

20 <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/drinking-vessel-in-the-shape-of-a-fist-322343> (01.07.2016).

21 Sur les déplacements entre villes voir désormais Kryszewski 2016.

22 Popko 1994: 192–193.

23 Popko 1994: 180–183.

24 Voir aussi Archi 1973: 19. L'auteur donne un résumé de l'ensemble de la procédure dans le cadre du rituel pour la divinité

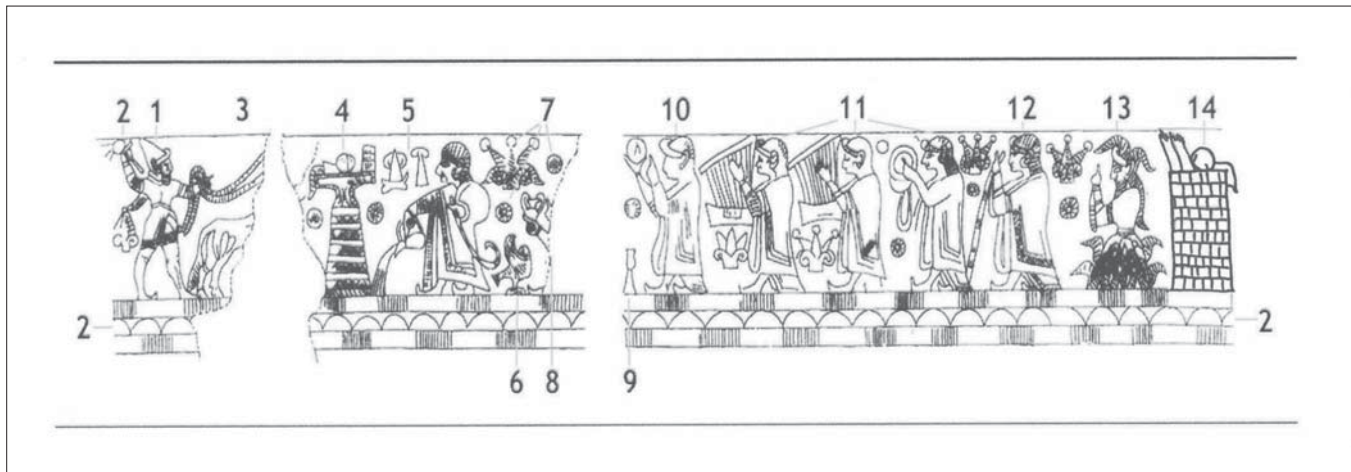


Fig. 3: Frise du vase à boire en forme de poing, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, n° 2004.2230, provenance inconnue, XIV-XIII^e siècle (dessin: P.M. Michel avec la permission de S.Ö. Savaş, tiré de Savaş 2008: 676).

verture du pithos du dieu de l'Orage de Zippalanda au 5^e jour, comme on le voit dans CTH 604²⁵ en B obv. 23 et A i 30-31 (fragmentaire):

23 L[U₂] A-BU-BI-DU ZAG-aš-ša DUG ḫar-ši ŠA ^dU URU Zi-ip[-pa-la-an-da ḫi-ik]-zi

«Alors l'intendant du palais [offr]e (?) à droite le vase du dieu de l'Orage de Zip[alanda]».

Les rites se déroulaient dans un espace vert et sauvage, bien qu'une structure dût marquer matériellement les limites du sanctuaire. On le voit par exemple dans CTH 611, au 15^e jour:

(KUB 20.42 obv. i 10-12) = 20.63+11.18 obv. i 8-13 (CTH 611.1.B)²⁶

8 ^dU URU Ḫat-ti INA ^{giš}ḪI.A ^{giš}TUG₂
 9 E₂ tar-nu-i ma-ni-in-ku-wa-an
 10 EZEN₄ AN.TAḪ.ŠUM^{sar} ḫa-me-<eš>-ḫi DU₃-zi
 11 ^{na}ḫu-u-wa-a-ši ŠA ^dU URU Ḫat-ti
 12 [(E₂ tar-nu-i A-NA ^{giš}ḪI.A)] ^{giš}TU[G₂]
 13 [m(a-ni-in-ku-wa-an ar-ta-r)]i.

« (lorsque Tudḫaliya IV, Grand Roi, fils de...), célèbre l'AN.TAḪ.ŠUM^{sar} au printemps pour le dieu de l'Orage du Ḫatti dans la haie de buis près du *tarnu*. La pierre dressée du dieu de l'Orage [se dresse dans le *tarnu* près de la haie de bujis. ...]. »

6 Analyse et interprétation

Les vases en terre à relief ont été interprétés comme représentant une hiérogamie²⁷. Cette hypothèse était

solaire par exemple: «Après avoir fait des offrandes au pithos, conservé dans la *cella* du temple, on en extrait l'épeautre, qui, caché par un linge, est porté au moulin pour être broyé. Puis l'image de la divinité (Soleil Istanu) est transportée dans la forêt, devant une stèle à laquelle on fait des offrandes, jusqu'à ce que le pain préparé avec l'épeautre du pithos arrive, recouvert d'un linge; après avoir été enduit de gras, il est en partie offert directement au dieu, et en partie réchauffé dans un four, déposé devant la stèle, tandis que le pain restant est distribué au roi et aux autres participants».

²⁵ Güterbock 1997: 91-98.

²⁶ Groddek 2004: 71-73.

²⁷ Haas 1994: 524 (Telepinu et Hatepuna) et Özgüç 1957: 65.

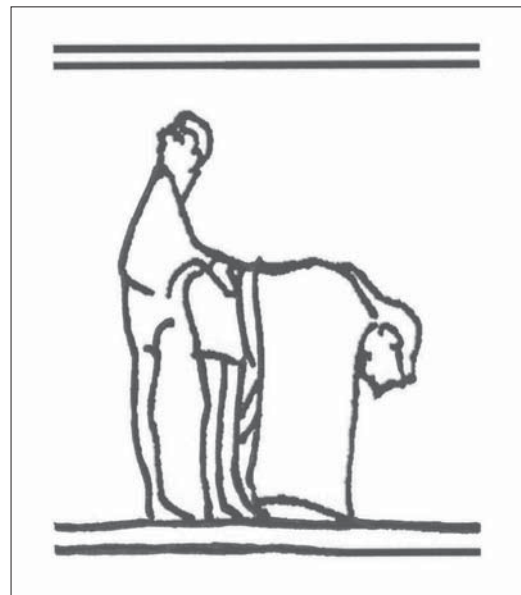


Fig. 4: Détail du vase en terre cuite polychrome, Ankara, Musée des civilisations anatoliennes, Inandıktepe, XVI^e siècle (dessin: P.M. Michel, avec l'autorisation du musée).

étayée par la présence, sur le premier registre du vase d'Inandık, d'un couple sur un lit et d'un couple de personnages apparemment en position de coït²⁸ (fig. 4). Sans nier la possibilité d'une scène à connotation sexuelle, nous préférons y voir un couple d'acrobates s'appêtant à exécuter un «saute-mouton», d'autant que des acrobates sont présents sur le même registre. Dans ces conditions, nous pouvons considérer que ces vases représentent une iconographie montrant une fête de printemps en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage. T. Yıldırım est arrivé à la même conclusion il y a une dizaine d'années. Nous pensons de la sorte que le programme iconographique du vase à boire en argent est identique à celui des vases en terre.

²⁸ Sur le rituel du couple royal en contexte rituel, voir Haas/Koch 2011: 278.



Fig. 5: Vase en terre cuite polychrome, Ankara, Musée des civilisations anatoliennes, Çorum, XVI^e siècle (photo: P.M. Michel, avec l'autorisation du musée).

7 Les graphèmes

- La structure architecturale

Elle ferme la scène rituelle et touche les bords supérieur et inférieur du registre. C'est le seul élément d'architecture présent dans les registres. Il se présente diversement sur les trois vases présentés ici mais reste une constante dans l'iconographie religieuses de ces objets.

- Le vase

En ce qui concerne la construction des images hittites, le premier point à souligner concerne la typologie des vases céramiques. Cette forme en S remonte à l'époque des comptoirs assyriens tout comme le système particulier de remplissage par réservoirs zoomorphes au sommet du col. Autre point à souligner, le vase apparaît dans sa propre iconographie. Or, cette mise en abyme permet de situer l'objet réel dans le moment rituel. Le vase est associé à un couple (royal?) assis sur le lit devant l'objet conique à partie sommitale plane, ou bien à une divinité assise levant le bras droit. On le voit aussi sur le vase d'Inandik dans une scène de cuisine ou de préparation de nourriture.

7.1. Le syntagme

Ne pouvant interpréter l'ensemble des registres des vases dans le cadre de cette contribution, nous nous attardons sur un syntagme (qui connaît des variantes), composé des graphèmes (ou signes iconiques) suivants: la structure architecturale, un objet conique à partie sommitale plane, un vase (cependant absent à Hüseyindede) et un lit (absent dans le syntagme du vase de Boston).

7.2. L'interprétation

Si le vase rituel, support de l'image, est bien lié à un culte agraire et saisonnier pour le dieu de l'Orage, l'ob-

jet conique à partie sommitale plane (pierre dressée) devait être un autel sacré ou une matérialisation aniconique de l'essence divine²⁹.

En ce qui concerne la structure architecturale, la comparaison avec les textes, dans le contexte même des fêtes de printemps, peut aider à l'identification. La même démarche avait été proposée par S.Ö. Savaş³⁰ qui interprétait GEŠPU dans les textes rituels comme étant le vase en forme de poing utilisé pour les libations. L'exemplaire conservé à Boston porte une frise qui se termine par la représentation d'une structure maçonnée, interprétée par Savaş comme le *tarnu*.

Il estime de plus que E₂ désigne un téménos ou du moins un mur et non une structure couverte ou une maison. C'est ce qui apparaissait aussi dans les instructions au *Bēl-madgalti* où le E₂ *tarnu* désignait un mur entourant un bois.

Or, au 14^e jour de l'AN.TAḪ.ŠUM, le roi honore la divinité solaire de la Terre (voir par exemple note 24). Le soir venu, il prend un bain rituel près de la «haie de buis», là où se situe aussi la pierre dressée matérialisant le dieu de l'Orage. Toute la scène se déroule à proximité du *tarnu*. On comprend dès lors que le *tarnu* contient la pierre dressée du dieu de l'Orage³¹ et qu'il entoure le bois sacré³².

Cette hypothèse n'est pas nouvelle, puisque I. Singer avait déjà suggéré que le *tarnu*, à l'extérieur de la porte

29 Sur une possible identification des «autels» d'Emirgazi portant l'*hapax legomenon* HWASATTI comme référent du *huwaši* hittite, voir Michel 2015: 20–23.

30 Savaş 2008: 657–680.

31 Bien que Savaş interprète la pierre dressée qui reçoit une libation (n° 4 sur le dessin qu'il publie, fig. 1,b) comme le ⁶⁵BANŠUR AD.KID (autel), il reconnaît cependant que «cult inventories and texts concerning Hittite religion often mention seasonal festivals and *huwaši*-stones along with the *tarnu*-structure». Il est étonnant dès lors de ne pas remettre en question l'interprétation de la pierre dressée comme autel. Voir Savaş 2008: 670.

32 C'est également ce que donne CTH 611 pour le 15^e jour; voir ci-dessus.

GRAPHEME (signifiant)	Identification épigraphique	TRADUCTION (référent)
pierre dressée ^{a)}	STELE?	bétyle?
	<i>ḫuwaši</i> / ZI.KIN?	
	^{gi5} BANŠUR AD.KID	autel?
vase	DUG <i>ḫarši</i>	pithos
personnage assis	DINGIR-LUM	divinité
structure architecturale	E ₂ <i>tarnu</i>	téménos, enceinte

Fig. 6: Tableau récapitulatif des données.

a) Sur cette hypothèse, voir Michel 2015.

Tawiniya à Ḫattuša, contenait la pierre dressée du dieu de l'Orage comme le décrit CTH 611³³.

Sur la frise du vase en argent conservé à Boston on voit donc une structure maçonnée devant laquelle se dresse une personnification du bois sacré (^{gi5}TUG₂)³⁴. Sur le fond de l'image, on pourrait reconnaître la plante AN.TAḪ.ŠUM^{sar} qui apparaît à quatre reprises. La structure architecturale ou structure maçonnée présente dans le syntagme iconographique pourrait être interprétée comme le mur qui entoure le bois où le roi arrive en char une fois sorti du palais.

On décrivait jusqu'à présent le *tarnu* comme une hutte de purification ou une maison du bain³⁵, mais on voit désormais que le *tarnu* pourrait aussi être interprété comme le téménos du sanctuaire qui contenait le bois et une pierre dressée³⁶. Le sanctuaire pouvait aussi contenir un lieu de purification dans lequel, selon les textes, le couple royal faisait ses ablutions et se changeait pour endosser les vêtements rituels purs avant de pénétrer dans le Saint des Saints³⁷.

L'apparence de cette structure³⁸ diffère entre les vases d'Inandık, de Hüseyindede et le vase à boire en argent mais la structure architecturale, représentée comme touchant les limites de l'espace iconographique (délimité par les bandeaux), comporte toujours des éléments sur son sommet (miniatures de musiciens à Inandık, peut-être des miniatures de l'objet conique à

Hüseyindede et des objets à identifier sur le vase de Boston). Il serait alors possible d'interpréter les éléments de l'image qui sont derrière, et parfois sur, la structure comme étant en fait à l'intérieur de celle-ci, ce qui indiquerait alors que la structure pouvait contenir la pierre du dieu de l'Orage et parfois le lit royal et le vase (Fig. 5).

Nous proposons d'interpréter le syntagme avec la structure architecturale comme suit :

Une pierre, sur laquelle on peut offrir des libations, se dresse à côté du vase du dieu de l'Orage qui contient le grain pour la fabrication des pains sacrés nécessaires à la célébration du rituel en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage. À côté se tient, sur le lit d'apparat, le couple royal qui opère un rite de boisson ou le roi qui offre une libation. La structure architecturale serait le E₂ *tarnu*.

La combinaison de l'iconographie et de l'épigraphie permet donc une lecture en image du rituel. Les graphèmes trouvent une possible identification grâce aux textes rituels. Si l'on tente de comparer les graphèmes avec le contenu des textes religieux on obtient, dans le cadre de notre étude, le tableau de la figure 6.

8 Conclusion

Définir une période de formation de l'iconographie hittite est très difficile car l'Anatolie s'est enrichie des influences de l'est et de l'ouest. Le développement du système des symboles, des signes iconiques, des graphèmes à l'intérieur des syntagmes a ainsi été continuellement transformé suivant les interactions culturelles en Anatolie. On voit cependant se dessiner clairement une continuité depuis l'époque des comptoirs assyriens, non seulement en ce qui concerne les signes iconiques, mais aussi en ce qui concerne les supports, en particulier les vases rituels et les coupes à boire ou les vases à libation. Le système des signes religieux est complexe puisqu'il mêle l'anthropomorphisme, l'aniconisme et le thériomorphisme.

Au final, cet essai d'interprétation d'un syntagme se sera concentré sur un moment du rituel de printemps en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage. Il offre cependant de nouvelles perspectives pour l'étude et l'analyse des images rituelles hittites. La sémiologie impose une des-

33 Singer 1986: 250–251.

34 La scène est très proche de celle du rhyton Schimmel, mais ce dernier ne montre pas de structure à côté de la plante indiquant le bois sacré.

35 «the *tarnu*-building is most often attested as a building in which ritual bathing takes place», mais d'autres traductions sont proposées: «water installations» ou «water building», voir Miller 2013: 381.

36 Fleming 2000: note 385; Gurney 1977: 27.

37 Se pose la question de savoir s'il est possible de localiser un *tarnu* à Ḫattuša. Selon Pierallini, qui note justement que la structure est antérieure à l'Empire, le *tarnu* devrait être localisé dans la Ville Basse. Elle note quatre attestations de *tarnu* distinctes, mais toujours près des portes urbaines, à la porte *ašuša*, à la porte *puḫla*, à la porte Tawiniya et à la porte Zipalanda, mais propose de les interpréter comme se référant toutes à un seul et même édifice. Voir Pierallini 2002: 269–272.

38 Une étude détaillée est encore nécessaire concernant les particularités iconographiques du monument, notamment au sujet de la représentation des registres verticaux séparés et la présence au sommet de chacun d'eux de musiciens ou de petits «chevrons».

cription initiale objective afin de séparer les signes iconiques avant de les mettre en relation pour en chercher le sens. La complémentarité des sources littéraires et iconographiques est une étape nécessaire afin de pouvoir comprendre les images que portent les objets qui étaient utilisés dans les mêmes rituels: que cela soit le vase, la structure architecturale ou la pierre dressée. En mettant en relation des signes iconiques identiques mais provenant de supports différents, on augmente le corpus et les contextes d'attestations, ce qui nous offre aussi de plus amples possibilités de compréhension. La contextualisation permet au final de chercher dans les textes rituels les éléments nécessaires à l'identification des objets et offre diverses hypothèses d'interprétation. Dans cette vision le syntagme, l'image étudiée a une valeur épistémique réelle puisqu'elle est porteuse d'un

message, celui qui met en image le déroulement du rituel.

Durant le rituel de printemps, la pierre occupe une place particulière en tant que matérialisation aniconique de la divinité qui reçoit tour à tour offrandes de pain, de viande et des libations, tandis que les textes indiquent que la scène se déroulait dans le *tarnu*. Or, nous avons montré comment une structure architecturale maçonnée était une constante des syntagmes des vases présentés, ce qui nous a permis de proposer d'inscrire ces vases en terre et en argent dans le cadre des rituels de printemps en l'honneur du dieu de l'Orage.

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Estimation and observation

A study of two Old Babylonian tabular administrative documents

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Abstract: This paper attempts to explain methods used to assess volume in an Old Babylonian administrative environment. Texts like NBC 11509, an undated tabular administrative text, appear to estimate the volume of earth that is to be excavated from canals using a simple multiplication of length by width by depth to produce volume. Each of the six canal sections listed on NBC 11509 bear this out. However, when a similar text, NBC 6763, is examined this is not the case. On NBC 6763, which is dated to *Rīm-Sîn* of Larsa's 38th year and possibly produced in a similar bureaucratic setting as NBC 11509, only one volume measurement value out of six appears to be produced by multiplying length by width by depth. Moreover, the total volume in NBC 6763 is not the sum of volume measurement values stated on the text. This paper asks, “why do expected and stated measurement values on NBC 6763 differ so much?” and, “Is there a relationship between texts like NBC 6763 and NBC 11509?” In answering these questions, it explores the calculation techniques used to produce each text, the administrative environments in which they were compiled, and the educational background of the scribes who produced them.

Keywords: excavation, volume, estimation, observation, education, mathematics.

1 Introduction¹

NBC 11509 and NBC 6763 both describe canal excavation projects. Provenance of both texts is uncertain because they were each purchased on the antiquities market. However, they almost certainly come from the kingdom of Larsa and both probably date to the reign of *Rīm-Sîn* of Larsa. While NBC 11509 lacks a complete date formula, the personal name *Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu* suggests a date to *Rīm-Sîn* of Larsa. NBC 6763, on the other hand, states the name of *Rīm-Sîn*'s 38th year.

The two texts show several differences. First, tablet shapes differ. While both are roughly rectangular, NBC 11509 has outward curved edges and rounded corners, giving it a slightly rounded shape, whereas NBC 6763

has edges that curve inward and less rounded, more pointed corners. In addition, vocabulary is different. *us₂*, “side”, is used in NBC 6763 to describe canal lengths while *gid₂*, “to be long”, appears in NBC 11509. In this study, both *us₂* and *gid₂* are translated “length” for simplicity's sake. Finally, sign shapes are different as well. This is clear when, for instance, the signs *dagal* and *saḫar* are compared (**Figure 1**):

	NBC 11509	NBC 6763
<i>dagal</i>		
<i>saḫar</i>		

Fig. 1: Comparison of *dagal* and *saḫar*.

While these texts are certainly the product of different hands, they are structurally very similar. Both take a tabular, landscape format.² They both are divided into five columns: a column for canal section length, width, depth, and volume as well as a column to label each canal section. Canal section lengths in each text are labeled by the word *ki*, “place”, followed by a number. Both state a total excavation volume as well as a statement of who is in charge of the excavation.

¹ As discussed by Proust 2009: §6.4 (referring to measures of capacity), cuneiform notation of measurement values is not positional so that they should not be transliterated using positional notation. Therefore, positional notation is not used here when transliterating or translating measurement values. In addition, following Neugebauer/Sachs 1945, units of measure are left untranslated. Thus, for instance, *gin₂* is not translated ‘shekel’ but left in Sumerian. The reasons for this are summed up in Middeke-Conlin/Proust 2014: §2.9. Finally, because sexagesimal place value notation (henceforth SPVN) does not reflect magnitude, no attempt has been made to impose magnitude on these numbers. Following the preference of the Mathematical Sciences in the Ancient World (SAW) project, when SPVN appears, it is written with a colon (:) as a separator rather than a comma, period, space, or any other punctuation. This is because modern digital documents use the colon for counting time and so the colon illustrates that SPVN's base is sixty to non-specialists and outsiders to the field of Assyriology.

² For more on tabular record keeping see, for instance, Robson 2004 and Robson 2008: 157–166.

NBC 11509 transliteration

Obv	1	2	3	4	5
1	gid ₂	dagal	bur ₃ -u	sahar	mu- ^ˈ bi[-im]
	6 ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	7 sar	ki 1
	3 ½ ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	4 sar 5 gin ₂	ki '2'
	14 ½ ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 kuš ₃	14 ½ sar	ki '3'
5	5 ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	5 ⅙ sar	ki '4'
	22 ninda	4 kuš ₃	4 kuš ₃	29 ⅓ sar	ki '5'
	17 ninda	4 kuš ₃	4 ½ ninda [!]	25 ½ sar	ki 6
			1(ubu) GAN ₂	36 sar 15 gin ₂	
	sahar a-aḥ	i ₇ ^d ma-mi-šar-ra-at ka-ša-ri-[im]			
Rev	i ₃ -dab ₅ ^d ri-im- ^d EN.ZU-ra-ap-pa-šu-nu				
11	<u>iti udru (ZIZ₂.A) u₄ 1-kam</u>				

NBC 11509 translation

Obv	1	2	3	4	5
1	length	width	depth	volume	[its] name
	6 ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	7 sar	place 1
	3 ½ ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	4 sar 5 gin ₂	place '2'
	14 ½ ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 kuš ₃	14 ½ sar	place '3'
5	5 ninda	4 kuš ₃	3 ½ kuš ₃	5 ⅙ sar	place '4'
	22 ninda	4 kuš ₃	4 kuš ₃	29 ⅓ sar	place '5'
	17 ninda	4 kuš ₃	4 ½ ninda [!]	25 ½ sar	place 6
			1 ubu	36 sar 15 gin ₂	
	Earth		to consolidate the bank of the <i>Mami-šarrat</i> canal		
Rev	Charge of <i>Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu</i>				
11	<u>Month 11 Day 1</u>				

In the following, I will ask, “How similar is the content?”, “What is the purpose of each text?”, and “Are they related somehow?” Each text will be examined separately in pursuit of these questions, starting with NBC 11509.

2 NBC 11509

NBC 11509 has rounded edges, although the right edge is broken. The reverse is worn in the center but legible. It is pale white, of lower quality clay, and baked for preservation. Dimensions are 57 mm by 76 mm by 23 mm.

2.1. Transliteration, translation, and notes

Transliteration and translation: see left side.

Notes:

L. 7: *ninda* in the third column is a mistake for *kuš₃*. This is certain because volume in column 4 is produced by multiplying area by $4\frac{1}{2}$ *kuš₃*, and not $4\frac{1}{2}$ *ninda*.

L. 9: For the *Mami-šarrat* canal see Groneberg 1980: 296, Edzard 1987–1990: 329, and Owen 2013: 38 n. 83. The canal, which was built by *Rīm-Sîn* of Larsa, linked the Euphrates and the Tigris with the sea.

2.2. Discussion

The obverse of NBC 11509 is divided into 5 columns and summarizes a canal maintenance project. Lines 1 through 8 describe each section of this maintenance. Each column’s heading in line 1 states an element of the canal, with columns 1 through 3 stating length (*gid₂*), width (*dagal*), and depth (*bur₃-u*) respectively, column 4 stating the excavation’s volume (*sahar*), and column 5 stating what section is being excavated (*mu-bi-im*, “its name”). Lines 2 through 7 state each canal section’s description. Length and depth vary by section while width is uniform. The entire canal is 4 *kuš₃* in width. Line 8 gives the total and line 9 states what canal is maintained, the *Mami-šarrat* canal. This canal was located in the extreme south of Mesopotamia, connecting the Tigris and the Euphrates, and bound by the Persian Gulf. As Edzard states (see note to line 9 above), the *Mami-šarrat* canal was built by *Rīm-Sîn* of Larsa. However, line 9 informs the reader that this is a maintenance project meant to consolidate the canal bank, and so is probably carried out after the *Mami-šarrat* canal’s establishment. The reverse of the tablet, line 10, states that *Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu* is charged with canal maintenance. The text is then dated to month 11, day 1 in line 11.

Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu also appears in Riftin 1937: 114 through 116 and MAH 15886+16295, where he is responsible for groups of men and rations in barley for these groups.³ All four texts are tabular in format and similar in shape to NBC 11509. Thus, a similar bureau-

cratic environment is suggested here for all these texts. In Riftin 114 and 116, there are two types of labor presented with pay rates: overseers (*erin₂ ugula*) who receive $6\frac{2}{3}$ *silā₃* of grain apiece per day, and then other laborers (*erin₂-ḥa₂*) who receive 2 *silā₃* apiece per day. In MAH 15886+16295 there are two types of labor as well, one which receives 3 *bariga* 2 *ban₂* of grain (*eren₂ ru-ub-bu su-qi₂-im*) and another which receives 1 *bariga* of grain (*eren₂-ha₂ u₃ ugula nam-10*). Clevens-tine 2015 suggests that these texts present “prospective estimates of the resources to be deployed in the projects named at the bottom of the table” and that the labor provided was probably a form of *corvée* labor because two *silā₃* of barley per worker per day is too little to survive on. Because NBC 11509 concerns canal excavations in pursuit of a maintenance project, and because *Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu* appears in all five texts, it’s reasonable to suggest that *Rīm-Sîn-rappašunu* was a kind of entrepreneur who was charged with planning or executing public works. Riftin 114 and 116 and MAH 15886+16295 could also all refer to canal excavations even if these excavations aren’t explicitly mentioned. Regarding this last hypothesis, Clevens-tine points to the mention of *bad₃ ku-du-ur-ma-bu-uk*, a place where a watercourse is attested, as the location of activity in MAH 15886+16295, although Clevens-tine believes a fortress may be the subject of the texts (Clevens-tine 2015).

2.3. Calculation in NBC 11509 and mathematical practice

The volumes stated in column 4 lines 1 through 7 are the products of the prior three columns; in each instance length in column 1 multiplied by width in column 2 and then by depth in column 3 produces volume in column 4. Also, the sum of column 4, lines 2 through 7 is the measurement value stated in line 8. There are no discrepancies in calculation, only one mistake in orthography – the author wrote *ninda* where *kuš₃* is clearly intended in line 7 column 3.

Does this text reflect calculation as witnessed in mathematical texts and the scribal curriculum of the Old Babylonian period? Calculation of volume is present in Old Babylonian mathematical texts such as YBC 4663. This procedure text is probably from Southern Babylonia, although its exact provenance is uncertain. YBC 4663 presents eight problems and their accompanying solutions.⁴ Problem 1 presents the excavation of a trench and costs associated with this excavation:

A trench: 5 *ninda* (is) the length, $1\frac{1}{2}$ *ninda* <the width>, (and) $\frac{1}{2}$ *ninda* the depth. 10 <*gin₂*> volume (is) the work assignment, 6 š[e (is) its (silver) wages.] What are the area, the volume, the workers, and the silver (total)? You to know it: Make the length encounter the width, it will give you 7:30. Raise 7:30 to the height, it will give you 45. Detach the reciprocal of the work assignment, it will give you 6. Raise to 45,

3 For a recent discussion of these tablets, see Clevens-tine 2015. I thank Emmert Clevens-tine for directing me to the fourth text mentioned in my discussion here, MAH 15886+16295.

4 For more on YBC 4663, see especially Neugebauer/Sachs 1945: 69–71 (edition), pl. 7, 32 (copy); Høyrup 2002: 305, 345–347 (discussion); and most recently Proust Forthcoming (problems 1–2, discussion).

it will give you 4:30. Raise 4:30 to the salary, this will give you 9. The procedure.

In problem 1's setup, measurement values are stated, while the procedure only uses SPVN. Because there is explicit use of SPVN in calculation, especially the numbers 7:30, 45, and 4:30, all measurement values were probably converted into SPVN by the author of YBC 4663 prior to calculation. These conversions act as follows:

Length:

5 ninda → 5

Width:

1 ½ ninda → 1:30

Depth:

½ ninda → 6

Work assignment:

10 gin₂ → 10

Wage rate:

6 še → 2

Here, an arrow (→) is used to represent a modern conversion from a measurement value stated in YBC 4663 problem 1 to a SPVN value. The metrological conversions in this problem are all found in metrological tables such as those described in Proust 2007 for scribal education in the city of Nippur during the Old Babylonian Period.⁵ Solution is found through a step by step process; first length is multiplied by width to produce area, then area by depth to produce volume, the reciprocal of the work assignment is found and multiplied by volume to produce the number of workers, and finally the number of workers by wages to produce cost in silver for the excavation:

$$5 \times 1:30 = 7:30$$

$$7:30 \times 6 = 45$$

$$10 \sim 6$$

$$45 \times 6 = 4:30$$

$$4:30 \times 2 = 9$$

The author of YBC 4663 felt no need to convert from SPVN to measurement values. Eleanor Robson (1999: 252–255, esp. 253) and then Jöran Friberg (2000: 123–127, esp. 125) establish a connection between canal excavation problems like YBC 4663 problem 1 and numeric tabular texts such as UET 6/2, 233 from the city of Ur. The Ur texts all carry out calculation using a similar step by step process and incorporate what seems to be the same coefficients as are witnessed in YBC 4663 problem 1. 10 in UET 6/2, 233 can be understood as the SPVN equivalent to the work assignment of 10 gin₂ as witnessed in YBC 4663 problem 1, while 2 can be understood as the SPVN equivalent to 6 še wages witnessed in

YBC 4663. If this connection is accepted, then it shows problems similar to problem 1 of YBC 4663 were practiced at Ur as part of a scribal mathematical curriculum.

How well does NBC 11509 reflect the calculation carried out in YBC 4663, problem 1? Multiplication by length, width, and depth is similar to that carried out in YBC 4663. However, area is not stated in NBC 11509 like it is in YBC 4663. This is expected. The author of NBC 11509 is concerned with administering an excavation, not with a mathematical exercise. Therefore, while all data necessary to carry out calculation is provided in columns 1 through 3 of NBC 11509, just as all data necessary to carry out multiplication in YBC 4663 problem 1 is stated at the beginning of the problem, only volume is necessary in NBC 11509 so that the steps involved in calculation need not be mentioned. Vocabulary is also slightly different: while YBC 4663 states length as us₂, it is listed as gid₂ in NBC 11509. Thus, it is possible to suggest that NBC 11509 represents a mathematical tradition similar to that witnessed in YBC 4663 but with some variation in so far as vocabulary is concerned. Because YBC 4663 carried out calculation in SPVN, then it can also be suggested, if the author of NBC 11509 was educated with texts like YBC 4663 or UET 6/2, 233, whether this education occurred in a school or professional setting, he probably carried out multiplication in SPVN. This would be a part of the text that is invisible to the modern reader but important to the ancient author. Whatever the basis for multiplication, all calculations work perfectly in NBC 11509 so that we can suggest the author multiplied length by width to produce a base and then base by depth to produce volume.

With all of this, the purpose of NBC 11509 can now be suggested. First, the lack of a year date and poor quality of clay suggests that NBC 11509 was not a permanent record. Month and day are stated but not the year so that NBC 11509 would only be a valid record within the year it was produced. Second, if it is accepted that Riftin 114 and 116 as well as MAH 15886+16295 all refer to canal maintenance excavations, and if all three texts state estimations of labor and pay to be expended in these excavations, then we can suggest the volume measurement values stated in NBC 11509 are estimations as well. This would explain why NBC 11509 is not a permanent record. As an estimation it states the volume of earth that should be excavated, not the volume of earth that was excavated. From such a volume estimate, labor estimations such as are witnessed in Riftin 114 and 116 can be produced. Indeed, this is seen in the second half of the mathematical procedure found in YBC 4663 problem 1, where cost is found in labor (4:30, the SPVN equivalent to the number of men) and then pay (9, the SPVN equivalent to the total cost in silver). Finally, because NBC 11509 is temporary, it suggests another text with a full year date would be produced after excavations are completed. Do such texts exist?

⁵ See in particular Proust 2007: 97–116 and then the composite text presented *ibid.* 311–315.

I. Line	II. Stated volume	III. Expected volume	IV. Difference	V. % difference
3	1 iku 38 $\frac{5}{6}$ sar	1 iku 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ gin ₂ 15 še	$\frac{2}{3}$ sar 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ gin ₂ 15 še	0.592%
4	25 sar	25 sar	--	--
5	1 iku 1 ubu 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂	1 iku 1 ubu 25 sar 11 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂	1 $\frac{1}{3}$ sar 5 gin ₂	0.808%
6	1 ubu 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar	1 ubu 9 $\frac{5}{6}$ sar 7 gin ₂ one 6 th 10 še	$\frac{1}{3}$ sar 7 gin ₂ one 6 th 10 še	0.757%
7	13 sar 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂	12 $\frac{5}{6}$ sar 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂ 20 še	8 $\frac{5}{6}$ gin ₂ 10 še	1.143%
11	15 sar 10 gin ₂	15 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar 5 gin ₂	$\frac{1}{3}$ sar 5 gin ₂	2.674%

Fig. 2: Differences between stated and expected volume in NBC 6763.

3 NBC 6763

The tablet NBC 6763 is in good shape although damage is visible on the lower right-hand corner of the obverse and the corresponding upper right-hand corner of the reverse. It is pale white, of fine clay, and baked for preservation. Its dimensions are 64 mm by 103 mm by 26 mm.

3.1. Transliteration, translation, and notes

Transliteration and translation: see next side.

Notes:

L. 3: $\frac{1}{2}$ in $\frac{1}{2}$ kuš₃ of column 3 is written over an erased U₂.

L. 8: gin₂ is expected after 10 in in column 4. The omission of measurement units is somewhat common in the Old Babylonian period tabular texts. See, for instance, Ashm 1922-0277 where the unit sar is omitted after several measurement values to produce readings like 3(bur'u) 5(bur₃) 1(eše) 4(iku) 10 in lines 18-19 of column 1. The last value is most likely understood as 10 (sar). sila₃ is omitted in several measurement values found on LB 1075 as well, such as 1(aš) 2(bariga) 1(ban₂) 7 in column 1, the final value of which is probably understood as 7 (sila₃). Finally, in YBC 4721 sila₃ is routinely omitted at the end of measurement values. For instance, in lines 10-11 of column 3, '4(geš₂)' 3(u) 4(aš) 3(bariga) 4(ban₂) 5 is written. 5 is probably to be understood as 5 (sila₃).

3.2. Discussion

NBC 6763, like NBC 11509, is an unprovenanced tabular text concerning the excavations of a series of canal sections. Like NBC 11509 it is divided into five columns: a column for length (us₂), width (dagal), depth (bur₃-u), volume (sahar), and a label for each canal section. There are seven entries stated in lines 3 through 9 of the obverse, although the last two entries do not state dimensions, only volume. Unlike NBC 11509, all dimensions, including width, vary between canal sections. A sub-total is given in line 10 of the reverse, with an additional entry, including dimensions, in line 11 and a total in line 12. Lines 13 and 14 present an administrative summary which states who the excavating authority

is (i₃-dab₅), and then whose property or responsibility the excavation is (ni_g₂). The tablet is dated to *Rim-Sîn's* 38th year in power. It is difficult to connect the text to a specific archive based on the personal names. Nor can a general region within the kingdom of Larsa be suggested based on the canal names in lines 10 and 11. However, based on the text's format and content, it was probably part of an archive similar to that witnessed in NBC 11509, a bureau of irrigation and excavation, which planned canal excavations.

3.3. Calculation in NBC 6763

Do calculations in NBC 6763 work as expected? NBC 6763, appears to state the lengths, widths, and depths of canal sections followed by volumes corresponding to these dimensions. These volumes seem to be added together to produce a sub-total and then total. However, only one calculation works as expected. Multiplication of lengths in column 1 by widths in column 2 by depths in column 3 produce values other than the stated measurement values in column 4 in all lines but line 4. Moreover, these volume measurement values do not add up. The sub-total of volume in line 10 is not what is expected based on the stated volume measurement values in lines 3 through 9. Can these apparent discrepancies be explained? To answer this, discrepancies between the expected and stated volume measurement values found in column 4 will be investigated first, followed by the discrepancy in the sub-total.

Figure 2 represents volume measurement values as stated in the text (column ii), as expected based on multiplication of length by width by depth (column iii), the difference between stated and expected volume measurement values (column iv), and the percent difference between these two values (column v). As shown in **figure 2**, the stated and expected volume measurement value are the same in line 4 only, while the rest of the lines exhibit a discrepancy between expected and stated volume measurement values. This would suggest the volume measurement values were based on observations other than length, width, and depth. Was there a technique to observe volume outside of multiplying length by width by depth?

NBC 6763 transliteration

Obv	1	2	3	4	5
1	us ₂	dagal	bur ₃ -u	sahar	
	7 ninda ½ kuš ₃	2 ninda 4 kuš ₃	½ ninda 2 ½ kuš ₃	1(aš) iku 38 ⅝ sar	ki 1
	1 ninda 4 kuš ₃	2 ½ ninda	½ ninda 1 ½ kuš ₃	25 sar	ki 2
5	7 ninda	2 ½ ninda 5 ⅓ kuš ₃	½ ninda 2 ½ kuš ₃	1(aš) 1(ubu) iku 26 ½ sar / 6 ⅔ gin ₂	ki 3
	3 ninda 1 kuš ₃	2 ½ ninda 3 ⅓ kuš ₃	½ ninda 1 kuš ₃	1(ubu) iku 9 ½ sar	ki 4
	½ ninda 2 kuš ₃	2 ½ ninda 3 ⅓ kuš ₃	½ ninda 1 kuš ₃	13 sar 6 ⅔ gin ₂	ki 5
				6 sar 10	ki 6
				<i>ša i-na li-ib-bi i₇-da</i>	
				<i>in-na-as-ḥu</i>	
				8 sar	ki '7'
				<i>ša i-na u₂-ša-la-tim [x x] 'x x'</i>	
Rev				4(aš) iku 26 sar	sahar i ₇ ma-'lik ² -
10				10 gin ₂	er ₃ -ra
	1 ½ ninda 4 ⅔ kuš ₃	½ ninda 3 kuš ₃	½ ninda 5 kuš ₃	15 sar 10 gin ₂	sahar i ₇ ^d en-'lil ₂ '-[...]
			šu-nigin	4(aš) iku 41 ⅓ sar	sahar
	i ₃ -dab ₅			Nin-ki-aĝ ₂ - ^d	iškur-ra
	nig ₂			im-me-er-	dingir
15	iti udru (ZIZ ₂ .A) u ₄ 8-kam mu ki-9 i ₃ -si-in-na ^{ki} ^d en-ki-ga-ta ba-an-dab ₅				

YBC 4663, this time problem 7, presents such a technique for calculating volume out of pay and labor rates. Problem 7, translates as follows (my italics)⁶:

9 gin₂ silver trench, the silver trench. The silver of the trench. The length and the width I add and 6:30. ½ ninda [(is) its depth]. 10 gin₂ (is) the work assignment, 6 še (is) its wages. What are its length and width? You to know it: *Detach the reciprocal of its wages (and) raise to 9 gin₂, it will give you 4:30. Raise 4:30 to the work assignment, it will give you 45. Detach the reciprocal of its depth (and) raise to 45, it will give you 7:30. Break ½ of the length and the width which are added, it will give you 3:15. Make 3:15 encounter (itself), it will give you 10:33:45. Tear out 7:30 from the middle of 10:33:45, it will give you 3:3:45. Take its square root, it will give you 1:45. To the 1 add, to the 1 subtract, it will give you the length (and) width: 5 <ninda> length, 1 ½ ninda width.*

The goal of problem 7 is to find the original dimensions of length and width of an excavated object out of the

total silver paid when the length and width are added together. It uses what is called cut and paste geometry as described by Høyrup (2002: 96–99) in pursuit of the solution. However, in the course of solving problem 7, the author of YBC 4663 assesses the volume excavated out of 9 gin₂, which converts to SPVN 9, the labor rate of 6 še, which converts to 2 in SPVN, and the work assignment of 10 gin₂, which converts to SPVN 10. The reciprocal of the wage is found: 2 is the reciprocal of 30. 30 is then multiplied by 9, the SPVN equivalent to the total cost of the excavation, to produce 4:30, the number of workers or man-days' work. 4:30 is multiplied by the work assignment of 10 to produce 45, the volume.

It is held here that the utility of a mathematical curriculum is not necessarily in the problems presented, which may not always represent reality, but in the tools these problems produce or make use of. Thus, because problem 7 of YBC 4663 produces volume out of the total costs of the excavation, daily wages, and the work assignment, then it can be suggested that a scribe familiar with this kind of problem would be able to calculate volume measurement values from the total cost

⁶ See note 4 above for more on this text.

NBC 6763 translation

Obv	1	2	3	4	5
1	length	width	depth	volume	
	7 ninda $\frac{1}{2}$ kuš ₃	2 ninda 4 kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ kuš ₃	1 iku 38 $\frac{5}{6}$ sar	place 1
	1 ninda 4 kuš ₃	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ninda	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ kuš ₃	25 sar	place 2
5	7 ninda	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ kuš ₃	1 iku 1 ubu 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂	place 3
	3 ninda 1 kuš ₃	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 1 kuš ₃	1 ubu 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ sar	place 4
	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 2 kuš ₃	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 1 kuš ₃	13 sar 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ gin ₂	place 5
				6 sar 10 which was removed from the canal	place 6
				8 sar which was in the meadows [has been ...]	place '7'
Rev				4 iku 26 sar 10 gin ₂	earth of the Malik-Erra canal
10	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 3 kuš ₃	$\frac{1}{2}$ ninda 5 kuš ₃	15 sar 10 gin ₂ earth of the Enlil-[...] canal	
			total	4 iku 41 $\frac{1}{3}$ sar	volume
	charge of			<i>Ninkiaĝ-</i>	<i>Iškura</i>
	property of			<i>Immer-</i>	<i>ilī</i>
15	Month 11 day 8 Year 9 (after) he seized Isin with (the help of the mighty weapon of An, Enlil and) Enki.				

of an excavation if wages and work assignment were known. Further, because the total cost in wages and daily wages were used to produce the total cost in man-days' labor, and because man-days' labor and the work assignment were used to produce the excavation's volume, then such a scribe would only need man-days' labor accrued in excavating a canal and the work assignment, whether the same work assignment as is stated in mathematical texts or a different, project-specific work assignment, to state how much volume was excavated.

The Old Babylonian scribes did have access to a method to evaluate volume other than multiplication of length by width by height. Volume measurement values for each canal section could have been calculated from the total cost in either silver (or grain) or man-days' labor. NBC 6763 does not mention costs, a wage rate, or a work assignment used to calculate volume. That's not its goal. Its goal is simply to state the volumes that were excavated so that, similar to NBC 11509 with area, it cannot be expected to state these variables.

There is another discrepancy in NBC 6763 that must be explained as well. The sum of volume measurement

values stated in column 4 of NBC 6763 lines 3 through 9 is not the stated sub-total in line 10 as is visible in **figure 3**, where each stated area is added together and then the expected and stated sub-total is compared (see next side).

In **figure 3**, bold denotes deviation from stated totals. There is a deviation between the expected sub-total measurement value and the stated sub-total measurement value, which amounts to 1 sar 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ gin₂ and which results in a 0.29 % difference in line 10 of the text. Is this a mistake, the result of a lapse in scribal competence? Or can this difference be explained in another way?

One possibility is that the sub-total represents the sum of expected volume measurement values produced by multiplying length by width by depth as stated in columns 1 through 3 of the text (see **figure 4**, next side)

In this proposal the stated sub-total results from adding unstated volume measurement values for each canal section, lines 3 through 7, which themselves are produced by multiplying the stated lengths by the stated widths and then by the stated depths (see **figure 2** column iii for these values). However, if this suggestion

Line	Notes	Volume					
3	Place 1	1 iku	38	5/6 sar			
4	Place 2		25 sar				
5	Place 3	1 iku	1 ubu	26	1/2 sar	6	2/3 gin ₂
6	Place 4		1 ubu	9	1/2 sar		
7	Place 5			13 sar		6	2/3 gin ₂
8	Place 6			6 sar		10	
9	Place 7			8 sar			
10	Extant sub-total	4 iku		26 sar		10 gin ₂	
	<i>Expected sub-total</i>	4 iku		27 sar		13	1/3 gin ₂
11				15 sar		10 gin ₂	
12	Extant total	4 iku		41	1/3 sar		

Fig. 3: Addition of stated volume measurement values in NBC 6763.

Line	Notes	Volume						
3	Place 1	1 iku	39	1/2 sar	9	1/2 gin ₂	15 še	
4	Place 2		25 sar					
5	Place 3	1 iku	1 ubu	15 sar		11	2/3 gin ₂	
6	Place 4		1 ubu	9	5/6 sar	7 gin ₂	one 6 th	10 še
7	Place 5			12	5/6 sar	7	2/3 gin ₂	20 še
8	Place 6			6 sar		10		
9	Place 7			8 sar				
10	Extant Sub total	4 iku		26 sar		10 gin ₂		
	<i>Expected sub-total</i>	4 iku		16	5/6 sar	6 gin₂	one 4th	
11				15 sar		10 gin ₂		
12	Total	4 iku		41	1/3 sar			

Fig. 4: Addition of expected volume measurement values in NBC 6763.

is accepted, then there is still a significant discrepancy between the expected and extant sub-total in line 10. This discrepancy is largely overcome if the author of NBC 6763 only added values at or greater than 1/3 sar to produce the sub-total in line 10. That is to say, all values at and below 19 gin₂ were truncated off the original volume measurement values before addition of the sub-total.⁷ This suggestion would produce a sub-total of 4 iku 16 sar 10 gin₂. Stated 26 sar could, then, be a simple orthographic mistake: the author of NBC 6763 meant to write 16 sar and instead wrote 26 sar.

The measurement values in lines 8, 9, and 11 were possibly not part of the same survey as lines 3 through 7 and

⁷ As Proust notes, only the measurement values 1-19 gin₂ appear on metrological lists and tables from Nippur, while 1/3 ma-na appears in place of 20 gin₂ (Proust 2007: 69). For this reason, 19 gin₂ is suggested as the highest truncated value, rather than 29 gin₂.

so are produced out of total cost in labor. This would explain why lines 8 and 9 lack dimensions in columns 1 through 3. This would also explain the omission of gin₂ from the expected 10 <gin₂> written in line 8. If each volume measurement value that was used to produce the sub-total in line 10 was truncated below the fraction of sar before addition, if volume measurement values listed in lines 8 through 9 were produced out of total costs in labor, and if these two volume measurement values were the only volume measurement values that were both stated on the text and used to produce the sub-total in line 10, then written measurement values below fractions of sar measurement values in lines 8 and 9 would, perhaps, be of less importance. Thus, in line 8, gin₂ is omitted from 10 <gin₂> because, while 10 <gin₂> reflects part of the volume measurement value that was derived from total labor expended in excavating this section of canal, it was also truncated off the

Line	Notes	Volume		
3	Place 1	1 iku	39	$\frac{1}{2}$ sar
4	Place 2		25 sar	
5	Place 3	1 iku	1 ubu	15 sar
6	Place 4		1 ubu	9 $\frac{5}{6}$ sar
7	Place 5		12	$\frac{5}{6}$ sar
8	Place 6		6 sar	
9	Place 7		8 sar	
10	Extant Sub total	4 iku	26 sar	10 gin ₂
	<i>Expected sub-total</i>	4 iku	16	10 gin ₂
11			15 sar	10 gin ₂
12	Total	4 iku	41	$\frac{1}{3}$ sar

Fig. 5: Addition of truncated volume measurement values in NBC 6763.

measurement value before adding up the sub-total in line 10. All this would imply that the author had performed the addition that resulted in the sub-total found on NBC 6763 out of several volume measurement values that are not stated on the text NBC 6763. It must be asked, then, how was this original data produced?

A possible answer is the author of NBC 6763 is referring to an older text for the stated lengths, widths, and depths found in lines 3 through 7, as well as the unstated volume measurement values corresponding to these lines. This text would have been written down as a volume estimate, similar to NBC 11509, which was probably used to estimate costs in labor and pay, similar to the estimates witnessed in Rfittin 114 and 116, in advance of the excavation. The volume measurement values on this proposed text, truncated to fractions of sar, would have been used to produce the sub-total and then total as they are stated on NBC 6763.

If the proposals made above are accepted, then several texts were produced and used in constructing NBC 6763: First, an original, temporary volume assessment, similar to NBC 11509, was produced before excavation. After the excavation was completed, one or several texts were produced, which stated the total costs in pay or labor for each canal section accrued during the excavation. All of this suggests NBC 6763 describes a completed excavation. The fine quality of clay and year date, as well as the use of the preterite tense in describing the excavations, provide further evidence that NBC 6763 is a permanent record of a completed excavation.

4 Conclusions

The results of this study show that, while at first glance content and purpose may seem the same between NBC 11509 and NBC 6763, they are both very different. NBC 11509 probably assesses volume to be excavated. It has no year date, is produced out of poor quality clay, and calculation acts as expected based on multiplica-

tion of length by width by depth as stated on the text. NBC 11509 was probably produced in preparation for a cost assessment in labor and pay in advance of an excavation. NBC 6763, on the other hand, possibly observes volume already excavated. It has a full year date formula, is produced out of high quality clay, uses the preterite tense, and discrepancies between expected and stated volume measurement values suggests that the stated volume measurement values for each canal section are produced out of costs in pay or man-days' labor. NBC 11509 and NBC 6763 are not directly related to each other. However, a text like NBC 11509 was probably referred to by the author of NBC 6763 when he compiled the text.

If this hypothesis is accepted, then the work assignment used to estimate volume out of total labor was close to reality. As shown with **figure 2**, in one section the stated volume measurement value matches perfectly with the expected volume measurement value. In three sections, the difference between expected and stated volume measurement values is less than one percent. Finally, in the remaining two sections, difference does not exceed three percent. This means that the model used to predict and assess labor was probably relatively close to reality, suggesting that the bureaucrats in charge of excavations could put together reasonable cost estimates in so far as canal excavations are concerned.

An unexpected result of this study is the possibility of up to three different mathematical sub-cultures based on different vocabularies. First, a sub-culture witnessed in the mathematical text YBC 4663 uses the Sumerian us_2 for length, sag for width, and bur_3 for height. NBC 11509 uses the word gid_2 , "length", $dagal$ for width, and bur_3-u for depth. Finally, NBC 6763, similar to YBC 4663, uses the word us_2 for length but like NBC 11509 it uses $dagal$ for width and bur_3-u for depth. These vocabulary differences need to be explored further. For now, it is suggested here that calculation was

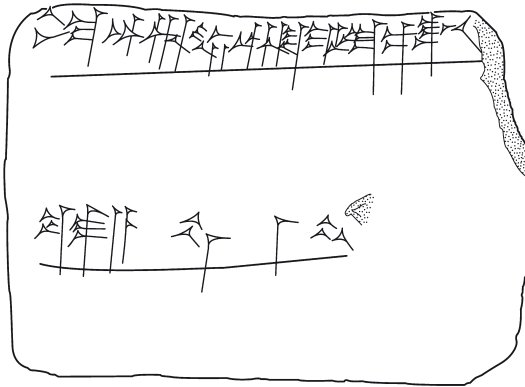
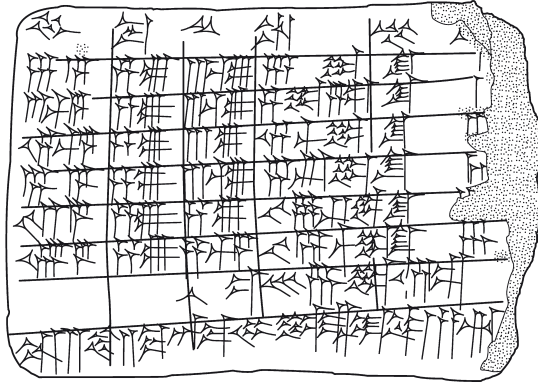
the same, even if vocabulary was different. YBC 4663 problem 1, NBC 11509, and NBC 6763 all probably produced volume measurement values, whether stated or unstated, by multiplying length by width by depth. YBC 4663 problem 7 and possibly NBC 6763 also produced volume out of costs in pay and/or labor, whether this was in pursuit of a further calculation as is the case for YBC 4663, or volume was the ultimate goal as is suggested for NBC 6763.

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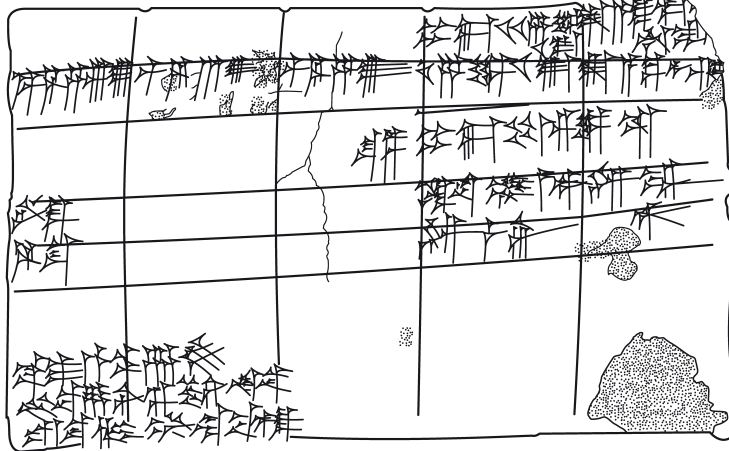
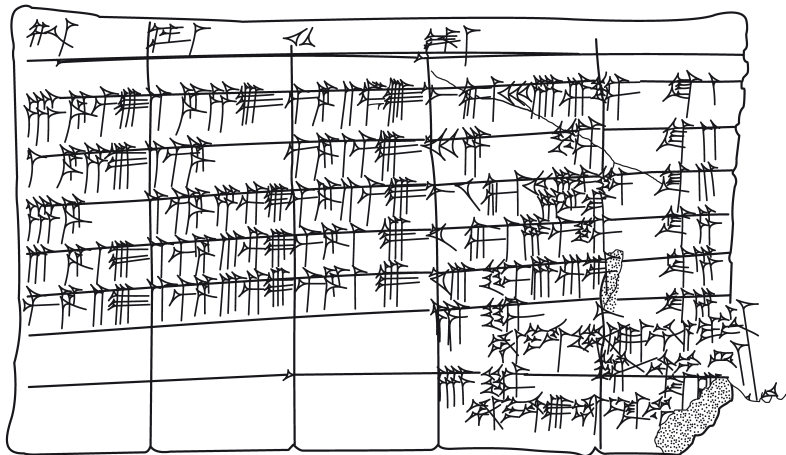
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NBC 11509 (copy: R. Middeke-Conlin).



NBC 6763 (copy: R. Middeke-Conlin).

The movement of text and image within the layout of an envelope throughout Mesopotamian history

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Abstract: Clay envelopes existed since the invention of writing in Mesopotamia. Their formal, technical, and functional features changed and developed through time and space, but their content always remained consistent. Text and image belonged together and their placement within the layout of the envelope was an important part of administrative practices. There are two distinct levels of text/image relations within their layout: The written text on the surface of the envelope versus the rolled seal impression, and the depiction and inscription of the seal within the impression respectively. The interrelations between these levels of text and image offer a great deal of information about the social and administrative organisation and political situation of the societies in question. The continuity of the use of written and sealed envelopes from the Uruk Period (e.g. closed bullae) to the perfectly shaped rectangular clay envelopes of the 1st millennium B.C., demonstrates the necessity and the willingness of the scribes to invent new practices and techniques to improve their administrative tools. This paper will examine two basic questions concerning cases and envelopes of clay tablets: did their invention result from a need to combine text and image, and which methods can be used to trace the beginning of this practice?

Keywords: Text, image, medium, envelopes, bulla, tokens, glyptic practices, Mesopotamia before writing systems.

1 Introduction

Text and image are omnipresent in Ancient Near Eastern art history. They always belonged together and they were planned to exist side by side so as to complete each other¹. When dealing with texts and images, the question always arises: what came first? The image, the text, or the object? When going back to the early beginnings of Mesopotamian art and writing systems, the interrelations between text, image, and object seem significant for a better understanding and reading of the message. The coexistence and ambiguity of text and image in the early stage of administration will be emphasized in the following paper.

Their medium, the object for which text and image were planned, should not be ignored, and indeed deserves more attention. The medium and its material were chosen on grounds of the information which the scribe or producer wanted to express. The very beginning of research on issues of text and image, therefore, should be the detailed observation of their medium. The main focus is to be laid on the practices used to inscribe and seal the surfaces. This is the standard method

which archaeologists have used since the beginning of their research on objects: Firstly, their formal and technical production, and secondly, their iconographic and encoded message. The interrelations and placement of text and image within layouts of different media are often crucial for the classification and typology of the objects. They move and change through time and space depending on their intentions and statements.

Within the recent approaches and methods within what has been deemed the practical (Schatzki 2001) and material turns (Hahn 2014; Miller 2005; Hurcombe 2007), good results have already been achieved within the broad field of humanities. The following analysis on envelopes in Mesopotamia presents an example of how these principles might be applied within cultural studies. As will be demonstrated, the practices and actions connected with envelopes reveal a lot of information about administration, techniques and knowledge in these early periods.

1.1. Envelopes, text and image media

What today might be called envelopes was produced in vast quantities in Mesopotamia largely at the end of the third mill. B.C., at a time when the third Dynasty of Ur came into being, and state administration became increasingly standardized and complex. Dealing with

¹ For further reading about text, image and new methods to deal with them see Belting 2001; Hilgert 2010.

Ur III envelopes from Ġirsu/Tellō, an archaeological perspective was chosen. Firstly, the object/envelope, secondly the scribal and sealing practices and lastly administrative practices were taken into consideration. The envelope is the natural medium for text, image, and the object inside it: the cuneiform tablet.

Until today, the cuneiform tablet has been regarded as the prime medium for the text, and the envelope as the medium for the image/seal-impressions. The text written on the envelope was not important, because in most cases — especially in the Ur III Period — it was a copy of the text of the inner tablet (Taylor 2011: 19–20; Charpin 2010: 77). As a result of their respective interests, archaeologists and philologists treated the envelopes as two different objects. Archaeologists, for a long time, were solely interested in the envelopes' seal impressions, iconography, and design, whereas philologists merely focused on the textual content relevant to them. This is the reason why, in earlier publications, text and image cannot be found together. Regrettably, their medium, the envelope, is often not even mentioned. Nevertheless, it is impossible to work on seals or texts without considering their medium. Individual features of these objects contain much more information than might be expected, provided that the right questions are posed and they are examined from a practical point of view. Therefore, in this study, the envelope is regarded as an object with all its material features, all information, like the relationship between text and image within their layout and other stored knowledge.

The envelope is a thin rectangular piece/strip of clay, which is laid over the almost dried tablet to cover and to protect it. To produce a tablet and an envelope was not difficult. Firstly, clay was available everywhere in Mesopotamia², and secondly, with the correct knowledge and practice, it was very easy to shape these objects (Balke 2015: 278). In a first step, the tablet would have been shaped and inscribed, before being briefly left to dry. Then it would have been enclosed with an envelope. Some researchers believe that a medium slip would have been placed between the two objects to prevent them from adhering to one another, but there is still no real evidence for this assumption (Taylor 2011: 20). At the British Museum, some of the Ġirsu envelopes were analysed in 2013 for the presence of an intermediate slip, but the curator, Jonathan Taylor, could only identify salt traces, which resulted from oxidation processes within the tablets. The rectangular strip of clay was laid around the tablet and then closed like a vest. To hide the two ends of the envelope and to flatten the surface, it was coated with an extra thin slip of clay. Afterwards, the envelope was polished, sealed, and inscribed. Secondary traces on the surface of the envelopes can reveal the different practices. The contents of the sealings and the texts vary through time and space. In most cases, the seal impression of the executing par-

ty and their names are mentioned in the text (Charpin 2010: 77).

There are actually two different levels of text-image relationships within the envelope: the layout of the envelope itself including the seal impressions and the written text, as well as the layout within the seal impression, i.e. the depiction or scene, and the seal inscription. Very often, the scribes appear to have emphasized certain features according to specific intentions connected to the organization and/or the knowledge of those who produced or inscribed the tablets and envelopes. The layouts and the order of sealing were definitely planned and organized. The materiality of the envelopes with the secondary traces on their surface demonstrates the practices and techniques. The standardization of formats in the Ur III Period led to a huge amount of them. The workmanship was very elaborate, but for the skilled producers of the envelopes, it must have been an everyday practice. To understand how and why they produced so many envelopes for common transactions about small amounts of raw materials, like barley or animals, more questions regarding the objects themselves must be answered.

1.2. Methods employed to investigate the missing phases

Dealing with Ur III envelopes, the question of the nature of their precursors arises. Where did they originate from? Who produced them and for what purposes? Currently, most researchers assume that envelopes were an innovation of the Ur III Period (Taylor 2011: 18–20). However, why were these objects already perfectly shaped at this time? The experimental phases in earlier periods are missing. Especially when we compare it to the invention of writing, during which all stages of development were recorded in clay (Woods 2010). So, why was this not done with envelopes? Another question is as to why there were no envelopes from earlier periods, although the administration and organization of the Akkadian or Early Dynastic cities were no less complex and sophisticated than during the Ur III Period? As is known, the envelopes were invented for administrative, organisational and hierarchical reasons. However, why were they introduced so late? The elaborate seals from the early Dynastic and Akkadian periods are a good example for the existing sealing practices, but the matter of sealing is not clear yet. One of the reasons for missing envelopes could be the limited quantity of archaeological records. However, if we concentrate on a smaller scale and focus for example on Ġirsu/Tellō, there are thousands of administrative records from earlier times. Their contents seem to come very close to the later documents from the Ur III Period³.

² For further study on clay and clay tablets see the overview provided in Taylor 2011.

³ For a first publication of the presargonic texts see Thureau-Dangin/Genouillac 1910. Works by Selz, Marzahn, Sollberger and many other scholars provide good overviews of relevant secondary literature (see Selz 1989, 1993; Marzahn 1991, 1996; Sollberger 1972).

There is only one very well-known text passage, appearing in the Sargon Legend, about the probable use of envelopes in earlier periods (Cooper/Heimpel 1983: 76–77; Barton 1915):

(53) u₄- 'bi-ta' im-ma 'gub-bu ħe₂-ġal₂' im 'si-si'-ge
ba-'ra'-ġal₂-la-am₃

In those days, writing on tablets certainly existed, but enveloping tablets did not exist!

According to this passage, the envelope was not used, but it was nevertheless already known. Here, the envelope is the missing object. As the stated in the legend, it had the function to hide the content of the inner tablet, which was written for a private purpose in a letter from Urzaba to Lugalzagezi (Mittermayer 2009: 64). Urzaba's very life depended upon the content of the written message. Moreover, the missing envelope determined his destiny, rendering Sargon, the favourite of the gods, the ruler of Kiš (Cooper/Heimpel 1983: 82, l. 53). In the Ur III Period, the envelopes fulfilled a different, namely administrative, function. These envelopes contained the same message as the inner tablets. The Sargon Legend seems to be written in the latter part of the Old Babylonian Period, but it might be a copy of an original text composed during the Ur III Period, which means that it is difficult to verify the usage of envelopes in the earlier Akkadian Period on grounds of such a citation.

2 Enveloping practice

Due to the small amount of archaeological evidence available for the earlier periods, another method was necessary to investigate the issue at hand. When the material itself is missing, there is the possibility of working with practices instead. A look back at enveloping practices of even earlier times seemed necessary in the pursuit of the origins of clay envelopes. Additionally, an abstraction from the rectangular object envelope seemed useful, as it promised to open up more possibilities to answer such questions. When, once again, the invention of writing is considered, which accompanied cylinder sealing practices, we automatically think of the Uruk Period, when all of these processes began (Nissen/Damerow/Englund 2004: 48–50). Strikingly, before the writing system was invented, the relevant administrative tools were already in place, and the corresponding practices had been established (Postgate 1994: 53). Older practices that originated even before the Uruk Period, which appear to have developed and changed in some manner through time and space before becoming detectable again in the Ur III Period, were therefore employed to envelope and to seal objects. Clay bullae containing tokens and carrying seal impressions represent the beginning of this development (Krebernik 2002: 56; Woods 2010: 45–48).

An oft-heard narrative might illustrate this: The complex administration and organization of the first cities at the end of the 5th to the 4th mill. BC needed to be managed and organized. Therefore, small tokens were used to represent raw materials or animals for different ad-

ministrative transactions. In order to put them together and to protect them, a covering bulla was shaped. It seems likely that the bullae and envelopes were introduced as a result of the need to archive the taxes levied and the necessity to keep track of what had not been delivered and remained due to the temple. Schmand-Besserat suggested that these accounts were preserved until the payment was complete (Schmandt-Besserat 1992: 181; 1980: 381). Earlier, other scholars had proposed that the bullae and envelopes, which accompanied items transported for exchange and service, together with their tokens, had served as receipts or confirmation of delivery for a specified set of goods (Amiet 1986: 88). The closure bulla is the simplest shape of an envelope. In the Late Uruk Period, these bullae were marked with what appear to be numerical symbols, which date to a phase just before the earliest tablets. It should not be neglected that this form had already been known from earlier bullae, which were used to protect small jars, bags, boxes, doors, etc. In fact, the practice of covering objects, or, in this case, vessels or furniture, is essentially the same (Nissen 2013: 170). As urban society expanded rapidly, bureaucrats and scribes transformed the previously existing systems to suit new needs. The covering objects changed and developed a rectangular shape, because of the inner object. When three-dimensional/geometrical objects needed to be covered, the bullae would be round. Oval or triangular shapes, occasionally with a hole for a cord, were used for vessels. However, which shape is best suited for an object like a rectangular tablet? The question is, whether the round bullae with tokens, the bullae for vessels and doors and the later envelopes of tablets actually all represent the same covering object? In fact, they were used for similar purposes like protecting, certifying and authenticating their contents. Analysing the texts and images within the layout of the clay bullae, it can be observed that the envelopes were completely covered with impressions of up to three different seals (Woods 2010: 46). The numerical signs on their surface were impressed later and they mostly followed the same direction of the seal impressions. However, it is very clear that the impressions were used as verification and authentication by the bureaucratic institutions. However, how might such an assumption be reconstructed? How can continuity from the very first periods before writing to the Ur III Period be established? Until now, I have argued that the same practice for covering objects over time and the material evidence is similar, if the round format is discounted for the sake of argument. The text passage in the Sargon Legend could be evidence for the earlier existence of envelopes before the Ur III Period.

3 Archaeological evidence

The continuity of enveloping practices from the Uruk Period until the Ur III Period implies that more material should be available. Even if the archaeological evidence from the Akkadian and Early Dynastic Periods is scarce, more attention should be paid to other potential

sources of information. When I started searching for envelopes in earlier times, I recognized that this issue has rarely been investigated. Piotr Steinkeller mentioned two enveloped examples which are of earlier origin, one from Lagaš and another one from Nippur (Steinkeller 1977: 41).

3.1. The Sumerian envelope

One envelope from the ED IIIb Period is known from Lagaš, but this object remains unique until today (Fig. 1a–b). Pinches (1908: 1–9) treated the envelope of text Amherst 1 as a special object and supposed that there should be more in the Louvre and Brussels considering the typology of the tablets. This envelope is dated back to the 4th year of Urukagina (2350 B.C.) and contains an administrative document listing fish votive offerings to the goddess Nanše. One seal is impressed everywhere on the surface of the envelope: The seal owner is Enigal, the scribe of e₂-munus. There is one more inscription written in the upper edge of the envelope: “On the festival of Nanše from the *hawr* (or swamp)-fishermen”.

The old Sumerian administrative tablets from Lagaš are almost square, with rounded corners and a cushion-like appearance. The writing of the legal texts is arranged in lines which form vertical columns. The shape of the envelope is interesting, because it resembles the earlier bullae to some extent. The practice and the order of sealing look similar to earlier bullae as well. When the text-image interrelations are again scrutinized, it may be observed that the image of the sealing is always visible. Firstly, it was sealed from the top of the obverse to the bottom, crossing the lower edge. It is rolled over the reverse in the same manner. Then the seal was rolled from the left to the right edge over both sides. The seal impressions form a cross on both sides. The images of the sealings are more prominent than their inscriptions, even though the latter is important for the recipient, the goddess Nanše in this case.

3.2. Akkadian envelopes

When we look at the Akkadian Period, about 4000 administrative texts are known. During this period new administrative objects emerged. Yelena Rakic (2014: 194) lists different text and image media invented in the Akkad Period: 1) closure bullae, 2) sealed inscribed tablets, 3) bulla labels, 4) tablets without texts. Furthermore, she mentions, but does not explicitly list one more medium, namely 5) the envelope! She argues that the closure bulla is the only object, which is in use through all times in Mesopotamian history and represents a continuation of these sealing practices. I would argue that the envelopes also existed through all of these periods. The existence of the other sealed artefacts listed could represent an intermediate or an experimental stage of the development process of the envelopes. It indicates that, at some point, the function of sealing expanded and underwent a change during the Akkadian Period.

Concerning their form, size, and palaeography, Akkadian documents are very similar to Neo-Sumerian examples; and indeed, they already have a rectangular to square format. Their envelopes, therefore, became more rectangular as well. Only few Akkadian examples known. Some of them were published by Karin Rohn (2011: Pl. 39, no. 448a). The example from Nippur shown here is definitely Akkadian (PBS 9, nr. 122; Fig. 2).

When we look at the text and image interrelations, firstly, we can recognize that the shape of the envelope is not exactly rectangular; its palaeography, the order within the layout, the seal, and the sealing practices further prove its Akkadian character. It bears one seal impression with a contest scene composition that consists of two pairs and the inscription reads: “Ur-Suen, the scribe”. Interestingly, the image has a more prominent place within the layout of the envelope. The sealing is rolled all over the surface of the envelope and the seal inscription is visible, but it takes up only a quarter of the space available. Thus, the image here seems to be more important than the text. There is no other inscription on the surface of the envelope, which means that no additional information was needed here, except that of the sealer. There is another envelope from the Schøyen Collection, which is dated to the Akkadian Period⁴. The reverse with its sealing of the envelope is preserved. Here, again, the tablet and the envelope look very similar to Ur III examples. Only the palaeography of the signs and the seal impression reveal that it is Akkadian. Here, the seal inscription has a more prominent place within the layout and the inscription divides the image into two scenes. Again, the seal impression is rolled all over the surface of the envelope and it carries no other inscription. This envelope reminds us of the later Ur III envelopes, even if it provides no further information.

4 Text and image within the layout of the objects

The shapes and formats of these objects changed from round to oval, rectangular to square, and, of course, the shape always depended on the content of the information in the documents. The same changes may be observed regarding the layouts of the objects as well as the order of text and image within their layouts.

4.1. Preliterate periods

It is interesting to see that, on the earlier bullae, cases, or envelopes, the image was the more prominent part, but, at the same time, the image was used as a medium of information, which means that it was read as a text!

So far, only a few examples of envelopes from the Early Dynastic and Akkadian have been presented. However, this study seeks to indicate future research avenues for dealing with objects like envelopes and will hopefully provide an impetus for researchers to consider as-

⁴ Prof Aage Westenholz was very kind to share this information about this particular Akkadian envelope with me. The encased tablet is published in CUSAS 27, 104 (MS 3550).



Fig. 1a: Tablet, Louvre (FD III Urukagina/Lagaš; CDLI nr. P. 100839).



Fig. 1b: Clay envelope, Louvre (FD III Urukagina/Lagaš; CDLI nr. P. 100839)



pects of the questions discussed here within their own work. The few examples available indicate that both text and image played a role in these early periods, but the image of the impressions seems to have played the more prominent role. The tablet was the text medium, the envelope the image and text medium. The inscription of the seal seems to have served as the frame of the seal's scene or depiction. However, on Ur III tablets and envelopes, the text was for sure more important than the image. Sealings were mostly rolled all over the surfaces and over all sides and margins. Nevertheless, the seal inscription always held the most prominent place within the layout: always central, and always following the direction of the other inscription, which would have made it easier to read. The inscription of the text, which was added after the sealing, mostly hid the images of the impression. Of course, there are many exceptions, but more than three quarters of administrative texts seem to follow this pattern.

4.2. Later periods

In the following Old Babylonian or Old Assyrian Periods, the texts and images of the clay envelopes were further interrelated and their order within the layout was very

important. On Old Assyrian envelopes, the order of text and sealing is particularly apparent (Veenhof/Klengel-Brandt 1992; Teissier 1994). In the Old Babylonian Period, the enveloping practice was extended to the use of envelopes for legal records, like sales or inheritance disputes. The seals were rolled down the left side or on the left edge. The practice of enveloping declines in popularity from the Old Babylonian Period onward, but this practise and its technology did not disappear. There are many examples from the Neo-Assyrian Period. For these later periods such as the Old Babylonian⁵, Old Assyrian, Middle Assyrian, and Neo Babylonian, there are many more studies on texts, seals, and administrative practices, but, these fall beyond the remit of this paper and are mentioned to emphasize the importance of better reconstructing earlier periods.

4.3. A bilingual practice

To demonstrate the ability of the producers and scribes to adapt new and old practices and to combine them in order to meet the needs of their users, one more ex-

⁵ Anne Godderis presented a very nice paper about the layouts and practices on Old Babylonian envelopes at RAI 61.

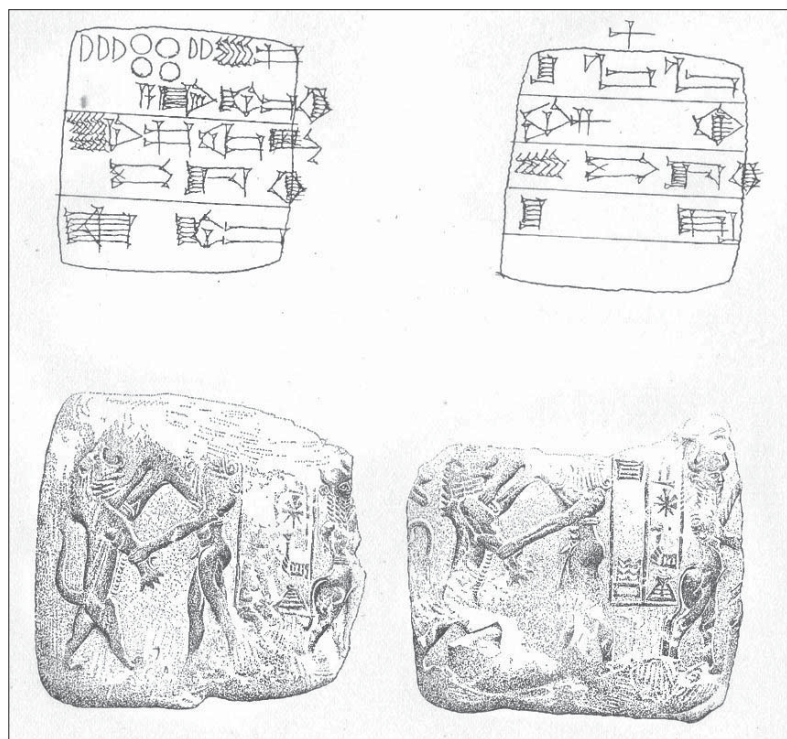


Fig. 2: Clay envelope and tablet, Pennsylvania (Akkadian; after PBS 9, nr. 122).

ample will be presented. A unique egg-shaped tablet from Nuzi discovered by Oppenheim (1959: 122) is an interesting type of envelope. It is sealed and inscribed in Akkadian language and bears information about 49 pebbles enclosed which represented sheep. An additional receipt tablet found together with the envelope, gives further information about the shepherd Ziqqaru and his “stones” and the sheep owner Puhisenni. The question arises why both objects were needed for this transaction. An explanation given by Oppenheim (1959: 123) and Abusch (1981: 7) is the illiteracy of the shepherd Ziqqaru. It is difficult to prove this assumption, but at least this example shows the complex and individual use of tokens, tablets and envelopes and again demonstrates the parallel practices which could exist together and in different forms in different times.

5 Conclusion

It would hence seem relevant to reconstruct continuity between the invention of administration and the envelopes of the Ur III Period and to show that there is probably no thousand-year gap between these events. Despite having different formats of bullae and envelopes, it is very probable that equal administrative practices were in continuous use from the Uruk to the Ur III Pe-

riod. Firstly, the enveloping practice emerged as a general practice. The different practices of collecting and archiving information, together with the writing and sealing practices, were transferred from the Uruk Period (bullae and tokens). The motivation to shape an envelope or a bulla seems to be one and the same. In both cases, organization and administration were the impetus for the ‘covering practice’.

If sealing and writing practices are to be considered, many more similarities may be identified. An interesting fact is that the seals and the stylus used for writing were both impressed in clay. It is, in fact, the same practice used for text and image in Mesopotamia. It is a very simple analysis, but a very important one. Text and image belong together. They were even created using the same practice of impressing clay (Ross 2014). Over time, there are still clear material and technical connections.

The immaterial or intangible practices and their actors, rather than only the objects as well as their text and images, need to be considered as well in order to understand the whole picture. All items, whether material or immaterial, should be analysed together. The practice of enveloping existed from the very beginning of administration; the objects changed, but the intentions, techniques, and knowledge remained the same through time and space in Mesopotamian history.

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‘If the earth quakes...’: The Nuzi text SMN 3180

Paola Negri Scafa

Abstract: The text SMN 3180, published by Lacheman in 1937, is different from other Nuzi texts, it is an omen text which deals with earthquakes. As it belongs to the second millennium BCE, it is one of the most ancient omen texts and is one of the forerunners of the canonical versions of the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* and *Iqqur īpuš* found in the Neo-Assyrian libraries. However, this text can be viewed from a different perspective, which takes into account the education or training of its writer. The existence of a written report about ominous events can throw some light on the existence of a Nuzi scholarly and scientific tradition connected to the main stream of the Mesopotamian cultural tradition.

Keywords: Nuzi, omen texts, earthquakes, education.

The tablet SMN 3180 is unique in the Nuzi corpus.¹ Whereas the majority of Nuzi texts are primarily administrative, legal and business documents, this is instead a tablet of earthquake omens, linked to divination, which was fundamental to the daily and cultural life in Mesopotamia and its peripheral areas².

In Mesopotamian literature the relevance of divination texts is unquestioned, not only as a store of knowledge of the Mesopotamian scribes and scholars but as a collection of the results of a practice aimed at discovering the signs³ by which the gods would indicate future events to mankind.

SMN 3180 belongs to a group of astrological texts that certainly dates back at least to the Old Babylonian period when the earliest collections of astrological omens, particularly on lunar phenomena, appear; but astrology possibly has its roots in the third millennium BCE⁴.

These texts could have been the core of the later series.⁵ During the second millennium BCE, Babylonian science, literature and divination tradition widely spread throughout the Near East.⁶ SMN 3180 attests that Nuzi (Yorğāntappe)⁷ was involved in this cultural trend as well, albeit marginally. The evidence of an intense ‘scientific’ and astrological activity in the Middle Babylonian period suggests that already in the fourteenth century some major astrological omen texts existed, some of which would have later been used for compiling the canonical series⁸ found in the Neo-Assyrian libraries of the first millennium BCE.

Of special interest is the fact that SMN 3180 is not only a text containing omens, but omens regarding earth-

1 Some slides of the presentation also referred to Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, letters and reports. Because that presentation was related to the ‘Nuzi Session’, the present paper will mainly deal with SMN 3180, and the Neo-Assyrian materials will be published elsewhere.

2 Bibliography on a so crucial argument for the intellectual history of the Ancient Near East is very relevant; for a good overview of the current state of the argument cf. Fincke 2014a.

3 Such signs could be found, for example, in the entrails of animals, in the shapes of oil dropped in water, in phenomena observed in the sky and in natural events, or in unusual events in everyday life.

4 The evidence of celestial divination omens in the third millennium BCE is inconsistent; Amar Annus (2010: 1) suggests that omens in the third millennium BCE must have been of oral nature. Ulla Koch-Westenholz (1995: 36) thinks that “The most cogent argument for a third-millennium origin of Babylonian divination, including astrology, would be its advanced state of development already in old Babylonian period.” The earliest celestial divination texts date to the Old Babylonian period; most of them concern lunar eclipses (cf. Rochberg-Halton 1988: 7; see also Hunger/Pingree 1999: 7–8, 13, where other Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian celestial omen texts found

in Babylonia itself are mentioned). In addition, the Old Babylonian omen texts from Mari must be mentioned, although they are mainly related to extispicy.

5 Cf. Hunger/Pingree 1999: 5–26. In any case, the textual history of the Old Babylonian texts is very complicated and reveals the existence of variant traditions, cf. Koch-Westenholz 1995: 38.

6 Many omen texts that show connections to later *Enūma Anu Enlil* are documented in the so-called peripheral areas: Ugarit, Qatna, Alalah, Emar, Ḥattuša, Susa. SMN 3180 can be also included into this group (cf. Hunger/Pingree 1999: 5–26).

7 Nuzi (Yorğāntappe) was located in the region to the east of the Tigris, not far away from Arrapha (Kirkuk). In the second part of the second millennium BCE Arrapha was the capital of the small Kingdom of Arrapha, which Nuzi was part of. What is known about this kingdom is derived almost entirely from the documents found in Yorğāntappe, in the site of Tall al-Faḥḥār and in a marginal area of Kirkuk.

8 The relevance of these texts in the Mesopotamian culture is witnessed by the existence of commentaries written by Assyrian and Babylonian scholars in the first millennium BCE (cf. Frahm 2011: 133–134). Actually, the reconstruction of the series, of the tablet sequence and the reorganization of the fragments is a hard and complex work: materials belonging to different periods come from different archaeological sites and are kept in different museums (cf., for example, Fincke 2001: 19–39; Gehlken 2005: 235–273).

quakes. Considering the highly seismic geographical position of Yorgāntappe, this should not be particularly surprising; ancient Mesopotamia, like modern Iraq, experienced frequent earthquakes.⁹ Yet curiously, texts citing earthquakes are not very numerous¹⁰ in Mesopotamian literature and this is also true in texts with weather or atmospheric omens, to which earthquakes are normally linked. In the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*,¹¹ of which one recension has 70 tablets of astrological and meteorological omens, earthquakes are only mentioned in the reverse of Tablet 47,¹² lines 39'–60'. Similarly, in *Iqqur īpuš*,¹³ the second part of which is mainly a series of weather omens, earthquakes are only mentioned in the paragraphs 100 and 101.

A more comprehensive overview of SMN 3180 is beyond the scope of the present article, however the following remarks offer a summary of its characteristics.

SMN 3180 was published for the first time by Ernest R. Lacheman.¹⁴ The tablet was found during the 1931–1932 excavations, in room D 6.¹⁵ It is a text inscribed on both sides, with a total of 43 lines. The text runs along the wider side, unlike most other Nuzi texts, such as letters, legal and business documents, where the text usually runs along the narrower side. Lacheman observed that the script is the characteristic Nuzi ductus, whereas the language is not. There is no colophon.

Lacheman immediately identified the obverse of the tablet as a duplicate of a text from the *Adad* section of

the *Enūma Anu Enlil* series, and drew attention to some similarities to the *Sîn* section of that series as well.¹⁶ He suggested that the Nuzi text was a forerunner of the canonical version found in the Neo-Assyrian libraries.¹⁷ This observation is also made in further studies of astrological texts, where similarities and differences between both sections of SMN 3180 and the two main series *Enūma Anu Enlil* and *Iqqur īpuš* were highlighted.¹⁸

The two sections contain two sequences of earthquake omens occurring month by month. As in all the other omen collections, a classical structure of a conditional sentence is used, with a protasis *if ...* and an apodosis *then ...*. In the protasis, where the month in which the earthquake occurs is mentioned, the verbs are typically preterit; while the apodosis, which contains the prediction, may be a verbal or a non-verbal clause. When it is a verbal clause and the verb is written syllabically, it is usually in the present tense.

The omens of the first section, ll. 1–16, use a structure with the verb *rābu* + Month Name: *šumma eršetu ina arḫi X irūb* “if the earth quakes in Month X”. In ll. 17–28 the structure is different using the verb *nāšu*:+ the indication of a situation (*šumma eršetu ... X inūš*); a good example is offered by l. 22: *šumma eršetu ina kala ūmi inūš* “if the earth quakes the whole day long”.¹⁹ In line 19 the scribe indicates the existence of a gap in the original copy (*he-pi₂*) and does so again in ll. 26–29. In addition, lines 1–16, 19, 22–27 parallel lines 39'–60' of *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 47.²⁰ Lines 17–18 and 20–21 do not match any other known versions of *Enūma Anu Enlil*, and lines 22–25 are so badly preserved that only a partial comparison is possible. With line 27 the parallels end.

The omens of the second section, ll. 30–43, use the protasis “if during month X an earthquake shakes” with the words *rību* and *rābu*: *šumma rību ina arḫi X irūb*

9 The Mesopotamian region, in fact, is located near the border between the Anatolian, Eurasian and the Arabian Plates, an area characterized by a strong tectonic thrust (about 15 mm/year) of the Arabian plaque on the Zagros Mountains (cf. Tuba Ökse 2007; Şengör/Yılmaz 1981). For example, in the years 2011–2014 in Iraq at least 211 earthquakes were recorded and largely perceived: about 70% of the earthquakes occurred in the border region between Iraq and Iran; about 20% were local earthquakes; and the others at the border of Turkey and Syria (data recorded in http://www.portaleabruzzo.com/nav/terremotiMap_WD.asp).

10 Fadhil 1993 highlighted the fact that the texts on the subject belong in principle to two major categories: a documentation that could be defined historical, consisting of royal inscriptions and letters; and a documentation that is connected to the literary, cultural and cultic areas, concerning oracular and divination texts.

11 The series *Enūma Anu Enlil* is the major celestial-meteorological omen collection; it has been studied from 1899, the date of its first overview, until today. The final redaction of this series was elaborated in the seventh century BCE, although forerunners and precursors existed from the early second millennium BCE onwards: therefore, there were different recensions originating in different places and at different times (cf. Gehlken, 2012: 2–3). Various excerpt series have been prepared from the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, for example, the series *Rikis gerri* (cf. Gehlken 2012; Fincke 2014b).

12 See Weidner 1968–69: 72 under ‘Tafel 43’.

13 This series is centred on the ‘time’, and in particular on the ‘months’; the first part refers to human activities such as building and rebuilding houses, or events such as rituals, marriage and birth. The second part is a compendium similar to *Enūma Anu Enlil*, and collects omens that have often parallels with meteorological and other sections of *Enūma Anu Enlil*. For this series see Labat 1965.

14 Lacheman 1937.

15 Cf. Lacheman 1958: viii, where the author gives an analysis of the Nuzi texts, grouping them on the basis of the areas in which they were excavated.

16 Lacheman 1937: 1–2 refers to the first publication by Virolleaud of the main series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, which includes 70 tablets with astronomical and meteorological omens according to one recension. When it was published the first time, it was divided into four sections named after four gods: *Sîn*, related to the lunar omens, *Šamaš*, related to solar omens, *Adad*, related to weather omens, and *Ištar*, related to omens from stars and planets. Tablets 37–49 in the series collect signs of the weather, namely the signs of *Adad*. Cf. Virolleaud 1908–1909, commonly quoted as *ACH*.

17 The relation between SMN 3180 and the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* is complex. The series *Enūma Anu Enlil* is much later than SMN 3180 that cannot be, in turn, a direct forerunner of the canonical version found in the Neo-Assyrian libraries. Nevertheless, although the canonical series *Enūma Anu Enlil* could have been based on forerunners different from the Nuzi text (see note 11), this document appears to be very important, because it offers relevant parallels with the canonical series and witnesses the existence of a tradition in the regions to the east of the Tigris.

18 It is not possible to examine here the whole bibliography on the matter: some indications can be found in Koch-Westenholz 1995.

19 The reconstructed prediction is <*sapāh māti*> “destroying of the land”. Parallels can be found with *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 47, l. 55' and LAS 1, 16 (cf. Parpola 1970: 12–13): in this text, a letter to the king related to a NAM.BUR₂.BI ritual (an apotropaic ritual) against earthquakes, the scribe *Ištar-šumu-ēreš* precisely quotes l. 55'. For the NAM.BUR₂.BI ritual see below note 42.

20 Gehlken 2012: 150–157; in particular in Gehlken 2012 weather omens of *Enūma Anu Enlil* are studied.

and correspond to the predictions in the *Sîn* section of *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 22.²¹ In the series *Iqqur īpuš*, paragraphs 100 and 101²² are parallel to the second and first sections respectively of the Nuzi text.

Parallels with *Enūma Anu Enlil* and *Iqqur īpuš* help to correctly read the Nuzi text. The comparison of SMN 3180, l. 4 with EAE 47, l. 42’ and *Iqqur īpuš* § 101: 3 offers important indications, useful for understanding the Nuzi text and for making it possible to read the end of that line in the Nuzi text correctly. However, it is curious to note that l. 53’ of Tablet 47²³ in the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, which parallels the gap of l. 19 in SMN 3180, does not help to restore the Nuzi text because the meaning of this line is obscure in the text of the canonical series as well.

As far as the graphic structure of the SMN 3180 is concerned, the term *eršetu* (KI) is mentioned only in the first line of the first section, and left out in the other lines. This does not correspond to the content of the canonical texts in this sequence, where KI is usually written in each line.

As usual in omen texts, also in the Nuzi text Babylonian month names occur. A complete list including the intercalary months is found in ll. 1–27 and another, without the intercalary months,²⁴ in ll. 30–42. In general, the logograms of the months in SMN 3180 correspond to the logograms in *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Only for the month Nisan the full Old Babylonian form *BARA₂*, *ZAG.GAR*, typical for the second millennium BCE, in the Nuzi text corresponds to the later, abbreviated writing *BARA₂* in the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* and in *Iqqur īpuš*. It must be pointed out that the calendar of SMN 3180 does not correspond to the typical Nuzi calendar²⁵ that is employed in legal and business texts, as Lacheman²⁶ remarks; moreover he points out that logograms seldom or never found in other Nuzi texts are also used. But it is not surprising because differences in vocabulary and writing between literary and legal texts must be expected.

Differences between the canonical series and the Nuzi text can be found in the use of logographic or syl-

labic graphemes, such as *ar-bu-tu₂* in *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 47 (see l. 40’), to which either *KAR-tu₂* (ll. 2, 12) and *ar-bu-tu₂*- or *ar₂-bu-tum* (ll. 7; 10) in SMN 3180 correspond;²⁷ or *a-mat* in *Enūma Anu Enlil*, to which the logographic writing *INIM* corresponds in the Nuzi text.

This brief summary points to the value of SMN 3180 as a copy made from a damaged original as well as a possible forerunner of a canonical series relevant to Mesopotamian culture and knowledge. However, this may be too limiting as the text can be viewed from a different perspective, which takes into account the education or training of its writer.

As seen above, Lacheman²⁸ observed that the ductus of SMN 3180 is characteristic for Nuzi, while the language is not: the content, Babylonian in structure and language, concerns a subject of particular importance to Mesopotamian culture.²⁹ Discrepancies between content and ductus or between parts of the content do not create particular difficulties, since several examples are found in Mesopotamian texts. A good example, consistent with SMN 3180, can be the Assyrian *Reports* that show experts in divination, who often resided in cities all over Assyria and Babylonia, delivering their responses to the requests of the Neo-Assyrian kings. It was not uncommon for them, to use two different “dialects” in the same text, that of the expert who sent the reports (Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian) and the dialect of the cited canonical omen texts.³⁰

If the Nuzi text was a copy made by a local scribe, the question arises as to how scribes were trained. What sort of educational system existed in the kingdom of Arrapha, which Nuzi belonged to? The literature on scribal education in Mesopotamia and peripheral areas, Anatolia included, is extensive.³¹ However, Nuzi and the kingdom of Arrapha are not taken much into account because of the scarcity of data and materials. Only nine school texts have been found in Nuzi, and only seven of them have been published.³² Very recently, Brigitte Lion³³ has carefully analysed them in a more extended Nuzi framework. She refers to the high number of scribes’ names and to their activities carried on widely in many towns of the kingdom. Moreover, she attempts to identify the criteria for training the Nuzi scribes, based on the Old and Middle Babylonian school systems.

21 Rochberg-Halton 1988 has published a critical edition of Tablet 22 in a volume concerning the lunar eclipse texts of *Enūma Anu Enlil* (Tablets 15–22). Tablet 22, formerly published by Virolleaud 1908–1909 as *Sîn XXXIV–XXXV*, consists of two parts; in particular the second part contains twelve paragraphs, where the eclipse omen is combined with three meteorological omens unrelated to eclipse; cf. Rochberg-Halton 1988: 251–252. Therefore, each paragraph consists of four omens: each third omen concerns earthquakes. More or less direct parallels can be established between SMN 3180 and the third omens of each of these paragraphs.

22 Labat 1965: 188–191; see also Gehlken 2012: 150–157.

23 Gehlken 2012: 155; see also note 43 below.

24 The intercalary month Nisan, which seldom occurs in the series *Iqqur īpuš* (Labat 1965: 14), is lacking in §§ 100–101; moreover the Šabāt omen of *Iqqur īpuš* (§ 101: 11) corresponds to the intercalary Addar omen in both SMN 3180 and *Enūma Anu Enlil* (Gehlken 2012: 155).

25 The specificity of the Nuzi calendar soon appeared: cf. Gordon 1935: 253; Gordon/Lacheman 1938: 56. For a comparison of the Nuzi calendar with other Near Eastern calendars see Hunger 1980: 297–303; Cohen 1993: 367–371; Cohen 2015: 349–354.

26 Lacheman 1937: 4

27 Gehlken 2012: 150–154, where he reads both *tu₂* and *tam* for the same sign in the same context.

28 See note 26.

29 Actually, also the Nuzi ductus has Babylonian characteristics, since Nuzi scribes have learned writing from Babylonian scribes; however, the ductus of SMN 3180 shows some features typical for Nuzi.

30 This means that those scribes were able to manage texts written in different dialects, even if they were not necessarily experienced linguists.

31 See, for example, Westenholz 1974–1977: 95–110; Sjöberg 1975: 159–179; Civil 1985: 67–78; Waetzoldt 1986: 36–50; Nemet-Nejat 1988: 285–300; Waetzoldt 1989: 33–50; Demsky 1990: 157–170; Ikeda 1992: 37–40; Veldhuis 1997: 12–80; Cohen 2004: 81–100; George 2005: 127–137; Fincke 2012: 85–101.

32 Lacheman 1939.

33 Lion 2015, where also not professional scribes are considered.

Evidence for the existence of scribal schools in the Old Babylonian period has been found in several towns, such as Ur, Sippar or Nippur where cuneiform tablets that could be identified as school texts and exercise tablets have been found in rooms that however could not be considered classrooms.³⁴ From the Old Babylonian period onwards, a standardization process went on for several centuries, and affected almost all of the genres that belong to the stream of tradition.³⁵ Contemporarily, school practices aimed at training young people spread to several different areas, including the peripheral areas in the west, such as Syria, and in Anatolia.³⁶ It seems justifiable to suppose that similar systems existed in peripheral areas in the east, such as the region to the east of the Tigris where Nuzi was located.

As pointed out above, in Nuzi the small number of school tablets have been found in private houses, but archaeologically it is impossible to recognize schools in those buildings. These tablets contain material extracted from two longer lexical lists, UR₅.RA = *hubullu* and LU₂ = *ša*. Some parallels can be found within the Old Babylonian school system, starting with the Old Babylonian E₂.DUB.BA.A as the reference point for reconstructing the educational system in Mesopotamia.³⁷

The Babylonian educational process required several phases: teaching activities include writing techniques; Sumerian nouns and nominal phrases; sign lists and arithmetic; and Sumerian language.³⁸ Scribal students began with mastering the cuneiform system and the basics of language by studying lexical lists and texts. They then continued to advanced specialized studies in several different disciplines. The curriculum of this second phase included literature,³⁹ which required the knowledge of the Sumerian language; also law, where the students learned the style, formulae and structure of contracts, and legal procedures, law codes, letters, and mathematics for use in business and administration. At the most advanced level was music,⁴⁰ which was primarily connected to the temple schools.

In peripheral areas, the linguistic educational process is more complex, because Akkadian is a foreign language there: as a consequence, several different languages were taught in peripheral schools and scribes were often multilingual. This aspect concerns also Nuzi scribes, who lived in a Hurrian environment and wrote in Akkadian.

Perhaps pupils began their education at the homes of experienced scribes, which could explain the presence of tablets in private houses as in Nuzi. Then more advanced students might have continued the education in more formal structured institutions. When they had completed their studies, scribes went on working in the different areas for which they were trained. The present paper argues that the scribes (*tušarru*) that were specialised in interpreting celestial, terrestrial and teratology omens and experts in earthquake phenomena, were able to make intelligible the will of gods announced by the signs that appeared spontaneously, or were explicitly solicited; as a result of the interpretative activity of the experts, every evil portent could be averted with appropriate rituals.⁴¹ Moreover, interpreting the divine messages and performing the necessary rituals, the experts supported the rulers in their decision-making process.⁴²

Clearly scribal education is an important consideration in evaluating SMN 3180. It represents a composite text, that includes parts from different sources. It is not possible to say whether the Nuzi scribe had copied exactly the document from one original or had worked on a group of originals. Perhaps too hastily Lacheman criticised the Nuzi scribe for not having tried to search a more complete text. However, the fact that l. 53' of Tablet 47 of *Enūma Anu Enlil* does not help to fill the gap of the parallel omen in l. 19 of SMN 3180, as seen above, may indicate an older, more complex problem.⁴³

34 Cf. George 2005, where the archaeological distribution of school texts in Nippur and Ur is analysed: in particular, the author notices that spaces in the buildings and chambers where texts have been found were not big enough to accommodate a large body of pupils. Sjöberg 1975: 176–177 lists towns where the finding of school texts shows scribal and teaching activities. In particular the author observed that in the two rooms uncovered in the Palace of Mari and believed to be schoolrooms, no lexical, grammatical or literary texts have been found; therefore his conclusion is that there were no schoolrooms in that palace.

35 Veldhuis 1997: 67.

36 Demsky 1990: 157–170; Ikeda 1992: 37–40; Klinger 1998: 365–75; Cohen, 2004: 81–100; Fincke 2012: 85–101. See also note 31.

37 The problem of the educational process in Mesopotamia and peripheral areas is complex and is related to the Old-Babylonian E₂.DUB.BA.A as institution of education (Sjöberg 1975: 160) and the development “of small-scale activity run by private individuals” (George 2005: 131). The development of local, peripheral educational systems (see note 36; Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012; Cohen 2012) makes the question more complex.

38 Veldhuis 1997: 58.

39 Demsky 1990: 160–165; Civil 1995; Veldhuis 1997: 146; Tanret 2002: 166–171; Cohen 2012: 115–127.

40 Michalowski 2010: 199–239.

41 Maul 2007: 361–372. See also Reiner 1995: 81–84. Apotropaic rituals and other rituals are often mentioned in reports and letters written by experts: written reports about omens already occurred in Old Babylonian times, although most of them referred to extispicy (cf. Hunger 1992: v). Neo-Assyrian letters and reports offer the largest documentation of the interpretation of omens and of these rituals; a few of these letters and reports are related to earthquakes: see, for example, LAS 1, 16 r. 6, referring to *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 47: 55', that corresponds to SMN 3180: 22; LAS 1, 148, where the scribe Adad-šumu-ušur mentions a pertinent ritual performed twice; LAS 1, 234, referring to *Enūma Anu Enlil* Tablet 47: 42', that corresponds to SMN 3180: 4; very interesting is LAS 1, 35, where the scribe Balasi not only mentions past earthquakes, but also refers to the formula (*Ea ēpuš Ea ipšur*: “Ea has done, Ea has undone”) often pronounced in the course of the apotropaic rituals (NAM.BUR₂.BI); see Parpola 1970 and 1983. On the bibliography on the NAM.BUR₂.BI, with its Akkadian loan word *namburbū*, see, for example, Čaplice 1974; Maul 1994 and 1998, 92–94; Reiner 1995: 81–84, 93, 96; Rochberg 2002: 677 and 2010: 24; Noegel 2010: 147. For *dullu*, another term for a ritual employed in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts, cf. CAD D: 177.

42 Radner 2011: 361.

43 According to Gehlken 2012: 155, the meaning of line 53' of Tablet 47 of *Enūma Anu Enlil* that corresponds to SMN 3180 l. 19 is obscure. This fact demonstrates that the problem of this line occurred earlier in the tradition and also in other forerunners of the series.

Moreover, often it was not easy to critically copy texts. In fact, texts such as omens – and astrological reports quoted from them⁴⁴ – could appear to be difficult: a later text, a Neo-Assyrian letter, provides vivid testimony when a learned and experienced scribe teases a colleague having difficulties reading a text of the series *Šumma Izbu*.⁴⁵

Therefore, it is evident that whoever copied the Nuzi text was certainly experienced enough to copy such a text in his own, correct ductus, but possibly also able to manage a complex text, obtained from different originals. Actually, the fact that the Nuzi ductus was used in an omen text is an important evidence that, in addition to the existence of elementary education to which the Nuzi school tablets refer, there was also a school in the kingdom of Arrapha, where the educational process continued with further phases, including literary texts and more specialized studies, capable of producing trained, specialised scribes, according to the normal contemporary standards.

Certainly it is the only hint of the presence of a higher level school in the kingdom of Arrapha; nevertheless some textual analyses⁴⁶ on legal texts have brought to light the tendency of the Nuzi scribes to standardise formats of routine documents such as contracts or wills useful for a consistent organisation of the various materials they had to manage. Certainly, in some cases, they studied earlier formats from the Old or Middle Babylonian schools, but the results are original and typical of the Nuzi area. This suggests somewhat lively scholar activities in scribal art.⁴⁷

The observations above lead to the conclusion that a form of E₂.DUB.BA.A of a higher academic level existed in the kingdom of Arrapha and that SMN 3180 was written there. This raises further questions about SMN 3180.

The first question is whether or not the text could have been a textbook. The hypothesis is not without parallels since such a text could have certainly been included in an advanced curriculum. School texts related to omens including the forerunners of omen series such as *Enūma Anu Enlil* certainly existed in the second millennium BCE;⁴⁸ school texts also occurred in the first millennium BCE, when the canonical version of *Enūma*

Anu Enlil is also attested as a school text, as the fragmentary text from Uruk W 20044, 62 demonstrates.⁴⁹

However, some evidence invites us to conclude otherwise. As pointed out above, the school texts from Nuzi refer to an initial phase of learning and were found in private houses in a particular area of the city.⁵⁰ SMN 3180 is an advanced level text and, more importantly, it was found in room D 6 of a building where there is no clear and precise information about its functions.⁵¹ However, the tablets found there are more compatible with documents from the palace administration than with private or academic texts, which makes it rather difficult to consider it a school text.

Another question concerns the possible location of an E₂.DUB.BA.A, the existence of which has been suggested in the present article and a few characteristics have tentatively been outlined. The archaeological data and the above mentioned considerations suggest that there was no E₂.DUB.BA.A in the city of Nuzi. At most, on the grounds of the few school texts found there, one might suggest that more experienced scribes tutored elementary pupils in their own homes.⁵² This would be compatible with the contents of the school texts, but would also exclude the existence of an important institution for scribal training. So, where could a school be located?

One of the towns of the kingdom is named Tupšar-riniwe, but the fact that its name refers to scribes (lit: “(the town) of the scribes”) does not make this place a preferential seat of a scribal school. The texts written there only show the presence of a few scribes such as Akiya son of Šumu-libši, Ariḫ-ḫamanna and his son Akkulenni, Amurru-Našir, or Ḫasip-tilla; there are no indications of a particular scribal activity. Another possible location for an E₂.DUB.BA.A is undoubtedly the city of Arrapha. This is a more sustainable hypothesis, considering that it was the capital of the kingdom. Arrapha was a somewhat prestigious town, with a long history; in the second part of the second millennium BCE it was

44 Cf. Hunger 1992.

45 Waterman 1930; Fales 1992: 86–87, 151–153.

46 Negri Scafa 1999: 71. Further studies on this line of research are still being carried out.

47 Obviously, this does not refer to SMN 3180, because it is a literary text. The activity of the Mesopotamian scribes on literary texts was different, since they were thought to be revealed by the antediluvian sages and the gods, and, therefore, should not be changed (cf. Lambert 1957: 9). For example, according to a catalogue from the library of Ashurbanipal (K. 2248) the author of the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* was the god Ea himself (cf. Lambert 1962: 59–77). Therefore, the scribal main editorial activities on these documents consisted in copying, excerpting and quoting texts from originals or former copies; this can explain the existence of different editions of *Enūma Anu Enlil* (cf. Weidner 1941–44: 172–195; 1954–56: 86–87).

48 Fincke 2012: 67.

49 Mauer 1987.

50 Of the seven published Nuzi school texts, five are located in Room P 313 and one in Room K 465: both rooms are in the southwest area of the town. The seventh published text was found in the Room S 151, in the eastern area of Nuzi. The association of the six texts found in the southwest area with the scribe Akip-tašenni son of Ḫui-tilla (RA 23, 1: 34–35; JEN 472: 29–30; JEN 636: 3–37; HSS 16, 409: 12–14) suggested the idea of a “scribal quarter”, but this suggestion is not supported by the other materials of the area (cf. Morrison 1987: 187).

51 Room D 6 belongs to the most unusual and puzzling building of the city. Seventeen rooms have been found in this building: among these, the long passage-like room D3–D6. Archaeological evidence shows that this ambience was modified during the time of its occupation. The building was of particular importance and shows traces of rebuilding and reuse, but no signs of habitation such as in living quarters. Some rooms seem to have been devoted to storage and safe keeping of goods. The archaeological evidence and the typology of the texts found in Room D 6 seem to support the theory that this building is related to the Palace of Nuzi. Cf. Starr 1937–1939: 242, 246–248, 251–253.

52 According to Lion 2015: 25, it is also possible that those tablets belonged to a scribe and are linked to his training period, or belonged to people introduced to the scribal art, without being professional scribes.

the capital of the kingdom of Arrapha, inhabited mainly by Hurrians and strictly related to the “kingdom of Mittani”⁵³ and would become an important centre in the Neo-Assyrian period.

Lastly, one wonders why the text was found in Nuzi. It could be suggested that someone connected to the palace administration collected this material for personal purposes.⁵⁴ Another theory, more intriguing, although equally unsustainable, is that the text was kept as a reference to consult the appropriate earthquake omen as needed. This idea is suggested by the seismicity of the area and the fact that there are archaeological traces of an earthquake detectable from the collapse of wall G 50 of the temple A.⁵⁵ But it is only an unverifiable playful suggestion.

Finally, it seems interesting to close the present article with a digression. In Mesopotamian texts, earthquakes

were linked to atmospheric phenomena,⁵⁶ including the wind. It is curious to note that many centuries after the end of the Mesopotamian world, the poet T. Lucretius Carus, in a different context, language and culture, pointed out in his *De rerum natura*, the connection between earthquakes and wind, stating that earthquakes are part of atmospheric phenomena.

Is it possible that in this poem the last echo of Mesopotamian culture is heard and through Greek and Hellenistic culture, came to be part of a different civilization? Works such as *Peri seismòn* or *Brontologion* by Hermes Trismegistos or Aristotele’s *Meteorologikà* in Greek literature seem to suggest a positive answer.

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⁵³ Mittani was a powerful kingdom during the 15th century BCE and the first half of the 14th century BCE; the state ruled over a large area, from the Upper Habur to the Middle Euphrates, from Eastern Anatolia to North-Western Syria. On its history, political organization and relations to other states and polities, cf. Wilhelm 1993: 286–296. The Nuzi texts offer some evidence of the relationship between the kingdom of Arrapha and the kingdom of Mittani, quoted as Ḫanigalbat, a geographical (or geo-political?) definition already used during the Old Babylonian period. In the Nuzi archives, Ḫanigalbat is mentioned at least fifty times: data are pertaining commercial, social, political and military relationships between the two kingdoms. In particular in the latest texts of Nuzi a relevant presence of Ḫanigalbatean military personnel is recorded. Cf. Zaccagnini 1979: 1–27.

⁵⁴ Or, according to J.C. Fincke, one scribe kept the tablet that he himself had written during his own school education for sentimental reasons (from personal communication with her; I thank her for this suggestion).

⁵⁵ Starr 1937: plate 33B.

⁵⁶ Certainly because earthquakes and thunder sound alike; moreover people involved in earthquakes often mentioned the presence of particular winds.

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Questions of text and image in ancient Sam'al (Zincirli)

Herbert Niehr

Abstract: The article discusses two reliefs from Sam'al (Zincirli) which convey a political message towards the population of the city and the kingdom, to the Aramaeans in Inner Syria and also towards the Assyrians. Thanks to the kings Kulamuwa and Bar-Rakkab who are obeying to their gods and to the Assyrian overlords the kingdom of Yādiya – Sam'al is enjoying peace and welfare. In order to propagate this message text and image are supplementing each other.

Keywords: Anatolia, Aramaeans, Assyrians, Ba'al-Hammon, Ba'al Harran, Bar-Rakkab, Gabbar, kingship, Kulamuwa, Moon-god of Harran, Panamuwa II, Sun-god, Sam'al, Syria, Yādiya, Zincirli.

1 Introduction¹

A glance at the map shows the location of Sam'al and its associated kingdom Yādiya² within the ancient world of northern Syria and southern Anatolia.³ The kingdom of Yādiya/Sam'al was surrounded by the kingdoms of Que in the west, Pattina/Unqi in the south-west, Bīt-Agusi in the south-east, Maraṣ/Gurgum in the north, and Kummuḥ and Karkamiš in the east. Yādiya/Sam'al was situated in the plain between the Amanus Mountains in the west and the Kurd Dagh (Kurt Dağı/Ġabal al-Akrād) in the east. The Amanus Mountains provided a connection to the Mediterranean, the Taurus Mountains, and the Cilician Gates. East there was a connection to the Euphrates region by way of the Kurd Dagh or the kingdoms of Bīt-Agusi and Bīt-Adini. This central position reflects the relevance that Yādiya/Sam'al held in the north-south connection between Maraṣ/Gurgum and Pattina/Unqi and in the west-east connection between Que and Syria.⁴

Taking all this together it becomes immediately clear that the culture of Yādiya/Sam'al underwent influences from Anatolia, Phoenicia, Inner Syria and Assyria.

The kingdom of Yādiya/Sam'al owes its existence to the takeover of this Luwian-populated area by Gabbar,

the founder of an Aramaean dynasty. Placed at the end of the 10th resp. at the beginning of the 9th century BC he is known from the fact that King Ḥayya of Yādiya/Sam'al (ca. 870–850 BC) was called *mār gabbāri* in inscriptions of King Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC) from the year 858 BC⁵ onward. Additionally, in his orthostat inscription King Kulamuwa (ca. 840–810 BC) calls Gabbar the first king of Yādiya (KAI 24: 1). All these inscriptions suggest that Gabbar was the founder of the dynasty of Sam'al.

At the same time Gabbar must also be considered the founder of the Aramaean city of Sam'al. By the time the Aramaeans arrived at the end of the 10th or at the beginning of the 9th century BC, this place had been uninhabited for several centuries.⁶

After several decades of independence of the kingdom the links to Assyria were strengthened when King Kulamuwa requested Assyrian support against his western neighbour Que (KAI 24). Since that time the kings of Yādiya/Sam'al, especially Panamuwa II (ca. 740–733 BC) and Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733–713/711 BC),⁷ were known as most loyal vassals to their Assyrian overlords.⁸

2 Two case studies from Sam'al (Zincirli)

The excavations at Zincirli, ancient Sam'al, began in 1888 under the direction of F. von Luschan. After five campaigns the excavations ended in 1902 and were only taken up in 2006 by an American team of the Ori-

1 A different version of this article was presented as a lecture at Stellenbosch University in March 2015. I am obliged to all participants for their discussion, esp. to Dirk Wicke (Frankfurt) for some pertinent information, to Virginia Herrmann (Tübingen) for her critical lecture of the manuscript and to Susanne Maier (Tübingen) for her help in editing the manuscript.

2 The proof furnished by F. Starke is decisive regarding the vocalisation of Yādiya. He states that in Luwian toponymy place and country names often appear as an adjective attribute (Starke 1997: 458.476f fn. 121). Thus Yādiya in the sense of „das yādäische (Land)“ („the Yadaean country“) is derived from the country name Yādi- (Starke 1999: 525).

3 For the following cf. the overviews in Lipiński 2000: 237f.; Niehr 2013: 185f.; Schloen 2014: 27–31.

4 Lemaire 1991: 268; Novák 2010: 399.

5 A.O. 102 ii 24, 83; cf. Grayson 1996: 18, 23; Yamada 2000: 110, 153, 243, 374, 378; Hawkins 2006–2008: 601.

6 Casana/Herrmann 2010: 69; Schloen 2014: 34.

7 Traditionally the reign of King Bar-Rakkab is dated from c. 733 to 713/711 BC. But 713/711 marks the first mention of an Assyrian governor of Sam'al which was perhaps already annexed to Assyria during the reign of King Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC); cf. on this discussion Radner 2006–2008: 62 no. 58 and Hawkins 2006–2008, but also Lipiński 2000: 246.

8 Cf. 2.2.

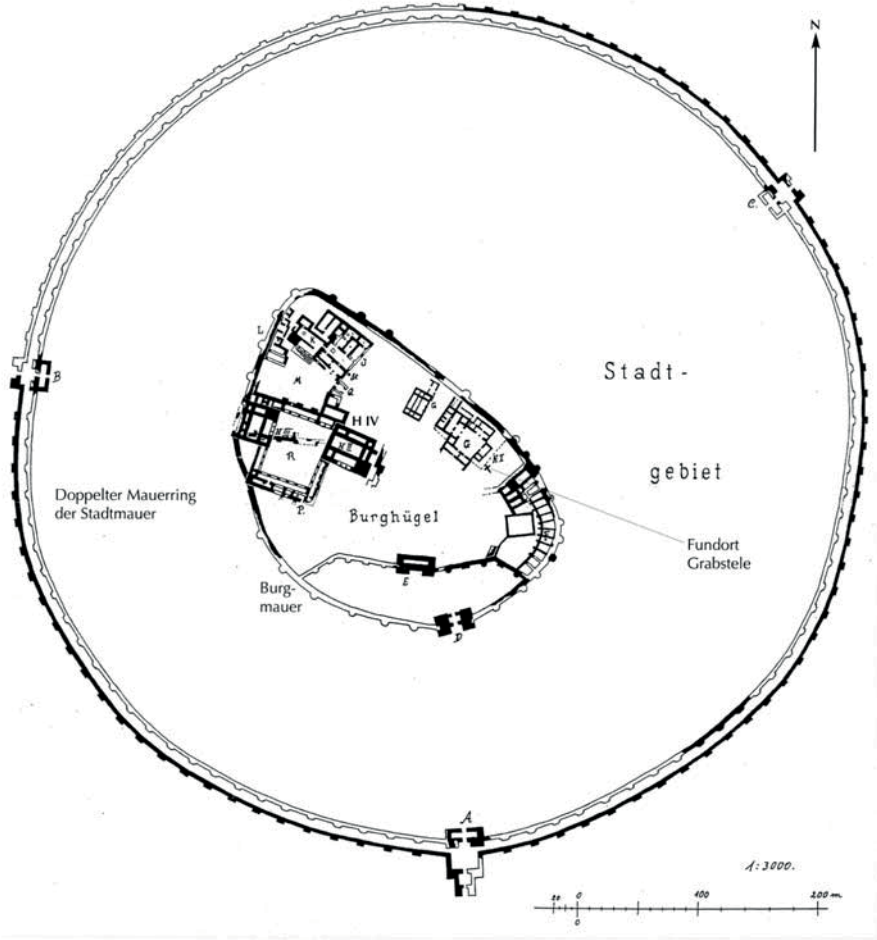


Fig. 1: The city of Sam'al (after Wartke 2005: 60 fig. 57).

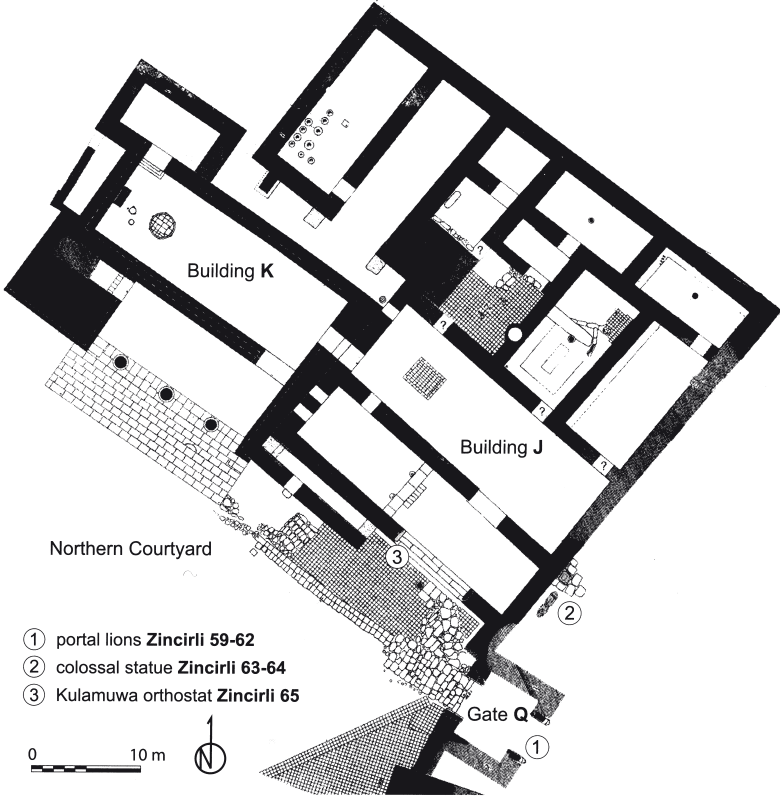


Fig. 2: Building J/K on the acropolis of Sam'al (after Gilibert 2011: 81 fig. 44).

ental Institute, Chicago, which was joined by the University of Tübingen in 2014.⁹

Ancient Sam'al (Fig. 1) puts us into the privileged situation to have several examples of text and image on one and the same object. So the question of the correlation of text and image arises, a question which is often discussed and answered in a controversial manner.

For this article two objects have been chosen in order to show different modes of the text-image-relationship:

1. The orthostat of King Kulamuwa showing a Phoenician inscription of 16 lines (KAI 24) and an image of the king and the divine symbols on its upper left side.
2. An orthostat of King Bar-Rakkab showing a Sam'alian inscription of two lines (KAI 218) and an audience scene on it.

2.1. The orthostat of King Kulamuwa

This famous orthostat with its Phoenician inscription (KAI 24) was found *in situ* in the entrance of building J on the acropolis of Sam'al (Zincirli) during the 5th campaign of excavations in 1902 and is now housed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin¹⁰ (Figs. 2–3). The inscription mentions as its author King Kulamuwa of Yādiya who reigned in the capital Sam'al during the years 840–810 BC.

The text

The inscription on the relief is in Phoenician.¹¹ The first five lines say:

1. I am Kulamuwa, son of Ḥayya[a].
2. Gabbar was king over Yādiya, but he accomplished nothing.
3. There was Banihu¹², but he accomplished nothing. Then there was my father Ḥayya, but he accomplished nothing. Then there was my brother
4. Ša'il, but he accomplished nothing. But I Kulamuwa, the son of Tamal¹³, what I accomplished
5. not (even) the predecessors accomplished.

According to these lines King Kulamuwa presents himself by establishing a gap between him and all the

preceding kings of Yādiya in order to demonstrate his achievements in the realm of foreign politics. These achievements become clear by his measures against the kings of the adjacent kingdoms to whom Kulamuwa addressed a clear message:

(5.) The house of my father was at the center of kings, power-

(6.) ful ones, and each reached out his hand to fight. But I was in the hands of the kings like a fire that devours

(7.) the beard and [like] a fire that devours the hand.

These few sentences show King Kulamuwa's resistance against threats from the neighbouring kingdoms. He expands even further on his largest foreign political threat, that of the King of the Danunians:

(7.) And the King of the Danu[n]ians was stronger than I. But I hired

(8.) against him the King of Ashur.

Already Kulamuwa's father, King Ḥayya, had submitted to Shalmaneser III in 858 BC.¹⁴ By 'hiring' the King of Aššur King Kulamuwa continued the vassalship to the Assyrians. This caused him to be loyal to the Assyrians, a topic which is not explicitly worked out in the inscription, but – as we shall see – very clearly in the iconography of the orthostat.

In its final part containing the curses the inscription mentions three gods:

(15.) And if anyone smashes this inscription may Ba'al-Šemed (the god) of Gabbar smash his head

(16.) and may Ba'al-Hammon (the god) of Banihu and Rakkab'el, the Lord of the House, smash his head.

The god Ba'al-Šemed who is named the god of Gabbar, the founder of the dynasty of Sam'al, is likely to be the god of the mace.¹⁵ The god Ba'al-Hammon who was the tutelary god of the second king of Sam'al, Banihu, was a local god of the region, the "Lord of the Amanus", who achieved a prominent status in Phoenician religion where his cult was propagated up to Carthage.¹⁶ Rakkab'el who is mentioned in the third place is less known; he can be understood as the divine charioteer.¹⁷

After this short overview of the content we still have to comment upon the choice of Phoenician for the inscription.¹⁸

At the time of King Kulamuwa Phoenician had the rank of both a prestigious and a diplomatic language which was not only used in Phoenicia proper but also in Inner Syria and in Southern Anatolia. This is clearly shown by the inscription of the prince-regent Yariri

⁹ Cf. Schloen 2014.

¹⁰ Inv: VA S 6579; for the orthostat (height 156 cm; width 130 cm) cf. von Luschan 1911a: 246; id. 1911b: 374–377; Jacoby 1911: 272f. and pl. IL; Orthmann 1971: 66f., 74f., 155–157, 545; Genge 1979: 41–43; Hawkins 1984: 78 no. 115; Czichon 1995; Gerlach 2000: 250–253; Wartke 2005: 35 fig. 38; Brown 2008; Gilibert 2011: 79–84; Wicke 2015: 575–577; for the inscription cf. esp. Donner/Röllig 1971–2002 II: 30–34; Gibson 1982: 30–39; Tropper 1993: 27–46, 153f.; Parker 1997: 78–83; Green 2010: 136–156.

¹¹ On the use of Phoenician in Sam'al cf. Niehr 2016: 311–314, 318–321.

¹² So the correct form, whereas in line 16 an error – *bmh* – occurs. Cf. esp. the facsimile in von Luschan 1911b: 375 fig. 273, the photos in Tropper 1993: 343 pl. 6–7 and the discussion in Tropper 1993: 32 and Lipiński 2000: 239f.

¹³ Cf. on this name Tropper 1993: 33 and Lipiński 2000: 242 who reads *tmn*.

¹⁴ See above fn. 5.

¹⁵ Cf. the discussion in Niehr 2004: 303f.; id. 2013: 189–191; id. 2014: 157f.

¹⁶ Cf. Xella 1991.

¹⁷ Cf. the discussion in Niehr 2004: 304f.; id. 2013: 190f.; id. 2014: 158–160.

¹⁸ Cf. for the following paragraph Niehr 2016: 318–321.

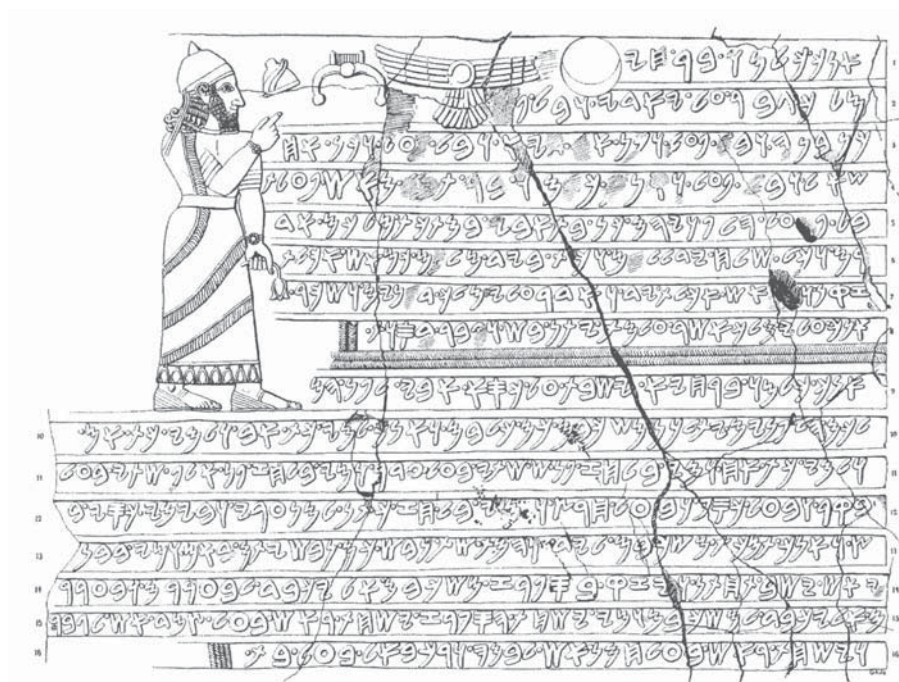


Fig. 3: The orthostat of King Kulamuwa (after von Luschan 1911b: 375).

from Karkamiš.¹⁹ So the inscription of King Kulamuwa addresses an audience from abroad.

It is also important to take into consideration the Luwian and Aramaic background of the inscription. The arrangement in lines and the protruding characters are influenced by Luwian inscriptions,²⁰ whereas the text shows several Aramaic loanwords.²¹

The relief

The relief on the upper left part of the orthostat shows King Kulamuwa who is depicted wearing a tiara similar to the Assyrian royal tiara, the headdress, the beard, the bracelets and the clothing of an Assyrian king (Schalgenwand no. 2).²² These garments which are “the effect of deliberate adaption”²³ make Kulamuwa similar to an Assyrian overlord. This is especially clear for the Schalgenwand no. 2 which was only worn by Assyrian kings.²⁴ So King Kulamuwa did not only elevate his own status over that of an ordinary Aramaean petty king, he also displayed his status as a loyal vassal to his Assyrian overlord.²⁵

This agrees further with the *ubāna-tarāšu*-speech gesture with which King Kulamuwa points to the gods who are represented by their divine symbols.²⁶ The ar-

range of the divine symbols on top of the orthostat also betrays an Assyrian influence.²⁷

As concerns these four symbols we can see from left to right a horned crown, a yoke, a winged sun disc and a moon.

As concerns the identity of these divine symbols there is a long discussion which has made clear that a convincing correlation of the four symbols with the three gods mentioned in the inscription cannot easily be made.²⁸ Nevertheless, the following proposals seem to be reasonable: It is most plausible to identify the horned crown with the Assyrian main god, Aššur,²⁹ and the yoke which holds the second position after Aššur with the tutelary god of the Sam’alian dynasty, Rakkab’el, the divine charioteer.³⁰ The symbols of the sun- and the moon-god represent the guarantees of justice and order.³¹

Conclusion

In her book on “Syro-Hittite monumental art and the archaeology of performance” A. Gilibert observes pertinently: “The figure of the ruler interacts with the text: the feet stand upon a text line, the head is at the level of the first line, his right hand raised in front of him, and the text-flow adapts to his silhouette.”³²

19 For the inscription see Hawkins 2000: 130–133 and Payne 2012: 84–87. For Yariri see Jasink 1995: 22–28 and Bryce 2012: 94–97.

20 Cf. Hawkins 1984: 78 no. 115; id. 2006–2008: 601; Gilibert 2011: 82.

21 Cf. Tropper 1993: 31, 33, 35, 41–45, 278f. and Gzella 2015: 73.

22 Cf. Orthmann 1971: 66; Magen 1986: 50, 92–94; Czichon 1995: 363–369; Gerlach 2000: 250–253 with pl. 11; Brown 2008: 343f.; Gilibert 2011: 82; Wicke 2015: 575f.

23 Wicke 2015: 576.

24 Cf. Magen 1986: 92–94; Braun-Holzinger 2009–2011: 130; Wicke 2015: 576.

25 Cf. esp. Magen 1986: 50; Gerlach 2000: 251f.; Wicke 2015: 576.

26 Cf. on this gesture Magen 1986: 45–55, 94–104 and Czichon 1995: 369–373. Magen interprets this gesture as “ein Sprachgestus in einer positiven Kommunikation zwischen Mensch

und Gott” (53). This contradicts the assumption of a Luwian influence according to which King Kulamuwa is represented in the form of the Luwian Ego-sign; contra Hawkins 1984: 78 and Gilibert 2011: 82.

27 Cf. Orthmann 1971: 66.

28 Cf. e.g., Barnett 1964; Tropper 1993: 24–26; Mayer 1995; Niehr 2004: 310f.

29 So Mayer 1995: 352 and cf. also the previous discussion in Donner 1955: 78 and Barnett 1964: 68f. who both, however, prefer to see here Hadad instead of Aššur.

30 Cf. Landsberger 1948: 45f.; Mayer 1995: 352; Niehr 2004: 310f. For the god Rakkab’el cf. above fn. 17.

31 Cf. on these two deities Theuer 2000 and Kutter 2008.

32 Gilibert 2011: 82.



Fig. 4: King Bar-Rakkab, the Moon-god of Harran and his scribe (after Niehr 2014: pl. III).

The inscription is divided into two parts by a double line in rope-form. Each of these two parts starts with the self-presentation: “I am Kulamuwa”. Part I (lines 1–8) deals with matters of foreign policy, whereas part II (lines 9–16) deals with domestic affairs.

So the figure of the king who has his head on the level of lines 1–2 and his feet on the level of line 9 is uniting in his body both realms of politics.

This interaction of text and image continues with the deities in the inscription and the divine symbols the king is pointing at in the *ubāna-tarāšu*-speech gesture. But here, one has to look closer.

For the interpretation it has to be taken seriously that the text mentions only three gods, Ba'al Šemed, Ba'al Hammon and Rakkab'el (KAI 24: 15–16), and not four gods as one could expect from iconography. So a simple correlation or even an equation with the four divine symbols cannot be reached. This is not only the case for numerical reasons but also because Aššur, the sun-god and the moon-god whose symbols are depicted on the orthostat do not appear in the inscription.³³

From the analysis of the iconography it became clear that the gods Aššur and Rakkab'el are represented here together with the sun-god and the moon-god. As concerns the whole scene W. Mayer has brought forward a pertinent interpretation according to which the king as representative of his dynastic god, Rakkab'el (yoke), has concluded a vassal treaty with Aššur (horned crown), a

treaty which is guaranteed by the sun-god (winged sun-disc) and the moon-god (crescent).³⁴

These insights from text and image can be underlined by a short reflection of the placement of the orthostat. As already mentioned it was found during the 5th campaign of excavations in 1902 *in situ* in the entrance of building J on the acropolis of Sam'al³⁵ (Fig. 2). So in its original place the orthostat could be seen by visitors to the palace, among whom were the king's servants, members of the upper class and high-ranking visitors from abroad, last but not least also visitors from Assyria.

On the right side of the staircase there was an aniconic and anepigraphic basalt orthostat which had never been completed.³⁶

2.2. The orthostat with the Moon-god of Harran, King Bar-Rakkab and his scribe

This orthostat was found *in situ* during the 4th campaign in 1894 in the eastern part of the “Nördlicher Hallenbau” leading to *hilani IV*³⁷ (Figs. 4–5) and it is now housed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin.³⁸

³³ Cf. already Barnett 1964: 66.

³⁴ Mayer 1995: 352.

³⁵ Cf. above the literature cited in fn. 10.

³⁶ Cf. von Luschan 1911b: 374f. with pl. IL and LII.

³⁷ Cf. Koldewey 1898: 159–171; von Luschan 1911b: 345–349.

³⁸ Inv: VA 2817; for the orthostat (height 113 cm; width 115 cm) cf. e.g., Orthmann 1971: 63f., 292, 545; Genge 1979: 121; Hawkins 1984: 83f. no. 121; Gilibert 2011: 85f., 212 no. 66; for the inscription cf. Donner/Röllig 1971–2002 Vol. 2: 236f.; Gibson 1975: 93; Tropper 1993: 145f., 164.

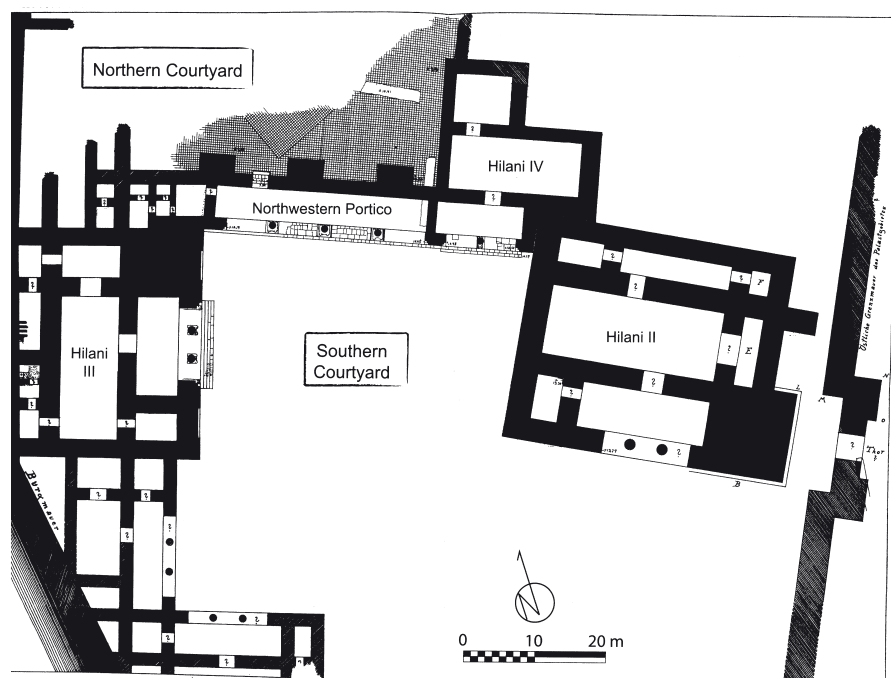


Fig. 5: The Southwestern Complex with *hilani* IV (after Gilibert 2011: 84 fig. 46).

The text

The inscription on this orthostat is small and simple:

I am Bar-Rakkab, son of Panamuwa. My Lord is Ba'al Harran. (KAI 218)

The order of these two sentences written to both sides of the Moon-god-symbol can be arranged differently. In most publications the editors start with the sentence to the right: "My Lord is Ba'al Harran."³⁹ This order is quite understandable because the West Semitic scripts are sinistroverse. Looking at the arrangement of the sentences one gets the impression that they do not frame the divine symbol precisely. One sentence illustrates the divine symbol, the other one is a self-presentation of the king.

In accordance with all other royal inscriptions from Sam'al and also because the king as the main human agent is speaking the introductory formula "I am Bar-Rakkab, son of Panamuwa" should be expected to be first; only then the religious message should follow.⁴⁰

This message is clear but nevertheless deserves some words of explication, especially because in the whole epigraphic corpus from Sam'al from which 23 inscriptions are published and some more are still unpublished⁴¹ the Moon-god of Harran is never mentioned.

Each of the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria and Anatolia witnesses the worship of the moon-god. In the Aramaic speaking kingdoms the moon-god was called Šahr; he is also depicted on some reliefs.⁴² Contrary to what has been claimed for the case of our relief the Moon-god of Harran does not replace the dynastic god Rakkab'el. King Bar-Rakkab mentions him in KAI 216: 5

and in B4: 5.⁴³ Furthermore, King Bar-Rakkab carries the memory of him in his personal name.

The Moon-god of Harran is known in the Assyrian and also in the Aramaean realm where he was invoked as the god who guaranteed oaths and treaties. It does not come as a surprise that King Bar-Rakkab who was most loyal to the Assyrians called him "My Lord."

The relief

This shows on the left King Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al sitting on his throne, on the right a scribe with his writing utensils in his left hand and a diptych⁴⁴ under his arm standing in attendance before the king, and in the center the symbol of the Moon-god of Harran is represented.

The orthostat was standing on the right (eastern) side of the stairs which led into the *hilani* IV. This *hilani* IV served according to some weights and counting stones which have been found there as an administrative center⁴⁵ (Fig. 5).

For the interpretation of the orthostat it is important to see that on the left (western) side of this staircase another orthostat was standing. This heavily damaged orthostat shows a banquet-scene with King Bar-Rakkab (Fig. 6). Some fragments are kept in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin,⁴⁶ another one in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul.⁴⁷ It was J. Voos who was able to join the pieces in a convincing manner.⁴⁸ Due to

39 Cf. e.g., Donner/Röllig 1971–2002 Vol. 2: 237; Gibson 1975: 93; Tropper 1993: 164.

40 Cf. Burnett/Keel 1998: 83; Niehr 2014: 172.

41 Cf. Niehr 2016: 309–310.

42 Cf. Krebernik 1993–1997: 364.

43 For B4 cf. Tropper 1993: 164.

44 For details of the writing utensils and the diptych cf. Seidl 2007; Reade 2012.

45 Cf. Pucci 2008: 6f.; Gilibert 2011: 87.

46 Inv S 6059; 6061; 6585; 6587.

47 Inv AOM Istanbul 7797.

48 Voos 1985: 71–86. Cf. also Wartke 2005: 88 fig. 99; Gilibert 2011: 86–88, 213f. nos. 69 and 70.

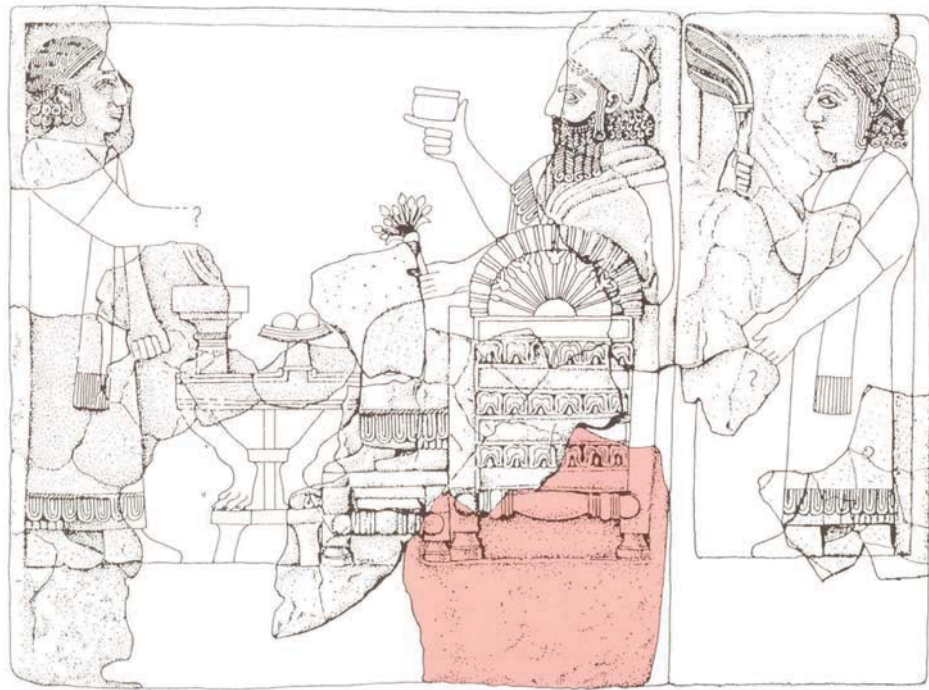


Fig. 6: Banquet orthostat of King Bar-Rakkab (after Wartke 2005: 88 fig. 99).

its destruction it is not clear whether this orthostat had in its center an inscription or not.

As concerns the provenance of this orthostat one has to see that the fragments are not mentioned in the excavation reports, they are only known from the museums in Berlin and Istanbul. Their ascription to the “Nördlicher Hallenbau” is nevertheless very likely.⁴⁹ Both reliefs were accompanied by processions of courtiers.

These two images of King Bar-Rakkab open our eyes to see an important difference between the two royal representations flanking the entrance into the royal palace. The image on the right (eastern) side shows King Bar-Rakkab sitting on a throne in Assyrian style, whereas the opposite relief shows him to be seated on a Syrian throne.⁵⁰ So two different but complementing aspects of an ideal royal rule become visible: The loyal king and the successful king.

Conclusion

Concentrating on the orthostat with the inscription (KAI 218) on the right (eastern) side of the stairs we have to ask how inscription and image complement each other.

The orthostat is usually labelled as “King Bar-Rakkab and his scribe”.⁵¹ Such a label or headline is certainly missing the point because hereby the important Moon-god of Harran who shows up in the upper center of the scene and who is also mentioned in the inscription is completely neglected.

In order to approach the message of this scene in an appropriate manner one has to take the whole composition into consideration. In the realm of Near Eastern archaeology there are some attempts to find out the

composition of reliefs and statues and to ask for the compositional axes which give a structure to the scene.⁵²

The compositional axes can be drawn in the following manner: The central point of the whole scene is symbol of the Moon-god of Harran which is situated in the middle between the two human beings, the king on the left and the scribe on the right. Both persons are pointing with their right hands to this lunar symbol in the center. These acts are, however, slightly different from each other. The king is raising his whole palm, whereas the scribe shows his fist. So the king seems to be represented as speaking and underlining his argumentation with his right hand.⁵³ The scribe is waiting to give an obeying answer.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the scribe on the right is looking towards the king, esp. to his mouth, whereas the king on the left is looking towards the symbol of the Moon-god of Harran.

Also important are the dimensions of the figures in the image. The king who is sitting on his throne is in accordance with Ancient Near Eastern art clearly taller than the scribe. The scribe is standing on a lower level than the king’s throne.

Returning now to the king we see that the king’s head is on the same level as the symbol of the Moon-god of Harran and it is the king who is speaking the two sentences written to the right and to the left of the Moon-god.

Now the question arises of how the scribe can be adequately integrated into this picture? It is clear that we are facing an audience scene. In this context M. Livera-

49 Cf. Orthmann 1971: 545–547 with plan 10; Voos 1985: 71, 73–76.

50 Cf. Seidl 2000: 94–96.

51 Cf. e.g., Gilibert 2011: 85.

52 Cf. e.g., Bachmann 1996; Bonatz 2000: 5–12, 24–46; Elsen-Novák/Novák 2006: 138–140.

53 Cf. a similar scene from the Sargonic period in Reade 2012: 703 fig. 6.

54 Contra Magen 1986: 49 I do not think that the scribe is pointing to the king in an *ubāna-tarāšu*-gesture.

ni has recently shown that the audience of the Assyrian royal messages “can be imagined as being set according to concentric belts. [...] The innermost belt is the political and administrative leading elite, whose members are literate, can have access to the very wording of the texts, and are the only ones to do that, the only ones able to understand the subtleness of the message and its implications. On the one side the king is in need of convincing the members of this belt with a maximum of detail, about the correctness of his behaviour; on the other side the members of the elite want to be informed in detail about reasons and perspectives of the political actions at large. The practical authors of the texts (the top scribes) belong to this belt, so that their basic purpose can be defined as one of self-indoctrination of the scribal elite.”⁵⁵

The relief with its inscription and the representation of the Moon-god of Harran is a symbol of the political order which is given by the gods and realized by the king who was the mediator between the divine realm and the human world. The king had access to the divine realm and the scribe had access to the king. Furthermore, the Moon-god of Harran was ascribed an important role in swearing oaths and concluding contracts and international treaties.⁵⁶ That is why U. Seidl interprets the two tassels suspended left and right between the standard and the crescent moon as pictorial representation of the Assyrian term *riksu* (“contract”; “treaty”) which is derived from the verb *rakāsu* (“to bind”).⁵⁷

So in this relief King Bar-Rakkab also alludes to his position as a loyal vassal of the Assyrians who keeps the treaties with the Assyrians and the oaths sworn to them. Thus the orthostat is linking up with the explicit messages of King Bar-Rakkab’s loyalty in the inscriptions KAI 216, 217 and B4.

This vassalship made Bar-Rakkab a successful king thanks to the support by the Assyrians. This topic is present in the banquet relief opposite our orthostat which shows the king celebrating a banquet,⁵⁸ a cult,⁵⁹ a feast⁶⁰ or a victory.⁶¹ Unfortunately the central part of this relief is missing. J. Voos had assumed that the divine symbols of the gods of the pantheon of Sam’al had been represented here.⁶²

So to both sides of the stairs leading into the palace two corresponding scenes were to be seen: On the right side King Bar-Rakkab administering justice and order an invoking the Moon-god of Harran as guarantee of treaties and on the left side the same king celebrating a feast.

3 Conclusions: Text and image in Sam’al

From the preceding paragraphs some general and some detailed conclusions can be drawn.

1. As concerns the general relation of text and image one has to acknowledge that texts and images are entities of their own. So in a first approach they have to be deciphered independently from each other. Only in a second step the question comes up how a relation between these two entities can be made out. That there was such a relation can already been assumed because text and image were fixed on one and the same object, e.g. an orthostat or a relief. So the question must be whether and how text and image are standing in a complementing relationship and are interacting with each other.
2. In the case of King Kulamuwa’s orthostat the combining elements between text and image are King Kulamuwa and the symbols of the gods. Both are represented in textual and iconographic form. The alliance with Assyria expressed in the inscription is also visualized in the image. In the case of the second object which shows the Moon-god, King Bar-Rakkab and his scribe things are more complex. The iconography puts the Moon-god in the center and places King Bar-Rakkab to his right and the scribe to his left. The inscription only mentions the king and the god; here the scribe is missing. As we saw before the relief with its inscription and the representation of the Moon-god of Harran is a symbol of the political order which is given by the gods and realized by the king. In order to establish a just rule also scribes were needed. They even belonged to the inner circle of audience at the royal court. So a picture of the world order is shown to us.
3. In both cases it was evident that the archaeological context of the two orthostats had to be taken into consideration in order to achieve a proper understanding of text and image. King Kulamuwa’s orthostat was erected at the entrance of building J. Before a visitor came to this entrance he had already passed the statue of the founder of the dynasty, King Gabbar. But then he came across King Kulamuwa’s relief with its inscription in Phoenician which due to its language could be read by diplomats and visitors from outside the kingdom. King Bar-Rakkab’s orthostat was also erected at the entrance of a palace (*hilani* IV). Everybody who came could easily decipher the message of loyalty to the Assyrians and recognize the king as the mediator between the divine and the human world. This orthostat was matched by another one situated on the opposite side of this entrance showing the king celebrating a feast.

55 Liverani 2014: 374.

56 Cf. on this god Niehr 2014: 132–134 and the bibliography *ibid.* fn. 24; on the Moon-god of Harran in Sam’al cf. *ibid.* 172.

57 Seidl 2000: 93f.

58 So Orthmann 1971: 462.

59 So Voos 1985: 84–86.

60 So Seidl 2000: 96.

61 So Bernett/Keel 1998: 84 fn. 375.

62 Cf. Voos 1985: 84 fn. 50.

4. In the preceding pages only two examples from the royal court of Sam'al were analyzed. One could add more examples which would give further insights into the relation of text and image in Sam'al. This has been demonstrated recently by J. Patrier in an article on the Kuttamuwa stele which shows

precisely how text and image at the same time match and differ in this object.⁶³

5. All in all, although text and image have to be read and decoded independently of each other, there is also a common denominator of text and image. One could also say that text and image are supplementing each other.

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⁶³ Cf. Patrier 2015.

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Dolmens in the Amuq Plain: Kızılkaya survey

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Abstract: Kızılkaya lies in the northeast of the Amuq Plain on top of a high rocky hill. Approximately 300 dolmen can be traced there. Our research at Kızılkaya Tepesi and related sites in the vicinity such as the mounds of Temel Kızılkaya, Tell Kızılkaya and Akpınar as well as some caves shows that the site reveal an uninterrupted time range from presumably the Paleolithic and Chalcolithic to Islamic period. Dolmens have a rectangular plan and consist of large and rough stones. It is difficult to date Kızılkaya dolmens at this stage, because of the singularity of the phenomena in Anatolia and the lack of confirmed comparisons with datable material. Hence, many questions are still unanswered, such as that of chronology, origin, cultural links etc. Dolmens are to be found in many parts of the world in different periods and a wide range of varieties in typological appearance. In modern Turkey they can be found in two distinct regions: Thracia in the northwest in the European part of the country and basically in the Amuq-Islahiye plains of Northern Levant in the south. The Thracian examples belong to a group of dolmens attested throughout the Balkans and Eastern Europe, whereas the Amuq Plain examples are associated with the Levantine and Eastern Mediterranean group, dating generally into the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age.

Keywords: Kızılkaya, Antakya, dolmen, Amuq.

The Kızılkaya survey under the direction of the present author aims to investigate the site with its dolmens on top of the hills and the settlements closeby. As pottery sherds indicate, the Kızılkaya hill was uninterruptedly occupied most likely from Paleolithic and latest from Chalcolithic to the Islamic period. Hence it stands out from the settlement system of the entire Amuq Plain, where most sites are mounds. The hill is situated in the northeast of Amuq Plain, on the westernmost extremity of Kurt Mountains bounding the Amuq Plain on the east. Kızılkaya is also located between the valleys of Afrin and Muratpaşa, two tributaries to the former Amik Lake together with Karasu River (**Fig. 1**).

The first research here was conducted by R.J. Braidwood in 1933–1938 as part of his Amuq Plain survey. He recognized the mounds of Tell Kızılkaya (AS 36) and Akpınar (AS 52) nearby and downhill the Kızılkaya Tepesi. Wide-range surveys initiated in 1995 by K.A. Yener are still ongoing (Amuq Valley Regional Project AVRPP) discovered the dolmens of Kızılkaya Tepesi for the first time. Within the frame of this project, B. Yükmén investigated the dolmens between the 1998 and 2002.

This research has been continued in the present survey by the author. The systematic and documentation system follows the pattern of Yener's project:

Kızılkaya Tepesi (AS 207), mostly remarkable for the dolmens on its top, was obviously related to the settlements in the plain (**Figs. 2–5, 7**). Temel Kızılkaya (AS

208), Tell Kızılkaya (AS 36) and Akpınar (AS 52) mounds were hence investigated in the season of 2014.

Kızılkaya Tepesi (AS 207) is a high rocky hill that extends 4.3 km long and 0.7 km wide in the northwest-southeast direction (**Figs. 2–4, 7**). The dolmens are found almost all over the hill, but especially on the summit. So far, a total number of 292 monuments have been identified.

The dolmens were generally built up with two unworked large rectangular monolithic slabs standing vertically and another one as cover lying on their top (**Figs. 3, 5–6**). Most of the examples are rather simple and of modest size. Their average height is about 1–1.5 m with the the ceiling slab of 1 × 2 m. Such small dolmens were usually built with two vertical slabs on and one on the top. It is difficult to attain a clear date for the time being, since no ceramic or other artifacts can be traced in their context.

Kızılkaya and the sites in its vicinity were presumably part of the same settlement system (**Figs. 2, 4–5, 7**). The dolmens might have been the markers of tombs of a necropole on top of Kızılkaya Tepesi (AS 207), further monumental buildings, caves and rock-cut tombs can be localized on Temel Kızılkaya (AS 208) at the southern end of Kızılkaya Tepesi. Tell Kızılkaya (AS 36) was presumably the settlement at southern slope of the hill. This site was occupied throughout a rather long time-span from the Chalcolithic to the Islamic period. Fur-

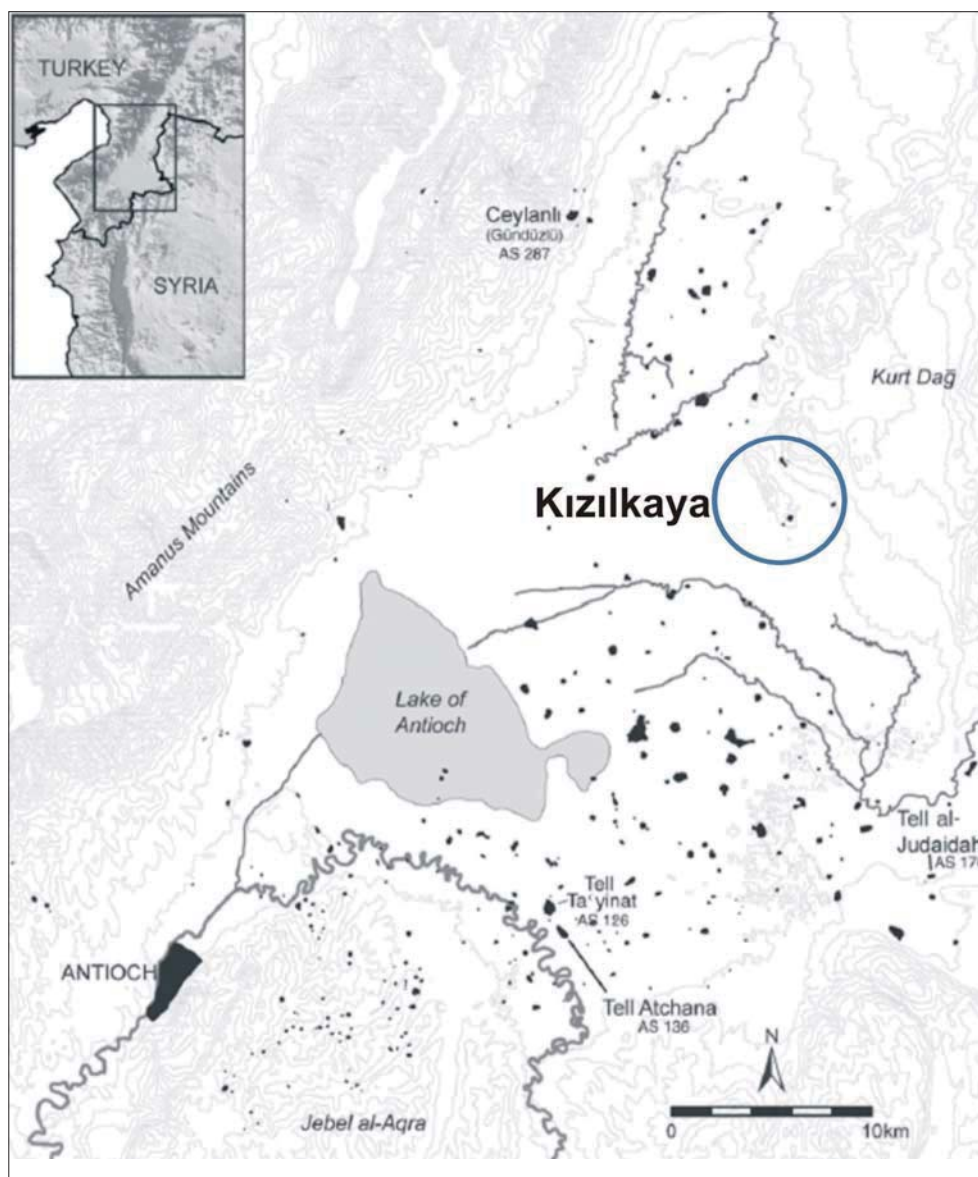


Fig. 1: Amuq Plain and survey area (after Yener 2005: Fig. 2.1).

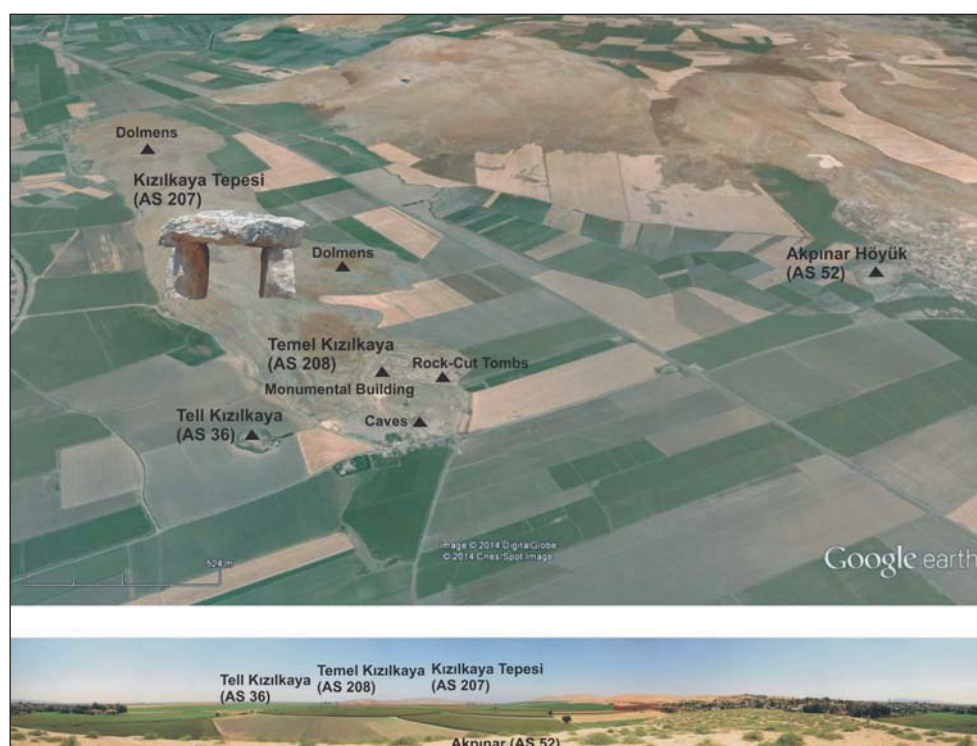


Fig. 2: Kızılkaya Tepesi and its vicinity (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo: B. Kocamaz).



Fig. 3: Kızılkaya Tepesi dolmen (photo: B. Kocamaz).



Fig. 4: Kızılkaya Tepesi (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo: B. Kocamaz).



Fig. 5: Kızılkaya Tepesi dolmen (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo: B. Kocamaz).

thermore, there are also some traces of palaeolithic occupation nearby.

As mentioned, Temel Kızılkaya (AS 208) is located at the southernmost extremity of Kızılkaya Tepesi (Figs. 2, 4–5, 7–8). Wall remains that may belong to a monumental structure are attested on the summit of this rocky hill next to the plain. The rectangular structure measures 60×15 m in its present condition. Potsherds of the Early Bronze Age and – in higher quantity – of the Middle Bronze Age have been identified in the area. On the eastern foot of the hill were potsherds of Late Chal-

colithic period. Starting at the eastern limit of the structure, stretching downhill to the south and southeast are numerous rock tombs, cisterns and caves. On the south foot of the hill, caves were discovered that contained numerous fragments of silex tools. Some of them date back to the Paleolithic.

Tell Kızılkaya (AS 36–36D) southeast of Kızılkaya Tepesi (Figs. 2, 5, 7) was settled from the Late Chalcolithic until the Islamic period as reflected by the surface ceramic material.

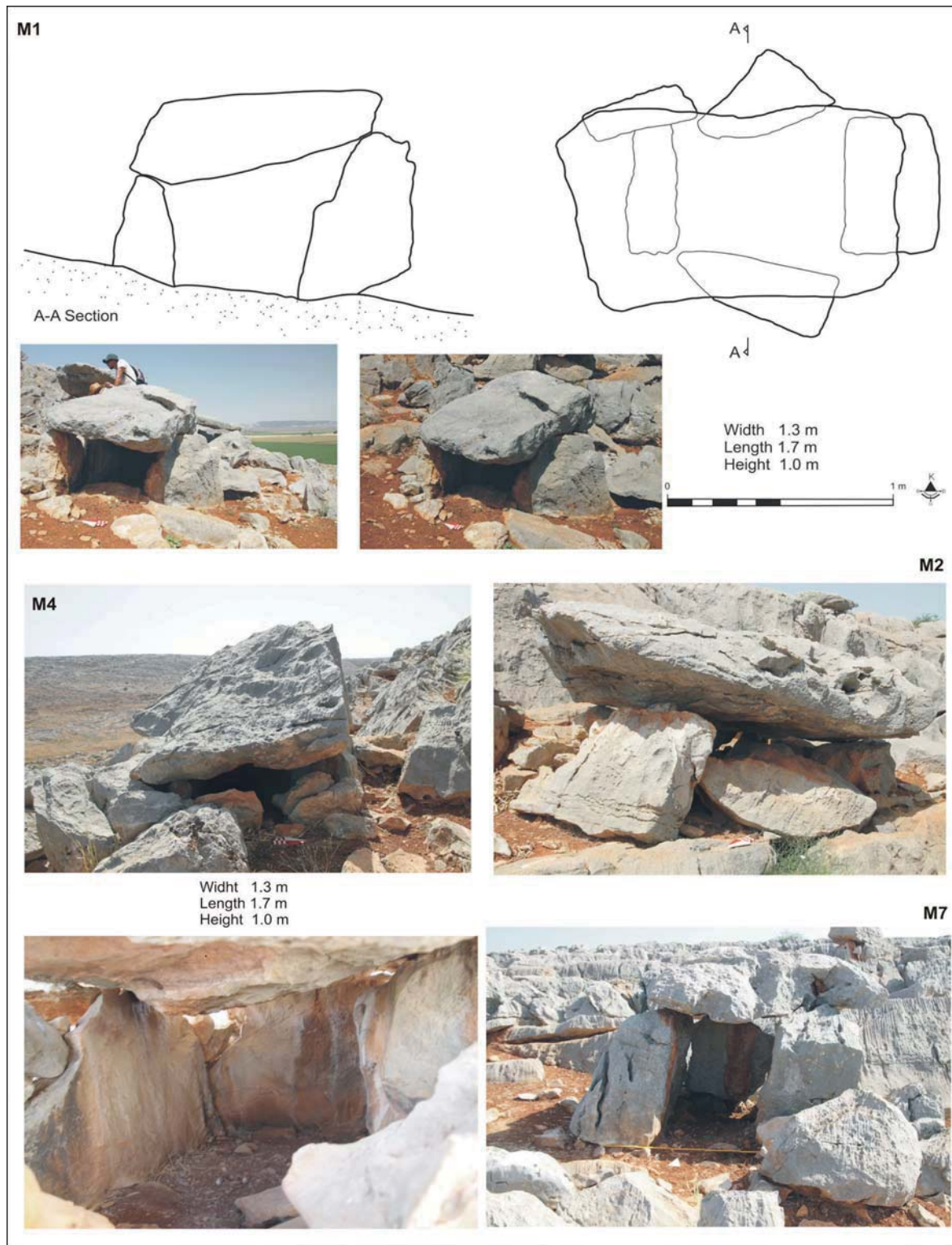


Fig. 6: Dolmens at Kızılkaya Tepesi (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo and drawing: B. Kocamaz, C. Karataş).

Akpınar Mound (AS 52) is located to the east of Kızılkaya Tepesi, at the point where the Amuq Plain meets the foot of the Mt. Kurt in the east (Fig. 2). The site was inhabited from the Chalcolithic period through the Ottoman period.

In conclusion, it is difficult to attain a clear date of Kızılkaya dolmens for the time being. No evidence was attested to gain a precise dating. Lack of excavations of this culture in the region and that we are at the beginning step of our research leave many questions regarding the chronology, origins, and cultural connections

at this stage. However, some more dolmen fields have been discovered in the northeast part of Amuq and in the Islahiye Plains. Thus it seems to have been a characteristic phenomenon of this region at a certain point.

Dolmens are attested almost all over the world at various dates starting from the Neolithic period. In Turkey, they are found in Thrace in high frequency, followed by Amuq and Islahiye plains (Fig. 9). Thracian dolmens are usually ascribed a link with the Balkans and East Europe whereas Amuq and Islahiye plains dolmens with those of the East Mediterranean-Levant.



Fig. 7: Kızılkaya Tepesi (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo: B. Kocamaz).



Fig. 8: Temel Kızılkaya monumental building (compilation: A. Özfirat; photo: B. Kocamaz).



Fig. 9: Dolmens of Turkey (compilation: A. Özfirat; drawing: B. Kocamaz).

The Levantine dolmens are usually dated to the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages. However, each site may have sub-traditions and connections according to their dates and geography with regards to dolmens and related burial tradition, which display a variety over a long time range.

Acknowledgements: We would like here to thank warmly Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate for Monuments and Museums for giving us permission to and support. The survey also was supported by the Mustafa Kemal University. Our thanks also goes to Prof. Dr. Aslıhan Yener for her kind help.

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Textes et images à Nuzi

Le cas du scribe Iṭḫ-āpīḫe fils de Taya

Véronique Pataï

Abstract : In the various publications of tablets, the impression of seals are almost never represented. The studies conducted by E. Porada (1947) and D. Stein (1987: 225–320 ; ead. 1993a ; ead. 1993b) are the most complete studies concerning the seals of Nuzi. The prosopographic study of the scribes from the archive of ʿTulpun-naya highlighted the presence of many homonym scribes that I had to distinguish thanks to several criterias of comparison such as the contacts of the scribes (employers, witnesses, judges), the cities where they were active, their writing styles or even the nature of their written texts. My stay at the Oriental Institute of Chicago, allowed me to identify unpublished seals and to integrate the sigillographic criteria in my research. These criteria turned out to be a very precious tool in the identification of homonymous scribes. This paper concerns the following scribes: Iṭḫ-āpīḫe without patronym (72 texts); Iṭḫ-āpīḫe son of Taya (64 texts) and Iṭḫ-āpīḫe son of Turari (1 text: JEN 239). Thanks to the observation of the seal impressions, 26 tablets from the 48 written by Iṭḫ-āpīḫe could be attributed to the son of Taya, because they share a common seal with the scribe of JEN 239, which is sometimes still credited to Iṭḫ-āpīḫe son of Turari. This paper highlights also the practice of sharing seals among individuals.

Keywords : Nuzi, scribe, seal impressions.

La ville de Nuzi, qui correspond au site actuel de Yorgān-tappe (Yorghān Tepe), dans le Kurdistan irakien, faisait partie aux 15^{ème} et 14^{ème} s. av. J.-C. du royaume d'Ar-rāḫe. La connaissance que nous avons de ce royaume est essentiellement fondée sur la documentation découverte sur place. Celle-ci comprend près de 6 000 tablettes, réparties notamment entre les petites archives familiales, les archives de Teḫip-Tilla et de ses fils, celles du prince Šilwa-Teššup et les archives du palais (Mayer 1978 ; Stein 1993a et ead. 1993b ; Pedersen 1998 : 15–32 ; Lion 1999 : 35–62 ; Abrahāmi/Lion 2012b : 1–7). Cette documentation a été produite par près de 260 scribes, mais il est probable qu'ils aient été plus nombreux, car la majorité des homonymes n'ont pas été comptabilisés (Negri-Scafa 2015 : 345). Dans certains cas cependant, l'indication de leur patronyme permet de les distinguer les uns des autres et parfois même d'identifier des familles sur plusieurs générations.

En 1962, E.R. Lacheman identifie ainsi les familles de scribes de Lu-nanna, Inb-adad et Apil-Sîn (Lacheman 1962 : 236–238). Cette dernière famille, l'une des plus importantes de Nuzi, a à plusieurs reprises fait l'objet de réactualisations, notamment par G. Wilhelm en 1970, puis par J.C. Fincke en 2015¹. Cette famille est très largement représentée dans le corpus de Nuzi, car elle est active pendant toute la durée du site, sur près

de cinq générations, et elle a écrit près de 25 % des tablettes trouvées à Nuzi (Friedman 1987 : 111).

Dans les différentes publications des tablettes, les empreintes de sceaux sont simplement signalées et ne sont presque jamais publiées². E. Porada a été l'une des premières à révéler l'importance d'une étude sigillographique des tablettes de Nuzi à travers la recherche qu'elle a menée sur près d'une centaine de tablettes concernant quatre générations de la famille de Teḫip-Tilla fils de Puḫi-šenni (Porada 1947 : 3). Lorsque D. Stein étudie les empreintes de sceaux des tablettes de la collection babylonienne de Yale, elle souligne également leur importance pour la restitution des noms incomplets et l'identification du scribe et des utilisateurs de sceaux qui ne sont pas associées à une suscription (Stein 1987 : 232–235).

Dans le cadre de ma thèse sur les scribes au service de ʿTulpun-naya à Nuzi, j'ai identifié le corpus de chacun d'eux en utilisant les répertoires onomastiques de

1 Wilhelm 1970 : 10 et Fincke 2015 : 556.

2 L'absence d'indication des empreintes de sceau concerne l'ensemble des JEN en dehors de JEN 6 et 7, l'ensemble des HSS sauf HSS 14 et l'ensemble des EN+ RA (n^{os} 15, 23, 28, 35, 36 et 56). En revanche, G.G.W. Müller (1999), relève systématiquement la présence des sceaux et les intègre dans son index. D'autres études publient également les empreintes de sceaux ou bien des photographies des tablettes parmi lesquelles l'étude de l'archive de la famille de Pula-ḫali menées par B. Lion (2001) en collaboration avec D. Stein pour l'étude des sceaux des tablettes issues de cette archive.

a) Ith-apihe sans patronyme

Inventaire (48)	Tablettes
Tablettes consultées (34)	JEN 4, 15, 25, 37, 41, 45, 54, 55, 80, 217, 236, 249, 251, 293, 405, 407, 419, 423, 426, 454, 464, 583, 590, 611, 687, 700, 705, 714, 717, 724, 844, 914, 925, 928
Tablettes non consultées (2)	BM 81 509, JEN 34
Sceau non identifiable (12)	JEN 18, 30, 100, 261, 267, 400, 461, 719, 767, 777, 905, 917

b) Ith-apihe fils de Taya

Inventaire (49)	Tablettes
Tablettes consultées (41)	HSS 5/61a, JEN 12, 14, 22, 57, 95, 155, 196, 206, 209, 224, 246, 274, 409, 416, 420, 421, 425, 455, 483, 554, 584, 585, 586, 588, 686, 694, 703, 709, 710, 720, 721, 722, 723, 725, 726, 797, 799, 809, 926, 932
Tablettes non consultées (4)	JEN 3, 716, BM 82 614 et RA 28/1
Sceau non identifiable (4)	JEN 213, 257, 813, 924

c) Ith-apihe fils de Turari

Inventaire (1)	Tablettes
Tablette consultée (1)	JEN 239

Fig. 1 : Tablettes scellées par les scribes Ith-apihe.

a. http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P393549

I. Gelb et son équipe, complétés plus tard par E. Cassin et J.J. Glassner, ainsi que les index des différentes études menées sur les petites archives³. Cette recherche a mis en évidence la présence de nombreux scribes homonymes qu'il a fallu que je distingue des scribes de ^fTulpun-naya afin de délimiter avec exactitude leurs corpus de textes. Pour ce travail, j'ai mis en place des critères de comparaison tels que l'entourage des scribes (commanditaires, témoins, juges), les villes où ils interviennent, leurs styles rédactionnels ou encore la nature des textes rédigés. Mon séjour à l'Oriental Institute de Chicago m'a permis d'intégrer le critère sigillographique à mes recherches⁴. Ce critère s'est révélé être

un outil très précieux notamment dans l'identification des scribes qui portent le nom d'Ith-apihe. Ainsi, j'ai pu consulter près de 315 tablettes : certains des sceaux y figurant étaient déjà répertoriés par E. Porada et D. Stein ; près d'une trentaine d'autres, utilisés par les scribes travaillant pour ^fTulpun-naya sont inédits⁵.

1 Ith-apihe sans patronyme et ses deux homonymes

1.1. Le corpus de textes des scribes Ith-apihe

Une recherche systématique du nom propre Ith-apihe, en tant que scribe, dans les répertoires et les index de noms propres a permis de le mettre en relation avec 137 textes qui se répartissent de la façon suivante⁶ :

- Ith-apihe sans patronyme rédige 72 textes dont AASOR 16, 19, une tablette d'adoption, pour ^fTulpun-naya.

3 Gelb/Purves/Macrae 1947 (noté NPN par la suite) ; Cassin/Glassner 1977 ; Müller 1998 ; Lacheman/Morrison/Owen 1987 : 357-703 ; idd. 1993 : 133-398 ; Lacheman/Owen 1995 : 85-357 ; Fincke 1996 : 379-468 ; ead. 1998 : 217-384 ; ead. 2002 : 169-320 ; Spering 2005 : 201-251 et ead. 2009 : 681-723.

4 Ce séjour de recherche a pu être réalisé grâce au soutien financier de plusieurs institutions : le ministère français de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche via le programme AIRES Culturelles, le laboratoire Archéorient et le département du Vaucluse. Je remercie le conservateur de la salle des tablettes de l'Oriental Institute de Chicago, Dr W. Farber, pour m'avoir permis de consulter les tablettes et d'en publier les photos, ainsi que ses deux assistants, Dr A. Dix et P. Gauthier pour leur chaleureux accueil.

5 L'ensemble des données est consultable en ligne <http://lescribesdenuzi.wix.com/nuzi>.

Les sceaux inédits portent la mention Pataï+nombre.

6 Cf. note 3.

Sceaux	Textes d'Ith-apihe sans patronyme	Textes d'Ith-apihe fils de Taya
Pat 4	JEN 80	
Pat 5	JEN 464, 925	
Pat 6		JEN 797
Pat 7		HSS 5/61
Po 35	JEN 217, 251	
Po 276	JEN 423	
Po 309	JEN 249, 714	
Po 346	JEN 41, 611, 914	JEN 799
Po 349	JEN 15, 37, 407, 687, 705	JEN 22, 409, 720, 725, 926
Po 353	JEN 4, 25, 45, 54, 405, 454, 590, 700, 928	JEN 57, 425, 721, 726
Po 498	JEN 293, 426, 583, 724, 844	JEN 155*, 196, 206, 209, 246*, 274, 416, 420, 421, 455, 483, 554*, 584, 585, 586, 588*, 694, 703*, 709*, 723, 809, 932*
Po 691	JEN 55, 236, 419	JEN 12, 224, 686, 710, 722
Po 708		JEN 14, 95
Po 996	JEN 717	

Fig. 2 : Sceaux utilisés par Ith-apihe sans patronyme et Ith-apihe fils de Taya.^a

a. Certains sceaux sont inscrits, ils sont indiqués en gras sur le tableau. Les textes sur lesquels Ith-apihe fils de Taya est témoin sont indiqués avec un astérisque.

- Ith-apihe fils de Taya, membre de la troisième génération d'Apil-Sîn, est impliqué dans 64 textes dont 21 en tant que témoin et 43 en tant que scribe.
- Ith-apihe fils de Turari, membre de la quatrième génération d'Apil-Sîn, est l'auteur de JEN 239.

1.2. Inventaire des sceaux utilisés par les trois scribes homonymes

Ith-apihe sans patronyme scelle 48 tablettes, Ith-apihe fils de Taya scelle 49 tablettes et Ith-apihe fils de Turari scelle la tablette JEN 239. En ce qui concerne les sceaux, E. Porada en répertorie 3 pour Ith-apihe sans patronyme⁷ :

- Po 35 sur JEN 251
- Po 276 sur JEN 423
- Po 349 sur JEN 15

Et 5 sceaux pour Ith-apihe fils de Taya (Porada 1947 : 126-138) :

- Po 346 sur JEN 799
- Po 353 sur JEN 721
- Po 498 sur JEN 421
- Po 691 sur JEN 12
- Po 708 sur JEN 95

⁷ À noter que par la suite, pour signaler une empreinte de sceau répertoriée par E. Porada, on utilisera l'abréviation Po (Po+nombre).

1.3. Inventaire des tablettes consultées

E. Porada, dans AASOR 24, s'intéresse aux sceaux, mais non à l'ensemble des tablettes scellées : pour cette raison, elle n'a pas dressé un inventaire systématique de ces tablettes et donne une référence par empreinte de sceau. Pour Ith-apihe, elle retient 8 tablettes, alors qu'il est impliqué dans 137 textes.

Lors de mon séjour à l'Oriental Institute de Chicago, dans le cadre de mes recherches sur les scribes de Tulpun-naya, j'ai procédé à une vérification systématique des tablettes impliquant ce scribe.

J'ai pu consulter 127 tablettes sur les 137 qui concernent Ith-apihe (avec ou sans patronyme). Pour la répartition des tablettes qu'il a scellées voir **figure 1** :

76 empreintes de sceaux ont pu être identifiées : 34 concernent Ith-apihe sans patronyme, 41 Ith-apihe fils de Taya et 1 Ith-apihe fils de Turari. Ces 76 empreintes correspondent à 10 sceaux répertoriés par E. Porada (Po) et 4 autres qui étaient jusqu'à présent inédits (Pat+nombre).

1.4. Inventaire des empreintes de sceaux utilisés par les scribes Ith-apihe

Une conclusion importante peut être tirée de la présente répartition. On constate ainsi qu'Ith-apihe sans patronyme utilise 5 sceaux dont le fils de Taya a également l'usage (Po 346, Po 349, Po 353, Po 498 et Po 691, dans la zone grise de la **figure 2**). On peut donc considérer avec un assez grand degré de certitude que le scribe

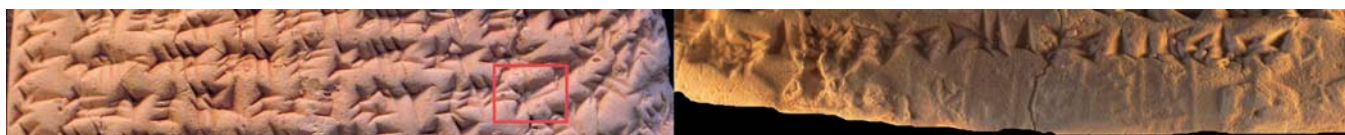


Fig. 3 : Revers JEN 239, détail ligne 33 (gauche) et empreinte du sceau Po 691 ligne 40 (droite)
(Oriental Institut of Chicago; © Photo: V. Pataï).



Fig. 4 : Détail ligne 28a de JEN 714 avec l'empreinte du sceau Po 309 (Oriental Institut of Chicago; © Photo: V. Pataï).

sans patronyme qui a rédigé les 25 tablettes associées à ces sceaux est en fait le fils de Taya.

1.5. Le cas d'Ith-*apiḫe* fils de Turari

Le cas de JEN 239 est intéressant, car lorsque I. Gelb et son équipe répertorient ce texte comme écrit par Ith-*apiḫe* fils de Turari, ils signalent qu'au lieu du signe DUMU, le signe IGI est clairement visible sur la tablette (NPN 1943 : 75a).

Une étude de la tablette m'a permis de confirmer les observations de I. Gelb. En effet, le signe qui suit le nom d'Ith-*apiḫe* est abîmé, mais il est plus proche du signe IGI que du signe DUMU. On aboutit ainsi à la lecture : IGI *It-ḫa-pi-ḫe* DUB.SAR I[GI] *Tu-ra-ri* (figure 3 gauche). Cela rattacherait donc la tablette au groupe rédigé par Ith-*apiḫe* sans patronyme.

De plus, une étude de l'empreinte du sceau utilisé par Ith-*apiḫe* sur cette tablette confirme l'utilisation du sceau Po 691 (figure 3 droite) (Porada 1947 : Planche 34, sceau 691). Ith-*apiḫe* fils de Taya se sert de ce sceau à plusieurs reprises (JEN 12, 55, 224, 236, 419, 686, 710 et 722) et je pense donc qu'Ith-*apiḫe* fils de Turari n'existe pas et que JEN 239 est bien écrit par Ith-*apiḫe* fils de Taya.

2 Le prêt de sceau par Ith-*apiḫe*

Dans son étude, E. Porada attribue :

- Po 309 au scribe Waqar-*bēli* fils de Taya, grâce à l'inscription de la ligne 35 de JEN 237 : NA₄.KIŠIB *Wa-qar-be-li* DUMU *Ta-a-a* DUB.SAR.
- Po 996 au témoin Warad-*ilišu* fils de Dūr-*šarri*, grâce à l'inscription de la ligne 19 de JEN 449 : NA₄.KIŠIB *Warad-ili-šu* (Porada 1947 : 130 et 138).

Ces deux sceaux sont également utilisés par Ith-*apiḫe* sans patronyme. Nous faisons face à une situation qui est régulièrement documentée à Nuzi, lorsqu'un sceau est utilisé par plusieurs personnes. Ce phénomène a particulièrement été étudié par D. Stein (Stein 1993a : 73–77).

2.1. Po 309

Po 309 est utilisé à deux reprises par le scribe Waqar-*bēli* fils de Taya, sur JEN 237 et 577, sur lesquelles Ith-*apiḫe* n'apparaît pas en tant que témoin. Il est aussi apposé par Ith-*apiḫe* sans patronyme sur JEN 249 et probablement JEN 714, tablettes dans lesquelles Waqar-*bēli* n'apparaît pas.

À la ligne 29 de JEN 249, on lit clairement : NA₄.KIŠIB *It-ḫa-pi-ḫe* DUB.SAR. À la ligne 28a de JEN 714, le début du signe est détérioré, mais celui-ci est plus proche du signe IT pour Ith-*apiḫe* que du signe WA pour Waqar-*bēli*. On peut ainsi restituer : NA₄.KIŠIB *It-ḫa-pi-ḫe* (figure 4).

Dans le cas de JEN 714, Ith-*apiḫe* serait donc l'utilisateur du sceau Po 309 et non pas Waqar-*bēli*⁸.

En ce qui concerne Po 309, il est difficile d'établir avec exactitude le propriétaire du sceau, car les deux scribes l'utilisent chacun à deux reprises. L'utilisation d'un même sceau par deux scribes à plusieurs occasions est une pratique bien documentée ; de plus, le fait que ce soit Waqar-*bēli* fils de Taya qui partage le sceau avec Ith-*apiḫe* sans patronyme peut nous permettre d'identifier Ith-*apiḫe* comme fils de Taya. Le sceau Po 309 étant ainsi utilisé par deux frères.

2.2. Po 996

Cependant, il arrive parfois que le partage de sceau se fasse entre personnes qui n'appartiennent pas au même cercle familial, professionnel ou social. C'est le cas de Po 996.

Lorsque Ith-*apiḫe* sans patronyme écrit JEN 717, il utilise le sceau Po 996. Au cours de son étude de JEN 717, M.P. Maidman, citant E. Porada, considère qu'Ith-*apiḫe* n'utilise pas son sceau, mais celui de Warad-*ilišu* fils de Dūr-*šarri* (Maidman 1994 : 159, note l. 21). En effet, Warad-*ilišu* fils de Dūr-*šarri* utilise ce sceau non seulement sur JEN 239, mais aussi sur JEN 41, 43, 57, 67, 73, 75, 95, 217, 225, 251, 271, 463, 556, 579, 683, 704 et 727⁹.

8 Waqar-*bēli* fils de Taya utilise aussi un autre sceau répertorié par E. Porada et D. Stein sous Po 569 et Stein 447 (Porada 1947 : 133 et Planche 28 et Stein 1993b : 381–382).

9 Warad-*ilišu* fils de Dūr-*šarri* utilise également un autre sceau sur JEN 35 et 805 répertorié par E. Porada sous le numéro 968



Fig 5 : Empreinte du sceau Po 353 sur JEN 732 (gauche), à comparer avec l’empreinte du sceau Po 353 sur JEN 721 (droite) (Oriental Institut of Chicago; © Photo: V. Patai).

Si l’on suit l’hypothèse de D. Stein, selon laquelle le propriétaire du sceau partagé est celui qui l’utilise le plus de fois, on peut affirmer que dans le cas de JEN 717, Ith-apiḫe sans patronyme n’utilise pas son sceau personnel, mais celui de Warad-ilišu fils de Dūr-šarri (Stein 1993a : 74).

3 Autres tablettes attribuables au scribe Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya

Sur la base de leurs styles rédactionnels et du cercle de personnes impliquées, JEN 208 et JEN 728 sont considérés comme écrits par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya et JEN 732 par Taya fils d’Apil-Sîn. Les empreintes de sceau découvertes sur ces trois tablettes permettent soit de confirmer, soit de nuancer ces propositions.

3.1. JEN 208

Pour JEN 208, le nom du scribe n’est pas précisé et c’est la raison pour laquelle ce texte n’apparaît pas dans le NPN. Mais selon A. Fadhil, ce texte est écrit par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya, d’après des critères stylistiques et prosopographiques¹⁰. Après consultation de la tablette, j’ai pu remarquer que le scribe de cette tablette avait apposé le sceau Po 498 à la ligne 22. Ce sceau est très utilisé par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya sur de nombreux textes (cf. **figure 2**) et donc, comme A. Fadhil, j’attribue ce texte à Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya¹¹.

3.2. JEN 728

Pour JEN 728, le nom du scribe est détruit, mais M.P. Maidman pense qu’il s’agit d’Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya

au vu des liens prosopographiques avec le corpus de textes écrits par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya à Artiḫe¹². Après consultation, j’ai pu constater que le sceau apposé n’est autre que Po 691, qui est utilisé à plusieurs reprises par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya sur JEN 12, 55, 224, 236, 239, 419, 686, 710, 722 (**figure 2**)¹³. En l’occurrence, Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya est le scribe de JEN 728.

3.3. JEN 732

M.P. Maidman attribue JEN 732 à Taya fils d’Apil-Sîn, bien que le nom du scribe n’apparaisse pas sur la tablette (Maidman 1989 : 27 ; 1994 : 214 note l. 24). En effet, d’après lui, les témoins des lignes 17 à 23, qui sont quasiment illisibles sur cette tablette, peuvent être reconstitués d’après les tablettes JEN 690 et 756. Ces deux tablettes appartiennent à un groupe de douze textes écrits à Unapšewe dont la majorité sont attribués à Taya fils d’Apil-Sîn (Maidman 1994 : 72, note l. 18).

Une étude sigillographique a permis de constater l’utilisation du sceau Po 353 sur la tablette (**figure 5**). Etant donné que ce sceau est utilisé à plusieurs reprises par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya, sa présence au moment de la rédaction de cette tablette est à envisager, sans que son rôle exact, scribe ou témoin, puisse être identifié. Même si Ith-apiḫe a peut-être prêté son sceau à son père, Taya fils d’Apil-Sîn, l’étude du style rédactionnel permet néanmoins d’attribuer ce texte à Ith-apiḫe en raison des observations suivantes (**Fig. 5**) :

- à la ligne 3, on trouve l’écriture syllabique *i-pu-uš-šu*, qui est systématique chez Ith-apiḫe, alors que Taya emploie largement le logogramme *DU₃-uš*
- l’écriture syllabique *i-bal-kat* est courante chez Ith-apiḫe, alors que Taya utilise constamment les logogrammes *KI.BAL-at*.
- l’écriture du nom propre *Pi-i-ru* au lieu de *Pi-ru* à la ligne 21, est très largement utilisée par Ith-apiḫe.

(Porada 1947 : 138 et Planche 48).

¹⁰ Fadhil 1983 : 305. Dans JEN 208 : 5, le scribe utilise la même formulation dans la rédaction des mesures que dans JEN 3 : 5 écrit par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya. A. Fadhil constate également des similitudes dans la désignation des points cardinaux des lignes 6 et 7 de JEN 208 avec des termes hourrites que l’on retrouve dans JEN 236 : 8, JEN 694 : 7 et JEN 723 : 6, écrits par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya (CAD Š/2 : 308b). Enfin, il remarque la présence à la ligne 18 de Mār-⁴Ištar fils d’Ataya, également présent dans JEN 245 : 20, 213 : 38 et 454 : 12 écrits par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya.

¹¹ JEN 155, 196, 206, 209, 246, 274, 416, 420, 421, 455, 483, 554, 584, 585, 586, 588, 694, 703, 709, 723, 809, 932. À ces textes, on peut ajouter JEN 293, 426, 583, 724, 844 écrits par Ith-apiḫe sans patronyme, mais qui ont pu être attribués au fils de Taya.

¹² Maidman 1989 : 27 ; 1994 : 200 note l. 30. Cette tablette est relativement abîmée, mais d’après M.P. Maidman, il est possible d’en restaurer une partie, notamment la liste des témoins, grâce aux tablettes JEN 419, 686, 710 et 716 écrites par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya à Artiḫe.

¹³ JEN 12, 55, 419, 686, 710 sont également rédigés à Artiḫe.



Fig. 6 : Empreinte du sceau Po 346 sur JEN 254 (gauche), à comparer avec l’empreinte du sceau Po 346 sur JEN 799 (droite)
(Oriental Institut of Chicago; © Photo: V. Pataï).



Fig 7 : Empreinte du sceau Po 498 sur JEN 462 (gauche), à comparer avec l’empreinte du sceau Po 498 sur JEN 421 (droite)
(Oriental Institut of Chicago; © Photo: V. Pataï).

4 Identification d’Ith-apihe fils de Taya en tant que témoin

Dans les différents index de noms propres, on trouve cinq différents Ith-apihe qui agissent soit en tant que témoin, soit en tant que protagoniste¹⁴ :

- Ith-apihe fils d’Arip-[...]
- Ith-apihe fils de Muš-Teššup
- Ith-apihe fils de Tuḫmiya
- Ith-apihe fils de Zilip-erwi
- Ith-apihe sans patronyme

Parmi les textes qui ont pu être consultés, JEN 254 et JEN 462 sont scellés par un témoin Ith-apihe sans patronyme.

Sur JEN 254, on trouve à la ligne 26, le sceau Po 346 et à la ligne 24 de JEN 462, le sceau Po 498 (figures 6 et 7). Ce dernier est l’un des plus utilisés par Ith-apihe fils de Taya, tandis que Po 346 est utilisé par lui à quatre reprises : JEN 41, 611, 799 et 914 (figure 2).

Ainsi, grâce à l’observation des empreintes de sceaux sur ces deux tablettes, il a été possible d’identifier la présence d’Ith-apihe fils de Taya lorsque celui-ci était un témoin et que son patronyme n’était pas précisé.

5 Textes et images : utilisation des sceaux et données écrites

Dans le cadre de mes recherches sur Ith-apihe fils de Taya, j’ai été amenée à étudier les villes dans lesquelles le scribe travaille et les types de textes qu’il écrit. La mise en relation des données textuelles et sigillographiques montre que l’utilisation d’un sceau en particulier ne correspond pas forcément à un type de textes ou

à une ville spécifique. Par exemple, à Artihe, Ith-apihe fils de Taya utilise quatre sceaux différents : Po 349, Po 353, Po 498 et Po 691. Dans cette ville, le scribe rédige des tablettes d’adoption réparties en différents groupes par N.K. Weeks, A. Fadhil et M.P. Maidman, en fonction des séquences de témoins identiques¹⁵. On constate l’utilisation d’un sceau spécifique à chacun de ces groupes :

Groupe 1 (Po 498) : JEN 4, **30, 34**, 45, 54, 425, 700, 925, 928

Groupe 2 (Po 691) : JEN 12, 55, 419, 686, 710, **716**, 728

Groupe 3 (Po 349) : JEN 15, 37, 687, 705

Groupe 4 (Po 349) : JEN 22, 409, 720

Groupe 5 (Po 498) : JEN **3, 100**, 585

Groupe 6 (Po 498) : JEN 416, 421, 483

Groupe 7 (Po 498) : JEN 420 et 426

Sur les tablettes indiquées en gras, l’empreinte du sceau d’Ith-apihe est effacée. Le cercle des témoins permet cependant de les rattacher à un groupe spécifique et donc de déterminer le sceau qui a été utilisé pour les sceller.

On peut donc supposer que sur les tablettes du groupe 1, Ith-apihe fils de Taya utilise le sceau Po 498 sur JEN 30 et 34 ; sur JEN 716 il a probablement apposé le sceau Po 691 comme sur JEN 12, 55, 419, 656, 710 et 728 issus du groupe 2 ; enfin JEN 3 et 100 sont peut-être scellés avec le sceau Po 353 comme JEN 585 (groupe 5).

6 Conclusion

Ith-apihe sans patronyme et Ith-apihe fils de Taya utilisent 5 sceaux en commun. En effet, sur les 48 tablettes scellées par Ith-apihe sans patronyme, 26 tablettes ont

14 Cf. note 3.

15 Weeks 1972 : 204–206 ; Fadhil 1983 : 53–54 ; Maidman 1994 : 109, 155 note l. 3, 125 note l. 25 et 171–172.

pu être attribuées au fils de Taya, car elles avaient un sceau en commun avec le scribe. De plus, le sceau Po 691 identifié sur JEN 239, qui est parfois encore attribué à Ith-apiḫe fils de Turari, a permis d'assigner la tablette à Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya.

La présente étude donne une illustration supplémentaire de la pratique du partage de sceaux : le sceau Po 309 qu'Ith-apiḫe et Waqar-bēli fils de Taya, deux scribes et probablement deux frères partagent et le sceau Po 996 qu'Ith-apiḫe sans patronyme emprunte à Warad-ilišu fils de Dūr-šarri.

JEN 208, 728 et 732, tablettes pour lesquelles l'identification du scribe était problématique, ont pu être at-

tribuées à Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya grâce à l'étude sigillographique.

L'observation des empreintes de sceaux de JEN 254 et 462 a également permis d'identifier la présence d'Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya alors qu'il était un simple témoin et que son patronyme n'était pas précisé.

Enfin, à partir des données sigillographiques et stylistiques des tablettes écrites par Ith-apiḫe fils de Taya à Artiḫe, il a été possible d'envisager les sceaux utilisés sur JEN 3, 30, 34, 100 et 716 alors que leurs empreintes n'étaient plus visibles.

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Representations of steles in the palace glyptic of Early Syrian Ebla

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Abstract: The possible representation of steles on one seal from the Royal Palace G of EB IVA Ebla is being considered in this contribution. By comparison with the written evidence, an attempt will be made at understanding how such steles were made, where they were placed, and what their meaning for the visual image of kingship in the culture of the mature Early Syrian Ebla was.

Keywords: Ebla, Tall Mardīḥ, Early Syrian period, Early Bronze Age, stele, Syria, kingship.

In this short contribution, I wish to present an Eblaic example of the relation between text and image. Such a relation poses several critical issues for the study of the ancient Near East; such issues were already examined in detail by C. Suter (Suter 2000: 3–12). To the problems already addressed by C. Suter, I would add the fact that texts and images frequently do not come from the same site, not to speak of the many objects – cuneiform documents and visual objects – coming from the antiquities market, which are therefore decontextualized. Thus, in the moment we propose possible connections between the two kinds of evidence, we should take into account the possibility of local elaborations, even quite substantial, and also concerning narrations, like the mythic/religious ones, which are apparently more strongly codified; every kind of document, in fact, may be the object of interpretations and/or adaptations to the ideologies of individual centres in cultures where identity was closely connected with the belonging to one specific urban organization. Using written evidence, in order to interpret visual evidence, should take this aspect into account. The ideal situation would be to deal with evidence coming from the same site, and also dating from the same period, a circumstance quite difficult to obtain and rarely met in the ancient Near East.

In this perspective, the site of Ebla (Tall Mardīḥ) presents precisely these characteristics, concerning the mature Early Syrian period, with the presence of a large archive of cuneiform documents dating from the last 50 years of the city's existence, and including documents of different typologies; on the other hand, a large number of fragments of the furniture of the Royal Palace G was also retrieved, which – although being only a mere remnant of the original objects – may still be interpreted, often in a very satisfactory way, and which may be used for a comparison with what is mentioned in the texts.

In this respect, I will take into account a term attested both in the lexical and administrative texts from Ebla, namely *na-ru₂* (“stele”), and I will try to identify this object within the visual material evidence; also in order to propose a contextualisation of its use. As a matter of fact, however, no real monument belonging to what could be referred to as a “stele” was found in the levels of the mature Early Syrian Ebla contemporary with the textual evidence. Therefore, my line of argument is based on the possible identification of representations of a stele in other artistic forms, and on the comparison between what is mentioned in the administrative texts and the way in which the object is represented here.

In 1998, A. Archi published an article which collected the textual evidence about the presence of steles within the corpus of the Ebla archives.¹ According to him, the sumerogram for *na-ru₂* is attested in the lexical lists, with two equivalences, i.e. *sikkannu*, interpreted as “stele, baetyl”, and *maš-ar-du-um/tum*, a term interpreted by P. Fronzaroli as “victory stele” (Fronzaroli 2003: 29).² *Na-ru₂* also appears in administrative texts, from which it is possible to infer that the stele was the property of kings and of the viziers Ibrium and Ibbi-Zikir, whereas only once a deity's stele, belonging to Hadda, is mentioned. The steles received gifts, particularly on the days of their “festivals” not explicitly described in the cuneiform texts. These gifts were frequently made of metal, and metal – tin and gold – was used in order to decorate the steles: according the texts, tin and gold were used for the edges, and, in one instance, for an obscure “plate” of the stele (Archi 1998: 17). Nothing

¹ This article is now reprinted in Archi 2015.

² See also Durand 1988: 5–6, who confirms the interpretation as “standing stone”, without the need of the presence of a written text. A different interpretation is proposed by Michel (2011: 103–112), who relates the term *mašartu* with a priestess, but the evidence he relies on is very scanty and not up-to-date, in fact, he ignores Archi's article on this topic (see above, fn. 1).



Fig. 1: Stele I from Tall Ḥalāwa, limestone (after Orthmann 1989: fig. 44).

is mentioned about eventual decorations, save for Ibrum's stele, which was apparently decorated with images – according Archi's interpretation of the term "statue" – and which had to be covered with gold (Archi 1998: 17).

Thus, the written evidence about the *na-ru₂* at Ebla is not particularly rich, and yet it is quite significant with regard to the owners of steles and the ceremonies related with them; on the other hand, the archaeological evidence for steles is completely missing at Ebla thus far. Yet, possible *na-ru₂* monuments are indeed known in the Syrian region during the Early Syrian period, albeit with a rather limited number of specimens. As concerns the use of aniconic baetyls, we may recall the specimens from ar-Rauḏa – a baetyl placed in eminent position within the cult area of the so-called *Grand Temple* –, and from Mari, in the Temple of Ištarat and Inanna-zaza.³ There is a possibility, following an inter-

³ The Mari baetyl should be considered the most ancient, it certainly stood in Inanna-zaza's temple, possibly in a covered space, and was the pivot for ceremonies – probably processions –, as indicated by the presence of a path, covered with bitumen, surrounding it, see Butterlin 2011: 92. For an overview of the presence of baetyls in Early Bronze Syrian cult areas, see Castel 2011; as regards the baetyl from ar-Rauḏa, Castel points out that it is made of a limestone different from that of the region, and therefore that it had to be carried to ar-Rauḏa, notwithstanding the considerable weight of more than 1.2 tons. For its size it was probably set in place before the walls surrounding it were built, and in the ar-Rauḏa temple this stone coexisted with a cult statue placed inside the cella (Castel 2011: 80, 85). According to Castel, the presence of baetyls may be related to the realm and culture of pastoralists (Castel 2011: 79). Margueron (quoted by Butterlin 2011: 92) believes that baetyls represent the Syrian culture in the specific context at Mari.

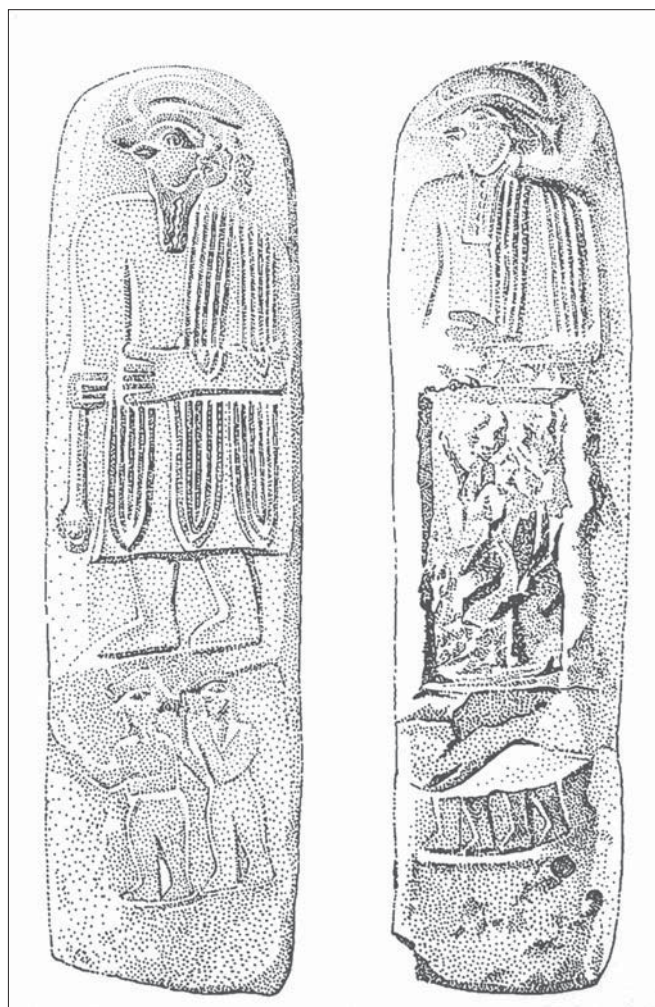


Fig. 2: Drawing of the stele from Ḡabalat al-Baidā' (after Börker-Klähn 1982: figs. 13a–b).

pretation of the Ebla texts, that there were aniconic baetyls also there.⁴ Regarding steles with figural depictions, we may recall the monument, or monuments, from Tall Ḥalāwa (Fig. 1),⁵ and the stele from Ḡabalat al-Baidā' (Fig. 2).⁶ The fragment of the main stele from Tall Ḥalāwa is actually closer to the traditional Mesopotamian type, with a flat frontal surface, divided into several horizontal figurative registers; it was probably quite large in size, as the preserved fragment features a register approximately 40 cm in height, including two secondary registers each ca. 20 cm in height; probably also the preserved bottom register was 20 cm in height; on the other hand, the uppermost preserved register features the lowest part of quite a large bull figure, which then was also ca. 40 cm in height, too, making for a total height of the fragment of about 1.20 m. All

⁴ According to Lipiński's interpretation, there was a garden at Ebla where baetyls of the kings were placed, and where they received offerings of sheep, see Lipiński 2009: 34.

⁵ The excavations at Tall Ḥalāwa yielded several fragments of steles, which apparently do not belong to one single monument, as the edges of the preserved registers seem to be different, see Orthmann 1989: 74–77, figs. 44–45, 49–50.

⁶ Another monument found at Tall Ḥuwaira (Tell Khuera) is more difficult to interpret: apparently, the monument is broken on the left side, so it included one register only, ca. 30 cm in height, depicting seven female figures, two of whom carry a newborn baby, whereas the others seems to carry animals, see Moortgat/Moortgat-Correns 1976: 51–57, fig. 20 a–b.

the personages depicted are facing left, where the most important figure of the stele was probably shown: it is quite likely that, in analogy to the arrangement of the Eblaic Victory Standard, to the extreme left there was a royal figure, whose height probably took more than one register.⁷ The scenes depicted represented the welfare obtained by the city-state through good government, represented by the town élites also engaged in military deeds,⁸ and by the well-being of ordinary people, particularly women, as well as cattle and agriculture (Pinnock 2008a).

The monument from Ġabalat al-Baidā', however, should rather be called an "obelisk": it measures 3.45 m in height, and, though being quite rounded, has two carved surfaces. The topic depicted is related to war: in the upper registers a royal warrior is represented, while in the lower registers there are pairs of male figures, encased in approximately square fields (Moortgat-Correns 1972; Dolce 1986).

All in all, the archaeological evidence thus far known includes two baetyls from urban cult areas, and two – or even more – carved steles, of which the Tall Ĥalāwa specimens come from an urban cult area, and the stele from Ġabalat al-Baidā' comes from an extra-urban sanctuary.⁹

With regard to Early Bronze IVA Ebla – as is well known –, large areas of the Royal Palace in Area G were brought to light, as well as two important cult areas – the Temple of the Rock in Area HH and the Red Temple on the Acropolis in Area D – and a building devoted to food processing and handicraft production in the Lower Town north, in Area P (Building P4).¹⁰ Although

certainly largely sacked, all these buildings, and most of all Palace G and Building P4, yielded large amounts of fragments of their original material inventory. Yet, certainly none of these may be considered as belonging to a stele. As regards the stone fragments, they belong either to small size statues in the round, possibly from ceremonial standards of palace officials (Matthiae 2013c; Pinnock 2015), or to inlays from decorative panels (Matthiae 2010: 152–155). On the other hand, in my treatment of the cylinder seals impressions from the Royal Palace G of Ebla,¹¹ a peculiar representation was noticed, which might be interpreted as a representation of a stele.

In the destruction levels of the Royal Palace G, more than 200 sealings were found, as well as one complete cylinder seal (Matthiae 2013a).¹² As a result of a first analysis, P. Matthiae identified 15 seals from which the impressions were made (Matthiae 1995: 103), whereas I think that there were approximately 20 seals, nearly all of these used more than once, with the exception of the actual cylinder seal, of which no impression was found.¹³ The seals form a very distinctive and homogeneous group, quite different in style and topics from the seals used on jars before firing, whose motifs, as proposed by S. Mazzoni were rather related to rural milieus (Mazzoni 1992: 190–196). The seals we are now taking into account, on the other hand, belong to what we may call a "Palace Style", and their imagery is strongly influenced by the contest scenes attested in the Mesopotamian tradition, although these were definitely adapted to the local Eblaic ideology.¹⁴ One evident peculiarity is the constant presence of human and divine characters: the king and queen were identified with a man, wearing a distinctive turban, with a tuft on one side, and with a woman with long loose hair; both wear only a skirt, of the *kaunakés* type, held at the waist by a double swollen girdle (Matthiae 1995: 97–99; Pinnock 2008b).¹⁵ One deity was identified by P. Matthiae as

7 The Victory Standard of Ebla was a large wooden wall panel, composed of several vertical planks, into which limestone inlays were inserted. The figurative pattern, in horizontal registers, included groups including one Eblaic soldier carrying booty, or dealing with captives, alternating with rows including groups with an *Imdugud* dominating man-headed bulls. All the soldiers are turned to the left, where a high royal figure stood whose height was certainly spanning several registers; of this figure, only a large part of the stone skirt was recovered, see Matthiae 2013b: 503; now Matthiae 2016.

8 In the preserved fragment – from top to bottom – there is a bull of a very large size, possibly a man-headed bull, a procession of women, one of whom carries a newborn baby in her arms, a second register with two goats standing on both sides of a plant from which they eat, and a milking cow, and at the bottom register, a ploughman with his bull. To the right, two men occupy the same height as the two registers with the women and the grazing animal with the milking cow, they hold a vertical stick in front of their faces and an axe across their breasts, while an axe is represented in the field in front of each of them. Thus, it is quite likely that they represent two high officials, for their height and for the insignia they carry; it is clear that they were engaged in military matters, for the presence of the weapons they hold, and which are also represented in the field in front of them.

9 The monument from Tall Ĥuwaira – if it indeed was a stele – was found out of place in the so-called *Mitanni-Bau*, which was possibly related with cultic activities, see Moortgat-Correns 1976: 51.

10 For a comprehensive and updated description of all these buildings, see Matthiae 2010: 64–93, 377–396. The development of the archaic city of Ebla was recently reassessed in a number of contributions dealing with the earliest phases, between EB I and EB III, and with the inner chronology of the Palace, see Vacca 2015; Vacca 2016; Pinnock in press.

11 The author of the present article was recently put in charge of the publication of the sealings and seals from the Royal Palace G, which will appear as a volume in the series "Materiali e Studi Archeologici di Ebla".

12 Another seal, made of bone, was found in the "Court of Audience", within the small archive L.2712 (Mazzoni 1992: 42–45, Pl. XLIII, 8). Its state is very fragmentary, and also this seal was apparently never used, its style and iconography in fact are closer to the group of sealings published by Mazzoni (Mazzoni 1992).

13 For preliminary presentations of this assemblage, see Matthiae 1984: see description of the individual plates, 25–26; 2008: 127–129; 2010: 172–178; Micale/Nadali 2010; Pinnock 2013a.

14 The same phenomenon may be observed in other aspects of the Eblaic cultural life, e.g. the production of lexical lists, for which see recently Veldhuis 2014 (with previous bibliography).

15 The identification of this character with a king is debated, yet, the alternative proposals put forward are not convincing. The most frequent hypothesis is that this is a deity, but this proposal cannot be accepted, since the character does not have any divine characteristics, and is represented also on different objects than seals, where a divine figure would be quite incongruous, i.e. wooden pieces of furniture and inlaid panels. Moreover, in Mesopotamia as well as in Syria during this period, divine figures had already started to feature well-defined and clearly recognizable characteristics, one of which is certainly the horned crown, albeit not yet in the canonical



Fig. 3: Sealing TM.75.G.630, Royal Palace G, store L.2716, clay
(© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

Išhara (Matthiae 2013a: 486–489), mistress of animals, wearing a very peculiar skirt of oblique swollen flounces, and usually represented with cow horns, or ears, or even both. The seals belonged to high court officials, as is proven by inscriptions which some of them bear: the officials, whose names only, but not their actual functions, were written on the seals are *Ibdula*, possibly the same person mentioned as *ugula* in charge of agricultural production, owner of three seals, used on 43 sealings; *Rei-Na'im*, possibly the same person mentioned as *ugula* in charge of working units and of the delivery of food rations, owner of two seals, used on 18 sealings; and *Ušra-Samu*, perhaps the same person as the *ugula* in charge of the women's sectors of the palace, owner of the only cylinder seal, which was apparently never used (Micale/Nadali 2010).¹⁶

One seal in particular caught the attention of the present writer, because it does not depict the usual contest scene: the figurative pattern includes two groups of figures, each one flanking an enigmatic structure. Like most of the other sealings, also this sealing was found in Room L.2716, one of the two long storerooms behind the northern façade of the Court of Audience (Fig. 4).¹⁷

form it has during the Akkadian period (Braun-Holzinger 2013: 143–149). Braun-Holzinger (2007: 65, 67–68) considers the wooden figure problematic (“problematisch”), and proposes to identify it with a mythical figure (“mythische Figur”). This idea is somehow closer to our interpretation, as certainly the kings' representations in Eblaic art are not real characters, but rather idealized representations of specific “roles”, for which also see Amiet's considerations (Amiet 1980: 162–163).

¹⁶ On the basis of the analysis of the distribution of these sealings and of the containers sealed by each of the seals used, Micale and Nadali propose interesting considerations about the administrative practices related with the officials *Ibdula* and *Rei-Na'im*, see Micale/Nadali 2010: 20–22.

¹⁷ The Court of Audience was the large and open space where the king received and/or performed in public ceremonies, sitting on his throne (Pinnock 2012). The king's throne was placed on a rectangular dais, erected against the northern façade of the Court of Audience. A small door to the king's right led to the

The seal used for the sealing, unlike almost all the other seals thus far identified, was apparently used only once, with several impressions of it featured on the same clay sealing, which probably was not used to seal a storage jar (Fig. 3).¹⁸

The first group of figures includes two female characters (Fig. 5): one of the figures is certainly the queen, with her long hair, and the *kaunakés* skirt, whereas the second figure features long hair, i.e. longer than the queen's hair, and wears a different skirt, possibly made of wool tufts, which is longer and less regular than the usual *kaunakés* skirts; it is longer on one side, which leaves one leg bare. This figure is apparently attacked by a lion, standing on his hind paws. The second group of figures includes the king, wearing the distinctive turban and the *kaunakés* skirt, and a bull-man. In the field, closer to the group of the two female characters and the lion, there are a scorpion, a fly and a swastika, while a rosette is located between the queen and the bull-man.

Two rectangular structures are clearly in the focus of the two groups, because in both groups the figures touch it with a gesture frequently found in the Ebla seals showing protection: the inner arm is bent, with the hand turning upwards, whereas the outer arm points downwards, both hands touch the structure. The two structures are identical in shape: they are quite high and narrow, and are divided into three registers, two square registers at the top and one rectangular register at the bottom. Both uppermost registers feature two heads: a male and a female in the object to

quarters where the queen probably dressed up and waited to enter the court, and to two narrow rooms where pottery used during the ceremonies and sealed goods were stored.

¹⁸ The sealing belongs to a type which is heavily flattened, bearing traces of a semi-cylindrical object and strings on its base; it was used for containers whose covering was convex and did not bear particular marks, thus they were probably not made of wood, but of clay or stone.

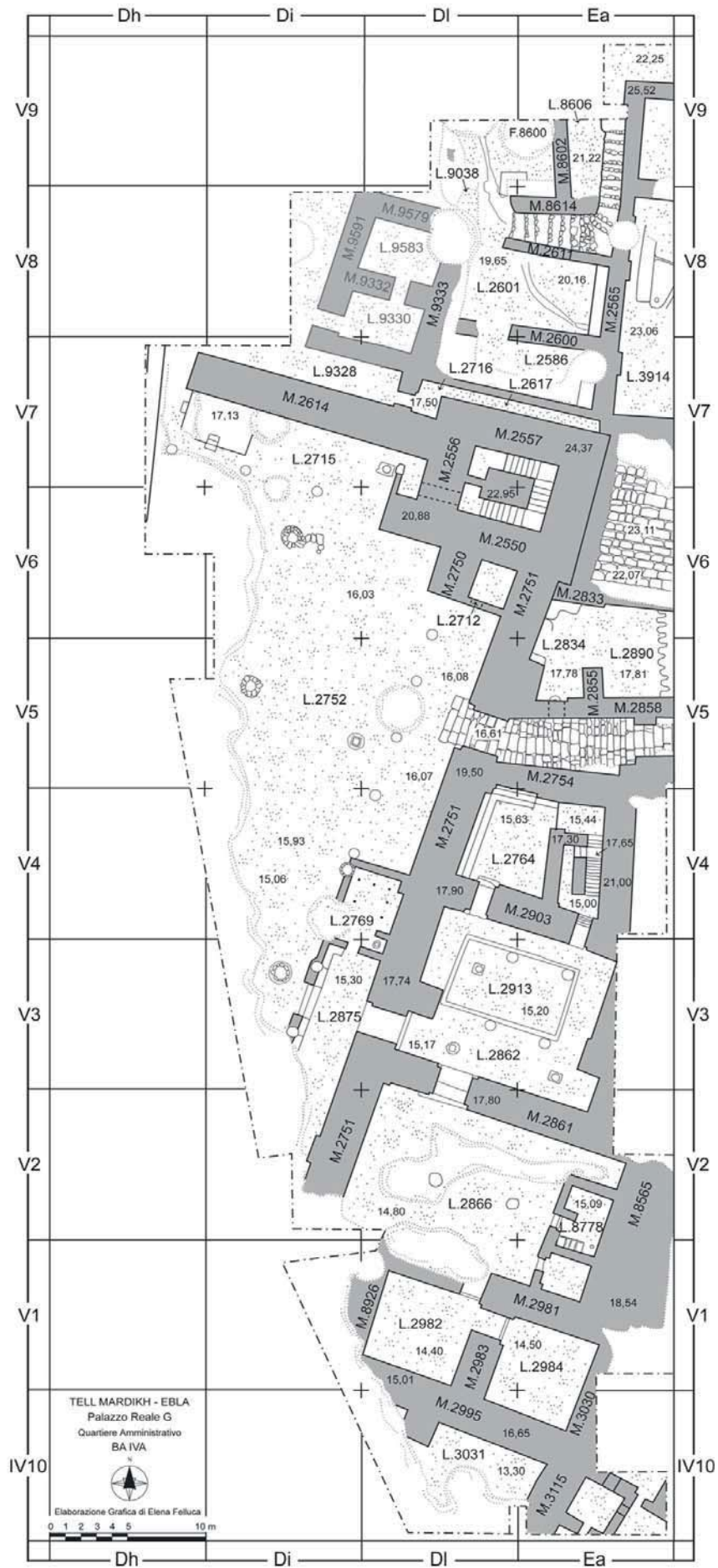


Fig. 4: Schematic plan of the Royal Palace G (© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

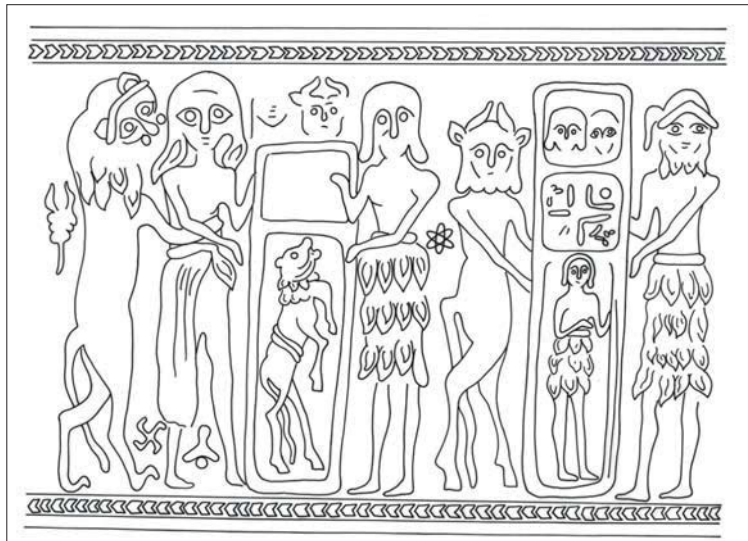


Fig. 5: Reconstruction of seal I from the Royal Palace G
(© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

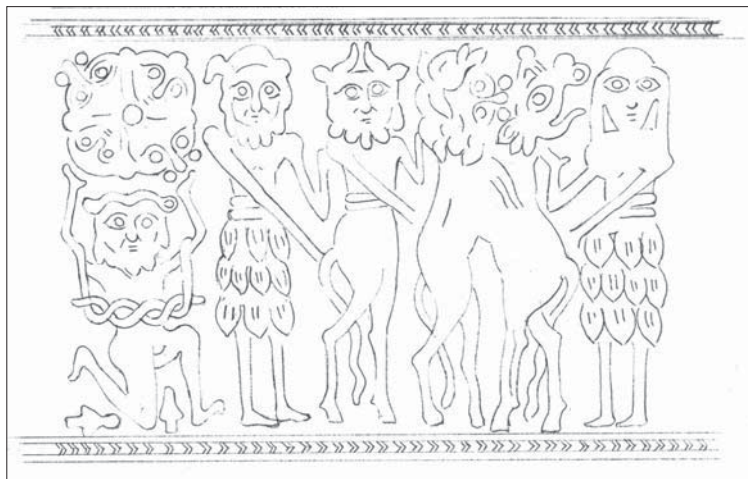


Fig. 6: Reconstruction of the seal impressed on TM.75.G.630
(© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

the right, and a bull-man and a human head in the left register. The middle register to the left is very badly preserved and it was not possible to reconstruct what was represented inside with certainty. Looking carefully at the photos, it is argued here that it possibly included two bearded human heads. The middle register to the right, on the other hand, depicts a peculiar symbol, consisting of four heads, featuring alternating human and animal heads – probably of lions –, a symbol which also appears on another Eblaic seal, which in this case is carried by a kneeling figure, a kind of archaic “Atlas” figure (Fig. 6), and which was considered by P. Matthiae as being a representation of the four parts of the world (Matthiae 1995: 103–104; 2010: 177). The bottom registers are not easy to read: to the left, the impression is good, but it is cut and therefore disturbed by a deep crack in the middle, whereas to the right, the impression is not complete, for another impression of the same seal cuts its upper part, and a further heavy crack runs through the register. Nonetheless, the presence of a bull, whose horn is missing, is securely identified in the structure to the left, while to the right, there was

a human figure, with the head and torso facing front, wearing a *kaunakés* skirt, and possibly holding a spear.

The shape of the two enigmatic structures leads the present writer to propose that these might be representations of two steles or obelisks, quite alike the similar objects from Ġabalat al-Baidā', or maybe rather two sides of one and the same monument, presented by two groups of figures: the king and the bull-man on the one hand, and the queen and another female character on the other hand. Here – unlike to what usually happens in the Eblaic contest scenes, where the king and queen co-operate within the same group of figures (Fig. 6) –, the two sovereigns are deployed in two separate groups. Moreover, as the group which includes the king shows a co-operation between human and divine worlds, one might infer that the same is true for the group of the two female characters. The woman wearing the irregular skirt might belong to the priesthood, thus implying a relation with the divine world, albeit placing this group on a slightly lower level than the group featuring the king. Yet, the presence of several divine symbols near the two women might also lead to identify the second

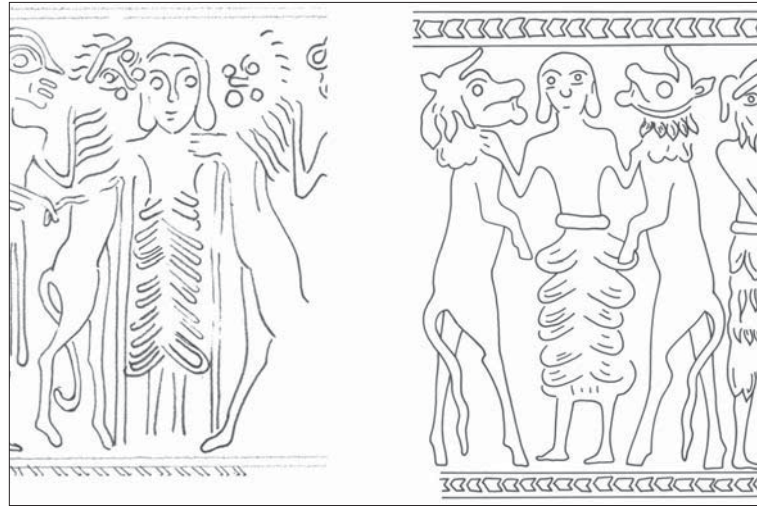


Fig. 7: The goddess Išhara as represented in the Ebla seals: to the left (Cylinder VIII) with two lions, to the right (Cylinder IV) as Mistress of the Animals (© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).



Fig. 8: Reconstruction of seal VI from the Royal Palace G, with another representation of the goddess Aštar/Ištar (© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

individual depicted with a deity, therefore putting the two groups on the same level.

Among the deities known from the Ebla texts, the most suitable for the identification seems to be Aštar/Ištar. This goddess had some importance in the Eblaic pantheon during the mature Early Syrian period, and shared several characteristics with the goddess Išhara (Pomponio/Xella 1997: 63–67), the only divine figure thus far identified in the Eblaic seals (Matthiae 2013a: 484–487), and both being strongly related with the king (Pomponio/Xella 1997: 67, 215). Concerning their representation within the corpus of seals from Palace G, the two deities – the already identified Išhara and the proposed Aštar/Ištar – are both sometimes accompanied by rampant lions: Išhara is usually represented between two lions (Fig. 7), in the same heraldic pattern that is used to depict her as mistress of the animals with bulls, whereas Aštar/Ištar is accompanied by one lion only (Fig. 8). And although the lions seem to attack the goddesses, it is clear that they do not bite

them, and that they rather accompany them: the lions, when attacking bulls or deer, usually bite the necks of their prey, whereas when accompanying the goddesses, their muzzles do not touch the human figure. In the seal now taken into account, the proposed depiction of the goddess Aštar/Ištar would also feature the presence of a scorpion, much like the goddess Išhara, which also appears on *Ušra-Samu's* seal where the goddess Išhara is the protagonist of the scene (Fig. 9).

In the textual sources, the two goddesses are mentioned together in two texts of the “Ritual of Kingship”, where they receive the same precious gifts, and at the same moment.¹⁹ The first text – T1 – mentions, according to the Eblaic tradition, “Išhara of the king” (Fron-

¹⁹ In text T1, the sovereigns offer the goddesses two wooden statues, covered with silver, at the end of this ritual (Fronzaroli 1993: 20). In text T2 the same offering is also mentioned, which takes place at the end of the ritual pilgrimage outside of the town, but before the beginning and performance of two seven-day rituals inside the city of Ebla (Fronzaroli 1993: 71–72).



Fig. 9: Seal of *Ušra-Samu*, Royal Palace G, L.9583, marble and gold (© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria).

zaroli 1993: 20, T1, v. 101, 21–22; Pomponio/Xella 1997: 204), whereas Aštar/Ištar may be the deity mentioned only as “Lioness of the king” (Fronzaroli 1993: 20, T1, v. 102, 6–7; Pomponio/Xella 1997: 249). The same phrasing is also used in the second text – T2 –, again mentioning “Išhara of the king” (Fronzaroli 1993: 70, T2, v. 111, 1’–2’), but this time Aštar/Ištar apparently is not called *labbadu* (“lioness”), but *sigar*, more precisely “*sigar* of the king” (Fronzaroli 1993: 70, T2, v. 112, 6–7; Pomponio/Xella 1997: 322). This second epithet is interpreted as “bolt”, or “door lock”, and one interpretation of this term, as proposed by Pomponio and Xella, might be that the goddess, being at the same time a divine lioness and a “bolt”, possessed the apotropaic function to “prevent access” (Pomponio/Xella 1997: 322).²⁰

In the reconstruction that is proposed here, the scene depicted on the Eblaic seal would represent a highly meaningful moment involving the uppermost level of Ebla’s elite and hierarchy, namely the king and queen, and two deities who are so closely related with kingship that the epithet “of the king” was added to their names. And yet, Išhara and Aštar/Ištar are not at the top of the Early Syrian Eblaic pantheon – which were Kura and Barama –, but the two deities may rather represent an older tradition. The two goddesses are related personally to the king, and physically with the palace where they had their sanctuaries; the two goddesses, on the other hand, are also related with the wild nature and with the protection of bulls and deer from lions. Additionally, Aštar/Ištar’s epithets – *labbadu* and *sigar* – also seem to connect her with protection in open spaces, i.e. outside of the town. In the texts of the “Ritual of Kingship”, the two goddesses – and Išhara in particular – receive gifts in different moments of the sovereigns’ pilgrimage outside of Ebla. The epithet “of the king” is mentioned only at the end of the pilgrimage, however, when the sovereigns are returning to their palace and have regained their royal insignia and prerogatives, as if to mark that, after the period of “power void” during the ritual, the king and queen, by retrieving their royal

power, have also retrieved their potential to dominate the wild nature.

Regarding the stele in particular, the presence of the goddess Aštar/Ištar might hint at the fact that the monument, or monuments, like the stele from Ġabalat al-Baidā’, were placed in an extra-urban sanctuary, in order to mark a border, or possibly a junction of borders, or even crossroads, which might have been a meeting point for regional powers, a place where treaties were celebrated. In fact, the treaty known to have been arranged between Ebla and Kablul is dated to the year of the offering of a stele (Fronzaroli 2003: 27)²¹ and the seal might thus depict precisely a ceremony of an offering of a stele. The king and the bull-man present the stele, or one face of the stele, which is more closely related to the idea of dominion, and which includes, from top to bottom, the king and queen – most likely two royal ancestors –, the cosmic symbol of the four parts of the world, and a member of the town élite, possibly a member of the military class holding a spear.²² The queen and Aštar/Ištar present the stele, or the second face of the same stele, possibly related with the welfare brought about by divine protection, represented by the two heads at the top, a bull-man and, as proposed here, the goddess herself, as well as by the rampant bull at the bottom.²³ The presence of the soldier might hint at the positive effects of a victorious campaign, and the

²¹ The document is a letter from king *Irkab-Damu* of Ebla to an unnamed king of Kablul, sent upon the occasion of the alliance stipulated between the two towns, and is chronologically fixed by an offering made to the stele by king *Igriš-Ḥalab*, i.e. *Irkab-Damu*’s predecessor.

²² Though the figure is not well preserved, the presence of a spear is most probable; this would make the representation on the proposed stele from Ebla very similar to the stele from Tall Ḥalāwa, where two officials holding weapons are depicted in the scenes.

²³ If this figure is indeed divine, it would be an important exception to the general custom of representing deities wearing the horned tiara in this early period. Yet, also in Middle Bronze in western Syria, Ištar is frequently represented without the horned tiara, both in her licentious and in her demure iconographical representations: e.g. at Ebla on the stele and in the obelisk from the region of her temple on the acropolis (Area D), she is depicted in her demure shape and without the tiara (Matthiae 2010: 312–317; 2011: 761–769). For a peculiar version of the licentious Ištar, see Matthiae 2012.

²⁰ For these two epithets of Ištar, see also CAD 9 s.v. *labbatu*, and CAD 17 s.v. *sigaru*.

presence of Aštar/Ištar might hint at the protection the goddess provided to borders established after a victory, and also at the fact that the stele might have been placed somewhere along these new borders.

The stele (na-ru₂) possibly represented on the Eblaic sealing described above looks like a summary of the two monuments we know from archaeology: its shape is comparable to that of the stele/obelisk from Ġabalat al-Baidā', whereas its topics, depicting the balance of power and the welfare descending from it, can be compared with the subject of the stele from Tall Ḥalāwa.

The shape of the presumed na-ru₂, moreover, as represented in the seal, might help to explain the obscure mention of deliveries of tin and gold for the "plate", or for the "edge" of the stele: perhaps the edges of the registers, which are clearly marked in the representation of the object, were gilded, or otherwise covered with metal.

The cylinder seal we have taken into account certainly belonged to a very high official of the Eblaic state, someone, however, who was not involved in the everyday administration, as his seal was used only once, and for a container, which was not a jar. For the strong ideological meaning of the representation, he was certainly one of the topmost officials; on the other hand, as already mentioned, the Eblaic texts explicitly mention the king, and the viziers *Ibrium* and *Ibbi-Zikir* as owners of steles, and in particular *Ibrium* was the owner of a stele carved with figures. So, *Ibrium* seems a very good candidate for the ownership of this cylinder seal, or rather, as the evidence we have from the Royal Palace G belongs to the last years of the Palace's life, his descendant *Ibbi-Zikir* might have owned a seal depicting his own stele.²⁴ It might seem peculiar that the seal belonging to such a high official of the court was employed only once. Several explanations for this may be proposed: 1) the vizier was not directly engaged in the control of the goods brought to the Palace, for which lesser officials were responsible, and he sealed a container of special importance; 2) the vizier, like *Ibdula* and *Rei-Na'im*, owned more than one seal; 3) the seal belonged to *Ibrium* and the container he sealed was kept in the Palace still during *Ibbi-Zikir*'s vizierate; 4) the stores behind the north façade of the Court of Audience were not meant to keep goods for a long time, the evidence left represents only a limited amount of goods kept temporarily there and the sealings found in this context cannot be considered a good representation of the actual proportion of seals used in the Palace. Presently, it is difficult to choose for a specific hypothesis, or possibly a combination of these hypotheses is more probable, in the light of the fragmentary evidence we have.

Summing up, in the present author's interpretation, this seal depicts the presentation – or the "festival" of a stele – which was placed in an extra-urban sanctuary as

²⁴ *Ibrium* is certainly the vizier who led most of Ebla's victorious campaigns, therefore one third possibility is that *Ibbi-Zikir* owned a seal recalling the presentation of *Ibrium*'s stele, just like *Irkab-Damu* mentioned the offering of the stele of his predecessor *Igriš-Ḥalab* in his year name.

a warranty for international relations among confining regional powers; such was probably also the case with the monument from Ġabalat al-Baidā'.²⁵ The stele represented a synthesis of the foundations of Eblaic power, as it wanted to be represented outside or at the borders of its territory: it depicted the deified royal ancestors and the world divided into four parts as the Eblaites conceived it, including their patron deities,²⁶ military power and the deriving welfare. It was presented and/or protected by human rulers, represented by the ideal king and queen and by divine power, represented by the bull-man and by Aštar/Ištar of the king, the divine lioness preventing enemies from entering the territory of Ebla.

This being the case, we would have the evidence for the creation in Syria – in the Early Syrian period – of the typology of the stele/obelisk, represented by the monument of Ġabalat al-Baidā' and by the depiction of a stele on the Eblaic sealing. These monuments would be the oldest specimens of this kind featuring a complex decoration divided into registers, chronologically followed later on by the steles/obelisks dedicated to the Ištar of Ebla on the acropolis of the town, and dating from the beginning of the Old Syrian period, which were recently considered by P. Matthiae to be the true prototypes for the Late Assyrian obelisks (Matthiae 2015: 143–149).

At the same time, this would also be the first evidence for the use of steles/obelisks as markers for the physical and ideological borders among polities, though more in an inclusive sense, rather than in the exclusive one, which characterized some of the Late Assyrian steles.²⁷ Whereas Late Assyrian steles were meant to mark the separation between order and chaos, these Early Syrian steles seem to mark crossroads, a meeting point for bordering polities.

This evidence, along with the traditions illuminated by the "Ritual of Kingship" (Pinnock 2016a; 2016b), give further proof of Ebla's relations and strategies of presence within the adjacent territories, which were definitely multi-faceted; this great capital of northern Syria employed models for territorial control and for its relations with other centres in the region and beyond, ranging from military expeditions, to commercial and political treaties, to ritual performances, all which have the characteristics of a proto-imperial ideology.

²⁵ Recently, L. Ristvet analysed four sites in north Mesopotamia – Gre Virike, Ḥazna, Ġabalat al-Baidā' and Tall Banāt – as possible ritual centres, related to major urban sites (Ristvet 2011). In her interesting analysis, she proposes the existence of rituals similar to the Eblaic "Ritual of Kingship" in that region, and stresses the peculiarity of the monuments from Ġabalat al-Baidā', which she considers the most politically oriented, most clearly related with royal power and domination, among the monuments she takes into account (Ristvet 2011: 22).

²⁶ In this sense, it seems meaningful that the divine figures chosen are not the main deities of the pantheon – Kura and Barama, divine king and queen – but rather two protective beings, i.e. the bull-man and the divine lioness protecting the borders.

²⁷ This refers to the steles which – like the Early Syrian specimens examined above – were placed outside of the settlements, in the territory controlled by the Assyrians, see Morandi 1988: 109–110, 121; Pinnock 2013b: 159.

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Tigridian royal representation

Text and image between tradition and innovation

Beate Pongratz-Leisten

Abstract: This paper re-examines A. Leo Oppenheim’s notion of the “stream of tradition” and demonstrates its legitimacy and ongoing utility in both written and visual contexts through an elucidation of the development of Tigridian discourse. This Tigridian discourse in its royal perspective emerged in Early Dynastic Lagaš and continued through Akkad and Old Babylonian Ešnunna into Assur. As a case study, this paper analyzes pictorial and textual adaptations and reconfigurations of warrior mythology in the shaping of royal representation. In refining Oppenheim’s conceptualization of the stream of tradition, this paper further explores the categories of tradition, cultural discourse, and ideology, considering the latter as a sub-discourse responding to societal expectations impregnated by tradition.

Keywords: *Chaoskampf*, cultural discourse, *Denkform*, iconology, ideology, stream of tradition.

The mythological motif of the *Chaoskampf*,¹ the battle against invasive and rebellious forces disrupting civil and cosmic order, formed an essential part of royal ideological discourse in Mesopotamia. The threats experienced by the people of the Mesopotamian plain, due to their exposure to migrating and invading people – and wild animals – from the mountains and the steppe, leads to the creation, by the Early Dynastic period, of the concept of the divine warrior figure warding off intrusive elements and protecting civilized life and the cosmic order. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that a rich pictorial repertoire emerges during this period that encompasses not only the more generalizing contest scenes (as represented in the heraldic iconography of the glyptic corpus), but also the iconic images of victory (as played out in both the divine and human world) on Eannatum’s *Stele of the Vultures* and other royal steles of the subsequent periods.

To the educated viewer, ancient and modern, this pictorial repertoire is evocative of certain mythic narratives, such as the Early Dynastic cosmogony told in the Barton Cylinder, the Sumerian tales *Angimdimma* and *Lugal-e*, the Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian versions of the *Anzû Epic*, the myth recounting the battle of the storm god Tišpak against the snake dragon known from Ešnunna, *Enuma eliš*, and the seventh century myth of Tišpak smiting Labbu. While never merely illustrating or mirroring these narratives, the pictorial imagery in its condensed form selects, organizes, denotes, and references their key moments (Goodman 1976: 7f.), evoking by means of iconic representations

specific agents and their stories in the mind of the viewer. The choices made by the image producers in condensing key moments of the combat myth in a “visual formula”² or an iconic image (Winter 1985), as well as the phenomenon of recognition on the side of the audience, are generated through cultural experience and learning. They are embedded in what Leo Oppenheim termed the “stream of tradition” (Oppenheim 1977: 13–25), revealing, as recognized by Nelson Goodman, that “reception and interpretation are not separable operations: they are thoroughly interdependent” (Goodman 1976: 8), and the way themes are seen and depicted “depends upon and varies with experience, practice, interests, and attitudes” (Goodman 1976: 10 with reference to Gombrich 1960: 254–257). When defining his notion of the “stream of tradition” in the 1960s, Leo Oppenheim had the textual evidence of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian libraries specifically in mind. These libraries, according to Oppenheim, demonstrated a striking conservatism in the transmission of texts and text genres such as omen compendia and certain literary texts that originated in the Sumero-Babylonian tradition.³ Oppenheim also stressed the point that in Mesopotamia it was “considered an essential part of the training of each scribe to copy faithfully the texts that made up the stream of tradition.”⁴ This copying served, in the words of Piotr Michalowski, to socialize the scribe in a common stock of ideas and ideologies

² See further Moorey 1987; Pittman 1996.

³ Oppenheim (1960: 411) assumed this apparent conservatism to be a consequence of “the desire to preserve a body of religious writings, or the wish to sustain one tradition against the opposition of, or in competition with, rival traditions.”

⁴ *Ibid.*

¹ Sincere thanks go to Karen Sonik for editing my English. For a recent treatment of the *Chaoskampf* motif, see Sonik 2013.

(Michalowski 1987: 54), and to educate him as a faithful and loyal member of the elite.

Oppenheim's notion of the stream of tradition has recently come under attack. Eleanor Robson has argued strongly against Oppenheim's "conservative" notion of tradition, referring to local variations in mathematical texts and discontinuity in the use of certain omina series (Robson 2011). Similar reservations have been advanced by Niek Veldhuis in his discussion of the transmission of lexical texts, where he has stated that Oppenheim's metaphor of a stream of tradition "views the tradition as something more or less independent and with a power of its own" (Veldhuis 2012: 12), obscuring or concealing the significance of local variations. It seems to me, however, that Oppenheim had something different in mind in his conceptualization of the stream of tradition, and that his emphasis fell on social values and ideological preferences as expressed in key cultural metaphors transmitted in myth, as well as on the manner in which texts were created in the service of the court, be it in response to political events or as possible patterns of explanation and orientation (as in the case of omen compendia): "When Assyriologists will be able to follow the fate of individual text groups through the history of their tradition, they will obtain more insights into the workings of this 'stream' and, conceivably, light will be shed some day on the ideological preferences and other attitudes that neither the content nor the wording of these texts is likely to reflect directly" (Oppenheim 1960: 412; 1977: 16).

In the following discussion, I argue that local variations and permutations in individual texts are by no means inconsistent with the persistence of key cultural metaphors throughout Mesopotamian history. In response to some of the just criticisms that have been levied against an uncomplicated view of tradition, however, I also introduce here a more nuanced approach to the interrelationship of tradition and its history of reception. In particular, I add to the picture the category of cultural discourse, resulting in a three-pronged model of analysis and interpretation: tradition, cultural discourse, and ideology.

Tradition, in the context of this model, is defined as the growing body of cultural memory, which is informed by social values and practices (Eisenstadt/Graubard 1972; Arnason 2005), i.e. the various symbols of collective political, cultural, and social identity and the modes of legitimation of the sociopolitical order. It comprises, essentially, the general reservoir of the experience of a society, which tends to persist through historical, structural, and organizational changes. In Mesopotamia, this cultural legacy was heavily informed by, and may even be equated with, religion, which functioned as a mechanism for maintaining stability and social order. It materializes in the historical *cultural discourse*, which is constantly reformulated and re-conceptualized in all media. In Mesopotamia, these media include myth and historiography, as well as architecture, imagery, and ritual. Royal *ideology* may be considered a *subcategory* of cultural discourse, namely

the condensed form of the royal perspective including all of its conceptual innovations, which as "variations upon received themes" (Greenblatt 2005) are constantly worked into the traditional framework.

In ancient societies, one medium of establishing and explicating traditional frameworks was myth. Myths inform both cultural discourse and ideologies, possessing the cultural status of truth in the society or groups to which they belong. As demonstrated by Hans Blumenberg in his monumental *Work on Myth*⁵ this might equally apply to modern societies despite the advance of secular scientific rationality. Regarded by its audiences as truthful and meaningful, myth represents what Eliade called the *exemplar history*, and is sufficiently authoritative to have paradigmatic value as "simultaneously a 'model of' and a 'model for' reality" (Lincoln 1989: 24).

Local and regional dynamics notwithstanding, royal ideology was surprisingly consistent with respect to the set of tropes and key metaphors it deployed in fashioning a royal image that supported the claim of a particular king to be the equal of his peers on the international scene: the key metaphor of the king as warrior is a particularly important example of this phenomenon. In the following discussion I would like to shed light on the dynamics of the relationship between myth and the historicizing interpretation of it from the Early Dynastic into the Old Babylonian period. It is during these early stages of Mesopotamian history that the essential referents and motifs for the image of the king as warrior were developed in both pictorial and written media, prior to entering into the Assyrian ideological discourse. I would also like to look at some early imagery as it reflected upon and "theorized" the theme of the combat myth. Rather than being localized in a particular tale, my notion of the combat myth is that of a particular plotline in which specific agents are assigned specific roles: these roles, in their interdynamics, lead to a particular unfolding of events that, through the process of antagonistic encounters, ultimately terminate in the restoration of the cosmic order. This fundamental plotline possessed countless variations in numerous local traditions; however, both its outcome and the fact that either a divine or human warrior was the central agent in the overarching cosmic scheme, remain common to all narratives. The combat myth in this context might be best understood as what Gérard Genette has termed a "hypotext" or what the cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have characterized as a "conceptual metaphor," which might be materialized in various textual narratives – mythological and historical, cultic commentary, pictorial image, and ritual – that may reference each other but will never mirror each other completely. Rather, all such materializations reflect a particular "image of the mind" in their response to and processing of the cultural repertoire that evolved

5 Blumenberg 1985. For a detailed discussion of the relevance of myth to ideological discourse, see Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 219–289 as well as 379–447 for its relevance to ritual.

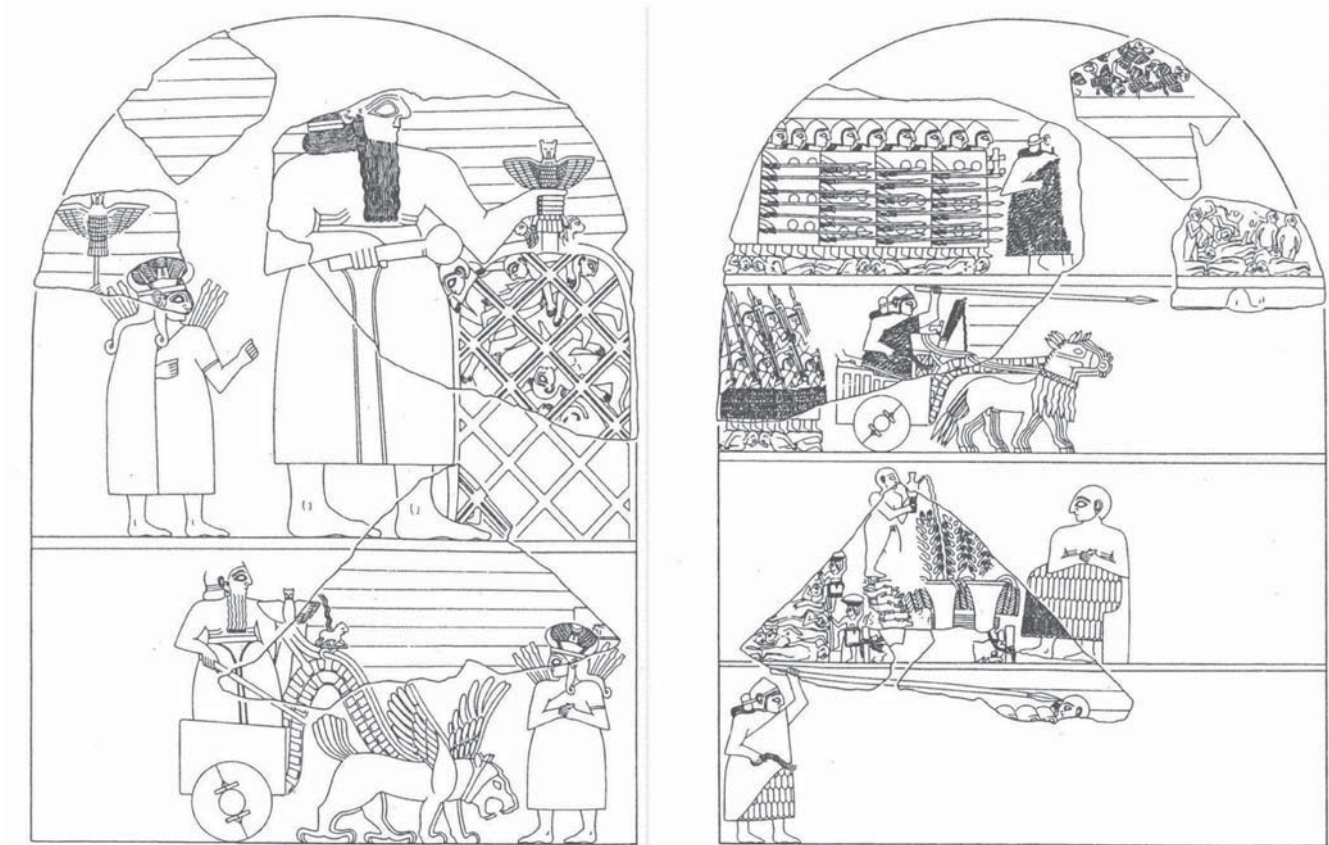


Fig. 1: Line drawings of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* (after Bahrani 2008: 148; drawings: Elizabeth Simpson).

and revolved over time—with respect to combat myth as conceptual metaphor. Taking such an approach, primacy is given neither to the image nor to the text;⁶ rather, it is the conceptual metaphor itself or “mental imagery,” which is expressed in myth as a pragmatic analytical tool—as a “Denkform” using the term of Hans Blumenberg (1985)—that possesses primacy. My analysis, consequently, focuses on how this conceptual metaphor is realized in the pictorial construction, recognizing that visual literacy might not be fully explicable on the model of textuality (Mitchell 1994: 18).

From the Early Dynastic period, two sites are particularly notable for their contributions to establishing the constitutive iconographic elements and “gesturality” (i.e. gestures as vehicle for narrative and dramatic signification⁷) in the imagery of the battle against chaos: Ešnunna and Ġirsu. Moreover, while the site of Akkad has not yet been discovered, steles or fragments of steles of the Sargonic kings attested outside the Akkadian royal capital constitute an important part of the pictorial repertoire evolving around the combat myth, so that we can trace its dynamics through the Old Akkadian period and even beyond, as it ultimately informed the Assyrian iconography of royal self-representation.

The various strands of tradition revolving around the theme of the divine and human warrior were articulated by various scholarly elites in response to the increasing martial responsibilities of the rulers of the

various Mesopotamian urban centers. In Early Dynastic Ešnunna, the chaotic opponent emerges as the seven-headed hydra, which survives into Old Akkadian glyptic imagery. Although the interpretation is not uncontested, Baal's opponent in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle has been interpreted as a seven-headed monster,⁸ which then reappears in Greek myth with Herakles defeating the multi-headed Hydra (Ogden 2013), in the Old Testament with Yahweh smashing the heads of Leviathan (Ps 74:14) and the seven-headed Satan in the New Testament (Revelation 12).⁹ This pictorial and textual evidence led to the assumption of a West-Semitic origin of the motif. The evidence from Ešnunna, however, speaks in favor of a transcultural if not Trans-Tigridian phenomenon: Ešnunna's patron deity Ninazu was already associated with a snake and represented as snake-god. As demonstrated by Frans Wiggermann, the Sumerian temple hymns already make reference to two Ninazus, one (TH 14) at home in the city of Enegi (located between Uruk and Ur) and associated with Ereškigal and the Netherworld (DP 51, offering list) and the other (TH 34), a warrior type deity, at home in Ešnunna and, like Ningirsu/Ninurta, associated with Enlil and Ninlil and celebrated in his martial triumph as “storm” and “great dragon” (Wiggermann 1998–2001: 300 §2). The conflation of Ninazu with a warrior-type divinity might perhaps have originated in his equalization with Tišpak or with Ninurta. As “king of snakes,” Ninazu was active in Ur III and Old Babylonian incantations against the

6 On the primacy of image or text see the recent discussions in art history in Mitchell 1986. For the Ancient Near Eastern discussion see Sonik 2014; Crawford 2014.

7 See Mitchell 1994: 26 and his comment on Panofsky 1962: 3.

8 Rendsburg 1984: 448–452, 451; see, however, Smith/Pitard 2009: 53–54, 250–253; recently Ayali-Darschan 2015: 20–51.

9 For these references see Rendsburg 1984.



Fig. 2: Lion-headed eagle between caprids
(Frankfort 1955: pl. 60, fig. 641).

snake-bite, which also exist in the Elamite and Hurrian languages, pointing to a foreign component in his cult.

In the Sumerian south, by contrast, the role of the opponent was assumed by what Piotr Steinkeller prefers to separate into two bird-like figures: one, the lion-eagle (Sumerian Imdugud) as avatar of Ningirsu in the city-state of Lagaš, is attested in Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* (Fig. 1) and probably also represented in the sculpture of a lion-headed eagle from Ubaid; the other is the Semitic equivalent Anzû or Zû in Northern Mesopotamia, as referenced in the *Early Dynastic Hymn to Šamaš* (Lambert 1989, 1992) attested at Sippar and in Early Dynastic Ebla as well (Krebernik 1992). This northern Anzû or Zû was associated with the Mount Šar₂-šar₂, which is to be equated with the Ġabal Bišrî in central Syria (as attested in the Old Babylonian and later versions of the Akkadian *Anzû Myth*). These bird-like opponents must have been conflated at some point, and it is difficult to pinpoint which of the two is represented in the Early Dynastic seals at Ešnunna, which show an eagle between a standing and reclining goat (Fig. 2).¹⁰

From all this Early Dynastic evidence, the ideological discourse of the city-state of Lagaš emerges as the most dense, sophisticated, and elaborate in its combination of a mythic model with the historicizing depiction of the king as warrior on the two sides of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures*. The obverse shows the god Ningirsu in the lower register arriving victoriously from battle before his mother Ninhursaĝ, who originally – at least according to the later Akkadian *Anzû Myth* – had given him strategic advice on how to defeat Anzû. As he is driving in his chariot pulled by winged lions, the viewer is reminded of his celebratory procession after battle to the temple of Enlil, as is recounted in the Sumerian poem *Angimdimma*. The upper register depicts the warrior god in what Irene Winter identified as an iconic image of victory (Winter 1986): Ningirsu holds the net of the enemies crowned by the Imdugud bird and strikes the bald head of one of the enemies with his mace. As such, to make sense of the imagery of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures*, “prior knowledge on the part of the viewer would have been required, to which the representation stood in a referential status” (Winter 1985: 16). The imagery of these two registers suggests that this referencing did not occur through the illustration of one particular narrative. Rather, the depiction



Fig. 3: Line drawing of *Stele of Sargon*
(Börker-Klähn 1982: fig. 19b).

evokes, crystallizes, and enunciates the accumulated cultural knowledge in what Nelson Goodman called the “dense” image (Goodman 1976: 226) effecting recognition on the part of the educated viewer/spectator.

On the reverse of the stele, which is divided into four registers, three registers depicting the king's advance on the enemy are combined with a banquet scene depicting the king¹¹ seated in front of a libation scene flanked by a pile of enemy corpses. The uppermost register, in which the king advances together with his soldiers, with the latter trampling underfoot the bodies of the fallen enemies, is particularly notable. The fourth (lowermost) register is poorly preserved, but Winter describes the surviving fragment as follows: “one sees a hand at the far left grasping the butt of a long spear shaft, the tip touching the forehead of a bald enemy near the center of the band. The enemy faces the oncoming spear; his head emerges from a group of three additional bald heads before him all facing [the attacking figure]” (Winter 1985: 18).

The imagery of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* is constituted of several motifs which will become relevant for iconological choices in later periods: a) the combination of the cosmic mythological warrior (here Ninurta) with the historical human warrior (here Eannatum), though these are still depicted here in separate images on the obverse and reverse respectively; b) the divine warrior holding in his left hand the net with the enemies and smiting the head of the enemy leader with his mace in his right hand; c) the human soldiers trampling the dead bodies of the enemy in the uppermost

¹⁰ See, for example, Frankfort 1955: pls. 38, 60; figs. 400, 641.

¹¹ Also Irene Winter 1985: 18 argues that the seated figure must be the king.

register of the reverse; and d) the cultic scene, here a libation scene in the presence of the king, in the third register of the reverse. In the following paragraphs, I investigate which of these pictorial constituents evoking the combat myth are carried over into later periods and how these were adopted and transformed to express the historical position of the respective rulers on the myth.

The Old Akkadian emulation of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* – and particularly the iconic representation of Ningirsu's victory over Anzû and the enemy – in the fragmentary diorite *Stele of Sargon* (Louvre Sb 2) has already been recognized (Fig. 3). The image-makers of the rulers of Akkad were clearly familiar with the visual conventions employed in Early Dynastic Lagāš. A notable innovation in the Sargonic imagery is that it is now the king (Sargon himself) rather than the god of the victorious city (i.e. Ningirsu on Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures*) who holds the net and smites the enemy within it. Lorenzo Nigro has argued persuasively that the enemy chief in the *Stele of Sargon*, depicted with his head protruding from the net, is Lugalzagesi of Uruk, who was vanquished by Sargon during his early military endeavors in southern Mesopotamia (Nigro 1998: 93). The royal rank of the enemy being struck by Sargon is indicated by his beard and long, loose hair “suggesting that he had just lost his royal hair buns while fighting in battle” (Nigro 1998: 90). Opposite to the king is a seated figure with three undulating rays rising from the shoulder, one of them ending in a mace head. This detail has been convincingly interpreted as the attribute of Ištar in her warrior aspect, which would identify the seated figure as Ištar.¹² A single visual motif is thus deployed to strikingly different effects in these two monuments: on the *Stele of the Vultures*, the god Ningirsu is shown achieving the ultimate cosmic victory over disruptive forces; on the *Stele of Sargon*, this iconic representation is transformed and becomes an image of *ongoing royal action* against threats to civilization under the guidance and protection of the dynastic goddess Ištar, thus affirming the victory of order over chaos. Sargon's adoption of the central gesture of the warrior deity on his stele epitomizes the transition from the Early Dynastic programmatic statements combining myth and historical events to the ideological discourse of the Akkad period. The replacement of Ningirsu in the pictogram with the net as he appears on Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures*, with the king, as he appears on the *Stele of Sargon*, constitutes an appropriation of the mythic icon of victory by the king, thereby centering martial action primarily on the ruler.

By the reign of Sargon's grandson Naram-Sin, the transition is complete: the image of kingship becomes that of the “eternal” warrior, and on his famous *Victory Stele* Naram-Sin (Fig. 4) is so completely identified with the role of the warrior god Ningirsu that he is represented as superhuman in size and in command of both life and death. Naram-Sin, the mighty king of

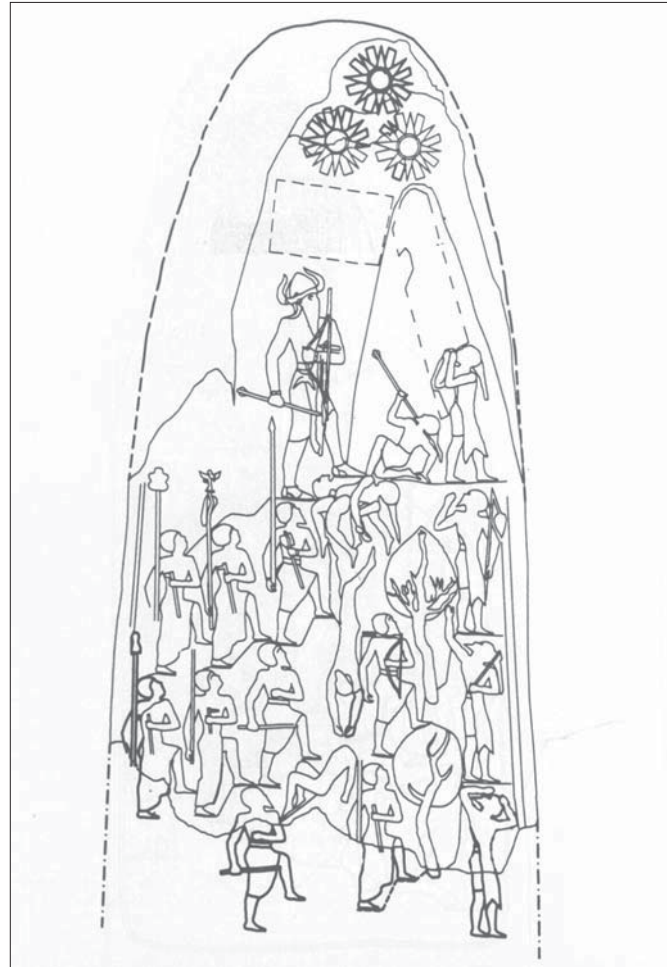


Fig. 4: Line drawing of Naram-Sin's *Victory Stele* (Winter 2002: 305).

Akkad, now becomes the telos of the temporal narrative and is presented as and at the culmination of the main event (Bahrani 2008: 109). Naram-Sin's body is portrayed emerging as a silhouette against the sky, walking on the mountaintop and crossing into territory hitherto uncharted by the kings of Mesopotamia. The imagery depicting the king mastering unknown territory is a new element in royal iconography. Although it commemorates the historical event of Naram-Sin's campaign against the Lullubi in the eastern mountains, the *Victory Stele* visually transforms Naram-Sin himself into an icon of victory in the role of master of the universe. The gesture of the warrior god Ningirsu, whose power over the enemies in his net on Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* manifests the glorious outcome of the battle, is replaced on the *Victory Stele* by the king in the heroic action of trampling the defeated enemy.

Unfortunately, no steles survive from Ešnunna in the Early Dynastic and Akkad periods. The only extant evidence takes the form of sealings: one example shows two heroes stabbing a seven-headed hydra; another, owned by a scribe,¹³ shows a presentation scene with

¹³ According to Frankfort 1955: 49, the inscription reads:

[³ Ti]špak	O Tišpak,
[ur]-saĝ	warrior,
[...] LI?	...
p[uzur ₂ -ru-um]	Puzurum
dub-sar	the scribe,
warad-zu	(is) your servant.

¹² Nigro 1998: 85 with further bibliography.



Fig. 5: Tišpak riding the *mušhuššu*-dragon
(Frankfort 1955: pl. 61, fig. 649).



Fig. 6: Seal of Šu-iliya (Ur III period)
(Frankfort 1940: fig. 100).

the god Tišpak seated on the *mušhuššu*-dragon in front of a fire altar and a minor deity introducing a suppliant (Fig. 5). The *mušhuššu*-dragon as symbol of the god Tišpak recurs in one of the year-names of Naram-Sin, who boasts of having installed two *mušhuššu*-dragons at the “fearsome gates” (Lambert 1987).

When Ešnunna managed to break away from the domination of the Ur III kings during the end of the Ur III period and gain decisive territorial control, its ruler Šu-iliya introduced new iconographic motifs to enunciate this historical change. The legend of his seal reveals a theology similar to that of the city of Assur with its patron deity Tišpak holding the office of kingship, while the ruler functions as his steward. The asymmetrical divine-human relationship, at least with respect to the division of power, reads as follows in the legend of the seal (Fig. 6):

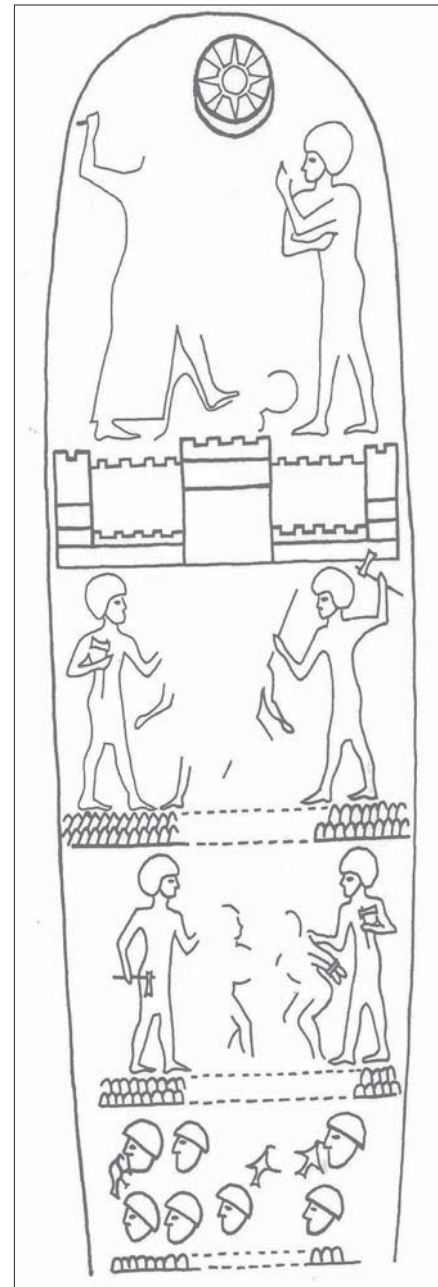


Fig. 7: Line drawing of Stele of Daduša
(van Koppen 2006: 100, fig. 1).

^[a]Tišpak
[LUGAL] *da-num*₂
[LUGAL] *ma-at [wa]-ri-im*

Tišpak,
mighty king,
king of the land of Wa-
rum,
king
of the four quarters,
^dŠu-iliya,
his agent,
beloved
of Bēlat-terraban
and of Bēlat-šuhnir,
Adad
and ...

LUGAL
[*ki-ib-r*] *a-at [a]r-ba-im*
^[a]Šu-*i*₃-*li*₂-*a*
PA?-*šu*
na-ra-a[m]
^d*Be-la-at-t[e]-ra-ba-an*
^d*Be-la-at-š[uh]-n[ir]*
^dIŠKUR
*u*₃ ^d[.....]
i-š[*i*]
*mu-uš-te-[...]*¹⁴

In the imagery, divine kingship is reflected in the specific pose of the god Tišpak, who is shown trampling the naked bodies of the enemy, thus adopting the ges-

¹⁴ See RIME 3/2, E3/2.3.1.1.

ture previously assumed by the human king Naram-Sin during the Old Akkadian period. The asymmetrical divine-human relationship is signified by the iconic image of the deity holding the royal insignia. The cutting of the seal into two registers is reminiscent of the arrangement in registers of Eannatum's *Stele of the Vultures* and of some Old Akkadian steles. During the Old Babylonian period, this type of organization was also adopted by king Daduša of Ešnunna (Fig. 7).

Daduša, moreover, also seems to have preferred a mythologizing rendering of the combat scene, as the storm god is depicted in the act of treading on the enemy in the upper register, a choice also made in Šamši-Adad I's stele. In contrast to the imagery of Šu-ilīya's seal, the king himself is now shown in the role of a supplicant rather than in the role of a warrior. While it is tempting to assume that Šamši-Adad I's iconographic choice was triggered by the cultural discourse employed in the powerful neighboring polity of Ešnunna, the iconic scene of the storm god trampling the naked enemy was notably used already by Silulu, an early Old Assyrian ruler of Assur, in the iconography of his seal, which is reminiscent of Šu-ilīya's seal in Ešnunna.

In the centuries that followed the mythologizing aspect, centering on the divine warrior figure disappeared from the pictorial construction of Assyrian steles, being woven instead into the textual medium of heroic poems, historical epics, and even the annals. During the Neo-Assyrian period, the image producers preferred to focus exclusively on one pictorial element only: the king shown as supplicant in never-ending communi-

cation with the gods. On the steles, his role as warrior was relegated to the textual medium; it was now the orthostat reliefs in the palaces that came to be used as the medium for this type of narrative pictorial display.

This diachronic survey of the conceptual metaphor of the combat myth traces the occurrence and recurrence of pictorial elements from the Early Dynastic period into later periods. It has demonstrated that once certain iconic gestures were established, such as the smiting of the enemy with the mace or the trampling of the naked body of the enemy, these could be successfully and meaningfully applied to either the human or divine warrior. Such alternations in gesturality reveal that the focus was on the *role* of the warrior figure as performed within the larger cosmic scheme, blurring the boundaries between the human and the divine, the historical and the mythical. Local variations consisted primarily of the creation and invention of new *constellations* of particular pre-existing pictorial motifs and the particular emphasis applied to either the mythologizing or historicizing rendering of this metaphor, as demonstrated in the pictogram of the trampling of the enemy, for instance. The conclusion to be drawn from these examples of the reception, processing, and recreation of particular motifs in the pictorial medium within the stream of tradition, is that rather than attempting to pin down the precise relation between text and image, future analyses might more productively consider how both text and image related to and denoted the same cultural metaphors and ideas.

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Ships bringing timber for the palace of Sargon

Alternative presentations of reality

Julian Edgeworth Reade

Abstract: An important group of Assyrian wall-panels from Khorsabad represents ships moving timber. This paper attempts to resolve the long-standing disagreement about the location of the scene.

Keywords: Assyria, Phoenicia, Khorsabad, composition, ships, timber.

Assyrian kings needed timber for the wide ceilings, high doorways and tall columns of grand buildings. While most of it must have been obtained in or near the Assyrian heartland, some of the finest prestigious logs came from the far west, from the celebrated Mediterranean ranges of Amanus and Lebanon, which also supplied timber by sea to Egypt. This paper addresses the context of an elaborate composition, showing the transport of timber, which was carved about 710 BC on a series of wall-panels in the throneroom court of Sargon's palace at his new capital city of Dur-Sharrukin or Khorsabad (Fig. 1).

Several administrative letters ascribed to the period when Khorsabad was being constructed refer to the cutting and/or transport of logs (SAA 1, 62–63; 98–102). Some were being transported along one of the Zab rivers, and thousands were being sent upstream by the governor of Ashur. There must have been several sources. One means of moving timber along local rivers, at least downstream, is illustrated in a carving from Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh (Fig. 2, above): material destined for this palace includes a group of roughly-cut logs, bound together as a raft steered along the Tigris by men holding curved oars.

Some of the letters relating to Khorsabad (SAA 1, 4; 202) may mention timber from the far west too. Its use is further confirmed by Sargon's building inscriptions, which mention high columns from Mount Amanus (e.g. Luckenbill 1927: 43, 49).

There are also ninth-century illustrations of the transport of timber. On the Rassam Obelisk of Ashurnasirpal II (Fig. 2, middle), a log sent as tribute from the west is transported by a team of oxen with a cart; this was clearly suitable for a large building. On the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (Fig. 2, below), soldiers are carrying logs, but there are only four men for each of them, as on the contemporary Nimrud thronebase (Fig. 3, above) which is probably identified by a caption as cedar from Amanus (RIMA 3, A.0.102.60); the images may be schematic, since these logs as drawn would not really have been long enough for roofing, but cedar

was suitable for other purposes too. If long logs from the far west were going to Nineveh, Nimrud or Khorsabad, they would eventually have had to cross the Tigris; the most obvious method would have been by floating.

The Khorsabad boat scene surely represents the transport of timber by boat for use in Sargon's palace itself. The main story runs from right to left, while including empty boats that are returning with masts erect from left to right (Fig. 1). The beginning on the right is missing, but could have shown logging. In the first surviving right-hand panel, timber is dragged across land, and piled up (Fig. 5). It is towed and carried across water on boats, past two fortified island cities (Figs 4 and 7), ready to be unloaded (Fig. 6) on to another area of land (Fig. 3, below).

On this last left-hand panel (Fig. 3, below) a road leads uphill to the left, but the top of the panel is missing. One drawing in the original publication (Fig. 8) shows the state of this entire wall at the time of excavation, together with the excavators' proposed reconstructions. Piles of stone on the ground suggest that the top of the panel may well have survived, even if fallen and broken, but it is uncertain whether the excavators noted any fragments indicating the nature of the carving. Their reconstructed view of the entire composition includes a town at the top of the panel, at the end of the road (Fig. 1). This makes sense, as the road wants a destination.

Immediately to the left of this broken panel, the line of the wall projected forward slightly, like a buttress. On the face of the projection there was a series of three panels, all found fallen but restored by Botta and Flandin as showing a row of four courtiers leading up to the king and an attendant, with a grand doorway beyond to the left. One might have expected the first courtier at the right-hand end of the row to be waving his arm, in a gesture of introduction, as in other compositions where Sargon or other Assyrian kings receive people or goods. The restoration by Botta and Flandin, however, simply shows an ordinary courtier with folded hands in this position. Loud (1936: 38), after re-excavating

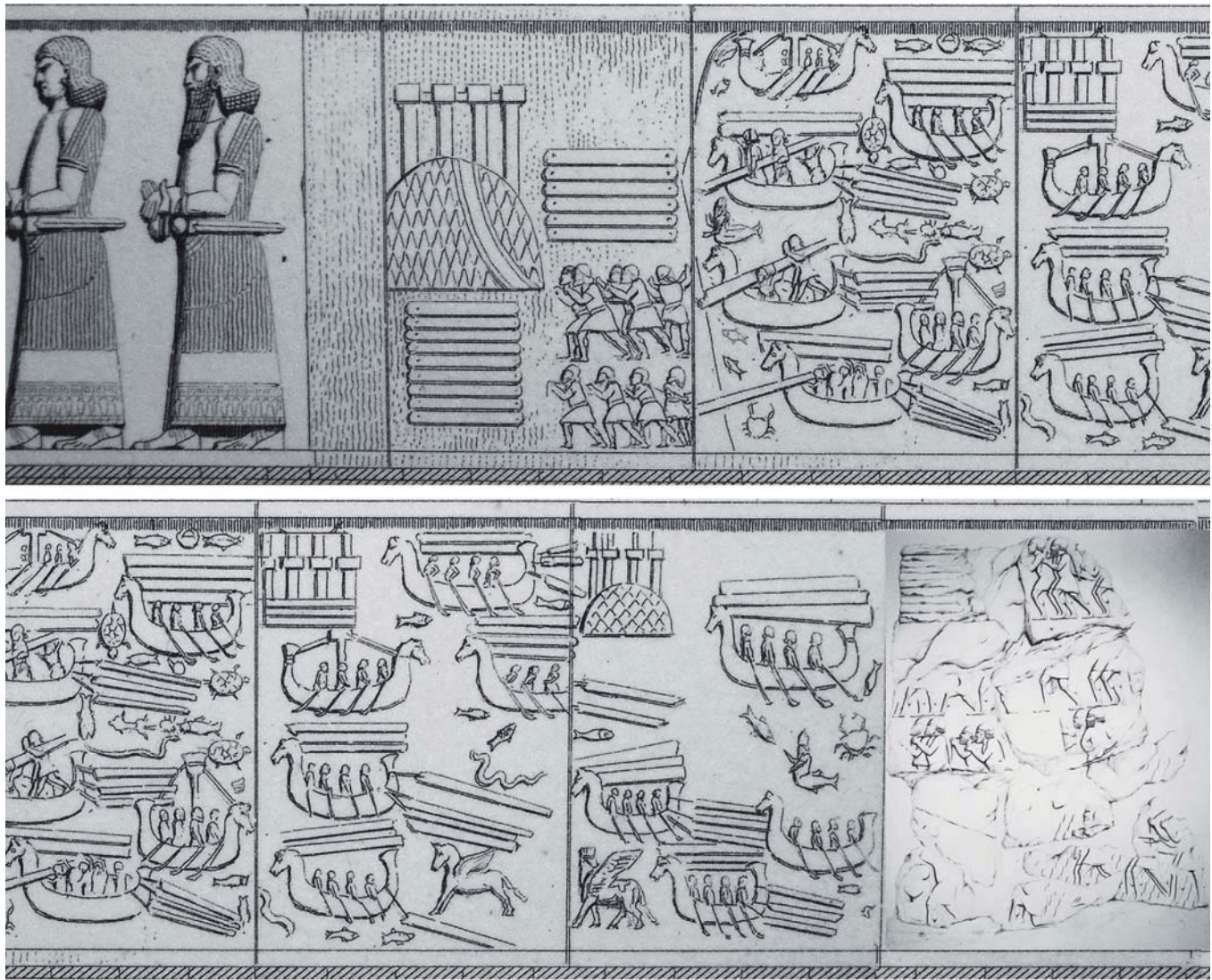


Fig. 1: Khorsabad boat scene, overlapping views, restored. Above: left side. Below: right side.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849–1850: I, pl. 29 (detail) and Pl. 31.

another nearby series of fallen panels restored by Botta and Flandin, observed that “obviously imagination played some part in putting together in pen and ink this scene.” So it seems possible that, in the boat scene too, an ordinary courtier was restored where there should have been one waving his arm.

On the other hand, the arrangement of king and courtiers as restored by Botta and Flandin on this projection resembles that on a similar balancing projection further left, on the far side of the grand doorway, where the panels were found in position (Fig. 8). The composition on this far side again included the king, attendant and four courtiers on the projection, but facing in the opposite direction. They were receiving a procession of men bringing tribute from the left, and there was a courtier waving his arm, but he was positioned on the section of wall with the tributaries rather than on the projection. So it seems not impossible that, in order to balance the compositions on either side of the grand doorway, the boat scene omitted this otherwise standard figure of a courtier waving his arm to show or introduce things to the king, although his presence may be understood.

Botta and Flandin (1849–1850: V, 99–105) proposed that the Khorsabad boat scene represented preparations for a siege, but this cannot be right. Jal (1847) proposed instead that the scene showed timber transported across a river or lake. Later it was proposed that the water was the Mediterranean Sea; Albenda (1983) gave a detailed exposition of this view, which is maintained on the Louvre website.¹ Linder (1986) slightly revised Jal’s thesis, suggesting that the boat scene showed the transport of timber upstream along a river. He was followed by Parpola (1987: Fig. 20a–d), in a caption not approved by that volume’s “illustrations editor” (myself). More recently Morandi Bonacossi (2014: 450), citing Linder, affirmed that “a Mesopotamian riverine setting for the scene has been convincingly suggested on the basis of the flora, fauna and type of boats portrayed in the reliefs.” Friedman (2015: 24–25) seems to agree. The main considerations are as follows.

Modern students of this scene are agreed that the turbans or caps worn by all the people doing the work identify them as westerners (e.g. Linder 1986: 278).

¹ <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/frieze-transportation-timber>; last accessed June 2015.



Fig. 2:

Above: Raft on Tigris, made of logs tied together (Sennacherib). Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum. ME 124822.

Middle: Ox-drawn cart carrying timber (Ashurnasirpal II). Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum. ME 118800.

Below: Assyrian soldiers carrying logs (Shalmaneser III). Courtesy The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. 54.2335 (Museum purchase, 1949).

Sargon's Khorsabad inscriptions list the many lands he conquered, beginning in the west with Cyprus, and state that his city of Khorsabad was built by the peoples he had defeated (e.g. Luckenbill 1927: 50, 52). The rulers of two Mediterranean islands, Tyre and Arwad, and ten kings of Cyprus are among westerners from whom

Esarhaddon later got timber for Nineveh (RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 1 v 54–vi 1). There are two cities or fortresses on islands in the Khorsabad boat scene. Magical figures, namely two mermen and a human-headed winged bull, are to be seen in the water among the boats; Sargon sometimes calls such bulls, when stationed at his palace

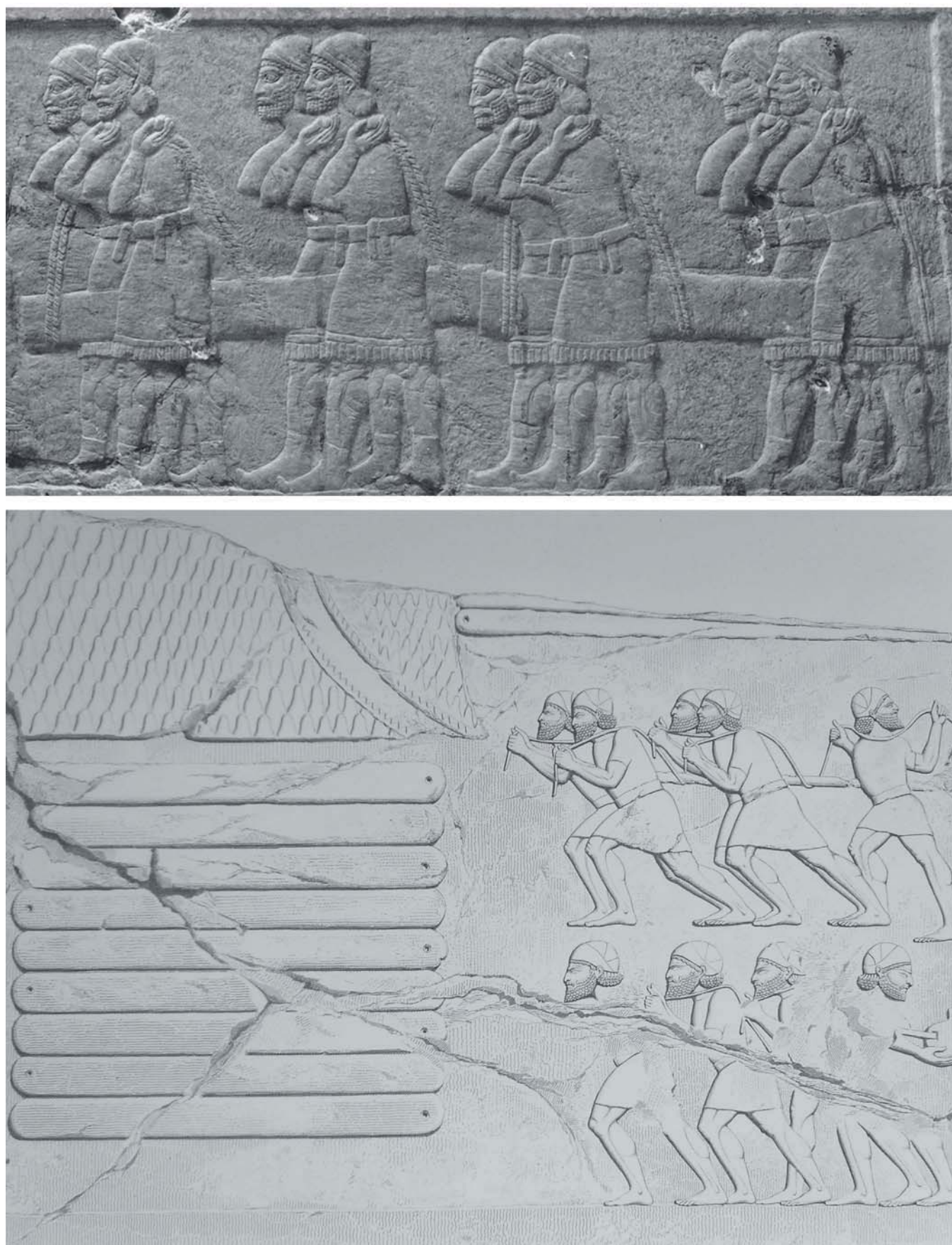


Fig. 3:

Above: Westerners carrying logs (Shalmaneser III). Iraq Museum 65574. Photograph: British School of Archaeology in Iraq (scan by courtesy of Nigel Tallis).

Below: Khorsabad boat scene, left edge. After: Botta/Flandin 1849–1850: I, pl. 35.

gates, “creatures of the mountain and the sea” (Luckenbill 1927: 56, 58). Other features and characteristics of the boat scene cannot be defined as unquestionably marine or riverine: it is arguable whether details are accurate or impressionistic, but the scene is anyway not a military campaign, and need not have been based on real sketches, such as those prepared by war-artists which were probably available in this period for scenes of military narrative (Reade 2012).

The boats themselves, both those with erect masts and those without, are of a type that is, so far, only attested with certainty in illustrations at Khorsabad. They have figureheads in the form of horse’s heads at the prow, and sternposts in the form of fishtails. They are therefore imaginatively carved in the shape of the hippocamp. This type of composite being, a horse at the front and a serpent or fish at the back, although better attested slightly later in the Mediterranean world, would evidently have felt at home with other composites such as the merman and goat-fish in an Assyrian scholar’s bestiary.

Animal-head figureheads are found on earlier Phoenician boats represented on the embossed bronzes of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III, both in London (Fig. 9, above) and Paris (Musée du Louvre, AO 14038; Aruz et al. 2014: 136, Fig. 44a). The boats are mastless and operated by standing oarsmen, as if they are small vessels for coastal use. They are ferrying tribute, apparently jewellery and ingots, from Tyre or Sidon across to the mainland. The figureheads are at both prow and stern. The heads, when compared to those of real horses and camels on other Balawat bronzes (e.g. King 1915: Pls XXIII–XXIV, XXXIX–XL), look much like either of them, and use of a camel figurehead might have seemed appropriate since the camel was a transport animal or “ship of the desert”. Since it is the horse figurehead that is usual later, however, Friedman (2015: 20–21) is probably right in assuming that horses are the animals intended in the Balawat bronzes. While the sterns of these boats are not drawn as fishtails, the presence of heads at both ends is counterintuitive, and it is legitimate to wonder whether they reflect reality or some mistake by an Assyrian draughtsman who was recording details he had not inspected at close quarters.

Two vessels with oarsmen are shown beside another island city or fortress on the excavation drawing of a Tiglathpileser III sculpture of which only part now survives (Fig. 9, middle and below). One has neither figureheads nor mast, but the other is masted and has at the prow a figurehead in the shape of a waterbird such as a goose or duck. At the sternpost there is another feature. The drawing presents this latter as a lion’s head, but close inspection of the original, in consultation with St John Simpson, does not support this; the feature has a roundish shape and is scratched, but the traces suggest that the surface was originally flat. It could be regarded as the rear end of a bird but not as any kind of head. Similarly, at least two vessels belonging to Tyre or Sidon represented in lost Sennacherib sculptures seem to have had figureheads at the prow in the shape

of a waterbird’s head with prominent eye, to judge by the poor photographs available (Fig. 10, above; see also Barnett et al. 1998: 52, Pls 39–41), although this detail was missed in the excavation drawings of the same scene (Fig. 10, below). The sternposts are unclear, but might be the rear ends of birds, or even fishtails. The Sennacherib vessels do not have masts but have rows of seated oarsmen and are evidently serious sea-going ships (while distinct from warships with rams), rather than coastal boats, as the context of the sculpture anyway suggests. Given the bird’s head figurehead on the Tiglathpileser fragment, this too may have intended to represent a large sea-going vessel. Yet, even if our two or three Assyrian carvings of large Phoenician transport vessels of this period show their figureheads as having the shapes of waterbirds rather than horses, that does not mean that horse figureheads were never used on sea-going vessels.

Hippocamp carvings at prow and stern, resembling those of the boats in the main Khorsabad boat scene, are also present on two boats moored beside a summer-house in the royal garden at Khorsabad (Fig. 11, above); this detail is in a series of panels showing a royal excursion during which birds are shot (Botta/Flandin 1849–1850: I, Pls 108–114). The boats here might have been used for hunting, as one of comparable design was used for this purpose, probably on canals near Nineveh, by Ashurbanipal. Only a drawing of the panel showing Ashurbanipal’s boat survives. The figurehead at its prow seems again to be a horse’s head (Fig. 11, below); the boat’s stern is turned inward, and what it represents is unclear but might be the tail of a serpent. So the Assyrians, at least from Sargon onwards, sometimes used boats with hippocamp figureheads on waterways around Nineveh. It is possible that the hippocamp element of the design was contributed by an Assyrian court scholar, but the kings of this period prided themselves not only on their appreciation of the luxurious western lifestyle exemplified by, among other things, these very gardens and summer-houses (e.g. Reade 2008), but also on the recognition and adoption of superior technology, such as that embodied in the western “Hatti” ships built at Til-Barsip and Nineveh for one of Sennacherib’s Elamite campaigns (RINAP 3/1: Sennacherib 34: 20–26). The practical details of the hippocamp boat design may well have been based on that of western boats, such as those used along the Phoenician coast, and they may well have been built by Phoenicians or other westerners.

The person responsible for designing the carving of the main Khorsabad boat scene could then have seen such hippocamp boats on the Tigris or on Assyrian canals. He could have known that the Phoenicians and Greeks had sea-going vessels which were involved in transporting timber. He need not have had a reliable sketch illustrating how they operated, and so he could simply have drawn the type of western-style boat with which he was familiar. Yet hypotheses like these, while they are compatible with an intended Mediterranean location for the events illustrated in the Khorsabad boat

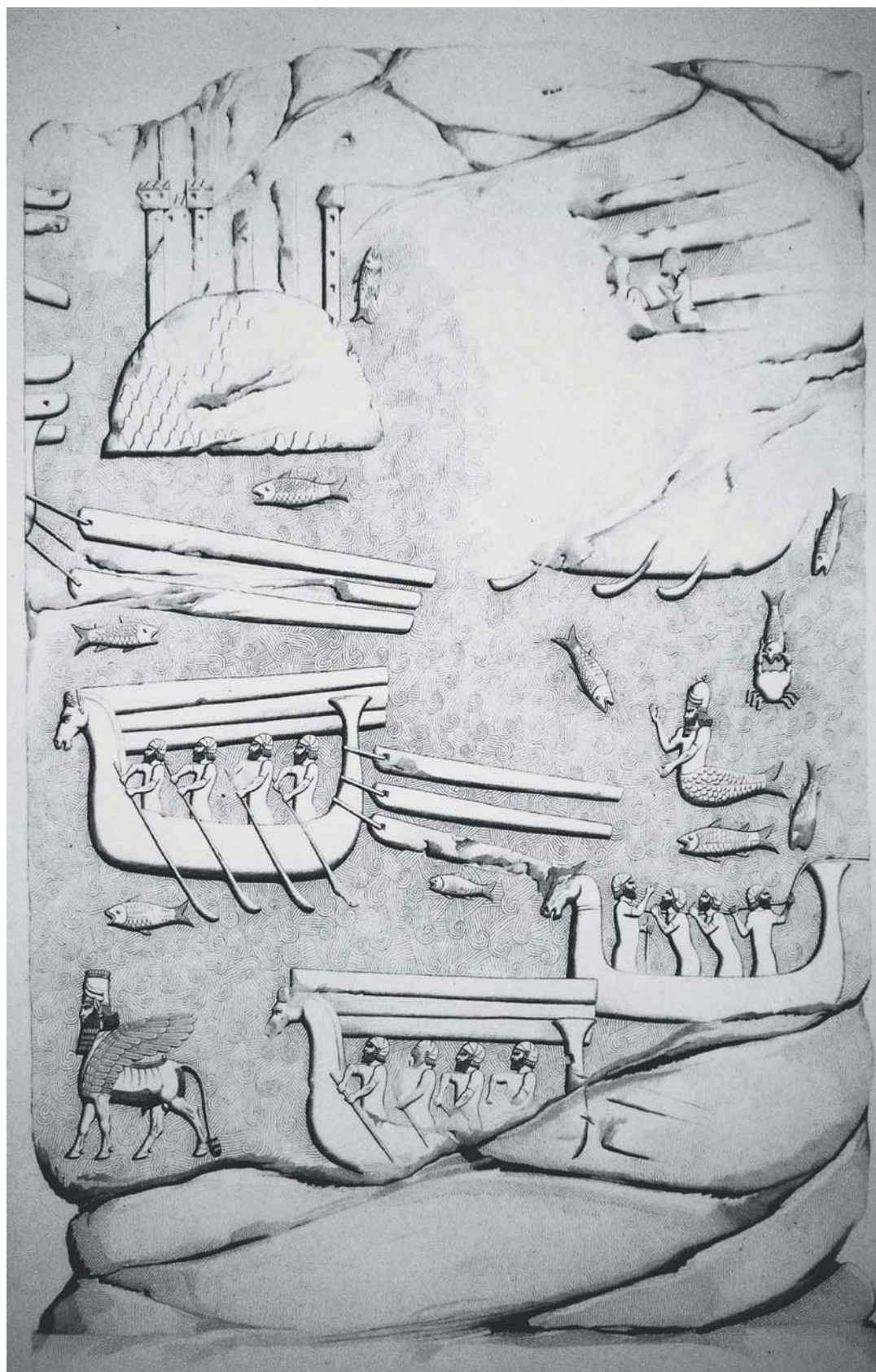


Fig. 4: Khorsabad boat scene, centre right.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849-1850: I, pl. 32.

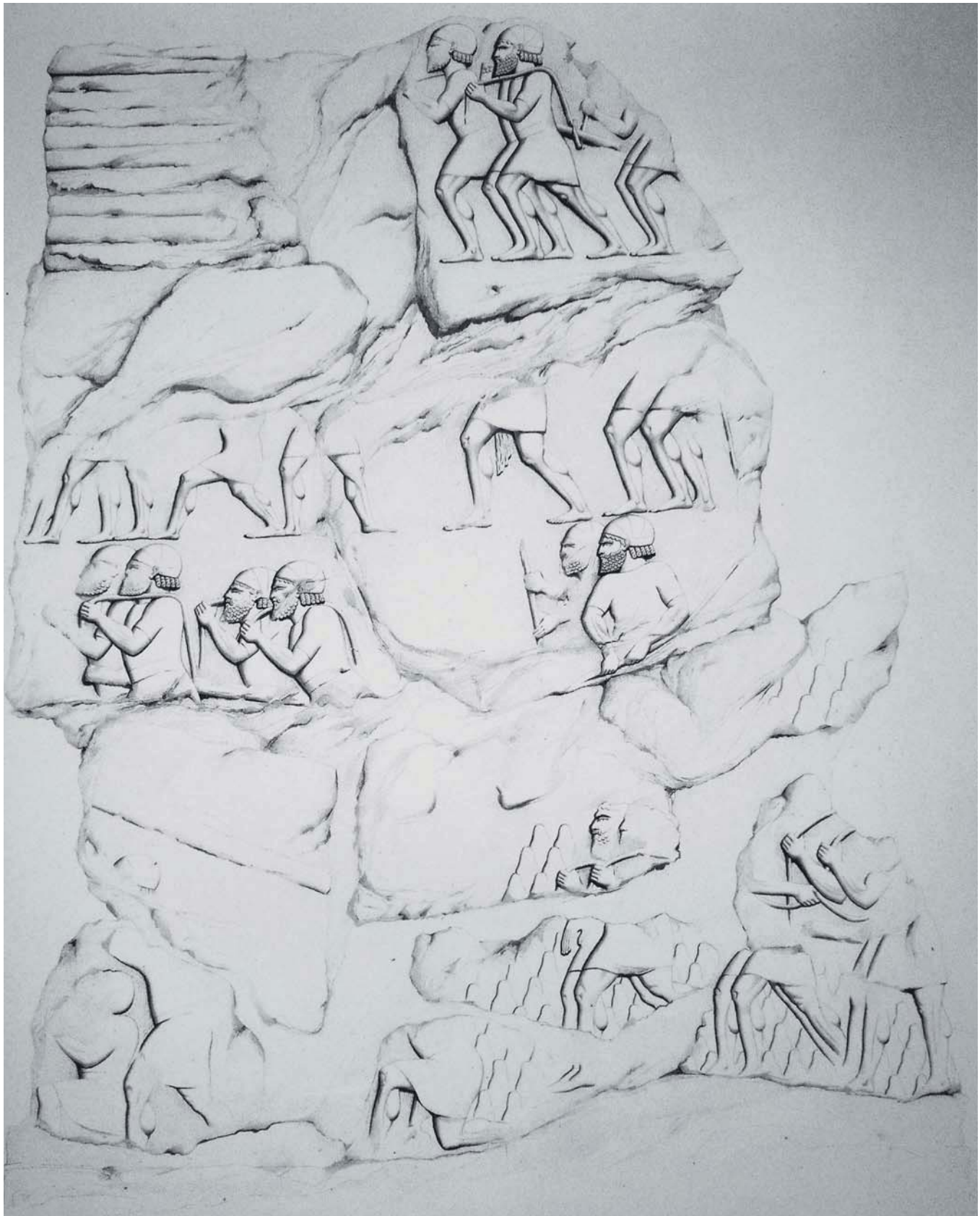


Fig. 5: Khorsabad boat scene, right edge.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849-1850: I, pl. 31.

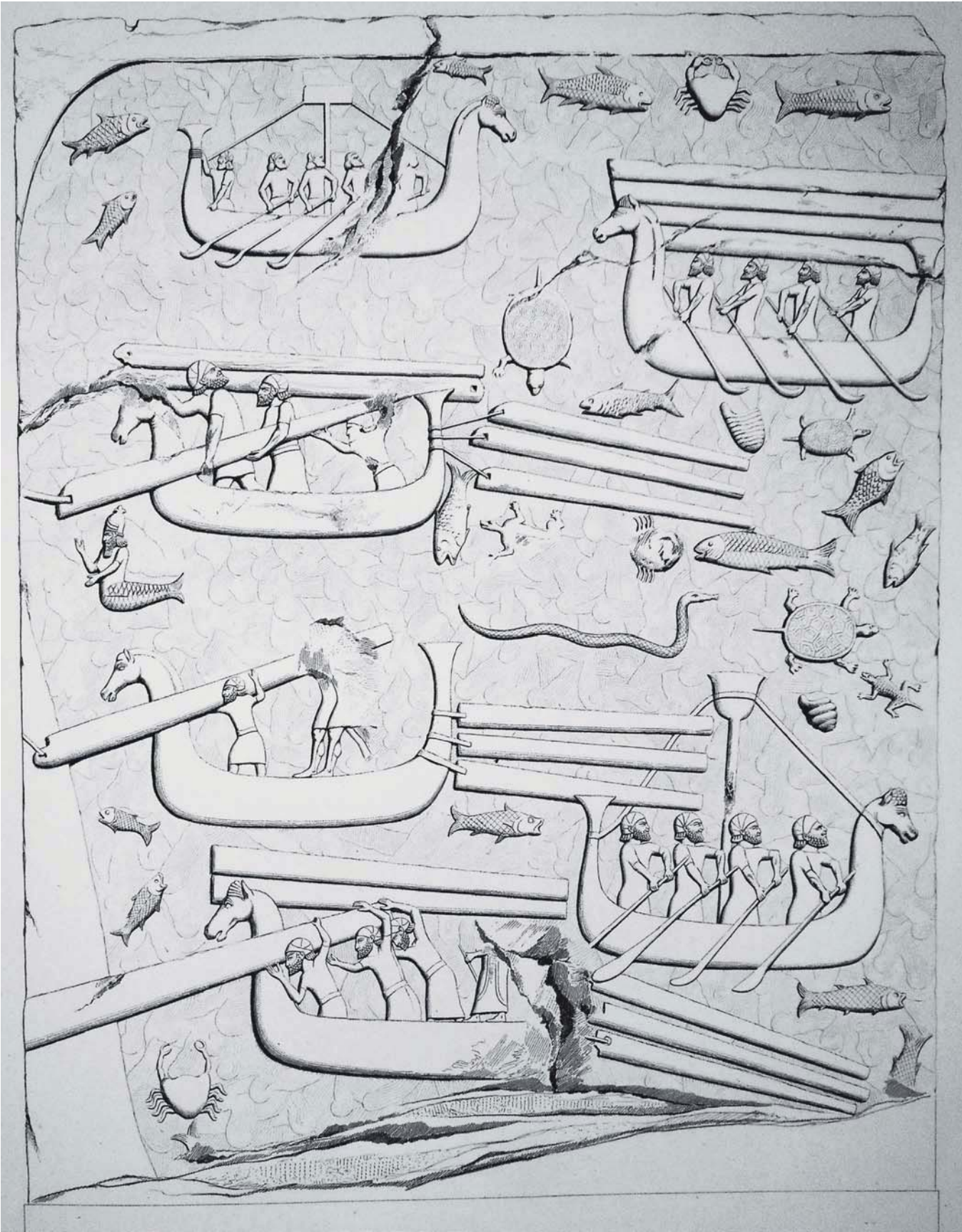


Fig. 6: Khorsabad boat scene, centre left.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849-1850: I, pl. 34.

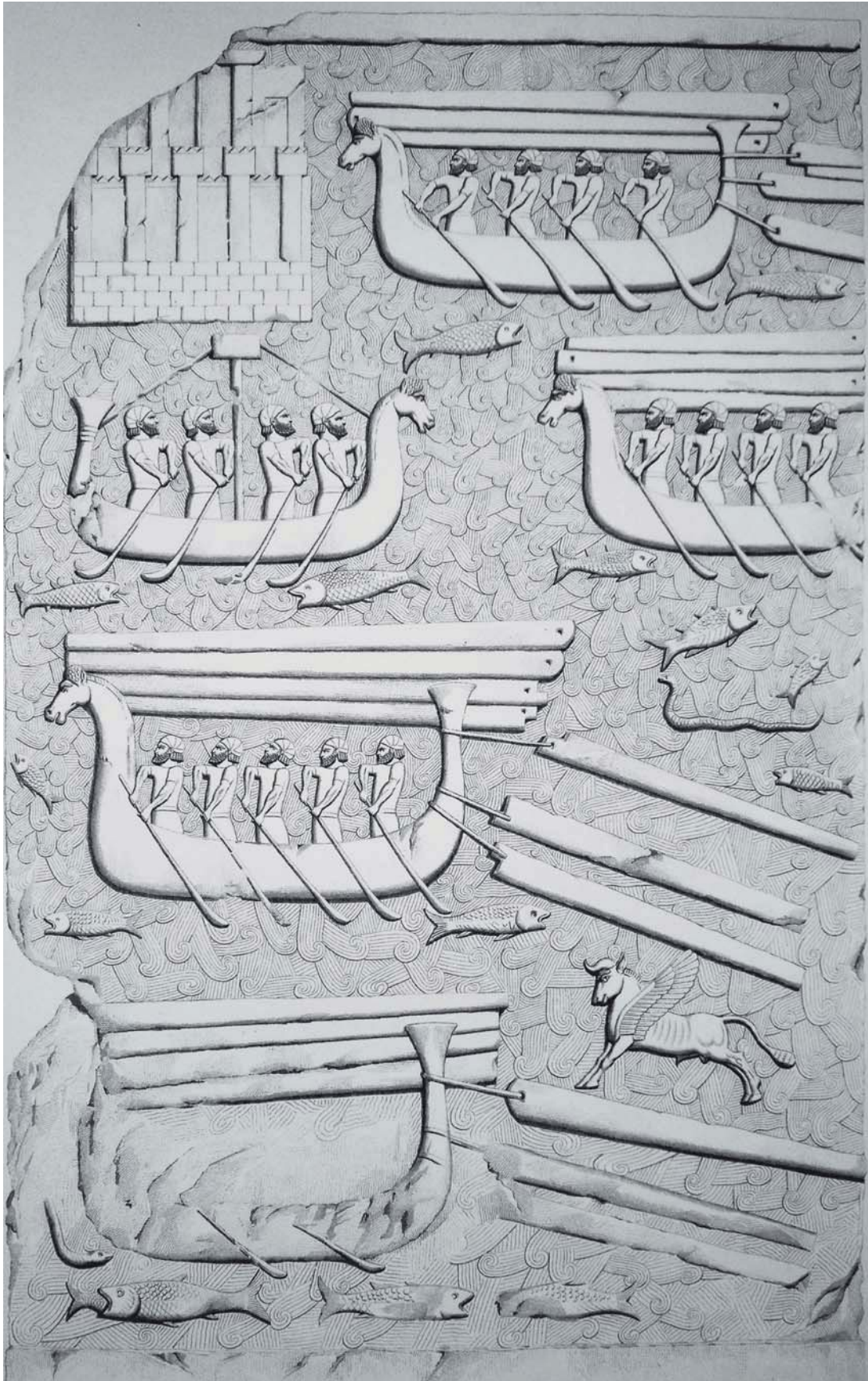


Fig. 7: Khorsabad boat scene, centre.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849-1850: I, pl. 33.

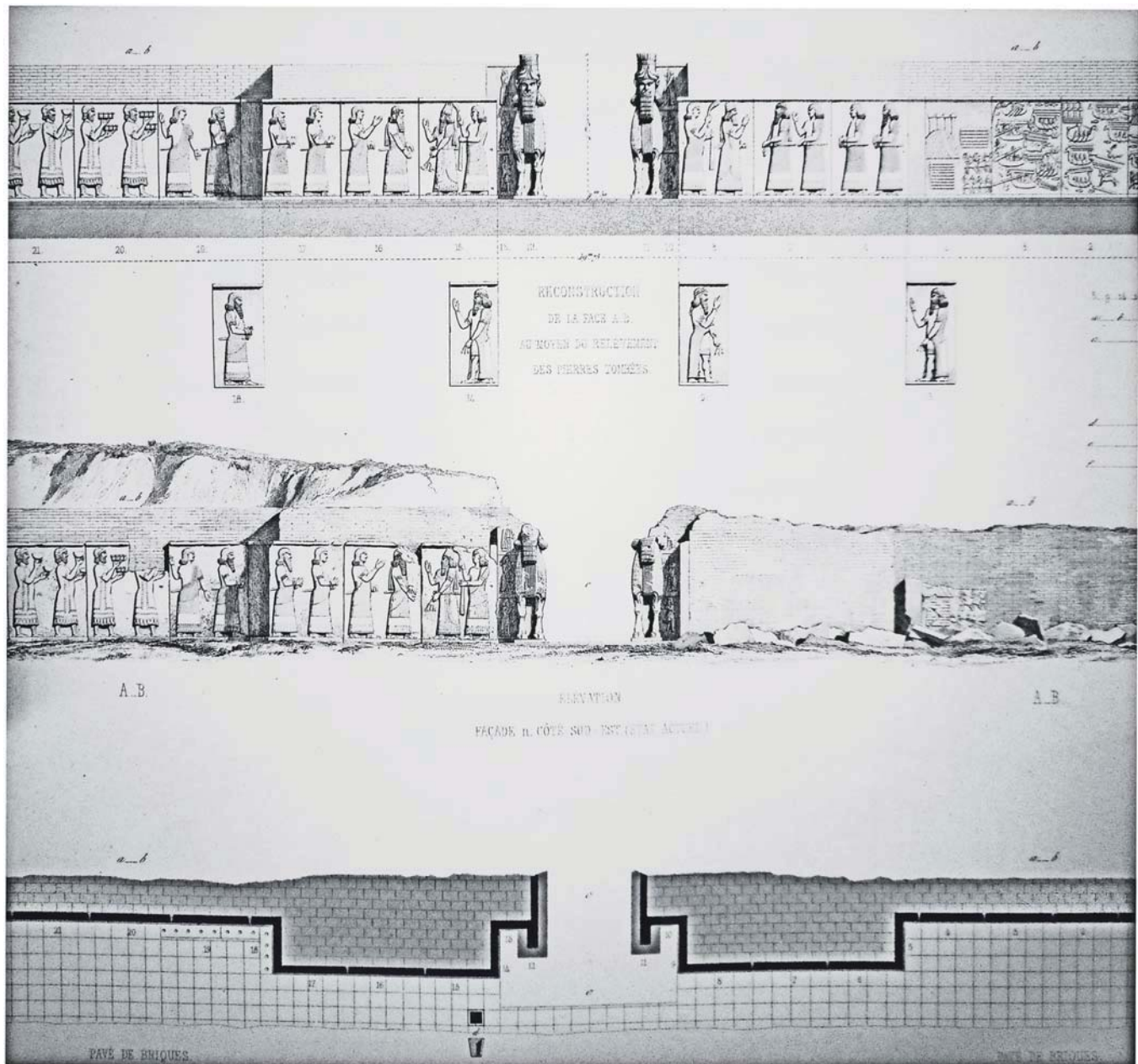


Fig. 8: Architectural relationship of Khorsabad boat scene and tribute composition, as excavated and restored.
After: Botta/Flandin 1849–1850: I, pl. 29 (detail).

scene, cannot be decisive in the identification of its subject-matter.

Linder (1986: 278–279) emphasised another problem, that the way in which the timber is shown as being carried on these boats is not compatible with transport at sea. The timbers are piled high above deck from bow to stern, or are towed behind. The boats appear top-heavy, in imminent danger of overturning. One could conceivably use some such method to move high-quality timber a short distance along or across a calm river, such as the Tigris in most seasons, but any boats loaded like this in the Mediterranean would require a heavy weight of timber inside to provide stability. The boats as shown could easily have been damaged by the logs they are towing in the water, and the idea of loading logs on top of boats when it might have been easier to float them is anyway strange.

There is a way around this dilemma. Both interpretations, that the water is the Mediterranean (Albenda

1983) or the Tigris (Linder 1986), presuppose that the Khorsabad boat scene shows a real event, rendered in accordance with standard Assyrian artistic conventions but essentially intended as a literal representation of something that was really happening and that people really saw. By this reading it is one episode, a moving film of activities taking place over a very limited time, in the same way that the assault and capture of a city were customarily described in an annalistic account and illustrated in narrative art, within a neat chronological and geographical framework, with well-observed fauna and flora.

There is, however, another relevant type of scene, best exemplified in Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, where campaigns in Elam, in which the king did not personally participate, culminate in the booty and prisoners being led into his presence (e.g. Barnett 1976: Pls 16, 21, 67). It looks at first sight as if the fighting has only just finished, with Assyrian soldiers hold-

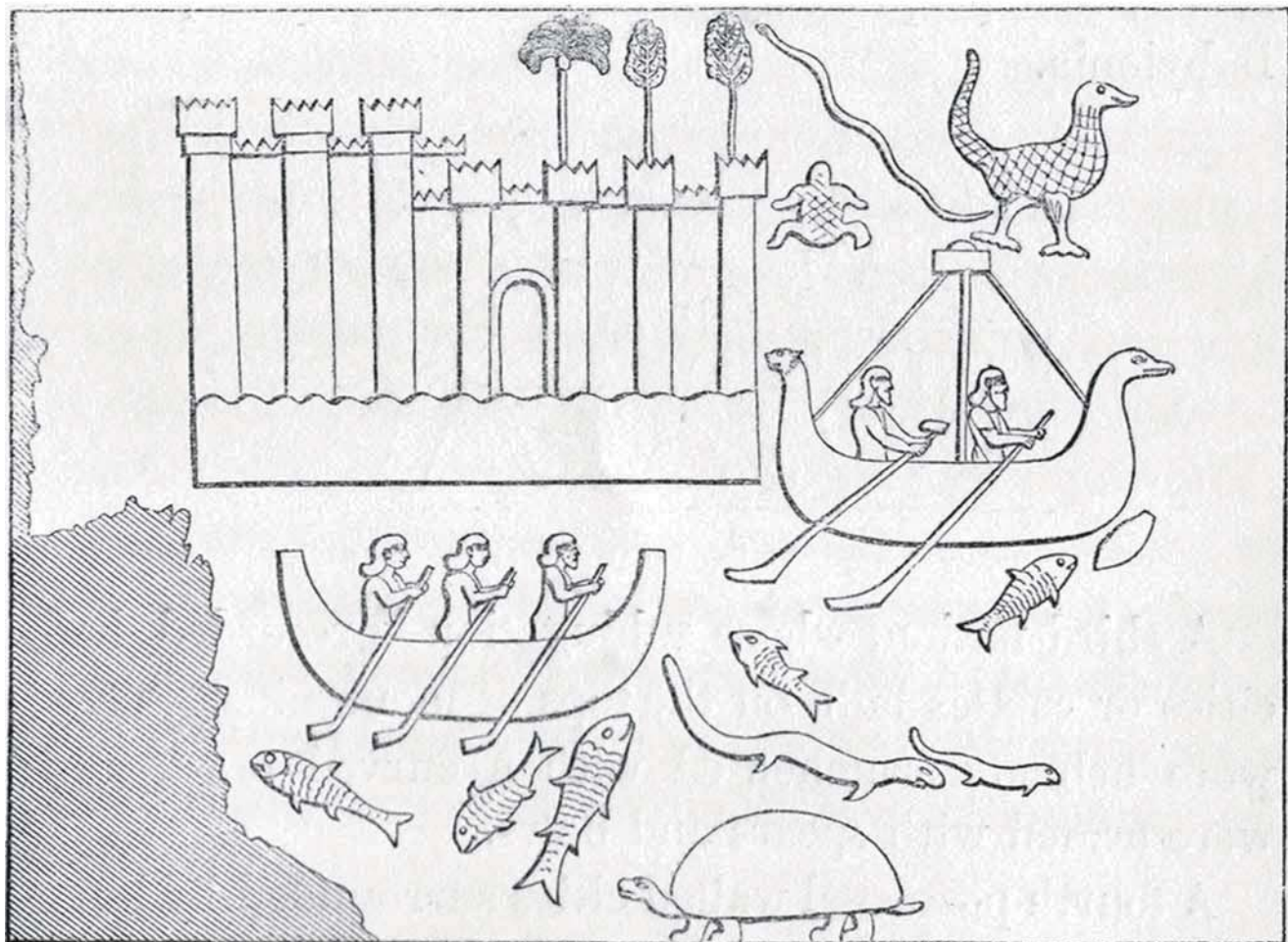


Fig. 9:
Above: Phoenician boats (Shalmaneser III). Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum. ME 124661.
Middle: Boats and island, probably Phoenician (Tiglathpileser III). After: Layard 1849a: II, 395.
Below: Detail of boat (Tiglathpileser). Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum. ME 102981.



Fig. 10:

Above: Phoenician boat (Sennacherib). Photograph by L.W. King, c. 1904. Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum.

Below: Phoenician boat (Sennacherib). After: Layard 1849b: Pl. 71 (detail).

ing prisoners and sometimes even enemy heads, but the king and his attendants have arrived suddenly, in incongruous court dress, on a magic carpet: they are present in spirit but not in the flesh. Similarly, there is a series of panels that must have shown the capture of Babylon in 648 BC, and that culminated in the king receiving the booty of Babylon in a landscape of palm-trees, above a procession of prisoners (Reade 1964: 9; Barnett 1976: Pl. 35). Foreigners from other places are in attendance too (e.g. Reade 1998: 230), reinforcing the Assyrian triumph, as they could have done in reality during formal celebrations at Nineveh, but there is no particular reason to suppose that they were present at Babylon immediately after the capture of the city. This kind of portmanteau composition is the visual counterpart, not of an annalistic inscription but of one of the so-called display or summary inscriptions.

The boat scene is part of one of two compositions flanking a major entrance (**Fig. 8**), which led from the throneroom court to a grand reception suite in which foreigners were received. The left-hand composition represents a general statement that the king held the gorgeous west in fee. Westerners are bringing tribute of various kinds, from left to right, to be received by the king and his courtiers. In the right-hand composition, westerners are bringing timber, from right to left; they too are received by the king and his courtiers, and the absence of a courtier waving his arm need not be significant. The boats and courtiers are interdependent. The importance of the subject-matter of this composition should be broadly comparable with that of the composition of tributaries on the other side of the entrance. This suggests that, while the shore on to which the timber is unloaded should indeed be somewhere on the way to Khorsabad, and the postulated city on the last

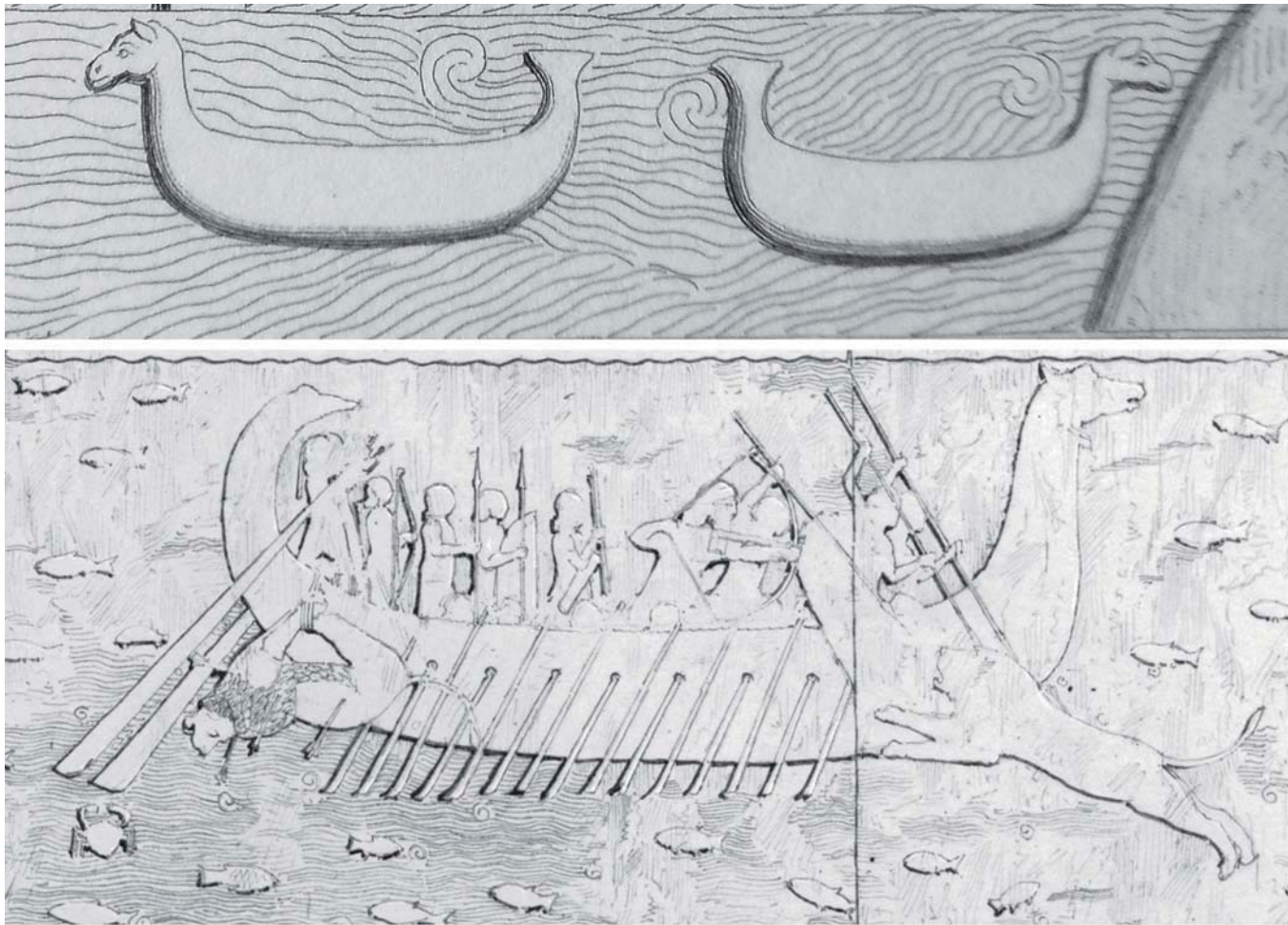


Fig. 11:

Above: Royal Assyrian boats, probably for hunting (Sargon). Botta/Flandin 1849–1850: II, Pl. 114 (detail).

Below: Royal Assyrian hunting boat (Ashurbanipal). Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum. Original Drawings V, 22.

panel could be Khorsabad itself, the water could still represent the Mediterranean, with its island cities and a source of timber on a farther shore, illustrating in an ill-informed but proper fashion the vast extent of the resources controlled by Sargon.

By this hypothesis the Khorsabad boat scene, incorporating the king and his courtiers and the transport of

timber, belongs in the same family as the Ashurbanipal wall-panels. It is a portmanteau composition, presenting an alternative summation of reality. Royal achievements in scenes of this nature are compressed in ways that meet propagandistic requirements but tend to elude close logical analysis. It is a formula with lasting appeal and limitless applications.

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Identification through image and legend

Inscribed seals from Kültepe lower town level II

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Abstract: Seals are one of the most common artefacts where image and text meet. Glyptic compositions and legends are both intended to serve artistic, functional and symbolic purposes that complementarily express the same basic information: the seal owner's identity, which is only occasionally detectable from the information provided by the tablet or the envelope. The combination of image and text does not occur in all seals and, when it does, it does not follow a prescribed scheme. This paper will examine the inscribed seals from Kültepe lower town level II, focusing, in particular, on their legends, their distribution among different social groups and the treatments applied to their inscriptions when reusing them (i.e. collocation of the text within the frieze, relation between the legend and the scene, re-carving or preservation of the legend after a seal's transfer, etc.). All these points will be developed together with the identification of the seal's owners and users, which remains a significant area of concern when reconstructing the Kaniš archives.

Keywords: Kültepe/Kaniš, cylinder seals, seal inscriptions, Old Assyrian period.

1 Introduction

After their introduction in the Chalcolithic period, seals have experienced several uses according to the meaning assigned to them.¹

Throughout history, the users and owners of seals belonged to a variety of social classes and groups who covered different roles and positions. Nevertheless, the basic functions of seals remained essentially the same. They were impressed on clay to mark ownership and to protect any kind of object that was so marked. After the development of writing, seals, as representatives of the individual and as an emanation of his authority, were largely used to ratify documents. Both their legal and protective functions imparted in them value as amulet which, by extension, acted to protect the rightful wearer and to symbolize the wearer's identity within society.

The magic properties of seals were enhanced by the prestige of the material from which the seal was made, by the quality of its craftsmanship and by its visual meaning. Designs were carefully chosen and often spe-

cifically commissioned according to the personal preference of the owner.

The value of a seal could be connected to features that are hardly detectable from the current evidence, such as the importance of its previous owner and the prestige resulting from it.

The seal's primary function was enclosed in its carving which – theoretically – could not be identically reproduced. The iconographic and stylistic features of the seal as well as the seal cutter's "hand" characterized the seal as a *unicum* representing that precise individual or authority. Within a limited group of people anyone would have been able to recognize the seal of a specific owner. The more popular the individual was, the more his seal was known.²

In the late 3rd millennium BC, thanks to the increasing involvement of individuals into judicial and financial matters, the concept of private ownership became crucial. Finally, from the latter part of the Early Dynastic period we have evidence of personal names inscribed on seals, which can definitely be said to belong to individuals.³

1 Abbreviations of editions and studies of Old Assyrian texts follow those in Michel 2003. Seal references are indicated according to Teissier's catalogue number (Teissier 1994: Te) and, when available, with the CS number introduced by N. Özgüç (Özgüç/Tunca 2001; Özgüç 2006). I address my warmest thanks to Bradley Sekedat who kindly corrected the English of this paper and to Federico Longo for his helpful comments and suggestions. All remaining mistakes are my sole responsibility. Research for this paper was conducted at Ankara Üniversitesi within the TÜBİTAK 2216 Research Fellowship Programme for International Researchers.

2 For a general overview on Near Eastern glyptic and sealing practice see Frankfort 1939 and Collon 1987. For further considerations on the value of seals and their importance in Near Eastern studies see Cassin 1960 and Winter 2001.

3 Bilateral approaches on inscriptions and iconography are not new in Near Eastern glyptic studies. See Gelb 1977 that shows a pioneering classification of seal inscriptions and Winter 1991, where the author revealed the code governing some Ur III seals variants through an admirable combination of textual and visual data.

The inscription provided the seal with a special apotropaic aura which extended to the owner. The charming impact produced by writing and the literate skills necessary for its intaglio (probably not always affordable as a service) added more value to an already valuable object. At the same time, the seal benefitted from the good omens generated by displaying the owner's name and was considered as precious as the latter's own prominence within society, even in later times, as a sort of relic.⁴

Legends were essential for identifying seal impressions on documents and merchandise. The regard enjoyed by inscriptions may be foreseen in the execution of some sealing, where the impression does not show the complete and consecutive visual sequence of its elements. Rather, when rolling the seal, the sealer carefully impressed the inscription in a central place to ensure its legibility and occasionally did not continue the impression until the whole disclosure of its freeze. This practice is particularly evident on *bullae*, where the small space available on clay did not allow rolling the whole surface of the cylinder. The visual priority was placed on the inscription, being the most revelatory and probably captivating feature of the seal.⁵

Sealing and seals from Kültepe, near Kayseri, in Cappadocia, are one of the largest repertoires for 2nd millennium Near Eastern glyptic.⁶ The *kārum* of Kaniš, located in the lower town of the city, appears to have been the administrative centre of the Assyrian trading network that extended from north-west Mesopotamia and north Syria to south and central Anatolia. The lower town consists of five occupational levels. The levels II (ca. 1970–1830 BC) and Ib (ca. 1800–1725 BC), which correspond to the Assyrian presence in the site, are rich in tablets, envelopes, *bullae* and other archaeological artefacts that have been discovered in the private houses inhabited by the merchants.⁷

4 Collon 1987: 120; Ricetti 2014: § 4.2.

5 This practice may be seen in a number of *bullae* from Achemhöyük (Özgüç 1980: 64, figs. III-1 a–c, III-3 a, b; 2015: 38–66, CS 1–12). See also Winter's considerations on Ur III official sealing (1991: 73–74) and some Ur III examples of the same kind (Buchanan 1981: ns. 642, 644, 649).

6 The term "seals" in this paper it is not restricted to the actual seals, but alludes, more generally, to the ancient impressions. Though working only with the impressions might seem a challenge, their combination with the document where the impressions appear acquaints us with information that otherwise would remain concealed.

The archaeological excavation at the site yielded only few actual seals. When leaving their houses, the inhabitants apparently had the opportunity to carry their valuables, among which, were their seals. So far, ca. 120 actual seals from Kültepe have been published. Most of them are stamps coming from level Ib. They are mentioned as small finds in excavation reports and articles and only occasionally treated in monographs (e.g. Özgüç 1968). A few inscribed actual seals that are preserved in different collections are probably contemporary of Kültepe lower town level II period (i.e. Porada 1948: ns. 863, 868, 872, 874, 878, 880, 885, 887, 892, and possibly also n. 904; Buchanan 1966: ns. 824, 832). Although their finding place is unknown and their impression has not been found on any Old Assyrian document, they likely originated from centers placed along the Old Assyrian trade routes.

7 For the many aspects related to the Old Assyrian period inside

The evidence from level II is an ideal framework for glyptic studies and for investigating the relationship between seals and seal inscriptions. Counting hundreds of different sealings, which refer to individuals of the same community, it allows a broad investigation on different social aspects.⁸

Due to its abundance, the investigation has been limited to the material available in publications. Nearly all the sealed evidence brought to light before the beginning of the official excavation at the site has been published, either in joint or separate catalogues of texts and seals.⁹ A considerable amount of envelopes and *bullae* has been recovered by the Turkish archaeological mission working at Kültepe since 1948. Part of the seals impressed on them is offered in catalogues rich of descriptions, photographs and drawings.¹⁰

Many of the issues offered in this paper are not entirely new. However, a general reconsideration appeared to be needed. Documents that have been discovered during the last sixty years are gradually getting published and scholars have established a new interdisciplinary platform, which promotes the combination of textual and visual information.¹¹

and outside Anatolia, see Veenhof 2008, Larsen 2015 and their bibliography. For further publications on texts, seals and other archaeological evidence, see Michel 2003 updated in: Michel 2006 and 2011. More recent publications resulted from a few conferences on Kültepe studies: Atici et al. 2014, KIM 1 and KIM 2.

8 See Larsen 1977, whose suggestions were reiterated by Teissier (1994). Scholars working on Kültepe material constantly recall the importance of the information enclosed in seals and sealing practice. Complementary publications of texts and seal impressions would be very welcomed.

9 E.g.: TC 3, TMH, ICK 1–2, CCT 6, KKS, CTMMA 1, VS 26. For the list of tablets held in different collections, see Michel 2003: 3–59.

10 I.e. Özgüç 1965 shows descriptions and photographs of Old Anatolian style seal impressions that have been found on the envelopes recovered during the seasons 1948–1951 (Kt a/k–Kt d/k) and 1953–1962 (Kt f/k–Kt n/k); Özgüç/Tunca 2001 collects all the *bullae* found in fifty years of excavation. It is equipped with a seal impressions catalogue edited by Nimet Özgüç and with the analysis of the inscriptions both on *bullae* and seals by Öhnan Tunca; Özgüç 2006 presents descriptions, photographs and drawings of more than 700 seal impressions found on the envelopes from the archives of Peruwa excavated in 1951 (Kt d/k) and of Uşur-ša-Ištar discovered in 1962 (Kt n/k). Though remarkable for their content, these works remain rather mute on a number of issues, which would benefit from making texts accessible. The just mentioned archive of Uşur-ša-Ištar (Kt n/k) whose impressions have been largely published, counts only a handful of available texts, while texts from Peruwa's archive appeared in 2016 in AKT 10. On the other hand, the impressions on the envelopes from the Kt a/k (AKT 1) and 90/k (TPAK 1) archives have not been published yet. Few publications derive from the cooperative efforts of philologists and archaeologists. AKT 4 (Kt o/k), AKT 7a (Kt 88/k) and AKT 9a have been published without drawings, but they present photographs, as well as AKT 6a–c (Kt 94/k), whose impressions are expected to be published soon by A. Lassen in a separate edition. AKT 5 (Kt 92/k) includes seal drawings and descriptions by M. Omura, who is also preparing the publication of the impressions found on the envelopes from Kt e/k–i/k archives (1953–1957) (AKT 5: 211, note 1) and from the archive of Elamma (1991/92), whose texts have been published in AKT 8.

11 See for example the recent experience of the Old Assyrian Text Project (<http://oatp.ku.dk/>), though the online database is no more available, and the institution in 2013 of the "Kültepe In-



Fig. 1a: Re-carving of legends: Particular of Te 28 (KKS: 47A)
(drawing: M. Ricetti).



Fig. 1b: Re-carving of legends: Particular of CS 656 (Kt n/k 1857D)
(drawing: M. Ricetti).

2 Legends and glyptic art

Legends, though not frequent, are not unusual on seal impressions from Kültepe lower town level II. They are carved only on cylinder seals and appear on *ca.* one sixth of the already published evidence.¹²

Unlike legends from other periods, Old Assyrian inscriptions are generally limited to the name – sometimes preceded by the word KIŠIB (seal) – the patronymic and, in exceptional cases, the title of the owner.¹³ Cuneiform signs are aligned from top to bottom in vertical columns perpendicular to the length of the seal. They are arranged as to be read from left to right after turning the impression through 90° counter clockwise. Inscriptions are frequently enclosed in frames and set on either side of a central line.¹⁴ In some cases, they lack the external vertical lines, which separate them from the scene; whereas in others, they are integrated in the seal's design, in the space available among the figures.¹⁵

Generally, the first group of cuneiform signs gives the owner's name and the second his filiation, following the formula: (KIŠIB) PN₁ DUMU PN₂. In some cases, lines

ternational Meeting" (KIM) which takes place every two years at Kültepe and aims to bring together all the researchers working on Kültepe and its surrounding area, from a wide range of disciplines.

¹² The seal impressions known from Kültepe lower town level II are more than 2200 (half of them appears on envelopes held in collections and the others are known from envelopes and *bullae* recovered after 1948). The number keeps growing, as shown by the most recent publications (i.e. AKT 6–10), which, however, do not include a seal impressions catalogue. The present investigation has taken into account all the seal impressions known from both collections and official excavations. Among them, *ca.* 347 bear an inscription. The number is updated to the publications available in January 2016, when the present paper was delivered to the editor.

¹³ Cf. the *nibum*'s seal that for this period is the only known seal held by an office (see Dercksen 2004: 90–93).

¹⁴ Te 188 = CS 231 shows a wavy line.

¹⁵ The cartouche can serve as an altar for a bull (e.g. Te 529a = CS 819; Te 470, 497; CS 533, 547, 615, 814) or be supported by an animal or another figure (e.g. CS 621); some legends show a figure or a group of figures interposed between the lines (Te 135 = CS 374; Te 335, 346; CS 408).

have been carved as to be read in the inverse order (e.g. Te 312 = CS 230; Te 347 = CS 199; CS 107, 237).

It seems likely that inscriptions were added by scribes who were trained for that purpose and worked together with the seal cutter, so that the theoretical balance between the elements of the composition would have been achieved. In other cases an untrained person might have cut the legend, which appears coarse or shows some signs facing one way and some the other.

Inscriptions were not always planned in the original design. They could be added in a second moment or, if already present, be partly or totally modified. Occasionally, the frames of the previous legends are still visible and filled with motifs (e.g. ICK 2: Ka 718; Te 28; CS 536, 679). In other cases, the lines have been erased, but the arrangement of the figures betrays the presence of a previous column of legend (e.g. Te 187; CS 656)¹⁶ (see Fig. 1a–b).

Portions of inscriptions extending beyond the lines of the text box might indicate that the legend has been added afterwards, as a result of reuse (e.g. Te 214 = CS 745; Te 296, 297; CS 455, 682). Nevertheless, one must not exclude that, occasionally, seal cutters underestimated the space needed for the inscription¹⁷ or that a stock supply of seals showing different designs were kept for selling and ultimately inscribed after the purchaser's name in the place which had been left for the legend.

Unlike most of Near Eastern seals inscriptions, Old Assyrian legends are frequently not cut in reverse on the stone, so as to be legible when the seal is impressed. The reasons concealed in this practice (called "mirror writing") are still unknown. Teissier suggests that this trend was not intentional, but due to a lack of technical skills in the "colonies", where the expertise needed to

¹⁶ This pattern may have inspired similar compositions, not necessarily related to an adjustment of the legend (cf. Te 100, 601; CS 414, 448, 479, 579, 732, 734, 813).

¹⁷ Conversely, figures overlapping the cartouche might indicate a miscalculation when inscriptions were cut before the freeze was carved (e.g. see the arm of the seated figure in Te 110 = CS 60; Te 478; CS 408, 630, 742).

carve an inscription was not commonly available (Teissier 1994: 67).

Without any doubt, it is easier and more legible to carve the legend directly onto the seal. However, the fact that seals belonging to high status individuals (e.g. the Old Assyrian rulers) bear “mirror writing” legends would not match with her assumption.¹⁸ Though a low level of expertise may be foreseen in a number of poor quality inscriptions, which were roughly added to the seal’s design, the “mirror writing” could have a specific purpose and cannot be used as a distinctive feature in judging the seal’s quality.¹⁹ By marking the seal as the property of one particular individual rather than allowing his impression to be recognized, the “mirror writing” practice made the objecthood of the seal prevail upon its functions.²⁰

Script seems also to vary according to the seal. Tunca identifies three types of wedges which differ in shape. He remarks that less sophisticated, triangular and fusiform signs are more common in seals in Old Assyrian and Old Anatolian styles,²¹ whereas cuneiform patterns were more accurate in strictly Mesopotamian seals.²²

Local craftsmen, if not illiterate, were less accustomed to cuneiform signs. In Anatolia scribes were not always available and inscriptions must have been frequently added by merchants, who obviously did not have the training of a professional seal cutter.

Most of the inscribed seals from Kültepe are in Old Assyrian style (46%). A lower number belongs to Old Syrian (19%) and Old Babylonian (14.7%) styles; few examples belong to Old Anatolian style (4.6%), whereas both Ur III and *šakkanakku* period seal impressions, which constitute small, but significant groups (4.3% and 2%), were generally re-carved and a new inscription or motif filled the space previously occupied by the legend.²³ In very few cases, the owner maintained the original Ur III or *šakkanakku* inscription (see Fig. 2).

18 Eppihimer 2013: 37–38, see, in particular, note 11.

19 See added inscriptions in Te 16, 232a–b, 347 = CS 199; Te 646. Te 517 presents a bogus inscription, perhaps added in modern times.

20 Votive seals from later periods showing “mirror writing” inscriptions probably have the same purposes. However, their designs are often in relief rather than in intaglio, suggesting that the seal was not projected to be typically used (see Collon 1987: 131). All the mirror written seals that have been considered in this analysis have been found impressed on clay. Therefore, this custom do not necessarily pertain a votive intent of the seal so marked (see Gibson 1977: 149; Eppihimer 2013: 38).

21 The subdivision in different styles follows the general guidelines established by E. Porada (1948: 107–115) and N. Özgüç (Özgüç/Özgüç 1953: 226–242) that have been partially maintained by B. Teissier (1994: 51–65). Though a fresh look at styles, which takes into consideration the more recent findings, would be needed (for an updating on the Old Assyrian style, see Lassen 2014), the general partition into Old Assyrian, Old Anatolian, Old Syrian, Old Babylonian and other Mesopotamian (Ur III, *šakkanakku*, etc.) styles is still valid. More specifically, the term Old Syrian covers a variety of sub-groups showing distinctive iconographic motifs which can be carved in different techniques (see Özgüç 2006: 31–32, 37–40: elaborate, linear, drilled, popular sub-groups; cf. Teissier 1994: 57–58: Syro-Cappadocian/Syrian colony style groups).

22 Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 303–304.

23 9.4% of inscribed seals cannot be placed in any group, since

Though the combination of different glyptic styles resulted in a great variety of experimental designs, compositions remain essentially based on a few themes, often based on Ur III prototypes (i.e. introduction, audience and ritual scenes). Legends were not consistently associated with specific patterns; however, some motifs appear more frequently than others. Most of the inscriptions are set in presentation scenes, behind the seated figure, at the end of the composition, as was common in Ur III seals. In Old Assyrian style seals, processions can include deities, such as Šamaš (e.g. Te 189 = CS 140), Adad (e.g. Te 221) and the Weather god (e.g. CS 742). Occasionally they can be directed towards a worship object, such as the bull altar (e.g. CS 358). Contest scenes recur with similar patterns in both Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian styles and display symmetric couples of battling men and beasts parted by legends (e.g. Te 271 = CS 371). Old Anatolian style seals show more variety in the arrangement of inscriptions. Some legends are included in designs that recall the traditional presentation scene, while others appear with animals patterns (e.g. Te 384) or complex arrangements of gods, animals and human figures (e.g. Te 353). The Old Syrian style adds some variations which are already known from the Old Assyrian tradition. The inscription borders the composition, where new motifs appear among the figures (e.g. the naked woman, the woman with the long dress, the bull-man, etc.).

3 Legends and titles

Legends referring to rulers are the most elaborate among Old Assyrian seals inscriptions.²⁴ The name, the title and the filiation of the king are set in three columns of six superimposed frames according to the formula: PN₁ *iššiak Aššur* DUMU PN₂ *iššiak Aššur*.²⁵ Both the textual and the visual patterns are remarkably consistent in all seals.²⁶ The legend, which describes the ruler as the official at the service of the god Aššur, is reflected by

they are too fragmentary or not published. Rates represented in the graph (Fig. 2) are subject to change based on future available evidence. Some impressions can be classified in more than one glyptic group. Seals could be originally carved in one style and be modified with additions in other styles. Note that almost 20% of Old Anatolian style seals are stamps.

24 So far, the impressions of three rulers have been identified: the seal of Irīšum I (known in two slightly different versions: one displayed on the envelope fragment Kt 83/k 246 and the other on the ceramic jar rim VA 5036 = Ass. S 1941a), the seal of Sargon (Te 23 = CS 441) and that one of Narām-Sîn (Özkan 1993: fig. 2b).

25 Irīšum I:

Kt 83/k 246; see Özkan 1993: 50;
VA 5036 = Ass. S 1941a; see Meyer 1955: 11.

Sargon:

Edinburgh 1909.585A; Pa 18B; ICK 2: Ka 596; Kt a/k 938a; c/k 1389; n/k 1750, 1751, 1925a; see Balkan 1955: 52.

Narām-Sîn:

Kt 89/k 127–129; see Özkan 1993: 502.

26 All the seals used by Šamšī-Adad I (1808–1776 BC) follow a different iconographical composition based on southern Babylonian models. Nonetheless, one of them recalls the Old Assyrian royal inscription. According to Tunca 1989: n. 1, the legend must be read as follows: ^aUTU^{si} - ^aIŠK[UR] / *na-ra-am* ^aA-š[ur₄] / ENS[I₂] / ^aA-[šur₄] / [DUMU] *i-la-kab-k[a-bu-u₂]*; cf. RIMA 1: 61.

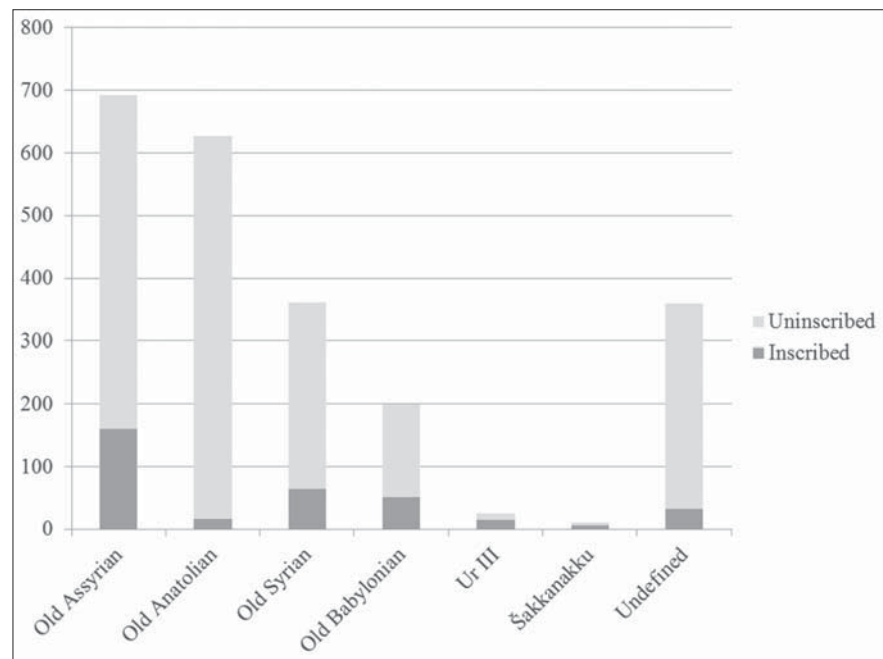


Fig. 2: Inscribed and uninscribed seals according to glyptic styles.

the scene, where the king is led by an interceding deity towards the city god.²⁷

The seal of Šilulu (Te 238 = CS 49), which was originally owned by a ruler whose reign must be placed a few decades before the beginning of the Puzur-Aššur dynasty, shows the earliest known textual evidence of the ruler's role in relation to the city-god: "Aššur, the king, Šilulu, vice-regent of Aššur, son of Dakiki, herald of the city Aššur, [servant of ?]".²⁸ Though the scene differs from the standard royal introduction scene found on the seals owned by later rulers, the primacy of the god Aššur is emphasized by the bearded figure (Aššur?) standing on a prone enemy.²⁹

The inscription is a primary element in royal seals. It covers a large portion of the surface, so that the viewer focuses immediately on it. The long script was probably perceived not only as a status symbol, but as a sort of propitiatory formula. The mention of the god Aššur would have guaranteed the benevolence of the god for the ruler and the community he led. Moreover, the "mirror writing" legend emphasises the apotropaic power concealed in the seal, supporting the idea that royal seals were first conceived and appreciated as valuable objects rather than as sealing media (see above).

Titles accompanying inscriptions may vary. Beside the *iššiakkum* title used by the king, another common attribute is *laputtā'um* written with the Sumerogram NU.BANDA₃ that indicates a high-ranking official (a

lieutenant or a steward), whose institutional role and managerial function remain rather unclear.³⁰ This title appears in a number of seals in relation to the name or the patronymic of the owner (i.e. Te 39 = CS 822; Te 42; Te 43 = CS 444b; Te 183 = CS 545; CS 358). The single known seal of an official was originally owned by Šū-Anum son of Āmur-ilī (CS 358) as shown by its legend: *Šu-A-nu-um* NU.BANDA₃ DUMU *A-mur*-DINGIR. The seal was re-used in the letter Kt n/k 1702³¹ by another *laputtā'um*, a certain Hupitum (son of Aššur-šamšī?).³² According to N. Özgüç, Hupitum modified the seal by erasing the seated deity who was in front of the two Lamas and in his place he added the group topped by the "bull with the cone" (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 137–138; Özgüç 2006: 106). However, since there is no evidence of the seal as it was used by Šū-Anum, Özgüç's suggestion raises some concerns.³³

³⁰ See Dercksen's considerations of the term *laputtā'um* as it emerges from written sources (2004: 70–72) and see also pages 65–69 for an updated list of the individuals entitled with this epithet.

³¹ The letter is sent by Hupitum (KIŠIB *Hu-pi-tim* NU.BANDA₃) to Ušur-ša-Ištar son of Aššur-imitti and Nabi-Sîn son of Iddin-Dagān. The photo of the obverse of the envelope is shown in Özgüç 2003: 292, fig. 341. The same seal has been found on the unpublished envelopes: Kt n/k 2051, 2060.

³² Dercksen 2004: 67–68, in particular note 221; Larsen 1976: 156–157; cf. VS 26: 20, text 32.

³³ Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 137–138, pl. D. See also Dercksen's suggestion (2004: 69), which, following the considerations by N. Özgüç that the original seal was carved in Isin-Larsa style, proposes that Šū-Anum modified his seal for conforming to the newly developed Old Assyrian style. Beside the fact that the lack of evidence does not allow advancing any convincing conclusions on the seal's re-carving, the so-called bull-altar or bull with the cone on his back is found as a worship target in several seal impressions of this period (e.g. Teissier 1994: ns. 2–14, 16, 18–19, 79–81, 86, 88, 232a–b). Therefore, it could have been already part of the original design. Moreover, the style appears to me as already fully Old Assyrian, which, as it is commonly known, recalled motifs typical of the Isin-Larsa period, such as the presentation scene.

On the use of the vertical crescent in seals owned by high-sta-

²⁷ Both the inscription and the motif show a remarkable analogy with the Ur III royal introduction scene, where the official is brought before the divine king he serves. See Winter 1991: 69–73; Eppihimer 2013.

²⁸ The impression has been found on: ICK 1: 29; Kt b/k 265, 271a, 285, 322, 683, 685; c/k 843, 1285, 1578; g/k 407; n/k 1795. The seal was reused in later times by a merchant named Šilulu son of Uku (Balkan 1955: 54–57). For a discussion on the identification of Šilulu son of Dakiki as the Sulili included in Assyrian King List, see Veenhof 2008: 124–125.

²⁹ Eppihimer 2013: 42.



Fig. 3: The seal of Šū-Bēlim (CS 655) (drawing: M. Ricetti).

J.G. Dercksen excludes that Šū-Anum and Hupitum used the same seal while holding the position of NU.BANDA₃ at the same time. He rather suggests that Hupitum acquired the seal from his predecessor maintaining his inscription for prestige reasons.³⁴

The title held by Šū-Anum is also mentioned in the seals owned by his sons, who, in their legends, refer to themselves as DUMU Šū-Anum NU.BANDA₃, corroborating the idea that their father's position was of great importance.³⁵

The seal transfers (borrowing or reuse?) that occurred among Šū-Anum's sons (Āmur-ilī – Hurašānum and Puzur-Ištar – Būšija, see note 35) were intention-

ally kept within the family circle, as an expression of their common lineage. Moreover, since the acquisition by Hupitum of the seal owned by Šū-Anum would have excluded the hereditary transfer of the seal, Šū-Anum's sons had no other possibility than to use their legends for asserting their status as sons of a high-ranking official.

Unlike NU.BANDA₃, the title UGULA (akk. *waklu*) is not very common within the Old Assyrian documentation.³⁶ Only one occurrence has been found among the seal legends known from level II (Kt n/k 1857, seal C = CS 655). According to Dercksen (2004: 71), in Old Assyrian times the term *waklum* was used exclusively for the king. However, the title in the seal Te 174 = CS 655 (inscription: *Šu-Be-lim DUMU En-na-x[DUMU? UGULA]*³⁷ seems to refer to Šū-Bēlim's grandfather, who does not seem to correspond to any Old Assyrian *waklum* (see Fig. 3).

An official indicated as UGULA DAM.GAR₃ ("overseer of the merchants") is firstly attested during Šamši-Adad's reign (AbB 8, 15; reign of Išme-Dagān: ARMT 26, 342), but the title seems to disappear before the Middle Assyrian period. What UGULA DAM.GAR₃'s function was and what circumstances have determined his appointment are not entirely clear.³⁸ It is, however, very unlikely that the UGULA mentioned in Šū-Bēlim's legend was related to that figure. The inscription may have been partially recut with the addition of the first line (*Šu-Be-lim*), which seems to extend into the seal design, and of the little figure at the bottom of the third column.

Though very frequent on tablets, the profession DAM.GAR₃ appears only twice in legends (Te 532; Te 555).³⁹ As it was typical for the seals used by merchants in the Ur III period, Te 555 shows a three-line legend (PN₁ son of PN₂ DAM.GAR₃, *Ba-la DUMU La-NI*

tus individuals, see the remarkable notes by Lassen 2014: 110. 34 Or he had not yet had the chance to change it. See Dercksen 2004: 68, 70.

35 It must be noted that, beside the *iššiakkum* title used by the king, *laputtārum* is the only paternal epithet mentioned in seal inscriptions during the Old Assyrian period (Dercksen 2004: 70). Four of the sons of Šū-Anum are known by their seals: Ah-šalim's seal: ICK 2: Ka 271B; FT 1b (Larsen/Møller 1991: 228); CS 822. See also Teissier 1994: n. 39. The same impression has been found on the following unpublished envelopes: Kt j/k 321; n/k 1966, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2031–2034, 2043, 2046 (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: pl. E1), 2056, 2092; 75/k 102.

Āmur-ilī's seal: TC 3: 58C. See also Özgüç T.1953: fig. 682; Teissier 1994: n. 42. Note that the character following NU.BANDA₃ in the inscription is a space filler (Dercksen 2004: 68, note 225). In the envelope AO 9387a (TC 3: 259b) Āmur-ilī is not mentioned among the sealers. The seal was probably used by Hurašānum, his brother. The same impression has been found on the following unpublished envelopes: Kt a/k 901–902 (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: pl. D3); j/k 396, 580; m/k 136.

Puzur-Ištar's seal: KKS: 104A; CTMMA 1: 53; CS 545. See also Teissier 1994: n. 183. Even if the envelopes do not show the patronymics of the sealers, it can be added that, as in the previous case, the seal was used by Puzur-Ištar's brother, Būšija, who among the sealers is the only one known as the son of Šū-Anum. The same impression has been found on the following unpublished envelopes: Kt b/k 151, 161, 614 (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: pl. E5), 674; n/k 1811B, 1961A, 2009A. Though there is no evidence of the seal as it was used by Puzur-Ištar, N. Özgüç suggests that Būšija imposed few additions to the original design (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 139).

Uzubiškum's seal: CTMMA 1: 42; CS 444a–b. See also Teissier 1994: n. 43. Note that there are two versions of his seal: CS 444a and 444b with some later additions. Their impressions have been found on the following unpublished envelopes: Kt a/k 424 (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: pl. E4); n/k 1754–1762, 1769 (Özgüç/Tunca 2001: pl. E3), 1938; 89/k 130. Since the inscription was not modified and the impression always appears in association with its owner, the alterations were probably made on Uzubiškum's will.

36 See for example Kt a/k 353, 315: ll. 1–2, 36; n/k 517+1571: l. 2; n/k 1857 (seal C). For the term *waklu* see CAD A1 277–280 (sub *aklu* A); AHw 1456.

37 The transliteration of the inscription was kindly provided by M.V. Tonietti. In both the drawings in TC 3 and Özgüç N. 2006 the sign for DUMU clearly appears before that one for UGULA. Unfortunately, the only photograph available (Özgüç N. 2006: pl. 231, C) does not allow a more scrupulous evaluation. The same impression has been found in TC 3: 264b, seal 57B. See also Teissier 1994: n. 174.

38 Veenhof 2008: 140–141.

39 See CAD T 125–140 (sub *tamkuru*).

DAM¹.GAR₃), whereas Te 532 has a fourth column with the filiation of the father (KIŠIB PN₁ son of PN₂ son of PN₃ DAM.GAR₃, KIŠIB *E-ru-um*-[...] DUMU *Za-ha*-[a DUMU]š-me-i₃-li₂ x NIN^{??} x[?] DAM.GAR₃^{??})⁴⁰. In both cases the seal has been reused maintaining the previous inscription, where the title refers to the father and to the grandfather of the original owner.⁴¹ Bala and Zaha are rather rare names within the onomastic dataset offered by the Old Assyrian documentation. A certain Lali is also known, but it is usually written with *-li* and not *-li₂* as in this case (cf. AKT 6a: 56, l. 35 – Kt 94/k 1015). Išme-Ilī is certainly from Akkadian origin.

Both of the seals have been classified within the Syro-Cappadocian style (Teissier 1994), which combines Syrian elements with Assyrian and Anatolian motifs.⁴² Te 532 shows a common introduction scene where a worshiper (the merchant?) is led by an interceding deity towards a seated figure who holds a scale-pan balance. A deity with a saw precedes them. Behind the seated figure a poorly preserved human figure is kneeling upside-down.

The scale-pan balance has been found only twice within the glyptic evidence from Kültepe and it does not occur in any other place during the 2nd millennium BC.⁴³ In both cases, the figure holding it cannot be unquestionably identified as a ruler rather than as a deity (see Te 533 = CS 767). Both gods and kings were the guarantors for the correctness of economic transactions and, more generally, for the administration of justice that had to be figuratively “weighed”.⁴⁴ Šamaš, the sun-god, is the deity most commonly associated with these functions. Since the standing figure with the saw in Te 532 must be identified with him, the seated figure with the scale-pan balance likely represents the king. This motif is particularly suggestive considering that, as a merchant, the owner of the seal would have been constantly concerned by weighing operations.

Te 555 shows an iconography which does not find any parallel within the glyptic *corpus* from Kültepe: a worshiper offers a libation to a deity who stands on a bull and holds a snake[?] in one hand and a bird in the other; between them, a crescent and an altar support-

ing some indefinable objects. Offering scenes are quite frequent in both Old Anatolian and Syro-Cappadocian glyptic styles. However, they usually display a different scheme where a pitcher-carrier or a worshiper with a cup stands in front of a seated figure, who is occasionally characterized as a deity (Te 303, 304, 307, 322–327; CS 142, 296, 325, 399, 662; St 35; cf. CS 211, 406, 571, 796). The libation motif showing the liquid poured from a cup is a Mesopotamian subject. It is found, in particular, in Ur III seals (e.g. Frankfort 1939: pl. XXV, j) and at Mari during the *šakkanakku* period (e.g. Beyer 1985: ns. 5–6, 8, 11). At Kültepe it frequently appears together with the ruler wearing the peaked cap, which is a typical motif of north-west Syrian glyptic art at the beginning of the 2nd millennium (e.g. Te 529a–b = CS 819; Te 533, 581, 582a–b = CS 606; CS 597, 738; cf. Te 526–530, 536, 539, 563 = CS 704; CS 308, 486, 703).⁴⁵ The libation before a standing deity is found in north Mesopotamian seals from the early Old Babylonian period (Al-Gailani-Werr 1980: 40, n. 3b; 42, n. 15; 43, n. 17; cf. 54, n. 33; 59, n. 36; see also CS 571), but it does not occur in 18th and 17th centuries BC Syrian glyptic.

The fact that they have been reused and their legends not modified indicates that great value was allotted to these seals. The evocation of the profession (DAM.GAR₃) and the weighing scene in Te 532 have certainly been maintained for the desire of the new user to introduce himself as a merchant. The seals might have been also inherited from an ancestor whose name was still meaningful. However, both the unusual occurrence of the title DAM.GAR₃, which might recall the Ur III tradition,⁴⁶ and the motifs displayed may suggest that the seals have been acquired from individuals originally operating in Syria and upper Mesopotamia.

These examples clearly point out the Assyrian’s approach towards seals stemming from other traditions. Their attitude is still more evident when looking at some reused Ur III seals that preserve their original inscription. The seals of the scribes Ur-lugal-banda (Te 584 = CS 421, inscription: “Ibbi-Sîn, the valiant king, the king of Ur, the king of the four quarters – of the world – Ur-lugal-banda, the scribe, son of Ur-nigin-gar, is your servant”)⁴⁷ and Šalim-bēlī (CS 38, inscription: “Šalim-bēlī, scribe, son of ..., “coachman” of the king”)⁴⁸ have been respectively reused by Aššur-dān and Šū-Kūbum, who added a few filling motifs to the field (such as the ball-staff, small figures and drill-holes), but did not re-carve the inscription. Likewise the seal originally owned by the scribe Lukalla (inscription: “Lukalla, the scribe, son of Ur-e-e, the official”), which has been identified by H. Waetzoldt on the anepigraphic fragment Kt m/k 63, was probably reused by an Assyrian

40 Transliterations kindly provided by M.V. Tonietti. For Te 532, cf. ICK 2: p. 48; Teissier 1994: 178; Hecker, ICK 2, <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/altass/>. For Te 555 cf. KKS: p. 27; Teissier 1994: 182.

41 Te 532 is impressed on the loan contract ICK 2: 52 (Ka 601)+I 491, which, though not very well preserved, does not seem to mention any sealers bearing the name in the inscription. Te 555 appears on the *be’ulatum* KKS: 3a–b, which likewise does not include any Bala son of Lali in its sealers list. Not one of these documents shows any chronological reference.

42 Previous publications of the same seal impressions, however, give different style definitions: ICK 2: Ka 601A (Te 532), Old Babylonian / KKS, 7A (Te 555), Syrian.

43 Cf. Eisen 1940: n. 42; Boehmer 1965: n. 1105; pl. 38, n. 458 showing a Late Akkadian seal in the Moore Collection. The iconography leaves no doubt about the identification of the seated figure as Šamaš, who is shown with a saw in one hand and rays protruding from his shoulders. An attendant with a scale-pan balance stands in front of him, followed by another figure carrying a goat and a small man hanging an object over an altar.

44 Cf. Ascalone/Peyronel 2001: 8–10.

45 Teissier 1993; 1994: 59–61.

46 The designation as “merchant” in seal legends was rather infrequent in Ur III time (see Winter 1991: 68; cf. Porada 1948: n. 277; Buchanan 1981: ns. 520, 540).

47 CTMMA 1: 135–136; cf. Hecker, CTMMA 1, <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/altass/>.

48 Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 159, 310.



Fig. 4: The seal of Šāt-Ibra, the chief sceptre bearer (Te 221)
(drawing: M. Ricetti).

merchant.⁴⁹ A slightly different treatment was intended for Te 585, where the original inscription was partly erased and only “Ibbi-Sîn the mighty king the king of Ur” can be read. The seal was re-used by Amurru-bānī son of Manana, who carved his name below the seated figure (MAR.TU-*ba-ni*) and added some filling motifs to the field. As it is clear from their original inscriptions, all these seals were previously owned by members of the Ur III administration, who were probably highly esteemed not only for the peculiarity of their seals and legends, but for being important figures of a legendary past.

Other Ur III seals known from the Kültepe glyptic corpus have their legends altered though they maintain their main design. Some have new inscriptions carved (e.g. CS 691, 719), while in others the legend has been replaced by figures and other filling motifs (e.g. CS 370, 575[?], 584[?], 834).

The few *šakkanakku* seals from level II, whose date and provenance are not easy to trace, were probably produced by court workshops and were originally owned by important individuals of the Syrian élite.⁵⁰ Some of them still show their long inscription (Te 576, 579; 582a = CS 606; Kt m/k 102C = m/k 171B) or few traces of it (Te 577, 581, 583).

As most Ur III seals, many of them have been re-carved. Some have only few filling motifs added to the field (Te 579), while others have their legend replaced with a new inscription (Te 582b; CS 738) or with a group of figures (Te 563 = CS 704; Te 581; CS 703).

Among the ones that preserve their original legend we find the seal of Tarām-Mari (Kt m/k 102C = m/k 171B; inscription: *I-ti-DINGIR ŠAGINA Ma-ri₂^{ki} [T]a-ra-Ma-ri₂^{ki} [... ...]?*) who was probably part of the court of Iti-ilum

šakkanakku of Mari (Durand 1985: ca. 2090–2085 BC; revised by Otto 2007: ca. 1889–1863 BC).⁵¹ Her seal was reused twice by unidentified locals. The name of the *šakkanakku* Iti-ilum is mentioned also in the inscription of the seal Te 576 that has been restored by J.-M. Durand.⁵² Moreover, in the field between the standing and the seated figures J.-M. Durand identifies the cuneiform sign NU, suggesting a possible restoration as NU.BANDA₃. The same term might have been carved on Te 577, whose inscription is, however, mostly erased. Many are the iconographic affinities with *šakkanakku* glyptic from Mari level 3 (see in particular Beyer 1985: 176, n. 3) from where these seals probably originated.

Though from the impression the re-carving is not particularly evident, the vertical lines behind the standing figure in Te 576 might be the remaining traces of an inscription panel, whose legend has been erased but not recut.

The title ŠAGINA has been preserved also in Te 579, where the personal name preceding it can only be partially read: *x-x-li* (Teissier 1994: 186, *Tar²-x-li*). Unlike the previous seals, here the composition shows a closer similarity to Syro-Cappadocian glyptic.⁵³ The seal has been reused by a not identified Assyrian, who was among the representatives of the *wabartum* of Ulama in the verdict CCT 5: 18a.

Among the titles known by inscriptions there is only one occurrence of Anatolian origin. The original owner of the seal Te 221 was Šāt-Ibra, who held the position of *rabi haṭṭim* (chief sceptre bearer), as stated by his legend: [*Ša-at-ip-ra*] GAL *ha-ti₂-im* (see Fig. 4).

The impression of the seal has been found on the sale fragment ICK 1: 46a in association with the Assyrian trader Lā-qēpum son of Aššur-rabi who apparently reused the seal without modifying the inscription. The preservation of the legend seems to suggest that the Assyrians appreciated the seals previously owned by im-

49 Waetzoldt 1990: 31–32; cf. Buchanan 1966: 78, 225; pl. 32, n. 432. Lukalla was a scribe during the reign of Amar-Suen and Šū-Sîn (ca. 2046–2028 BC). He belonged to one of the most important families of Umma. Though the founding place of Kt m/k 63 has not been recorded, the fragment probably stems from level II, like few other samples with close excavation numbers (i.e. Kt m/k 77–78).

50 For seals from the *šakkanakku* period, see the restoration of the *šakkanakku* list by J.-M. Durand (1985) and see also Beyer 1985; cf. Anbar 1987, Teissier 1994: 59–61. A new order, which better fits with the archaeological evidence, has been proposed in recent times by A. Otto (2007; see also Beyer 2007, 2013).

51 By examining the traces of another impression of the same seal on Kt m/k 101, K. Hecker proposes a possible reading of the signs between the two standing figures as [DU]MU.MUN[US-su] according to which Tarām-Mari would therefore have been the daughter of Iti-ilum (2008: 108).

52 See Durand’s comments in Teissier 1990; cf. Durand 1985: 149–150.

53 Teissier 1994: 60.



Fig. 5a: Seal with the names of gods: Presentation scene (Kt a/k 435A) (drawing: M. Ricetti).

portant members of the local society.⁵⁴ However, since there are no other occurrences of Te 221 in published editions,⁵⁵ it is not possible to assert whether Šāt-Ibra's seal has been reused only in this occasion.⁵⁶

4 Anatolian inscriptions

In contrast to the large use of inscribed seals made by Assyrians we observe very few local names in seal legends. The small amount of Anatolians identified with inscribed seals must not be strictly attributed to the general low attendance of locals in the sealing practice or to the low number of locals who owned a personal seal, but to fashion reasons as well. Locals used a variety of sealing media which included stamp seals (never inscribed in this period), substitute seals (such as rings, fingernails, etc.) and less commonly cylinder seals. Few high status or rich locals with daily contacts with Assyrian individuals were probably able to afford an inscribed seal, which would have shown their capacity of operating on equal levels with them.

Anatolian names are generally written in one column and usually limited to the owner's name (Te 333, 353, 384; CS 57, 258).⁵⁷ Among locals the use of patronymic, in legends as well as in texts, was not very common, or at least not common as among Assyrians. Te 221 and Te 187 are the only exceptions known to me so far. The latter was owned by Perua son of Hamuria (ICK 1: 27a–b), as indicated by its legend: *Pe₃-ru-a DUMU Ha-mu-ri-a*. The seal has probably been reused and re-carved after it was acquired from a former Assyrian user. The two-column legend was probably adopted not only for

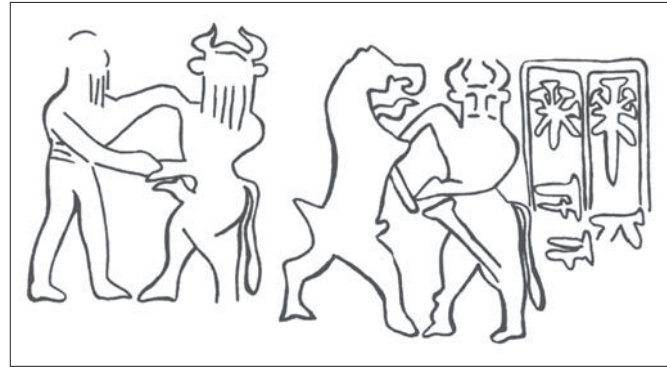


Fig. 5b: Seal with the names of gods: Contest scene (Te 636) (drawing: M. Ricetti).

conforming to the Assyrian standard, but also for practical reasons, since the original seal probably displayed a bipartite inscription panel.

5 Inscriptions with the names of gods

Deities' names have been found in a large group of seal impressions in Old Babylonian style (cf. some coarse examples in the so-called Provincial Babylonian/Late Old Assyrian style, Porada 1948: ns. 863, 868, 872, 874, 878, 880, 885, 887, 892; 1980: 16). Their legends usually consist of a dedicatory formula invoking a divine couple. Šamaš and Aya are the most frequently mentioned. Their names are usually casted in a two-column panel according to the inscription: 1. ^aUTU 2. ^aA-a (e.g. Te 606, 636, 637, 638; 644; CS 51, 109, 769; Özgüç 1988: fig. 2, Kt a/k 435A; Özgüç/Tunca 2001: tav. İ, 2, Kt a/k 448H; cf. Te 186: ^aNIN.TU ^aHUN.GA₂.ZA; Kt 90/k 96C: ^aMAR.TU ^aUTU; illegible inscription, DINGIR ... DINGIR ...: Te 592, 594, CS 539). Even if only few of them have been identified, most of these seals were apparently used by individuals of Assyrian origin.⁵⁸ Their iconographic motifs can be generally classified into two main groups: introduction scenes (e.g. Te 186, 592, 594, 606; CS 539, 769; Kt a/k 435A, 448H; Kt 90/k 96C; cf. CS 51) and contest compositions (Te 636, 637, 638, 644; CS 109), which frequently recur with the same pattern in Old Babylonian glyptic art⁵⁹ (see Fig. 5a–b).

We cannot say whether there was any particular relation between owners and deities. In particular, whether the latter were conceived as tutelary gods or celebrated only for their general apotropaic meaning. In the ancient Near East there are many textual and iconographic references to the relation between the god Šamaš and his bride Aya with the concept of justice, which is generally expressed by the act of measuring and weighing.⁶⁰ It is therefore not particularly surpris-

⁵⁴ Though there are a few cases of Anatolians reusing seals previously owned by Assyrians (Te 47b, 145, 247), so far this is the only example showing the opposite.

⁵⁵ Kt a/k 318 is still unpublished (see Özgüç T. 1953: fig. 721; Özgüç 1965: n. 9) and KKS: 122A appears on an unscribed fragment.

⁵⁶ Šāt-Ibra *rabi haṭṭim* is mentioned also in KKS: 45b; Lā-qēpum son of Aššur-rabi is known also from BIN 4: 197; CCT 5: 9b; TPAK 1: 156a–b. Though he is mentioned among the sealers in TPAK 1: 156b, the envelope does not show the impression of Te 221. So far, however, Lā-qēpum son of Aššur-rabi has not been identified with any other sealing.

⁵⁷ Most of the inscribed seals with local names are in Old Anatolian style. There is evidence of one column legends with Anatolian as well as Assyrian names in Syro-Cappadocian style seals: Te 541; CS 468, 564, 681, 805; AKT 6b: fig. 58; cf. CS 630 (Old Babylonian style?), 738 (Old Syrian style?); illegible one column legends: AKT 6c: figs. 97 (bottom)–98; Te 470; CS 460, 464, 547.

⁵⁸ Cf. Pa 40B impressed by Te 592 and ATHE: 6b impressed by Te 594, where all the sealers mentioned are of local origin.

⁵⁹ See Porada 1948: pls. XLVIII–LXXVII; cf. some similar occurrences from the Isin-Larsa period, Porada 1948: ns. 299, 301. In some cases the inscription seems to be added later in the space available between the figures (ns. 323, 341, 345–346, 359–360, 370, 426, 435, 482).

⁶⁰ Ascalone/Peyronel 2001: 7–10. As overseer of commercial transactions Šamaš was the depository of the correct measuring standard and the judging authority who granted fortune

ing to find such devotion in a context mainly composed by tradesmen. Their names probably served both as an act of reverence and as a good omen against fraud.

Gods' names appear also in other legends that have been found in only a few seal impressions from Kültepe level II, though they are very well known from a large group of seals from the Old Babylonian period. The seal CS 35 was probably reused (and maybe slightly re-carved) by a certain Dādāya (see Kt c/k 771). The three-column inscription invokes "Nergal, the mighty warrior of Enlil" (see Özgüç/Tunca 2001: 310; cf. Porada 1948: ns. 380, 562; for similar legends mentioning other deities see: ns. 374, 445, Martu; ns. 429, 439, 527, Nin-šubur; n. 442, Nabû; ns. 459, 508, Iškur; n. 523, Il-Amurri; n. 532, Dagan; n. 559, Enlil).

In another seal (Te 604) the name of the owner appears together with the name of his patron god, ^dA-šur-ṭāb DUMU At-tan-ni ^dAdad il-šu, "Aššur-ṭāb son of Attanni; Adad is his god" (ATHE: 103), as it can be seen in many Old Babylonian examples (i.e. Porada 1948: pls. XLVIII–LXXVII, in particular ns. 375, 446, 507, 512–513, 530, 567). The seal has been reused, since no one of the sealers mentioned in ATHE: 5a–b bears the name of Aššur-ṭāb son of Attanni. The design was apparently modified with a later addition of drill-holes around the disc-in-crescent symbol. The seal might have been originally owned by an individual involved in the temple administration, more specifically a priest or an attendant of the sanctuary of Adad.

All these seals denote a strong influence from the Old Babylonian tradition. It is currently assumed that seals in Old Babylonian style whose impression has been found in Kültepe, were produced in workshops located in northern Mesopotamia (Teissier 1994: 64), where the seals were acquired by locals moving to Anatolia or sold to Old Assyrian merchants travelling in those regions. The large use of seals in Old Babylonian style illustrates the appreciation of items which were prestigious since they originated from a foreign tradition. Most of them, even when altered with the addition of few filling motifs, maintained their original pattern and inscription.

6 The legend's fate

Legends were not necessarily altered in combination with the handover. The seal Te 582a = CS 606 inscribed with the legend: *I-ku-uš-MU-[x⁷] DUMU I-ra-am-d[a-ad]*⁶¹ was reused by the merchant Idī-abum, who initially did not alter the legend, as is shown by the impression on the envelope TC 1: 64. However, when he notifies the document ICK 1: 36a, the seal inscription displays his own name (Te 582b, inscription: *I-di₁₂-a-bu-um DUMU I-su₂-rik₁₃*). Despite the re-carving, the design does not seem to have been modified. The figure wearing the peaked cap and the fringed dress is a typical

iconography of the Syrian milieu, more specifically of Ebla.⁶²

Two other seals with similar motifs were apparently produced in Ebla. One was used by Aššur-nādā son of Aššur-idī (Te 529a–c = CS 819) who in at least two different documents seals without altering the inscription of the previous owner, a certain Ib-damu, whose name recalls a group of royal anthroponyms from Early-dynastic Ebla (Te 529a, inscription: KIŠIB *Ib-da-[mu] me-ki-im eb-l[a-im]*). He was probably a ruler or an important member of the Ebla royal court.⁶³ The same impression has been found on a third document with a different legend: Te 529c,⁶⁴ *A-šur-na-da-[a] DUMU A-šur-i-[di]*. The original inscription has been erased and the right column filled with a small deity. The new inscription was then cast in an extra column added at the left of the legend panel, which constitutes a sort of altar for a reclined bull.

Unlike the previous, the second seal (Te 527) was not re-carved by the new Old Assyrian user, Irma-Aššur son of Ninde-bāni. Its surface, however, might have been modified before turning up in Kültepe. A column of the legend, which follows an unusual grammatical structure and has been similarly found in Ebla between the 3rd and the 2nd millennium BC (^{d2}*Ni-du-hu-šu²-x/-ša DUMU⁷ Hu-ur-da²-ba ša Me-ku-um i-ra-mu-šu*, "PN son of PN, beloved by Mekum"),⁶⁵ is fitted in the space between the first two figures. Moreover, the cuneiform signs are not carefully aligned. Though the legend does not mention any toponym, its origin is probably to be placed within the Ebla cultural milieu, as the figure with the peaked cap suggests again.

Like the Ur III seals mentioned above, exoticness and fineness must have played an important role in the pursuit of refined seals that was constantly attempted by Old Assyrian merchants.

Inscriptions can contribute to revealing the identity of the sealers. However, reusing and re-carving make the task arduous. When seals do not show inscriptions which are directly linkable to the sealers mentioned in the text, the identification is made by looking for the same impressions and names on different documents.⁶⁶

As pointed out above, the legend was not necessarily adjusted according to the name of the new user. It could be partially or totally re-carved, erased or added, if not already present, and the different operations not always discernible when only looking at the impression.

On the basis of the interventions performed on legends, three groups of inscribed seals may be established.

62 Teissier 1993; Tonietti 1997: 226–230; cf. Pinnock 2000: 1398.

63 Tonietti 1997: 228–230.

64 Despite the classification by B. Teissier (1994), Te 529a and Te 529b correspond to the same version of the seal. The erroneous evaluation was due to a lacuna in the seal impression found on FT 2b (Larsen/Møller 1991: 229–230, n. 2); cf. Tonietti 1997: 229.

65 Tonietti 1997: 230.

66 Ricetti 2014: § 3.3; cf. KKS: 19–21; VS 26: 54–55.

and misfortune according to the merchants' behaviour.

61 Courtesy of M.V. Tonietti. Cf. A. Karaduman in Özgüç N. 2006: 198–199.

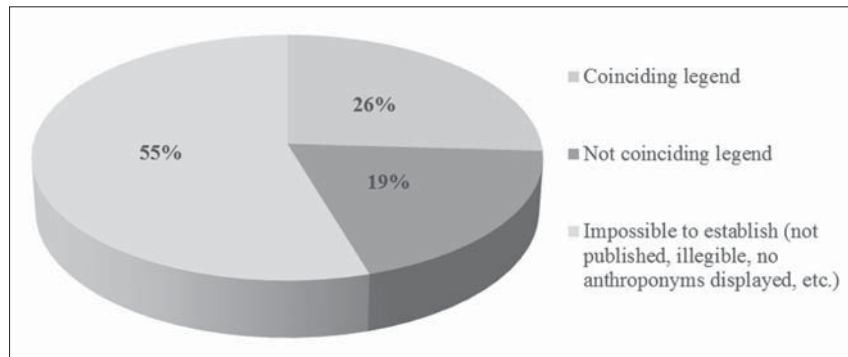


Fig. 6: Relationship between seal legends and users.

1. Seals whose inscription coincides with the name of their user. These seals have preserved their original legend or have been re-carved with the name of their new owner (e.g. Te 28, 529c, 582b; CS 551, 691). Inscriptions can also have been added in a second moment in the space available between the figures (e.g. Te 16, 347 = CS 199; Te 486, 618a = CS 145; Te 619, 646). In all cases legends allow the seal to be identified.
2. Seals whose inscription does not coincide with the name of their user. These seals have been reused (after acquisition, e.g. Te 24, 27b, 40, 48, or inheritance, e.g. Te 87, 184 = CS 392; Te 224b) or “borrowed” (e.g. Te 188 = CS 231; Te 344) and only occasionally allow solving the identification issue. Though some of them show traces of re-carving, their inscriptions have not been altered (e.g. Te 264 = CS 87; Te 599; CS 359, 579).
3. Seals whose inscription has been erased and replaced by figurative motifs (e.g. KKS: 77; ICK 2: Ka 607B; Te 153 = CS 603; Te 468, 472, 477, 504 = CS 277; Te 581, 607, 608, 629; CS 370, 560, 594, 609, 834).

A number of inscribed seals cannot be placed in any of the mentioned groups because of the lack of textual information that would allow relating them to their actual users. Legends can mention tutelary gods, be illegible or partly erased. Few seals are known in more versions (before and after their legend was updated, e.g. Te 47a–b, 246a–c, 529a–c, 582a–b) and must be classified according to the phase considered. Based on published evidence, it emerges that seal impressions with coinciding legends (re-carved or not) occur slightly more frequently than those with not coinciding inscriptions (see Fig. 6).

As remarked by A. Lassen, the lack of correspondence between legends and users is more common in some styles than in others. Correct legends were probably more important for certain categories of owners than for others.⁶⁷

Moreover, inscriptions that do not correspond to the name of their user tend in general to reflect his cultural background. Assyrians usually reused seals previously

owned by other Assyrians and seals owned by Anatolians were generally not reused (cf. above the Šāt-Ibra’s seal, Te 221, which is the only occurrence demonstrating the opposite). Ur III seals were generally acquired by Assyrians, who probably regarded the members of the Ur III state as eminent Mesopotamian ancestors. Anatolians could occasionally appreciate the prestige conveyed by Mesopotamian seals. Besides the already mentioned Tarâm-Mari’s seal (Kt m/k 102C = m/k 171B), there are two other seals that preserved their Assyrian inscription though they have been reused by locals. Te 145 (inscription: *A-mur-A-šur*₃ DUMU *Šu-A-nim*) was probably adopted by Huruta (TC 1: 90a–b) and Te 247 (inscription: *Ha²-na-na-tum* DUMU.MUNUS *Puzur*₄-*ša-da*) was reused by Šatahšušar (ICK 1: 24a–b). The second seal is particularly interesting because it shows a woman who chose to reuse a seal previously owned by another woman.

Though women commonly used seals in the Old Assyrian time, female names in legends are very rare.⁶⁸ So far, the only other occurrence has been found in CS 357 (inscription: *Ru-ba-tum* DUMU.SAL *A-mur-DINGIR*). Also in this case, the seal has been reused by another merchant named Usānum, who did not modify the legend.⁶⁹

7 Conclusion

Most of Old Assyrian seals are uninscribed, no matter the quality of their intaglio or the status of their owners. Inscriptions, though prestigious, were not considered essential for sealing practice.

As free-lancers, merchants did not need to convey any other information but their name and patronymic in order to be identified. Titles are very rare and mostly linked to other Mesopotamian traditions. They mostly appear on reused seals and on seals produced in workshops located outside Anatolia.

Despite the crucial role of trade activities, the current designation as “merchant” is remarkably absent in seal legends (cf. Te 532, 555).

The lack of comparisons with the sealed evidence from Assur does not allow proper determination of

⁶⁸ Women occasionally appear as seal owners, though they are largely mentioned in the textual evidence from Kültepe. See Michel 2009; Ricetti 2014: § 6.

⁶⁹ For further considerations on this seal, see Donbaz 2005.

⁶⁷ Lassen 2014: 112.

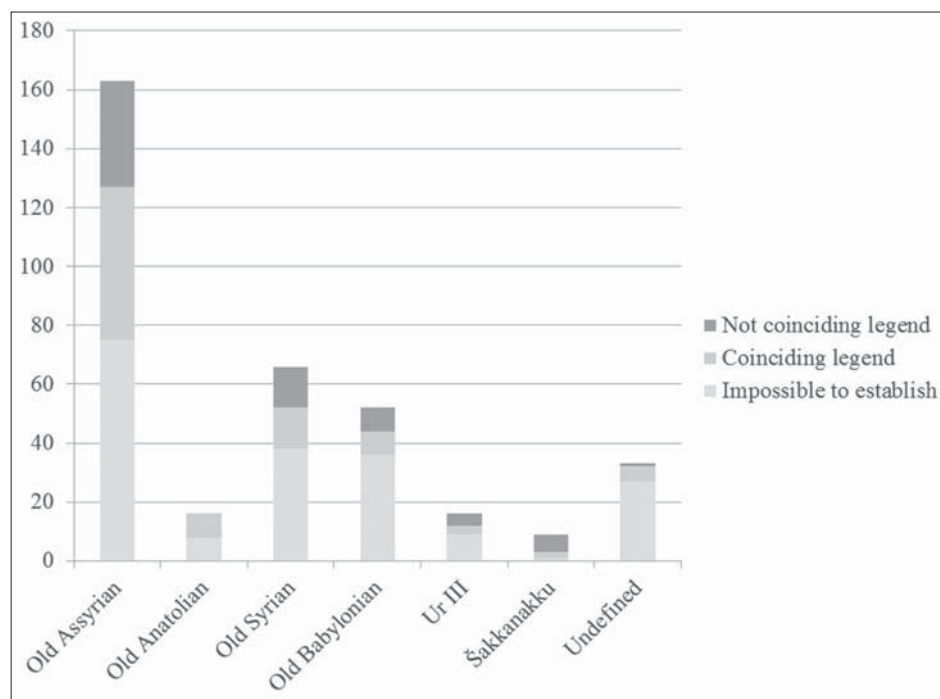


Fig. 7: Relationship between seal legends and users according to glyptic styles.

how inscribed seals were used and reused in the city-state and whether legends tended to correspond to the owners. I personally think that, even if reusing practices were widespread all around the Near East, Anatolia showed a much greater variety of cases which derived from the crucible of glyptic styles and customs interacting there.

Reusing and re-carving affects the link between imagery, legend and owner. The one who tries to identify the owner in the scene or the deity invoked in the legend will be disappointed by the general discrepancy between the figurative and the written messages conveyed, even when the seal has not been reused. In CS 357 the worshipper is characterized as a man though the legend mentions a woman; some inscribed seals do not even include any human figure identifiable with the owner (e.g. Te 270–271, 384; CS 601). The seal owned by the two *laputtā'um* (CS 358) does not show any particular feature, but the vertical crescent, which has been found also in Old Assyrian ruler's seals (Lassen 2014: 110). The worshipper worn a long beard, which, however, does not seem exclusive for a particular category of owners (cf. Te 62, 91, 320; CS 149, 257, 268, 292, 408, 572, 703, 826; see also Te 238 = CS 49, which probably shows a ruler and Te 536, where the bearded figure is

the ruler with the peaked cap). Self-representation was probably a primary concern for the original owners of some reused seals that turned up in Kültepe (i.e. Ur III, *šakkanakku* and Eblaite seals), but not for the merchants adopting them. The city-state did not impose any specific model to which merchants had to conform through the designs of their seals, nor does it seem that any particular motif was restricted to a certain category of people.

The mixed cultural background that characterized the Old Assyrian trade network, where customs from many different traditions interacted with each other, offered to merchants many stimuli in the pursuing of their personal taste. Motifs had to somehow appeal to the seal's owner, even if they did not coincide with his own self-image. The same was true for legends. The prestige conveyed by some names was still more important than one's own name. Despite this, as demonstrated above, some considerations on the link between owner and legend are still possible: e.g. the consistency of imagery and legends in the seals owned by rulers; the devotion for Šamaš and Aya expressed by some seals used by merchants and the one column legends generally adopted by Anatolians.

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Showing off: Old Babylonian “goddess in a structure” plaques revisited

Elisa Roßberger

Abstract: Old Babylonian terracotta plaques have been studied for decades, yet their functions and iconographic content remain elusive. This paper approaches the pictorial system of this popular art by analyzing the features typical of a group of plaques known as “goddess in a structure” or “Brustbildgöttin”. The widely distributed group depicts females within dome-shaped reed-like structures, wearing long coats, elaborate hairdos and horned headdresses that identify them as goddesses/divine images. Their enlarged faces and clenched hands protrude prominently from the patterned background displaying rich dress and jewelry, which gives the impression of a direct engagement with the viewer rarely seen in Mesopotamian art. Reviewing their typology and contextual distribution in southern Mesopotamia and beyond, I will argue that these plaques testify to a relatively short-lived cultural practice of distributing miniaturized and schematized visualizations of local cult images beyond their original temple contexts.

Keywords: terracotta plaque, Old Babylonian, replication, pictorial practice, cult image, reed-structures.

What happens to an original when it is reproduced and spread into different societal contexts? What are the consequences of it losing “its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be”?¹ Walter Benjamin posed these questions in his well-known 1936 essay on “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” where he dealt with the shift of perception and its effects in the wake of the advent of photography and film in the early twentieth century. He was particularly concerned with what he called the “loss of an aura” that only emanates from an original. My contribution poses similar questions concerning image production in early second millennium Babylonia in the wake of the growing popularity of clay images cast from moulds. Among them is a distinct group of images usually interpreted as representations

of cult statues of female deities (Frankfort 1936: 85, 96). They have been called “goddess (with)in a structure” (Auerbach 1994: 236; Moorey 2001: 86, 116) or, in German, “Brustbildgöttin” (Opificius 1961: 66) and will be the focus of this paper. I argue that materiality and pictorial practice that characterize these small-scale images transform and condense qualities inherent in the large-scale originals in a particular contextual setting and respond to the worshippers’ desire for immediacy and participation in specific local cults at household and “public” levels alike. The choice of medium and visual realization is particular to this period.

1 Physical appearance and stylistic groupings

I have identified almost 130 specimens from several Mesopotamian sites and various museum collections (**Fig. 1**); when stratigraphically excavated their contexts date to Isin-Larsa/Early Old Babylonian period levels. Besides the ubiquitous “nude female”, the “goddess in a structure” is one of the most popular motifs in early second millennium terracotta plaque production.

The overall shape of the plaques under discussion is rather homogenous with an arched top and a straight horizontal lower edge, reminiscent of the classic shape

¹ Benjamin 1963 [1936]: 4. The English translation follows H. Arendt (Benjamin 1968:11). My research on Old Babylonian terracotta plaques and related issues has been financed by a postdoctoral fellowship granted by the Bayerische Gleichstellungsförderung. A travel grant by the Fritz-Thyssen Foundation allowed me to examine originals at the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago. I thank Michael Roaf and Jean Evans for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this paper, as well as Anna Kurmangaliev and Martin Gruber for the discussion of many of the topics raised here. Claudia Suter’s review helped to clarify several points. All made valuable suggestions improving this paper, the remaining errors are my own. I would also like to thank Gizem Gruber and Manfred Lerchl who helped in preparing my drawings for publication.

Site (area)	Find No.	Mus.	Mus. no.	Type	Publication
Babylon (?)		VAM	VA Bab 3109	4	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: Nr. 101, Taf. 9
Babylon (Merkes)	VA Bab 3110	VAM	VA Bab 3110	4	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: Nr. 104, Taf. 9
Babylon (Merkes)	VA Bab 3111	VAM	VA Bab 3111	4	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: Nr. 103, Taf. 9
Babylon (Merkes)	VA Bab 3149	VAM	VA Bab 3149	4	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: Nr. 105, Taf. 10
Babylon (Merkes)	VA Bab 567	VAM	VA Bab 567	4	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: Nr. 102, Taf. 9
Babylon (Merkes)	VA Bab 568	VAM	VA Bab 568	?	Klengel-Brandt/Cholidis 2006: 68, Nr. 106
Fāra	F1469	VAM		1	Heinrich 1931: 144, Taf. 74e
Fāra	F1825	VAM		1	Heinrich 1931: 144, Taf. 74c
Fāra		VAM		1	Heinrich 1931: 144
Fāra (<i>mould</i>)	F1961	VAM		1	Heinrich 1931: 144, Taf. 74d
Iščali	Is. 34.210	IM	IM31724	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pl. 34e
Iščali	Is. 35.220	OIM	A21203	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pl. 34i
Iščali	Is. 34:R.171	IM		?	Auerbach 1994: no. 321, pl. 62u
Iščali	Is. 34:R.40	IM		?	Auerbach 1994: no. 257, pl. 56h
Iščali	Is. 35:R.130	IM		?	Auerbach 1994: no. 256, pl. 56g
Iščali (Kitītum IIB)	Is. 35:R.137	IM		2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: no. 316, pl. 62r
Iščali (Kitītum I–II)	Is. 35:R.140	IM		2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: no. 315, 62q
Iščali (Kitītum I–II)	Is. 35:R.142	IM		?	Auerbach 1994: no. 258, pl. 56i
Iščali (?)		OIM	A9458	3	unpublished
Iščali (?)		OIM	A9344	2	unpublished
Iščali (City Gate)	Is. 34.103 & 34.110	IM		2	Frankfort 1936: fig. 71
Iščali (Gate Temple)	Is. 35.91	IM	IM27235	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 34d
Iščali (Gate Temple)	Is. 35:216	IM	IM31728	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 34g
Iščali (Kitītum IA?)	Is. 34.40	OIM	A16972	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 34b
Iščali (Kitītum IB)	Is. 35.222	OIM	A21205	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 34f
Iščali (Kitītum II)	Is. 34:R.184	IM		?	Auerbach 1994: no. 254, pl. 56e
Iščali (Kitītum III)	Is. 34.124	IM		1	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pl. 34a
Iščali (Kitītum IV)	Is. 34.204	OIM	A21196	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pl. 37d
Iščali (Kitītum)	Is. 35:R.139	IM		2	Auerbach 1994: no. 255, pl. 56f
Iščali (Serai; <i>mould</i>)	Is. 34.125	OIM	A17002	2	Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 34h
Isin	IB 1471	IM		4	Spycket 1987: Taf. 20 und 22
Isin (GN, Haus d. Rechts)	IB 1655	IM		4	Spycket 1992: 65, Taf. 47
Isin (GN, Haus d. Rechts)	IB 1804	IM		3	Spycket 1992: Taf. 47
Isin (N I)	IB 0023	IM		special	Hrouda 1973: 42, Abb. 21, Taf. 23
Isin (N II)	IB 0515	IM		4	Hrouda 1977: 50
Isin (N II)	IB 0786	IM		4	Spycket 1987: 51
Isin (NO II)	IB 1375	IM		3	Spycket 1987: Taf. 20, 23
Isin (NO III)	IB 1442	IM		4	Spycket 1987: Taf. 20
Isin (NO IV)	IB 1467	IM		?	Spycket 1987: 58-59
Isin (SO)	IB 1857	IM		special	Spycket 1992: 66, Taf. 46,47
Isin (SO)	IB 1874	IM		special	Spycket 1992: 66
Isin (SO)	IB 1889	IM		special	Spycket 1992: 66
Isin (W III)	IB 1957	IM		3	Spycket 1992: 66
Ḥafāḡa (Mound D)	Kh. VIII 176	IM		2	Delougaz 1990: pl. 61k
Kiš	K.825	IM	IM21346	special	Moorey 1975: 86, pl. XIXd
Kiš	V.10	IM	IM49867	4	Moorey 1975: 86
Kiš	V.74	IM	FM228337	4	Moorey 1975: 86
Kiš	Y.223	FM	FM230913	6 (?)	Moorey 1975: 86
Kiš (Ingarra)	X.38	FM	FM158112	?	Moorey 1975: 86
Kiš (<i>mould</i>)	K.825bis	IM	IM21346	special	Moorey 1975: 86, pl. XIXd
Kiš (Uḡaimir)		Ashm	An1926.424	1	Moorey 2001: no. 111

Kiš (Uḫaimir)		Louvre	AO10421	4	de Genouillac 1925: 17, pl. X.1
Kiš (Uḫaimir)		Louvre	AO10414	1	de Genouillac 1925: 17, pl. VI.4
Kiš (Uḫaimir; <i>mould</i>)		Louvre	AO10419	4	de Genouillac 1925: 17, pl. VIII.3
Larsa		Louvre	AO20194	4	Barrelet 1968: no. 577, pl. LV
Larsa		Louvre	AO20193	4	Barrelet 1968: no. 578, pl. LV
Larsa		Louvre	AO16929	special	Barrelet 1968: no. 579, pl. LV
Mari	TH.79.46	NMSDeZ		schematic	Weygand 2006: fig. 1
Mari	TH.00.149	NMSDeZ		schematic	Weygand 2006: fig. 2
Nippur	3N-289	OIM	A29442	1	McCown/Haines/Hansen 1967: pl. 135.11
Nippur		IM		3	Opificius 1961: Nr. 180
Nippur		IM		2	Legrain 1930: no. 99, pl. XVIII
Nippur		IM		?	McCown/Haines/Hansen 1967: pl. 139.2
Šišin		IM		2?	Rumayidh 2009: figs. 20, 21a
Šišin		IM		2?	Rumayidh 2009: figs. 20
Šišin		IM		2?	Rumayidh 2009: figs. 20
Sippar		IAM	1364	schematic	Opificius 1961: 65, Nr. 179
Sippar		IAM	1360	schematic	Scheil 1902: 85-87, fig. 7
Sippar		IAM	1363	schematic	Scheil 1902: 84, fig. 6
Tall ad-Dair	D 105830	IM		2 (schematic)	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 100, pl. 22
Tall ad-Dair	D 101847	IM		1 (schematic)	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 101, pl. 23
Tall ad-Dair	D 103369	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 119, pl. 30
Tall ad-Dair	D 101735	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 86, pl. 19
Tall ad-Dair	D 102754	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 87, pl. 19
Tall ad-Dair	D 102827	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 88, pl. 19
Tall ad-Dair	D 102588	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 89, pl. 19
Tall ad-Dair	D 102792	IM		special	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 92, pl. 20
Tall ad-Dair	D 100743	IM		?	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 93, pl. 20
Tall ad-Dair	D 103381	IM		2 (schematic)	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 94, pl. 21
Tall ad-Dair	D 101891	IM		1 (special)	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 95, pl. 21
Tall ad-Dair	D 102959	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 96, pl. 21
Tall ad-Dair	D 102442	IM		?	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 97, pl. 21
Tall ad-Dair	D 102398	IM		?	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 98, pl. 21
Tall ad-Dair	D 101061	IM		schematic	Gasche/Pons 2014: no. 99, pl. 22
Tall ad-Dair		IM		1?	Baqir/Mustafa 1945: pl. 3
Tall ad-Dair		IM		1	Baqir/Mustafa 1945: pl. 4
Tall Ḥarmal		IM	IM 51140	?	Opificius 1961: Nr. 177
Tello		Louvre	AO15113	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 300
Tello		Louvre	MNB?	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 307
Tello		Louvre	AO12059	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 308
Tello		Louvre	AO15114	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 309
Tello		Louvre	AO16687	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 310
Tello		Louvre	AO16755	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 301
Tello		Louvre	AO6932	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 305
Tello		Louvre	AO12566	5	Barrelet 1968: pl. XXIX, no. 306
Tello		Louvre	AO16757	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 509
Tello		Louvre	AO12222	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 510
Tello		Louvre	AO15123	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 511
Tello		Louvre	AO12717	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 512
Tello		Louvre	AO15122	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 513
Tello		Louvre	AO15124	6	Barrelet 1968: pl. XLVIII, no. 514
Terqa	15036	NMSDeZ		1	Weygand 2006: fig. 3
Unprovenanced		Ashm	An1949.920	1	Moorey 1975: 86, pl. XXIIa; 2004: 150

Unprovenanced		YBC		4	Douglas Van Buren 1930: no. 431, pl. XXII fig. 113
Unprovenanced		Louvre		1	Barrelet 1968: no. 787, pl. LXXVII
Unprovenanced		YBC	10 054	1	Douglas Van Buren 1930: no. 434, pl. XXIII, fig. 116
Unprovenanced		KNM	6521	2 (special)	Opificius 1961: Nr. 181, Taf. 2
Unprovenanced		Louvre	AO9002	3	Barrelet 1968: no. 785, pl. LXXVII
Unprovenanced		OIM	A7566	3	unpublished
Unprovenanced		Louvre	AO6505	4	Barrelet 1968: no. 786, pl. LXXVII
Ur	U.1013	Penn	B15188	5	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/1108/
Ur		Penn	31-16-876	5	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/27411/
Ur	U.16238	BM	1931,1010.411	3	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/16672/
Ur	U.7582	BM	120906	3	Woolley/Mallowan 1927: No. 131, pl. 78
Ur	U.17661	BM	123244	schematic	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/18976/
Ur (AH)	U.16957	BM	127434	schematic	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/17915/
Ur (Diqdiqqah)	U.1227	Penn	B15648	6	Opificius 1961: 214, Taf. 4
Ur (Diqdiqqah)	U.1012	BM	116510	5	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/1107/
Ur (Diqdiqqah)	U.1744	Penn	B15634	5	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/1807/
Ur (Diqdiqqah)	U.16949	Penn	31-43-371	5	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/17907/
Ur (figurine)		BM	1931,1010.530	schematic	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/31239/
Ur (KPS, S of Giparu)	U.6454	BM	1927,0527.237	4	http://www.ur-online.org/subject/5672/
Uruk		IM	IM 69456	4	Wrede 2003: Nr. 1038, Taf. 37
Uruk		VAM	VA 115588	3	Wrede 2003: Nr. 1060, Taf. 38

Fig. 1: Table of “goddess in a structure” plaques. Abbreviations used: Ashm = Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; BM = British Museum; FM = Field Museum, Chicago; IAM = Istanbul Archeological Museum; IM = Iraq Museum, Baghdad; KNM = Copenhagen National Museum; NMSDeZ = National Museum of Syria, Dair az-Zör (Deir ez-Zor); OIM = Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago; Penn = Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia; VAM = Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin; YBC = Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven. All internet sources cited last accessed: 28.01.16.

of Mesopotamian stone stelae passed on since Early Dynastic times.²

In contrast to the marks of deliberate breakage that terracotta figurines and plaques generally exhibit, these plaques were frequently found intact or only with minor damages. Their massiveness equally sets them apart: the clays used are generally coarser and more heavily chaff-tempered, making them robust and durable. Their heights range between 10 and 12 cm and they are up to 3 cm thick. Unlike many other plaques, most goddess plaques can be placed standing up due to their solid, broadened base or the addition of a supporting foot on their back, suggesting that they were meant for display (Fig. 2).

There were no visible traces of paint on the pieces that I examined in Chicago, London and Oxford, but there were red and violet pigments on plaques from Isin (Spycket 1987: 51, IB 1471) and Kiš (de Genouillac 1925, 17, pl. X.1); it is possible that other examples also were painted.

The general composition of the imagery is very consistent: thick ridges surround the central motif on at least three sides. The frame protrudes markedly from

the background. Crosshatchings, impressions and grooves indicate its texture and rosettes or circles often appear as decorative elements. The regularly patterned dress of the goddess fills at least two thirds of the interior, making it at times difficult to decide where the dress ends and the surrounding frame begins. Knobs, impressed designs, and hatchings indicate ornamented fabrics and multiple strings of necklaces.

The figure depicted does not have a plastically modelled body, just a face and knob-like hands clenched into fists in an awkward position in front of the chest. Sometimes, horizontal grooves indicating fingers make it clear that these protruding disc-like or square protrusions are indeed hands and not female breasts. The broad frontal face with its outlined, larger-than-life eyes attracts the viewer's attention. Interestingly, other facial features such as nose and mouth are regularly smeared or washed out. This cannot be a coincidence since the lower parts of faces on other types of plaques are generally much better modelled and/or preserved. Comparing these faces to the contemporary iconography of females on terracotta plaques and in other media makes them look crude and sometimes even grotesquely ugly.

Despite these common features, there is a large but not random variety in the rendering of details. We can differentiate several groups with similar but rarely identical members (only few were formed from the same mould). I will briefly point out some of the most

² Börker-Klähn 1982: 12. The earliest examples for stelae with an arched top are the ones from Ġabalat al-Baiḏā' for Syria (Börker-Klähn 1982: Nr. 13.14), and the Ušumgal stele and Uru-nāše stelae for southern Mesopotamia (Börker-Klähn 1982: Nr. 15–16).



Fig. 2: Examples of freestanding “goddess in a structure” plaques: a) Fāra (F 1469; after Heinrich 1931: Taf. 74e); b) unprovenanced, probably from Iščali (A9344, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago); c) unprovenanced (A7566, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago); d) unprovenanced, said to be from Iščali (A9458, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago) (drawings and photographs by E. Roßberger).

prominent groups found in central and southern Mesopotamia (Fig. 3). Within each group several varieties exist, and at times boundaries become blurred. In Fig. 1, I labeled unique plaques not attributable to one of these groups as “special”, and such with simplified, reduced details as “schematic”. When attribution was not possible due to the fragmented state of preservation or insufficient reproduction quality, I entered a question mark in the type-column.

1. Heavy drapery falling in two folds over the horizontally held forearms and a large cylindrical headdress characterize *Type One* (Fig. 3a–d). Although not exactly identical, all representatives are closely related: all females wear necklaces consisting of multiple strings of large round beads and three to four bunches of hair. Their tiered, cylindrical headdress resembles that worn by the seated bronze goddess from Iščali.³ Their somewhat artificial appearance creates the impression of a wig, and recalls the reed bundles that frame some of the images. Several females hold sickle-shaped instruments in their hands. The backgrounds have a patterned, reed-like appearance.
2. The frames of *Type Two* plaques resemble palm trunks (Fig. 3e–h). Circular knobs or impressions

indicating necklace beads and textile decoration are spread all over the surface; multiple horned headdresses crown the prominent heads. In many cases vertical bands with horizontal divisions are placed in the center of the lower part of the dress; on the more schematically rendered specimens this even looks like a pole or stem on which the head rests (Fig. 3f).

3. *Type Three* examples have a similar vertical band in the center, yet decorated with a herringbone pattern (Fig. 3i–l). The framing bands are decorated with a checkered pattern and with circular decorations and resemble a long veil encasing the small-headed figure. Interestingly, the large, single horned crowns sit *outside* on top of the frame. Rows of discs with inscribed circles probably indexing rosettes surround the images. Just like in *Type One*, two elongated strands of hair (or bands/pieces of jewelry?) hang down on either side of the head, forming, together with a choker consisting of multiple rings, a characteristic rectangular ornament below the chin. Some of them wear a large rounded medallion, which is more characteristic for *Type Four*.
4. The simple long cloaks typical of *Group Four*, which are sometimes vertically bordered by circlets, are cut out along the edges so that the edges of the cloak form the lateral frames of the plaque (Fig. 3m–p). Other features characteristic of this group are hemispherical or cylindrical headdresses, a round tuft of hair on either side of the face and an elongated strand each hanging down from the ear to the chest (cf. *Type One* and *Three*).
5. There are two variants of *Type Five* plaques, one set in a rectangular frame (Fig. 3q–r), the other with a rounded top (Fig. 3s). Both variants feature a rosette attached to each shoulder and two more on either side of the head and (where preserved) of the lower body. Both hold the neck of a globular vessel in each hand and wear tripartite cylindrical headdresses higher than those of *Type One*. These headdresses are divided into three vertical sections and have no horns.⁴ While bodily features (breasts) and proportions are more realistically rendered here than in the other types, the first variant exhibits pinched noses and applied eyes, typical of contemporary and earlier clay figurines.⁵ Interestingly, a small socket similar to studs attached to (metal) statues for anchoring them on pedestals appears where we would expect feet (Fig. 3s), a feature that I interpret as a visual characterization of the depicted as an inanimate object and thus a cult statue rather than a divine being (see below).

3 Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pls. 28–29. These high-cylindrical and vertically subdivided headdresses seem to represent niched buildings/entrances and might conceptually relate to the much later turreted mural crowns worn by Hittite goddesses, Assyrian and Elamite queens and Hellenistic goddesses/city personifications (Calmeyer 1987–1990: 596). See also *Type Five* with tripartite cylindrical headdress.

4 In one plaque from Tello (Barrelet 1968: no. 368, pl. XXXV), a nude female playing the drum wears the tripartite headdress, thus making its clear-cut attribution of this headdress to the divine sphere disputable.

5 Compare for instance Ur-III and Isin-Larsa figurines from Tall Asmar (Frankfort/Lloyd/Jacobsen 1940: pls. 109–113a).



Fig. 3: The most popular “goddess in a structure” plaque types found in central and southern Mesopotamia: a) Fāra (F 1825; after Heinrich 1931: Taf. 74c), b) unprovenanced (Ashmolean AN1949.920; after Moorey 2001: no. 150), c) Kiš (Uḫaimir; after Barrelet 1968: pl. LXI fig. 648); d) unprovenanced (after Barrelet 1968: No. 787, pl. LXXVII); e) two fragments from the same mould, Iščali (Ish. 35:220 and 34:204); f) Iščali (Ish. 35:222); g) unprovenanced, said to be from Iščali (A9344, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago); h) Ḥafāḡa (Kh. VIII 176; after Delougaz 1990: pl. 61k); i) Ur (Diqdiqqah, BM120906, after photograph of the Ur Digitization Project, BM London); j) Isin (IB-1804; © Isin Archive, LMU Munich, drawing: C. Wolff); k) unprovenanced, said to be from Iščali (A9458, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago); l) unprovenanced (A7566, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago); m) Babylon, purchased (Klengel-Brandt 2006: Nr. 101, Taf. 9); n) Isin (IB-1471; courtesy of Isin Archive, LMU Munich); o) Kiš (Uḫaimir; after: Barrelet 1968: No. 646, pl. LXI); p) Ur (BM 1927.0527.237; after photograph of the Ur Digitization Project, BM London); q) Ur (Diqdiqqah, BM 116510; after photograph of the Ur Digitization Project, BM London); r) Tello (Barrelet 1968: No. 305, pl. XXIX); s) Ur (Diqdiqqah, B15634; courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia); t) Tello (Barrelet 1968: No. 513, pl. XLVIII); u) Ur (Diqdiqqah, B15648; courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia); v) Ur (Diqdiqqah, BM 116860; after photograph of the Ur Digitization Project, BM London) (all drawings [except j] by E. Roßberger based on original objects or photographs).

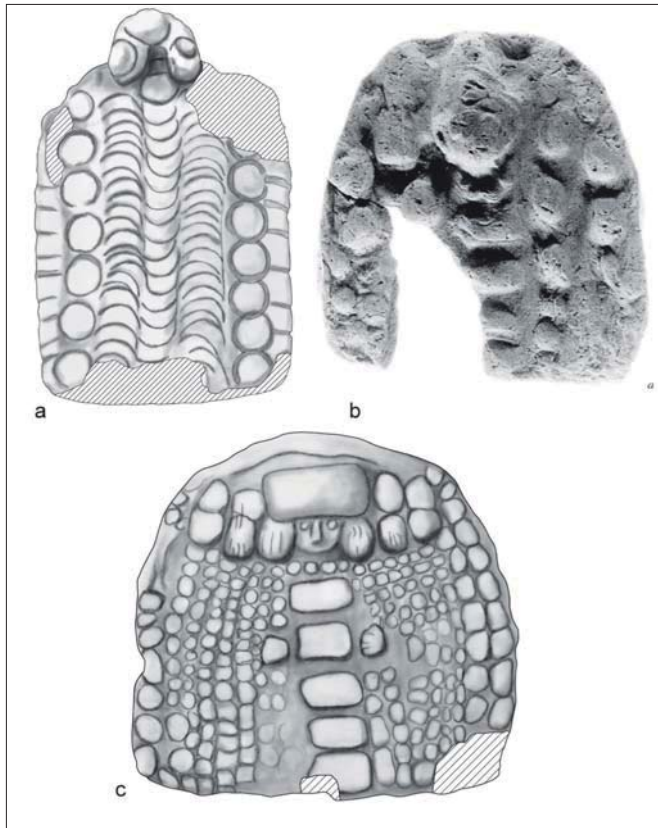


Fig. 4: Stylized versions of “goddess in a structure” plaques: a) Ur (BM 127434; after photograph of the Ur Digitization Project, BM London); b) Tall ad-Dair (Gasche/Pons 2014: pl. 22.99a, reproduced with permission); Sippar (Scheil 1902: 85, Nr. 7) (all drawings: E. Roßberger).

The V-shaped neckline, cape and pleated dress are also worn by other (probably non-divine) females depicted on terracotta plaques, most of which come from Tello.⁶

6. *Type Six* has been called a “Babylonian Sphinx” (Woolley 1962: 102, Nr. 20, pl. 28) for its enlarged face, short, bust-like body and frontal “paws”, flanked by miniature figures (females wearing long robes with clasped hands) (Fig. 3t–u). It is perhaps a cult image accompanied by smaller statuettes and with crouching lions in front of the ensemble. The goddess with her big face wears a modest single-horned headdress and at least one string of a beaded necklace. Due to the protruding shape of the bottom of these plaques, the large hands (not animal paws!) of the goddess stretch outwards. In several cases, only the characteristic socle of this unusual group is preserved (Fig. 3v).⁷

Even the simplest and most stylized versions of the motif are easy to identify due to their characteristic features, such as their overall shape, hairdo and ornaments (Fig. 4). Arguably, the plaques labeled “schematic” in Fig. 1 could as well be defined as yet another type.

There are also other variants of the “goddess in a structure” plaques that do not fit easily into these six

most popular types. Plaques typical for the Ḥamrīn region (Tall Yalḥī) combine a nude female body with an enormously enlarged divine headdress and hairdo (Cellerino 2011). Their cylindrical, vertically-divided horned headdress is similar to that of *Type Five*. These terracottas are among the rare instances in which female nudity is combined with a divine attire; they complicate issues concerning identity and functions of the Old Babylonian “nude female”.⁸

Closely related, but not included here are images of enthroned goddesses (e.g. Barrelet 1968: Nr. 186, 297–298, 795–796; Wrede 2003: Abb. 87–88). In these images, a female deity sitting on a clearly recognizable, sometimes three-dimensionally modelled chair was rendered in a more realistic and anatomically correct manner. Their hands differ from those of the “goddess in a structure”: they hold poles on either side or are clasped in front of their bodies.

Recent excavations of Middle Bronze Age layers at Hirbemerdon Tepe in the Upper Tigris region have unearthed five rectangular terracotta plaques with peculiar, protruding “spouts” at the bottom edge and perforated extensions for affixing them onto a wall (?) at the upper edge (Laneri 2011: 84–87). They depict small nude female figures applied in high-relief or scratched as simple stick figures centrally into a wide rectangular frame. These frames were painted in red and black and richly decorated with rosettes, herringbone patterns, triangles and concentric circles, resembling the overall conception and framing of the plaques under discussion. The plaques from Hirbemerdon Tepe have parallels at neighbouring Middle Bronze Age sites, but no regional predecessors (Laneri 2011: 87). Therefore, I would suggest that they are local variants of the same visual phenomenon and/or ritual practice that led to the contemporary production of “goddess in a structure” plaques further south.

2 Distribution and find contexts

Charting these groupings suggests that some typological differences reflect local or regional peculiarities with some types clearly prevailing at one or two sites, such as *Type 2* at Iščali or *Type 5* at Tello and Ur (cf. Fig. 1). However, singular examples of a site-specific type also occur at other places: for instance, one plaque of *Type 6*, typical for Tello, was found at Ur. Obviously, moulds and/or finished plaques traveled across southern and central Mesopotamia. At the same time, places like the Kitītum-temple at Iščali (ancient Nērebtum) yielded a great variety of goddess-plaques, none of them alike (even though we can broadly group many of them under *Type 2*).

Unfortunately, we lack precise archaeological contexts for too many plaques, making clear identifications of production centers or distribution patterns impracticable.

⁶ Barrelet 1968: pl. XXX. 315–317, 319.

⁷ Examples of such socles with lions survive from Iščali (Ish. 34:60; OIM A16980), Ur (BM 116860) and Isin (IB 1657).

⁸ See recently Felli 2015.

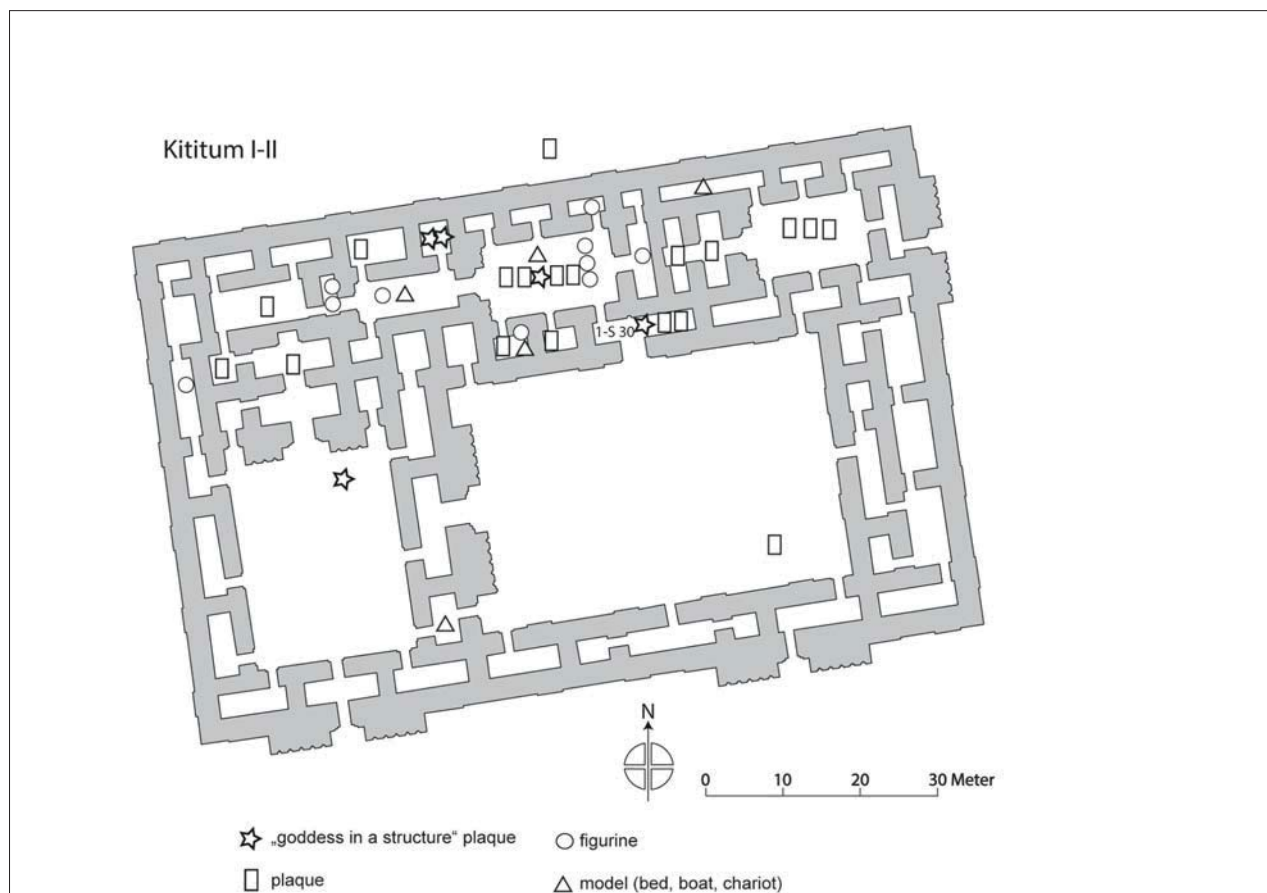


Fig. 5: Find spots of terracotta objects in the Kititum-temple at Iščali, levels I-II (plan after Hill/Jacobsen 1990: fig. 3; redrawn by M. Lerchl, modifications by E. Roßberger).

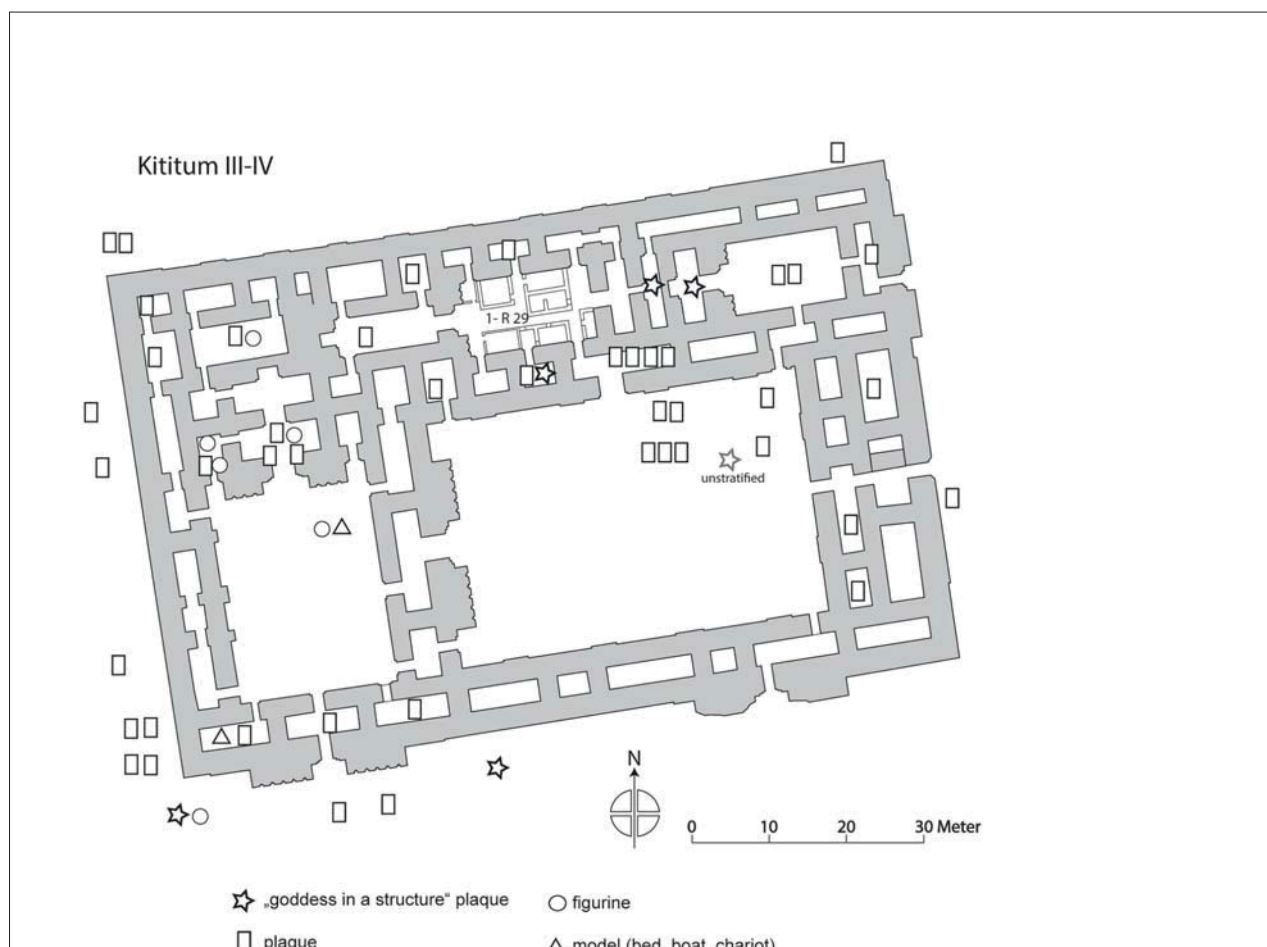


Fig. 6: Find spots of terracotta objects in the Kititum-temple at Iščali, levels III-IV (one “goddess in structure” plaque unstratified) (plan after Hill/Jacobsen 1990: fig. 13; redrawn by M. Lerchl, modifications by E. Roßberger).

The best evidence comes from Iščali with a total of 18 “goddess in a structure” plaques and one mould, all stratigraphically excavated. The largest architectural structure exposed at the site, the Ištar-Kitītum Temple, yielded most plaques (9); another two specimens came from the neighbouring Gate Temple, one from the City Gate and, interestingly, one mould from the residential buildings, which the excavators called “Serai”.⁹

Inside the Kitītum Temple, figurative terracotta objects were found scattered over the entire building (Figs. 5–6). The “goddess in a structure” plaques lay dispersed in the inner courtyards and in small back rooms: only one was found in one of the two cellae or antecellae. One plaque (Ish. 35:222), found in a passage room (1-S 30, level I-B) with a small square niche about 90 cm above floor-level, might have been originally set up in this niche (Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 47, pl. 4a). Since built-in niches are rather scarce in the archaeological record, such an installation was obviously not a prerequisite for the handling and display of these images. In the neighbouring Gate Temple and its adjacent rooms two goddess plaques, like most other terracottas, were found in the entrance area but not in the cella itself (Roßberger 2017: fig. 5). The distribution pattern of plaques with concentrations in entrance areas as well as in and around courtyards may reflect patterns of the temple’s accessibility to people who brought such images into the compound.¹⁰ The question of who had access to which parts of the temple and when is difficult to resolve. Besides temple personnel including priests, singers, guards, cleaners, scribes and other people explicitly “dedicated” (Sum. a-ru-a, Bab. *širku*) to a deity, members of the urban population purveying goods and provisions for the deity (prebends) would have regularly entered the temple (Sallaberger 2011–2013: 522–523). At festivals, the temple doors opened to present the cult statue and to (re-)dedicate treasures (ibid.).

Not many terracotta plaques have been excavated in a stratigraphically controlled manner. At Tall ad-Dair (ancient Sippar-Amnānum) a small part of a residential area has been excavated and revealed about 15 “goddess in a structure” plaques in early Old Babylonian levels.¹¹ Several lay in or close to entrance areas, several just outside the central excavated building, but only

few in the interior of the house. Possibly due to the limited area of exposure, no clear pattern of distribution appears (Gasche/Pons 2014: 192–208).

The same is true for 13 “goddess in a structure” plaques from Isin. The majority was discovered in residential areas. While none came from the Gula-temple itself,¹² two were found in the major building to the North of the temple within the temenos complex¹³ and one in the area of the “Enlil-bāni palace”.¹⁴

Only four of eleven known specimens from Ur have archaeological contexts: three are from Isin-Larsa period houses (in areas AH, EM, BC) and one comes from the temenos area, south of the Giparu (area KPS).¹⁵

3 Discussion

3.1. Pictorial features

Several features set our plaques apart from conventional Babylonian image production. One is the *reduction of the human physical form* to the upper part of the body and to two prominent body parts – the face and the hands. I interpret this as an intentional visualization of the fact that the entity depicted is an object and not an actual divine or human being. We find analogies with contemporary plaques depicting bull-eared male figures with horned caps sometimes called “shrouded gods” (Moorey 2001: 94; Barrelet 1968, 182–183; Opificius 1961: 90–95). This is not the place to discuss this strongly related type further, but I want to point out that bull-eared male figures, too, lack a lower body suggesting that they depict immobile cult furniture. I suggest further that we should relate this observation to the so-called “Gula busts” (busts of a female deity in profile set on a cult pedestal) on later second millennium *kudurrus* (Seidl 1989: 195, Nr. 32, Taf. 15a; Nr. 40 Abb. 4). The fact that they lack a lower body and appear set up on a pedestal makes it clear that this specific form of cult image was the icon of a specific (?) deity.

A second point is the *frontality* of the image captivating the gaze of the beholder, “looking at us” and thus transcending the space of the surface.¹⁶ Ancient Near Eastern two-dimensional artworks rarely de-

9 For an overview on the distribution of terracotta objects from Ishchali see now Roßberger 2017. All data based on information available at the Diyala Archaeological Database (<http://diyala2.uchicago.edu/>; last accessed: 28.01.16).

10 *Contra* Assante who argues that “Old Babylonian terracotta plaques in temples were by and large intrusions” (Assante 2002: 15 with fn. 67) by attributing plaques found at the Kitītum-temple to domestic residents in “jerrybuilt shelters” in the temple’s north wing (1-R 29). The number of plaques found in this area actually decreases with the construction of flimsy compartments (= Assante’s refugee shelters; the excavators’ kitchen installations) in room R 29:1 at the beginning of building-period III. At no point in the temple’s history is the plaques’ distribution limited to this area (Roßberger 2017; Auerbach 1994: 301–308).

11 Levels Ig–Ii, about second half 19th c. according to the Middle Chronology (Gasche/Pons 2014: 53–63, cat. 86–89, 91–101, 119? pls. 19–23, 30).

12 Interestingly, only terracotta *figurines* (animals, especially dogs, and humans) and *miniatures* of a bed, a boat and a wagon but no terracotta *plaques* were found inside the temple. Two plaque fragments (IB 1642, discussed below, and IB 1643) came from the temple dump.

13 Goddess plaques IB 1655 and IB 1804 (Spycket 1992: 65, Taf. 47) were excavated in this building, termed by the excavators “Haus des Rechts” (Hrouda 1992: plan 9).

14 Goddess plaque IB-1957 (Spycket 1992: 66). Despite inscribed bricks from this area, neither of the two massive buildings in “West-Abschnitt III” could be unequivocally identified as the “palace of Enlil-bāni” (Hrouda 1992: 10, 40–48).

15 U.162363 (area BC, ruins of Larsa house above building), U.16957 (area AH), U.7582 (area EM), U.6454 (area KPS, South of Giparu). Based on information available at <http://www.ur-online.org/> (last accessed: 25.01.16).

16 See Sonik 2013: especially 288–293, citing much relevant literature on frontality and its visual function in Ancient Near Eastern art and beyond. Sonik’s focus lies on the “twisted profile pose” particularly suitable for the depiction of “in-between” beings like demons and monsters.

pict human or divine beings in strictly frontal view, an exception being images of Inana/Ištar and various *Mischwesen* whose bodies are often rendered in profile while their heads face outwards. Art historians, such as Meyer Shapiro (1973) and Ernst Gombrich (1986: 96, 98, 125), pointed out this peculiar treatment of sacred imagery long ago. Julia Asher-Greve (2003) collected third millennium visual evidence for what she identified as the “life-giving gaze“ (igi-namti-bar) or “legitimate/favourable gaze“ (igi-zi-bar) directed from goddesses, like Inana, Nanše, Bau or Geštinanna, to rulers, their cities or other gods (ibid.: 11, 22–23, 28–29). During the third millennium, only seated goddesses are represented in this way, all with voluminous strands of hair encircling their large face and equipped with an elaborate headgear. I propose that our terracotta “goddess in a structure” plaques are a continuation of this third millennium pictorial tradition with not only the face but also the full body turned towards the beholder.

In addition, the peculiar *gesture* of presenting one’s dress and jewellery contrasts with the clasped or raised hands found most frequently in Ancient Near Eastern anthropomorphic imagery. The protruding hands engage with the spectator as if saying “Look at me, I show this to you”. It is this gesture of exhibition, of “showing off”, which is obviously essential to the functioning of the images. Again, we can find a close match with the bull-eared (“shrouded”) gods mentioned above – with the difference that they display multiple weapons not jewelry.

Another characteristic is the coarse rendering of facial features and the high degree of *schematization* evident in many of the plaques. Some might interpret this as popular or artistic degenerations, even though several were found in elite buildings and inside temples such as at Isin and Iščali. Instead of attributing these sometimes almost abstract features to low quality production or lack of artistic competence, we should consider schematization as a stylistic device to stress the most important part, to emphasize the essence of the entity depicted and to single out the components that carry most semantic value.

There is another unusual point about the plaques which we recognize even in their most schematic form: their peculiar *framing* – a feature whose importance for the human response to an object or image was extensively treated by Ernst Gombrich and others.¹⁷ In our case, the central figure is not isolated, not set against a blank background as it is normal for other images depicted on Old Babylonian terracottas or cylinder seals. Instead, the stylized human form is integrated into a three-dimensional space, into a vaulted architectural frame consisting of organic, flexible construction ma-

terials, such as wickerwork, reeds, and palm trunks, in marked contrast to the ubiquitous mud-brick character of all Mesopotamian architecture.

3.2. Reed and wickerwork as architectural components of sacred architecture

Where do we find evidence for the employment of organic material in Mesopotamian sacred architecture? The use of reed cords (^{gi}dur) to construct door frames of gates and buildings, and of bundles of reeds (^{gi}gilim) or twisted palm leaves to set up canopies in courtyards, is well attested (Waetzoldt 2009–2011: 357). Tall bundles of reed stalks were the symbol of the goddess Inana and of other deities in Late Uruk times, marking the entrances of her and other deities’ cult buildings (Szarzyńska 1997: table 2, figs. 6, 11, 20 and 21). The excavators of the “White Temple” at Uruk (IV) found evidence that the wooden beams built into the back walls of the façade’s niches were visible.¹⁸ Columns imitating trimmed palm trees or spiraled trunks in various materials are regularly associated with entrances of temples or cellae in early second millennium Mesopotamia (Moorey 1994: 310–312; Seidl 2013; Gruber 2015).

Quoting the old topos of the “reeds of Enki”, reed as a building material in ritual settings stood for purity and healing.¹⁹ According to Ambos (2013a: 249), a reed shrine would be the ideal place for a person to “meet the gods in a pure, apotropaic, and vitalizing environment” and a “place that gives life”, but also the “place where divine judgement was pronounced”. Second and first millennium texts such as *bīt rimki* and *mis pī* refer to the erection of reed huts, Akkadian *šutukku* (E₂.GI.PAD), as temporary shrines outside inhabited areas and actual temples.²⁰ Inside these huts, rituals and incantations would purify the Babylonian king, animate a new cult statue, or cure the fatally ill.²¹

According to early second millennium temple descriptions, a structure made of reed and wood corresponds to one place in particular: the *apsū*, Enki’s abode of subterranean waters at Eridu.²² Originally a reed shrine, it incorporated *kiškanū*-trees in its door construction (Green 1978: 148–149). The poem Rim-Sin F describes the *apsū* in Nanna’s temple Ekišnuḡal at Ur

17 Gombrich 1979 (also cited by Pongratz-Leisten/Sonik 2015: 52) and Freedberg 1989: 82–135. See also Assante (2002: 16) who sees the “bordered field” as preparing a “space for the reception of an image in a manner similar to an altar that marks off and consecrates space to hold idols or offerings” and concludes that such a framing lends “the visual quality of iconicity to its enclosed subject” (ibid.).

18 Heinrich/Seidl 1982: Abb. 32; see a summary of this evidence in Moorey 1994: 358. The zig-zag decoration depicted on various stone fragments and on an architectural model from the same period might equally indicate the use of plant materials for temple façades and especially entrances (Heinrich/Seidl 1982: Abb. 33, 147).

19 Already Early Dynastic incantations celebrate the purifying power of reed (Cunningham 1997: 226).

20 Ambos 2013a: 249. See also Seidl/Sallaberger 2005–2006: 54–74 for a detailed discussion of reed huts as locations of rituals and reed-stands for delimiting and enlivening ritual space; cf. Ambos 2013a: 246–248; 2013b: 53–57 for rituals concerning the Babylonian king and Taracha 2001: 132–146 for reed-huts in Mesopotamian and Hittite ritual contexts.

21 For (neo-Assyrian) visual evidence of medical and magical procedures taking place in reed huts see for instance Ornan 2004: 20, fig. 17.

22 See for instance Löhnert 2013: 274, 276 referring to *Enki’s Journey to Nippur* (ECTSL 1.1.4) and other literary texts.



Fig. 7: Reed structured hunchbacks: a) Iščali “goddess in structure”-plaque (Ish. 34:124, Hill/Jacobsen 1990: pl. 34a, courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago); b) terracotta plaque from Tall ad-Dair (after Gasche/Pons 2014: No. 160, pl. 42, reproduced with permission); c) terracotta plaque with bull-eared god in reed structure set onto a lying bull and flanked by nude heroes (unprovenanced; A7656; courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago; photo: author); d) three-dimensional clay model from Isin (IB-1068, courtesy of Isin Archive, LMU Munich).

as a room of *kiškanû*-wood and “very holy reeds, golden yellow or silver white”.²³

Another element of temple architecture that carries the building material “reed” in its name is the Sumerian *gi.gu₃.na* (GI.UNUG), the Akkadian *gigunû*, according to the CAD a “reed structure erected on an artificial mound (eš₃)” (CAD G 1956: 69). As pointed out by Krystyna Szarzyńska (1997: 48–50) such sacred buildings, or rather “a special kind of cult construction” (ibid.: 49), already occur in archaic texts from Uruk (Uruk IV; W 21263 and ATU 1 no. 48). In Early Dynastic to Old Babylonian times the *giguna* is described as “pure grove”, “pure as the Abzu”, “with sweet odor of cedars” and “clad with green”.²⁴ It is a secluded entity of sacred architecture connected with goddesses, such as Ninlil, Ninhursaĝ, Ištar, Aya, or a divine couple, and regularly related to (imitations of) trees.²⁵

²³ ECTSL 2.6.9.6, 13, 17; Charpin 1986: 288, 294. See now Gruber 2015 for further discussion.

²⁴ See Szarzyńska 1997: 48–49 and CAD G (1956): 67–68 for citations.

²⁵ CAD G (1956): 70. Cf. a passage in *Inanna’s Descent to the Netherworld* (ECTSL 1.4.1, 293–294) where demons surround the

Not surprisingly, archaeologists have never identified such structures in their excavations. However, there is evidence for reed and wood furnishings in the holy of holies of Ur III and Old Babylonian temples: while not surrounding the surviving cult statue on all sides, reed impressions were clearly visible at the entrance to the cella of a neighbourhood-chapel at Ur (Woolley/Mallowan 1927: pl. 51b). A well-preserved 1.40 m wide reed screen was excavated in level III (Kassite period) of the Enlil Temple at Nippur between Cella 13 and the adjacent Room 10 (McCown/Haines/Hansen 1967: 15, pl. 10b, 25:6). For the cella of the Šu-Sîn Temple at Ešnunna, Henri Frankfort (Frankfort/Lloyd/Jacobsen 1940: 27) described the remains of a 1.30 m wide “reed screen” close to the cult niche.²⁶

goddess like “the reeds of a fence”.

²⁶ The vertical reeding ran between pivot stone and cult niche and served, according to Frankfort (1940: 27), to screen the cult image from „public gaze”. K. Reiter (1991: 55–56; 1989) refers to the same evidence from Ur and Ešnunna when trying to identify reed-panelled (?) *kilkillu* room (where a *šurinnu*-emblem of Šamaš was set up and oaths were taken) in the archaeological record.

The last phase (= Kititum IV) of the Ninšubur cella inside the Kititum Temple at Iščali contained a massive accumulation of wooden beams, partially from roofing, but also in front of the cult niche; the excavators interpreted the latter as “remains of a lintel covering the niche” (Frankfort 1936: 81; Hill/Jacobsen 1990: 35). The whole cella floor was covered with layers of “white ashes” and a “charred powder substance” – a situation not encountered elsewhere. These were probably parts of the roofing (reed, palm leaves), but they might also testify to an “organic look” that set this room apart from the rest of the building.

The best evidence for installations made of wood and reed in cellae comes from Isin. The excavators of the Gula Temple described the north-western part of the so-called Ninurta cella and the passageway to the adjacent side-room as filled with burnt wood and reed panels, a concentration of organic materials unparalleled anywhere else inside the temple (Hausperger 1992: 25, 28, plan 8, pls. 14-15). Archaeobotanical analysis revealed that these were remains of reeds, palm trees, tamarisk, Lebanese cedar and Aleppo pines. Among the charred fragments lay numerous beads of lapis lazuli, carnelian and calcite, ornamented bone inlays and fayence figurines, amulets and prehistoric stamp seals as well as the famous mace-head of Maništusu (Hausperger 1992: 28).

I suggest that these are the material counterparts of the locales illustrated on the terracotta plaques. The organic appearance and aromatic fragrance of the construction materials contrasted with the surrounding mudbrick architecture and probably served to enliven the cult image as was the purpose of the *šutukku*-huts mentioned earlier. A distinct visualisation of this particular setting was essential for the potency of the terracotta plaques.

Terracotta shrine models with and without a male or female cult image inside are known from various sites and illustrate such a setting in three-dimensional form.²⁷ The circular appliqué on some of these frames are reminiscent of the rosette decorations on the plaques, and the incised lines surrounding the entrance might be thought to resemble the surfaces of reed structures.

Finally, one may note how the cult image was literally incorporated into its surroundings. Some of the goddess plaques, like a well-known piece from Iščali (Fig. 7a), have a hunchback-like appearance, which relates them to the similarly textured hunchbacks typical of bull-eared gods (Fig. 7b).²⁸ A three-dimensional terracotta model from Isin (Fig. 7d, IB 1068; Hrouda 1977: 68, pls. 25, 28) and various plaques with similar depic-

tions (Fig. 7c) illustrate the total conflation of the cult image and its organic architectural frame evoking a “reed hut”.²⁹ Just as is the case with the goddess plaques, only head and hands clenched in fists and occasionally holding weapons, stick out of an ornamented, organic-looking object with rounded top. In the case of the three-dimensional clay model from Isin (Fig. 7d), the protruding hands were attached separately and were probably made of another material (now lost). If my argument is correct, the clay models and plaques represent small-scale versions of real cult objects rather than artists’ inventions of specific divine creatures. It is hard to refrain from relating these obscure bull-figure/reed hut constellations to the age-old motif of cows and calves emerging from dome-shaped reed pens known from Late Uruk times (e.g. Szarzyńska 1997: 61, table 6). Although such a connection is difficult to prove, it would hint at the archaic roots of reed temple fittings “reproducing the form of primitive shrines like that of Enki at Eridu” (Moorey 1994: 361).

Conclusion

The previous discussion suggests that the “goddess in a structure” plaques are not depictions of imagined divine beings, but of cult objects in specific sacred settings that were surely recognizable to the contemporary viewer, even though most people did not have access to the actual cult image proper. On the one hand, divine beings were believed to reside in their cult statues with rituals and daily provisions ensuring their persistent presence. On the other, a visual distinction remained between man-made anthropomorphic object and deity.³⁰ The often elaborately depicted organic-looking enclosure of the central figure was crucial to the image’s identification and function. I would argue that this framing intentionally evoked the cult setting in the temple cella, drawing generally on the life-giving and purifying potency associated with such reed structures.

The occurrence of “goddess in a structure” plaques in and around temples, *élite* buildings and residential areas in the early second millennium demonstrates an intermingling between social and religious spheres that

²⁷ See Muller 2002: 14, 22, 33, 44; Barrelet 1968: no. 114 (Tello; with circular appliqué surrounding the entrance), no. 739; (unprovenanced; with a seated figure in a long dress inside and incised lines surrounding the entrance); Douglas Van Buren 1930: 119 no. 593, fig. 159 (Nippur; with circular appliqué). Cf. Badre 1980: no. 110, pl. V (Hama; with the upper part of a female cult image inside the niche; circular appliqué).

²⁸ See examples at Tall ad-Dair (Gasche/Pons 2014: 91–102, cat. 125, 136–160, pls. 31, 35–42), Nippur (McCown/Haines/Hansen 1967: pl. 129.6) and Isin (IB 1371, Spycket 1987: Taf. 20).

²⁹ There is another fragment of a three-dimensional “reed hut model” from Isin (IB 1807; Spycket 1992: 71–72, Abb. 9). Plaques depicting clearly such a hunchbacked, bull-eared “god in a reed hut” include examples from Nippur (McCown/Haines/Hansen 1968: pl. 136.10), Tall ad-Dair (Gasche/Pons 2014: pl. 31.124; pl. 36.142; pl. 40.155; pl. 41–42.158–160), Isin (IB 1371, Spycket 1987, Taf. 20, 23) and several purchased on the antiquities market (Fig. 7c; also Opificius 1961: Nr. 367, Taf. 8 = BM 123286). In my opinion, two pyramidal shaped terracottas from Isin equally feature a “bull-eared god in a reed hut”-cult figure set into a stepped niche (IB 1838 and IB 1967; Spycket 1992: 59–61, pls. 46, 49). A very similar terracotta object at the Yale Babylonian Collection was probably illegally excavated at Isin (NBC 6095; Buchanan 1962: 270–271). See Spycket 1994 and Battini 2009 for discussions on these peculiar pieces. I do not agree with Battini’s identification of the depicted deity as female (“Ishtar”) or as a representation of the “concept of fertility” (Battini 2009: 135).

³⁰ U. Seidl (1980–1983: 317 with Abb. 3; also Spycket 1969: 23–27) and B. Collins (2005: 34–35) come to the same conclusion in regard to Mesopotamian and Hittite cult imagery respectively.

are often considered discrete. Rather than making a distinction between the supposed “sacred-special” and a “quotidian-ubiquitous”, or “official” and “popular” natures of images, we should discuss how differences in visual expression and artistic media relate to different social practices while embedded in the same cultural and even contextual settings.³¹

Most goddess plaques served as small-scale free-standing exhibits for a certain period of time, neither durable like stone or metal statuettes, nor intended for prompt breakage like the nude female type or various animal figurines.³² In contrast to life-size statues or tiny images on seals, palm-sized terracotta plaques call for action: they can be held and carried, manipulated with various substances (e.g. colour pigments, bitumen), played with, smashed and easily replaced. They testify to a desire for immediate physical contact with one’s god/its cult image, obviously not possible with the actual cult statue cared for by selected priests and secluded in their cellae or private temple rooms.

Even though the plaques probably represent cult-statues, they did not imitate or naturalistically duplicate them as closely as possible. As Douglass Bailey (2005: 32) argued for miniature figurines in general: they exhibit “inherent qualities of compression”, forcing selectivity in regard to detail and omission, and produce a denser expression of reality suitable to the preoccupation of the persons that made and used them. On “goddess in a structure” plaques special attention is paid to the face, especially to eyes and eyebrows, as well as to hairdo and headdress. Ears and necks, on the other hand, were omitted, and mouths and noses frequently neglected or washed off. The plank-like rest of the figure lacks bodily features with only coarsely rendered, knob-like hands sticking out from the background. There are generally no depictions of feet, instead, narrow studs similar to fixtures for statuary, occur in several instances (Type 5 plaques, **Fig. 3s**). This kind of artistic treatment stress-

es the “manner in which divinity materialized or was ultimately presented within a material matrix” (Pongratz-Leisten/Sonik 2015: 53) and explains why the depictions of patterns and texture (of headdress, dress, jewellery, framework) was of such importance when producing these images.

To come back to Walter Benjamin and the question how images of cult objects could circulate without losing their aura, I would argue that the reduction of pictorial features to the essence of the depicted entity sets them apart from the “cold mechanical productions” Benjamin had in mind in regard to photography and film production. Depictions of the sacred need, to a certain degree, stable, recognizable forms, but the unconventional rendering of the plaques under discussion, together with the possibility to recognize specific local cult images in them, preserves some of the aura that emanated from the originals. It sets them apart from “official” or “frozen” iconography that characterizes much glyptic and also some terracotta imagery of the period.³³

The question of the specific identity of the goddess depicted was probably never asked by a contemporary observer who knew that she was the goddess of the local temple, whether in Nērebtum, Ur, Ġirsu or Larsa, displaying the jewelry dedicated to her and exhibited to the public on festive occasions.³⁴ To possess her image and eventually bring it back into a temple setting (as might have happened in Iščali), made the goddess accessible and provided a conduit between the human and the divine worlds.

Why such materializations of religious practices remain restricted to the early second millennium and what kind of figurative objects could have served similar needs in other socio-cultural settings, requires further investigation and a full integration of a wide range of archaeological, iconographic and textual data.³⁵

31 See Meskell (2015: 16) for a similar conclusion in regard to Neolithic animal figurines from Çatal Höyük.

32 With one exception (Ish. 35:62), all of the 51 nude female plaques and 28 nude female figurines from Iščali were found broken, usually either the head, the torso or the legs survive (no joins). From 18 “goddess in a structure” plaques at Iščali, 8 were rather complete (more than 80% surviving).

33 Examples are the “nude female”, the most popular terracotta plaque motif, or the “warrior Ishtar”, which is particularly common in glyptics. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between iconographic and stylistic repertoires of plaques and cylinder seals, see Auerbach 1994: 194–272.

34 On the regular (re-)dedication of the cult image’s jewellery in Ur-III festivals see Zettler/Sallaberger 2011: 24–25 with fn. 38.

35 Such an investigation of continuity and change in the perceptions and practices surrounding figurative objects, artistic media and the human body in the late third and early second millennium Mesopotamia is currently underway as a postdoctoral research project carried out by the author.

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„Dieser Ziegel ist wie Lapislazuli..“

Ein bisher übersehenes Bauritual im Kontext der frühen sumerischen Beschwörungen

Nadezda Rudik

Abstract: The earliest Sumerian incantations are among the most difficult Mesopotamian magical texts to interpret due to the archaic and often defective orthography, the concise art of writing and our insufficient knowledge of Sumerian. In the course of my PhD project I undertook a completely new evaluation of the corpus of the earliest incantations. Along with a new edition of all known incantations before the OB period (104 texts), the genre of “incantation” in its diachronic development, its features and its differences from other genres of Mesopotamian literature were studied. A new subdivision of the text corpus was proposed based on text function and text aim (as opposed to Falkenstein’s). Special attention was given to the incantation formulae: the research results demonstrate that certain formulae are not necessarily bound to a certain incantation type, and vice versa, that incantations with a certain function do not necessarily require a specific formula. The formulae served rather to connect the incantations with the divine sphere. Furthermore, this research project has uncovered many new interpretations of the old texts which were studied practically for the first time in connection with one another. After a short summary of the project this paper focuses on one such text which belongs to the group of incantations concerning house building. A new interpretation of this text is presented. Its topic and motifs are analyzed in the context of other early incantations and in the wider context of Sumerian literature as well as its „Sitz im Leben“ is determined.

Keywords: incantations, structure of incantation, classification of incantations, formulas, house building ritual, first brick.

Das Ziel dieses Artikels ist es, einen Einblick in meine Forschung zu den frühesten sumerischen Beschwörungen zu geben und eine neue Interpretation zu einem dieser Texte vorzulegen.¹

1 Frühe sumerische Beschwörungen

Beschwörungen zählen zu den magischen Texten, die am schwierigsten zu interpretieren sind. Die Gründe dafür sind ihre archaische und defektive Orthografie, ihre verkürzte Schreibweise und unsere unvollständigen Kenntnisse der sumerischen Sprache. Der Korpus, den ich während meiner Promotion untersucht habe,

besteht aus 104 sumerischen Beschwörungen und Ritualen, die zeitlich von der frühdynastischen Zeit bis in die Ur III-Zeit reichen.² Die Tabelle in **Abb. 1** demonstriert die geografische und zeitliche Verteilung dieser Texte und vermittelt eine kurze Charakteristik ihres Schriftsystems und ihrer Schrifträger.

Der zweite und mutmaßlich wichtigere Teil der Arbeit enthält neue Editionen dieser Texte. Die theoretische Auswertung des Korpus ist diesem Hauptteil vorangestellt. Hier werden Form, Funktionen und Formeln, Sitz im Leben und einige andere Aspekte der sumerischen Beschwörungen untersucht.

Die erste Frage, mit der man konfrontiert wird, wenn man sich mit Beschwörungen beschäftigt, lautet: „Was ist eigentlich eine Beschwörung?“ Oder mit welcher Begründung werden in der Altorientalistik z.B. Texte

¹ Dieser Artikel ist die überarbeitete Fassung meines auf der Rencontre in Genf gehaltenen Vortrages. Er basiert auf der erweiterten Fassung meiner Doktorarbeit „Die Entwicklung der keilschriftlichen sumerischen Beschwörungsliteratur von den Anfängen bis zur Ur III-Zeit“ (Rudik 2015), die online zugänglich ist. Für die Einladung, am Workshop „Mesopotamian Incantation Literature“ teilzunehmen, möchte ich E. Zomer und F. Simons ganz herzlich danken. Mein Dank gilt auch Marco Stockhusen für die geduldige Korrektur dieses Manuskripts. Neben den im RIA gebräuchlichen Abkürzungen wird hier FSB + Nr. verwendet, was für „Frühe Sumerische Beschwörung“ + Nummerierung der Texte in Rudik 2015 steht.

² Dank der Arbeit von A. George in der Schøyen-Sammlung hat sich der Korpus der frühesten sumerischen Beschwörungen beträchtlich vergrößert. Laut seines Vortrages auf der RAI 61 (22.06.2015) wurden von ihm drei frühdynastische (mit 9, 1 und 12 Texten) und eine neusumerische Tafel mit einem Text entdeckt. Das zugehörige Buch „*Mesopotamian Incantations and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*“ (= CUSAS 32) ist kürzlich erschienen.

Periode	Zeit	Zahl	Geografie	Medium	Schriftsystem
FD IIIa	ca. 2600–2500	< 50 Texte	Šuruppak (Fāra); Tall Abū Šalābīḥ	Tontafeln (rund, rechteckig-abgerundet); Diorit-Platte (FSB 76)	Umstellungsphase des alten rein logografischen Systems auf das jüngere gemischt logografisch-phonografische. Defektivität.
FD IIIb	ca. 2500–2350		Lagaš (al-Hibā), Ġirsu (Tellō); Ebla (Tall Mardīḥ)		
aAkk	ca. 2350–2100	5–6 Texte	Lagaš, Nippur (Nuffar) und Susa (Elam)	Tontafeln (längliche Rechtecke, eine runde Tafel [FSB 36])	Fortgeschritteneres Schriftsystem: zunehmende Anzahl der syllabischen Schreibungen.
Ur III	ca. 2100–2000	< 50 Texte	Nippur; Puzriš-Dagān (Tall ad-Duraihim); Ġirsu; Umma (Tall Ġūḥā); Ešnunna (Tall Asmar)	Tontafeln (längliche rechteckige, kleine quadratische); fünfkolumniger Zylinder (FSB 51–FSB 55)	Standardisierte sumerische Orthografie. Ausdruck von Morphemen und Morphemketten.

Abb. 1: Geografische und zeitliche Verteilung früher sumerischer Beschwörungen und Rituale.

gegen Krankheiten, für den Bau eines Hauses oder für die Purifikation eines Gegenstandes unter dem Begriff „Beschwörung“ summiert? Michalowski behauptet, dass „[t]he reason for bringing these disparate texts together is pseudo-generic: they appear to look alike and therefore we call all of them incantations, *Beschwörungen*, or *sconguri*“.³ In Wirklichkeit basiert unsere Intuition in diesem Fall auf absolut rationalen Kriterien, die in der Textlinguistik für Textsortenforschung benutzt werden, um eine Gruppe von Texten von der anderen zu unterscheiden.⁴ Eine „Textsorte“ wird von einer Gruppe von Texten gebildet, die bestimmte Bündel von Eigenschaften aufweist, und zwar ähnliche Merkmale, Strukturen und Funktionen.⁵ Es wird dabei zwischen textinternen und textexternen Kriterien unterschieden, auf deren Kombination eine Textsorte (oder eine Gattung) beruht. Zu den textinternen Kriterien gehören Form, Zielsetzung und Inhalt eines Textes.⁶ Unter den

textexternen Kriterien werden in erster Linie Funktion und Sitz im Leben (bestimmt durch Faktoren wie Zeit, Ort, Umstände und soziales Umfeld)⁷ verstanden. Der Sitz im Leben ist für die Klassifikation der Beschwörungen jedoch nicht so wichtig, da sie ihren Sitz im Leben mit anderen religiösen Texten teilen, die alle im Kult benutzt wurden. Die textinternen Kriterien und die Funktion der Beschwörungen demonstrieren dagegen deutlich, warum wir so unterschiedliche Texte der Gattung „Beschwörung“ zuschreiben.

Wir beginnen mit der Funktion. Die Hauptfunktion aller sumerischen Beschwörungen liegt darin, die Welt im Gleichgewicht zu halten. Einige Texte dienen dabei der Wiederherstellung der Ordnung (wir nennen sie „reaktiv“). Die anderen werden zur Beibehaltung der Weltordnung benutzt (wir nennen sie „präventiv“). Die beiden Hauptgruppen teilen sich in mehrere Untergruppen, die nach ihrer Zielsetzung charakterisiert sind. Reaktive Beschwörungen bestehen aus Texten:

- gegen Krankheiten und Krankheitsdämonen (41 Texte);
- gegen schädliche Tiere (10 Texte);
- Geburtsbeschwörungen (4 Texte).

Präventive Beschwörungen sind heterogener. Ihnen werden die konservierenden Texte zugerechnet, die den Ablauf verschiedener Rituale sichern:

- Fruchtbarkeitsbeschwörungen (5 Texte);
- Reinheitsbeschwörungen (8 Texte);
- Beschwörungen für den Hausbau (4 Texte);

und präventive im engeren Sinne, die gegen das Böse gerichtet sind, welches noch nicht eingetreten ist:

Funktion der Beschwörungen gehört aber zu den textexternen Kriterien (Linke/Nussbaumer/Portmann 2004: 280–281, Adamzik 2008: 165), da sie an den Kommunikationszusammenhang gebunden ist. So ist die Funktion aller Beschwörungen die rituelle Beibehaltung oder Wiederherstellung der Ordnung.

⁷ Linke/Nussbaumer/Portmann 2004: 281.

³ Michalowski 1992: 306.

⁴ Zur Textsortenforschung s. Heinemann 2000a, 2000b; Dammann 2000; Adamzik 2008; Linke/Nussbaumer/Portmann 2004: 278–285 und Fischer 2010: 14–26. Die Textsortenforschung in der Textlinguistik widmet sich hauptsächlich Sachtexten, zu welchen auch die Beschwörungen gezählt werden müssten. Der auf strukturellen und funktionalen Ansätzen basierende Begriff „Textsorte“ kann in der Literaturwissenschaft anstelle der herkömmlichen Gattungszuordnung gebraucht werden (Vofkamp 1992: 253–269; siehe auch Dammann 2000 und Fischer 2010: 14–26). Da die Terminologie bisher noch nicht vereinheitlicht wurde, werden in diesem Artikel die Begriffe „Textsorte“ und „Gattung“ als Synonyme verwendet.

⁵ Die Bestimmungskriterien für eine Textsortenklassifikation werden in der Textlinguistik noch diskutiert (Linke/Nussbaumer/Portmann 2004: 278; siehe auch Adamzik 2008).

⁶ Die Textklassifikationskriterien, über die in der Linguistik noch kein Konsens besteht, wurden in Anlehnung an Linke/Nussbaumer/Portmann 2004: 278–281 und Adamzik 2008: 165 gewählt. Zu beachten ist, dass „Funktion“ in meiner Dissertation den textinternen Kriterien zugeschrieben ist (Rudik 2015: 9). Nach eingehender Beschäftigung mit dem Thema erscheint es angebrachter, statt „Funktion“ den Begriff „Zielsetzung“ zu verwenden. Nach der hier benutzten Terminologie entspricht die Zielsetzung einer Beschwörung der Unterschrift (Koloophon) und ist mit dem Thema des Textes verbunden: z.B. Beschwörung gegen Schlangen oder für die Behandlung einer Augenkrankheit (zu den Koloophonen s. Rudik 2015: 43–46). Die

A. Einleitungsformel

B. *Expositio* (episch-erzählender Einleitungsteil):

B1. *Historiola*

B2. Einführung der Personen und Gegenstände

B3. Konfliktauslösung

B4. Symptombeschreibung

C. *Incantatio* (dramatischer Handlungsteil):

C1. Ritual-/ Heilungsanweisungen

C2. Wunschformeln für Beseitigung des Bösen

D. Schlussformel

E. Kolophon

Abb. 2: Aufbau einer Musterbeschwörung.

- Schutz vor bissigen Tieren (6 Texte);
- soziale Probleme (1 Text).

Das zweite Merkmal, das uns die Klassifikation von Beschwörungen unter ein und dieselbe Gattung ermöglicht, ist der Inhalt. Inhaltlich stehen alle Beschwörungen in Kontakt zum Göttlichen. Viele Texte zeigen, dass sie direkt als Worte der Gottheiten verstanden wurden:

- (KA+)UD-du₁₁-ga ^dNingirim „Das ist der/ein Spruch von Ningirim“ (*passim*);
- inim ^aen-[l]il₂-la₂-kam „Das ist das Wort von Enlil“ (FSB 87);

und in späteren Perioden:

- *šiptum ul jattum šipat* GN GN *šiptam iddī anāku ušannī* „Die Beschwörung ist nicht mein. Die Beschwörung ist von GN. GN legte die Beschwörung auf, ich wiederholte“ (*passim*).

Diese Worte haben die Welt und ihre Elemente dank ihres göttlichen Ursprungs beeinflusst. Die inhaltliche Homogenität der Beschwörungen zeigt sich auch in den für sie typischen Handlungsmotiven (z.B. Dialog zweier Gottheiten, Lobpreis von Gegenständen) und in Schlüsselwörtern, die sich allerdings je nach Beschwörungszielsetzung unterscheiden.

Beschwörungen besitzen einen nur für sie typischen Aufbau. Auf Basis der von mir untersuchten Beschwörungen ist es möglich geworden, einen idealen Aufbau für eine Beschwörung aufzustellen, d.h. denjenigen, der alle möglichen Komponenten einer Beschwörung in einer bestimmten Ordnung aufweist (siehe **Abb. 2**).

Der Aufbau einer Beschwörung besteht aus freien und festen Elementen. Jedes Element definiert sich durch den charakteristischen Inhalt und durch die sprachliche Gestaltung. Zu den festen Strukturkomponenten gehören die Einleitungsformel, die Schlussformel und das Kolophon (fett markiert). Die wichtigsten Teile einer jeden Beschwörung sind allerdings die freien Komponenten: *Expositio* und *Incantatio*. *Expositio* beschreibt die Ausgangssituation, führt die Gestalten ein. Für diesen Beschwörungsteil sind präsentische und präteritale Verbalformen und Partizipien typisch. *Incantatio* ist das einzige Beschwörungselement, ohne

das eine Beschwörung nicht existieren kann. *Incantatio* ist eine Beschwörung im engeren Sinne, die unter Verwendung von prekativischen und prospektivischen Verbalformen formuliert wird. Anhand des anschließenden Beispieltextes wird der Aufbau einer Beschwörung erläutert:

FSB 49 (gegen eine Schlange)⁸

A AN.U.DAG-nuru

B₂ Die Schlange hat von den hellen Bergen gebrüllt.
Die mit gespaltener Zunge des Himmels und der Erde

hat die Zunge aus dem Mund getan.

Die Kinder von derjenigen mit gespaltener Zunge des Himmels und der Erde sind sieben.

C₁ Es ist der Brunnen (für) die Rohrmatte, den er errichtet.

Es ist das Wasser (für) die Rohrmatte, das er rein-gießt.

Es ist A.ZI.ZI.A-Rohr (für) die Rohrmatte, das er mit seiner rechten Hand (kreisförmig) herumlegt.

Er schneidet dieses A.ZI.ZI.A-Rohr mit seiner linken Hand.

Er wiederhole ...

Möge er in ... das Maul binden!

D Das ist eine Beschwörung von Eridu.

(Meine Beschwörung) soll nicht einmal Asalluhi, Eridus Sohn, auflösen können.

E Nisaba!

Gerechte Frau!

Gütige Frau!

Möge das, was Addakalla,

der Schreiber,

geschrieben hat,

gut in deinen Augen sein!

Gute Arbeit(?)⁹.

⁸ Für die Edition siehe Rudik 2015: 298-302.

⁹ Die Übersetzung „Arbeit“ für bala folgt der Interpretation von Geller 2003: 48 („Nice job!“) und ist provisorisch, weil bala in dieser Bedeutung sonst unbekannt ist. Normalerweise bezeichnet bala sa₆-ga (*sic!*) „gute Herrschaft“ (Išme-Dagan A + V (ETCSL 2.5.4.01) 122; Lipit-Eštar B (ETCSL 2.5.5.2) 51; The lament for Sumer and Urim (ETCSL 2.2.3) 4 usw.). P. Attinger

Für interkulturelle Forschung dürfte von höchstem Interesse sein, dass diese zweiteilige Struktur (*Expositio* und *Incantatio*) der Beschwörungen in verschiedenen Kulturen anzutreffen ist.¹⁰

Alle diese Kriterien (Form, Zielsetzung, Inhalt und Funktion) erlauben uns, die Beschwörungen von Texten anderer Gattungen zu unterscheiden und alle Texte mit solcher Form, solchen Zielsetzungen, bestimmten Inhalten und solcher Funktion als Beschwörungen zu definieren. Es ist sicher kein Zufall, dass die Textgruppe, die wir nach wissenschaftlichen Kriterien als „Beschwörung“ bestimmen, von den Sumerern ähnlich aufgefasst wurde. Sie haben solche Texte als *en₂-e₂-nu-ru* bezeichnet:

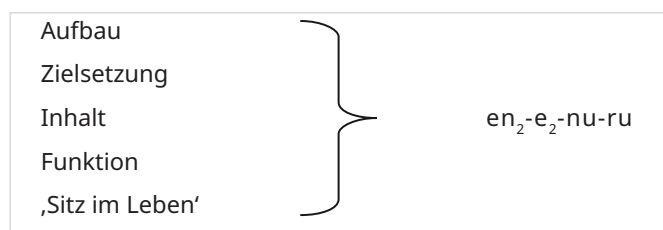


Abb. 3: Sumerische Bezeichnung von Beschwörungen.

Wenige Worte müssen noch den Formeln und formelhaften Elementen gewidmet werden. Die folgenden Formeln und ihre Entwicklung wurden in der Arbeit untersucht:

- Einleitungsformel;
- Schlussformeln;
- Konsultationsschema (Marduk-Ea-Formel);
- formelhafte Elemente (einige frühdynastische Texte gegen Krankheiten;¹¹ Lobpreis von Gegenständen).

Als Hauptergebnis dieser Untersuchung stellte sich bei mir der Eindruck ein, dass die alte Klassifikation von A. Falkeinstein¹², der Beschwörungen nach 4 Typen eingeteilt hat, aufzugeben ist:

- Legitimationstyp (LT)
- Prophylaktischer Typ (PT)
- Marduk-Ea-Typ (MET)
- Weihungstyp (WT)

Abb. 4: Klassifikation nach Falkeinstein.

(private Kommunikation) schlägt vor, dass bala hier die Zeit meinen könnte, die ein Schüler in der Schule verbringen musste, oder ein Wort für „Prüfung“ (wörtlich „der passieren lässt“) ist.

¹⁰ Rudik 2015: 23 Anm. 50.

¹¹ In fünf frühdynastischen Beschwörungen (FSB 4–7 und FSB 23) werden Krankheitsauslösungen und Symptombeschreibungen, die zu *Expositio* B gehören und normalerweise „frei“ sind, formelhaft (mit den gleichen Worten) dargestellt (Rudik 2015: 56).

¹² Falkeinstein 1931.

Dieser Standpunkt kann anhand eines Beispiels untermauert werden. Bekanntlich verbindet Falkeinstein das Konsultationsschema (in seiner Terminologie Marduk-Ea-Formel) mit Beschwörungen gegen Krankheiten und (Krankheits)dämonen. Er behauptet, dass diese Formel nicht von dieser Beschwörungszielsetzung getrennt werden kann. Aber schon in der frühdynastischen Zeit wird das Konsultationsschema nur in einigen Beschwörungen gegen Krankheiten benutzt. Wenige Texte verwenden eine ähnliche Formel, in der hilfsbereite Gottheiten auftreten. Hier fehlt aber der Dialog zweier Gottheiten, der wiederum für das Konsultationsschema kennzeichnend ist. In anderen Texten gegen Krankheiten wird das Konsultationsschema durch einen Lobpreis ersetzt. Einige Beschwörungen gegen Krankheiten kommen sogar ohne jede Formel aus:

- Konsultationsschema
- Direkte Einmischung einer Gottheit
- Lobpreis von Gegenstand
- keine Formel

Abb. 5: Methoden zur Aktivierung frühdynastischer Beschwörungen.

Mutmaßlich existierte ein Formel-Reservoir, das bei der Wiederherstellung oder Beibehaltung der Ordnung helfen sollte und als Verbindung zur göttlichen Sphäre diente. Diese Formeln konnten in allen Beschwörungen unabhängig von ihrer Zielsetzung benutzt werden. Ob sich diese Vermutung auch auf spätere Beschwörungen übertragen lässt, ist noch zu prüfen. Jedenfalls scheint die Klassifikation der frühesten Beschwörungen nach ihrer Funktion und Zielsetzung eher mit dem heutigen Kenntnisstand über sumerische Beschwörungen konform zu gehen (s. **Abb. 6**).

2 Ein bisher übersehenes Bauritual

Mein Forschungsprojekt, welches alle bisher publizierten frühen sumerischen Beschwörungen erstmals umfassend behandelte, erbrachte für die bekannten Texte oftmals neue Interpretationen. Eine dieser Neuinterpretationen betrifft den Text FSB 82. Diese neusumerische Beschwörung befindet sich auf einer vierkolumnigen Sammeltafel mit zwei Spalten pro Seite. Die Vorderseite der Tafel ist fast komplett abgebrochen: Es sind nur noch ein paar Zeichen oben in der 2. Spalte zu sehen. Die Rückseite ist relativ gut erhalten. Die 3. Spalte enthält das Ende einer Beschwörung (FSB 94). Danach folgen eine leere Zeile und die Beschwörung FSB 82. Diese nimmt den Rest der 3. Spalte ein. Die 4. Spalte enthält eine Liste von Gegenständen, die mithilfe von leeren Zwischenzeilen in drei Abschnitte gegliedert wurde. Da nur eine Beschwörung auf dieser Sammeltafel komplett erhalten ist, lässt sich nicht mit Gewissheit sagen, ob die Texte auf der Tafel thematisch eine Einheit bildeten und ob sich die Liste von Gegenständen nur auf den letzten Text oder auf alle Texte der Tafel

Funktion	reaktive (Wiederherstellung der Ordnung)	präventive (Bewahrung der Ordnung)
Zielsetzung	- gegen Krankheiten und Krankheitsdämonen (41 Texte) - gegen schädliche Tiere (10 Texte) - Geburtsbeschwörungen (4 Texte)	- Fruchtbarkeit (5 Texte) - Schutz vor bissigen Tieren (6 Texte) - Reinheit (8 Texte) - Hausbau (4 Texte) - soziale Probleme (1 Text)

Abb. 6: Klassifikation der Beschwörungen.

bezog. In diesem Beitrag wird vorläufig angenommen, dass die Gegenstandsliste zum untersuchten Text FSB 82 gehört. Im Folgenden wird ein Exzerpt aus meiner Doktorarbeit mit Transliteration, Übersetzung, bibliografischen Angaben und Anmerkungen zur Keilschrift gegeben.¹³

FSB 82 (TMH 6, 019₂)

1. Textzeugen:

HS 2439 Rs.03.06-04.15 (Nippur). Foto: TMH 6, 156; CDLI: P273912. Kopie: TMH 6, 126 (Kopie von van Dijk), 141 (Kollationen von Geller), 145 (Kopie von Geller).

2. Bibliografie:

van Dijk/Geller 2003: 65–68; Bauer 2007: 178.

- Rs.
- A 03.06 en₂-e₂-nu-r[u]
 - C₂ 03.07 im ħe₂-du₁₀-[ge]
 - 03.08 ab₂ munzer (AN.ŠEŠ.KI) 'x¹⁴-[x]
 - 03.09 ^den-[ki]-'ke₄? x x ħe₂'-m[a-x(x)]¹⁵
 - 03.10 ^dnunura(BAĤAR₂)-'NUN.E₂.ZA.KU' / iri ħe₂-ma-sar²-sar²¹⁶(-[re])?
 - 03.11 ^dnin-šubur ^dasar-bi¹⁷
 - 03.12 e₂-e ħe₂-ma-er₁₄(DU.DU)(-[eš₂])?
 - 03.13 a₂ kal-le ħe₂-a[k]/-de₃
 - B₂ 03.14 LAGAB×U nun-ne₂ saġ¹⁸ bi₂-ku₅(-[de₃])?
 - 03.15 LAGAB×U gal-la maš šu i₃-gid₂-d[e₃]

- 03.16 im edin¹¹⁹-ta 'kid₇(IM.KID₂)' šu¹²⁰ [x]
- 03.17 šeg₁₂ u₅-šub-ba i₃-ġar šu²²¹ [x]
- B₂ 03.18 im-bi IGI.BUR-am₃
- 03.19 u₅-šub-bi gi-rin-am₃²²²
- 03.20 šeg₁₂-bi za-gin₃-am₃
- 03.21 dubsig(IL₂)-bi alan 'abzu' /-ka[m]
- Liste 04.01 leere Zeile
- 04.02 zu₂-lum
- 04.03 ġeš²³ħašħur
- 04.04 ġeš²³peš₃(MA)
- 04.05 ġeš²³ma-nu
- 04.06 ġeš²³tin-ħad₂
- 04.07 ġeš²³šennur(KIB)
- 04.08 še ġeš²³ħa-lu-ub₂
- 04.09 leere Zeile
- 04.10 u²šakira_x(URU×NI.GA) 'x (x)'
- 04.11 li kur-ta u²KI.KAL
- 04.12 u²ab₂-munzer (AN.ŠEŠ.KI)
- 04.13 u²pa ġeš-ge
- 04.14 'u²lagab peš
- 04.15 u²ama-maš-um^{sar}
- 04.16 [(x)] 'x²³ DU₈.DU₈ tukul gu/-ul ġeš²³asal₂(A.TU.GAB.LIŠ)
- 04.17 (leere Zeile)
- 04.18 kur-gi-'rin?' [(x)] / du₁₀ 'bar²⁴-us₂ zi₃

13 Für Kommentare zum Text, einzelnen Wörtern und Ausdrücken s. Rudik 2015: 422–427.

14 Geller (van Dijk/Geller 2003: 65) liest hier 'ħe₂?', was aber kaum mit den Spuren auf der Tafel konform ist.

15 Nach dem Zeichen ke₄? liest Geller (ibid.) 'enim ħe₂'-m[atar-e?]. Das Zeichen ENIM ist hierbei fragwürdig. Die Kollation von Geller auf S. 141 und seine Kopie auf S. 145 zeigen den Anfang des Zeichens KA mit einem Winkelhaken, der mit dem Anfang des Zeichens KA×X in der Z. 03.02 auf dieser Tafel (siehe hier unten) vergleichbar ist. Die Kopie von van Dijk auf S. 126 entspricht jedoch eher den Spuren auf der Tafel, die keinen Winkelhaken zeigen.

16 Geller (ibid.) liest die beiden Zeichen als ku₄. Es scheint mir aber, dass die beiden Zeichen, wenn auch halb vertilgt, genauso wie SAR in 04.15 geschrieben sind.

17 Die Emendation von Geller (ibid.) ^dasar-bi[-da] ist nicht nötig, s. Jagersma 2010: 97–98.

18 Geller (ibid.) versteht dieses Zeichen als KA und liest es enim.

19 Es wird hier mit Geller EDIN gelesen. Das Zeichen sieht aber wie BIE aus. P. Attinger (private Kommunikation) betont mit Recht, dass dieses Zeichen viel mehr einem ŠEM ähnelt. Die Lesung šem „Gewürz“ würde zwar ein kontextuales Problem lösen (zur Problematik von edin in einem Kontext mit LAGAB×U siehe weiter unten), aber der Sinn des Satzes bliebe unklar. Könnte es sich vielleicht um das Mischen des Tones mit dem Gewürz šem handeln?

20 Geller (ibid.) interpretiert dieses Zeichen als zi₃ und liest zi₃-[da(-am₃)].

21 Siehe die vorherige Anmerkung.

22 Geller (ibid.) liest maš-gi-rin-a ħ[e₂]-m[a-x]. Siehe seine Kollation auf S. 142 und die Kopie auf S. 145. Das mutmaßliche Zeichen MAŠ ist aber eher der Anfang von GI. Die Spuren am Ende der Zeile entsprechen kaum den Zeichen Ĥ[E₂].M[A], siehe schon die Kopie von van Dijk auf S. 126. Die Lesung A.AN ist hier vorzuziehen (auch in Analogie zu der vorigen und der nächsten Zeile).

23 Geller (ibid.) interpretiert dieses Zeichen als DUG, was möglich, aber unsicher ist. Vor dem verbliebenen Dreieck kopiert van Dijk (ibid.: 126) noch ein Paar Winkelhaken. Es kann nicht mit Sicherheit gesagt werden, ob sie wirklich da sind oder ob es sich um Reibungen handelt. Wenn sie da sind, könnte man das Zeichen als IN definieren.

24 Geller (ibid.) interpretiert das Zeichen als 'gur₁₀?', was vielleicht von van Dijk's Kopie (ibid.: 126) her beeinflusst ist. Auf der Tafel ist nur ein waagerechter Keil zu erkennen, auf dem im 90-Gradwinkel ein senkrechter Keil steht, der kurz nach

Übersetzung

- A Enenuru.
 C₂ Möge der Ton gut sein.
 Mit Süsshholz (gefütterte) Kuh (?) ...
 Möge Enki für mich ...
 Möge Nunura-NUN.E₂.ZA.KU für mich (das Böse aus) der Stadt vertreiben (?).
 Mögen Nin-šubur und Asar ins Haus für mich gehen.
 Möge er das für mich für den kostbaren Lohn (?) machen!
 B₂ An der fürstlichen Lehmgrube (?) wird der Kopf abgetrennt (?).
 An der großen Lehmgrube(?) wird das Omen verlangt.
 Der Ton, der in der Steppe abgekniffen ist ...
 Der Ziegel, der in die Ziegelform gelegt ist ...
 B₂ Dieser Ton ist (wie) IGI.BUR.
 Diese Ziegelform ist (wie) Karneol.
 Dieser Ziegel ist (wie) Lapislazuli.
 Dieser Tragkorb ist (wie) ein Abbild vom Abzu.
 Liste (leere Zeile)
 Dattel,
 Apfel,
 Feige,
 Manu-(Früchte?),
 Rosinen,
 Pflaumen,
 „Körner“ des ḫalub-Baums,
 (leere Zeile)
 šakira-Pflanze ...,
 Wacholder aus den Bergen (und) KI.KAL-Pflanze,
 Süsshholz?,
 die Halme des Schilfbestandes,
 der Stamm eines Feigenbaums,
 ama-maš-um-Pflanze,
 ... ein großer Stock aus Pappel (?).
 (leere Zeile)
 süße (?) Curcuma (?), ein spitzer Stab (?), Mehl.

Geller, dem wir die erste Edition dieses Textes verdanken, interpretiert ihn aufgrund von alan „Figur, Statue“ in der Z. 03.21 als „a ritual for constructing a figurine“. ²⁵ Da Geller behauptet, „that the ingredients are intended to be mixed into a potion and drunk by the patient“ (ibid.), soll mithilfe dieses Rituals mutmaßlich eine Krankheit beseitigt werden. An dieser Stelle soll eine andere Interpretation dieses Textes vorgeschlagen werden, die ihn in das Umfeld mesopotamischer Baurituale verortet, die in der sumerischen Überlieferung bisher so „schmerzhaft selten“ ²⁶ sind.

Im ersten Abschnitt des Textes C₂ nach der Einleitungsformel wird eines der Stichwörter, und zwar im „Ton“, angeführt. Danach wird die Kooperation verschiedener Gottheiten gesucht, damit sie dem Sprecher bei seinem Unternehmen helfen. Genannt werden

Enki, Nunura, Nin-šubur und Asar. Enki und Asar spielen in vielen sumerischen Beschwörungen des 3. Jts. eine wichtige Rolle. ²⁷ Ihr Auftreten in diesem Text ist also noch kein Merkmal für ein Bauritual. Für den weiteren Argumentationshergang ist daran zu erinnern, dass Enki in den Zylindern Gudeas am Tempelbau teilnimmt: Er zeichnet den Grundplan (A xvii 17); beteiligt sich an der Herstellung des ersten Ziegels (A xix 10–12); setzt die Gründungspflöcke ein (A xx 15; B xiii 3) und macht die Orakel-Entscheidung bei der Purifikation des Hauses ausfindig (B iv 3). Am letzten Arbeitsschritt ist auch Asar beteiligt, der das Haus in Ordnung bringt: e₂-e^dasar-re šu si ba-sa₂ (B iv 1). Enki tritt auch als Hauptfigur in FSB 81 in Erscheinung, einer fröhdyastischen Bauinschrift mit einer integrierten Beschwörung in Form eines Lobpreises an das Rohr. ²⁸

Die Schlüsselfiguren zur Bestimmung der Textzielsetzung sind aber Nunura und Nin-šubur, die selten (Nunura) bis gar nicht (Nin-šubur) in anderen sumerischen Beschwörungen des 3. Jts. auftauchen. Die Gottheit Nunura, Töpfer und Ziegelmeister, ²⁹ tritt insgesamt fünfmal im untersuchten Korpus auf. ³⁰ Sein Name ist immer logografisch geschrieben und besteht aus zwei Teilen: ³¹ ^dBAḪAR₂.E₂.NUN.ZA.KU/UN.ZA.KU/NUN.E₂.ZA.KU. Die Lesung und Bedeutung des zweiten Teil ist unklar. ³² In zwei von fünf Fällen ist die Gottheit mit dem Epitheton lugal nam-išib-ba „Der König des Beschwörungspriestertums“ versehen, ³³ wodurch die Identifikation mit Nunura bestätigt wird. ³⁴ In zwei Texten ³⁵ ist Nunura wohl derjenige, der für das Auflegen der Beschwörung verantwortlich ist. Die magischen Worte sind seine harmonische Rede. In FSB 78 stellt Nunura zusammen mit Enki Weihwasser her. In FSB 35, die möglicherweise gegen ein Dämon gerichtet ist, kommt Nunura im Kontext von Ton und Gefäßen vor. Wenn die Lesung der Zeile in der untersuchten Beschwörung korrekt ist, vertreibt Nunura hier das Böse aus der Stadt ³⁶. Nunura als Vertreiber von Dämonen ist aus späteren Texten bekannt:

^dnun-ur₄-ra baḫar_x(^{du}g₃sil₃)-gal an-na-ke₄
^{du}g₃sil₃-gaz udun ki-ku₃-^rga[˘]-t[a] al-šeḡ₆-ḡa₂ e₂-a
 ḫe₂-ni-ib₂-sar-re = ^dMIN pa-ḫa-ru GAL-u₂ ša₂ ^da-nim ina

27 Für die Liste der Beschwörungen, in welchen Enki und Asar vorkommen, siehe Rudik 2015: 544.

28 Rudik 2015: 417–421.

29 Cavigneaux/Krebernik 1998–2001: 620–621 und Ambos 2004: 24.

30 FSB 35, FSB 78, FSB 82, FSB 103 und FSB 104.

31 In FSB 35 steht möglicherweise noch das Zeichen NIN vor BAḪAR₂ (weibliche Form dieser Gottheit?).

32 Für nicht sehr überzeugende Versuche, diesen Namensteil zu deuten s. Rudik 2015: 86.

33 FSB 78 und FSB 104.

34 Cavigneaux/Krebernik 1998–2001: 621.

35 FSB 103 und FSB 104.

36 Störend wirkt sich aus, dass iri keine Kasusendung aufweist. Möglicherweise wäre die Lesung uru „mächtig“ (syllabisch für uru₁₀) als Epitheton zum Götternamen an dieser Stelle besser. Das fehlende Objekt könnte sich in den halbabgebrochenen Zeilen davor befinden. Beachtenswert ist der Vorschlag von Cavigneaux (mündliche Mitteilung), diese Zeile iri ḫe₂-ma-mu₂-mu₂ „Möge die Stadt wachsen“ zu interpretieren.

dem Keilkopf des horizontalen ansetzt, also das Zeichen BAR.

25 van Dijk/Geller 2003: 66.

26 Cavigneaux 1996: 63 Anm. 114.

MIN-e ša₂ ina u₂-tu-ni KU₃-ti ba-aš₂-lu ina E₂ liṭ-ru-us-‘su’
Udug-ḫul 9: 47’ (SAACT 5, 147; Geller 2016: 310)

„Möge Nunura, der große Töpfer von Anu, ihn (den Dämon) mit Hilfe eines (zerbrochenen) Topfes, der im Brennofen aus einem reinen Ort gebrannt wurde, aus dem Haus vertreiben.“

In der gleichen Rolle, nämlich als Bekämpfer des Bösen, erscheint Nunura auch in späten Bauritualen bei der rituellen Reinigung des neuen Hauses.³⁷

Nin-šubur, die Wesir- und Türhütergottheit, kommt in der Magie sehr selten vor.³⁸ Soweit bekannt, ist die diskutierte Beschwörung der einzige neusumerische magische Text, der Nin-šubur unter anderen Gottheiten aufzählt. In diesem Zusammenhang ist bemerkenswert, dass Nin-šubur, teilweise allerdings als Nin-šubur-Papsukkal,³⁹ eine wichtige Rolle in späten Tempelbau-Ritualen spielt.⁴⁰ Eine Lehmfigur von Nin-šubur wird beim Anlegen des Tempelfundaments unter dem Postament begraben;⁴¹ die Opfer werden für Nin-šubur dargebracht.⁴² In seiner akkadischen männlichen Form Papsukkal tritt Nin-šubur in einer zweisprachigen kosmologischen Beschwörung für den Bau eines Tempels auf.⁴³ Selbstverständlich ist für sich genommen keine der aufgezählten Gottheiten ein ultimativer Beweis dafür, dass es sich bei FSB 82 um ein Bauritual handelt. Aber ihr gemeinsames Auftreten im gegebenen Kontext spricht eher dafür als dagegen.

In der Z. 03.12 wird das Haus genannt, welches den Anlass für die Bauaktivität darstellen könnte. Worauf sich die letzte Zeile (03.13) des Abschnittes bezieht, ist nicht eindeutig. Wenn die vorgeschlagene Interpretation (siehe Übersetzung) korrekt ist, dann stellt sich eine entfernte Ähnlichkeit mit einer sumerischen Passage aus einem späten akkadischen Bauritual ein:⁴⁴

ki-ḡar šam₂-zu šu te-ma-ab

„(Verschiedene Gegenstände wirfst du in die Tongrube. Du sprichst folgendermaßen:) Tongrube, empfang deinen Kaufpreis!“

Der nächste Abschnitt B₂ teilt sich aufgrund seiner Verbalformen in zwei Sinneinheiten. In den ersten vier Zeilen, die in *marû* formuliert sind,⁴⁵ werden zuerst (Bau)opfer und Opferschau thematisiert, die an LAGAB×U durchgeführt werden. Das Zeichen LAGAB×U ist mehrdeutig. Nach Steinkeller wird dieses Logogramm in der Ur-III-Zeit entweder als pu₂ „well, cistern“ oder als tul₂ „public fountain“ gelesen.⁴⁶ In alt-

babylonischen und späteren lexikalischen Listen wird LAGAB×U mit dem akkadischen *essû* „Lehmgrube“ gleichgesetzt.⁴⁷ tu-ul₂ = *es-su-u₂* MSL 14, 90: 37 (aB). Außerdem wird in den späten lexikalischen Listen LAGAB×U mit den Lesungen tul₂ und kala₃ auch mit *kalakku* „Grube“ gleichgesetzt.⁴⁸ Andererseits verbindet Hallo mit *kalakku* das sumerische Wort für eine Lehmgrube, das in den Inschriften Gudeas als ka-al⁴⁹ oder im Lokativ als ka-al-ka⁵⁰ auftritt.⁵¹ Beachtenswert ist außerdem die Berufsbezeichnung einer Person lu₂-ka-al, die große Mengen von Ziegeln liefert, in einer neusumerischen Wirtschaftsurkunde aus Lagaš.⁵²

In den Statuen Gudeas kommt ka-al(-ka) immer im gleichen Kontext vor:

ka-al-ka (ḡeš)urin ba-mul

„An der Lehmgrube ließ er ein Emblem glitzern.“

Die gleiche Idee ist in Zyl. A xiii 21 ausführlicher beschrieben:

ka-al nam-nun-na mu-ni-ḡar-ra-ni anzu₂ mušen šu-nir
lugal-la-na-kam urin-še₃ bi₂-mul

„Nachdem er die Lehmgrube in Fürstlichkeit hingestellt hat, ließ er da Anzu, die Standarte seines Königs, als ein Emblem strahlen.“

Bevor Gudea der Lehmgrube seine Aufmerksamkeit zuwendet, wird in der Nähe eine Opferschau durchgeführt (Zyl. A xiii 16–17). Auch in unserem Text wird eine Opferschau an LAGAB×U durchgeführt. Sowohl die ähnlichen Kontexte, in denen LAGAB×U und ka-al vorkommen, als auch die oben angeführten lexikalischen Belege könnten somit dafür sprechen, dass LAGAB×U eine Lehmgrube mit der Lesung kala₃ oder tul₂ bezeichnen könnte. Gegen diese Annahme spricht allerdings die nächste Zeile, die davon berichtet, dass Lehm in der Steppe abgekniffen wird.

In den Zeilen 03.16 und 03.17 werden Ton und ein Ziegel genannt. Letzterer wird in seine Ziegelform gelegt. Die Abfolge der rituellen Praktiken, die im Abschnitt 03.14–03.17 aufgezählt sind (eine Opferschau, Gewinnung von Lehm, das Formen eines Ziegels in einer Ziegelform), hat ihre Entsprechung in den Bauinschriften Gudeas. Statue C berichtet,⁵³ wie Gudea einen Plan im Schuppen der Ziegelform zeichnet, seine Standarte an der Lehmgrube befestigt, Ton mischt (im lu) und die Ziegel formt (šeg₁₂ du₈). Statue E fügt hinzu,⁵⁴ dass der Ziegel in die Ziegelform gelegt wird: šeg₁₂ ḡeššub-ba i₃-ḡar E iii 9.⁵⁵ Zyl. A berichtet über die Durchführung der Opferschau (xiii 16–17), Zeichnung eines Plans im Schuppen der Ziegelform (xiii 20), Aufstellung einer

37 Ambos 2004: 24.

38 Wiggermann 1998–2001: 499.

39 Ibid.: 492–494.

40 Ambos 2004: 25–26.

41 Siehe das Bauritual „Tonmännchen und Puppen“ in Ambos 2004: 155–166.

42 Siehe das *kalû*-Ritual nach dem Einsturz der Tempelmauer in ibid.: 186–187, Z. 22’.

43 Ambos 2004: 204–205, Z. 10’.

44 „Tonmännchen und Puppen“ in Ambos 2004: 156–157, Z. 5.

45 In den Zeilen 03.16 und 03.17 sind die Verbalformen abgebrochen. Man erwartet aber auch hier am ehesten *marû*-Formen.

46 Steinkeller 1981: 26–28. Früher wurde tul₂ „public fountain“ mit dem Logogramm LAGAB×TIL geschrieben.

47 Zu *essû* „Lehmgrube“ s. von Soden 1992: 21–22.

48 CAD K 62 und AHw 423. Z.B. kala₃ = ka-la₂ = LAGAB×U = *ka-lak-ku* Ea 1: 55 (1 Jt.).

49 A xiii 18, 21; A xviii 19 und A xix 4.

50 Gudea St. C ii 22; Gudea St. E iii 3 und Gudea St. F ii 14.

51 Hallo 1987: 207–208.

52 Foxvog 1998: 7–8.

53 RIME 3/1, 39.

54 RIME 3/1, 43–44.

55 Diese Passage weist eine verblüffende Ähnlichkeit mit der Z. 03.17 unseres Textes auf: šeg₁₂ u₅-šub-ba i₃-ḡar.

Standarte an der Lehmgrube (xiii 21–23), Füllung der Ziegelform mit Ton (xviii 24), das Formen eines Ziegels (xviii 26) und Legen eines Ziegels in die Ziegelform: $\check{s}eg_{12} u_3$ -šub-ba mu-ni-ġar-ra-ni (xix 8).⁵⁶

Der nächste Abschnitt besteht aus vier Nominalsätzen, die die Schlüsselwörter Ton, Ziegelform, Ziegel und Tragkorb enthalten. Alle diese Gegenstände findet man auch im Gudea-Zylinder A bei der feierlichen Zeremonie der Herstellung eines Gründungsziegels:

ka-al $\check{s}eg_{12}$ -be₂ saġ im-mi-du₈ la₃ i₃-nun i₃-he-nun-na al im-ma-ni-tag šembulug_x (ŠIM×UH₃) ŠIM×PI ġeš ħi-a aġ-še₃ im-mi-ak dubsig ku₃ mu-il₂ u₃-šub-e im-ma-gub gu₃-de₂-a im u₃-šub-ba i₃-ġar niġ₂-ul pa bi₂-e₃ e₂-a $\check{s}eg_{12}$ -bi pa e₃ mu-ni-ġa₂-ġa₂ kur-kur-re i₃ mu-da-sud-e eren mu-da-sud-e (Zyl. A xviii 19–28)

„Er besprengte die Tongrube für diesen Ziegel, mischte Honig, Butter (und) fürstliches Feinöl mit einer Hacke ein, machte š.-Harz (und) wohlriechende Essenz(?) von diversen Bäumen zu einer Paste, hob den reinen Tragkorb hoch (und) stellte (ihn) neben die Ziegelform. Gudea legte Ton in die Ziegelform, er brachte das Traditionelle hervor, indem er den (ersten) Ziegel des Hauses strahlend erscheinen ließ. (Dabei) sprengten alle Fremdländer mit ihm zusammen Öl. Zedernessenz sprengten sie mit ihm zusammen.“

Dieser Beschreibung geht die Aufzählung der Gottheiten voraus (Zyl. A xviii 13–15), die Gudea bei dem Ritual unterstützen, wie in der vorliegenden Beschwörung; siehe auch FSB 81, welche eine Beschwörung im Rahmen einer Bauinschrift enthält. Dort trägt eine Gottheit beim Tempelbau den Tragkorb dubsig.

Fraglich ist jedoch der Satz dubsig(IL₂)-bi alan 'abzu' /-ka[m] „Dieser Tragkorb ist ein Abbild vom Abzu.“⁵⁷ Nach Braun-Holzinger „[m]it alan und *šalmu* werden nur Abbilder anthropomorpher Wesen, wie Götter, Menschen und Dämonen in menschenähnlicher Gestalt, benannt.“⁵⁸ Siehe z.B. eine Passage aus der späten Beschwörungsserie *Bīt-mēseri*:

tu₆-tu₆ tu₆ ^dasar-ri lu₂-ka-piriġ alan ^dasal-lu₂-ħi = *šiptum šipat Marduk āšipu šalam Marduk* (AfO 14, 150: 225f. *Bīt-mēseri* 2)

„Die Beschwörung ist eine Beschwörung von Marduk. Der Beschwörungspriester ist ein Ebenbild von Marduk.“

Unsere Passage in FSB 82 wäre somit wohl die erste, in der sich alan nicht auf eine menschenähnliche Gestalt beziehen würde. Jedenfalls dient alan hier lediglich als Vergleichsobjekt und nicht als zentraler Zielgegenstand im Ritual (*contra* Geller).

Der strukturelle Aufbau von FSB 82 ist beachtenswert. Nach der Einleitungsformel A folgt zuerst der dramatische Handlungsteil *Incantatio* C₁ mit den Verbformen im Prekativ. Erst danach schließt sich der erzählende Teil *Expositio* mit seinen präsentischen und

nominalen Sätzen an. Diese Abfolge ergibt sich aus der Logik des Bauprozesses, der schon teilweise an den Beispielen der Gudea-Inschriften erläutert wurde: Reinigung der Stadt mithilfe von Gottheiten, Opferschau, Vorbereitung der Lehmgrube und Herstellung eines Ziegels.

Die letzte Kolumne der Tafel ist vom Schreiber sinngemäß in drei Abschnitte durch leere Zeilen geteilt worden. Im ersten Teil werden Früchte verschiedener Bäume, im zweiten verschiedene Pflanzen und ihre Teile und im dritten wohl die Produkte („Curcuma“ und „Mehl“), die erst noch hergestellt werden mussten,⁵⁹ genannt. Wie schon erwähnt, ist unklar, ob diese Liste in Zusammenhang mit der besprochenen Beschwörung oder mit dem Gesamthalt der Tafel steht. Aufgrund der Ähnlichkeit dieser Liste mit der Liste des Rituals FSB 102, welches für die Vorbereitung einer Salbe und eines Aufgusses für einen Kranken bestimmt ist, möchte Geller FSB 82 den Krankheitsbeschwörungen zuschreiben.⁶⁰ Diese Argumentation erscheint mir wenig stichhaltig, weil gleiche Ingredienzien in verschiedenen mesopotamischen Ritualen Verwendung finden konnten. Datteln, Äpfel, Feigen, Rosinen, Mehl, Weidenholz (^{ġeš}ma-nu) und Rohr treten als Opfergaben bei Festen in zeitgenössischen Urkunden auf.⁶¹ Beachtenswert ist weiterhin die Geschenkliste für die Gottheit Bau in Gudeas Statue E.⁶² Viele Ingredienzien, die in FSB 82 aufgezählt werden, kommen auch in den Gudea-Zylindern vor: zu₂-lum, ^{ġeš}peš₃, ġeštin als Opfergaben für Gottheiten (B iii 18–21.), Holz von ^{ġeš}ħa-lu-ub₂ (A vii 18) für Bauarbeiten, li^{ġeš} u₂ sikil kur-ra-kam „Wacholder, reine Pflanze der Berge“ für Beräucherung (A viii 10; xiii 26) und ġeš-ge und ^{ġeš}asal₂ zum Einpflanzen (B xii 2; A xxii 18). Auch das oben angeführte Ritual des ersten Ziegels von Zyl. A ist nicht außer Acht zu lassen. Bei der Herstellung des ersten Ziegels wurden dem Lehm verschiedene kostbare Essenzen beigemischt. Unsere Liste in FSB 82 könnte Produkte nennen, die für einen ähnlichen Zweck bestimmt waren.

Von den in unserem Text vorkommenden Substanzen kennen die späten Baurituale zu₂-lum (*suluppu*), ^{ġeš}ħašħur (*ħašħuru*), ^{ġeš}peš₃ (*tittu*), ^{ġeš}ma-nu (*ēru*), ġeštin-ħad₂ (*muzīqu*), ^{ġeš}ħa-lu-ub₂ (*ħaluppu*), še (*zēru*)⁶³, li (*burāšu*), ^{u2}(ab₂-)munzer (*supālu?*), gi (*apu*, *qanū*), lagab (≈ *ħibištu?*) und zi₃ (*qēmu*).⁶⁴ Die späten Baurituale zeigen, wie genau die aufgezählten Gegenstände beim Bau verwendet werden konnten: als Opfergaben, zur Beräucherung und als Gründungsbeigaben zum Deponieren in den Fundamenten.⁶⁵ Die Gartenfrüchte konnte man auch zum Verfüttern an das danach geschlachtete Opfertier nutzen.⁶⁶ Besonders viele ver-

59 Der spitze Stab passt aber nicht zu diesem Bild.

60 Siehe schon oben.

61 Sallaberger 1993/2: 195–205 (Index).

62 RIME 3/1, 44.

63 Samen jeder Art, s. Ambos 2004: 136–137, Z. 17.

64 Siehe Indizes in Ambos 2004: 280–310.

65 Siehe die Tabelle von deponierten Materialien, die auch wie unser Text Parfümpflanzen und Holzscheite enthält, in Ambos 2004: 72–73.

66 Ibid.: 158–159, Z. 29.

56 Siehe die vorherige Anmerkung.

57 Zur Bedeutung „Abbild, Bildnis“ von alan siehe Braun-Holzinger 1991: 231 und Marchesi/Marchetti 2011: 162.

58 Braun-Holzinger 1991: 231.

schiedenartige Substanzen enthielten die Gründungsbeigaben. Ambos zeigt, dass sie als wirksame *materia magica* aufgefasst wurden, die die Fähigkeit besaßen, das Böse vom neu gebauten Haus fernzuhalten.⁶⁷ Sehr wichtig für unsere Argumentation ist Mauls Beobachtung,⁶⁸ dass die Gründungsbeigaben den Substanzen entsprachen, die für die Zubereitung des Weihwassers benötigt wurden. Die Früchte, Samen, Hölzer und anderen Ingredienzien waren somit ein *breitbandig* einsetzbares Mittel der Beschwörungskunst: Sie konnten für Weihwasser und Salben⁶⁹, aber auch als Reinigungsmittel in jedem Kontext benutzt werden.

Alle oben angeführten Indizien sprechen dafür, dass FSB 82 ihren Sitz im Leben im Bauprozess hatte. Möglicherweise wurde dieser Text beim Segnen des ersten Ziegels, einer Zeremonie, die im Frühsommer durchgeführt wurde, rezitiert.⁷⁰ Der Monatsname $\check{s}eg_{12}$ (^{ges}) u_5 - $\check{s}ub$ - ba $\check{g}ar$ „(Monat), in dem der Ziegel in die Ziegelform gelegt wird“ des Monats, in dem diese Zeremonie durchgeführt wurde, spiegelt ihren wesentlichen Kern wider. Dieser Ausdruck ist beinahe wortgetreu in der Z. 03.17 wiedergegeben. Somit wäre dieser Text der erste neusumerische Beleg für ein Ritual, welches für den Bauprozess bestimmt war.

3 Beschwörung im Kontext

Unser Bestand an Bauritualen aus dem 3. Jt. v. Chr. ist gering.⁷¹ In diesem Kapitel werden in aller Kürze die Texte vorgestellt, die Bauaktivitäten thematisieren. Das soll dazu dienen, FSB 82 in ihrem Kontext zu verorten. Auf der Sammeltafel HS 2439, die FSB 82 enthält, befindet sich auch der Rest einer oder mehrerer Beschwörungen, die von mir als FSB 94 aufgefasst wird.

Vs.	
02.01	[] $\check{s}eg_{12}$ - $\check{b}i$ x^{72} $\check{[x]}$ - \check{sub}_6 (TAG) $\check{[x]}$ (Rest des Vs. abgebrochen)
Rs.	
03.01	$\check{d}en$ - ki $\check{d}nin$ - ki $\check{s}u$ $\check{[x]}$ $\check{[x]}$
03.02	$\check{g}ana_2$ an - na - ke_4 $KA \times X^{73}$ - \check{r} $\check{[x]}$ $\check{[a]}$ / \check{ra}_2 mu - r $\check{[i}_2$ - x^{74}]
03.03	$\check{s}ila_4^{75}$ $\check{h}e_2$ - $\check{g}al_2$ - la \check{g} $\check{[ub}^2$ - $ba^?$]

67 Ibid.: 74

68 Via ibid.: 74a + Anm. 518. Siehe auch Maul 1994: 44: alle für Weihwasser benötigten Ingredienzien kamen auch in anderen Reinigungsverfahren zur Anwendung.

69 Wie in FSB 102.

70 Sallaberger 1993/1: 235. Zur Einweihung des Gründungziegels in den Gudea-Zylindern siehe Heimpel 1987: 205–211; Hruška 1999: 222–226; Suter 2000: 91–92. Für die Herstellung des ersten Ziegels in Bauritualen des 1. Jts. siehe Ambos 2004: 77–78.

71 Siehe auch Ambos 2004: 5.

72 Nach Geller (van Dijk/Geller 2003: 65) liegt hier das Zeichen IM vor.

73 Geller (ibid.) liest $\check{s}ud_3$ ($KA \times \check{S}U$)- $\check{d}e_3$?, was möglich, aber unsicher ist. Die Mitte des Zeichens KA, in der Geller ein $\check{S}U$ sieht (siehe seine Kollation auf S. 141 und die Kopie auf S. 145), ist abgebrochen, was die Bestimmung erschwert. Die Kopie von van Dijk auf S. 126 scheint exakter zu sein.

74 Geller (ibid.) rekonstruiert hier das Zeichen GUB.

75 Siehe Rudik 2015: 462.

03.04	ur_2 - za $\check{h}e_2$ - $\check{g}al_2$ e - \check{r} x / x x^{76}
03.05	leere Zeile

Die Lesung und Interpretation dieses Abschnittes ist sehr schwierig und nicht sehr ergiebig. Beachtenswert ist allerdings, dass in der Z. 02.01 von der Bestreichung eines Ziegels die Rede ist, was diesen Abschnitt mit FSB 82 verbindet.

Insgesamt sind vier Beschwörungen vorhanden, drei fröhdynastische⁷⁷ und eine neusumerische⁷⁸, die in meinem Korpus eine kleine Gruppe von Hausbau-Beschwörungen bilden. Keiner von den drei anderen Texten berichtet über Lehm und Ziegel. Eine klärungsbedürftige Passage aus dem Fära-zeitlichen literarischen UD.GAL.NUN-Text SF 60 IV 15–23 zeigt jedoch eine verblüffende Ähnlichkeit mit unserem Text:⁷⁹

$en_{(GAL)}$ PU_2 $\check{s}u$ $\check{[gid}_2$ $\check{[x]}$
 $\check{s}eg_{12}$ $\check{p}a_3$
 mu - RU
 $KI.A$ $IGI.BUR$
 $\check{s}eg_{12}$ za - $\check{g}in_3$
 $kur_{(UD)}$ - $\check{t}a_{(TAGunú)}$ $kisal$ $\check{g}ar$
 $\check{g}ar_3$ - $\check{p}a_3$
 \check{KAD}_4^{80} $ALAN$ $\check{[x]}$
 $\check{[abzu}_{(IS-NESAG)}$ $\check{[x]}$
 $\check{LAK}04$ x x $\check{[KU}$

Zu beachten sind hier insbesondere PU_2 $\check{s}u$ $\check{[gid}_2$ $\check{[x]}$; $IGI.BUR$; $\check{s}eg_{12}$ za - $\check{g}in_3$; $ALAN$ und $abzu$, die auch in FSB 82 auftreten.

Unter den neusumerischen Texten bieten die Inschriften Gudeas, besonders seine Zylinder, die die Renovierung des Eninnu-Tempels des Gottes Ningirsu schildern, ausreichend Vergleichsmaterial für unsere Zwecke.⁸¹ Zwei Textfragmente aus Uruk, die wohl zu einer Tafel der altbabylonischen Zeit gehören,⁸² interpretierte Cavigneaux als „wohl ein liturgisches Ritual für den Bau eines Hauses“.⁸³ Fragment 122 behandelt einen Ziegel, der als zentraler Gegenstand eines Rituals auftritt: Es werden sieben Ziegel im Tragkorb eines Gottes gebracht. Ferner singt ein Chor ein Lied mit guten Wünschen an den Ziegel. Auch die Bauherrin wünscht dem Ziegel alles Gute. Außer dem Begriff „Ziegel“ und der allgemeinen Bauthematik liefert dieser Text keine weiteren Berührungspunkte zu FSB 82. Ausführlich formulierte Baurituale erscheinen erst im 1. Jt. Erstmals seit den Gudea-Zylindern vermitteln sie eine komplette Vorstellung über die Stellung der Rituale im Baupro-

76 Geller (ibid.) liest hier $s[ir_2]$ - $r[a]$. Zwei Winkelhaken am Ende der ersten Halbzeile könnten tatsächlich dem Anfang des Zeichens BU entsprechen. Aber viele andere Zeichen fangen ebenso an. In der zweiten Halbzeile könnte tatsächlich der Anfang des letzten Zeichens dem Zeichen RA entsprechen. Davor steht aber noch ein waagerechter Keil, den Geller nicht dem Text zu rechnet (siehe seine Kollation auf S. 141).

77 FSB 79, FSB 80 und FSB 81.

78 FSB 82.

79 Die Lesung erfolgt nach Zand 2009: 279–280.

80 Ist \check{KAD}_4 möglicherweise eine Schreibweise von $\check{d}ubsig$?

81 Siehe ausführlich oben.

82 AUWE 23, 122 und 123.

83 Cavigneaux 1996: 63.

zess.⁸⁴ Desto wichtiger ist in diesem Zusammenhang die Entdeckung eines neuen Baurituals aus dem 3. Jt., wel-

ches die große Lücke in unserem Kenntnisstand über die frühen Baurituale zumindest ein wenig verringert.

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⁸⁴ Ambos 2004.

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Enūma eliš meets the so-called Babylonian Map of the World

An image and its text

JoAnn Scurlock

Abstract: The Babylonian Map of the World has long puzzled scholars. It is the contention of this article that this map is an iconic image of Marduk's revenge, otherwise known to us as the Fall of Assyria.

Keywords: Babylonian Map of the World, moral economy, Chaoskampf, Nebuchadnezzar II, Fall of Assyria, Great Flood, Marduk, Ezekiel.

In his book, *Mesopotamian cosmic geography* (1998), Wayne Horowitz provides us with a new edition of what has long been hailed as the Babylonian Map of the World, complete not only with its captions, but with an accompanying text (Horowitz 1998: chapter 2; **Fig. 1**, p. 420). The latter is, to put it mildly, curious. Parts of the text more or less clearly relate directly to the image, so the reverse's eight "regions" of the entire world (Horowitz 1998: 23–25) presumably refer to the four seas and the four "regions" separated by the Great Wall of captions 14–17, 19–22 and 18, respectively (Horowitz 1998: 20–22). This should leave the obverse of the narrative to refer to the first 13 captions comprising the features recorded in the middle of the image or the known world, as opposed to the distant regions. I say "should" because the features recorded in the middle of the image are a bit odd both in inclusions, exclusions and placement and, if they are peculiar, the contents of the obverse of the narrative are even more so (Horowitz 1998: 22–23).

After a tantalizing reference to ruined cities (2'), the text picks up with Marduk installing a bridge in the vast Sea and settling inside it or creating on top of it a variety of ruined gods (3'–9'). The references are both to the proliferation of wild and/or imaginary terrestrial animals in deserted or far away regions and to the annual destruction and (re)creation of constellations in the heavenly Sea of the night sky as, for example, with Hydra which rises at the Autumnal equinox and sets at the Vernal Equinox thus literally taking the place (*ina libbi*: 5') of Anzû (the head of Pegasus) which rises at the Vernal Equinox and sets at the Autumnal Equinox. The next line after the constellations mentions Ut-napištim, Sargon and Nur-Dagan, king of Purušhanda (10'), apparently without context. Finally, we end with someone or something broken who/which had bird-like wings whose inner region "no one knows" (11').

Of these lines, the easiest to relate to the Babylonian World Map are lines 3'–9' that, as already realized by Horowitz, refer to Marduk's treatment of the monsters in Tiamat's army as described in the *Enūma eliš* and other ancient Mesopotamian mythological texts (Horowitz 1998: 33–36). A map that places Babylon at the center is, obviously, interested in glorifying the capital city of the Neo-Babylonian empire, an essential part of which, namely the Esagila complex, was, according to the *Enūma eliš*, built by the very ruined gods whose (re)creation and (re)settlement we are hearing about in the text. The last line of the obverse mystified Horowitz, but is a very clear reference to Marduk who was both winged¹ and a god whose heart (situated in the midst of the wings) no one, not even the other gods, could know (Ludlul I 29–30 [Annus/Lenzi 2010: 3, 16, 31]).

1 Ut-napištim, survivor of the Great Flood

But this is not simply empty glorification of Babylon and its god; there is a specific historical referent indicated by the human figures of line 10'. Ut-napištim was a survivor of the Great Flood. According to Babylonian tradition, Marduk controlled the gates of the Netherworld, which he opened, when aroused, to usher in the plagues, earthquakes, political upheaval and nomadic invasions that occurred periodically throughout Mesopotamian history. Indeed, the core group of five texts that formed the Neo-Babylonian advanced scribal curriculum² attributed every major political wind change in recorded Babylonian history to an angry Marduk.

1 Livingstone 1989 no. 39: 4–5 speaks of Marduk's wings and heart.

2 These were the *Weidner Chronicle*, the *Letter of Samsuiluna to Enlil-nadin-šumi*, the *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin*, the *Birth Legend of Sargon* and the *Epic of Gilgameš*. Beaulieu notes, the view of kingship presented in these texts is not the normal Mesopotamian concept of social justice (the good shepherd)

So, for example, in the *Weidner Chronicle* (Grayson 1975: no. 19),³ Marduk's wrath first put Sargon of Akkad into power and then destroyed him with a horde of Gutian nomads who, in turn, were eliminated after having offended the godhead by the most trivial violation of privileges claimed by the Esagila in Babylon (ll. 46–63; Al-Rawi 1990).

“The Gutians were unhappy people unaware how to revere the gods, ignorant of the right cultic practices. Utu-ḫegal, the fisherman, caught a fish at the edge of the sea for an offering. That fish should not be offered to any other god until it had been offered to Marduk, but the Gutu took the boiled fish from his hand before it was offered, so by his august command, (Marduk) removed the Gutu by force from the rule of his land and gave (it) to Utu-ḫegal.” (ll. 56–61).⁴

As explained in the *Erra Epic* (Cagni 1969),⁵ even the Great Flood had been unleashed by Marduk, an usurpation from what had previously been a prerogative of Enlil.

“A long time ago when I was angry and rose up from my dwelling and arranged for the Flood—I rose up from my dwelling, and the control of heaven and earth was undone. ... (Afterwards), I directed Gerra (the fire god) to make my features radiant, and to cleanse my robes. When he had made the finery bright, and finished the work, I put on my crown of lordship and went back to my place. My features were splendid, and my gaze was awesome!” (Erra I 132–144 [Dalley 1997: 407]).

He is portraying the Great Flood, which according to Mesopotamian tradition, was sent not to punish the wicked but simply to reduce the population (Kilmer 1972), as a glorious victory over mankind. Now that the finery has become tarnished again, it is time for a new Flood.

“I shall rise up from my dwelling, and the control of heaven and earth will be undone. The waters will rise and go over the land. Bright day will turn into darkness. A storm will rise up and cover the stars of heaven. ... The Anunnaki will come up and trample on living beings” (Erra I 170–177 [Dalley 1997: 408]).

This last sentence is a reference to opening the gates of the Netherworld to allow the dead to eat the living.⁶ The only restraint that Marduk puts on Erra, who has been sent out to do the dirty work while Marduk is occupied elsewhere, is to admonish him to spare a remnant. In the event, regret for the horrific consequences of such a mandate extends only to asking Erra in future to please destroy enemy lands rather than Akkad and to bring all of their booty to Babylon (Erra V 20–41 [Dalley 1997: 415]).

but about “presenting the king as a religious leader and teacher of wisdom” (Beaulieu 2007: 140–142).

³ Latest edition by Glassner 2004.

⁴ For the translation, see Millard 1997.

⁵ For the translation, see Dalley 1997.

⁶ Compare Ludlul I 7, 13 (Annus/Lenzi 2010: 3, 15, 31) and Ištar's Descent v 10–12 (Dalley 1997a: 388).

2 The relevance of Sargon of Akkad, *King of Battle*

The mention of Ut-napištim, then, marked the time frame for the map as falling at a significant turning point in Mesopotamian history. As to which of these wind changes we are talking about, the second historical referent tells all. *Sargon of Akkad's Birth Legend* and the *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin* also featured in the basic Neo-Babylonian scribal curriculum for the simple reason that these ancient kings were regarded as spiritual ancestors of Neo-Babylonian monarchs (Beaulieu 2007: 140–142). As we know from surviving copies of the *King of Battle*, an epic preserving the conflict between Sargon of Akkad and Nur-Dagan, king of Puruṣḫanda (Güterbock 1969), Sargon's campaign ended with a massive cutting down of valuable timber followed by the erection over the ruins of the enemy city of a stela of Sargon, to which the local ruler was required to offer libations (Güterbock 1969: 21 iv 14–25).

The cutting of cedars and the setting up of a stele in Neo-Babylonian context is a clear reference to the inscriptions carved by Nebuchadnezzar II on the cliffs bordering Wadi Brisa. In those inscriptions, Nebuchadnezzar claims to have cut down virgin timber on a massive scale, even going so far as to build new roads to accommodate the flow (WBC ix 33–46 [Da Riva 2012: 62; cf. 17–18]). The purpose of the inscriptions' accompanying “eternal” royal image was to cast the king's protection over the surrounding areas (WBC ix 50–52 [Da Riva 2012: 62; cf. 18]) which were expected to respond, as was every other area under Babylon's “protection”, with “bowing down” to Babylon (WBC viii 33 [Da Riva 2012: 61]) and “heavy” tribute (Hof. v 18', 26'–27' [Da Riva 2013: 211]), in this case continued installments of their valuable timber.

Not a stick of this wood was destined to grace the sanctuaries of local divinities. From the Old Babylonian period already, worshippers of Marduk had to be very careful about attentions paid to other gods, even those like Šamaš of Sippar with whom Marduk was supposed to have a special relationship. So, for example, the minders sent from Babylon to keep an eye on the high priest of Šamaš had inscribed on their cylinder seals the immortal phrases:

“May I not forget the precious one! (May I be in) your good graces, o Marduk, (and those of) the one who takes [you] by the hand with rejoicing [and jubilation]!” (De Graef 2002: 120).

More subtly, the Wadi Brisa inscriptions positively slobber over the chief gods of the Babylonian pantheon, thinking only to please them and “running about day and night” to serve them (WBA ii 9–12 [Da Riva 2012: 43]), while linking their reverence for gods other than Marduk and Nabû to these divinities' express command (WBA i 17–18 [Da Riva 2012: 42]),⁷ implying that no wor-

⁷ Similarly, Nabopolassar no. 2 i 5–9 (Langdon 1912: 64); Nebuchadnezzar no. 1 i 11–14 (Langdon 1912: 72); Nebuchadnezzar no. 3 i 11–15 (Langdon 1912: 80); Nebuchadnezzar no. 12

ship was to be offered to those not in Marduk and son's good graces.

The uninscribed rock carvings in Lebanon that show a king dressed in a long robe with conical crown and long staff in one hand before the symbols of the locally revered astral triad of Sin, Šamaš and Ištar⁸ should, based on iconography, be dated to Nabonidus. To be sure, Nebuchadnezzar could have represented himself in this fashion, which was by his time traditional for Babylonian kings, but he would never have given exclusive reverence to gods other than Marduk. The presence of Nabonidus monuments in these valleys requires no explanation—Lebanon was the venue of choice for the one to five thousand beams needed to roof his newly rebuilt Ebabbar (Schaudig 2010: 156–157 with n. 34).

As for Nebuchadnezzar, we have on one side of the Wadi Brisa the image of the king killing a lion, the by now iconic image of triumph over an enemy king, and on the other in juxtaposition the Babylonian monarch cutting down a tree as he himself describes it: “strong cedars that I cut with my pure hands in the Lebanon.”⁹ Taken together, the two images represent Nebuchadnezzar's Gilgameš-like triumph over the Cedar Forest and its unlucky guardians. One may only imagine the feelings of those who could actually read the accompanying inscriptions. Assyrian building inscriptions, whether in or outside of Assyria always spoke of building work and repairs to local temples. Instead, the local population allegedly being benefited by Babylonian rule was treated to column after column of loving description of the vast sums of money being spent on lavish offerings, elaborate processional boats, and building projects on the temples, walls and gates, palaces, even bridges of Babylon, Borsippa and Cutha using timber carted off from them by the Babylonian army.¹⁰ I say the

“army” both because the road building activities and cutting of timber are described in the style of a military campaign¹¹ and because Nebuchadnezzar specifically claims to have personally collected the annual tribute to Marduk and Babylon in every succeeding year (WBA iii 24–34; WBC ib 1'–4' [Da Riva 2012: 43–44]).¹²

In this context, the Babylonian king's claim to truth (WBC viii 40 [Da Riva 2012: 24; 61]) would appear to be more on the order of what we in America call “truthiness”, meaning that we do not have far to look for the identity of the foreign enemy that had recently oppressed the local population and taken their trees by force (WBC ix 23–25 [Da Riva 2012: 62–63]). As if to add insult to injury, the forests of Lebanon were not only said to belong to the god Marduk and to the ziggurat of Babylon (WBA iv 5–8 [Da Riva 2012: 45]), but not to have been used (or perhaps better they should never have been used) for the sanctuary of any other god than Marduk or the palace of any other king than himself (Da Riva 2012: 62 ix 13–22; cf. 80 ad. ll. 17–18]). This would make those who had the temerity not to “voluntarily” hand them over or indeed anyone who had in the past handed them over to any other god or ruler the actual thieves of the trees.

Neither was there much obvious tangibility to the protection that Nebuchadnezzar was allegedly extending to the people of Lebanon in return for their timber; indeed it ostensibly consisted solely in the reliefs themselves (Da Riva 2012: 62 ix 47–52; cf. p. 94). All this does not sound like a very good bargain, but the alternative was worse. Babylonian policy was to understand a refusal to accept Babylonian peace terms as a personal affront to the national god Marduk, a god not to be lightly crossed, even by his own worshippers. One might have thought that Nebuchadnezzar, one of the princes hand-picked by Marduk to avenge Akkad and even “given as a gift” to this divinity by his father (Nabopolassar no. 1 iii 16–18 [Langdon 1912: 62]), would not have had to worry about minor (and inadvertent) cultic irregularities. Yet at Wadi Brisa we see him desperately trying to avoid a repeat of the Gutian fish fiasco. Not only did he “restore” the “ancestral” custom of providing Marduk with a daily ration of 30 fishes, but he dedicated 20 fishermen to the exclusive task of providing Marduk's table with fresh fish (Da Riva 2012: 46–47 WBA iv 58–v 18; WBC iib 3'–21').

Babylonian response to a rebuff from potential protectees was what in Akkadian is referred to by a phrase usually translated as “marching around victoriously.”¹³

i 17–24 (Langdon 1912: 100); Nebuchadnezzar no. 13 i 22–25 (Langdon 1912: 104); Nebuchadnezzar no. 20 i 22–25 (Langdon 1912: 178).

8 Differently, Da Riva 2012: 19 with previous bibliography.

9 WBA iv 4–8, WBC iia 20–22 (Da Riva 2012: 45 [for Babylon]); WBA vi 16–18, WBC iii b 5'–7' (Da Riva 2012: 49 [for Borsippa]); WBC ix 16–22 (Da Riva 2012: 62 [made to go to Babylon for Marduk's temple and his own palace]). Similarly, C 36 i 42–43 and C38 i 42–44, apud Da Riva 2012: 81 ad l. 19.

10 Da Riva 2012: 22–23; 44–45 WBA iii 35–iv 22; WBC ib 5'–iia 24 (temple and ziggurat of Marduk); 45–47 WBA iv 23–v 18; WBC iia 1'–iib 21' (offerings for Marduk and Šarpanitu); 47–48 WBA v 19–60; WBC iia 1–34 (Marduk's processional boat); 49–50 WBA vi 4–50; WBC iib 1'–33' (temple and ziggurat of Nabû); 50–51 WBA vi 51–vii 20; WBC iia 1–25 (offerings for Nabû and Nanaya); 51 WBA vii 21–42; WBC iia 26–33 (Nabû's processional boat); 51–52 WBA vii 43–viii 6; WBC iib 1'–26' (streets of Babylon including a cedar[!] bridge); 53–54 WBA viii 11–ix 2; WBC v 4–35, 1'–14' (walls of Babylon); 54–55 WBA ix 3–48; WBC v 1'–vi 24 (other temples in Babylon); 55–56 WBA x 1–13; WBC vi 25–45 (walls and temples in Borsippa); 56–57 WBA x 14, 1'–7', xi 1'–3'; WBC vi 46–81 (extended defences for Babylon); 57–58 WBA xii 1'–5'; WBC vii 4–31 (New Years' offerings for Nabû and Marduk); 59 WBA xiii 1'–4'; WBC vii 41–61 (temples, offerings and walls for Cutha); 59–60 WBA xiv 1'–6'; WBC vii 62–viii 25 (temples for select cities in Babylonia); 61–62 WBC viii 38–75 (his new palace in Babylon). Several of Nebuchadnezzar's dedications in Marad (Langdon 1912: 78–80 [Nebuchadnezzar nos. 2–3]), Sippar (Langdon 1912: 102–112, 140–144 [Nebuchadnezzar nos. 13, 16]) and Kiš (Langdon 1912: 176–186 [Nebuchadnezzar no. 20]) have a similar trajectory, spending as much or

more time describing the gifts lavished on the gods of Babylon than on the local divinity allegedly being honored.

11 WBC ix 33–46 (Da Riva 2012: 62–63).

12 As Da Riva (2012: 80) points out, the placement of the “at that time” section dealing with logging in Lebanon immediately after the discussion of the building of the palace more than implies that the timber was acquired by means of a military campaign specifically designed to collect it.

13 The expression *šaltāniš alāku* appears repeatedly in Babylonian chronicle entries describing the campaigns of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. See Grayson 1975: no. 3: 54, 58–59, no. 5: 12–13, 16, 23, 5' (pp. 95, 100, 101). There is also mention

This policy of destroying enemy cities and turning their gods into *zaqīqus* by destroying their sanctuaries was carried to its highest degree of horror by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar who meted out this treatment not only to the cities of the Assyrian heartland but to Ḥar-rān and to an erstwhile ally, Jerusalem.

Initially, moreover, local populations were not carried off, as had almost invariably been the case with Assyria's wars of conquest; instead, to put it in Biblical terms, the men were butchered, women ripped up and babies' heads dashed against the wall. So, for example, the inhabitants of Kalḫu were massacred and the bodies of over 180 young men were discovered, drowned in the palace wells where the Babylonians had thrown them (Oates 2001: 100, 103). Nabopolassar summarizes the military accomplishments of his reign with the chilling claim: "I killed the Subarean and turned his cities into heaps of ruins." (Nabopolassar no. 1 i 29–31 [Langdon 1912: 60]; no. 3 ii 1–4 [Langdon 1912: 66]).

Nabopolassar did not do this personally, of course, leaving the dirty work up to the Medes and the Babylonian army. His most important contribution to the war effort was to go into the temple of Marduk and pray for what must have seemed an impossible dream and one requiring direct divine intervention to accomplish.¹⁴ Or, as Nabopolassar puts it, his victories over Assyria are to be attributed to the sole action¹⁵ of Marduk and Nabû who caused Nergal, the "strongest among the gods", to march at his side, to slay his foes and fell his enemies (Nabopolassar no. 4: 8–21 [Langdon 1912: 66, 68]).¹⁶ What he means is that Erra (a by-form of Nergal) has been commissioned by Marduk to sweep away just and unjust alike for the sheer joy of killing,¹⁷ and to bring the resulting plunder to Babylon.

The prophecies of Ezekiel give testimony to the rivers of blood that flowed¹⁸ when Babylonian kings "marched around victoriously" in what had been the Assyrian empire, leaving in their wake a swath of cities destroyed so thoroughly that it took them two centuries to recover. The notorious Babylonian failure to discuss military

campaigns in their inscriptions doubtless stems from a reluctance to discuss matters of which they had no reason to be proud. A certain whiff of remorse also colors Neo-Babylonian literature as, for example, in the Ḥuwawa episode in the *Gilgameš Epic*, which was enriched in the Neo-Babylonian versions (Al-Rawi/George 2014) by a loving description of the cedar forest and its noisy animal inhabitants, an elaboration of the betrayal of Ḥuwawa by Enkidu whose servant he had once been and the expression of regret for the loss of a mighty tree eerily reminiscent of Ezekiel's lament for Assyria:

"Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, beautiful of branch, mighty of stature; amid the very clouds, it lifted its crest" (Ezek. 31: 3). "[My friend], we have reduced the forest [to] a desert ... My friend, we have cut down a lofty cedar whose top abutted the heavens." (Gilg. V 302–303, 314–315 [Al-Rawi/George 2014: 82]).

The historical event in question in the *King of Battle* reference is, then, what we call the Fall of Assyria, the birth narrative of the nascent Neo-Babylonian state. As if in confirmation, the *Erra Epic* with its reference to the Great Flood of Ut-Napištim and its summer setting¹⁹ mesh perfectly with the actual Fall of Assyria, since both Assur and Nineveh were destroyed in Abu (Grayson 1975: no. 3: 24–27, 42–45).

3 The Babylonian Map of the World decoded

Armed with this knowledge, we return to our Neo-Babylonian Map of the World—and every "mistake" is revealed as nothing of the kind. This map was never intended as a mere representation of observed topography. A glance reveals that represented toponyms are lined up in two lines to the East and West of the Euphrates. The West line—which ignores actual East-West placement—represents the allies of Babylon (Habban [Medes], Bīt-Yakin [Sealand], Susa [Elam]); the ruined city on the Western side represents the cities of Akkad that sided with Assyria and whose cult centers were correspondingly destroyed, resulting in the "ruin" of their gods. To the East of the Euphrates, we have Assyria and its Allies, a ruined city above the mountains representing those Median tribes that sided with Assyria and which, like Nush-i-Jan, also had their cult centers destroyed.²⁰ Otherwise, we have Urartu, Assyria and Der. The fact that Assyria is about the same size as Der (in other words, it pretty much consists at this point of the city of Aššur itself), the fact that the Tigris is not even mentioned as existing, and the fact that Babylon may with a straight face be depicted as a megalopolis places us exactly in time and place. The world creat-

of defeats in which "no one was left alive" and of turning cities into ruin heaps. See Grayson 1975: no. 3: 45, 57, no. 5: 5–7, 20 (pp. 94, 95, 99, 100). Things do not seem to have calmed down much under later rulers. Neriglissar claims to have "burnt (Kishi's) wall, its palace, and its people" (Grayson 1975: no. 7: 19 [p. 104]).

14 He advises a future prince "not to be concerned with feats of might and power. Seek the sanctuaries of Nabû and Marduk and let them slay your enemies." (Nabopolassar no. 4: 31–34 [Langdon 1912: 68]).

15 This is what is meant by the assertion (Beaulieu 2007: 141) that Nabopolassar's policy vis à vis the Assyrians was to avoid war, remain passive, trust in the providential guidance of the gods, to remain faithful to the gods Marduk and Nabû in times of adversity, and to requite Assyrian brutality with kindness. In fact, it was Nabopolassar who was the architect of the times of adversity and his aim was to requite Assyrian kindness (in twice rebuilding Babylon) with brutality.

16 For the translation, see Beaulieu, 2000a.

17 For more on the lack of interface between justice and divine punishment in Mesopotamia and its implications for the interface between the religious ideologies of Nebuchadnezzar II and Josiah, see Scurlock 2006a: 15–23.

18 See, for example Ezekiel 30: 1–19.

19 Erra is associated with the Fox and the Sibitti in MUL.APIN. Both are causers of the plagues and famines of Summer. For references, see Cooley 2008: 184–185.

20 After the destruction of the fire temple around 600 BCE, someone came back; the altar was cut down to a carefully plastered stump and the whole complex was filled with mudbrick with a baked brick cap to seal the ruins and prevent further desecration of the site (Stronach 2001: 627–629).

ed by Assyria has been destroyed by the Great Flood and remade to Marduk's liking, a new world in which the city of Babylon is the cosmic center, and Assyria has been reduced to virtual non-existence, along with just about every other place on the map **except** Babylon into which the tribute of all mankind was meant to be sucked. Also making its first known appearance on the map is the Great Wall of Gog and Magog²¹ beyond which, according to Rabbinic tradition, live the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel settled there by Sargon II, a pure fraction of the Jewish community waiting to return at the end of time.²²

4 Chaoskampf

This is all very well and good, but how do we relate our map's image to its text: Marduk's victory over Tiamat and her monstrous children so carefully chronicled in lines 3'–9'? It is conventional to refer to this victory as a Chaoskampf in the specific meaning of the forces of order gloriously defeating the forces of chaos, an alleged proxy for what we would term the struggle between good and evil if not an expression of what Eliade alleged as the myth of the eternal return (Mirea Eliade, apud Tugendhaft 2012: 145–147).

This conceptualization of the emic perspective has colored our understanding of everything in Mesopotamia from the intersection of nature and culture and the relationship between the city and the sown to royal and even imperial ideology. Here, however, Marduk's victory would seem to be identified with what we like to refer to as the collapse or disintegration of Assyria—certainly a period of chaos as defined against order, and directly, deliberately, even as a matter of course, produced by a god whom we prefer to see as the local champion of order against chaos.

A careful re-analysis of the *Enūma eliš* and related materials, however, reveals that the problem is, as so often with theoretical approaches, not with the ancient texts but with the modern theory that seeks to stuff round ancient pegs into square modern holes.

In short, the problem lies with the word Chaos, which means one thing in Hesiod and apparently almost the opposite thing in Ovid, the usage from which the modern English meaning of the word derives (Sonik 2013: 5–12).

In my humble opinion, it would be better to start all over again. It is not as if the texts themselves gave us no clue as to what is going on. Over and over again, a contrast is drawn, whether between an older and a younger set of gods or between the gods collectively and mankind over the issue of noise. In other words, you have a group that is characterized by quiet, stillness and sleep

that is in charge challenged by another group that is noisy, in motion and very much awake and currently locked out of the halls of power. In these challenges, moreover, it is the latter group that invariably prevails.

We begin from this to understand that, if we insist on an order vs chaos paradigm, we are seeing quiet stillness and sleep going down to defeat at the hands of noise, motion, and awakesness or, in other words, chaos as represented by Marduk and the gods of whom we know is defeating order as represented by Apsu and Tiamat.

It is Apsu and Tiamat that, at the beginning of the struggle, possess that ultimate symbol of divinely sanctioned order, the *Tablet of Destinies* (Ee I 157–158, II 43–44). Marduk, from the moment we see him, is using the winds literally to whip a calm sea into turbulent waves (Ee I 105–110). It is Marduk and not Tiamat who is characterized, in Akkadian texts, as a dragon,²³ a red dragon no less. Marduk is also referred to as a god of sorcery (*kišpu*) (Böck 2007: 196, ll. 64–65).

Marduk's role in the *Enūma eliš* is as a warrior god who destroys and creates, but only in that order—a force of chaos enlisted by the younger gods to defeat old order, essentially a revolution which, like all revolutions needs to legitimate itself by arguing that the old guard are not doing their job or have otherwise forfeited their right to rule. Marduk's thoughtful and merciful feminine self, his “heart” imagined as a “mother with her calf” (Ludlul I 18–20 [Annus/Lenzi 2010: 3, 15, 31]) was exercised in his role as divine midwife. In this capacity, he mercifully declined to kill the baby and its mother too while he was at it. Joining Ištar and the weaving goddess Uttu as the third of the ancient Mesopotamian version of the three fates, it was his/her job to cut off the thread, determining the day upon which the newborn child would die.²⁴ Marduk's role in medicine was as a *gallû*-demon to drag off the disease-causing spirit or, alternatively somebody else not in his good graces, to the Netherworld.²⁵ When he was working for a higher authority, Marduk was also divine enforcer, doing the dirty work of destroying cities with whom the collectivity of gods had become angry. When working for himself, he lashed out against those who had for one reason or another offended him. This brought out Marduk's unthinking and merciless masculine self (his “hand”) which, when truly aroused acted with blind rage killing good and bad alike, destroying even his own city and temple, and so deaf to prayers that he literally put his head between his legs and pressed his

21 Originally, this will have been a reference to the cross-country walls built by Nebuchadnezzar II in defense of Babylon (Da Riva 2012: 19–20, 22; 56–57 [WBC vi 60–81; 75–77]). For archaeological evidence for the physical reality of this “spectacular statement ... of Babylon's power,” presumably also Xenophon's “Median Wall”, see Czichon 1999: 204.

22 For a fascinating discussion (ignoring a rather scary “summary” of Mesopotamian religion), see Silverstein 2014: 299–303.

23 For references, see CAD U 331a s.v. *ušumgallu* mng. d.

24 This is known from a ritual to remove a curse that requires re-enacting the setting of fate at the patient's birth, thus creating a new fate for him. For references, see Peterson 2009: 128 (not his interpretation).

25 See especially Farber's translation of *akitu*-festival texts in TUAT 2/2: 221, apud Cranz 2014: 81–82 where he takes what was previously taken as the great *gallû* demon being killed by Marduk in connection with *mimma lemnu* in the house being driven out of the Esagila as Marduk, described as the great *gallû* demon, who is supposed to be killing *mimma lemnu*.

thighs to his ears to drown out the screams (Kutscher 1975: 95, line 104).²⁶

So much was destroying cult centers part of the job description of Neo-Babylonian kings that, before he was allowed to resume his throne in the annual Babylonian New Year's Festival, he was made to swear not to destroy Babylon, command its overthrow, wreck the Esagila Temple or smash Babylon's walls (Sachs 1969). So, Marduk leading the charge by unleashing chaos against Assyria in revenge for the destruction of his city and the smashing of his statue by Sennacherib is exactly and perfectly a fit with his character as portrayed in the *Enūma eliš* and elsewhere.

5 Marduk's revolution justified?

And there is more. Chaos in our sense of the word was not a good thing for Mesopotamians, nor would it be such a good thing for us if we did not invariably imagine it as happening to somebody other than ourselves. As is quite clearly laid out in the *Enūma eliš*, to be described as good, Marduk's revolution had to be justified by more than just bad behavior on the part of his opponents; he needed, once the necessary violence was over and order had been re-established, to work for the benefit of all the cities of Mesopotamia (as represented by the divine assembly) and not just himself, and he needed to be merciful to his opponents and to forgive them without imposing impossible conditions for their return to grace.

The justification part of this situation was dead in the water, since the wrongs of Sennacherib, assuming that they were wrongs, had twice already been compensated for, once under Esarhaddon and once under Aššurbanipal. Moreover, according to the Babylonian's own version of an interchange between Nabopolassar and Sin-šar-iškun (CTMMA 2 no. 44 [Spar/Lambert 2005: 203–210], an Assyrian unconditional surrender actually preceded the horrific massacres attested to by archaeology. The Assyrian prince was indeed “a partridge who tried to share [a nest] with a falcon” (CTMMA 2 no. 44: 10 [Spar/Lambert 2005: 207]).

Nonetheless, there being no Assyrians left to complain, things might have worked out harmoniously if the other two conditions for acceptance of Babylon's rule had been met. I say “had been” since Nebuchadnezzar's Hofkalender and C34 texts clearly indicate that they had not. Despite Assyrian-sounding noises about peace and prosperity, and casting the shadow of their protection over mankind,²⁷ the new government were

no Assyrians.²⁸ As far as Neo-Babylonian development projects were concerned,²⁹ they were designed to benefit the capital district at the expense of the rest of the country, taking precious irrigation water needed for Southern Mesopotamian grain to grow Babylonian dates (Kleber 2012: 235–236).

Neo-Babylonian kings kept the temples of the gods of Babylonia under a tight leash, helping themselves to temple funds as they saw fit (Jursa 2007: 76). There continued to be land grants, but the land that the temples were given came with strings attached, requiring the provision of materials for building projects in Babylon (Beaulieu 2005) as well as garrison troops for the chain of fortresses that largely replaced Assyrian administrative centers.³⁰ Moreover, in stark contrast to the situation under Assyrian rule, when major Babylonian centers had *kidinnūtu* privileges, the temple servants had to do forced labor for the government, and at the temples' expense, for which purpose a storehouse was kept in Babylon (Kleber 2012: 220, 225). When the wheat crop failed due to lack of water, as happened in the early years of Cambyses, the temple staff had to buy food to feed their workmen in Babylon and that food was the very dates to grow which Babylon had stolen Uruk's water (Kleber 2012).

Economic crises in the Old Babylonian period were relieved by tax remissions and the cancellation of debts. However, the Neo-Babylonian monarch's idea of being the king of justice was not *mīšarum* edicts but exemplary punishments, indicative of a shift from restorative to retributive justice consonant with Marduk's unfettered rule. So, all injustice and oppression allegedly ceased in the land when a second offender got his head cut off and an inscribed stone copy of the head got affixed to the city gate (Lambert 1965: 5–6 iii 3–14).

Eerily, the most precious gift of Šamaš, the god of justice, to the human king in Nebuchadnezzar's reign was not his “just scepter” but the “wrathful weapon that cannot be opposed for causing the downfall of my enemies” (Peled 2013: 148 ii 10–12).³¹ Or, as Nebuchadnezzar himself tells us in the Wadi Brisa inscription, his role as king of justice shepherding the people given to him by Marduk consisted in laying down the law by protecting those true to Babylon, and killing its enemies

a rejection of Assyrian values, such phrases, like the presentation of the king of Babylon at Wadi Brisa in the style of the Neo-Assyrian official royal seal, are an attempt to sell the new Babylonian regime as a simple continuation of the previous system under new management. For other examples of such propaganda, see Da Riva 2013: 197–198.

28 They also falsely claimed Hammurapi as spiritual ancestor (Seri 2014: 94).

29 The substance to match Nebuchadnezzar's claim to be “valiant canal-inspector who irrigates the fields, true farming supervisor who stores barley in immense piles” (C36 i 10–11, apud Da Riva 2013: 218 ad l. 28').

30 For details on the administration of these lands by the temples, see Jursa/Wagensonner 2014. For a general description of the system of military colonists, see Jursa 2007: 86–87.

31 Similarly Nebuchadnezzar no. 12 iii 17–30 (Langdon 1912: 102). He also opened paths to destroy the king's enemies (C 23/1 ii 8–11, apud Da Riva 2012: 79 ad. l. 11).

26 This was, like so much else in the cult of Marduk, originally a lament designed to soothe the angry heart of Enlil. For a discussion, see Kutscher 1975: 5.

27 Far from being “Babylonian in language, concepts and essence, carefully avoiding Neo-Assyrian patterns” (Da Riva 2012: 19), phrases like “making the inhabitants lie in safe pastures” are an essential component of Assyrian ideas of kingship as, most spectacularly, in the inscriptions of Sargon II. Other phrases such as “king of justice” are acknowledged by Da Riva (2012: 79 ad. l. 26) as being of Neo-Assyrian origin as is indeed the image of the king fighting a lion (Da Riva 2012: 94). Far from being

(WBC viii 26–37 [Da Riva 2012: 61]).³² As Robespierre put it, the rights of man and the citizen were for the true citizens; to the others, the state owed only death.

The *quid pro quo* for the peace and protection afforded to those under Babylonian rule was reverence, literally “bowing down” to the city of Babylon (Hof. iv 13'–17' [Da Riva 2013: 210]; C34 iii 18–20 [Da Riva 2013: 224]; WBC viii 33 [Da Riva 2012: 61])³³ or perhaps better to the royal palace (C29/2 ii 5 [Da Riva 2013: 205]),³⁴ as well, of course, as paying annual “heavy” tribute (Hof. v 18', 26'–27' [Da Riva 2013: 211]). Most striking is the apparent annual suction of imperial resources into the capital city all too often papered over in the translations (Hof. iv 18'–24' [Da Riva 2013: 210]; C34 iii 21–26 [Da Riva 2013: 224–225])³⁵ and resulting in an accumulation of a whopping 1 million measures of barley in the Esagila and another 2 million in the palace, not to mention enormous quantities of dates and wine (Hof. iv 25'–31' [Da Riva 2013: 210–211]). Curious for such a pious ruler is that the palace's share is twice that of the temple. “And the fields of the *ensi* ...” but I digress.

The bulk of this munificence seems to have remained in Babylon to judge from the contrast between the meager offerings made to the temples of the lesser gods and those showered on the “great gods” of Babylon, Borsippa and Cutha. So, the lower class gets barley, bandicoot rat, eggs, birds and drinks yearly “in plenty and abundance” (Hof. iii 19'–iv 5' [Da Riva 2013: 210]) and the upper class receives bulls or at least sheep, honey, milk and truly fine wine of every variety besides, not counting the fact that their daily offerings were on a par with the yearly offerings of everybody else.³⁶ As Nebuchadnezzar himself boasts: “I did not make any other cult center more pre-eminent than (those of) Babylon and Borsippa” (Nebuchadnezzar no. 15 vii 32–33 [Langdon 1912: 134]).

Curiously, the later inscription of Nebuchadnezzar's early reign claims only to have provisioned the temples of the great gods and makes no mention of offerings for anybody else (C34 ii 60–iii 2 [Da Riva 2013: 224]). Similarly, the Wadi Brisa inscriptions only get round to describing delivery on Marduk's promise in the *Enūma eliš* to provision the sanctuaries of the other gods in col-

umn vii of WBC and xii of WBA! There follow nine lines of protestation on the subject of Nebuchadnezzar's good intentions (Da Riva 2012: 58–59 WBC vii 32–40) and finally the evidence to substantiate them, a quarter column joint description of temples, offerings and walls given to what had, since the late Kassite period, been the third wheel of the divine triad, namely Nergal (Da Riva 2012: 59 WBA xiii 1'–4'; WBC vii 41–61). Both last and least came a column and a quarter of beneficences to all those other gods, mentioning only temple building, no offerings and most certainly no walls (Da Riva 2012: 59–60 WBA xiv 1'–6'; WBC vii 62–viii 25). Nebuchadnezzar always intended to actually provide for the gods as well as to renovate their sanctuaries, he tells us, and we may believe him since the god Šamaš himself gave him truth as a present, but somehow while doing this he found time and money to build himself a spanking new palace, the old one being just too small to hold him (Da Riva 2012: 61–62 WBC viii 38–75; cf. 80).

It is also hard not to notice that work on the temples of Babylonia in Nebuchadnezzar's early inscriptions forms a bizarrely short list—Sippar, Larsa, Ur and Bas to which the younger inscription adds Dilbat, and even these are having to be rebuilt (Hof. iii 19'–28' [Da Riva 2013: 210]; C34 ii 40–59 [Da Riva 2013: 224]). The text actually says “newly made” as if the temples in question had never before been built (C34 ii 41, 43, 45, 47, 49 [Da Riva 2013: 224]).³⁷ Sadly, as we know from Nabonidus' inscriptions, it would be more accurate to say that these temples had been reduced to non-existence for resisting Nabopolassar and siding with Assyria.

“(Marduk) provided him (Nabopolassar) with helpers ... (And) he (the king of the Umman-manda) swept on like a flood storm ... avenging Babylon in retaliation. The king of the Umman-manda ... demolished the sanctuaries of all the gods of Subartu (Assyria). He also demolished the towns within the territory of Akkad (Babylonia) which were hostile to the king of Akkad and had not come to his assistance (in fighting Assyria). None of their cult centers did he omit, laying waste their towns worse than a flood storm” (The Eḫulḫul inscription, apud Liverani 2001: 390).

Nabonidus insists it was the Medes who destroyed these sanctuaries, but we need not believe him. Three of the texts in the Neo-Babylonian scribal curriculum: *The Weidner Chronicle* (Millard 1997), *The Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin* (Gurney 1955) and the *Letter of Samsuiluna to Enlil-nadin-šumi* (Al-Rawi/George 1994: 135–139), would, given their subject matter, have served to justify the destruction of cult centers in Akkad which had not supported Marduk in his campaign of revenge against Assyria. As if to confirm this impression, temples being renovated in the cities of Babylonia are explicitly said to have been made anew (Nebuchadnezzar no. 13 ii 41–71 [Langdon 1912: 108]), sometimes with added details about the ruin heaps to which they had been

32 Similarly Nebuchadnezzar no. 14 i 13–32 (Langdon 1912: 112–113) which has him being sent from the upper to the lower sea to kill the unsubmitive, bind enemies, increase the population in the land, put the evil and wicked to flight and bring the products of the world to lay at Marduk and Nabû's feet. Nebuchadnezzar no. 15 i 40–ii 42 (Langdon 1912: 122–124) adds that whatever he did was under the personal supervision of Marduk.

33 Cf. making Babylon pre-eminent from sea to shining sea: WBC ix 3–8 (Da Riva 2012: 62)

34 As Da Riva points out (2013: 219 ad. l. 19' and 220), it is not always clear that the city of Babylon is meant, and not simply the royal palace.

35 The heaping up in question was for Babylon, and not mankind.

36 Hof. iii 6'–18' (Da Riva 2013: 208–210); C34 i 16–28, ii 26–35, 36–39 (Da Riva 2013: 222, 223, 224), cf. iii 7–17 (Da Riva 2013: 224 [akitu-festival]). The imbalance also shows up in building activities—see Da Riva 2012: 22–23 and contrast C34 i 29–38 and ii 18–25 (Da Riva 2013: 222, 223) with C34 ii 40–59 (Da Riva 2013: 224).

37 Nabopolassar no. 3 ii 1–9 (Langdon 1912: 66) has the new making directly on the heels of the turning of Assyrian cities into ruin heaps. Similarly Nebuchadnezzar's cone recording the “newly made” Ebabbar at Sippar (Peled, 2013 148 i 6–8).

reduced, such as blowing sands actually obscuring the site (Nebuchadnezzar no. 10 i 11–16 [Langdon 1912: 96]). The ostensibly bizarre description of the Ebabbar at Sippar as “from the beginning turned to pasture land like a desert” (Nebuchadnezzar no. 12 i 26–ii 1 [Langdon 1912: 100])³⁸ is a perfect reflection of that “reducing to non-existence” which was the intended result of unmeasured violence of the sort unleashed by a god whose bent was first to destroy and then to recreate.

What is more, it is a fact, now confirmed by archaeological survey (Ur/Clindaniel 2014), that those areas that fell to the Medes in the spoils share-out between the allies, and that included the extremely important cult center of Ištar of Arbela, survived the Fall of Assyria intact. The paradisaical lushness of this intact landscape gives silent witness to the devastation dealt out by an angry Marduk to those who opposed him.

And there is yet more. The Hofkalender (Da Riva 2013) has two very important omissions, namely the cities of Nippur and Uruk. The reason for this lag soon becomes apparent. Cities only got their sanctuaries that had been destroyed by Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar for siding with Assyria rebuilt if they agreed to Babylon’s terms as outlined in the *Letter of Samsuiluna to Enlil-nadin-šumi*, a document part of the scribal curriculum in the Neo-Babylonian period. Samsuiluna is supposed to have sent a letter chastising the priests of the cult centers of Akkad for lying, committing abominations, desecrating the rites of their gods and altering divine commands, that is, not following Marduk’s lead, literally laid down at Creation, as to how local cults were to perform their rites. Samsuiluna allegedly backed up his charges with the warning that recalcitrant priests would be dealt with by Marduk (doubtless with the assistance of the king’s army) by being burnt, roasted, baked and, just for good measure, incinerated with raging *ašāgu*-thorn fire (Al-Rawi/George 1994: 135–139: 5’–7’). By this tirade, Samsuiluna was essentially claiming the right of Babylon to dictate local cult praxis (Al-Rawi/George 1994: 135–139, lines 1–17).³⁹

We can see this interference at work at Neo-Babylonian Sippar where Nebuchadnezzar demoted Anu and Enlil to the bottom of the offering lists and moved Marduk above the deified Ziggurat. He also introduced the cult of Nanaya and her twin Ištar-tašme. Moreover, Gula’s cult got reorganized, and her husband Ninurta disappears from offering lists (Zawadski 2006: 155–186). Looking back on these reforms, Nabonidus had some pretty harsh words for Nebuchadnezzar’s concomitant “restoration” of Sippar’s Ebabbar of Šamaš. “He built a new temple on his own for Šamaš, which was not appropriate for his lordship and which was not suited for the necessities of his divinity” (Schaudig 2010: 156).

Neo-Babylonian cult inventories also indicate a policy of setting up statues of Marduk on daises facing the

gateways of temples or shrines belonging to other gods with the obvious intent of having whatever was offered to those gods have to pass first to Marduk whose leftovers these gods would thus be receiving (George 1997: 65–70). Far from provisioning their cults, Marduk was symbolically stealing their offerings.

The failure of the cities of Akkad to respond to Samsuiluna’s demands was presumably meant to account for the ignominious end of the Old Babylonian period, and may well be one of the reasons (besides Samsuiluna’s canal projects designed to tap river water to develop the production of Babylonian dates)⁴⁰ that lead to the revolt of most of the south against Babylon.⁴¹

To enforce his claims to interference in local cults, Marduk had to give specific permission before any of the destroyed temples could be rebuilt. In the case of Larsa, the god gave a sign that his heart had been “pacified” vis-à-vis the temple of Šamaš there by having his winds blow away the covering sands (Nebuchadnezzar no. 10 i 17–22 [Langdon 1912: 96]).⁴² Marduk’s father Šamaš of Sippar actually had a say in the restoration of his temple; the ruined state to which it was still, at this point, reduced being allegedly due to the god’s being very picky about which king was worthy of building his temple, so picky in fact, that Nebuchadnezzar had to beg and plead for permission and only after confirmation by extispicy did he dare to proceed with the rebuilding (Nebuchadnezzar no. 12 i 26–ii 27 [Langdon 1912: 100–102]).⁴³ Ninkarrak of Sippar did not get the same courtesy. It was to Marduk, with supplication and kissing the hem of his garment, that Nebuchadnezzar needed to apply for “merciful” Marduk to come to be at peace and to give his permission, confirmed by extispicy, to rebuild Ninkarrak’s “dust covered” temple and restore her interrupted offerings (Nebuchadnezzar no. 13 iii 13–36 [Langdon 1912: 110]).⁴⁴

One may imagine the reaction of the priests of Yahweh to having to agree to perform their cult Marduk’s way as a condition for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Proud Nippur, once the religious capital, seems also to have held out to the bitter end—the Wadi Brisa inscription, apparently from the last years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (Da Riva 2012: 19–20), still makes no mention of any work on its temples.

To Nebuchadnezzar’s claim to have restored the “original symbols and primordial cultic rites” to Uruk whose temples he was eventually able to “newly build” (C34 ii 40–59 [Da Riva 2013: 224]), we may readily also

38 Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar no. 13 iii 13–24 (Langdon 1912: 110) which has Ninkarrak’s temple in Sippar having been out of commission with dust covering every trace and no offerings of any kind—it was not even named with the other sanctuaries.

39 For a discussion of this text, see Beaulieu 2007: 142–148.

40 Cole and Gasche 1999: 94 describe a major canal project of Samsuiluna that would have solved the “flooding problem” forever. Even if the stated objective of the project was to “extend the cultivated area of Babylon”, it is all a matter of perspective as water being a scarce resource in this part of the world, downstream users have never appreciated upstream irrigation projects, and will have regarded this as outright theft of their water.

41 For continued rivalries between Babylon and especially the ancient cities of Sumer and Akkad, see Scurlock 2012.

42 A translation of this text appears in Beaulieu 2000b.

43 Cf. Nebuchadnezzar no. 16 i 23–26 (Langdon 1912: 142).

44 Cf. Nebuchadnezzar no. 16 i 33–ii 16 (Langdon 1912: 142).

give the lie since, as we know from Uruk's own records, the tablets recording those rites were given by Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar to his Elamite allies to go with the statues demanded by them as a price for alliance.⁴⁵ That the "original" statues of Nanaya and her avatars that Nebuchadnezzar gave to the city in replacement for the ones that Nabopolassar had sent to Elam and the "primordial" rites that accompanied them were those of "Ištar of Elam" does not give confidence (Scurlock 2006b: 456).⁴⁶ In any case, Nebuchadnezzar's choice of adjective suggests that the intended reference is to those rites instituted by Marduk at Creation, and not to whatever the priests of the Eanna might have been doing in the mean time.

In short, Babylon itself benefitted greatly from the Fall of Assyria, but the old cities of Sumer and Akkad suffered the brunt of Marduk's wrath. In Nebuchadnezzar's third year there was a revolt among the military levies⁴⁷ and in the tenth year, a month long general uprising (Da Riva 2013: 198 citing Glassner),⁴⁸ and old cities like Uruk were still so unsettled that they sided against Babylon with the Persians, even with Xerxes, who was no contemporary's idea of anything but an evil tyrant (Jursa 2007: 90–91 citing the work of Waerzeggers and Kessler). As a reward, the temples of Uruk got to jettison their Babylonian minders (see especially Waerzeggers 2003/2004: 162–163).

While Babylonian meddling in local cults was not appreciated, and although it is certainly the case that

Persian administration was an efficient vacuum cleaner beyond the dreams of Neo-Babylonian monarchs,⁴⁹ I would still argue that the major shift in moral economy represented by the advent of Babylonian rule was at least as important as Babylonian religious policy in understanding how the cities of Babylonia could have behaved in so "un-patriotic" a manner. I call to witness the archives of those Jews who had the good fortune to be carried off to Babylon. Having been properly settled on crown lands and prospering under Babylonian rule (Pearce/Wunsch 2014), they apparently fought and died for Babylon against Persia and that despite Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Jerusalem.⁵⁰

In the Greek historians' accounts of Cyrus' taking of Babylon there is a curious reference to the diverting away of the river Euphrates. This, if true, implies that the attack was intended to counter Nebuchadnezzar's paranoid turning of Babylon into a Merodach-Baladan style refuge in the swamps,⁵¹ and it almost certainly represents a real (or imagined) revenge for the stealing of water from southern cities by Babylon.

So Marduk and Babylon failed, from the perspective of the old Southern cities, on all of the tests of a just revolution, a fact curiously reflected in the very texts used to justify Babylon's ravages, including this Babylonian map of the World which shows, quite literally, "Before him a Garden of Eden; after him an abandoned waste" (Joel 2.3).

⁴⁵ For references, see Scurlock 2006b: 458.

⁴⁶ It has been argued that Nabopolassar never took any tablets from the Bīt-Reš and that their rediscovery by Kidin-Anu in Elam is a "pious fraud" trick (Beaulieu apud Lenzi 2008: 160). This is a propos of the priesthood of Uruk attempting to restore the situation before Nebuchadnezzar dictated their "primordial" cultic rites. Pious frauds are not "tricks", and it is the general rule that fortuitous "discoveries" of lost documents take place in the location where those objects might reasonably have been stored. The ritual tablets in question, then, might or might not be genuine, but the tradition of the "theft" is worthy of credence.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of possible motives, see Tyborowski 1996.

⁴⁸ See Streck 1998: 198.

⁴⁹ Jursa 2007: 86–89 gives a nice summary of the developing squeeze put on the Babylonian cash cow by Darius and his successors.

⁵⁰ As with so many archives from the period, texts mysteriously cease to be produced after the last years of Darius (Pearce/Wunsch 2014: 8).

⁵¹ C34 ii 1–17 (Da Riva 2013: 223); WBA x 15, 1'–7', xi 1'–3', WBC vi 46–81 (Da Riva 2012: 56–57); see the discussion on pp. 73–75 ad ll. 46–59. This was in addition to adding an extra wall and moat to the two already put there by Nabopolassar (Da Riva 2012: 53–54 WBA viii 11–ix 2; WBC v 4–35, 1'–14'; cf. C38 ii 5–10, 48–52 apud Da Riva 2012: 69 ad. viii 20, 70 ad ix 1–2). This swamp was no exaggeration, according to Cole/Gasche 1999: 95.

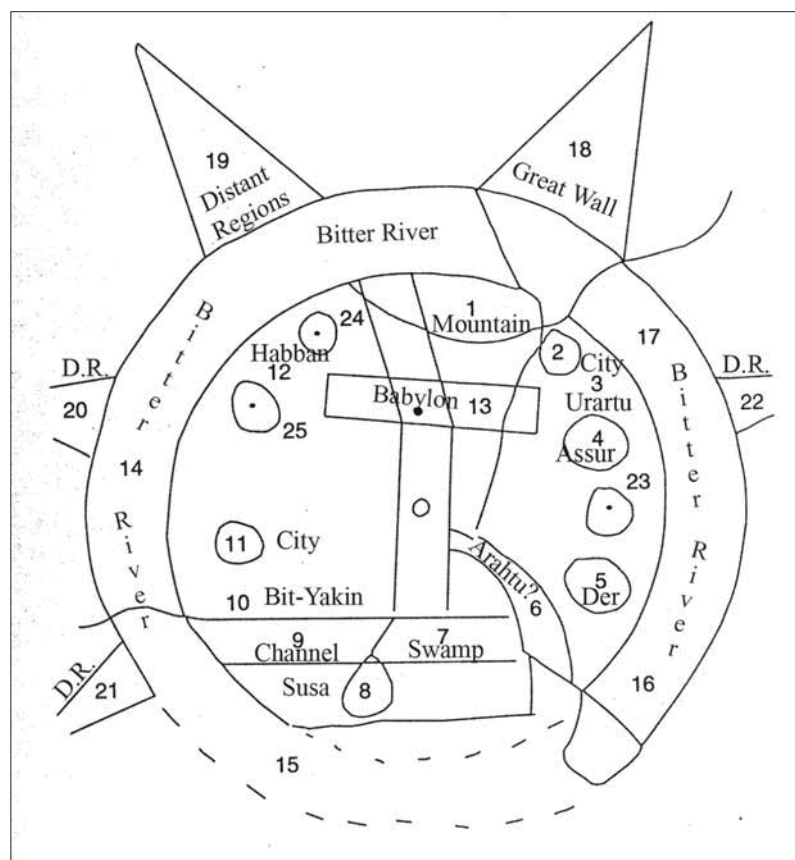


Fig. 1: "Babylonian Map of the World" (after: Horowitz 1998: 21).

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Step by step: Correcting our mental image of the *mušlālu*

Alexander E. Sollee and Johanna Tudeau

Abstract: The *mušlālu*, which is usually understood to be a step- or ramped gate, has so far rarely been discussed in much detail, even though the Akkadian texts mentioning it have been known for a long time. This is no doubt because the evidence on which to base both philological and archaeological investigations appears sparse and scattered. Up to now, scholars have tended to focus on specific *mušlālu*-structures. Consequently, there are as many discussions as there are *mušlālu*-structures. This article attempts to get a sense of the broader picture by bringing together the philological and archaeological data hitherto available with the aim of discussing the *mušlālu* as term and structure, clarifying the semantics and reassessing the architectural identifications. We hope to demonstrate that it is actually possible to take the evidence one step further and adjust the *mušlālu* image that prevails.

Keywords: Architecture, Akkadian, Assyrian, archaeology, philology.

1 Information gained from the textual sources

1.1. Translations and etymology

The textual evidence indicates that the *mušlālu* was an architectural structure (see **Appendix**). What the *mušlālu* is generally regarded to have been more specifically is encapsulated in the translations that have been proposed so far, a representative selection of which is listed here in chronological order:

Ebeling/Meissner/Weidner (1926: 67–68, Fn. 9): “Prozessionstreppe”

Landsberger/Balkan (1950: 232): “Stadttor mit Freitreppe”

Borger (1956: 9, §8): “*mušlālu*-Bau”

van Driel (1969: 29): “the *mušlālu*”

Larsen (1976: 58): “Step Gate”

Andrae (1977²: 173): “Eingang zu einer steilen Treppe”

AHw (1977): “Tempel oder Palasttor mit Freitreppe”

CAD (1977): “a gate or gatehouse”

Scott/MacGinnis (1990: 66): “stairs or a ramp”

George (1992: 177): “the *mušlālu*”

CDA (2000): “staircase (-gate)”

Pedde/Lundström (2008: 183–187): “*mušlālu*-Bau”

Leichty (2011: 139–141): “gatehouse”

Grayson/Novotny (2012: 18); Grayson/Novotny (2014: 279–282): “Step Gate”

Veenhof (2014–2015): understood as “Step Gate” but referred to as *mušlālu*

It appears that the supposed characteristics most commonly used to define and translate *mušlālu* are the ramp, the stairs and the gate. Some scholars prefer the more neutral translation “*mušlālu*-structure” or simply opt for “the *mušlālu*”. Where all translations agree is that the *mušlālu* is architecturally defined and served for access. For now, we will simply refer to it as the “*mušlālu*”, in order to avoid any premature interpretations.

The term’s etymology does not offer any additional clues concerning its appearance and function. Possible etymologies which have been advanced to this date¹ involve taking the *mušlālu* as a loanword into Akkadian from a hypothetical Prototigridian language (Landsberger/Balkan 1950: 232–233), or as an Akkadian *mupras*-form, which is what one would *a priori* expect it to be. If a *mupras*-form, it could come from *šalālu* taken as synonym of *alāku* and potentially connected to Hebrew *m^csillāh* “raised path”, *maslūl* “way”, and *sulām* “ladder” (Ebeling et al. 1926: 68), from *šalālu* I with the sense “to take people into captivity, to plunder, to destroy” (Pedde/Lundström 2008: 186), or from *šalālu* II with the sense “to slither” (AHw *sub* *šalālu* II).

Finally, should we attempt to hypothesise a Sumerian origin for the term, a potential contender based on phonetic grounds would be the emesal form of the verb *geš*

¹ See Lundström in: Pedde/Lundström 2008: 186 for an overview.

Ref. No.	"Author"	Text(s)	Object(s)	Provenance(s)	City concerned	Context
Old Assyrian period						
1	Anonymous from Aššur	AbB 5, 156	Letter	Nippur	Aššur	judgement rendered in <i>mušīālu</i>
2	(N/A)	kt c/k, 904 (unpublished, quoted in CAD sub <i>mušīālu</i>)	Letter	Kaneš (archive of Alāhum)	Aššur	judgement rendered in <i>mušīālu</i>
3	(N/A)	kt n/k, 511 (unpublished, referenced in Veenhof 2004–2005:113)	Letter	Kaneš	Aššur	negotiation in <i>mušīālu</i>
4	N/A	kt 00/k, 16 (cf. Donbaz 2004: 187)	Court document	Kaneš	Aššur	men of the <i>mušīālu</i>
5	N/A	kt 88/k (cf. Çeçen 1996: 21)	Court document	Kaneš	Aššur	lawsuit in the <i>mušīālu</i>
6	(N/A)	kt n/k, 1365 (unpublished, referenced in Veenhof 1995: 1721)	Letter	Kaneš	Aššur	(N/A)
7	Erišum	RIMA 1, A.O.33.1	Copy tablets	Kaneš	Aššur	<i>mušīālu</i> // <i>qaššum + watmanum</i> ;
						judges of the <i>mušīālu</i> ;
8		RIMA 1, A.O.33.4	Bricks	Aššur temple (mainly iB3IIIM)	Aššur	judgement rendered in <i>mušīālu</i>
9	Aššur-nārārī I	RIMA 1, A.O.60.4	Clay cone	Aššur	Aššur	<i>mušīālu</i> // <i>qaššum + watmanum</i> (a part) of the <i>mušīālu</i>
10	Puzur-Aššur III	RIMA 1, A.O.61	Clay cone	Aššur (iC4III)	Aššur	<i>mušīālu</i> wall dilapidated, renovated; <i>sikkatu</i> peg placed there
Middle Assyrian period						
11	Adad-nārārī I	RIMA 1, A.O.76.7	Stone tablets	Aššur (e.g. iB5I)	Aššur	<i>mušīālu</i> dilapidated, rebuilt with limestone and mortar; stele placed there
12	Salmānu-ašarēd I	RIMA 1, A.O.77.3	Stone tablet	Aššur (h3Bv)	Aššur	<i>mušīālu</i> // Kalkal gate + Nunnamir courtyard

13	Tukulti-āpil-Ešarra I	RIMA 2, A.0.87.10	Clay tablets	Nīnawā	Nīnawā	<i>mušlālu</i> house //palace			
Neo-Assyrian period									
14	Salmānu-āšarēd III	RIMA 2, A.0.102.25	Stone Statue	Aššur	Tabira Gate, Aššur	<i>abul nērab šarri mušlāli</i>			
15		RINAP 3/1, 15/16/17/18	Clay prisms	Nīnawā	Aššur, Nīnawā, Kalḫu	<i>abullu mušlālum</i>			
16		RINAP 3/1, 18	Clay prism	Nīnawā	Nīnawā	<i>mušlālu</i> of the palace, of the orchard, of the Review Palace			
17		RINAP 3/2, 178	Stone block	Aššur	Aššur (gE3V)	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace; limestone foundation			
18	Sin-ahḫē-eriba	RINAP 3/2, 199	Clay brick	Aššur	Aššur	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace; fired bricks			
19		RINAP 3/2, 200	Clay brick	Aššur	Aššur (hB4III)	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace; fired bricks			
20		RINAP 3/2, 201	Clay bricks	Aššur	Aššur (e.g. g4, f4)	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace, fired bricks			
21		RINAP 3/2, 202	Clay bricks	Aššur	Aššur (fD5III)	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace; fired bricks			
22		GAB 121	Clay tablets	Aššur	Aššur and Nīnawā	<i>abul nērab šarri mušlālu/i</i>			
23	Aššur-aḫu-iddina	RINAP 4, 61/62/63	Limestone blocks	Aššur	Aššur (g3+4 sector)	<i>mušlālu</i> of Aššur palace; for going in and out; limestone foundation			
24	Anonymous (potency incantation)	LKA 94	Clay tablet	Aššur	Aššur	<i>mušlālu</i> of silver and gold			

 Fig. 1: Overview of attestations for the term *mušlālu*.

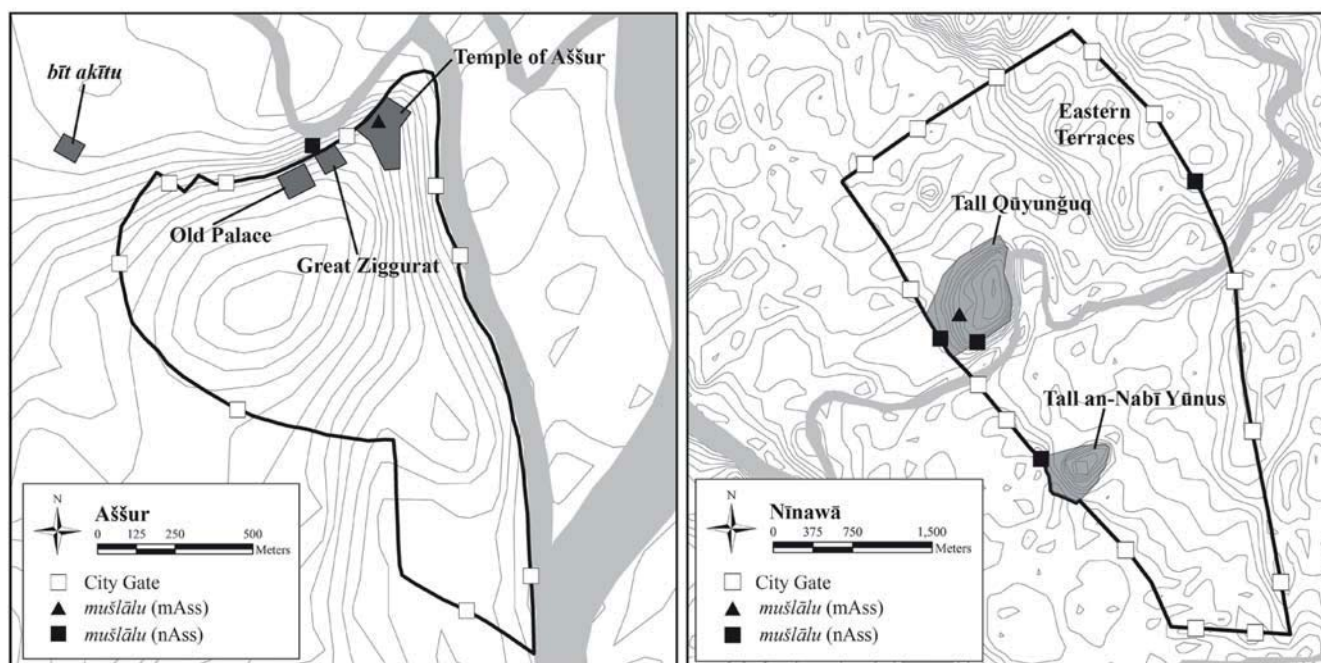


Fig. 2: Localisation of Middle and Neo Assyrian (mAss/nAss) *mušlālu*-structures in Aššur (left) and Ninawā (right) with contours at 2 m intervals generated from a SRTM90 DEM provided by <http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org> (map by A. Sollee).

la₂ (“to be silent, to be attentive”), namely mu-uš la₂. However, whilst an etymology of this sort would relate well with the original legal function of the *mušlālu* (see below) given that silence and attention are required in places where justice is rendered, the use of the emesal dialect in such a context would be otherwise unattested and difficult to explain: not only would it suppose emesal was already being used at the Assyrian court in the Old Assyrian period, but it would also assign to the *mušlālu* a literary or cultic dimension, which none of the available sources corroborate.

1.2. Content of attestations

Whilst the word’s etymology remains obscure (see already Edzard 1993–1997: 495) and does not offer any conclusive information as to what *mušlālu* might have signified, the various texts referring to a *mušlālu* do give an idea of its form and function. Although most of the texts mentioning a *mušlālu* come from the Neo-Assyrian period, more specifically the inscriptions of Šin-aḫḫē-erība, there is also a reasonable amount of evidence from the 2nd millennium B.C.E., reaching as far back as the reign of Erišum (ca. 1975–1935 B.C.E.). Overall, the amount of information available is limited, but sufficient to suggest what the term may have referred to.

As figure 1 shows, the term *mušlālu* is attested essentially in the Assyrian sources, mainly the royal inscriptions, suggesting it is an Assyrian concept (Fig. 1). There is one attestation in an Old Babylonian letter that was discovered in Nippur (App. 1), but the sender seems to have been based in Aššur (see Kraus 1972: 73). This suggests that whilst the term very much belonged to Assyrian royal ideology it was not unknown to the common Assyrian citizen. Furthermore, it implies that the term

was understood in Babylonia as well, since the letter’s recipient was probably from there. This is also suggested by archival texts from Kaneš that mention the *mušlālu* of Aššur (App. 2–6).² A number of these texts refer to verdicts that were passed in the *mušlālu* of Aššur, which seems to have been situated behind the Aššur temple at the edge of town and probably contained the precinct referred to as *ḥamrum* (Veenhof 2014–15: 112–113). Thus, it seems safe to assume that the *mušlālu* at that time represented a frequently used public building with a very specific judicial purpose.

What is immediately clear is that in the Old Assyrian period, and until the beginning of the Middle Assyrian period, the *mušlālu* is associated essentially with the Aššur Temple at Aššur. At that time, it appears to have served as the seat of the “Seven Judges” (*sebēt dayyānū*), which suggests it functioned as a venue where legal matters were discussed and decided (Fig. 1). However, starting with Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I (1114–1076 B.C.E.) in the late Middle Assyrian period, and then throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, the *mušlālu* seems to have been associated with palaces and fortification gates essentially (Fig. 1). Under Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, a *mušlālu* is mentioned in the context of his report on the construction of a palace in Ninawā (App. 13). In the Neo-Assyrian period, a *mušlālu* is attested for the Old Palace of Aššur (App. 17–21). Furthermore, two such features were part of each one palace on top of the two citadel mounds of Ninawā and another must have been connected to the royal gardens (App. 16). Additionally, at least one city gate in Aššur (App. 14, 22) and one in Ninawā (App. 15) are associated with the term *mušlā-*

² Another text from Kaneš (App. 7) is a copy of a royal inscription. Why it was brought to or copied in Kaneš remains obscure.

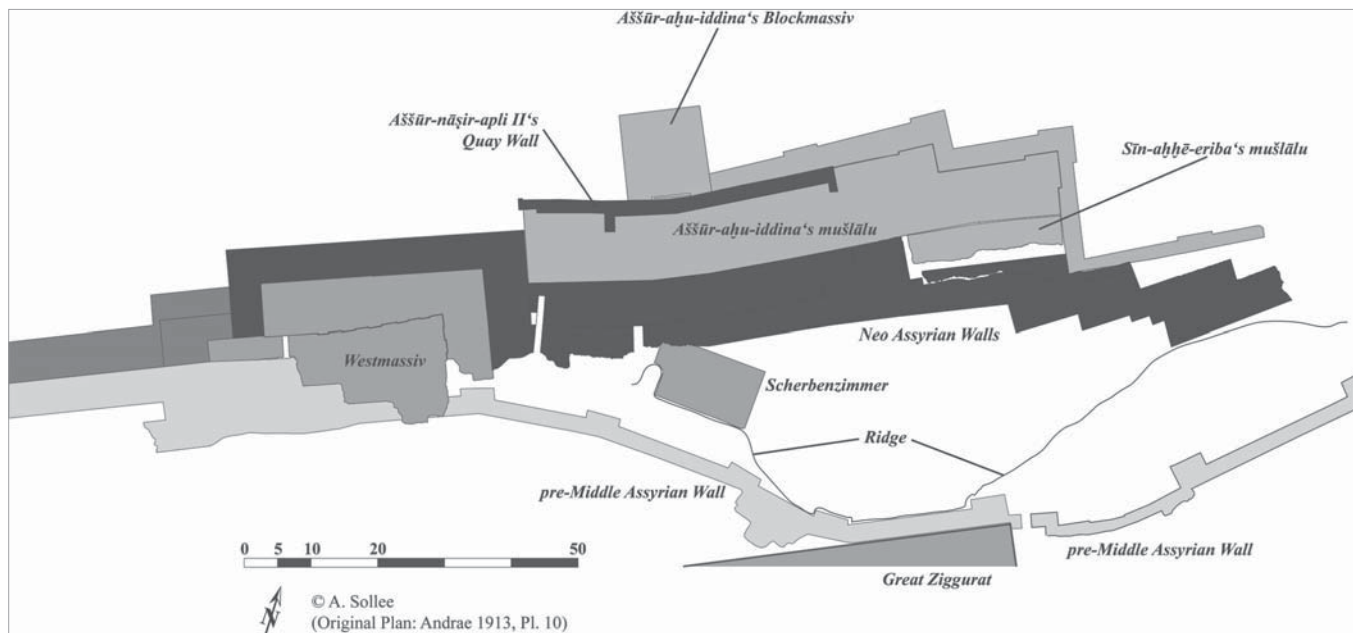


Fig. 3: Architectural remains uncovered at the northern edge of Aššur (after Andrae 1913: pl. 10).

lu. By this time, the *mušlālu* had lost its original legal function, as in the Neo-Assyrian period, it is typically described as a royal entrance. Aššūr-aḫu-iddina (681–669 B.C.E.) informs us that he renovated the *mušlālu* in order to enter and exit the palace in Aššur. This is the most explicitly formulated usage of a *mušlālu* available as well as being one of the rare instances in the Assyrian sources where the purpose of a building is provided.³ It does not however provide any further insight as to whether this royal function was exclusive to the *mušlālu* portal.

The information is sparse concerning the architecture of the *mušlālu*. Nevertheless, the *mušlālu* does seem to have comprised at least one room, where specific actions like the convention of judges could take place (App. 1–2, 5–7). The Neo-Assyrian attestations suggest that it essentially represented a gateway, which at that time would always possess at least one gate chamber (Mielke 2011–13: 94–95). Furthermore, we learn that the *mušlālu* of Aššur was connected to or was equipped with an outer fortification wall, which was in need of renovation under Puzur-Assur III (ca. 1490 B.C.E.; App. 10) and possibly also earlier under Aššūr-nārārī I (ca. 1515 B.C.E.; App. 9). The *mušlālu* also appears to have rested upon a limestone foundation (App. 11, 17, 23). However, none of the structure's kiln-fired brick walls that Sīn-aḫḫē-erība (705–681 B.C.E.) reports to have built (App. 18–21) are known to have been discovered so far.

Concerning the geographical distribution of the *mušlālu*-structures, the attestations indicate that they are mentioned only in association with Aššur and Nīnawā (Fig. 2). For the major part of the 2nd millennium B.C.E., only Aššur seems to have hosted a *mušlālu*: such a structure is not attested in Nīnawā before the reign of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I. (App. 13) According to

Veenhof (1995: 1721) two texts from Kaneš suggest that the *mušlālu* stood behind the temple of Aššur, which is also where legal activities are known to have taken place (Veenhof/Eidem 2008: 40, footnote 12). Some precise information is available regarding the location of the *mušlālu* at Aššur in the Middle Assyrian period. We know from Adad-nārārī I (1295–1263 B.C.E.) that the *mušlālu* of the temple of Aššur was opposite or against the gate “The Oath of the God of the Land”⁴ and the gate “The Judges” (App. 11), and from Salmānu-ašarēd I (1263–1233 B.C.E.) that the *mušlālu* led to the *Nunnam-nir* courtyard through a specific tower gate (App. 12).⁵

Aššur and Nīnawā's important cultural role as seats to two of the empire's most significant deities, Aššur (cf. van Driel 1969) and Ištar of Nīnawā (cf. Lambert 2004: 35; Menzel 1981: 36–37; Porter 2004) and the limited amount of settlements hosting a *mušlālu* suggests a connection between the two major cult centres and the structures. However, the respective *mušlālu*-structures did not remain in one place, nor were they restricted to one per city. Throughout the 2nd and 1st millennium B.C.E., each city was home to more than one *mušlālu*. Thanks to the work of various scholars, it is possible to narrow down the locations of these structures within the respective sites and also assess their situation within the topography of the ancient settlement. At Aššur, it is even possible to associate the *mušlālu* with remains uncovered by archaeological investigations, thereby offering a case where multiple sources of evidence can be viewed in combination.

⁴ This gate could be a contender for the previous name van Driel (1969: 48) suggests the *Enpi* gate mentioned by Tukultī-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.E.) in RIMA 1, A.O.100.5: 27 may have had.

⁵ According to van Driel (1969: 47), this gate could be the *Enpi* gate of Tukultī Ninurta II (see previous footnote).

³ Tudeau (forthcoming).

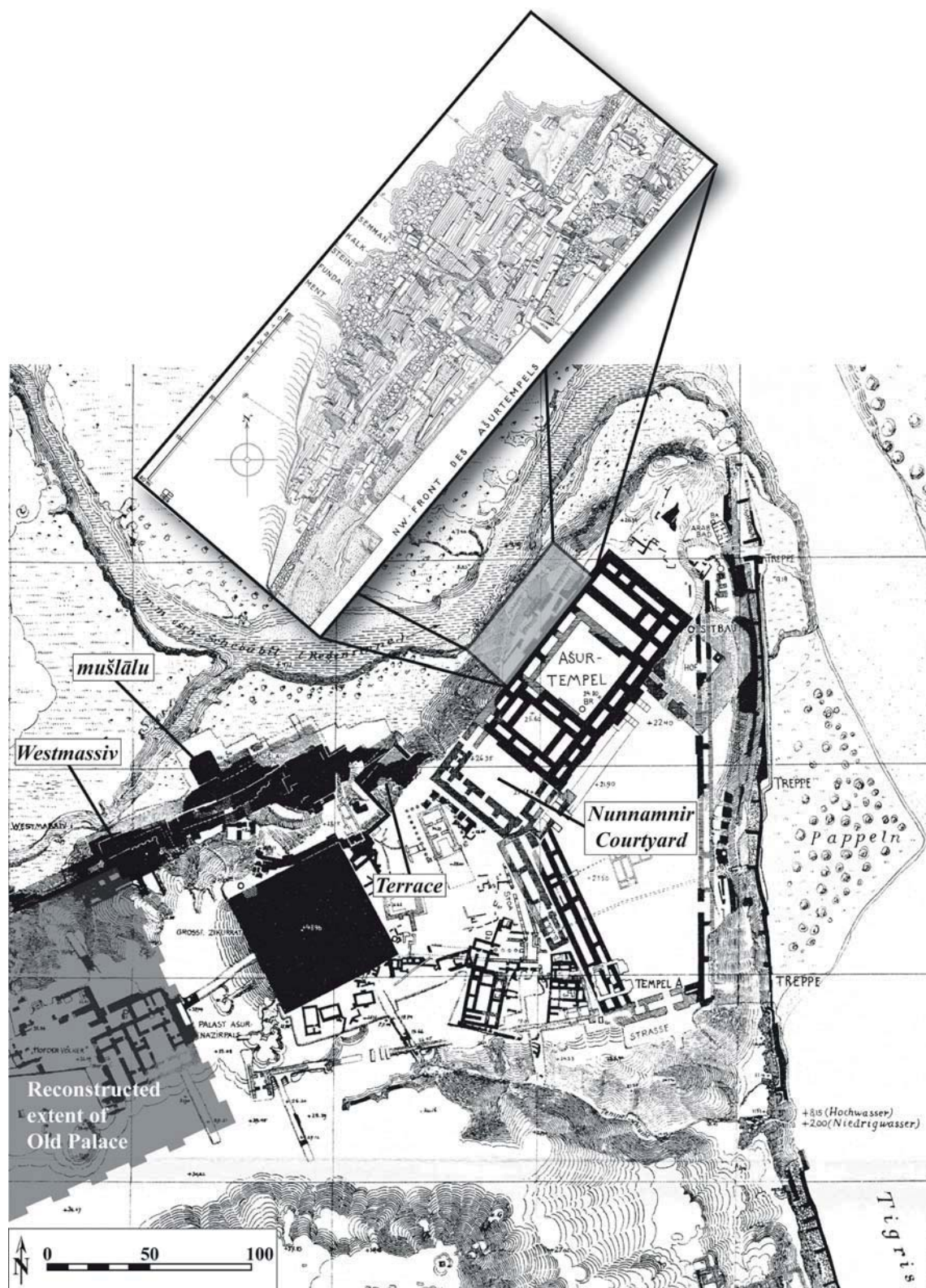


Fig. 4: The area of the Temple of Aššur in Aššur (after Andrae 1913: pl. 2. 5, 1; Kertai 2015: pl. 8a).

2 Information gained from the archaeological sources

2.1. The *mušlālu*-structure of Aššur

The massive stone structure found by W. Andrae and his team below the northern rock face that marks the northern limit of ancient Aššur provides a rare case of archaeological evidence for a *mušlālu* (Figs. 3–4). Here,

the archaeologists discovered extensive stone foundations that belonged to various large structures and had grown successively since at least the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C.E.⁶ (Andrae 1913: 63–92). The major ex-

⁶ The oldest known structure that attests settlement activity in this area is the so-called “Scherbenzimmer”, which yielded large amounts of Nuzi ware sherds and is thus considered to have been constructed during the earlier part of the Late

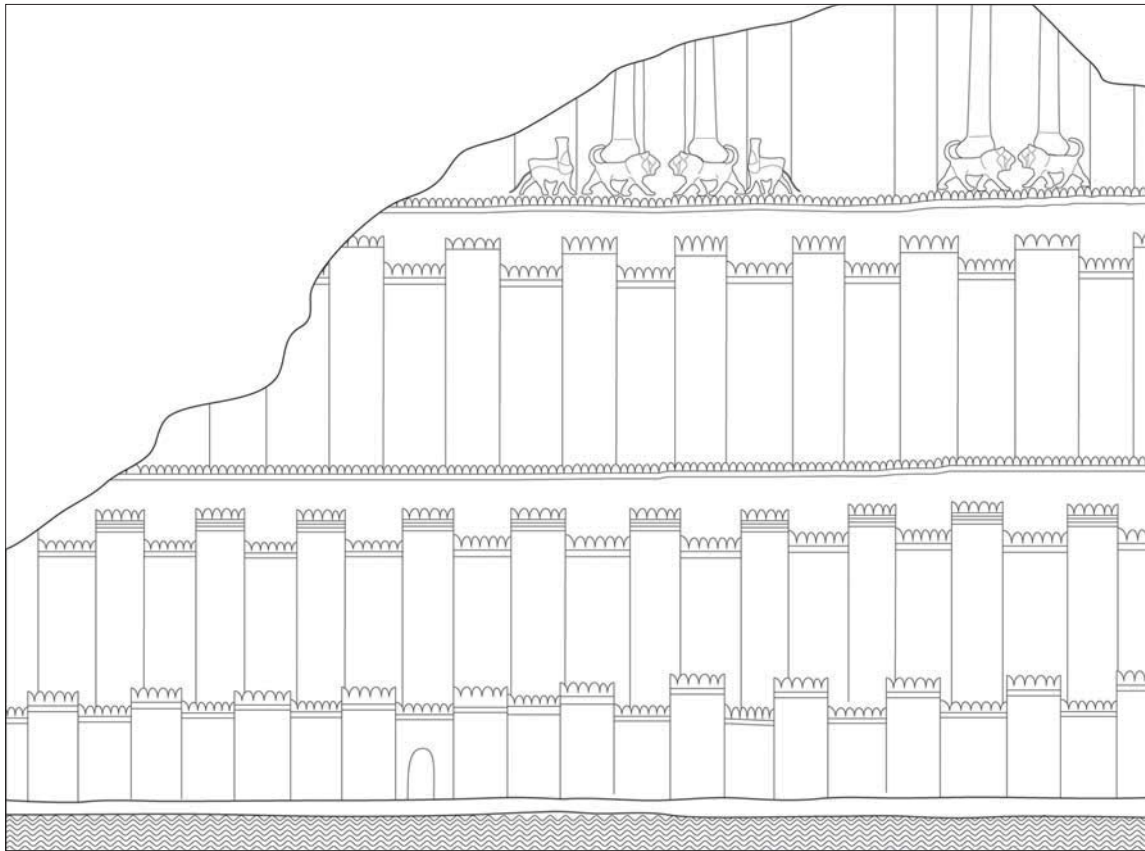


Fig. 5: Bas-relief from Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's Southwest Palace in Nīnawā supposedly depicting the 7th century B.C.E. appearance of the western front of Tall Qūyunḡuq (after Barnett 1960: 136).

pansion seems to have happened during the latter part of the Neo-Assyrian period, when a quay wall from the time of Aššur-nāšir-apli II (883–859 B.C.E.) was overbuilt by a large stone foundation (Andrae 1913: 85, pl. 12, 1). The latter is attributed to Aššur-aḥu-iddina due to various building inscriptions found *in situ* (Andrae 1913: 87–88, pl. 12, 1). The texts written upon the stone blocks inspired W. Andrae to name this area “Muschlal”, since they bore an inscription by Aššur-aḥu-iddina who stated to have rebuilt the “*mušlālu* from the centre of the palace of Baltil” (App. 23; see also Andrae 1913: 177). The latter does not appear to have been the first ruler to have built a *mušlālu* at this location, though, as a similar inscription by Sīn-aḥḥē-erība was discovered in a structure that must have been created in an earlier building phase (App. 17; also Andrae 1913: 176). Thus, the *mušlālu* of Aššur seems to have been situated here in Neo-Assyrian times and the inscriptions indicate that the structure – the layout and appearance of which remains obscure – was connected to a palace of Aššur. While a number of royal structures have been located in Aššur,⁷ only the Old Palace, which according

to D. Kertai's (2013: 20; 2015: 49) recent studies may have reached all the way to the steep rock face north of it (Fig. 4) can plausibly be identified with the palatial building mentioned by Sīn-aḥḥē-erība and Aššur-aḥu-iddina (Pedde/Lundström 2008: 183–187). Consequently, the *mušlālu* seems to have represented one of the ways into the Old Palace that continued to fulfill an important role within the Neo-Assyrian Empire even though the political centre had already shifted northwards by that time, as the burial of numerous Neo-Assyrian rulers in the building's southern part suggests (Hauser 2012: 109–110; Postgate 2011: 93–94). Salmānu-ašarēd III's (858–824 B.C.E.) description of Aššur may point out that the *mušlālu* already served as an entrance to the palace during his reign, as he lists the “great gate of the entrance of the king, of the *mušlālu*” among the city gates of Aššur (App. 14), which is also mentioned in the younger “Götteradressbuch” (App. 22). The latter attestation, which probably dates to the time of Sīn-aḥḥē-erība (Pongratz-Leisten 1994: 25–26), who is known to have built a *mušlālu* below the Old Palace (App. 17), advocates the assumption that both attestations referred to the same structure.⁸

Bronze Age (see Andrae 1913: 69–73; Cecchini 1965: 66–73; figs. 68–69, 72–96; Herzfeld 1937: 146; Hrouda 1957: 50–52, 55–56; pl. 1–5, 7; Hrouda 1993–1997).

⁷ For a summary of the palaces of Aššur see Preußer 1955. A more detailed investigation of the Old Palace is offered by Pedde/Lundström 2008. Another palace, probably founded by Salmānu-ašarēd III, was located and partially excavated by Iraqi archaeologists on the so-called “Gräberhügel” (Miglus 2013). Another possibly similar building may have been situated on top of the terrace of the middle Assyrian “New Palace”, just west of the “Anu-Adad Temple” (Miglus 1996: 93).

⁸ Due to the assumption that Salmānu-ašarēd III's texts listed the gates in topographical order (clockwise), Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 26; Abb. 1) argued in favor of identifying the *mušlālu* gate with the “Lower Gate” along the northeastern wall of the “Außenhaken”. This would mean that there were two *mušlālu*-structures in Aššur, which has been considered conceivable by Hrouda (1993–1997). However, there is no archaeological evidence to support this idea. In fact, the location of the *mušlālu* inscriptions rather supports the identification suggested here, which in turn follows earlier researchers' opinions (see

Gate	Senn. 15-16 (697-695 B.C.E.)	Senn. 17 (694 B.C.E.)	Senn. 18 (691 B.C.E.)
I	1. Ḥandūru Gate: "The God Šarur Is the One Who Cuts Down the King's Enemy"	15. Ḥandūru Gate: "The God Šarur Is the One Who Cuts Down the King's Enemy"	1. Ḥandūru Gate: "The God Šarur Is the One Who Cuts Down the King's Enemy"
II	2. Aššur Gate: "May the Vice-Regent of the God Aššur Endure"	1. Aššur Gate: "May the Vice-Regent of the God Aššur Stay in Good Health"	2. Aššur Gate: "May the Vice-Regent of the God Aššur Endure"
III	3. Sīn-aḥḥē-erība Gate: "The One Who Flattens All Enemies"	2. Sīn-aḥḥē-erība Gate: "The One Who Flattens All Enemies"	3. Sīn-aḥḥē-erība Gate: "The One Who Flattens All Enemies"
IV	4. Šamaš Gate: "The God Enlil Is the One Who Makes My Reign Firm"	3. Šamaš Gate: "The God Enlil Is the One Who Makes My Reign Firm"	4. Šamaš Gate: "The God Enlil Is the One Who Makes My Reign Firm"
V	5. Mullissu Gate: "O Ištar Bless the One Who Provides for You!"	4. Mullissu Gate: "Make Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's Dynasty as Firm as the Position of the Wagon Constellation!"	5. Mullissu Gate: "Make Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's Dynasty as Firm as the Position of the Wagon Constellation!"
VI	6. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate: "The One Who Exorcises the 'Flesh' of the <i>Asakku</i> -demon"	5. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate: "The One Who Exorcises the 'Flesh' of the <i>Asakku</i> -demon"	6. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate: "The One Who Exorcises the 'Flesh' of the <i>Asakku</i> -demon"
VII	7. Šibaniba Gate: "The Choicest of Grain and Flocks Are Constantly Inside It"	6. Šibaniba Gate: "The Choicest of Grain and Flocks Are Constantly Inside It"	7. Šibaniba Gate: "The Choicest of Grain and Flocks Are Constantly Inside It"
VIII	8. Ḥalaḥḥu Gate: "The Bearer of the Produce of the Mountains"	7. Ḥalaḥḥu Gate: "The Bearer of the Produce of the Mountains"	8. Ḥalaḥḥu Gate: "The Bearer of the Produce of the Mountains"
	Eight gates facing the sunrise, towards the south and east	Seven gates facing the sunrise, towards the south and east	Eight gates facing the sunrise, towards the south and east
IX	9. Adad Gate: "The God Adad Is the Provider of Prosperity to the Land"	8. Adad Gate: "The God Adad Is the Provider of Prosperity to the Land"	9. Adad Gate: "The God Adad Is the Provider of Prosperity to the Land"
X	10. Nergal Gate: "The God Erra Is the One Who Cuts Down Enemies"	9. Nergal Gate: "The God Erra Is the One Who Slaughters Those Hostile to Me"	10. Nergal Gate: "The God Erra Is the One Who Cuts Down My Enemies"
XI	11. Gate of the Garden: "The God Igisigsig Is the One Who Makes Orchards Flourish"	10. Sīn Gate: "The Divine Nannāru Is the One Who Protects My Lordly Crown"	11. Sīn Gate: "The Divine Nannāru Is the One Who Makes Firm My Lordly Crown"
	Three gates facing north	Three gates facing north	-
XII	12. Mašqû Gate: "The God Ea Is the One Who Properly Directs (Water Flow into) My Cisterns"	11. Mašqû Gate: "The God Ea Is the One Who Properly Directs (Water Flow into) My Cisterns"	12. Mašqû Gate: "The God Ea Is the One Who Properly Directs (Water Flow into) My Cisterns"
XIII	-	-	13. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate of the Palace: "May Its Builder Endure"
XIV	-	-	14. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate of the Gardens: "The God Igisigsig Is the One Who Makes Orchards Flourish"
XV	13. Quay Gate: "The One Who Brings in Income from the Settlements"	12. Quay Gate: "The One Who Brings in Income from the Settlements"	15. Quay Gate: "The One Who Brings in Income from the Settlements"
XVI	14. Armory Gate: "The One Who Regulates Everything"	14. Armory Gate: "The One Who Regulates Everything"	16. <i>mušlālu</i> Gate of the Armory: "May Its Builder Live Forever"
XVII	-	-	17. Barḥalzi Gate: "The God Anu Is the Protector of My Life"
XVIII	-	13. Desert Gate: "The Presents of the People of Sumu'el and Tēma Enter Through It"	18. Desert Gate: "The Presents of the People of Tēma and Sumu'el Enter Through It"
	Three gates facing west	Five gates facing west	Ten gates facing north and west

Fig. 6: Overview of the ceremonial names of the city gates of Nīnawā (after Grayson/Novotny 2012: 18).

It seems fairly certain that the *mušlālu*, and with it the option to enter or exit the royal edifice without having to pass through the city itself, were strongly associated with the king. This does not however necessarily mean that it was reserved to him alone, as he will have been accompanied by personnel and members of the court, who may also have used it for convenience. Unfortunately, even though recent studies have shown that the Old Palace must have reached further north than previously assumed (Fig. 4), no traces of a path connecting the latter with the *mušlālu*-structure were discovered, despite W. Andrae's intensive efforts in this area. In fact, a steep drop between the *mušlālu* and the Old Palace makes it appear highly unlikely that there was a direct connection between both areas, as is best illustrated by a section drawing from the original publication of the findings at the northern edge of Aššur (Andrae 1913: pl. 12, 1). Remains of a rough pebble pavement leading up the slope were only recognised in the area just north of the Great Ziggurat's northeastern corner, but these were assumed to be of 2nd millennium B.C.E. date (Andrae 1913: 68–69; pl. 10, 11, 1). In the light of the aforementioned modern reconstruction of the Old Palace's northern extent, a poorly preserved postern discovered on the western side of the "Westmassiv" – a bastion-like structure that was founded during the Middle Assyrian Period and was still in use in Neo-Assyrian times (Andrae 1913: 73–78) – should also be mentioned (Andrae 1913: 74–75, Fig. 110, pl. 9). However, the path would have had to lead all the way around the "Westmassiv", thus making this option appear quite unlikely. Therefore, this issue must remain unresolved for now.

In any case, it is important to emphasise that the *mušlālu* of Aššur had not always been considered a part of the palace by the Assyrians. According to earlier inscriptions, it must have originally constituted an important part of the temple of the Assyrian state's main god Aššur. In fact, this seems to have been the case at least from the reign of Erišum I until the time of Salmānu-ašarēd I (App. 7–12). Its precise location within the temple of Aššur remains a matter of debate, even though the descriptions provided by Adad-nārārī I and Salmānu-ašarēd I (App. 11–12) do place it in the vicinity of the court of *Nunnamnir*, i.e. somewhere along the sanctuary's northwestern face which lay just on top of the eastern part of steep drop that marked the city's northern end. Consequently, it appears tempting to equate the 2nd millennium *mušlālu* of Aššur with the structures uncovered just northwest of the main courtyard of the temple of Aššur (Fig. 4). Various clues indicating that a significant doorway of monumental proportions connected the courtyard with the assumed *mušlālu*-area would appear to fit this idea quite well (Haller/Andrae 1955: 22, 43; pl. 4–5).

In the end, however, firm evidence to support this suggestion is lacking and the complicated stratigraphy of the many successively constructed stone walls and features in this area (see Andrae 1913: 93–98) makes it difficult to assess which one of these structures already or still existed during the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

Furthermore, the Middle Assyrian texts (App. 11–12), which place the *mušlālu* around the *Nunnamnir* courtyard suggest it was situated further southwest, as the courtyard is usually identified with the temple's southwestern court (Haller/Andrae 1955: pl. 5; van Driel 1969: 17). Just as in the main courtyard, the so-called "Südwesthof" was also equipped with a doorway through its northwestern front (Haller/Andrae 1955: pl. 5). This door, where a pivot-stone with an inscription by Salmānu-ašarēd I was found (RIMA 1, A.O.77.20, Ex. 13; see also Haller/Andrae 1955: pl. 5), lay close to a poorly preserved terrace-like structure, which was tentatively dated to the Middle Assyrian period (Andrae 1913: 67–68) just above the Neo-Assyrian *mušlālu* (Fig. 4). Therefore, it cannot be said where the 2nd millennium B.C.E. *mušlālu* had actually been situated, but the Old Assyrian description as lying "behind the temple of Aššur" (Veenhof 2014–15: 112–113) seems to fit the picture all the same. However, it is worth mentioning that the stratigraphic development of the temple might play a significant role in this respect, as the excavators recognised that the southwestern courtyard was added under the reign of Salmānu-ašarēd I (Andrae 1977: 122, 165). This might indicate that Salmānu-ašarēd I moved the *mušlālu* from its original position northwest of the temple's main courtyard to the vicinity of the southwestern *Nunnamnir* courtyard, which according to the written evidence was not a completely new addition but must have existed before (van Driel 1969: 17). Even though this observation remains conjectural, as it lacks conclusive archaeological evidence, it does illustrate the difficulties connected to any attempt of locating the 2nd millennium B.C.E. *mušlālu* of Aššur.

2.2. The *mušlālu*-structures of Nīnawā

Further knowledge on the *mušlālu* can be gained from taking a closer look at Neo-Assyrian Nīnawā. According to Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's building inscriptions, there were up to four *mušlālu*-structures in Nīnawā (Fig. 2). Traditionally, one of them is identified with gate 6,⁹ located just north of the spot where the Nahr al-Ḥūšr (Khosr River) passed through the Neo-Assyrian eastern city wall and entered the area of the ancient capital (Reade 1998–2001: 401). Two more are assumed to have been part of Tall Qūyūnḡuq, the main citadel, whereas another one is assumed to have been connected to the military palace on the secondary citadel mound of Tall an-Nabī Yūnus (Reade 1998–2001: 402; van Driel 1969: 30). Apart from Sīn-aḥḥē-erība, Tukulti-apil-Ešarra I apparently also built a *mušlālu* in Nīnawā,¹⁰ which must have been sit-

⁹ The gates are numbered according to Reade 1998–2001: 401–403; according to Reade 2016: 48, however, the location of Gate 6 would now be where we situate our Gate 5.

¹⁰ Whether the gateway at the end of a ramp leading up the eastern slope of Tall an-Nabī Yūnus from the lower town (see al-Asil 1954: 110–111; Scott/MacGinnis 1990: 64–66) can be identified with the "*mušlālu* of the *ēkal māšarti*" (Scott/MacGinnis 1990: 66) must remain unconfirmed as the excavations did not bring to light any corresponding inscriptions and the structure may have simply served as the palace's main entrance (cf. Reade 2016: 86).



Fig. 7: The southern entrance of *Fort Shalmaneser* in Kalḫu (after Mallowan 1966: Plan 8).

uated on Tall Qūyungūq (Reade 1998–2001: 398). None of them have been uncovered in archaeological excavations, however, which makes it difficult to establish their precise locations.¹¹ According to J. Reade (1998: 88), a relief depicting Nīnawā discovered in Sīn-aḥḥē-erība's Southwest Palace may show one of the *mušlālu*-gates below the royal edifice's southwestern portico (Fig. 5). This suggestion, however, cannot be backed by conclusive evidence as no inscription identifies this entrance or the monumental building above it, although it must be emphasised that many details, as well as the scene's reconstructed place among the wall panels, do make it quite likely that it represents a contemporary rendering of the western front of Neo-Assyrian Nīnawā (Barnett 1976: 14; Reade 1964: 5).

Whilst most of the attention regarding the issue of the *mušlālu*-structures of Nīnawā has focused on the three structures located on the citadels of the site, the *mušlālu*-gate along the ancient settlement's eastern front has rarely been investigated in detail. This comes as no surprise as there have been no archaeological excavations at its proposed location. Its situation within the city itself seems odd, though, as the lack of a significant elevation does not fit with the general picture of a *mušlālu*, which is generally assumed to have been connected with areas of different elevations. The fact that there is no mound along the eastern front of Nīnawā suitable for such a construction¹² inevitably raises the question

of how a *mušlālu* could have existed there. There have been a few attempts to explain this curious situation¹³ but none of them appears convincing. Recently, Reade (2016: 75) has pointed to the existence of a postern-like feature at about 36° 21' 33" N, 43° 10' 27" E and suggests it may have been related to the *mušlālu* gate. However, the structure in question (cf. Reade 2016: Fig. 22) could also be interpreted as a drain through the lower courses of the outer city wall. A comparison of the names of the city gates of Nīnawā may offer a different solution. As B. Pongratz-Leisten (1994: 29–31) has shown, all the gates bore names composed of two elements: one theological-ideological, the other topographical in nature (Fig. 6). Only gate 6 deviates from this pattern, as its described purpose was neither ideological nor profane, but apotropaic: it was supposed to “remove the flesh of the *asakku*” (App. 15). It is striking that only the *mušlālu*-gate is officially connected with such an important apotropaic function. The apotropaic designation and the seemingly unsuitable location of this gate challenges the idea that the term *mušlālu* must be referring to a structure of distinctive architectural form.

11 Even the question whether or not the *mušlālu*-gates of Nīnawā actually led out of the city or could have also connected the citadels with the lower town has not been resolved (see Frahm 1997: 274).

12 The northeastern part of Nīnawā is indeed elevated and even

reaches a similar altitude as the main mound of Tall Qūyungūq (el-Wailly 1965: 5). However, the so-called “Eastern Terraces”, as this part of town is also called, do not represent a mound, but a larger elevated area within the ancient settlement's limits that seem to have never been occupied very densely, as archaeological surveys suggest (see Lumsden 2004: 187).

13 For instance, Reade (1978: 52) reconstructed a path to have led from the gate's location down to the Khosr River.

2.3. Further evidence from other Neo-Assyrian gates

A number of Neo-Assyrian gates cast doubt on the assumption that a gate's architectural appearance determined whether or not it was referred to as a *mušlālu*. For instance, the notion that steps or a ramp separated *mušlālu*-gates from other Neo-Assyrian gates should be abandoned. As far as the archaeological records show, ramps were actually a common element of Neo-Assyrian city gates. Remains of such features were discovered in front of the Western, Tabīra- and Lower Gate of Aššur (Andrae 1913: 27–29, 41, 47–48) as well as at the Šamaš-gate of Nīnawā (Madhloom/Mahdi 1976: pl. 10, 13) and the gates of Dūr-Šarrukīn (Place 1867 a: 196–197; Frankfort 1936: 1). Steps were also a more common feature of Neo-Assyrian gates than one may assume: staircases were a feature that could be found in every city gate (Eickhoff 1985: 21; Sollee forthcoming). The younger phase of the Western Gate of Aššur was even accessed via a flight of stairs leading up to the portal (Andrae 1913: 52). In addition, it should be pointed out that the decorated gates of Dūr-Šarrukīn were equipped with an admittedly low set of stairs that was integrated into the outer entrance of the gates' courtyards (Place 1867 a: 176; Place 1867 b: pl. 12–13). In any case, the *mušlālu*-gate along the eastern fortifications of Nīnawā is unlikely to have been equipped with a staircase leading through it or up to it for topographical reasons (van Driel 1969: 30). The circumstances clearly suggest then that neither ramps nor stairs may be identified as the features that determined whether a gate was referred to as a *mušlālu*.

Further hints may be found by extending the scope of investigation beyond Aššur and Nīnawā. For example, the southern entrance of *Fort Shalmaneser* (Fig. 7), created during the reign of Aššur-aḫu-iddina (Mallowan 1966: 466–468), comprises a number of architectural features that are usually associated with a *mušlālu* (see Reade 2016: 74–75). Not only does it represent a passage connecting the inner part of the palace with the surroundings of Kalḫu, but its manner of construction with large limestone blocks used to form the probably 4–4.5 m high portal was also quite impressive (Mallowan 1966: Fig. 379), echoing well with the texts which suggest the *mušlālu* was an imposing structure. Furthermore, its ramped floor led through nine doors before passing through the western wall of the palace and connected two areas with a difference in elevation of 8.64 m (Mallowan 1966: 374).¹⁴ Finally, its significance is also emphasised by wall paintings that seem to have originally decorated at least one of the entranceway's rooms.¹⁵

¹⁴ The excavators compared the heights of the courtyard south of room T3 with that of the doorsill of the southern entrance (Mallowan 1966: 374).

¹⁵ According to the excavators' report, traces of wall paintings depicting a procession of officials as well as a chariot and perhaps the king were discovered in room R 7 (Mallowan 1966: 467; Oates/Oates 2001: 154; see also Kertai 2015: 164).

Formally, this feature of *Fort Shalmaneser*, which may not have been the only one of its kind at Kalḫu¹⁶ and can also be compared to similar passages installed in other Neo-Assyrian palaces within the Assyrian heartland,¹⁷ appears to fulfil all criteria of a *mušlālu*. However, no Assyrian source indicates that a *mušlālu* ever existed in Kalḫu. Whilst this could be a coincidence, it is also conceivable that the settlement was simply never meant to host a *mušlālu* – despite its obvious highly prominent role within the Assyrian Empire (Novák 1999: 130–131). In a way, the same applies to Dūr-Šarrukīn, which also hosted impressive palaces and temples of paramount importance (Novák 1999: 141–143). However, neither Šarru-ukīn II's meticulous account of his building project (Fuchs 1994), nor any other text referring to the construction of the new residence mentions a *mušlālu* at Dūr-Šarrukīn. Thus, a city's political role within the empire did not necessarily mean that it would be equipped with a *mušlālu*. The existence of *mušlālu*-structures at Aššur and Nīnawā could then point to these ancient centres' cultic pre-eminence within Assyrian culture.

3 Summary of evidence: the *mušlālu* in perspective

How are we to read the available evidence, then? If neither architectural form nor topographical location can be found to distinguish a *mušlālu* from an ordinary city gate, why was this term used so selectively? A crucial aspect to understand the general significance of the *mušlālu* throughout the ages may have to be sought in the geographical distribution of known *mušlālu*-structures. The fact that these urban features are only attested at the two most prominent Assyrian cult centres, Aššur and Nīnawā, may be of some significance in this respect. Indeed, one is left to wonder why no *mušlālu* appears to have existed in Kalḫu and Dūr-Šarrukīn, two equally important and prestigious urban centres. The connection of the *mušlālu* of Aššur with the Aššur temple, the most important temple of the Assyrian state makes it seem most plausible that the *mušlālu* should be understood as a structure deeply rooted in Assyrian culture. It is then not surprising that this obviously very significant and symbolic building would have only existed in the Assyrian core (Aššur, Nīnawā). The strong Assyrian character of the building may also explain why there was originally only one *mušlālu* in Aššur. The fact that it was part of the state god's sanctuary should probably also not be underestimated.

The *mušlālu* concept appears to have evolved, though, as did other elements of Assyrian culture, and although we must deal with limited information, a gen-

¹⁶ It has been suggested that a similar structure belonging to Aššur-aḫu-iddina's Southwest Palace located on the main citadel of Kalḫu, may have been discovered and described by Rassam (1897: 226). Also see Reade 2002: 139–140; Abb. 1; Reade/Walker 1982: 114 on this matter.

¹⁷ Comparable sloped passages were also part of the North and Southwest Palace of Nīnawā (Barnett 1976: 31–32; Barnett/Bleibtreu/Weidner 1998: 32–34).

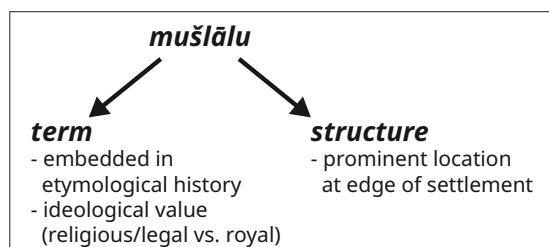


Fig. 8: Development of the semantic value of the *mušlālu*.

eral scenario can be reconstructed. The most significant traceable change seems to have been a shift in urban topography, since at some point between the reigns of Salmānu-ašarēd I and Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, i.e. the second half of the 13th or the larger part of the 12th century B.C.E., the *mušlālu* was no longer exclusively a part of the Aššur temple, but was incorporated into the palace. Consequently, one is led to believe that whatever actions took place inside of it must have been transferred from the spheres of the clergy to those of the king. At the same time, this change meant that the *mušlālu* was no longer tied to a single temple, which made it possible to erect more than one structure of this kind.

Whilst *mušlālu*-structures were, throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, characterised by their prominent location at the edge of the city, this characteristic was not enough to turn a structure into a *mušlālu*. It is also difficult to assess why specific gates were referred to as *mušlālu*, whereas most others were not. Neither ramps nor staircases can be identified as absolutely distinctive features, as they could also be part of non-*mušlālu*-gates. Also the location on a slope does not qualify as the distinguishing feature, as suggested by the eastern *mušlālu* of Nīnawā. In the end, many questions regarding these buildings must remain unresolved. They do not seem to have shared a unique layout or architectural details – at least not to our knowledge. It is also not possible to determine their precise function or which events or actions took place in them. Given their importance and deep connection with Assyrian culture, it may have to be taken into consideration that it was not their appearance or location that made them special, but the role they played in Assyrian culture. Accordingly, any gate could be a *mušlālu*, but only those that were used in a specific way or for certain events were referred to in this way. Therefore, we may have to abandon the thought that the term was used to express an architectural reality in favour of understanding *mušlālu* as a designation reserved for gates of superior cultic significance. This would mean that the word referred mainly to function. In the Old–Middle Assyrian periods, the function of the *mušlālu* was religious or legal, whilst in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods we may simply take Aššur-aḫu-iddina’s word that his

mušlālu-gate served for his entering the city (App. 23) i.e. it functioned as royal entrance, which would tie in well with the idea of “path/way” brought forward by B. Meissner (Ebeling/Meissner/Weidner 1926: 68) in relation to the term’s etymology.

This brings us to the original consideration that the *mušlālu* as structure can be distinguished from the *mušlālu* as term and calls for a few final remarks regarding its semantic implications. The ideological shift, obvious from the attestations, which indicate that the *mušlālu* was associated first with the religious/legal and then with the royal domain, has implications for the interaction between *mušlālu* as term and *mušlālu* as structure. By the reign of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I, the term *mušlālu* was no longer used to mean a unique structure at a specific place as it might have in the Old and most parts of the Middle Assyrian periods when it described an important element of the temple of Aššur and may have been understood in relation to its original, possibly descriptive, etymology, whatever it may have been. Instead, it was being used to designate a structure that was characterised by its prominent location on the edge of the city and seems to have served a specific purpose related to the king. This also meant that it was possible for a settlement to contain a number of *mušlālu*-buildings, thus demonstrating that by this time, the intrinsic connection between the term and the temple of Aššur had dissolved. We thereby come to the conclusion that the term *mušlālu* not only acquired two different dimensions in the course of its history (religious/legal and royal), but that the royal dimension was brought about by a topological development which saw the *mušlālu* structure – regardless of what was designated at any one time – acquire a significance of its own, independent of the term *mušlālu* which through its etymology remains imbedded in a very ideological history (Fig. 8). Because there is no one fixed *mušlālu* concept, we shall not seek to translate the term and opt instead for the neutral and simple transcription “*mušlālu*” in general discourse, and “*mušlālu*-structure” for convenience when referring to specific architectural evidence. Since the term *mušlālu* relates to a multifaceted concept, any translation would restrict its meaning and significance.

Appendix

Ref. No.	Text(s)
1	AbB 5, 156 on judgement rendered at Aššur
	15-18 <i>awātka lillikāma dīn mušlālim ittīšu ludīn</i> May news of you come here so that I may render with him the judgement of the <i>mušlālu</i> .
2	Kt c/k, 904 (unpublished, cf. Hertel 2013:329) on judgement rendered at Aššur
	6-7 <i>ammala dīn dayyāni ša ina mušlālim dīnam idīnūni kaspam lā šabu'āti</i> According to the judgement of the judges who rendered judgement in the <i>mušlālu</i> , are you not fully paid in silver?
3	Kt n/k, 511 (unpublished, cf. Veenhof 2014-2015: 113) on negotiations in Aššur
	29-30 <i>ana ṭuppēkunu ina mušlālim lū nētuwwu</i> On the basis of your tablet, let us negotiate in the <i>mušlālu</i> .
4	Kt 00/k, 16 (cf. Donbaz 2004: 187) on a judgement in Aššur
	14'-15' [...] <i>awīlū anniūtīm šu[nu] ša mušlālim</i> [...] Those men are tho[se] of the <i>mušlālu</i> .
5	Kt 88/k, 112 (cf. Çeçen 1996: 21) on a verdict in Aššur
	6-8 <i>kaspum ša ina mušlālim abūni iddīnim ile'ūkununi (...)</i> The silver about which our father defeated you in a lawsuit in the <i>mušlālu</i> (...)
6	Kt n/k, 1365 (unpublished, referenced in Veenhof 1995: 1721)
	Text not available

	Erišum I on construction work at Aššur
	RIMA 1, A.0.33.1 (Conflation of royal inscriptions from Aššur copied on two clay tablets from Kaneš)
	5-6 [<i>mušlā</i>]lam qaššam watmanam ana bēliya ēpuš For my lord I built the [<i>muš</i>]lālu, the qaššu and the watmanu.
	(...)
	29-30 (...PN's...) napḥurum 7 dayyānū ša mušlā[ā]e (Names of judges) – a total of seven judges of the <i>mušlālu</i> .
	(...)
7	39-41 qābi watartim ina mušlāle [...] ša ḥarēbem pūšu u qinnassu iṣabbat The one who speaks exaggerations in the <i>mušlālu</i> , the [...] of wasteland will seize his mouth and his hindquarters.
	(...)
	46-50 ša ana šībū't s'arrātim ēleu [7 day]yānū' ša dīnam ina [<i>mušlā</i>]le idīnu 'dīn' [sarr]ā[ti]m [lidīnūšum] The one who rises to give a testimony of falsehood- [may] the [seven jud]ges who render judgement in the [<i>mušlā</i>]lu [render a judgement of falsehood against him].
	(...)
	53-56 [ša?...]AN imaggaranni[...]ana mušlāle [...]-ni' rābišam ša ekallim [liḥuz]ma [The one who?] obeys me- [when he goes ?] to the <i>mušlālu</i> , [...] [may he retain?] a palace deputy.
	RIMA 1, A.0.33.4 (On bricks from Aššur Temple: mainly iB3IIIM, also pE3III, fD5II)
	12-19 (...) siḫirti isāre ša bīt Aššur u mušlālam qaššam watmanam ša Aššur īpuš (...) the entire <i>isāru</i> (=temple area?) of the house of Aššur as well as the <i>mušlālu</i> , the qaššu and the watmanu of Aššur, he built.
8	
	Aššur-nārārī I about works on the <i>mušlālu</i> at Aššur
	RIMA 1, A.0.60.4 (fragment of a clay cone)
9	5-6 [...dūrum?] ša mušlāli [... e]li'am u ša[pli'am ...] [...the rampart?] of the <i>mušlālu</i> [a]bove and be[low...]
	Puzur-Aššur III on renovation work at Aššur
	RIMA 1, A.0.61.1 (Complete cone found at Aššur, iC4III)
	7-10 dūrum ša mušlālim ēnaḥma uddiṣ u sikkatī aškun The rampart of the <i>mušlālu</i> became dilapidated so I renovated (it) and placed my <i>sikkatu</i> -peg.
10	

11	Adad-nārārī I on renovation work at Aššur
	RIMA 1, A.0.76.7 (Stone tablets from Aššur, from for example iB5I)
	35–39 <i>enūma mušlāla ša bīt Aššur bēlīya ša tarši bāb nēš ili māti u bāb dayyānī ša ina pāna epšu ēnaḥma iḥḥis u īnuš ašra šātu upeṭṭer dannassu akšud itti pūli u eprī ša Ubasē ēpuš ana ašrīšu utēr u narēya aškun.</i>
	At that time, the <i>mušlālu</i> of the house of Aššur my lord, which is opposite/against the Gate of the Oath of the God of the Land and the Gate of the Judges, and which was built earlier, became dilapidated, sank and shook. I opened that site and reached its foundation pit, I built it with limestone and mortar from Ubasē. I returned (it) to its site and placed my stele.
12	Salmānu-ašarēd I on construction work at Aššur
	RIMA 1, A.0.77.3 (Stone tablet, found east of peripteros in h3Bv)
	22–29 <i>nāmari ša bāb aladlammī u nāmarīma ša ištu mušlāli ana kisal Nunnamnir ina erābe 2 nāmari annūti ša ina maḥrī lā epšu kīma atartima lū ēpuš</i>
	The towers of the Aladlammū-Gate and also the towers which (stand on the way) from the <i>mušlālu</i> to the courtyard of Nunnamnir, when entering: these two towers, which had not previously been built, I built as an addition. (Note: The reading ⁴ ALAD ₂ .LAMMA is preferred here over the traditional ⁴ KAL.KAL. It would suggest that the gate leading from the main courtyard to the <i>Nunnamnir</i> courtyard was decorated with apotropaic figures.)
13	Tukultī-apil-Ešarra I on construction work at Nīnawā
	RIMA 2, A.0.87.10 (Nīnawā)
	84–85 <i>‘bītu? (E₂) mušlā’la [...] ‘ar’šip ekalla šubat šarrūtīya` [...] annimmā ēpuš</i> The building (?) <i>mušlālu</i> [...] I built. This palace here, seat of my kingship [...] I built.
14	Salmānu-ašarēd III lists city gates of Aššur
	RIMA 3, A.0.102.25 (Stone statue from the Tabira Gate)
	41–42 <i>ṭābat eli ummāniša abul nērab šarri mušlāli</i> “Favourable To The Troops”– great gate of the entrance of the king, of the <i>mušlālu</i>
	Sīn-aḥḥē-erība on city gates of Nīnawā and Aššur, as well as on Palace of Aššur
	About Nīnawā

15	RINAP 3/1, Sennacherib 15, 16, 17, 18 (Prisms from Aššur and Nīnawā)
	vii <i>mušēšat šir Asakki abullu mušlālum</i>
	“Removing The Flesh Of The Asakku”: the great gate <i>mušlālu</i>
16	RINAP 3/1, Sennacherib 18 (Prisms from Nīnawā)
	vii 30’–31’ <i>libūr ēp’issa’ mušlālam ša ekalli</i>
	“May ‘its buil’der stay firm”: <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace.
	vii 31’–32’ <i>Igisigsig mušammeh šippāti mušlālam ša kirī</i>
	“The god Igisigsig makes the fruit orchards flourish”: <i>mušlālu</i> of the garden
	vii 34’–35’ <i>lū dāri bānūša mušlālum ekal māšarti</i>
	“May its ruler last forever”: <i>mušlālu</i> of the Review Palace
17	About Aššur
	RINAP 3/2, Sennacherib 178 (Stone block from Aššur, gE3V)
	3–5 <i>mušlālum ekalli ša qēreb Baltil ina pīlu aban šadī uššišu add*</i>
	The <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace from within Baltil– with limestone, a mountain rock, I laid its foundations. * <i>mušlālum</i> is here understood to be in a genitival construction with <i>ekallu ša qēreb Baltil</i> because this possessive relationship is attested in other Sīn-aḫḫē-eriba inscriptions (e.g. RINAP 3/2, 199: 2–3).
18	RINAP 3/2, Sennacherib 199 (Edge of a brick from Aššur)
	2–3 <i>‘mušlālu ša’ ekal Bal’til’ ina agur’rī utūni elleti eššiš ušēpiš’</i>
	The ‘ <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace of Bal’til’ with kiln-fired bricks from a pure oven I bu’ilt’ anew.
19	RINAP 3/2, Sennacherib 200 (Brick from Aššur, hB4III, east side of ziggurat)
	2–4 <i>bītu? (E₂) ‘mušlālu ša’ e’kal’ [Baltil] [ina agurrī] utūni elleti eššiš ab[nīma] [u]’zaq’qir ‘ḫur’šāniš</i>
	The building (?) <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace of Baltil with kiln-fired bricks from a pure oven I created anew and built high like a mountain.
20	RINAP 3/2, Sennacherib 201 (Bricks from Aššur, ex. from g4 or f4)
	2–4 <i>‘ bītu? (E₂) mušlālu [ša ekal Baltil]’ina agurrī utūni elletim eššiš u[šēpišma] [u]’zaq[‘qir huršāniš]</i>
	The building (?) <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace of Baltil with kiln-fired bricks from a pure oven I built anew and built high like a mountain.
21	RINAP 3/2, Sennacherib 202 (Bricks from near Aššur-nāšir-aplis’ palace and fD5III, NE of Aššur-nāšir-apli’s palace)
	2–3 <i>‘mušlālu ša ekal Bal’til’ ina agurrī [utūni] ‘elle’tim uzaqqir ḫuršāniš</i>
	The <i>mušlālu</i> of the palace of Baltil with kiln-fired bricks from a pure [oven] I made high like a mountain.

22	GAB 121 (found in Nīnawā and Aššur)
	George 1992, 176: 121 <i>ṭābat eli ummāni abul nēreb šarri mušlālu/li</i>
	“Favourable To The Troops”– great gate of the entrance of the king: the <i>mušlālu</i> /OR/ “Favourable To The Troops”– great gate of the entrance of the king, of the <i>mušlālu</i>
23	Aššur-aḫu-iddina on palace of Aššur
	RINAP 4, Esarhaddon 61, 62, 63 (limestone blocks: g4, gB41, gC3V, gC41, gD3V; gB4III, gC4I, gB4I; gB4I)
	<i>bītu? (E₂) mušlālu ša qēreb ekal Baltil ana erēbi u aṣē eššiš ušēpiš ina pīli puṣē ušaršid temmenšu</i>
	The building (?) <i>mušlālu</i> from the centre of the palace of Baltil (which is) for entering and going out I had built anew, with white limestone I had its foundation plan fixed.
24	LKA 94 for potency
	ii 17 <i>šiptu mušlāli kaspi</i> (ditto) <i>ḫurāši</i>
	Incantation: <i>mušlālu</i> 's of silver (<i>mušlālu</i> 's) of gold

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Ninĝirsu, Ninurta und Sirius in sumerischem Kontext

Marie-Louise Thomsen

Abstract: The Sumerian god Ninĝirsu/Ninurta was first of all a warrior god fighting against several enemies of gods and mankind, but he was also a farmer god taking care of agricultural works. His identification with the star Sirius as attested in astronomical and religious texts from the 1st mill. B.C. may explain the connection of these two aspects of the god, since the rising of Sirius in summer was an important indication of time in the agricultural year. Hitherto the identity of Ninurta and Sirius was thought to be a late phenomenon but as a fact several instances in Sumerian texts describe the god as shining and luminous, comparable to other celestial bodies like Sun, Moon and Inanna/Venus. Therefore, it seems very likely that the identification of Ninĝirsu/Ninurta with Sirius is an old tradition reaching back into the 3rd mill. B.C.

Keywords: Astronomie, Gudea, Landwirtschaft, Medizin, Ninĝirsu/Ninurta, Sirius, Stadtfürst.

1 Einleitung

Der Gott Ninĝirsu/Ninurta ist in der mesopotamischen Mythologie als Held und Krieger dargestellt, der gegen böse Mächte in den Kampf zieht; aber auch als Gott der Landwirtschaft, der sich um Felder und Bewässerungskanäle kümmert. Sowohl in astronomischen Texten wie in Hymnen und Gebeten des ersten Jahrtausends v. Chr. ist Ninurta mit dem Stern Sirius identifiziert, eine Gleichsetzung, die man bisher für ein eher spätes Phänomen gehalten hat. In diesem Beitrag soll gezeigt werden, dass auch in sumerischen Textquellen aus älteren Perioden Ninĝirsu oder Ninurta als leuchtender Stern am Himmel beschrieben wurde. Die Identifizierung Ninurtas mit Sirius ist damit wahrscheinlich viel älter, als man bisher vermutet hat.

2 Krieger und Gott der Landwirtschaft

Der Gott Ninĝirsu, Stadtgott von Ĝirsu-Lagaš, ist schon in Fara-zeitlichen (ca. 2600 v. Chr.) Quellen belegt,¹ außerdem in zahlreichen alt- und neusumerischen Inschriften. In den Gudea-Zylindern wird der Bau seines Tempels Eninnu ausführlich beschrieben. Unter dem Namen Ninurta spielt der Gott als Krieger und Sohn Enlils eine große Rolle in der mesopotamischen Mythologie, auch in späteren Epochen. Die Frage, ob es sich ursprünglich um zwei unterschiedliche Gottheiten handelt, ist nicht endgültig geklärt. Die Eigenschaften und

Funktionen, wie die Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen der beiden, sind praktisch identisch, so dass es sich wahrscheinlich um dieselbe Gottheit handelt.

Vor allem der kriegerische Aspekt des Gottes wird gerne hervorgehoben, wenn er in den Mythen gegen allerlei Feinde für seinen Vater und die großen Götter kämpft. Seine Gegner sind u.a. der böse Asakku-Dämon und der Anzû-Vogel, der die Schicksalstafeln gestohlen hat. Inschriften aus Ĝirsu bezeugen eine enge Verbindung zwischen Gott und Stadtfürsten: Eanatum wurde von Ninĝirsu gezeugt und hat von ihm seinen Namen bekommen.² Ninĝirsu begleitet und unterstützt den Stadtfürsten in den Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Nachbarstaat Umma, z.B. erscheint er Eanatum in einem Traum, um ihm Anweisungen für den Kampf zu geben.³ Der Gott als Krieger (ur-saĝ), seine Waffen und Heldentaten stehen fast überall im Vordergrund, auch in den Mythen und in späteren Hymnen und Gebeten.

Ninĝirsu/Ninurta hat aber auch eine andere Funktion, nämlich als Gott der Landwirtschaft, weswegen man ihn in der Fachliteratur auch „Fruchtbarkeitsgott“ oder „Vegetationsgottheit“ nennt, eine wohl nicht ganz zutreffende Bezeichnung. Der sumerische Text „Georgica“ oder „Farmer’s Almanac“, der in Form eines Lehrgedichtes die landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiten chronologisch auflistet, ist ausdrücklich als von Ninurta überlieferte Instruktionen bezeichnet, wie die letzten Zeilen bezeugen: „Anweisungen Ninurtas, Sohn Enlils. Ninurta, der rechte Bauer Enlils, dein Preis ist süß.“⁴

1 Sowohl Ninĝirsu wie Ninurta kommen in den Götterlisten aus Fāra vor, s. Krebernik 1986: 172 v 19; 169 ii 18. Für die ZA₃MI₂-Hymnen aus Tall Abū Šalābiḥ siehe Biggs 1974: 49:117–119. Zur Inschrift auf der Steintafel, der sog. „Figure aux plumes“, wo Ninĝirsu mehrmals erwähnt ist, s. Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991: 66–67; Wilcke 1995.

2 Geierstele, Ean. 1 v 1–vi 3.

3 Geierstele, Ean. 1 vi 25–vii 11.

4 na de₃-ga ^dNin-urta dumu ^dEn-lil₂-la₂-ke₄, ^dNin-urta engar zid ^dEn-lil₂-la₂ za₃-mi₂-zu dug₃-ga-am₃, Georgica Z. 108–109 (Civil 1994: 32).

3 Ningirsu als Licht

In seinem Kommentar zu den Gudea-Inschriften erwähnte Falkenstein einen weiteren möglichen Aspekt des Ningirsu. Mehrere Passagen in den Gudea-Zylindern vergleichen Ningirsu mit der Sonne oder nennen ihn direkt „den Sonnengott von Lagaš“. Die relevanten Textstellen sind hier aufgeführt mit der Übersetzung von Falkenstein:⁵

lugal [e₂-a-n]i-ta nam-ta-ĝen

^dUtu ki Lagaš-e e₃-am₃

Der König ging aus seinem Haus heraus –er ist der Sonnengott, der für ‚Lagaš‘ aufgeht.
(Zyl. B v 8–9)

ud im-zal ^dUtu Lagaš^{ki}-ke₄ kalam-ma saĝ mi-ni-il₂

Der Tag ging darüber auf – der Sonnengott von ‚Lagaš‘ erhob (stolz) das Haupt im Lande Sumer.
(Zyl. B v 19)

lugal-bi ur-saĝ ^dNin-ĝir₂-su ^dUtu-am₃ mu-DU

Der Krieger Ningirsu trat wie der Sonnengott (zu seinem leuchtenden Wagen).
(Zyl. B xvi 16)

E₂-bar₆-bar₆ ki a₂ aĝ₂-ĝa₂-ĝa₂

ki ^dUtu-gin₇ dalla-a-ĝa₂

Im Ebarbar, dem Ort meiner Weisungen, wo ich wie der Sonnengott leuchte.
(Zyl. A x 24–25)

Falkenstein (loc. cit.) ließ offen, ob anhand dieser Aussagen Ningirsu „von Haus aus eine lokale Erscheinungsform des Sonnengottes gewesen sei“, oder ob es sich um „literarische Bilder“ und bloße Vergleiche handelte. Wieso es zu solchen Vergleichen kommen konnte, erklärte er aber nicht, und das Phänomen Ningirsu/Ninurta als Sonne in sumerischen Texten ist m.W. nicht weiter diskutiert worden.

Untersucht man aber andere sumerische Ningirsu- und Ninurta-Texte, findet man häufig ähnliche Stellen, wo der Gott mit Lichtphänomenen in Verbindung steht. Der Vergleich mit der Sonne gibt es auch außerhalb der Gudea-Inschriften:

saĝ-ĝi₆-g[e]^dUtu-e₃’-[gin₇ ig]li-bi he₂-me-ši-ĝal₂

Die Schwarzköpfigen schauen auf dich wie auf die aufgehende Sonne.
(Ur-Ninurta Hymne C 43)⁶

^dUtu kalam-ma-kam

(Ninurta) ist die Sonne Sumers.
(Ninurta-Hymne SLTNi 61:[78]; 86)⁷

bara₂ an-na-ke₄ dur₂ nam-[mi-in-ĝar]

u₄-sakar₂ gibil-am₃ uĝ₃-e pa am₃-[mi-in-e₃]

Auf dem Thron des Himmels hat er Platz genommen.
Wie der Neumond erscheint er den Leuten.

(Ninurta-Hymne, TCL 15, 7: 8–9)⁸

In einer Šu-Suen-Hymne hat das Licht einen eher unheimlichen Charakter:

^dNin-urta u₂-sa₁₁-an sig₇-ga kalam-ma ni₂ ru-ru-gu₂

^dUraš kug-gin₇ ušum su-lim-ma izi-ĝar huš il₂-il₂-i

Ninurta, grünes Abendlicht, erzeugt Furcht in Sumer.
Wie die reine Uraš, der strahlende Drache, trägt er eine furchterregende Fackel.
(Šu-Suen-Ninurta-Hymne)⁹

Ningirsu/Ninurtas Bezug zum Himmel ist öfters belegt:

nam-lugal-zu, an-na mu-un-ĝal₂, ki-a mu-un-ĝal₂

Dein Königtum ist im Himmel, ist auf der Erde.
(SLTN 61, 12–14)¹⁰

Der Text „Ninurtas Reise nach Eridu“ (STVC 34) beschreibt den Einzug Ninurtas in den Abzu-Eridu folgendermaßen:

lugal Abzu-a kur₉-ra-ni ud he₂-ĝal₂-am₃ ĝi₆ giri₁₇-zal-am₃

^dNin-urta Eridu^{ki}-ga kur₉-ra-ni ud he₂-ĝal₂-am₃ ĝi₆

giri₁₇-zal-am₃

me ud ti-la-ke₄ saĝ mu-na-r[ig₇] ur-saĝ An-na-ke₄

me nig₂-ul ki-bi mu-ši-[gi₄/ĝar ?] en me šar₂-ra-ke₄

ud dug₃ Ki-en-ge-ra e₃-dam en [...]

Wenn der König im Abzu eintrifft, ist der Tag Überfluss, die Nacht ist Freude.

Wenn Ninurta in Eridu eintrifft, ist der Tag Überfluss, die Nacht ist Freude.

Der Held des Himmels (Ninurta) hat ihm (Enki) die *me* des (langen) Lebens als Geschenk gebracht, der Herr der zahlreichen *me* hat ihm die ewigen *me* [wiederhergestellt/fest gegründet?]

Ein günstiger Tag (oder günstiges Licht) erscheint (wörtl.: steigt auf) in Sumer, (er/es ist) der Herr [...] ¹¹

Eine mögliche Interpretation könnte sein, dass Ninurta/Sirius, so lange er unsichtbar ist, bei Enki im Abzu verweilt, um dann wieder in den Himmel hinaufzusteigen. Ninurta bringt Licht in den Abzu und hat Enki die gestohlenen *me*, „die göttlichen Kräfte“, wieder gebracht. Wenn der Stern Ninurta/Sirius erscheint, ist es ein Glückstag für die Menschen in Sumer.

4 Ningirsu/Ninurta ist Sirius

Diese Beispiele zeigen deutlich, dass Ningirsu/Ninurta in sumerischem Kontext, ähnlich wie die Göttin Inanna, mit der er öfters verglichen wird, als ein hell leuchtender Himmelskörper wahrgenommen wurde. Da Ninurta in späteren astronomischen und religiösen Texten mit dem Stern Sirius gleichgesetzt wird, ist es am wahrscheinlichsten, dass dieser Stern auch in den oben angeführten Textstellen gemeint war und dass es sich um eine sehr alte Tradition handelt, die bis ins dritte Jahrtausend v. Chr. zurückgeht.

8 In den folgenden Zeilen gibt es Vergleiche mit Nanna und Utu; Sjöberg 1973: 116.

9 Sjöberg 1976: 414: 40–41, 43–44.

10 S. Anm. 7.

11 STVC 34 ii 9–14, Falkenstein 1959: 82/85; Reisman 1971: 4/6.

5 Falkenstein 1966: 94.

6 TCL 15, 19, s. Falkenstein 1950: 120–121.

7 Cohen 1975–1976.

Obwohl keine sumerischen astronomischen Beobachtungen überliefert sind, spielen Himmelskörper eine große Rolle in der sumerischen Mythologie, und die Namen der Sternbilder sind alle sumerisch. Mythen um Inanna z.B. sind Geschichten über das Erscheinen und wieder Verschwinden des Planeten Venus, dessen Bahn schwer vorhersehbar ist. Inanna steigt in die Unterwelt hinab, kommt aber wieder zurück. Sie besucht Enki im Abzu und entflieht mit den me („den göttlichen Kräften“), indem sie in den Himmel hinaufsteigt, wo sie für Enki unerreichbar ist. Als Grundlage dieser Geschichten dienen Kenntnisse über die Sterne und Planeten und ihre Bewegungen am Himmel.

Sirius ist ein Fixstern, hat eine feste Bahn und weist keine Unregelmäßigkeiten auf wie etwa der Planet Venus. Nach Venus ist Sirius der hellste Stern am Himmel, und es ist daher verständlich, dass diesem Stern eine besondere Bedeutung zugeschrieben wurde. Durch seine besondere Leuchtkraft hebt er sich gegenüber den anderen Sternen ab. Er ist zuverlässig, erscheint immer zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt und folgt unausweichlich seiner gewohnten Bahn. Sirius ist aber nicht das ganze Jahr sichtbar, und in der Antike war der erste Aufgang am Morgenhimmel in Juli ein wichtiger Hinweis für die Landwirtschaft; in Ägypten z.B. kündigte er das jährliche Nilhochwasser an. Dass es in Mesopotamien ähnlich war, zeigen der oben genannte Bezug Ninurtas zur Landwirtschaft und sein häufiger Beiname a.ma.ru „Flut“. In meinen Augen war seine Funktion aber nicht die eines Fruchtbarkeits- oder Vegetationsgottes, sondern die Zeitangabe: Wenn er am Himmel zu beobachten war, kam die Zeit für bestimmte Arbeiten auf den Feldern. Auch in der sumerischen Georgica ist die Rede von Beobachtungen der Sterne, aber weder der Name des Himmelskörpers noch der genaue Zeitpunkt sind erwähnt.¹²

5 Ninĝirsu und der Stadtfürst

Die Herrscher in Ĝirsu-Lagaš hatten schon seit frühesten Zeiten eine besondere Beziehung zu Ninĝirsu, wie es aus den altsumerischen Inschriften hervorgeht (s.o.). Als Krieger und Sohn des höchsten Gottes Enlil war er ein perfektes Identifikationsobjekt für den Stadtfürsten, der in den Krieg gegen die Feinde zog. Als Sirius, Aufseher am Himmel, der die Zeit angibt, war er ein Vorbild für den guten Herrscher, der für Ordnung und Überfluss sorgte.

Zwei der bedeutendsten Stadtstaaten des alten Sumer hatten sich die zwei, nach Sonne und Mond, hellsten Himmelskörper als ihre Schutzgötter ausgesucht: Uruk hatte Inanna = Venus, Ĝirsu Ninĝirsu/Ninurta = Sirius. Beide Götter hatten außerdem gemeinsam, dass sie sich in Träumen direkt an den Herrscher wandten, um ihm Rat oder Anweisungen zu geben.

¹² Georgica Z. 38: ud mul an-na šu im-ma-ab-du₇-a-ta „Nachdem der Himmelsstern vollkommen ist“ s. Civil 1994: 30–31, 79.

6 Ninĝirsu/Ninurta in medizinischen Texten

In den astronomischen Texten aus Mesopotamien nannte man Sirius „den Pfeil“: ^{mul}KAK.SI.SA₂ = šukūdu. Vor allem aus dem ersten Jahrtausend gibt es Hymnen und Gebete an Ninurta als Sirius, um Heilung von Krankheiten und Abwenden von Bösen zu erzielen.¹³ Bei der Herstellung von Heilmitteln war es eine oft angewandte Methode, die vorbereitete Medizin über Nacht unter den Sternen stehen zu lassen, um Kraft und Wirkung zu verstärken.¹⁴

Einen möglichen Hinweis auf diesen Brauch gibt es vielleicht in Gudea Zyl. B, wo der Neubau des Ninĝirsu-Tempels Eninnu sehr ausführlich, mit allen Vorbereitungen, Arbeitsgängen und den damit verbundenen Riten, beschrieben wird, vom Auftrag des Gottes in einem Traum bis hin zur Einweihung des Tempels. Die Sprache ist literarisch und poetisch, und der genaue Hintergrund der Handlungen ist oft schwer zu verstehen. Einer der Höhepunkte ist das Erscheinen des Gottes und sein Einzug in den neuen Tempel (Zyl. B v). Vorher wird das Eninnu gesäubert und gereinigt, der Stadtfürst verbeugt sich, alles ist friedlich und fröhlich (Zyl. B iv). Die Beschreibung endet mit folgender Aussage:

iri-a ama lu₂ tu-ra-ke₄ a silim ĝar-ra-am₃

In der Stadt hat die Mutter des Kranken heilbringendes Wasser hingestellt.

(Zyl. B iv 17–18)

Könnte es sich hier um die oben erwähnte Praxis handeln, Medizin für einen Kranken unter die Sterne, in diesem Fall den gerade aufgehenden Sirius, zu stellen? Dies wäre dann das früheste Beispiel dafür.

7 Zusammenfassung

Das jährliche, zur gleichen Zeit wiederkehrende Erscheinen des Sterns Sirius war im alten Mesopotamien ein wichtiger zeitlicher Orientierungspunkt, nach dem sich die landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiten richteten. Seine Zuverlässigkeit und große Helligkeit verlieh Sirius besondere Aufmerksamkeit, und als Ninĝirsu/Ninurta verkörperte er schon in der sumerischen Mythologie den Krieger und Anführer, sowie den Verantwortlichen für das Vorhandensein des Wassers in Flüssen und Bewässerungskanälen.

¹³ Gebete an Sirius und Ninurta s. Mayer 1976: 404–405, 430–431. Für Ninurta und Sirius in magisch-medizinischen Texten s. Reiner 1995: 19: „Of all the stars, it is Sirius that is especially often addressed“.

¹⁴ Hierzu ausführlich Reiner 1995: 48–59.

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All the king's *adamindugas*

Textual images of Ur III sovereigns as managers of the universe

Luděk Vacín

Abstract: This paper will tackle the question why some Sumerian debate poems mention Ur III kings and why at least one of those kings was supposed to have decided the dispute of the protagonists.

It will be argued that by awarding the Ur III kings an important role in the quarrels of the basic representatives of the agricultural cycle, raw materials, animals and plants some of the disputations contributed to the formulation and performance of Ur III royal ideology. To that end, the paper will explore mainly the intertextual relations of the debates with poems in praise of Ur III kings.

The key source underpinning the argument will be the unedited debate between Tree and Reed which depicts Šulgi as a divine king judging the values and qualities of plants and the decision maker whose decrees were essential for the organization and management of the Sumero-Akkadian universe.

Keywords: Sumerian debates, royal hymns, Ur III literature, OB literature, royal ideology, royal ceremonial, Šulgi.

1 Introduction

According to M. Civil's catalogue of Sumerian literary compositions, seven texts are considered literary disputations or debates proper:¹ Hoe and Plough;² Sheep and Grain;³ Summer and Winter;⁴ Bird and Fish;⁵ Copper and Silver;⁶ Date Palm and Tamarisk;⁷ Tree and Reed.⁸ If

sufficiently preserved, they consist of an introduction, mostly cosmogonic, while the following dispute is split in several alternating speeches of each contender, and the text is rounded off with a verdict pronounced by a senior member of the pantheon, Enlil, Enki, or in one instance by the divine king Šulgi.

None of the seven disputations is free of references to a royal persona. In Sheep and Grain the mention of an unnamed king is a topos underpinning the argument of the contender who uses it. This also applies to Date Palm and Tamarisk where the reference to a king in the utterly fragmentary Sumerian text can only be assumed on the basis of the Akkadian version, however.⁹ On the other hand, in Hoe and Plough the references to an anonymous ruler go well beyond the use of a rhetorical device by alluding to the performance of agricultural rituals by the king.¹⁰

1 See Cunningham 2007: 386. For a detailed overview of the disputation literature see Volk 2011–2012. Volk counts 9 compositions among the Sumerian debate poems (p. 215). Other scholars also include more compositions among the debates. See, e.g., Vanstiphout 1990: 272–276 (10 pieces in total); Herrmann 2010: 41–47 (8 pieces in total). Note further the recent discussion of the features of debate literature in the poems of Enmer-kara by Mittermayer (2009: 40–56), Volk (2011–2012: 219–220) and Wilcke (2012: 3–4). For a discussion of the issues involved in the definition of the genre and the assignment of certain compositions to it by modern scholars see now Mittermayer 2014. For Akkadian debate literature see now Jiménez 2017.

2 No published critical edition is available but see Civil 1965. See also ETCSL 5.3.1.

3 Edited in Alster/Vanstiphout 1987. See also ETCSL 5.3.2.

4 No critical edition is available, for a partial edition see van Dijk 1953: 42–57. See also ETCSL 5.3.3.

5 Edited in Herrmann 2010. See also ETCSL 5.3.5.

6 No critical edition is available, for a partial edition see van Dijk 1953: 58–64. See also ETCSL 5.3.6.

7 Sumerian version edited in Cavigneaux 2003: 53–58. See also ETCSL 5.3.7. Akkadian version edited in Wilcke 1989; Ponchia 1996: 67–69, 95–98, 121–128; Kämmerer 1998: 230–251; Streck 2004: 255–262; Cohen 2013: 177–198.

8 No edition is available. The text does not appear in the ETCSL either. I was able to use an unpublished composite transliteration by Miguel Civil with notes by Pascal Attinger who kindly shared his copy of the manuscript with me.

9 In lines 97–99 of Sheep and Grain the sheep says how Šakan, the god of (wild) animals, takes care of the king's emblems and implements, while in lines 107–108 it boasts how woolen garments make the king happy. No king is mentioned in the nineteen preserved lines of the Sumerian version of Date Palm and Tamarisk but the Akkadian version mentions an anonymous (ideal) royal couple in the speeches of both contenders.

10 Lines 24–31 (cf. ETCSL 5.3.1):

izim-ĝu₁₀ ^{iti}šū-numun-a a-ša₃-ga ak-da-bi
lugal-e gu₄ im-ma-ab-gaz-e udu im-ma-ab-šar₂-re
kaš bur-ra-am₃ mu-e-de₂
lugal-e a KIN-a mu-e-de₆
^{kuš}šem₅ ^{kuš}a₂-la₂-e še₂₆ ši-im-ma-gi₄-gi₄
lugal-e a₂-ĝu₁₀ šu bi₂-in-du₈
gu₄-ĝu₁₀ ^{ĝeš}šudul-e si ba-ni-in-sa₂
bara₂-bara₂ gal-gal za₃-ĝu₁₀-ta im-da-su₈-su₈-ge-eš

Four poems explicitly mention an Ur III king who at least in one case assumes the role of the divine arbiter himself. The disputation between Summer and Winter mentions king Ibbisu'en but it is decided by Enlil. Copper and Silver mentions Urnamma but the verdict is not preserved. Thus, the debate might have been resolved either by Enlil or Urnamma himself. Bird and Fish mentions king Šulgi but it is decided by Enki. Finally, Šulgi is mentioned no less than fourteen times in the preserved text of Tree and Reed, and the king also renders a fairly detailed verdict for the rivals.

2 Previous scholarship

The conspicuous presence of Ur III kings in Sumerian literary debates has been noted by several scholars, first by Jan van Dijk in his masterpiece on Sumerian-Akkadian wisdom literature (van Dijk 1953). He argued that debates mentioning a king must have been composed in the Ur III period because it would not have made any sense for the author to refer to other than the ruling sovereign. He also hypothesized that the author either criticized the king or flattered him (van Dijk 1953: 36). Regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of the texts van Dijk maintained that disputations were created to entertain the monarch and court at festivals, which implies a performance increasing the king's self-esteem. In that way, the debates would have been a script for a secular variant of performances of religious texts (van Dijk 1953: 37).

Van Dijk's explanation of the occurrence of Ur III royal names in Sumerian disputations was slightly refined by Herman Vanstiphout, but he and others studying this genre explored chiefly different aspects of those multifaceted poems.¹¹ Van Dijk's analysis of why Ur III

rulers were mentioned in some debates thus remains the most comprehensive one, although it is based on common sense inferences.

3 The evidence

In the following, van Dijk's statements will be tested against internal and external textual evidence to bring his points up to date and to observe if debates mentioning an Ur III king have anything to do with Ur III royal ideology.

3.1. Ur III administrative texts

I will begin with evidence from Ur III administrative texts which generally enjoy more credibility among scholars than OB copies of Sumerian literature. Relevant Ur III sources are accounts of animals disbursed mostly to the cooks or a kitchen on the occasion of a debate performance. This implies that literary disputations were known in the Ur III period, and that they were performed at festive occasions or banquets where plenty of meat was consumed.

3 udu muḫaldim-e-ne a-da-min ak
(SACT 1, 155: 1; Amarsu'ena 04-12-05)

2 maš₂ / ba-ug₇ e₂ muḫaldim-še₃ / 3 udu muḫaldim-e-ne a-da-min ak
(SACT 1, 190: i 17'-19'; Amarsu'ena 04-12-25)

7 udu / udu a-da-min-a-še₃
(Nisaba 8, 129: 1-2; Amarsu'ena 04-06-14)

230 udu / 10 udu a-da-min / 6 maš₂ gal
(BIN 3, 269: 1-3; Amarsu'ena 06-03-29)

3 udu / a-da-min-še₃ / ša₃ a₂-ki-ti šu-numun-na
(AUCT 1, 794: 1-3; Amarsu'ena 04-04-11)¹²

Unfortunately, administrative texts do not tell us if the kitchen was a royal one or which disputation was performed and how. All the dated texts come from Puzriš-Dagān in the reign of Amarsu'ena, which does not help either because this king is never mentioned in extant OB manuscripts of the debates.

Yet Amarsu'ena seems to have been a patron of debate literature. As C. Wilcke has argued in his edition of Enmerkara and En-suḫkeš-ana, the composition could be written in honour of Amarsu'ena's victory over Ḥamazi, and could be first performed at a banquet in the house of the son of the governor of Ḥamazi in the second month of year Amarsu'ena 2. While the interpretation of the name of the sorcerer from Ḥamazu, which Wilcke identifies with the region of Ḥamazi

¹¹ 'To perform my festival in the fields during the month of seeding, the king slaughters oxen and sacrifices sheep, he pours beer from stone bowls. The king brings ... water, while the šem and ala drums resound. The king takes hold of my handles, he harnesses my oxen to the yoke. All the great notables walk at my side.' On the similarity of lines 24-28 with relevant passages from other disputations and royal hymns see below. For the expression a KIN-a in line 27 see Civil 1965: 52 (lugal-e a-ur₄-a mu-a-tum₂), 75 ('Le roi apporte les eaux rassemblées'), and 107-108. It occurs in a parallel phrase in the Keš Temple Hymn, line 110: tu-e a-ur₄-a am₃-mi-tum₂, 'The ... brought the gathered waters' (Gragg 1969: 174); tu-e a KIĜ₂-a mu-e-fe₆, 'Der Tu-Priester brachte Wasser für das Orakel' (Wilcke 2006: 234, 227). For more attestations and comments see Sallaberger 1993: 188.

¹² Vanstiphout 1990 and 1992b offer an overview of the debates and a detailed analysis of the structure, form, content, rhetoric, different levels of meaning, and poetics in those texts. Vanstiphout 1991 examines reasoning in the debates, the use of various literary motifs, the didactic value of the texts and their comic dimension. Vanstiphout 1992a deals with the meaning of the banquet scenes in Sumerian literature at large, and in the disputations in particular. The ideological aspect and the presence of Ur III royal names in four poems of the corpus are addressed in passing only. See Vanstiphout 1990: 284-286 for a general discussion of the palace setting and Šulgi's role as arbiter. Vanstiphout 1990: 296, first paragraph, comes near the ideological aspect of the disputations but without further elaboration. Vanstiphout 1992a: 12 notes that the debates 'contain a number of explicit references to the Royal Court of the Ur III period' but dates them to the early Isin period. Vanstiphout 2014: 236 states: 'As so often in Sumerian - and any other

worthwhile poetry, meaning and intention of these pieces are or can be multi-layered, ambiguous and metaphorical.' Yet, the ideological semantic layer goes unexplored in that work too. Herrmann 2010 scrutinizes the topics of genre, sources, structure and content of the Bird and Fish debate, while the issue of the *Sitz im Leben* and the references to Ur III monarchs in the disputations are dealt with briefly and inconclusively (63-64, 67-68).

¹² SACT 1, 155 and SACT 1, 190 have already been noted as referring to the performance of a literary disputation in Alster 1990: 13. For AUCT 1, 794 cf. Herrmann 2010: 65, note 276.

in the Zagros foothills,¹³ has recently been refuted,¹⁴ thereby weakening Wilcke's argument, the combined evidence of the origin of the sorcerer in Enmerkara and En-suhkeš-ana and of the royal banquet with the family of the governor of the region where the literary character allegedly came from still holds the possibility that the text might have been first performed at that banquet to celebrate Amarsu'ena's first successful campaign.¹⁵ In any case, the evidence of administrative texts presented above strongly suggests an Ur III date of composition of debates mentioning an Ur III monarch.

Furthermore, there is one piece of evidence produced by the Ur III administration which provides at least an indirect proof of the connection of debates with royal ideology. The text records thirty talents of bright bitumen, an offering for Ninmarki which was added to the 'boat of the disputation' and the 'boat of the deified stela'.

30 gu₂ esir₂-had₂ / esir₂ a-ru-a ^dnin-MAR^{ki} / daḥ-u₃
ma₂ a-da-min-še₃ / u₃ ma₂ ^dna-ru₂-a-še₃'
(ITT 5, 8234: 1–4; not dated)¹⁶

This appears to show that literary debates and their performance had something to do with royal ceremonial and self-representation at events which may not have been very amusing but rather solemn and even stiff political and religious occasions with the divine persona of the deified ruler in focus. The possibility that literary debates were created to criticize the king, as once contemplated by van Dijk, seems out of question in such a context.

3.2. OB copies of the debates and royal hymns

Let us now look at what the OB copies of relevant disputations have to say about royal ideology. In order to do so, one must look for intertextuality between the debates and royal hymns,¹⁷ the compendia of Ur III and early OB royal ideology. I will quote here the most eloquent examples, proceeding from the very general ones to the more specific.

In Segment I of the debate between Copper and Silver Urnamma is portrayed as a master builder of temples and irrigation works, which accords well not only with historical evidence from his reign but also with the statements of hymns in praise of him.¹⁸ Lines 30–36 of Copper and Silver actually summarize the hymn Urnamma B by saying that 'Enlil joyfully addressed Sumer. In a [...] of abundance he raised (him) to the duties of shepherd. In order to build [the Ekur] of Enlil...,

Enlil gave might to shepherd Urnamma in his majestic arms.'¹⁹

The topic of temple building is elaborated on in lines 41–44, noteworthy is the word 'palace' describing the Moon-god's temple at Ur both in the disputation and the hymn Urnamma C. Also of note is the mention of irrigation works in these lines which occurs in similar context in the hymn Urnamma G.

Copper & Silver, Segment I (ETCSL 5.3.6)

41. uri₂^{ki}-ma e₂-gal ^dsuen-na im-ta-an-[...]
42. nibru^{ki} e₂-kur ^den-lil₂-la₂ im-ta-an-[...]
43. e₂ diḡir gal-gal-e-ne-ka pa e₃ im-mi-in-[ak]²⁰
44. eg₂ pa₃-re' [(x)] gu₂ an-še₃ bi₂-in-[zi]
(CBS 15206+Ni 9657; CDLI P269762, ISET 1: 178)

41. In Ur, he ... the palace of Su'en.
42. In Nippur, he ... the Ekur of Enlil.
43. He made the temples of the great gods shine forth.
44. He let the embankments and ditches raise (their) banks high.

Urnamma C (ETCSL 2.4.1.3)

108. ^dnanna lugal-ḡu₁₀ e₂-gal-la-na mu-na-du₃
(Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 218)

108. For Nanna, my master, I have built his palace.

Urnamma G (ETCSL 2.4.1.7)

21. eg₂ pa₃-re ^dutu e₃-gin₇ igi-bi m[u-...]
(Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 292)

21. Embankments and ditches have ... like the rising sun.

While these examples may be considered as usual stock-phrases for describing royal building activity in literary texts, the following striking instance of an almost identical line from Copper and Silver and the hymn Urnamma C shows that intertextuality of debates and royal hymns is a phenomenon that deserves close attention.

Copper & Silver, Segment I (ETCSL 5.3.6)

48. uḡ₃-e 'u₂ nir-ḡal₂ mu-da-gu₇-u₃-[ne]
(CBS 15206+Ni 9657; CDLI P269762, ISET 1: 178)

48. Under him people eat tasty food.

Urnamma C (ETCSL 2.4.1.3)

75. uḡ₃-e u₂ nir-ḡal₂ bi₂-ib₂-ḡu₇'-en ^den-ki-im-du-bi
me-en
(Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 214)

75. I let people eat tasty food, I am their Enkimdu.

The common feature of the better preserved debate poems mentioning a monarch are references to the pal-

13 Wilcke 2012: 7 with references.

14 Peterson 2015.

15 Evidence collected and discussed in Wilcke 2012: 9 with note 26. See also Wilcke 2012: 35–36.

16 For the 'disputation boat' see also BPOA 6, 37: rev. 23; not dated: ma₂ a-da-min mu-a-du₃.

17 For examples of intertextuality between the debates and other literary works including Lugalbanda II but no royal hymns see Vanstiphout 1991: 33–36.

18 For an overview of Urnamma's building activity see Sallaberger 1999: 137–140.

19 See ETCSL 5.3.6. The construction of the Ekur is the central topic of hymn Urnamma B, see e.g. l. 20: sipa ^dur-^dnamma-ke₄ e₂-kur maḡ dur-an-ki-a-ka an-še₃ mi-ni-in-mu₂, 'Shepherd Urnamma made the magnificent Ekur grow heavenward in Duranki' (Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 191).

20 Note also the similar vocabulary in lines 157–158 of The Death of Urnamma (Urnamma A, ETCSL 2.4.1.1): diḡir-re-e-ne-er mu-ne-gub-bu-nam ki-ur₃ mu-ne-ḡal₂ / ^da-nun-na-ke₄-ne ḡe₂-ḡal₂-la pa mu-ne-e₃-a, 'I indeed served the gods and provided them with homes. Having revealed abundance to the Anuna ...' (Flückiger-Hawker 1999: 128).

ace and to the festivities taking place in the royal residence. In the disputation between Bird and Fish such references are formulated in general terms.

Bird & Fish (ETCSL 5.3.5)

73. **e₂-gal lugal-la-ke₄** DU.DU ħe₂-d[u₇] me-en
74. **kisal-a** mu₇-mu₇-ġu₁₀ me-te-aš im-mi-[i]n-ġar
75. akkil ġar-ra-ġa₂ niġ₂ ku₇-ku₇-da-b[i]
76. su-bar ^dšul-gi dumu ^den-lil₂-la₂-ra du₁₀-ge-eš im-mi-ġal₂

(Herrmann 2010: 156–158)

73. While striding to the royal palace, I am an ornament.

74. My warbling embellishes the courtyard.

75. My twitter which I intone in all its sweetness

76. is a delight for the person of Šulgi, son of Enlil.

...

173. **e₂-gal lugal-la-ke₄** (var.: [dš]ul-gi-ra) mur-ša₄-bi du₁₀-ga []

174. ^šbanšur [dšul]-gi dumu ^den-lil₂-la₂-ka saġ an-še₃ [-il₂]

175. lugal zi 'su₃-ud' ġ[al₂]

(Herrmann 2010: 170–172)

173. His singing in the royal palace (var.: Šulgi's palace) is sweet ...

174. At the table of Šulgi, Enlil's son, ... (raises) the head heavenward.

175. The king who possesses a long life ...

The relevant passage from Summer and Winter specifically describes a royal banquet where divine Ibbisu'en enjoys food, drink and music with the great gods in the Enamtila, his royal residence founded by An.²¹

Summer & Winter (ETCSL 5.3.3)

229. lugal-ġu₁₀ mu pa₃-da ^dnanna dumu ^den-lil₂-la₂-ra

230. ^di-bi₂-^dsuen ^{tu}šutur ^{tu}ħur-saġ u₃-mu-ni-in-mu₄

231. ^{tu}bar-dul₅ ^{tu}niġ₂-lam₂-ma mi₂ u₃-ba-ni-dug₄

232. izim diġir-re-e-ne-ke₄ šu u₃-mu-ši-ib-du₇-du₇

233. ^da-nun-na-ke₄-ne bar ku₃-ba tug₂ u₃-mu-ne-ġal₂-ġal₂

234. **e₂-nam-ti-la ki-tuš ku₃ nam-lugal-la an-ne₂ ġar-ra-na**

235. ki ur₅ sa₆-ge ġešbun niġ₂ du₁₀-ga si ba-ni-sa₂-sa₂-eš

236. **šem₅ ^{ku}a₂-la₂** si-ŠIR₃ ġeš-gu₃-di ni₂-ba u₃-mu-na-du₁₂

237. **tigi za-am-za-am** niġ₂ ša₃ ħul₂-la-zu u₄ mi-ni-ib-zal-zal-e

238. ġe₂₆-e ġeštin **lu-lu me-en** gu₇ naġ gal-gal me-en

(CBS 8310 v 5'-15'; MBI 7; van Dijk 1953: 46–47)

229. For my master, whom Nanna called by name, for the son of Enlil

230. Ibbisu'en, when he was clad in the šutur and ħur-saġ garments,

231. when you (i.e. Summer) have taken care of the bar-dul and niġlam garments,

232. when you have prepared a perfect feast for the gods,

233. when the Anuna have clothed their holy bodies,

234. in his Enamtila, the holy abode of kingship founded by An,

235. at that place of happiness they prepared a choice banquet.

236. When the šem and ala drums play together with the frets of the gudi lutes,

237. he passes the time with your delightful tigi lyres and zamzam tambourines.

238. But it is me (i.e. Winter) who made wine plentiful and provided much to eat and drink!

What is Ibbisu'en's 'House of Life'? It is mentioned elsewhere in the text as an abode of Enlil,²² and indeed it was the name of a shrine of Enlil probably in the Ekur.²³ But the palace founded by An also occurs in the hymn Šulgi A as a place of a royal banquet with the gods.

Šulgi A (ETCSL 2.4.2.01)

76. šeš ku-li-ġu₁₀ šul ^dutu-am₃

77. **e₂-gal an-ne₂ ki ġar-ra-ġu₁₀ kaš ħu-mu-un-di-ni-naġ**

78. nar-ġu₁₀ **tigi** imin-e ser₃-ra ħa-ma-an-ne-eš

79. nitadam-ġu₁₀ ki-sikil ^dinana nin ħi-li an-ki-a

80. **gu, naġ-bi-a** ħu-mu-da-an-tuš-am₃

(Delnero 2006: 1901–1903)

76. With my brother and friend, the youth Utu

77. I drank beer in my palace founded by An.

78. My singers performed songs for me to the accompaniment of seven tigi lyres.

79. My spouse, the maiden Inana, the lady, charm of heaven and earth,

80. sat with me at the banquet!

The characteristics of the 'House of Life' as an abode of kingship founded by An suggests that it is nothing else than the structure known as the 'House-Mountain Range' or Eħursaġ, the royal residence at Ur whose construction is commemorated in the year formula of the year Šulgi 10 and in brick inscriptions of Šulgi.²⁴ This palace is further mentioned in the concluding lines of the large hymn Šulgi B,²⁵ while a hymn to the Moon-god makes it clear that Enamtila was a by-name of this seat of Ur III kingship.²⁶

22 Line 70: e₂-nam-ti-la e₂ ^den-lil₂-la₂-še₃ nidba na-gid₂-i, '(Summer) dragged offerings to Enlil's shrine Enamtila'; lines 105–106: e₂-nam-ti-la e₂ ^den-lil₂-la₂-še₃ / e₂-me-eš en-te-en-bi-da maš₂ kadra si ba-ni-in-sa₂-sa₂-eš, 'Summer and Winter drove the goats, (their) gifts, to Enlil's shrine Enamtila.' But cf. line 67 where the structure is also called the holy abode of kingship: e₂-nam-ti-la ki-tuš ku₃ nam-lugal-la bara₂ maħ-a tum₂-ma, 'Enamtila, the holy seat of kingship, fit for magnificent daises.'

23 George 1993: 130 (no. 848). Klein 2014: 295–296 provides a detailed overview of the attestations of the Enamtila in Sumerian literature.

24 George 1993: 131 (no. 854), 100 (no. 474); Frayne 1997: 98–99.

25 See Castellino 1972: 240.

26 Note also the occurrence of the Enamtila as Ibbisu'en's palace in lines 105–106 of the Sumer and Ur Lament (ETCSL 2.2.3):

^di-bi₂-^dsuen e₂-gal ni₂-te-na i-si-iš ba-ni-in-la₂-la₂ e₂-nam-ti-la ša₃ ħul₂-la-ka-na er₂ gig mu-un-še₃-še₈

'Ibbisu'en was sitting in anguish alone in his palace. In the Enamtila, the place of his delight, he wept bitterly' (Michalowski 1989: 42). Cf. the translation by Attinger (2015): 'Ib-bi-Sîn plongeait son palais dans les gémissements, lui-même versant des larmes douloureuses sur l'Enamtila qui avait réjoui son coeur.' There is also administrative evidence for the

21 See Vanstiphout 1992a: 14–15.

Šulgi B (ETCSL 2.4.2.02)

377. ^dšul-gi me-en e₂-ĝu₁₀ e₂-**hur-saĝ** e₂-gal e₂-gal-bi-im
 378. **ki-tuš nam-lugal-ĝa**₂ za₃-mi₂ gal-gal-la-kam
 (Castellino 1972: 68)

377. I am Šulgi, and my house Eḫursaĝ is the palace of palaces.

378. My royal residence is beyond all praise.

Nanna O, Segment B (ETCSL 4.13.15)

18. e₂-**hur-saĝ** e₂ **lugal-la**-še₃
 19. e₂-**nam-ti-la** nun šul-gi-še₃ in-ĝe₂₆-e-re₇-en-de₃-en
 (Sjöberg 1977: 9–10)

18. To the Eḫursaĝ, house of the king,

19. to the Enamtila of prince Šulgi we go!

The debate between Summer and Winter clearly plays on the fact that Enamtila was an epithet of the Eḫursaĝ and by referring to the homonymous sanctuary of Enlil, who is the arbiter of the debate, the text apparently attempts to identify Ibbisu'en with Enlil, whom it calls the king's father.

However, intertextual relations between literary debates and royal praise poems reach well beyond the characteristics and epithets of the royal residence. If the vocabulary and context of the previously quoted lines 236–238 from Summer and Winter are compared to the corresponding hymnic statements (see already lines 78–80 from Šulgi A above), a close parallel between the depiction of royal banquet and religious ritual emerges. As in the following passage from Šulgi A which describes how the ruler discharged his cultic duties in the Moon-god's temple at Ur.

Šulgi A (ETCSL 2.4.2.01)

48. e₂-kiš-nu-ĝal₂-la ḥa-ba-ku₄-re-en
 49. e₂ ^dsuen-na tur₃ i₃ gal-gal-la ḥe₂-ĝal₂-la ḥe₂-bi₂-du₈
 49a. gu₄ ḥa-ba-ni-gaz udu ḥa-ba-ni-šum
 50. **šem**₅ ^{kuš}a₂-**la**₂-e še₂₆ ḥa-ba-gi₄
 51. **tigi niĝ**₂-**du**₁₀-**ge** si ḥa-ba-ni-sa₂
 52. ^dšul-gi lu₂ niĝ₂ **lu-lu-a me-en** ninda ĝeš ḥa-ba-ni-tag
 (Delnero 2006: 1887–1889)

48. I entered into the Ekišnuĝal

49. (and) filled the house of Su'en, a byre yielding a lot of fat, with abundance.

49a. I slaughtered oxen there, I butchered sheep there,

50. I made the šem and ala drums resound,

51. I made the pleasant tigi lyre play properly.

52. I am Šulgi who provides everything plentifully, (so) I offered food there!

This kind of intertextuality strongly suggests that royal banquets were very formal gatherings of the state's elite including perhaps foreign envoys and that they resembled a religious ritual. The divine persona of the

Eḫursaĝ and Enamtila from the capital: UET 3, 915: 4 (Amar-su'ena 01-07, Eḫursaĝ); UET 3, 861: 2 (Ibbisu'en 16-09, Eḫursaĝ); UET 3, 1495 r. 5 (Ibbisu'en 16-11, Enamtila). For further references see Michalowski 1989: 81.

king would have been honoured not only by instrumental music, but also by the performance of hymns and disputations asserting his ability to control the visible universe.²⁷ The next example makes it clear what were the lyrics of the music genres performed at such banquets.²⁸

Šulgi E (ETCSL 2.4.2.05)

53. **en**₃-**du-ĝu**₁₀ a-da-ab ḥe₂-em **tigi** ma-al-ga-tum ḥe₂-em
 54. ser₃-gid₂-da **ar**₂ **nam-lugal-la**
 55. šumun-ša₄ kun-ĝar bal-bal-e ḥe₂-em
 56. ge-gid₂ **za-am-za-am** ḥe₂-em
 57. ^{ĝeš-tu}ĝeštu-ge nu-dib-be₂ ka-ta nu-šub-bu-de₃

53. My hymns, be they adab, be they tigi or malgatum,

54. be they sergida praise of kingship,

55. šumunša, kuṅgar or balbale,

56. be they gidid or zamzam –

57. so that they never pass out of memory, never fall into oblivion.²⁹

3.3. OB tablet inventories

After considering the intertextuality of Sumerian literary debates referring to an Ur III king with the royal hymns, the question may be asked if there is still more evidence for the relationship of those two text groups, and thereby for the argument that the former were connected with Ur III royal ideology and court ceremonial.

Some clues may be found in OB tablet inventories. These are lists of Sumerian literary compositions used in OB scribal schools for the instruction of advanced apprentices.³⁰ While the modern reader has difficulties to discern the relationship between the groupings of incipits even in the best preserved inventories,³¹ the sequential order of individual compositions was apparently guided by a number of criteria including thematic similarities and possibly also intertextual relations between some compositions.³² The place of the debates within tablet inventories might therefore help us understand how those texts were perceived by OB scholars and their students. First of all, the disputations are not listed in the sequence of the so-called Dialogues,

27 One might even ponder the chanting of self-laudatory passages from royal hymns, i.e. the 1st sg. parts of e.g. Šulgi B, by the crown prince or a substitute singer in front of the ruling sovereign, his family, provincial governors, army generals and other notables, which would have emphatically affirmed the continuity of the dynasty and its divine kingship.

28 For the music genres found in the quoted passages see Shehata 2009: 227–234, 251–262, 274–278, 293–301. On the ala and šem instruments see Mirelman 2014.

29 A critical edition of the Šulgi E hymn is lacking. Some passages including the quoted one have often been translated and discussed. See Klein 1989: 298; Metcalf 2015: 144.

30 For a recent reassessment of OB lists of Sumerian literary texts as tablet inventories rather than curricular catalogues see Delnero 2010. Cf. the overview of earlier opinions on those lists and the critical remarks to Delnero's study in Ludwig 2012: 201–209. See also below with note 38.

31 Delnero 2010: 36–37.

32 See Delnero 2010: 44: 'In other instances, groupings are not marked formally, but according to thematic or graphic criteria. These include groupings of compositions that are connected by a theme, such as a common subject or protagonist (thematic grouping) [...].'

Diatribes and other Eduba compositions to which they are often counted by modern scholars.³³ Instead, they appear in clusters of heroic, hymnic and lamentation literature.

'Ur Catalogue' (U2, ETCSL 0.2.04)

15. ħur-saġ an ki-bi-da-ke₄ (Sheep & Grain, no king mentioned by name)
 16. ^den-lil₂ su₃-ra₂-še₃ (Enlil A)
 17. saġ-ki gid₂-da (Curse of Agade)
 18. ^ġesal-e ^ġesal-e (Hoe & Plough, no king mentioned by name)
 19. u₄ ul-e re-da (Bird & Fish, Šulgi mentioned)
 20. ki-ur₃ gal-e (Tree & Reed, Šulgi mentioned)
 21. e₂-u₄-nir (Temple Hymns)
 22. an-ne₂ nam-nir-ra (Summer & Winter, Ibbisu'en mentioned)
- (Kramer 1961: 171)

The quoted lines are preceded by a group of Sumerian tales of Gilgameš and major hymns to Inana and Nun-gal, while they are followed either by a hymn to Nanna or the Keš Temple Hymn, upon which comes the incipit of the Sumerian King List. Thus, the cluster containing the incipits of debates with an Ur III royal name is surrounded by compositions of some importance for Ur III royal ideology.

The cluster itself contains two texts whose significance for Ur III symbolic politics is also widely recognized, and which are attested already in Ur III versions (the Curse of Agade and Temple Hymns).³⁴

'Louvre Catalogue' (L, ETCSL 0.2.02)

16. e ^ġesal-e al-e (Hoe & Plough, no king mentioned by name)
 17. lugal-e mu-ni niġ₂-ul-e (Šulgi B)
 18. lugal-e u₄ me-lim₄-bi 'nir'-ġal₂ (Ninurta's Exploits)
 19. iri na-nam (Nanše A or Enlil & Ninlil)
 20. u₄ ul re-ta (Bird & Fish, Šulgi mentioned)
 21. ki-ur₃ gal-e (Tree & Reed, Šulgi mentioned)
 22. u₄ ul an ki-ta (Lugalbanda I)
- (Kramer 1942: 17–18)

It is difficult to establish the sequence of the preceding grouping(s) because the incipit used in lines 7, 14 and 15 is attested for more compositions but the occurrence of Gilgameš and Ĥuwawa A, Sheep and Grain, and the Curse of Agade in lines 10–12 is noteworthy with respect to the 'Ur Catalogue' discussed above.

The quoted cluster is followed by the incipits of Lugalbanda II, Enmerkara and the Lord of Arata, Enmerkara and En-suĥkeš-ana, upon which come the city laments, Summer and Winter (l. 30) and the Temple Hymns. Again, the cluster is surrounded by pieces of fundamental importance for Ur III royal ideology, par-

ticularly the tales of Enmerkara which are in essence literary disputations too.

The reason why Summer and Winter should not follow the other debates mentioning an Ur III king but be appended to the group of city laments concluded with the incipit of the Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur, might have a thematic and intertextual basis too. Both the Sumer & Ur Lament and Summer & Winter mention the last king of the dynasty, Ibbisu'en, and his palace Enamtila, even though in contrasting contexts.³⁵

The quoted lines contain two compositions closely connected with royal ideology and attested in Ur III versions (Lugale and Lugalbanda I).³⁶ Moreover, the incipits of debates mentioning Šulgi and the royal palace are preceded by the initial line of hymn Šulgi B, a central piece of the Šulgi corpus, which includes a praise of the king's residence.³⁷

'Nippur Catalogue' (N2, ETCSL 0.2.01)

25. e ^ġesal-e ^ġesal-e (Hoe & Plough, no king mentioned by name)
 26. lugal-e mu-ni niġ₂-ul-e (Šulgi B)
 27. u₄ ul re-ta (Bird & Fish, Šulgi mentioned)
 28. ki-ur₃ gal-e (Tree & Reed, Šulgi mentioned)
 29. an-ne₂ nam-nir-ġal₂ (Summer & Winter, Ibbisu'en mentioned)
- (Kramer 1942: 15)

This sequence occurs in a grouping separated from the other sections by rulings. The order of the four preceding incipits is unclear (l. 21–24), since three of them are attested for more compositions, while one is unidentified. The final line of the grouping lists the incipit of Heron and Turtle (l. 30).

The previous section contains three tales of Gilgameš (l. 11, 12, 14), Sheep and Grain (l. 17), and the Curse of Agade (l. 18). The following section consists largely of incipits of city laments (l. 32–34) and the Uruk Cycle compositions (l. 38–40).

The quoted sequence shows an obvious similarity to the 'Louvre Catalogue' in the separation of Hoe and Plough which does not mention a monarch by name from the other debates which do mention an Ur III king. The common interfering incipit in both inventories is that of the hymn Šulgi B. In the 'Nippur Catalogue' it is directly followed by three of the four known debates mentioning an Ur III sovereign. All those three include references to the palace, mentioned by name in two of them (Tree and Reed: Eĥursaġ; Summer and Winter: Enamtila), as well as in the hymn Šulgi B (Eĥursaġ).

Although these clues must be taken with caution, since the exact function of tablet inventories remains unclear, I believe that a sequence of incipits must have

33 For the best preserved inventory of those compositions see the 'Nippur Catalogue' (N2, ETCSL 0.2.01), lines 50–62 (Kramer 1942: 16). For an example of the modern perception see Rubio 2009: 27, 57–59 (under the heading 'Paradigmatic compositions'). On some formal and structural differences between the disputations and dialogues see Vanstiphout 1992b: 353.

34 For the Ur III manuscripts of both pieces see Rubio 1999: 121–155.

35 See the discussion of the banquet scene in Summer & Winter and the pertinent line from the Sumer and Ur Lament above (with note 26).

36 For the Ur III manuscripts of both pieces see Rubio 1999: 85–120, 192–201. The Ur III dating of the Lugale fragment is not entirely certain.

37 See the quotations from Bird & Fish and Šulgi B above and from Tree & Reed below.

been meaningful to those who were supposed to work with the texts, no matter if they were to find them, copy them, or to recall and write them down as part of their education, i.e. the compositions listed in such a cluster must have been perceived as related to each other.³⁸ While the subtleties of that relationship are likely to elude us forever, the evidence of the inventories seems to illustrate the awareness of OB scribes that the original place of the debates mentioning an Ur III king (and his palace) was among compositions which we would call propagandistic.

4 The debate between Tree and Reed

Among the debates mentioning an Ur III king, the disputation between Tree and Reed appears to be the most ideologically charged text. In the following, the structure and content of the composition will be summarized and the points directly bearing on the present discussion will be highlighted.

The poem opens with a cosmogonic introduction describing the preparations of the Earth for a cosmic marriage with Heaven, which leads to the birth of vegetation, i.e. Tree and Reed. Next, both contenders are introduced, whereupon we are told that all cultivated plots in the country surrendered their yield to divine Šulgi.³⁹

Tree & Reed (unpub. ms. by M. Civil)

23. ^dezinam₂ diġir usu kalam-ma-ke₄ saġ an-še₃
nam-il₂
24. ki-šar₂ gan₂ zi-de₃ ^dšul-gi-ra gur₇ mu-na-ab-dub-
dub⁴⁰
(AO 6715, TCL 16, 53; Ni 9684, ISET 1: 87)

23. Ezinam, the deity of the Land's sustenance, raised
the head heavenward.
24. All the tilled fields heaped up their produce for Šul-
gi.

Already this early in the composition royal ideology appears. But then Tree grabs a goat and brings it to Šulgi as an offering. Šulgi is a deity who receives offerings and his palace is therefore considered a 'shrine', a religious structure. After all, a temple hymn was created about Šulgi's palace and added to the collection of the Sumerian temple hymns.⁴¹

29. ġeš-e maš₂ kadra-ka-ni gaba-na i-im-tab
30. eš₃ e₂-ġur-saġ ^dšul-gi-ra mu-na-ni-in-ku₄-ku₄
(AO 6715, TCL 16, 53; Ni 9655, ISET 2: 73)

29. Tree holds a kid, a gift of his, to his breast,
30. he brought it to Šulgi in the shrine Eġursaġ.

After a badly damaged list of reed products and implements, Reed brings his own offerings to the palace. Upon seeing him, Tree attacks Reed.

42. u₄-bi-a ġeš-e e₂-gal-la ku₄-ku₄-da-ni
43. ge ġeš-ra igi-še₃ ba-na-ab-dib
44. ġeš-e ge-er ki im-mi-ib-la₂ dur₂-ra-ni-še₃ mu-un-
gi₄
(AO 6715, TCL 16, 53; CBS 9857, PBS 13, 42)

42. While Tree was entering the palace,
43. Reed passed in front of Tree.
44. Tree threw Reed to the ground, sent him back home.⁴²

They fight briefly and Tree bursts into his first insulting speech. In it he boasts about providing material for the construction of Šulgi's residence. Reed feels that to counter this heavyweight point he must come up with some weapon of mass destruction: the reed-stylus of the scribes.

93. ge-dub-sar-ra inim-ma-še₃ en-bi im-x-[x]
(Kramer 1981: 138, fig. 13, right centre fragment)

93. The stylus *records* the words.⁴³

The whole answer of Reed is badly damaged but he speaks more about styli and tablets, as well as of ditches and holy boats of Šulgi.

There follows a broken second speech of Tree which employs names of trees and reeds taken from the lexical lists,⁴⁴ and ends with an enumeration of fruits, honey and other delicacies provided by Tree for Šulgi's banquets. The palace setting of the debate is reiterated here.

184. ^dšul-gi-re e₂-gal du₁₀-ga-na ġešbun ħa-ba-ni-ib-
be₂
(UET 6, 194; UM 29-16-217, CDLI P229451)

184. Šulgi throws a party in his pleasant palace.

Tree cannot help himself but add some terrible insults of Reed as well. In his second answer, again badly broken, the poor Reed desperately tries to counterbalance the contest which has developed in a less than promising way for him. This passage also makes frequent use of lexical material.

After Reed has finished his speech, preparations for a festival take place. This passage is very damaged too but the mention not only of the Eġursaġ but this time also of the 'shrine' Puzriš-Daġān is clear enough.

38 Delnero 2010: 48–49: 'Grouping entries with the same sign or signs and by thematic similarities could have served as an effective mnemonic device for remembering groups of entries, facilitating tablet retrieval.' On the other hand, such criteria may equally well have served the apprentices to recall related compositions, thereby facilitating the task of writing their 'Arbeitspensum' (for the term see Ludwig 2012: 208–209) down from memory, which would further imply that (some of) the groupings were devised by the teachers. In any case, the logic of grouping related compositions together seems clear enough.

39 For a reconstruction of the structure of the whole introductory passage see Vanstiphout 1990: 294–295.

40 Cf. Vanstiphout 1990: 308, note 87.

41 Sjöberg/Bergmann 1969: 24 (no. 9).

42 Cf. Vanstiphout 1990: 282 with note 76; Vanstiphout 1992b: 340 with note 7.

43 The tentative translation of this line is based on the assumption that en is a phonetic writing of en₃, the nominal element of the compound verb en₃ ... tar, 'to pay attention', 'to inquire', for which see, e.g., Attinger 2004: 81 and Gudea St. B vii 38–41:

niġ₂-gi-gi-na

^dnanše

^dnin-ġir₂-su-ka-še₃

en₃ im-ma-ši-tar

'I paid attention to the justice ordained by Nanše and Ningir-su' (Edzard 1997: 36).

44 On the use of lexical list material in the debates see Vanstiphout 1991: 32; Vanstiphout 1992b: 351.

233. u₄-ba e₂-ḥur-saĝ izim-m[a ...] eš₃ puzur₄-iš^d-da-gan-še₃ [...]
(Ni 9655, ISET 2: 73)

233. At that time, Eḫursaĝ ... in a feast, ... to the shrine Puzriš-Dagān.

Here we find another structure, universally known as the administrative centre of the Ur III state, ready to offer shelter to the god-king. As T. Sharlach has argued in her lecture at the RAI in Warsaw, the Puzriš-Dagān complex is likely to have included a royal residence where the king could stay during his apparently frequent cultic journeys between Ur and Nippur which found the most vivid and odd depiction in Šulgi A, a piece certainly composed in the Ur III period.⁴⁵ And it is intertextuality with Šulgi A again which can be discerned in the broken banquet scene that follows.

237. šem₃ ^{kuš}a₂-la₂ [...] BALAĜ [...]

238. tigi niĝ₂ du₁₀-ge [...] mu-na- [...]

239. ^{kuš}a₂-la₂-e tigi maḥ g[u₃ ...]
(CBS 2215; CDLI P259231, STVC 58)

237. The šem and ala drums...

238. The pleasant tigi lyres ... for him,

239. the ala drums, the magnificent tigi lyres *resounded*.

The tigi is even fitted with the same characteristics as in line 51 of Šulgi A quoted earlier in this paper. At the banquet, the satisfied king states that Reed belongs in the hands of the musician, referring perhaps to a flute, which gives Reed some hope, so Reed complains about the bitter insults spoken by Tree whom he calls his ‘subordinate’. Thereafter, both contenders ask the king for a decision.

245. lugal-me di-me ḥe₂-ku₅-de₃ ka-aš-me ḥe₂-bar-re

246. ^dšul-gi-re mu-un-ne-ni-ib-gi₄-gi₄⁴⁶
(UM 29-16-217, CDLI P229451; Ni 4463, ISET 2: 73; Ni 9676, ISET 1: 85)

245. May our master decide our case, may he render a verdict for us!

246. Šulgi replied to them:

The verdict is a shortcut of royal investiture imagery, containing a clear pun on the initial line of the Sumerian King List.

247. ĝeš ^{šes}gu-za maḥ nam-lugal-la-kam an-ta im-ta-an-e₁₁

248. aĝa ni₂ gur₃-ru su-zi il₂-la-am₃ niĝ₂ nu-um-da-sa₂

249. ĝedru gal mu maḥ pa₃-da-am₃ ni₂ gal im-da-ri

250. ge-kid an-ta an-dul₃-e-eš ḥe₂-em-ak

251. ki-ta ša-ra-aḥ-bi-še₃ ḥe₂-em-ši-ri

252. ĝeš-e ge-da a-da-min₃ du₁₁-ga

253. ĝeš ge-a diri-ga-ba

254. kur gal a-a ^den-lil₂ za₃-mi₂

(UM 29-16-217, CDLI P229451; Ni 4463, ISET 2: 73; Ni 9676, ISET 1: 85)

247. Tree brought the splendid throne of kingship down from heaven,

248. and the crown imbued with awe, full of dread, which nothing can equal,

249. as well as the great sceptre, called by a magnificent name, which inspires great fear.

250. The reed-mat will work as a shade above,

251. while below it will be laid down as his (i.e. Tree's) decoration!

252. In the dispute between Tree and Reed,

253. Tree was superior to Reed.

254. Praise be to the Great Mountain, Father Enlil!⁴⁷

What conclusions can be drawn from the outline of the Tree and Reed disputation presented above? The structure of the poem is the same as in other disputations mentioning an Ur III king, although this text contains only two longish speeches by each contender. The initial ten lines form a cosmogonic introduction which might hold the record of being the most frequently scrutinized part of a Sumerian literary text whose remaining two hundred plus lines have been almost universally ignored at the same time.⁴⁸ If examined in its full context the introduction does not explain the origins of the world but provides a dramatic primeval setting for the disputation very much in keeping with what follows in the text.⁴⁹

The Eḫursaĝ palace of Šulgi is depicted as the centre of the universe,⁵⁰ a sacred home of a god on Earth who himself is mentioned fourteen times in the poem. The disputation presents the divine king as a transcendent, mythical figure asserting control over basic forces and entities of nature, as shown at least in the lines quoted above (24, 29–30, 245), as well as in the verdict.

The use of lexical material suggests that the text originated in the school milieu, not at the royal court.⁵¹ Thus, the composition could be a product of Šulgi's state-sponsored academies founded by him at Nippur and Ur according to hymn Šulgi B; or it could be written by the literati once in the service of Gudea of Lagaš; or it could be the work of scholars from (family-run) scribal workshops in Nippur or Ur – we do not know.⁵² In any

47 Cf. Vanstiphout 1990: 308, note 88.

48 See most recently Lisman 2013: 39–40, 43–44, 70 with note 260, 251–255 with references. See also Mittermayer 2012: 252–253 for a translation and discussion of lines 6–10.

49 See already Vanstiphout 1990: 288–291.

50 The central place of the Eḫursaĝ in the disputation and its possible relation to the praise of the palace in Šulgi B has been noted in passing by several scholars. See Hallo 1962: 29, note 214; Castellino 1972: 240; Limet 1975: 81.

51 See Alster/Vanstiphout 1987: 41–42, note 10. However, their point about the name of Šulgi having been inserted in two disputations because of his fame in OB Babylonia is refuted by the evidence and argumentation in the present paper. Why were Urnamma and Ibbisu'en mentioned in other disputations? Were they equally famous? Sallaberger (2011–2012: 276, 278) counts Tree & Reed and Bird & Fish among Šulgi's court literature, Hoe and Plough among the court literature of Išmedaĝan of Isin.

52 On the literary evidence for Šulgi's academies, not (yet) attested archaeologically, see Volk 2000: 1–10 with note 52 but especially George 2005. Note the arguments against the existence of (large-scale) state-sponsored schools in the Ur III period in Brisch 2011: 709. On the marked influence of the literature commissioned by Gudea on the hymns of Šulgi, which implies

45 See Rubio 1999: 202–210; Sallaberger 2011–2012: 276–277. For Šulgi's palaces see now Sharlach 2017a: 35–45. For Puzriš-Dagān as a seat of kingship see now Sharlach 2017b.

46 Cf. Vanstiphout 1990: 308, notes 88–89.

case, Ur III academics clearly knew well what kind of literature the court expected them to compose and they readily did so.

The occurrence of Puzriš-Dagān in the debate provides a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the text, i.e. from the year Šulgi 39 onwards, and also renders OB origin of the poem implausible because the very specific allusions to Šulgi's royal households are not likely to have been made or understood by OB scribes copying the text some three centuries after the Eḫursaġ and Puzriš-Dagān were last in use.

This disputation suggests more than any other that literary debates were performed at royal banquets and the king took an active part in the performance by pronouncing the verdict,⁵³ whereby he eliminated the chaos threat arisen from the quarrel of the archetypes of two indispensable entities of the Sumero-Akkadian cosmos. In so doing, he reinforced his divine stature vis-à-vis the elite audience, proving his capacity as the ultimate judge and manager of all key affairs in the visible universe, who was predestined to defend order against chaos.

The composition therefore seems to have been an important tool of symbolic politics and royal propaganda, which is most explicitly shown in Šulgi's verdict. The choice of Tree which provides material for the regalia or weapons, and Reed of which scribal tools and some musical instruments are made was quite clever because it sternly reminded the political (viz. military) and intellectual elite participants of Šulgi's banquets of their role in the world: to be unconditional supporters of royal power.

5 Conclusion

Ur III administrative texts combined with the palace setting and banquet scenes of relevant debates suggest the performance of those compositions at royal ceremonial occasions. Intertextual relations with royal hymns show that those debates do contain an ideological semantic layer.

Royal banquets seem to have been formalized events where the deification of Ur III rulers was promoted by the performance of royal hymns, including those in the Šulgi corpus that mention Lugalbanda and Gilgameš, and debates, including the tales of Enmerkara, in order to assert their image of infallible managers of earthly and cosmic affairs and successors of legendary Sumerian heroes.

Only those kings who were building or trying to save the legitimacy of the dynasty were mentioned in the debates. Amarsu'ena, who apparently did not commission

the involvement of Gudea's scholars in the composition of the Šulgi corpus after Lagaš was turned into a mere province of the Ur III state, see Klein 1989. For the hypothesis of Ur III scribal education by way of 'situated learning' and 'legitimate peripheral participation', when learning does not take place in a classroom of a large academic institution but through close interaction of the apprentice with advanced scribes and experts at work, see Robson 2008: 52–53, 84.

53 See Hallo 1970: 117; cf. Vanstiphout 1992a: 12.

any hymns in praise of himself,⁵⁴ seems to have relied on the ideological foundations laid by Šulgi. According to Wilcke's interpretation of Enmerkara and En-suḫkeš-ana, Amarsu'ena liked to nourish the mythical link of his dynasty to the legendary rulers of Uruk in the heroic past, of which the Ur III state was meant to be a continuation. Šusu'en's symbolic politics was entirely different. His hymns do not resemble the Urnamma and Šulgi classic at all, while he preferred to have his ideology proclaimed in Sargonic-style inscriptions.

How should we explain the role of Ibbisu'en in Summer and Winter? Having witnessed the decline of royal power and a danger of famine, the king's academics seem to have found no better way out of the ideological dilemma than to depict the sovereign as a ruler and beneficiary of the natural cycle with many images of plenty included in a poem perhaps staged by an ancient counterpart of Potemkin villagers.

While the practice of debate performance might have continued in early OB times, the context was different, as suggested by line 84 of Išme-dagān and Enlil's Chariot which makes a reference to the disputation between Hoe and Plough, whereupon follow images of agricultural work and plenty.⁵⁵ Thus, the ruler's traditional role as the mediator of divine blessings (fertility) was highlighted, while the features of his deified persona were no longer at the forefront.

It is possible to explain this by the unstable nature of Isin-Larsa divine kingship. While the Ur III tradition of portraying the monarch in royal hymns continued, gradually giving way to an even earlier tradition of large royal inscriptions, the use of literary debates and their performance as royal propaganda might have seemed fanciful to rulers who could not be sure if a few weeks after such a theatre they would still be in control of Nippur.

But disputations mentioning a king were quite popular in the Edubas where their other semantic layers could be exploited. This applies not only to their didactic value but also to notions of competition and exclusivity, inherent in much of the Sumerian literary lore of the time. The comic dimension of the debates, hardly an issue in the original setting of those texts, may also have played a role in their preservation by OB scribes. After all, propagandistic texts are always taken very serious-

54 Note that the lack of texts glorifying Amarsu'ena may have been brought about by Šusu'en's policy of eradicating the memory of his predecessor, for which see Sallaberger 1999: 167. It is impossible to resolve this issue on the basis of the available evidence.

55 Lines 84–86:

[^ges]l¹-e ^ges²apin-e ṛ^ges³ nam⁴-erin² a-da-min³ ḥa-mu-ra-an-e lugal-e inim⁴ en-lil²-la²-še³ ḡessal^{sal4} ba-ši-in-ak⁴ nin-urta-ke⁴ ḡes²apin ku³-ge si nam-mi-in-sa² ṛ^gan² zi na-ur⁴-ru

'Let the hoe (and) the plough, the implements of the working people, have a contest before you. The king paid attention to Enlil's instructions, Ninurta put the holy plough in good order, and ploughs the fertile field' (Civil 1968: 5, 7). Hoe and Plough does not mention a king by name but it refers to the performance of the rituals to open a new agricultural year with the ploughing of the first furrow by the (Ur III, OB) monarch himself. See Sharlach 2005: 6, and above with note 10.

ly by the society which creates them, while outsiders and future generations burst into laughter after reading only a few lines.

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Hittites in North-Central Anatolia

A compilation of the current evidence

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Abstract: This paper presents a summary of the state of research on the archaeology and historical geography of the region of North-Central Anatolia during the Hittite period. By reevaluating the data known so far, as well as taking into account new finds and results from recent excavations in the region, a thorough and comprehensive historical and archaeological synthesis is presented.

Keywords: Anatolia, Hittite geography, history, archaeology, Bronze Age.

In recent years, excavations and surveys in Anatolia focusing on the Hittite period have gained a momentum. As a result of this research, important new results have been achieved regarding Hittite culture and historical geography. In Central Anatolia and the regions north of it, which is to be considered as the heartland of the Hittites, e.g. at sites such as Boğazköy, Alacahöyük, Kültepe/Kaneš and Ortaköy/Şapinuwa, important studies are being conducted. Furthermore, archaeological excavations and surveys are being carried out in Eski-yapar, where the excavations have recently resumed, and at Uşaklı/Kuşaklı Höyük near the region of Yozgat, Vezirköprü-Oymaağaç Höyük/Nerik? (Höyük Tepe), and Oluz Höyük near Amasya (see **Fig. 1**).

North-Central Anatolia is the least known region of Anatolian Archaeology today. At the same time, it is the key region where the Hatti (Hattian) civilization emerged in 3rd millennium BC and where the Hittite Kingdom was founded and expanded into an empire during the 2nd millennium BC. Two important rivers of the region, the Kızılırmak (Maraşantiya) and Yeşilirmak (Kummešmaha) rivers, were the determining factors in the formation and continuity of the cultures in the region. In the river valleys, dense and important settlements are found.

The numerous surveys and scientific archaeological mission in Central Black Sea Region during the recent years have strongly proven the Hittite presence there, especially in the Samsun and the Amasya regions. For the time being, the site of Oymaağaç Höyük is the only settlement in the center of the Karadeniz region where Hittite cuneiform tablets were recovered other than the settlement in Maşat Höyük/Tapigga in Tokat.

During the excavations in 2005 at Oymaağaç Höyük, located in the district of Vezirköprü near Samsun, important results regarding the Hittite Imperial period, have been achieved.¹ A temple with dimensions of ca.

40 × 40 m was discovered on the top of the mound. The temple walls were built with a timber framing building technique also using mudbricks and stones. The small finds, i.e. seal impressions and cuneiform tablet fragments prove that this temple belonged to the thunder god of Nerik, the holy city of the Hittites. There is a courtyard in front of the southern corner of temple. In this courtyard, numerous miniature pottery vessels and fragments of a bull figurine – probably depicting the sacred animals of the thunder gods Ḫurri and Serri – have been encountered.

Another important discovery at Oymaağaç Höyük is the underground staircase at the eastern side of the temple, which resembles the well-known poterns at Boğazköy and Alacahöyük. At the end of the staircase, an underground room full of water most probably existed. The cultic sanctuary and the underground structure clearly show that this settlement was an important Hittite cult center. The mention of the city of Nerik and the its gods in cuneiform tablet fragments from Oymaağaç Höyük proves that this settlement is indeed Nerik, the “holy city” of the Hittites.

Geographically being close to the region of Çorum, where the major Hittite settlements existed in the 2nd millennium BCE, the region of Amasya has great potential for Hittite studies. Viewed as a whole, the region of North-Central Anatolia offers five consecutive settlements in a north-south axis only five kilometers apart from each another. When aligned from north to south, the sites of Oluz Höyük, Doğantepe and Ayvalıpınar Höyük would seem to mark the northern route of the two known important ways coming from the south, i.e. the Hatti heartland.

The first systematic excavations in the region started at Oluz Höyük in 2007, which is located to the 25 kilometers southwest of Amasya on the western border of the fertile Plain of Geldingen, under the direc-

1 Czichon 2009: 25–31; Czichon 2010: 17–30; Czichon 2013:

298–309; Forlanini 2011: 119–135.



Fig. 1: North-Central Anatolia during the Hittite period (courtesy of the author).



Fig. 2: Oluz Höyük, general view, Amasya (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

tion of Ş. Dönmez.² At the site, ten architectural layers, from the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Ages, have been exposed (Fig. 2). Phase III at Oluz Höyük is dated to the Hittite period. Stone seals, a bronze sickle, crescent-shaped loom weights and Hittite pottery fragments recovered in this culture layer point to the fact

² Dönmez/Naza-Dönmez 2007: 49–74; Dönmez/Naza-Dönmez 2009a: 395–421; Dönmez/Naza-Dönmez 2009b: 125–170; Dönmez 2010; Dönmez 2011: 103–129; Dönmez 2012: 151–179; Dönmez/Yurtsever Beyazıt 2013: 165–192.

that Oluz Höyük was an important Hittite settlement.³ Remains of a heavily fragmented structure were uncovered in Trench B on the slope of the site, which was executed in a step trench technique. Two rooms of this building featuring stone foundations and mudbrick walls have been discovered (Fig. 3). The remains of an oven in oval shape (ca. 1.60 × 1.25 m in diameter) adjacent to the eastern wall of the structure was uncov-

³ Dönmez/Yurtsever Beyazıt 2015: 54.



Fig. 3: Trench B, Hittite Imperial period structure, Oluz Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Fig. 4: Arrow head, bronze, Hittite Imperial period, Oluz Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Figs. 5a-5b: Button-shaped seal, stone, Hittite Imperial period, Oluz Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Fig. 6: Sickle, bronze, Hittite Imperial period, Oluz Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

ered. In and around the structure, many wheel-made pottery fragments and a leaf shaped bronze arrow head were also found (Fig. 4). The small finds and pottery from Oluz Höyük are also very important for dating the settlement. One of the two stone seals found in the settlement is button shaped and has a hole stringing.⁴ On one side (Side A) of the seal, a zigzag band served as a border and triangles with hatching can also be seen

(Figs. 5a-5b). The middle part was left empty. On the other side (Side B), a deer in a frame, a tree on the right, a spica-like plant on the left, and a star and a triangle on the top of the seal can be seen. The seal, which has parallels at Boğazköy, Kuşaklı and Kaman-Kalehöyük, dates to the Hittite Imperial period. The second stamp seal unfortunately is too fragmented to allow for a clear description. Other than the two seals, a bronze sickle (Fig. 6), with similar examples from Central Anatolian Hittite settlements, and crescent-shaped loom weights

⁴ Doğan-Alparslan/Alparslan 2010: 87-90.



Fig. 7: Crescent-shaped loomweight, clay, Hittite Imperial period, Oluz (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

(Fig. 7) are the other important finds from the Hittite Imperial period.

The Hittite pottery from Oluz Höyük was manufactured on the fast-turning wheel, the clay used is thin-mineral tempered, with very fine coating and well fired (Fig. 8). The small finds and the pottery fragments attest to the strong Hittite presence at the settlement of Amasya, although the excavations have not even uncovered the related cultural layers in a large area yet.

Apart from Oluz Höyük, two important settlements are located in the region. One of them is Doğantepe, where a brief rescue excavation was conducted by the Museum of Amasya (Fig. 9).⁵ The site, which is located 25 kilometers southwest of Amasya, is a large settlement, about 40 meters in height and approximately 400 × 300 meters in dimensions. Doğantepe warrants attention because of its Hittite Imperial period finds dating to the Late Bronze Age. The bronze statuette of a god and a bronze stamp seal are the important Hittite Imperial period finds from this region.⁶

The bronze statuette with a preserved height of 21.5 cm was crafted in a mould casting technique, and its arms and legs were attached with rivets (Figs. 10a–10b). The crafting technique of this statuette proves that the craftsmen of the period had an advanced knowledge of the technology of metallurgy. The statuette, with its conical hat and skirt, is thought to represent to the storm god, one of the most important gods of the Hittites and thus probably the ancient settlement at Doğantepe was indeed an important cult center in the central part of the Black Sea Region. With its finds and size, Doğantepe seems to be one of the most important settlements of North-Central Anatolia in 2nd millennium BC.

Thus, an identification with the ancient settlement of Hakmiş – even though at the moment being only a pre-



Fig. 8: Pottery sherd, Hittite Imperial period, Oluz Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

liminary consideration –, seems to be plausible.⁷ During excavations at Doğantepe undertaken by the Museum of Amasya, however, architectural remains of neither the period of the Assyrian Trade Colonies nor the Hittite period were not yet uncovered. Despite this, a button shaped stone seal (Fig. 11) and a large number of pottery fragments dating to the Hittite Imperial period were recovered. Within the pottery repertoire made of finely sifted clean clay and crafted on wheel, beak shaped spouts, spouts belonging to kettles, and shallow bowls with short, thick bases are present (Fig. 12).

Another strategically important settlement in the region is Ayvalpınar Höyük, which lies 3 kilometers northeast of the city of Gediksaray in the province of Göynücek (Fig. 13). An Old Assyrian style cylinder seal made of stone, which was accidentally found at this site and bought by the Museum of Amasya, is important, since it is dated to the Assyrian Trade Colonies period (Fig. 14).⁸

Ayvalpınar Höyük, approximately 300 × 260 m in diameters and rising ca. 10 meters above the surrounding ground level, is the most remarkable settlement site of the 2nd millennium BCE outside of Central Anatolia and in the north, given its dimensions and location. At the site, many pottery fragments dating to the Assyrian Trade Colonies period and the Hittite Imperial period were found (Fig. 15). The settlement lies ca. 60 km away from Merzifon, where copper ore deposits known to have been in use since the Early Bronze Age are located.⁹ Since it is known from the Kültepe texts that the settlement of Turhumit was an important copper production center for Assyrian traders, and since it should be located in close proximity to the copper deposits, it does not seem to be too far-fetched to identify Ayvalpınar Höyük with Turhumit.¹⁰

Another settlement that is located in North-Central Anatolia is Eskiypar. During the excavations at this

⁵ Dönmez/Özdemir 2010: 227–244.

⁶ Alp 1963: 191–243; Doğan-Alparslan 2011: 41–47.

⁷ For the identification of Doğantepe with ancient Hakmiş, see Dönmez/Özdemir 2010: 230; Ünal 2014: 327.

⁸ Doğan-Alparslan/Alparslan/Özdemir 2010: 91–96.

⁹ In his doctoral thesis, G. Barjamović (together with R. Kuzuoğlu) proposes to identify the region of Merzifon/Göynücek with Turhumit, see Barjamović 2011: 264.

¹⁰ Barjamović 2011: 241–267.



Fig. 9: Doğantepe, general view, Amasya (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Figs. 10a–10b: The Storm God statuette, bronze, Hittite Imperial period, Doğantepe (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

site, located five kilometers west of Alacahöyük in the province of Çorum, two “treasures” dating to the Hittite period were found in the late 1960s.¹¹ The excavations resumed in 2010, and specifically the finds from the Hittite period are remarkable.¹² Hittite cuneiform tablets were found at Eskiyaşar, among others mentioning the cities of Arinna and Tahurpa; clearly, these

documents will also make an important contribution to the identification of Eskiyaşar.¹³ Hittite pitchers, flasks, vases and plates are attested in great numbers. Besides these pottery finds, a bull rhyton uncovered at the site may hint to the fact that the Storm God may have been worshipped here.

Uşaklı or Kuşaklı Höyük, which was thought to be a center dedicated to the Hittite Storm God, is a newly

¹¹ Özgüç/Temizir 1993: 613.

¹² Sipahi 2010: 79–92; Sipahi 2012: 45–62.

¹³ Sipahi 2013: 247.



Fig. 11: Button shaped seal, stone, Hittite Imperial period, Doğan-tepe (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Fig. 12: Pitcher sherd, clay, Hittite Imperial period, Doğan-tepe (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Fig. 13: Ayvalıpınar Höyük, general view, Amasya (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

discovered Central Anatolian settlement, located near Mount Kerkenes in the vicinity of the city of Yozgat.¹⁴ Excavations at the site started in 2008. Hittite cuneiform tablets dating the 14th century BCE were recovered during the excavations, the studies on the tablets are still ongoing. The site, which was clearly founded at an important crossroads, is believed to be Zippalanda, which is mentioned often in Hittite texts. A monumental structure, which spans approximately 870 m² and thought to be a temple, is remarkable.

Many important results have also been achieved by the excavations carried out at Kayalıpınar, located to

the northeast of the Kızılırmak River, thus outside of the region dealt with in the present article.¹⁵

A cuneiform tablet, which was uncovered in 2014, revealed a new site identification to the historical geography of Anatolia.¹⁶ The cuneiform tablet, written in Old Assyrian, proves that Kayalıpınar is to be identified with the capital city of Šamuha, one of the most im-

¹⁴ Gurney 1995: 69–71; Corti 2010: 193–212; Mazzoni 2012: 399–413.

¹⁵ Müller-Karpe 2000: 355–365; Müller-Karpe 2006: 211–247; Müller-Karpe/Müller-Karpe 2006: 1–12; Müller-Karpe/Müller-Karpe 2009: 173–238.

¹⁶ The cuneiform tablet uncovered in Kayalıpınar was presented by the director of the excavation team, V. Müller-Karpe, at the 37th International Symposium of Excavations, Surveys and Archaeometry held in Erzurum in 2015. The publication of the proceedings of this symposium is currently in press; see now Müller-Karpe/Müller-Karpe/Kryszat 2014: 11–41 and Rieken 2014: 43–54.



Fig. 14: Cylinder seal, stone, Assyrian Trade Colonies period, Ayvalıpınar Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).



Fig. 15: Pottery sherd, Hittite Imperial period, Ayvalıpınar Höyük (courtesy of the Oluz Höyük Excavation Archive).

portant Hittite cities, from where the Hittite great kings ruled the country around 1400 BCE.

In recent years, important new results that shed new light on the religious, political and social life of the Hittite culture have been uncovered in archaeological excavations, especially in North-Central Anatolia. As can be seen, many problems concerning the localization of Hittite settlements that are mentioned in cuneiform

tablets, are partly also being solved by the ongoing archaeological studies conducted in Anatolia.

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Workshop

International Relations theory and Ancient Near Eastern history

organised by Selim F. Adalı and Lucas G. Freire

Introduction to the workshop

International Relations theory and Ancient Near Eastern history

Selim F. Adalı and Lucas G. Freire

We wish to express our thanks to the organising committee of the 61st *Recontre Assyriologique Internationale* for hosting our interdisciplinary workshop on International Relations (IR) and Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) history.¹ Participants were asked to make an explicit attempt to connect both fields, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue.

IR scholars have rarely addressed ancient history, and ANE events and patterns of political behaviour in particular.² Experts in ANE cultures and civilizations have written extensively on the relations between the great powers of Western Asia in specific periods (e.g. Bryce 2003; Liverani 2001; Podany 2010), whereas interdisciplinary endeavours combining authors and readings from both fields are unusual (but see Cohen/Westbrook 2000; 2008).

Such efforts tend to concentrate on the Late Bronze Age and the so-called Amarna system. The papers presented at the workshop have mainly followed this regional and chronological focus, while no doubt recognizing the availability of evidence for what may be loosely dubbed ‘international relations’ before and after the Amarna age. The period of Old Babylonian kings (early 2nd millennium BCE) and in particular the Mari archives offer considerable potential in this regard (e.g. Charpin/Edzard/Stol 2004). Whether the terminology and conventionalized behaviours of ‘international’ activity became more explicit in the Late Bronze Age remains to be further analysed, since a greater accumulation of analytical study and factual knowledge is re-

quired for every period of ANE history to this end.³ This is merely a reflection of how much further an interdisciplinary endeavour such as the present one could potentially go. Our workshop has raised pertinent issues that require further exploration. The papers engaged different theories of IR within the framework of ANE history.

Serdar Ş. Güner’s “The balance of power and geopolitics in the Hittite-Egypt-Mittani system” observes balancing moves and policies of geopolitical significance within the ‘triangular system’ of Egypt, Hatti, and Mittani, orbited by kingdoms such as Babylonia, Assyria, and Alašiya. The analysis traces the shift in alliances among the Mittanian, Egyptian and Hittite kingdoms. Güner traces here alignments betraying objectives of opting for the lesser of the two evils and/or the avoidance of two-front wars. These balancing moves are also known in modern strategy. Geopolitical calculations observed across history are of critical relevance to Güner’s IR theory.

In **“System and society: The Near East in the second millennium BCE”**, **Lucas G. Freire** conceives the Near East as a society of polities not only under conditions of anarchy but also with a social order embedded in multiple tiers. Freire questions the degree to which balance of power achieves stability as opposed to the roles of institutions, including covenants, gift exchange, royal marriages, war and communication between polities. Such institutions aimed to control violence, ensure the maintenance of oaths and treaties, and preserve the prerogatives of jurisdiction and spheres of influence. The paper explores whether the conscious pursuit of

1 We are grateful to Prof. Peter Machinist for presiding at the workshop as the respondent to the papers.

2 Exceptions are: Buzan/Little 2000: 163–238; Ferguson/Mansbach 1996: 65–110; Kaufman/Wohlforth 2007; Watson 1992: 18–34. International political economists have paid closer attention to ANE history. See, for example, Frank/Gills 1993; Stremelin 2008; van der Pijl 2010.

3 For example, the Early Dynastic period (early-to-late 3rd millennium BCE) also testifies to competing city-states; Van De Mierop 2004: 39–58.

these goals on the part of the ancients via institutionalised practices led to stability and order; anarchy prevented its perfect realization whereas sociability allowed for a partial realization that, to Freire, represents a challenge to “Hobbesian power-politics narratives.”

The reception of what constitutes international relations is critically engaged in Emanuel Pfoh’s “**Reconsidering International Relations in Southwest Asia during the Late Bronze Age**”. Pfoh comparatively reviews the Egyptian and Asiatic means for expressing and conducting inter-polity relations during the Late Bronze Age. Pfoh’s contribution emphasizes the need to distinguish between ancient ways of understanding what in modern concepts is referred to as ‘diplomacy’ and ‘international relations’. Drawing from studies of anthropology and ethnography, Pfoh points to the need to try to attend to the ancient meanings attributed to inter-polity relations in Southwest Asia.

Alex Aissaoui’s “**A Near Eastern states system ‘before age’: Comparing the Greek *poleis* system with Ancient Near Eastern state formation**” engages the English School in IR theory and this tradition’s emphasis on the Greek city-state culture as constitutive of a ‘nascent international society’ based on common Pan-Hellenic institutions and a common language. Aissaoui seeks to develop the premise of ‘international society’ outside of the European experience and history and argues that an interdependent and multicultural pre-modern state environment is observed in the Near East dating back to the third and second millennia BCE. Balance of power strategies, sovereignty, treaty-making between equals and vassals were the key features of a “great international era in world history.” Aissaoui contends that the ancient Near East, with its cosmopolitanism and other features discussed, provides for a better pre-modern international society within the axioms of the English School tradition.

In “**What is policy impact? Questioning narratives of political events in the last century of the Assyrian Empire**”, Selim F. Adalı explores new ways of conceiving the final periods of Assyrian hegemony in the Near East, with a focus on its hegemonic position in the Near East the late-8th century BCE. Adalı discusses an intentionally limited Neo-Realist conception of ‘international system’ along with state-level models of foreign policy, and then proposes new ways of describing and formulating ancient Near Eastern history writing. The aim is to provide a new and complementary tool for conventional history writing that tackles source problems and a multiplicity of factors present in complex events.

Among the issues linked to the interdisciplinary character of this exploration, we would like to highlight three points. First, we noticed that each field makes use of evidence in particular ways. IR material dealing with ANE history focuses on historical narratives and syntheses as the main sources of empirical information. Lack of familiarity with relevant primary sources is a major obstacle in interdisciplinary projects involving IR and any field of History (Buzan/Little 2001). Aware of the situation, we asked our fellow participants from an IR background to mention specific documents in order to support the key points of their argumentation. Assyriology and cognate fields have a very important role to play in connection to this problem, providing IR scholars with evidence that may strengthen or challenge some of their theoretical generalizations.

Second, there is also the issue of the role of theory in the study of historical events. Theories are systematic. They help us organise information in a coherent way and offer a framework that enables us to connect factors and events. Theories are parsimonious. A theorist proposes a simplified model hoping that it will enable us to better explain, predict or simply interpret reality. Theories are general. In IR theory, for example, we ask questions about the causes of war in general, or how a great power chooses its allies in general. A theory is supposed to make sense in specific cases whereas IR focuses on how polities relate to each other. This would also apply in the case of ancient history. IR can offer ANE historians a powerful tool in the construction of narratives and syntheses.

We hope to see these two issues of evidence and theory further explored in future interdisciplinary projects involving IR and ANE history. It is safe to assume that a third issue, dealing with the nature of social science as such, will shape these further avenues of research. IR, as many other fields in the social sciences, is not homogenous. There are many theories available and their diversity and competition is linked, at least in part, to the fact that each is a reflection of particular positions on what social science is and how it should operate. Mainstream theories focus on external behaviour and measurable data. Alternative approaches emphasise visual and verbal discourse. When applied to ANE history, the former will tend to highlight material culture and express a preference for archaeological evidence. The latter will look at philological disciplines as a rich fountain of material for discussion.

Depending on the problem at hand, some approaches will be better suited to an interdisciplinary investigation of politics in the ancient world. We are glad to have provided a forum in which both types of social research were represented in fruitful dialogue.

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Balances of power in the Hatti-Egypt-Mittani system (1400–1300 B.C.)

Serdar Ş. Güner

Abstract: During the Late Bronze Age, ca. 3500 years ago, the kingdoms of the Near East formed and dissolved alliances, resisted threats, and tried to preserve their existence. This paper analyzes the balancing moves in the triangular system between the Egyptian, Hatti, and Mittani kingdoms, which were orbited by Babylonia, Assyria, and Alašiya. We find that the avoidance of two-front war prospects was a powerful motive for alliance formation. Bronze Age rulers had to solve the same problems as German strategists such as von Moltke and von Schlieffen prior to the First World War. For example, the Mittani ruler Parattarna, who established control in Upper-East Mesopotamia, clashed with Egypt under the rule of Tuthmosis III in 1472 B.C. However, under Hittite threat, Sauštatar's son Artatama then chose to align with Egypt to prevent a two-front war. Similarly, prior to the emergence of the bipolar Near Eastern Bronze Age system of Egypt-Hatti, Tušratta asked for Egyptian help against the Hittite Empire rather than asking for Hittite help to circumvent Egypt. Finally, the Qadiš treaty sealed the Hatti-Egypt brotherhood against rising Assyria and eliminated the possibility of a simultaneous fight against two enemies.

Keywords: Hatti-Egypt-Mittani (HEM) system, alliance, balance of power, two-front wars.

1 Introduction

This paper offers a system-theoretic view of the Hatti-Egypt-Mittani (HEM) system and evaluates the formation of alliances within this specific triad. Historical records note three such alliance agreements: the Kurštama treaty between Hatti and Egypt (Bryce 1998; Sürenhagen 2006), the Egypt-Mittani Treaty (Moran 1992; Redford 1992), and the Qadiš treaty between Hatti and Egypt (Moran 1992; Redford 1992). Each agreement indicates two actors siding against a third actor. The rationale was to establish peace between allies to reduce the number of war fronts.

Two- or multiple-front war problems present the difficulty of allocating a state's military forces to geographically separate fronts. The more fronts, the more divided become military capabilities. Divisions of armed forces entail a higher probability of defeat in the hands of an intact hostile army. Accordingly, Bronze Age rulers formed alliances against common threats to reduce costs of defeat and to maximize gains of victory.

The first section presents the HEM triad as a system. It discusses bilateral relations in the system, the geographic positions of each actor, changes of the system, changes in the system, and the power distribution across the three actors. The second section analyzes alliance making in the HEM triad and two-front war prospects. The final section concludes the paper.

2 The Hatti-Egypt-Mittani triad as a system

2.1. Relations between dyads

A system is a set of interacting elements (von Bertalanffy 1968: 3). Hatti, Egypt, and Mittani acted autonomously, controlled a core territory, possessed an army, and aimed for continued existence at a minimum and forging hegemony at maximum (Waltz 1979: 118). Not Babylon or Assyria or both but Hatti, Mittani, and Egypt competed for the control of Syria between 1400–1350 B.C. Therefore they constituted a triangular system for the period. Goetze (1965: 3–5) affirms:

“...all political development in the Near East tends toward the domination of Syria by its neighbours...In fact, the struggle for the domination of Syria was never more marked than during this period...Mitannian power was at its height at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It had then taken the place of Hittites as the dominating factor. With the decline of Egyptian might after the death of Tuthmosis III the Hittites had, with considerable success, tried to re-establish themselves in Syria where they had ruled during their ‘Old Kingdom’. But when their homeland on the Anatolian plateau had been attacked from all sides in the times of Tudkhaliash III, they had been forced to withdraw from Syria. Yet their power continued to loom in the background as a factor with which to reckon. The interplay of all these forces—the Eyp-

tians, the Mitannians with their Hurrian partisans finally the Hittites—determined the fate of Syria in the fourteenth century.”

Thus, it is difficult to claim that the small number of Amarna tablets 41, 42, 43, and 44 indicating Hittite-Egypt correspondence means that Hatti was an actor Mittani kings or Egyptian pharaohs could easily ignore. Amarna tablets do not reflect all interactions in the HEM system.

Triangular rivalries and alliance relations shaping the HEM system were constituted by three dyads (Hatti-Egypt, Egypt-Mittani, and Mittani-Hatti), each dyad affecting the other two (see Bull/Watson 1984; Dittmer 1981 for triadic system requirements). Interrelations between the dyads mark the system. Thus, viewing the HEM triad as a full-fledged system, three relations must be considered. First, the Egyptian pharaoh and the Mittani (or the Hurri) king evaluate their individual relations with the Hittite ruler in strategic calculations they conducted with respect to each other. Second, the pharaoh and the Hittite ruler consider the level of enmity and cooperation between themselves when each thought about whether to cooperate or not with Mittani. Third, the kings of Hatti and Mittani evaluate their individual relations with the pharaoh in calculating war against each other.

It is, of course, impossible to unearth all the evidence that might help confirm such hypotheses. Nevertheless, observations partially support them. Hatti, Babylonia (Karduniaš), Alašiya, Alalah, and Assyria sent gifts to Egypt following Thutmose I's victory over Mittani (Bryce 1998: 128; Redford 1992: 160). The Hurri king Saustatar sent messengers to Amenophis II to propose brotherhood after the Hittite king Tudhaliya destroyed Aleppo (the Hittite Halap), a Mittani vassal, and Hatti became stronger (Redford 1992: 164; Gurney 1990: 19). The Hurri king Tušratta sent part of the spoils to Amenophis III after his repulsion of Šuppiluliuma's first attempt to destroy Mittani (EA 17). Šuppiluliuma sent gifts to Thutmose III and/or Shmenkhare to weaken the Egypt-Mittani alliance (EA 41). Finally, after the disappearance of the Hurri kingdom more than a decade after the Qadiš war, Hattušili III proposed an alliance to Ramesses II to counter Assyria's rising power. In each of these triangular relations, we observe rulers' calculations to establish an alliance or friendship with Egypt to weaken the third member of the system.

2.2. Geographical positions

Crucially, in geographical terms, each actor was connected to rivers. The Hatti heartland was located around Maraššantiya (Halys), the Nile gave (gives) life to Egypt, and Mittani core territory (also called Hanigalbat, the Hurrian kingdom, or Naharin) was located in the Ḫābūr triangle east of the Euphrates and the Balīḫ river with both capitals Waššukanni (Tall Faḫariya) and Taidu (Tall al-Ḫamīdiya). The geographic placements of the three actors reflect a spatial view of the HEM system, as well as each element's contiguity with one other in terms of territories won through wars, vassal king-

doms in Syria, and the Palestinian coast that were coveted by each. Egypt tried to expand from Africa towards Asia. Hatti expansion trust aimed mainly at Northern Syria from Central Anatolia similar to Mittani who had an eye on Syria from Southeastern Anatolia and today's Northern Mesopotamia. Hatti and Mittani were closer to each other than to Egypt in terms of their power centers; that is, the locus of the highest possible amount of military capabilities they could muster in the heartland were not too distant from each other. Hatti and Mittani contiguity and proximity implied motives for a high level of competition for resources. In fact, interactions observed over 180 years in the HEM triad mostly consisted of Hatti-Mittani rivalry including the aim of Egyptian friendship.

2.3. Systemic changes

It is a truism to state that the HEM system was dynamic, but we must assess the dimensions of changes and stability across the HEM triad. We distinguish between changes *in* the system and changes *of* the system (Waltz 2000). If one actor ceases to exist and a whole new system emerges, such a change is qualified as a change *of* the system. In the HEM triad, this happened only when Šuppiluliuma destroyed Waššukanni, the Hurri capital, and Mittani disappeared as an independent element of the system. Hence, the structure of a system does not change unless an actor reaches other core territories and annexes them. Changes in war capabilities, including technological advances in offensive and defensive weapons, and changes in the possession of vassal states constitute changes *in* the system. Aleppo's changing vassalage status or Canaanite cities changing hands were such transformations.

2.4. Power distribution in the HEM system

The power distribution in the HEM system was the central indicator of each actor's position relative to the others. There were three dimensions: territorial dispositions including vassal positions, war technology generating offensive and defensive advantages, and raw materials and resources. The Hatti-Mittani conflict centered on Kizzuwatna, Southeastern Anatolia, and Northern Syria, as well as Isuwa in Eastern Anatolia. Concerning the Hatti-Mittani rivalry, Redford (1992: 136) asserts that “North Syria and the upper Euphrates would be the battleground.” The epicenter of Hatti-Egypt and Egypt-Mittani conflicts was the same: Central Syria around Qaṭna, Qadiš and Amurru. Yet Egyptian armies never reached Southeastern or Eastern Anatolia, and similarly, Mittani forces never penetrated the Egyptian heartland. Only Mittani's core territory was invaded, that is, the Middle Euphrates, which lies west of the proper heartland of Mittani – first by Egypt during the rules of Thutmose I and III and finally by Šuppiluliuma. Hence, in the HEM system, the Hurri heartland was more vulnerable to invasions than those of Egypt and Hatti. Considering geographic conditions and the distance of their heartlands to Syria's battleground, the Hurri kingdom appeared to occupy a rela-

tively more advantageous position even though its territory was more open to invasions from the north and the south. The conflicts and resulting territorial gains losses in the system indicate a frequent change in the distribution of power.

In addition to the actors' geographic placements, offensive and defensive military capabilities, augmented by raw materials and resources and the possession of key vassal states, shaped offensive and defensive advantages in the HEM system. Egypt distinguished itself as the richest actor. It possessed a larger core territory and was (is) irrigated by the world's second-biggest river (the Amazon being the first). It even helped Hatti by sending grain in periods of during their final demise, which was caused by insufficient amounts of harvest and by allocating forces to different conflict zones to fight internal and external enemies (Bryce 2014: 88). The Amarna letters constitute a treasury of Bronze Age communications among kingdoms in the Middle East. They demonstrate the wealth of and foreign rulers' esteem for Egypt; for example, both Tušratta and Šuppiluliuma asked the pharaoh to send them gold statues and the Babylonian king Kadašman-Enlil asked Amenophis III about the fate of his sister sent to the pharaoh as wife (Güner/Druckman 2000; 2003). In the Amarna tablet EA 29, Tušratta requests gold by addressing the new Pharaoh Amenophis IV. His idea of rich Egypt is summarized by his claim: "In my brother's country, gold gold is as plentiful as dirt." Hence Egypt emerges as the richest among the three actors. The riches of Egypt did however not prevent the pharaohs to request for lapislazuli and horses from Karduniaš (Babylonia).

On the defensive side, war-making capabilities included battering rams and siege towers, first used in Central Mesopotamia and improved by the Hurrians (Redford 1992: 120). On the offensive side, spoked-wheel and horse-drawn war chariots contributed to the speed of armed forces in offensive and defensive exercises. They balanced the cost of reducing projected forces, that is, "the loss of strength gradient," to some extent as well (Boulding 1962; Quester 1988). War chariots were possibly introduced to the region by the Hyksos, who conquered Egypt in approximately about 1650 BC and formed its fifteenth dynasty (Redford 1992: 96; Shaw 2000: 48). These vehicles greatly reduced the cost of transportation for the military and improved war-making capabilities in target areas. All three HEM actors used these chariots, but either Egyptians or the Hurri did not have to cross mountains with them. As a result, the flat land West of the kingdom, with no geographic obstacles from the upper Euphrates and the Balih, enabled the Hurrians to thrust toward the Mediterranean Sea at high speed. In terms of the loss-of-strength gradient, the Hurrians possessed an offensive advantage not only with respect to the Hittites when Hittites did not control Kizzuwatna but also to the Egyptians who had to cross a desert to claim Syrian territories in the North.

Isuwa in Eastern Anatolia served Mittani interests because controlling it would put Hatti into a two-front war in the event it encountered hostilities with Western

Anatolian kingdoms of Ahhiya and Lukka. The treaty between Tudhaliya I and Šunaššura of Kizzuwatna reveals that an earlier Hatti-Mittani agreement had been possibly reached over Isuwa. According to this treaty, if Isuwans were to break free and flock to Mittani, the Hurri king should not accept them. And if Hurri subjects broke away from Mittani and came to Hatti, the Hittite king should refuse them by reciprocity. Yet the Hurri king did not uphold this agreement and welcomed fugitive Isuwans and their cattle. We hear the following from Tudhaliya II about Mittani's deception: "If some land were to free itself from you and turn to Hatti, then how would this matter be? The ruler of Hurri sent to me as follows: 'Exactly the same!'" (CTH 41 A; Beckman 1999²: 19).

Similar to Isuwa, the kingdom of Kizzuwatna played a pivotal role in the Hatti-Mittani conflict as it not only separated the two kingdoms but also separated Northern Syria from Hatti by the Taurus mountain range. The treaty between the Hatti ruler and the Kizzuwatna king Paddatiššu informs that Kizzuwatna once was part of the Hittite Old Kingdom but became independent and a Mittani vassal during fifteenth century BC. According to the treaty of Išmerika concluded between the Hittite king Arnuwanda I and Išmerika, citizens including Hittite and non-Hittite soldiers, had to monitor Kizzuwatna and inform the Hittite king of any foreign invasion in the region. Finally, the treaty between Tudhaliya I and Šunaššura of Kizzuwatna founded a Hatti-Kizzuwatna alliance targeting Mittani. This treaty came at the expense of a considerable Hittite concession, as Šunaššura was granted some equality with the Hittite king, paying no taxes or tributes to Hatti (Beckman 1999²: 16–26). Šuppiluliuma I eventually made Kizzuwatna a Hittite vassal state giving Hatti an advantageous geographic position from which to invade Northern Syria.

Overall, we can assert that Egypt was the strongest member in the HEM system because its dependence on vassals was not as acute compared to Hatti and Mittani. The Amarna tablet EA 5 notes that Egypt's wealth, its large armed forces, rapid military transport and much-prized archers. These factors gave Egypt a considerable military advantage. As to Hatti and Mittani, they seemed to emerge as equal powers regarding their war technologies and dependence on vassal states' willingness to align with them.

3 Alliance making in the Hatti-Egypt-Mittani system

3.1. Rational choice approach

Alliance making depends on the distribution of power and the calculation of benefits. The benefit of an alliance increases as the gain from aligning with an actor increases and the costs of the alignment decrease. In theory, given the presumed dyadic relations in the HEM triad, the pharaoh and the Hurri king would independently evaluate whether Hatti might side with the enemy in their conflict. The Hittites and the Hurri would also consider their respective levels of enmity

and cooperation with Egypt in a Hatti-Mittani conflict. In general, each member of a triad faced two rivals. If a dyadic conflict broke out, the third actor could always intervene and produce immense uncertainties for the warring sides with respect to the conflict and its termination. Blainey (1988) gives plenty of historical examples where a third actor gets involved in a war between two states to snatch territory.

A three-way peace is rare. The triad usually turns into an alliance of two against one (see Simmel 1962). There might be an Egypt-Mittani alliance targeting Hatti, a Hatti-Mittani alliance targeting Egypt, or a Hatti-Egypt alliance targeting Mittani. The final attack on Mittani was made possible by a Hatti-Assyrian treaty and alliance in 1350. Among these theoretical possibilities, an Egypt-Mittani alliance targeting Hatti was indeed observed, but there never was a Hatti-Mittani alliance against Egypt. The Hatti-Egypt Kadeš alliance occurred after the disappearance of Mittani. Such alliances can be explained by the balance-of-power theory by taking account of the intrinsic aspect of triads to transform into a group of two, isolating the third member.

3.2. System-level approach

The balance of power is a key concept in the theory of international politics. However, it is defined in multiple ways and thus generates theoretical and empirical confusion. Haas (1953: 446–447) notes eight meanings of the concept: 1) distribution of power, 2) equilibrium, 3) hegemony or the search for hegemony, 4) stability and peace, 5) instability and war, 6) power politics, 7) the universal law of history, and 8) a system and guide to policy making. Zinnes (1967: 272) offers a solution to this conceptual confusion by deducing from early balance-of-power writers' manuscripts that the balance of power describes a specific distribution of power, such that "no single state and no existing alliance has an 'overwhelming' and/or a 'preponderant' amount of power." Hence, if Hatti, Egypt, Mittani, or dyadic alliances targeting the third mustered an overwhelming amount of power, the HEM would not constitute a balance-of-power system. Thus, the problem is to explain such an emergence of balance of power in the system.

Waltz (1979: 119) proposes that if states aim for continued existence, systemic hegemony, or equality with others, sooner or later alliances will form against more powerful states or those striving for hegemony. The theory does not require rationality – states can make errors – and implies a repetition of balancing alliance formations in the long run. Both Waltz' and Zinnes' approach imply general tendencies, but at a systems level. We should thus simply expect recurrent balancing alliances and the inexistence of a single actor more powerful than the combination of the other two in the HEM triad. The two theories do not account for individual calculations in alliance making, however, and the information we obtain from observed interactions in the HEM system corroborate rational choices of the rulers.

3.3. Observed alliances and two-front war prospects

Redford (1992: 147) asserts that Egypt reached its "apogee" after Thutmosis III's victory over Mittani, but about two years after Mittani's defeat, another Hurri king appeared with a larger army. This king was Sauštatar, the son of Parsatatar, who succeeded Barratarna (Astour 1972: 103). Hence, Egypt's victory did not lead to Egyptian domination of the HEM triad. Similar to the case of Egypt, Mittani reached its apogee under Sauštatar, who controlled not only Assyria and Harrak but territories extending to the Zagros Mountains in Iran, and all the Mittani vassals captured by Egypt in Syria and Phoenicia were returned to Mittani again (Redford 1992: 162). Hence, no hegemon arose in these cases.

Here we must note another conceptual confusion in international relations theory: the definitions of *hegemon* and the *sole superpower*, that is, the unipole. The hegemon enjoys an absolute capability to conduct the policies it prefers and it dictates those policies. Moreover, one defines a hegemon in a triad as an actor whose capabilities exceed half the total resources available in the system (Wagner 1986). It is difficult to differentiate between unipolar and hegemonic systems because there exists a single powerful state in both systems. Yet if a state is a hegemon, the power of all remaining actors cannot match it. No balancing alliance can be formed in a hegemonic system. In contrast, the unipole cannot force others to act in its favor. Secondary states are free to decide whether to acquiesce to the unipole's policies or oppose them, and thus alliances balancing the unipole can form. Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth (2007: 20) claim that "unipolarity is a normal circumstance in world history," "balancing behavior is relatively unlikely in conditions of unipolarity," and the unipole "has the capability to crush any likely opposition." Unfortunately, these statements mix up the hegemon and the unipole, and they are not rigorously deduced from commonly accepted terms. To illustrate, Wohlforth (1999: 10) describes the current global system as unipolar in the following way: "Two states measured up in 1990. One is gone. No new pole has appeared: $2-1=1$. The system is unipolar." Unfortunately, the concept of polarity is imprecise (Wagner 1993). Consequently, the equation ($2-1=1$) has no rigorous value. It is valid in mathematics but not in international relations theory.

Hence, we cannot assert that the HEM system was hegemonic or unipolar even if one actor or another came out victorious in some wars and expanded its territory. Needless to say, measuring military capabilities, population size, advances in war technologies, and agricultural harvests subject to climate changes are impossible (Schneider/Adalı 2014). Were Egypt endowed with more capabilities than Hatti and Mittani, we should expect a Hatti-Mittani alliance against Egypt. "Secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them" (Waltz 1979: 127). But no such alliance was

formed against any pharaoh. The formation of alliances under geographic constraints and a rational choice assumption about what type of empirical evidence exists is therefore more promising.

3.4. Alliances under two-front war prospects

The two-front war prospects each actor faced in the system have an important impact on alliance relations. Here we have to maintain that we do not deal with Mittani concern with its border with Babylonia, or Egyptian concern with respect to borders or conflict zones with Nubians and Libyans. If we take two-front war prospects, Babylonians, Libyans, Nubians, Isuwans or other actors faced with respect to still other kingdoms. The analysis becomes intractable and our systemic view of relations between Hatti, Mittani, and Egypt is impeded. Instead, we need to demonstrate connections that seem to constitute the essence of an empirical complexity. We try to capture important factors and their connections to explore relations not previously exposed.

The treaty between Tudhaliya I and Šunaššura, the king of Kizzuwatna, attests to the important goal of avoiding two-front war prospects within Anatolia. Hurrians plundered Isuwa in Eastern Anatolia while Hittites fought another enemy. It was impossible to defend both Isuwa and fight on another front. The same type of calculations played a role in the HEM system. The first alliance we consider is the treaty of Kuruštama (Bryce 1998: 128). The existence of this treaty is supported by the Hittite decision to send gifts to Thutmose III following his victory over Mittani. The Hittite ruler at that time was either Zidanta or Huzziya II. Hatti agreed to transfer inhabitants of Kuruštama located in Northeastern Anatolia to Egyptian territories in Syria. Given the importance of manpower during the Bronze Age, we can interpret this decision as a power transfer from Hatti to Egypt. We do not know, however, whether these individuals were expelled from the region because they fought with Mittani against Egypt or whether Egypt asked the Hittite ruler for such a deportation.

Bryce (1998: 129) offers a more general explanation for such an alliance, supporting our positional view of the HEM system. First, Egypt was not able to project its forces deeper into Anatolia across the Taurus Mountains. Thus, Egypt did not pose a serious military threat. Second, unlike Egypt, Mittani constituted a constant threat for Hatti. Hatti could not deal with a two- or multiple-front wars in Anatolia as it was subject to constant attacks from Kaška, tribes residing in Northern Anatolia on the Black Sea coast. It also had to deal with Isuwa in Eastern Anatolia and the Ahhiyawa kingdom in the west. An alliance with Egypt would free Hittite forces slated for a battle against Egypt in the south and prevent simultaneous wars in different locations. As for Egypt, its foremost concern was to preserve the territories it had snatched from Mittani, which was known to make spectacular comebacks after defeat at the hands of Egyptians. Instead of conquering Kuruštama, Egyptians perhaps let the Hittites deal with the situation. De Martino (2004: 38) indicates that the treaty was indeed

signed to weaken Mittani, a Hatti-Egypt common interest. The figure below displays the alliance relationship at the time of the treaty.

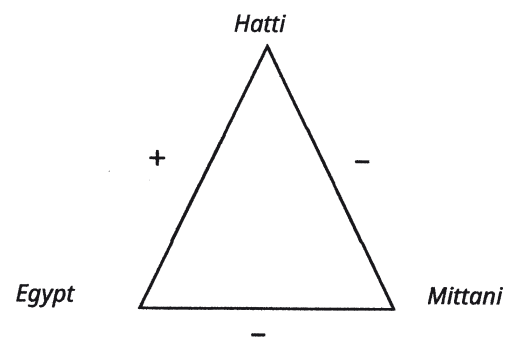


Fig. 1: The HEM during the period of Kuruštama Treaty.

Thutmose III received gifts from Hatti following his victory over Mittani. As already noted, the new pharaoh, Amenophis II, also received gifts following his military activities in the Levant not only from Hatti but also from Mittani (Redford 1992: 163). Redford (1992: 164) affirms that a Mittani king, probably Saušatar, sent messengers to Egypt. He explains the Mittani bid for an alliance with Egypt as if Saušatar acted as a rational benefit maximizer. Saušatar observed the Hittite attack under Tudhaliya II on Aleppo and that city's destruction. Earlier, Hatti had signed a treaty with Kizzuwatna (the treaty of Talmišarruma) and thus was free to deal with Northern Syria. Amenophis II was an energetic pharaoh, perhaps planning further excursions into Syria. "Under these circumstances there was little the Mittanians could do, save persevere alone in a 'two-front war' or seek an alliance that would do away with one of the 'fronts.' Mittani wisely chose the latter" (Redford 1992: 165). Amenophis II agreed to align with Mittani. As we do not know whether Hatti under Tudhaliya I had cooperative relations with Egypt, the triad became as the figure below summarizes after the Egypt-Mittani alliance:

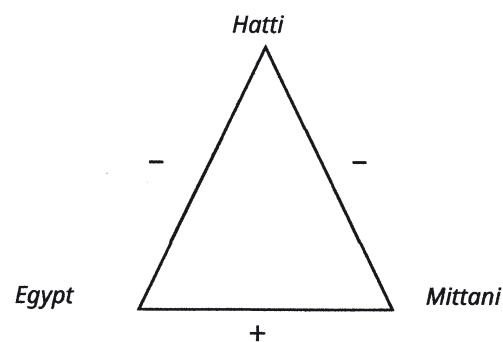


Fig. 2: The HEM after the Egypt-Mittani alliance.

Three dynastic marriages sealed the alliance. Artatama sent a daughter to Thutmose IV, Šuttarna sent his daughter Gilu (or Kelu) Heba (Tušratta's sister) to Amenophis III, who later also received Tušratta's daugh-

ter Tadu Heba as a bride. The alliance weakened only when Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) became the pharaoh. The Amarna tablet EA 17 records Tušratta's demand for a renewal of the alliance and confirms the Hittite-Hurri war against Šuppiluliuma. The message might have been sent when Tušratta ascended the throne, because a renewal of alliances when a kingship changed was the norm during the Bronze Age. The tablets EA 19, EA 20, EA 21, EA 22, and EA 24 sent to Amenophis III (Nimureya) expose Tušratta's insistence on the renewal and list his complaints about the pharaoh sending only a small amount of gold. In EA 24, Tušratta declares that he received a much smaller amount of gold than his father Šuttarna and his grandfather Artatama received. This fact might be interpreted as Egypt's lesser need for an alliance with Mittani over time. Another indicator of lesser pharaonic interest in the alliance comes from EA 29, sent by Tušratta to the new pharaoh, Amenophis IV. Tušratta states that Artatama agreed on the seventh pharaonic request for a Hurrian wife, Šuttarna agreed on the sixth request, and he accepted at once when Amenophis III asked him to send his daughter. In the same tablet, Tušratta hints at his junior role within the alliance: "They will say, 'How the kings of Hanigalbat and Egypt love one another.' If in this way it makes our countries much happier than all other countries, all other countries will see this and they will speak of you."

There can be two explanations for the eventual weakening of this alliance. Mittani started to lose its great-power status in the later years of Amenophis III's reign and its decline solidified during the heretic pharaoh Akhenaten's reign. These two rulers did not value help that would come from Mittani in the case of a hostile attack, whether from the direction of Hatti or elsewhere. However, Tušratta's repulsion of the first Hittite attack under Šuppiluliuma and his sending part of the war spoils to Amenophis III could have signaled that Mittani was not as weak as it was believed to be. We can then hypothesize that perhaps Amenophis III did not desire to be involved in a Hatti-Mittani war given that the costs of such an action were far more than the gains it might yield. He might have been ailing and/or old, hence a pharaonic failure was more probable. As to his son, he was not interested in military affairs as much as in his religious reform, proposing only one God. Either way, the Egypt-Mittani alliance was apparently only on paper by then.

Mittani, with no more hope of an Egyptian alliance, was open to a new Hittite attack. Indeed, Šuppiluliuma's second attack led to the destruction of the Hurri capital Waššukanni. Tušratta fled and was later murdered. Here we must note that Šuppiluliuma gave a

daughter to Šattiwaza and helped Mittani rise again as a Hittite vassal. The Mittani kingdom thus ceased to exist as an independent actor. Šuppiluliuma's move was a prime example of the balance-of-power rule permitted a defeated actor back in the system, as proposed by Kaplan (1957). The calculation behind the rule is that no actor can be certain when it will need an ally, and the more the alliance alternatives, the better are prospects of successful offense or defense. The Hittite aim was to use the Mittani vassal as a buffer zone against rising Assyria and increase its defensive advantages. However, the strategy did not prove successful. Mittani ultimately became a prized object between Hatti and Assyria and was finally absorbed by the Assyrian kingdom under Aššur-uballit I (1365–1330 BC). Thus, formed around the end of the sixteenth century BC and the beginning of the fifteenth century BC, the HEM system ended forever.

Concluding remarks

The balance-of-power theory implies an alliance cooperation of the weak against the strong. Yet a strong actor and a weak one can align against the third to avoid two-front war prospects. Such prospects and the implications of the balance-of-power theory are not necessarily identical but are ubiquitous in world history. German strategists von Moltke and von Schlieffen prepared Germany for a two-front war facing Russia and France. Before the advent of World War I, they calculated that there was no need to separate the German army on opposite fronts given the low rate of Russian mobilization. Instead, using Germany's efficient railway system, the whole army first could defeat the French and afterwards they could fight the mobilized Russian army at the other end of the German territory in full force.

We have no information about armies' mobilization rates during the Bronze Age. Yet two-front wars always have influenced alliance choices. The speed of marching soldiers and of war chariots would not allow fighting at more than one front. Analyses at a systems level would discard such information, but the history of the HEM triad informs us that pharaohs and kings did consider prospects of fighting on different fronts. Thus, the HEM also had the tendency of becoming a constellation of two actors against the third. Consequently, rational calculations at the individual level prove to be instructive at such a degree of abstraction and generalization.

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System and society: The Near East in the second millennium BCE

Lucas G. Freire

Abstract: Scholarship on the international relations of the second millennium BCE Near East has stressed the dynamics of power politics. For International Relations (IR) theory, this would seem to confirm the alleged perennial problem of anarchy between polities, similar to a Hobbesian state of nature. The standard IR theory postulate for such a situation is that stability is kept through a balance-of-power mechanism. In this paper, however, it is argued that the Near Eastern polities in the second millennium formed not only a states-system, but also a society of polities of multiple tiers. Order was maintained by institutions, such as covenants, enforcement wars, communication, gift exchange and royal marriages. Key goals of such institutions were to control violence, to reassure that promises would be kept and to clarify and preserve the rights of jurisdiction and spheres of influence. The conscious pursuit of these goals via institutionalised practices led to stability and order. Because of anarchy, these goals were only imperfectly attained. Because of sociability, the fact that they were attained to some extent presents a challenge to traditional power-politics narratives.

Keywords: International relations theory, great kings and lesser kings, covenants and war, message and gift exchange, royal marriages.

Introduction

International Relations (IR) theory often alludes to the notion of an anarchical ‘international system.’ Most theorists employ the concept to describe the constant interaction of separate polities under no central authority capable of imposing itself on the parties. The international system, therefore, is a realm of uncertainty and danger. This anarchical structure and the risky environment it generates limit whatever cooperation exists beyond borders. Anarchy, taken in this mainstream IR theory sense, is a concept that allegedly applies across the board. The system is either anarchical or hierarchical, and the latter we encounter in domestic society, where a government exists which provides certain goods, adjudicates conflicts and punishes crime.

In this paper I would like to explore a distinct view of anarchy among polities on historical and theoretical grounds. I argue that political units in the 2nd millennium BCE Near East formed not only a system, but also a ‘society of polities.’¹ Moreover, this society was not necessarily an anarchical society in the traditional sense, but a combination of multiple suzerain-systems. The ANE society of polities was characterised at its core by a two-tier structural element, where one type of polity enjoyed certain privileges and responsibilities that the

other did not. Within the top tier, anarchy prevailed, but across both tiers, the pattern was one of suzerainty. In this historical society of polities, order was maintained by institutions, which served a threefold purpose. Institutions reassured that promises would be kept, clarified and preserved the rights of jurisdiction, and regulated the use of force. The conscious pursuit of these goals via institutionalised practices led to stability and order. Because of anarchy at the top tier (i.e., between great kings), these goals were only imperfectly attained. Because of sociability, the fact that they were attained to some extent at all is remarkable in light of traditional IR.

The first section provides more detail on the broader discussion on anarchy and IR theory. If you are familiar with IR or political studies, you may want to skip this part. The second section addresses the conceptual distinction between system and society of polities. Basically a society presupposes a system, but involves a much ‘thicker’ level of interaction and commonality. If you are not familiar with the discussion on system and society in IR, I recommend reading this passage. The third section looks at the core two-tier element embedding the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities. This is central to the argument that the institutions of order in the society of polities drew on a core ‘normative principle’ involving the two-tier element. The fourth section looks at additional institutions of order in that society: covenants, enforcement wars, communication, gift exchange and royal marriages.

¹ For the sake of economy, I often adopt the common practice of omitting ‘BCE’ after ‘second millennium.’ The context is sufficient to indicate what period is meant.

1 Anarchy and international relations

Brutal violence, uncertainty, double-dealings, hypocritical flattery and pragmatic self-preservation – these themes abound in modern political thought, from Machiavelli to the opinions of pundits in the media. Traditionally, both the justification of political authority and the arguments for its limitation have emerged under the shadow of pessimistic considerations about how prone we are to misuse power. ‘Social contract’ theory is a case in point, with the argument that it makes sense to yield some of our freedoms (or all of it, depending on who is arguing) to a central authority in exchange for order, predictability and peace, hopefully leading to prosperity.

In the modern imagination, diplomacy and international politics are particularly fruitful settings for violence and cheating (Wight 1966: 29–34). After all, the interaction of separate political units is characterised by anarchy, or the lack of an overarching authority capable of governing and controlling these units. International relations are, for this reason, analogous to the ‘state of nature’ that the ‘social contract’ is meant to solve (Suganami 1989: 24–39). When we look at the solutions for the international ‘state of nature’ provided by contemporary IR scholarship, though, it is quite striking that they do not fully follow a ‘social contract’ principle. There is talk of global governance, institutions, the balance of power, or coercion falling short of bullying to make sure agreements are kept and to hold violence in check. However, we do not often hear of a ‘world government’ as the ultimate solution for the ‘state of nature’ in international affairs. IR is a discourse of anarchy (Schmidt 1998: 227–242). It assumes that the analogy between domestic politics and international politics is an imperfect one.

The analogy between domestic and international ‘states of nature’ has its limitations for many reasons (Bartelson 2009: 19–45; Walker 2006). To mention only one, each state is better equipped to defend itself in international anarchy than individuals in the ‘state of nature.’ Thus, they feel less compelled to yield their autonomy to an overarching Leviathan (Bull 1977: 44–49). States under anarchy can form alliances and counter-balance the rise of a potential hegemon in order to preserve their independence. This is what IR scholars name the balance of power.² Despite the need to form alliances in order to preserve political autonomy, the problems of violence and cheating persist. The anarchical system of states is a realm of uncertainty, where survival is prioritised. For some theorists, this is all there is to international relations, security being the focus of diplomacy and statecraft (Morgenthau 1978³: 4–15; Waltz 1979: 102–128; Mearsheimer 1990: 11–21). Such is the claim of the ‘realist’ tradition. For others, in the ‘liberal’ tradition, it is possible to further mitigate the effects of anarchy, going beyond the balance of power. While

keeping the same assumptions and the focus of analysis on the external behaviour of states, this second group of theorists looks at how certain practices and settings can help reduce the potential for cheating and thus increase the potential for cooperation (Axelrod/Keohane 1985: 228–247; Martin 1992: 31–45).

The scholarly literature on the international relations of the 2nd millennium Near East has frequently stressed similar themes as the realists mentioned above (e.g. Liverani 2014: 241–254; Van De Mierop 2016³: 130). Other ANE scholars have looked at the facilitation of cooperation and the mitigation of anarchy provided by certain tools of interaction, especially the exchange of messages (e.g. Lafont 2001: 44–50). This echoes certain aspects of the liberal tradition. Most of the ANE Studies material on inter-polity relations does not interact directly with either tradition of thought. ANE historians tend to avoid explicit theorising, focusing instead on the construction of narratives and on the critical discussion of the evidence (e.g. Podany 2010). On the IR side, a small number of authors have attempted to seek further confirmation of their theories in ANE ‘case studies,’ drawing mostly on secondary sources (Ferguson/Mansbach 1996: 65–110; Kaufman/Wohlforth 2007: 22–46; Watson 1992: 18–29). Overall, however, there is precious little contact between IR and ANE Studies. This is surprising, considering the abundance of sources, especially for 2nd millennium inter-polity relations.³ I turn now to a discussion of IR theory and, then, to the specification of specific categories to be employed throughout the rest of this brief study.

2 System and society

Realists see the issue of anarchy as a perennial problem of international politics. Liberals look at possible ways of mitigating the effects of anarchy. These two groups are part of what is considered ‘mainstream’ IR. There are, however, alternative theoretical arguments on how order is maintained within the anarchical international system. One such view expands on the insight that it is possible to mitigate the effects of anarchy and foster cooperation. This third approach draws on the tradition of interpretive social theory. Its proponents argue that the most revealing analysis of international relations takes into account the social context of rules, norms and values in which political units are embedded. Because social actors are influenced by ideas, norms and beliefs that they share with those around them, historical context matters. For example, notions of what is appropriate in a certain setting, and perceptions of what course of action a given situation enables or encourages, have a profound effect on how social actors operate (Onuf 1989: 33–65; Wendt 1992: 396–407).

² See Güner’s contribution to this forum for a discussion of how the concept is employed in IR.

³ The collection of essays in Cohen/Westbrook 2000 is a notable exception. Here I cite sources contained in Beckman 1999² using the abbreviation HDT and the number of the document in that collection.

Some have called this the ‘constructivist’ perspective. I prefer to label it the ‘interpretive’ approach.⁴

There is a diversity of interpretive views in IR. Here, I argue from the perspective of a tradition of international thought that places great emphasis on history, the ‘English School’ of Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, among others. The English School approach has the advantage of integrating many relevant elements of the realist and liberal traditions. English School theorists argue that there is a connection between institutions, rules and how order is maintained in a given historical system of states (Bull 1977: 51–73; Wight 1972: 1–28). When a system has ‘thickened’ to such an extent that political units not merely interact, but actually pursue common goals and values, it may be called an international society (Buzan 1993: 348–52). There have been several international societies in history, and some of them existed at the same time in isolation or with little contact between them. Prospects for international order are significantly better when an international society is present.

For Bull (1977: 22–73), an international society can be identified in how political units use common institutions to interact. Institutions help promote rules. Rules are important because they identify and prescribe types of behaviour that are consistent with the orderly coexistence of states. The connection between institutions and order depends on how the rules promoted by several types of institutions help states pursue the elementary goals of international society. Bull illustrates his points based on the modern European international society of sovereign states. In order to avoid an anachronistic projection of concepts of modern statehood back to the 2nd millennium BCE, I am adapting the conceptual language of the theoretical approach and use ‘polity,’ not ‘state’ as a generic term.

There are at least four elementary goals in a given society of polities. First, there is the goal of preserving the society of polities itself, or at least a system in which they interact at a sufficient level. The preservation of a specific kind of political unit as the primary legitimate actor in international society is a direct implication of this goal.⁵ In the ANE, negative discourse about those outside the city (e.g. the SA.GAZ and the ‘Sea Peoples’) reinforced the notion that the city was the appropriate and noble form of political organisation where one could live the ‘good life’ and serve the gods (Postgate 1992: 83–87).

A second elementary goal is the preservation of a principle of distinction between individual political units. In the ANE, independence as such was only a prerogative of the great kings. However, there was a principle of differentiation between the several suzerain sub-systems making up the overarching society of

polities. A second-tier polity could only be subordinated to one great king, and any attempts to shift allegiance would be met with severe punishment.

A third elementary goal of a society of polities is to provide a peaceful framework of interaction. Armed conflict was an ever-present reality in the ANE, but it was not always the desirable policy choice (Podany 2010: 10). In peacetime, a king was supposed to serve the local gods building temples, supporting festivals and working on the city’s infrastructure.⁶ Stable polities were further enabled to play their role in the “brotherhood” (*aḥḥūtu*) of kings, through which they could safely exchange presents or promote royal marriages (Gestoso Singer 2008).

A fourth and final elementary goal of a society of polities is more obvious, and reflects the general goal of attaining coexistence as such. It consists in restricting violence, enabling an environment in which promises may be kept, and promoting the stability of possession. A society of polities, then, presupposes a shared interest in pursuing certain aims. It operates through rules that prescribe what behaviour is consistent with those basic goals.

3 The two-tier principle

Not all rules have the same impact in a society of polities. In this section, I describe the ‘constitutional normative principle,’ a type of rule that helps advance the first three goals listed above. The constitutional normative principle of a specific society of polities is a crucial type of rule for three reasons. First, it defines the character, or specific type, of society as stake, prescribing it as the foundation of order. Second, this rule also defines what is an acceptable and legitimate member of this society. Finally, the constitutional normative principle clarifies what counts as a legitimate way of relating within that society (Reus-Smit 1997: 566–570).

The first point – the specific type of society of polities – can be applied to the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities by highlighting that, at its core, it was a society based on a two-tier principle. It differentiated between ‘great kings’ and lesser kings. A family metaphor was frequently employed by the rulers themselves to normalise the distinction: “The kings each occupied a specific spot in the pecking order; a man was ‘brother’ to kings who were equal in status to himself (...), but he could also be a ‘son’ to the greater kings and a ‘father’ to lesser kings.” This, however, was not a perpetual state of affairs. “A powerful king, a ‘brother’ of the major kings, might see a change in his fortunes and be demot-

4 Unlike realism and liberalism, constructivism per se is not an IR theory, but rather an account of the social world in general and a metatheoretical position on how it should be studied.

5 A modern example is the general agreement that a primary actor needs to be recognised as a sovereign state, and that groups such as pirates or the so-called ‘Islamic State’ are out.

6 Thus, Yaḥdun-Lim of Mari is introduced in a temple inscription not only as a “strong king” (LUGAL *dan-nu-um*) but also one “who opens rivers, builds walls” (*pe₂-ti I₇.DA.ḪI.A / e-pi₂-iš du-ri*) and one who “establishes prosperity and affluence for his people” (*ša-ki-in nu-uḥ-ši-im / u₃ ḪE₂.GAL₂-lim a-na ni-ši-šu*) (RIME 4 E4.6.8.2, lines 17–27). Šamši-Adad I boasts of the results of his conquest of Assur by reporting the good terms of trade (Context 2.110). In fact, some believe that low, “utopian prices” were part of the “propaganda” of royal inscriptions (Grayson 1972: 20–21 fn. 64).

ed to a ‘son.’ Other kings longed to join the brotherhood of high-ranking kings, wanting to change their status as ‘son’ to that of a ‘brother’ or ‘father’” (Podany 2010: 70).⁷ This two-tier principle, in turn, permeates the operation of the other rules. The institutions of the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities promoted not just any kind of order, but a two-tier order in particular, resulting in a society made up of hierarchical sub-systems.

Secondly, the role of defining what is an acceptable and legitimate member of the society of polities is linked to the centrality of the city and the institution of kingship. Kingship was deemed “the very basis of civilization”, since “peace, and justice could not prevail without a ruler to champion them.” (Frankfort 1948: 3). There was a connection between life and welfare, on the one hand, and kingship and divine favour bestowed upon the city, on the other (Block 2013²: 21–34). No other form of ANE political rule in the 2nd millennium enjoyed such widespread legitimacy as kingship in the city.⁸ Here, then, the constitutional normative principle defines kings as the key subjects of the society of polities, and the city as the main form of political organisation.

Thirdly, if kings were the key actors, not all kings were as important as the great kings. This final point pertaining to the constitutional normative principle legitimises a certain pattern of hierarchy within each suzerain subsystem, where expressions of tribute, loyalty and devotion are expected to flow from the second-tier to the top-tier. Take, for instance, how Akizzi of Qatna deals with the Pharaoh: “My lord,” he writes, “I myself am your servant [IR₃-ka] in this place (...) Qatna is your city. I am my lord’s [anāku ana ša bēliya]” (EA 55). Such deference, unthinkable as it may be in current world politics, was at the core of the definition of legitimate ways of relating in the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities.

4 Rules of coexistence, order and institutions

Rules of coexistence emerge to preserve and further advance other elementary goals of a society of polities, especially the restriction of violence, the “carrying out of undertakings” and the “stabilisation of (...) jurisdiction” (Bull 1977: 66–67). In the 2nd millennium ANE institutionalised covenants, war, communication, gifts and royal marriages contributed to reinforce specific rules of coexistence, as well as the more general constitutional normative principle of a two-tier society of polities.

Covenants involved at least an agreement and a ceremonial oath. The parties would swear to perform what

was promised in the presence of human and divine witnesses. Treaties between great kings (e.g. HDT 15) would be witnessed by a series of gods, who sanctioned any violation with curses. Treaties between a great king and a lesser king, on the other hand, would reflect the asymmetrical relationship of authority with a more unilateral set of stipulations and oath performance (e.g. HDT 8). As an institution, the covenant advanced the constitutional rules of the society of polities in the ANE by reflecting, in a highly stylised form and performance, the two-tier constitutional normative principle. Among the great kings, it advanced the ideal of brotherhood and an implicit norm of non-intervention, tacitly acknowledging each other’s sphere of influence, but stressing that the king with whom a covenant was ratified was indeed the legitimate king of his domain. Between a great king and a subordinate king, the top-down covenant further crystallised the hierarchical practices of this two-tier configuration. The covenant also promoted coexistence in the society of polities by allowing kings to settle disputes, control violence and make future provisions for alliances and the use of force (Weeks 2004). Moreover, in the use of oaths and curses, the institution of the covenant provided a way to lend credibility to promises. Finally, covenants often sealed treaties that clarified the jurisdiction and authority of a king over a certain territory.⁹

War is the second institution to be mentioned. The use of force did not always promote chaos in the system of polities, and often operated as an enforcement mechanism. The first principle that could be enforced was the constitutional authorisation of certain political actors as legitimate members of the society of polities. The violence of the *ḥapîru*, for example, was seen as a threat to order and predictability, hence the appeal of Biridiya’s request of assistance to deal with them (EA 243; EA 244). Secondly, there were asymmetrical expectations about how each legitimate actor should use force in that society of polities. In their covenants, lesser kings promised to make their capabilities available to the campaigns of their great king. A great king, in turn, often signalled an inclination to protect them against external aggressors. Notice how Ḥattusili I reflects these expectations as he writes to a subordinate king in Tikunani: “You are my servant. Protect me! And I will protect you (as) my servant (...). I will surely protect you. My campaign has begun. So you should be a man with respect to the man of Ḥaḥḥum (...). Be a man with respect to him! I from this side and you from that side” (Hoffner 2009, Letter 1). The use of force thus served to reproduce the idea of a two-tier society with different prerogatives and obligations. Wars to punish recalcitrant subordinate rulers abroad in the name of the god who had witnessed the broken covenant were an additional way to reinforce this principle. Moreover, they obviously contributed to the enforcement of agreements and stabilisation of

⁷ Pfoh’s contribution to this volume discusses and dismisses Liverani’s (2001) disagreement with this position.

⁸ The particularities of how kingship and polity were substantiated in each place, with their discrepancies, can be isolated from this particular discussion, except perhaps for the Egyptian case (see Pfoh’s contribution to this volume), which nevertheless did not prevent that polity from partly adhering to the rules and norms of the society of polities in the period under discussion.

⁹ Elsewhere (Freire 2013) I provide additional examples and a more detailed discussion of covenants as an institution of the ANE society of polities from an English School IR perspective.

promises and expectations, further advancing the goals of coexistence in the society of polities.¹⁰

With covenants and war, communication between kings was another institution that advanced the two-tier order of the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities. Some have employed the analogy of an exclusive ‘club’ to describe the circle of great kings with full prerogatives of communication (Liverani 2000; Van De Mieroop 2016³: 137–158). Lesser kings, in contrast, did not enjoy the same level of access to inter-polity communication. An increase in the material capabilities of Assyria encouraged Aššur-uballiṭ to write to Egypt in pursuit of recognition as a member of the club: “I’ve sent you my messenger to see you and to take a look at your country. Until now, my predecessors had not written to you. Now I do write to you” (EA 15). At the time, Assyria was probably still a formal part of the Babylonian suzerain sub-system, for Burraburiyaš II, the Babylonian king, protested by alluding to the rule that a lesser king was not independent to conduct his foreign policy: “Why on their own initiative have they come to your country?” (EA 9; Rainey 2015). It seems that Assyria managed, nevertheless, to gain acceptance as part of the club: later on, Aššur-uballiṭ I referred to himself as a “great king” and to Pharaoh as “my brother” (EA 16). The two-tier constitutional principle of the society of polities was reinforced by barriers to participation and also by the asymmetrical flow of communication. A letter found in the Hittite capital (HDT 22D) was sent from Ramses II to Kupanta-Kurunta of Mira-Kuwaliya, a subordinate king in the Hittite suzerain sub-system. This lesser king had attempted to bypass the Hittite overlord, asking the Pharaoh whether the new Hittite king was legitimate. Egypt seems to have sent the reply to the Hittites, and not to Kupanta-Kurunta, respecting the two-tier constitutional rule as well as the coexistence rule of Hittite jurisdiction over its suzerain sub-system. Inter-polity communication further stabilised jurisdiction by drawing on the assumption that a great king could do as he pleased with foreign envoys residing in his country (EA 3; EA 16). In terms of the other rules of coexistence, communication allowed kings to clarify their intentions, correct their expectations and de-escalate conflict, if required, thus advancing the goal of restricting violence in the system (e.g. Chavalas 2006: Text 74). It also allowed kings to clarify, albeit in an imperfect way, whether agreements were being kept.

Another institution of the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities was gift exchange. Gifts would often accompany messages and envoys. Presents were also exchanged between great kings on special occasions, such as “when kings assume kingship”, as a Hittite letter sent to Assyria makes it clear (HDT 24B), or a royal wedding (EA 22). Gifts, of course, were a form of trade or a means to obtain something that was not readily available. Aplaḥanda of Karkamiš wondered if Yas-

maḥ-Adad had some “good wine around, to drink,” otherwise he would be happy to send some to Mari (ARM 5, 6; for another example see EA 6).¹¹ More importantly, gifts reassured those engaged in the exchange that their status in the two-tier society of polities was acknowledged by the other part – provided that a returning gift were understood as bearing similar significance to the original gift (Lafont 2001: 50–51).¹² A gift offered from kings in the lower tier of the society of polities to the great king controlling their suzerain sub-system was a frequent requirement, often understood as tribute.¹³ Gift exchange thus further reinforced the constitutional normative principle of the ANE society of polities.¹⁴

The final institution under discussion that shaped order between polities was the royal marriage. This institution reiterated the family metaphor employed to describe the relations between kings on the top tier (brotherhood) and across the two tiers (father and son). Much has been written about the role played by this institution in trade and intelligence gathering (Munn-Rankin 1956: 94; see Leick 2010²: 115), but for our purposes three additional aspects of royal marriages should be highlighted. First, second millennium discourse hints at an expectation that new family ties emerging from a royal marriage should strengthen the political connection between the kings involved. The king of Mittani writes to pharaoh as “brother” but also “your father-in-law, who loves you” and then expressing the desire for a closer relationship: “In my heart I wish to be on the best of terms with my brother and to love one another. And may my brother keep faith perfectly” (EA 24; Rainey 2015). With a special political connection, the idea is that it would become harder for both sides to engage in violent conflict. This points to the coexistence rule of reducing violence in the society of polities. Secondly, a king who sent his daughter to marry a foreign ruler lent further credibility to the promises made to that ruler. For purposes of signalling commitment and good intentions, the princess became a kind

11 From Aplaḥanda’s letter: *u₃ šum-ma GEŠTIN DUG₃GA / ma-aḥ-ri-ka a-na ša-te-[e-k]a / u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši / šu-up-ra-am-ma GEŠTIN ṭa₃-ba-am / a-na ša-te-e-ka lu-ša-bi-la-[kum]* (lines 13–17).

12 The king of Qaṭna’s anxiety in writing to Mari to complain that a little bit of tin does not match the two horses he had sent is a good illustration, and indicates exactly what was at stake: “Aren’t you a great king? Why have you done that? [*u₂-ul [š]ar-rum ra-bu-um at-ta / am-mi-nim an-ni-tam te-pu-uš*] (...) He that hears about this, what will he say? He won’t place us on equal footing” [*u₃ še-mu-u₂-um mi-nam i-qa-ab-bi u₂-ul i-ta-pa-la-ni-ti-i*] (ARM 5, 20, lines 33–34, 23–24). For the context, see comments by Sasson (2008).

13 For example, based on this understanding a high official of the Hittites wrote to a newly installed ruler in Ugarit demanding “presents” for the Hittite king (HDT 21).

14 In a less general way, this institution could also contribute to promote the rule of coexistence linked to the stability of territorial jurisdiction. In the Amarna archives there is a document addressed from a great king to “the kings of Canaan” asking the lesser kings within Pharaoh’s sphere of influence to charge no taxes or fees from the envoy (EA 30). The two-tier normative principle appears to permeate also the way in which this rule of coexistence was reproduced by gift exchange. The gift belonged to the great king in the final destination, and his jurisdiction over it had to be respected.

10 Sasson 2014: 675 makes similar points in his study of ANE discourse about the legitimacy of warfare drawing extensively on the Mari archives.

of 'hostage' at the other court (Lerner 1986: 72). Royal marriage, in this vein, promoted order in the society of polities by facilitating the carrying out of undertakings. Thirdly, in terms of relations across the two tiers of the society of polities, when the great king gave a bride to a ruler of a lesser kingdom within his sphere of influence, their bond of authority and subordination was further reinforced (often in the context of an asymmetrical covenant), stressing the great king's prerogative of intervention in the affairs of the lesser kingdom.¹⁵ In short, whether between great kings or across the two tiers of the society of polities, the royal marriage was another means to reinforce the key rules and norms of that society.

5 Final remarks

As a means to preserve order, each institution of the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities functioned in a distinctive way to promote rules of coexistence and the constitutional normative principle of that society. My sketch of how each of the key institutions fostered the preservation of order yields a picture of a society of polities organised around a two-tier principle. Great kings used those institutions to interact more or less as equals, but also employed them in their relations with lesser kings to preserve the very principle of a hierarchical two-tier society comprised of suzerain sub-systems. The finding corroborates, now with the additional weight of IR theory, some of the studies in the specialised historical literature (Liverani 2001; 2004: 53–81).

In this brief attempt to integrate IR theory and ANE history in interdisciplinary dialogue, I have referred to a broader debate in political science about the possibility of order in an anarchical system of polities. Hobbesian power politics narratives rely on an analogy, albeit incomplete and imperfect, with the 'state of nature,' advancing the claim that sociability within an anarchical system is very 'thin,' to the extent that it exists at all. To be sure, even under anarchy, polities may cooperate particularly by forming balance-of-power alliances, but this arises out of self-interest and not of a sense of appropriateness. One may think of Hammurabi's policies of expansion that included breaking covenants when it was not convenient to remain in an alliance anymore (Launderville 2003: 91–92). The realist power politics story should not be ignored. However, what I have suggested here is that a thorough account of 2nd millennium ANE inter-polity relations should bring more to the table.

The other side of the story is that great kings and lesser kings operated not only in a system where clashes

and cooperation for convenience were unavoidable, but also made a point of following certain rules and norms which prescribed appropriate behaviour seeking to maintain a certain social order among them, given the tradition in which they were embedded. They interacted through institutions that promoted those rules and norms and, at the same time, reinforced that tradition. To tell this side of the story, I have interpreted inter-polity relations in the 2nd millennium ANE as a *society*, and not merely a system, of polities. The institutions of covenants, wars, communication, gift exchange, and royal marriages promoted behaviour that was consistent with three elementary goals of that society, namely, the restriction of violence, making sure promises would be kept and stabilising jurisdiction. These institutions also reiterated the core normative principle of a two-tier society.

Here I have opted for a certain way of linking social theory to historical sources. In an attempt to give as much weight to primary sources as a short and preliminary study would allow, I have drawn on a tradition of IR theory – the 'English School' – that emphasises history and interpretation without ignoring the issues raised by the mainstream realist and liberal traditions. However, I have adapted English School theory to the case of the 2nd millennium ANE society of polities. The overarching argument about institutions promoting order was maintained, but in the English School account the specific institutions are those of modern international relations. For this reason, I have derived a list of institutions from the historical case, instead of imposing our understanding of contemporary institutions upon the historical case. A background to my argument, then, is a view that from time to time the way of ordering things in a given historical society of polities will change.

It was not my aim to stipulate when and how the 2nd millennium order in the ANE society of polities came about, and when and how it changed later. In order to tackle these additional issues, the framework I have proposed here would have to be expanded with the inclusion of an account of institutional change. This is a topic for further investigation. In addition to this, given the richness of the material available from that period and the complexity involved in the study of ancient documents, another avenue for future research is the in-depth analysis of the discourse contained in each specific archive on inter-polity relations and their institutions.¹⁶

While IR theory may help historians make sense of their material, a deeper knowledge of the historical context should prompt IR theorists to refine and readjust their generalisations about how polities relate.

¹⁵ Some of the second millennium Hittite treaties include clauses on the royal marriage that will help seal the covenant, with unilateral provisions on how the princess should be treated (e.g. HDT 3).

¹⁶ I thank prof. Frank H. Polak for mentioning this point particularly in relation to the Mari documents.

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Reconsidering international relations in Southwest Asia during the Late Bronze Age

Emanuel Pfoh

Abstract: This paper addresses the question of ‘international relations’ or also ‘diplomacy’ in ancient Near Eastern studies, focussing on the Late Bronze Age period (ca. 1550–1200 BCE). The Egyptian point of view, on the one hand, and the general Asiatic point of view, on the other, are reviewed and discussed in a comparative manner in order to understand the means for expressing and conducting inter-polity relations during this period. We should not confuse, however, ancient ways of understanding what we currently call ‘diplomacy’ and ‘international relations’ with modern ways of explaining such phenomena. The main point advanced in this paper is the need to attempt to capture or recover the ancient meaning these ‘international relations’ had for the peoples of ancient Southwest Asia.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age, diplomacy, Egypt, Southwest Asia, inter-polity relations.

1 International relations and diplomacy as interpretative models

Ancient Near Eastern scholars, and historians in particular, have regarded the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 BCE) in the history of the ancient Near East, or better Southwest Asia,¹ as a foundational period of ‘international diplomacy’, at least for this part of the ancient world.² From a critical perspective, however, terms like ‘international’ and ‘diplomacy’ must be properly defined and evaluated in their own interpretative capacity and value for the historian of ancient socio-cultural realities and the specific dynamics within them, namely inter-polity contacts and relations. In pharaonic Egypt there was indeed an institution that can actually be considered a foreign office, dealing with foreign political affairs.³ Nevertheless, we should understand

the nature and functions of such an institution from a historical and anthropological analysis that covers both the ‘native’ (Egyptian) meaning attributed to the institution and the scholarly interpretation of it.

It is a socio-anthropological methodological principle that the native understanding of reality cannot stand on the same level of interpretation offered by modern scholarship about such a reality since quite different epistemologies are behind the construction of ancient and modern social and cultural worlds. Therefore, any reference to ‘international relations’ in ancient Near Eastern times should not confuse us as to how ancient people conceived of such relations and their dynamics and what we in the modern West think of them. Besides, we must acknowledge this phrase—‘international relations’—to be a modern concept interpreting ancient data rather than a self-evident fact. In short, it is all about not confusing what social anthropologists call the ‘native’ or *emic* perspective of social reality with the researcher’s or *etic* perspective of it.⁴ I would argue then that Late Bronze Age or Amarna ‘diplomacy’ should not be uncritically placed in the same category with what in modern times is referred to as diplomacy since not only a temporal or historical gap of millennia is present, but essentially a *cultural* gap has to be considered too since the ideological universe of Amarna regional politics is ontologically diverse from the modern (i.e., since the Enlightenment onwards) idea of politics and

1 ‘Near East’, ‘Middle East’ and related terminology have become problematic concepts; for useful discussions, see Scheffler 2003 and van Dongen 2014.

2 See, for instance, the explicit juridical terminology used in Ke-stemont 1974; see also Cohen 1996a; Cohen 1996b; Cohen/Westbrook 2000; Westbrook 2000; Lafont 2001; Liverani 2001; further the studies of synthesis by Podany 2010 and Altman 2012 and the anthology by Westbrook 2003, in which arguments are made in order to support the existence of an ‘international diplomacy’, even an ‘international law’, in the ancient Near East already in the third millennium BCE, although without the formal components of the Late Bronze diplomatic relations.

3 At the site of Tall al-Amārin (El Amarna) in Upper Egypt, the so-called Building 19, which housed the cache of tablets of the Amarna letters, would stand after the name “The Place of the Letters of the Pharaoh – Life, Prosperity, Health”, and was effectively the archive of the foreign office of the Egyptian State (see Mynářová 2007: 11–39). Moran (1992: xvi) observes about this building: ‘[it] may refer to a larger complex, the more extensive part of which was devoted to affairs of state conducted in the Egyptian language, the smaller (the actual find-spot), to

those conducted in foreign languages’.

4 On methodological grounds, it is thus most relevant for our analysis the criticism C. Lévi-Strauss (1950) posed on M. Mauss’s (1950 [1923–1924]) interpretation of the nature of native exchanges, which confused what the natives thought of the exchange with a proper anthropological analysis of it; cf. also Sahlins 1972: 149–183.

diplomacy. One therefore might agree with the general description of the ‘diplomatic system’ during the Amarna age made, for instance, by R. Cohen (1996b), but the interpretation of it, aiming at conceiving of an almost trans-historical notion of *diplomacy* in which both ancient and modern systems belong in an easily comparative set of inter-polity relationships, must be objected on historical and anthropological grounds. Even more, this question is greater if we consider that G. Berridge (2000: 212), who defines ‘diplomacy’ as ‘essentially a means of communication designed to promote negotiations, gather information, and clarify intentions, in relation to enemies as well as friends’, does not find such a definition as fitting for the Amarna regional system of political relations since

[...] the evidence strongly suggests that it is misleading to describe Amarna diplomacy as a full-fledged diplomatic system. It is true that its personnel were in general adequate to their tasks, that its methods for underpinning agreements were impressive, and that a suitable degree of flexibility of form and procedure (associated in this case perhaps with its very underdevelopment) was apparent. Nonetheless, it was marred by an incomplete and weakly held norm of immunity, an absence of resident missions other than those—stunted and crippled—of special envoys temporarily detained, incomplete bureaucratic support, and little in the way of a reflex for mediation between the Great Powers. Most significantly, diplomatic communication between hostile states—the real test of a developed diplomatic system—appears to have been virtually nonexistent (Berridge 2000: 221–222).

In a similar manner, the term ‘international’ as applied to ancient societies might lead to misunderstandings and misrepresentations if used uncritically and without an interpretative context: the idea of ‘nation’, as it is usually perceived nowadays, is essentially an anachronism when applied to pre-modern or ancient social realities⁵. Therefore, a term like ‘interregional’ instead of ‘international’ might connote a less modern understanding when we are dealing with issues related to identity, politics and territory (land, boundaries, frontiers, etc.). In a more strictly political sense, the notion of ‘inter-polity’ relations might replace too the idea of ‘international’ when addressing relations between two or more kingdoms, two or more states, a state and a tribal organisation, etc., each of them located in different regions. This precision in the use of terminology is necessary to avoid the representation of anachronistic realities of the past and to achieve a correct interpretation of symbolic and socio-political practices in ancient societies.

It should be clear then that each reference to ‘diplomacy’ in ancient Southwest Asia depends on a particular set of cultural and ideological presuppositions, which are built upon the general parameters of ancient

oriental worldviews,⁶ clearly expressed for instance in the epistolography of the period.

M. Liverani (2001), in his widely-known *International relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600–1100 BC* characterised the nature of diplomatic relations in the Late Bronze Age in the following manner:

Kings exchanging correspondence call each other ‘brother’ or less frequently ‘colleague’, and define their alliance as ‘brotherhood’, a ‘goodness (of relation)’ (*tābūtu*), even a ‘friendship’ or ‘love’ (*ra’amūtu*). They insist on the idea of ‘loving’ each other, ‘enjoying’ and ‘not afflicting’ each other’s heart, sharing resources and gratifying each other’s desires. If a difference in age should make the brotherhood metaphor inappropriate, the image of a father/son relationship is used instead; this is just a sign of personal respect with no political implications. When the royal Ugaritic couple address a high Hittite official as ‘father’, they are not implying any political subordination; they just wish to honour an old man. The use of the term ‘son’ as a form of address is also devoid of political significance, though it savours of an irritating ‘paternalism’. When a high Hittite official addresses a young and recently enthroned Ugaritic king as his ‘son’, his object is to make it understand, from the first line of the message, that a novice such as him has to pay more attention and respect to older people. [...] Suzerainty is expressed by the lord/servant terminology.⁷

I think it is however possible to dissent from Liverani when he points out that the father-son image did not have political implications since these are expressed instead through the metaphor lord-servant (cf. Schloen 2001: 256–262). In fact, if we attend in the Amarna epistolographic repertoire, for example, to the heading of the letter the petty king Aziru of Amurru sends to the Egyptian official Tutu, Aziru addresses Tutu as ‘my lord, my father’ and the message transmitted possesses clear political implications, hence the use of such household/kinship terminology.⁸ This example cannot be discussed further in the present work; nevertheless it could be affirmed that the conception of sovereignty and power relations in Syria-Palestine was actually constructed through notions and representations of kinship, friendship and patronage, all *personal* relationships, which support the political phraseology of the period’s diplomacy and constitute the vehicle of socio-political practices (see Pfoh 2016: *passim*).

6 See the still unsurpassed presentation in Liverani 1976.

7 Liverani 2001: 136. Liverani refers here to the heading of the text RS 19.70 294 *un-ma šar₃ KUR URU u-ga-ri-it u₃ šarrat KUR URU u-ga-ri-it a-na ¹ki-la-’e-e a-bi-ni ¹qi,-bi-’ma* (transl. ‘thus says the King of Ugarit and the Queen of Ugarit: to Kila’e, our father’). On the basic aspects of Bronze Age diplomacy, cf. also Munn-Rankin 1956; Liverani 2001: 128–138; Zaccagnini 1990; Zaccagnini 1999.

8 EA 158: 1; see Rainey 2015: 787 *a-na ¹tu₃-u₂-tu₃ EN-ia a-bi-i[a]* ‘To Tutu, my lord, my father’.

5 Cf., for instance, the now classical discussions in Hobbsawm 1992; and Anderson 2006.

2 Egyptian and Asiatic worldviews

If we consider now the particularities of ancient Near Eastern worldviews relating to inter-polity connections, a clear differentiation can be established between an Egyptian worldview and an Asiatic (Mesopotamian, Hittite, Levantine) worldview (Liverani 1967; 2001). From the perspective of the Egyptian worldview, what we understand as ‘diplomacy’ or ‘international relations’ cannot be addressed apart from the nature of Egyptian kingship itself and the attributes and features of the pharaoh as a god-king. In effect, the Egyptian conception of monarchy saw the pharaoh as he who guarantees the cosmic order and peace, both in the land of Egypt (*Kmt*) and in foreign lands (*ḥswt*) (Grimal 1986: 53–54). Furthermore, the pharaoh would provide the ‘breath of life’ (*ḥw n ḥh*) to men, both Egyptian and foreign, through the establishment of order (*mꜣt*) and the pacification of the land, defeating the forces of chaos and guaranteeing the unity of the country. The Egyptian king of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties possesses both warrior and demiurgic features: he vanquishes the enemy and grants them life, in a symbolic manner—which is also ontological, from the Egyptian perspective—but also in a more concrete way, namely a political way.⁹

In the Annals of Thutmose III, the defeated Levantine petty kings at the battle of Megiddo are represented exclaiming:

[Great] is the power of *Mn-ḥpr-Rꜥ*, [the son of Amun]! Grant that we survive: we shall make deliveries to your majesty, and we shall send trade goods (*bꜣkw*) [for your treasury! ... There has never been a king who did] what your majesty has done in this land! Then my majesty commanded that the ‘breath of life’ (*ḥw n ḥh*) be given to them.¹⁰

In the same text it is further noted:

Lo, the chiefs of this foreign country came on their bellies to ‘kiss the earth’ to the power of his majesty and to request ‘breath (*ḥw*)’ for their noses, because of the greatness of his strength and because of the greatness of the power.¹¹

In the times of pharaoh Akhenaten, during the Amarna age, several letters from the petty kings in the Levant disclose an appropriation of the Egyptian phraseology (and, in pragmatic terms, also the ideology). Thus, Rib-Hadda of Byblos claims:

May the king heed the word of his servant and may he grant sustenance for his servant and may he *keep his servant alive* and I will guard his faithful [city],

⁹ Cf. Grimal 1986: 229–338; also Lorton 1974: 136–144; Liverani 2010: 162–170. On the features of Egyptian kingship in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, cf. Redford 1995; and Murnane 1995 respectively.

¹⁰ Urk. IV, 759, 8–15; quoted in Lorton 1974: 138. This expression is also found in the Amarna correspondence: *a-na ša LUGAL EN-ia* ⁴UTU-*i[a]* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia* *ša-ri* TIL.LA-*ia* *qi₂-bi₂-ma* (EA 141: 1–3; Rainey 2015: 718; transl.: ‘Speak to the king, [m]y sun god, my deity, the breath of my life’); see also EA 142: 1; 143: 1–2; 144: 1–2.

¹¹ Urk. IV, 662, 8–12; quoted in Lorton 1974: 138–139.

with our La[dy] (and) our deity, f[or you]. And may [the king] see to his [land] and [his servant and may he ta]ke counsel concerning [his] land and paci[fy] h[is city]!¹²

N. Grimal indicates also that to receive the pharaoh’s breath of life is, above all, political recognition, from the Egyptian perspective, a recognition realised by the duty of work or labour (*bꜣkw*), by extension obedience, that the now foreign servants owe to the Egyptian pharaoh.¹³ ‘Every land bows down to his power, their goods (*inw*) being on their backs, [in return for giving] them the ‘breath of life (*ḥw n ḥh*)’.¹⁴ This should not mean, however, that the Egyptian administration of conquered lands would proceed through some kind of ‘vassal oath’ or ‘vassal treaty’, as was the case with Hittite rule. It is true that the nominal and verbal expression *sdfꜣ tryt* can be translated as ‘oath of allegiance’ (Faulkner), ‘to undertake fealty’ (Wilson), or ‘to establish the veracity’ (Goedicke); but in each case the expression appears as the commitment of the vanquished (or of Egypt’s subjects) not to contravene what the pharaoh orders or decrees.¹⁵ Also as C. Zaccagnini (1990: 53–54) observes of two occurrences on loyalty oaths (*sdfꜣ tryt*) sworn by the Asiatics to Thutmose III and Amenhotep II: ‘these oaths are still a matter of controversy, but their sporadicity is a strong hint against a regular practice not otherwise attested in the relations between Egypt and Asia. Comparison with loyalty oaths of the Hittite milieu seems to be out of place, because the *sdfꜣ tryt* only concern the Pharaoh as a person and do not include his successors, and moreover because this kind of oath is by no means functionally inserted in the texture of an inner (i.e., Egyptian) administrative structure or in an international setting where third parties engage themselves as «tributary» subjects’. Thus, this terminology operates more within a ritual sphere of the pharaoh’s attributes over his subjects than as a loyalty oath (see further Mynářová 2015: 157–158).

It is also interesting to note the conception according to which the Egyptian king manifests his sovereignty after a condition of possession (something shared with the southwest Asian monarchies): the pharaoh is the ‘lord’

¹² EA 74: 55–59, after Rainey 2015: 455 (the emphasis is mine).

¹³ Grimal 1986: 246. Faulkner (1962: 48) translates *bꜣkw* as ‘work, task; work of craftsmanship, labour of captives, revenues, taxes’, semantic variants that can be made one single term, from the Egyptian worldview, meaning all of which is owed to the pharaoh for keeping the cosmic order and guaranteeing life: ‘la soumission naturelle de l’Egypte à son roi fait que celui-ci accorde automatiquement au Pays ‘le souffle’, symbole de la protection que mérite l’obéissance’ (Grimal 1986: 248). In the same sense, the term *bꜣk*, ‘servant’ (Faulkner 1962: 49), may be conceptualised under the same analytical considerations.

¹⁴ Urk. IV, 896, 15–17; quoted in Lorton 1974: 140. The term *inw* can be translated as ‘produce of region; tribute of subject lands; gifts from palace; diplomatic gifts from foreign powers, dues to be paid’ (Faulkner 1962: 22); see in general, Bleiberg 1996: 90–114.

¹⁵ Cf. the discussion in Lorton 1974: 132. See also Wilson 1948; Faulkner 1962: 259; Helck 1962: 256–257; Goedicke 1963: 79; and Morschauer 1988: 103, who dismisses the reference of the expression to a loyalty oath and places it in the realm of a royal pardon.

(*nb*), he is the ‘king’ (*nswt*) and the ‘sovereign’ (*ity*) of Egypt and the ‘chief’ (*hk3*) of the ‘Nine Bows’ (*psdt-pdwt*), namely the conquered enemies from the foreign lands (Grimal 1986: 564–585; also Lorton 1974: 12–16, 18–21, 21–29). This differentiated terminology on the modes in which the pharaoh relates to their subordinates by exerting power is most relevant for the present discussion since, from the Egyptian perspective, there is only one king (*nswt*), while other rulers are recognised as princes (*wrw*, lit. ‘great ones’),¹⁶ lords (*nbw*) or chiefs (*hk3w*)¹⁷ in foreign lands, who would never be on the same ontological level as the Egyptian king (*nswt*).¹⁸ As D.B. Redford (1995: 168–169) affirms:

The monarchy in Egypt constituted a unity, a single function, with universal application. There was but one *nswt*, “King (of Upper Egypt)”. The mythology rationalizing kingship did not accommodate a plurality of *nswts*. The case with Akkadian *šarrum* or West Asiatic *malkum*, both “king”, however, was quite different. These were terms which had basically terrestrial reference, and did not suffer the burden of mythological baggage inherited from the period of formulation. A Hammurabi or a Yarim-lim, or a Shamshi-adad, great kings themselves, were served by lesser kings, and the terms *šar šarri* or *melek m^llakim*, “king of kings”, arose spontaneously. Pharaoh, on the other hand, thrust as overlord into the Asiatic sphere, could not conceive of, or tolerate, degrees of kingship. All foreign heads of state, whether they called themselves kings or not, were but “chiefs” (*wrw*) to him. “King of kings” (*nswt nsww*) or “ruler of rulers” (*hk3 hk3w*) were simply mechanical translations of alien locutions.

In Southwest Asia, inter-polity relations were conceived of instead after a much less centralist ideology or worldview than in Egypt, and the wider landscape, both physical and political, was probably one of the main reasons for it. Kingship in this region had similar characteristics to the Egyptian, regarding palatine structures and the material means of socio-political organisation. However, kingship ideology was divergent from the Egyptian conception of kingship.¹⁹ If in ancient Egypt the pharaoh was a king-god on earth, the Asiatic king—each one of the Great Kings of Late Bronze Age diplomacy—was instead conceived of as a human king with functions mediating the divine and human realms. The Asiatic king was the representative of the human community before the gods, especially through the performance of rituals, and was also the keeper of

the divine order on earth, that is, in the kingdom. Celebrative inscriptions about the protective, warrior and brave nature of the king describing the kings of Southwest Asia in the Bronze and Iron Ages, make room—unlike the ancient Egyptian worldview—for the existence of various kings, ontologically alike; in other words, monarchic peers with which to interact through parity or alliance relations (cf. Liverani 2001: 29–45).

An example of a parity treaty is the famous one celebrated between Hattušili III of Hatti and Ramesses II of Egypt, notably from the Hittite point of view, in which both rulers are referred to as Great Kings of each of their kingdoms and in terms of brotherhood (*ahhutu*), establishing relations of alliance and mutual defensive assistance, guaranteeing the throne succession of each other and the exchange of fugitives from their respective kingdoms.²⁰ Copies of the tablets where the treaty was inscribed were available for both parties; in the Hittite case they were found in the archives of the imperial capital, in the Egyptian case there is a hieroglyphic version of it carved in the walls of the temple of the god Amun in Karnak (see Beckman 1996: 90–95). However, in the Egyptian version of the treaty, the pharaonic ideology is preponderant over any parity relation and, thus, king Ramesses II is referred there as *p3 hk3 3 n Kmt* (‘great chief of Egypt’), while Hattušili III is referred only as *p3 wr 3 n HB* (‘great one of Hatti’) (Langdon and Gardiner 1920: 185; Spalinger 1981: 308).

We may observe in this context also an alternative example, a non-parity or asymmetrical treaty between the Hittite king Hattušili III and king Bentešina of Amurru: there were certainly instances of mutual assistance in the treaty, of alliance and observations over safe succession to the throne; however, it was the Hittite king the one imposing the conditions of the treaty and the king of Amurru the one following them, with clauses indicating retribution should he not behave as envisaged in the agreement. This kind of subordination relation, through the imposition of a treaty with duties and nominal guarantees, was the standard procedure of Hittite organisation of conquered polities, as attached territories to the kingdom.²¹

The political relations the kings from Kassite Babylonia established with Egypt during Amarna times should be understood, in theory, as parity relations, at least from the Asiatic perspective. Nonetheless, as already indicated, the Egyptian centralist ideology would make it highly improbable for the pharaoh to recognise

16 Faulkner (1962: 64) translates ‘great one, magnate’ (cf. Urk. IV, 62, 2) and ‘ruler of a foreign land’ (cf. Urk. IV, 185, 3; 773, 2); Hannig (2006: 699), translates ‘Fürst, König (e. *Fremdlandes*)’.

17 According to Lorton (1974: 176), [t]he crucial change in the terminology occurs in the Hyksos period, with the introduction of *hk3* “ruler” to indicate an independent king who can be an overlord and *wr* “prince” to indicate a king, especially a dependent king. Given the Asiatic provenance of the Hyksos, it seems clear that these terms translate Akkadian *šarru rabû*, “great king, independent king, overlord” and *šarru* “king, dependent king”.

18 Cf. Urk. IV, 15, 1292, 1325, 1568, 1756.

19 Cf. especially the notable study by H. Frankfort (1948), noting the salient features of Egyptian and Mesopotamian kingship.

20 The semantic field of the Near Eastern concept of “brotherhood” covers biological and family relations but also socio-political bonds: CAD A1, 186–188: *ahhutu* 1. ‘brotherly relationship, brotherliness’, 2. ‘position of a brother (as legal term, *adoptio in fratrem*), group of persons of equal status’, 3. ‘brotherhood (referring to a political relationship)’; cf. also CAD A1, 195: *ahu* 2. ‘brother, colleague, associate’. For ‘brotherhood’ as what I would call macro-politics, see Liverani 2001: 135–138; and for ‘brotherhood’ instead as micro-politics, see Démare-Lafont 2012.

21 See CTH 92; cf. the translation of the treaty in Beckman 1996: 95–98. See also the treaty between Hatti and Ugarit in PRU 4, 133, and the epistolography of Ugarit in Ugaritica 5, 20–80. See further Pfoh 2016: 112–116, 141–143.

a relation among equals—at least as it is attested in the Egyptian repertoire of sources. This is evidenced in the complaint king Kadašman-Enlil of Babylonia writes to pharaoh Amenhotep III:

[Furthermor]e you, my brother, when [you wrote to me] about not gi[ving] (a daughter) when I wr[ote to you] for a daughter for marriage, saying: “From of old a daughter of the king of Egypt has never been given to anyone,” why [has one] never [been given]? You are a king; you can [do] whatever you want. If you were to give (a daughter) who c[ould say] anything?²²

Accordingly, on the one hand, the diplomatic relations between Egypt and Asiatic polities may be analytically categorised as between Great Kings; but, on the other hand, the Egyptian centralist worldview would impose an ontological difference between the monarchies and the kingdoms with which Egypt interacted, thus widening even more the gap of ‘normal’ (i.e., Asiatic) asymmetrical relations with Small Kings. The situation is not only marked by conditions of political status or prestige or even military power, as would be expected in the Asiatic political landscape; the situation is also affected by the cosmic differences between Egypt and its periphery. Nonetheless, and following S. Meier (2000), this situation is not absolute if we attend more to the practices carried out by the Egyptian pharaoh than to the worldview supporting them. In effect, Meier (2000: 168) observes that the Egyptian diplomatic disposition during Amarna times was actually forced to give up certain pretensions of its own worldview in order to maintain contacts with other great powers:

Pharaoh and his chancery had surrendered on the international level their self-image in order to communicate with second-class humans. What Egypt gained was coexistence with powerful neighbors on the northern fringes of their empire. The public compromise of Egypt’s image—demotion from uniqueness to membership in an elite club—suggests that Egypt was not dealing from a position of strength. This posture of compromise marks a real surrender on Egypt’s part that is confirmed on other levels. Not only in the areas of kingship and kinship is Egypt publicly (i.e., internationally) compromising its image. One must also not overlook the fact that Egyptians are corresponding in a non-Egyptian language. Instead of foreigners learning Egyptian standards, it is Egypt who learns the mechanics of international communication from others. It is not suggested that there was any competition in this regard. It is simply that when Egypt began to join in the dialogue, the tools for diplomacy had already been forged, and Egypt had to learn the rules set up by others.

A key to Meier’s suggestion lies in the fact that Egypt during the Amarna age had not imposed completely its rules of relations between powers, but had joined a group of ‘international’ players who were already operating with agreed upon rules. Egypt may have attempted to impose its pretensions concerning marriage

²² EA 4: 4–9, after Rainey 2015: 73.

negotiations, but it did not change the established rules of the interregional system. In effect, it is noteworthy that in the Amarna correspondence (for instance, EA 53: 40–44), the Egyptian king is called by the Akkadian term for ‘king’, *šarru*, and placed ontologically in the same category as the Asiatic kings, even when the Egyptian was the most powerful (Meier 2000: 167).

Such practical concessions of Egypt’s foreign politics are not witnessed, however, in the correspondence with the Syro-Palestinian petty kings, as these write to the pharaoh in disappointment over his silence in response to their complaints. As we read in two letters by Rib-Hadda of Byblos:

[Sp]eak [to] the king, my lord, [my sun god;] the message of Rib-Hadda, [your servant,] at the feet of my lord, [my] sun god, [seven times (and) seven times] have I fallen. Be informed [that] the hostility against [me] is severe. [He (Abdi-Aširta of Amurru; EP) has taken] all of my towns. The tow[n of Byblos] alone remain[s] to me [...]What can [I] do by myself? You keep silent while the *‘apîru* [dog] is taking them. But it is to you that I have turned.²³

[Rib-Hadda spoke to] h[is] lord: [at the feet of my lord, seven times and seven times] have [I] fallen. [I wrote to you, “Why] do you sit idly [and] keep silent and the man of the *‘apîrû*, the dog, is taking [yo]ur [cities]?” Oh king, [listen to me and se]nd [regular] troops [that they] take the land of Amur[ru].²⁴

It consequently seems, so far, that the sovereigns of Babylonia, Assyria and Ḫatti, as described above, were considered Great Kings by themselves and as such they would politically relate to each other and to minor polities under subordination.²⁵ Each of the petty kings from Syria-Palestine—but also rulers of higher status—were called by the Egyptian court *wr* (Eg. pl. *wrw*; lit., ‘great ones’); while the petty kings were self-proclaimed in their letters to the pharaoh as ‘servants’ (Sum. sing. IR₃ = Akk. (*w*)*ardu*)²⁶ of their distant ‘lord’ (Sum. EN = Akk. *bēlu*).²⁷ Nonetheless, and interestingly, the petty kings of the Levant would refer to themselves among their neighbouring peers as ‘kings’ (Sum. sing. LUGAL = Akk.

²³ EA 90: 1–9, 22–23, 63–64, after Rainey 2015: 519.

²⁴ EA 91: 1–5, 36–38, after Rainey 2015: 523, 525. It is usual in the Amarna letters to find the term *‘apîrû* /*ḫabîru* as a derogatory epithet for referring to the enemies of the pharaoh; see Liverani 1979.

²⁵ Following an established rule of reciprocity in the salutation formula opening the diplomatic letters, for instance in these letters sent to the pharaoh: EA 7: 1–7; 16: 1–5; 19: 1–8; 21: 1–12; 27: 1–6; 29: 1–5; 41: 1–6.

²⁶ Cf. CAD A2, 243: *ardu* (*wardu*, *bardu*, *urdu*, *aradu*) ‘1. slave, 2. official, servant, subordinate, retainer, follower, soldier, subject (of a king), worshipper of a deity’. The semantic difference between ‘slave’ and ‘servant’ is, of course, contextual in each case. It could be said, from the Egyptian ideological perspective, that all the Levantine petty kings are ‘slaves’, in the sense that they all belong politically to the pharaoh; however, from the Syro-Palestinian perspective, all the petty kings see themselves as ‘servants’, as they proclaim their loyalty and request assistance in exchange; cf. further Pfoh 2016: 128–137, 150–160.

²⁷ Cf. AHw 1, 118: ‘Herr; Besitzer (von)’; also CAD B, 191: ‘1. master, ruler, 2. owner (of property), officeholder’. See also Helck 1962: 515.

šarru),²⁸ as the ‘man’ (Sum. *LU₂* = Akk. *awīlu* → *amī/ēlu*) of a particular town²⁹ or as the ‘great one’ (Eg. *p3 wr* = Akk. [*p*]awura).³⁰ Summing up the relationship scheme then, and building on the ideology of the actors and the structure of communication between the kings of the Late Bronze Age regional system (Liverani 2000), we can place on one side the aforementioned structure of Great Kings and Small Kings interacting, but we must also acknowledge on the other side the distinctive character of the Egyptian worldview, especially when interacting with the powers of Southwest Asia and the petty kings from the Levant.

3 Decoding native worldviews

If we consider the profoundly ethnocentric nature of the Egyptian worldview, regarding the essence of kingship but also the nature of those inhabiting beyond the borders of the land of Egypt (cf. Galán 1995), how does such worldview relate to any notion of ‘diplomacy’ or ‘international relations’? As D. Lorton (1974: 1) asks: ‘What did the Egyptians regard as the method of creating this order? What was its specific content? How was their system, i.e., their international law, intelligible both to them and to the foreigners with whom they dealt?’

It is apparent that the interregional contacts of Egypt denote a certain tension between the mentioned ideology and concrete situations of ‘diplomatic’ contact with other powers as any state or complex polity would be expected to have. In this sense, scholars like Liverani (1990) suggest that Egyptian propaganda—in the etymological sense of propagating a worldview through visual and graphical means—establishes a double vision: towards the internal public, a centralist and triumphalist vision of kingship predominates; towards

the exterior public, namely the diplomatic arena, such centralist and triumphalist vision is tamed and a recognition of a certain parity predominates.³¹ Nonetheless, the different procedures in Egypt and in Southwest Asia regarding inter-polity contacts with their subordinates produced, on the one hand, a relatively stable mode of socio-political relations—notably, Ḫatti’s rule over the northern Levant—and, on the other hand, a political domination marked by profound ideological differences between the ruler and the ruled—notably Egypt’s dominance over the southern Levantine kings (Pfoh 2016). Such socio-political dynamics, between the Great Kings themselves, and between Great and Small Kings, may indeed be interpreted according to a general framework covering the variety of means for interaction: economic exchanges, marriage alliances, and the exchange of messages and specialists, besides the conceptualisation and articulation of political power and prestige (Liverani 2000). However, rather than concrete historical facts, the interregional polity interactions during the Late Bronze Age offers the Near Eastern scholar a kind of ancient mental scheme to be decoded, a scheme evidenced in the epigraphic and textual record and after which we may attempt to recover an ancient cultural mode of creating and expressing a whole spectrum of socio-historical realities as ancient oriental political elites conceived of them.

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²⁸ See, for instance, EA 92: 30–34; 147: 66; 148: 25, 40. Cf. Rainey 2015: 526, 744, 748.

²⁹ Cf. AHw 1, 90; CDA 31. See EA 146: 14. Cf. Rainey 2015: 738–739, 774–775, 778–779.

³⁰ The term has been frequently overinterpreted as ‘prince’: see, most recently, Rainey 2015: 755, EA 149:30: [*Zi-im-re-da p*]a-wu-ra : ‘[Zimreda, t]he prince’. Cf., however, Knudtson 1907–1915: 616–617, who, in spite of transcribing [*e-ta-ga-ma^a p*]a-wa-ra, translates probably more properly the term as ‘Herr von’.

³¹ In fact, Grimal (1986: 5) affirms, the term ‘propaganda’, ‘appliqué à l’Égypte pharaonique, il est, à la limite, impropre. Il ne correspond pas, in effet, à un besoin de démonstration ou de conversion, puisque le “discours” pharaonique s’adresse exclusivement à ceux qui participent du système qu’il décrit. Il s’agit, simplement, d’une présentation des faits selon une formulation qui ne cherche nullement à leur faire violence, mais, bien au contraire, à les restituer dans leur réalité essentielle’.

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A Near Eastern states system before the classical period

Comparing the Greek *poleis* system with ancient Near Eastern state formation

Alex Aissaoui

Abstract: International systems, international societies and world societies have been the focus of analyses of the English School (ES) par excellence. Within this research tradition, the emphasis has been to consider the Greek city-state culture as constitutive of a ‘nascent international society’ based on common Pan-Hellenic institutions and a common language. By contrast, a central claim of the paper is to show that in the Near East dating back to the third and second millennium we encounter a region-wide international arena where it is possible to find an interdependent and multicultural pre-modern state environment – indeed, the first great international era in world history. Balance of power strategies, sovereignty, treaty-making between equals and vassals were the key features of this interaction. Power balancing, in particular, is interesting because it remains to be considered – within the international relations (IR) scholarship – as a classical construct of the European statecraft. Although there was no theorizing on the concept in the ancient Near East, this does not preclude the existence of the phenomenon itself. Set against a comparative analysis between western and eastern Mediterranean worlds, this paper suggests, then, that the Near Eastern case better meets the criteria for a pre-modern international society in its cosmopolitanism and in chronological terms than has been thus far recognized in the ES tradition as well as in the field of IR.

Keywords: international system, international society, world society, English School, Greek city-state culture, balance of power, sovereignty, treaty-making, comparative analysis, eastern and western Mediterranean worlds.

1 Introduction

When Francesco Sforza, the Duke of Milan, sent Nicodemo da Pontremoli to Genoa as a resident ambassador in 1455, this set an important precedent in the history of diplomacy: despite some controversy, Nicodemo is still considered to be the first recorded permanent diplomatic envoy (Anderson 1993: 7; Der Derian 1987: 106; McClanahan 1989: 43). Historians and IR theorists alike have rightly paid attention to this fact as an indication of the institutionalization of diplomatic practices which paved the way for the emergence of a modern states system (see Anderson 1993: 2–9; Mattingly 1988: 72; Roberts 2009: 8–9; Berridge 2000: 212–213, 222–224). However, the central premise of the paper is to take a long view perspective over the issue of diplomacy by analyzing from a comparative perspective the Mediterranean states systems in the world of Greek city-states as well as in the ancient Near East. Accordingly, diplomacy and complex multilateral interstate relations were entirely possible several millennia before the age of resident embassies in Renaissance Italy (for ancient Near Eastern diplomacy recognized as a precursor for

modern diplomacy, see e.g. Roberts 2009: 5–6). Thus, the larger issue behind ancient diplomacy is how far back in time can there be said to have been an international system of states (a question raised in Luard 1992: 342). This problematic has received surprisingly little attention in IR scholarship beyond the European experience.

The English School (ES) of international relations stands out as a school of thought that has made the most serious attempt to use historical knowledge in the theory building of IR (for a succinct up-to-date account of the history of the ES, see Buzan 2014: 5–11). While this research tradition has deepened our understanding especially with regard to analyses of international system and international society (see Frey/Frey 1999: 212–215; Little 2006: ch. 5), the Eurocentric legacy is still recognizable¹. Accordingly, the ES has leaned predominantly on the European experience from the 16th century CE onwards at the expense of regional systems that are significantly earlier than the Atlantic-based global system. It is against this background that this paper

¹ Suggestively, Richard Little (2005: 54) seems to take for granted that the Greco-Roman world is the starting point for analyzing international society from a world historical perspective.

aims to tackle the international arenas in the ancient Mediterranean world.

It is well established within the academic disciplines studying the ancient Near East that agriculture, cities, writing, administration and collection of laws, social stratification, state formation, rudimentary banking system, mathematical thinking, astronomy, and calendar saw the birth for the first time in Western Asia. Consequently, it should not come as a surprise that we can also trace the first tangible evidence for those facets of world politics – balance of power, bandwagoning, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, treaty-making – we find familiar in our contemporary world (on the cultural heritage and dynamics of empire formation in the ancient Near East, see e.g. Barjamovic 2016: 120–153; Eddinger 2010: 419–423, 427; Hallo 1996: 324–332; see also Kuhrt 2006; Maier 2006; Snell 2005: 430–433; Westbrook 2003: 1; Whitehouse 2006). Indeed, the history of the ancient Near East, the Late Bronze Age (LBA) (ca. 1600–1200 BCE) in particular, offers a rich source material for a student of world politics as it constitutes the first truly international era in world history – an era described as a complex milieu where there was “a web of interconnectedness” to borrow a term used by the British archeologist and anthropologist Brian Fagan (2003: 24: 27.06–28.32; see also Monroe 2009: 297).

Students of world politics have mainly focused on the western Mediterranean world and even more rare have been comparative studies between the ancient eastern and western Mediterranean polities.

In the following section, the analysis will focus on the use of some of the elementary concepts in states systems analysis and how they are linked to the phenomena they try to describe. The aim is to show that concepts are historically contingent products borne out of historical events, not some neutral abstract constructs above them. This theoretical examination paves the way for the third and fourth sections, which empirically and with a comparative perspective set light on the international arenas of ancient Greece and the ancient Near East.

2 Concepts vs. phenomena

Before entering the political landscapes of the Greek city-states and the ancient Mediterranean states, I will elaborate five constitutive concepts: states, international systems and societies of states, balance of power, and sovereignty.

International systems and societies cannot function without the existence of collective political communities – that is to say *states*. State as a focus of study constitutes the *raison d'être* for the study of international relations. Understanding how and why states behave the way they do was a central rationale behind the institutionalization of IR as an academic discipline after the First World War (a concise overview on the history of world politics as a discipline is provided in Hobden 2002: 42–59).

For social scientists, defining an ancient ‘state’ as a political formation still poses problems. Among them, Anthony Giddens (1985: 4, 50–51) argued that the existence of “international relations is coeval with the origins of nation-states” and that “borders are only found with the emergence of nation-states”. This kind of interpretation of world politics is highly problematic, culturally limited and historically narrow for it implies that the existence of a states-system is directly linked with the formation of modern states, the genealogy of which does not date further back than to the 16th century CE Europe (a similar kind of reasoning is offered by Wight 1991: 1; also Held 2006: 32, fn. 2, 60–62; Vagts/Vagts 1979: 558; for a critical view of Giddens’ assessment, see Smith 2003: ch. 4, n. 5; and for a critique of the lack of interest in the ancient world in the field of international thought, see Harle 1998: 9–11). In recent years, however, IR scholarship has started to recognize the need to go beyond the analysis focusing on the birth of the modern state, for international history clearly shows us the existence of organized political units that were unmistakably autonomous and independent although of course not sovereign nation-states as such (see Dunne 2001: 227; Melko 1995: 34; Rae 2007: 123, 133–134; Watson 1990: 100; see also Scheidel 2016: 7–8).

In the analysis of an “international system of states”, we face the question of how far back in time can we apply the idea of an international system (see Buzan and Little 1994: 233). IR scholarship, in most cases, goes back to the classical world in the form of the Greek city-states system. However, this kind of conceptual analysis is not only Eurocentric in the sense that it precludes other possible candidates meeting the standards for a states-system outside of the European experience, but it also implicitly sets the chronological framework to the Greco-Roman period in the first millennium BCE. Yet, more than a thousand years before Thucydides’ time, we witness in the ancient Near East an international arena where we come across the first surviving diplomatic documents such as peace treaties, treaties of alliance between equals and vassals, multiethnic centrally-ruled empires, proto-globalized trade relations, and detailed descriptions of military battles. Perhaps the best-known phase at this point in international history is the Amarna period (1365–1330 BCE), which gives us – in the form of a diplomatic correspondence – a vivid glimpse into the complex inter-polity relations in the region where Egypt, Mitanni, the Hittite state, Babylonia and Assyria traded, fought wars and tried to manipulate small vassal states to their own advantage.

States-systems and international societies, the latter of which represent a deeper interaction between states, have existed before the very terms were coined. Because of its Western origin in the theoretical sense, there is a tendency to locate the idea too closely to the European experience: ancient Greece and Rome continue to be considered birthplaces of modern international societies (see e.g. Watson 1992; Dunne 2001: 526–527; Eckstein 2006: 81–82). At a closer scrutiny, however, we see in the case of the ancient Greece more of a Hobbes-

ian world rather than an environment characterized by a harmony of interests. Another factor downgrading the international society argument is the parochial nature of the Greek city-state culture, which was not particularly open to outside influences and not even to fellow Hellenes as regards the extension of citizenship.

It is interesting to explore to what extent the interplay between system and society was present in the ancient world, and what the mechanisms for creating the conditions for an international society in the ancient Near East were. Clearly, it is easier to show the existence of an international system than that of a society, but in actual fact these are often intertwined with each other. Nonetheless, it becomes quickly evident that the societal arrangements were largely absent in the pre-modern world. There were no regular meetings with the great kings. As in Greece, warfare was a constant phenomenon. There was no unifying ideology in the ancient world. Yet there were elements in the ancient Near Eastern world that brought cosmos into the ostensibly chaotic international scene. For one, there was a common diplomatic language used for communication to overcome the diverse linguistic landscape of the region. Second, there was 'brotherhood' – a term widely used in the political correspondence between sovereigns during the second millennium. Other similar expressions like 'brother', 'father' and 'son' were metaphors for showing the political relationship between allied rulers rather than indicating any real kinship (e.g., Kristiansen/Larsson 2005: 104; Liverani 2001: 135–136). For the great kings 'brotherhood' meant belonging to a bond of love and friendship, which in concrete terms translated into exchanging gifts, be they gold, lapis lazuli or royal women. The need to belong to a group of peers in the name of brotherhood is a classic leitmotif in international history whether we are talking about the Persian king Shapur II's correspondence with the Roman emperor Constantius II (in the 4th century CE) or Napoleon III's (in the 1850's CE) exchange of missives with his Russian counterpart (Goldsworthy 2009: 390).

The literature on the *balance of power* theory is vast. It is one of those rather few concepts that scholars both in the social and human sciences have found useful in their research. The reason for this seems to be linked to the transhistorical nature of the balance of power theory, which makes it relatively easy to analyze from broad spatial-temporal premises. IR scholars, among them Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2009), claim that the last five hundred years are sufficient to analyze the balance of power theory. The problem with this kind of reasoning is that it unnecessarily reinforces the Eurocentric research tradition of the discipline of world politics.

The Late Bronze Age and to a lesser extent the Middle Bronze Age provide us with several examples of power balancing behavior that manifested itself both in the relations between vassals and great states. The French Assyriologist Bertrand Lafont (2001: 41) captures this problematic well when he observes that: "...is it necessary to conceptualize diplomacy to make diplomacy?" The same could be said about the balance of power –

we will return to this important question in the fourth section.

In the early 21st century, there has been a new kind of approach to the past in IR scholarship – students of world politics no longer take it for granted that the Peace of Westphalia, which put an end to the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), was a watershed in the diplomatic relations between states. The Peace of Westphalia – instead of being a decisive moment in the history of international relations – is, at least partially, a myth insofar as it sanctioned the age-old right to wage (just) war and to intervene in the affairs of other states rather than freedom from external interference, which is the attribute of the 20th century sovereignty (see Denmark in Ferguson et al. 2000: 8; Glanville 2013: 79–81; also Evans/Newnham 1998: 504–505). The right of one set of states, i.e. major powers, to meddle in the affairs of other states was upheld in the great international conferences from the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) and the Berlin Conference (1884–1885) to the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Only in the Declaration of the United Nations (1942), setting the foundation for the United Nations, do we see the principle of equality between states firmly established under international law (e.g. Glanville 2013: 85–86; Thompson 2006: 256).

In the next two sections, I will focus on the interplay of the above concepts in the framework of the ancient Near Eastern world.

3 Greek city-states and multi-city states: rivalry and cooperation under anarchy and hierarchy

Joyce Marcus (1998: 92) argues convincingly that territorial states and city-states "were often different stages in the dynamic cycles of the same states rather than two contrasting sociopolitical types" and that "clusters of city-states were invariably the breakdown product of earlier unitary states". In other words, we can see an ebb and flow process or a swing movement between unitary and city-states polities, which are by no means mutually exclusive. This theme is strongly present in the state formation process in the ancient Near East. While in recent historical scholarship there have been clear advances in our understanding of the city-state as a state type, the exact origin of city-states remains uncertain. There is no all-embracing reason for their existence. Yet, contributing factors include the need for centers of worship, population explosion, transition from pastoralism to agriculture favoring urban culture, and decentralization (see Ferguson 1991: 192; Hansen 2006a: 9–10; Hansen 2000b: 609–611).

City-states or *poleis* (sing. polis) were by far the most common political units in the ancient Greece by the time we reach the Archaic and Classical Ages (ca. 800/700–500, 500–323 BCE). Both in terms of geographical scope and population the Greek polis is considered

to be the largest of all city-state cultures² in world history (Hansen 2006a: ch. 1). Greek city-states could be found from Emporion in Spain to Ai Khanoum in Afghanistan, and from Olbia in Ukraine (close to the Black Sea) to Kyrene in Libya. The number of poleis was perhaps as high as 1,500, out of which 600 were located in Greece proper and the rest were scattered in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as well as the Near East and the Indus River Valley (see Hansen 2006a: 151, fn. 5; Hansen/Nielsen 2004: 3–4, 54; also e.g. Cohen 1995: 30–63).

Of interest here is less the internal (political system) or external structure (geographic scope) of the Greek poleis but rather the way the Greek city-states interacted with each other and beyond the Hellenic world. With the birth of the city-state culture the coexistence became significantly more complicated. Organized political violence changed from what had been raids among chiefdom neighbors into serious wars (Pomeroy et al. 2004: 88). The multiplied number of city-states also meant that subtle diplomacy, willingness to influence other poleis, came into play aside from violent coercion. Diplomacy was an inescapable fact of life. Unlike in other parts of the ancient world – Mesopotamia, China, India, Rome – where sources on secular history and political theory are more limited, classical authors, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Diodorus of Sicily, provide us with a relatively detailed picture of the political history in the land of the Hellenes, although, admittedly, the narrative is Athenian or Spartan-centered; Athens and Sparta were the dominant poleis in the classical period (see McNeill 1991: 189, 199; also Morris 2016: 280, 286–287; Ober 2008: 53–55).

This state of affairs is well captured by Thucydides (3.11) in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*: he observed that it is mutual fear that creates the most solid basis for an alliance. Yet for the quarrelling Greeks fear did not only come from the Near Eastern empire of Persia, but also from home territory. The security dilemma for the smaller poleis, especially in the case of the Ionian city-states on the coast of Asia Minor, was how to find a balance between a foreign threat (Persia) and the ambitious Spartan military commander Pausanias, who was operating on the coast after having defeated the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE which, effectively, marked the end of the Persian threat of invading Greece. However, from Thucydides (1.94–95, 1.128–133) we learn that Pausanias was willing to bring Sparta, Athens and the rest of Greece under Persian control. This treasonous act, which can be interpreted as an attempt to bandwagon on Pausanias' part, together with Sparta's alleged arrogance, explains why the

Ionian city-states were ready to ally themselves with the new rising power, i.e. Athens, another example of bandwagoning.³ The behavior of the Ionian poleis fits the pattern we see much earlier in the ancient Near East where the vassal states were rather quick to switch sides so as to choose a lesser evil of two possible hegemons in order to guarantee a sufficient space of freedom of action for themselves (see e.g. Watson 1992: 49). Ultimately, however, after the victory over the Persians, it became clear that Athens wanted to use the external threat as an excuse for building a hegemony among the Greeks in the form of the Delian League. It was this fear the Realists in the field of IR have brought to our attention that pushed Sparta to start a war against Athens, the result of which led to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides: 1.23).

A factor that helped increase the instability and the external intervention of outside parties within poleis was the phenomenon called *stasis* or a constant state of civil war between the Greeks (see Eckstein 2006: 51, fn. 62; Hansen 2016: 273; Watson 1992: 52–53). More specifically, *stasis* meant that two rival groups or factions within a polis fought for power often with the help of a like-minded group in a neighboring city. At stake was the question of which form of government to choose, (direct) democracy or oligarchy. The Persians took notice that the Greek poleis were not united in their opposition to the eastern giant: while the Athenians, the Spartans and the Corinthians led the independence camp, the Thebans together with many other city-states in central Hellas were ready to submit to the overlordship of Persia for reasons indicated above.

The intra-Greek rivalry with or without the help of outside powers in the classical age is obviously not the whole story. Treaty-making and the sending of diplomatic envoys was very much part of the city-state culture, and shows a real effort to find solutions by peaceful means. We know over 250 treaties of friendship, peace and alliance from this period (Bederman 2004: 171–83). Yet it would be an exaggeration to say that the Greeks possessed a conception of international law. On the other hand, a few societal aspects do surface in the classical age and the Hellenistic period. One was the ideology emphasizing the benefits of a 'general peace' (*koinē eirēnē*), a peace treaty to which all Greek city-states would swear, while at the same time protecting their own autonomy. In the end, despite attempts to adhere to the spirit of general peace in the 4th century BCE, *koinē eirēnē* was an ideal respected only during the brief period of the Olympic Games when there was a truce of three months (*ekacheiria*), and even then the truce was quite restricted, not constituting peace throughout the Greek world except for the city of Elis where the games were held (Golden 1998: 16–17; Swaddling 1999: 10–11). Another feature tilting towards the international soci-

2 For a list of thirty-seven city-state cultures ranging from Sumerian Ur, Uruk and Lagaš in the late fourth millennium Mesopotamia to the Spring-and-Autumn and Warring States Period (771–221 BCE) in China, and from the cities of northern Italy constituting city-states after the Carolingian kingdom broke up in 875 CE to a set of 'stone cities' that arose ca. 1000 CE and were occupied by a Swahili-speaking population in East Africa, see Hansen (2006a: ch. 2).

3 The earliest case of bandwagoning used by the Realist school of IR, which had both the ingredients of power balancing and bandwagoning, comes from the Greco-Roman world during the First Punic War and is illustrated by the ambivalent policy of the ruler of Syracuse Hiero II.

ety camp was perhaps the capacity of the Greek culture to Hellenize non-Greek populations, especially in the Orient, in the second half of the first millennium BCE.

Overall, the Greek city-state culture gives us a rather mixed picture as regards the system vs. society dichotomy, which in any case is partly artificial. Problematic is also the use of ‘international’ since the Greek city-state culture was still rather parochial during the Hellenic period. In contrast to Rome, none of the multi-city states like Athens, Sparta or Syracuse tried to construct multi-city citizenship, except in dire circumstances when they needed to expand the population base for defensive purposes (see Morris 2016: 296–298). Finally, diplomatic relations between poleis were not maintained by permanent ambassadors but by envoys (*presbeis*) sent out on an *ad hoc* basis to negotiate, e.g., a truce or an alliance (Adcock/Mosley 1975: 12, 122; Hansen 2016: 274–275). At the end of the day, the above examples further speak in favor of a system rather than a society.

4 The rise and decline of Near Eastern great states during the third and second millennium BCE: High politics in the Levant

“...There is no king who, just by himself, is truly powerful. Ten or fifteen kings follow Hammurabi, lord of Babylon, as many do Rim-Sin, lord of Larsa, as many Ibal-pi-el, lord of Eshnunna, as many Amut-pi-el, lord of Qatna. Twenty kings follow Yarim-Lim, the lord of Yamkhad (Aleppo).”⁴

The above excerpt – a letter sent by Itûr-Asdu, an official of Zimri-Lim from Mari (18th century) – is one manifest example of the ancient tradition of diplomatic relations and the interdependence of the region where the deeds of one state had an impact on the fates of others. We are hardly witnessing here a stereotypical eastern despotic monarchy but rather a landscape of minor powers jostling for an advantage (see Fleming 2004: 238–239). The letter also tells us that the basic political unit in the ancient Near East, before large territorial states came into existence, was the city-state; the oldest known city-state culture is that of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, which saw its heyday from 3100 to 2350 BCE. Indeed, rivalry between city-states is a constant theme in the history of the region, and it was to outlast the rise of territorial states and empires (for an overview of the endurance of city-states in Western Asia see in *ibid.*: 97–105). The city-states are relevant here because they created a ‘multi-centric environment’ where complex alliance strategies – including power balancing – could emerge as the above letter from the Mari archives vividly reminds us of (see Liverani 2005: 10–14).

There were several centralizing factors that led to the formation of larger political entities in the ancient Near East. The political core out of which the state growth developed came through the hegemonic rule

of suzerainty or ‘overlordship’, which later turned into more solid structures (Gat 2006: 235). The exact reasons behind this development are hard to follow but, obviously, this was largely the result of conquest, diplomacy and the expansionist policy of ambitious leaders. What seems clear enough, however, is the fact that territorial states or empires grew out of the city-state environment: there was a kind of uncomfortable *modus vivendi* between the two most important geopolitical structures of the ancient world (Parker 2004: 56).

We can divide the dynamics of the Near Eastern inter-polity relations into three different chronological phases: a) formation of large territorial states in the Middle and Late Bronze Age (ca. 2300–1600); b) shifting balances of power in the Syro-Palestinian area (ca. 1600–1200); c) systemic collapse of intense interaction between regional entities (ca. 1200–900) (end of a poly-centric states-system).

War, especially a war between great powers, can be a powerful instrument in reshaping the existing status quo. There are several examples – the battles of Megiddo, Kadeš and Nihriya – in ancient Near Eastern history to suggest that war shifted the balance of power in the victor’s favor by eliminating the vanquished state from the ranks of the great powers. A mere victory over an opponent did not, of course, by itself necessarily always cause an upset in the overall balance. The Mari archive, for example, tells the story of intricate political relationships in Babylonia where independent and dependent states maneuvered with each other in a carefully set political scene where allegiance and loyalty between suzerains and vassals were highly structured through parity and non-parity treaties in order to preserve the political equilibrium (Charpin 2006: 816; Munn-Rankin 1956: 74–84). The existence of these treaties is significant because the treaty-making itself is an attribute of sovereignty that the great states were committed to practice in order to maintain carefully established spheres of interests with one another as well as with their vassals (see e.g. Beckman 2003: 759–764). There is evidence that ‘brother’, ‘father’ and ‘son’, instead of being mere terms designating kinship relationships, were also metaphorical, psychological, and political epithets for recognizing rulers of equal or subordinate rank (see Kristiansen/Larsson 2005: 104; Liverani 2001: 135–138). An intriguing question is under what conditions could ‘brotherhood,’ *ahhûtu* in Akkadian, could also refer to the relationship of vassal and suzerain. What interests us here is the question of why there was a ‘brotherhood’ relationship between unequals, since power relations in the ancient Near East were highly hierarchical. The answer seems to lie in the logic of the regional international anarchy in the region which, in turn, is linked to political calculations dictated by the necessities of power balancing. It follows that major states such as Egypt, the Hittite state, or Mitanni, were on occasion ready to make compromises on status related issues so as to ensure their vassals stayed in their camp and advanced their territorial interests (on Mitanni’s efforts to secure

⁴ Translation after Charpin (2006: 816).

the alliance of its former vassal Assyria, see Gad 1975: 27).

The last theme of this section will focus on the Amarna period during the mid-14th century BCE, which brings the ancient Near Eastern world to us from the perspective of region-wide cosmopolitan diplomacy through the medium of diplomatic correspondence. The Amarna letter collection, probably the most important source of its kind in terms of describing inter-polity relations in the late Bronze Age, portrays an international arena where interaction in variety of forms – spheres of influence, deterrence, prestige, alliance formation, trade and survival of small city-states as well as the rise and decline of major states like Assyria and Mitanni – was at the center of the missives exchanged between the great states and the vassals. What makes the brief Amarna period unusual is that it describes the logic of international anarchy almost a millennium before Thucydides' classic study of the causes of the Peloponnesian War (431–404). Unlike the Greek poleis, however, the world of the ancient Near East during this period was less Hobbesian: military clashes were followed by relative peace and stability, which were up-held by peace treaties, exchange of precious gifts, marital arrangements between sovereigns, the notion of 'brotherhood' depicting equality between great states, and diplomatic envoys and letters (see e.g. Morris 2010: 197; Podany 2013: 87–88, 91–94).

Aside from the Hellenistic period, the Greek city-states were never part of a wider multi-ethnic states-system and mostly interacted with each other with some trade links and colonies in the wider Mediterranean world (see Eckstein 2006: ch. 3; Ma 2013: 351–352; for a take on the cultural and ethnic homogeneity, see Morris 2009: 99, 132, 159–160). By contrast, in the ancient Near

East there were several smaller and larger political units interacting with each other and using a common language, Akkadian, in order to overcome linguistic barriers.

5 Conclusions

This essay approached the question of the temporal limits of world politics by comparing the ancient western and eastern Mediterranean world of city-states, territorial and imperial states. It focused on the concepts of state, international system vs. society balance of power, and sovereignty. I suggest that the Eurocentric perspective within the field of IR has kept scholars mostly uninterested in the rich and, in several ways, cosmopolitan international arena of the ancient Near East. In Greece of the classical age, the poleis and their leaders were often clever individuals who knew how to advance the interests of their community by making alliances, bandwagoning or signing treaties. However, for the Greeks the notion like 'brotherhood' meant attempts to find unity between bellicose Hellenes whereas in the ancient Near East it meant harmony and prestige across wider cultural lines. In the final analysis, however, systemic rather societal forces were at play in both political landscapes.

Concepts, such as the balance of power, sovereignty and state, have firm theoretical roots in European political thought. Yet the phenomena behind these concepts are considerably older than the theoretical understanding of them. Through a careful historical analysis IR scholarship can act as a 'myth breaker' whether we are talking about states vs. nation-states, sovereignty after vs. before the Westphalian model, or balance of power after vs. before the Italian Renaissance.

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What is policy impact?

Questioning narratives of political events in the last century of the Assyrian Empire

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Abstract: The final century of the Assyrian Empire witnessed a transition from a hegemonic position in the Near East during the late 8th century BCE to the demise of the empire in the late 7th century BCE. A Neo-Realist conception of ‘international system’ and state-level models of foreign policy are utilized in order to bring new ways of approaching ancient Near Eastern history writing. The aim is to complement conventional history writing by tackling source problems and a multiplicity of factors present in the description and explanation of complex events.

Keywords: Neo-Assyrian Empire, international system, Neo-Realism, foreign policy, historiography.

1 Introduction

Any period of human history presents a challenge for the historian.¹ This is also the case for the ancient historian.² He must not only engage with modern preconceptions of the past, but must also, at least for certain periods, face the scarcity and/or variety of sources (e.g. textual, archaeological) in addition to dealing with the conceptions of the ancient witnesses and the source materials available to them. Furthermore, the ancient historian faces the reality of highly complicated events. Since ancient witnesses cannot be trusted fully, the historian must provide a judicious evaluation based on first-hand reading of the ancient sources. Inevitably, *one of the several aspects of history writing* is that the modern author will build assumptions and ideas as to how and why human beings act as agents on individual and collective levels. These assumptions and ideas will influence how elements of history are brought into a narrative of events. In other words, there is a point while engaging with the sources when the historian will select the focus and elements of the narrative used to describe the event(s) and thereby bring forward his or her theoretical thinking, wisdom, knowledge and even intuition, hopefully with competence. The facts do not speak for themselves. In my opinion, this raises a problem of narrative. We select how we connect

information into a narrative, but one needs to be attentive to the processes through which a narrative is built. Hayden White (2006: 25–33) points to the role of fictional topoi, rhetorical devices, and emplotment when historians connect pieces of historical evidence and create a narrative; thus, the border between history and literature is challenged. In addition to this perhaps partly subliminal *aspect* of history writing, this paper tries to modestly contribute some considerations based on a limited range of theoretical concepts from the field of International Relations (IR), namely ‘international system’ (an anachronistic term, explained further below) and state-level foreign policy impact. I will investigate whether these concepts can help with the writing of ancient Near Eastern history. Due to my own research interests, I have chosen the final century of the Assyrian Empire as a case study for this paper. This is a period which bears witness to the Assyrian Empire’s transition from a position of hegemonic power in the Near East in the late 8th century BCE to its demise in the late 7th century BCE.

Coming back to the point formulated above (i.e. ‘the modern author will build assumptions and ideas as to how and why human beings act as agents on individual and collective levels’), I find that social sciences, with their unique methodologies (e.g. Della Porta/Keating 2013), have much to offer the humanities provided adequate adaptation and research. William H. Sewell’s *Logics of History* is a progressive step in this direction, employing certain anthropological and sociological concepts while at the same time recognizing the complexity of events and the underlying human agent which creates these social structures (e.g. Sewell 2005: 1–21). I, like many historians perhaps, have yet to elucidate the various assumptions underlying the applicabil-

¹ I would like to thank the *Recontre* organizers for their help throughout this entire process. I am very grateful to Sabine Ecklin for the help offered during this time and to Johanna Tudeau for editing my paper. I thank Serdar Güner for commenting on an earlier draft of my paper. The responsibility for any errors in this paper are mine alone.

² The expression ‘ancient historian’ is employed here to designate the modern historian dealing with ancient history.

ity of causal laws or structures to events in the human world. Few indeed would say simplistic causal relations suffice. On the other hand, one may expect that human events must also be open to scientific evaluation, which employs causes and logic and not only human perceptions. This should not imply falling into the trap of the idealist-materialist debate in the social sciences and humanities. The question is what benefit could come from the theories and concepts developed by the social sciences without tarnishing the fabric of human complexity in the writing of history and particularly in the writing of events. There is much work to be done. It is with this rather courageous spirit that I ask whether IR theory may be of some relevance to historiography.

The workshop held at the 61st *Rencontre* sought to identify ways by which IR theory, a multi-disciplinary branch of the social sciences, with its diverse ranges of theoretical approaches, can enter into a dialogue with ancient Near Eastern history. My own interest in this paper is to select the ‘Neo-Realist’ (so dubbed is this particular IR theory) conception of international system and state-level policies. This is not necessarily because I agree with the underlying philosophical premises of the concepts to be discussed. I also note that this is a selection of concepts from the literature in the school of IR theory dubbed as ‘Realism’ (for which, amongst others, one must read works by Hans J. Morgenthau, Stephen van Evera, Stephen Walt, Robert Gilpin, John J. Mearsheimer, William C. Wohlforth) as well as from other approaches (discussed in the other workshop contributions; Lucas G. Freire’s contribution has a good introduction). I could have selected other concepts, and indeed in future research I intend to bring together multiple concepts from IR theory, sociology, and other fields of the social sciences for my own practice of history writing. What I am trying to do at present is rather to find out through experimentation whether the concepts I have now purposefully selected will help Assyriologists and ancient historians conceive, in a new way, the political events of a given historical period of interest. I humbly request the reader’s indulgence on these points and on the preliminary character of the observations provided. The reader will also recognize below a peculiar attempt at methodological consistency which may give the false impression of hyper-criticism and/or oversimplification. It is part of the experiment and not the entire story. On the other hand, it is, I hope, a way of recognizing new ways of telling and contextualizing the events leading up to the demise of the Assyrian Empire thanks to the use of these concepts unfamiliar to ancient Near Eastern history writing.

2 The international system

‘International Relations’ refers to a series of relations among political units, usually “states” in the modern era, whatever the domestic nature of these units (though this point receives heavy criticism, e.g. Ashley 1986: 268–273). The nation-state is still treated as the primary political unit in the modern world, but other

historical periods attest to different forms of state or other polities. I do not wish to coin a term to replace ‘international’ for the moment. I will use the latter term solely for practical purposes, owing to my discussion of the ‘international system’ as outlined by IR theorist Kenneth H. Waltz (but the insightful reservations against modern classifications by Emanuel Pfoh in the present volume are well noted).

Theory in general, according to Waltz (1979: 5–6), refers to statements explaining laws pertaining to a particular behaviour or phenomenon and is a separate construction which may be used deductively to explain state behaviour in part. By laws, one can understand tendencies and/or a stricter causal relation between variables in the socio-political reality. For my purposes as a historian, I am here to consult a primary source (text or archaeological data used to write about events), and also to test a theory which will help approach the primary evidence without relying upon the historians’ initial primary source reading. This may help categorize and explain the behaviour of states and units and how they interact during the flow of events in any given socio-political reality. The interest here is in political history, albeit factoring in other variables (as will be evident towards the end of this paper).

The concept of ‘international system’, despite its anachronistic name, is very basic and applicable to any period where collective entities built by human beings interact in a given social and political environment. Drawing on theories of economy, Waltz’s ‘Neo-Realist’ conception of the ‘international system’ focuses on the relative distribution of material capabilities of the interacting units (i.e. states). In this context, I understand ‘capabilities’ as a term which refers to all of the military, economic, social, political and ideological tools, facilities and resources available to each of the interacting units and their ruling elite in the polity’s functioning and the fulfilment of its goals and objectives. The *distribution of capabilities* across states defines *structure* in the anarchical environment (Waltz 1979: 89–93, 97–99). This structure is what I refer to as the international system (I prefer to avoid the term structure as it is used for different sociological and anthropological concepts). In the neo-realist view, the most relevant capabilities are military. The system is created by the coercion of the self-regarding units seeking their own survival. The system constrains the interacting units. Each state has a range of capabilities to pursue its goals and has to interact with states or units of varying capacities. States may or may not recognize the pressure of the changing international system, in the same way that economic actors may or may not see the pressures of the market. In international politics, according to Waltz, changes in the distribution of capabilities means that the system is one of the factors which may lead to changes in the behaviour of states and force them towards particular policies. Unlike the economic model, however, the international system is anarchic. The system can be multipolar, bipolar (compare the Cold War era) or unipolar

(almost hierarchical even). As I tried to apply this concept of ‘international system’ in the case of the Assyrian Empire, I found that because the term ‘international’ is anachronistic, the line between what may correspond to ‘international’ polities and other polities is a bit unclear. The status of vassal states, for example, may raise the question as to how ‘international’ the ‘system’ is. Vassal states also had an independent influence in their regions in relation to the Assyrian Empire. We may try to discard the term ‘international’ and maintain only the ‘system’, to include a wider scale of polities. However imperfect it may be, I will temporarily retain the term ‘international system’ to refer specifically to the system which includes the Assyrian Empire and other interacting polities, regardless of their size and power. I will discuss the place of the vassal states further below.

At first, I was under the impression that owing to its hegemonic position in the Near East, Assyria was at the pinnacle of a unipolar world during the reign of Sargon II (721–705 BCE). Most other polities were vassals with the exception of Phrygia, a few polities from central Anatolia (Tabal), Elam and Urartu, who appear to have been independent of Assyria. On second thought, I tried to use the IR theory concept in a different way, as a tool to approach the primary sources without my first thoughts. Such theories are of no real use if they cannot treat specific data by itself. So, I tried to define the political units which interact with the Assyrian Empire using the concept of ‘international system’. In other words, I questioned whether the socio-political reality could be studied. This is not a historian’s typical question. The historian will usually ask: what are my sources and what can I learn from them? This latter question remains my primary focus, but with the theoretical approach and the specifics of the ‘international system’ concept presently discussed, I look at the royal inscriptions and other written material from the reign of Sargon II (mainly from Parpola 1987; Lanfranchi/Parpola 1990; Fuchs 1994; Fuchs/Parpola 2001) with a view to identifying the units as they are mentioned in the texts. What I find is that Sargon II is trying to replace vassals with governors (Radner 2006) while at the same time the Assyrian Empire has complex relations with the vassal polities, which underscore the power of the local elite independent of Assyria. The case of Anatolian polities is a good example. The archaeological evidence (e.g. Köroğlu 1998; Parker 2003; Matney 2011) shows signs of Assyrian presence in south-eastern Anatolia at certain locations. Otherwise, archaeological evidence of direct Assyrian control on a wider scale in this region is yet to be established. One has to consider that the ancient texts, especially the royal inscriptions, could be exaggerating the Assyrian hold on its vassals not only in Anatolia but elsewhere in the realm. Furthermore, Sargon II is said to have conducted campaigns against various polities in the Near East during his career. Could it be, therefore, that the Assyrian Empire was the dominant power in a multi-polar socio-political reality which exercised its own influence? The units are not only states like Phrygia or Urartu but also smaller

polities mentioned in these texts. The units would also involve polities whose remains are known from the archaeological record but may be missing from the written record (e.g. the sites mentioned in Matney 2011 are still without historical identification). These should also be included in the historical narrative. Defining the socio-political reality is one way of enabling their inclusion in a responsible narrative of history.

Here it may be objected that the vassal states are part of the Assyrian Empire and that the concept of ‘international system’ is not applicable. The line between independent and dependent state is not as critical for my present purpose because I am interested in the interactions of the Assyrian Empire with units around it. And these units are usually not directly controlled by the Assyrian central administration. Even the placement of governors in some areas does not guarantee real centralization. Whether the system where Assyria is placed is ‘international’ or not is less to the point. Given the complexity of political events and the difficulty in achieving a centralized state equivalent to a modern state in ancient times, it is important to include vassals as decision-making actors with some capability outside of Assyria, whether or not they chose to obey the Assyrian Empire regarding specific matters. On an ideological level, the Assyrians appear to have acted as masters in these matters, at least on record (c.f. especially the royal inscriptions). The distribution of administrative correspondence, however, indicates that on the frontiers, the Assyrian governors and vassals would receive embassies from states such as Phrygia, Urartu and the kingdoms of Tabal (central Anatolia, Cappadocia) and that they would transmit the information to their king (e.g. SAA 1, 1). Problems translating Lydian during the time of Assurbanipal (Fuchs 2010) may indicate that the Assyrians usually worked with translators to communicate with foreign embassies.

I need to discuss this with an example. The Assyrian Empire campaigned vigorously during the time of Sargon II. The king then died unexpectedly in a campaign against Tabal in 705 BCE (Grayson 1975: 76–77; Millard 1994: 48). How should I interpret this? For the sake of comparison, the campaign of Sargon II in 714 BCE (Mayer 2013) may be seen as a cause of Urartu’s decline; but then I should also try to see a relative decline for the Assyrian Empire after the death of Sargon II. In both cases, however, the situation seems to be more complicated – and yet to dismiss these defeats also seems problematic. The Assyrian Empire appears very powerful during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) whereas Urartu prospers under Rusa III, son of Argišti, after the 714 BCE defeat.³

Here is how I think the system analysis may assist: with it I can add texture to my analysis of these and other events. One aspect of the issue is to build the socio-political reality wherein the historic states and other units interact. The task beyond the scope of this pa-

³ On Rusa III, see Çifçi 2017: 305–310; Sagona/Zimansky 2009: 327–328.

per is therefore to provide a list of units inhabiting the socio-political reality dominated by the Assyrians. The units are to be listed with their known material capabilities, e.g. known military victories, defeats, as well as archaeological finds that may be associated with them. There is bound to be a body of knowledge in this regard. My project is to juxtapose this emerging body of information with events narrated in the ancient texts. This is to be done using all the texts for all the Assyrian kings up to the demise of the Empire. This will provide a healthier perspective when trying to interpret the events told in the ancient texts and partially inferred from the archaeological records. The data will help to test system-level impact. I posit at the moment that the pressures owed to the change in the distribution of the capabilities among units outside of Assyria are one of the major factors that triggered the relative decline of the Assyrian Empire after the death of Sargon II.

3 Policy impact and state-level analysis

So far my discussion has only looked at the international system, but how the Assyrian Empire and other units employ foreign policy and interact with each other requires the discussion of state-level policy impact, a related concept which I believe promises new insights. The political unit will have its own forms of rule and organization. Different human agents are active within the state's mechanisms. The state produces policies against other political units. These policies, actions of the state, can be called *foreign policies*. In a paper in press (Adalı 2017), I discuss foreign policy theories following Graham Allison's recognized work on the foreign policies of the USA and the USSR during the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison 1971). The 'Rational Actor Model' conceives foreign policy decisions as the produce of the state's rational choices and strategic thinking as a unified actor. The 'Organizational Process Model' draws attention to institutions with procedures and limited resources affecting their output with regards to the administration of foreign policies. Organizations functioning within the political unit submit to certain processes which are not completely under elite control. The state is comprised of several organizations with potentially different processes as well as goals and interests. Finally, the 'Governmental (Bureaucratic) Politics Model/Court Politics' model assumes conflicting relations and interests among groups and institutions within the state, each seeking a particular policy to enhance its own interests. In Adalı forthcoming, I discuss these three models of foreign policy and then I apply them to foreign policies conducted during the time of Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE). I found that one must also factor in domestic developments while trying to explain

Assyrian foreign policy.⁴ In fact, domestic factors were almost as important as external factors. A survey of the pertinent evidence with such an eye is bound to produce new insights into all the periods of Assyrian history. State-level analysis can help connect elements of events internal and external to the Assyrian state. The same should also apply to the other polities interacting with Assyria in the Near East.

From the theoretical point of view, foreign policies generated from domestic dynamics as well as rational decision-making have *policy impacts* independent of the system, modifying the state's position within the system and impacting the system. The system in turn will have its own independent impact on the state. This I will call *system impact* and it represents the aforementioned impact of the international system. Above I proposed a survey of Assyria's socio-political reality and the interacting units. Here, then, I add the need to accumulate knowledge regarding the *policy impacts of every political unit in the Near East*. For example, a local king of Tabal, by the name Kilar, demands territory from the Assyrian governor of Cilicia (SAA 1, 1). Sargon II is no longer constrained by such demands because Midas of Phrygia has offered peace and now the king calculates that the Mushkean (i.e. Midas) and the Assyrian governor will press Tabal from both sides (SAA 1, 1: 49–51). It is known that Tabalian kingdoms had manipulated the rivalries between Phrygia, Urartu and Assyria (Melville 2010). I posit that the policy impact of demands such as those made by Kilar actually accelerated Assyrian motivation to directly control the region, given that Sargon II reacted by telling his governor not to be concerned any longer because Midas was no longer an enemy (SAA 1, 1: 31–42). The work here is tedious and I am happy to relegate it to future research. I will search each statement in the correspondence (and other texts) of the Assyrian kings for different political units as intensively as possible, and I must trace policy impact systematically, seeing how this will colour the account of events against their socio-political background. This will also provide an opportunity to discuss other factors. For example, parts of the Near East may have faced aridification during the later period of Assurbanipal's reign, leading to a conjuncture of negative economic and later political impact on the political events that followed the sudden collapse of the Empire, which should also be seen in light of the urban policies of Sennacherib (Schneider/Adalı 2014). Part of the picture for understanding and explaining political events can be reconstructed with knowledge from the distribution of capabilities and changes in these capabilities, raising the question of how other factors contributed to the events.

⁴ See Radner 2011 and Verderame 2014, who discuss the impact of magnates and scholars in the Empire's decision-making processes and the role of the scholars in the court.

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Extraordinary session

Strategies of restoration and reconstruction Museums, heritage sites and archaeological parks in post-war countries

**organised by the International Network shirín
(Syrian Heritage in Danger: an International Research Initiative and Network)**

Strategies for restoration and reconstruction

Museums, heritage sites and archaeological parks in post-war countries

Cynthia Dunning, Mohamad Fakhro, Denis Genequand, Mirko Novák

There are many initiatives concerning strategies for restoration and reconstruction in war-torn countries.

The extraordinary session “Strategies for Restoration and Reconstruction. Museums, Heritage Sites and Archaeological Parks in Post-War Countries” held in Bern in the frame of the 61^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale was one of the first to develop the subject with archaeologists and museum curators from two such countries, Syria and Iraq. Therefore, it gave the possibility to these specialists to clearly express their needs in presence of major international actors in near-eastern archaeology. It was meant to be a starting point for developing respective strategies.

The extraordinary session took place on Thursday 25 June 2015, 2–6pm, Bern University, Universität Schanze (UniS), Room A003 and was preceded by the Statutory Meeting of shirín (Syrian Heritage in Danger: an International Research Initiative and Network) from 9–12:30pm. It was organized commonly by the Institute for Archaeological Sciences (IAW) of the Bern University¹, shirín international², and Archaeoconcept³, and made possible by the generous support of the Swiss Federal Office for Culture (Eidgenössisches Bundesamt für Kultur, BAK)⁴, the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection (Bundesamt für Bevölkerungsschutz, BABS)⁵ and the Foundation Johanna Dürmüller-Bol⁶.

It was intended to initiate a dialogue between the international community of scholars working on the Ancient Near East and colleagues from Syria and Iraq, which should lead to announce the requirements within the countries that suffer from civil war and vast destructions of their heritage. Moreover, an outcome should have been the development of concrete relief measures and their financing. Particular attention was given to the current events in the regions controlled by the “Islamic State” or those affected by massive fighting.

1 <http://www.iaw.unibe.ch>.

2 <http://www.shirin-international.org>.

3 <http://www.archaeoconcept.com>.

4 <http://www.bak.admin.ch>.

5 <http://www.babs.admin.ch>.

6 <http://www.fjdb.ch>.

shirín: Syrian Heritage in Danger: an International Research Initiative and Network

shirín is an initiative of the global community of scholars, active in the fields of archaeology, art and history of the Ancient Near East. It brings together a significant proportion of those international research groups that were working in Syria prior to 2011, with the purpose of making their expertise available to wider heritage protection efforts. Accordingly, its international committee includes the directors of a number of long-term international research programmes, and others who share their strong commitment to the effective protection of the heritage of Syria. shirín is a privileged partner of UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, ICOM and BLUE SHIELD. Its committee was created in response to a request articulated by the participants at the 9th *International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, in Basel, Switzerland, on 10 June 2014. Representing the major institutions, universities and research centres in Europe, North America, Oceania, Eastern and Western Asia, its main purpose is to support governmental bodies and non-governmental organisations in their efforts to preserve and safeguard the heritage of Syria (sites, monuments & museums).

The first official statutory meeting of the international committee took place on 25 June 2015 in Bern and elected its president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. The minutes have been made public on the shirín website.

The extraordinary session on strategies

Vast destructions resulting from the civil wars in Syria and Iraq affect both museums and archaeological sites, either as collateral effects of fighting or through lootings and conscious damages. Many governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations started initiatives to protect heritage sites, to register destructions and lootings, and to prevent trade of stolen artefacts on the international art market. Less developed



EXTRAORDINARY SESSION.
61ST RENCONTRE ASSYRIOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE

University of Bern - UniS, Schanzeneckstr 1, Room A003 - Thursday, 25th June 2015

**STRATEGIES FOR RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION:
 MUSEUMS, HERITAGE SITES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARKS IN
 POST-WAR COUNTRIES**

11:30-11:45

Cynthia Dunning,
 Denis Genequand,
 Mohamad Fakhro,
 Mirko Novák:
 Introduction.

11:45-12:00

Jean-Bernard Münch
 (President of the
 Swiss UNESCO com-
 mission): Welcome
 address.

**PART I
 STATUS OF THE
 IRAQI AND
 SYRIAN HERITAGE**

12:00-12:20

Maamoun Abdul-
 karim, Lina Qutifan
 (DGAM Damascus):
 Protecting Heritage
 Sites in Syria. Tasks
 and Perspectives.

12:20-12:40

Ahmad Deeb (DGAM
 Damascus): The
 Status of Syrian Mu-
 seums.

12:40-13:40

Lunch Break

13:40-14:00

Ahmad Kamil (SBOA
 Baghdad): The Iraqi
 Museum between
 2003 and 2014:
 Experiences in Re-
 creation. The Status of
 Mossul Museum.

14:00-14:20

Qais Hussein Rashid
 (SBOA Baghdad): The
 Status of Archaeologi-
 cal Sites in Iraq under
 ISIS Occupation.

14:20-14:40

Youssef Kanjou,
 Mohamad Fakhro
 (National Museum of
 Aleppo): The National
 Museum of Aleppo.
 Threats and Strategies
 for Safekeeping.

14:40-15:00

Marc-André Renold
 (UNESCO Chair,
 Univ. of Geneva): Illicit
 Art Object Trade: The
 Legal Answer.

15:00-15:30

Karin Pütt, Diana Miz-
 nazi (Syrian Heritage
 Archive Project):

In Preparation for
 Post-Conflict Syria:
 Archiving, Dama-
 ge Mapping and
 Engaging in the Local
 Community.

15:30-16:00

Coffee break

**PART II STRATEGIES
 FOR RESTORATION
 AND
 RECONSTRUCTION**

16:00-16:10

Cheikhmous Ali
 (APSAprotect SYR):
 Alep d'hier et
 d'aujourd'hui: quelle
 stratégie pour la
 reconstruction?

16:10-16:30

Michel Al-Maqdissi
 (University St-Joseph,
 Beirut): Site Recreat-
 ion and Management
 Strategies. Require-
 ments and Resources.

16:30-17:00

Lutz Martin (Vice
 Director VAM Berlin):
 Vorderasiatisches Mu-
 seum Berlin and the

Tell Halaf Museum:
 Reconstructions After
 World War II Dama-
 ges

17:00-17:20

Hiba al-Bassir (Free-
 lancer Restaurator
 and Conservator,
 Damascus/Berlin):
 Museum Object
 Restoration.

17:20-17:40

Marc Lebeau (Eu-
 ropean Centre for
 Upper Mesopotamian
 Studies): The Shirin
 Initiative: Science vs.
 Darkness - A Utopian
 view?

17:40-18:00

Carine Simoes
 (Federal Office of
 Culture):
 La restitution de biens
 culturels illégalement
 sortis du pays.

18:00-19:30

Discussion: Creating
 Strategies: How, Who
 and Where?

u^b

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ARCHAEOCONCEPT



are the initiatives to train experts and specialists that will be required in both countries after the war is over. Museums have to be reconstructed and recreated, artefacts restored, archaeological sites cleaned from mines and other traces of the war, heritage sites relaunched and prepared for visitors.

The aim of the workshop was to collect information on requirements, develop ideas on strategies, and figure out possibilities for the scientific community to support these activities.

Preliminary outcome

During the extraordinary session, a considerable quantity of information on the current situation of the preservation of the cultural heritage in Syria and in Iraq was harvested. This led to develop strategies for the phase of restoration and reconstruction on different levels: international, national and regional.

Five themes were particularly addressed:

1. Mapping – data bases and inventories. Many projects concerning data bases and inventories have been developed throughout Europe and the USA concerning the documentation and objects which are stored in different universities, research institutions and museums throughout Europe, Asia and America. The need for collaboration between these projects and for communication concerning them was announced. It was decided that shirín could take the responsibility for the coordination between these innumerable projects.
2. Training. The first question was to know what kind of training is needed. A key point is the demand of training in conservation techniques, not only in rebuilding but also for objects of all kinds. The difficulty of knowing who should receive training was also mentioned. The fragmentation not only of the Iraqi and Syrian societies but also of the scientific communities of these countries builds up high barriers for any kind of collaboration.
3. Location of training. The third point was about knowing where training can happen. Most speakers wished training in nearby countries as much as this is possible. No question that these wishes face diplomatic and political difficulties, starting with visa issues for scholars from different parts of Syria and ending with the difficult matter of funding and providing training camps. Regarding higher education, it was pointed out that European countries (or the EU) could offer much better conditions and more open possibilities, following the example of Erasmus mundus. Another ques-

tion arose during the discussion, without bringing forth many answers: how can one make it visible that training is a high priority and that it is necessary? How can the support of funding organisations and politicians can be gained?

4. Illicit trade. The question of illicit trade is an extraordinary important one. It depends much on laws and legislations of the different countries involved and is quite complex. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of each partner country must be defined and communicated. During the conference, it was asked that the Syrian Department of Antiquities (Direction Générale des Antiquités et Musées, DGAM) provide a list of valuable pieces which may particularly serve in the case of illicit trade of objects stolen in its museums during the conflict.
5. Assessment, protection and on-site reconstruction. Four elements were addressed under this theme: a) legislation, b) information and consultation in prioritising of projects and developing possibilities for reconstruction, c) financing, and d) active collaboration.

The importance on working on a master plan in collaboration with the governmental institutions in Syria and Iraq was considered a high priority.

One of the most important outcomes of the extraordinary session was an attempt to break the barriers created by the war within the community of Syrian archaeologists, which is divided into members of governmental institutions and of non-governmental groups, by giving the scholars the opportunity to meet and share information in order to protect together the Syrian heritage.

It was emphasized that there is an urgent need to activate the local communities in Syria and Iraq for taking their part in the protection of their cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the consciousness of the own responsibility and the own role in the protection was largely neglected and thus very often absent before the war. Stimulating the awareness and knowledge about the importance of the cultural heritage for future generations is the most promising way of protection.

It is clear that the session was only the beginning of a series of long-term actions, that still must be decided upon.

It helped to identify the needs of the specialists on an international scale, allowing thus other associations and non-governmental organisations to act, since it is essential that all of them propose coordinated efforts for protection, reconstruction, recuperation of disappeared objects and above all training for the future of the archaeology and museum sciences in the war-torn countries of Iraq and Syria.

Abbreviations and conventions

In the present volume abbreviations follow the usage of the “Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie”, geographical names follow the conventions of the “Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients”.

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