

**Empire and Ethnicity:
A Social History of Deportation in Assyria and Karduniaš
during the First Millennium BCE**

by

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© 2020 The Trustees of the British Museum; *deportees lamenting the fall of their city; Aššurnaširpal II (883–859 BCE)*

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my grandmothers, Lavona Spunaugle and Zoe Worsley, the family matriarchs whose determination and drive were some of my first examples of courage and strength. I also dedicate this to my parents, Jane and John Spunaugle, whose love and support have never wavered, and my sister, Emily Spunaugle, whose no-nonsense feedback always keeps me on my toes.

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List of Abbreviations

- ABC:** A.K. Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles (= TCS 5, 1975)
- ABL** (aka HarperABL): R. F. Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Letters (Chicago 1892-1914)
- ADD:** C. H. W. Johns, Assyrian Deeds and Documents (Cambridge 1898 - 1923)
- Akk.:** Akkadian
- AnOr:** Analecta Orientalia (Rome 1931 ff.)
- AO:** 1) Der Alte Orient (Leipzig 1900 ff.). 2) Museum siglum Louvre (Antiquités orientales)
- AOAT** (aka AOATS): Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969 ff.); S = Sonderreihe (1971 ff.)
- AoF:** Altorientalische Forschungen (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients) (Berlin 1974 ff.)
- AOS:** American Oriental Series (New Haven 1925 ff.)
- APN:** K. Tallqvist, Assyrian Personal Names (= ASSF 43/1, 1914)
- ARAB:** D. D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia (Chicago 1926/27)
- ARRIM:** Annual Review of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project (Toronto 1983 ff.)
- BASOR:** Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (New Haven 1919 ff.)
- BC:** C. Bezold, Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik collection in the British Museum (5 vols.)
- BiOr:** Bibliotheca Orientalis (Leiden 1943/44 ff.)
- BM:** Museum siglum of the British Museum, London
- CAD :** The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago (Chicago 1956 ff.)
- CAH :** The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge, England 1970 ff.3)
- CatBM :** H.H. Figulla, Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
- CBS :** Museum siglum of the University Museum in Philadelphia (Catalogue of the Babylonian Section)
- CDLI :** Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative <<http://cdli.ucla.edu/>> (Los Angeles/Berlin)
- col(s) :** column(s)
- cf. :** confer, see

cp. : compare

CT : Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum (London 1896 ff.)

CTN : Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud (London 1972 ff.)

CUSAS : Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology (Bethesda, 2007ff.)

diss. : dissertation

DN : deity name

esp. : especially

fig(s). : figure(s)

fn. : footnote

Fs : Festschrift (Anniversary volume, Studies in honor of, etc.)

GN : geographical name

hist. : historical (texts)

i.e. : that is

IEJ : Israel Exploration Journal (Jerusalem 1950 ff.)

IM : Museum siglum of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad

inscr. : inscription(s)

Iran : Iran. Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies (London 1963 ff.)

Iraq : Iraq (British School of Archaeology in Iraq) (London 1934 ff.)

JANEH : Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History (2014 ff.)

JANES : Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society (of Columbia University) (New York 1968/69 ff.)

JAOS : Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBL : Journal of Biblical Literature (Philadelphia 1890 ff.)

JCS : Journal of Cuneiform Studies (New Haven . . . Baltimore 1947 ff.)

JNES : Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago 1942 ff.)

JSOR : Journal of the Society of Oriental Research

JSOT : Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (Sheffield 1978/79 ff.)

KAR : E. Ebeling, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts I/II (= WVDOG 28, 1919; 34, 1923)

l.e. : left edge

LAOS : Leipziger Altorientalische Studien (from 2011)

MA : Middle Assyrian

MB : Middle Babylonian

MC : Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake, Indiana)

Mes (aka Mesop., Mesopotamia) : Mesopotamia. Rivista di Archeologia . . . (Turin 1966 ff.)

Mesopotamia : Revista di archeologia a cure del Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Turno per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia, University of Turin (Turin)

ms(s) . : manuscript(s)

N : Museum siglum of the University Museum, Philadelphia (Nippur)

NA : Neo-Assyrian

NABU : Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires (Paris 1987 ff.); cf. Mémoires de NABU (1992 ff.), Cahiers de NABU (1990 ff.)

NAPR : Northern Akkad Project Reports (= Mesopotamian History and Environment, Series I; Ghent)

NAT : S. Parpola, Neo-Assyrian Toponyms (= AOAT 6, 1970)

NB : Neo-Babylonian

NBC : Nies Babylonian Collection, siglum of the Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven

NBDM : Neo-Babylonian Documents in the University of Michigan Collection (Ellen Moore)

Nbk. : J. N. Strassmaier, Inschriften von Nabuchodonosor, König von Babylon (= BT 5-6, Leipzig 1889)

Nbn. : J. N. Strassmaier, Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon (= BT 1-4, Leipzig 1889)

nd : no (publication) date

no(s) . : number(s)

OBO : Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg Switzerland 1973 ff.); Series archaeologica (1980 ff.)

obv. : obverse

OIC : Oriental Institute Communications (Chicago 1922 ff.)

OIP : Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago 1924 ff.)

ORACC : The Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/projectlist.html>)

OrAnt : Oriens Antiquus (Rome 1962 ff.)

Orient : Orient. Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan (Tokyo 1960 ff.)

OrNS (aka Or.) : Orientalia, NS = Nova Series (1932 ff.)

PN(s) : personal name(s)

RAI (aka CRRA, CRRAI, Rencontre) : Proceedings of the Rencontre assyriologique internationale; Comptes rendus de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale

resp. : respectively

rest. : restored, restores

rev. : reverse; revised

RGTC (aka Rép. géogr.) : Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (= TAVO Beihefte Reihe B Nr.7 1974 ff.)

RIAo : The Royal Inscriptions of Assyria Online (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/>)

RIMA : The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto 1987 ff.)

RIMB : The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian periods

RINAP : The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period

RIA : Reallexikon der Assyriologie (und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie) (Berlin 1928 ff.)

RN : royal name

s.v. : sub voce

SAA : State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki 1987 ff.)

SAAB : State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin (Padua 1987 ff.)

SAAS : State Archives of Assyria. Supplement (Helsinki)

SANE : Sources of the Ancient Near East (Los Angeles/ Malibu 1974 ff.)

SANER : Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (De Gruyter 2012ff.)

SAOC : Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago 1931 ff.)

Si. : field numbers of tablets excavated at Sippar in the collections of the Archaeological Museums (Istanbul)

TMH (aka TuM, TMH NF, TMHNF) : Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection . . . Jena, (Leipzig 1932-1934); NF = Neue Folge (Leipzig 1937, Berlin 1961 ff.)

UE : Ur Excavations. Publications of the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania to Mesopotamie (Oxford/Philadelphia 1927 ff.)

UET : Ur Excavations. Texts (London 1928 ff.)

VA : Museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Ass. = Assur)

VAT : Museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln)

vol(s). : volume(s)

YBC : Tablet siglum, Yale Babylonian Collection (New Haven)

YOS : Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts (New Haven 1915 ff.)

ZA : Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete , (from 1939) und Vorderasiatische Archäologie (Leipzig ... Berlin 1886 ff.); s. UAVA

ZAW : Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (1924-1935; und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, Berlin 1881 ff.)

Abstract

Imperial conquest and deportation dramatically reshaped Middle Eastern societies during the first millennium BCE. While historians and archaeologists have studied these deportations from the perspective of kings and empires, the lived experience of deportees has largely been ignored. This dissertation develops a social history of deportation as implemented and experienced by social groups across the Middle East, with particular focus on Mesopotamia by reassessing our conceptions of empire, identity, and the experience of the subaltern. By grounding my research in the period's geography and changing climate before approaching the relevant texts, I illustrate how deportation changes from the Middle Assyrian period until the beginning of the Persian period. I present deportation from multiple viewpoints: from that of the elite, of the lived experience of deportees, and of tribal elements often blamed for imperial difficulties.

In Mesopotamia, the first millennium BCE witnessed the advent of at least three major empires. Immediately prior to this imperial "explosion," the area had experienced a drier, colder shift in climate that contributed to the decline of previously flourishing imperial expressions (c.1250–900 BCE). Aligning the textual evidence with what paleo-climatology records, we see that empires and the use of deportation practices also declined and then redeveloped correspondingly. For this reason, this study focuses on 1200 to 500 BCE, incorporating the intermediate period between the height of the Middle Assyrian and Kassite Empires and ending before the recorded coup in the Persian Empire.

Situating thousands of available administrative, epistolary, and royal texts in the period's geography and climate, I illustrate how these texts reflect contemporary socio-economic motivations behind deportation and how they changed over the course of time in line with the changing climate and landscape. For the Middle Assyrian kings, raids and subsequent deportation provided mobile and edible capital for their homeland. As the climate improved, rationale for raids shifted to glory as kings sought fame for their military exploits instead of their ability to provide economically during the Neo-Assyrian period. During the Neo-Assyrian

period, the Assyrian kings began deporting large numbers of people from recently conquered regions to meet a shortage of workers, to repopulate areas that had been abandoned during the previous deterioration in climate, and to populate the heartland of Assyria with small, rural communities of farmers who could supply the needs of the cities.

Post-Kassite Southern Iraq, however, presents a different trajectory: never fully centralized, each region and ethnic group could hold local governing powers and provide for their own locality. Terms such as Akkad, Sumer, Karduniaš, Kaldû, Aram, and Sealand refer to various regions of Southern Iraq without subordinating any of them to another. While under Assyrian rule, the Aramaeans and Kaldeans of this region were the victims of the most recorded deportations. When at last free of Assyrian rule, it took time to unite the region under local rule. Even then, the king at Babylon appears to rule only certain regions, exercise authority over others, and be opposed by still others. Within this multicultural milieu, deportees made new lives for themselves as temple dependents and through land for service schemes according to the same practices in place for local subaltern groups or local mid-level elites.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Mesopotamian Deportations

The mass deportations of first millennium BCE Mesopotamia are well known by those familiar with the Hebrew Bible. Perhaps the best known episode of deportation, the Babylonian exile of Judahites from Jerusalem and its environs during the early sixth century BCE greatly affected the redaction of the biblical text. But Judah was not unique in its experience; multiple regions experienced deportation at the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. What began as a limited and rather unexceptional (if traumatic) practice common to raiding parties and military endeavors with time and opportunity grew to enormous proportions. Assyrians practiced several forms of imperially administered movement of peoples across their empire, with the first attested deportation occurring during the Middle Assyrian period.¹ At this time, deportations were on a smaller scale and typically included only the ruler, his family and possessions, and a small group of people associated with him. Over the next five hundred years, however, the practice developed to the point where Sennacherib in 701 BCE boasts of deporting “200,150 people great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, and sheep without number” from Judah.²

Deportation was also practiced by the subsequent Neo-Babylonian empire, though the first Babylonian accounts of deportation are records of the acts of the neighboring Assyrians or Elamites.³ But the economic and administrative records (as well as the biblical accounts) attest the presence of an influx of foreigners who were settled throughout the heartland and empire, indicating that mass deportations continued.

Flexing of imperial power on this level impacts the society and lived experience for all of the empires’ subjects—primarily those subaltern and elite foreigners who were deported to the

¹ Cf. The first attestation appears during the reign of Arik-dīn-ili (ca.1307 – 1296; Glassner 2004: 184 – 187, “The Chronicle of Arik-dīn-ili”). The next occurrences appear in his successor’s reign, Adad-narāri I (ca. 1295 – 1264; RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 43b – 51).

² RINAP 3, 4. Rassam Cylinder: 51.

³ Cf. Glassner 2004.

empires' respective heartlands or further flung regions of the empire. The evidence indicates such political power affected the ethnic identity of multiple groups, prompting some to assimilate to the hegemonic culture and others to further differentiate themselves from their surroundings. One group whose boundaries were strengthened from increased contact with other groups was the exiled Judeans relocated to the hinterlands of the city of Nippur, Iraq, during the early sixth century BCE. The recent publication of the "Āl-Yahūdu" texts from a private collection has sparked renewed interest in this area (2014).⁴ The people most frequently recorded as being deported, however, were the Aramaeans and mobile peoples south of Babylon. Mobile peoples comprised a large percentage of the broader empires' populations. These individuals, clans, and tribes are more regularly attested in the written record than deportees of western lands, making it easier to describe their engagement with the wider Neo-Babylonian society. Incorporating mobile peoples' experience into the study of deportations at large contextualizes and normalizes this practice in the broader imperial population.

1.2 Empires and Theoretical Perspectives

Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied.

-E.W. Said (1978: 5)

Understanding forms of political power is one of the enduring topics of inquiry in the humanities. Debates have waged in a variety of disciplines over the nature of nations, states, and empires. Likewise, the nature of imperialism, colonialism, colonialization, and other related concepts (such as Orientalism) have also been reevaluated. Consequently, the resulting heterogeneity of definitions and uses of these terms requires a brief foray into their respective relationships to this project and my choice of definition. Of central importance here is the notion of empire(s) and upon what our understanding of such polities is based. I will briefly touch upon "imperialism," "colonialism," "colonization," and "Orientalism." These terms are useful for our study of the ancient Middle East, in how those from Western traditions approach the material,

⁴ Named after the original location of its new residents, the village Āl-Yahudu essentially means "city of Judah." This collection includes economic transactions of individuals with names familiar from the Hebrew Bible and containing references to the Judean god Yahweh. This region also produced another archive with a high concentration of individuals with Judean names from the later Achaemenid period—the Murāšu archive (Stolper 1985). The two collections of texts provide insight into the lived experience of an exiled community, in a location unique to those of other such deported groups. See also Alstola 2020.

how our subjects plotted and planned their political dominance over others, as well as how their subjects experienced this control. From these core definitions, I will then move to discuss one method of such political dominance and its effects upon the peoples involved: deportation and its effects on ethnic identity. As a term, “deportation” comes from the perspective of the person removed from one location to another, not by the acting polity. Therefore, I shall also be using terms such as “forced migration,” “forced relocation,” and others to describe the use of this mechanism by various polities as well as the effects upon people moved and stationary. The resulting entanglement and intermingling prompted in some instances people to identify more with those in their new surroundings and become “acculturated.” In other instances, however, we see that some groups chose to underscore their implicit differences from their new neighbors, often creating new iterations of ethnicity as a result. The case of the Judahites / Israelites deported to the region of Babylon is especially intriguing in this light, for they seem to fall under both instances; the presence of a newly created text (e.g. the Hebrew Bible) for the purpose of unifying⁵ and convincing their brethren to return to their homeland,⁶ as well as the presence of the Murašu archive⁷ thus illustrate two very different approaches to the predicament of experiencing “forced migration.” On the one hand, we find explicit encouragement to return to the “homeland” in the Levant, while on the other we find evidence of how at least some Judahites appear to have done rather well for themselves in their lives as descendants of deportees.

1.2.1 Empires

Nations, states, and empires, as stated above, have been defined in a variety of ways. From a Western European perspective, many of these definitions have their basis in a Greco-Roman-biblical notion of an evolution of polities beginning with antiquity and finding their completion in Rome or the Holy Roman Empire, respectively. As illustrated by Edward W. Said (1978; 1993) and Michael Dietler (2010), the notion of empire was rekindled during the Enlightenment as Western Europe fabricated historical ties to Rome and to Greece. The basic conception of

⁵ Cf. Sergi 2015.

⁶ Cf. Liverani 2005.

⁷ Cf. Stolper 1985.

empire was thus founded upon the notion that Europe was heir to the great classical empires.⁸ Kathleen Morrison (2001: 1-2), likewise, indicates how difficult it has been for the field of empire studies to disentangle itself from these long-standing notions of the archetypal empire:

In scholarship coming from the European tradition, ideas of and about one empire—Rome—have contributed definitions and constituted foils for all subsequent discussion of the concept of empire. It is thus worth considering that heritage and its intellectual legacy... In so doing, we acknowledge that western scholarship grew up around culturally and historically specific notions of imperialism and that these intellectual legacies have framed our enquiry in particular ways.

She also notes that this historical bias is not predetermined and advocates for a more anthropological approach that emphasizes comparison with other examples of empire. Such comparison pushes our perspective beyond “received historiography” through “evidential interplay of diverse source materials”—textual, architectural, material cultural, artistic, and the modification of landscape on a local and regional scale (Morrison 2001: 2).⁹ Although this is hardly news to those who have worked with empires recently,¹⁰ there are still several instances in which the Eurocentric notions of what constitutes “empire,” “state,” and “power” are maintained.¹¹ In what follows, I illustrate several of these biases.

The definition of “empire” with which I shall work is loosely based on the definitions of Thomas Barfield (2001), Kathleen Morrison (2001), and Timothy Mitchell (1995). Morrison (2001:4) remarks that Max Weber’s oft-cited definition of a state as an organization which claims “a monopoly on legitimate force within a given territory” and of empires as “special kinds of states” is only a starting point in analyzing empires.¹² It does not “tell us how the actual contours of this amorphous organization are to be drawn” (Mitchell 1991: 82). Barfield’s approach to empire calls attention to a multiplicity of examples of empire outside the traditional Greco-Roman context. Mitchell’s approach supplements Barfield’s by focusing on processes

⁸ Cf. Dietler 2010.

⁹ Cf. Morrison (2001) for a brief synopsis on the etymology of the term itself and its evolution since the Roman period and how it is and should be used by critical scholarship today.

¹⁰ E.g. Liverani 1993; 2001; Kuhrt 2001; Garfinkle 2007; Weeks 2007; da Riva 2014; Gufler & Madreiter 2014; Zawadzki 1994, 1995; Boivin 2018; Barjamovic 2015.

¹¹ A key point recognized by Said, Dietler, and others regards Europe’s interest in Greco-Roman Empire: a forged heritage from as early as the medieval period which linked Western Europe’s roots to Rome through the Christian church. Thus, many early investigations into ‘empire’ merely seek to justify the writer’s contemporary regime.

¹²

within specific polities that led to the creation of empire, rather than the geographical boundaries of an empire. The elusive nature of the boundaries between a state and its society is a “clue to the nature of the phenomenon [of empire]” rather than merely as a matter of conceptual precision (Mitchell 1991:78). Mitchell thus proposes to examine the processes by which “the uncertain yet powerful distinction between state and society is produced” rather than focus on a boundary between the two. After all, he states, “the boundary [is] not between two discrete entities, but [is] a line drawn internally within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a social and political order is maintained” (78).¹³

What is meant by the term “empire”? In what is one of the more agreed upon attempts at defining this term, Barfield (2001: 29) defines “empire” as:

a state established by conquest that has sovereignty over subcontinental or continental sized territories and incorporates millions or tens of millions of people within a unified and centralized administrative system. The state supports itself through a system of tribute or direct taxation of its component parts and maintains a large permanent military force to protect its marked frontiers and preserve internal order.

This definition subsumes multiple examples of empire. The traditional concept of empire is a “territorial empire” and provides a useful starting point for discussion of the various types of empire attested in the ancient Middle East. Within the first millennium—the focus of the present research—there are numerous forms of empire attested in the textual and material records. The term “empire” is used loosely to refer to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Median, and Persian forms of governance, but little attention has been paid to the processes of empire present in each.¹⁴ That is to say, all polities labelled “empires” have been treated as examples of a single form of government, even when doing so overgeneralizes to the point of occluding the facts. For that reason, I will briefly discuss several examples of empires which are pertinent for the present

¹³ Morrison (2001: 5) makes her plea for process over definition as follows: “If we shift concern from definition *per se* to the kinds of processes that act and interact to form historical empires, a larger range of subject material becomes germane to our analysis.” This is an excellent point. For our interests, I argue that it is useful (even if not ideal) to utilize loosely-held designations or types of empire, if only to illustrate in shorthand that we are fully cognizant that not all empires function in the same manner or for the same purpose. While in time it may prove tricky not to fall into the trap of typology again, at least at this point I feel that categorizing is still a useful inroad to the discipline of empire studies itself, and therefore should not be wholly abandoned.

¹⁴ Instead, often studies on empires in the ancient Near East have focused on the religious rationale for warfare, which was likely to have been developed after the fact. Although they couched their proclamations in religious language, the sovereigns of the Assyrians did not *merely* follow the will of the gods—though this language proved a very useful tool in centralizing a widely diverse group of people against a common enemy in service of a common good / god.

discussion on the use of deportation by imperial polities. Territorial empires share five internal characteristics (Barfield 2001: 29-32):

[They] are organized both to administer and exploit diversity, whether economic, political, religious, or ethnic ... [by] establish[ing] transportation systems designed to serve the imperial center militarily and economically ... and sophisticated systems of communication that allowed them to administer all subject areas from the center directly. ... [This allowed] empires [to] proclaim a monopoly of force within the territories they ruled and project their military force outward ... [and establish] an 'imperial project' that imposed some type of unity throughout the system.

This combination serves both to define the boundaries of the term "empire" as well as to describe the processes by which an empire may be identified.

The apex of Assyrian imperialism occurred during the first half of the first millennium BCE. Some have assumed the Neo-Assyrian empire to follow the general notion of the Greco-Roman empire first popularized during the Enlightenment, also known as a "territorial empire."¹⁵ A territorial empire is marked by "the control (or lack thereof) by an imperial heartland of outlying lands that are conquered, in time lost and reconquered, one after another, in progression from the nearer to the most distant in relation to the central country."¹⁶ As archaeological excavations began to focus on peripheral sites to the imperial heartland, scholars noticed specific differences in the sovereign's attitude toward the governed of various regions. Mario Liverani (1988; 1992), Reinhard Bernbeck (2010), Bradley Parker (2001; 2012), and Bleda Düring (2020) have proposed that Assyria functioned as a network of centrally held nodes of administration throughout their empire rather than the territorial model epitomized by the Greco-Roman Empire (likened to an oil-stain by Liverani 1988). Parker (2001) develops Liverani's (1988) "network empire" for the Neo-Assyrian period as well as the Middle Assyrian by expanding D'Altroy's (1992) "Territorial-Hegemonic Continuum." In this expanded form, Parker's continuum addresses the degree of autonomy from imperial rule experienced by the various states and zones in contact with the imperial center by incorporating the concepts of neutrality and negative

¹⁵ While Liverani (1988) identified the later Neo-Assyrian Empire as territorial, his comparison of the later period with earlier forms of governance from the Middle Assyrian period until the eighth century BCE suggested a dramatically different form of administration was in use. Parker (2012) and Bernbeck (2010) revisited this and proposed a network approach applied even in the later period. Before 1988, all attempts at defining empire within ancient Near Eastern historiography focused on comparisons to Rome's territorial strategy.

¹⁶ Liverani (1988: 84) established this definition of a traditional empire in order to distinguish a "territorial" empire from what he coined as a "network" empire.

power.¹⁷ In so doing, Parker incorporates areas known to be under direct imperial control as well as those known to be influenced, but not controlled by the center. In other words, Parker marries elements of Liverani's (1988) "network empire" with elements of a traditional empire.

As illustrated both textually and archaeologically, the Neo-Assyrian Empire did not aim to treat the periphery in an identical manner as its heartland, but rather employed different methods of constructing and maintaining power in the periphery.¹⁸ This "network empire," as coined by Liverani, focused primarily on the subjugation of key points or nodes situated throughout a territory rather than the total control of the entire territory.¹⁹ Under this system, the core is the only area territorially dominated, surrounded by key nodes in the hinterland which provide the core with resources.²⁰ Network empires do not prioritize hands-on administration in the periphery. Connected by a transport system, communication flows smoothly from the interstices to the imperial hub(s) and loose centralized control is maintained.²¹ A network imperial power evaluates the labor power of a human not as a productive unit in itself but rather in the accumulation of surplus units of production (Bernbeck 2010: 153). By way of example, the Assyrians, were meticulous in their notation of deportees and prisoners, but of the thousands of tablets thus far restored, so far no record of the fate of these people after deportation has been found.²² By their own admission, the Neo-Assyrian kings had little interest in the peripheral

¹⁷ Parker 2001. For a brief summary of his continuum, see page 254.

¹⁸ Although Parker appears to pit himself against the interpretation first suggested by Liverani and followed by Bernbeck, his description of the processes involved illustrate that it is more a question of semantics than a real disagreement of the role and function of Assyria in the provinces. Parker focuses on the details of Assyrian administration and therefore the more theoretical approaches that Bernbeck and Liverani discuss are not in question. For example, Parker states: "the data show the Neo-Assyrian Empire was not made up of contiguous stretches of land. Instead, much of the empire consisted of a patchwork of provinces, vassal states, and buffer areas linked to the imperial core by a network of fortified transportation and communication corridors" (2012: 875). Liverani and Bernbeck describe the empire much the same, though through the specified term of a "network empire", first coined by Liverani in 1988.

¹⁹ For this term, see Liverani 1988; Bernbeck 2010.

²⁰ Bernbeck 2010: 143. These nodes or strongholds are scattered across the empire with smaller forts placed strategically between (153).

²¹ Richardson 2016 terms this immediate connection of nobility to the king as "confidence", after the Akkadian *raḥāṣu*, the usage of which emerges in the NA period and continues into the NB period, but is not used during the Late Babylonian period (fn3, 30-31; CAD R, s.v. *raḥāṣu* C v). Additionally, no nominalized forms exist and negation of the verb have not yet been identified (fn3, 31).

²² This was also noted by A. Keskin (2003) "Deportation and Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire," a paper presented at a conference on "Empire and Identity" at the Columbia Center for Archaeology, New York, March 1-2, 2003; *apud* Bernbeck 2010. At most there are some comments in administrative documents from the Middle Assyrian period about provisioning "deportees" (ERIM.MEŠ *nashūtu*) at the city of Nahur (e.g. KAJ 113: 26, 121:

territory and its populace, or in carrying out administrative reforms therein.²³ The question of “Assyrianization”—or the forced assimilation to Assyrian culture and religion—has not been found in the relevant textual and material data in the peripheries, provinces, or frontier zones (e.g. Bagg 2013; Berlejung 2012; Cogan 1988, 1993; etc.).²⁴ In contrast, however, the Neo-Assyrian heartland experienced a boom in imperially planned and administered rural settlements in the region behind Nineveh (Morandi Bonacossi 2016, Ur 2016). In short, not only does this model of a network empire better fit what we know about the administrative structure of the heartland, provinces and outlying vassal states than a territorial empire, it also provides a unifying framework for the Assyrian kings’ administration strategies.

Other examples of empire are often derived from a larger, primary empire in various ways. For instance, nomadic confederacies form in “direct response to imperial state formation of their neighbors... because they were responses to the challenges presented by a neighbor’s imperial centralization.”²⁵ One such confederacy was the nomadic imperial state formation along the Chinese frontier during the third century BCE.²⁶ Far from restricted to East Asia, this form of empire was not unknown to the ancient Near East: Michalowski (1983) posited this same reaction as one reason for the existence of the Gutium hordes during the Akkadian period. The

6, 109: 5). However, the terminology used herein does not refer to the *šallatu* group of deportees (aka the traditionally understood type of deportees), but rather refers to another group of imperially displaced persons—primarily mobile peoples who had been uprooted or displaced (*nasāhu*). The vast majority of the extant texts, however, do not specifically notate deportees as such after they have arrived at their new locations.

²³ Bernbeck 2010: 154.

²⁴ Those who have argued in favor of forced Assyrianization seem to do so to justify reasons other than those empirically based (for example, some have argued this to support an earlier date for widespread monotheism than the material and textual data would otherwise suggest). For updated archaeological essays on the provincial archaeology of the Assyrian empire, see MacGinnis, et al. 2016.

²⁵ Barfield 2001: 34.

²⁶ Barfield 2001: 10-41. This imperial confederacy among the nomads of Mongolia managed to establish a series of empires that “controlled immense territories under the rule of powerful long-lived dynasties” against all odds of imperial organization (10). Their leadership was divided into three basic levels; the first level was occupied by a member of the founding tribe’s ruling lineage. Secondly, indigenous tribal leadership and command regional armies were supervised by governors. And finally, local tribal leaders occupied the third tier (13). By maintaining the separate identity of the tribes as they centralized government under one, the nomads were able to “create a political organization, an imperial confederacy that centralized military power and kept the tribes united” (13). Of additional interest for comparison, the hegemonic government had only three options in how to deal with the nomads’ frontier violence tactics: 1. They could respond defensively by fortifying the frontier and ignoring the nomads’ demands. 2. They could respond aggressively by raising a military force capable of confronting the nomads on the steppe. 3. They could appease the nomads with “expensive peace treaties that provided them with subsidies and border markets” (16). This comparison will be dealt with in greater detail in the chapter on Aramaeans.

details of these nomadic encounters in East Asia²⁷ relate similar situations to those skirmishes with the Aramaeans the Neo-Assyrians and Babylonians recorded. In recognizing the Aramaean confederacies of Southern Mesopotamia as empire formed in response to empire, these raids may be unpacked as coordinated responses to imperial control.²⁸ Other nomadic confederacies include the recent re-interpretation of the Median Empire as a coalition of Zagros tribes in response to the Assyrian threat.²⁹

The case of the “Neo-Babylonian” empire³⁰ departs from the traditional territorial notion of empire. It emerged from the remnants of a previous, more traditional empire on which it commensally relied—taking on the form of the previous empire without its substance. One other such empire was the empire of Kush after its conquest of Egypt in the eighth century BCE (Morkot 2001). The new empire never truly became identical to the previous—no matter how many of its structures it adopted.

The “Neo-Babylonian” empire never truly replaced the Neo-Assyrian empire.³¹ It has been assumed that the Neo-Babylonian Empire followed its predecessors’ footsteps. However, closer investigation suggests it never fully replaced the Neo-Assyrian empire, but instead sought to ground its administration in the trappings of the Neo-Assyrian without adopting its underlying *raison d’être*.³² Empires such as these require exceptional circumstances in order to transform into a self-sustaining primary empire (Barfield 2001: 33-34), which rarely align. After the fall of Assyria, Babylon had a chance to establish itself as the head of a more primary empire upon the

²⁷ Incidentally, the sources used by historians and anthropologists to construct this historical response to empire were also royal inscriptions, in that they were written at the behest of the Chinese emperors and exhibit similar forms of rhetoric as those utilized in the cuneiform sources. Using even the basic tenants of literary criticism illustrates productive means for interpreting rhetoric-filled imperial texts, as has been illustrated multiple times.

²⁸ See chapter four, where I discuss the Aramaeans’ experience of empire in more detail.

²⁹ See Lanfranchi, Roaf, Rollinger, eds. 2003. The Achaemenid kings also governed by means of a network empire, but one with even greater independence granted to its constituent territories. Each province (or *pīhātu*) was governed by a local inhabitant who had been trained for the position.

³⁰ The highly problematic nomenclature of this empire will be discussed and abandoned in chapter three, which is devoted to the same area via way of the contemporary term for the region during the first millennium, or “Karduniaš.”

³¹ Cf. Curtis 2003: 157-167.

³² This can be extrapolated from the Babylonian choice to maintain provincial structures of the former Assyrian Empire, but to infuse all rhetoric with notions of connection to a distant, Babylonian past before the hegemony of Assyria.

demise of the Neo-Assyrian empire, though its numerous rebellions and short-lived existence suggest a failure to sufficiently centralize control.

Babylon's rulers also maintained their ties to their own ethnic groups as they attempted to adopt the empire of their fallen northern neighbor. Such empires were described by Barfield (2001: 36-37):

These [empires] were created by leaders of frontier provinces or client states or by allies that sat on the geographic and cultural periphery of an empire. They were formed after the internal collapse of their imperial neighbors, when peripheral leaders were able to seize the imperial center and form a new empire. ... [These peripheral leaders] were familiar with the dominant imperial culture but still strongly linked to their co-ethnics in the hinterland who maintained older indigenous ways of life.

Several of the "Neo-Babylonian" kings have been identified as members of Kaldean tribes,³³ located in the Sealand to the south of the area specifically claimed by the city of Babylon. In these kings' reigns one can see a dedicated attempt to act "Babylonian" enough yet still maintain their personal ethnic affiliations with their tribe(s).³⁴ The "Neo-Babylonian" empire was an entirely new iteration of empire to what had existed before: a marriage of Kaldean and Babylonian culture and practices amid the trappings of the former Assyrian empire.

The final, pertinent example of empire is that of a theoretical empire rather than a physical empire, wherein the administration builds their political structure by hearkening to local, pre-existing understandings and trappings of empire.³⁵ This form of empire is based on a nostalgic hegemony provided by the memory of a long distant dream of a golden age. Barfield (2001: 38) notes these empires:

claimed an imperial tradition and the outward trappings of an extinct empire, but could not themselves meet basic requirements of true empire, such as centralized rule, direct control of territory, a significant imperial center, or enough territory to make the imperial grade (i.e., a province of former empire).

Such empires include the Satavahana dynasty of Northern India (Sinopoli 2001) and the "imperial myth" of the Qin dynasty that permeated the Chinese empires from the Han to the present (Yates 2001). In these South and East Asian cases, the enforced "memory" of a past

³³ Beaulieu 1997: 391; Jursa 2007: 131; Fuchs 2014: 59; Popova 2015: 402.

³⁴ The Neo-Babylonian kings' acknowledgment of their association with Kaldean tribes and their efforts to reinforce connections to previous, non-Kaldean Babylonian kings and their state-building activities suggests a conscious attempt to connect both to their Kaldean tribe and to cultural norms traditionally associated with citizens of Babylon and Akkad.

³⁵ Barfield 2001.

empire or kingdom was made strong enough to hold a population in thrall to perceived-shared memories. The Neo-Babylonian empire also illustrated this use of nostalgia, in addition to its previously mentioned similarities with other, derivative forms of empire. The “remembered” empires provide the ideological and administrative models for a new empire. The “Neo-Babylonian” empire’s often noted antiquarianism³⁶ (or, preoccupation with the kings of the past) functioned similarly. By referring to kings of the long distant past, known only through temple reconstruction and myth, the Kaldean kings established a link to the idea of longevity. In practice this nostalgic ideology often provided “little more than an influential fantasy” due to the external complications by ruling elite and the complexity of running an empire (Barfield 2001: 38-39). Another such turn to nostalgia can be seen on a non-imperial level, where the compilers of the Hebrew Bible turned to ethnic myths and histories to create a “golden age” in their efforts toward creating a Judean identity during the Babylonian exile.³⁷

The above discussion illustrates how the term “empire” encompasses numerous examples of administration styles and structures, and how the use of a single term without accompanying description can obscure the issue. Empires exist in a variety of forms, each of which was preceded, established, described, and felled by varied processes.

1.2.2 Implicit Biases

No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society.

-E.W. Said (1978:10)

In dealing with topics related to the implementation of power by one group over another, our own cultural heritage connections to empire, various forms of imperialism, and the resulting effects on our intellectual perceptions of these events are ever-present. As Said (1978) illustrated more than forty years ago, colonialism and its off-shoot, Orientalism, permeated the socio-cultural landscape from the 18th through the 20th century and beyond. As a result of this, all

³⁶ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 227; Lenzi 2008; von Dassow 2012; Spiegel 2014; Richardson 2014; etc.

³⁷ The Hebrew Bible is a creation of the exilic and post-exilic period as encouragement to return to the homeland of Judah. The imperial tradition echoed in the later biblical sources illustrates this empire of nostalgia: a specific golden age is remembered, and all present circumstances used to populate that past in order to gain imperial hold over the sentiments of its descendants. This point will be later dealt with after first describing the lived experiences of the deportee community in southern Mesopotamia.

disciplines that have roots in the Enlightenment or beyond are affected by such intellectual prejudices.³⁸ As much as we have attempted to distance ourselves from the concerns and issues of our present, many of the implicit biases of our forebears remain intact: the course of history has left its indelible mark on the hermeneutics of present-day academic research.

When discussing imperialism and related terms, one's "positionality"—an individual's lived experiences based on how they appear to others (including the color of our skin, sexual orientation, other questions of identity, and socio-economic status)—plays a large factor in one's notions of the terms themselves. It is therefore important to craft working definitions that encompass as many vantages of the power dynamics as possible. These terms—imperialism, colonialism, colonization, and Orientalism—and their definitions are ultimately intersectional and defined in relationship one to the other.³⁹ As Dietler (2010: 13) commented in his treatment of the colonial encounters of ancient Mediterranean France:

I would argue that the situation needs a fresh critical treatment that transgresses and challenges some of the long-established interpretive orthodoxies that are endlessly repeated and embellished. These interpretive problems are due not to a paucity of relevant data, but rather to certain theoretical limitations and a resulting failure to pose some fundamental questions.

Acknowledging that the issue of continuing to impart our inherited biases is widespread across the academy is both troubling and comforting. We ourselves are part of an historical process and must acknowledge which parts of our analyses are affected and work to incorporate other, marginal views into our perceptions of possible processes. "Colonial encounters transform all parties involved"—not only those immediately involved (Dietler 2010: 10).⁴⁰

³⁸ For example, as noted by Wachtel (2010: 307), because acculturation and the development of ethnicities were "born of a colonial context," much research focuses solely on "an analysis of the relations between the West and non-European societies. ... [Consequently,] they tend to remain locked into Eurocentric perspectives."

³⁹ As stated above, each definition boasts a multiplicity of meanings based on one's positionality which can hamper constructive discussion if not addressed. To begin, we return to the implicit connection of the term "empire" to its Greco-Roman prototypes. All of the terminology under discussion lend itself toward this bias, as all of our present jargon relating the field of empire and colonialism finds its roots in Greek and Latin. C.f. Dietler 2010, Morrison 2001, and Said 1978 and 1993 for detailed accounts of these etymologies and their historiography.

⁴⁰ There are those who would argue the point that Orientalism and colonialism have no effect on the (pre-)pre-modern world, but this is a logical fallacy based in a premise of the historical-cultural method. The truism that context of the past does not mirror that of the present or recent past does not also imply that a contemporary concept (however recently discussed) cannot have occurred before, as well. The expanded definitions from a process-based approach of the acts of "colonialism," "imperialism," and "Orientalism" render this argument additionally invalid—these terms no longer only refer to a specific instance in the recent past, but have been opened up to their basic gist and then applied in multiple situations. Additionally, we remain still products of our own age—as aptly put by

I expand the definition of “imperialism” to focus primarily on efforts to increase one society’s domination over another;⁴¹ the term does not merely relate to those actions taken under the auspices of a self-acknowledged empire. “Colonialism” refers to the practices of control resultant from the notion of “imperialism”, as well as from socio-cultural transformations and entanglement.⁴² Likewise expanded, “colonization” refers to the enactment of said practices of control over another people group—whereas “founding colonies” is the new phrase reserved for the old sense of colonization.⁴³ By extension, “Orientalism” is here expansively defined as the act of intellectual imperialism found in: the act of reflexively questioning critical methods of non-Western scholarship; institutional hierarchies that deprioritize non-Western scholarship; and any other act of avoiding consideration of the unknown in favor of the known.⁴⁴ So defined, “Orientalism” is a specific intellectual imperialism present in modern interpretations of material, “colonialism” refers to the practices used by the imperialistically minded, “colonization” refers to the employment of said practices against another people. Thus expanded from their original imperialist bias these terms now prioritize the experience of the subjugated and provide a more nuanced critical lens through which to view our subject matter. Acknowledging the forms of

Said—and thus cannot help but incorporate our inherent biases into our research if we do not actively account for them in our methodology.

⁴¹ See Dietler 2010: 18: “*imperialism* ... indicate(s) an ideology or discourse that motivates and legitimizes practices of expansionary domination by one society over another, whatever those practices might entail (e.g. military conquest, economic dependency).”

⁴² *Ibid.* 9, 18: “Colonialism: the complex process by which alien colonists and native peoples become increasingly entangled in webs of new relations and through which there developed a gradual transformation of all parties to the encounter. ... I mean the projects and practices of control marshaled in interactions between societies linked in asymmetrical relations of power and the processes of social and cultural transformation resulting from these practices.”

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 18: “*Colonization* indicate[s] the expansionary act of imposing political sovereignty over foreign territory and people, and *founding colonies* denote[s] the act of establishing new settlements in alien lands. ... *Colonial province* designate[s] a subject territory that is the product of colonization. Hence, colonization is, ultimately, solidified or maintained through colonialism, but colonialism can also operate without the formal subjugation of foreign territories that colonization implies.”

⁴⁴ While much of this may seem old-hat to some, unfortunately there are still remnants of such Western imperial biases within critical scholarship. One example of such intellectual imperialism is the instinct to discredit or ignore nomadic and tribal elements within ancient societies. While most now acknowledge the evolutionary scheme of cultural development to be fundamentally flawed, still the notion that the political formation of a non-sedentary people must be inferior to a state based in a single location remains. This is evident even at the basic stage of translating textual materials that reference nomadic groups. Instead acknowledging a mobile polity as a polity in its own right, we continue to privilege the biases of ancient and current sedentary peoples. The pervasiveness of this has affected the study of the Middle East so much that scholars of Middle Eastern origin also attribute a baseness to mobile peoples without realizing this conception arrived with the advent of Imperialism in the eighteenth century.

imperialism in our approach, our fields, and our subjects prevents us from further colonizing the ancient subaltern. It tears down the colonial wall of ancient empires and brick by brick it permits a view of empire as it was experienced—rather than how it was portrayed in royal rhetoric.⁴⁵

1.3 Deportation

State formation is not an event; it is an on-going process by means of which political authority is continually reproduced (and thereby reformed) along established pathways of institutions and identification. ... Empire is a context rather than a catalyst. ... Both cores and peripheries are embedded within a larger imperial matrix.

-B. Routledge (2016:92)

As discussed above, an empire is a state which has been expanded by conquest to hold sovereignty over a significant territory and percentage of governable population within a central administrative system. This state supports itself by requiring its constituent parts to provide mobile and real capital, as well as to contribute to various military endeavors. Often the peripheral areas carry a greater burden of these obligations than the heartland. Upon the fulfillment of basic physical needs—food, drink, clothing, shelter—ideological motivators such as religion, philosophy, and (royal) propaganda rely. They underlie and provide rationale for these manipulating ideologies, and any leader must first satisfy these basic needs before the populace will submit to exploitation.

In addition to bringing in material resources and founding new colonies, the Assyrians imported people as mobile capital into the heartland of the empire.⁴⁶ Due to the climatic situation preceding the heyday of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, this polity was short of agricultural workers in addition to food. Babylon's empire already stood ravaged and disunited, and implemented deportation to fill the needs generated by the deportation practices of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (which had deported markedly higher numbers from Karduniaš than from other regions).⁴⁷ This alternative form of colonialization is most often discussed in relation to the experience of the Judahites and Israelites during the first millennium BCE. Consequently, this practice of

⁴⁵ This again addresses the imperative Liverani (1973; 1988: 82) laid out for the historian of the ancient Near East: "...Full use of the available sources ... [requires] techniques of reading the historical inscriptions that are more refined than those used in the past, techniques which will allow us to go beyond the simple categories of 'conquest' and 'tribute,' and permit us to free the inscriptions from their ideological framework and restore and decypher the variegated historical reality."

⁴⁶ E.g. RIMA 2 30: 78b-84a.

⁴⁷ Oded 1979.

relocating human capital to the heartland has been termed alternately “deportation,” “exile,” and “forced migration.”

The terms “deportation,” “exile,” and “forced migration” have a long history. Many scholars have been attracted to the term “forced migration” with the argument that it captures the sense of the older terms “deportation” and “exile” without holding the same biases.⁴⁸ Others have promoted the shift of term on the basis that “deportation” is not as accurate as “*trans*-portation” would be⁴⁹—but since that term is already thoroughly aligned with roadways and the movement of goods or voluntary moving of people, we should abandon the root altogether.⁵⁰ For these reasons among others, it has recently become the trend to eschew the use of the term “deportation” for such terms as “forced migration.” However, the term “migration” has only in the recent past come to mean the movement of a people from one location to another, where past terminology associated said movement with the agency of government (e.g. exile, banish, deport, etc.) or style of habitation (e.g. camp, travel, sojourn, etc.).⁵¹ Recent scholarship has broadened the definition of migration to incorporate a variety of both forced and voluntary migrations. As indicated at a colloquium held recently on the *Archéologie de Migrations* (2017), the basic word “migration”—and its modifications “emigration” and “immigration”—was noted to encompass a dozen different movement patterns.⁵² The movements identified within that volume include both voluntary and forced migrations of humans as well as the spread of ideas and culture. Of those types of forced migrations identified, none is relevant to the discussion of imperially dictated movement of people during the first millennium BCE in the Middle East.⁵³

⁴⁸ Cf. Boda, Ames, Ahn, Leuchter 2015.

⁴⁹ Cf. JoAnn Scurlock, personal communication.

⁵⁰ E.g. Ahn 2006, 2010.

⁵¹ Of interest is the following comment found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* regarding today’s usage of the term “migration”: “the alleged sense of ‘Residence in a foreign country; banishment’ [as] given in some recent Dictionaries is fictitious. The word in the authority cited is a misreading of a later edition for ‘extermination’” (OED, 2nd ed., 1996, s.v. “migration” d.).

⁵² Cf. J.-P. Demoule 2017: 28-30.

⁵³ The forced migration types listed include: “...un mouvement migratoire organisé, ponctuel et pacifique (comme celui qu’envisageaient les Helvètes vers la Saintongue au début de la guerre des Gaules, du moins selon Jules César); un mouvement de colonisation de peuplement appuyé sur la violence guerrière, mouvement soit rapide, soit progressif (comme on représente souvent la période des “Grandes Invasions” des premiers siècles de notre ère; comme l’a été la colonisation européenne des Amériques, de l’Océanie et d’une partie de l’Afrique, ou encore aujourd’hui celle de la Chine au Xinjiang et au Tibet, ou celle de l’Indonésie en Nouvelle-Guinée); une expédition guerrière ponctuelle (comme le siège de Rome par les Gaulois en 390 avant notre ère; ou les interventions américaines récentes en Irak, en Afghanistan ou a la Grenade); ...” (J.-P. Demoule 2017: 28-30).

In general, although deportation was clearly a common imperial strategy in the ancient past, this practice is not today typically addressed in discussions of imperialism, colonialism, or human migrations. The primary reason I tend to avoid the term “forced migration” in the context of ancient Middle Eastern deportations is that the particular form of imperialist movement of interest in this region is not acknowledged as an example of “forced migration” by those in the field of migration studies.⁵⁴ The act of importing conquered peoples into a state’s heartland as an imperial (rather than mercantile) act is simply not addressed in scholarship on “forced migrations” outside the sphere of Mesopotamian and biblical studies.⁵⁵ In addition, I maintain the original term “deportation” for the following supplementary reasons. When addressing the imperial strategy of moving groups of people as “forced migration,”⁵⁶ I find this phraseology to be overly hegemonic. It places the imperial prerogative at the focus of investigation rather than encompassing both the imperial prerogative and the colonized experience in a single term. I prefer to maintain the fluidity of the older term “deportation.”

I define “deportation” as the orchestrated and enforced movement of one people by a sovereign state *from* one area to another for imperialist purposes. Long used within Mesopotamian and biblical studies, the emphasis of the term “deportation” includes the experienced reality of the people thus moved, rather than focusing solely on imperial motivations (for which one would then employ the term “importation” or “transportation”). Thankfully, the etymology of “deportation” includes only the notion that something must be moved *from* one location, without reference to its resultant position.

1.3.1 Comparand: the Inka *Mitmaq*

Though rare, the imperially orchestrated practice of dispersing of groups from the periphery to the core and throughout the empire is not unique to first millennium BCE Mesopotamia. One exemplar of a similar imperial strategy of deportation to that of that of Mesopotamian empires occurred in the Inka Empire. Through comparison, we learn many things about the concepts of

⁵⁴ Cf. above regarding the conference on Migration studies, where no similar form of imperial relocation scheme was considered among the examples or kinds of forced migration discussed.

⁵⁵ Even though the American practice of chattel slavery may seem to fall under this category, the acts of the first millennium empires give no sign of being fueled by notions that the conquered are sub-human.

⁵⁶ As used by the Exile–Forced Migrations in Biblical Literature Group of the SBL (since 2008); Ahn (2011); Ahn & Ames (2015); Cook (2015); Peterson (2015); and others.

“deportation” employed by the two empires—especially as pertains to the concept of ethnicity and imperial hierarchy. Comparison of Inkan to Assyrian and Babylonian deportation practices allows us to highlight elements of deportation practices that are distinctive to each empire.

The Inka Empire thrived from the early thirteenth century until 1572 CE in the Andes mountains of South America. Ruled by a single ruling ethnic group—the Inka—the empire maintained clear ethnic differences even in urban, multi-ethnic settings. The Inka practiced a form of deportation which they titled “*mitmaq*.” *Mitmaq* consisted of “directed relocation, whereby populations were relocated from one geographical area to another in order to perform specific tasks for the Inca state” (Rankin 1994: i). In this state-initiated deportation, sources record numerous variations on this theme—all of which were given specific, technical names by the Inka and their subordinate populations, and recorded by the Spanish.⁵⁷ These terms include *yana*, or royal retainers; *aclla*, or women in the service of state religion; and *camayoc*, skilled workers in silver (Rankin 1994: 17-18). Each of these groups could be further defined by the term *mitmaq* if they were required to relocate to perform these tasks. These names refer to specific groups of people by gender, ethnic group, geographic location, etc., all of which were periodically included under the term *mitmaq* and moved across the empire. A few of the Spanish sources vaguely record the *mitmaq* groups as people who were relocated when: their home area was too populated or non-productive;⁵⁸ their leaders rebelled;⁵⁹ or new areas were conquered.⁶⁰ These summarized functions parallel those generally hypothesized for Mesopotamian deportations of the first millennium BCE. One Spanish chronicler, Cieza, however, was more systematic in his ethnography. From his interviews with locals, he identified five types of *mitmaq* settlers:

- 1) loyal subjects moved to instill imperial loyalty;
- 2) loyal subjects moved to guard hostile borders;
- 3) people sent to unoccupied territories to produce surplus foodstuffs for the royal stores;

⁵⁷ The Spanish records abound with colonialist interpretations of their subject, yet still the records prove relatively reliable when compared to Inkan material culture and decipherable texts. Some of the more reliable records include those of: (Juan) Polo de Ondegardo, Melchor de Alarcon, don Garcia Calçomaquera, don Martin Cari, don Martin Cusi, Garci Diez, Francisco de Toledo, Ludovico Bertonio, Jesuit José de Acosta, Pedro Cieza de Leon, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, Garcilaso de la Vega, and Bernabe Cobo, among others.

⁵⁸ Garcilaso lib, VII, cap.I; 1966, pp.401; *apud* Rankin 1994: 18.

⁵⁹ As claimed by Garcilaso lib, VII, cap.I; 1966, pp.401; *apud* Rankin 1994: 18.

⁶⁰ Per Sarmiento 1967 [1572]:120; *apud* Rankin 1994: 18.

- 4) foreign ethnic groups transported to Cuzco to represent the variety of groups the Inkas ruled over; and
- 5) allusions to groups relocated for unspecified religious purposes.⁶¹

At least two of these five groups are familiar to Assyriologists and other ancient Middle Eastern historians, while the others stimulate fruitful discussion. The first three of these five categories fall under colonization, whereby the empire founded colonies of loyal subjects to guard boundaries, promote loyalty, and generate resources for the broader empire. For the fifth, not enough information remains to discuss it in greater detail, but the fourth serves the best for comparison with what has been traditionally designated “deportation” in Mesopotamia.

Closer inspection of these categories of *mitmaq* settlers illustrate the differences between the two superficially similar practices. The Spanish sources tell us the fourth category served to make up a type of “human menagerie” for the Inka kings: a representative sampling of the inhabitants of all conquered lands were relocated to the imperial center to live within specially designated areas within the capital city.⁶² The Neo-Assyrian capitals housed various neighborhoods named after specific ethnic groups,⁶³ but there is little to suggest that the people of these ethnic groups were made to live solely within these walled neighborhoods within the city. The Inkan *mitmaq* sent to the capital, on the other hand, were settled in areas specifically built up to replicate their previous habitats and were required to stay within these sectors.

⁶¹ Rankin (1994) identifies these sources as: 1) Cieza lib.II, cap.XXII; 1959, pp.60; 2) Cieza lib.II, cap.XXII; 1959, pp. 61; 3) Cieza lib.II, cap. XXII; 1959, pp.62; 4) Cieza lib.II, cap.XXII; 1959, pp.79; and 5) Cieza lib.II, cap.LII; 1959, pp.232.

⁶² Rankin (1994: 65) references a file found in the Archives of Lima as noted by Rostworowski (1963:225) that discusses the movement of groups of *mitmaq* to the neighborhoods of Cuzco.

⁶³ The city quarter of the Hundurāya in Aššur provides one such example of a city ward or neighborhood that came to be known by the ethnic identity of its residents (Kaisa Åkerman 2001, “The ‘Aussenhaken Area’ in the City of Assur during the Second Half of the 7th Century BC,” SAAB 13). Other identifiers were also used to name the regions of the peoples who lived therein, such as occupations (e.g. goldsmiths, bleachers, potters; van de Mierop 1997: 183).

Excavation of Assyrian royal cities residential areas still remains a desideratum. During the apex of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (the seventh century), the City of Aššur added new neighborhoods of tightly packed housing, considerably smaller than earlier houses which dominate the *libbi āli* or “downtown” (cf. Cambridge World History vol 3: 469-490). Kalhu’s Lower Town (or residential neighborhoods) has not yet been thoroughly excavated, but texts record an extensive building program occurred during the reign of Aššurnasirpal II—the first Assyrian king to relocate his capital to Kalhu from Aššur. In this sector, the Cambridge World History suggests that Aššurnasirpal II relocated the peoples he invited to attend the celebrations for completing the palace; however, the text referenced (RIMA 2 A.0.101.30: 140b-154) specifically notes that he sent the attendees home after a ten day period. A better choice would have been to cite RIMA 2 A.0.101.23: 14b-17a, which notes the resettling (*šušbutu*) of defeated peoples within Kalhu, though not in as impressive numbers (in fact, there are no numbers mentioned).

Unlike the *Sho'ah* or pogroms of the twentieth century, the inhabitants of neighborhoods in Mesopotamian imperial capitals were not discussed as being of lesser status than other inhabitants of either the capital or the empire. Rather than being cast as the scourge of the earth,⁶⁴ Inkan and Mesopotamian deportees appear to have held a different ideological value altogether. Upon arrival to the Inka capital city of Cuzco, these deportees—like all inhabitants of the Inkan Empire—were required to maintain their traditional dress, customs, practices, and all other cultural markers without assimilation to those of the imperial elite.⁶⁵ While there is no indication that these deportees were considered “less” than other, non-Inkan inhabitants of the capital, their otherness was strictly enforced and maintained through this requirement to maintain visual cues of otherness. Furthermore, assimilation into higher socio-economic levels even within one’s own ethnic group was so rare as to be considered impossible. The hierarchy of the Inkan Empire did not allow for upward mobility among social classes.⁶⁶ Even within the highest echelon—the Inka themselves—there were two clans (the Greater and the Lesser Inka) which could shift according to which Inka ascended the throne.⁶⁷ The inflexibility of the social hierarchy was further enforced by the notion that the Inka king was the Sun god⁶⁸ and the practice of non-patrilinear ascent to the throne.

⁶⁴ The Inka did hold such an anthropic category—the *uru*—which although originally referred to a group of fisher/hunter-gatherers who conceived of themselves as wholly different to those under the Inkan term for “human” (Wachtel 2010: 283), by the time of the Spanish chroniclers it had been “emptied of its many meanings and came to refer to only the lowest stratum, that of ‘savages’” and below all other classes (Wachtel 2010: 306). This “backwardness,” as is common, was the end result of a “long process of domination and rejection” (Wachtel 2010: 307; cf. Lévi-Stauss 1952: 113-32).

⁶⁵ Wernke 2006: 181; Juan de Ulloa Mogollón (1965 [1586]) remarked that the Inka took pains to preserve the ethnic customs of the ethnic groups subsumed into a single province during the colonial period. Rankin (1994: 21) cites evidence by Cobo that these *mitmaq* groups were directed to “maintain their traditional ethnic costumes even when residing far from their homeland” (lib. II cap. XXIII; 1979: 190). Rankin (1994: 184-185) summarizes what is known about the ethnicity of the *mitmaq* as follows: “There is one similarity between all *mitmaq* groups created by the Inca. They retained their traditional ethnic identity. ... Interviews with local populations and with *mitmaq* demonstrate that the *mitmaq* were distinguishable to others and that the *mitmaq* themselves retained a strong sense of their traditional identity.”

⁶⁶ There are some instances in which Inka subjects were allowed to buy their way into a higher status, but these instances remain the exception to the rule. For examples, see Wernke 2006.

⁶⁷ These so-called “greater” or “lesser” families were termed the Hurin and Hanan and correspond to Upper and Lower Cusco, respectively (Zuidema 2010: 177). These two “families” or divisions of the highest ranking Inka were mirrored in the Inka’s perceived environment and the dichotomy determined: “the Inka concept of history, their mythology, their rituals and politics, and their architecture” (190).

⁶⁸ Unlike the Egyptians, who conceived only their king as related to the Sun god, the Inka claimed direct descent from the Sun for their entire supra-household or ethnic group (cf. Wernke 2006: 180-181).

Assyria, by comparison, made no such regulation on their deportees, nor did they limit upward mobility within the empire. As Fales and others have noted, “Assyrian-ness” was performed as much as it was bred.⁶⁹ Babylon, also, does not appear to have employed ethnist or racist practices in their incorporation of deportees or others into their empire.⁷⁰ Even less so did Persia—which often chose to install locals in positions of authority, saddled with the trappings of

⁶⁹ Fales’ work on “Assyrian” identity and ethnicity illustrates this as well (2013, 2015, 2017, 2018). While there was certainly a hierarchy among the elite of Assyria, upward mobility was possible through economic ventures as well as by royal endowment. Those who reached the highest level, Fales reports, were considered to be true “Assyrians”, and those of lesser levels were encouraged to emulate these “Assyrians” in show of solidarity and hope of self-advancement. Others have tracked the notion of Assyrian identity with varying results. For example, Emberling (2014) tracks the progression of the concept of “Assyrian” (Aššurāyu) from being a resident of the city Aššur without ethnic connotations in the Old Assyrian period (160); to a resident of the territory ruled by the king at Aššur, still without ethnic notes during the Middle Assyrian period (161; Lafont 2003: 531); coterminously, deportation systems began in earnest and relocated peoples were absorbed into the category of Assyrian according to their new location (162); “Assyrian-ness” continued to lack exclusive cultural connotations even into the early Neo-Assyrian period (164). Emberling (2014: 169) summarizes the scope of ethnicity diachronically as follows: “There was only a weakly developed idea of Assyrian cultural identity, and it was continuously modified by linguistic, cultural, and artistic practices of cultures encountered during imperial expansion.”

Although at first these two depictions of Assyrian ethnicity appear at odds, closer inspection reveals two differing approaches to the concepts of ethnicity and identity are at play. Emberling’s diachronic presentation of Assyrian identity focuses on how they define that identity against other (imperial) powers. Fales’ work, however, focuses on the internal definitions of “Assyrian” among members of the same geographic area, namely Assyria. Fales presents a category of Assyrian identity among Assyrians which may be compared to the notion of being an “All-American” within the United States: it is not the question of “citizenship,” but of being counted among the elite that Fales describes.

⁷⁰ Abraham (2015) presents several instances of “inter-ethnic” marriage certificates from the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. Although determining ethnicity through prosopography is far from certain, the presence of numerous ethnic minority groups within single documents suggests that there was no specific stigma attached to such unions. Although Da Riva (2014) cites Zadok’s (1984, 1995, 2003) opinion that the Neo-Babylonian state was a “closed society” wherein “temple administration was reserved for ethnic Babylonians,” she notes that other skilled positions were often occupied by non-Babylonians. Beaulieu (2007) notes the importance of names for reconstructing the “structure and composition” of society in Babylonian sources, but as will be discussed later, names following the forms used by the hegemonic power are not sufficient to indicate ethnic identity. As Beckman (2013: 205) remarked: “And if due to the practice of papponomy a second-generation Babylonian was given the name of his immigrant Amorite grandfather, did this make him an outsider in the eyes of his neighbors?”

Babylon and Karduniaš could not have operated along racist or ethnist lines, for the simple fact that the term “Babylonian” had not made the progression that “Assyrian” had (see note above). To be a “Babylonian” was to be a resident of the city of Babylon; there was no single, overarching term for those who inhabited Karduniaš as a whole. Fales (2011) notes the combined populations of the age-old centers (e.g. Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Sippar, Ur, Uruk, etc.) fell well below that of the Aramaeans and Kaldeans. Instead, the state seems to have operated along divisions rooted in socio-economic differences: the elite and the subaltern, with little emphasis on the ethnicity of the family involved. Even acknowledging Zadok’s remarks (1984, 1995, 2003) about Babylonia being a “closed society”, that was only true for the the realm of temples and elite, urban “Babylonians.” As Hackl and Jursa (2015: 165) note: “the environment of the court and the royal administration in Babylonia... was ethnically far more diverse than the realm of the temples and the social background ...of the Babylonian families whose archives have come down to us: urban Babylonians kept themselves segregated, rigorously so on the level of marriage and lineage and less distinctly, but still in a noticeable fashion, on the level of economic interchange, from their non-[elite-] Babylonian surroundings.”

Medo-Persian elite identity.⁷¹ The Mesopotamian empires recognized ethnic groups other than their own, they did not institute moratoria to prevent their assimilation to the empire. In fact, the Mesopotamian empires of the first millennium BCE encouraged assimilation in varying degrees. The Inka placed far more importance upon distinguishing themselves from their ethnic constituents. By strictly maintaining ethnic categories they prohibited ethnicity from fluctuating naturally—according to need or desire.⁷² By contrast, the advent of new ethnic groups—such as the revised ethnicity of the Judean deportees during the Neo-Babylonian period—illustrates the Mesopotamian empires enacted no such policy.⁷³

The ghettoization of *mitmaq* deportees within the capital city of Cuzco also indicates these people served a very different purpose from the imperial deportations of Mesopotamia. Where the Inka transplanted groups of people to create a “zoo” of their subjects—complete with regional animals and simulacra of their homelands—Mesopotamian empires did not. Assyrians did bring people to live in their capital cities, but the evidence does not suggest these people were treated like occupants of a menagerie. Babylonians left little to indicate they sought to populate their capital city with deportees. Rather, both Assyria and Babylon appear to have primarily deported people to meet the socio-economic needs of the empire. Such exercises of political power can affect ethnic identity. The ruling Inka prohibited assimilation of their deportees, so to the extent that those prohibitions were effective, they dictated the ethnic diversity of their empire. Neo-Assyrian rhetoric, however, opened a path toward inclusion for their deportees and subaltern classes (Fales 2015; Machinist 1993). The empire at Babylon was not socially centralized under the absolute rule of any one ethnic group, and so new groups found room to flourish.

⁷¹ Cf. Dandamayev 1999: 271-272, who names most polities in Anatolia and Greece, Cyprus, Arabia, Ethiopia, and the Levant as included among those permitted to self-govern under the auspices of the Achaemenid Empire.

⁷² Cf. Jones 1997: 97: “Thus, manifestations of ethnicity are the product of an ongoing process involving the objectification of cultural difference and the embodiment of those differences within the shared dispositions of the habitus. Such processes will lead to fluctuations over time in the correspondence between the representation of a particular ethnic identity, in terms of objectified cultural difference, and the cultural practices and historical experience of the people involved. In some situations there may be a high degree of contiguity between ethnicity and the habitus, whereas in other situations characterized by social dislocation and subordination there may appear to be very little.”

⁷³ The lack of textual indication for such opposition to otherness further supports this conclusion.

Due to the shift of climate at the start of the first millennium BCE, the Mesopotamian empires were primarily concerned with replenishing their human resources / workforce. The Assyrians sent groups of people throughout the empire's heartland to rebuild towns and engage in agriculture.⁷⁴ Babylonians repopulated abandoned or ruined cities and their temples' fields with laborers.⁷⁵ Persian policies further differed, and they favored free trade by tolerating free travel across the empire—allowing previous deportees to return home. The Achaemenids notably only deported their defeated Greek and west Anatolian enemies. The parameters of deportation, it would appear, varied drastically based upon the empire's conception of self, others, and the dominant socio-economic need. For all first millennium rulers of Mesopotamia, there was no enforced or mandated separation of ethnic groups, nor did they assign strict hierarchical status based on ethnicity.

1.4 Ethnic Groups and Subalterity

Ethnicity is not constituted by the historical legacy of a primordial, essentialist identity; rather the formation and transformation of ethnicity is contingent upon particular historical structures which impinge themselves on human experience and condition social action.

-S. Jones (2007:55)

When presenting a social history of deportation, it is necessary to broach the subjects of “ethnicity,” “ethnic groups,” and “subaltern groups” in addition to those of empire and imperialism. Specifically for the case of first millennium BCE Mesopotamian empires, the question is: how and why did certain ethnic groups maintain or lose their distinctiveness in the face of imperialism?

⁷⁴ Cf. Ponchia (2014: 386), who notes the Neo-Assyrian period to have been a time of “intense settlement in which even ecologically marginal areas were exploited.” Characterized by dispersed settlements and farmsteads, a marked modification of the landscape occurred in both the core and peripheral areas (cf. Oates 1968, 2005: 44; Wilkinson 1995, etc.). Parker (2001: 99) remarks: “This ‘unnatural’ settlement is, I believe, indicative of an Assyrian policy of ‘agricultural colonization’ which saw the forced relocation of large numbers of people to newly annexed regions for the purpose of agricultural production.” Incidentally, the texts tell us the Assyrians also performed the “agricultural colonization” of the heartland with peoples from defeated regions, as well. E.g. an Assyrian inscription by Aššurnasirpal II (RINAP 1 iii 132-136) in which he rebuilds the city of Kalhu and settles conquered peoples within. Additionally, in SAA 1, 183 (=ABL 1287), an Assyrian official wrote to Sargon II to complain about the people he has been sent. Instead of the farmers he requested, he was sent lawyers, creditors, and members of the royal family of Carchemish.

⁷⁵ E.g. in the areas surrounding Sippar (cf. Bongenaar & Haring 1994; Jursa 1998; MacGinnis 1995; Bloch 2014), Borsippa (Waerzeggers 2006, 2014), Nippur (Stolper 1985, 2001; Pearce & Wunsch 2014), and Uruk (Gehlken 1998; Kozuh 2006).

The subject of ethnicity has been difficult to define, and often the term is used without complete agreement as to its referents. It has been inaccurately equated with notions of minority and subalterity.⁷⁶ However, this conceptualization of ethnicity has been thoroughly discredited in the social sciences. Studies of ethnicity transitioned from essentialist approaches that conceptualized ethnicity as a static, inalienable characteristic of a person or group that was identified by the presence or absence of specific cultural markers. Barth (1969) first redirected this to a functional approach which focused on the creation, maintenance, and navigation of boundaries between groups rather than the chosen traits themselves. With this shift new conversations arose about the nature of ethnicity and how to identify it.⁷⁷

Fredrik Barth (1969:11-12) formulated what has become the basic approach to ethnicity within this milieu, noting the following about the previous cultural-historical or essentialist approach:

If one chooses to regard the culture-bearing aspect of ethnic groups as their primary characteristic, this has far-reaching implications. One is led to identify and distinguish ethnic groups by the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they are the bearers. This entails a prejudged viewpoint both on (1) the nature of continuity in time of such units, and (2) the locus of the factors which determine the form of the units.

To address these failings, Barth proposed a new method of identifying ethnic groups by focusing on the boundaries and boundary-maintenance performed by groups when in contact with others (1969: 15):

The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses. The boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts. If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion. Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the different ways in which they are maintained,

⁷⁶ Additionally, “race” and “ethnicity” are often used interchangeably in the media and government organizations—which is also incorrect sociologically speaking. Recent biological research into the human genome has corroborated what anthropologists have known for years: there is no such thing as race biologically. Worldwide, all physical variations occur within 0.1% of the human genome, according to the Human Genome Project completed in 2000. That same year, the political leaders of the US and the UK along with the lead researchers of the Human Genome Project declared the following: “at the level of the DNA, there is no such thing as race” (cf. Duster 2015). This statement from the “hard sciences” came at the end of 30–50 years of social scientific research which had proclaimed all along that race was a social construct (Solomos 2015).

⁷⁷ Sian Jones (1997) presents a full summary of the arguments surrounding the definition of ethnicity up to the late 1990s.

not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation, need to be analysed.

This new method for identifying and interacting with ethnic groups destroys the old equation that “a race = a culture = a language, and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others” (Barth 1969: 11)—a proposition still encountered regularly within historical endeavors. Close-reading the textual and material records provides insight into elite–subaltern relations. As Barth implied, all artifacts—textual or architectural, ceramic or lithic—function as part of a self-subordinating continuum, wherein redundancy (or the multiplicity of markers) indicates importance both overtly and subtly (O’Shea 1985).

Jones (1997: 125)—in her pivotal work to formulate a means to identify ethnicity in archaeology without recourse to ceramic typology, etc.—further modified the definition and methodology of ethnicity:

The theoretical approach developed here suggests an alternative to both an outright rejection of ethnicity as a valid subject of archaeological enquiry, and a functionalist approach to ethnicity in which culture is reduced to a seemingly arbitrary and secondary role. The analysis of contextual realizations of ethnicity is by no means entirely beyond the possibilities of archaeological interpretation if, as argued here, there is a relationship between the historically constituted dispositions and orientations that inform people’s understandings and practices, and the recognition and expression of ethnicity. As such, the way in which particular styles of material culture are meaningfully involved in the articulation of ethnicity may be arbitrary across cultures, but it is not random within particular socio-historical contexts. Ethnic symbolism is generated, to varying degrees, from the existing cultural practices and modes of differentiation characterizing various social domains, such as gender and status differentiation, or the organization of space within households (see Eriksen 1991).

As noted above—despite the continued attempts to couch it in essentialist terms—ethnicity is not monolithic: it is capable of shifts, translations, and mutations. As Jones’ theoretical approach highlights, the “very existence of ethnic groups as coherent, monolithic entities within which enculturation can be relied upon to have produced a uniform spread of culture which undergoes gradual change through time” is insupportable (1997: 126). I do not seek subaltern ethnic minority groups based on *a priori* determined customs or traditions, nor do I attempt to identify them based on their own *emic* boundaries of their ethnic group. The latter do not exist in the extant sources. Rather, I seek to find ethnic groups as the hegemonic ethnic groups perceived of them. While not ideal, nor in any way indicative of how these subaltern groups self-identified, by comparing the imperial perceptions of these groups and their contemporaries diachronically, we gain crucial clues as to the observed nature of these groups. I

focus on these contemporaneous identifications of ethnic groups to avoid imposing modern conceptions of what should or should not be included in a group.⁷⁸ By avoiding the essentialist approach to ethnicity, I allow for fluctuations and self-identification of ancient ethnic groups.

“Ethnic groups” denote self-bounded groups of people based on descent, emic and etic ascription, situation, and / or strategy (Emberling 1997). “Minorities,” by contrast, refer to any ethnic group which does not make up the majority of a population.⁷⁹ “Subaltern groups” refer to those ethnic groups which are not of the ruling elite ethnic group.⁸⁰ The elite ruling class is most often an ethnic minority itself, particularly in empires. This minority group occasionally rules by convincing other, subaltern groups that together (the elite and this group of subaltern minorities) they make up a “majority” in opposition to certain subaltern ethnic minorities.⁸¹ The Neo-Assyrians appear to have modified this principal for their own subjects by creating an additional technical category for “people of the land of Aššur” (*mār/nišê māt Aššur*) in addition to the older, and more prestigious category of “Assyrian person” (*lú.Aššurāya*).⁸² Another option for

⁷⁸ This is especially important when discussing the Judean deportees.

⁷⁹ In discussing various ethnic groups, it is expected that questions of power between these groups should arise. Terms such as “minority group” or “minorities” are often used to discuss ethnic groups which do not hold political power. However, this usage is technically incorrect: a minority refers to the number of constituents of that group, rather than its hierarchical position. Most of recent Western history, for example, has evidenced one minority group rising up and subjecting other groups to their will—even when the subjugated groups constitute the majority. The history of ancient Mesopotamia is no exception: without fail, it is a minority group that has constituted the ruling group / class. I therefore use the terms “minority” and “minority group” quantitatively to indicate a group’s relative position to other groups’ populations. To address the more commonly used referent of “minority group”, I use the specific term “subaltern”—as used in discussions of power from postcolonial studies.

⁸⁰ Speaking specifically of examples from South Asia, Ranajit Guha reports the following regarding the subaltern classes (including several differing ethnic minorities): “Taken as a whole and in the abstract this ... category [of the subaltern] ... was heterogeneous in its composition and thanks to the uneven character of regional economic and social developments, differed from area to area. The same class or element which was dominant in one area ... could be among the dominated in another. This could and did create many ambiguities and contradictions in attitudes and alliances, especially among the lowest strata of the rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants, and upper middle class peasants all of whom belonged, *ideally speaking*, to the category of people or subaltern classes” (Guha 1982: 8, author’s italics; *apud* Spivak 1988: 284).

⁸¹ E.g. the ruling, white class of the United States of America and how they have convinced poorer white classes that unifying along a racial construct is more important than unifying along socio-economic divides, which could encourage the poorer classes to work together against the elite, white class (cf., among others, J.D. Vance 2016, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, HarperCollins).

⁸² The differences between types of “Assyrians” have been discussed by Machinist 1993 and Fales 2015. Machinist identifies a difference in class between the two categories suggested by a passage in Esarhaddon’s Vassal Treaty. The lower class of Assyrian rarely appears as a category in letters or administrative texts but rather appears almost exclusively in the royal inscriptions, suggesting the second category was a polemical invention of the Neo-Assyrian kings used solely to encourage the identification of persons of foreign of lower class origins as Assyrians alongside the more established *lú.Aššurāya*.

the ruling elite, as in the case of the Inka, is to rule the majority by defining themselves in opposition to all other groups—e.g. only the Inka were descendants of the Sun god. Consequently, the concept of a “majority” is rooted in further othering of subaltern groups by the ruling elite.

Most investigations into ethnicity focus upon the bounded groups of non-elite minority groups, or subaltern ethnic minority groups. These groups have no access to power.⁸³ Should they be positioned well enough to assimilate into the imperialist machine, they lose their ability to speak on behalf of their subaltern community. Any intermediary groups straddling the divide between the imperial elite and the colonized may only gain power through the sacrifice of their original, non-elite identity (Spivak 1988). The subaltern has no voice within the imperially sanctioned world (Spivak 1988). Subaltern groups include both the socio-economically marginalized of the “indigenous population” as well as those of other ethnic descent: ethnic groups of subaltern status also figure into the equation.

Anderson (1991) addressed another form of social cohesion as the “imagined community” that provides the basis upon which a nation may be built—a perception of underlying connection and community with people one has never met. This sense of community is used by the ruling elite to rule over subaltern groups imagined to lie within the borders of a state or region in a very similar manner to that used by the Neo-Assyrians’ invention of the term “people of the land of Assyria.” Both Anderson’s (1991) description of a nation or “imagined community” and Barth’s (1969) definition of ethnicity discuss an identity demarcated by the community.⁸⁴ The term “Assyrian,” therefore, depicts both an ethnic group (*lú.Aššurāya*) as well as a (proto-)nationality (*mār / nišê māt Aššur*). It was both an notion of a polity and its constituents, as well as a term used to discuss one’s assimilation and loyalty to the empire. Achaemenid Persia, too, created a similar situation in which the term “Persian” was used both as a reference to one’s ethnic group and earlier origins as well as to a polity which encompassed many other ethnic groups within its upper echelons. The empire ruled by Babylon, on the other hand, never became a name for a polity larger than a city—only the inhabitants of Babylon were

⁸³ Cf. Spivak 1988.

⁸⁴ This note has been further developed by Alonso (1994), who commented on the imagined nature of the boundaries that enclose ethnic groups and other “subnational confluents of race, culture, and social group” (395).

designated “Babylonians.” Babylon’s empire appears to have been divided primarily by socio-economic status rather than ethnic or national category.

1.4.1 Identifying the Ethnic Subaltern Through Hegemonic, Imperial History

The first step in beginning to understand the experience of deported people in their own terms is simply to ask the question, rather than be satisfied with the accounts of imperial authorities. This has been done in many other anthropological, historical, and archaeological cases, but not for the deported people of the ancient Middle East. The challenge of accessing the ethnic identity of the subaltern in the far distant past is treacherous because the main texts we have to rely on are these imperial accounts. Although the changes reflected in the imperial texts concern the elite, the changes in how they deal with other peoples and how they define the borders of their own identities provide *entrée* into the world of the subaltern experience. By searching this etic information presented us in royal inscriptions, we may discover a more nuanced, social history of nonelite peoples.⁸⁵ Etic conceptions of the ethnic boundaries of another group permeate our texts, and once read against their imperialist lens to identify the assumed basic facts, these perceived ethnic boundaries reveal much about both the elite and the subaltern.

The scribes of Mesopotamia were not given to self-reflection as known from Greco-Roman philosophers, which makes identifying their attitudes toward others more difficult. One method around this is to deduce the attitudes that are implicit in the presentation of other ethnic groups in the hegemonic power’s sources. The ethnic groups are identified through gentilic / *nisbe* markers in the text and provide a record of the general understanding of socio-cultural groups in existence at a given time. Neo-Assyrian texts (royal and non-royal) illustrate the general assumptions of the Neo-Assyrian elites of their subordinates and neighbors. The specific names given to these groups marked by the *nisbe* indicate they were perceived as distinct, cultural entities from those around them on an implicit level. By analogy, if all Westerners are perceived to behave in one way, then the act is considered “Western”; however, if only those from a particular locale, region, or city behave in a certain way, then the act is named after that

⁸⁵ Cf. Jones (1997: 128): “It has been shown that the construction of ethnicity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of social agents which shape, and are shaped by, objective commonalities of practice, i.e. the *habitus*. Such subliminal dispositions provide the basis for the recognition of commonalities of sentiment and interest, and the perception and communication of cultural affinities and differences.” These same “shared subliminal dispositions” are recognizable by non-members and serve to demarcate the boundaries of the ethnic group in question.

specific location. Contextualizing the terms found in ancient documents then provides us greater insight into how the Assyrian elite perceived a specific group, how that perception relates to broader reality, and why they chose to portray that people in that fashion. Identifying the writer's audience as well as the general political situation of their time helps contextualize the literature, no matter the genre.

Our interpretation of historical documents must also be nuanced by the recognition of the writer's positionality in relation to the ethnic others depicted in their writings. The proximity and familiarity of a person to an ethnic group affect how that person's accuracy of perception of the other ethnic group. For example, royal commanders or administrators who were located in a particular region for a period of time had a closer understanding of the norms of the region. These sources (e.g. letters) preserve greater familiarity with the people in question than the authors of royal inscriptions or myths who dwelt in the imperial core. Likewise, individuals who lived further from the periphery or regions where the ethnic groups in question lived would have less personal exposure to the norms of the given group—and therefore be less reliable in presenting information about a subaltern group. Even with these differing levels of reliability, what was presented is relevant for historical reconstructions of ethnicity because it provides an ancient perception of customs and boundaries. In addition to geographic location and gentilic markers, many scholars have used personal names to assess the ethnicity of the person mentioned. However, the practice of renaming royal officials in praise of the king (or, assigning *Beamtennamen*) masks the ethnic identity of the individual in question—further illustrating the need to note positionality through means other than prosopography alone.

Prosopography, or the study of personal names, has been used for years to identify percentages of ethnic groups within numerous corpora. There are several methodological problems with this approach, however. To begin, it assumes a one-to-one correlation of language to ethnicity: if one bears an Aramaic name, they must be Northwest Semitic or Aramaean. While true that it is unlikely that a member of the elite would take on a subaltern name, the same does not apply to those of subaltern status and adoption of elite naming practices. Second, even if one makes it past that hurdle, no one agrees upon how to identify the language of a specific personal name. For example, Nielsen (2014) presented a catalogue of the names found in sources from the early Neo-Babylonian period. In this catalogue, he identified several names as X, which Zadok (1978, 1979, 2005, 2014, etc) identified as Y, and Dandamayev (1992) identified as Z. As if not

confusing enough, none of these scholars allow for pan-Semitic formations within naming practices. Nielsen and other Assyriologists approach names from an Akkado-centric perspective: if a name can be Akkadian, then it is. Zadok and Semiticists tend to identify more ambiguity in attributing a name to a language tradition, but neither recognize the possibility of ideograms along pan-Semitic lines (i.e. that AD could be used for any iteration of “father” among the Semitic or other known languages, or LUGAL for “king”, or NAM for “lord/Lord/Ba’al/Bēl”). Again, language does not necessarily correlate to ethnicity.

Not every person with a Babylonian or Assyrian name belonged to the ruling class. Even if 85% of the 403 individuals named in the vicinity of Nippur in the early Neo-Babylonian period are said to have East Semitic names,⁸⁶ it does not follow that all of those individuals would have been considered members of the dominant ethnic minority. In fact, any foreign individual of high enough status to appear in [elite] texts would also be most likely to have changed his name to maintain his standing as best he could. Such assimilation is necessary for people of subaltern classes or ethnic groups (that is, anyone not of the ruling group) to climb the imperial social hierarchy.

1.5 General Hierarchies Within the Imperial Heartlands

Once the deportees had been relocated, our sources no longer identify them as such. They are nearly impossible to trace without the presence of *nisbe* markers to tell us their culture or original provenance. Modifying Spivak’s (1988) hierarchy between the hegemonic and the subaltern allows us to deduce where these former deportees might be found socio-politically.

Spivak created her hierarchy in response to Foucault’s and Deleuze’s theories on how the subaltern interacts with empires, based on the (British) imperial structure of the nineteenth century CE. She therefore focused on the (lack of) availability for upward mobility for the subaltern within the hierarchy imposed by the presence of the new hegemon. Within this paradigm, she identified 4 levels of hierarchy between the hegemonic and the subaltern, where groups 1-3 are reserved solely for the elite:⁸⁷

⁸⁶ This percentage was calculated by crunching the data supplied by Nielsen (2014), in which he focuses on the naming practices between 747 and 626 BCE. This leaves out the more recently published data from Al-Yahudu and surrounding areas, as well as the Murašu archive as well as all epistolary documentation of the period in question.

⁸⁷ Spivak (1988: 284).

1. Dominant foreign groups.
2. Dominant indigenous groups on the [state] level.
3. Dominant indigenous groups on the regional and local levels.
4. The terms ‘people’ and ‘subaltern classes’ have been used as synonymous throughout this note. The social groups and elements included in this category represent the demographic difference between the total ... population and all those we have described as the ‘elite’.

This hierarchy provides a comparative base for the hegemonic hierarchy likely experienced by the Mesopotamian deportees in their new socio-political environs. The empire at Babylon provides a quick example of how such a hierarchy can be adapted to suit the experience of deportees post deportation.⁸⁸

1. Ruling elite groups (e.g. one of the long-established families who ruled)
2. Long-established families (e.g. Egibi, Nappahu, Naggaru)
3. Lesser families and foreign elites (e.g. prebend and bow fief holders)
4. All subaltern classes (temple dependents, independent farmers, land-for-work schemes, including most deportees)

Occupations and institutional titles would be available only to those born into established families or those who could purchase such a prebend (levels 2 and 3).⁸⁹ The endogamous trends among well-established families (levels 1 and 2)⁹⁰ effectively curtailed upward mobility beyond level 3. Thus, although one might rise among the economic strata of level four and achieve access to the world available to those born into level three, the likelihood that one could rise further was next to zero—a premise surmised by Waerzeggers (2014) in her discussion of the probabilities of a person of deportee descent gaining access to higher schools of Babylonian cuneiform and literacy. However, Waerzeggers (2014) does not here address those foreign elites who were deported and assigned to specific, more established families—which level three allows.⁹¹ For those foreign elite, this third level of power was the highest they could rise and is

⁸⁸ I do not here include the position of “slaves” or “servants” for two reasons: a person of any status may become a slave, and a slave’s socio-economic standing was a reflection both of his master’s and of his relative importance to his master.

⁸⁹ Cf. Waerzeggers and Pirngruber (2011).

⁹⁰ Cf. Abraham (2006, 2011, 2015), Waerzeggers (2002, 2014, 2015).

⁹¹ The social hierarchy of the Neo-Assyrian empire is similar, although with the important caveat discussed above: the Neo-Assyrian empire created a category by which people of lesser status or of foreign descent could be incorporated into the category of “Assyrian.” Thus, the divide between the upper echelon and lower classes was maintained in practice but not in polemic.

therefore the most likely to be comprised of people who are known through *Beamtennamen* where they appear in texts. Deported foreign elite occupied the intermediate space between the hegemonic elite and the “true” subaltern (or powerless masses of people).

1.6 Overview of Chapters

Understanding ethnicity as a fluid concept best identified by contemporaneous sources, yet best analyzed through modern, critical theories, better focuses the search for subaltern ethnic groups in the ancient past. Comparing imperial colonization practices illustrates the nuances of the society in question’s conception of hierarchy, identity, ethnicity, and empire. All together, the preceding discussions serve to frame the discussion of deportation practiced by Assyria, Karduniaš, and Persia—as well as how deportation was experienced by the mobile Aramaean tribes.

In the following chapters, I will present a social history of deportations as situated by the area’s climate and geography, in basic concepts of what empires are and are not, through anthropological perspectives on ethnicity. Upon this base, I will offer new or nuanced readings of many well-known and several lesser-known inscriptions and the political histories which have been built upon them. This will include the dissection of some very basic terms, including “Babylonia,” “Aramaean,” and the “Babylonian Empire.” From the extant sources, I gain a glimpse of how life was experienced by the deportee communities located in Karduniaš.⁹²

In Chapter Two, I discuss the broad concepts of polities, powers, and peoples as they relate specifically to empires, deportation, and ethnicity. Here I address several forms of empire which appear in the first millennium BCE and discuss the implicit biases that affect Western scholars approaching forms of imperialism, colonialism, colonization, and Orientalism. From this presentation of empires, I define the term “deportation” in relation to various other terms which have been used in related scholarship. I then illustrate how deportations such as those found in the ancient Near East affect the society as a whole as they bring people of various

⁹² Here I note that I hold the Hebrew Bible to be a post-exilic creation, allowing that parts were likely written by referencing earlier materials and / or recording various folk traditions. More specifically, I follow Liverani’s analysis of the Hebrew Bible (2005, *Israel’s History, A History of Israel*), in which he proposes the works as we have them were created for the purpose of encouraging exiled Judeans to return to Judea. This approach also has adherents within Israeli scholarship (cf. Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch 2012 *From Gods to God*, etc.).

identities together. I then discuss ethnicity, what it is, how it can manifest, and how we can identify it in history.

In Chapter Three, I present an analysis of the Assyrian conception and practice of deportation from 1200 – 612 BCE. This history is grounded in a brief presentation of the paleoclimatology of the region over the period in question, which is used to further inform the broader political history of the late Middle – Neo-Assyrian Empires. From the royal inscriptions of Assyria, I have isolated four different forms of deportation as presented by the Assyrians through specific formulae: 1. Rehousing imperial subjects in “suitable abodes;” 2. Taking hostages; 3. Requiring set-period work projects that require relocation; and 4. Deporting elite members of the general populace as *šallatu* and nonelite workers as *hubtu* (here defined as “captives”) to perform various tasks.

Chapter Four presents a view of deportation in Karduniaš during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. Due to the nature of the extant sources, it is currently impossible to present an analysis of deportation parallel to what I discuss about Assyria. Therefore, the chapter details the lived experiences of deportees within Karduniaš as a non-unified, multi-ethnic empire. I first discuss the term and notion of a “Babylonia” and with “Babylonian” as a reference to all subjects of the empire; there was no such term and, I argue, no such conception. Karduniaš as a whole remained non-centralized during Babylon’s return to power. Within this setting, I then discuss the kinds of occupation available to the deportees and how they pertain to Spivak’s (1989) theory of subalterity. A brief discussion of how to identify foreigners within the sources is offered. Due to my definition of deportation, all peoples who were moved on an imperial whim are considered to be deportees (various kinds of deportees are identified in the chapter on Assyria). Because the official sources do not identify deportees after they have been delivered to their new posts—nor do unofficial or personal sources⁹³—I determine that the deportees were not exposed to extreme othering. Several comparisons to the *post facto* assumed life of deportees in Assyria are made.

Finally, Chapter Five presents a case study of the Aramaeans and other mobile peoples in relation to the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. This portion discusses various tribal elements and how deportations affected them and their relations with non-tribal peoples and with the

⁹³ While deportees may be identified by their place of extraction or culture, I have not found any term used of deportees used to identify them after they have been relocated to their new locations or positions.

imperial administration. Specifically, I illustrate that the royal inscriptions typically referred to for information regarding these tribal groups show varying levels of understanding of the groups in question. For example, the term “Aramaeans” changes in meaning and usage from the Middle Assyrian period to the Neo-Assyrian period, in a manner that indicates the authors or audience of these texts no longer meant a specific social formation but began to use the term as a catch-all for all mobile / tribal elements. Many of the examples come from the Nippur region. Located in a frontier zone, as it is, with the presence of numerous representatives of various identities, Nippur was a prime location for the development of ethnic identity to occur. This zone was influenced by people from multiple other zones, including: Elamites, Arabs, Kaldeans, Aramaeans, Assyrians, Persians, and various other localities within Karduniaš. These peoples left their mark upon the region in specific ways.

In forming this social history, I have scoured over 8000 cuneiform texts. From these texts, I have determined what can be said about the deportees of Assyria and Karduniaš generally. I focus on the lived experience of these deportees from the top down (chapter 3: Assyria), from the evidence of their lived experiences (chapter 4: Karduniaš), and a case study of life for the Aramaeans in Karduniaš in light of the Assyrian deportations. These chapters pave the way for a future case study of the lives of the deportee community of Āl-Yahūdu and others in the Nippur area—a frontier zone that fostered the development of specific ethnic groups, namely the transitional process from Judahite Yahwism to Judean ancient Judaism.

Chapter 2. Sources and Methods

2.1 A Social History

Too often in the pursuit of elucidating ancient history, we are driven by the desire to discern typologies from the accumulated record of events: people X thought according to a cyclical concept of time; people Y privileged the concept of monotheism above all else; people Z were radically inferior to people X because of their mobile lifestyle. When these heuristic categories are closely examined, however, these neat, tidy, and seemingly useful summaries fall apart. A closer look at ethnic identity in first millennium Mesopotamia from multiple perspectives shows a diversity of tribal groups that do not conform to the monolithic terms we customarily use in writing history. The writing of a social history requires one to read critically between the lines of the available sources and benefits from a multidisciplinary approach. My method (and that of many scholars) is firmly rooted in the German biblical hermeneutic tradition of the Enlightenment, via feminist criticism and Marxist socio-historical literary criticism.⁹⁴ This approach identifies meaning in what is said by considering *how* something is said. Several other scholars of the ancient Near East have also encouraged greater emphasis to be placed on the analysis of texts through such critical analyses.⁹⁵ Their work has opened the way to better understanding ideologies, intertextuality, religion, and gender, and has prompted revisionist assessments of previously edited texts.

While revisionist in its critique of previous assumptions long held to be fact, my methodology is well established in other fields to which feminist interpretations and Marxist

⁹⁴ Cf. *Historicism: The New Critical Idiom* by Paul Hamilton (2nd ed., 2002), for a detailed historiography of historiography and historicism from biblical hermeneutics of the Enlightenment, through the German and English Romanticisms, unto Marxist and post-modernist approaches to historical-literary criticism. See note 96 for a list of several scholars who use similar approaches to the sources.

⁹⁵ See, for example: Liverani 1973, 2017; Tadmor 1997; Kuhrt 2003; Michalowski 2011, 2019; Beaulieu 2018; Bagg 2010; Jursa 2010, 2018, 2019; Waerzeggers 2015, 2018; Seri 2014, 2019; Weissert 1993; Morandi Bonacossi 2016; Düring 2020; Parker 2001; Bernbeck 2010; Frahm 2017; DaRiva 2008; etc.

social history are well known. Specifically, my research is based in several critical methods of inquiry, incorporating an archaeological approach to historical processes to textual approaches including hermeneutical historicism, biblical-literary criticism, philology, and structural linguistics. Ultimately this approach stands as an answer to the call set forth by Liverani in 1973 in his “Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts,” to which I have added insights and methods which have been developed during the time since. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of critical methods first advanced in feminist literary scholarship in the 1970s which are now utilized to access minority groups and the subaltern across multiple disciplines.⁹⁶

In a social history, it is inevitable that we should discuss various concepts of ethnicity and how they may or may not be relevant to the ancient world. Ethnic identity is a difficult concept to define because the phrase carries so many meanings—even more so when it comes to identifying it within the ancient past. Additionally, ethnicity can be both internally (emic-ly) and externally (etic-ly) identified in a multiplicity of ways. For years language was the primary method of identifying the “ethnicity” of the speaker / writer / person denoted in a text. However, it is now recognized that there is no need for a speaker of a language to be associated solely with an area in which that language is spoken. While language is an important part of ethnic identity, there are two main problems with using it as a diagnostic for ethnic boundaries. First, sometimes speakers of a single language divide themselves into more than one ethnic group. Second, the language of a person’s name does not reliably indicate the native language of that individual, or if her ethnic group considered language to be a marker of its ethnic boundary. Further, the administrative language of a region cannot be used exclusively as an identity marker for a

⁹⁶ Such feminist literary critical methods have been applied to the biblical and ancient Near Eastern material by scholars such as: George Murdock and Catherine Provost (1973), Peggy Day (1989), Katherine Sakenfeld (1989), Margaret Conkey and Joan Gero (1991), Carol Meyers (1997, 2003, 2013, 2017), Penelope Allison (1999), Mark Chavalas (2002), Phyllis Bird (2003), Sarah Milledge Nelson (2004), Steven Holloway (2007), Julia O’Brien (2014), Davina Lopez and Todd Penner (2014), Jeremy Punt (2017), Caroline Blyth (2017), and Susanne Scholz (2017).

Feminist critical scholars “employ various tools, reject claims to objectivity, and investigate how the particularities of context impact cultural representations ... and their interpretations” (Rebecca Hancock 2017: 97). Hancock continues: “Applying a feminist hermeneutic to the comparative historical method offers two distinct advantages. First, by providing a variety of new sources ... feminist comparative historical scholars demonstrate that lives ... were impacted by a variety of temporal, spatial, and social realities. ... The second advantage of this approach ... is that it demonstrates the inadequacy and problematic nature of relying on essentialist categories, suggesting that simple binaries are insufficient not only in describing women’s lives, but also various other social dynamics” (2017: 97). While the feminist comparative historical approach initially sought only to better understand the lives of women in the past who had rarely been included in the writings of history, today such approaches are used to access the lived experiences of various peoples who were excluded from written histories.

dominant ethnic group because it often served as a *lingua franca* and was used by other non-dominant groups. Language is therefore not always a defining feature of ethnicity.

This social history builds upon a restructured view of the known political histories of the polities involved. It privileges a basic understanding of how paleoclimatology and geography affect the intent of the texts. In focusing on data relating to the common shared experiences, I limit the possible interpretations of the available texts. Upon this basis, royal inscriptions are compared with administrative texts to arrive at the best possible interpretation of the events transcribed. This underlying “ideological grammar” as defined by the Italian school⁹⁷ identifies the specific “morphology, syntax, and semantics ... [and] observe[s] and understand[s] the use of literary phenomena such as parallelisms, repetitions, topicalizations, juxtapositions, allusions, wordplays, metaphors, synonyms, gaps, and intertextuality. Every single morpheme and literary phenomenon count in this particular type of textual analysis.”⁹⁸ This same method is used by feminist critical scholars in the “feminist comparative historical approach.”⁹⁹ In the attempt to push our understanding of the subaltern experience of deportation further, I have expanded this approach to include other sources of contextual information, including: chronology, geography, and climate. While histories are usually written from the accumulation and analysis of written documents, most of the world’s population has belonged to the category encapsulated by Eric Wolf’s (1982) “people without history,” and had little-to-no direct impact on (or access to) textual accounts. The textual data, therefore, primarily present a glimpse into the lives and perspectives of an elite, literate group.¹⁰⁰ To read the lives of the majority from these texts, then, requires some critical and contextual analysis.

⁹⁷ Karlsson (2013) uses this term to reference to those scholars influenced by Liverani, et al.’s methodology. This so-called “Italian School” within Assyriology refers to those scholars who have taken up a more socio-historical (Marxist) approach to the study of the ancient Near East.

⁹⁸ *Apud* Karlsson 2013, 18; for an overview of this approach, see Liverani 1973.

⁹⁹ Cf. Hancock 2017: 97.

¹⁰⁰ Analysis of literacy rates in the ancient Near East remains a source of contention. Though early estimates were decidedly low (Larsen 1989 placed it at 1%) today’s estimates assert greater emphasis on levels of functional literacy, rather than limiting literacy levels to scholarly literary rates (cf. N. Vieldhuis 2011; Van de Mierop 2010). At this point, it is too early to assign a general literacy rate to the first millennium BCE. Nevertheless, no matter the assumed level of functional literacy, it is certain that those of non-elite societies were predominantly non-literate, in that they did not require functional literacy in their daily lives.

The new historicist approach, in the words of Chakrabarty (2000), does not permit one simply to “add X and stir” together with previous interpretations.¹⁰¹ When we neglect to seek out the discordant voices in the historical and archaeological records, we silence them more thoroughly than the elites of over 2,000 years ago ever could.¹⁰² As Erin Darby (2014) illustrated in her revisitation of Judean pillar figurines, we must “move beyond the level of description and inference to examine carefully all types of data that may be brought to bear” on their specific socio-historical setting.¹⁰³

2.2 Sources:

2.2.1 Paleoclimatological Data

In preparing a social history, the significance of the regional and local landscape is invaluable. Where textual sources record only select events, significant to the purpose of their elite authors, the effects of the local landscape and climate are felt by all members of society. In the attempt to establish field specific definitions for “landscape,” Förster et al., discovered that the definitions used within the natural sciences describe landscape as a “level of spatial reality” that incorporates human influence as well as expected quantifiable parameters.¹⁰⁴ Morandi Bonacossi (2016: 14) therefore identifies landscape as a “dynamic space that is at once physical, social and mental, shaped not just by ecological, demographic and economic processes, but also by their interaction with social and cultural dynamics, as well as with the human perception of the changing cultural and natural environment.” Harmansah (2012) linked the northward movement of Assyrian kings at the turn of the first millennium to a coterminous shift in climate at the end of the Late Bronze Age that decreased rainfall and made water less accessible in their traditional religious and political centers.

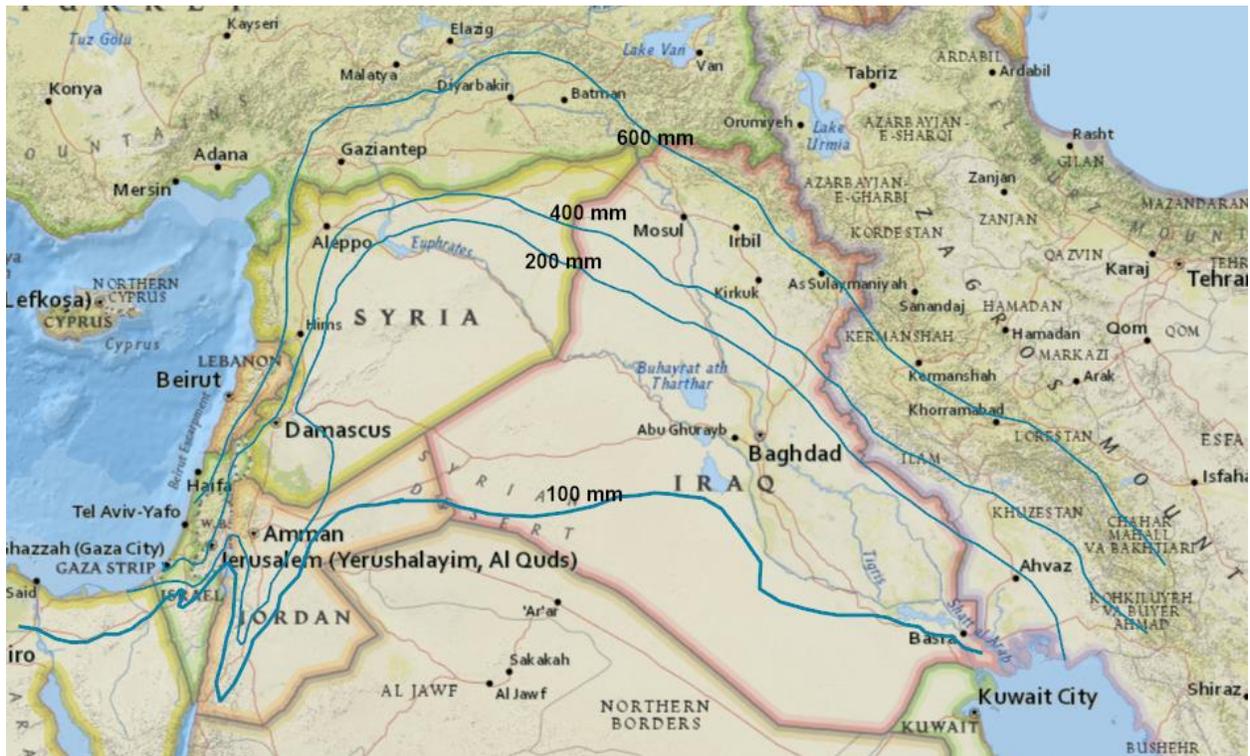
¹⁰¹ *apud* Bernbeck & McGuire 2011: 11.

¹⁰² Cf. Bernbeck (2009: 39; referencing Helmuth Plessner (1982): 90-93), who suggests that the emphasis on coherence in writing history is “fundamentally mistaken as it neglects the internal dialectics and contradictory developments that are at the base of all human activities.”

¹⁰³ Darby 2014: 1. Another limitation is the present state of published texts and archaeological reports regarding ancient Near Eastern historiography. Because there is more information to be translated and interpreted than there are individuals in the field, it is hardly surprising that the analysis and synthesis of materials has lagged in some respects behind the rate in other fields. Recently, however, the emphasis has shifted toward analyzing and synthesizing the material through a more critical lens by employing techniques obtained from other fields, e.g. social network analysis.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

The Mesopotamian plain is primarily noted to be of a degraded Mediterranean type in the west that transitions to a continental climate of semi-to-full aridity.¹⁰⁵ The continental climate exhibits a strong demarcation between winter and summer seasons, controlled by high atmosphere circulation patterns affected by the surrounding mountains. The entire region attests a similar temperature range, differentiated primarily by local altitude: mean temperatures in the summer months hit 34°C, while the winter temperatures average 10°C. These mountain ranges cause the majority of precipitation to fall on the windward side of the mountains—to the north and west of the Mesopotamian plain. Thus mostly drained of their moisture before traversing the plain, the Mesopotamia relies upon its riverine assets for its annual precipitation. Brought on by cyclonic air patterns between Turkey and Jordan, the winter season attests the highest precipitation for the year for the entire Levant and eastern Anatolian peninsula.¹⁰⁶ In the areas furthest from the Mediterranean (i.e. the Taurus and Zagros Mountains), this precipitation is stored as snow until the spring / summer season, when its melt-off feeds the Euphrates and Tigris River Basin.



¹⁰⁵ Reculeau 2016: 14.

¹⁰⁶ Reculeau 2016: 14.

The Upper Mesopotamian terrain exhibits several climatic zones along northwest - southeast lines, which are produced as a result of the degradation in rainfall as one leaves the mountain zone. For example, the mean precipitation totals for the cities of Gaziantep, Urfa, and Dēr-ez-Zōr — representing three distinct climatic zones, transitioning from the mountainous-steppe down to the plateau furthest from the mountains— exhibit 570 mm, 470 mm, and 150 mm per year, respectively.¹⁰⁸ Though precipitation typically is heaviest during the winter months, its levels fluctuate within a year, as well as on a year to year basis.¹⁰⁹ This yearly deviation from expected patterns — which can reach as high as 50% variability in the Syrian Jazīra¹¹⁰ — intensifies the area’s general aridity and unpredictabilities associated with dry-farming in a semi-arid climate, even within regions which technically received enough average precipitation to support dry-farming.¹¹¹ As the rivers progress, moisture is lost to many forces, including evapotranspiration as the arid climate interacts with the hydrology of the rivers. This intensifies water loss along the river’s downward regime and greatly affects Southern Mesopotamia’s expected access to water.

2.2.1.1 Collection

The landscape, climate, and politics of the modern Middle East determine which methods are used to gather data, and monetary resources significantly limit regional exploration of the past. Consequently, many locations are inhospitable either to the preservation of paleoclimatological data or to its collection. To address this difficulty, I compare data from across many regions to gain a holistic view of the climate of the ancient Middle East during the late second through the first half of the first millennium BCE. The collection points are located along the perimeter of the Fertile Crescent in those regions best suited for the preservation of climatological data—most often within the mountain ranges to the west, north, and east of the empires in question. This

¹⁰⁷ Maps throughout this study were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Kuzucuoglu 2007: 460.

¹⁰⁹ Reculeau 2016: 15.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Kerbé 1987: 263-265; *apud* Reculeau 2016: 15.

¹¹¹ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 15.

spread is further limited by funding and political situation so that collection comes from locations in the southern Levant, central and eastern Turkey, upper Syria, Armenia, northern and eastern Iraq, and western Iran. For those areas in which paleoclimatological data is unavailable, precipitation modeling can be used to approximate the expected local effects of the climatological patterns reflected in other regions.

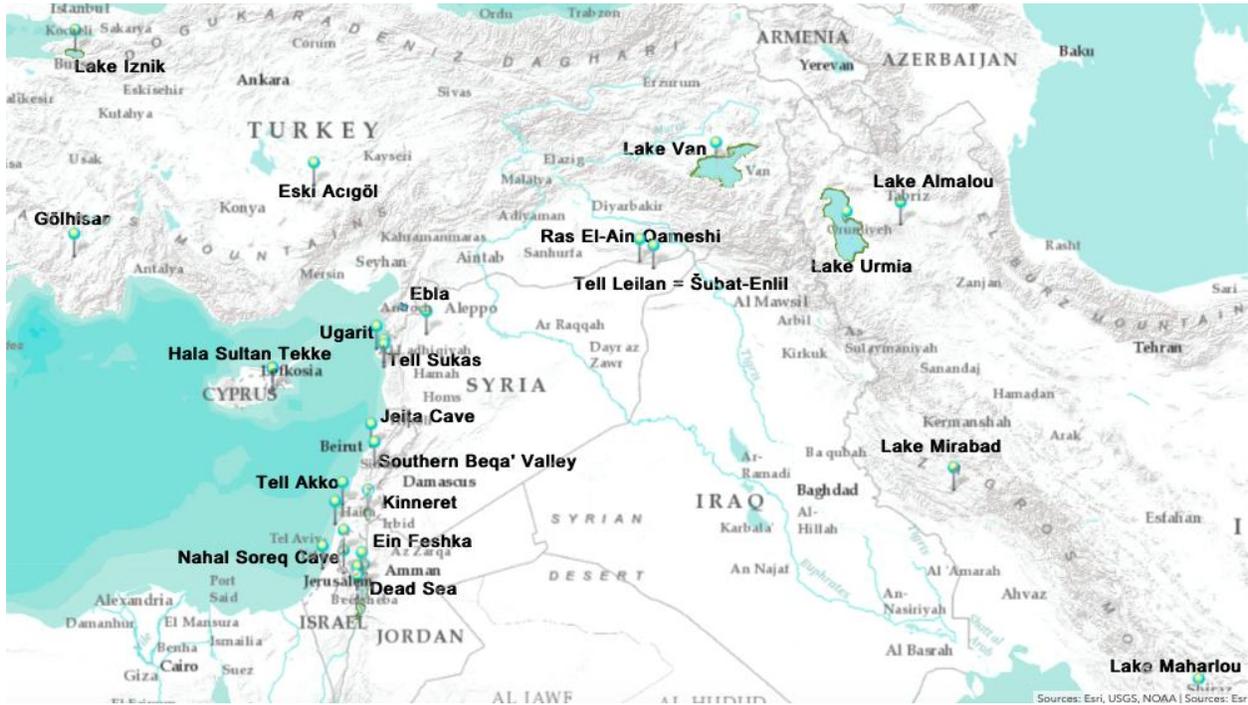


Figure 2 Data collection sites

Geo-archaeology, or the investigation of geography and climate of ancient societies, relies upon sample-testing numerous data. These include speleothem (e.g. stalagmite, stalactite), palynological (pollen), varve (sedimentary layers of a lake), and isotope analysis (e.g. Carbon-14, Carbon-13, and Oxygen-18 dating), in addition to more traditional archaeological approaches of single-site excavations (e.g. tells), GIS mapping, multi-site excavations, regional surveys, etc.

Past precipitation levels are extrapolated from speleothem, varve, sedimentary, and palynological data. The layers evidenced in these sources are relatively dated according to their location in the core sampled, and absolutely dated according to isotopic analysis where available. Multiple cores are retrieved from specific points within a limited locale, and then compared to gain as complete a sample as possible. The mineral deposits within speleothem, varves, and sediments present a timeline varying according to precipitation. Palynology reflects the levels

and types of pollen present over a period, reflecting the levels of precipitation through the types of plant pollen evidenced— affected by both anthropogenic and climatic stresses.

2.2.1.2 Interpretation

Climatological data from the past century and from paleo-climate records indicate the climate experienced during the first millennium BCE is very similar to today's climate. These similarities provide a useful 'control' for computer-based modeling from the available data. Just as local and global weather patterns are predicted by meteorologists for weather forecasting, so too can the paleo-climatic data discussed above be used to model likely climate situations for the past. This allows multiple data sources to be weighed and combined into probable scenarios, even when the data sources appear contradictory at first glance.

While these records cannot depict single-year events, they provide information for longer multi-year events that impact the relative aridity of the region that can be roughly aligned with historical events. For example, pollen records across Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia, and the countries along the eastern Mediterranean suggest a decrease in pollen occurred throughout the entirety of the Late Bronze Age (from 1500 – 1000/900 BCE), but it is unclear whether this dry phase was climatically or anthropogenically driven.¹¹² Proxy-indicators such as samples of organic matter and pollen from archaeological excavations are less frequently relied upon to develop widespread climate trends, as they indicate anthropogenic influence more frequently than climatic stresses.

Paleoclimatological data and computer-based modeling —such as the Macrophysical Climate Model of Bryson and Bryson (1997/1999) —indicate a period of aridification occurred during the transition between the second and first millennium BCE. Even in those regions that experienced greater annual precipitation patterns than today, the general status of the ancient Near East was more arid during the Late Bronze–Iron Age transition than it is today. This general state of aridity greatly affected human activity— especially with regard to agriculture and pastoralism. The level of aridity incidentally is “the most important element for agriculture, rainfall alone being of little heuristic value in the absence of other climatic parameters.”¹¹³ As a location's level of aridity – precipitation varies along a northwest-southeast gradient (as

¹¹² Reculeau 2012: 41.

¹¹³ Reculeau 2012: 65.

topography influences weather patterns), so too do the expected means of sustenance. Assyrian texts present a “narrative of successful agricultural production using specific techniques... to generate desired produce for the empire.”¹¹⁴ Even through imperial rhetoric, glimpses of natural impediments to the expansion of empire shine. As Rosenzweig (2016) notes, “provincialization was world-changing,” a transformation reflected in the physical and mental landscape of the period.

The water supply in Upper Mesopotamia is completely dependent upon its rivers, not only because precipitation is erratic and impeded by the mountains to the north and west, but also because the groundwater table is salty except in specific locations.¹¹⁵ The freshwater tables deep below the surface were unknown until recently, as no naturally occurring or artesian wells exist along the Euphrates as they do in the region of ‘Ayn al-Zarqa, Lebanon.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the only locations perennially suited for agriculture are those either in the piedmonts of the Taurus and Zagros or along rivers, where a zone of marginal cultivation exists. The Tigris, in contrast to the Euphrates, spends most of its upper course within the 400 + mm isohyet—allowing greater certainty regarding the success of dry farming practices than experienced in more marginal or dry zones.

Societies of arid zones (e.g. the Aramaean tribes of the first millennium) are often intuited by scholars as being simpler, with less complex histories, and at some level even static (e.g. Saidel 2008; for Kalahari hunter-gatherers see Wilmsen 1989). Under this assumption of a static society, climate and environment are viewed as the primary determinants of social change.¹¹⁷ However, intensive archaeological research in the Israeli Negev — an area of desert / semi-desert at the very south end of the Southern Levant — indicate our perception of what level of habitation is possible within arid regions is skewed. Research in the Negev has illustrated the inadequacy for arid zones of the traditionally used Köppen and Thornthwaite climatic classifications to predict possible agricultural practices.¹¹⁸ Arid and hyper-arid zones

¹¹⁴ Rosenzweig 2016: 57.

¹¹⁵ Geyer and Monchambert, 2015: 16. “Canals and water supply in the lower Euphrates valley” B. Geyer • J.-Y. Monchambert *Water Hist* (2015) 7:11–37. DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0108-4

¹¹⁶ Besançon et al. 2000, *apud* Geyer and Monchambert 2015: 16.

¹¹⁷ Rosen 2017: 6.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Bruins 2012.

accommodated runoff-farming practices as early as the Iron Age (Bruins 2012). It is thus advisable to re-address temperate-centric interpretations of arid zones and agricultural practices to allow for greater anthropogenic resilience.¹¹⁹ Most farmers in temperate zones well-suited to dry-farming would consider it economically unviable to plant a crop if its expected yield was less than four out of every ten years. However, Avner (1998) records the Haiwat Bedouin of Biqat Uvda (southern Negev) were satisfied with such results.¹²⁰ Their harvests yielded 800 kg per hectare (~12 bushels per acre). Such yields are comparable to those of the American state of Kansas during the “American Dust Bowl” (1920 – 1942)—even though the lowest precipitation recorded in Kansas at that time was 21.51 inches (546.36 mm) which is far more rainfall than experienced in arid or hyper-arid zones such as the Negev.¹²¹ The yields of arid zones have thus been proven considerably more sufficient than anticipated for regions that experience less than 200 mm of rainfall a year.¹²² Such realizations are useful for tempering our interpretations of mobile, raiding peoples such as the Aramaeans and their (non-rhetoric driven) effects upon the Assyrian empire.¹²³

Within arid zones riverine oases provided the ideal location for settlement and agriculture— especially along the Euphrates River. These riverine oases were devoted to irrigation agriculture, specifically for cereals and legumes.¹²⁴ As earlier discussed, the Euphrates’

¹¹⁹ While the topographical specifications discovered for the Negev itself do not lend themselves to our investigation of greater Mesopotamia, they do prompt us to reconsider our preconceptions of what is “habitable,” “profitable,” or “advantageous.”

¹²⁰ Uzi Avner (1998) “Settlement, Climate, and Paleoclimate.” Pages 147-202 in A.S. Issar and N. Brown, eds. *Water, Environment and Society in Times of Climatic Change: Contributions from an International Workshop within the framework of International Hydrological Program (IHP), UNESCO, held at Ben-Gurion University, Sede Boker, Israel from 7-12 July 1996.* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Science & Business Media.

¹²¹ This is comparable to some averaged yields from 1920 - 1942 in the American state of Kansas — otherwise known as the “breadbasket of America”— at which time barley yields varied from 12 to 30 bushels of barley per acre (“Barley Production in Kansas.” Agricultural Experiment Station: Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science: Bulletin 318, October 1943).

¹²² Incidentally, this yield was sufficient for a tribe of 4000 people for a period of three years (cf. Avner 2007, *apud* Bruins 2012, 40). Additionally, even when crop yields are insufficient for human consumption, the plants are still valuable as feed for small livestock: “agricultural system viability, therefore, is a very relative issue, interconnected with the economy of the related society” (Bruins 2012: 40).

¹²³ Rosen (2017: 6) notes: “The essential social and residential flexibility of nomadic adaptations, both those of hunter-gatherers as well as mobile pastoralists, requires a different view of the notion of stability (cf. Meriaot 2011), one based on territorial perspectives and not on single site-based continuities. Longer term social continuities are thus also dependent on territory size, and must incorporate such phenomena as gradual migration as well as seasonal transhumance (e.g., Ingold 1980).”

¹²⁴ Reculeau 2012: 17.

nature limits agriculture and settlement to within naturally-formed terraces alongside the river, below the Pleistocene terraces and high plateau.¹²⁵ Even when the climate was considerably less arid than during the Late Bronze – Iron Age transition, permanent settlements were typically restricted to the area along the river for purely practical reasons: it is impossible to use gravity-fed-irrigation from a lower to a higher altitude.¹²⁶ Though some have expressed reservations as to ability of small farms, such as at the river oasis of Terqa, to support an entire settlement (e.g. Postgate 2016: 37), when the numbers supplied by ancient texts are compared against the yields from the Negev, we find quite the reverse.¹²⁷ Though the yield and sustenance rate may be much lower than those of the post-industrial age, it is still more than sufficient for a population the size indicated by excavation and texts.

2.2.2 Texts

The textual evidence pertaining to empires, ethnicity and deportation from the late second millennium until the Achaemenid Persian period (c.1200 – 539 BCE) is vast and includes a wide variety of genres. These genres may be briefly summarized in four categories: royal inscriptions, chronicles, letters, and (economic / administrative) archives.

2.2.2.1 *Royal Inscriptions*

The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia include all texts that were written at the behest of the king. Of the genres subsumed by this category, of particular interest to this study are the Assyrian annals, as well as the building, monumental, and dedicatory inscriptions of Assyria and

¹²⁵ Cf. Geyer and Monchambert 2015: 14-17.

¹²⁶ Evidence of irrigation techniques has been found at Terqa — at which no evidence for settlement within Iron Age II was found apart for a few scattered tombs and a stele found by chance during the 1940s (Simpson 1984; Geyer and Monchambert 2003: 115, 261, 264-266; *apud* Masetti-Rouault 2016: 202) and also at Mari (Geyer and Monchambert 2015).

¹²⁷ Postgate equates a 300 *iku* farm with approximately 100 hectares (247 acres). As a general equivalency in agronomics is that 12 bushels is capable of feeding one human for a year, this field should have been well able to provide for approximately 250 individuals. Even if we only suggest a yield equivalent to that attested in the hyper-arid Negev of 800 kg / ha (11.9 bushels / acre), we still would expect an annual yield of 80,000 kg (1189.57 bushels). The texts indicate that Terqa was inhabited by 30 people and their families who were expected to produce enough to feed themselves in addition to seed for the next year, traveler rations, and then send the remnant to the state (Postgate 2016: 37). According to these numbers, limiting the yield to that expected in the Negev (much lower than expected based on its isohyet), and accounting for travelers, need for next year's seed, and the sustenance of the inhabitants, we would still expect an excess for an additional 71-131 people. These figures allow for 70-100 inhabitants and 20-50 travelers, with 60 lbs / acre expected for seed, and provisioning 12 bushels / person annually. According to these numbers, in profitable seasons settlements such as these could well expect to contribute to “‘Joseph-in-Egypt’ reserves for the population as a whole” (contra Postgate 2016: 37).

Karduniaš. As royal inscriptions, these texts are replete with royal ideology and propaganda, and routinely use literary devices to emphasize the omnipotence or grandeur of the king through similes, hyperbolae, typological numbers, parallelism, and other repetitions more common to hymno-epic poetry than chronographic prose documents.¹²⁸

2.2.2.1.1 Assyria

The royal annals as a genre are unique to Assyria during the first millennium BCE (Tadmor 1997). They first appear as an innovation during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114 – 1076 BCE), wherein they combine the ideological-literary conventions of hero epic literature with the chronological structure of the chronicle.¹²⁹ The military might of Assyrian kings before this was recorded in narrative expansions within dedicatory, monumental, or building inscriptions. I have limited the royal inscriptions of interest to this study by the presence of warfare or military narratives. Thus, the Assyrian royal inscriptions utilized here are marked by gaps of information during those periods in which we either have no extant inscriptions or those in existence are of no use regarding the use of deportation. Even with these gaps of time, however, of the currently available 1402 texts, 1261 are of use to us here.

The use of literary devices in these accounts serve to accentuate the king's might and service to the god (and by extension, the empire) Aššur. The historical events addressed within these texts, therefore, are described through "well-defined formulae and conventions," in the words of Tadmor 1997. Consequently, great attention has been paid to "understand and define the contemporary conception of that event and the linguistic conventions used to describe it" (326). The resultant spin on historical events has been variously termed "propaganda" (Tadmor 1997), or "political ideology" (J.J. Finkelstein 1979), or still eschew all such terms by defining these texts as ceremonial writings not meant for communication (Oppenheim 1979). While Tadmor (1997) convincingly argues for the continued use of the term "propaganda," no matter what you term it, all agree that discerning historical event from the political rhetoric is a complex matter.¹³⁰ As a result, great effort has been spent to access the reflected lived reality of the period

¹²⁸ Cf., for instance, Tadmor 1997.

¹²⁹ Tadmor 1997: 327.

¹³⁰ As discussed primarily by Liverani 1973, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1991.

in reading these texts. Consequently, the recorded numbers of deportees (more likely typological than actual) are ignored in favor of how they are discussed.

The first grouping of inscriptions begins with the reign of Arik-dīn-ili (ca. 1307 – 1296) and includes the following three kings: Adad-nērāri I (ca. 1295 – 1234), Šalmaneser I (ca. 1263 – 1234), and Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1233 – 1197). The total count of these inscriptions (as published in RIMA), is 161 texts.

After a hiatus of relevant texts, the next group includes Tiglath-Pileser I (1114 – 1076) and Aššur-bēl-kala (1073 – 1056).¹³¹ This group marks the first attestations of the innovative Assyrian annals (Tadmor 1997), and as such, the texts within tend to provide more details (and more rhetoric) than the previous. The total count for these two monarchs is 73 texts.

The third grouping of texts does not begin for more than 100 years; beginning with the reign of Aššur-dān II (934 – 912) and continuing until the reign of Adad-nārāri III (810 – 783). The first three kings of this grouping lead up to the ideologically and militarily momentous reigns of Aššur-našir-apal II (883 – 859) and Šalmaneser III (858 – 824). The last two kings present the continuation of these kings' policies. In sum, the total extant royal inscriptions of this grouping are 372 texts.

After a very brief hiatus of relevant texts for forty years, the final grouping begins with Tiglath-Pileser III (744 – 727) and runs through the reign of the second-to-last Assyrian king, Sîn-šarra-iškun (627/626 – 612). A few gaps in the relevant inscriptions during this period appear during the reigns of three short-ruled kings—Šalmaneser V (726 – 722), Aššur-etel-ilāni (631 – 627/626), and Sîn-šumu-līšir (627/626). At present this grouping contains 655 texts.¹³²

2.2.2.1.2 Karduniaš

The royal inscriptions of the kings based at Babylon show a marked difference in their selection of narratives included in their monumental, building, and votive inscriptions. Where Assyria used this genre to emphasize their military might, the kings at Babylon by and large reserved the genre for religious acts of rebuilding and provisioning temples. For example, of the 31 kings of Karduniaš who attest royal inscriptions, only thirteen of these are relevant to the discussion of

¹³¹ Of the intervening king, Ašarēd-apil-Ekur (1075 – 1074), no extant texts are known.

¹³² This total does not include the inscriptions of Sargon II which are presently being prepared for publication by Grant Frame as part of the RINAP project.

warfare or deportation. Consequently, these texts are not of primary importance for a study of deportation and we must turn elsewhere for similar data to that found in the Assyrian royal inscriptions: the Babylonian chronicles.

2.2.2.2 *Chronicles*

By definition, Mesopotamian chronographic texts record events in chronological order. The two types from this category used in this study are the Assyrian / Babylonian Chronicles and the Synchronistic Chronicle.¹³³ These Chronicles are essentially lists of important events ordered on a yearly basis according to eponym and / or the year of the acknowledged ruling monarch (Grayson 1975, Glassner 2004). Unlike other texts of this category which provide only the years attributed to a king or high official (e.g. king lists, eponym lists), these chronicles include brief notations on military campaigns, revolts, and religious matters. Several of these brief narratives include references to deportees, captives, and relocated workers under imperial orders to relocate—and occasionally the locations to which they were sent.

2.2.2.2.1 Assyria

The kings of Assyria primarily utilized the genre of royal inscriptions (see above) to record their military might and made secondary references to such narratives in their chronicles. Of the eight extant Assyrian Chronicles, four contain references to deportation: the Eponym Chronicle (for the first millennium), the Synchronistic Chronicle, the Chronicle of Arik-dīn-ili III, and the Chronicle of Tiglath-Pileser I.¹³⁴ In these four chronicles, Assyria primarily deports people from Karduniaš.¹³⁵ The only attestations of deportations from Assyria are two instances in the midst of

¹³³ See Glassner 2004.

¹³⁴ Glassner 2004: 164 – 177, 176 – 183, 184 – 187, 188 – 191, respectively.

Note: while the Synchronistic Chronicle is technically written in Babylonian, with Assyrianisms and provenance, the decidedly central role of Assyria in the chronicle merits its inclusion in the chronicles of Assyria. Additionally, certain passages indicate it was compiled from numerous sources (e.g. warning epilogues of Assyrian boundary stele addressing “treachery” of Sumer and Akkad in iv A 23-29).

¹³⁵ In chronological order, all from the Synchronistic Chronicle: Aššur-dān I (1168 – 1133; Glassner 2004: 178 – 179, iii B 9’-12’), Tiglath-Pileser I (1114 – 1076; ii A 14” – 24”), Adad-nērāri II (911 – 891; iii A 1 -21), Šamši-Adad V (823 – 811; iii C 6’ – iv A 14), and finally Adad-nērāri III (810 – 783; iv A 15 – 30, who incidentally returned the deportees from the previous ruler to their homes in Karduniaš); and from the Eponym Chronicle, once during the reign of Aššur-nārāri V (754 – 745; B6 rev 4).

The two exceptions to this general rule took place during the reign of Arik-dīn-ili (1307 – 1296) and represent the earliest extant exemplars of deportation in the Assyrian chronicles. The first records a time during a drought / famine when Assyria dispersed (*nasāhu*) the troops of several towns in the vicinity of the towns Habaruha and Kutila (Glassner 2004: 186 – 187: 18 – 26). The second occurred during an extended famine wherein Assyria

a famine or drought during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114 – 1076) during which unspecified “Aramaean houses” deport Assyrians.¹³⁶

2.2.2.2.2 Karduniaš

Since 1963, the Babylonian Chronicles have been the basis for scholarly reconstruction of political history during the Neo-Babylonian period.¹³⁷ Although tersely constructed of restricted, formulaic notations on key events,¹³⁸ these chronicles remain the best primary representation of military events for this and the following early Achaemenid period. Although these texts have been noted as having “restricted vocabulary and uniform syntax,”¹³⁹ they impart far more information than the royal inscriptions about the political and military events of the period. By reading these in a similar manner to that advocated by Tadmor (1997) and Liverani (1973) of the Assyrian royal inscriptions—that is, by critically reading between the lines—these texts reveal additional insight into how deportation was administered by the empire at Babylon. Unlike the Assyrian royal inscriptions or royal chronicle, however, the Neo-Babylonian chronicles included both victory and defeat.¹⁴⁰

Of the twelve chronicles relevant to the study of deportation from 1200 – 539 BCE, all come from the Neo- or Late Babylonian periods.¹⁴¹ The transition of empire from the Babylonian

ransacked (*habātu*) the land of Halahhu (kur.*Halahhu*) and brought deportees to the city of Assur (Glassner 2004: 186 – 187: 27 – 32).

The only other possible attestation of deportation is found in the Assyrian Eponym Chronicle (First Millennium) during Aššur-nārāri V’s reign, where the verb *i-ta-bak*(?) may have been inserted after an attested person named Haldiya. Nothing more about this episode is known, and if this verb is correct, it would prove the only time an Assyrian royal inscription or chronicle chose to use the verb *abāku* regarding an instance of deportation—most uses of the verb are decidedly Babylonian.

¹³⁶ Glassner 2004: 188 – 191, 2’ – 13’.

¹³⁷ Elizabeth von Voigtlander’s unpublished University of Michigan dissertation (1963) was the first to order Neo-Babylonian history after the Babylonian Chronicles rather than the later Greek versions of Babylonian history, and remains the most detailed account of political history during this period.

¹³⁸ Glassner 2004: 38.

¹³⁹ Glassner 2004: 39. See Glassner 2004: 83 – 84 for a detailed overview of the terseness of the Neo-Babylonian chronicles.

¹⁴⁰ Glassner 2004: 48. This does not mean that they record history objectively (as indeed nothing can), but rather that they were not written with a conscious intent to impart the writer’s subjectivity, as indeed Glassner notes (49).

¹⁴¹ Two texts not included in this count also relate to the use of the verb *šalālu*, but they are either too far removed from the events depicted (Glassner no. 26 “Chronicle of Nabonidus,” written during the Seleucid period and attesting a high degree of bias against the Babylonian king; and Glassner no. 28 “Chronicle of the 14th year of Artaxerxes,” which was written during the Seleucid period about events in 345-344 BCE).

to the Achaemenid in 539 BCE did not effect an historical break, permitting the use of both Neo-Babylonian texts (those from 747 – 539) and late Babylonian texts (those from 539 – 331) to be used. In this study, I limit all writings to the period before the reign of Darius III (335 – 331), focusing as much as possible on those from the Neo-Babylonian period (or, before 530 BCE). These texts record their recent past, and therefore allow less time for speculation on the reasons historical events occurred.¹⁴²

The Babylonian chronicles provide us with additional information on deportation for seven of the thirteen kings who attest royal inscriptions plus an additional eleven kings for whom there are either no royal inscriptions extant or no record of deportation included in their inscriptions. Even with the Neo-Babylonian chronicles' brevity, the authors choose to employ several terms whose precise semantic domains remain unclear to scholars today. Therefore, the Babylonian chronicles are primarily useful for this study in distinguishing the semantic domains assigned by Babylonian scholars to terms related to deportation (e.g. *šalālu*, *habātu*, *ekēmu*, *abāku*, *galû*), as they provide us with the closest parallel to the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

2.2.2.3 Letters

Imperial communications have been preserved primarily for the Neo-Assyrian empire. The surviving letters deal primarily with issues arising outside the imperial heartland. Letters provide unique access into data that (although of imperial concern) neither reflects the royal prerogative on historical events nor records the standardized rhetoric found in royally sanctioned texts. As such, many details relating to social situation, allegiances, and the general lived experience are reflected prominently within these texts. For tribal areas to the south of Karduniaš (e.g. the Aramaean and Kaldean lands), the Assyrian officials and spies record some of the most reliable details regarding their makeup and operations.

Of all the 5056 texts published by the State Archives of Assyria project, over half (2603) of these are letters.¹⁴³ The data from these letters regarding nonliterate groups is often the only

¹⁴² The Greek histories of Babylon (including that of Berossos) have not been consulted in an effort to avoid later etiological depictions of historical events. The same is true of a handful of cuneiform sources that are too moralizing in their retelling of (ancient) history.

¹⁴³ The numbers reflect the automatic source count available on SAAo. Due to the organization of the publications, some of these texts are twice published and therefore this number reflects a number of duplicate texts. The following percentage also reflects the issue of duplicate publications within the State Archives of Assyria project. There are still a number of letters which have yet to be included in the SAA project, including many which still remain unpublished.

information available for these peoples surrounding the Assyrian heartland. These letters pertain to matters all over the empire, and thus it is surprising that nearly 31% (806) of the extant letters relate to Karduniaš, Akkad, Kaldû, Aram, and Babylon. As regards deportation, especially, the imperial letters to and from Assyrian spies in Karduniaš and the south provide much of the detail on the lives of the deportees after they arrived at their destinations.

Although there are letters attested during the Neo-Babylonian period, they are far fewer than those extant for the Neo-Assyrian empire. Other than the aforementioned Assyrian letters pertaining to Karduniaš, one of the most important publications of letters from Karduniaš is the Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive (OIP 114)—which includes 113 letters found at Nippur dealing with tribal and Nippurean matters from 747 – 626 BCE.¹⁴⁴ These texts primarily serve to illustrate the cultural diversity within Karduniaš during the first millennium, into which the deportees were brought. Other groups of letters come primarily from temple archives and deal with issues arising from maintaining temple fields with workers and their sundries, seed, draft animals, equipment, or the silver with which to purchase these necessities.¹⁴⁵ As such, these letters provide little information on deportees, except through inference as deportees often made up a large percentage of temple dependents.¹⁴⁶

2.2.2.4 Archives

Archives for the first millennium BCE refer primarily to dossiers and libraries of texts that were found together or that appear to center around a single individual. Thus, there are royal archives, temple archives, and private archives. The great majority of these documents are economic and administrative documents, including tribute lists, ration lists, sales, marriages, and other social transactions. Within these texts, the lives of the deportees are occasionally reflected, and thus the primary use of these texts for this study lies in rebuilding the social setting of the general lived experience of foreigners within the empire—specifically that of the Neo-Babylonian empire.

¹⁴⁴ While the title remains the same, the general consensus now is that the archive does not pertain to Nippur's governor (*šandabakku*) specifically (cf. Beaulieu 2018: 189).

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Frahm & Jursa 2011, Neo-Babylonian Letters and Contracts from the Eanna Archive, YOS 21; specifically 11-19.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Jursa 2010.

2.2.2.4.1 Assyria

Assyrian archives are not nearly as plenteous as those of the Neo-Babylonian period. Those that remain typically relate specifically to the state archives. Additionally, the style of these is less formal than that of those from Babylon. In dealing with deportees and deportation, few of these texts have proved useful. For example, while there are a handful of texts from the early Neo-Assyrian period¹⁴⁷ which have been termed “booty lists” in the literature (cf. Tadmor 1997, Grayson 1980), closer inspection of these texts indicates that they would be better termed “tribute lists.” The contents of these texts record the *nāmurtu* audience offerings of livestock and produce to the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I and their subsequent distribution to the king, courtiers, officials, and even to captive lions.¹⁴⁸ Only one phrase from these texts (VAT 15400) as transcribed by Weidner may pertain to deportees, but Freydank (1975) has clarified this reading from Weidner’s *ša-lal-t[u* to NÍG.LAL *b[u* (or, from “deportees” to “bandages”). No other reference to deported persons exists in these lists.

Other available economic and administrative texts from the Neo-Assyrian state archives attest standardized formula in reporting specific types of deportees. Some record elite deportees from Karduniaš identified by name, family, and provenance according to the Assyrian in charge of them.¹⁴⁹ People whose status is not recorded from the west (e.g. Quê, Tillê) are summarized by sex, age, and size, with the summary of “living workers” applied to the total count.¹⁵⁰ This formula is further shortened to “living (persons)” (ZI.MEŠ) for farmers and agropastoral workers are reported with their families and location.¹⁵¹ From notations in censuses of these deportees some time after arriving in their new locations of Guzana and Našibīna (e.g. SAA 11 159=ADD

¹⁴⁷ See Weidner 1935-1936 (AfO 10): 9-52; Ebeling 1927/1968 (WDOG 50): 154, no. 314 (VAT 8751).

¹⁴⁸ The *nāmurtu* offering is literally translated by the CAD as “audience gift” (CAD A1: 254a), or more dynamically through Weidner’s “Ehregaben” or “gifts of honor” (1935-1936: 30). A Middle Assyrian ritual text indicates that such an offering was presented to the king during the coronation ritual: *šulmānāte ana šarri uqtanarrubu ... ištu nāmurāte ana šarri uqarribuni* “(primary and secondary level officials) present greeting gifts to the king (and) after they have presented audience gifts to the king (they lay down their insignia)” (MVAG 41/3 14 iii 7).

¹⁴⁹ e.g. SAA 11 154=ADD 0891, SAA 11 155=ADD 0771.

¹⁵⁰ ERIM ZI.MEŠ, *šabāni nupšāti*; e.g. SAA 11 167=ADD 1099; SAA 11 168=CT 53 787; SAA 11 170=ADD 0895; SAA 11 171=ADD 0905; SAA 11 172=ADD 0826; SAA 11 174=ADD 0882.

¹⁵¹ E.g. SAA 11 173=ADD 0783; SAA 11 176=ADD 0910.

Note: Of these individuals, most names are indistinguishable from those considered proper “Akkadian” or at most “West Semitic,” destroying any hopes of identifying these deportees by linguistic differences in later texts.

1045+), we ascertain that not all deportees remained where they had been relocated.¹⁵² The deported elites (at least of cities from Karduniaš) appear to have been assigned to specific individuals—regardless of whether their own profession matched that of their “host.”¹⁵³ These formulaic notations provide us with a basic understanding of deportation as regards socio-economic class and possible provenance.¹⁵⁴

2.2.2.4.2 Karduniaš

Archives of the Neo-Babylonian period primarily stem from temples and elite (merchant) families, rather than from the state as in Assyria. As of 2018, Neo-Babylonian archival texts and fragments numbered over 60,000, of which only about 17,000 have been published.¹⁵⁵ The majority of these texts date to the period between 626 – 484 BCE and come from multiple cities in Karduniaš. Only approximately 346 texts¹⁵⁶ are known from the Babylonian state archive—most remain unpublished—the few published of which (e.g. the Weidner ration lists) pertain to the distribution of food and goods at the court of Nebuchadnezzar II (595 – 577). In these three lists, we catch a brief glimpse of royal hospitality for foreign delegates, emissaries, and officials. The majority of Neo-Babylonian archival documents comes from temple institutional archives, primarily from the Ebabbar temple at Sippar (approx. 35,000 texts and fragments) and the Eanna temple at Uruk (approx. 8000 texts and unknown number of fragments).¹⁵⁷ Noninstitutional archives are primarily the domain of elite families and their business transactions.

¹⁵² The census of deportees records the numbers of men seen, those missing, and the running total of men expected in an area at a given time. The reports on this tablet appear to have been assembled from notations taken on various days from the same locations. The tablet is unfortunately broken so we are left wondering the timespan allotted between head counts.

¹⁵³ E.g. SAA 11 155=ADD 0771, wherein four elite men from Babylon (identified by family and occupation) are assigned to four different Assyrian men whose given occupation is that of “baker” (LÚ.NINDA, lú.āpīu). None of the four Babylonians are themselves bakers.

¹⁵⁴ The scope of the present study does not permit me to include analysis of the Assyrian administrative documents for the presence of foreigners, generally. This would be the obvious next step in discussing deportation from the lived experiences of Assyrians. It is, however, not anticipated to be as fruitful as perusal of the Neo-Babylonian archives. The driving rhetoric to “become an Assyrian” for deportees and members of the empire at large will likely be illustrated by the use of fewer identifying features of these once foreigners.

¹⁵⁵ These numbers (from Beaulieu 2018: 221) reflect the count as updated from the standard numbers often cited from Jursa 2005.

¹⁵⁶ See Alstola 2019: 61. Of the 346 texts identified in the original excavation journals, only 80 are in museums, another 65 have photos, but only 13 are published in part or in full (See also Pedersén 2005, Jursa 2007).

¹⁵⁷ Beaulieu 2018: 221.

Of the abundance of available economic and administrative documents from these archives, I have found none so far that identify deportees specifically with the terms used in royal inscriptions or chronicles of either the Assyrian or Babylonian courts. Consequently, these texts have been utilized primarily to illustrate the fates of all foreigners dependent upon the state's or temples' whims. Specifically, the temple ration lists have been consulted in an attempt to discern whether the deportees received lesser rations than locals or whether another such form of xenophobia was at play. From Jursa's and others' summaries of the economics during this period (as based on these texts), it appears that the deportees were treated according to their socio-economic status and respective value to the empire, rather than their place of origin.

Based on the synthesis of the above sources, I next present deportation: 1. as discussed in the royal Assyrian texts, which provide standardized formula for five different forms of deportation; 2. as experienced by the deportees in Karduniaš, for which there is the most abundant data; and 3. as experienced by the Aramaeans and other mobile peoples within Karduniaš, who experienced the greatest number of recorded deportations during the Neo-Assyrian period.

Chapter 3. Assyria: Elite Use of Deportation

The Assyrian empire had two phases: Middle (1353–1054 BCE) and Neo (934–609), with a century long period between known as the “Dark Age.” Located in modern Iraqi Kurdistan in the Middle East, the Assyrian heartland expanded from its eponymous capital city of Aššur to encompass several other cities along the banks of the Tigris river during this period—namely, Nineveh, Kalhu, Arbela, and other royal cities of lesser renown, such as Tušhan. At its height, the Assyrian empire stretched in a crescent shape from the western slopes of the Zagros mountains in modern Iran to the western Mediterranean coast, and from the Taurus mountains in southern Turkey to Egypt and to the Persian Gulf. The location of Aššur along the southern border of the 200 mm isohyet meant that rain-fed agriculture was extremely unpredictable. During the climactic shifts of the late Bronze Age – early Iron Age, this prompted many Assyrians to move northward toward higher isohyets and what would become the capital cities of Nineveh, Kalhu, Arbela, and Tušhan.¹⁵⁸ The return to more moderate climate conditions spurred the Assyrians to rebuild the state that emerged throughout this period represented an “entirely new level of political development”—the empire.¹⁵⁹

Deportation practices were well known in the region even before this period of Assyria—appearing at least from 2300 BCE onward.¹⁶⁰ Over the seven centuries of Assyrian deportations, the practice of deportation changed dramatically. Middle Assyrian deportations are infrequently described in the royal inscriptions, but what we have seems to indicate a continuity with previous periods. The practice itself petered out during the climate shift, and only begins again to be included in royal inscriptions at the start of the early Neo-Assyrian period. What seems to have

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Harmansah 2012.

¹⁵⁹ Parker 2001: 1.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. for early Mesopotamia (late 4th millennium–2004 BCE): I.J. Gelb (1973) “Prisoners of War in Early Mesopotamia,” *JNES* 32: 70 – 98; for the Old Babylonian period (2000–1600 BCE): Codex Hammurabi § 32, 133-135; for Hittites (1600–c.1178): S. Alp (1950/51) “Die soziale Klasse der NAM.RA-Leute und ihre hethit. Bezeichnung,” *Jb. für kleinasiatische Forsch.* 1: 113-135; for Middle Assyrian period (1353–1054): Oded (1979).

begun as a practice of raiding—implemented primarily to fill the labor deficit—eventually culminated in the extreme expansionist practices of the Sargonid kings of the late Neo-Assyrian period, where deportees not only filled the labor gap but also served as a type of souvenir of places conquered.

3.1 Historical Overview

3.1.1 Middle Assyrian Period

During the latter Middle Assyrian period, from the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233–1197) to that of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076), the climate of the entire ancient Near East shifted towards aridity. This is borne out not only through paleo-climatological research, but also evidenced in the contemporaneous literature. Administrative documents attest to the importation of vast quantities of grain from peripheral areas to the central Assyrian heartland.¹⁶¹ Royal inscriptions also allude to reconnaissance missions undertaken to obtain additional foodstuffs (cf. Jakob 2015, 2017). From the known royal correspondence of the Middle Assyrian period (most of which is still undiscovered), Freydank (1976, 1982, 2009), Cancik-Kirschbaum (1996), Jakob (2015, 2017), and others have presented a glimpse of life during the Middle Assyrian period. As Jakob summarized, “these examples may indicate that the daily life in Middle Assyrian Hanigalbat proved to be difficult, a permanent struggle against adversities of all sorts. It seems that the Assyrian administration often was limited to damage control rather than determining the agenda.... In such a fragile system, it does not take much to set off disaster. To name but two: destruction of [stores] by enemies and plagues of locusts.”¹⁶² In what follows, I take this fragile ecological system and its dependent socio-economic structure as the basis for our understanding of socio-political decisions.¹⁶³

Though the Middle Assyrian Empire reached its height during Tukulti-Ninurta I’s reign, the effects of climate change had already become serious by the last decade of his rule. Beginning in the third decade of his reign, the Assyrian *šarru* “king” is already recorded as going

¹⁶¹ Cf. MARV II: 17: 110; Freydank 1982b: 43; Jakob 2015: 184; BATSH 4/1: 12:14–35; Llop 2013: 551–558.

¹⁶² 2015: 182, 181-182

¹⁶³ Jakob suggests this may be a possible factor in the decline of the Middle Assyrian Empire (2015: 184-5) but does not develop this. See the relevant chapter / appendix in this dissertation for an updated recap of the salient scientific data for the area during the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

on military campaigns both against his enemies and also to ensure a food supply for the capital.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, records are made of grain deliveries from the periphery without military escort or expedition (*ibid*). Though his storage facilities at Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta had been built with the idea of increasing the agricultural use of its environs,¹⁶⁵ it is already recorded that the yields of these fields had significantly declined in the last decade of Tukulti-Ninurta's reign.¹⁶⁶ The administrative records clearly indicate the accessibility of foodstuffs was a regular royal concern.¹⁶⁷

After Tukulti-Ninurta I, the following period was one of decided decline across the empire. There were three kings in quick succession from his death until Adad-šuma-ušur, who overthrew his predecessor by means of high treason (cf. Jakob 2017: 132). During Adad-šuma-ušur's short-lived reign (twelve years), Assyria was unable to reclaim what Adad-nirari I, Šalmaneser I, or Tukulti-Ninurta I had established, nor even to commission many monumental inscriptions. As Jakob notes: "there were other priorities to consider" (2017: 133).¹⁶⁸ The two kings who followed Adad-šuma-ušur—Aššur-dan I (1168-1133 BCE) and Aššur-reša-iši (1132-1115 BCE)—are known primarily from their exploits against Karduniaš as recorded in the "Synchronistic History,"¹⁶⁹ though their official inscriptions are extant. At this point, it is certain that the size of the area governed by Assyria had shrunk well below its earlier height, exemplified when the messenger of a local ruler of Ṭabetu on the Habur is treated as a foreign diplomat rather than an Assyrian official.¹⁷⁰ The boundary with Karduniaš, however, maintained its earlier position—alongside the Lower Zab, as attested in a literary royal letter.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Jakob 2015: 184.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Freydank 2009: 24.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Freydank 2009: 78.

¹⁶⁷ In fact, after the excursion against Kaštiliaš of Karduniaš, a scribe reports there were not enough rations for the returning soldiers and deportees' trip to the Assyrian heartland (MARV I: 1 IV 32–35; Freydank 1974: 70–71). Additionally, another report notes that the king was forced to take military forces with him to gain grain from Hanigalbat—which was then already supposedly under his rule (MARV II: 17: 110; Freydank 1982b: 43).

¹⁶⁸ Of the first four kings after Tukulti-Ninurta I, only Aššur-nadin-apli left record of a large building project within the capital (RIMA 1, A.0.79.1).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Grayson 1975: 162, 163f.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Potts 1999: 244, *apud* Jakob 2017: 133.

¹⁷¹ Jakob 2017: 133.

The first king to attempt to expand beyond the Assyrian heartland once again was Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BCE). According to the “Synchronistic History” it was because of Aššur-reša-iši’s success against Karduniaš that Tiglath-Pileser I was able to turn his attention to regions other than the eastern Tigris River region—primarily in the north and west. Although he is best known for his military successes against his neighbors, closer inspection of his royal inscriptions indicates that his emphasis had not shifted completely away from providing sustenance to his people. The juxtapositioning of the deportation of agriculture and humans with military achievements, exploration, and royal prowess over wild animals illustrates the importance of providing food and workers for the status of the Assyrian king, as will be shown later. As illustrated by texts, archaeology, and paleoclimatology alike, the motivations behind the political machinations of the Middle Assyrian kings can be explained by the need to adapt to the changing environment. It is only after they have successfully secured provisions and their means in the mid-tenth century BCE that the kings’ sights shift to more egomaniacal desires.

Though the size of Assyria increased drastically during Tiglath-pileser I’s time, already toward the end of his reign western territories had ceased to recognize the sovereignty of the Assyrian ruler.¹⁷² During this time, most of the battles which occurred were against nomadic or “Aramaean” peoples of the West who “posed a permanent risk to the entire western region of Assyria and were nearly impossible to control.”¹⁷³ While this represents one interpretation of the repetitive battles against specific tribes and people groups, another one is perhaps more plausible in light of the types of warfare most often utilized before the modern period. These recurring battles each year against the same peoples, wherein might and valor were praised to the point of attempting new feats heretofore unperformed, suggests a different style of warfare to that known in the Western world today: tribal warfare / skirmishes. I submit the Middle Assyrian “empire” was still organized primarily according to principles typical of tribal societies: family, clan, hospitality, valor, protection, heroic feats against an opponent, swapping of allegiances based on who was better able to provide for them, raiding other groups for necessary supplies, etc. When

¹⁷² Cf. Jakob 2017: 136. Tiglath-Pileser I was the first Assyrian monarch to cross the Euphrates, but once he accomplished this feat he would have us believe that he repeated it every year for 28 years (cf. RIMA 2, A:0.87.4:34-6; Jakob 2017: 136-137).

¹⁷³ Jakob 2017: 136-137.

read through this lens, the political history of the Middle Assyrian period into the Neo-Assyrian period takes on an entirely new light.

In a world such as this, where the success of kings' reigns relied upon their ability to provide for their people before they saw to their own agendas, there was little room for error. Military raids and skirmishes against neighboring tribes and polities provided a means for these kings to supply their needs. Though these military endeavors were later couched in descriptions suggestive of religious fervor, initially the references to deities served merely to justify their right to raid another area for human and material booty. The practice of deporting conquered peoples—though best known from Tiglath-pileser I's time forward—was already well established during the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I.¹⁷⁴ Despite the assertions to the contrary in the royal inscriptions, it can be deduced from administrative records and the political probabilities of the day that no Assyrian king from Tukulti-Ninurta I to Tiglath-pileser I could have hoped to consume completely their adversaries.¹⁷⁵ While traditionally this notion has served primarily to counter modern interpretations of these inscriptions, it is also key to note that this was not empty rhetoric. Though it may appear that these kings made extravagant claims that were simply not factual in their inscriptions, a closer look at the formulae used reveals more about our assumptions about the function of the text and its original interpretation.

The claims made about military skirmishes up until the time of Tiglath-pileser I tend to be more modest in nature than those that come later (e.g. Aššur-naširpal II, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Aššurbanipal). While earlier kings are noted for their attention to recording the gruesome details of their military endeavors, it is not until Tiglath-pileser III that an Assyrian king claims to *bêlu* “lord over” cities and peoples outside their traditional homeland.

In this light, we are able to better understand the situation of those short-lived rulers who followed Tiglath-pileser I.¹⁷⁶ As Liverani first proposed in 1981, the rulers of the late Middle

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Jakob 2017: 135. Tiglath-Pileser I did, however, establish the practice of describing in great detail the punitive measures taken against a defeated enemy (cf. Frahm 2009: 28, *apud* Jakob 2017: 135), and emphasize the use of chariotry in battle (Jakob 2017: 135).

¹⁷⁵ This point has not gone unnoticed in the secondary literature. For example, Jakob 2017 notes this in passing regarding the rather limited goals of Tiglath-Pileser I (136); Oded 1979 noted the difficulties inherent in deducing fact from hyperbole in royal inscriptions, generally; etc.

¹⁷⁶ Namely, Ašared-apil-Ekur (1075–1074 BCE; 0 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-bêl-kala (1073–1056 BCE; 16 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Eriba-Adad II (1055–1054 BCE; 3 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Šamši-Adad II (1055–1054 BCE; 5 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-naširpal I (1049–1031 BCE; 2 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Šalmaneser II (1030–1019 BCE; 1 text attested),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-nārāri IV (1018–1013 BCE; No known texts),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-rabi II (1012–972 BCE; No known

Assyrian period operated a network empire rather than a territorial empire. His proposal still best explains the data available—even with the increase in textual and archaeological data available since his article’s publication. Others—such as Bernbeck,¹⁷⁷ Parker,¹⁷⁸ and Harmanşah¹⁷⁹—have further pushed this model in one direction or another in recent years, but with every new excavation or survey report that is published the overall premise is further substantiated. Assyria did not maintain a territorial empire before the Neo-Assyrian period.

3.1.2 Neo-Assyrian Period:

The beginning of the early Neo-Assyrian period is typically identified with the reigns of Aššur-naširpal II (883–859 BCE) and Šalmaneser III (858–824 BCE).¹⁸⁰ For the first time since Tiglath-Pileser I, we have ample inscriptions extant and therefore have a better informed record of events.¹⁸¹ Early in his reign, Aššur-naširpal II rebuilt the city of Tušhan (modern Ziyaret Tepe), along the Tigris River and boasts that he “brought back the enfeebled Assyrians who, because of hunger and famine, had gone up to the other lands.”¹⁸² Harmanşah argues his efforts in this area and others constitute an attempt at the re-urbanization of areas that had been out of reach of the immediately previous Assyrian kings.¹⁸³ The general distribution of texts with known

texts),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-rēša-iši II (971–967 BCE; 2 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Tiglath-pileser II (966–935 BCE; 2 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Aššur-dān II (934–912 BCE; 7 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Adad-nārāri II (911–891 BCE; 11 texts attested),¹⁷⁶ Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BCE; 21 texts attested).

¹⁷⁷ 2010.

¹⁷⁸ 2001, 2002.

¹⁷⁹ 2012, 2017. Harmanşah 2012: “Therefore, the Middle Assyrian incursion into Upper Mesopotamia was an attempt to link the powerful Assyrian center to the existing networks of communication and long-distance trade, to reinstate a new territorial administration over existing patterns of settlement” (58).

¹⁸⁰ Recently, Karlsson presented an analysis of these kings’ ideologies (2013; 2016), wherein he abandons the notion that any general schemes of ideological development occurred and concludes the two kings came to the throne with “an established ideological program right from their seizing of the throne, which they then kept throughout their reigns” (2013: 215). Unfortunately the use of diachronic data negatively affected the development of this argument, as he attempted to match Liverani’s 1981 argument for Sennacherib annals to what he saw in the inscriptions of Aššur-naširpal II and Šalmaneser III.

¹⁸¹ Aššur-naširpal II: 174 texts, 1120 exemplars; Šalmaneser III: 155 texts, 514 exemplars; as related in Karlsson’s 2013 dissertation. Roughly 20 from each ruler are not yet included in ORACC (or RIAo, RINAP, and SAAo).

¹⁸² Grayson 1991: 237–54, A.0.101.17, yii, 5–36.

¹⁸³ “Urbanization is a landscape process by which a regional settlement system gains greater complexity and density through the establishment or growth of towns and cities. This is accompanied by developments in agricultural production and specialized industries, local exchange, long-distance trade and social interaction, and the spatial configuration of all of these new social relationships. With urbanization, there is political centralization and monumentalization, while wide rural territories are linked together by the political economy and cultural ideology of

provenance from this period (883–824 BCE), indicates that of the known and excavated cities only four were given priority for the depositing of texts: Kalhu, Aššur, Nineveh, and Imgur-Enlil (modern Balawat).¹⁸⁴ The concentration of royal inscriptions along the Tigris within the northern end of the traditional heartland of Assyria suggests this area was more secure than other cities under their rule. The inscriptions found outside the heartland commemorate specific achievements at geographically significant locations well outside of the traditionally secure area. Though the royal inscriptions once again report that the kings travelled outside their immediate territory, the process was not a simple one and took many years to regain the allegiance of their neighboring polities. The paradigm shift from network to territorial empire had not yet occurred.¹⁸⁵

The kings from the next one hundred years¹⁸⁶ are often passed over in broad sketches of political history because of their relative unimportance compared to Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE), who arguably was the first to expand Assyria beyond its traditional zone. But these kings are not without significance for our study. Šamši-Adad V records among his exploits that he met Marduk-balāssu-iqbi (supposedly from Babylon, though this text does not indicate his home or ancestry) with a coalition from Kaldû, Elam, the lands of Namri, and Aram outside the city of Dūr-Papsukkal, within the swamps of southern Iraq.¹⁸⁷ This passing note tells us that Assyria was strong enough to warrant international concern and also that Babylon did not hold control over Kaldû, the mountains of Namri, or Aram at this time—though they were allied against

the region. There is also a poetics of urban life, voiced often by the literate elites of the city—an epic notion of the city as the locus of collective power, economic prosperity, spectacles of cult practices, cultural heterogeneity, and civilized everyday life. In the context of an emergent territorial power, capital cities acquire the special status of becoming the public space of state spectacles and witness ambitious building projects, sponsored by beneficent royal patrons.

Urbanization is frequently presented to us in royal inscriptions as a deliberate program of construction based entirely on the decisions of the political elite. As Lewis Mumford, Spiro Kostof, and other urban historians have demonstrated, however, cities are complex entities and are products of a variety of processes where economic, environmental, socio-spatial, and cultural factors play major roles in their making (Mumford 1961; Kostof 1991: 1–41)” (Harmanşah 2012: 57).

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Karlsson 2013.

¹⁸⁵ This is further substantiated by the charts of Aššurnāširpal II’s campaigns, per Liverani 1981: 93-96, which illustrate the increase in lands committed to paying tribute, but not those committed to the “empire” itself.

¹⁸⁶ Namely, Šamši-Adad V (823–811 BCE), Adad-nārāri III (810–783 BCE), Šalmaneser IV (782–773 BCE), Aššur-dān III (772–755 BCE), and Aššur-nārāri V (754–745 BCE).

¹⁸⁷ RA I o Šamši-Adad V text no. 1 iv 37-45.

Assyria. This is the last king to record a visit south for almost a century. The following kings focus their attentions on boundary disputes to the north¹⁸⁸ and west.¹⁸⁹

With Tiglath-Pileser III's reign (744–727 BCE) we reach the period during which most investigation has been done on the subjects of empire and deportations. During the twenty years before the advent of the Sargonid dynasty, we again see specific mention of tribal peoples in the royal inscriptions. From the time of the *turtanu* Šamši-Ilu and Tiglath-Pileser III onward, lists of people groups appear as the target of military campaigns.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, Tiglath-Pileser III is the first in many years to “rule over” (*bêlu*) cities in the south and Karduniaš, rather than just defeating them in a battle or raiding their towns.¹⁹¹ He also is the first to claim to annex these cities and peoples to the borders of the land of Aššur.¹⁹² For the first time, we see a change in the way empire is conceived by the royal scribes, and supposedly the Assyrian ruler. This continued until the end of Aššur-bani-apli's reign, when the empire's decline began in earnest. With this, we also see a fundamental shift in the way that deportation is conceived of and employed by the royal administration. We also find most of the attested interactions with tribal peoples (e.g. Aramaeans, Kaldeans, Arabs) and West Semitic peoples (e.g. Tyreans, Israelites, Judeans, Philistines).

The history of the late Neo-Assyrian empire (744 – 609) for all its brevity is detailed and complex.¹⁹³ Assyro-Babylonian conflicts skyrocketed. Levantine kingdoms such as Aram-Damascus, Israel, Ammon, Judah, and Moab were made into vassals and began to pay heavy tribute.¹⁹⁴ A salient feature of the military policies from Tiglath-pileser III (747 – 727) to Aššurbanipal (668 – ca.631) were the mass deportations carried out in conquered territories.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ E.g. Kummuh, Gurgum, and Arpad, cf. RAIo Adad-nerari III text no. 02; RAIo Shalmaneser IV text no. 1: 11-15.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. RAIo Adad-nerari III text no. 06: 11b-20; RAIo Shalmaneser IV text no. 1: 4-10. Additionally, two fragmentary texts give additional indication that the boundaries were at no point completely stable. One clearly mentions a *DUMU m.Arame* whom Adad-nerari III interacted with (cf. RAIo text no. 04: 9'). And another from Aššur-nērēri V (RAIo text no. 1) clearly mentions their use of scaling ladders and siege ramps, though the name of their adversary is unfortunately lost.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. RINAP 01: Tiglath-pileser III 04.

¹⁹¹ Cf. RINAP 01 Tiglath-pileser III 05: 5b-8a.

¹⁹² Ibid, *ana mi[šir] 'KUR' Aššur utêra* “I returned [them] to the border of Assyria” line 8a.

¹⁹³ For a recent summary of the Neo-Assyrian empire see Frahm 2017: 161 – 208.

¹⁹⁴ Bagg 2011: 213-6; Dubovsky 2006b.

¹⁹⁵ Oded 1979; De Odorico 1995 discusses the problematic nature of the numbers of captives provided.

Two of the main goals of deportations include: “destroy[ing] the identity of the colonized polities and thus reduc[ing] the potential for armed resistance, and enable[ing] the Assyrian king to send large numbers of laborers wherever they were most needed, whether in underdeveloped provinces to do agricultural work, or in the Assyrian capital cities to participate in large construction projects.”¹⁹⁶ These deportations changed the ethnolinguistic composition of the region forever and promoted the rise of Aramaic as the lingua franca.

3.2 Deportations

3.2.1 Early Work

Our understanding of deportation practices in Assyria largely comes from Oded (1979). His was the first in-depth study of Assyrian deportation from Middle to Neo-Assyrian periods, though much of the monograph is specific to the late Neo-Assyrian period. Oded claimed that there was no development of the deportation system from the time of Aššur-dān II, but “rather, the widespread and consistent use of mass deportation began systematically and with great momentum in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III.”¹⁹⁷ With its focus on the late Neo-Assyrian period, it was inevitable that it should be used as the standard for deportation studies. The monograph remains a meticulous and thorough account of all references to deportation in Neo-Assyrian sources—letters, economic and administrative documents, chronicles, and royal historical inscriptions as were then published.

Oded identified several phrases and a list of terms that “occur regularly in the descriptions of a deportation,” which I provide here:¹⁹⁸

abāku; abālu; arū; šūšū; šūšubu; ekēmu; šūrubu; galū (galītu, šaglū, šaglūtu); habātu (hubtu, hubut-qašti); kamū (kamātu); kašādu (kušūdu); kišittu; leqū; manū; nasāhu (nashūte); ramū; šabātu (šušbutu, šabtu); šalālu (šallatu, šallūtu); turru.

After a detailed search of RIMA, RINAP, SAA, and the Mesopotamian Chronicles,¹⁹⁹ several of the terms in Oded’s list do not appear with great frequency and many are genre, region, or dialect

¹⁹⁶ Frahm 2017: 177.

¹⁹⁷ Oded 1979: 19.

¹⁹⁸ Oded 1979: 5. Oded provides references for some of these terms in footnotes—the pertinent of which will be discussed above.

¹⁹⁹ The acronyms stand for two research projects and their publications: RIMA = the Royal Inscriptions of Middle Assyria, RINAP = the Royal Inscriptions of Neo-Assyria Project (together housed in RIAo = the Royal

specific.²⁰⁰ Without regard for ideological purposes, genre, dialect, register, or context, our understanding of how deportation was practiced by the Assyrian empire(s) is considerably hindered. During the Middle and early Neo-Assyrian period, the empire used specific terms and phrases to denote deportations. The late Neo-Assyrian empire utilized different terms. And the terms preferred in letters and other texts from the state archives display more idiomatic or lower register references than were used by the official royal inscriptions.²⁰¹ By dividing this list chronologically we can refute Oded's claim that there was no development of the deportation system.

To this list of terms Oded added his list of twelve common phrases which he labeled indicators of “clear, explicit, and unambiguous documentary evidence” of deportation.²⁰²

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. ... <i>ummānātešunu assuha ina uru.Kalhi ušašbit</i> (Aššurnāširpal II, AKA p.362: 53–55)
I uprooted X of their troops and settled them in Calah. (Grayson, <i>ARI</i> II, p. 141)</p> <p>2. ... <i>šābēšu assuha ana āliya Aššur ubla</i> (Michel, <i>Šalmaneser III, WO</i> 1 p. 462:8–9)
X of their soldiers I uprooted and brought to my city Aššur.</p> <p>3. ... <i>nišē šātunu ušēšamma adi ... ana libbi mātiya ūbilšunūti ana nišē mātiya amnu</i> (Šamši-Adad V, <i>KB</i> I p. 184: 5–8)
Those people I brought out together ... to my land I carried them and counted them with the people of my land.</p> <p>4. ... <i>nišē adi maršītīšunu ... alpēšunu šēnēšunu ašlula ... šallat uru.Kuruša ... ašlula</i> (Rost, <i>Tiglath-Pileser III</i>, p.34–36: 206–208)
I brought away as prisoners X (of its) inhabitants with their possessions ... their large and small cattle. X prisoners from Kurussa ... (<i>ANET</i> p. 283)</p> <p>5. <i>kur.Bīt Amukkāni kīma dayyašti adīš, puhur nišēšu, makkūršu ana kur.Aššur ūrā</i> (Rost, <i>Tiglath-Pileser III</i>, p.44: 11–12)
Bīt Amukkāni I trampled down like a threshing</p> | <p>(sledge). All of its people (and) its goods, I took to Assyria. (<i>ARAB</i> I, 783)</p> <p>6. ... <i>nišē āšib ina libbišu ašlula</i> (Winckler, <i>Sargon</i>, p. 100: 24)
I led away as booty X inhabitants of it (<i>i.e.</i> Samaria). (<i>ANET</i>, pp. 284–285)</p> <p>7. ... <i>nišē šeher rabi zikar u sinniṣ sīsē ... ša lā nībi šallatu kabittu ašlula ana qereb Aššur</i> (Luckenbill, <i>Sennacherib</i>, p. 25: 50–53)
X people, great and small, male and female, horses ... without number, a heavy booty, I carried off to Assyria.</p> <p>8. <i>nišē mātišu akšudma šallatiš amnu</i> (Luckenbill, <i>Sennacherib</i>, p. 91: 28)
The people of his land, I captured and counted as spoil.</p> <p>9. <i>nišēšu rapšāte ... alpē šēnē imērē ... ābuka ana qereb kur.Aššur</i> (Borger, <i>Asarhaddon</i>, pp. 48: 78–80)
His widespread peoples ... cattle and sheep and asses ... I transported to Assyria. (<i>ARAB</i> II, 511)</p> <p>10. <i>nišē hubut qaštiya ša šadē u tāmtim ... ina libbi ušēšib</i> (Borger, <i>Asarhaddon</i>, pp. 48–49: 10–15)</p> |
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Inscriptions of Assyria Online, available on <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu>, and SAA = the State Archives of Assyria, which primarily includes texts from the late Neo-Assyrian period.

²⁰⁰ Some are not found prior to the late Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (*abāku, arū, kamū*), while others primarily appear in letters, biblical sources, and late Babylonian Chronicles (*galū, galītu, šaglū, šaglūtu, nashūte*). Many are infrequently attested in early royal inscriptions (*šūšū, šūšubu, šūrubu, habātu, hubtu, kišittu, manū, ramū*). Some are rarely found among the royal corpus, full stop (*abāku, hubut-qašti, kamū, kamūtu, šabtu, šušbutu, šallūtu*).

²⁰¹ This last category is closer to reflecting the subaltern experience of deportation rather than the imperial ideology. Therefore, more use will be made of the letters and administrative / economic documents in later chapters.

²⁰² Oded 1979: 2–4. All attestations by Oded, even when newer editions exist; unless otherwise stated, all translations are by Oded.

The people, spoil of my bow, of mountain and sea ... therein I settled. (ARAB II, 512)

11. *nišē zikra u sinniš ... assuhma alqâ ana*
kur.*Aššur* (Piepkorn, *Ashurbanipal*, p.48: 14–15)
People, male and female ... I uprooted and took to Assyria.

12. *nišē uru.Kirbit mala ašlula assuhma qereb*
kur.*Mušur ušašbit*

The people of Kirbit, as many as I had taken, I took away and settled (them) in Egypt.

These twelve formulaic phrases, however, are conservative in their usage of the above listed terms. Only ten of the verbs previously listed appear in these phrases—many of which contain a string of verbal phrases: *nasāhu* and *šalālu* (4x each), *abālu* and *manû* (2x), and *abāku*, *arû*, *šūšû*, *šūšubu*, *kašādu*, and *šušbutu* (1x each). Also, emphasis on phraseology such as this runs the risk of grouping all instances of deportation together as varied examples of the same phenomenon. Which, incidentally, is how Oded treated deportation. To Oded, all mass deportation was the same. Even more recent treatments of deportation (e.g. Radner 2018) continue to discuss deportation as a singular form of imperialism. When variations on deportation are noted, it is only through the concepts of “unilateral” and “bilateral” deportation—or, the practice of removing people vs. removing and transplanting new people in their stead.²⁰³

This dissertation builds on Oded’s work in several ways. First, through a fine-grained analysis of the Assyrian terms used in royal inscriptions, we understand deportation as comprising four separate types of operations. Second, I expand this analysis back to the Middle Assyrian period, not covered by Oded. Third, in the next chapter, I expand this analysis to the Babylonian empire, also not discussed by Oded. Finally, in the last chapter, I take steps toward understanding the experience of the deportees themselves—subalterns within the imperial system. Understanding Assyrian imperial views of deportation depends on analysis of their royal inscriptions. I analyze them not as a means of finding out what “actually happened,” but to understand the ways the empire itself understood and used deportation practices.

3.2.2 Moving Forward

As previously stated in Chapter 1, I define “deportation” as the orchestrated and enforced movement of one people by a sovereign state from one area to another for imperial purposes. An

²⁰³ Cf. Tadmor 2006, Cambridge Ancient History, VI *The Fourth Century BC: 287*—“The Assyrians, by contrast, had practised the method of ‘bilateral deportation,’ which as a matter of course ultimately produced a new ethnic entity replacing the deported nation.”

This practice is typically of more interest to biblicalists—who have the vested interest of discovering why the ten Israelite tribes disappeared as a result of deportation while the Judeans maintained or created their identity as a result of their deportation. As this is also the primary concern guiding Oded’s investigation, it is not surprising that he initiates his investigation on the assumption that all Assyrian deportations are the same.

analysis of the terms used in Assyrian royal inscriptions suggests that what we gloss as “deportation” in fact comprised four separate processes—three of which were previously unidentified. People were taken or given: as surety (*lītu*, *šaprūte*, *lú.maškanūtu*), as gifts or property (*maddattu*, though rarely),²⁰⁴ as populace (*šallatu*, *lú.hubtu*, *nišū*), and as workers (*ilku*, *zābil kudurri* or *tupšikki*), and finally, imperial subjects were relocated within the empire. In this chapter, I present four types of Assyrian deportations I’ve identified within the episodes of deportation identified by Oded. By incorporating these additional forms into our perceptions of deportation, we are better able to contextualize the impact of “traditional” mass deportation.

3.3 Four Types of Deportation

Assyrian deportation encompassed a range of practices, of which only one has previously been included under the term “deportation”: the relocation of captives from defeated tribes, cities, and lands. The four types²⁰⁵ of Assyrian deportation practices that I have identified are:

1. Settler Deportation = *nišī māt aššur ālāni / bītāti naṭūte <šūšbutu>*
2. Hostage Deportation = *lītu*, *lú.šaprāte*, *šaprūte*, *lú.maškanūtu*
3. Corvée Deportation = *tupšikku*, *kudurru*, *ilku/alku*, *dulli šarri*
4. Captive Deportation = *šallatu*, *šallūtu*, *kamū*, *kamūtu*, *lú.hubtu*, *zi.meš*

These four categories of deportation include reference to temporary and “permanent” physical relocation as well as ideological repositioning after captive deportation. The first category addresses the imperially administered movement of Assyrians from one location within Assyria to another area within Assyria. The two categories of hostages and corvée laborers address forms of imperially motivated movement that were to occur for short, (sometimes set) periods of time. The fourth category (captive taking) encompasses what typically has been understood to be the definition of “deportation” or “forced migration” in the ancient Near East. The last category also contains reference to the ideological shifting of boundaries as experienced by those people who were absorbed into the Assyrian Empire. For each of the four categories, I address the practices as recorded for each of the two major periods of the Assyrian empire. The early Assyrian

²⁰⁴ Due to the nature of our sources, we are unable to elucidate much as to the giver’s reasoning and so all discussions of *maddattu* must be limited to when it is imposed upon a people by Assyria. This thoroughly eliminates human *maddattu* from our inquiries into the imperially sanctioned deportations of Assyria.

²⁰⁵ Here I specifically do not include any options available only to military personnel of the defeated force, which belongs to a sixth category not investigated here: that of the conscription of foreign soldiers into the Assyrian army, which is well documented elsewhere (e.g. Luukko 2019).

empires made use of available human capital to consolidate its control of the *libbi mātiya*²⁰⁶ by expending energy rebuilding the infrastructure, agricultural areas, and population of the interior. In the late Neo-Assyrian empire, Assyria prioritized using human capital to establish tighter control over the *mišir māti(ya)* or the Assyrian heartland.²⁰⁷

In what follows, I present the philological justification for each of the first four categories as well as evidence of how they functioned during the early and late Assyrian empires. As we will see, ultimately the early purpose of deportation was subverted from an attempt to meet the nutritional needs of a people through agriculture to an early exemplar of imperialist expansionary practices. This is reflected in the terminology used and the underlying ideologies of the royal inscriptions, and further supported by numerous contemporary letters.

3.3.1 Movement Within the Imperial Heartland

3.3.1.1. *Settler Deportations*

During the early and late Neo-Assyrian periods, the causative (Š) stem of *šabātu* “to cause to seize” (*šušbutu*) primarily refers to the resettling or rehousing of persons who had been displaced for various reasons either back to their respective homes or in other suitable houses and cities. The Š-stem of *šušbutu* does not appear in the royal inscriptions until the reign of Aššur-dān II (934 – 912). For the next one hundred years during the early Neo-Assyrian period, this verb is found twenty-three times.²⁰⁸ After a hundred-year gap, we find it attested again eleven times from

²⁰⁶ To stress the native emphasis on these terms I employ Assyrian terms for concepts whenever they exist as set idioms or jargon. In this way, I highlight the use of etic concepts against those emic concepts of the peoples in question. The semantic range of this term *libbi mātiya*—“the heart/interior of my land (Assur)”—as employed by Assyrian kings and their scribes is equivalent to the notion of the “Assyrian heartland,”—the area of Kalah, Nineveh, and Aššur in the Upper Tigris – Upper Zab River valley. The same is true for other uses of *libbi* + KUR.XX, where the phrase indicates the interior of a country (with KUR) or city (with URU) of other geographic locations.

²⁰⁷ A close study of this phrase indicates that *mišir mātiya* is equivalent to the notion of “borderlands” or “periphery” of Assyria in its attestations in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.

²⁰⁸ Aššur-dān II RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: 63; Tukulti-Ninurta II RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 24, 126; Aššurnaširpal II RIMA 2 A.0.101.01: i 103, ii 8, 10, 90, iii 54, 134; 02: 55; 17: ii 25, 31, iv 14; 19: 49, 93, 95; 23: 17; 26: 52; 28: v 6; 30: 36, 81; 33: 23’; Šalmaneser III RIMA 3 A.0.102.02: ii 37.

Tiglath-pileser III (744 – 727) to the end of the empire.²⁰⁹ The other attestations of this verb in the late Neo-Assyrian period are connected to campaigns and architectural contexts.²¹⁰

The first phase of the use of *šuṣbutu* (934 – 824) happens to coincide with what paleo-climatological data indicate to have been an amelioration of climate. At the end of a roughly 200-year period of aridification throughout the Middle East, Assyrian kings begin to boast that they were able to rehouse new and former subjects in “suitable” houses. Two-thirds of the attestations of this use of *šuṣbutu* appear during this period.²¹¹ While neither the climatological data nor the textual sources suggest a cataclysmic event, even subtle changes will rock agricultural communities. After 200 years of a lessening of rainfall in the mountains and the resultant lower river water levels and higher sediment levels, the agriculture of all areas dependent upon rainfall (whether indirect or direct) was bound to be affected negatively.

Nearly all twenty-three early attestations refer to the resettlement of Assyrians in areas they had previously abandoned due to want, hunger, and famine.²¹² For example, the first attestation of the use of this verb by Aššur-dān II, specifically prioritizes caring for former subjects, reclaiming the land, and preparing the earth for agriculture.²¹³

<i>nišē māt Aššur anhāte ša ištu pān sunqi</i>	I brought back the people of the land of Assyria who
<i>bubūte hušahhi ālānišunu bītātīšunu</i>	had abandoned their towns and houses in the face of
<i>ušerruni ana mātāti šanīate elūni utērašunu</i>	famine, hunger, and need, going up to different lands.
<i>ālānišunu bītātīšunu naṭūte ušašbissunu</i>	I settled them (<i>šuṣbutu</i>) in suitable towns and
<i>šubtu nēhtu ušbū</i>	houses; they dwelt in secure conditions.
<i>ēkallāte ina šiddī mātiya aršip</i>	I raised up palaces in the <i>šiddī mātiya</i> (periphery of
<i>epinnī ina šiddī mātiya arkus še'u tabkāni</i>	my land).
<i>eli ša pāna ušāter [atb]uk</i>	I hitched up plows in the <i>šiddī mātiya</i> ; I stockpiled
<i>sisē šimdāt nīrī [... ana emūq] māt Aššur</i>	more grain than ever before.
<i>arkus</i>	

²⁰⁹ RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 13: 12; 47: o 15; RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33: o? ii 6, r iii 36', iv 8' (all of which are used for different objects: animals and a goddess); and RINAP 5 Aššurbanipal 1: vi 8; 2: vi 9; 3: iii 15; 4: iii 8; 74: r 18.

²¹⁰ One would *šuṣbutu* “take” the road or “install” objects in doorways, “lay” stones as tile, etc. There are 37 such instances of *šuṣbutu* in this sense in RINAP and zero in RIMA.

²¹¹ These include: Aššur-dān II (RIMA 2 A.0.98.01: 63); Tukulti-Ninurta II (RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 24); Aššurnaširpal II (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 103; ii 8, 10; 17: ii 25, 31; 19: 93, 95; 30: 81); and Šalmaneser III (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii 37).

²¹² cf. RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: 63; RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 103, ii 8; RIMA 2 A.0.101.30: 81; etc.

²¹³ RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: 60–67.

I hitched up teams of horses ... for the strength of the land of Assyria.

This text clearly notes an exodus of Assyrians due to harsh climate conditions of the past. In boasting of “rescuing” former Assyrians, the Assyrian king incidentally admits the empire’s control had diminished in previous years. More importantly for the study of deportations, however, is the connection of bringing back Assyrians and resettling them to the ability to stockpile more stored grains than ever before. This inscription foreshadows what would become the underlying reason for early Assyrian deportations: accumulating workers for agriculture.

Nine other attestations follow this example. Of the ten total such examples, the eight which record specific locations are all located in the Nairi Mountains around the cities of Tušhan and Matiātu, located in the upper Tigris Valley in what is now southeastern Turkey. This particular area receives more rainfall throughout the year than further south along the Tigris in Assyria proper and attests more grain spores within the speleothem deposits.²¹⁴ Both of which support the premise that some Assyrians had fled to where agriculture was easier to practice during the drought. In one of the most commonly cited references, Aššurnaširpal II mentions:²¹⁵

*nišī māṭ Aššur anšāte ša ištu pān sunqi
bubūte ana māṭāti šaniāte ana kur.Šubria
ēli`uni*

...the enfeebled people of Assyria who went up to other lands—especially the land of Šubria—because of famine and hunger...

Again, these texts indicate that at least this form of deportation was uniquely tied to rehousing former subjects. Aššurnaširpal also records resettling of Assyrians in towns and cities that had been abandoned and turned into ruins.²¹⁶

*ālāni naṭūte ša ina abbiya ana tīli utēru ana
eššūte ašbassunu nišī ma`adūte ina libbi
ušašbit ēkallāti mahrāte ša pirik mātiya ana
eššūte aršipšina ussimšina ušarrihšina
še.am u tibni ina libbišina ašpuk*

I selected suitable cities that had turned into tells during the time of my fathers to make new and settled (*šušbutu*) many people within [them]. I rebuilt ancient palaces anew across the width of my land—embellishing and adorning them. I stored up grains and straw within them.

Once again, we note that these certain cities were selected to renew, to house settlers, and to be storage centers for grain and straw. The inclusion of this data in royal inscriptions suggests the kings were determined not to fall short of foodstuffs again. Aššurnaširpal also uses *šušbutu* in

²¹⁴ See Appendix A.

²¹⁵ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 7–9

²¹⁶ RIMA 2 A.0.101.30: 78b–84a.

reference to Assyrians who were purportedly settled by Šalmaneser II (1030–1019)²¹⁷—a time that happens to be the same time the paleoclimatological data suggest an aridification event began.

Outside of these applications, the verb *šušbutu* is also applied to two other incidences: first, the relocating of defeated troops who had previously fled from the king back in their own cities after the Assyrians had destroyed them;²¹⁸ and second, the relocating of conquered tribal members of the West (Syria) to Kalah/Kalhu during Aššurnaširpal II’s restoration of the city.²¹⁹ The first time *šušbutu* is used in reference to re-settling troops is found in Aššurnaširpal’s inscriptions.²²⁰

<i>ālānišunu ušašbissunu biltu ma[ddattu ... elišu]nu aškun</i>	I resettled them in their cities. I imposed <i>biltu</i> , <i>maddattu</i> , ... upon them.
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It is highly unusual for any Assyrian king to report that the defeated soldiers who had fled the battle were allowed to live. And for Aššurnaširpal II—who takes glee in narrativizing the war horrors he commits—to allow them to remain in their own homes is especially shocking. The only other occasion in the early Neo-Assyrian periods is again noted by Aššurnaširpal II, who allows the people of the city Matiātu to return to their own settlement clusters after their defeat.²²¹

The last relevant semantic domain of *šušbutu* for deportation in the royal inscriptions treats the relocation of people to capital cities of early Neo-Assyria (particularly Kalhu, Tušhan, and Aššur). Aššurnaširpal used this verb on two separate occasions to say that he has deported peoples from the West and brought them to inhabit Kalhu. This use of the verb serves as evidence of a transition to what will become its primary meaning. Later attestations within the

²¹⁷ Aššurnaširpal II RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 101b–103a:
*ina lime annūma ina uru.Ninuwa usbāku řēmu uterrūni mā lū.meš māt Aššurāya m.Hulāya bēl ālišunu ša
m.Šalmaneser šar māt Aššur rubū ālik pāniya ina uru.Halziluha ušašbitušununi ...*
“In the same eponymy, while I sat in Nineveh, I received a message saying: the Assyrian people and Hulāya their city-lord—whom Šalmaneser (II), the king of Assyria, a prince who went before me, **settled** at the city Halziluha...”

²¹⁸ cf. RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: ii 10; RIMA 2 A.0.98.17: iv 14.

²¹⁹ cf. RIMA 2 A.0.98.2: 55.

²²⁰ RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 125b–6.

²²¹ This occurs in RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 90; 17: ii 25, 30; 19: 49. The term “settlement clusters” or *uru.didli* is used by inscription no. 17, which is reserved for clusters of towns / settlements within mountain ranges, primarily within the land of Zamua (roughly northern Luristan today).

same semantic domain supply the object “the road to X,”²²² indicating a shift in usage of the verbal stem (from G to Š) has occurred between the two periods.²²³ The early Neo-Assyrian period is the only period in which the royal inscriptions utilize this verbal form to discuss the relocation of Assyrians or others *back* whence they came.²²⁴ In fact, the few late Neo-Assyrian attestations of *šušbutu* in the sense of resettling people are mostly found during the reign of Aššurbanipal, where it is used in a different sense. It is only used for the captives he resettled in Egypt,²²⁵ a task usually assigned to the verb *šēšubu* “to set, settle, locate.”

In the state archives, *šušbutu* is primarily used for provisioning captives, soldiers, and other persons. There are a couple instances in which the verb means resettling Assyrians in new locations, or conquered peoples in their own homes,²²⁶ but the vast majority of its uses are “to provide” for imperial subjects.

3.3.2 Movement of Foreigners to Imperial Capitals and Beyond

3.3.2.1 Temporary Relocations

The next two categories of deportation practices treat the temporary relocation of peoples to Assyrian capitals for specific purposes: surety for taxes/fealty and transient labor for projects within the *libbi mātiya*.

3.3.2.2 Hostage Deportations

Over the nearly four hundred years of documented hostage deportation, only a small percentage of peoples were selected as surety for payment or safety. From Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233 – 1197) to Šalmaneser III (858 – 824), the primary term *lītu* is only attested a total of 33 times in the royal inscriptions and not at all in the state archives—figures which are quite low, given the 1402 royal inscriptions and additional 5026 texts in the State Archives of Assyria presently available.

²²² RINAP 3 22: iv 43, 23: iv 37; RINAP 4 33: o? ii 6, 34: o 8’ (broken, but contextually relevant); RINAP 5 1: vi 8 (and duplicates), 6: ii 55’ (and duplicates).

²²³ The phrase “to take the road” originally appears in the G-stem, and only later after Tiglath-Pileser III do we find the idiom now employs the Š-stem, instead.

²²⁴ Additionally, of note is that we here find seven attestations of one of the few instances in which a foreign king delivers a group of conquered people (*šallatu*) not his own to the king of Assyria as payment (cf. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 136 and duplicates).

²²⁵ Cf. RINAP 5 Aššurbanipal 1: vi 8; 2: vi 9; 3: iii 15; r: iii 8; 74: r 18.

²²⁶ E.g. SAA 05 052: r 2 – 6; 21 050: o 9’ – 10’.

After the rule of Sargon II (722 – 705), this term disappears from all extant texts and other terms (e.g. *šipru*, *maškānā*) are used with greater technical precision. The handful of times hostages are referred to in the royal inscriptions suggests that the kings only took note of those hostages which brought the most prestige or were significantly influential. Trends in usage charted for the Middle Assyrian period through the end of the Neo-Assyrian empire indicate a specialization of terminology according to the organization, location, and status of the political actor involved. These in turn suggest a shift in political ideology and perhaps in military strategy, as well.

The earliest attestations of *lītu* as “hostage, pledge” appear at Mari and Alalakh during the Old Babylonian period.²²⁷ These include examples of “hostages” who were seized from defeated enemies and kept in a royal or capital city to ensure payments were made annually. The context of one of these texts suggests these hostages were kept—in this case at the palace—for a significant period of time before restitution could be made.²²⁸ Although we assume this practice continued throughout the later Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, the term itself is not used by the Assyrian dialect in the same manner. There are plenty of economic documents that attest the practice of people standing as surety for loans or credit, but they utilize a different term (*šapru*, *šapartu*, and the like) and are not attested in royal inscriptions, palace letters, or other palace administrative texts. “Hostage” (*lītu*) more often denotes a category of people who were captured or imposed upon vassal kingdoms during a military campaign.

The majority of cases indicate that hostages were imposed upon a land at the same time the required *biltu* and *maddattu* (payment and bribe / tribute) were imposed rather than seized to ensure these were paid.²²⁹ A royal inscription of Sargon II interrupts the expected narrative flow of military campaigns to present a short story of provincial ruler in the Zagros mountains who left in such haste to present the king with *maddattu* (payment / tribute) that he forgot to bring the *lītu* with him.²³⁰ In an inscription of an earlier king, Aššurnaširpal II (883–859 BCE), *lītu* are taken from Sangara, the Hittite king at Carchemish after providing *maddattu* to the Assyrian king. The *lītu* then march with the Assyrian king and his army through the Syrian rift valley (the

²²⁷ Cf. ARM 1, 36: 30; 4, 22: 20; Wiseman Alalakh 23: 5.

²²⁸ Cf. Wiseman Alalakh 23:5 (CAD L 223B s.v. *lītu* A): *kīma kaspim PN ana bīt ēkallim ana līti wāšib*.

²²⁹ E.g. RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 83, v 80; 2 A.0.87.3: 27.

²³⁰ TCL 3: 34 = AO 05372.

eastern lands of the former Hittite empire) to the mountains of Lebanon.²³¹ They remained in the Assyrian king's presence until they reached Mt. Lebanon. Beyond these notes, no further attention is paid the hostages. Upon reaching the mountains of Lebanon and receiving *maddattu* (bribe) from the rulers therein, the narrative ends.²³² An earlier king, Tiglath-Pileser I (1114 – 1076), referred to hostage deportation in his summaries of campaigns ranging from the far side of the Lower Zab River to the Hittite and Syrian lands at the Mediterranean Sea—the same range further detailed in his successors' inscriptions.²³³ From these and other texts it is conceivable that hostages were taken in order to ensure safe passage through certain lands. The brief narrative in this example from Aššurnaširpal II suggests that the purpose of hostages was more immediate than the earlier long-term function of *lītu* attested at Mari and Alalakh. In fact, these episodes suggest the type of hostage under discussion served as a guide and insurance of compliance through their native lands.

The Assyrians record taking *lītu* hostages from only a few peoples, predominantly from their neighbors in the mountains to the north and northwest of the Assyrian heartland (*libbi mātiya*). These peoples include: the Alzi, Amadāni, Nihāni, Alāya, Tepurzi, and Purulimzi of the Mt. Kašiyāri area (far eastern mountainous corner of Turkey);²³⁴ the KUR.Išdiš at Mount Aruma (presumably in Syro-Lebanon);²³⁵ the city of Melidiya of Hanigalbat, where hostages were taken without conquering the city (near the source of the Euphrates in Turkey);²³⁶ the KUR.Qumānāya people at various cities (uncertain);²³⁷ the Nairi mountains from the lands of the Tammu to those of the Dayānī (the steppe along the foot of the Taurus-Zagros mountains in eastern Turkey);²³⁸ subjects of the Hittite king, Ini-Tešub (the mountains of eastern Turkey to northern Syria);²³⁹ and the people of the middle Euphrates from Carchemish to Suhu (from the Syrian Jazireh to mid-

²³¹ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 64b–70a; RIMA 2 A.0.101.2: 43–45.

²³² Although this is hardly surprising given the genre of royal inscriptions, it significantly limits the amount of information available regarding the practice of taking hostages.

²³³ Cf. RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: vi 39–48; 2: 5'–8'.

²³⁴ RIMA 1 A.0.78.1: iii 30b–24a.

²³⁵ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 63–84.

²³⁶ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: v 33–41.

²³⁷ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: v 67–8, vi 22–38.

²³⁸ RIMA 2 A.0.87.2: 25–27.

²³⁹ RIMA 2 A.0.87.3: 26–28.

Iraq);²⁴⁰ the Habhe and the Alzi and Natbi of the Nairi mountains (far eastern Turkey);²⁴¹ the people of the city Madara of the Nairi mountains beyond Kašiyāri;²⁴² the people of Bīt-Adini at the cities Kapr-abi and Tīl-abni (steppe and foothills of the Taurus-Zagros range in Turkey/Syria);²⁴³ the peoples ruled by the eastern Hittites at Carchemish and Kunulua;²⁴⁴ all the peoples of the land of Habhe (the Iranian Zagros south of Lake Urmia);²⁴⁵ the people of Que (near Osmaniye, Turkey, in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea).²⁴⁶ All of these princedoms and kingdoms were located in mountainous regions outside the immediate environs of Assyria’s heartland. It is noteworthy that at no point do the Assyrians record taking *līṭū* from Karduniaš or Elam, even when they campaign in those regions (an alluvium plain to the south and a mountainous region to the southeast, respectively).

The only other location in which the term *līṭū* “hostages” is found in this corpus is in the titulary of Aššurnaširpal II’s inscriptions, where we find *šābit līṭī* “seizer of hostages.”²⁴⁷ This title is found solely in this king’s royal inscriptions. Even when narratives of hostages were absent from an inscription, Aššurnaširpal II included this title in his titulary.²⁴⁸

A few other terms have also been translated “hostage” or “surety”: *šapru*, *šīru*, and *maškanā(ti)*. As indicated by the chart, these terms all occur within specific time periods and appear to be = regionally as well as chronologically specific, and may also refer to various levels of dignitaries with a different function than that previously discussed for the *līṭū*. Within the royal inscriptions, the term *lú.šaprāte/šaprūte* is only used by Aššurnaširpal II and in one

²⁴⁰ RIMA 2 A.0.87.13: 4’–9’.

²⁴¹ RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 30–33.

²⁴² RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 97b–100a.

²⁴³ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 50b–56a.

²⁴⁴ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 64b–70a, 70b–77a.

²⁴⁵ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 99b–104a.

²⁴⁶ RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 130–141a.

²⁴⁷ This title is immediately followed by another title which is essentially a play on words with *šābit līṭī* “seizer of hostages”: *šākin lītē* “establisher of victories.” Cf. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 17; 2: 7; 3: 28; 23: 5; 26: 13; 28: iii 7; 30: 9; 33: 14’; 51: 11; 56: 6.

²⁴⁸ E.g. RIMA 2 A.0.101.23: 5, 26: 13, 28: iii 7. Apparently, the choice of title is not directly related to the acts which were emphasized in narrative. While Aššurnaširpal II regularly records graphically detailed descriptions of how he killed his enemies (e.g. decapitation, burning alive, flaying, hanging, etc.), none of these acts is recorded in his titulary. Meanwhile, there are only four incidents in which he took hostages (cf. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1 and 2), yet “hostage seizer” makes an appearance in ten separate inscriptions (cf. 1, 2, 3, 23, 26, 28, 30, 33, 51, 56).

specific narrative.²⁴⁹ This term is used in reference to the siege of the city Madara, in the Nairi mountains (near Turkish Kurdistan):²⁵⁰

kur.*Kašiyaru attabalkat šaniatešú ana mātāti Nairi attarad ina uru.Šiggiša assakan bēdāk ištu uru.Šingiša attumuš ana uru.Madara āl dannūtišu ša m.Labṭuri mār ṭupusi aqṭirib āl dan danniš 4 dūrāni lābe ālu assibi ištu pān kakkīya dannūti iplahūma makkūrušunu būšašunu mārīšunu ana šaprūte amhuršunu ana šūzub napšātišunu uššeršunu biltu maddattu urāsī elišunu aškun ālu appul aqqur ana tili u karmē utēr*

For a second time I crossed Mount Kašiyaru and descended into the Nairi lands. I set up [my camp] and spent the night at the city Šiggiša. From the city Šiggiša I set out for the city of Madara—the fortified city of Labṭuri, the son of Ṭupusi (ruler of the land of Nirdun). I reached it and surrounded this strong city, fortified by four walls. They became scared of my mighty weapon and I received their *makkūru*, *būšu*, and their sons as *šaprūte*. I spared them to save their lives. *Biltu*, *maddattu*, and *urāsī* I set upon them. I felled their city. I demolished it. I turned it into tells and ruins.

Here the Assyrian king receives *būšu* (belongings) and *makkūru* (saleable property) in addition to city dwellers as *šaprūte* or “hostages” or “surety.”²⁵¹ Another of Aššurnaširpal II’s inscriptions records visiting dignitaries invited to the consecration of his palace at Kalhu.²⁵² In this list, *šaprūte* are listed in conjunction with *šīru*, all of whom come from twelve named Aramaean princedoms to the west of Assyria.²⁵³ The two other attestations of this term appear in state letters dating to Sargon II’s reign (722 – 705). One of these is found sandwiched between merchants and palace stewards (lú.rab bīt-ēkalli) in a list of people relating to the appointment of a government official.²⁵⁴ The other is found in a letter from Sargon to Aššur-šarru-ušur, the governor of Que, wherein we find greater detail on the role of the lú.šaprūte.²⁵⁵

¹ša¹ tašpuranni mā lú.mār—šip¹ri¹ [ša]
mMetā kur.Muskāya ina muhḫiya it¹tal¹kā
mā 14 ummānāti kur.Quwāy¹a ša¹ m¹Uri¹k
ana lú.šaprūte ana kur.Urartū ušēbilūni mā
ina muhḫiya naša tariiṣ adanniš annurī
Aššur aŠamaš Bēl aNabū ilāniya ētap¹šú lā¹
ina libbi qarābi* [lā ina libbi] ¹me¹mmēni
kur.Muskāya pišū ittannanāši ana salmini
ittūar

As to what you wrote to me: “A messenger of Midas the Phrygian has come to me, bringing me 14 men of Que whom Urik had sent to Urartū as lú.šaprūte”—this is extremely good! My gods Aššur, Šamaš, Bel, and Nabū have now taken action, and without a battle or anything, the Phrygian has given us his word and become our ally.

²⁴⁹ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1, 17, 19, 30.

²⁵⁰ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 97b–100a.

²⁵¹ *mārūšunu*: “their sons” presumably refers to the people of the city, as there is only one king in question. Cf. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 97b–100a; 17: iv 46–47a; 19: 65b–66a.

²⁵² RIMA 2 A.0.101.30: 143.

²⁵³ Specifically, from Suhu (a region of Aramaeans along the mid-Euphrates), Patinu, Hatti (the eastern neo-Hittite empire), Tyre, Sidon, Gurgum, Malid, Hubuški, Gilzanu, Kummu, and Mušašir.

²⁵⁴ SAA 12 083: r 16.

²⁵⁵ SAA 01 001 = 19 152 (=NL 039): o 3 – 10a.

These men were subjects of the Assyrian king that an insurrectionist had sent to the kingdom of Urartu (an enemy of the Assyrian state), had been captured by Midas the king of Phrygia, and then returned to the Assyrian governor. In return, Sargon tells his governor to release whatever Phrygians his governor held in his court and maintain friendly relations (r 16 – 25). Each of these attestations suggests a court position between emissary and hostage: *šaprūte* appear as people of high status who appear to have lived at a foreign court as a sign of amicableness between two polities. Thus, a better translation for *šaprūte* is “envoy” or “emissary” rather than “hostage.”

To further support separating *šapru* from “hostage” is its connection with *šīru*. The term *šīru*, as previously discussed, appears to have also been a form of official that made regular trips to foreign courts. It is also attested in several letters and administrative documents within the SAA project, where *šīru* appear to hold the role of a mid- to high level city or regional official from the reign of Aššur-dan III onward.²⁵⁶ The term is used indiscriminately for all regions from the far west (Kumuh, Que, Sam'al), to the Levant (Ashdod, Moab, Gaza, Judah) and Egypt, and to the north and east (Urartu, Mannea, Elam). But none of these high-ranking individuals were victims of pillaging or booty. Instead, they appear to have been gifted with deported captives from other regions.²⁵⁷

The final term that has been connected to the position of “hostage” is *maškanā(te)*. Similar to the above several terms, however, further investigation suggests the term refers not to hostages, but to emissaries or envoys from mobile or tribal peoples. The etymology of the term alone supports this, as *maškanu*'s primary meaning is “tent.” In all attestations in which it has been hypothesized to mean “hostage” the determinative recorded is for “people” (lú) rather than the determinative “túg” used when specifying tents. This term is attested infrequently and only for those mobile peoples who lived under the authority of Assyria.

One term that has seldom been connected to the “hostage” form of deportation is *galû*. This verb and its derivatives (*galītu*, *galūtu*, *šaglû*, *šaglūtu*) have been assumed to be connected to captive deportation—presumably from its cognate's use in the Hebrew Bible to describe those who were deported from Jerusalem and Judah to Babylon. However, *galû* et al.'s usage suggests

²⁵⁶ E.g. SAA 06 312, 313; 07 58, 127; 01 10, 32, 33, 76; 09 002; 10 185; RINAP 5 3, 4. Before Aššur-dan III, the term is only found in this context in the list of invited dignitaries Aššurnaširpal II invited to the consecration of his Kalhu palace. All other attestations appear as an adjective modifying either the king or the gods.

²⁵⁷ Cf. SAA 01 010 = ABL 0306+: 2-21, wherein lú.šīru from Urartu receive lú.hubtu “captive deportees” from the Assyrian king at the city of Urzuhina.

it aligned more closely with exile and the “hostage” category of deportation. The terms are found primarily within the royal correspondence of the state archives rather than the royal inscriptions,²⁵⁸ and express great concern from elite persons or tribal people that they might be *galû*-ed. For example, in a letter from Aššurbanipal (668 – 631) we hear that the lú.Ru’ua people had written to the Assyrian king begging not to be exiled (*šaglû*) and left at the mercy of the Elamites.²⁵⁹

ʿša lú.Ru¹ [ša] [taš]purāni mā šēpī¹ka*¹
 nišbat mā palhāni issu pān šagalūti ša
 kur.Aššur issu pān tūrute ša kutalli ana
 kur.Elamti.ki ūma kī ša taqbiāni ina pān
 mBēl-iqīša alkāni qaqquru bīt tara’amāni
 lušašbītununu ina libbi šība urdāniya attunu
 uru.bīrtu ša lú.Ru¹ issu mBēl-iqīša ušra
 ina libbi ilāniya attama šumma anāku
ušaggalūkanūni šumma ana kutal
 usahharūkanū<ni> ana kur.Elamti
 assaprakkunu lā tapallahā

Concerning what you wrote about the lú.Ru’ua: “We want to submit. We are afraid of being exiled from Assyria and of being exposed to Elam.” Now, in accordance with what you said, come before Bel-iqīša, and let him settle you (like my subject) in a territory that you like. Stay there as my subjects and guard the fortress of the lú.Ru’ua with Bel-iqīša.

I swear by my gods that I shall not **exile** you; I will not expose you to Elam. I am writing to you: don’t be afraid.

The king promises to deport (*šušbutu*) and resettle them as his subjects in an area or house of their choosing rather than exiling them (*galû*) to be at the mercy of their enemy Elam.

In a letter to an unidentified Assyrian king, we find that a diviner had been exiled by the king and had been held in confinement until an official came to release him.

ultu] ʿmuhhi¹ ūmu ša šarru bēlā [ušeg]lānni
 šabtak u ašbāk [ūmussu a]ʿna¹ šarri beliya
 ušalla [m.d.Nabû-killā]anni lú.rab-lú.šāqē
 [lú.rab-kašir kī] išpuraššu iptataranni

Ever since the day when the king my lord exiled me, I have sat in confinement, praying to the king, my lord, every day, (until) Nabû-killanni the chief cupbearer sent a cohort commander to release me.

In this sense, from the perspective of the one exiled to *galû* or to exile an elite person would be to commit them to a status approaching that of a hostage in a foreign land—refugee status being received only when one voluntarily fled one’s own country.

Thus, I have identified several variations of “hostage” status within the Assyrian royal inscriptions and state archives: *lītu* of two variations, *maškanā(te)*, *šapru* and *šīru*, and *galû/galītu*/et al. The first of these (*lītu*) appears primarily during the Middle to early Neo-Assyrian periods—extending into Sargon II’s reign—and addressed two variations of “hostage”: one valuable primarily in his ability to guide or dissuade further violence during a foreign

²⁵⁸ All but six of the forty-three attestations appear in the correspondence of the Sargonid kings (722 – 631). These last six either appear in undatable letters (two) or in grants, decrees, or treaties (four).

²⁵⁹ SAA 21 050 (=ABL 0541): o 1’ – r 9.

campaign through unknown mountainous regions, and another form wherein a person was held as surety for future payment of owed deliverables. At the end of the Sargonid period, another term *lú.maškanā(te)* is used to refer to mobile people from within Assyria proper that were held as “hostages” or “surety.” The next category of envoy or emissary (*šapru* and *šīru*) appears during the early Neo-Assyrian period and continues until the end of our documentation. While envoys and emissaries are not “hostages” *sensu stricto*, they do occupy a fine line between ambassador and hostage where they are at the mercy of their host court. We also know that these persons resided at the Assyrian court for differing periods of time—some arrived merely for building consecrations, others for annual parade before the king, others more routinely—such that they were assigned special garments to be left at the palace—and finally, those who remained at the Assyrian court indefinitely. Finally, the last category within the “hostage” class of deportation is that of the “exiled” persons (*galû* and its derivatives). This last group pertains primarily to the fear of being held as hostage by those who were expelled from their country by force. Thus, the category of *galû* does not precisely refer to the deported captives as so often assumed in studies linking the Neo-Assyrian corpora with the deportees removed from Judah and other topics of biblical interest.

3.3.3 Corvée Deportation

Within the greater socio-economic system(s) of the day, unpaid, intermittent labor—i.e. corvée labor—was regularly instituted by state and aristocrat/feudal lord upon their subjects. When imposed by the state as a form of levy or taxation, this type of corvée primarily focuses on public works and is termed “statute labor.”²⁶⁰ Such forms of taxation were especially suited for populations that do not have land, crops, or cash—e.g. mobile peoples. Like many other economic systems (e.g. feudalism), there were no native terms to describe the system at large in Assyria or Mesopotamia. However, what we have instead are terms that denote the type of corvée work performed in a given situation: *ilku*, *tupšikku*, *kudurru*, and *dulli šarri*. While most of these terms apply solely to peoples within the empire, one at least (*tupšikku*) appears to have described corvée labor as imposed upon buffer states or allies. All terms discussed below

²⁶⁰ “Statute Labour,” 2015. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. online: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/statute-labour>. Accessed 09 June 2020.

incorporate the imperially administered movement of peoples and thus provide examples of deportation.

Much of the previous work done on corvée work has centered around the term *ilku*. Our understanding of *ilku* during the Neo-Assyrian period (911 – 609) is based upon our perceptions of *ilku* during the Old Babylonian period (1894 – 1595).²⁶¹ Sufficient work has now been done on *ilku* and other state service during the Neo-Babylonian period onward (especially 626 – 484) to adjust some of these earlier interpretations, especially in comparison with Neo-Assyrian attestations. As a base, corvée laborers were:

levied from free, but taxable households, as well as from larger entities such as tax units, but also from temples, villages or cities, on a seasonal basis, or simply according to requirements. Individuals had to fulfil a limited period of service; the hiring of substitute laborers recruited from the free population that did not own taxable properties was extremely common (Jursa & Waerzeggers 2009). ... [Hiring such substitute laborers was] particularly common when it came to strenuous service outside Babylonia, especially for military purposes. There are several contracts in which substitutes are hired by those liable for service. In part the relevant terminology reflects this practice: next to *ilku* ‘service obligation’, *šāb šarri* ‘(service as) royal soldier’ ... and the like one finds also *kutallūtu* ‘service as a substitute’ among the terms for pertinent obligations. ²⁶²

Although some of the terminology of the Neo and Late Babylonian periods reflect different technical applications, the term *ilku* seems to remain the same. This is especially important when we recall the letter to the Neo-Assyrian king in which a Babylonian official warns against imposing *ilku* or *tupšikku* upon the cities with exempt status (*zakātu*), but allows that *dulli šarri* is permitted legally.²⁶³ The first of these, *ilku*, seems most likely to be connected to agricultural statute labor; *tupšikku/kudurru* primarily referred to building projects; and *dulli šarri* seems to have been a much more general term, including any job the king might have assigned to a particular official or artisan.

While there are records exempting (*zakātu*) individuals of certain cities or specific individuals from grain and straw taxation and corvée labor,²⁶⁴ the vast majority of the population were subject to tax levy. In one letter to the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon, one Bēl-ušēzib explains the tax exemptions of Babylon, Nippur, and Sippar by quoting the literary text known as

²⁶¹ As per Kienast 1980, Postgate 1982.

²⁶² Jursa 2015: 346, 352.

²⁶³ SAA 18 124, discussed below.

²⁶⁴ Cf. SAA 12 025: o 30 – r 8; 12 026; 12 035.

the *Babylonian Fürstenspiegel*.²⁶⁵ Though its dating has been debated,²⁶⁶ Biggs (2004) proposed the text should be considered evidence of political agenda rather than addressing a particular foreign king—as had been previously suggested—in light of the date of its Nippur exemplar (ca. 755–732).²⁶⁷

*umma lū šarru lū šandabakku lū lú.aklum lū
lú.šāpiru ša ilku muhhi Sippar.ki Nippur.ki
u Babylon.ki iššakkanuma tupšikku bītāti
ilāni immidu ...*

“If a king, a governor of Nippur, a supervisor, or a scribe assigns corvée service (*ilku*) to Sippar, Nippur, or Babylon, or imposes corvée service (*tupšikku*) of the temples...”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ SAA 18 124 = CT 54 212, and OIP 114 128, respectively.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Hunger 1968, Lambert 1968, Reiner 1982, Tadmor 1986, Cole 1996, Hurowitz 1998, Biggs 2004, etc.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Biggs 2004: 1-5; Finn 2017: 85-89.

²⁶⁸ SAA 18 124 (= CT 54 212): r 4b – 5.

The above passage is taken from the end of Bēl-ušēzib’s letter, where he quoted a rescension or paraphrases a passage from the *Fürstenspiegel*. The original phrase from that literary text appears below:

Sippar.ki ¹*Nippur*.ki u *Baby*¹*lon*.ki
*mit*¹*hāriš* [ZI(?)*-bi*?] *šābū šunū*¹*tu*¹ ***tupšikka***
ē[*medda i*]***ilki*** [*šisīt*] [l]ú.*nāgiri elišu*[*nu*
ukannu] ^a*Mar*¹*duk ap*[*kal*]¹*li i*¹*āni rubū*
*muš*¹*ta*¹[*lum*] ¹*mās*¹*su ana lú.nakrišu*
*usahharma šabī māti*¹*šu* ***tupšik***¹*ka* ¹*a*¹[*n*]*a*
lú.nakrišu ¹*i*¹*zabbil*...

If [he mobilizes] Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon all at once, if he imposes corvée service (***tupšikku***) upon their workers, if he imposes the herald’s call to corvée service (***ilku***) over them, then Marduk—sage of the gods, perfect prince—will turn over his land to his enemy and the forces of his land will perform corvée service (***tupšikku***) for his enemy. ...²⁶⁹

With very little variation to the specific technical jargon (*ilku*, *tupšikku*), the astronomer quoted relevant passages of the literary text. But just in case Esarhaddon or his officials did not catch the significance of the text, he also provided a brief explanation for what types of work the king could require of the inhabitants of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon.

ana ilki ul iddekkū maddatta [x x x x x x]
[*dul*]¹*li*¹ *šarri šá šarru igerrūma ippušū*
tupšikku *ina libbi ul* ¹*x*¹+ [x x x x x x]

[Nippur] is not summoned for corvée service (***ilku***) and it [does not pay] tribute (*maddattu*). They do only the king’s work (***dulli šarri***) that the king can legally claim; they do not [perform] corvée service (***tupšikku***) therein.²⁷⁰

Bēl-ušēzib’s letter specifically addresses the sanctions put upon corvée labor for certain, privileged cities in Karduniaš, but in doing so it also shines light upon the available forms of corvée service available to Mesopotamian rulers. These terms and phrases have been difficult to disambiguate, but their usage in the royal inscriptions and state archives of Assyria suggests both a start toward defining the terms and identifying a chronological development of the preferred terms. Both captive deportees (next section) and other inhabitants of the empire were required to perform statute labor and other forms of corvée service.

3.3.3.1 *tupšikku*

The first attestation of corvée labor in the royal inscriptions appears as *tupšikku* during the reign of the Middle Assyrian king Adad-narāri I (1295 – 1234),²⁷¹ followed by a string of six attestations during Tukulti-Ninurta I’s reign (1233-1197).²⁷² Adad-narāri I’s use of *tupšikku* appears in the phrase *alla marra u tupšikka* “hoe, spade, and basket”—a combination of two

²⁶⁹ OIP 114 128: 24 – 29.

²⁷¹ RIMA 1 A.0.76.03: 44.

²⁷⁰ SAA 18 124 (= CT 54 212): o10b – 11.

²⁷² RIMA 1 A.0.78.01: iii 6, iv 23; 05: 32; 23: 39; 26:16; 1001: o 7’.

phrases both including *tupšikku* that were first attested during the Middle Assyrian and Old Babylonian periods,²⁷³ but otherwise not noted by the CAD. The term *tupšikku* next appears during the reign of Šalmaneser IV's reign (782 – 773), in which we find the first attestation of the phrase *ilku tupšikku*²⁷⁴—a phrase that pops up periodically during the rest of the Neo-Assyrian empire.²⁷⁵

In its earliest (Middle Assyrian) appearances in our corpus, *tupšikku* was imposed upon the recently defeated peoples of Hanigalbat²⁷⁶ and also of the lands of Uqumēni, the (lú.)Qutî, Alzi, Amadāni, Nihāni, Alāya, Tepurzi, Purulimzi, and a host of other lands in the Nairi mountains and the former Hanigalbat domain (both to the west-northwest of the Assyrian heartland).²⁷⁷ After a break of about five hundred years, during which the term is not used in any of our extant royal inscriptions, *tupšikku* appears once more. Later Neo-Assyrian attestations in royal inscriptions from Šalmaneser IV (782 – 773) through Sennacherib (704 – 681) also record imposing *tupšikku* upon conquered peoples. Sennacherib justified destruction by the god Aššur by linking it to the divine order of things: Aššur destroys the insubmissive so that: *biltu u maddattu immidū šēruššun ūmēšam lā naparkā ezabbilū tupšikšun* “tribute and bribe are imposed upon them; daily without cease, they perform their *tupšikku* service.”²⁷⁸ Corvée service as *tupšikku* was imposed only upon the subjects of the empire—whether they be newly acquired vassals or subjects of longer standing.

Sennacherib used *tupšikku* solely in reference to the corvée service required of conquered peoples whom he had uprooted after they refused to submit.²⁷⁹ Esarhaddon resurrected the phrase *allu tupšikku* “hoe (and) basket (service)” known from a Middle Assyrian account of the creation

²⁷³ Cf. KAR 4: 30 (*alla u tupšikka...*), ABIM 5:13 (*giš.mar.hi.a u tupšikkātum...*), respectively. The full phrase appears again in the royal inscriptions in slight inversion or the individual terms are used in parallel during Esarhaddon's (680 – 669; RINAP 62: vi 38), Nabopolassar's (625 – 605; VAB 4 62 iii 12, 60 i 42), and Nabonidus's (555 – 539; VAB 4 240 ii 53) reigns, but *allu* and *marru* are not attested between in either royal inscription or archival text.

²⁷⁴ RIMA 3 A.0.105.2: 22.

²⁷⁵ 13x in the SAA—all of which are part of a longer phrase of taxation forms a city or group are exempt from—and 3 in the RINAP.

²⁷⁶ Adad-narāri I, RIMA 1 A.0.76.03: 44.

²⁷⁷ Tukulti-Ninurta I, RIMA 1 A.0.78.01: iii 6, iv 23; 05: 32; 23: 39; 26:16; 1001: o 7'.

²⁷⁸ RINAP 3 161 (=K 08664): o 10-11

²⁷⁹ RINAP 3 1: 71 (=2.42, 3.42; // 4.69), 15: v 46 (=16: v 69, 17: v 55); in summaries 42: 13 (=43:33, 44: 33, 50: 8); 161: o 11.

of mankind (KAR 4:30). This phrase is used in each of the attestations from Esarhaddon’s reign in reference to building works he had initiated in Assyria.²⁸⁰ It may, in fact, be an attempt at archaizing the more common phrase *ilku tupšikku*, as its usage increased from Esarhaddon’s reign onward.²⁸¹ Aššurbanipal continues the joyous building narrative of his father, but he drops the *allu* “hoe” and *tupšikku* appears about one third of the times it is attested during the previous two kings’ reigns.

3.3.3.2 *kudurru*

During the period in which *tupšikku* is not attested in the royal inscriptions (between 1197 – 782), we find another term for “basket” *kudurru* is used instead. During the early Neo-Assyrian period, the term *kudurru* is only attested by Aššurnāširpal II (883 – 859)²⁸² and Šalmaneser III (858 – 811).²⁸³ Within these kings’ royal inscriptions, there are three distinct variations of the term: *kudurru*, *lú.zābil kudurri*, and *(lú.)kādurru*.²⁸⁴ As with *tupšikku*, the references to “*kudurru* baskets” in royal inscriptions are not to baskets themselves, but metonymical references to the work done with the baskets.

The basic term *kudurru* refers to a type of basket used to carry plants and soil (primarily used in making bricks for building projects), so for it to be paired with a participle that means “one who carries” (*zābil<zabālu*) is unremarkable. The term *kudurru* on its own is only used in summary notes that refer more generally to what the king demanded of his governors: *urdūti uppušū kudurru ēmessunūti*, “they performed servitude; I imposed upon them (the task of supplying) *kudurru*.”²⁸⁵ The four attestations of this exact phrase further spell out the manner in

²⁸⁰ RINAP 4 1: v 48 (// 2: iv 45; 5: viii 3’; 106: iii 11); 1: vi 38; 48: r 97 (// 104: iii 23; 105: iv 16; 106: iii 11; 114: iv 7; 116: r 11); 57: iv 14; 2003: ii 13’ (// 2004: 14’).

²⁸¹ Although its first attestation in the state archives is dated to Adad-nārāri II (SAA 12 069: r 26, 27), the vast majority appear from Esarhaddon’s reign onward: SAA 18 124: o 11, r 5; SAA 12 025: r 2; 026: r 2; 035: r 21; 036: r 27’; 039: r 6’; 040: r 2’; additional attestations appear in the following texts of uncertain dating: SAA 10 143: r 4; SAA 12 049: o 5’, 092: o 12, 096: b.e. 22.

²⁸² *Kudurru/kādurru*: RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 53, 67, 73; ii 11, 47=17: iii 23, 50=17: iii 28, 79=17: iii 109; iii 125=3: 46=26: 31=51: 25; 17: i 79, 88; ii 34, 47; 19: 99.

²⁸³ RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: iv 39.

²⁸⁴ While the CAD and RIMA combine these variants in a single-entry *sub voca* “*kudurru*,” close reading illustrates nuances between the variants.

²⁸⁵ E.g. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 125; 3: 46; 26: 31; 51: 26.

which *kudurru* service was carried out: namely, that the appointed governors were required to organize the workforce teams to represent their lands in the capital's projects.²⁸⁶

The variant (lú.)*kadurru* is found twice with the determinative, both regarding the service required of the kings of Zamua specifically to be performed at Kalhu (modern Nimrud, Iraq),²⁸⁷ and five times without.²⁸⁸ Incidentally, this episode with the kings of Zamua is one of two times prior to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744 – 727) in which an Assyrian king specifies where a group will perform their service and is the only time the term is performed by a named group in royal inscriptions.²⁸⁹ This notation that the lú.*kadurru* of Zamua will work in Kalhu appears to be an intensification of the usual service, as it is only mentioned after the last of three uprisings by Zamua alongside a note that their tributes and taxes had been increased.²⁹⁰ We also discover that Kalhu had been abandoned and Aššurnaširpal settled (*šušbutu*) people from newly conquered lands (including Zamua) therein.²⁹¹ Quashing Zamua's third uprising appears to mark the annexation of Zamua to Assyria, for it is the first time that Aššurnaširpal records having required taxes (*biltu*) from the area.²⁹² All previous revolts had been against the payment of tribute / bribe (*maddattu*) and supplying of *zābil kudurri* or *kadurru*.²⁹³

The term *kudurru* also appears a handful of times from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744 – 727) to the end of the Assyrian empire (609). The attestation from Tiglath-Pileser III's reign may provide additional insight into how this form of corvée was carried out.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁶ This is further borne out in the land grant “*kudurru*” from the reign of Adad-Nerari III, wherein he grants the governor of kur.Rašappa the governorship of kur.Hindānu and the ilku service required of the people therein (cf. RIMA 3 A.0.104.9: o 5).

²⁸⁷ Aššurnaširpal II, RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 79 and 17: iii 109.

²⁸⁸ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 73, ii 47, 50; 17: iii 23, 29.

²⁸⁹ Accordingly, the vowel variant does not preserve a dialectal difference but instead reflects intentional harmonizing with the G participial form along the *pāris* formation and thus should be transcribed as a denominative participle *kādurru*.

²⁹⁰ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 49b – 51a, ii 77b – 80a.

²⁹¹ RIMA 2 A.0.101.26: 46b – 52.

²⁹² RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 78 – 80a.

²⁹³ RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 47.

²⁹⁴ RINAP 1 35: i 38' – 42'a

100 *alāni ša mTarḫulari kur.Gurgumāya*
akt[um ...] adi ālāni 'ša' siḫirtišunu akšud
m'Tar'[ḫulari ...] 'adi' ašarēdūti 'ša'
māti'su' itti ku'durru'[šunu adi mahriya
illikūnimma] unaššiqū šēpīya ana lā
ḫul'l[uq] 'kur'.[Gur]'gume' [...] amḫuršu

I overwhelmed 100 cities of Tarhulara the Gurgumite. ... I conquered ... together with the cities in their environs. **Tarhulara ... together with the foremost men of his land and their kudurru came before me** and kissed my feet in order that I might not destroy the land of Gurgume. I received ... from him.

Here we find a hint that the term *kudurru* may also stand for the person performing the service, as well as the service referenced through mention of the basket. As it is rare that a fientive verb can have an abstract noun as its direct object, the context here prevents interpreting *kudurru* as “service.” But if we were to interpret it as “basket,” this would be the sole instance in which the term were not used metonymically. A third option would be to interpret the term as yet another instance of metonymy along the lines of (lú.)*kadurru* discussed above—the person(s) performing the service. When read this way, the people who come to meet Tiglath-Pileser and beg for mercy include the Gurgumite leader, Tarhulara, the foremost leaders of Gurgum, and the men who would perform *kudurru* service for the Assyrian king.²⁹⁵

The majority of the attestations of *kudurru* during the late Neo-Assyrian period are found in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions, where the term most often appears in the context of Esarhaddon ceremonially joining the rebuilding of a temple of Aššur alongside people of lands he had conquered. But while the conquered deportees take up *allum u tupšikku* “hoe and basket,” the king himself lifts a *kudurru* upon his head.²⁹⁶ The obvious archaizing of *allum* (one would expect the mimation of the case ending to be absent) further supports the thesis put forth earlier that *tupšikku* was the term primarily used for such service in Assyria, where *kudurru* was the preferred term of Aššurnasirpal II and used primarily in archaizing contexts afterward. Outside of Assyria, most of the attestations of *kudurru* appear in Babylonian texts.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ This reinterpretation may find support in one of Esarhaddon’s texts (RINAP 4: 076: o 9 – 12), wherein he boasts of having summoned the workforce of Aššur from all the settlements and the rulers from the four quarters of the earth to rebuild the temple of Aššur. The people thus mustered brought *kudurru* with them to the capital city (*kudurru ittašūni ana āli kiššūte*). While it is certainly possible that both cases refer to “baskets” rather than those who performed the labor, it would make more sense for a king to boast about the workforce he had assembled than about the baskets his subjects brought to the city. Requests for more baskets would be more likely to be found within the state archives—where, incidentally, this term (*kudurru*) does not appear.

²⁹⁶ RINAP 4: 57: iv 11 – 15, iv 36 – 38.

²⁹⁷ Cf. CAD K s.v. *kudurru* B.

3.3.3.3 *ilku*

The term *ilku* has been much discussed elsewhere by Postgate (e.g. 1971, 1974, 1982, 1987, 1989), and thus only the most relevant points for deportation and deportees shall be addressed here.²⁹⁸ As Postgate (1971) asserted, *ilku* is a form of state service or statute labor required by an overlord of his underling as a prerequisite to land tenure, known in all periods from the third millennium onward.²⁹⁹ Contrary to Postgate's assertions,³⁰⁰ however, this form of statute labor did not equate to military service during the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods but rather appears as an alternate form of statute labor alongside military service, as noted by Kienast (1980: §3). As Postgate later summarized (1989), "in NA times at least [*ilku*] was primarily a state-imposed obligation to perform military or civil service, which could be commuted to some form of payment."³⁰¹ Previously administered by local villages,³⁰² as the Assyrian empire became more centralized and *ilku* became associated with the state as well.³⁰³ The NA letters and land grants suggest that the responsibility for raising *ilku* and *tupšikku* laborers was the domain of the local officials, who would be called upon to provide laborers as the state needed.³⁰⁴ The exemptions granted to such administrators as Aššurbanipal's *lú.rab-kissiti*, Baḷṭaya, indicate that outside of these exemptions, officials entrusted with state lands were to provide the following to the state: a grain tax (*še.nusāhu*), a straw tax (*še.tibnu*), a tax on livestock (*šibit alpāni šēnī*), *ilku* service,

²⁹⁸ We know that deportees were assigned *ilku* duties from the following texts: SAA 01 099, 183, etc.

²⁹⁹ Cf. CAD I s.v. *ilku* A for early attestations.

³⁰⁰ Cf. 1971: 498, where Postgate assumes that the rations listed for those of the "army" (*ša hu-ra-di ša uru.Nihriya*) of Nihria who had performed *ilku* with their brothers must mean that *ilku* = army (from TR 3005, *Iraq* 30: 2, 1968, plate LVIII). The primary issue with this equation is that the difference between "army" and "workforce" is entirely contextual and supplied by translators. Of additional interest is that Postgate's own argument supports interpreting *hurādu* along the same lines as the more common *ummānu* or *šabū* (cf. 499 – 501, contrary to his summations of his cited evidence). His later argument (1982: 304) is less restrictive, and defines *ilku* as a broad, umbrella term for all statute labor: "what this personal service entailed varied: it was for the state to determine whether, having taken over a person, he should be employed on military or civilian duties, and the decision must have depended on economic and social conditions at the time, as well as on political events." His continued efforts to link military service to *ilku*, however, better suit Radner (2015)'s argument for hired labor (*ilku* service is not paid except in kind).

³⁰¹ 1989: 149.

³⁰² Postgate 1989: 149.

³⁰³ Postgate (1989: 149) admitted that opinions remained divided on whether the obligations were due to the state or the local village.

³⁰⁴ E.g., while pre-Sargonid kings' land grants noted exemption from grain and straw taxes (cf. SAA 12 001-018), by the time of Esarhaddon, at the latest, additional exemptions had been added, including people, orchards, and fields.

tupšikku service, and military conscription (*dikût māti*).³⁰⁵ This phrase *ilki tupšikki dikût māti lā irreddû* “they shall not be called up for *ilku*, *tupšikku*, or military conscription” in a legal document indicates that these were three different forms of statute labor during the Neo-Assyrian empire.³⁰⁶

Other attestations of the term *ilku* suggest it had become a monthly labor. For example:³⁰⁷

ʿū¹mâ nišû ilak šarri bēlišu[nu] iptalhū
 [iddubbū] mā : atâ ITI ana ITI
 u[kaššadu]nāši išten a¹na¹ [išten]
 iḫtanalli[qū] ina nagê [o] ša uru.Arpadda
 ana aḫulā nâri uššubū issu maši šarri bēli
 [mā]tu ḫannīti : uba ”ūni :

Now, people have become afraid of the *ilku* service of the king, their lord, grumbling: “Why do they month after month persecute us?” One by one, they keep running away and settling in the district of Arpad, beyond the (Euphrates) River, as though the king, my lord, were really looking for them.

Statute labor such as *ilku* and *tupšikku* had also increased in frequency or length so that it became difficult to perform other, king-appointed assignments.³⁰⁸

Regarding the frequency of the term itself, *ilku* is found attested a total of 82 times from the reign of Adad-nārari II (911 – 891) onward. This is roughly equivalent to the combined number of attestations for *tupšikku* and *kudurru* during the same period (48 and 32, respectively). Prior to this, no attestation of *ilku* is found in the royal inscriptions and only a handful of times in the Middle Assyrian laws (cf. Postgate 1971, 1974, 1982). Of these texts, the attestations of *ilku* that are not ambiguous convey a connection to agricultural work rather than military conscription (various forms of which are referred to by *šāb šarri*, *hurādu*, *dikût māti*, etc.).

³⁰⁵ SAA 12 025: 30 – 8. The official’s people are also exempt from paying quay and crossing dues, leather taxes, and other taxes and fees that are lost in the break of the tablet.

A more explicit example may be found in SAA 01 099 (=ABL 099), where an official of the Inner City of Ekallate complains about being expected to supply the deficit of workers for the *ilku* service now that the palace of Ekallate has been exempt from such labors.

³⁰⁶ Additional support for separating *ilku* from military conscription appears in SAA 19 070 (=CTN 5 p.109), where the palace herald (*nāgir ēkalli*) is informed of an argument between two of his servants. In the retelling of the tale, one servant chastises another for not banding together with the city lords around him who are “exempt of state service” (*zakkû ilki*) to fight against the invading Urartians instead of remaining inactive. Even more explicit is SAA 19 089 (=CTN 5 p.208), where servants of an official are explicitly stated to be exempt from *ilku* or military (*hurādu*) service—*hurādu* being the term upon which Postgate builds his equation (cf. 1971, 1982).

³⁰⁷ SAA 01 183 (=ABL 1287): o 12’ – 18’a.

³⁰⁸ Cf. SAA 10 143 (=ABL 0346), wherein astrologers complain that they are kept so busy with *ilku* and *tupšikku* that they are unable to perform their assigned “watch of the night” or teach their students scribal craft. Baker and Gross (2016:8-9) mistakenly associate this *maššartu* “watch” with military work, when this term has long been associated with the craft of astronomy (cf. Hunger & Pingree 1989, Hunger 1999, Horowitz 1998, Albani 1994).

3.3.3.4 *dulli (ša) šarri*

In keeping with our letter writer’s distinction between *ilku*, *tupšikku*, and *dullu ša šarri*, we find plenty of examples where *dullu ša šarri* or the “king’s work” is mentioned in ways that explicitly illustrate its separateness from *ilku*. Contra Postgate (1971)—who equates all “civilian” state service with *dullu ša šarri* or the earlier, Middle Assyrian phrase *šipar šarri*³⁰⁹—most attestations of the phrase *dullu ša šarri* or *dulli šarri* seem to refer to another form of labor entirely. Rather than interpreting *dullu ša šarri* as an “alternative employment for those called up for *ilku* service,”³¹⁰ which would contradict our letter writer’s distinction, we find that such king’s work often conflicted with *ilku* service.

In one letter to a royal official,³¹¹ we find that a group of blacksmiths have withdrawn from their *ilku* labor because, not having the necessary fields, no one has provided them with grain for their *ilku* service. Therefore, they have returned to their regular work inside the palaces (the *dullu ša ēkallāni*, a variant of *dulli šarri*, itemized as iron swords, nails, and other weapons at the beginning of the letter). In another letter regarding the building of Dūr-Šarrukīn (Sargon’s Fort),³¹² an official reports his workers performing *dulli šarri* that included: creating(?) the Aššur-of-Lions and other bits for the Inner City and the Review Palace, respectively. Other letters request reeds in order to complete *dulli ša šarri*,³¹³ discuss the difficulties of completing the work due to the interruptions by *kallapus* and trackers (*rādi kibiāni*),³¹⁴ and inquire as to the straw and reeds sent for *dullum ša šarri*.³¹⁵ Administrative texts provide itemized lists of artisan work labelled *dulli šarri*.³¹⁶ And, finally, several letters from scholars report performing rituals attest the same phrase, but best translated as “ritual.”³¹⁷

In other letters, however, we see a conflation of the terms *dullu ša šarri* and *ilku*. Since *dullu* is the most general term for work, it stands to reason that some writers would refer to state

³⁰⁹ Postgate 1971: 501-2; 1982: 305.

³¹⁰ Postgate 1982: 305.

³¹¹ SAA 16 040 (=CT 53 013).

³¹² SAA 01 039 (=ABL 1177).

³¹³ SAA 01 144 (=ABL 0626).

³¹⁴ SAA 01 147 (=ABL 0526).

³¹⁵ SAA 01 237 (=CT 53 072).

³¹⁶ E.g. SAA 07 066 (=ADD 0935+), 067 (=ADD 0934),

³¹⁷ E.g. SAA 10 255 (=ABL 0018), 275 (=ABL 0553).

imposed corvée with the phrase “king’s work.”³¹⁸ Thus, although “king’s work” is occasionally used instead of *ilku* in such letters, it stands separately in the majority of texts—especially in legal or administrative documents, where more precision to technical terminology is found. Even in a letter to Sargon II about people escaping from *ilku*, *šābi šarrūte*, and then finally from *dulli šarri*, we find a progression in severity of the offense in the rhetoric of the letter writer.³¹⁹ Still, even with these examples of inexactitude on the part of the letter writer, the term does not equate to *ilku*.

Although none of the above terms, *tupšikku* / *kudurru*, *ilku*, or *dulli šarri* apply exclusively to deportees, we find deportees performing all three forms of statute labor for the Assyrian throne, especially starting in the early Neo-Assyrian period. All subjects of the empire who had not been born into or granted *zakātu* or exemption status were required to fulfill statute labor in the form of *ilku* and *tupšikku* or *kudurru*. But even those granted exemption from all other taxes and fees were still required to perform *dulli šarri* with the rest of the empire’s subjects. And while generally the terms align with specific forms of public works—*ilku* as horticultural and agricultural labor, *tupšikku* / *kudurru* as maintenance on public buildings and state infrastructure, *dulli šarri* as skilled labor and artisanal work—there are times in which the letter writer appears to use a term according to a more popular meaning than its technical sense (e.g. *dulli šarri* instead of *ilku*; *ilku* instead of *tupšikku*). The regularity and heaviness of these corvée levies, as indicated in the letters discussed above, often encouraged laborers to run away from the work—which presumably led to an increased need for additional laborers and an increase in *šallatu* or *hubtu* deportations.

3.3.4. “Permanent” Relocation

3.3.4.1 Captive Deportation

Of the plunder and loot of battle, several classes of human captives are frequently attested in the texts. While soldiers were frequently killed by or absorbed into the victorious army and kings were similarly dispatched or held hostage at court, other classes experienced different fates. Among the terms found in the Assyro-Babylonian sources, three refer to persons captured as

³¹⁸ E.g. the text SAA 01 099 (=ABL 099), that Postgate (1971, 1974) used for his general equation of *dullu ša šarri* with *ilku*.

³¹⁹ SAA 05 052 (=ABL 0252).

loot, plunder, or booty: *šallatu*, *hubtu*, and ZI.MEŠ. Unlike “loot,” “plunder,” or “booty,” however, these three terms are not true synonyms but refer to specific types of captives. In the cases of *šallatu* and *hubtu*, we can trace a chronological development of semantic range from the Middle Assyrian to the late Neo-Assyrian periods. *Šallatu* is used primarily in connection with city-dwellers and other elite, nonmilitary persons taken captive. *Hubtu* refers both to general plunder as well as lower-class captives (those of the steppe and country). Finally, the term ZI.MEŠ is used exclusively in the state archives to refer to all able-bodied captives who were not part of the military as commodities to be fed, relocated, and governed as needed.³²⁰

3.3.4.1.1 *šallatu* Captives

By far the most frequently attested of the three terms, *šallatu* and its cognate verb (*šalāhu*) deal solely with the deportation of captive elites. This term is occasionally difficult to distinguish whether it refers to either human or material booty, as has been noted in the past,³²¹ but closer inspection permits greater certainty. For example:³²²

2530 *nišī adi maršītišunu ašlulamma* I captured 2530 people with their pasturable livestock
An example of how *šallatu* is similarly used of captives follows:³²³

1000 <i>erim.meš kur.x-[...] ... 4000</i>	[He ...] 1000 troops of the land. He uprooted 4000
<i>šallassunu issuhā ana māṭ aAššur</i>	captives from among them and brought them down
<i>ušeri^f dā?¹ [...]</i>	into Assyria. ...

Because of the frequency with which *šallatu* is found in situations such as this, we can assert with relative certainty that the term *šallatu* was only ever used of human captives—more specifically, of non-royal and non-military elite persons.³²⁴ While the verb develops until it

³²⁰ The term is never once spelled phonetically when it is used in this manner, therefore I have chosen not to refer to this term by its Akkadian equivalent.

³²¹ Cf. CAD Š s.v. *šallatu*; and Oded 1979: 7. The verb *šalāhu* and its derived forms (i.e. *šallūtu*, *šallatu*, *šallatiš*) have proven difficult to translate due to their unique semantic range. Due to our own uncertainties, we adopted the term “booty” as *šallatu*’s most common rendering. But the term “booty” does not specifically imply human spoils of war, nor is it immediately connected to a verb “to loot, plunder.” Analysis of all the attestations of these terms within the Assyrian royal inscriptions—and all other terms for spoils of war, payments, and bribes—illustrates that these terms had a much more restricted semantic range initially, which only expanded during the late Neo-Assyrian Empire.

³²² Sargon II (722 – 705): Fuchs (1997): *Annalen*: 116 (= Lie, W 90).

³²³ Aššur-bēl-kala (1073 – 1056): RIMA 2 A.0.7: ii 1 – 3. See also, Sennacherib (704 – 681) RINAP 3 1: 60-61. Another example is found in the use of the determinative *lú* for people with the term—e.g. *lú.šallūtu* in SAA 19 070 (=CTN 5 p. 109): r 13’.

³²⁴ The connection to elites is primarily gleaned through comparison with the term *hubtu*’s use in the state archives.

contains the notion of *šuṣbutu* deportation by the late Neo-Assyrian empire, the nominal forms *šallatu* and *šallūtu* only ever refer to the removal of elite persons as spoils of war.³²⁵

Comparing *šallatu* with other terms for plunder strongly suggests that the term *šallatu* was reserved for elite people who were looted from defeated cities, tribes, and lands, but were not the rulers or military. It is commonly found in constructions such as *šallat āli* “captives of the city”³²⁶—as opposed to *hubtu*’s *hubut šēri* “captives of the steppe”³²⁷—and immediately following royal family members or gods in lists of plunder.³²⁸ The perception of *šallatu* thus appears to be favorable in the eyes of the empire.³²⁹ While there was an abundance of terms for material goods pillaged, *šallatu* and *hubtu* are the only terms that refer to humans with any consistency.³³⁰ Against earlier scholarly readings, the noun *šallatu* is unambiguous: it refers specifically to those elites who were forced to undergo captive deportation at the hands of the Assyrians. Because the main practice was to kill all remaining soldiers of one’s opponent,³³¹

³²⁵ The few instances in which *šallatu* appears to refer to material goods appear as descriptions of reliefs (Sennacherib RINAP 3 61, 62, 63, 64, 64, 66) or dedications on objects (Ititi RIMA 1 A.0.1001.1: 4; Sennacherib SAA 12 088: r 4). The relief descriptions all refer to the *šallatu* “marching in review” (*etēqu* A) before the king—which precludes inanimate objects. The dedications on the objects may be explained as being shorthand meaning from “(the belongings of) the elite captives,” rather than from the (inanimate) plunder of the locations mentioned.

³²⁶ E.g. Fuchs (1997) Die "Große Prunkinschrift" 133; Babylonian Chronicle 22: 64 (Nabopolassar and the Fall of the Assyrian Empire; *šillat āli u ēkuri kabittu ištallu*).

³²⁷ Cf. SAA 04 043: b.e. 18; 044: o 18; 051: o 12; 054: o 5’; 055: o 2’; 10 111: o 20, r 1; 112: o 10; where it is used as a specific technical term in the midst of astrological queries.

³²⁸ E.g. Fuchs (1997) Annalen 212-213; Adad-nerari II (911–891) RIMA 2 A.0.99.1: r 4’; Synchronistic Chronicle iv A 5-6 (Glassner, Chronicle 10).

³²⁹ At least in comparison to *hubtu*.

³³⁰ To phrase it another way, with specific terms already in place for saleable goods (e.g. *namkūru* / *makkūru*), pasturable animals (*maršītu*), property (*būšu*), precious stones and metals (*abnu šūquru*, etc.), fealty payment (*biltu*), bribes (*maddattu*), not to mention types of chariots, all quadrupeds and exotic animals, weapons and battle implements, the only thing left for *šallatu* to include besides humans would be as a catch-all for “loot, booty.” Yet, even this domain is already filled by the terms *kišittu* and *hubtu*—each of which refers generally to things taken in victorious raids. From the discussion below (which is supported by all attestations in the royal inscriptions and state archives), it is clear that these two terms may refer to the very generic “loot” taken from all (victorious) battles / raids.

According to the definitions in the CAD (K s.v. “*kišittu*”) and attestations throughout the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the semantic domain of *kišittu* indicates a close connection to its verbal root: all meanings attested are connected to the act of conquest, either the victorious battle itself, or the loot (human or material) acquired from said victorious battle. The CAD offers two relevant definitions for “*hubtu*” “2. booty, loot, 3. captive, prisoner of war” (CAD H s.v. “*hubtu*” s., 215b). From its attestations in royal inscriptions and the state archive, the semantic range of *hubtu* is firmly connected to its parent *habātu* “to take something (property, people, territory) from someone else” with both temporary and permanent temporal dimensions attested. That said, *hubtu* also denotes a particular class of captives, as will be discussed below.

³³¹ E.g. Šamši-Adad V (823–811) RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: iv 27b–30.

soldiers were thus rarely included.³³² So, too, were the sons and family members of noncompliant enemy royalty dispatched with equal haste, lest they lead another rebellion against Assyria. It is only rarely that we find attestations where this was not the case. Furthermore, *šallatu* as a term was not typically used as a collective for general booty;³³³ the only instances where this appears to be the case are where the expected definition of *šallatu* is found listed first among the items plundered. This usage finally alters during Sennacherib’s reign (704-681).³³⁴ Prior to this shift, those instances of *šallatu* that could be interpreted as a collective for plunder are prefaced by the inclusion of humans as item number one of the listed *šallatu*.³³⁵ Similar to the linguistic phenomenon of subject-verb disagreement—where a singular verb is paired with a list of subjects (thereby making the subject plural)—the use of *šallatu* as a collective is only found when humans are listed first, essentially ignoring all other items that appear afterward.

3.3.4.1.1.1 Chronological Development of *šallatu*

The verb *šalālu* is first attested in royal inscriptions during the reign of Šalmaneser I (1263–1234), where it appears with its cognate noun *šallatu* as its accusative/object.³³⁶ As is frequently the case, the verb *šalālu* governs both *šallatu* and the term for property or belongings (*būšu*). Phrases such as *šallassunu būšašunu namkūršunu ašlul* “I plundered their *šallatu*, their belongings, and their saleable goods” are extremely common.³³⁷ However, in contrast to the verb

³³² On rare occasions, as in the above cited example from Šamši-Adad V’s reign, after slaughtering the majority of the enemy’s soldiers the Assyrian king would impress a fraction of the original enemy force into the Assyrian army (RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: iv 27b–31a).

³³³ This modification to the traditional definition of *šallatu* (CAD Š *šallatu* “1. plunder, booty, captives, prisoners of war”) is further supported by the connection of its verbal adjective *šallūtu* to the term *kamātu* “bound.” In the royal inscriptions, all actively-voiced occurrences of the verbal stem *kamû* are applied to captive humans. All things bound are captives, but not all captives are bound. This word *kamātu* accompanies *šallūtu* in eight of its nine attestations in the royal inscriptions (Cf. Adad-Nerari I (1295–1264) RIMA 1 A.0.76.3: 48; Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233–1197) RIMA 1 A.0.78.1: iii 3; 5: 64; 23: 66; 24: 37; 25: r 6; Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–11076) RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: v 13, 24. RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: v 12-13 “*šallassunu u kamûssunu ina mahar aUTU bēliya aptur.*”). The ninth provides two possible ways a person could be bound (handcuffed and blindfolded; Adad-nārāri III, RIMA 3 A.0.104.6: 30). These attestations indicate that the state of being a part of the *šallatu* (denoted in the substantivated, plural, verbal adjectival form *šallūtu*) is not identical to those who are bound or *kamātu*. Incidentally, neither *kamû* or *kamātu* are attested in the state archives aside from technical usage in cultic and ritual applications.

³³⁴ E.g. Sennacherib RINAP 3:002: 16; 003: 16; 004: 14; 004: 60; 008: 14; 015: i 15’, v 14; 016: i 73, v 37; 017 i 63.

³³⁵ E.g. RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 80–90a.

³³⁶ RIMA 1 A.0.77.1: 38-39, 74-75.

³³⁷ Tiglath-Pileser I RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: iii 9-10, 62-63, etc.

šalāhu, the noun *šallatu* is far more specialized during its early usage in royal inscriptions: it only refers to humans who have been captured from conquered towns during warfare.

With the start of Tiglath-Pileser III's reign in 744 BCE, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (and its deportation scheme) as it is best known begins. From this point until 609 BCE, the style of deportations exhibited were drastically different from the forms attested in earlier periods³³⁸—even eliminating some forms altogether. In this period, two of the first three types of deportation discussed—settler relocation, hostages, and migrant workers—are simply not attested in the royal inscriptions. Although settler relocation and corvée labor are attested in a few epistolary texts,³³⁹ hostage deportation is no longer attested. Outside of a handful of attestations by Sargon II (721–705),³⁴⁰ there are no attestations of *lītu* “hostage” in RINAP or the SAA.³⁴¹ This sudden decrease in attestations of settler relocation (*šušbutu*)³⁴² and hostage deportations is even more prominent given the increase of texts available for the late Neo-Assyrian Empire: half of the corpus of royal inscriptions comes from the last 150 years of a 700 year-span.³⁴³ It seems that the royal inscriptions shifted their ideological focus to emphasize on the acquisition of additional real property and its inhabitants as *šallatu* and *hubtu* “captive” deportations.

In early Middle and Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, the term *šallatu* is used exclusively of non-royal and non-military elites which have been captured during raids and military endeavors.

³³⁸ Sometime during the thirty years between Šalmaneser IV (782–773) and Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727) a drastic shift took place in the language and rhetoric employed by Neo-Assyrian royal scribes. Along with this shift, new emphases appear within the royal rhetoric—especially as concern the topics of empire expansion and deportations.

³³⁹ Settler relocation: e.g. SAA 05 052: r 2 – 6; 21 050: o 9' – 10'. Corvée labor: e.g. SAA 12 025: r 2; 026: r 2; 035: r 21; 036: r 27; 039: r 6; 040: r 2'; 069: r 26–27.

³⁴⁰ Fuchs (1997): *Annalen* 102 (= Lie, W 76); 286c (= Lie 329, W 269): II: 25,4; 287 (= Lie 326s, W 270); *TCL* 3: 34 (=AO 05372).

³⁴¹ There are a handful of attestations of the Neo-Babylonian (lú.)*maškanu* “hostage” among the NA letters from locations within Karduniaš among the SAA: SAA 17: 1; 61; 93; 95. These usages are only tangentially related to the concept of hostage deportation as found in the royal inscriptions, however.

³⁴² Only 14 times out of 49 attestations. All remaining attestations refer to building or erecting procedures for monumental decorations.

³⁴³ Of the 1562 royal inscriptions included in RIMA and RINAP, 294 texts are Middle Assyrian and 1143 are Neo-Assyrian. Of the 1381 texts of interest to the present investigation into deportations, 676 date to the late Neo-Assyrian period (i.e. 744–609 BCE). Although the number of texts is presently unavailable for Sargon II through RINAP (Botta's catalogue lists 183 inscriptions), Fuchs (1997) divides the inscriptions into 33 different texts from Khorsabad (aka Dur-Šarrukīn, or Sargon's Fort). When RINAP 2 of Sargon's texts is finally published, this number will only rise. This publication will take the number of the (late Assyrian) RINAP texts well over twice what is available for the rest of the seven hundred years (1307–609) of the Assyrian empire: over 700 from 744–609 BCE, compared to 681 for 1307–745.

By the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727), we encounter a list of *šallatu* from peoples that are specified by tribe, city, and/or region within the royal inscriptions. From the level of detail included in the following list (and others), it is evident that the system of captive deportation known primarily from the late Neo-Assyrian period had been established before Tiglath-Pileser III's time. It is also evident that *šallatu* deportations were gaining new prominence in the inscriptions. Instead of grouping the peoples taken along with the material goods, now suddenly the inscriptions have given them pride of place.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴ Tiglath-Pileser III, RINAP 1 14:3b–10a. The remaining five lines of this fragmented inscription list the *maddattu* (bribe) from Levantine kings who had previously rebelled against the king.

600 *šallat* URU.*Amlāte ša lú.Damūni*
 5400 *šallat* URU.*Dēr*
 ina URU.*Kunaliya* ...
 URU.*Huzarra* URU.*Taye*
 URU.*Tarmānazi*, URU.*Kulmadāra*,
 URU.*Hatātirra*, URU.*Irgillu*—
 ālāni ša KUR.*Unqi ušēšib*
 [xx] *šallat* KUR.*Qutê* KUR.*Bīt-Sangibūte*
 1200 *lú.Illilāya*
 6208 *lú.Nakkabāya lú.Budāya*
 ina ... URU.*Šimirra*, URU.*Arqâ*,
 URU.*Usnû*, URU.*Siannu ša šiddi*
 tâmtim ušēšib

588 *lú.Budāya* URU.*Dunāya*
 [xx]
 252 *lú.Bilāya*
 554 *lú.Banītāya*
 380 *lú.Pāḷil-andil-māti*
 460 *lú.Sangillu*
 [xx] *lú.Illilāya*
 458 *šallat* KUR.*Qutê* KUR.*Bīt-Sangibūti*
 ina pīhat URU.*Tu'imme ušēšib*

555 *šallat* KUR.*Qutê* KUR.*Bīt-Sangibūti*
 ina URU.*Tīlgarimmu ušēšib*
itti nišī KUR *Aššur amnušunūti*
ilku tupšikku kī ša Aššurī emissunūti

I settled:
 600 *šallatu* from the city Amlāte of the lú.Damūni
 people and
 5400 *šallatu* from the city Dēru in the following
 cities of the land of Unqi: Kunaliya,
 Huzarra, Taye, Tarmanazi, Kulmadara,
 Hatatirra, and Irgillu.
 I settled:
 X *šallatu* from the land of Qutû and Bīt-Sangibūte,
 1200 of the lú.Illilāya people, and
 6208 of the lú.Nakkabāya and the lú.Budāya people
 in the following cities along the coast [of the
 Mediterranean]: Šimirra, Arqâ, Usnû, and
 Siannu.

I settled:
 588 of the lú.Budāya people from the city of Dunāya,
 [xx]
 252 of the lú.Bilāya people,
 554 of the lú.Banītāya people,
 380 of the lú.Pāḷil-andil-māti people,
 460 of the lú.Sangillu people,
 [xx] of the lú.Illilāya people,
 and 458 *šallatu* from the land of Qutû and Bīt-
 Sangibūte in the region of Tu'immu.

I settled:
 555 *šallatu* from the land of Qutû and Bīt-Sangibūte
 in the city of Tīl-Garimmu.
 I counted them among the people of the land of
 Aššur; I levied *ilku-tupšikku* upon them like
 upon Assyrians.

As has been argued in the past,³⁴⁵ lists in literary texts are highly programmatic and reflect more than the desire to record an event. All peoples listed here were moved from one geographic region to another of similar topography. Tribal groups from the mountain and steppe regions south-southeast of the *libbi mātiya* of Assyria were moved to mountain and steppe regions along the north-northeast shore of the Mediterranean.³⁴⁶ This attention to geographic detail suggests

³⁴⁵ Cf. Michalowski 1983, Tadmor 1997, Hagens 2004.

³⁴⁶ URU.*Amlāte ša lú.Damūni* and URU.*Dēr* are cities in the eastern Karduniaš steppe (southeastern Iraq, against the Zagros Mtns). The *šallatu* from these cities were relocated in the plain between Syrian mountain ranges along the coast, east of the Ammanus Mountains.

The peoples of Qutû and Bīt-Sangibūte were from the mountains of Ellipi, near those of the steppelands previously mentioned. They were relocated in Lebanese coastal mountain cities.

As is often the case, we cannot precisely locate the tribal groups here listed, but because the trend is to send peoples to lands similar to their homelands we can guess that they are from a plains region along the Zagros. They are sent to a plains region south of Unqi and Bīt-Agusi and are grouped with the Qutû and Bīt-Sangibūti from the Zagros steppe in the previous section.

Again, the Qutû and Bīt-Sangibūti are sent away, again to mountainous lands, this time north-northwest of Gurgum, or southeast Turkey, just inside from the Mediterranean coastal plain.

intimate knowledge of both regions and levels of planning far beyond divide and conquer tactics. The first king to move captives from one topographic region to one dissimilar to their point of origin was Esarhaddon.³⁴⁷ The phrases used in his inscriptions indicate that this move was an especially drastic punishment, over and above the usual or earlier practice.³⁴⁸

The category of *šallatu* deportations had expanded from merely denoting “captive deportation” to also include the *šušbutu* “settler relocation” form of deportation by this point. Although the peoples within the above list are not specifically addressed as “Assyrians,” they lived well within the area claimed by the Assyrian empire.³⁴⁹ The earlier form of “settler relocation” was no longer as relevant a category of deportation for several reasons, in part because of the increasing unification of the empire and in part because no one escaped the Assyrian army to be returned to their previously occupied houses. I would suggest that *šušbutu* deportation ceases before the late Neo-Assyrian empire due to the paucity of attestations in the state archives and royal inscriptions; however, the most we can prove is that the category is no longer of real interest to the kings’ political agendas or issues faced by their officials. At the very least we may assert that earlier inscriptions marked settler relocation with specific verbal phrases; later inscriptions mark settler relocation through adverbial phrases or subsumed within the *šallatu* or *hubtu* “captive” categories.

The category of *šallatu* deportations gains yet another modification in the gradual inclusion of military and royal personnel into the elite groups included. As previously discussed, initially *šallatu* did not include either kings and their families or defeated warriors. But over the years, the term came to encapsulate both. We first see this beginning in the reign of Šamši-Adad V (823–811), where for the first time we find *šallatu* in construct with or in reference to members of the military: *šallat qurādīšu kīma eribī ana ummānāti mātiya lū ippādū* “like locusts, *šallatu* from his warriors were impressed into the forces of my land.”³⁵⁰ The phrase *šallat*

³⁴⁷ Cf. RINAP 4 1: iii 1ff.

³⁴⁸ That this is not usually the case may be surmised from its presentation and accompanying data from the state archives.

³⁴⁹ The scribal choice whether or not to include the term *šallatu* before the people group listed is an example of literary gapping—or the intentional omission for brevity, emphasis, or flow.

Additionally, the use of the phrase *ilku tupšikku kī ša Aššurī emissunūti* “I imposed statute and corvée labor like that of the Assyrians upon them” illustrates how the listed peoples were settled and levied in the same manner as other imperial subjects of the heartland—i.e. Assyrians.

³⁵⁰ RIMA 3 A.0.103. 1: iv 34–36a.

qurādī(šu) appears a handful of times during Sargon II's reign (722–705), but in each case it is clearly the exception to the usual meaning of *šallatu* which is also attested in the same narratives.³⁵¹

3.3.4.1.2 *hubtu Captives*

The term *hubtu* is often found alongside *šallatu* where both clearly refer to human captives, however, unlike *šallatu*, *hubtu* at times also denotes non-human plunder. Attested throughout all Akkadian periods,³⁵² when applied to captives the verb *habātu* and its derivative (*hubtu*) are the lowest form of deportation. Of all the categories of deportees, those associated with *hubtu* and *habātu* most likely made up the peoples without history and formed the majority of the population of Assyria, Karduniaš, and the rest of the ancient Middle East.

Initial attestations of this verb associate it with clearing out mudbricks during temple restoration.³⁵³ While this use become rare, the use of *habātu* to refer to plundering people and objects during raids and warfare remains in constant use.³⁵⁴ Two of the first attestations of *habātu* associate the act of plundering cities with the act of seizing their harvests.³⁵⁵ One of these—at the start of the climate shift during Arik-dīn-ili's reign (1307–1296)³⁵⁶—specifically mentions that it was done due to famine.³⁵⁷ Later, a chronicle of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076), records unnamed

³⁵¹ Cf. Sargon II (Fuchs 1997) Annalen 212-213, Die "Große Prunkinschrift" 81. All other known examples of where *šallatu* is paired with soldiers or warriors are already discussed herein.

³⁵² E.g. from Šamši-Adad I (ca. 1808-1776) RIMA 1 A.0.39.1001: iii' 3, to Artaxerxes' year 14 (345) Mesopotamian Chronicles 28: 2, 3, 6 (Glassner 2004).

³⁵³ E.g. Arik-dīn-ili (1307–1296) RIMA 1 A.0.75.1: 40; Adad-nārāri I (1295–1264) RIMA 1 A.0.76.10: 39, 13: 39; Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233–1197) RIMA 1 A.0.78.01: v 23; 14:16.

³⁵⁴ E.g. from the Old Assyrian king Šamši-Adad I (1808–1776) RIMA 1 A.0.39.1001:iii' 3; to the Middle Assyrian kings Arik-dīn-ili (1307–1296) RIMA 1 A.0.75.8: 29'; and Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076) RIMA 2.A.0.87.1: v 50, 2: 28; to the last great king of the Neo-Assyrian period Aššurbanipal (668–ca.631) RINAP 5 2: v 9', 3: i 56, iii 9.

³⁵⁵ E.g. Šamši-Adad I (1808–1776) RIMA 1 A.0.39.1001:iii' 3.

³⁵⁶ This climate change occurred across the entire Mediterranean and Middle East at the end of the Late Bronze Age and occurred in conjuncture with the fall of many cultures and polities across the region.

³⁵⁷ Arik-dīn-ili (1307–1296) RIMA 1 A.0.75.8: 29'. While the left side of the text is destroyed, the previous entries confirm that the catalogue records the spoils of Assyrian raids upon other cities, including harvests (9'-10'), flocks and oxen (2'-3'), storage containers (5'), chariots (10'-17'), and people as *awīlu* (24', 29') and *šallatu* (30'). Even with the breaks in the text, it is clear that the only time the Assyrian army *habātu*-ed or *šalālu*-ed an enemy was during a period of famine. The reported number killed also increased from 600 to 254,000 from the first year of hardship to the second. The previous two entries in the catalogue report the acquisition of 100 flocks, 100 oxen, and 7000 storage containers (1'-5') before the price of grain—a signal of famine or hardship—is reported in the last two

Aramean tribes plundered (*habātu*) the Assyrians' crops and conquered their cities due to an extreme famine,³⁵⁸ and again during a particularly bad Assyrian harvest.³⁵⁹

Beyond these few, specific instances that associate it with harvests and times of famine, *habātu* is otherwise routinely used to refer to the plunder of cities and countryside. In the royal inscriptions alone, there are a total of 45 occurrences of the verb *habātu*.³⁶⁰ The verbal cognate of *šallatu* (*šalālu*) is found far more often in the royal inscriptions: 434 times. However, the frequency of the verbs flips in the state archives, which prefer *habātu* to *šalālu* (103 and 34 times, respectively) and *hubtu* to *šallatu* (69 and 13 times).³⁶¹ The obvious preference toward one term over the other in the two genres suggests the specification of definitions I have deduced for the terms *šallatu* and *hubtu*: that *šallatu* refers to more elite captives while *hubtu* refers more generally to a lower-class of humans and all other property.

First, the formulaic phrasing in the Assyrian and Babylonia chronicles and extispicy reports indicates the two terms are more than synonyms. We find phrases such as *hubta ihbut šallata išlal* in multiple locations,³⁶² often expanded in the phrase *ša GAZ GAZ.MEŠ-u ša SAR SAR.MEŠ-u ša IR IR.MEŠ-u* “Will they kill what there is to kill, *habātu* any *hubtu*, or *šalālu* any *šallatu*?”³⁶³ In the chronicles' narratives, large or prominent cities are noted to have been both *habātu*-ed and *šalālu*-ed,³⁶⁴ all suggesting that the two terms are not true synonyms but reflect different shades of meaning within the realm of “take captive.” The preference of *šalālu* and *šallatu* in the royal inscriptions suggests that this category of captive was worthy of boasting.

entries (18', 27'). Another instance in which capturing is justified by hardship and famine appears in a Babylonian letter to a Neo-Assyrian king (either Sargon II or Sennacherib) SAA 17 152: r 5.

³⁵⁸ Glassner 2004: 188-189: 2'-7': the famine is reportedly severe enough to elicit the note [... *bubūtu baši niš]i šīrī aha'iš ēkul[ū ana balāti ...]* “there was famine. The people ate each other's flesh in order to live.”

³⁵⁹ Glassner 2004: 188-191: 10'-12'. Incidentally, this text also dates to the climate change (toward the beginning of its amelioration) and is one of the first royal inscriptions to record confrontation with the Aramaeans (as discussed in a later chapter).

³⁶⁰ E.g. Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076) RIMA 2.A.0.87.1: v 50, 2: 28; Aššur-bēl-kala (1073 – 1056) RIMA 2 A.0.89.2: iii 28', 3: 6', 7: ii 19, 21, iii 20; Aššur-dan II (934 – 912) RIMA 2 A.0.98.1: 11, 19; Sennacherib (704 – 681) RINAP 3 223: 45; Aššurbanipal (668 – ca.631) RINAP 5 2: v 9'.

³⁶¹ The nouns *šallatu* and *hubtu* also follow similar distribution patterns as their verbal cognates in the royal inscriptions: 474 and 45 times, respectively.

³⁶² Mesopotamian Chronicles (Glassner 2004) 16: ii 46, iv 27-28; 18: 10-12; 22: 7, 27; 24: o 18-19; 25: 2-3.

³⁶³ Cf. SAA 04 018: o 8, 10, r 8; 028: o 15; o 40: r 8'; 271: o 4, 6, r 5', 6'; 272: o 6, r 8'.

³⁶⁴ E.g. in the Mesopotamian Chronicles (Glassner 2004): uru.Kimuhu (23), Aškelon (24), Sidon (18), Arzā and Šubria (18), Memphis (16), Ēber-Nahāri (25), Manē, Sahiri and Balīhu (22).

The catalogue notes and dedications of valuable items from the *šallatu* of a certain region or city also suggest the term carried weight and significance. In contrast, the terms *hubtu* and *habātu* are most commonly found in the state archives where officials scramble to maintain order among different factions in Karduniaš.³⁶⁵

Additionally informative is an analogy used by Sargon II (722 – 705). The first of two occurrences of *habātu* in his annals is found likening a high official (the *lú.turtānu*) to a shepherd whose flocks are captured.³⁶⁶ The usage here and elsewhere indicates that sheep and goats (*šēnu* “flocks”) and other non-prestige animals are routinely the object of *habātu*-capturing.³⁶⁷ Other instances include capturing foodstuffs³⁶⁸ and people. A series of catalogue entries from the imperial administrative records illustrate how people and animals were both objects of *habātu*:³⁶⁹

<p><i>ina</i> ITI.Nisanni 60 <i>alpāni</i> 30 <i>imērī</i> 10 ZI.MEŠ URU.Biduwa <i>habtū</i> 90 <i>alpāni</i> 30 <i>imērī</i> 1500 <i>immerē</i> x x x x <i>habtū</i> <i>ina qāti</i> x x x x 30 <i>alpāni</i> xx x x x 32 <i>imērī</i> x x x x <i>sammuhūte</i> x x 2000 <i>immerē</i> x x xx.MEŠ URU.x-x-ani <i>habtū</i> ...</p>	<p>In the month of Nisan (I), 60 oxen, 30 donkeys, and 10 persons were captured from (the village of) Biduwa; 90 oxen, 30 donkeys, and 1,500 sheep were captured fr[om (the village of) ...]; by the ha[nd of NN] ... 30 oxen, [.....] ... 32 donkeys [.....] mixed [.....] 2,000 sh[EEP] were captured from (the village of) [xx]-ani.</p>
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The second occurrence of *habātu* in Sargon’s annals is used to describe the capture of citizens of Babylon by a tribal group (*lú.Hamarānāya*).³⁷⁰ The use of *habātu* for the capture of humans occurs frequently³⁷¹ One of the most blatant examples comes in a letter to Sargon II

³⁶⁵ Cf. SAA 17: 152: r 5; 18 072: r 2, 4; 19 201: r 4’; 21 056: r 11.

³⁶⁶ Fuchs (1997): Annalen 55 (=Lie; W 29): II: 6,3: *mRē’ē kī lú.rē’ī ša šēnašu habtā ēdānūššu ipparšidma* “Re’e ran away alone like a shepherd whose flocks are captured/pillaged.”

³⁶⁷ Other examples of similar attestations may be found in the following: Šalmaneser III (858 – 824) RIMA 3 A.0.102.17: 49; Aššurbanipal (668 – ca.631) RINAP 5 2: v 9’; SAA 03 017: r 17; SAA 19 125: r 11b – 17a, 19 176: o 9b – 11, 182: r 5’ – 8’, 192: r 11; SAA 21 139: o 2’ – 4’.

³⁶⁸ E.g. SAA 01 082: o 5 – 9a—the end of the letter (e.1-2) clarifies that the objects of *habātu* were foodstuffs by noting that the tribes in question did not *habātu* flocks or camels. The initial complaint states that they captured things when they were hungry, and while the Arabs are said to *habātu* people there is nothing to support cannibalism.

³⁶⁹ SAA 11 087 (=ADD 1133).

³⁷⁰ Fuchs (1997): Annalen 318-319 (=Lie 379-381; W 304-306): V: 9,4-5; II: 29,2-5.

³⁷¹ E.g. Tukulti-Ninurta II (890 – 884) RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 17 *nišī mātišu ana hubtāni lū ahtabat* “I captured the people of his land as *hubtu*-captives.”

regarding a certain group of Arabs who were raiding Assyrian cities.³⁷² After a long discussion of how to control their habits, the official provides the following in summary of their raiding habits:

ʿālāni¹ iḥabbutū lāšu immer¹ ē

They do not plunder cities; they never

anše.gammal¹ ʿlā¹ iḥabbutū nišī iḥabbutū

plunder sheep or camels, but they do plunder

people.

These instances of *habātu* help to interpret the opaquer occurrences of *habātu* and *hubtu*, such as *hubut šēri*,³⁷³ *hubut mātišu*,³⁷⁴ *hubut GN*,³⁷⁵ *hubut šadī ma 'diš*,³⁷⁶ and *hubut qašti*. In all of these occurrences *hubtu* clearly refers to human and animal property along with grains and other foods. That the Assyrians and Babylonians would refer to a group of humans in the same terms as (non-prestigious) property is not surprising. Both societies were comprised of several classes, only the highest of which were exempt from certain labors and duties expected of all other classes (*zakātu*). The people of the *zakātu*-class are among those who I have assigned to the possible list of people who could be *šalāhu*-ed, while all those who were dependent upon the state or other individuals of higher station are included in those possible to be *habātu*-ed. This is additionally supported by the use of *hubut qašti* in Babylonian texts to refer to a lower-class group of deportees who were assigned to work on tracts of land termed *bīt qašti*.³⁷⁷

3.3.4.1.3 ZI.MEŠ

The final term for deportees under discussion here is ZI.MEŠ, literally “living (people).”³⁷⁸ This technical use of the substantivated adjective is not found in the royal inscriptions—which attest only the general adjectival form of the term.³⁷⁹ While both literally mean “living” or “lives,” only

³⁷² SAA 01 082 (=ABL 0547): e. 1-2.

³⁷³ E.g. SAA 04 043: b.e. 18; 04 044: o 18; 04 051: o 18; 04 054: o 5'; 04 055: o 2' 10 111: o 20, r 1; 10 112: o 10.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Mesopotamian Chronicle 16.

³⁷⁵ Cf. Mesopotamian Chronicle 16.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Mesopotamian Chronicle 23.

³⁷⁷ Cf. Jursa 2011: 432: “Furthermore, the Neo-Babylonian/Kaldean origins of the bow-‘fief’ system and its connection to the very old Mesopotamian tradition of integrating outsiders of different ethnic origins into the fabric of the state by settling them on institutional land and saddling them with service and tax obligations were discovered.”

³⁷⁸ Again, because none of the 253 instances of this term in the state archives spell the term out phonetically when used in this manner, neither shall I do so here.

³⁷⁹ The general use of the adjective is most frequently spelled phonetically (i.e. *nupšutu* or *napištu*) or with the logogram “TI” rather than “ZI.”

ZI.MEŠ is found describing groups of people who belong to, are the responsibility of, or are owned by people of higher rank.³⁸⁰ Additionally, “lives” is not a suitable translation due to the use of the term ZI.MEŠ even when referring to people who have since died or remain living. For example:³⁸¹

1119 lú.erim.meš dannūti 5000 šunu ZI.MEŠ ina
 muhhi aḫē 'iš ammar mētūni issu libbišunu mētu
 ammar balṭūni balṭu ana lú.zūku ša ekalli tadnū

1,119 strong soldiers / work force—there were 5,000
 ZI.MEŠ all together, but those who have died have
 died, and those who are alive are alive—were given
 to the exempts of the Palace...

The term ZI.MEŠ is used primarily of humans who were of the status level to have been *habātu*-ed by various armed forces, whether or not it refers to captives in any given moment.³⁸² Warriors and soldiers who were absorbed into the Assyrian army made up yet another group of the several kinds of captives and deportees. When read closely, warriors and soldiers (lú.*qurbūtu* and lú.erim.meš= *šābū* or *ummānu*) are not included in this term ZI.MEŠ in the catalogues of persons and property in the state archives. Soldiers and members of the state work force are listed separately before the rest of their associated wives, women, and children. For example, one of the best preserved tallies of human captives is as follows:³⁸³

³⁸⁰ E.g. SAA 11 221: o 1 – 4, which lists an estate (land, sheep, and people ZI.MEŠ) which is being reclaimed for the royal illegitimate sons of the king (via the palace maids).

³⁸¹ SAA 01 011 (=ABL 0304): o 2 – 7a.

³⁸² The same term is used in economic documents recording the purchase or sale of slaves and real estate, as well as in inheritance texts. All attestations refer to the dependents of a person, family, or property.

³⁸³ SAA 11 167 (= ADD 1099).

334 erim.meš ʿdann¹[ūti]
 38 dumu.meš 05 rūṭī
 41 dumu.meš 04 rūṭī
 40 dumu 03 rūṭī
 28 dumu pīrsi
 25 dumu ša ga
 pab 172 lú.šeḥrūti
 349 mí.meš
 08 mí 05 rūṭī
 22 mí 04 rūṭī
 49 mí 03 rūṭī
 17 mí pīrsi
 25 mí ša ga
 pab 121 dumu.mí.meš
 pab-ma 977
 erim.meš zi.meš kur.Quwāya

334: **strong soldiers / work force;**
 38 boys of 5 spans' height;
 41 boys of 4 spans' height;
 40 boys of 3 spans' height;
 28 boys, weaned;
 25 boys, (still) nursing.
 Total: 172 boys.
 349 women;
 8 females of 5 spans' height;
 22 females of 4 spans' height;
 49 females of 3 spans' height;
 17 females, weaned;
 25 females, (still) nursing.
 Total: 121 girls.
 Grand total: 977 **soldiers /work force and people (captives)** from Que.

The math (almost) works out: from the list we expect 977 total persons (we only find 976). The number counts 334 men of working age (lú.erim.meš) and 642 boys, women, and girls who are referenced via the short-hand ZI.MEŠ. This phrasing is formulaic and appears in multiple citations, but the phrase “erim.meš zi.meš” is only found when one of the previous lines lists “erim.meš” explicitly. Another brief example where ZI.MEŠ are explicitly connected to *habātu*-capturing occurs in a previously cited text (SAA 11 087=ADD 1133: o 1-3), where “60 oxen, 30 donkeys, and 10 lú.ZI.MEŠ were captured (*habtū*) from the village of Biduwa.”

We can say even more about the people who made up the ZI.MEŠ from other texts. Although no text refers to people identified as “erim.meš” with the term ZI.MEŠ, there are many other occupations that are so grouped. These include: shepherds,³⁸⁴ farmers,³⁸⁵ gardeners,³⁸⁶ bakers and confectioners,³⁸⁷ architects,³⁸⁸ builders,³⁸⁹ engravers,³⁹⁰ horse trainers,³⁹¹ scribes,³⁹² and temple cupbearer,³⁹³ among others. As may evident from this list, ZI.MEŠ was also used

³⁸⁴ E.g. SAA 11 203: o iv 15, r iv 6'; 205: ii 2'-4';

³⁸⁵ E.g. SAA 11 173: o 6b – 16; 203: o iv 11, r ii 14'; 205: i 6'.

³⁸⁶ E.g. SAA 11 203: r i 13'; 205: i 11; 12 027: o 1 – 6.

³⁸⁷ E.g. SAA 11 172: o 7 – 10.

³⁸⁸ E.g. SAA 11 154: o 1-9.

³⁸⁹ E.g. SAA 11 154: o 12-13a, where a chief builder is included.

³⁹⁰ E.g. SAA 11 154: r 1-2.

³⁹¹ E.g. SAA 12 016: o 3'.

³⁹² E.g. SAA 11 154: r 8-9.

³⁹³ E.g. SAA 11 154: o 16.

occasionally to refer to people of higher status (scribes, temple cupbearers, etc.). One excellent example that lists only men of status and their families provides a list of fourteen people from Karduniaš:³⁹⁴

mBēl-iddin lú.š*elappāya* [o]
A mBēl-ahhēšu [o] *mRemut-aGula* ʾ*mār*¹[š*u*]
*mQunnaba*¹*tu*¹ *mInqāya* [o] *mKullāya*
mAdirtu *mBittū* PAB 4 *mārātišu*
PAB 7 *qinnu Bīt mArad-ʾNer*¹*gal* *indi Bīt—*
*aNabû-ša-mḥa*¹*r*¹*ē*
*mKidin—**aMarduk* lú.*rab-bānī* *A mSapi*¹*ki*¹
mBēlassunu aḥāssu
PAB 2 *ina Bāb Sāme*
mZērūtu lú.*šaḣē* *ša aBēlit-Bābili.ki* *mMaqartu*
aḥāssu
PAB 2
mBulluṭ lú.*kabšarru* *A mAplāya*
PAB 3 *qinnu Bīt mNūr-aSîn* *indi šutummē šarri*
mGagāya issušu ša mIddu ʾ*a* lú.*rab-bānī* *ina*
Bāb Sāme
PAB 13 *mār-Bābili.ki*
mAḥunu mār mSapiki lú.*ṭupšarru* *uru.Kuthāya*
PAB 14 **zi.[meš]**

Bel-iddin, architect, son of Bel-ahhešu; Remut-Gula, [his] son; Qunnabatu, Inqaya, Kullaya, Adirtu, Bittū — in all, his four daughters.
Total, 7 of the clan Bīt-Arad-[Ne]rgal, beside the temple of the god Nabû-ša-Harê.

Kidin-Marduk, chief builder, son of Sapiku; the woman Bilassunu, his sister. In all, 2 at the Gate of Sesame.

Zerutu, cupbearer of goddess Belet-Babili; the woman Maqartu, his sister. In all 2.

Bulluṭu, engraver, son of Aplaya.

In all, three clans of Bīt-Nur-Sin, beside the king's silos.

The woman Gagayu, wife of Iddu'a, chief builder at the Gate of Sesame.

In all, 13 citizens of Babylon.

Ahunu son of Sapiku, scribe, from Kutha.

In all, 14 people.

The people mentioned in this catalogue entry all come from prestigious families of Karduniaš (Arad-Nergal and Nūr-Sîn)³⁹⁵ or hold senior positions (or both). While there is no illuminating context for this administrative record, it would not be far-fetched to assume it listed people who had been counted as *šallatu*. Esarhaddon (680 – 669) is noted for capturing the king of Babylon along with the *hubtu* and lú.š*rāne* (nobles).³⁹⁶ Then, this king is celebrated for returning the *šallatu* and *hubtu* of Babylon to their city during his reign³⁹⁷ after being reminded by officials in Karduniaš of the treaty established by an earlier Assyrian king with the king at Babylon.³⁹⁸

The term ZI.MEŠ is often interchangeable with UN.MEŠ (*nišū*) the standard term for “people.” In comparing the instances where these two terms appear to be used interchangeably, I found that ZI.MEŠ is used whenever the persons listed are numbered whereas UN.MEŠ is only

³⁹⁴ SAA 11 154 (=ADD 0891).

³⁹⁵ Cf. Nielsen 2011.

³⁹⁶ Cf. SAA 18 147: r 6ʹ.

³⁹⁷ Cf. SAA 18 014: r 1 – 2.

³⁹⁸ Cf. SAA 18 181: r 7; 19 201: r 4ʹ, respectively.

used when people are listed, but not counted. A brief example is found in an administrative document that records several estates which reallocated to the “sons of the palace maids.”³⁹⁹

Bīt mAdad-dān lú.sartin 08 ZI.MEŠ 20
imār eqlī 150 yābilī ina uru.2–Mārat-Šarri

Estate of Adad-dan, sartinnu official: 8 people, 20 hectares of land, 150 rams, in the ditto town of the Daughter of the King.

Bīt mNūrānu lú.sukkallu bītu UN.MEŠ *eqlu*
immērē ina kur.Barhalzi ...

Estate of Nuranu, vizier: a house, people, field, and sheep, in the region of Barhalzi....

In sum, the term ZI.MEŠ is routinely used in administrative texts as shorthand for whatever people are being counted by the official. Thus, at times it may refer to slaves and other dependent persons, higher status persons (including exiles “*šaglūtu*”), and even those of *lú.zakkātu* “exempt” status.⁴⁰⁰ Yet, by far the majority of extant attestations use the term for people who were counted as property and mobile—such as deportees. Thus, one of the primary ways we have left to access the lives of deportees after deportation is through the lists of people (UN.MEŠ, ZI.MEŠ, and otherwise) in the administrative records.

The benefit to identifying a term that was used for both native and foreign peoples is that it allows us insight into how the deportees were viewed by the administration. Because ZI.MEŠ was used to refer to all enumerated, non-military persons in addition to deportees, we now know that the deportees were not segregated administratively. As a class of people, they fit into the general social structure without being relegated to ancillary or ghettoized communities. Fales, in his treatment of the notion of an Assyrian ethnicity, identified several variants of “Assyrian-ness” that were applied to individuals of different social classes. One of these categories was offered—at least ideologically and in royal rhetoric—to peoples whose families were not originally connected to the city of Aššur and other cities of the Assyrian heartland. Thus, we may state that the Assyrian deportation system ultimately differed from that employed by the Inka (see Chapter One)—although both empires deported peoples from outside the empire to live and serve within, the Assyrians encouraged (but did not require) centralization and assimilation of its newest subjects while the Inka demanded that persons maintain all external markers of their ethnicity.

³⁹⁹ SAA 11 221 (=ADD 0675), especially o 1 – 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. *šaglūtu*: SAA 01 257: o 7, r 12; 01 218: r 2' – 4'. *lú.zakkātu*: SAA 01 255: r 4, where even far off regions such as Samaria, Israel, is noted to have local *lú.zakkū* who are included among the ZI.MEŠ recorded.

3.3.4.2 Noncognate Verb Pairings

Now that captive deportation has been established as a concept emic to the Assyrians and their contemporaries, it remains to discuss the manner in which these *šallatu* and *hubtu* were dealt with in the ideologies of the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Of the verbs listed by Oded as commonly denoting deportation, which are specifically used with these two terms? The following summarizes the use of verbs found most often paired with *šallatu* and *hubtu* (outside of *šalālu* and *habātu*, which were discussed above), including: *nasāhu* “to uproot”, *manû* “to count; to consider X as Y”, *ubbulu* “to bring or carry”, and *šūšubu* “to settle [X somewhere].”

3.3.4.2.1 *nasāhu*

Arguments have been made to understand *nasāhu* in a kind, nurturing light because of its use in the transplanting of precious plants and trees. Radner (2000, 2018) in discussing the attitude of Assyrian kings toward the physical land of their realm briefly refers to the use of deportees and the local population in cultivating (barren) land (2000: 238). She also makes the following assessment:⁴⁰¹

When the topic of resettlement is discussed in the royal inscriptions, they either employ a vocabulary of violence and pillage, fittingly for the context of war, or else the language of horticulture, which likens the deportees to precious trees that are uprooted and replanted in the best possible circumstances by that most conscientious of gardeners, the king of Assyria: just like the gardener transfers valuable plants to a nurturing new environment that they in turn will enhance, the wise ruler allocated his people where they best benefitted the Empire.

The horticulture imagery is indeed found; however, such imagery as imagined by Radner prioritizes the voice of the empire over the experiences of its subjects and deportees. I struggle to find textual evidence for the interpretation of *nasāhu* along such benevolent lines. The royal inscriptions provide no indication that the Assyrian king considered the peoples he uprooted to be similar to “precious trees” —“farmer” though he be.⁴⁰² Close analysis of the verb *nasāhu* “to uproot; tear out” throughout its usage in the royal inscriptions and state archives illustrates no such care was indicated in the verb’s use. This verb is used exclusively for captive deportation in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, and within the state archives of Assyria the verb is most

⁴⁰¹ Radner 2018: 105; in which she refers to a previous article (2000) that is to support likening the deportees to “precious trees that are uprooted and planted in the best possible circumstances by that most conscious of gardeners, the king of Assyria.” Unfortunately, the reference is inaccurate and only describes the king as gardener without mentioning deportees.

⁴⁰² The notion of the Assyrian king as a “farmer” refers to an apotropaic ritual that was carried out in which a substitute king was placed on the throne and the true king was referred to as a “farmer” to confuse the fates/gods/demons during the period of forecast doom.

commonly used in relation to: *še.nusāhu* “a grain tax”, *šarpu* “a type of silver”, *udu.nīqu* “sheep offerings”, and various references to people.

There are four occasions in the state archives when the verb is used of a delicate horticultural procedure related to sapling trees.⁴⁰³ These attestations of *nasāhu* regarding saplings do not exactly convey a sense of care. Further investigation of the sources as to the context of *giš.ziqpu* “sapling” shows most attestations are connected to verbs such as: *nasāhu* “tear out, uproot”, *nakāsu* “cut down”, and *matāhu* + *ubbulu* “carry / transport building materials” and “carry.” While the Assyrian king does indeed care for his land and prioritize agriculture and horticulture as means to subdue the foe, provide for his citizens, and accumulate wealth,⁴⁰⁴ the terminology utilized for deportation does not intrinsically connote care. The verb *nasāhu* is used more for captive deportation⁴⁰⁵ than it is for the delicate transplanting of trees and other precious plants in the royal inscriptions or the state archives. That verb (“to transplant”) is *matāhu*, and it was not selected for this application of removing persons from their networks and surroundings.

This horticultural verb (*nasāhu*) is more akin to the act of ripping out a deeply rooted weed or tree: the roots run deep and wide and are extremely difficult to remove. Descriptions of settler deportations that employ this verb deal solely with tribal elements of the surrounding populace.⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, similar attestations of *nasāhu* in the state archives primarily refer to the removal of tribal peoples. The two variations on this usage maintain notes of deeply-embedded peoples being removed from their networks and taken someplace completely new.⁴⁰⁷ Ultimately, it appears that Radner and others have conflated two technical terms which should not be compared: *nasāhu* is used as a technical term for deportation, taxation, and the removal of plants. All other attestations appear to be metaphorical uses of these three uses.

⁴⁰³ SAA 01 222 (=ABL 938), SAA 1 227 (=ABL 814) (2x), and SAA 5 027 (=ABL 510).

⁴⁰⁴ As per Radner 2000, 2018.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. M. Weinfeld (1993: 194), where in a discussion on Deut. 28: 63 he tags the verb *nasāhu* as the “Assyrian verb par excellence for ‘exile.’”

⁴⁰⁶ This same verb *nasāhu* is also found in similar contexts within the curse section of one of Esarhaddon’s *adê* treaties, wherein the oath breaker is threatened with the gods’ “uprooting them from the living and depriving their ghost of water”(SAA 2: 011=BRM 4 50). Another attestation of *nasāhu* from the State Archives quotes the Ištar of Arbela and Nineveh as having sworn that they will *nasāhu* all who are disloyal to the king of Assyria (SAA 10: 284=ABL 0058).

⁴⁰⁷ In one a scribe is fired for inciting a coup against his master, and in the other a (suspect) officer moves his family from staying among the Puqudu to live among the Bīt-Amukāni as a political stratagem.

3.3.4.2.2 *manû*

The use of the verb *manû* “to count; to consider X as Y” in the royal inscriptions illustrates a shift of ideology. In the Middle – early-Neo-Assyrian period this verb is most often found in variations on the following phrase: *ana nišî mātiya amnušunūti* “I considered them to be people of my land.”⁴⁰⁸ Such ideologically charged phraseology is unsurprisingly absent from the state archives, which do not attest any variant of this or the following phrases concerning *manû*. When we next see it, this common phrase has morphed into *itti nišî māt Aššur amnu* “I counted them with the people of the land of Assyria” by the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III.⁴⁰⁹ Although the semantic difference is slight at this time, the use of *manû* for such statements is greatly reduced: it appears only five times. Sargon II (722 – 705) uses both this previous phraseology⁴¹⁰ as well as a variant of what would become standard by Sennacherib’s time: *ana šallati amnu(šu)* “I counted (it) as *šallatu*.”⁴¹¹ The phrase appears to have been so familiar to the scribes that occasionally the adverbial phrase was dropped altogether in a literary technique known as gapping:⁴¹²

*nišî nārti elīti u šaplīti ša ina gerr[i]ya
maḥrīti itt[i] nišî uru.Ḥarḥar amnu*

“In my first campaign, I counted (as *šallatu*) the people along the (Euphrates) River to the north and the south together with the people of the city Harhar.”

⁴⁰⁸ E.g. Tiglath Pileser I 1: i 88; 2: 22; Aššurbanipal II 1: iii 125; 33: 13’; 40: 25; Šalmaneser III 2: ii 75; 5: ii 3, iii 6; 28: 26; Šamši-Adad V 1: iv 8.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. 5: 4.

⁴¹⁰ E.g. Fuchs (1997): Annalen 254 (Lie 262, W 227f): *itti nišî māt Aššur.ki amnušunūtima* “I counted them among the people of the land of Assyria.”

⁴¹¹ E.g. Fuchs (1997): Annalen 70 (=Lie, W 44).

Additionally, Sargon also employs the verb to note which official’s provincial governance the new territory and its usufruct was allotted to (e.g. *ina qātī lú.šūt-rēšiya lú.šākin māti kur.Gambuli amnušunūti* “I considered them to be under the command of my Šut-Reši official, the governor of the land of Gambulu,” Fuchs 1997: Annalen 288=Lie 326, 330f; W 271).

⁴¹² Fuchs (1997): Annalen 109 (=Lie, W 83). No other uses of the verb *manû* in Sargon’s annals specify the peoples of a region being “counted” or “considered;” all others discuss territories, cities, and regions.

By the time we arrive at Sennacherib’s annals, another phrase is in use: *ušēšâmma šallatiš amnu* “I brought them out and considered them as *šallatu*.” This phrase appears 127 times throughout the late Neo-Assyrian kings’ inscriptions.⁴¹³ With this shift, we see a completely different ideology at play as regards the fate of the deported captives, or *šallatu*. Early on, it was mostly tribal groups that had been uprooted (*nasāhu*) that were then considered (*manû*) to be people of the *mātiya*. Midway through its chronological use, a subtle distancing of phrase is noted by the use of the circumlocution *māt Aššur* for the previous *mātiya*. This distancing emphasizes both the ruler’s transcendence above his populace and also the might of the budding nation of Aššur; both of which serve to promote an ideology of centralization.

3.3.4.2.3 *ūbbulu*

The verb *ūbbulu* “to bring” (*wabālu* D) is frequently attested in the royal inscriptions, appearing a total of 233 times. From these attestations, a demonstrable trend in the Assyrian Empires regarding the spoils of war can be identified: once again, a trend toward distancing the king from the act of labor. In the early inscriptions, it is relatively common for *ūbbulu* to be used of the king to describe his part in touring with his military and bringing home the spoils of war—including *šallatu*. From Arik-dīn-ilī (1307–1296) to Aššur-bēl-kalâ (1073–1056), or the first wave of royally documented Assyrian deportations, the verb is attested thirty-three times. Twenty of these refer to the king bringing *šallatu* back to Assyria. The second wave of deportations—from Aššur-dān II (911–891) to Šamši-Adad V (823–811)—attests a similar pattern, albeit with a crucial difference. The subject of the verb *ūbbulu* is no longer the king by default. Others—rulers and troops—have begun to bring things to the king while he sits in his capital.⁴¹⁴ While this is perhaps unremarkable at face-value, it reveals an ideological shift wherein it is no longer required that the king perform these actions on his own. Battle spoils and even *biltu* “payment,” *maddattu* “bribe,” *nišī* “people,” as well as *hubtu* and *šallatu* captives are all delivered to the king at a capital city or the *libbi mātiya* more generally. In the third wave, however—from Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727) to the end of the empire (609)—the trend of the second wave of deportation exponentially increases. Most importantly, the verb is only

⁴¹³ Sennacherib 79x; Esarhaddon 5x; Aššurbanipal 43x. No detailed count from Sargon II’s reign has yet been attempted.

⁴¹⁴ E.g. Aššur-dān II 1: 9; Adad-Nerari II 2: 60; Tukulti-Ninurta II 5: 10; Aššurnasirpal II 1: i 101, ii 82; Šalmaneser III 14: 174; etc.

associated with *šallatu* on three occasions after Šalmaneser III.⁴¹⁵ Many notables are listed by name, rank, and location in lieu of *šallatu*, and the term *maddattu/mandattu* “bribe” begins to include humans in its itemized receipts.

Again, just as was the case for *manû*, the shift in phraseology and usage of *ūbbulu* indicates both the detachment of the Assyrian kings over their ever-expanding realm and the continued ideological emphasis on plundering humans as *šallatu* over their transport. Emphasizing the ideology of transporting people as *šallatu* back to the *libbi mātiya*—as occurred during the early period—pointed to the primary concern being a lack of people. In order to sustain the production of food necessary for increased urbanization, greater manpower was needed to work the fields. In contrast, the shift from this emphasis in the royal inscriptions toward the collecting of *šallatu* and their transportation indicates that was no longer the case. By the time of the late Neo-Assyrian period (Tiglath-Pileser III, onwards), the empire had become a network empire focused on expanding in order to obtain ever greater access to goods and the market. *Šallatu* transitioned from the goal to merely a status symbol for one’s military and administrative prowess.

3.3.4.2.4 *šūšubu*

The causative of *wašābu* (*šūšubu*) “to settle [X somewhere]” is the most frequently attested verb associated with *šallatu* at 376 times. With that said, there is perhaps the least to be said about this verb. It is the verb most expected to pair with the resettling aspect of deportation, and therefore presents little variation from expectation. Whenever people are to be moved and settled in a location, this is the most common verb found. However, what is interesting is that initially this verb was used for resettling Assyrians themselves within their own country. But by the time of Tiglath-Pileser III, the verb’s usage has changed to associate more with *hubtu* and *šallatu* captives than with Assyrian settlers. At this same time, the verb’s use more than doubles in frequency of attestation: from seventy-eight times during the Middle–early-Neo-Assyrian period to 298 times during the late Neo-Assyrian period. The verb is also frequently attested in the state archives of the late Neo-Assyrian empire, where it is used in much the same way.

⁴¹⁵ E.g. Sennacherib 17: iv 85; Aššurbanipal 9: v 1; 11: vi 5.

3.4 Conclusion

Assyrian deportation practices varied considerably and developed over the 700 years of their attestation. While these practices culminated in the practices of the Sargonids (744–609), deportation as a scheme existed long before in four different kinds. Settler deportation strove to repopulate deserted areas within the countryside with their own people, and to re-house their people after they had fled hardships. Hostage deportation occurred as a completely separate category to captives, and while they may have expected to stay in the capital for lengthy periods, their purpose was to ensure payment was made—not hard labor. Temporary, migrant *corvée* laborers also technically were a type of deportation: it was ordered and administered by the empire and temporarily served similar purposes as the captives would in later years. The fourth kind, and most well-known, was that of captive deportation—about which much has been written by Oded (1979; 2012) and others. This chapter has sought to expand on his efforts by illustrating trends which occurred in *šallatu* or *hubtu* captive deportations over time and introduce ZI.MEŠ as a term that included deportees among the laborers and non-military men of the empire.

Through investigating all of these types of deportation, I have sought to illustrate not only how valuable expanding the definition of the term “deportation” is to understand the lived experience of deportees and the peoples of the ancient Near East, but also how the late Neo-Assyrian kings displayed a completely different type of deportation from that evidenced earlier. In fact, captive deportation was only used during periods of imperial expansion in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. The other forms continued between the imperial golden ages, only to be mostly abandoned during the late Neo-Assyrian or Sargonid period. As such, comparative work on deportations outside Assyria should not take the late Neo-Assyrian period as the control group against which to compare another society. For those polities that were not as fully imperial as late Neo-Assyria, a more conservative approach that considers external factors such as climate change should be adopted.

Chapter 4. Karduniaš: Life After Deportation

The royal inscriptions of Karduniaš (aka Babylonia) vary greatly from those of Assyria in content, form, and ideology. For this reason, one cannot discuss the deportation practices of Karduniaš as one can those of Assyria. There are only scattered references to deportation, looting, and conscription labor in the royal inscriptions, whose real focus is on building projects. The extant sources do, however, provide us access to the lives of deportees *post facto*. This data coupled with the generally multicultural nature of the region is enough to determine that the nature of deportation in Karduniaš differed greatly from that of Assyria and thus affected the lived experiences of deportees in Karduniaš. The Neo-Babylonian empire's attitude toward ethnicity allowed for previous ethnic identities to be reevaluated and strengthened, whereas the evidence of the Neo-Assyrian empire suggests their policy of incorporating all subjects under a single ethnonym did not. Unlike in Assyria, where the royal ideology proclaimed that all subjects were considered "Assyrian" whether or not that was their primary ethnic affiliation,⁴¹⁶ in Karduniaš the option to integrate into the surrounding cultures was only obliquely encouraged. In what follows, I present a general history of Karduniaš, address some foundational assumptions about Karduniaš and its population, provide an overview of Karduniaš society between 1200 and 600 BCE, discuss how to identify deportees in the texts, list the five lifestyles or statuses available to deportees of all types, and offer an example of the general attitudes toward subaltern classes. From this discussion, I illustrate how the social environment and makeup of Karduniaš affected the deportees' experience in comparison to what occurred in Assyria.

4.1 Historical Overview of Karduniaš

Located to the south of Assyria, the area here termed "Karduniaš" (elsewhere termed Babylonia) incorporated several smaller regions and former city states from along the middle Euphrates to its delta, and from the bottleneck of the Tigris to the same. The name Karduniaš was given to the

⁴¹⁶ Cf. the royal inscriptions and the previous discussion of the verb *manû* in Chapter 3.

region during the Middle Babylonian period (1500 – 1000) under its Kassite rulers (ca. 1500 – 1150),⁴¹⁷ and is the only geographical term known to have encompassed the entirety of the region.⁴¹⁸ The region was otherwise known to its inhabitants as “the land of Sumer and Akkad” from the end of the third millennium until the Persian period⁴¹⁹—a phrase that refers to two separate districts within the broader expanse of Karduniaš. The dividing line of Sumer and Akkad ran somewhere near the city of Nippur⁴²⁰—an ancient and respected city in mid-Karduniaš.⁴²¹

During the climactic (and ensuing economic) crisis at the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200),⁴²² the land of Karduniaš changed dramatically. What before had been a “complex settlement hierarchy” of large provincial centers through to forts and villages of all sizes, underwent a period of ruralization during which the countryside became populated with smaller rural communities and large cultivated areas.⁴²³ The general structure of taxation remained largely the same from this point through the Persian period: people were levied on the increase of herds, grain, straw, and other foods, performed corvée duties to upkeep infrastructure and buildings, and provided whatever was needed for statute labor and other duties⁴²⁴—much the same as the case in Assyria. The consistent deficit of the necessary manpower to meet these obligations prompted the kings at Babylon to deport peoples from distant regions to Karduniaš to

⁴¹⁷ The Kassites were foreign rulers who capitalized on the chaos in Sumer and Akkad after the defeat of Babylon by the Hittites (cf. Paulus 2013b: 296–7). For a brief yet thorough overview of the Kassites and their rule, see Beaulieu 2018: 122 - 153.

⁴¹⁸ Beaulieu (2018: 25) notes that although the term Karduniaš may be an “early equivalent for Babylonia,” this is not entirely certain. From my reading of the texts, it appears that this is the most commonly implied meaning for the term in Neo-Assyrian sources, though in some cases it may refer to Akkad only. My proposed solution to this is that the term lost its connection to the region of Sumer when that area began to be referred to as the Sealand. Thus, in those texts which date to periods in which the Sealand was governed by Babylon, “Karduniaš” refers to both Sumer and Akkad. In periods where this was not the case, the distinction is made between “Karduniaš” and the “Sealand” as territorial (political?) entities. I therefore will use the term Karduniaš as a more accurate equivalent of what would become known as “Babylonia.” (See discussion below.)

⁴¹⁹ Beaulieu 2018: 24-25.

⁴²⁰ Beaulieu 2018: 24.

⁴²¹ The city continued to be a frontier city between two distinct subdistricts even into the late Achaemenid Persian period and thus provides an interesting point of reference for examining interactions between Aramaeans, surrounding non-tribal peoples, and deportees, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁴²² As discussed in Chapter 2 and the Appendix.

⁴²³ Cf. Adams 1981; Beaulieu 2018: 145.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 145 – 146.

maintain the imperial heartland. Karduniaš is therefore an excellent location to investigate the lives of deportees in their foreign homes because not only does it attest a large number of deportees, but it has produced one of the largest corpora of archival texts in the pre-modern period.⁴²⁵

I begin with the post-Kassite Middle Babylonian period and continue until the beginning of the Achaemenid Persian period (1150 – ca.484)—an era which underwent several upheavals, rebellions, and periods of foreign rule. After the fall of Kassite rule in 1155 to concerted Assyrian and Elamite battles, Karduniaš became decentralized.⁴²⁶ Elamites occupied various parts and the kinglists state power transferred to the *palê Išin* or the “dynasty of Isin”—named after the recognized capital city Isin.⁴²⁷ Rife with conflict against an Assyria regaining strength under Tiglath-pileser I (1114 – 1076), Karduniaš benefitted from Assyria’s growing preoccupation with Luwian-Aramaeian Princedoms in the area around Jebel Bishri (in north-central Syria).⁴²⁸ In an obscure reference to a little known king in the kinglists, scribes acknowledge both a king at Babylon and a king of “the Sealand” during the Isin II Dynasty, indicating that Karduniaš once again was divided into separate regions under different rulers.⁴²⁹

After the fall of the Isin II Dynasty (1022), the sources grow scarce for the next three hundred years. Most historical information for this period comes from Assyrian documentation and therefore remains sketchy and according to the interests of the Assyrian monarch. What little we have (and documentation from the periods following) suggests an increase in the population of Aramaeans and Kaldeans in Karduniaš during this time.⁴³⁰ The kinglists record three short dynasties (Sealand II, Bazi, and the Elamite Dynasties) during 1021 – 975, before the “Dynasty

⁴²⁵ Beaulieu (2018: 221) estimates the total number of published and unpublished archival texts and fragments from the 8th – 2nd centuries BCE to be more than 60,000 (only approximately 17,000 have been published). Most of these texts date to the Neo-Babylonian period until the second year of Xerxes (ca. 626 – 484).

⁴²⁶ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 150, 154.

⁴²⁷ Beaulieu 2018: 154. During the Isin II period (1153 – 1022), the ascendancy of Marduk to king of the gods over Enlil appears to have become complete, and Nabû the god of writing becomes his son (cf. Beaulieu 2018: 157). The *Enuma eliš* likely dates to this time, specifically to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1121 – 1100; see Beaulieu 2018: 161 – 162).

⁴²⁸ Cf. Tiglath-pileser I’s royal inscriptions; Beaulieu 2018: 167.

⁴²⁹ Beaulieu 2018: 164.

⁴³⁰ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 171. These two tribal peoples were composed of several different lineages, clans and smaller family units—the names of which are more frequently attested in the sources than the overarching terms “Aramaeian” or “Kaldean.” For more on the Aramaeians and Kaldaeans, see Chapter 5.

of E” appears (974 – 732).⁴³¹ Typically fraught with tensions with Assyria, one king of Dynasty E, Marduk-zakir-šumi I, is recorded on equal footing with the Assyrian king Šalmaneser III (858-824) on a throne base discovered at Kalhu.⁴³² Highly unusual for Assyrian kings, the inscription on the throne base identifies a king of Babylon along with various kings of Kaldea—again illustrating the disunity of Karduniaš. After the death of Šalmaneser III, Marduk-zakir-šumi I signed a treaty with the Assyrian monarch’s son, Šamsi-Adad V (823-811) which among other things prohibited the taking of *hubtu* from Babylon or Akkad.⁴³³ Assyria capitalized on this fragmentation for the next century, eventually subjugating Karduniaš. Kaldeans are also attested as palace officials and kings during this period, illustrating that they were not kept from high offices.⁴³⁴ In the midst of “Dynasty E,” Nabonassar ascended the throne at Babylon (747 – 734). This king is not given a Kaldean gentilic marker, and so is thus assumed to have been a “native Babylonian:”⁴³⁵ thus, Nabonassar is credited with being the first king of the early Neo-Babylonian period. More importantly, we are able to align his reign with the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745 – 727), who seized a large portion of northern Karduniaš (along the middle Euphrates).

The beginning of Nabonassar’s reign also marks the start for my investigations into deportation in Karduniaš. The most recorded deportations occurred from the start of his reign until the fall of Babylon—aka the Neo-Babylonian period (i.e. 747 – 539). I also include a few examples of the descendants of deportees from the early Persian period (539 – 484).⁴³⁶

⁴³¹ For the dates of each king and discussion on the difficulties with this disparate dynasty, see Beaulieu 2018: 179.

⁴³² Šalmaneser III RIMA 3 A.0.102.059.

⁴³³ Cf. SAA 02 001 (=AfO 08 28): o 12’. Similar language is found in SAA 10 354 (= CT 53 075): 19 – b.e. 29, which refers to a treaty between Assyria and Kaldean sheikhs or kings. Although broken, it uses the same lines to remind the king that the treaty states that they will return each other’s *lú.hubtu* and any deserters from Assyria.

⁴³⁴ E.g. Iddin-Marduk of Bīt-Amukani, as attested in a royal land grant and prebendary office where he acts as witness (cf. Beaulieu 2018: 183); and Abdi-il, the *šaknu* of Adinu, who was of Bīt-Dakkuri (RIMB 2 B.6.7.2001).

The Kaldean kings at Babylon are: Marduk-apla-ušur, Eriba-Marduk (of Bīt-Yakîn), and Nabu-šuma-iškun (of Bīt-Dakkuri)—none of whose dates are known.

⁴³⁵ Interestingly, Kaldea appears to regain its (semi-)autonomy during this period, for Tiglath-pileser III acknowledged them as separate polities from that at Babylon.

⁴³⁶ The decision to draw the dividing line at or just after the fall of Babylon to the Achaemenids (539) rather than at the first Persian revolt (484) is based solely on the need to limit the number of texts for the present iteration of this research. Historically speaking, little changed for the inhabitants of Babylon and Karduniaš at the change of ruling power and most research into the Neo-Babylonian period draws its line at the later date of 484. Thus, relevant texts dated to the period between 539 and 484 will occasionally be cited as needed.

Nabonassar's reign had only begun when he was forced into a vassal relationship with his northern neighbor, Tiglath-Pileser III. During the early Neo-Babylonian period (747 – 626), the kings at Babylon were subservient to the Assyrian kings, but not submissive. Rebellions in Karduniaš are attested for nearly every Assyrian king. Deportations ensued. In the century between 747 and 626, the Babylonian heartland underwent long sieges, deportations, and other mortifications at the hands of the Assyrians. In 626, under the rule of Nabopolassar (626 – 605) a new, independent state was once again established in Babylon. Even though he successfully overthrew the Assyrians from their place in Babylon, it took time before other cities abandoned their allegiance to Assyria and were won to his side.⁴³⁷ For the next twenty years, the kings at Babylon continued to fight off the Assyrian oppressors, until finally (with the aid of their Median allies) they overthrew the Assyrian empire.

With the fall of Assyria at Harran in 610—and the subsequent defeat of Assyria's ally, Egypt—the Babylonian kingdom became an empire that stretched from Egypt through the Levant and up to the Zagros mountains and Elam (modern Iran, near Susa). Nebuchadnezzar II (605 – 562), son of Nabopolassar, led the charge and then campaigned around the Levant for the next four to five years, taking booty, captives, and tribute. At the end of these campaigns (601), an alliance of Levantine states led by Jehoiakim, king of Judah, challenged Babylon's authority. After three years (598), the Babylonian king led an assault on Jerusalem and installed a puppet king on the throne. The heir apparent, Jehoiachin, was taken back to the palace at Babylon where he and his family lived on palace rations along with other hostages and dignitaries,⁴³⁸ in the first wave of deportees from Judah. Nebuchadnezzar II led his new empire to great economic heights, which he showed off with tremendous building projects within Karduniaš.⁴³⁹ However, how the areas in the Levant were governed remains a mystery to us.⁴⁴⁰

One cylinder (the Etemenanki cylinder) from Nebuchadnezzar II lists all the conquered lands that were required to send statute laborers to build the Etemenanki temple. In this text, the king takes great care to list by name every great city and region in Karduniaš, but all areas outside of this realm are summarized briefly as if naming random areas that people have heard

⁴³⁷ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 227.

⁴³⁸ Melanges Dussaud B: o ii 38 – 40; cf. Beaulieu 2018: 228.

⁴³⁹ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 232.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Beaulieu 2018: 235.

about, but pay little attention to.⁴⁴¹ This preoccupation with the land inside the region of Karduniaš marks the kingship at Babylon during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.⁴⁴² Recently, Richardson (2020) has suggested that Babylon routinely rejected “a tradition about heroic royal conquest, but [refocused] on the highest priorities of kingship and the state away from expansionism, and towards a stewardship over a bounded, finite land.”⁴⁴³ The idea of empire was not “ideologically urgent” to the Neo-Babylonian kings⁴⁴⁴ His analysis of the Babylonian royal inscriptions’ ideological stance toward conquest supports my analysis of Babylon in Chapter 1 as a dependent empire, that adopted the trappings and realm of the Assyrian empire without the push toward expansion.

The last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire was Nabonidus, who reigned from 555 to 539 BCE. A decidedly different king, Nabonidus was crowned after a conspiracy to remove the previous king succeeded. His paternal lineage is uncertain—unusual for a member of elite circles in this period—but surprisingly we know a considerable bit about his mother, Adad-guppi, from his inscriptions.⁴⁴⁵ Nabonidus was an outspoken patron of the moon god Sîn,⁴⁴⁶ restored the Sîn cults at Harran and Ur,⁴⁴⁷ and spent ten years campaigning in northern Arabia.⁴⁴⁸ During this period, Cyrus, king of Anšan (an ancient city of Elam, in the Iranian Zagros mountains), rebelled against his overlord, Astyages the Mede. The Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus implies that Nabonidus conspired with Cyrus to overthrow the Medes, in order that he might restore the Sîn temple at Harran.⁴⁴⁹ While Nabonidus did indeed restore Harran’s Sîn temple after Cyrus overthrew the Medes, his victory was short-lived. Cyrus began systematically conquering the polities throughout the Zagros mountains from Anšan to Sardis in Lydia.⁴⁵⁰ Eventually, Babylon

⁴⁴¹ Nebuchadnezzar II C41: 85 – 132.

⁴⁴² Richardson 2020.

⁴⁴³ 2020: 173.

⁴⁴⁴ Richardson 2020: 185.

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. Beaulieu 1989, 2020.

⁴⁴⁶ Beaulieu describes this as his “near obsessive devotion to that god,” (2020: 239).

⁴⁴⁷ Beaulieu 2020: 239.

⁴⁴⁸ Nabonidus 47 (the Harran stele) = Schaudig, AOAT 256 no. 3.1; Beaulieu 2020: 240.

⁴⁴⁹ Schaudig, AOAT 256 no. 2.12 ex. 19.

⁴⁵⁰ Chronicle 26.

fell to Cyrus on October 12, 539 BCE, Nabonidus was deported to another country,⁴⁵¹ and Karduniaš was under Achaemenid Persian rule until the arrival of Alexander the Great in 331.

4.2 Culture and Society in Karduniaš⁴⁵²

To understand the complex interplay of identities in Karduniaš, it is necessary first to discuss the term “Babylonia” and the ways that its usage has distorted our understandings.

4.2.1 Anachronistic Centralization

There are times when the *etic* referents, ancient and convenient though they may be, impede research by obscuring *emic* differentiations.⁴⁵³ For example, the region known as Mesopotamia was given its name by ancient Greek historians, who designated it: “[the land] between two rivers.” Before the acceptance of this anachronistic, *etic* designation the area had been known by several *emic* terms that changed according to the political situation and by region. But never before was there one simple term to designate the land; “Mesopotamia” is as accurate in describing the region prior to the second century CE as is “Iraq.”⁴⁵⁴ The acceptance of this term as a loose anachronistic method of referring to the region has only recently been contested⁴⁵⁵ as awareness of social identities and imperialism have impinged upon scholarly research. While the term’s continued use has been justified for many by its ease and relative antiquity, little investigation has occurred as to how this term has shaped our perceptions of how these ancient societies perceived of themselves. The imposition of alien notions of belonging on a society skews our research; by presupposing certain categories, we should not be surprised when they turn out to circularly affirm themselves.

Parallel to the issues surrounding the use of the term “Mesopotamia” to denote a region unmarked by centralized identity are the problems connoted with using “Babylonia.” Although

⁴⁵¹ Cf. Dynastic Prophecy.

⁴⁵² For a detailed account of Neo-Babylonian political history, see von Voigtlander’s unpublished dissertation (1963), who was the first to compile a political history of the region during the first millennium from the Babylonian Chronicles; or more recently, that summarized by Beaulieu (2018).

⁴⁵³ To refresh, the term *emic* references the terms and claims made by a group of itself; *etic* refers to those made by one group of another group.

⁴⁵⁴ Arrian’s *Anabasis Alexandrii* VII.7, ca. late second century CE, is the earliest extant reference to the term “Mesopotamia” (cf. Rattenborg 2018: 151; also, Finkelstein 1962: 73). However, it is important to note that this term originally designated the area of the Habur triangle—no longer included in “Assyria” or “Babylonia” by Assyriologists. “Iraq” did not gain popularity until after the beginning of the Islamic period.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. Tero Alstola 2018; Eva von Dassow 1995; Beaulieu 2007; Kanchan and Radner 2012; etc.

the term first appears in Aristotle’s Οἰκονομικά (or *Economics*, known from ca. the early third century BCE),⁴⁵⁶ it is used only in passing of the hinterland of the city of Babylon with no real attempt at accuracy for emic political nomenclature. Von Dassow (1989) also raised this issue in a discussion of theory, method, and practice in history writing, noting that no term had yet been settled upon by the Greeks to refer to this area of the world.⁴⁵⁷ Closer inspection of passages containing the term “Βαβυλωνία,” however, illustrates that the term was only ever used in metonymic reference to the general area around the city Babylon⁴⁵⁸—thus illustrating that the term was loosely imagined from its inception. Prior to this usage by the Greeks, the term “Babylonia” (*māt Bābili* “the land of Babylon”) had only ever been used during the Achaemenid period to refer to the area ruled by the regional governor at Babylon.⁴⁵⁹

4.2.1.1 “Babylonia”

Enforcing foreign conceptions of “belonging” and “group identity” upon any group of people only result in misrepresentations of that group by the people who operate under such conceptions. There is no single *emic* designation for the entirety of the region known to scholars as “Babylonia” during the first millennium BCE.⁴⁶⁰ Efforts to manufacture such a broad general term use the comparison with Assyria as their basis. However, conceptualizing the region along the lines of its northern neighbor (or other centralized states), in opposition to textual and material evidence to the contrary, only derails investigations into history of Karduniaš. Much of what we know of the administrative framework of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is inferred from the continuation of many of these practices of the Neo-Assyrian Empire into the Achaemenid

⁴⁵⁶ Per Liddell, Scott, and Jones, s.v. “Βαβυλωνία”, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsg/#eid=19406>.

⁴⁵⁷ “The name Babylonia seems not to be attested prior to the 4th century B. C. E., according to the 1996 edition of H. G. Liddell and R. Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. It is not used by Herodotus, who considers Babylon to be in “Assyria” (1.178); but Xenophon does use it, in the *Anabasis* (I.VII.1, II.II. 13)” von Dassow 1989: 241 fn 35.

⁴⁵⁸ E.g. Herodotus, *The Histories*, I.193, II.109; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I.VII, *Cyropaedia*, I.I.

⁴⁵⁹ As von Dassow (1989) has remarked, the only instances of *māt Bābili* before the Achaemenid period are found in two Middle Babylonian letters, wherein its use is parallel to that of the later Greeks; i.e. the hinterlands of the city.

⁴⁶⁰ In discussing the attestations of the term *māt Bābili*, von Dassow (1989: 241-242 fn 36) reports: “So far as I have been able to discover, during the relevant period there is no attested instance of a designation such as *māt Bābili* that could be understood to denote ‘Babylonia’ in the sense of either a territorial state or simply a territory of the extent intended by either the Greek or the modern usage of the name Babylonia.”

period.⁴⁶¹ But the structure of a thing does not define its implementation. The names of officials and administrative positions continue to be attested from the Neo-Assyrian period to the Neo-Babylonian (as attested in the *Babylonian Hofkalender*), it does not follow that the roles of these positions remained the same. The cultural context of a region greatly affects the manner in which a concept such as administration is realized.

In all of the thousands of texts from the first millennium,⁴⁶² there are no known cases of a king using the phrase *šar māt Bābili* “king of the land of Babylon/Babylonia.” Neither the Assyrian kings nor the kings of Babylon use the term. If there had been a conception of a unified, eponymous region under control of Babylon, then we would expect to find such a term phrased along these lines—just as we find *māt Aššur* for Assyria and *māt Sumer and Akkad* (KUR.EME.GI *u* URI.KI)⁴⁶³ for the regions of in the south. The phrase *māt Bābili* “Babylonia” itself is unknown before the Achaemenid period, outside of two Middle Babylonian letters.⁴⁶⁴ Since the rulers of the city of Babylon do not claim kingship over an expanse through such titulature—and they took every opportunity to extoll their own greatness—it is odd that scholarship stretches the reaches of this empire beyond their ideological bounds. Instead, the

⁴⁶¹ Cf. Jursa, Gross, Waerzeggers, MacGinnis, etc.

⁴⁶² The sample of Neo-Assyria’s “State Archives” included in the State Archives of Assyria Project alone number over 5000. To this must be added the late Middle-Assyrian/early-Neo-Assyrian texts published in the Royal Inscriptions of Middle-Assyria Project (nearly 500), the Royal Inscriptions of Neo-Assyria Project (currently over 500, but with the addition of Sargon II—due to be published in 2020—that number should rise to nearly 2000), in addition to the numerous letters which have yet to be treated in any detail, originally published in the early 20th century. Though no personal or institutional archives have been found, the famous “Library of Aššurbanipal” unearthed in prior to WWII itself housed more than 30,000 tablets. Beaulieu (2018: 221) offers an updated total of roughly 60,000 archival texts and fragments from the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty alone.

From Babylon and other cities in the south, Jursa (2005:1) records that as of fifteen years ago, the number of legal and administrative texts available to him was roughly 20,500. Da Riva (2008: 116-127) catalogues the royal inscriptions according to king, text version, and format in Appendix 1; a quick count of this appendix gives the number of 209 separate texts, some with as many as 149 exemplars. While many attest only one exemplar, a conservative estimate of the total number of royal inscriptions still lands in the several thousand—not including the trove of texts from Koldewey’s excavations which still await publication.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Marduk-apla-iddina II 2001: 2; other examples with subtly different orthography include: Itti-Marduk-balaṭu (1139 – 1132) 1: 13; Ninurta-nadin-šumi (1131 – 1126) 1: r 4; Nebuchadnezzar I (1125 – 1104) 1: ii 4; 3: r 4; 6: o 11’; 10: 2’; Marduk-nadin-aḥḫe (1099 – 1082) 4: r 4; Simbar-Šipak (1025 – 1008) 1: 13; Marduk-zakir-šumi I (ca. 9th c.) 2: o 14’; Marduk-apla-iddina II (ca.721 – 710) 1: 14; Nabopolassar (625 – 605)) 4: i 3; 5: i 10; 12: 3; 14: i 4; Nebuchadnezzar II (604 – 562) C39: i 22; C34: ii 16; C41: iii 11; and Nabonidus (555 – 539) 54: 11, 2001: 11.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. K. Nashef, *RGTC* 5 (1982) 48, s. v. *Bābili*. Von Dassow (1989: 241 fn 36) notes these two letters’ use of the term does not appear to connote an understanding of the phrase as a state or territory along the same lines as “Babylonia” is used by current scholarship.

term of choice employed by both local and foreign rulers is *Karduniaš*—a territorial name first adopted during the rule of the Kassite dynasties during the mid-second millennium.⁴⁶⁵

Unfortunately, this term has hidden beneath the scholarly convention of continuing to employ the anachronistic Greek term “Babylonia” for the region, despite the presence of local, emic terms. When the term is referenced, it is termed “anachronistic”, “archaizing”, and the like due to its connection to the Kassite Dynasty at Babylon. Yet if writers from both Assyria and its southern neighbor refer to the region as *Karduniaš* for over 1000 years and “Babylonia” was only used in a vague sense by far distant foreign philosophers, then Babylonia is the anachronistic term not *Karduniaš*.⁴⁶⁶

4.2.1.2 *Karduniaš* as a “nation”

Scholarly conceptions of “Babylonia” as a polity ruled from Babylon closely parallels what we know of Assyria—a empire centralized around an ethnic identity that veered toward a nationalist identity.⁴⁶⁷ Some scholars have even gone so far as to label Assyria a “nation-state.”⁴⁶⁸

Consequently, the notion of *Karduniaš* as a nation pervades the scholarship, even though there

⁴⁶⁵ Other names for the region denote specific areas within Southern Mesopotamia, including the continued use of “Sumer and Akkad,” “the Sealand,” “Kaldea,” and “Aram,” as previously noted by von Dassow (1999: 242), Frame (1992: 33), and Brinkman (1984: 16 n. 62). Von Dassow (1999) called Frame and Brinkman to task for noting this but continuing to adopt the anachronistic term “Babylonia.” This tendency to list out each region suggests the king felt a need to state his authority over each region by name, rather than create a centralized term and then use that.

⁴⁶⁶ “Mesopotamia” and “Babylonia” are far from the only terms used that advance false narratives of a unified geographic region. One additional such term is “Asia.” For all its usefulness in identifying a continent, the term is far too often used to describe all polities of East Asia: China, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, etc. Far from restricted to mere popular usage, Naoki Sakai (2000: 799) notes this trend among academics, stating: the assumption of Asia’s fixed, monolithic nature suppresses the “violent transformative dynamic that arises from social encounters among heterogeneous people.” Lee (2015: 140) further remarks: there “is an insistence ... that Asia has never been a neutral or self-evident category, despite the conventional assumption that it refers to a well-defined continent and the peoples and cultures that originate there (even when they are dispersed in other locales). Accordingly, [I] approach ‘Asia’ as a conceptual point of entry into global processes of subject formation and political imagination. ... Asia stems from a ‘cartographic imaginary of the globe’ that came into being as the modern colonial order reinforced the distinction between the West and the Rest. ... These geopolitical categories cannot be assumed to refer to essential characteristics, nor can they account for the heterogeneity of what they purport to encompass.”

⁴⁶⁷ While technically the concepts of nationalism, nations, and nation-states do not develop until the early modern period at the very earliest (cf. SAGE Reference: *The Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, “Nationalism”), the ideological development of Assyrian ethnicity to include all members of the empire pushes it past “ethnicity” in its typical sense. (Armstrong 1982 identified a similar development of ethnicity toward a “nation” in his treatment of early Christianity and Islam; *Nations before Nationalism*.)

⁴⁶⁸ E.g. Parpola.2004.

are few if any indications that the polity was technically a nation.⁴⁶⁹ For example, among others, Nielsen (2019: 18-21) defends the notion of Babylonia as a nation by basing his argument on Anderson's (1991) notion of a nation as an "imagined community," but his argument rests upon a conflation of the terms "nation" and "nation-state." What Nielsen argues for primarily is for the existence of a unified territory—which he labels a "nation"—whose inhabitants have established a "network [with] strong ideological underpinnings" through their civic identities as expressed through their family names.⁴⁷⁰ Yet what he illustrates is a collective identity among elites, whereas nationalism and nations are movements that portend to include the subaltern with the elite.⁴⁷¹

As discussed in Chapter One, Karduniaš became an empire after its conquest of Assyria, but like the derivative empire it was, it took on the form of the previous empire without its substance.⁴⁷² Among other things, Karduniaš lacked the unifying factor of a centralized notion of ethnicity. It sought to ground its administration in the trappings of the Neo-Assyrian without adopting its underlying *raison d'être*. First, there is no convincing evidence that the polity was a nation-state; and second, I find no evidence for the notion of a centralized identity, or "imagined community," that encompassed all subjects of Karduniaš (not just certain circles of the elite). In Gelvin's (2005) presentation of the rise of nationalism among the Arab states⁴⁷³—an effect of colonialism like Nielsen's proposed nationalism for "Babylonia"—he presents a useful analysis of how a nation-state is built in reaction to colonialism.

All nationalists believe that humanity is naturally divided into smaller units, or nations. All nationalists believe that nations can be identified by certain characteristics that all its citizens hold in common. These characteristics include the linguistic, ethnic, religious, or historical traditions that make the nation distinctive. All nationalists believe that times might change but nations retain their essential characteristics.⁴⁷⁴ ...

⁴⁶⁹ This is in part due to the fact that most scholars today come from nation-states and subconsciously impose certain characteristics of the nation-state upon our perceptions of what a polity must do or be.

⁴⁷⁰ 2019: 19-20.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Breuilly 2001, "Nations and Nation-states in History," *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*: 10369-10376.

⁴⁷² Cf. Curtis 2003: 157 – 167.

⁴⁷³ Gelvin 2005: 197-198. In the above quote, "nationalists" refer to those people who are attempting to build a nation and those in favor of the resultant nation.

⁴⁷⁴ As ethnicity is all too often used in mere substitution for the term "race," analyzing other trends of racism that developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is often illustrative. Hattam (2001: 63-64) remarked the following on the nature of discourse on race and racial categories in connection to the introduction of a new xenophobia based on geography. "All too often, racial categories, while being acknowledged as social

All nationalist movements take one or more linguistic, religious, or ethnic attributes of a given group of people and claim that the attributes they have highlighted makes that group a nation and entitles it to political independence in its ancestral homeland.⁴⁷⁵

Although in scholarship Babylonia's status as a nation may be assumed as a matter of course,⁴⁷⁶ the basic tenets of what makes a nation-state are missing from our sources: they do not share a single language, ethnicity, religion, or historical traditions that set them apart as a group. The kings of Karduniaš themselves do not align with the notion of a nation. For example, several of the "Neo-Babylonian" kings were members of Kaldean tribes,⁴⁷⁷ located in the Sealand to the south of the area specifically claimed by the city of Babylon. During their reigns they maintain their personal ethnic affiliations with their tribe(s) even as they seek legitimation through connections to ancient kings of Babylon. Beyond the kings, we know that the residents of Karduniaš, Sumer and Akkad in the first millennium varied greatly from those of the second or third millennium.⁴⁷⁸ Another basic failing in describing "Babylonia" as a nation is that although we see plenty of devotion to Babylon from the city's residents,⁴⁷⁹ this is not evidenced continuously by residents of other cities.⁴⁸⁰ The "Neo-Babylonian" empire was an entirely new

construction, have often been used as transhistorical terms. Scholars of racial discourse per se have attended to changes in racial discourse over time, but *when it comes to analyzing racial practices, we frequently invoke rather timeless notions of race* as if we can move from 1860 through 1960, for example, without attending to the very dramatic shifts in languages of race over this period. ... *Terms such as "foreigner" and "alien" were not transhistorical words used to describe immigrants throughout American history, but only began to appear with increasing frequency precisely in the first two decades of the twentieth century when Lamarckian notions of race were breaking down.*" Our insistence on applying such xenophobic idylls onto the ancient past, then, is merely racism in sheep's clothing. Hattam continues (2001: 65): "To what extent, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and others have asked, is the American conception of national belonging predicated on quite specific sets of racial exclusions?"

⁴⁷⁵ Gellner continues: "... True believers, of course, swear that their particular brand of nationalism deserves to succeed because it represents the authentic identity—aspirations of a given people. Most historians, on the other hand, wince at the idea of authentic identities and aspirations. For them, nationalist movements succeed or fail not because they represent true or false identities and aspirations but because of the often unpredictable circumstances in which nationalist movements find themselves."

⁴⁷⁶ As inferred by Nielsen 2019: 19.

⁴⁷⁷ Beaulieu 1997: 391; Jursa 2007: 131; Fuchs 2014: 59; Popova 2015: 402.

⁴⁷⁸ If only due to the influx of Aramaeans and Kaldeans, and the result of the Neo-Assyrian deportation systems which racked the region.

⁴⁷⁹ E.g. Brinkman 1979: 228, 233.

⁴⁸⁰ The "Advice to a Prince" (OIP 114 128) discusses the privileges afforded the residents of certain cities (e.g. Babylon, Sippar, Nippur) and their corresponding loyalty—which a letter from Nippur (SAA 18 124) reiterates. Additionally, even under Neo-Assyrian rule—a situation of imperialism under which many examples of nationalism have formed—the cities did not attest a centralized allegiance but each formed alliances in their own interest (e.g. with Assyria in the case of Nippur and Ur).

iteration of empire to what had existed before in Karduniaš: a marriage of Kaldean and Babylonian cultures and practices (and likely Aramaean) amid the trappings of the former Assyrian empire.

Furthermore, the pantheon differed from city to city within Karduniaš, even under the attempts to unify all gods under Marduk.⁴⁸¹ The presence of Marduk as ruler of the pantheon over Enlil (the traditional head of the pantheon)⁴⁸²—and the degeneration of the name “Enlil” from a specific deity to the position that deity once held⁴⁸³—illustrates an attempt at religious unity, but nationalism is typically found only in modern societies shaped by monotheism.⁴⁸⁴ But even in a polytheistic society, if Babylon had attempted to govern according to the principles adopted in Assyria one would expect to find attempts to solidify the national identity through ethnic and religious unification. Even if the kings attempted to centralize their polity through religious means, they made no efforts to enforce this centralization through the formation of a single, unified identity: no corresponding efforts at unifying all the population under a single ethnicity were made.⁴⁸⁵

If these were the only points of contention, one could determine that nationalism (if it did exist) in “Babylonia” was not an organic development. However, contrary to Nielsen’s (2019) proposal, the sources do not indicate that there was any attempt to define what made a “Babylonian” in a manner that could include residents of other cities or regions within the empire. The peoples of Babylon and other cities and southern regions could easily have adopted the standardized language we find in Assyrian administrative texts to refer Karduniaš in the same manner as Assyria. But there seems to have been a decided aversion to doing so. The idea of a sweeping standardization does not materialize in the south after the fall of Assyria in any linguistic sense. All terms for the region were already deeply embedded in the administration,

⁴⁸¹ This points to the difficulty inherent in centralizing polytheistic societies where the pantheon’s structure varies with each city or region.

⁴⁸² As occurred at least from the Isin II Dynasty onward through the creation of the *Enuma Eliš* and other efforts at religious reform (Beaulieu 2018).

⁴⁸³ E.g. from d.EN.LÍL “Enlil” as the god of Nippur who was at the head of the pantheon to EN.LÍL-ūtu or “Enlil-ship”: the act of ruling from the head of the pantheon as though one were Enlil.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. SAGE Reference: *The Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, “Nationalism.”

⁴⁸⁵ Additionally, Nielsen detracts from his own argument by admitting the lack of evidence for a centralized term for the polity or the population thereof (19-21).

and thus we assume among the general population.⁴⁸⁶ Babylon was not a nation-state; it was an empire. Though they did make some efforts in unification,⁴⁸⁷ these efforts were not all-encompassing.

4.2.2 Social Makeup of Karduniaš

The region known as Karduniaš was a mix of various ethnic groups since before the famous reign of Hammurapi (1792-1750 BCE), and its society was no more unified over a millennium later. Variousy comprised of Amorites and more established city-residents (eighteenth century); Elamites, Kassites, Aramaeans, Kaldeans, Assyrians, and city-residents (eighth century); and finally, the addition of deportee communities, the region was marked by heterogeneity rather than an attempt toward ethnic homogeneity.⁴⁸⁸ Although the tendency in scholarship is to combine these ethnicities together under the heuristic “Babylonian,” as I have demonstrated above this term promotes a vision of a centralized Karduniaš that cannot be substantiated. One of the hallmarks of kingship of Karduniaš was the ability to navigate multiple ethnic groups and convince them to serve the king at Babylon—even those who maintained (semi-)autonomy from the state’s bureaucracy. Thus, even the arrival of less established subaltern ethnic minority groups via deportation from the West did not upset the administration of the empire’s core.

As Jursa has established through analysis of Neo-Babylonian economic documents and references to court officials, the first millennium empire at Babylon managed a “tri-partite” structure of officials: the court, the provincial governors, and the tribal leaders. The resulting

⁴⁸⁶ The letters from Karduniaš to the Assyrian kings also suggest that no such centralizing term had developed among the populace, either. Cf. SAA 15 and 17—in all of these letters from “Babylonia” and the south, none of them refer to the region by anything other than city names, people names, and the names of specific areas within the region. No sweeping term is found.

⁴⁸⁷ Another such attempt has previously been identified in the first millennium’s archaizing tendencies and interest in ‘archaeology’ (as evidenced by the use of old signs, case-endings, and verbal forms and the kings’ renewed rebuilding programs). Such uses of archaeology and philology have long been identified as nationalist tools for legitimation, especially in the Middle East. For example, Gelvin (2005: 203) notes the following regarding their use in the development of Persian and Turkish national identities: “Using the tools of [their] newly established disciplines of archaeology and philology, they traced the lineages of their respective cultures and languages from pre-Islamic times forward. These intellectuals were not necessarily nationalists. Nevertheless, they provided a cultural, linguistic, and/ or ethnic: argument for the continuous existence of the Turkish and Persian nations that later nationalists Ziya Gokap and Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh could apply. When Mustafa Kemal and Reza Shah took power, they found the ideas of these nationalist ideologues useful for their nation-building projects and used the institutions of state to disseminate them.”

⁴⁸⁸ In the following chapter, I discuss the living conditions of the Aramaeans and other tribal groups in Karduniaš.

structure no doubt paralleled the ethnic enmeshment at a certain level, as the king sought to maintain order from his central position among otherwise separate groups. Jursa (2014: 133) thus summarizes:

Thus, even within the core area of the Neo-Babylonian empire there were centralising as well as centrifugal tendencies which could not easily be harmonised. Conflict occurred along lines of ethnic division. The crown pushed for centralisation and bureaucratic control, probably successfully so in the case of the old Babylonian cities of the alluvium whose landed elites in the final count bowed to royal demands. The tribal leaders on the other hand could not be integrated easily into the palace-based royal administration; they and provincial governors in general retained independent power bases. The highest royal officials could not act as stabilising factors for internal politics since they, in contrast to Assyrian practice, were not given provinces of their own to govern in the name of the king.

Such a depiction does not, in fact, support a hierarchical view of the empire's administrators, but rather favors a heterarchical approach, where multiple linear hierarchies existed side-by-side under the king's command. Although we are led to believe each leader only reported to the official above him and ultimately the king, practice suggests less straightforward interactions existed among the various levels of administration, as well. An empire's stability and success rely upon "the potential of its ideological foundation for elite integration and identity formation, and ... its coercive power" (Jursa 2014: 133). While there is ample evidence for such coercion as taxation, deportation, and military prowess, the texts provide no evidence of a single, integrative identity for its elites.

Our sources privilege the elite, especially those who dwelt in major cities. Thus, presentations of Babylonian history have focused on the presumed homogeneity among city-residents, extrapolating generalizations for all Karduniaš. But in keeping with the recognized administrative complexity of Babylon's rulers, so too must the population have been at least equally complex. In fact, homogeneity as has been proposed would negate the need for such an elaborate, tripartite administration.

4.2.2.1 Ethnic Diversity in Karduniaš

If Karduniaš was never a hegemonic ethnic state or nation-state, then we would not expect to find a single political ethnic label for its inhabitants. Further, we would have no reason to expect the deportees or other subaltern ethnic minority groups would be treated as less than human (where 'human' is defined as all members of the group). In fact, such evidence for the rulers at Babylon attempting to portray other peoples within their realm as being lesser humans than the more established elite families does not exist. The modern, scholarly use of a centralized term for

the polity obscures this by presupposing a (non-existent) “native” people group in opposition to the foreign. But as discussed above, such a term did not exist during the period in question. And when grappling with the conceptions of ethnicity and belonging in a time and land that predates the advent of citizenship, such technicalities on the part of the ancient locals and their contemporaries illustrate more than we have previously allowed. If there was no notion of a Babylonia, but rather one either of a Karduniaš or list of governed territories, then there can be no concept of a unified political ethnicity.

Neither the population of Karduniaš or Assyria used a term that denoted all the peoples of Karduniaš. For a region composed of multiple ethnic groups that are represented in their texts, palace reliefs, and art, the lack of a general term for the region’s peoples should alert us that a different, more enmeshed society existed therein. When there is no “Babylonia” then the term “Babylonian” in scholarship denotes only “a resident of the city Babylon”—just as it does in the ancient sources. In a discussion of the earliest years of rulership at Babylon, Beaulieu (2018: 25) also notes the emic definition of “Babylonian”—a definition that did not change in well over 1000 years.⁴⁸⁹ This leaves the question of what the residents of Karduniaš should be called, which is where many have abandoned the attempt to divorce ourselves from the term “Babylonia.” Believing that the resultant lack of centralized term for inhabitants of that empire is an insurmountable obstacle,⁴⁹⁰ several scholars have decided it is not worth the effort to construct such a term. But that is the point: there were no contemporaneous terms for a resident of Karduniaš. When it comes to subjects of the Neo-Babylonian empire, they apparently had no use for the concept of “us” and “them” within the empire itself.

When we abandon what could be termed the new binary of “native” vs. “foreign,”⁴⁹¹ the multiplicity of ethnic markers in the texts can be read with their respective, emic weights.

⁴⁸⁹ Although Beaulieu goes on to note that the term “Akkadian” was given to all residents of this area, this is not relevant for the texts of the first millennium which rarely use this term in reference to all inhabitants.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf., for example, Alstola 2018: 31, where after protesting the anachronistic nature of the term “Babylonia” and “Babylonian”, he then justifies his continued use of these terms by responding, “... there is an obvious need for a general term which juxtaposes deportees with the native population of Babylonia.” While there is much to be said for following convention in a dissertation on the life of Judean deportees in “Babylonia,” the statement is illustrative of the view of history taken in both biblical studies and Assyriology. We mistakenly believe there are no other options available.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. Hattam 2001.

Leaving aside the exact ethnonyms for the moment, I have identified the following categories into which the groups denoted as living in Karduniaš fall (in no particular order):

- Kin groups connected by descent from eponymous ancestors,⁴⁹²
- City residents connected by municipal ties to temples, heritage, lineage, ancient prestige,⁴⁹³
- Tribal groups of both mobile and sedentary members, organized by spokesmen or kings, or elected officials,⁴⁹⁴
- Tribal groups predominantly tied to southern marshlands,⁴⁹⁵
- Tribal groups predominantly tied to merchant routes and long-distance trade networks,⁴⁹⁶
- Tribal groups connected to far-off regions,⁴⁹⁷
- Deportees connected by previous origin points and certain elements of shared culture(s),⁴⁹⁸
- Traveling merchants without established ties to region,⁴⁹⁹
- Artisans, tradesmen, ambassadors from distant regions.⁵⁰⁰

Without the imposed dichotomy of “us” and “them”—and without the added confusion of unfamiliar or uncertain group names—the fluidity and overlap among these categories become evident. That fluidity and overlap is also key to understanding the concept of ethnicity, and also

⁴⁹² E.g. the elite families of the Egibi, Nasāhu, Rab-banê, Arad-Ea, Šangu-Dilbat, etc. Many of these families had members residing in multiple cities across Karduniaš, cf. Nielsen 2011.

⁴⁹³ E.g. uru.Bābilāya.ki “Babylonian,” uru.Sipparāya.ki “Sipparean,” uru.Nippurāya “Nippurean,” etc.

⁴⁹⁴ E.g. Aramaean tribes of Karduniaš (e.g. Puqudu) and Kaldean tribes (e.g. Bīt-Amukāni).

⁴⁹⁵ E.g. Bīt-Yakīn of the Kaldeans living in the “Sealand,” the Puqudu along the Uqnu river, and the Gambulu between Ur, the Uqnu river, and the Elamite border (Beaulieu 2018: 167)).

⁴⁹⁶ E.g. the Medes (cf. Young, Jr., 2008), Arab tribes (cf. Byrne 2003), and tribes in the Negev and Edom (cf. Thareani 2014).

⁴⁹⁷ E.g. certain of the Aramaic-Luwian tribes which were relocated to the Assyrian province of Gambulu in Karduniaš from their homes in the West.

⁴⁹⁸ E.g. the *ḥaṭru* lands and sister cities of Āl-Yahūdu (Judahites), *Bīt-Šūrāya* (Tyreans), *Hazatu* (Philistines at Gaza), and *Išqallūnu* (Philistines Aškelon), *Ālu-ša-Arbāya* and *Ālu-ša-Qurab/mātua* (Arabs), etc.

⁴⁹⁹ E.g. the merchants of the Murašu clan from later, Achaemenid Karduniaš.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. the peoples listed in Nebuchadnezzar II’s palace ration lists, Weidner A, B, C, D.

is borne out in the texts.⁵⁰¹ In Karduniaš especially, each person is permitted (and perhaps expected) to maintain membership in more than one of the above groups. For example, members of the Egībi family are granted weighted hierarchical standing based on their connection to specific cities.⁵⁰² And a member of an Aramaean tribe can hold simultaneous loyalty to a city, a city-lord, or merchant group.⁵⁰³

Gelvin (2005: 199) remarks that the nationalist act of defining a (heterogeneous) group with a single identity and interest provides a state with legitimacy and purpose. This purpose, in turn, is used to “mobilize and harness the energies of their populations.” While this applies to the Neo-Assyrian empire, it by no means applies to that of Karduniaš. The empire seated at Babylon during the first millennium was one built from the ruins of a previous empire—but was without the ability to fully adopt the necessary components to make such an empire function in the long-term.⁵⁰⁴ Its attempts at centralization through reviving the notion of a golden era or antiquarianism sought to establish a link to the idea of longevity that was “little more than an influential fantasy” (Barfield 2001: 38-39).

The kings’ reluctance to fabricate a new identity for their subjects—in connection with their interest in promoting values traditional to the inhabitants of Babylon⁵⁰⁵—suggests they were balancing two identities of their own: Kaldean and “Babylonian”—neither of which encompassed more than a subset of the population. When their tribal ethnicity is considered alongside their efforts to revitalize ancient traditions, “traditional” to the land before the Kassites’ rule, it would appear that they were more interested in establishing themselves as legitimate rulers than they were in establishing an identity shared with their subjects. Though they were presented with the possibility of creating a national identity parallel to that of the Assyrians, they did not. The two empires adopted different strategies to “dealing with diversity” among their subjects. As such, Karduniaš did not develop an ethnonym to identify its inhabitants

⁵⁰¹ For instance, a resident of a city may be both tied to that city and be a member of a tribe (e.g. in), elite residents of cities often claim ties to kin groups through the use of an eponymous ancestor’s name (e.g. in), or kings may claim both tribal, city, region, and long-distant ancestor affiliation (e.g. Ninurta-kudurri-ušur, governor of Sūḫu and Mari during the early eighth century; RIMB 2 S.O.1002.1).

⁵⁰² Cf. Wunsch 2000, 2007; Nielsen 2011.

⁵⁰³ E.g. OIP 114 27, 83.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Curtis 2003: 157-167; Barfield 2001: 33-34.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. Da Riva 2013.

but continued to conceive of itself as a multi-ethnic polity (i.e. an empire) comprised of numerous semi-independent groups.⁵⁰⁶

Essentially, such flexibility of identity not only affects the interpretations of ethnicity and allegiances, but it also underscores the lack of political centrality within Karduniaš. The lack of an etic or emic term for all peoples living within Karduniaš illustrates that it could not have been a “nation,”⁵⁰⁷ nor could it have been any other form of hegemonic ethnic state. A hegemonic ethnic state such as proposed for “Babylonia”/Karduniaš would necessitate that the region had been controlled by *an* elite group whose primary objective was to perpetuate power vis-à-vis other ethnic groups and maintain the culture of the single ruling elite group.⁵⁰⁸ However, there is no evidence that supports this interpretation of the Karduniaš state. At no point in the rhetoric-driven royal inscriptions, the economic / administrative documents, letters or other sources from Karduniaš or Assyria do we find a concerted drive to eliminate the influence of any subaltern group—ethnic or otherwise. There is no emic or in-group designator for the inhabitants of all Karduniaš, because as I will further illustrate in what follows, there was no notion of a shared identity among the peoples. Rather, each city and each tribe maintained its individual status in apposition (not opposition) to the other tribal and civic identities.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁶ While these points deserve devoted attention, such attention must be reserved for future articles. In brief support, as a polity comprised of numerous mobile peoples’ clans and tribes, as well as more sedentary, city-based peoples, Karduniaš was comprised of peoples who were used to self-governance: some by hereditary official, and others by election of tribal leader. The continued references to the phrase *lú.GAL-É ina kur.Akkad bihirtu ibtehir* in the Babylonian Chronicles refers to such election among the tribes. While Brinkman (1984: 77 n. 375), Frame (1992: 243-244), and Glassner (2005) note this expression is unclear, Glassner’s “carried out a selection in Akkad” fits the general events surrounding the election of new leaders for tribal groups (see Weiss and Green 1987: 18-25, esp. 22): “Decision-making powers within a tribe were vested in a council or *majlis*, composed of the tribal elders. It was customary for each clan—or at least each important clan—to be represented on the *majlis* by one of its leading men. The members of the *majlis* elected one of themselves, customarily the most respected man of the tribe, to be their spokesman.” The identification of these *lú.GAL-É* as tribal is inferred based on a literal translation where *É* “house” refers to the clans of the tribes—which are typically identified according to which “house” they are affiliated with. Additionally, the peoples governed by the ruler at Babylon may not have included all the cities in the region Sumer and Akkad, as careful reading of the kings’ inscriptions suggests.

⁵⁰⁷ Nielsen 2019, among others, has argued that “Babylonia” was a nation-state, though he uses the term ‘nation’ in its place.

⁵⁰⁸ Such a polity is discussed by As’ad Ghanem (2009) in his *Ethnic Politics in Israel: The Margins and the Ashkenazi Center* (New York: Routledge), where he argues that modern Israel is a “‘hegemonic ethnic state’ controlled since its foundation by the Ashkenazi (European Jewish) elite whose prime objective has been to perpetuate power vis-à-vis other ethnic groups and to maintain the European culture of the state” (Kaufman 2011: 581).

⁵⁰⁹ At times, however, certain cities banded together in a type of league / amphictyony, such as among the cities of Babylon, Borsippa, Kish, etc.

4.3 Deportees in Karduniaš

4.3.1 Arrival of Deportees

One of the first records we have for deportees being brought into Karduniaš in the first millennium occurs during reign of the Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II (722 – 705). In one of his annals,⁵¹⁰ Sargon reports the state of the land outside Babylon had grown full of thorns, thistles, and tribesmen. To rectify this, the Assyrian king drove out the tribes, restored settlements, and brought captives from other conquered countries to live therein. Sargon also claims to have settled deportees from Kummuh (in the south-central mountains of Turkey) in the region of Bīt-Yakîn.⁵¹¹ Sennacherib rebuilt and repopulated a city along the Tigris, Sur-marrāti.⁵¹² Esarhaddon reportedly restored the *šallatu* and *hubtu* captives of Babylon which had been deported during Sennacherib's reign.⁵¹³ Although these are but a few scattered examples of when the Assyrian kings rebuilt and resettled cities within Karduniaš, we may assume that there were several other instances from the Assyrian's policy of cultivating deserted areas and repopulating territories with deportees.⁵¹⁴ Even so, they did not rebuild the entire region; we know there were many villages and cities that were in ruins, lying abandoned.⁵¹⁵

After these initial waves of incoming deportees—and in the wake of becoming an empire in their own right—beginning with Nebuchadnezzar II, the kings of Karduniaš began their own deportation programme. As aforementioned, the focus of their royal inscriptions (and the lack of extant state archives) precludes discussion on many of the particulars of their deportations.

4.3.2 Identifying Deportees

Identifying an individual's ethnicity has always been problematic for scholars of ancient history. In the past, scholars have utilized multiple different approaches to the problem, most of which connected either to the comparison of material culture assemblages or the analysis of the onomastica. Due to the rigidity of such structuralist approaches and the comparatively fluid

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Gadd 1954; Oded 1979.

⁵¹¹ Lie, *Sargon*, p. 64: 16.

⁵¹² Grayson 1963: p. 94: 115 – 118.

⁵¹³ Cf. SAA 18 014 (=ABL 0418).

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Oded 1979: 69.

⁵¹⁵ ABL 942.

nature of ethnicity and its boundaries, many of these attempts have erred on the side of the majority: pots are not people and not every name reflects ethnic belonging. This has not, however, halted inquiry into matters of ethnicity and cultural difference. For Assyriologists, the usual issues are further compounded: identifying linguistic correlations in cuneiform adds its own idiosyncrasies to this already problematic issue. The writing system was not created for Semitic languages, causing multiple consonants to be lost or subsumed in vague approximations. In addition to such problems with the syllabary, logograms often hide linguistic variants within the ideogram for a concept. Further still, regional variants within the imperial core have often not been given proper due as dialect rather than error. By the Neo-Babylonian period, Aramaic had taken the place of Akkadian as the *lingua franca* with Akkadian relegated to a prestige language of elite city-residents and merchants. Cuneiform favors Akkadian personal name formations, yet multiple attested names obviously reference languages and naming practices not common to East Semitic speakers. Unfortunately, there are too few remaining Aramaic documents to compare productively against the vast archives of cuneiform inscriptions—especially Aramaic documents that would reflect the naming practices of the Aramaeans or other mobile peoples within Karduniaš. Still, one expects the presence of mobile Aramaean populations to evidence West Semitic naming practices within the greater community before the empires began resettling people from the West.⁵¹⁶

Establishing an ethnicity on the basis of personal naming practices is problematic. Each culture and era establish certain norms in naming practices which are not always easily discernable to the outside observer.⁵¹⁷ However, dominant groups (or the so-called “majority”) rarely adopt names that indicate subaltern status. It is far more common for subaltern or non-dominant groups to adopt the naming practices of the dominant culture or language. Therefore, though we cannot tell who were *absolutely* of the dominant groups without much inference, it is possible to identify those of subaltern heritage or status by their personal names. Beyond this

⁵¹⁶ The so-called Amorite or West-Semitic cultural element that lived alongside the East-Semitic Akkadian speakers influenced the shape and form of the Akkadian dialects over a millennium. Unfortunately, speakers of Amorite did not prioritize written communication in the same manner as the Akkadians, and so we cannot systematically analyze their grammar or lexicon. Nevertheless, the various Akkadian dialects reflect contact with West Semitic languages in their morphology, syntax, and lexicon, which provide tantalizing glimpses of Amorite language conventions.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. the Victorians, who selected names for their children from the names of their immediate ancestors, etc.

point, however, things become much murkier without the guiding principle of a specific, critical methodology. A central point of the methodology of some Assyriologists is the assumption that all are of Akkadian or local origin unless they cannot be.⁵¹⁸ Others tend to see whichever language they focus upon reflected in difficult personal names.⁵¹⁹ This is often done without recourse to provenance or regionalities reflected in the texts and under the assumption that the society of Karduniaš was unified by certain, never-spoken characteristics. In general, the traditional methodology appears to follow these guidelines:

1. Identify the ethnicity or linguistic origin of theophoric elements, looking for the origin of unfamiliar deities, assign all that exist in Mesopotamian religions as Akkadian, and assign to their “home” region.
2. If no theophoric element exists, recognize the grammatical or syntactical elements, identify those that cannot be Akkadian, assign all foreign elements to their corresponding language, and assign all others to Akkadian.
3. If the name derives from a noun, place it within a lexicon and assign the name to the corresponding language.
4. If the personal name contains a hypocoristic element or is a hypocoristicon of another name, assume it is Akkadian.

While the basic principles in this methodology are admirable, there are still numerous problems with this approach; first among which is that it leaves no room for ambiguity in assigning a name to a language or culture—if it *can* be Akkadian, then it *must* be Akkadian. A few examples will help illustrate the inherent issues with such methodology.

For example, in Nielsen (2015), we find the name “Aya-saggi” is attested in Karduniaš between 747 and 626 BCE. The name itself is comprised of a theophoric element “Aya” with a verbal adjectival complement “saggi,” meaning, “Aya is great.” Nielsen attributes a West-Semitic provenance. If we recreate this analysis according to what appears to be his method (that delineated above), the first step is to assign the deity to its corresponding culture. In light of the evidence, it would be best to consider the goddess an East Semitic deity whose fame extended to West Semitic appearances.⁵²⁰ Thus, we cannot pinpoint regionality according to the name’s

⁵¹⁸ E.g. Nielsen 2015.

⁵¹⁹ E.g. Iranian or other Indo-European languages for Dandamaev, Northwest Semitic languages for Zadok, and Arabic for Lipiński.

⁵²⁰ Aya was an Akkadian goddess who was the consort to the sun god, Šamaš, and as such had been part of the Akkadian pantheons at least since the end of the Sumerian period. She also appears in West Semitic god-lists at Ugarit during the second millennium BCE, and in names attested in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Gen 36.24; 2 Sa 3.7; 1 Chr 7.28). However, these attestations do not indicate that the goddess was originally West Semitic, much less that she could only be West Semitic. The first records of the goddess are in Akkadian, which was regularly used by the people of Ugarit in political correspondence as well as religious texts. That could account for the introduction of the

theophoric element. The second element is the consonantal root s-g-y/. The West Semitic cognate (š-g-y) carries the same lexical meaning as the Akkadian and the verb is attested in both Hebrew and Aramaic.⁵²¹ Neither element of this name is definitively East or West Semitic, making it possible for the name to occur in all of the dialects as a result of basic language and cultic contact. Unfortunately, Nielsen’s catalogue—like most others—allows for no such designation and leaves the ambiguity of the socio-linguistic status of this name undocumented.

Another example includes a theophoric element well-known in Mesopotamia: “Bēl.” The name “Bēl-ibni” is borne by both a well-known individual’s archive (Waerzeggers) and a ruler of Babylon. However, there are issues with attributing this name solely to Akkadian-speakers without question. Assyriologists typically interpret reference to “Bēl” as a synecdoche for the Babylon’s patron deity, Marduk, but Levantine texts similarly attest this practice of using *bēl* / *ba‘al* “lord, master, sir” in reference to the chief of a pantheon from the second millennium onward. Westerners whose names contained the element *ba‘al* would very likely have recognized its connection to the Akkadian *bēl*, at least enough not to make a distinction in writing.⁵²² It is therefore possible that as a theophoric element “Bēl” could indicate either a West Semitic storm god or the East Semitic patron / storm / mage / wisdom god. The second element of this name fares no better. “Ibni” is a prefix-conjugation verbal form attested in all branches of the Semitic language family.⁵²³ In all three branches, this root (*b n y/’*) is a final weak verb, in

goddess from the East Semitic pantheons to those of the West. Additionally, the names of these sections of the Hebrew Bible are also heavily influenced by Mesopotamian contact, if not exile. Therefore, even if the deity were attested strongly at Ugarit and Israel—which she is not—her earlier association with Akkadian language does not allow her to be considered a “West Semitic” element.

⁵²¹ The syllabary available to cuneiform does not allow for the accurate representation of the lateral fricative /š/. Hebrew and Aramaic likewise attest issues with this consonant—for all that their alphabets were patterned for Semitic speakers—and it is lumped with the letter for /š/ in Hebrew, differentiated by the placement of a dot. Due to the nature of Akkadian syllabary and the uneven way the Akkadian language dealt with such phonemes diachronically, the lateral fricative is found morphed into several other sibilants or dentals in Aramaic, Arabic, Ugaritic, and other dialects.

⁵²² Thanks go to Øyvind Bjøru for the following example: It is more like a Norwegian called “John” pronouncing his name like the English “John” rather than the native Norwegian pronunciation /Yün/ when he introduces himself to someone while speaking English.

⁵²³ All but Akkadian, or East Semitic, dialects utilize both prefix and suffix conjugations for finite verbs, and all three branches use a form of a prefixed verb for their present or habitual tense, with a *y-/i-*prefix for the third masculine singular formation. Additionally, East, West, and South Semitic languages also attest the consonantal verbal root “*b-n- /y/h*” as a verb for “to create.”

which the original *y* is often assimilated or dropped when not followed by a bound suffix.⁵²⁴ Thus, the word here transcribed “*ibni*” could easily stand for linguistic variants such as “*yibneh/yiben*,” “*ibni*,” or “*yabna*.” Neither the verb “*ibni*” nor the theophoric element “*Bēl*” help us narrow down possible socio-cultural affiliations. Linguistically, the individual may even have pronounced the name /Ba‘l-yibn(e)/ without any orthographic difference to the standard Akkadian *be-el ib-ni*. Again, as was the case with “*Aya-saggi*,” we find a name which could be declined along multiple Semitic branches.

The list continues. Familial elements that are mutually shared across language branches are unfortunately ascribed only to Akkadian (e.g. *abu*, *ummu/îmma/êm*, *aḫu/aḫ*). Cross-linguistic homophony and polysemy abound but are relegated solely to their Akkadian cognate without discussion. I propose that we should identify all socio-linguistically ambiguous names with the term “Pan-Semitic” to emphasize their ambiguity.⁵²⁵ By addressing contemporary naming practices cross-Semitically, we will ascertain the probability that a Pan-Semitic name might be associated with a specific culture—at least for a specific period and region. Even if all names be attributed to “Akkadian” solely, the problem of not having a centralized culture for Karduniaš during the first millennium makes this designation meaningless. Additionally, the practice of adopting new (court) names (*Beamtennamen*) according to dominant local naming practices renders the list of Akkadian names insignificant at best when identifying the linguistic or ethnic affiliations of an individual.⁵²⁶ The adoption of a name from a dominant language does not always equate to ethnic affiliation. Thus, we approach the onomastica aware of the pitfalls that await us when assigning ethnicity based on the language of personal names.

In conclusion, identifying linguistic or possibly ethnic affiliation based on the elements of a name is by no means certain when the name itself may be identified as one of the dominant culture. Theophoric and linguistic elements specific to minority elements in the population are

⁵²⁴ The vocalization varies, but all three Semitic branches attest to the presence of a vowel after the second consonant—though the form used in Hebrew and Aramaic personal names was typically shortened with the final vowel removed.

⁵²⁵ For those individuals for whom patronymics and other identifiers are attested, it is possible that social network analyses could be utilized to further identify their socio-linguistic backgrounds. For those who are difficult to disambiguate (or for whom we have no additional information) we should compile additional attestations from contemporary inscriptions of nominal formations including these elements, to then ascertain with greater certainty of which cultural said name reflects. After first treating those names that are relatively certain in their ascription, one should re-examine the names that identified as “Pan-Semitic.”

⁵²⁶ Cf. Da Riva 2014.

more accurate in identifying the spoken language or sphere of influence into which the person was born or moved. Therefore, the best way to identify people of foreign extraction in the onomastica is by relying on further clarifying elements: e.g. gentilics. We further expect that these gentilics will be used only as deemed helpful or relevant by the scribes, and therefore a great number of variant cultures will have been omitted from the record.⁵²⁷ Such gentilics are only helpful if they can be used to successfully identify an individual from among his companions, and thus reflect more diversity than previously allowed—especially in the cases where the gentilic or *nisbe* form is appended to the name of a city or town known to be within Karduniaš proper. Naturally, not every person that attests a foreign name or gentilic will have been a deportee. In a region heavily populated by mobile people groups and known for its mercantile ventures, many names likely reflect the more ‘voluntary’ residents. Thus, I focus on the attestations of nondominant or subaltern ethnic groups at large, and then (when possible) I further delimit these by analyzing the specific mentions of deportees (*šallatu* or *hubtu*) within this larger setting.

4.3.3 Lives of Deportees

Having now demonstrated that foreigners were not treated ill during their stay in Karduniaš, it remains to address the types of lifestyles we find them in. While there is no doubt that the deportees were not given a choice of occupation or lifestyle once in Karduniaš, there is equally little doubt that they came from similar situations of restricted social mobility in their own countries. Such examples, after all, are worldwide few and far between until the creation of the “middle class.”⁵²⁸ It is most likely that deportations occurred selectively. They were, as we know, meant to be of use in their new destinations and not merely become drains upon the imperial society. I therefore present the five types of lifestyles I have been able to find that attest foreigners among them and are most likely correspond to the limitations of being deported (i.e. I have excluded merchants from this category for the time being). These five lifestyles available are as follows:

1. Slaves and servitude
2. Temple dependents

⁵²⁷ The natural corollary of this is that any person identified solely by a gentilic is: 1. bound to have another, given name; and 2. highly likely to have been of that designated people group. As far as I am aware, neither of these two points has been much utilized much in translations or in identifying individuals through prosopography.

⁵²⁸ And even then, one might wonder...

3. State dependents
4. City residents' dependents
5. Royal dependents

Each of these categories has been thoroughly discussed and attested in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods by numerous scholars. I will therefore merely recap the basic meaning and status of each category before providing textual examples of foreigners in all of these positions.

4.3.3.1 Slaves and servitude

As may be expected, anything that may be looted (i.e. *habātu*) may also be owned. In a period in which “complete individual freedom” was unimaginable,⁵²⁹ many humans were no different than property. Slaves were members of households (however broadly defined), and as such they did not stand at “the margins of history and society, but belong[ed] to historical and social processes.”⁵³⁰ Thus fully integrated, the ancient Near Eastern forms of slavery involved complex social interactions and could provide the means for upward or downward mobility.⁵³¹

In Karduniaš the terms *ardu*, *amtu*,⁵³² and *qallu*⁵³³ land somewhere on the spectrum between our conceptions of slavery and servanthood.⁵³⁴ All denote a dependency upon a wealthier individual, family, or institution for one’s food, shelter, clothing, etc. In return, those in servitude were to perform whatever tasks or labor needed by their owner and were not required to perform their own corvée labor for the state⁵³⁵—though they were likely to serve on behalf of their masters (members of the *mār-banê*, or free person status). Thus, no matter the possibilities for high return on their investments, it was expensive to maintain persons in servitude. In times of famine and distress, some families would resort to selling certain members to a wealthier

⁵²⁹ Cf. Culbertson 2011: 2; Baker 2017.

⁵³⁰ Culbertson 2011: 14.

⁵³¹ Culbertson 2011: 14.

⁵³² Though the terms *ardu* and *amtu* are rarely used to refer to “chattel slavery” in the Neo-Babylonian period (i.e. 6th century), their popularity increases again during the early Achaemenid period (i.e. 5th century; cf. Kleber 2011: 101).

⁵³³ Literally “of low standing, of little value;” cf. Kleber 2011: 101.

⁵³⁴ The many scholars who have labored to define these terms for contemporaneous use and translation have unfortunately stopped short of reanalyzing the basic definitions of the English terms. According to Kleber (2018: 442-444), these terms were used both for “chattel slaves” and “servants,” with the only real difference being that some could and others could not be given as pledge or sold to another (cf. Head 2010: 150f.). However, the issue seems to lie with finding suitable modern terminology for the concept of dependency in the ancient world. See also Baker 2017, Tenney 2011.

⁵³⁵ Von Dassow 2011: 212.

person.⁵³⁶ The benefits for the family in need could be greater than for the ‘owner’ in such situations, as the person sold was guaranteed food and shelter and the sale provided the family with enough to get by for a little longer.⁵³⁷

One did not always go into servitude out of necessity, coercion, or birth. Those in servitude often were able to hold highly respected positions within their masters’ service—even, in some cases, gaining more wealth and privilege than those who had been born into the “old, established families” of Karduniaš. For example, in one legal text a *qallu* reports having been beaten by a member of an elite family for wearing the wrong clothing:⁵³⁸

... ša maNabû-ēṭir apilšu ša maNergal-šum-
ibni apil <m>Ēṭeru ūm 6.kam ša iiiDU₆
mušalla kūm šigiltu ana maMadānu-bēl-ušur
lú.qalla ša mItti-Marduk-balātu apil mEgibi
iṭṭiru ina giš.níg.gag bābišu šibtašu
ušaqqirrišu umma amāt šarri šī ardu
šubāta ša qabli ša šipāti rēštu ina qablušu ul
inaddu ...

... Madānu-bēl-ušur reported that Nabû-ēṭir, son of Nergal-šum-ibni of the Ēṭiru family, on the sixth day of the seventh month in the afternoon, in an outright and unlawful manner has beaten Mādanu-bēl-ušur, the slave of Itti-Marduk-balātu of the Egibi family, and with his door-opener has pierced his *šibtu* garment while stating: “This is the word of the king: ‘A slave does not wear a loin cloth of first-class wool round his waist.’”

From multiple economic and administrative texts, Wunsch and Magdalene (2012) pieced together the backstory to this episode. The *qallu*-slave was highly privileged and had been involved in many high status financial transactions both on behalf of his owners and on his own behalf.⁵³⁹ His assailant, however, was well-known to the archive for his debts and poor business acumen.⁵⁴⁰ The texts indicate that the two held very similar jobs in the same region.⁵⁴¹ Five years prior to this altercation, Nabû-ēṭir is reported to owe a considerable sum of silver and commodities to Madānu-bēl-ušur, which he promised to settle after the following harvest.⁵⁴² There is no record of him having done so. Apparently, he was unable to reconcile seeing the obvious success of a *qallu*-slave when his own ambitions had not materialized and lashed out

⁵³⁶ E.g. siege documents K.153: 6; O.30: 4 – 5.

⁵³⁷ E.g. in O.27: 5 – 6, 30: 9, where parents sell their offspring for six shekels so they may buy food to eat. Cf. Eph‘al 2009: 127 – 129.

⁵³⁸ E.g. BM 30812 (=Camb. 321): 6 – 9; see Wunsch and Magdalene 2012 for signs and discussion.

⁵³⁹ Cf. Wunsch and Magdalene 2012: 102 – 104.

⁵⁴⁰ E.g. Nbn. 176, CM 3 197, CM 3 267, CM 3 295.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Wunsch and Magdalene 2012: 106.

⁵⁴² Cf. Liv. 27.

with the excuse that no slave should wear such a garment.⁵⁴³ While far from the norm, persons in servitude such as the above Madānu-bēl-ušur were also capable of owning their own stamp seals and amassing wealth of their own (Kleber 2018).

4.3.3.2 *Temple dependents*

We know that deportees were given to soldiers, officers, and various individuals as their part of the booty gained on military exploits. The deportees were often, then, dedicated to the temple by these recipients for two reasons: 1. those gifted with the human captives could not always afford to maintain these persons—no matter the advance to their status, and 2. the dedicated persons would count toward their temple taxes or obligations.

People could be dedicated to a temple (*širku*), whether they were free or in service, to the advantage of all involved. If dedicated to a temple by their masters, those formerly in service gained manumitted status (*zakû, zakītu*) and the limited freedoms associated with being dependent upon a temple.⁵⁴⁴ Likewise, their former owners were no longer required to provide for them but maintained their rights of usufruct.⁵⁴⁵ Those families of free status (*mār banê*) could dedicate members of the family who would still be able to inherit their families' property⁵⁴⁶—and the family was not then liable to provide for those members thus dedicated. Thus, the category of *širku* described a person of limited freedom (or semi-free status) whose position was permanent and hereditary: they could be neither bought nor sold (Kleber 2018). This legal status was accessible to both those in servitude (*ardu, amtu, qallu*) and of free status (*mār banê*) through a dedication ceremony conducted by their master or elder.⁵⁴⁷

As a temple dependents (*širku*), a person was required to serve the temple to which they had been dedicated. This could involve numerous professions within the temple complex or

⁵⁴³ Incidentally, there is no evidence that such a law was ever published during the Neo- or Late Babylonian periods (cf. Wunsch and Magdalene 2012: 114; Waetzoldt 1980-1983).

⁵⁴⁴ In this period it was highly unusual for slaves to be granted autonomous freedom when manumitted. Rather, they were more likely to be inducted into temple service through dedication to the service of a temple deity by their previous owner (Kleber 2011: 101).

⁵⁴⁵ Or, they still maintained their rights to any profits the temple dependent might amass. Cf. Kleber 2018: 450.

⁵⁴⁶ Such examples include YOS 7 2 for a house owned by a *širku* and PTS 2308 for evidence that a person of *širku* status owned a female slave that he then hired out to a free woman.

⁵⁴⁷ N.B. Until relatively recently, children and women of all legal statuses were technically the property of the head of their family. Even younger males in families were subject to their family's leader's or elders' decisions, and thus the status of *širku* posed little legal difference for most people.

outside on temple agricultural lands. In the agricultural setting, there were various ways in which the *širku* could receive remuneration for their work: through rations (*ikkaru*), or through a share of the crops (*errēšu*, who also must supply their own tools).⁵⁴⁸ Over the course of the long-sixth century BCE (626 – 484), the economy developed in such a way as to affect the manner in which temple lands were worked. Taxation practices during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods encouraged the temples to invest in agricultural cash-crop cultivation in order to meet their taxes.⁵⁴⁹ Thus, temple lands entered the realm of commerce and entrepreneurship through rent-farming (a.k.a. *ferme générale*, or *Generalpacht*, or perhaps “tenant-farming”). The entrepreneurs who rented out these lands rented use of ploughs, equipment, and personnel, and then was required to give the laborers their rations and return a set mass of barley and / or dates to the temple in return. The influx of deportees from abroad were especially useful to the temples in supplying the needed manpower for their farmlands.

As with those in servitude, the temple dependents could come from all ethnicities and legal status backgrounds. The excess human booty given to individuals were often further dedicated to temples, and it is this *širku* status to which perhaps most of our *šallatu* deportees eventually found themselves. Among those of *širku* status and working temporary jobs for temples we find attestations of Elamites,⁵⁵⁰ Carians,⁵⁵¹ Egyptians,⁵⁵² Cilicians,⁵⁵³ Assyrians,⁵⁵⁴ Persians,⁵⁵⁵ Teima’ites,⁵⁵⁶ Arabs,⁵⁵⁷ as well as members of the Hindanaean tribe, people from Harran, Judeans, and Assyrians.⁵⁵⁸ Because Aramaic was already spoken in Karduniaš, no Aramaic (or non-Yahwistic West Semitic) names have been included in this list of foreigners.

⁵⁴⁸ Jursa 1995.

⁵⁴⁹ Jursa 2004, 2005, 2011.

⁵⁵⁰ E.g. IM 64445; BM 52893, MacGinnis 2002: 180 n. 13; Dandamayev 1991: 18.

⁵⁵¹ E.g. Pedersén 2005b: 270; Zadok 2011.

⁵⁵² E.g. W 18216,21.

⁵⁵³ E.g. BM 61386, MacGinnis 2012.

⁵⁵⁴ CT 56 638, 758, MacGinnis 2012.

⁵⁵⁵ BM 54107, MacGinnis 2012.

⁵⁵⁶ BM 78149, MacGinnis 2012.

⁵⁵⁷ BM 63947, BM 78837, MacGinnis 2012.

⁵⁵⁸ At Sippar, referenced by Zadok 2014: 110.

4.3.3.3 State Dependents

What transpired in the temples in their need for manpower to work their agricultural lands also affected the state-run lands, *ḥaṭru*. Through a variety of means—reward for military service or the forced resettlement of deportees—the state populated recently reclaimed and / or marginal lands.⁵⁵⁹⁵⁶⁰ The various terms associated with this practice include: *ḥadru/ḥaṭru* and *ḥanšû* as the lands in question, *šušānūtu* for state dependent workers, and *bīt-qašti*, *bīt-kussî*, and *bīt-narkabti* which denoted the type of service the land rewarded.⁵⁶¹

In Jursa’s words: “the land-for-service system served both to integrate foreign groups into the society and the fabric of the state and to extend the range of state-controlled agriculture into otherwise under-exploited areas” (2014:6). Even those natives of Karduniaš who had been granted land rights in this manner viewed the land grant as a status symbol and sought outsiders to perform their required military and civic services.⁵⁶²

Like the *širku* of the temples, the *šusānu* was semi-free with corvée obligations required (e.g. military and corvée).⁵⁶³ The *šusānu* received smaller rations in payment for their service than did free hirelings (*agru*),⁵⁶⁴ are were therefore cheaper labor. The great need for cheap laborers for these reclaimed fields and lands largely fueled the impetus to deport conquered peoples from the West.⁵⁶⁵ Evidence of deportation is found not only in the onomastica but also in the so-called “sister-cities” scattered throughout the countryside of Karduniaš. These villages were often named after the origin of their inhabitants and thus we find evidence for deportation from: Judah, at *Āl-Yahūdu*;⁵⁶⁶ Tyre, at *Bīt-Šūrāya*;⁵⁶⁷ Lydia and Phrygia;⁵⁶⁸ Cilicia at *Āl-*

⁵⁵⁹ Jursa 2014: 6.

⁵⁶⁰ Many of these “reclaimed” lands refer to cities and environs that had been abandoned before the early Neo-Babylonian period (i.e. before 747), but had since been populated by Aramaeans and other tribal elements.

⁵⁶¹ Eventually, these last terms (and others, e.g. *tašlīšu*) came to refer not only to the legal status of the land granted, but also to the land itself.

⁵⁶² Kleber 2011.

⁵⁶³ Kleber 2018: 447.

⁵⁶⁴ Kleber 2018: 447.

⁵⁶⁵ Jursa 1995.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. CUSAS 28.

⁵⁶⁷ Hilprecht and Clay 1898: 77, Clay 1912: 197.

⁵⁶⁸ Eilers 1940; Zadok 1978: 60.

Humāya;⁵⁶⁹ Urartu and Melid;⁵⁷⁰ Gaza and Ashkelon, at *Hazatu* and *Išqallūnu*;⁵⁷¹ Arabs, at *Ālu-ša-Arbāya* and *Ālu-ša-Qurab/mātua*;⁵⁷² Elumu (from Nabû-kudurri-ušur II's westward campaign) at *Elumu*; and *Elammu*, Neirab (in north Syria) at *Ālu-ša-Nērebāya*.⁵⁷³⁵⁷⁴

Some of these *šusānu* (or their descendants) are identifiable as witnesses in various legal and administrative texts through the presence of minor theophoric elements. For example, in a legal receipt for the payment of rent and rations of a sector of the palace women's estate at least three Judean or West Semitic peoples are reported: Haggāya, son of Il-qatar; Šilimmu, son of Yāhû-laqīm; and Aqara the scribe, son of Nādinu.⁵⁷⁵ Another example may feature a Judean as its protagonist: a servant (*ardu*) of Enlil-šum-iddin named Mardukâ (// Mordechai) petitioned to lease a certain field for three years, that had previously been worked by another likely Judean, Yadiḥ-Yāmâ.⁵⁷⁶ While these and many other examples date to the later Achaemenid period, others date to as early as Nebuchadnezzar II:⁵⁷⁷

1 gur 3 (pi) še.bar ša mMušēzib-dBēl A-šu ša
 maBēl-ušallim A mTunāya ina muḥḥi
 mYāhû-nūri A-šu ša mZabdiya ina itGU₄
 ina qaqqadišu ina Bīt-maBabû-lē'i inamdin
 lú.mukinnu mArihi A-šu ša mDinuwa
 maMarduk-uballit A-šu ša mRēmut u
 lú.UMBISAG maBabû-zēru-iddin A-šu ša
 mAḥu-erib Bīt-maBabû-lē'i
 itDU₆ ūm 20.kam šatti 22.kam maBabû-
 kudurri-ušur šar Bābiliki

8.3 hectares of land in Bīt-Nabû-lē'i which Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Bēl-ušallim, son of Tunāya, leased to **Yahu-nuri, son of Zabdiya**, at the beginning of the month of Ayyāru (II).
 Witnesses: Arihi, son of Dinuwa; Marduk-uballit, son of Rēmut; and the scribe, Nabû-zēru-iddin, son of Aḥu-erib, at Bīt-Nabû-lē'i.
 Month of Tašrītu (VII), 20th day, year 22 (583–582 BCE) of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

⁵⁶⁹ Jursa 1998 / 1: 91.

⁵⁷⁰ Clay 1904: 107; Zadok 1978: 60.

⁵⁷¹ Clay 1908: 56; Zadok 1978: 61.

⁵⁷² Zadok 2015: 101-102.

⁵⁷³ Zadok 2015; Zadok 1985.

⁵⁷⁴ Many of these sister cities existed in the Nippur region, but not exclusively: some were found in the vicinity of Sippar, Borsippa, and Uruk.

⁵⁷⁵ BE 09, 028: r 14 – 16a.

⁵⁷⁶ BE 09, 029.

⁵⁷⁷ VS 03, 006.

This text records the very early activities of a Judean on a small rent-farm (roughly 20 acres) just fifteen years after the first documented deportation from Judah (598-597).⁵⁷⁸

4.3.3.4 City Residents' Dependents

Waerzeggers (2006) identified this form of dependent deported individuals in her study of the Carians at Borsippa. Her analysis showed that these foreign individuals were assigned (*naskū* “thrown on”) to specific elite Borsippean families who were tasked with providing specific Carians high grade rations and lodging (7). The provisioned Carians do not appear to have been tasked with the *corvée* duties or other service obligations in return. The Borsippeans who provided for them appear to have treated it much like any other tax, except that there was no middleman to collect the dues and distribute them.⁵⁷⁹ Rather, each individual was tasked with providing for specifically named Carians. Waerzeggers surmises a very large Carian population at Borsippa, given that every known Borsippean family archive provides evidence for being thus taxed. “It therefore seems that the whole of Borsippa’s citizenry was drawn into the ration system, which implies that the Carian community sustained by the system was itself quite large” (2006: 6). This system is attested from the start of Cambyses reign, which itself suggests a reason for the presence of the Carians. Waerzeggers proposes that these Carians (alternately called Egypto-Carians) were “conscripts of the Persian army (not necessarily on a voluntary basis)” (2006: 7-8), and that the married women with children who live without a husband were likely married to these conscripted Carians / Carian mercenaries. While this is presently the only such example of this practice identified, perhaps this system existed elsewhere, too, as Charpin (*RAI* 38: 213f) attests a similar practice in existence at Old Babylonian Dilbat (Waerzeggers 2006: 8-9).

4.3.3.5 Royal Dependents

The last category of royal dependents is reserved for those individuals either provided rations by the king at Babylon (cf. Weidner A, B, C, D), or identified as an *arad šarrūti* “royal servant.”

⁵⁷⁸ While little is known about the location of this city or the quality of its soil, even by today’s 2000-calorie diet standard, 20 acres or arable land would feed roughly 20 people (cf. Farmland LP “Investing in Sustainable Farmland,” <https://www.farmlandlp.com/2012/01/one-acre-feeds-a-person/#.XwI1IC2z3fY>). Doubtless this equation is not completely accurate for ancient plots in Mesopotamia; the estimate is offered as a rough point of reference for the modern reader.

⁵⁷⁹ Waerzeggers 2006: 6.

This latest heuristic was comprised of individuals who had been selected by the king to serve as surety for the good behavior of their countries, traveling dignitaries there on diplomatic missions, and contracted foreign laborers. Clearly, these individuals were by far the minority of those deported. For many of these positions attested, it would seem unlikely that they could be reached by foreigners. However, the court at Babylon attested many officials of foreign extraction.⁵⁸⁰ It may be impossible to discern what type of deportation scheme these officials were the product of (i.e. *šallatu* or hostage/selection of officials), but the fact that even this select few had been relocated on an imperial whim proves them worth considering when addressing the lives of deportees in Karduniaš.

The people who ate the king's rations include several foreign professionals who seem to have been accumulated in a manner similar to the exoticism expressed by modern cultures. The professionals thus attested include: makers of perfumes;⁵⁸¹ Ionians and other soldiers of the steppe;⁵⁸² a Judean gardener⁵⁸³ and gardeners without gentile;⁵⁸⁴ an Egyptian monkey wrangler;⁵⁸⁵ house inspectors;⁵⁸⁶ sailors from Tyre, Ashkelon, Aleppo, Mahazin, Egypt and Sidon,⁵⁸⁷ and Arpad, Byblos, and Ionia;⁵⁸⁸ waggoneers;⁵⁸⁹ scribes;⁵⁹⁰ water carriers;⁵⁹¹ Ionian carpenters,⁵⁹² Arpadean and Byblean carpenters,⁵⁹³ and carpenters without gentile;⁵⁹⁴ singers from Ashkelon;⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁸⁰ Jursa 2014: 10.

⁵⁸¹ A o 9', C r iv 5'; D o 6.

⁵⁸² A o 10', r12; o 14'; r 17; C r iv 12'; D o 15.

⁵⁸³ A o 31', r 22.

⁵⁸⁴ B r iii 2'.

⁵⁸⁵ A r 24.

⁵⁸⁶ B r iii 4'.

⁵⁸⁷ B r iii 7'-11'.

⁵⁸⁸ C r iv 13'-15'.

⁵⁸⁹ C r iv 7', r iv 18'; D o 8.

⁵⁹⁰ C r iv 9'.

⁵⁹¹ C r iv 10'; D o 13.

⁵⁹² A o 19', r 27; D o 18.

⁵⁹³ D o 16-17.

⁵⁹⁴ C r iv 16'; D o 19.

⁵⁹⁵ C r iv 23'; D o 26.

and guards.⁵⁹⁶ It is clear even from these four fragmentary ration lists that at least Nebuchadnezzar II was a lover of exotic goods and artistry. Although I have only labelled the persons identified by gentilics within these ration lists, it is probable that people from other origins are also attested—hiding masked behind assumed *Beamtennamen*⁵⁹⁷ or others with non-Semitic personal names that could be Iranian or Egyptian language.⁵⁹⁸ All Aramaic names must remain uncategorized unless further identified by gentilics.⁵⁹⁹

To this list of artisans and professionals, we must also add the expected local courtiers,⁶⁰⁰ visiting dignitaries,⁶⁰¹ messengers,⁶⁰² and people held for surety.⁶⁰³ Among the individuals in the extant texts, we find a rather disproportionate number of people from Judah: the prince turned king;⁶⁰⁴ five sons of the king of Judah;⁶⁰⁵ 8 unnamed Judeans;⁶⁰⁶ Uri-milki and his 3 people;⁶⁰⁷ Samak-Yāma, et al.;⁶⁰⁸ Šalam-Yāma, the gardener;⁶⁰⁹ Dānī-Yāma(?), the Aramaic scribe;⁶¹⁰ 6 Judean hired hands;⁶¹¹ a fragmentary reference to another someone from kur.Ya'ūdu / Judah;⁶¹² and a Judean who has authority over the king of Judah and the kings sons, Qanâ-Yāma.⁶¹³ We

⁵⁹⁶ A r 9; D o 27.

⁵⁹⁷ e.g. r iv 3', 6'.

⁵⁹⁸ e.g. B r iii 16'-17'.

⁵⁹⁹ See Zadok (1976, 1978, 1979, 1982, 2000, 2005, 2015a, 2015b, 2018) for lists of non-Akkadian personal names found in cuneiform sources during the second through first millennia. See Hackl and Jursa (2015) for an updated discussion on the presence and role of Egyptians and Zadok (2011a, 2011b) on Elamites in Karduniaš during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.

⁶⁰⁰ e.g. D o 2, 14; A r 26.

⁶⁰¹ e.g. C r iv 22'; A o 11'-12', r 5-7.

⁶⁰² e.g. A o 13'.

⁶⁰³ e.g. A o 4'-5'; B r iii 14'-18'; C r iv 6'.

⁶⁰⁴ Yahu-kîn; cp. C r iv 17' to B o ii 38.

⁶⁰⁵ B o ii 39.

⁶⁰⁶ B o ii 40; A o 26'.

⁶⁰⁷ A o 11'; later only 2 in A r 13.

⁶⁰⁸ A o 28'.

⁶⁰⁹ A o 31', r 22.

⁶¹⁰ A r 8.

⁶¹¹ A r 28.

⁶¹² A r 32.

⁶¹³ C r iv 18'; D o 21.

may deduce that several of these figures were part of the entourage that arrived with Yahu-kîn when he was not yet the king, and then returned home—or at the very least that not all of these figures were permanent fixtures of the king’s table.

4.3.4 Attitudes toward Subaltern Classes

In all of these categories, the deportees are treated along the same lines as the others of their legal status. All slaves are treated as slaves—notes of their quality generally refer to their capabilities rather than their area of extraction. All *šikru* are temple dependents and are treated accordingly. All who received “land for service” from the state—though they were settled together with others who spoke their languages and often practiced similar cultures—were viewed as being of the same legal status as all other such workers. Most courtiers, royalty, and professionals were all given the same rations.⁶¹⁴ In some instances, however, we have record of foreign individuals receiving more rations than the rest: Ya’ū-kîn received an additional 1 se’ah of oil⁶¹⁵ and a possible Moabite of the name Abdi-Milki received a full 2 qû.⁶¹⁶ So far, in all the evidence discussed, the administration of Karduniaš permitted deportees all the same possibilities available to others of their legal status. Quality rations were provided (visiting) dignitaries and professionals, and regular rations to all others. They were allowed to work and to own land and property. They were not restricted in whom they could marry.⁶¹⁷ In Assyrian times, merchants report that they sold iron to the deportees just as they were expected to, and not to the Arabs.⁶¹⁸ In fact, it could be argued that for many at the lower status levels deportation brought opportunities that might otherwise not have been available. In any case, as Zadok (2018) himself admits: “It stands to reason that, in the long run, most of these foreigners assimilated to the lower strata of the local population but were not accepted into the urbanite clan-system. Thus, they never became part of the Babylonian urban elite.” Thus Spivak’s (1989) hierarchy of subaltern

⁶¹⁴ 1/2 qû; e.g. C r iv 9’-11’.

⁶¹⁵ C o ii 10.

⁶¹⁶ C r iv 12’.

⁶¹⁷ Although endogamy was practiced by the elite families, occasionally foreign women would catch the eye of one of the upper echelon and they would be permitted to marry (cf. Waerzeggers 2002, Abraham 2006, 2015).

⁶¹⁸ SAA 1 179=CT 53 010.

and elite holds, we should never expect to see people of subaltern classes accepted as such into the highest realms of the ruling elite.⁶¹⁹

Waerzeggers (2014, 2015) has rightly indicated the limitations of the realm in which deportees or other foreigners were able to operate within the more traditional society of more established, elite families of Karduniaš. But according to Spivak (1988), this is not surprising: the only space for the subaltern ethnic minority is that which has been provided for them at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid. Any subaltern who wishes forward advancement must strip themselves of their subaltern markers and assimilate into the dominant culture—and even then, such advancement is restricted to the bottom rung of officials. However, contra Waerzeggers, there were apparently no legal restrictions put on foreigners to prevent them from leaving the subaltern classes. The colonialism of the British Empire was the impetus for discussion of subalterity, primarily from among Bengali literati who experienced a new status of subaltern within the broader Empire. But the setting of the newly-subaltern of Bengal does not directly translate to what occurred in Karduniaš. The foreigners in Karduniaš had been relocated to the home of the empire—more akin to the people of the “West Indies” who were relocated to the imperial home. The ensuing racial struggles in Britain for the displaced Caribbean islanders are well known. While not a perfect analogy, the point remains: after being displaced into the heartland of an empire, the subaltern is usually further restricted in their upward mobility by legal and societal pressures. As far as I am aware, these further restrictions are missing for the foreigners in Karduniaš, as they are attested in large numbers in all socio-economic levels available to them.

The lack of legal restrictions on non-natives is further supported by the general absence of derogatory modifiers applied to the deportee communities. Part of the reason that it is so difficult to identify deportees within the 60,000 texts and fragments of texts from the height of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is that they cease to be thus identified after they arrive and are assigned to their new lives. As previously discussed, the best we can do is often to identify foreign names or gentilics in the economic and administrative documents and then compare the dates of those references with known military campaigns (e.g. Zadok 2018). The Weidner ration list A has been cited as one of the exceptions to this; it identifies a group who receives rations of

⁶¹⁹ See Chapter One.

the king as “*lú.húb-tu*.” However, Zadok (2018: 122) suggests reading *húb* as *kab*—giving us *lú.kab-tu* “notables” rather than “captives”—in light of the unexpectedly high rations allotted to them. His caution here in suggesting this—“If the latter case [and they be captives], they may be classified as hostages”—may be laid to rest through investigation of the term *hubtu* as used in royal Babylonian sources. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the Assyrian and Babylonian sources *šallatu* is the preferred term for elite captives whereas *hubtu* is used for lesser captives and objects generally.⁶²⁰

Additional support can be found in the temple and private ration lists which tend to assign the same amounts of foodstuffs and other rations to their dependents, regardless of their country of extraction. Waerzeggers (2006: 7) notes the “size of the rations [given to the Carians at Borsippa] must have been standardized” because the it is often that scribes “did not think it necessary to specify the exact amounts of each commodity delivered, unless the delivery was not according to standard procedure.” Dandamayev (1984: 239-241) notes the standard ration size during the Achaemenid period to have been one liter of barley per day, accompanied by allowances of beer, salt, mustard, oil, etc. At Sippar, for example the standard rations for a family were ideally 180 liters of barley per month, even until the end of the Achaemenid period.⁶²¹ Those males in the service of the palace or temples received between one to two liters barley per day. While occasionally variations on this amount appear—due to shortages, poor performance, etc.—no one is afforded less based on ethnicity or subalterity.

4.4 Conclusion

Much research into deportees and deportations center around the connection to biblical scholarship—especially in regard to the connections or pathways between Mesopotamian scribal

⁶²⁰ The Babylonian Chronicles (Glassner 2004) support this new reading, thereby adding more support for reading the word as *lú.kab-tu* “notables” rather than *lú.húb-tu* “(non-elite) captives.”

Outside of the royal inscriptions of Karduniaš, *hubtu* and *habātu* may be used in reference to humans—e.g. ABL 280: 18, ABL 1000 r 11, ABL 792 r 14. But these letters reflect common parlance, idioms, and slang not found in more elevated registers.

An additional term that could be construed as a type of human booty—*lú.šu.dus.a.meš* “(people as) guarantee”—also appears in Weidner lists C and D. This form of deportee is addressed in chapter two under the discussed as “hostage” or “surety,” and as such pertains to temporary deportees whose value was in their ability to encourage good behavior of their compatriots. Thus, their status was decidedly different to that of other deportees and their numbers much reduced in comparison.

⁶²¹ Jursa 2002: 112; 2010: 669.

culture and Judean. At least since the publication of the Murāšu archive (at the beginning of the twentieth century), the sources pertaining to the non-ruling elite of society have skewed toward the Judean population. With the recent publication of the Āl-Yahūdu archive by Pearce and Wunsch (2014), this imbalance has only increased. It is important to remember that a sizeable percentage of Judeans are easily identified through the use of their national deity Yahweh as a theophoric element in their names. It is also essential to recall that with regard to West Semitic naming practices, the theophoric element is often the only way to identify a name as belonging to a specific region. Again, Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the empire and so Aramaic names can represent Levantine deportees, Aramaeans, former Assyrians, or otherwise ‘established’ Kaldeans (outside of the elite classes). And all of these people may choose to follow the naming practices of the empire; i.e. through Akkadian naming practices that privilege the deities of Karduniaš. That said, the attempt to connect Judean scribes to Mesopotamian scribal culture will always be a bit of a leap in terms of connecting specific individuals to those educational settings.

With the publication of the Āl-Yahūdu archive, the debate has gained momentum. Biblical scholars and those with a vested interest in identifying the individual(s) responsible for creating the Hebrew Bible have claimed to have found the missing link (e.g. Pearce 2011, 2015). First millennium Assyriologists, such as Waerzeggers (2014, 2015), have pushed back rather forcefully. While it is true that the vast majority of deportees would not have had access to the scholarship or literature of the elite circles, few of local origin did either. In fact, it still remains a desideratum for any scholar of ancient, non-literate societies to explain how the average person might have knowledge of or a connection to the literature of their culture. Waerzeggers’ (2014) use of social mapping from social network theory is useful and highly informative. That said, she overlooked the presence of a Judean scribe (Dānī-Yāma) at the court of Nabû-kudurri-usur II (Weidner A r 8) which moderates the issue. Instead of being three steps removed from known scribal schools, now we have a scribe of Judean background at the court of the king at Babylon. While I do not claim (or support any who do) to have thus identified the access point at which a Judean could become familiar with cuneiform culture, several segments of the Hebrew Bible have been proven to reflect more than familiarity with cuneiform scribal culture. At present, the gap between what is known of Judeans from before the ‘exile’ and what is reflected from after their return is still too wide to suggest any additional arguments. However, by getting a better grasp on the lived experience of deportees in Karduniaš during the Neo-Babylonian and

Achaemenid periods, I hope to elucidate the general background in which this contact might occur.

The one category of foreigners in Karduniaš which has not been discussed above is that of foreign merchants or tradesmen. While it is attested that the Assyrians deported Aramaean and Arab tribes to administer trading in the West (see the following chapter), such evidence has not unfolded for the rulers of Karduniaš or Persians. Thus, merchants and traders of foreign origin are here presumed to have migrated to Karduniaš voluntarily to profit from the lucrative possibilities available in a multi-cultural urban setting.

The experience of the deportees in Karduniaš was marked by the accepted and expected presence of multiple ethnicities in the region. As there was no centralized ethnonym that applied to all the inhabitants of Karduniaš and there were already several separate people groups acknowledged by the state and temples, the deportees could neither be made to feel as though they did not fit in, nor as though they needed to assimilate into a centralized idyll. The deportees of Assyria were subjected to the state's encouragement to adopt the centralized identity of an "Assyrian." All who lived within the empire were considered by the administration to thus be Assyrian. Several of the provinces began to act as such, emulating the architectural patterns and eating practices of the Assyrian heartland (cf. MacGinnis, et al. 2016). However, in Karduniaš although there would always be the option to 'assimilate' through the adoption of Akkadian names, the practice was only obliquely encouraged. No source has yet been identified that indicates the deportees were coerced to assimilate, abandon their identities, or otherwise stigmatized for their foreign origin.

Chapter 5. Aramaeans: Tribes and Deportations

The political history of the “Aramaeans” has received much attention of late. With numerous scholars presenting their interpretations of who these people were, where they came from, and how they interacted with the local populations and empires,⁶²² it would seem that there would be little left to discuss. However, in what follows, I discuss several aspects of the Aramaeans that call into question some of the most basic suppositions of the peoples referenced. First, I present an overview of the history and geographical backgrounds of the peoples identified as Aramaeans. I next discuss how the Akkadian term *aramu* developed from a general etic term meaning the “West” to a more specified etic term for specific mobile peoples. The term itself did not have great meaning for the people so labeled and no attempt should be made to connect the later “Aramaeans” of Karduniaš with the earlier term denoting the West or Luwian-Aramaic states. After breaking down the multiplicity of meanings of the term itself, I then focus on discussing how the empires of Assyria and Karduniaš discussed and engaged with the Aramaeans. This section illustrates how the Aramaeans and other mobile peoples were fully incorporated into the social fabric of Assyria and Karduniaš. Next, I address how these Aramaeans and other tribal peoples experienced deportation and how it could not have been a permanent situation—as admitted in the Neo-Assyrian administrative letters.

5.1 Historical Background of the Aramaeans

Aramaeans are first encountered in the Mesopotamian sources in the Northern Levant and the Upper Euphrates (roughly coinciding with the borders of modern Syria) shortly after the fall of

⁶²² While this chapter does not purport to address directly the origin of the Aramaeans, it is important to note that the theory advocated by Dupont-Sommer (1949) and Malamat (1973) is to be abandoned in light of recent archaeological data: the Aramaeans were not foreign invaders to “traditional Mesopotamian society.” This has been illustrated by the marked continuity of dialect (evidenced at Emar, cf. Zadok 1991: 114) and ceramic assemblage (as sampled from numerous widespread sites, cf. Mazzoni 2000: 34). Therefore, following Sader’s (2014) summary: “So it can be safely assumed that the settlers of the Iron Age I sites were part of the local population of Syria and that the groups called *ahlamû*–Aramaeans were also part of this population.”

the Hittite empire (ca. 1200).⁶²³ Few contemporary texts remain that address these peoples, thus we are left with a smattering of attestations in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions,⁶²⁴ the Luwian royal inscriptions, and a handful of inscriptions left by the kings of this area themselves.⁶²⁵ Some of the recently discovered Luwian inscriptions⁶²⁶ indicate that the vacuum created by the collapse of the Hittite empire in modern Turkey was immediately populated by numerous, smaller kingdoms under descendants of the former Hittite royal families.⁶²⁷ This fragmented region attested both Aramaic and Luwian speaking populations during the early Iron Age, and thus is now referred to as Luwian-Aramaic Princedoms.⁶²⁸ The first emic reference to a region as “Aram” is found in the eighth-century Aramaic inscriptions from Sefire,⁶²⁹ where the writer uses the phrases “all Aram” and “Upper and Lower Aram” interchangeably. Although scholars have interpreted these phrases in many ways,⁶³⁰ they clearly refer to geographical region here termed the Luwian-Aramaic Princedoms.⁶³¹

In complement to the written sources, the archaeological evidence from the Euphrates valley and North Syria indicates an explosion of new settlements occurred at the end of the Late

⁶²³ Cf. Sader 2014; Younger 2016; Grayson 1991, 1996; Tadmor 1994; Leichty 2011.

⁶²⁴ Discussion of texts follows.

Before this, another mobile group is referenced by the term *ahlamû*. This term has recently been discussed at length by Alexander Johannes Edmonds (2019: 26-62) in relation to its attestation in Tiglath-Pileser III’s rock relief at Mila Mergi. He and others have noted a development in the definition of the term from its first attestations in the Old Babylonian period to its latest in the Achaemenid period. They argue that the term progresses from a general term for something between an ethnicity and a profession, to describe a “belligerent nomad,” to be used as a(n) (anachronistic) reference to the Aramaeans, to finally becoming an erudite anachronism for Aramaean in its final form (27-28; see also Herles 2007; Streck 2014; Kupper 1957; Brinkman 1968: 277; Fales 2002: 182, 2011: 22-23).

⁶²⁵ Cf. Sader 2014; Younger 2016; Hawkins 2000; KAI 201 – 227; Abou Assaf, Bordreuil, Millard 1982; Biran, Naveh 1993, 1995; Schwiderski 2004; Pardee 2009. Although there are several attestations in the Hebrew Bible denoting the conflicts between Aram-Damascus and Israel, they are unhelpful for understanding the history of the region in general.

⁶²⁶ Hawkins 2009.

⁶²⁷ E.g. the princedom of Walastin / Palistin on the ruins of the previous kingdom Mukish in the Amuq plain, near Carchemish (cf. Hawkins 2011).

⁶²⁸ The previous nomenclature for this region included: Aramaean Prince-/King-doms, Aram, and the Eastern Neo-Hittite states. It is notable, as well, that in none of the contemporary Aramaic inscriptions from this region do the kings refer to themselves as “Aramaean” or their countries as “Aram” (cf. Sader 2014: 15).

⁶²⁹ KAI 222 – 224.

⁶³⁰ See Sader 1987: 279 – 281.

⁶³¹ Pitard 1987; Fitzmeyer 1995; Grosby 1995; Sader 2000; Kahn 2007.

Bronze Age.⁶³²⁶³³ Ruralization such as this is not only present in the greater part of wider Mesopotamia at this point, but is also reflected in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser I and Aššur-dān.⁶³⁴ The architectural remains attested do not include monumental public buildings and seem to have been predominantly domestic structures that were built in an agglomerative style.⁶³⁵ These findings suggest the society was built around the complex patriarchal family as the foundational social unit,⁶³⁶ which tracks with the written record's portrait of these societies as tribally based states around the “*bīt-ab*,” or the “House of the Father.” As suggested by Routledge for an area to the south of these Luwian-Aramaic princedoms,⁶³⁷ the societies attested during the early Iron Age Syria were founded on different principles than those of the previous age and “stressed domestic autonomy and an ideology of categorical equality between domestic groups.”⁶³⁸ This change does not reflect a “great shift of population,” but rather “local rural communities together with unstable, possibly but not necessarily nomadic groups... became the primary components of the political and social fabric, and the tribe replaced the former territorial states as the basic unit of collective organization.”⁶³⁹

Many of these Luwian-Aramaic princedoms were characterized by a new naming practice that elevated the name of an eponymous ancestor along the formula of “House of PN” (e.g. Bīt-Baḥiāni, Bīt-Adini, Bīt-Asalli, Bīt Agusi)—as attested in the inscriptions of Adad-nērāri II (911 – 891) onward. Others, however—e.g. Aram-Damascus, Hamath, Sam'al / Yādiya—never developed such a practice, but were known by the name of their capital city or territory.⁶⁴⁰ These princedoms appear to have been divided into administrative districts similar to those

⁶³² Morandi Bonacossi 2007; Wilkinson 1995; McClellan 1992.

⁶³³ Sader (2014) presents a synthesis of the following archaeological reports: Braidwood 1937; Maxwell Hyslop et al. 1942–1943; Braidwood – Braidwood 1961; van Loon 1967; Courtois 1973; Matthers et al. (eds.) 1981; Akkermans 1984; Braemer 1984; Shaath 1985; Meijer 1986; Geyer – Monchambert 1987; Sapin 1989; Ciafardoni 1992; Schwartz et al. 2000: 447–462; Melis 2005; Janeway 2008: 126f; Harrison 2009a: 175f; Tsuneki 2009: 50; Wilkinson 1995: 152; see also McClellan 1992: 168f; Bartl – al-Maqdissi 2007: 243–251; Fortin 2007: 254–265; Harrison 2009a: 175f.

⁶³⁴ Grayson 1991: 133.

⁶³⁵ Sader 2014: 17-18.

⁶³⁶ Routledge 2004: 128; Sader 2014: 18.

⁶³⁷ 2004: 113.

⁶³⁸ So too Sader 2014: 18.

⁶³⁹ Bunnens 2000: 16

⁶⁴⁰ Sader 2014: 23.

known from Assyria, the number of which varied between polities.⁶⁴¹ Even with these administrative districts, the Luwian-Aramaic territorial polities did not have clearly defined borders,⁶⁴² but rather maintained a central area around their capital cities and laid claim to a wider frontier region that may or may not have overlapped with that of their neighbors.

The Luwian-Aramaic princedoms were by and large incorporated into the Assyrian empire during the mid-ninth century, but were not thoroughly subjugated until the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, one hundred years later.⁶⁴³ During this process—and ensuing deportations—the Aramaic language became the lingua franca through both language spread and the movement of peoples.⁶⁴⁴ During this period, we also encounter a ‘new’ group of people labelled as Aramaeans in the Mesopotamian inscriptions: mobile peoples in Karduniaš who live alongside the city-residents and Kaldeans. While we recognize some of the names attested from references to groups of the same name in Syria, we unfortunately have little concrete evidence for any widespread infiltration from the West.⁶⁴⁵ We do have very specific instances in which Assyrian kings report deporting (partial) groups into the Karduniašean provinces of Gambulu⁶⁴⁶ and the Sealand.⁶⁴⁷ These regions were home to many Aramaeans⁶⁴⁸ and Kaldeans⁶⁴⁹ even prior to these deportations. Of great interest, however, is that most attestations of the terms Aramaean and

⁶⁴¹ Sader 2014: 25; e.g. 16 districts in Aram-Damascus, Pitard 1987: 187; 19 districts in Hamath, Tadmor 1994: 62f; Radner 2006, 2008: 58-61.

⁶⁴² Sader 2014

⁶⁴³ For a detailed summary of the main Luwian-Aramaic princedoms’ fall to Assyria, see Sader 2014: 27 – 36.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. Gzella 2017.

⁶⁴⁵ What we have, for the most part, is a sense that the two are connected in a real sense and refer to the same people. Nonetheless, many scholars have written thousands of pages attempting to track each group from its attestations in the West to the attestations in Karduniaš and the East (e.g. Younger 2016, among others).

⁶⁴⁶ E.g. an unnamed group to Dēr (Assyrian Letter from 8th-7th c.), unnamed group to Nippur (Assyrian letter from 8th-7th c.), unnamed group to Rašappa (8th c.). See Oded 1979: Appendix A: List of Geographical Names Relating to Deportations: 116 – 135.

⁶⁴⁷ E.g. Kummuh to Bīt-Yakîn, Hursagkallama, and Babylon (Sargon II’s royal inscriptions), Šubrians and Puqudu to Uruk (Esarhaddon, letters). See Oded 1979: Appendix A: List of Geographical Names Relating to Deportations: 116 – 135.

⁶⁴⁸ Sennacherib (RINAP 3 001: 10 – 15) locates the following groups in the province of Gambulu: in the east, along the Tigris: the Tu’umuna, Rihihu, Yadaqu, Gibrê, and Malihu / Malahu; in the south, along the Surappu River: Gurumu, Ubulu, Damunu, Gambulu, Hindaru, Ru’u’a, and Puqudu; and in the west, along the Euphrates: Hamranu, Hagarānu, Nabatu, and Li’ta’u. He labels all of these people “insubmissive Aramaeans who did not know fear of death.”

⁶⁴⁹ The Sealand became synonymous with the name of the largest Kaldean tribe, Bīt-Yakîn.

Kaldean appear in Assyrian sources rather than those from Karduniaš—those from the south prefer to use their own tribal names.

Unfortunately, there are even fewer emic sources for these “Eastern Aramaeans” than there are for the Luwian-Aramaic princedoms and tribes in Syria.⁶⁵⁰ Most information is surmised from brief attestations in letters and royal inscriptions—neither of which was written to inform about the tribes themselves in much detail. We know only limited information regarding the deportations carried out by the Assyrian kings; they deported many Aramaeans and Kaldeans from Karduniaš to areas in the northeastern Assyrian provinces,⁶⁵¹ but many more deportations are mentioned than are detailed in any form. Some additional details from reliefs suggest that the Kaldeans were organized around walled settlements or forts within their region and were engaged in intensive agricultural practices—e.g. cultivating date palms, animal husbandry.⁶⁵² Aramaeans, on the other hand, are said to have remained more mobile, living in tents in wilderness zones.⁶⁵³ Kaldeans made up at least six of the kings of Babylon during the first millennium, as indicated by the recorded gentilics.⁶⁵⁴ Unfortunately, it is unclear if any Aramaean was enthroned over Babylon—if there were, they used no identifying gentilics in their inscriptions. What is evident, however, is that the Aramaean and Kaldean tribes were distributed throughout Karduniaš—in cities and villages, marshes and wilderness.

5.2 Diachronic Progression of “Aramu” As a Term

The terms here subsumed under the English translation “Aramaean” will include only those which are unequivocally connected: *a-ri-mu*, *a-ru-mu*, *a-ra-mu*, *ar-me-tu*, and MAR.TU. (This specifically excludes all attestations of “*ah-la-mu*” which merit their own investigation.) These terms and their *nisbe* / gentilic forms are commonly modified by either the determinative for people (lú) or for land (kur), and sometimes are found with the determinative for city / village (URU or URU.ŠE) and for human men or women (MUNUS and MÍ, respectively). None of this

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Younger 2016 is only able to fill 90 pages of his 857-page *Political History of the Aramaeans* with data on the Aramaeans of Southern Mesopotamia—and much of that is charts and etymological analyses of the names of said tribes.

⁶⁵¹ E.g. Tiglath-pileser III (744 – 727), Tadmor 1994: 44 Ann. 9: 9-11 and 122 Summ. 1: 12f; Sargon II (722 – 705) Fuchs 1994: 140: 271; 164: 354; and Sennacherib (704 – 681) OIP 2 55: 60, Frahm 2003: 140-149: 60.

⁶⁵² Frame 2013: 101 – 104.

⁶⁵³ Gadd 1954: 192f, pl. 50 vii 45 – 76.

⁶⁵⁴ Frame 2013: 98, 104 – 110.

is unusual or unexpected, and so is typically glossed over in treatments of the Aramaeans. However, the usage of these determinatives changes over time as the authors become more familiar with the referents. The following charts illustrate that for almost the first 300 years (since the first attestation in the time of Tiglath-Pileser I in 1114-1076) the term only appears with the determinative for land (KUR). Not until Šalmaneser III (858-824) do we see any movement toward interpreting this term as connected to an ethnic group—and even then, what we first see is simply a reference to a specific man from an Aramaean land. His successor, Šamši-Adad V (823-811 BCE), references a “tribute of horses... of Bisirayin of kur.Arimāya.”⁶⁵⁵

In the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), Aramu appears at the same time that the region kur.MAR.TU or kur.Amurri (the Western lands) is first recorded by an Assyrian king. Many have posited kur.Amurri to be etymologically related to the Aramaeans, though the nature of the connection between the “Amorites” and the “Arameans” is still debated.⁶⁵⁶ Although this term for the West is well-known and considered an archaic term, this is the first ruler to refer to this geographic region in his Akkadian royal inscriptions with this term. The sudden preponderance of attestations of kur.Amurri (17 attestations after 700 years without mention) coincides with the first ever attestations of the denominative for “Aramean,” specifically KUR.ar-ma-(a-)ia. The term is found only four times and always in connection with a little-understood group known as the Ahlamû (*ah-la-mi-i*):⁶⁵⁷ *ah-la-mi-i* KUR Ar-ma-a-ia.MEŠ. The syntax of the phrase suggests the Ahlamû were a people group from the land of the Aramaeans and context of the references states they were at enmity with Assyria.⁶⁵⁸ These first attested “Arameans” resided in the area of the Upper Euphrates to the West of Assyria. Unfortunately, little more can be gleaned from these sources as to the nature of this group (the Ahlamû-Arameans)—an absence which suggests little else was known by the Assyrians of the group than their military prowess and general location.

⁶⁵⁵ RIMA 3 A.0.103.1 iii 51.

⁶⁵⁶ cf. Bodi 2014.

⁶⁵⁷ The Ahlamû appear thirteen times in the Assyrian royal inscriptions: the first in a list of forces from the region of Kutmuhu and Qutu conquered during the reign of Adad-Nerari I (1295-1264 BCE; RIMA 1 A.0.76.1 23). Grayson 1976: 13 n. 70 suggested that the term held the general semantic range of “nomad” or “barbarian.” While neither of these terms is currently in favor, it is worth noting that the *ahlamû* have been accepted as a mobile people group.

⁶⁵⁸ E.g. RIMA 2 A.0.87.1 v 46-47. The next three kings to mention the Ahlamû (Šalmaneser I 1263-1234, Tukulti-Ninurta I 1233-1197, and Aššur-reša-iši I 1132-1115) also identify them as a fighting force from this region. Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076) is the first to note a connection of the Ahlamû to the Aramaeans. After Tiglath-Pileser I makes this connection, the few attestations of the Ahlamû continue to be referenced as the (KUR.)Ahlamê/i KUR.Aramāya.MEŠ until the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727).

The first possible attestation of a specific land “Aram” also appears for the first time in Tiglath-Pileser I’s inscriptions (1114-1076):⁶⁵⁹

*ana KUR.Išdiš šapšute lā māgiri lū allik
mātāti dannūti eqli namrāši tābi ina
narkabātiya u marša ina šēpīya lū ētetiḡ
ina KUR.A-ru-ma eqli pašqi ša ana mētiḡ
narkabātiya lā naṭū narkabāti lū ēzib pan
qurādīya ašbat kīma šibbe erḫēkuma ina
gisallāt šadī pašqāte šaltiḡ ētetiḡ
KUR.Išdiš kīma tili abūbe ašḫup
ummānāti muḡtabliḡunu ina qerēb tamḫāri
kīma šube ušna”il šallassunu būšāšunu
namkūršunu ašlul napḫar ālišunu ina išātī
aqmu līṭi bilta u maddatta eliḡunu ukīn*

I marched to the land of Išdiš (where) rebellious (and) insubmissive people (lived). Riding in my chariot when the way was smooth and going by foot when the way was rough, I passed through the rough terrain of mighty mountains. **In the land Aruma**, a difficult area which was impassable for my chariots, I abandoned my chariotry. Taking the lead of my warriors I slithered victoriously with the aggressiveness of a *nāḫāš* (or other Semitic mythical snake) over the perilous mountain ledges. I destroyed the land Išdiš (so that it looked) like ruin hills (created by) the deluge. Their warriors I laid low in battle like sheep. I carried off their *šallatu*, possessions, and saleable property. I burned all their cities. I imposed upon them (the obligation to provide) hostages, tribute, and taxes.

The orthography of the term in this passage is noticeably different from what would become standard for following inscriptions. This particular variant (“Aruma”) occurs only twice in the royal inscriptions of Assyria—both during Tiglath-Pileser I’s reign and from the same inscription (iii 77). From these passages, we know kur.Aruma is in a difficult terrain (ergo not the steppe or river oases of the Euphrates) and is located near the lands of kur.Sarawuš and kur.Ammawuš (iii 73-77). The linguistic nature of these names (Sarawuš and Ammawuš) suggest they were located in Indo-European-speaking lands, rather than lands dominated by Aramaic or other Semitic speakers—suggesting the location of “kur.Aruma” be tentatively placed in the area dominated by Carchemish. This interpretation interprets this term as a hybrid of the later kur.Arami—first to appear in the inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala (1073-1056)—and the earlier KUR.MAR.TU / kur.Amurri, both essentially meaning the “West.” That such a term (kur.Aruma) be found at the beginning of a reversal in preferred term for “West” from the earlier kur.Amurri to kur.Arami (occurring between 1114 and 1073) also suggests that the two instances of kur.Aruma attest a moment in which the middle vowel was not well established.⁶⁶⁰

The next chronological reference to Aramaeans is found in Tiglath-Pileser III’s (744-727) royal inscriptions. Although we know he traveled to the Luwian-Aramaic lands in Syria, the majority of his references to “Aramu” are to the people rather than a land of Aram—the

⁶⁵⁹ RIMA 2 A.0.87.1 ii 68b-84.

⁶⁶⁰ Later inscriptions also attest similar middle vowel variants.

lú.Aramu. From this point forward this becomes the trend: of the 99 attestations of KUR or LÚ Aramaeans from Tiglath-Pileser III until the fall of the Assyrian Empire, two thirds (67) refer to the people (lú) rather than the land (kur) of Aramu. During the mid–late eighth century, the term’s usage shifted from primarily a geographic region to specific people groups, as denoted by the use of the determinative for peoples (lú).⁶⁶¹ For over four hundred years, the term *Aramu* had not been governed by LÚ nor found without a primarily geographic sense.⁶⁶² But by Tiglath-Pileser III’s time not only had the term shifted in its primary usage but “Aramaeans” are noted to live along more rivers than just the Upper Euphrates—e.g. the River Zab, which was well to the east of the term’s previous attestations. For example, in a summary inscription Tiglath-Pileser III listed the people groups from Karduniaš that he claimed to have conquered and annexed to Assyria during his first seventeen years (51: 5-9a).

[ultu] ʿrēš¹ šarrūtiya adi 17 palīya
 kur.Itu ʿu kur.Rubu ʿu lú.Ḥamarānu
 lú.Luḥuwatu lú.Ḥaṭallu lú.Rubbu
 [lú.Rapi]ʿqu¹ lú.Nabātu lú.Gurumu
 lú.Dunānu lú.Ubulu lú.Ru ʿuwa lú.Li ʿtawu
 lú.Marusu uru.Dūr-Kurigalzu
 [uru.Adin]ʿni¹ uru.birtu ša Saraḡiti
 uru.birtu ša Labnat lú.Arumu kalīšunu ša
 šiddi id.Tigris id.Euphrates [u
 id.Su]rappi id.Uqnê adi tâmtim šaplīti ša
 māt d.Šamši akšud ana mišir kur.Aššur
 uterra [lú.šūt rēši]ya lú.bēl pihāti elišunu
 aškun

[From] the beginning of my reign until my
 seventeenth *palū*, I captured: the lands of the Itu ʿu
 and Rubu ʿu; the peoples of the Ḥamarānu,
 Luḥuwatu, Ḥaṭallu, Rubbū, [Rapi]qu, Nabātu,
 Gurumu, Dunānu, Ubulu, Ru ʿuwa, Li ʿtawu,
 Marusu; the cities of Dūr-Kurigalzu, [Adin]ni; the
 fortified cities of Sarragītu, Labbanat—**all of them**
Arameans on the banks of the Tigris, Euphrates,
and even along the [Su]rappu, (and) Uqnū
Rivers—as far as the Lower Sea of the Rising
Sun. I annexed (them) to Assyria (and) installed [a
 eunuch] of mine as provincial governor over them.

Here not only do we have one of the first lists of the various tribes and cities identified as “lú.Aramu” but we also have a clear indication that these peoples now lived outside of Syria. Other of Tiglath-Pileser III’s palace inscriptions suggest that at least this king understood all inhabitants of Karduniaš not identified as Kaldean to be “Aramaean.”⁶⁶³

⁶⁶¹ Prior to this, the term had only twice been used without the determinative for geographic region—both in reference to people from the previously cited “KUR.Arime” (cf. Aššur-bēl-kala 7 iii 18-30).

⁶⁶² Before this, Šalmaneser III (858-824) and Adad-nerari III (810-783) used the term as either the name or hypocoristicon of an especially troublesome enemy ruler from KUR.Urartu (cf. 1: 30, 94³; 2 i 24, ii 12, 48, 51, 83; etc.). However, since the man is known both as an Urartian as well as a member of Bīt-Agusi, he is not the type of “Aramaean” under discussion here.

⁶⁶³ The wall slabs of the Nimrud Palace report victory over numerous cities and tribes in Karduniaš, after which the king uses the term LÚ.Arimi as a summary term to describe all the peoples (including those from Sippar and Nippur) he had deported from these regions (cf. 4, 5: 8-12).

One inscription of Sennacherib suggests greater understanding of the peoples identified by this term than his predecessors. As illustrated here in the Bellino Cylinder 11-12, Sennacherib understands both Aramaeans and Kaldeans to live within some of the major cult centers of Karduniaš—even those cities traditionally understood to have been at enmity with the so-called “Aramaean” tribes:

*ina ēmuq ᵏAššur bēliya 89 ālāni dannūti
būt dūrāni ša kur.Kaldi u 820 ālāni šeḥrūti
ša limētišunu alme akšud ašlula šallassuun
lú.urbī lú.Aramu u lú.Kaldu ša qēreb
Uruk_{ki} Nippur_{ki} Kiš_{ki} Ḫursagkalamma_{ki}
Kutha_{ki} adi mārī āli bēl ḫiṭṭi ušešamma
šallatiš amnu*

With the strength of Aššur, my lord, I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered *šallatu* from 89 fortified cities, fortresses of Kaldû, and 820 small(er) cities in their environs. I brought out the **auxiliary forces of the Aramaeans and Kaldeans** who were inside Uruk, Nippur, Kish, Ḫursagkalama, (and) Cutha, together with the guilty citizens, and I counted (them) as *šallatu*.

Here, the term is used to describe the types of auxiliary forces or work groups housed in specific cities of Karduniaš. Pairing the Aramaeans with the Kaldeans further suggests that these groups of Aramaeans stationed in the specific cities functioned along similar lines to the Kaldeans mentioned. Not only were both tribal groups but they were both resident in Karduniaš and used by empires for their military strength. The familiarity with which Sennacherib speaks of these peoples and their location within traditional cities of Karduniaš suggests the Aramaeans had long been established in this area by this point. From this we may infer that the “Aramaean” were now not only known as a group but that this group was no longer directly tied to the geographic referent KUR.Aruma from 300 years prior.

Many of the extant letters from Babylonia to the Assyrian king exist in fragmentary condition—and typically right about the place where we are most curious to read on. These fragmentary texts are interpreted according to inference from other contemporaneous texts and inscriptions in order to rebuild their historical context to the best of our ability. Assumptions of people groups such as the Aramaeans and their relationship to the empires, then, greatly affect how we translate such texts. For example, one letter from an Assyrian official stationed in Karduniaš to the Assyrian king (SAA 19 125: o 1’-5’; r 11-17a) reports specific details regarding the movements of troops in Karduniaš against the Babylonian Mukīn-Zēri. In this letter we find a brief detail about the Aramaeans who resided in Sapiya, Karduniaš.

ʿmuk atâ šarru¹ [ittū]^ʿšī¹ at^ʿtu¹nu ina bēti
 kammusā^ʿkunu¹ [muk] lú.emū^ʿqī¹ ša ēkalli
 ina libbi [mā ina lib]^ʿbi¹ lā nillak palḥušu
 adanniš [laš]^ʿšú¹ ina libbišu lā illukū
 anāku
 ... ta^ʿdd¹[an] ... ammar lú.Arumū ša
 ina uru.^ʿSa^ʿpiya issu m^ʿMukīn-Zēri
 ʿittal^ʿkūni m^ʿMukīn-Zēri ʿkī¹ issu
 uru.^ʿSa^ʿpi^ʿya¹ [ū]^ʿšā¹ni ina ʿšid^ʿ[di]
 ḥarrānšú ʿimmerē ša¹ Lar^ʿak¹.[ki] iḥtabat
 ʿimmerē ša¹ m^ʿMukīn¹-Zēri ina
 uru.^ʿBuḥa^ʿrru¹ ekkulū lú.Larak.^ʿki¹-āya
 ittalkū immerē 10,000 ša Mukīn-Zēri
 iḥtabūni

I said: “Why (is it that) the king has come out (but) you are staying at home? The forces of the Palace are there.” They said: “We will not go there (against Mukin-zeri).” They are very much afraid of him. They will not go inside the area at any condition.
 ... **All the Arameans who were in Sapia came with Mukin-zeri**, and when Mukin-zeri came out of Sapia, he plundered the sheep of Larak along his route. (But when) the sheep of Mukin-zeri were grazing in Buharru the Larakians went and plundered about 10,000 sheep of Mukin-zeri.

The above translation is directly from the critical edition published in the State Archives of Assyria volume 19, and it proceeds from the understanding that Aramaeans were allied against Assyria with Mukīn-Zēri. However, the syntax of the sentence does not support the translation. The letter’s syntax pairs the verb *alāku* Gt preterite “to go away” with the preposition TA = *issu* / *ištu* “from.”⁶⁶⁴ Therefore, the letter actually states that the Aramaeans who were inside the city of Sapiya ran away so that when Mukīn-Zēri left that city he was free to plunder the sheep of the city of Larak; there was no one left to prevent it. The details which immediately follow—about the sheep of Larak that were along his route from Sapiya to Buharru—also provide another bit of information about the role of the Aramaeans in Karduniaš. Some tended the sheep owned by city residents far from that city’s hinterlands, emphasizing the usefulness of their pastoral nature to city residents. Again, this emphasizes their close connections and interrelation to people identified by their city residence instead of tribal affiliation. The Aramaeans were not the enemy.

Another example of how people affiliated with the Aramaeans were thoroughly interwoven into the fabric of the local societies is found in one of Esarhaddon’s divination texts by concerning possible uprisings against his son, the crown prince Aššurbanipal (SAA 4 142: 4-21). While this passage is cited by Nissinen (2014: 282-3) as proof that the Assyrians recognized “Arameans” as an ethnic group, closer investigation of the Akkadian indicates that the term

⁶⁶⁴ While the CAD offers an idiomatic meaning for *alāku* + *išti* / *issi* under CAD entry *alāku* 4c5’: 320b, meaning “to go with a person,” this is not relevant for this passage. In this idiom *išti* / *issi* is a dialectal variant of the preposition *itti* “with” rather than a variant of *ištu* “from”—as unambiguously indicated by the use of the logogram TA = *ištu* = “from.” Additionally, this form is doubly marked by the specific translation offered for the Gt of *alāku* “to go away” 5f: 324a with the partitive preposition *ištu*: “to go away from.”

used is not *aramu* or “Aramaeans” at all. Rather, the term used is *ahlamû*—a term not used by Esarhaddon in his royal inscriptions, but familiar from other pairings with *aramu* and other tribal peoples. Additionally, the term is found within a list of people and positions loyal to (or at least in the service of) the Neo-Assyrian king:^{665 666}

[lū ina lū].¹šá¹-rēšiya ša-ziqni manzāz-pāni šarri lū ina ahhēšu ahhē-abīšū [qinnišu zēr bīt]-¹ābi¹šu lū zēr-šarri arkūti lū lu lū.tašlīšu lū.mukīl-appāti lū.mārdamqūti [lū lū.mušarkisāni lū] lū.šaknūti zakkē lū lū.šaknūti pēthalli lū lū.qurbūti lū lū.šá-šēpī [lū lū.at]¹ē¹ šá bītāni lū lū.atē ša qa¹nni¹ lū lū.rēšāni rakkūti [lū lū.x x x x x] lū lū.šá-pān—ēkallāte lū.ša-ša-huṭārī lū.šá-¹maššar¹āti lū lū.kallabāni lū.rādikibsāni [lū lū.šá-bīti-šanē lū.kāšir]ī lū.šaqē lū.nuhatimmī lū.karkadinnī ¹lū.ēp¹ē lū.kitkittū gabbu [lū lū.ltu¹āya lū.Elamāya] ¹lū¹.māhišāni lū lū.Ḥattāya [lū] lū.Gurrāya **lū ahlamû** ¹lū¹ [lū lū.Gimirrāya] ¹lū¹ kur.Pilistāya lū kur.Kusāya kur.Mušrāya lū kur.Šabuqāya [lū lū.rēšī¹ ša¹ tilli inaš]šūni ana maššarti ša šarri izzazzūni [lū ina zakkē gabbu lū.umman]āti ša ina muhhi sīhi bārta iddibubūni lū ahhēšun mārēšun [mār-ahhēšun lū bēl-ṭābātīš]un bēl-kusāpīšun lū ša issīšun išmūni ūdūni [x x x x x x x x x x zēr amē]lūtu mal bāšū sīhu [bārta ana muhhi m^dAššur-bāni-apli] ...

Will (any) of the eunuchs, bearded (officials), king's entourage; or will (any) of his brothers, uncles, family, or father's line; or will junior members of the royal line; or will the ‘third men,’ chariot drivers (or) fighters; or the recruitment officers; or the prefects of the professional military; or the prefects of the cavalry; or the royal bodyguard; or his personal guard; or the keepers of the inner gates; or the keepers of the outer gates; or the ___ eunuchs; or the [xxx]; or the palace superintendents, staff-bearers, or watchmen; or the mounted scouts or trackers; or will the lackeys, tailors, cup-bearers, cooks, confectioners, or any of all the craftsmen; or will the Itu'eans or Elamites; or the archers; or the Hittites; or the Gurreans; **or the Arameans**; or the Cimmerians; or the Philistines; or the Nubians or Egyptians; or the Šabuqēans; or will the eunuchs who bear arms; or the bearded (officials) who bear arms and stand guard for the king; or will any of the professional military, the troops who plotted the rebellious revolt; or will their brothers, sons, nephews, or their friends and guests; or those who are in their confidence; will any human being make an uprising and rebellion against Assurbanipal, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, or act against him in a hostile manner?

It is not until well after the *ahlamû* are mentioned in line 10 that any position intrinsically inimical is referenced in this text. The reference to the *ahlamû*, in fact, does not appear to be a wholesale ethnic referent to all Aramaeans, but rather specific to one among other people groups in the service of the Assyrian king. We know from other sources that the Assyrian army routinely grew their armies by adding contingents from their provinces and vassal states.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁵ To conserve space, what follows is lines 4-14, 20-21. Lines 15-19 continue to develop the types of enemies first introduced through the veiled reference to those who plotted revolt against Esarhaddon: male or female, whatever their name, whenever and wherever they are, when going out to war, when eating or drinking, etc. Because these lines develop a theme not introduced until 13 (after the freed men who plotted rebellion), they are not relevant to our discussion.

⁶⁶⁶ Luukko (2019: 94) suggests *zakkû* most likely referred to the professional soldiers instead of “exempt” soldiers, which fits the implied connotations of a “freed” soldier—one who is not forced into the military through national duty, slavery, etc.

⁶⁶⁷ E.g. Borger, Asarhaddon, p. 106: 15-23; cf. Oded (1979): 50.

Again, even the *ahlamû* are not solely the enemies of the Assyrian state but are here placed directly in the midst of the list of Assyrian officials, commanders, and military contingents.

The records from Karduniaš also illustrate a definite progression in the usage of the term, but with noticeable differences: other than a few exceptions, the kings of Karduniaš from 1100–500 BCE do not use the term “Aramaeans” in reference to people.⁶⁶⁸ The few attestations of *Aramu* that exist occurred solely between 1030 and 750 BCE in the inscriptions of kings from the Sealand Dynasty, Suhu, and a Dakkurean from Uruk. All references are to an Aramaean people and appear alongside references to Kaldeans. Simbar-Šipak (1025-1008), the first king of the “Sealand Dynasty”—as noted by King List A and the Dynastic Chronicle—was the first to refer to *Aramu*. The next attestation appears during the ninth century, where we find Ninurta-kudurri-ušur of Suhu using the term in a fictional explanatory narrative for why certain, other tribes had raided Suhu and Laqê.⁶⁶⁹ Marduk-zakir-šumi I, also from the ninth century, attests one reference to the kur.*Aramu* found in a broken list of those he had released from taxation and labor in Babylon and Borsippa.⁶⁷⁰ Nabû-šuma-iškun of the mid-eighth century presents the next reference to Aramaeans, and is the only king of Karduniaš to reference the Aramaeans with the determinative lú (for people).⁶⁷¹ Of the 177 royal inscriptions of Karduniaš from Marduk-kabit-aḥḥēšu (1157-1140) until the Persian Empire, there are only eleven references to Aramaeans using the term *Aramu*.⁶⁷² The term “*aramu*” therefore has little meaning for the typical kings and inhabitants of Karduniaš, even though Assyrian sources from the period indicate that people described by that term lived throughout the land and cities of Karduniaš. This lack of use indicates the lexeme held more value for those who were not identified by the term and suggests *aramu* was used as etic terminology by Assyrians for a people who were not Assyrian.

⁶⁶⁸ There is one exception to this trend found in the texts of Nabû-šuma-iškun (? – 748 BCE). This king ruled Karduniaš from outside Babylon at Uruk and claims to have instituted cultic practices of the Aramaeans, Kaldeans, and the Sealand at Babylon (1 r iii 42’-43’). In his one inscription he noted the LÚ.*Aramu* twice; each paired with the (LÚ.)*Kaldu* (1 r iii 26’-27’; 1 r iii 42’-43’). In another inscription from his reign—from a storehouse in the Ezida temple of Babylon—another reference is made to the LÚ.*Aramu* in a summary of the turmoil which occurred across Karduniaš (2001 i 15’b-22’). The affiliations of this king are clearly different to those who ruled Karduniaš before or after, and therefore are not included in the general trends noted for the kings of Babylon.

⁶⁶⁹ Note that although these kings did not rule from Babylon, they claimed descent from Hammurapi of Babylon, which is why they have been included here.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. 2 r 6’.

⁶⁷¹ See above note 47.

⁶⁷² There are even fewer references to Kaldeans via the term *Kaldû*: only three.

As an etic term used primarily by Assyrians, it is to their inscriptions we must look for additional information regarding the scope of the term. Notably, the use of determinatives applied to the term “*aramu*” parallels the Assyrian exposure to the term and possibly the lands. Although the term appears to have come into the Assyrian dialect from Syrians (through loan or calque)—and therefore to have an *emic* definition regarding the residents of Syria—there is no reason to assume that the Assyrians fully understood the cultural and ethnic boundaries denoted by this term. When we separate the Syrian and West Semitic references to “Aramaeans,” then, we arrive at a closer interpretation of what the term “*Aramu*” meant to the Assyrians. This then prevents reading too much into our extant sources in order to harmonize the two meanings.

After the shift in usage from geographic to demographic some time before the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (747-722 BCE), the individual attestations of *aramu* do not carry solely negative connotations. In fact, the term’s usage refers to allies and military contingents at least just as often (if not more) as it does to enemies of the state. This presentation of the data differs significantly from how the Aramaeans are typically described in scholarly literature. From close readings of cuneiform sources, it does not appear that the “Aramaeans” were credited with being the bane of the empires’ existence as many scholars have since portrayed them.⁶⁷³ While some polities in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and north-western Iraq held their ground against the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the kings did not routinely use the term “Aramaean” to describe their Western foes. Instead, they focused on specific polities rather than a catch-all term for the west.⁶⁷⁴ The following are representative of the types of references to Aramaeans in the present sample of texts.

From this brief survey, it is clear that the term *aramu* and its permutations, or the term *ahlamû*, is used solely by outside observers who have artificially bounded a people group that may not have any meaning for the individuals within the group itself. The term is used only etically and never emically. Furthermore, as the Assyrians gain greater familiarity with the multiplicity of groups from the west that they had previously lumped together under *aramu*, they

⁶⁷³ See the many summaries of Aramaean and Assyrian / Babylonian encounters in Assyrian and Babylonian political histories.

⁶⁷⁴ During the height of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and their campaigns to the West, of the 676 royal inscriptions here evaluated the term KUR.Aramu is only found six times and the older KUR.MAR.TU(.KI) twenty-six times. This number, again, is expected to rise considerably with the addition of Sargon II’s nearly 2000 texts when they are published.

begin to list the tribes by name, and we find fewer attestations to the broader term itself. The term “Aramaean” is only found a couple times after the fall of the Neo-Assyrian empire.⁶⁷⁵ The exception to this tendency is that the Assyrians continued to use the term as an identifier of their perception that these groups belonged to the category of “Aramaean.”⁶⁷⁶

5.3 Misconceptions of the Term

Identifying the place of “Aramaean” in ancient Near Eastern society at large has suffered in the past because of a desire that a single term maintain consistent usage over the course of a millennium. Instead, when the term is allowed to evolve according to the historicism of the specific author(s), we discover that the term “Aramaean” is most likely an etic descriptor which has no direct relevance to those it supposedly describes. Additionally, we see that several assumptions have influenced the treatment of texts and their interpretations—including the conflation of several terms under the same translation “Aramaean”, when contemporaneous scribes may be shown not to have conflated the terms to the same extent.

As discussed in Chapter 1, post-nationalist and post-Orientalist / post-colonialist theories recognize no need for the speaker of a language to be otherwise associated with an area in which that language is primarily spoken. Language is *not* a defining feature of ethnicity unless the language in question is not spoken by the hegemonic power.⁶⁷⁷ Therefore, the efficacy of prosopography must be revisited. The imperially sanctioned language cannot be used to identify “locals” or “traditional Assyrians / Babylonians / Persians.” The presence of personal names that represent non-hegemonic languages, however, should be understood to represent a smaller percentage of the ethnic groups actually present in the texts due to the widespread use of *Beamtennamen*. Unfortunately, even this use of language is not especially helpful in the case of Aramaeans and Kaldeans; the spoken language even of the empire was Aramaic rather than

⁶⁷⁵ (cf. Beaulieu 2013; Zadok 1985=RGTC 8)

⁶⁷⁶ This is the same for the so-called “Kaldeans”: the term simply is not found in the Neo-Babylonian / Late Babylonian period—incidentally coinciding with the reign of so-called “Kaldean” tribal members over Babylon.

⁶⁷⁷ Imperial powers enforce hegemonic dominance over a region by encouraging the use of a particular lingua franca already associated with the ruling ethnic group. Therefore, that language cannot be used to identify the ethnicity of a person because there are multiple overriding reasons to utilize that language that have nothing to do with demarcating ethnic boundaries. Other, nondominant languages, however, can be used to suggest ethnic belonging: if there is no political advantage to using a language, then one may assume that language represents the ethnicity of the person in question. When one locates particularly foreign theophoric elements (e.g. Amun, ‘Anat, Yahu-, etc.), these typically point to a person of a different ethnic status to that of the hegemonic “majority” (see chapter one for more on ethnicity, minorities, and the concept of “majority”).

Akkadian at this point. Additionally, authorial agency should not be discounted in the attempt to access the meaning of a term. Though we may wish to discover emic understandings of ethnicity, we must also be willing to nuance our readings through the acknowledgement of a term's etic usage instead. Our desire may be to identify those cultural markers identified by an ethnic group as demarcating their own group, but our texts provide external, imperial perceptions of the represented subaltern groups. We cannot access emic boundaries directly. Instead, the imperial perceptions recorded must be filtered to identify the hegemonic generalizations of these groups beyond the imperial rhetoric of the texts.

When addressing the Aramaeans, the issues of imperial language and generalizations are especially pertinent. The same word is used in cuneiform sources to denote language, polity, and tribal people, and scholarly treatments of "Aramaeans" have followed suit without acknowledging the multivalence of the term. We have approached it with the wrong assumptions. Previous attempts—such as those by Lipinski (2000), Younger (2016), Niehr (2014), Fales (2011), Arnold (2011), etc.—have attempted to address all attestations of the term and all named ethnic groups found in the proximity of the term at once. They presumed a static definition of the term over the centuries. In contradistinction to this approach, I focus on understanding the use of the term in each individual text to identify the contemporaneous generalizations, and then how the term and its usage evolve throughout time. By assessing the texts from a diachronic perspective—that analyzes each period synchronically—we can track how the referents of the heading "Aramaean" shift over 600 years. The term is used by scholars to refer to all of the following without distinction: a general term for lands to the West; the (often nomadic) peoples from those lands; of which some were known to be affiliated with the empires, and others affiliated with their foes; the polities lead by people who presumably spoke and wrote Aramaic; etc. Quite simply, we see that the term itself becomes far too broad to be meaningful beyond a blanket term by the time of Esarhaddon. Additionally, the relationship of empire to the "Aramaeans" within Karduniaš should be evaluated separately from that in Assyria.

In short, as much as there was indeed a polity which defined itself by the term "Aram" in West Semitic and Egyptian sources, and as much as the Mesopotamian sources also used the term to describe the alphabetic script of the West, the term "Aramaean" as applied to peoples or lands is simply not indicative of a specific, emically-identified ethnicity. We should therefore amend our practice of discussing "Aramaeans" as though they "retained sufficient consciousness

of their ethnic identity as Aramaeans [and] that these territorial states were tantamount to being national states.”⁶⁷⁸ In support of viewing this term solely as an etic referent, Fales (2011) noted that the term “Aramaean” was used as a general label for tribal groups, but so far no one has treated this term separately from the specific tribes or Western polities. The term “Aramaean” is an etic referent used primarily by the Neo-Assyrian kings and administrators to refer to a group of individual tribes which likely did not consider themselves bound in a single ethnic group at all.⁶⁷⁹ The discussion of such a term, therefore, must be restricted to the ways in which the Assyrians understood it: originally, *aramu* denoted KUR.MAR.TU or “the west,” then the non-Hittite peoples from the west, and finally developed to indicate mobile, tribal peoples by the eighth century when the term shifted from being a geographic referent⁶⁸⁰ to a demographic identifier. Thus, the Neo-Assyrian term is not identical with that used in West Semitic or Egyptian texts.

Aramu does not represent a single group of people, and we should not assign the characteristics attributed to *aramu* in Neo-Assyrian texts to all tribal groups the Assyrians grouped under that term. The rest of this chapter will be concerned solely with the “Aramaeans” as the “mobile tribes used and abused by the late empires of the first millennium” and often found in parallel to the Kaldeans (lú.Kaldû). All other meanings associated with *aramu* will be defined as follows: “Aramaic” for the language, “Aramaic-speakers” for speakers of said language, and “Luwian/Aramaic (=Neo-Hittite) Princedoms” for all so-called Aramaean princedoms, chiefdoms, or states in Syria and Southern Turkey.

5.4 Aramu of Assyria and Karduniaš

Assyria clearly noted similarities between the Aramaeans of the West and those in Karduniaš, even if they are best addressed separately for historical examination. Therefore, although the Aramaeans of Syria are not of primary interest for what follows, I will refer to them at the outset

⁶⁷⁸ von Dassow 1999. In this review of Dion 1997, she calls the field to task for assuming that the “Aramaeans” maintained any memory of connection to the previous Luwian-Aramaean Princedoms.

⁶⁷⁹ “Aramaean” as a term parallels what we have long noticed regarding the usage of the term “Hebrews” in the Hebrew Bible: it was an etic term used solely by outsiders who are speaking of the people who knew themselves as “Judaeans.”

⁶⁸⁰ See Sader (2014: 16): “So Aram is a geographical term that refers at times to part and at others to all of the Syrian territory in the Iron Age, hence the appellation “Aramaeans” given to the 1st-millennium B.C. inhabitants of Syria.”

in order to make comparisons with those of Karduniaš. For the remainder of this chapter, however, I will focus on the Aramaeans and Kaldeans from Karduniaš rather than the members of the Luwian-Aramaic princedoms and tribes.⁶⁸¹ The vast majority of written sources available for the period after the fall of Assyria attest the life and practices in Karduniaš, making the Aramaeans of the East of more interest for a study of deportations than those polities and tribes of Syria at present. Karduniaš’s Aramaeans are especially important for the study of deportation in the first millennium. Oded (1979) stated the number of times Assyrian kings deported Aramaean and Kaldean peoples from Karduniaš outnumbered the number of deportations from any other location or group. After the advent of the Karduniaš empire, its kings deported more peoples from the West to their heartland than they mixed peoples across the empire—making the experience of life after deportation in Karduniaš unique.

5.4.1 “Aramaeans” As Mobile Peoples: Raids and Warfare

Most scholarly presentations of Aramaeans (and Luwian-Aramaic princedoms) portray them in the same manner as the cuneiform sources: Aramaeans are the only people who steal, loot, kill, and destroy. But initially their strategies of warfare were not so dissimilar and later disparities can be tied largely to a difference in scale. Both Assyrians and “Aramaeans” employed what are described as razzias, raids, and guerrilla warfare against their opponents. The real difference between the long-cited raiding parties of the Aramaeans and those of the Assyrians is that our records are written from the royal Assyrian perspective—which painted all attacks against the empire in entirely negative tones. The campaigns of the Middle Assyrian kings were more focused on doing widespread damage as quickly as possible, rather than total eradication of an opponent. For example, Šalmaneser I (1263-1234) records a series of raids he conducted in just three days:^{682 683684}

⁶⁸¹ Although they may be connected, that connection is not so much concretely established as it is surmised for many of the tribes.

⁶⁸² RIMA 1 ... 1: 30a – 46a.

⁶⁸³ The term KUR.DIDLI is found nowhere else but in this inscription, where Šalmaneser I uses it twice (1: 36, 86). The context of each attestation suggests DIDLI functions both as a plural marker and diminutive similar to how DIDLI functions in URU.DIDLI (see below). The CAD does not list KUR.DIDLI as an optional spelling for either *šadû* or *mātu*. Context in this instance suggests we read *šadû* for KUR given the likely geographic location and ease with which the Assyrians were able to traverse eight “lands” or “small mountains / hills.”

⁶⁸⁴ Although the term URU.DIDLI has been traditionally translated as *ālāni* “cities” according to the synonym list *Igituh* i 333f, URU.DIDLI is used infrequently enough to warrant a closer look. Closer inspection indicates that this term is only vaguely synonymous with *ālu* = URU = “city,” and instead indicates much smaller

*dakūt ummāniya aškun ana kišir
 ḥuršānišunu dannūti lū ēli kur.Ḥimme
 kur.Uwatqun kur.Mašgun kur.Saluwa
 kur.Ḥalīla kur.Lūḥa kur.Nilipaḥri u
 kur.Zingun
 8 kur.didli u illatūšina akšud
 51 uru.didli-šunu aqqur ašrup
 šallassunu makkūrišunu ašlul
 puḥur kur.Uruwaṭri ina 3-ti ūmê ana šēpī
 Aššur bēliya lušekniš
 atmēšunu unessiḳ ašbat ana ardūti u
 palāḥiya ūtāššunūti kabitta bilat ḥuršāni
 ana dārāti elišunu lū aškun*

I levied my troops (and) I went up to the cluster of their mighty mountains. The Ḥimme, Uwatqun, Mašgun, Saluwa, Ḥalīla, Lūḥu, Nilipaḥri, and Zingun — eight hills and their fighting forces I conquered.

I demolished and burnt 51 of their small clustered settlements.

I carried off their *šallatu* and property.

I subdued the combined lands of Uruaṭri in three days at the feet of Aššur, my lord.

Another inscription dating to the reign of Aššur-bēl-kala (1073-1056), the Assyrian king records a series of battles against numerous groups labelled “Arameans” that read more like tribal raids than concerted military attacks:⁶⁸⁵

*ina šattimma šīāti ina 𐎠Ayyāri ḥarrāna ša
 kur.Arime ina uru.Pawuza ša šēp
 kur.Kašiyāri imtaḥaš ina šattimma šīāti
 ina 𐎠KI.MIN-ma ḥarrāna ša kur.Arime
 ina riš uru.Nabula [(...)] imtaḥaš*

In that year, in the month Ayyāru, on campaign against the Arameans, he struck the city of Pawuza, which is at the foot of Mount Kašiyari. In that year, in the same month, on campaign against the Arameans, he struck the head of the city Nabula.

Later in this same inscription, the king records a more victorious endeavor—again against the Arameans. He records striking some at one place (*maḥāšu*), uprooting residents of another city (*nasāḥu*), conquering yet two more cities (*kašādu*), and bringing out *šallatu* captives (*wašû*);⁶⁸⁶ before plundering the “Arameans” (*ḥabātu*).⁶⁸⁷ None of these actions (*maḥāšu*, *kašādu*, *šallata wašû*, or *ḥabātu*) is surprising; they remain constant throughout royal narratives. But neither are they solely the acts of a strong, centralized military force that the Assyrian kings are later known to be. These same verbs and practices are reportedly carried out by Arameans. Other Assyrian

settlements. For this reason, I propose to translate all attestations of URU.DIDLI according to the other synonym list in which it is found: CT 18 10 iii 52f. In this alternate synonym list we find *nammaššû* and *adurtu* given as synonyms: both of which mean “small or rural settlement.” The additional connotations suggested by the parallel drawn between URU.DIDLI and *nammaššû*—whose first meaning is “herds of (wild) animals”—indicate that the settlements in question are marked by their smallness and their tendency to cluster around each other without seeming plan or organization. (See CAD A1 s.v. *ālu* “city”; CAD A1 s.v. *adurtu* “rural settlements” 137a; CAD N1 s.v. *nammaššû* “1. herds of (wild) animals; 2. settlements, people” 234b-235a.) Ultimately, URU.DIDLI should be viewed as synonymous with the more commonly used (URU.)*dadme* which is used to denote the same types of settlements and is given as a synonym (*adur dadmê*) for *adurtu*.

⁶⁸⁵ 7: iii 1-32; see especially lines iii 8b – 10a for the following quotation.

⁶⁸⁶ 7: iii 13b – 17a.

⁶⁸⁷ 7: iii 19b – 20a.

kings attest similarly tribal raids. ⁶⁸⁸ Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884)⁶⁸⁹ records an excursion to the Nairi lands in which he knocked down two cities in the capital city's environs, killed the ruler's sons, and took away their grain, straw, people, hostages, bronze, tin, and iron, pots, and horses and mules. Similar actions are reported of the Aramaean tribes against the imperial army, cities, and lands, but we have followed Assyrian royal rhetoric and attribute these actions as "evil."

There are unfortunately few texts of Aramaean (not Luwian-Aramaic) warfare written from the perspective of the Aramaeans. Yet, the few attested provide enough detail to corroborate the rhetoric-driven accounts of the Assyrians. Some of these come from the region of Sūhu and Mari during the early eighth century—a chiefdom along the Middle Euphrates at modern Sur Jur'eh, near the ancient chiefdom of Laqê, that claimed ancestral ties to Hammurapi of Babylon. Though the ruler claimed the title of lú.GAR / *šaknu*, traditionally translated "governor," this region was traditionally separate from both Assyria and Karduniaš until its final conquest by Assyria.⁶⁹⁰ In all but the regional title for the ruler—lú.GAR instead of LUGAL *šarru* "king"—these rulers position themselves in much the same way as a king of Assyria, Karduniaš, or Luwian/Aramaic chiefdom. This independence is further affirmed in the relative absence of these people from Neo-Assyrian or Babylonian sources: no king claims to have completely destroyed or annexed the region of Sūhu and Mari to their empire.⁶⁹¹ In Neo-Assyrian

⁶⁸⁸ Aššurnaširpal II was the first Assyrian king to shift the focus of his narratives to the gory glories typically associated with the Neo-Assyrian kings. Before this turning point, from Aššur-nādin-apli (ca.1196 – 1193) until Tukulti-Ninurta II (890 – 884) we have found only 158 royal inscriptions for the entire 302-year period. Of these extant texts, the majority are building and votive inscriptions (113), suggesting that the royal writing practices of the late-Middle – early-Neo-Assyrian kings were less defined by a need to record their military exploits than to document their devotion to the gods. Even when we push back the beginning of this period to the reign of Šalmaneser I (1263-1234), the addition of these two earlier, more prolific kings only increases the totals marginally: 260 total texts in 379 years; 175 building or votive inscriptions; 85 tablets or documentary texts.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 11-25.

⁶⁹⁰ While Aššurnaširpal II (883-859) records that he: received a *maddattu* bribe from Ilu-ibni, a governor of Sūhu (1: i 100); besieged Kudurru, governor of Sūhu and ancestor of Šamaš-rēša-ušur (one of the two rulers of Sūhu for whom we have inscriptions), at the fortified city of Sūru (1: iii 15b – 19); and claims victory and strength over Sūhu (1: iii 23), he does not kill Kudurru in the skirmish and his victory seems to be more over the allied troops of Karduniaš that assisted Kudurru than over Kudurru and Sūhu. Sūhu was independent until after the first of Tiglath-Pileser III's (744-727) reign, when Sūhu is reported as contributing to *dullu* for Assyria (e.g. SAA 19 164=ND 2795; Sūhu also contributes men for unknown purpose in 19 084=ND 2382; 19 175 = ND 2647).

⁶⁹¹ Contra (among others) Alexa Bartelmus' (2016) "A Short Introduction on the Sūhu Texts," from ORACC: Suhu: The Inscriptions of Suhu online Project, whose readings of the referenced texts suggest a more maximalist interpretation of Assyrian supremacy than that presented here. (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/suhu/introduction/index.html>)

letters, Sūhu is treated in the same manner as Aramaean tribes⁶⁹²—allowing us, by extension, to use Sūhu’s “royal” inscriptions to access the nature of Aramaean warfare. The following example comes from the reign of Ninurta-kudurri-ušur, *šaknu* of Sūhu:^{693 694}

3 arhū ina muḥḥi ṭuppišu ina rēš
 lú.šaknūtuya ša ina giš.kussî ša abiya
 ūšibu **2000 lú.Ḥatallu ultu lú.Sarugu adi**
lú.Luḥuwāya ultu šābî giš.qašti u lú.rēš
karāšišunu ipḥurūma ṭemi ana aḥāmeš
 iškunūma

^mŠama’gamni **lú.nāgir** lú.Sarugu ša ina lā
 kitti ballu **ālik pānišunu ana ḥubtu** ana
 kur.Laqê ilūnimma ina šēri indalkūma
 umma lú.šakin kur.Suḥi ittini nakirma
 umma kīkīma nittiqma ḥubti ultu kur.Laqê
 niḥabbat ...

... lú.šaknī māti ša kur.Suḥi abbūšu mamma
 ina libbišunu ana libbi **1000 lú.Aramu** ana
 šālta ul illik umma enna šū ana libbi **2000**
lú.Aramu ana šālta illaku umma kī ana
 pānini itlā ana šālta ana libbišu nillakma u
 kur.Suḥi ana ša ramnini nutarru u kī lā **itlā**
ḥubtu nušēridma u šābî ana muḥḥini
nuraddāmma u nillakamma ana muḥḥi
bītāti ša kur.Suḥi nitebbema **ālānišu ša ina**
 šēri nišabbatma u **giš.gapnišunu** ninekkis
 ana emūqīšunu itkalūma ana kur.Laqê tūiqū
100 adurī ša kur.Laqê iṣbatūma **ḥubtu lā**
mīni iḥbutūnimma KUR.Laqê a<na> tīli u
 karmi uttīrū

Three months had hardly passed from the beginning of my rule when I ascended the throne of my father, (when) **2000 of the Ḥatallu tribe from the Sarugu and the Luḥuwāya clans** — with **troops, archers, and their camp leaders**—gathered and together came to an agreement.

The **spokesman** Šama’gamni of the Sarugu clan, in whom there is no loyalty, **led them**. They came up to the land of Laqê **for plunder**, but while in the steppe they deliberated, saying: “The governor of the land of Sūhu is hostile to us. How shall we pass by to take plunder from the land of Laqû?”

... “Not one among the governors of the land of Sūhu, his ancestors, went into combat with **1000 Arameans**. But now this one must combat 2000 Arameans!

So, if he comes up against us, we will combat him and take Sūhu for ourselves.

But, if he does not come up, then we will **take away plunder and add more troops to our (number)**. Then (later) we will go **attack the houses of Sūhu**; we will **seize his cities in the steppe and cut down their vines**.”

Trusting in their strength, they passed by (Sūhu) to Laqê. They **seized 100 rural settlements** of Laqê. They **took plunder** without number and **turned Laqê into tells and ruins**.

While this passage is almost certainly a fictional narrative to describe the thought-processes of an enemy, what Ninurta-kudurri-usur provides is general information about the raiding habits of

⁶⁹² See SAA 19 084=ND 2382 and 19 164=ND 2795, where people of Sūhu (LÚ.Sūhāya or KUR.Sūhāya) are listed with contingents from specific leaders and the LÚ.Hindānāya (19 084) and (in broken context) with “all the available Aramaeans” as guards from the city of Adad to the city of the Uqimūtāya/Uqimutaeans (named after a people group), where the Sūheans are (19 164).

⁶⁹³ The full text may be found in 02: i 7b – ii 35; for space the following quotation includes only lines i 7b – 16a, 19 – 30a.

⁶⁹⁴ The designations “clan” and “tribe” are contextual only. The text indicates that a certain number of X people came from larger groups Y through Z. The standard, basic designation of a “tribe” is that it is a social or kinship group larger than a “lineage” or “clan” but smaller than a “chiefdom” or “nation.” Therefore based on the information presented in the text, I have assigned the LÚ.Sarugu, LÚ.Luhuwāya, and LÚ.Amātāya (from the existed portion of the quote) to the category of clans within the tribe of the LÚ.Hatallu. This interpretation tracks almost entirely with the translation given by Grant Frame in the Suhu Inscriptions (RIMB 2, 1995), with the exception that I see no support for assigning tribal status to the LÚ.Amātāya. The phrasing of lines i 9b – 10 rather suggests that there was a string of clans included in this confederacy beyond the two listed.

Aramaeans. For this narrative to hold its rhetorical value, the basic structure of the narrative must present at least the generalizations of how Aramaeans fought. From this, then, the ruler of Sūhu has provided us with several details which we have otherwise had to surmise from Assyrian reliefs, etic terminology related to non-Assyrians, and other generalizations. We find external support that the peoples of the lú.Hatallu tribe were considered lú.Aramaeans⁶⁹⁵—even if this designation only serves to identify them in opposition to the people of Sūhu and Laqê. We discover they: fought with infantry, archers, and military camp leaders,⁶⁹⁶ were led by a man designated as “spokesman” or “herald” who was elected to lead them,⁶⁹⁷ and were motivated by the acquisition of plunder.⁶⁹⁸ Additionally, we learn that they focused their looting on a specific location (e.g. Laqê), but if opposed they would attempt to take over the land of their opposition.⁶⁹⁹ If left to their own devices as they rode past, they would only plunder and kidnap a few men on their way to their destination,⁷⁰⁰ only to return to attack the clans, accessible towns, and produce.⁷⁰¹ The pattern of warfare so often denounced by royal text and scholar alike is more

⁶⁹⁵ i 19-21a.

⁶⁹⁶ i 10.

⁶⁹⁷ i 12 – 13.

Compare the description of pre-Islamic Arabian tribes provided by Weiss and Green (1987: 18-25, esp. 22): “With regard to the internal dynamics of bedouin political institutions, there also existed an element of egalitarianism.... Tribes characteristically lacked authoritative leadership. Decision-making powers within a tribe were vested in a council or *majlis*, composed of the tribal elders. It was customary for each clan—or at least each important clan—to be represented on the *majlis* by one of its leading men. The members of the *majlis* elected one of themselves, customarily the most respected man of the tribe, to be their spokesman or *shaykh*. ... Yet there was a significant difference between the office of ‘king’ and that of ‘shaykh.’ The latter was less of a ‘ruler’ than a ‘spokesman’; for he enjoyed a very limited scope of authority. ... He was, in a sense, merely *primus inter pares* (‘first among equals’), since an important decision—moving to new pastures, undertaking a raiding expedition, or joining other tribes in a confederation—would be made collectively by the entire *majlis*. The shaykh’s leadership was thus in large part ceremonial. He represented the tribe in its dealings with outsiders. He was often, but not necessarily, the tribal leader in war.” While I do not suggest that there is any genealogical connection between the Arabs of the early common era and the Aramaeans from a thousand years prior, it is illustrative to compare the minimal details given in the cuneiform texts with the critical analyses available of later tribal groups from roughly the same geographic region.

⁶⁹⁸ i 13.

⁶⁹⁹ i 21b – 23a.

⁷⁰⁰ i 23b – 24.

⁷⁰¹ i 25 – 27a.

similar than not to that of the early Neo-Assyrians' of 1200 – 900 BCE,⁷⁰² and was clearly seen to advantage by the Assyrians—as their inclusion in palace reliefs⁷⁰³ and the army⁷⁰⁴ suggests.

5.4.2 Social Entanglement

As the previous section illustrated, the Aramaeans of Syria and the middle Euphrates regions of Karduniaš were not so dissimilar to the early Neo-Assyrians in terms of their military practices. And after the incorporation of all Luwian-Aramaic princedoms into the Assyrian empire, members of Aramaean tribes were even incorporated under the national ethnonym “Assyrian” whenever they were not currently in opposition to the state, in accordance with Assyria’s diversity strategies. As I will hopefully illustrate, the Aramaeans of Karduniaš experienced an even greater inclusion into society generally.

5.4.2.1 Assyria

Although Assyria considered members of Aramaean tribes as Assyrians after their annexation to the empire, the dual identity of Aramaeans meant that the clan or tribe did not always support the empire in full.⁷⁰⁵ Despite rhetoric to the contrary,⁷⁰⁶ the Assyrians expected and tolerated this to a degree truly exceptional when compared with the grievances performed by other states.

Many Aramaeans were treated as free agents who were periodically employed by the state.⁷⁰⁷ Luukko (2019: 92) went so far as to suggest: “one might say that the Assyrian Empire was nothing but a large Aramaean territory with fluid borders, and Aramaic speakers in the north, south, east, and west, as well as the center.” The Assyrian kings were responsible for caring for the basic needs of their people, as multiple letters and royal inscriptions attest. But

⁷⁰² Other indications of the Assyrians’ regard for the Aramaeans’ fighting style and military prowess have been discussed at length by Luukko 2019 (Itu’u and Gurrū as contingents of the Assyrian army); Dezsö 2006, 2012 (Assyrian military); Melville 2016; Lipiński 2000; Fales 2009; Frame 2013; Fuchs 2005; Galil 2011; Kaplan 2008; Nadali 2005; Postgate 1974, 1977; Reade 1972; Vidal 2010.

⁷⁰³ See Luukko 2019: 119; Dezsö 2012a: 67; Reade 1972.

⁷⁰⁴ See Luukko 2019.

⁷⁰⁵ See Luukko 2019: 116; Melville 2016: 230.

⁷⁰⁶ E.g. SAA 5 53=ABL 251; SAA 13 33=ABL 419; SAA 19 176=ND 2625; SAA 19 195=ND 2635.

⁷⁰⁷ Aramaean tribes were employed by the Assyrian army as archers, spearmen, trackers, intelligence gatherers, cavalry or mounted archers, guards, enforcers, etc. (see Luukko 2019). Luukko (2019: 114-115) summarizes the role of two groups (the Itu’u and Gurrū) as follows: “By ‘dirty’ I mean that they were sent to interact with the local people in the peripheral areas of the empire and that their interventions likely followed a pattern of coercion, intimidation, persuasion, and terror. From the Assyrian point of view, we might even speak about an “outsourcing” of the security of the empire’s borders to these tribes.”

they were also responsible for supplying the needs of the Aramaean clans and tribes that lived within the empire as we see in the following letter from either Sargon II or Sennacherib's reign:⁷⁰⁸

[*mindēma*] šarru bēli iqabbi [*umma*]
 ʿmiʿnū [tēmu]mma
 akl'ū' [lú.Hamar]nāya 'lú'.Lihuwātāya
 [lú].Rabilāya [nišē]'šū'nu kî 'ib'rû ana
 [x x x x x] [x x x x x] īterbū [x x x]
 umma šarru a'na' 'muh'hin'ni' [aklū]
 [lišpu]ram'ma' [x x] itti [lú.ḥa]ʿtal'lāya

Perhaps the king, my lord, will say: “What news is there?”

Regarding food: the lú.Hamarani, lú.Lihuwati, lú.Rabili, and their people when they were starving they entered (my presence?) ... saying: “[**May**] **the king send food to us** and (may he send?) [x] with the lú.Hatalli. ...

We also find concern that the Aramaeans should become more enmeshed into the Assyrian social fabric.⁷⁰⁹

ana šarri bēliya urdaka mAššur-mātika—
 tera lū šulmu ana šarri bēliya
 šuḥ kur.Armāya ša šarri iqbūni mā
 issāti lušāḥizušunu ʿiss'āti ma'da
 [ā]tamar ʿabbe'š'i'na' lā imma[gguru] lā
 i'ddu'[nūšina] mā adi ʿkaspu'
 iddanūnāšini
 kaspu liddinūniššū-nu šunūma lēḥūzū

To the king, my lord: your servant Aššur-matika-tera. Good health to the king, my lord!

As to **the Arameans** about whom the king said: “**They should be made to marry wives,**” I have seen women in great numbers (there) but their fathers refuse to give them, saying: “(Not) until they give money to us.”

Let money be given to them so they can marry.

Within the military, the king provided for the Assyrian troops as recorded by a provincial leader in a report to the king about the travel provisions:⁷¹⁰

ana šarri bēliya urdaka mAššur-mātka-
 tera lū šulmu ana šarri bēliya
 ina muhhi lú.ummānāti kur.Armāya ša
 šarri bēliya išpuranni mā šašbissunu mā
 ana harrāni illukū ešidīssunu sāgu ḥintu
 mešennu šamni addanašunu
 immērīya laššu issu mašen immērīya
 ibaššūni qirsīyāma ana harrāni
 lam'tuḥ'

To the king, my lord; your servant, Aššur-matika-tera. Good health to the king, my lord!

As for **the Aramean troops** about whom the king, my lord, wrote to me: “**Equip them! They are going on a campaign.**” I can give them their provisions, sackcloth, leather bags, sandals and oil.

I have no donkey stallions available, but if I did have donkey stallions available, I would offer my carts, too, for the campaign.

Although these concerns serve both the Aramaean groups and the Assyrian nation, anthropological comparisons illustrate that not all imperial administrations equipped their auxiliaries or mercenaries according to such a standard. Other letters inform us that Aramaeans could own their own land and be exempt from future taxation⁷¹¹ and their ethnic identity was

⁷⁰⁸ SAA 17 007 (=CT 54 042): o7 – r8.

⁷⁰⁹ SAA 19 18.

⁷¹⁰ SAA 19 17.

⁷¹¹ E.g. SAA 5 16=ABL 201: 4-11.

preserved through dress even whilst serving in the Assyrian army.⁷¹² These letters reflect the imperial concern for maintaining order in a multi-ethnic setting without concern that the people being equipped were less than “Assyrians.”

5.4.2.2 *Karduniaš*

Aramaeans were also entwined in the society of Karduniaš, perhaps to an even greater extent.⁷¹³ Although the term rarely appears in royal inscriptions from Karduniaš, multiple references to the *aramu* exist in the archives of the Neo-Babylonian period. Where certain Aramaean groups in Assyrian texts are attested as having been planted or stationed in specific cities to maintain order, the Aramaeans of Karduniaš appear as regular residents of ancient, “traditionally-Babylonian” cities. Further, while *aramu* still represents an etic or broad term for multiple segments of society, the peoples of Karduniaš use the term in a manner that attests greater familiarity with its constituent members than did the Assyrians. Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that the peoples of Karduniaš were never centralized under a single ethnonym like the Assyrians.⁷¹⁴ In addition to maintaining an identity affiliated with their city of residence, the people of Karduniaš also identified themselves through family and kinship ties,⁷¹⁵ perhaps as a result of their interactions with the tribal groups—Aramaeans, Kaldeans, Kassites, etc.—with whom they lived. Nielsen (2019: 21) suggests that the development of family names among the elite of Karduniaš occurred “to distinguish themselves from tribal groups they deemed to be ‘others’ and to project their claims to rights and privileges within the local [civic] institutions that defined their cities.” However, this supposed dualistic motivation is not born out by closer inspection of the texts: the peoples of Karduniaš maintained multiple ethnicities, thus complicating the notion of self vs.

⁷¹² E.g. SAA 19 6=ND 2735: r 14'-18'; SAA 7 112=ADD 680; 7 115=ADD 953.

⁷¹³ The extant evidence for Aramaean enmeshment in Karduniaš society is clearly stronger than that for Assyria; it is, however, probable that the Aramaeans were even more fully enmeshed into the Assyrian social fabric than our sources suggest.

⁷¹⁴ Although Nielsen (2019) argues in favor of a Babylonian nation-state, the closest he can come is to asserting its existence is the following: “While it is true that native terms never existed for a Babylonian nation or nationality, the absence of such terms should not imply that there was not a native conception of Babylonia as a geographic entity.” Note: there has never been a question about the existence of a geographically bounded region, but rather than such a region was ever so centralized as to support the creation of a native term to identify or describe its populace. The term “Karduniaši/-ean” simply does not exist. Nor, has there ever been sufficient proof that Karduniaš could be classified as a “nation-state.” A kingdom, chiefdom, or loosely managed empire, sure; but there was no nationalist push that created an identity from belonging to a specific region within Karduniaš. A nation may be an “imagined community,” but not all imagined communities are nations.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Nielsen 2011.

Other. As I discussed in chapter three, Karduniaš was never a “hegemonic ethnic state”; we have no evidence that the throne in Babylon ever attempted to portray other people groups within their realm as being lesser humans than the “traditional Babylonians” themselves. We have also discussed the problems inherent to the notion of a centralized identity for all inhabitants of Karduniaš (i.e. one simply did not exist). Thus, the very idea that Aramaeans and Kaldeans could possibly have been entirely excluded from the community (as is assumed in the secondary literature) is theoretically unsound.

All the peoples of Karduniaš were well integrated into the general social fabric—including the Aramaeans.⁷¹⁶ Tribal peoples lived among the non-tribal peoples in major cities of Karduniaš and in villages and tents within their own tribally dominated lands. Some of these peoples lived both within cities and in the marshlands, as attested in a Neo-Babylonian letter from the turn of the seventh century.⁷¹⁷

*Bīt-mDakkuru gabbu ālāni undaš<ši>rū u
ana libbi appāri īterbū uṭṭatu u suluppu
ana lā mīni muššur*

All of these people of Bit-Dakkuri have left the cities and returned to the midst of the marshes. Barley and dates without number have been left.

Other people not identified with a specific tribe are attested living with the Aramaeans and Kaldeans. In some instances, these people are recorded abandoning their traditional homelands for new lands and leaders:⁷¹⁸

*nišū šunu ina appāri lú.bāšihī
iqabbūšunūtu ina ūme ša m.d.Šamaš-ibni
30 šunu lú.qinnāta kī ihliqū' ina Bīt-
ʿAmukkanʿna ʿitʿtašabū*

There are people in the marshes called “marsh dwellers.” In Šamaš-ibni's time, thirty of their clans fled and settled in Bit-Amukani.

⁷¹⁶ Due to the unclear relation between the Aramaeans and the Kaldeans in Karduniaš, I include references to the Kaldeans when they also serve to illustrate that tribal groups were equally part of Karduniaš.

⁷¹⁷ E.g. SAA 17 084 (= ABL 0588): r3a-r7. The sender of this letter sees the so-called “abandonment” of these staple foods as fair game and recommends sending horses there to take advantage of the “free” feed (cf. r8-r9). However, peoples of the Iraqi marshlands regularly build cities to use as storehouses and then return to the deeper marshes until they have need of the stored goods (cf. Al-Dafar 2015). Another fragmentary letter also attests the existence of similar storehouses in the region of Nippur (SAA 18 076=CT 54 495: o2'-11').

⁷¹⁸ SAA 18 185=ABL 0258, esp o 5-10. Šamaš-ibni likely refers to the so-named leader of Bīt-Dakkuru who was taken to Assyria and executed during the reign of Esarhaddon (cf. ARAB II 643; ca.678 BCE).

The letter continues with a request for an appeal to their new leader to let them be resettled elsewhere, as the Assyrian king so determines.⁷¹⁹ In other instances, residents of the city of Nippur are attested as living among the Puqudu tribe;⁷²⁰ members of the Sarrabanu group linger or stay at Babylon, Nippur, Uruk, and in the midst of another tribal area;⁷²¹ and some of the Puqudu stay in Bīt-Amukāni territory.⁷²² At Nippur, in fact, the leaders of the city are identified as the *šandabakku* “governor”—as expected—and also the LÚ.SAG.MEŠ or *rēšāni*—a term solely used in regard to tribal leaders of the Kaldean tribes.⁷²³ Because our sources are unevenly distributed, it is probable that similar arrangements for living and the governance of cities existed outside the Nippur area.

All treatments of the Aramaeans and other tribal peoples to this point have focused on their enmity with the relevant empires. While they are often listed as antagonists of the state, this arises initially from foreign imperial meddling in local conflicts not from the basic nature of the Aramaeans. The Aramaeans (and other tribal groups) were not the antithesis to the “Mesopotamians”—not even in the Assyrians’ or Babylonians’ own rhetoric-driven inscriptions. When we begin to piece together history with close readings of such texts, we see that most of the references to lú.Aramaeans are to those people who are fighting alongside or for the empire. Scholars have assumed that the continuity evidenced by the continued use of the name “Assyrian” means that this ethnic group identified themselves by the same boundaries throughout their existence. Same, too, with the residents of Karduniaš. But this is demonstrably not the case. While

⁷¹⁹ Cf. r1-14.

⁷²⁰ E.g. OIP 114 27.

⁷²¹ E.g. SAA 16 154=ABL 572: o7'-11'a. One letter from an Assyrian spy located in Karduniaš reports that members of the LÚ.Sarrabanu people linger or stay (*kullu*) in Babylon, Nippur, Uruk, and in the midst of the Itu'u (SAA 16 154=ABL 572: o 7'-11'a). Luukko and Van Buylaere (2002) interpreted this verb “to hold” and supplied an object (“houses”) for the Sarrabanu to hold. However, what follows in the next lines suggest another interpretation. The letter writer claims to have shown these Sarrabanu several houses in need of new roofs in his jurisdiction (11'b-15'), which they then repair. Whether or not the contents of this text justify the assigned title of the letter—“Assigning Houses to the Sarrabaneans”—we infer additional details about this little known tribe. Of particular note, they were familiar with roofing techniques in use and were able to provide such services to the Assyrian official and his region.

⁷²² E.g. SAA 15 221 (= ABL 1434).

⁷²³ E.g. OIP 114 74.

early Mesopotamians may have held negative thoughts about the Amorites, and while many attempts have been made to link the Aramaeans to the Amorites, there is nothing to suggest the attitudes of the city-dwellers to the Amorite pastoralists reflected in epic poetry represent the attitudes of city-dwellers to tribal groups in the first millennium BCE. Deportation for the Aramaeans of Karduniaš, then, was highly colored by its position in this highly enmeshed multi-ethnic region.

5.5 Deportation of Aramu by Assyria from Karduniaš

Others have already noted the frequency with which the Aramaeans and tribal peoples of Karduniaš experienced deportation at the hands of the Neo-Assyrians. Oded (1979: 26) remarked:

As regards the places from which populations were deported, it is striking that Babylonia, especially its southern part, with its urban residents and various tribes, stands first with regard to both the number of times populations were deported from it (36 instances) and the number of people that were deported, most of them from Chaldaean and Aramaean tribes. The kings who frequently uprooted people from Babylonia were Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib. Other countries from which the Assyrians frequently carried out deportations were: Media (18 instances), Elam (13 instances), and Mannea (12 instances).

From Oded's count, the Neo-Assyrian kings deported tribal groups from Karduniaš twice as frequently as the next highest region and as much as three times as the next two regions—and yet the Neo-Assyrian and “Neo-Babylonian” attitudes toward these tribal peoples were far from monolithic. In the terminology of the Assyrians, the very peoples who are most frequently deported are also those who were used to maintain order in new provinces through force or trade.⁷²⁴ Additionally, the Aramaean tendencies of the Neo-Assyrian Sargonid kings has been noted by Leichty 2007 and Novotny 2003, and several (six) of the first millennium kings of Karduniaš are noted to have been deeply tied to Kaldean communities.⁷²⁵ The following section will discuss the nature of deportations as experienced by the tribal groups (e.g. Aramu, Kaldu,

⁷²⁴ E.g. compare the people of Kummê's actions in buying, selling, and trading (SAA 05 100=TCL 9 67) with the people of Kummê's leadership acquiescing to Sargon II's desire to uproot their people abroad to relocate in new provinces. For their use in “peace keeping” or brute force, see above and Luukko 2019; also see RIMA 3.A.104.2010:10-11, SAA 15 190, 15 258; etc. For more on trade activities, see Cogan 2008.

⁷²⁵ E.g. Beaulieu 2013; see previous chapter.

Arabu) specifically in the lower Euphrates / Karduniaš regions, where most references are to individual tribal and clan names, rather than the etic terms *Aramu*, *Kaldu*, or *Arabu*.⁷²⁶

Treating these groups as representatives of (occasionally mobile) tribal people groups in Karduniaš from the eighth century BCE onward allows us greater insight into the empires' views of mobile peoples. While we find several attestations to problems they posed to empires,⁷²⁷ we also find considerable evidence that they comprised an intrinsic part of Karduniaš's society. Unless explicitly stated, the classification of many of these tribes is difficult to identify. But of the Kaldeans, Arabs, and Aramaeans, the Kaldeans are by far the easiest to identify among the tribal names attested in the cuneiform sources. This is partly due to the limited number (five) of tribal groups thus labeled: Bīt Yakîn, Bīt Amukāni, Bīt Dakkūri, Bīt Sa'alli, and Bīt Šilāni. The Arab and Aramaean groups, however, are more contested. Many different philological etymologies have been proposed for the tribal names attested but no consensus has been reached. At least 42 different clans or tribes located in Karduniaš are identified as "Aramaean" in the Neo-Assyrian literature—the longest list containing 35 from Tiglath-Pileser III's reign.⁷²⁸ The explicitly labelled Arab groups are considerably less and figure into the sources only tangentially.

Various allies and allegiances arose organically among all non-imperial groups in their routine socio-economic activities and in their resistance to Assyrian (or Babylonian) attempted hegemony. Some of these groupings have allowed us to understand the implicit heterarchy of said clans within a tribe,⁷²⁹ others attest longstanding familial connections,⁷³⁰ and still others

⁷²⁶ Noticeably absent in royal documentation from Karduniaš are the terms "Aramaean" or "Kaldean," as remarked by Beaulieu 2013: 32 and Jursa (personal communication). For detailed documentation of the attestations of these tribal groups, see Younger 2016.

⁷²⁷ Contra Frame 2013: 93, Younger 2016: 682, who note only the issues between the Aramaeans and the "older, settled population"—a point which, as has been illustrated on many counts, represents a misconception of the multi-ethnic, tribal setting of Karduniaš and presents an unsupported view of Karduniaš's "centralized" state.

⁷²⁸ RINAP 1 47: 5-8 (Summary 7). The full list includes the following groups: lú.Itu'u, lú.Rupu'u, lú.Hamarāni, lú.Luhūwatu, lú.Haṭallu, lú.Rubbū, Rapiqu, lú.Hirānu, lú.Rabbi-ili, lú.Nāširu, lú.Gullusu, lú.Nabātu, lú.Rahīqu, lú.Kapīri, lú.Rummulūtu, lú.Adilē, lú.Kiprē, lú.Ubūdu, lú.Gurūmu, lú.Hudādu, lú.Hindīru, lú.Damūnu, lú.Dunānu, lú.Nīlqu, lú.Radē, lú.Dayi-x-nu, lú.Ubūlu, lú.Karmā'u, lú.Amlātu, lú.Ru'uwa, lú.Qābi'u, lú.Lītau, lú.Marusu, lú.Amātu, lú.Hagarānu (from RINAP 1 Tiglath-Pileser III 47: 5-8); lú.Labdūdu (from RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:10-11); lú.Puqūdu, lú.Tu'umūna, lú.Rihīhu, lú.Yādaqqu, lú.Malahu, lú.Gambūlu (from RINAP 3 1:55-56).

⁷²⁹ E.g. RIMB 2 S.0.1002.2: i 7b-ii 34.

⁷³⁰ E.g. SAA 17 120 (= ABL 1335+).

present more transitory political allegiances against an imperial power,⁷³¹ with an imperial power,⁷³² or specifically for their own gain.⁷³³ While the tribal groups of the Kaldeans are easily identified in lists, their social heterarchy was very similar to that of the Aramaeans and Arabs. Between the Aramaeans and Arabs, similar parallels exist. The greatest difference in perception of the two groups lies in their geographical “homeland” (the *arabu* are understood to come from the south—e.g. Tayma/Teima, Deidan—whereas the *aramu* are not) or in their spoken languages.⁷³⁴ The written sources do not appear to present a noticeable difference in perception of the groups—i.e. no one group is preferred demonstrably over the others. Each was treated as an intrinsic part of the social fabric of Karduniaš.⁷³⁵

5.5.1 Deportation of Mobile People

The experience of deportation for the mobile peoples of Karduniaš was decidedly different from that of other, more ‘exotic’ locales. The mobile nature of the Aramaeans and other tribal groups meant that these groups were not likely to remain permanently in the locations to which they were transported—nor were they expected to. One letter illustrates the expectedness of these groups’ mobility outside of deportation situations:⁷³⁶

lú.*Arbāya akī ša timāli šaššūme errubu*
uṣṣū šulmu adanniš

The Arabs—everything is it was yesterday and the day before: they enter and leave; all is well.

Another example of such expected mobility appears in a temple inspector’s inability to account for all of the village elders under his authority. In this, Nabu-šumu-iddina—inspector of the Nabû temple—records ten missing Aramaean village leaders from the lands of Rašappa and Barhalza.⁷³⁷ This same expectation continues in their new situation as deportees. The Neo-

⁷³¹ E.g. SAA 19 128.

⁷³² E.g. RINAP 3 Sennacherib 23: v 35-42.

⁷³³ E.g. the Puqūdu in SAA 4 289, 4 302; 15 221; 17 142; 21 155.

⁷³⁴ However, neither language nor geographic localization is immediately identifiable from the names of the tribal groups as a general survey of the suggested etiologies shows (cf. Lipiński 2000, Zadok 2013, Younger 2016). As it stands, the term *arabu* appears to be used in much the same way as lú.*aramu* was initially used by the early Neo-Assyrian sources: as an etic referent for a little understood people group classified mainly by geographic location and similar language. Even in antiquity, it was not always certain to which classification a group belonged. For example, the lú.Nabātu are identified by Tiglath-Pileser III as “*aramu*” (RINAP 1 Tiglath-Pileser III 47: 5-8) and by another source as “*arabu*” (SAA 18 149: 12-18).

⁷³⁵ Cf. SAA 1 182 (= ABL 547); 1 177 (= ABL 414); 1 179 (= CT 53 010).

⁷³⁶ SAA 1 177 (= ABL 414: r 7b – 9).

⁷³⁷ SAA 13 107 (= ABL 767). These individuals are identified as Aramaeans loosely due to the inclusion of the two men from KUR.Rašappa—which is specifically identified as “Aramu”. That several of the names attested

Assyrians are well-known for taking record of the deportees they moved from one location to another.⁷³⁸ Some later inspection documents from noted deportee communities tabulate the number of people counted by sight and those who were absent or reported as a “deficit.”⁷³⁹ Numerous letters to the Assyrian kings indicate the frustration experienced by the colonizers from the mobility of these tribal groups. One unfortunate official named Aššur-bēlu-da”in wrote to the Assyrian king to report the loss of numerous mobile peoples and the gain of others:⁷⁴⁰

*ana šarri bēliya urdaka mAššur-bēlu-
da”in lū šulmu ana šarri bēliya
lú.ša-bēt-kūdin ša ina muhhi nišē šadi
ḫalqūte ušēšānni lú.šābāni iššu
battabattiya ussēšiya ittanna kur.Ḫalši-
Atbarāya gabbišunu ma`da ḫalqū ina
libbi šadī gabbu šunu lú.ša-bēt-kūdin
daliḫ mā ḫūlu karim
annūriḡ mNabūwa lú.ša-bēt-kūdin ša ina
eli lú.Kaldāya pāqidūni 380 nupšāti
našša iššu libbišunu ina libbi kur.Yasūme
ina libbi kur.Bit-Zamāni rēḫu
egirtu ina muhḫišu lišpurūni kī ša
kur.Kaldā[ya] ušēšānni uga¹mmar¹[ū]¹ni¹
kī ša nišī šadi ḫalqūte upaḫḫaranni
ubbalanni*

To the king, my lord: your servant, Aššur-bēlu-da”in.
Good health to the king, my lord!
The Bēt-Kūdin official whom I brought out to search
for the runaway mountain people has brought forth
men from all around me and given them (back) to
me. All the mentioned Halzi-atbareans—a great
number—are (still) missing. They are all throughout
the mountains—all of them! The Bēt-Kūdin official
is dismayed, saying: “There’s no way (to get them
back).”
Now—Nabū’a, the Bēt-Kūdin official over the
Kaldeans, brought me 380 persons but several remain
in Yasume and in Bit-Zamani. May a letter be sent
him so that he will finish bringing these Kaldeans
out, and so that he will gather together the runaway
mountain people and bring them (back) to me.

The poor Bēt-Kūdin official here has given up hope of gathering the runaway people of kur.Ḫalši-Atbār who have scattered among the mountains of the region.⁷⁴¹ Rather than waste time and money on eliciting retribution, Aššur-bēlu-da”in has already called for deportees from Kaldū to be brought him until the inhabitants of the region can be found. Another letter indicates how commonplace it was for deportees of mobile groups to escape in the official’s exultant report: “Nobody has died or escaped since I reviewed them!”⁷⁴²

The mobility of these groups was not always problematic for the empire’s officials, however. Occasionally, they were even permitted to move from the city of deportees back to a

(e.g. Ahabū and Adad-nātan) are Aramaic cannot influence the identification, since at this time the majority of the population spoke Aramaic natively.

⁷³⁸ E.g. SAA 11 167 (= ADD 1099).

⁷³⁹ Cf. SAA 11 159 (=ADD 1045+); 11 163 (=ADD 0904+).

⁷⁴⁰ SAA 5 079 (=ABL 245).

⁷⁴¹ The location of this province is uncertain, but its etymology (*atbāru* “basalt”), the other regions typically attested in close proximity (e.g. Guzana, Arbela, etc. cf. SAA 10 096=ABL 0043), and the context of this letter suggest it was a mountainous region.

⁷⁴² SAA 01 195=ABL 0701: r1 – r2.

location in their own homeland. This is attested in one letter from an Aramaean group⁷⁴³ and the response from the Assyrian king.⁷⁴⁴

*ana šarri bēlīni [ardēka] lú.Gambulāya
lú.šī[būti] u lú.šēhrūti lū [šulum] ana
šarri bēlīni
[dibbī] ša šipirti ša šarri bēlīni išpura
mūtūtu anīni nī[tamar] u ništapak
[ultu muhhi] ša pānīni ana pāⁿ [šarri
bēlīni] niškunu ul^tu¹ [āl šallāti] kī nigl[ā
ina Dūri-ša-Lihbuqu] nitta¹šab¹ ...*

To the king, our lord: your servants, the Gambulians, young and old. Good health to the king, our lord! The words of the message that the king, our lord, sent—we the dead ones saw and treasured them. Since we set our faces towards the king, our lord: from the city of Šallātu / Deportees—to which we had been deported—we have now settled in the Fortress of Lihbuqu (in kur.Gambūlu)...

The Assyrian king’s response implies that the reason they had been given permission to return home was because they had obeyed the king:⁷⁴⁵

*ilu šū uznīkunu kī balāṭikunu iptēṭi
tal^{te}’ā¹ ardāt bīti bēlēkunu tubte’ā ina
šēpīya taššabīā*

God himself opened your ears so you may live, and you heard him. You sought the servitude of the house of your lords (and) grasped my feet.

After this exchange, the king promises whatever favor the Gambuleans ask of him.⁷⁴⁶

Two documented instances of deportation further suggest that deportation was not always performed against the will of the people thus moved. The first of these is found in a response to a letter from Sargon II, wherein he had apparently informed the leaders of the people of Kummê that he intended to deport some of their number. The response indicates the leaders’ acquiescence:⁷⁴⁷

*idabubu [m]^fā¹ [šum]^fma¹ šarru bēlīni bē^fli
ša¹ gabbi [š]ū mā anīnu mīnu ni^fqa¹bbi mā
lú.Kummāya ammar ina šadī bētāti ukāllūni
šarru bēlīni bēt tābūni lūbīli*

They say: “The king, our lord, is the lord of all; what can we say? As many Kummeans who hold houses in the mountains—the king our lord may bring to decent homes.”

Even though the Kummeans had decidedly few options available when replying to the Assyrian king, the very fact that the king sent a sealed message to them that was read aloud to them⁷⁴⁸ indicates that not every deportation experienced was one of punishment or retribution. The letter

⁷⁴³ SAA 21 112 (= ABL 0915).

⁷⁴⁴ SAA 21 51 (= ABL 0293 + CT 54 484).

⁷⁴⁵ SAA 21 051: 12–r2a.

⁷⁴⁶ r2 – t.e. 13.

⁷⁴⁷ SAA 5 105 (=ABL 0544): 10b–16a.

⁷⁴⁸ 4-10a.

continues with the expressed concern that certain Kummian scouts might be accidentally included in the planned deportation.⁷⁴⁹

The other instance reflects a rarely documented situation wherein a king records an instance in which his own subjects had requested to be relocated / deported to a newly built city. Ninurta-kudurrī-ušur ruler of Sūhu and Mari records the following in a royal inscription:⁷⁵⁰

*anaku m.d.Ninurta-kudurrī-ušur lú.šakin
kur.Sūhi u kur.Mari qaqqari mēreši ina rēš
kāpu āmurma epēšu āla libbī ublannima
temmennu abnī addīma udannin āla ina
muhhi ēpušma uru.Kār-Adad-Adad šumšu
azkur
50 lú x-ŠUK mār kur.Suhi ša mdNinurta-
kudurrī.ušur lú.šakin kur.Suhi u kur.Mari
ša aššu ašā¹bu¹ ša ālu imhurūma umma
ina ālika šūšibannāsi ina libbišu ¹ul¹[tēšib]
giš.kirī ina tāhi azqur ekurra ana Adad-
Adad ēpušma hu-x [...] ša Adad-Adad
āšib uru.Anat ina libbi ultēšib*

I, Ninurta-kudurrī-ušur, ruler of Sūhu and Mari, discovered cultivatable land on top of a cliff and thought to build a town (therein). I laid a stone foundation and reinforced (it). I built a town upon (it) and named it Kār-Apla-Adad. I settled there fifty __ subjects of Sūhu, who had approached Ninurta-kudurrī-ušur, ruler of Sūhu and Mari about settling in (this) town, saying: “Settle us in your town!” I planted an orchard nearby. I built a temple to the god Apla-Adad and the [...] of the god Apla-Adad, who had dwelt in the city Anat, I installed within..

The river kingdom of Suhu and Mari was comprised of numerous towns along the middle Euphrates—most of which were located in the inter-riverine oases below the level of cultivatable land. This ruler builds a new city within the arable lands and provides it with an orchard and temple to the city’s namesake deity. While the king had resettled people in other cities he had restored or built,⁷⁵¹ this is the only time any king records an instance where his people requested to be settled in a new location. As the Aramaean and Babylonian connections of this ruler have already been previously discussed, he represents a nexus of Aramaean and Mesopotamian traditions. He performs the acts expected of a good Mesopotamian king, but he records it in the literary style of a West Semite for an audience of mobile Aramaeans.

5.5.2 *nasāhu* and Tribal Peoples

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the verb *nasāhu* “to uproot” is most commonly used in the royal inscriptions when discussing the deportation of mobile or tribal peoples. The verb and its translation reflect its double usage with the removal of trees, which has been previously interpreted as an act of great care. While this may be true to a point, the act of removing trees

⁷⁴⁹ 16b–23.

⁷⁵⁰ RIMB 2 S.0.1002.2 iii 22’b – 29’b.

⁷⁵¹ E.g. iii 16b’ – 18’a.

and mobile peoples share an important factor: no matter how careful the extraction, there will always be far-flung roots which remain. As our discussions have illustrated, the Aramaeans and other mobile peoples of Karduniaš did not keep to a single location or to a single tribal alliance. Many mobile peoples maintained their ethnic affiliations even when separated by great distances from their “homelands”—no matter whether because of trade, employment, or deportation. This was not lost on the rulers of Assyria or Karduniaš who expected not to remove all members of a tribe and to lose these deported mobile peoples to their mobility. While some of these mobile groups were deported due to punishment,⁷⁵² these attestations seem to be in the minority. The majority of detailed attestations regarding the Aramaeans concern their efforts on behalf of the state: policing and military,⁷⁵³ enforcing taxation,⁷⁵⁴ establishing trade,⁷⁵⁵ and feeding the state through agricultural and pastoral ventures.⁷⁵⁶ It is thus important to evaluate the frequency with which they were deported (36 times, per Oded 1979) alongside their primary functions as noted outside the rhetoric-driven royal inscriptions. Doing so calls into question many of our translations that presume guilt and treachery for all Aramaeans, Kaldeans, and mobile peoples and elicits a more holistic interpretation of the function of deportation that does not rely upon rhetoric and ideology alone.

5.6 Life in Karduniaš Under Babylonian Rule

During the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, Aramaeans and Kaldeans appear throughout Karduniaš society, from highly placed royal officials to subsistence laborers dependent upon the state. Thus, they experienced many of the same living conditions as available to a deportee:

1. Slaves and servitude
2. Temple dependents
3. State dependents
4. Royal dependents

However, many of the Aramaean and Kaldean tribes had been there since the start of the first millennium, significantly altering their experiences of dependency outside of tribal structures.

⁷⁵² E.g. SAA 11 144.

⁷⁵³ E.g. SAA 15 186=ABL 830; 21 136=ABL 1009.

⁷⁵⁴ E.g. SAA 19 39=ND 2648.

⁷⁵⁵ E.g. SAA 16 154=ABL 572.

⁷⁵⁶ E.g. OIP 114 47, 92, 94, 96, 98, 104, 105.

For instance, much of the land “reclaimed” by the state in Karduniaš had been inhabited by Aramaean tribes while it lay fallow. Additionally, the power of the tribes was great enough for the state to recognize select chiefs as elite members of the administration, alongside many representatives of the “old elite” city-resident families. The experience of slavery / servitude and temple dependency did not vary greatly for these tribal groups compared to deportees and other persons. Therefore, in what follows I focus solely on royal dependents and state dependents.

5.6.1 Royal Dependents

In the previous chapter, I designated all who ate the rations of the king as being “royal dependents.” Although broken, the persons listed in these four royal ration lists⁷⁵⁷ include at least one person who held offices well-known from other texts: e.g. lú.GAL É(.GAL) “the major domo.”⁷⁵⁸ I therefore will include other officials who are not listed in these broken texts, in the likelihood that they were also provided for (at least partially) by the palace. The best evidence of the administration of Karduniaš during the Neo-Babylonian period is a list of officials found on a prism of Nebuchadnezzar II—often referred to as the Babylonian *Hofkalender* in the literature.⁷⁵⁹ Immediately after the chief palace administrators appears the following list of tribal leaders:

lú.rabātu ša māt Akkadim	The territorial leaders of the land of Akkad:
maEa-dayyān lú.šakin māt-(erasure)-Tāmtim	Ea-dayyān, šaknu-governor of the Sealand;
maNergal-šarru-ušur (erasure) aSin-māgir	Nergal-šarru-ušur, simmagir-official;
mNādin-aḫi ša kur.Tup ^l li ^l yaš	Nādin-aḫi, of the the land Tupliyaš;
maBēl-šumu-iškun ša kur.Puqudu	Bēl-šumu-iškun, of the land (of the) (lú.)Puqūdu;
mBibea mār mDakūru	Bibēa, the (lú.)Dakkūru;
mNādin-aḫi lú.šangu Dēr.ki	Nādin-aḫi, šangu of Dēr;
maMarduk-šarru-ušur ša kur.Gambūlum	Marduk-šarru-ušur, of the land (of the) (lú.)Gambulu;
maMarduk-šarrāni lú.bēl-pīḫāti	Marduk-šarrāni, provincial governor of Sumandar;
ša Sumandaar	Bēl-lē'i, the (lú.)Amūkānu;
maBēl-le'um mār mAmūkānim	Rēmūtu, šaknu-governor of the land Zamē;
mRēmūtu šak-<<ka>>-nu ša kur.Zamē	Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti, šaknu-governor of [the land
maNabû-ēṭir-napšāti 'ša'knu	Yap]tīru,
'ša ^l [kur.Yap]'ti ^l ri	

⁷⁵⁷ Melanges Dussaud A, B, C, D.

⁷⁵⁸ Melanges Dussaud D: o 22 – “Ša-Nabû-šū.”

⁷⁵⁹ Nebuchadnezzar II 028: v 28' – vii 29'; especially relevant here are lines vi 19' – 32'.

In the list are four tribal leaders as identified by their gentilic: two Kaldean leaders and two Aramaean leaders from the more northern tribes.⁷⁶⁰ The appearance of these tribal leaders in the *Hofkalender* is notable for several reasons, not the least of which being the status afforded these tribal individuals. Placed immediately after the chief palace administrators and before a list of *šangu*-officials from cities within the same region as the tribes above, the tribal leaders are afforded pride of place among non-palace officials. These officials—the *rabûtu*—are also named in a chronicle that records Nabonidus left Karduniaš under the command of the crown prince, the *rabûtu*, and the army.⁷⁶¹ Beaulieu (2013) notes that this is the only other attestation of *rabûtu* in the known Neo-Babylonian corpus.⁷⁶² Beyond this, as we now know that the Nergal-šarru-ušur attested as the *simmagir*-official in this list is “Neriglissar” the future ruler of Karduniaš,⁷⁶³ this may suggest that at least one of the kings of Karduniaš was an Aramaean.⁷⁶⁴ This evidence, I believe sufficiently indicates a close connection of Aramaeans and Kaldeans to the king of Karduniaš.

Soldiers present in Babylon were also included in the Weidner ration lists, and therefore belong to the heuristic category of royal dependents. In the temple archive of Uruk—the best source for information on Kaldeans—and of Sippar, we find more examples of persons in this category from a Kaldean background. For instance, we discover in a letter found at Sippar that soldiers from Bīt-Dakūri were often placed at the disposal of other locations, such as Babylon.⁷⁶⁵ Another example from Uruk, although not technically part of this heuristic, indicates that

⁷⁶⁰ These tribes are typically located in the steppe of Dēr westward toward Nippur, but not further south into the marsh realm of Bīt-Yakīn.

⁷⁶¹ Grayson 1973: Chronicle 7.

⁷⁶² By comparing the two terms, Beaulieu (2013) suggests that in accordance with a biblical narrative that names one of these officials, we should understand these leaders to take part in distant military campaigns. In the story, the *Rab-Šaqê* and *Simmagir* officials and all the “princes” (שרים) of Babylon enter the middle gates of Jerusalem after a siege, but the Judahite king Zedekiah escapes in the night into the wilderness (Jer 39: 1 – 4). I suggest that the Judean שרים “princes, nobles” is a dialectal variant of the Babylonian *rabûtu*, and that the biblical narrative actually refers to all the nobles on this list.

⁷⁶³ Beaulieu 2013: 35 – 36.

⁷⁶⁴ In his royal inscriptions, he names Bēl-šumu-iškun as his father—who is very likely to be equated with the person of that name two lines below, identified as being of the Puqudu tribe—one of the largest Aramaean tribes in Karduniaš.

⁷⁶⁵ CT 22, 74.

Kaldeans could be *mār-banê* “free persons”—the position was not limited to those of nontribal descent.⁷⁶⁶

5.6.2 State Dependents: Agriculture

The *ḥaṭru* / *ḥanšû* lands and *bīt-qašti* were state-run systems of tenant-farming or “land for service” schemes during the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, wherein “marginal” or “under-exploited areas”⁷⁶⁷ were “reclaimed” by the state. Many of these “reclaimed” lands refer environs that had been abandoned before the early Neo-Babylonian period (i.e. before 747) but had since been populated by Aramaeans and other tribal elements.⁷⁶⁸ Semi-free laborers, the *šušānūtu* were the cheapest form of labor for the state and thus occupy one of the lowest positions in the social strata.

A few early Neo-Babylonian texts indicate that Aramaeans also participated in the “land for service” scheme.⁷⁶⁹ One example from Nippur notes the availability of Aramaean farmers to break the compacted soil of the area if other farmers could not be found.⁷⁷⁰ Early Neo-Babylonian documents from Nippur attest the generalizing concept of *lú.Aramu* which is otherwise not frequently found in Karduniaš. The contexts of such attestations suggest that the reason for this overarching term was that there were several different Aramaean tribes present in the area, and the shorthand suited the brevity of the letters.⁷⁷¹

Also in this archive from Nippur are texts that indicate the city of Nippur was well enmeshed with the Aramaean tribes. One fragmentary letter discusses leading flocks to the Puqudu with an unclear mention of the *lú.Aramû ša ittiya* “the Aramaeans who are with you.”⁷⁷² Citizens of Nippur—itsself only recently re-inhabited or reclaimed—were well familiar with their

⁷⁶⁶ NCBT 666.

⁷⁶⁷ Jursa 2014: 6.

⁷⁶⁸ As indicated in Sargon II’s description of the lands around Babylon (discussed above), and the archaeological evidence of “squatter settlements” in the Nippur temples prior to 747, when the city was largely abandoned (cf. Adams 1981, Armstrong 1989).

⁷⁶⁹ See Zadok (2013) for a detailed list of attested Aramaeans in the cuneiform sources.

⁷⁷⁰ OIP 114 96: r 23 – 27a.

⁷⁷¹ Cf. OIP 114 15, 27, 46, 47, 105. Zadok (2013: 279) also notes the generality of the term *aramu* and how it was “reserved for general notions.”

⁷⁷² OIP 114: 105: o 4 – 6. Immediately after this phrase the tablet is broken.

Aramaeans neighbors, who attended festivals in the city,⁷⁷³ were issued advances for work performed,⁷⁷⁴ pastured the city-residents' flocks,⁷⁷⁵ and could be called upon to retrieve goods and men stolen by Kaldean tribes.⁷⁷⁶

5.6.2.1 Mixed Populations at Nippur

The location of Nippur within the frontier region between Karduniaš and the Sealand placed it immediately within the heart of the Aramaean and Kaldean tribal regions. Both Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II note its geographic proximity to Aramaeans and Kaldeans,⁷⁷⁷ which is further born out in the letters from Karduniaš and from the Governor's Archive at Nippur.

Nippur was also the general location of several deportee communities, including one of Judeans: Āl-Yahūdu. While the area was notably multi-ethnic before the extensive Assyrian deportations from and to the area,⁷⁷⁸ this only increased during the Neo-Babylonian period as communities of deportees from the West were established in the region. While others have discussed the low socio-economic status of these deportees and their relative lack of interaction among the elites of the cities,⁷⁷⁹ this does not necessarily ring as true for Nippur.⁷⁸⁰ Nippur was noticeably different due to its involvement in the affairs of the Aramaeans and Kaldeans as a market city which was governed by its local governor (the *šandabakku*) as well as local Aramaean and Kaldean leaders.⁷⁸¹ These differences from the majority of the cities of Karduniaš plays into the interesting role of Aramaeans in the Hebrew Bible.

Connecting Aramaeans of Karduniaš to the Hebrew Bible

As is generally agreed among biblical scholars, the earliest portions of the Hebrew Bible were not compiled until the exile. Among the multitude of proposals for this genesis, Liverani

⁷⁷³ OIP 114 27.

⁷⁷⁴ OIP 114 27.

⁷⁷⁵ OIP 114 46, 47.

⁷⁷⁶ OIP 114 18.

⁷⁷⁷ E.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-Pileser III 39: 4 – 6a; Gadd 1954: 192-3, vii 45 – 76; respectively.

⁷⁷⁸ Cf. SAA 18 192=ABL 238: r 6' – 8'a.

⁷⁷⁹ Waerzeggers 2014.

⁷⁸⁰ See also Berlejung 2017.

⁷⁸¹ OIP 114.

(2005) has presented a theory that tracks best with the extra-biblical sources and history of the sixth – fifth centuries BCE. One of these proposals is that the earliest patriarchal narratives were written to encourage the return from Karduniaš to the Levant (261). Because this section of Genesis also happens to contain the most decided interest in connecting the Judeans to other tribes and the Aramaeans, reevaluating this portion of the Hebrew scriptures in light of life at Āl-Yahūdu is enlightening. Some of the best support for Liverani’s (2005) proposal is that one would expect the earliest prophets to recognize the founder of their tribes’ relation to Yahweh—but none of the pre-exilic prophets know of Abraham (262). For them, the “fathers” seem to indicate the generation of the Egyptian exodus, or the descendants of the twelve tribes’ namesakes. The convenience of the number twelve also suggests a certain level of artificiality. Liverani (2005: 302) remarks on the tribal system of Israel:

Besides, all formal lists with a fixed number of equal members necessarily do a degree of violence to a tribal reality that must have been fluid and variously unbalanced. In the past (following M. Noth) it was thought that a formalized membership of twelve pointed to an organization that actually existed, like the Greek and Italian ‘amphictionies’ organized around a main sanctuary and perhaps with monthly service. ... The amphictyonic model, however, does not work. ... It is better to suppose that a formally structured league never actually operated, and was only created by the historiographer to represent, at least in the past, the organic unity of tribal groups that now appeared in reality to have been disrupted.

His note reflects a deep understanding of the fluidity of ethnicity and tribal structure. However, his comments on the inability to apply a concept parallel to the Greco-Italian “amphictyony” for the Levant can be reconsidered in light of the exiles’ familiarity with similar such arrangements in Karduniaš.⁷⁸² At the very least, it is clear that the patriarchal world lies outside of time (Liverani 2005: 261) and the texts written during or after the exile have no knowledge of where the tribes had been situated—assigning them regions artificially without regard for their earlier assignments.

The concentrated efforts to link Judah to Israel and Aram appear to have occurred during the same period in which the returning deportees valued polyvalence and plurality. The decided reinterpretation of the Judean religion to exclude all neighbors previously linked through (fabricated) genealogies has already been identified as a later tradition that sought greater solidarity by strengthening exclusive ethnic boundaries. According to Judah, Israel was not something to emulate prior to the Babylonian exile—as the narratives of Kings are quick to

⁷⁸² Such explorations will be dealt with in a later project which focuses on the social history at Nippur and its satellite deportee communities, specifically.

underline. In general, these ethnic etiologies and attempts at ethnogenesis are well noted among biblicalists, and for those who prioritize their comparisons with extra-biblical material, the only issues in connecting these texts with the exile has been the lack of knowledge of the social history of the deportee communities. “It must have occurred there; but how, I’m not sure.”

Links to Aramaeans in Karduniaš have not been very seriously discussed by many, due to the presumption that “Aram” and “Aramaeans” must be equated with the Kingdom of Aram-Damascus or the Luwian-Aramaic princedoms in Syria. However, as I have shown in the beginning of this chapter, the term *Aram* is far from monolithic. If a Luwian-Aramaic princedom were meant in Genesis when Abraham is demanding a wife from Aram for Isaac (or later Rebecca for Jacob), one would expect to find more references to such familial connections to Aram later. However, if Liverani is correct in his suggestion that the Abraham and other patriarchal narratives were written to encourage the Judeans to return, then such references would have more to do with the knowledge of Aramaeans from living among them at Nippur.

This proposal is supported by the genealogies presented by Ezra and Nehemiah which include Ammonites and Arabs in their lists; the narrative of the Tower of Babel as an etiology for the existence of multiple languages; the parable of Jonah traveling to Nineveh by fish or river, which uses a cuneiform pun as the basis for the story; and the Joseph story which requires Judeans / Israelites to be in Egypt—which did not occur until after the Babylonian exile (e.g. at Elephantine in Egypt). Ultimately, the descriptions of “Aram” in the Bible do not differ greatly from those of the early patriarchs—in opposition to the people of Canaan. Given the similar situation and lifestyles of the lower-class Aramaeans at Nippur and the Judean deportees, these stories take on new meaning when they are contextualized as written to an audience familiar with the Aramaeans and Kaldeans of the Nippur region, or Karduniaš in general.⁷⁸³

⁷⁸³ In support of this is another quote by Liverani (2005: 307). Although he intended this to refer to the postexilic Levant, it is equally true of the Nippur region during the long sixth century BCE:

“The scenario of a diversified territory, dangerous to cross, of relationships that represented a balance between maximal security and maximal interaction, of regular meetings and dispersions, is set in a ‘founding’ pre-monarchic past. It is, however, clear that both author and reader have also—and chiefly—the post-exile situation in mind with the returnees spread throughout the whole territory, partly governed by them and partly in the hands of foreign, and clearly hostile, people, as well as partly controlled by groups that they were related to but who were not very trustworthy. It is no coincidence that the historical scene, restricted to the area between Bethlehem and the Benjaminites’ centres, coincides precisely with the territory that the Babylonian returnees occupied on their arrival.”

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to illustrate several issues surrounding our interpretation of the lives and natures of the Aramaeans and other tribal peoples. After a thorough search of the royal inscriptions, state archives of Assyria and Karduniaš, as well as a smattering of the 60,000 Neo- and Late Babylonian archival texts, the term *aramu* did not have great meaning for the people so labeled and no attempt should be made to connect the later “Aramaeans” of Karduniaš with the earlier generic term denoting the West and Luwian-Aramaic states. Unless in open rebellion, Aramaeans tribes were fully incorporated into the social fabric of Assyria and Karduniaš. When in rebellion, the Aramaeans and Kaldeans of Karduniaš experienced more reported deportations than any other group,⁷⁸⁴ but at no point was an entire tribe relocated via captive deportations.⁷⁸⁵ Among those who remained, the Assyrian kings settled deportees from former Luwian-Aramaic states⁷⁸⁶—likely to similarity of language.

Like the deportees, Aramaeans and Kaldeans were also subject to the class structure of Karduniaš that had existed in the cities long prior to the first millennium. The network of elite families⁷⁸⁷ was impenetrable to all people not born into those circles. Still, Aramaeans, Kaldeans and deportees were able to climb the ranks of the state and palace administration, as evidenced in the *Hofkalender*. At least six Kaldeans and one Aramaean have been identified among the kings of Karduniaš during the first millennium, and several held *šangu* positions in the region of Gambulu and other tribal regions.

Finally, the location of several deportee communities was in the middle of tribal territories (e.g. at Nippur). The close proximity of Aramaeans and Kaldeans to the Judean settlement of Āl-Yāhūdu suggests perhaps the identity of the “Aramaeans” in the Hebrew Bible might be those in Karduniaš rather than subjects of Luwian-Aramaic princedoms. This new, proposed interpretation of the term could help explain the inclusion of several ethnic groups—which were otherwise unfamiliar to the residents of Judah and Israel—in etiological genealogical

⁷⁸⁴ Oded 1979.

⁷⁸⁵ As indicated by the number of times successive kings deported individuals from the same regions.

⁷⁸⁶ For the Aramaean and Kaldean peoples removed from the area around Nippur, none were settled in their place (Oded 1979).

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. Nielsen 2011.

lists of Genesis. I suggest this proposal for a new interpretation of some attestations of “Aramaean” in the Hebrew Bible should be investigated in greater depth in the future.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The research presented herein has sought to elucidate the experience of deportation as well as we are able with the materials available. Through investigating Assyrian royal inscriptions and state archives from the Middle Assyrian period through to the fall of the late Neo-Assyrian empire; royal inscriptions from Neo-Babylonian kings; Mesopotamian Chronicles; and a sample of the archival texts from Karduniaš, I discovered three additional forms of deportation to the form of captive deportations so well known. I examined how the lack of a centralizing ethnonym for the peoples of Karduniaš affected the lived experience of the deportee communities therein. And finally, I examined the lives of the tribal peoples among whom the deportees were settled and mused about their possible connections to later deportee literary works (e.g. the Hebrew Bible). Deportation presents a unique study for the interactions of empires with ethnic groups, and this dissertation has sought only to lay the groundwork so that more detailed studies of such interactions might proceed.

Appendices:

Appendix A:

Chronological Order of Kings of Assyria, Karduniaš, Elam, and Medo-Persia

	Diyala / Habur regions	Central – Lower Mesopotamia	Susa, Anšan, & Elam	Persia & Medea
		Marduk-kabit-ahhēšu (1157-40) Itti-Marduk-balātu (1139-32) Ninurta-nādin-šumi (1131-26)	Šutruk-Nahhunte I (c.1158) – Anšan & Susa Kutir-Nahhunte II (c.1155) – Anšan & Susa Šilhak-Inšušinak I (??) – Anšan & Susa	
1100	Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076)	Nebuchadnezzar I (1125-04) Enlil-nādin-apli (1103-00) Marduk-nādin-ahhē (1099-82)	Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (c.1110) – Anšan & Susa Šilhina-Hamru-Lakamar (c.1110) – A & S Humban-Numena II (early 11 th c.) – A & S	
	Ašarēd-apil-Ekur (1075-1074)	Marduk-šāpik-zēri (1081-69)		

1050	Aššur-bēl-kala (1073-1056) Erība-Adad II (1055-54) Šamši-Adad IV (1053-50)	Adad-apla-iddina (1068-47)	Šutruk-Nahhunte II (mid 11 th c.) – A&S Šutur-Nahhunte I (mid 11 th c.) – A&S	
	Aššurnasirpal I (1049-31) Šalmaneser II (1030-19)	Marduk-ahhē-erība (1046) Marduk-zēr-[...] (1045-34) Nabû-šumu-libūr (1033-26)		
	Aššur-nērārī IV (1018-13) Aššur-rabi II (1012-972)	Simbar-Šipak (1025- 08) Ea-mukīn-zēri (1008) Kaššu-nādin-ahhē (1007-05)		
1000		Eulmaš-šākin-šumi (1004-988) Ninurta-kudurrī-ušur I (987-85) Širikti-Šuqamuna (985)		
		Mār-bīti-apla-ušur (984-79)	Mār-bīti-apla-ušur (c.983-c.978) “son of Elam”	
950	Aššur-rēša-iši II (971-67)	Nabû-mukīn-apli (987-43)	Akšir-Šimut (??) – Anšan & Susa	

900	Tiglath-Pileser II (966-35)	Ninurta-kudurri-ušur II (943)	Akšir-Nahhunte (??) – Anšan & Susa		
	850	Aššur-dān II (934- 12)	Mār-bīti-ahhē-iddina (942-?)	Kara-Indaš (??) – Elam	
		Adad-nērārī II (911-891)	Šamaš-mudammiq (??)		
	800	Tukultī-Ninurta II (890-84)	Nabû-šuma-ukīn I (??)		
		Aššurnasirpal II (883-59)	Nabû-apla-iddina (??)	Unnamed king of Elam (c.821) – Anšan & Susa	
		Šalmaneser III (858-24)	Marduk-zākir-šumi I (??)		
		Šamšī-Adad V (823-11)	Marduk-balāssu-iqbi (?-813?)		
		Adad-nērārī III (810-783)	Baba-aha-iddina (812?)		
		Šalmaneser IV (782-773)	Ninurta?-apl?-[...] (??)		
		Aššur-dān III (772-55)	Marduk-bēl-[zēri] (??)		
			Marduk-apla-ušur (??)		
		750	Aššur-nērārī V (754-45)	Erība-Marduk (??)	Humban-Tahrah I (?- 743) – Elam
Tiglath-Pileser III (744-27)			Nabû-šuma-iškun (?- 748)		
	Nabû-nāšir (747-34)		Humban-Nikaš I (743- 717) – Elam		
	Nabû-nādin-zēri (733-32)				
	Nabû-šuma-ukīn II (732)				

700	Šalmaneser V (726-22)	Nabû-mukîn-zēri (731-29)		
	Sargon II (721-05)	— — Marduk-apla-iddina II (721-10)	Šutur-Nahhunte II (717-699) – Anšan & Susa	
	Sennacherib (704-681)	— Marduk-apla-iddina II (703)		
		Marduk-zākir-šumi II (703)	Hallušu-Inšušinak (699-693) – Anšan & Susa	
650		Bēl-ibni (702-00)	Kutir-Nahhunte III (693-92) – Anšan & Susa	
		Aššur-nādin-šumi (699-94)		
		Nergal-ušēzib (693)		
		Mušeziš-Marduk (692-89)		
	Esarhaddon (680-69)	— —	Humban-Numena III (692-688) – Anšan & Susa	
	Aššur-bani-apal (668-c.631)	— — Šamaš-šuma-ukîn (667-48)	Humban-Haltaš I (688-81) – Anšan & Susa	
Aššur-etel-ilāni (c.631-27/26)	Kandalānu (647-627)	Humban-Haltaš II (681-75) – Anšan & Susa		
Sîn-šumu-lišir (627/6)	— —	Urtak-Inšušinak (675-63) – Anšan & Susa		

			<p>Temti-Humban- Inšušinak I (663-53) – A & S</p> <p>Humban-Nikaš II (653-51) – Anšan & Susa</p> <p>Tammaritu (652-49) – Anšan & Susa</p> <p>Indabibi (649-48) – A & S</p> <p>Humban-Haltaš III (648-645/4) – A & S</p> <p>Tammaritu (647) – A & S</p> <p>Humban-Nikaš II (647) – A & S</p> <p>Umhuluma (647) – A & S</p> <p>Indattu-Inšušinak IV (647-46) – A & S</p> <p>Humban-Hapua (647) – A & S</p> <p>Pa'e (646-645/4) – A & S</p> <p>Šutur-Nahhunte III (646-?) – A & S</p>	
600	<p>Sîn-šarra-iškun (627/6-612)</p> <p>Aššur-uballiṭ II (611-609)</p> <p>—</p>	Nabopolassar (625- 05)	<p>Humban-Kitin (late 7th c.) – Susa</p> <p>Humban-Tahrah II (?) – Susa</p>	

550	—	Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562)	Hallutaš-Inšušinak (?) – Susa	Cyrus II (559-30)
	—	Amēl-Marduk (562-60)	Ummanunu I (early 6 th c.) - Susa	
	—	Neriglissar (560-56)	Šilhak-Inšušinak II (early 6 th c.) – Susa	
	—	Lâbâši-Marduk (556)	Temti-Humban-	
500	—	Nabonidus (555-39)	Inšušinak II (c.550) – “king”	Cambyses II (529-22)
	—	—	Halkataš (c.549/8) – Susa	
	—	—	—	
	—	—	—	
450	—	—	Açina (c.522) – Susa	Darius I (521-486)
	—	—	Ummanunu II /	
	—	—	Humban-Nikaš IV (Ummaniš) (522-21) – Elam	
	—	—	Atta-hamiti-Inšušinak (?-520/19) – A & S	

Appendix B:

Paleo-Climatological Data for Mesopotamia

Human agency notwithstanding, anthropic events are routinely mitigated by various factors in the environment or landscape. The notion of “landscape” has evolved from its first usage as a painter’s technical term *landschap* (Dutch) to encompass many elements. From a two dimensional representation of an inland vista, the term as used by the social, natural, and humanistic sciences has come to refer to the space itself rather than its representation. As a “dynamic space of social, cultural, and ecological significance, which develops interactively with the human societies occupying it,” the term “landscape” has gained increasing significance over the past two centuries.⁷⁸⁸ From the general concept of *Kunstlandschaft* in Classical Archaeology— which describes the characteristics which shaped the perceptions of Greek artists, and therefore their artistic expressions⁷⁸⁹— to that of “landscape” in intellectual history— which emphasizes how humans have perceived their surroundings⁷⁹⁰— to that of “landscape” in social history— which underscores the interaction between anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic elements⁷⁹¹— the scope of the term has grown over time. In preparing a social history, therefore, the significance of “landscape” is quite high, as it influences and (often) constrains human action. Therefore, the attempt is made to consider both humanity’s influence upon landscape, as well as landscape’s influence upon humanity— to understand how landscapes mitigated migration and how humans structured their environments.⁷⁹² In so doing, a cyclical connection appears between the choices of humanity and the limiting factors of the environment upon those choices. Mobility is the result of environmental changes as well as political reasons; and climate itself can affect political machinations. In the attempt to establish field specific definitions for “landscape”, Förster et al., discovered that the definitions used within the natural sciences

⁷⁸⁸ Förster, et al. 2012, 169.

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. LAC. 2010. 1st International Landscape Archaeology Conference 2010, Final Programme and Abstract Book. Amsterdam: VU, apud Förster, et al., 2012, 171.

⁷⁹⁰ Förster, et al. 2012, 174.

⁷⁹¹ Cf. S. Bernard and P. Sattler. 1997. *Vor der Tür: Aktuelle Landschaftsarchitektur aus Berlin*. München: Callwey; apud Förster, et al. 2012, 174.

⁷⁹² Förster, et al. 2012, 174.

describe landscape as a “level of spatial reality” that incorporates human influence as well as expected quantifiable parameters.⁷⁹³ Landscape is therefore understood as a “dynamic space that is at once physical, social and mental, shaped not just by ecological, demographic and economic processes, but also by their interaction with social and cultural dynamics, as well as with the human perception of the changing cultural and natural environment” (M. Bonacossi 2016, 141). As such, the attempt to define the term across fields indicates the interconnectedness of humanity to their natural environment, and it is from this perspective that I approach the formation of the first millennium’s empires. The aridification attested during the transition from Bronze to Iron ages was catalyst for the desertion of prime areas in both Assyrian and Babylonian heartlands, which in turn proved to be a driving concern in the respective empires’ policies: including deportation.

Water accessibility underlies many international conflicts, and the situation in the ancient Near East is no exception. Mesopotamian kings boasted of their ability to provide water access across their realms in royal inscriptions and iconography positioned near the aqueducts and canals as testament to their piety. Harmansah (2012) linked the northward movement of Assyrian kings at the turn of the first millennium to a coterminous shift in climate, and further investigation of climatological data and historical sources indicates later Assyrian expansion practices also align with variations in climate. A modern analogue to the effects of water depletion and the recovery therefrom illustrates a potential frame through which to view the advent and perpetuation of first millennium empires. A study undertaken by A. Kibaroglu and W. Scheumann (2013) tracked the evolution of international politics among the riparian states of the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin from the 1920s until 2012. In this study, Kibaroglu and Scheumann focus on transboundary water politics over four distinct periods: the internal focus on the socioeconomic development; the uncoordinated advancement of large scale water development projects; the issues of transboundary water control and non-riparian security; and the reorienting strategies from combative to cooperative. The relevant weather data have since been corroborated from research on the patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in the river basin (P. Daggupati et al., 2017), and reflect similar events to those attested through archaeo-botanical studies (to be discussed below). Though the historical circumstances are

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

separated by millennia, the parallels with the evolution of Assyria and Babylonia in the first millennium BCE are instructive. I suggest the first millennium BCE empires based in Assyria and Babylon followed a similar trajectory in their approach to rebuild their heartlands after the droughts and famines which marked the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the first. After both concerted efforts and climatological changes, the Persians were finally able to command an empire in which water politics were markedly more cooperative than combative. What follows is an investigation of the pertinent climatological data and historical sources illustrating the connection of the administrative decisions of empires with climatological and landscape factors. In essence, the present chapter seeks to elucidate landscape memory —both anthropic and geographic.

From a review of the environmental data now available, the Late Bronze Age crisis was a “long and complex spiral of decline that coincided with the onset of a ~300-year drought event, 3200 years ago.”⁷⁹⁴ Though this event is still far from completely understood, it serves to illustrate the interconnectivity of environmental changes to agro-productive events, as evidenced in the historical data (see later chapters) — especially as regards the “Sea People invasions.” In view of the later centuries — around which this research is primarily concerned — this backdrop of climate change and societal upheaval undergirds human agency and action for the next millennium, including the advent of the first world empires.

Climatological Data

Geo-archaeology, or the investigation of geography and climate of ancient societies, relies upon sample-testing numerous data. These include speleothem (e.g. stalagmite, stalactite), palynological (pollen), varve (sedimentary layers of a lake), and isotope analysis (e.g. Carbon-14, Carbon-13, and Oxygen-18 dating), in addition to more traditional archaeological approaches of single-site excavations (e.g. tells), GIS mapping, multi-site excavations, regional surveys, etc. Though these data are integral to compiling an accurate depiction of the intellectual and physical landscape of the past, the divide between the sciences and the humanities is not easily breached. Mutually-incompatible methods have resulted in misuse of data by historians and scientists—prompting scientists to accept uncritical overviews of history, and historians to miss the significance of seemingly overly-specific data. Pairing natural events with human interactions is

⁷⁹⁴ D. Kaniewski, J. Guiot, and E. Van Campo. 2015. “Drought and societal collapse 3200 years ago in the Eastern Mediterranean: a review.” *WIREs Climate Change* 6:369-382. Doi:10.1002/wcc.345.

fraught with difficulties inherent to both types of source material: the “memory” of natural events in landscape and written sources are recorded according to different parameters. The record of a natural event is locally precise, reflecting the geographical and botanical effects specific to a single locale. Humans experience and record these events selectively according to a society’s value hierarchy, which may or may not be immediately recognizable from the natural record. Chronologically, scientific data trends may be dated broadly according to what organic matter is available and according to its restrictions;⁷⁹⁵ historically, humans experience very limited, subjective periods of time. Decadal levels of precipitation are discernible from various water deposits, including stalagmite formations, pollen records, and sedimentary deposits. These strata are dated according to carbon and oxygen isotopic analyses of organic matter trapped within the sediments and formations. This disparity between sources makes correlating events tricky. Additionally, the landscape and climate of the modern Near East determines which methods are used to gather data, and monetary resources significantly limit regional exploration of the past. To resolve this divide, I compare data from many regions that I might approach the material holistically. The results of a single sample cannot be extrapolated to the region; compiling data from various sources across the region clarifies regional from local events.

Past precipitation levels are extrapolated from speleothem, varve, sedimentary, and palynological data. These layers are relatively dated according to their location in the core sampled, and absolutely dated according to isotopic analysis where available. Multiple cores are retrieved from specific points within a limited locale, and then compared to gain as complete a sample as possible. The mineral deposits within speleothem, varves, and sediments present a timeline varying according to precipitation. Palynology reflects the levels and types of pollen present over a period, reflecting the levels of precipitation through the types of plant pollen evidenced—affected by both anthropogenic and climatic stresses. While these records cannot depict single-year events, they provide information for longer multi-year events that impact the relative aridity of the region that can be roughly aligned with historical events. For example, pollen records across Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia, and the countries along the eastern Mediterranean suggest a decrease in pollen occurred throughout the entirety of the Late Bronze

⁷⁹⁵ Carbon dating, for example, is subject to many restrictions that govern its level of specificity at certain chronological periods. Steps are taken to counteract these handicaps, but for some eras the process still can reveal little. For these periods, other methods are used, selected according to the availability of sample materials.

Age (from 1500—1000 or 900 BCE), but it is unclear whether this dry phase was climatically or anthropogenically driven.⁷⁹⁶ Within this wider timeframe, it is doubtless that periods of greater humidity and precipitation occurred, but it is at this point difficult to pinpoint any with great accuracy. Proxy-indicators such as organic and pollen samples from archaeological excavations are less frequently relied upon to develop widespread climate trends, as they indicate anthropogenic influence more frequently than climatic stresses.

Due to the geographical terrain, the weather patterns of the Near East are quite varied, causing each region to experience significant variation within a theme of general aridity. These variations directly affect anthropic activities and can cause seeming contradictions in the paleo-climatic records. It is therefore necessary to treat each area in some detail and develop a much more nuanced appreciation of the ancient climate. What follows is a brief overview of the terrain and archaeo-climatic results of the broader Near East according to region. After which, we will discuss some of the general weather patterns and global oscillations that greatly affect this area. In so-doing, greater subtleties emerge in each region's landscape (mental as well as physical) which then bring us closer to understanding the thought processes of our ancient subjects. Most of our attention will be spent upon the areas for which we have the greatest amount of information— Upper and Central Mesopotamia— while our treatment of Southern Mesopotamia will have to be done inferentially, through the extrapolated effects of the Euphrates-Tigris' alluvial plains and historical notations on the growth-rates of the marshlands.

Over the last half century, archaeobotanical research from eastern Turkey – western Iran — Egypt has solidified our understanding of the area's climate during the late Holocene period. Palynological evidence from Lake Urmia,⁷⁹⁷ Lake Van, and an outlying marsh, Söğütlü,⁷⁹⁸ as well as isotope analysis and lithological and mineralogical data,⁷⁹⁹ indicate a general period of

⁷⁹⁶ Reculeau 2012, 41.

⁷⁹⁷ Talebi, et al. 2016.

⁷⁹⁸ van Zeist and Woldring, 1978, and S. Bottema, 1995, respectively.

⁷⁹⁹ Cf. Migowski et al., 2006; Stevens et al., 2006; Neumann et al., 2007; Talebi et al., 2016.

aridity occurred around 1000 BCE. Evidence from Syria,⁸⁰⁰ Southeast Arabia,⁸⁰¹ the Negev,⁸⁰² Mesopotamia, and Egypt⁸⁰³ also confirms this period suffered a drastic decline of precipitation. In general, a pollen-based model recently established for the Eastern Mediterranean — from Greece, the Levant, to Egypt — suggests the entire Levant experienced widespread aridity and an increase in average temperature during the transition from Late Bronze to Iron Age.⁸⁰⁴ We will first turn our attention to the mountainous areas toward the periphery of the Near East, before shifting our focus to the plateaus, steppes, and plains of lower Mesopotamia.

Mountainous areas:

Turkey

The Anatolian peninsula is bounded by the Black Sea to the north, the Aegean Sea to the west, and the Mediterranean to the south.⁸⁰⁵ Within these bounds, the peninsula's perimeter consists predominantly of mountain ranges which surround a high, intermontane plateau: the Köroğlu and Pontic / Parhar mountain ranges to the north, the Taurus to the south, and the highest range, the Anti-Taurus, to the east. The peninsula's mountainous terrain combined with its close proximity to three major bodies of water creates seven distinct zones, each with its own unique climatic features. The Anatolian plateau exhibits a continental climate, with dry summers and cool, wet winters— during the latter of which the area receives most of its moderate annual rainfall. Broadly speaking, it is divided into coastal and interior regions whose climates directly affect the rest of the Near East. Continental climates are generally located away from bodies of water that can moderate their seasonal climates. As a peninsula, Anatolia's climates differ from the expected continental climate, which significantly alters the expected weather patterns for the

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. Sorrel and Mathis, 2016, "Mid- to late-Holocene coastal vegetation patterns in Northern Levant (Tell Sukas, Syria): Olive tree cultivation history and climatic change," *The Holocene* 26(6) 858–873, DOI: 10.1177/0959683615622555.

⁸⁰¹ J. Charbonnier, 2015, "Groundwater management in Southeast Arabia from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age: a critical reassessment," *Water History* 7 39–71, DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0110-x.

⁸⁰² Cf. A.S. Issar, H. Ginat, and M. Zohar, 2012, "Shifts from deserted to inhabited terrain in the arid part of the Middle East, a function of climate changes," *Journal of Arid Environments* 86 5-11.

⁸⁰³ Cf. D. Kaniewski, J. Guiot and E. Van Campo, 2015, "Drought and societal collapse 3200 years ago in the Eastern Mediterranean: a review," *WIREs Climate Change* 6(4) 369-382, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/wcc.345>.

⁸⁰⁴ D. Kaniewski, E. Van Campo, C. Morhange, J. Guiot, D. Zviely, I. Shaked, T. Otto, and M. Artzy. 2013. "Early urban impact on Mediterranean coastal environments." *Sci Rep* 3:354. doi:10.1038/srep03540.

⁸⁰⁵ Cf. *Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online*, s.v. "Turkey," <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/147180> (accessed October 29, 2017).

area. Mountains along the southern coast prevent the Mediterranean climate from reaching the interior, which exhibits a primarily cold, semi-arid climate. The combined effect of the weather experienced in Asia Minor's climatic zones correlates directly to the weather patterns expected for the rest of the Near East. In what follows, I give a brief reconstruction of the climate in Turkey from the mid-late second millennium through the first millennium, so that we might better understand the climatic concerns experienced during the Late Bronze Age through the Persian Period.

Ten kilometers south of the Black Sea's south-western shore, the Sofular Cave in north-west Turkey provides a fifty-thousand year continuous speleothem record of climate change in the area⁸⁰⁶ — illustrating a significant drop in precipitation during the period in question.⁸⁰⁷ In southwestern Turkey, data from Dim Cave presents an eighty-thousand year continuous speleothem record of climate change for the Eastern Mediterranean, and several lakes provide additional data from change of oxygen isotopes.⁸⁰⁸ One such lake, crater lake Eski Acigöl, evidences an increase in aridity during the transition from the Late Bronze to Iron Age through an rise in salinity maximum.⁸⁰⁹ These high levels of salinity and oxygen isotope values exist for the period from 1250 - 850,⁸¹⁰ which palynological data also indicate experienced a drastic loss

⁸⁰⁶ D. Fleitmann, H. Cheng, S. Badertscher, R.L. Edwards, M. Mudelsee, O.M. Göktürk, A. Fankhauser, R. Pickering, C.C. Raible, A. Matter, J. Kramers, and O. Tüysüz. 2009.

“Timing and climatic impact of Greenland interstadials recorded in stalagmites from northern Turkey.”

Geophys. Res. Lett., 36, L19707, doi:10.1029/2009GL040050.

⁸⁰⁷ O.M. Göktürk, D. Fleitmann, S. Badertscher, H. Cheng, R.L. Edwards, M. Leuenberger, A. Fankhauser, O. Tüysüz, and J. Kramers. 2011. “Climate on the Black Sea coast during the Holocene: implications from the Sofula Cave record.” *Quat Sci Rev* 30:2433–2445.

⁸⁰⁸ N. Roberts, W.J. Eastwood, C. Kuzucuoglu, G. Fiorentino, and V. Caracuta. 2011. “Climate, vegetation and cultural change in the eastern Mediterranean during the mid-Holocene environmental transition.” *The Holocene* 21: 147-162.

⁸⁰⁹ N. Roberts, J.M. Reed, M.J. Leng, C. Kuzucuoglu, M. Fontugne, J. Bertaux, H. Woldring, S. Bottema, S. Black, E. Hunt, et al. 2001. “The tempo of Holocene climate change in the eastern Mediterranean region: new high-resolution crater-lake sediments data from central Turkey.” *The Holocene* 11:721–736.

⁸¹⁰ N. Roberts, W.J. Eastwood, C. Kuzucuoglu, G. Fiorentino, and V. Caracuta. 2011. “Climatic, vegetation and cultural change in the eastern Mediterranean during the mid-Holocene environmental transition.” *The Holocene* 21:147–162; N. Roberts, J.M. Reed, M.J. Leng, C. Kuzucuoglu, M. Fontugne, J. Bertaux, H. Woldring, S. Bottema, S. Black, E. Hunt, et al. 2001. “The tempo of Holocene climate change in the eastern Mediterranean region: new high-resolution crater-lake sediments data from central Turkey.” *The Holocene* 11:721–736.

of arboreal cover.⁸¹¹ Another, intramontane lake of Gölhisar, in the Burdur Province, also supports these findings through palynological-precipitation and carbon isotope testing.⁸¹²

In the eastern Anatolian highlands of Turkey, annually varved sediments — available from Lake Van — illustrate changes in the lake's relative wetness through hydrologic and isotopic balance modeling.⁸¹³ These varves alone were not a thoroughly reliable method of dating, however when moderated by radiocarbon and palynological correlation from Soğütlü marsh they fall in line with the broader data set.⁸¹⁴ The Soğütlü marsh lies along the western shore of Lake Van, at an elevation of 1646 m, and due to the lake's high level of salinity, exhibits minimal animal and plant life.

The area around Lake Van was covered by a sparse, oak steppe forest until roughly 650 BCE, between the Soğütlü marsh and the volcanoes immediately to the north and west of the lake. The first pollen types which could possibly be the result of farming activity — of the *Plantago lanceolata*-type, as well as *Platanus* — appear around 1000. Pollen from olive trees appears earlier in the area around Lake Van than elsewhere in western Anatolia or Greece.⁸¹⁵ The Soğütlü marsh evidences a limited amount of prehistoric grain-based agriculture in the area. Though the pollen of a few tall grasses is of similar size to *Cerealia*-type pollen, little remains for the period between the Early Bronze Age until the Common Era.⁸¹⁶ What is attested cannot be exclusively attributed to farming, although the crop cultivation took place sometime shortly after 750 BCE. However, this likely only reflect upon the local economy, as pollen production of

⁸¹¹ N. Roberts, W.J. Eastwood, C. Kuzucuoglu, G. Fiorentino, and V. Caracuta. 2011. "Climatic, vegetation and cultural change in the eastern Mediterranean during the mid-Holocene environmental transition." *The Holocene* 21:147–162.

⁸¹² W.J. Eastwood, M.J. Leng, N. Roberts, and B. Davis. 2007. "Holocene climate change in the eastern Mediterranean region: a comparison of stable isotope and pollen data from Lake Gölhisar, southwest Turkey." *Journal of Quaternary Science* 22:327-341.

⁸¹³ G. Lemcke, and M. Sturm. 1997. "δ18O and trace element measurements as proxy for the reconstruction of climate changes at Lake Van (Turkey): preliminary results." Pages 653-678 in H. Nüzhet-Dalfes, G. Kukla, and H. Weiss, eds. *Third Millenium BC Climate Change and Old World Collapse*. NATO ASI Series I, Global Environmental Change, vol. 49. Berlin: Springer.

⁸¹⁴ S. Bottema. 1995. "Holocene vegetation of the Van area: palynological and chronological evidence from Soğütlü, Turkey." *Veget Hist Archaeobot* 4:187-193.

⁸¹⁵ Bottema, S., H. Woldring. 1990. "Anthropogenic indicators in the pollen record of the Eastern Mediterranean." pgs 231-264 in: S. Bottema, G. Entjes-Nieborg, W. van Zeist eds. *Man's role in the shaping of the Eastern Mediterranean landscape*. Balkema, Rotterdam.

⁸¹⁶ S. Bottema. 1995. "Holocene vegetation of the Van area: palynological and chronological evidence from Soğütlü, Turkey." *Veget Hist Archaeobot* 4:187-193.

ancient grains were only partially cross-pollinating — and therefore are not adapted to widespread pollen dispersal.⁸¹⁷

Iran

The country of Iran primarily consists of a large plateau bordered by the Zagros Mountains to the west, the Kopet Mountains in the northwest, the Persian and Oman Gulfs to the south, the Caspian Sea and Elborz Mountains to the north, and two expansive salt deserts on the east, the Dasht-e Kavir and the Dasht-e Lut.⁸¹⁸ Iran consists of eleven different climate regions, though the vast majority of the country exhibits a continental climate with precipitation coming from the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Of these features, we will focus mostly on the Zagros mountains and the Mesopotamian lowlands of Iran. At the north end of the Iranian Zagros range lies Lake Urmia, a permanent lake of high-salinity just inside the borders with Turkey and Iraq. Other intermontane lakes also exist within the Zagros, which together with Urmia provide some of our best data regarding the climate of the ancient world. The Khuzestan Plain lies between the Tigris River and the Zagros Mountains, and is primarily marshland.

Of primary interest are Lakes Mirabad and Zeribar— at a similar altitude to Lake Van, Turkey— which attest evidence of a dry period between 1150-950 BCE, correlated with minimum flow levels of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.⁸¹⁹ Further north at Lake Urmia, the pollen diagram resembles cores from Lake Zeribar, Lake Van, and the Soğütlü marsh, with an increase in aridity around the turn of the millennium.⁸²⁰ The Urmia diagram has since been further corroborated by a recent study that found low values of arboreal pollen and high levels of

⁸¹⁷ S. Bottema. 1995. “Holocene vegetation of the Van area: palynological and chronological evidence from Söğütlü, Turkey.” *Veget Hist Archaeobot* 4:187-193.

⁸¹⁸ *Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online*, s.v. "Iran," <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/62391> (accessed October 31, 2017).

⁸¹⁹ L.R. Stevens, E. Ito, A. Schwalb, and H.E. Wright, Jr. 2006. “Timing of atmospheric precipitation in the Zagros Mountains inferred from a multi-proxy record from Lake Mirabad, Iran.” *Quat Res* 66:494–500.

J. Neumann, and S. Parpola. 1987. “Climatic change and the eleventh-tenth-century eclipse of Assyria and Babylonia.” *JNES* 46:161–182.

P. Alpert, and J. Neuman. 1989. “An ancient correlation between streamflow and distant rainfall in the Near East.” *JNES* 48:313–314.

P.A. Kay, and D.L. Johnson. 1981. “Estimation of the Tigris-Euphrates streamflow from regional palaeoenvironmental proxy data.” *Clim Change* 3:251–263.

⁸²⁰ S. Bottema. 1995. “Holocene vegetation of the Van area: palynological and chronological evidence from Söğütlü, Turkey.” *Veget Hist Archaeobot* 4:187-193.

Artemisia pollen from 600 BCE onward, illustrating both the prevalence of steppe vegetation and arid-like climate of the area from the Neo-Assyrian period onward.⁸²¹

Northern Levant & Cyprus

The area considered here primarily consists of the littoral of Syria / Lebanon and the various mountain ranges which run north-south between the littoral and the Syrian Desert.⁸²² In the north, the Jabal an-Nusayriyah range is rather low, by mountain standards, with an average elevation of 1212 meters. Between this and the Anti-Lebanon range to the south is a corridor known as the Homs Gap which has been used throughout the years as a trade route to the coast (exiting at Tripoli, Lebanon). East of the Jabal an-Nusayriyah range lies the Al-Ghab valley and the Orontes River, on the other side of which lies the Jabal az-Zawiyah range and a plateau region. The Anti-Lebanon range, lying inland to the south of this area, is twice as high as the average height of the Jabal an-Nusayriyah (at over 2700 meters), and spreads sporadically eastward toward the plateaus. West and south of the Anti-Lebanon range, past the wide Beqa' Valley, lies the Lebanon range—the highest mountain range of the Levant (highest peak at 3088 m)—which stretches down to Mount Hermon, the northernmost point of Israel. South of Damascus, the Hawran Plateau runs to the north of the Jabal al-Druze — a highly volcanic region, incorporated within the larger Harrat ash-Shaam volcanic field that runs to Saudi Arabia. Typically, these mountain ranges exhibit moister western slopes due to incoming Mediterranean precipitation, and less fertile eastern slopes due to desert winds and drained cloud formations from the Mediterranean.

From within this broad region, most of the paleo-climatological information available comes from sites near archaeological excavations. Though sporadically available, the evidence suggests a dry period occurred between 1100 and 900 BCE. Within the ancient kingdom of Ugarit, along the NE Mediterranean coast, at the ancient port city of Gibala / Tel Tweini, palynological readings indicate an increase of aridity associated with the destruction of it and of the

⁸²¹ T. Talebi, E. Ramezani, M. Djamali, H. Alizadeh, K. Lahijani, A. Naqinezhad, K. Alizadeh, and V. Andrieu-Ponel. 2016. "The Late-Holocene climate change, vegetation dynamics, lake-level changes and anthropogenic impacts in the Lake Urmia region, NW Iran." *Quaternary International* 408 40-51. p47

⁸²² Cf. *Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online*, s.v. "Syria," and s.v. "Lebanon," <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/139584> and <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/77532> (accessed October 29, 2017).

broader kingdom of Ugarit.⁸²³ This cycle of drought-like conditions lasted until 850 BCE, though with a fifty year abatement around 1000-950. Tel Sukas, near Ugarit, indicated cereal pollen reached its maximum at 1150 BCE.⁸²⁴ At the ancient city of Ebla in western Syria another reduction in available water was reflected by carbon stable isotope analysis.⁸²⁵ Scholars have also proposed similar events for Ras El-Ain-Qameshi, near Tel Leilan in eastern Syria.⁸²⁶

Palynological cores from coastal Syria provide evidence that commercial cultivation of olive trees decreased dramatically from the Late Bronze Age until roughly the end of the Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 650 BCE). During the intervening ~1000 years, olive trees were cultivated for personal subsistence, rather than for royal or commercial industry.⁸²⁷ This evidence suggests the Neo-Assyrian Empire's interest in areas in the West was not primarily for its olive cultivation before the reign of Assurbanipal. This could either be interpreted to mean that the level of control the NA empire at this time had already diminished to the point that locals could begin to cultivate commercially once more. However, this could also be indicative of greater Neo-Assyrian involvement in the far West and also indicate the over-expansion often supposed to be the downfall of the empire.

A stalagmite in Jeita Cave, Lebanon (north and east of Beirut), provides Oxygen 18 and Carbon 13 rates of change that evidence drier conditions from 1250 to 950.⁸²⁸ The decrease in diameter of the stalagmite also suggests an increase of aridity at this time. In the Southern

⁸²³ D. Kaniewski, E. Paulissen, E. Van Campo, M. Al-Maqdissi, J. Bretschneider, and K. Van Lerberghe. 2008. "Middle East coastal ecosystem response to middle-to-late holocene abrupt climate changes." *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 105:13941–13946; D. Kaniewski, E. Paulissen, E. Van Campo, H. Weiss, T. Otto, J. Bretschneider, and K. Van Lerberghe. 2010. "Late second-early first millennium BC abrupt climate changes in coastal Syria and their possible significance for the history of the Eastern Mediterranean." *Quat Res*, 74:207–215.

⁸²⁴ Sorrel and Mathis 2016, 868.

⁸²⁵ G. Fiorentino, V. Caracuta, L. Calcagnile, M. D'Elia, P. Matthiae, F. Mavelli, and G. Quarta. 2008. "Third millennium B.C. climate change in Syria highlighted by carbon stable isotope analysis of ¹⁴C-AMS dated plant remains from Ebla," *Palaeogeogr Palaeoclimatol Palaeoecol* 266:51–58

⁸²⁶ R.A. Bryson, R.U. Bryson. 1997. "High resolution simulations of regional Holocene climate: North Africa and the near East." Pages 565–594 in: H. Nüzhet-Dalfes, G. Kukla, H. Weiss, eds. *Third Millennium BC Climate Change and Old World Collapse*. NATO ASI Series I, Global Environmental Change, vol. 49. Berlin: Springer.

⁸²⁷ P. Sorrel and M. Mathis. 2016 868

⁸²⁸ S. Verheyden, F.H. Nader, H.J. Cheng, L.R. Edwards, and R. Swennen. 2008. "Paleoclimate reconstruction in the Levant region from the geochemistry of a Holocene stalagmite from the Jeita cave, Lebanon." *Quat Res* 70:368–381.

Beka'a Valley, deforestation and other anthropogenic activities disappear around 1300-1200 BCE, while only pastoral activity remained.⁸²⁹

Cyprus lies just over 100 km off the western shores of Syria and Lebanon, falling within the same meteorological patterns as the western littoral.⁸³⁰ Palynological evidence from Cyprus — at the eastern coastal region of Hala Sultan Tekke, Larnaca Salt Lake — also confirms a dry period around the year 1200: What had once been a marine embayment became dry land.⁸³¹ At the same time, agricultural activities at the site, heretofore robust, evidenced a significant decrease in activity. That the driest period attested at Cyprus occurred prior to that along the coast, should not be surprising: one would expect such a climatic difference from an isolated location west of the mainland. Additionally, paleo-climatological dates only provide us with a general timeline with a margin of error which provides less difference than may seem at face value between the 1200 BCE date for Cyprus and the 1100-900 BCE and 1250-950 BCE dates attested at the various mainland sites.

Southern Levant

The land of Israel / Palestine and western Jordan are here grouped together under the term “Southern Levant.”⁸³² The Southern Levant is demarcated to the north by Mount Hermon— today shared by Lebanon, Syria, and Israel— and to the south by the Red Sea / Gulf of Aqaba; to the west by the Mediterranean Sea and the east by the Syrian and Arabian deserts. The primary water source for the region is the Jordan River— which runs north-south through the Jordan Rift Valley— and is exogenously fed by the springs at Dan, Baniyas, and Hasbani in the north.⁸³³ In antiquity, the output from these springs converged to form the Hula marsh, a few kilometers north of the Kinneret / Sea of Galilee. The Jordan River exits the Kinneret at its southernmost point to continue through the rift until it reaches the Dead Sea— a permanent, terminal, high-

⁸²⁹ L. Hajar, M. Haïdar-Boustani, C. Khater, and R. Cheddadi. 2010. “Environmental changes in Lebanon during the Holocene: man vs climate impacts.” *Journal of Arid Environments* 74:746-755.

⁸³⁰ *Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online*, s.v. "Cyprus," <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/34192> (accessed October 29, 2017).

⁸³¹ D. Kaniewski, E. Van Campo, J. Guiot, S. LeBurel, T. Otto, and C. Baeteman. 2013. “Environmental roots of the Late Bronze Age crisis.” *PLoS ONE* 8:e71004. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0071004.

⁸³² The majority of the trans-Jordanian highlands (i.e. the country of Jordan) fall outside the scope of my present research interests and so will not be treated here.

⁸³³ Cf. *Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online*, s.v. "Israel," <http://www.columbiagazetteer.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/main/ViewPlace/62916> (accessed October 31, 2017).

saline lake. The Jordan Rift Valley itself lies well below sea-level, and is bordered by low mountains on the east and west. From west to east, the terrain progresses from coastal plain, through an area of low, rolling hills (the Shephelah), to the Judean Mountains and Judean Desert before reaching the Rift Valley. On the other side of the rift, the terrain is primarily marked by a large, high plateau, split by three primary seasonal riverbeds or wadis. This area presents the widest coastal region along the eastern Mediterranean coast, making it some of the most fertile in the region.

Scholars within Israel / Palestine have undertaken many projects related to ancient precipitation and aridity patterns— including along the Dead Sea, in the Negev, Central Hill Country, and cores from within the Dead Sea, Sea of Galilee, and Haifa Bay. Because the geomorphology of the area is more varied than elsewhere in the Levant, it pays to address each region individually. Along the northern coast of Israel, evidence from the natural port cities of Tel Akko and Tel Dor indicate drier conditions were experienced between 1250 - 850 BCE.⁸³⁴ Slightly south and east of these port cities, at the Kinneret, evidence was found that also indicates a significant dry event occurred at the transition from Late Bronze to Iron Age, ~1250 - 1100 BCE.⁸³⁵ Since the Kinneret is fed by three perennial springs, it is only to be expected that the dry event experienced there would be of shorter duration than that experienced along the coast.

In central Israel, within the Shephelah, a speleothem from the Nahal Qanah Cave illustrates change in carbon and oxygen isotopes — indicating the record wet climate at 1300 came to an abrupt end during the Bronze-Iron Age transition.⁸³⁶ The speleothem record from another central cave further south, Soreq Cave (within the Judean Hills), supports and furthers this data, indicating a steady decrease in rainfall from ~2500–500, peaking at 1250 BCE within this downward trajectory.⁸³⁷ These two caves provide evidence for the area’s semi-arid climate

⁸³⁴ D. Kaniewski, E. Van Campo, C. Morhange, J. Guiot, D. Zviely, I. Shaked, T. Otto, and M. Artzy. 2013. “Early urban impact on Mediterranean coastal environments.” *Sci Rep* 3:354. doi:10.1038/srep03540.

⁸³⁵ D. Langgut, I. Finkelstein, and T. Litt. 2013. “Climate and the Late Bronze collapse: new evidence from the Southern Levant.” *Tel Aviv* 40:149–175.

⁸³⁶ A. Frumkin, D.C. Ford, and H.P. Schwarcz. 1999. “Continental oxygen isotopic record of the last 170,000 years in Jerusalem.” *Quat Res* 51:317–327.

⁸³⁷ M. Bar-Matthews, A. Ayalon, M. Gilmour, A. Matthews, and C.J. Hawkesworth. 2003. “Sea-land oxygen isotopic relationship from planktonic foraminifera and speleothems in the Eastern Mediterranean region and their implication for paleorainfall during interglacial intervals.” *Geochim Cosmochim Acta* 67:3181–3199; B. Schilman, A. Ayalon, M. Bar-Matthews, E.J. Kagan, and A. Almogi-Labin. 2002. “Sea-Land paleoclimate

for nearly 200,000 years, and have elucidated many issues within Levantine archaeological and textual pursuits. Other cores retrieved from off the coast of Ashdod (directly west of Soreq Cave) also suggest analogous aridification.⁸³⁸

The southernmost point for core sampling within the Southern Levant is the area around the Dead Sea. The level of the Dead Sea has fluctuated between 390 and 415 m below sea level for the past 4000 years.⁸³⁹ Because it is fed primarily by precipitation levels at the headwaters of the Jordan, within the mountains of Syria and Israel, its levels provide a direct marker of climate change.⁸⁴⁰ At several locations along its western shore — Ze’elim, Ein-Gedi, and Ein Feshka — significant changes in the lithologic deposit correspond to the lake’s limnological conditions and the greater Mediterranean climate.⁸⁴¹ Palynological records from the end of the Bronze Age taken from these areas also indicate an increase in arid conditions.⁸⁴² At Ze’elim, a beach ridge intrudes into the sedimentary sections, suggesting a significant drop in lake level between 1510 - 1400 BCE.⁸⁴³ The pollen record indicates low arboreal pollen levels during this period, with an

correlation in the Eastern Mediterranean region during the Late Holocene.” *Israel Journal of Earth Science* 51:181–190.

⁸³⁸ B. Schilman, A. Ayalon, M. Bar-Matthews, E.J. Kagan, and A. Almogi-Labin. 2002. “Sea-Land paleoclimate correlation in the Eastern Mediterranean region during the Late Holocene.” *Israel Journal of Earth Science* 51:181–190; B. Schilman, M. Bar-Matthews, A. Almogi-Labin, and B. Luz. 2001. “Global climate instability reflected by Eastern Mediterranean marine records during the late Holocene.” *Palaeo-geogr Palaeoclimatol Palaeoecol* 176:157–176.

⁸³⁹ R. Bookman, Y. Enzel, A. Agnon, and M. Stein. 2004. “Late Holocene lake levels of the Dead Sea.” *GSA Bulletin* 116:555–571.

⁸⁴⁰ Y. Enzel, R. Bookman, D. Sharon, H. Gvirtzman, U. Dayan, B. Ziv, and M. Stein. 2003. “Late Holocene climates of the Near East deduced from the Dead Sea level variations and modern regional winter rainfall.” *Quat Res* 60:263–273.

⁸⁴¹ Cf. Stein 2001; Bartov et al., 2002; *apud* C. Migowski, S. Mordechai, S. Prasad, J.F.W. Negendank, and A. Agnon. 2006. “Holocene climate variability and cultural evolution in the Near East from the Dead Sea sedimentary record.” *Quaternary Research* 66 421–431. P422

⁸⁴² F.H. Neumann, E.J. Kagan, M.J. Schwab, and M. Stein. 2007. “Palynology, sedimentology and palaeoecology of the late Holocene Dead Sea.” *Quat Sci Rev* 26:1476–1498; D. Langgut, F.H. Neumann, M. Stein, A. Wagner, E.J. Kagan, E. Boaretto, and I. Finkelstein. 2014. “Dead Sea pollen record and history of human activity in the Judean Highlands (Israel) from the Intermediate Bronze into the Iron Ages (~2500–500 BCE).” *Palynology* 38:280–302. doi:10.1080/01916122.2014.906001.

⁸⁴³ F.H. Neumann, E.J. Kagan, M.J. Schwab, M. Stein. 2007. “Palynology, sedimentology and palaeoecology of the late Holocene Dead Sea.” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 26 1476–1498. doi:10.1016/j.quascirev.2007.03.004. p1487.

abundance of the chenopods *Poaceae* and *Asteraceae* that denotes dry conditions.⁸⁴⁴ The data evidenced by the beach ridge at Ze'elim are correlated to the Sedom diapir salt cave passages,⁸⁴⁵ which also indicate low lake levels at this time. The Ein Feshka core presents information missing from Ze'elim for those periods in which the lake was too low at Ze'elim to record a sedimentary layer. A level of organic material 50 mm above a layer of aragonite crusts was dated to the Late Bronze Age - Iron Age I transition. Testing of this organic material dates the aragonite crusts — indicative of markers of beach environments, and therefore low lake levels — to ~1300 BCE.⁸⁴⁶ Palynological data from Ein Feshka indicates the area was predominantly arid at this time with below a 5% rate for *Olea*, *Q. calliprinos*, and *Q. boisseri*-type: cultivated or wild Mediterranean vegetation played a minor role in the landscape.⁸⁴⁷ In other words, the pollen samples and sedimentary samples correspond to indicate a period of increased aridity occurred in the Southern Levant during the Bronze–Iron Age transition. Another sample taken from the shoreline at Ein-Gedi confirms these findings and indicates the lake level dropped significantly at about 1300, contemporaneous with an increase in winter temperature of about 4° C and decrease in annual precipitation of about 100 mm.⁸⁴⁸ This deeper-lacustrine environment (e.g. Ein Gedi) is also confirmed by shoreline deposits from Ze'elim and nearby cores.⁸⁴⁹ This decrease in precipitation and preserved pollen indicates at least that the contemporary population had no access to agriculture in the area around the Dead Sea at this time—which is not necessarily to say that the area became abandoned.

⁸⁴⁴ F.H. Neumann, E.J. Kagan, M.J. Schwab, M. Stein. 2007. “Palynology, sedimentology and palaeoecology of the late Holocene Dead Sea.” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 26 1476–1498. doi:10.1016/j.quascirev.2007.03.004. p1488.

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. Frumkin, A., 1997. “The Holocene history of Dead Sea levels.” Pgs 237-249 In: Niemi, T. (Ed.), *The Dead Sea—The Lake and its Settings*. Oxford: OUP.

⁸⁴⁶ F.H. Neumann, E.J. Kagan, M.J. Schwab, M. Stein. 2007. “Palynology, sedimentology and palaeoecology of the late Holocene Dead Sea.” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 26 1476–1498. doi:10.1016/j.quascirev.2007.03.004. p1488.

⁸⁴⁷ F.H. Neumann, E.J. Kagan, M.J. Schwab, M. Stein. 2007. “Palynology, sedimentology and palaeoecology of the late Holocene Dead Sea.” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 26 1476–1498. doi:10.1016/j.quascirev.2007.03.004. p1488.

⁸⁴⁸ T. Litt, C. Ohlwein, F.H. Neumann, A. Hense, and M. Stein. 2012. “Holocene climate variability in the Levant from the Dead Sea pollen record.” *Quat Sci Rev* 49:95–105.

⁸⁴⁹ C. Migowski, S. Mordechai, S. Prasad, J.F.W. Negendank, and A. Agnon. 2006. “Holocene climate variability and cultural evolution in the Near East from the Dead Sea sedimentary record.” *Quaternary Research* 66 421–431. P424

Plateaus and Plains:

Tigris-Euphrates River Basin

The topography of Upper Mesopotamia — a low plateau at the base of two mountain ranges, incised by two major river valleys and their tributaries — provided a prime location for early settlement due to the accessibility of water in an otherwise arid climate.⁸⁵⁰ Both rivers begin within the Anatolian mountains, in the Turkish province of Elazig, and wind their way down the mountains, through plateaux, steppe, and alluvial plains before uniting in the Shatt al-Arab and exiting into the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers obtain the majority of their flow from snow-melt — highest during May and April, respectively, which accounts for ~42% of the annual precipitation.⁸⁵¹ Throughout the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin, the average annual precipitation varies between 60 and 1500 mm, with the mountainous, northeastern watershed receiving the highest levels from November to February.⁸⁵² The rate of snowfall and runoff determines the level of water availability downstream, including the marshlands at the convergence of the two rivers.⁸⁵³ During periods when no manmade or natural abstractions exist between two points along the river, it is expected that the location downstream should have higher flows than upstream locations — as evidenced along the Tigris until the 1960s.⁸⁵⁴ When abstractions are present, the flow upstream exceeds that of downstream locations — as evidenced along the Euphrates until 1978.⁸⁵⁵ As may be expected, the more abstractions and climate

⁸⁵⁰ cf. Reculeau, 14.

⁸⁵¹ Cf. Beaumont 1998, *apud*

P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. “Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin.” *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p6-7.

⁸⁵² P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. “Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin.” *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p13.

⁸⁵³ P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. “Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin.” *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p6-7.

⁸⁵⁴ P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. “Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin.” *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p10.

⁸⁵⁵ P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. “Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin.” *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p11.

changes, the more significant the decrease in streamflow.⁸⁵⁶ Though generically similar in their coursing, the two rivers exhibit significantly different characteristics as they traverse. A brief overview of the many variations in terrain of the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin follows; a fuller description of the Tigris' and Euphrates' tributaries and patterns can be found in Reculeau 2016 (9-15).

The course of Tigris is split between a mountainous terrain and the plains / plateaux of the Jazira, Zagros Piedmont, and alluvial plains of Southern Mesopotamia.⁸⁵⁷ The river's characteristics change in accordance with the surrounding environs: the upper tributaries exhibit a torrential profile which decreases by 50% from the time it enters Iraq until it reaches the Lower Zab and the alluvial plain.⁸⁵⁸ The Tigris' rapid shift in declivity, therefore, monumentally affected anthropocentric activities along its course: those who lived in mountainous and upper-plateau regions would be much more accustomed to turbulent currents and torrential flooding than those who occupied the alluvial plain to the south.

The Euphrates also is definable by its mountainous and plains-regions. The Euphrates River presents several constraints upon those who would live along it. Of these, several are relevant: the river flow is intra-annually irregular, displaying a ratio of 16:1 for high and low water values; average low water levels are 250 m³/s, whereas spring/summer flood rates average 4000 m³/s, but can reach up to 8000 m³/s; the river meanders at a high degree; and the entire water supply for the Euphrates river basin depends upon this river.⁸⁵⁹ Unlike the Tigris, however, the Euphrates is an exogenous river — fed by primary tributaries in the mountainous regions— which presents an even more dramatic opposition of regions. The additional volume contributed by the Balīh and the Hābūr are negligible, so by the time it reaches the plateau the Euphrates has already accumulated the majority of its volume.⁸⁶⁰ The declivity of the Euphrates follows a similar trajectory to that of the Tigris—though at a much reduced scale throughout the Jazira—

⁸⁵⁶ P. Daggupati, R. Srinivasan, M. Ahmadi, and D. Verma. 2017. "Spatial and temporal patterns of precipitation and stream flow variations in Tigris-Euphrates river basin." *Environ Monit Assess* 189: 50 DOI 10.1007/s10661-016-5752-y. p12.

⁸⁵⁷ Reculeau, 10.

⁸⁵⁸ Reculeau, 10.

⁸⁵⁹ B. Geyer, and J.Y. Monchambert. 2015. "Canals and water supply in the lower Euphrates valley." *Water Hist* 7:11–37. DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0108-4. p16.

⁸⁶⁰ Reculeau, 10-11.

until at Hit, where the Euphrates' declivity is higher until the widest bend of both rivers, halfway through the alluvial plain where the situation reverses again.⁸⁶¹ The Euphrates flows in a Quaternary valley, sandwiched between two arid plateaus in the area around Mari - Terqa: the Shamiyeh and the Jazīra. Due to habitually low rainfall on these plateaus, their elevation from the river's surface (roughly 40 m), and the substratum of gypsum and / or calcareous flagstone covering the majority of the plateaus' surface area, only the bottom of the Holocene valley was originally exploitable.⁸⁶² During the late Holocene, additional fluvial formations formed within the Pleistocene glacia and Quaternary valley, which provide the arable and irritable land in the valley.⁸⁶³ The general declivity of the plains is measured out in three naturally-occurring terraced levels,⁸⁶⁴ of which the youngest level is suitable for agriculture and the middle used for settlement and infrastructure foundations.⁸⁶⁵ The Euphrates' Syrian valley is further demarcated into three segments of varying types of alluvial plains. Within these three hydro-geographical units, the Euphrates' meanders shift from preferring one side of the river to the other⁸⁶⁶—which additionally impact anthropic decisions regarding settlement and agro-pastoral concerns.

It is natural that communities upstream should impact the landscape of those downstream, and in addition to the scientific data regarding river flow patterns we also have texts in which people complain that irrigation upstream had significantly reduced their own access to water, especially along the Balīh River.⁸⁶⁷ The nature of irrigation along the Euphrates and Habur differed from that of the Balīh so that this concern was not experienced in Upper Mesopotamia.⁸⁶⁸ Nevertheless, by the time the Euphrates reached the alluvial plain to the south, we have additional attestations of similar complaints during the second and first millennia

⁸⁶¹ At Kūt along the Tigris and Ash-Sinafiyah along the Euphrates, Reculeau, 11.

⁸⁶² B. Geyer, and J.Y. Monchambert. 2015. "Canals and water supply in the lower Euphrates valley." *Water Hist* 7:11–37. DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0108-4.

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⁸⁶³ B. Geyer, and J.Y. Monchambert. 2015. "Canals and water supply in the lower Euphrates valley." *Water Hist* 7:11–37. DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0108-4.

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⁸⁶⁴ corresponding to the Holocene, Pleistocene, and earlier periods; Reculeau, 11-12.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. Reculeau, 11-12.

⁸⁶⁶ Cf. Reculeau, 12.

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Villard 1987, *apud* Reculeau 58.

⁸⁶⁸ Cf. Reculeau 2008.

BCE.⁸⁶⁹ Not only was the amount of water depleted, but the sediment load carried by the river increased⁸⁷⁰ — causing significant changes to the riverine landscape and course downstream. In fact, several elements suggest that just before the beginning of the first millennium the Euphrates pattern and manner evolved: from an anastomosing pattern — wherein connections are diverging or branching — to a meandering one; and from general aggradation to degradation — or, from one wherein the elevation of land increases due to sedimentary deposits, to one where it is carried away downstream.⁸⁷¹ The dating of this shift aligns with what we know from surveys of Southern Mesopotamia in the 1960s-80s and texts that record the movement of the Euphrates away from ancient key cities, such as Nippur and Babylon.⁸⁷²

Due to the nature of a landscape marked by ever-changing rivers, little archaeo-botanical research has been conducted in southern Iraq along the lower Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The lower river basin is marked by a network of wetlands, including interconnected shallow freshwater lakes, marshes, and seasonally swamped floodplains.⁸⁷³ The total wetland area covers nearly 20,000 square miles, and as the largest wetland in West Asia they rank as one of the largest in the world.⁸⁷⁴ Many studies have illustrated the similarities of the pre-1970s and ancient landscapes, though environmental changes have occurred.⁸⁷⁵

General climate patterns of Mesopotamia

The Mesopotamian plain is primarily noted to be of a degraded Mediterranean type in the west that transitions to a continental climate of semi-to-full aridity.⁸⁷⁶ The continental climate exhibits

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. CITE INFO FROM SIPPUR, BABYLON, AND NIPPUR

⁸⁷⁰ Cf. Reculeau 2016, 58.

⁸⁷¹ Reculeau 2016, 58.

⁸⁷² CF. TEXTUAL REFERENCES TO SUCH EVENTS & WHERE IN ADAMS' SURVEYS HE DISCUSSES THESE...

⁸⁷³ Al-Dafar, A. 2015. "Shadow-States: the archaeology of power in the marshes of Southern Mesopotamia." Unpublished dissertation. Department of Anthropology / Archaeology, University of Stony Brook. p19.

⁸⁷⁴ Cf. Sluglett 2001:121, *apud* Al-Dafar, A. 2015. "Shadow-States: the archaeology of power in the marshes of Southern Mesopotamia." Unpublished dissertation. Department of Anthropology / Archaeology, University of Stony Brook. p25.

⁸⁷⁵ Cf. De Mierop 1993; Richardson et al. 2005; Algaze 2008; and Touili and al-Hamdani 2011; *apud* Al-Dafar, A. 2015. "Shadow-States: the archaeology of power in the marshes of Southern Mesopotamia." Unpublished dissertation. Department of Anthropology / Archaeology, University of Stony Brook. p20.

⁸⁷⁶ Reculeau 2016, 14.

a strong demarcation between winter and summer seasons, controlled by high atmosphere circulation patterns affected by the surrounding mountains. The entire region attests a similar temperature range, differentiated primarily by local altitude: mean temperatures in the summer months hit 34°C, while the winter temperatures average 10°C. These mountain ranges cause the majority of precipitation to fall on the windward side of the mountains—in this case, to the north and west of the Mesopotamian plain. Thus mostly drained of their moisture before traversing the Mesopotamian plain, the area relies upon its riverine assets for its annual precipitation. Brought on by cyclonic air patterns between Turkey and Jordan, the winter season attests the highest precipitation for the year for the entire Levant and eastern Anatolian peninsula.⁸⁷⁷ In the areas furthest from the Mediterranean (i.e. the Taurus and Zagros Mountains), this precipitation is stored as snow until the Spring / Summer season, when its melt-off feeds the Euphrates and Tigris River Basin.

The Upper Mesopotamian terrain exhibits several climatic zones along northwest - southeast lines, which are produced as a result of the degradation in rainfall as one leaves the mountain zone. For example, the mean precipitation totals for the cities of Gaziantep, Urfa, and Dēr-ez-Zōr — representing three distinct climatic zones, transitioning from the mountainous-steppe down to the plateau furthest from the mountains— exhibit 570 mm, 470 mm, and 150 mm per year, respectively.⁸⁷⁸ Though precipitation typically is heaviest during the winter months, its levels fluctuate within a year, as well as on a year to year basis.⁸⁷⁹ This yearly deviation from expected patterns — which can reach as high as 50% variability in the Syrian Jazīra⁸⁸⁰ — intensifies the area’s general aridity and unpredictabilities associated with dry-farming in a semi-arid climate, even within regions which technically received enough average precipitation to support dry-farming.⁸⁸¹ As the rivers progress, moisture is lost to many forces, including evapotranspiration as the arid climate interacts with the hydrology of the rivers. This intensifies water loss along the river’s downward regime, and can greatly affect Southern Mesopotamia’s expected access to water.

⁸⁷⁷ Reculeau 2016: 14.

⁸⁷⁸ Cf. Kuzucuoglu 2007: 460; Reculeau 2016: 14.

⁸⁷⁹ Reculeau 2016: 15.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. Kerbé 1987: 263-265; *apud* Reculeau 2016: 15.

⁸⁸¹ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 15.

Connections to the North Atlantic Oscillation

Recently, climatological research has illustrated that cooling periods in the North Atlantic are directly tied to droughts in the Eastern Mediterranean during the last 55,000 years, though the process is by no means simple or linear.⁸⁸² At least since 2002, climatologists have connected the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) to Middle Eastern climate and streamflow, and have recognized the importance of their discovery for historical investigations of earlier human civilizations.⁸⁸³ Over the past fifteen years, additional research has furthered these initial identifications, arriving at more nuanced conclusions. As one would expect, the NAO has a greater affect upon areas that are not protected by three borders of mountain ranges— as are Iraq and western Iran.⁸⁸⁴ That said, the precipitation patterns exhibited in the southern region of Iraq (Amara Nasriya, and Basra) were found to have a 95% correlation to the negative phase of the NAO.⁸⁸⁵ In other words, the negative phase of the NAO is what allows the high-altitude cyclones about Turkey and Jordan to shift to the south, and bring an increase of precipitation to southern Iraq during the winter season.⁸⁸⁶ Western Iran also exhibits a similar pattern of correlation to the NAO as northern Iraq, for the same reason: streamflow patterns are affected by a significant lag time between the fall of precipitation (as snow) and the resultant flow regime in the south.⁸⁸⁷ Others have narrowed the scope of the NAO's primary data collection points to indicate that the most influential collection point is the Azores High pressure system.⁸⁸⁸ The Azores High pressure system is considered the “dominant modulator of regional variability in the Mediterranean

⁸⁸² Bartov et al., 2003, Cullen et al., 2002, Kushnir and Stein 2010; all *apud* Philippe Sorrel and Marie Mathis. 2016. “Mid- to late-Holocene coastal vegetation patterns in Northern Levant (Tell Sukas, Syria): Olive tree cultivation history and climatic change.” *The Holocene* Vol. 26(6) 858–873. p870 cf. Kaniewski et al, 2008; *apud* the same.

⁸⁸³ H.M. Cullen, A. Kaplan, P.A. Arkin, and P.B. Demenocal. 2002. “Impact of the North Atlantic Oscillation on Middle Eastern Climate and Streamflow.” *Climatic Change* 55: 315-338.

⁸⁸⁴ Cf. S.A. Khidher and P. Pilesjö. 2015. “The effect of the North Atlantic Oscillation on the Iraqi climate 1982-2000.” *Theoretical Appl Climatology* 122:771-782.

⁸⁸⁵ Khidher & Pilesjö 2015: 776.

⁸⁸⁶ Cf. Khidher & Pilesjö 2015: 781.

⁸⁸⁷ H. Tabari, H. Abghari, and P. Hosseinzadeh Talaei. 2014. “Impact of the North Atlantic Oscillation on streamflow in Western Iran.” *Hydrological Processes* 28: 441-4418. p4417.

⁸⁸⁸ M.J. Iqbal, S. Hameed, and F. Khan. 2013. “Influence of Azores High pressure on Middle Eastern rainfall.” *Theoretical Appl Climatology* 111:211-221. p219.

region. ... When the Azores High is low there is a flux of moist and warm air from the Atlantic and from the Arabian Sea into the Middle East region.”⁸⁸⁹

The connection of the North Atlantic Oscillation / Azores High pressure system to the climate of the Near East provides additional explanations for the similarity of samples found throughout the Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions. The above described terrains of the entire region affect how the NAO and related precipitation patterns are experienced locally, which attest variations as expected once we consider the topographical restraints at hand. The mountains of Turkey, Syria, and northern Iraq attest greater accumulation of precipitation as snow during negative NAO cycles, because the precipitation is rerouted from further north of the Black Sea and allowed to fall more directly over these mountains to the south. The Levant also experiences a greater level of precipitation in correlation to the NAO, but also attests connections to other systems, such as the East Atlantic / Western Russia (EAWR) pattern.⁸⁹⁰ More work is needed to present a full depiction of exactly *how* the two climate patterns are linked, but there is enough evidence at present to link the two and prompt historical speculations. However, these broader connections to global weather patterns and regional topography help explain the following precipitation patterns and climate modeling.

Precipitation Modeling

Climatological data from the past century and from paleo-climate records indicate the climate experienced during the first millennium BCE is very similar to today’s climate. These similarities provide a useful ‘control’ for computer based modeling from the available data. Just as local and global weather patterns are predicted by meteorologists for weather forecasting, so too can the paleo-climatic data discussed above be used to model likely climate situations for the past. This allows multiple data sources to be weighed and combined into probable scenarios, even when the data sources appear contradictory at first glance. The model I present here is that of Bryson and Bryson: “Macrophysical Climate Modeling” (1997). Because Bryson used info taken from the confluence of the Euphrates, the discharge rates represent rainfall rates over Anatolia and the broader Euphrates drainage basin rather than just the flow rate for a specific point further

⁸⁸⁹ Iqbal, Hameed, & Khan 2013: 219.

⁸⁹⁰ E. Black. 2012. “The influence of the North Atlantic Oscillation and European circulation regimes on the day to inter annual variability of winter precipitation in Israel.” *International Journal of Climatology* 32: 1654-1664. p1663.

downstream.⁸⁹¹ What follows are the modeled climates at two key sites in the upper reaches of the Euphrates, followed by a brief modelization of the Euphrates itself, during the second and first millennia BCE.

At Hattuša, Anatolia, above the headwaters of the Euphrates, the Macrophysical Climate Modeling identified a general period of increasing aridity from 2150-900 BCE, further divided into three main phases.⁸⁹² The first phase ranges from c2150 - c1200, and is marked by a loss of 50mm per year and average temperatures lower by 1°C by 1450 BCE.⁸⁹³ The second phase marks a brief period of amelioration from c1200-1000, during which the precipitation increased by 20 mm per year and temperatures remained lower. The third phase marks another brief decline in precipitation until 900 BCE, at which precipitation and evapotranspiration patterns returned to levels experienced today.⁸⁹⁴ At the site of Qamišlī, between Tell Leilan and Amuda, Syria, modeled precipitation levels parallel those at Hattuša, though the dates of the period of amelioration vary. The first phase occurs during the Middle Bronze Age (2100 - 1500 BCE), during which upper Syria experienced low and decreasing rainfalls, between 20 and 65 mm less than present day averages for the area.⁸⁹⁵ Like at Hattuša, phase two marks a one-hundred year period of amelioration (1500-1400 BCE), when precipitation increased by 10 mm from its lowest point in the previous period to 435 mm yearly.⁸⁹⁶ During the third phase, which stretched from 1400-950 BCE, a renewed dry period brought precipitation levels down to average 375 mm annually by 950 BCE. Following this phase, from 950 - 500 BCE the area experienced significant stabilization and amelioration.⁸⁹⁷

Modeled discharge of the Euphrates River itself suggests that 950 BCE experienced the lowest annual discharge, averaging 675 cubic meters per second instead of its expected output of 690 cubic meters.⁸⁹⁸ Modelization of the Habur River also parallels this decrease in output with

⁸⁹¹ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 64.

⁸⁹² Cf. Reculeau 2016: 62.

⁸⁹³ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 63.

⁸⁹⁵ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 62.

⁸⁹⁶ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 62.

⁸⁹⁷ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 62.

⁸⁹⁸ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 64.

minimums reached around 950 BCE. At first glance these data appear to be at odds with the previous precipitation records for the area, but they actually are to be expected—contra Reculeau (2012, 60-65). Because the discharge of these rivers is accumulated from snowmelt and rainfall within the mountains, the time lag between the decrease in precipitation and significant decrease in river flow is in perfect alignment. Additionally, this model does not account for increases in evapotranspiration in connection with general aridity / temperature patterns, which could also account for the variations in data.⁸⁹⁹ As discussed above, when we combine the atmospheric pressures which affect local weather patterns with knowledge of the geographical terrain, we can account for the variation between the two short periods of amelioration at the two sites and those of the rivers. And more generally, we have established from paleo-climatological data and computer-based modeling that the Near East experienced a significant period of aridification, starting at the end of the Middle and stretching through the end of the Late Bronze Age into the first Iron Age.⁹⁰⁰

In conclusion, paleo-climatological data and computer-based modeling —such as the Macrophysical Climate Model of Bryson and Bryson (1997/1999) —both sustain a period of aridification occurred during the transition between the second and first millennium BCE. Even in those regions that experienced greater annual precipitation patterns than today, the general status of the ancient Near East was more arid during the Late Bronze - Iron Age transition than today. This general state of aridity greatly affected human activity— especially with regard to agricultural means of production. The level of aridity, incidentally is “the most important element for agriculture, rainfall alone being of little heuristic value in the absence of other climatic parameters.”⁹⁰¹ We now will briefly outline the expected patterns of agriculture, as limited by terrain, precipitation patterns, and the general aridity of the period.

Agro-pastoral concerns:

As previously discussed, the geographical terrain of Mesopotamia greatly affects anthropogenic activities. As a location’s level of aridity - precipitation varies along a northwest-southeast gradient, so too do the expected means of sustenance. These zones are further verified through

⁸⁹⁹ Cf. Reculeau 2016: 64.

⁹⁰⁰ Cf. Bryson & Bryson 1999: 10 fig. 3; *apud* Reculeau 2016: 63.

⁹⁰¹ Reculeau 2016: 65.

inferences from the cuneiform textual corpus from the late second - to early first millennium, as found in letters, administrative texts, and even royal inscriptions. As I discuss the topography-induced-agricultural practices, I will allude to these inscriptions to build a fuller depiction of the anthropogenic experience during the late Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, on into the era of empires during the mid-first millennium. Overall, the Assyrian texts present a “narrative of successful agricultural production using specific techniques... to generate desired produce for the empire.”⁹⁰² Even through the imperial rhetoric, we still catch glimpses of the natural impediments to the expansion of empire: as Rosenzweig (2016) notes: “provincialization was world-changing,” as reflected in the physical and mental landscape of the period.

What follows primarily presents the situation along the Euphrates and its tributaries. The water supply in the Upper Mesopotamia is completely dependent upon its rivers, not only because precipitation is erratic and impeded by the mountains to the north and west, but also because the groundwater table is salty except in specific locations.⁹⁰³ The freshwater tables deep below were unknown until recently, as no naturally occurring or artesian wells exist along the Euphrates as do in the region of ‘Ayn al-Zarqa, Lebanon.⁹⁰⁴ Therefore, the only locations perennially suited for agriculture are those either in the piedmonts of the Taurus and Zagros or along the river, where a zone of marginal cultivation exists. The Tigris, in contrast, spends most of its upper course within the 400 + mm isohyet and therefore is of less immediate interest.

Dry-farming

The Piedmont of the Taurus Mountain range, or the *Regenfeldebau, Innere Zone* as identified by TAVO (1985) experiences an average yearly precipitation of 350 mm. This same zone was further divided by Wilkinson (2004) based on evidence that the area experiences two ranges of annual precipitation: Zone 1a experiences over 600 mm yearly, while Zone 1b experiences between 350 and 600 mm.⁹⁰⁵ Within this zone agricultural production consists primarily of wheat, while barley is grown in the limestone highlands where wheat does not thrive. Additionally, legumes, such as lentils and chickpeas, and grapevine cultivation are also important contributors to the

⁹⁰² Rosenzweig 2016, 57.

⁹⁰³ Geyer and Monchambert, 2015, 16. Canals and water supply in the lower Euphrates valley B. Geyer • J.-Y. Monchambert, *Water Hist* (2015) 7:11–37, DOI 10.1007/s12685-014-0108-4.

⁹⁰⁴ Besançon et al. 2000, *apud* Geyer and Monchambert 2015, 16.

⁹⁰⁵ 43, *apud* Reculeau 2012, 16.

area's agriculture. No cereals are grown in the rocky, mountainous areas.⁹⁰⁶ Incidentally, this zone contains the majority of Aramaean princedoms ca. 900 BCE, as indicated when we compare the map in Niehr 2014 of Aramaean princedoms to the isohyet lines. However, when a map of Middle Assyrian strongholds is compared to these isohyets it is clear that conditions must have differed during that period— as a greater majority of cities exist in marginal and arid zones.

Marginal cultivation

Immediately south of the dry-farming region exists a zone which has been labelled variously as the “outer zone of dry farming” (*TAVO*: “*äußere Zone mit beträchtlicher Ertragsunsicherheit*”) or “zone of marginal cultivation” (coined by Wachholtz 1996, used by Reculeau 2012, 16), and generally corresponds to the area in front of the 200 isohyet line. Wilkinson (2004) split this region into three more specific, separate zones, marked by annual precipitation patterns over three-year-periods: zone 2 experiences 200-300 mm, and not less than 250 in two out of three years; zone 3 experiences 200-300 mm yearly, but not less than 250 every-other-year; while zone 4 experiences an average of 200-250 mm, with 200 mm as a maximum at least every other year.⁹⁰⁷ This area consists of a very narrow ribbon between the Piedmont and arid zone throughout Syria and Iraq, within which lies the ancestral home of the Assyrians. According to the general understanding that agriculture is possible in areas that experience 200 mm or more precipitation yearly, this area should be suited for dry-farming. However, the high evapotranspiration rate experienced within the Near East has limited what crops are cultivated within this area to barley and a few sporadic legumes.⁹⁰⁸ True to its name, this marginal zone exhibits an overlap between agricultural and pastoral methods of sustenance, such that cereals are grown primarily as fodder for flocks, which exhibit a larger significance than in the dry-farming zone.⁹⁰⁹ Of all the zones, this is the least stable due to extreme variations in inter-annual precipitation and creates great uncertainty about which areas will experience enough rainfall to warrant dry-farming practices. During the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, however, many major

⁹⁰⁶ Cf. Reculeau 2012: 16.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. Reculeau 2012: 16.

⁹⁰⁸ Cf. Reculeau 2012: 16.

⁹⁰⁹ Cf. Wilkinson 2004: 43.

city-states flourished within this area⁹¹⁰— likely because the general climate experienced at that time would have pushed the “marginal” zone further south by another 50-100 kms.⁹¹¹

Arid zone

The area south of the 200mm isohyet line encompasses the majority of the course of the Euphrates from Emar to the Shatt Al-Arab. With the exception of the marshlands in Southern Mesopotamia and various riverine oases, this area consists of arid steppe slowly transitioning into true desert. This area corresponds to *TAVO*'s “semi-desert” (*Halbwüste*) and Wilkinson (2004) Zone 5. The subsistence practices within this region are particularly suited to pastoral use. All major sites located within this zone, even during the Middle Bronze Age, were situated within the immediate vicinity of river oases.⁹¹² Additionally, the two small mountain ranges of Jabal Sinjar and Jabal ‘Abd al-‘Azīz along the Habur exhibit specific ecosystems in accordance with their higher altitude and resultant increased precipitation.⁹¹³ These two locations and the riverine oases are the only areas within the Arid zone that permit pastoral farming according to the generally accepted guidelines, and remnants of open forests.⁹¹⁴

That said, there persists an Orientalist conception of the desert in the popular imagination, remnants of which can unfortunately be occasionally found within scholarship: Deserts are perceived as purifying and distilling, reducing people and societies to some core essence, stripping culture of its frills in the need to survive hostile environments inimical to the development of higher civilization (e.g., Flaherty, 1922; Cooper & Schoedsack, 1925; Howarth & Koff, 1976). In this sense, desert societies are viewed as simpler, their histories less complex, and in-deed at some level even static (e.g., Saidel, 2008; for Kalahari hunter-gatherers see Wilmsen, 1989). Given this assumption of static society, climate and environment are viewed as the primary determinants of social change; human adaptation consists of rise and fall.⁹¹⁵

⁹¹⁰ Cf. Reculeau 2012, 16.

⁹¹¹ This point seems to have been neglected by Reculeau's assessment of the area (2012, 16), for he suggests that this zone had the capability of sustaining large populations, rather than understanding that during the EBA-MBA this area of land would not have fallen within the parameters for a marginal zone of cultivation.

⁹¹² Cf. Reculeau 2012, 17.

⁹¹³ Reculeau 2012, 17.

⁹¹⁴ Cf. *TAVO* Map A-X-4, *apud* Reculeau 2012, 17.

⁹¹⁵ Rosen 2017, 6.

However, recent intensive archaeological research in the Israeli Negev — an area of desert / semi-desert at the very south end of the Southern Levant — suggest these assumptions have grossly skewed our perception of what level of habitation is possible within arid regions. Additional research in the Negev has illustrated the inadequacy of the Köppen and Thornthwaite climatic classifications used to predict possible agricultural practices in arid zones.⁹¹⁶ It has since been discovered that under certain conditions, arid and hyper-arid zones accommodated runoff-farming practices — as early as the Iron Age (Bruins 2012). It is thus advisable to re-address our Western, sedentary definition of “arid” and “agricultural practices” in ways that allow for the greater anthropogenic resilience evidenced in the Negev and other desert zones.⁹¹⁷ Most farmers in zones adapted to dry-farming would consider it economically unviable to plant a crop when its expected yield was less than four out of every ten years. However, Avner (1998) records the Haiwat Bedouin of Biqat Uvda (southern Negev) were satisfied with such results.⁹¹⁸ Their harvests yielded 800 kg per hectare (or ~12 bushels per acre), which is comparable to some averaged yields from 1920 - 1942 in the American state of Kansas — otherwise known as the “breadbasket of America”— at which time barley yields varied from 12 to 30 bushels of barley per acre.⁹¹⁹ This yield was sufficient for a tribe of 4000 people for a period of three years.⁹²⁰ Even when crop yields are insufficient for human consumption, the plants themselves are still valuable as feed for goats and sheep: “agricultural system viability, therefore, is a very relative issue, interconnected with the economy of the related society.”⁹²¹ Humans chose to live within desert settings even when opportunities to relocate existed, and we need to allow for this in our

⁹¹⁶ Cf. Bruins 2012.

⁹¹⁷ While the topographical specifications discovered for the Negev itself do not lend themselves to our investigation of greater Mesopotamia, they do prompt us to reconsider our preconceptions of what is “habitable,” “profitable,” or “advantageous.”

⁹¹⁸ Uzi Avner. 1998. “Settlement, Climate, and Paleoclimate.” Pages 147-202 in A.S. Issar and N. Brown, eds. *Water, Environment and Society in Times of Climatic Change: Contributions from an International Workshop within the framework of International Hydrological Program (IHP), UNESCO, held at Ben-Gurion University, Sede Boker, Israel from 7-12 July 1996.* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Science & Business Media.

⁹¹⁹ “Barley Production in Kansas.” Agricultural Experiment Station: Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science: Bulletin 318, October 1943.

It is interesting to note that the yields in Kansas and the Negev could be comparable, when the lowest precipitation recorded in Kansas during the Dust Bowl years was 21.51 inches or 546.36 mm— which should be comparable to the dry-farming zone, rather than the arid /hyper-arid zones of the Negev.

⁹²⁰ Cf. Avner 2007, *apud* Bruins 2012, 40.

⁹²¹ Bruins 2012, 40.

investigations. When we re-evaluate the standards for acceptable habitation to closer resemble those of the peoples of the Near East, rather than Western Europe, we will be better able to analyze its ancient past. Rosen (2017) notes:

The essential social and residential flexibility of nomadic adaptations, both those of hunter-gatherers as well as mobile pastoralists, requires a different view of the notion of stability (cf. Meriaot, 2011), one based on territorial perspectives and not on single site-based continuities. Longer term social continuities are thus also dependent on territory size, and must incorporate such phenomena as gradual migration as well as seasonal transhumance (e.g., Ingold, 1980).⁹²²

River oases

Within the broader arid zone, the rivers are populated with riverine oases, which provided the ideal location for settlement and agriculture— especially along the Euphrates River. These riverine oases were devoted to irrigation agriculture, specifically for cereals and legumes.⁹²³ As earlier discussed, the Euphrates' nature limits agriculture and settlement to within the Holocene terraces alongside the river itself, below the Pleistocene terraces and high plateau.⁹²⁴ Even during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, when the climate was considerably less arid, settlement was still restricted to the area along the river for purely practical reasons— it is impossible to use gravity-fed-irrigation going from a lower altitude to a higher. Evidence of irrigation techniques like this exists at Terqa — at which no evidence for settlement within Iron Age II was found apart for a few scattered tombs and a stele found by chance during the 1940s;⁹²⁵ and also at Mari— which may prove to have been the source of inspiration for later, first millennium irrigation canals in Southern Babylonia, according to Geyer and Monchambert (2015).

Though some have expressed reservations as to ability of small farms, such as these to support an entire settlement (e.g. Postgate 2016), when the numbers supplied by ancient texts are compared against the yields from the Negev, we find quite the reverse. Postgate equates a 300 *iku* farm with approximately 100 hectares,⁹²⁶ or 247 acres. As a general equivalency in agronomics is that 12 bushels or is capable of feeding one human for a year, this field should

⁹²² 6.

⁹²³ Reculeau 2012, 17.

⁹²⁴ Cf. Geyer and Monchambert 2015, 14-17.

⁹²⁵ Simpson 1984; Geyer and Monchambert 2003, 115, 261, 264-266, *apud* Masetti-Rouault 2016, 202.

⁹²⁶ 37.

have been well able to provide for approximately 250 individuals.⁹²⁷ As the texts indicate that this particular settlement was inhabited by 30 people and their families, and expected to produce for themselves, seed for the next year, traveler rations, and send the remnant to the state.⁹²⁸ According to these numbers, limiting the yield to that expected in the Negev, and accounting for travelers, need for next year's seed, and the sustenance of the inhabitants, we would still expect an excess for an additional 71-131 people.⁹²⁹ Though the yield and sustenance rate may be much lower than those of the post-industrial age, it is still more than sufficient for a population as small as indicated by both excavation and texts.

These calculations have been purposely minimalistic to illustrate how capable these riverine settlements would have been to support themselves and the broader empire during the Middle Bronze Age. Recent proposals by Geyer and Monchambert (2015) suggest that “during the entire Holocene the lower valley of the Syrian Euphrates looked like a fluvial oasis.”⁹³⁰ The Mediterranean climatic environment of Upper Mesopotamia has not failed, though there have been periods of significant climatic fluctuations.⁹³¹ Though the specifications of these areas differ drastically from popular notions of an “oasis,” everything is relative.

CONCLUSION

This general overview of the available paleoclimatic data from the Near East for the Late Bronze Age until the Persian Period suggests an unequivocal period of aridity occurred during the Bronze - Iron Age transition—contrary to Reculeau's conclusion that the data of the second millennium BCE “yielded rather ambiguous results.”⁹³² While it appears this way at first glance, when one factors in the various global oscillations and pressure systems that are now known to affect the precipitation patterns in the Near East, the ambiguity of his results disappears. However, his comments concerning Parpola and Neumann (1987) are justified—if only because

⁹²⁷ Even if we only suggest a yield equivalent to that attested in the hyper-arid Negev of 800 kg / ha (11.9 bushels / acre), we still would expect an annual yield of 80,000 kg, or 1189.57 bushels.

⁹²⁸ Postgate 2016, 37.

⁹²⁹ These figures allow for 70-100 inhabitants and 20-50 travelers, with 60 lbs / acre expected for seed, and provisioning 12 bushels / person annually. According to these numbers, in profitable seasons settlements such as these could well expect to contribute to “‘Joseph-in-Egypt’ reserves for the population as a whole” (contra Postgate 2016, 37).

⁹³⁰ 14.

⁹³¹ Geyer & Monchambert 2015, 13.

⁹³² 2012, 59.

the paper was written before the field of paleoclimatology had been well established. The palynology from all available sources—Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Israel—in fact *does* suggest a period of aridity, though that does not necessarily equate to a “hotter” period, as summarized by Parpola and Neumann. That said, Wilkinson’s analysis remains accurate: “the well-known twelfth century collapse ... appears to have been at the end of a decline that started much earlier.”⁹³³ As evidenced by the computer-based modeling and paleoclimatological data, the decline did indeed begin closer to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in many locations. However, hindsight is twenty-twenty: the beginning of a period of significant aridification is not heralded as such, nor the effects fully felt, until well into it. The Early - Middle Bronze Age should be seen as an atypical period of decreased aridity, after which the various agro-pastoral zones returned to their habitual, Holocene locales. City-states rose and fell during this anomalous time, and when the level of aridity rose once more, those outside of suitable zones experienced hardships and eventually could not be sustained. Harmansh (2012) plotted such adaptation within the early Neo-Assyrian empire, as cities were built further north, well into the higher isohyets than the ancestral capital of Assur, some were lost to Aramaean polities, to be later reestablished as “Assyrian” if only in name.

If one expects to find a year-to-year correlation between the scientific data and the historical sources, then it is true: There is no direct, coterminous correlation between the collapse of second millennium polities and climate change. However, when one begins with the paleoclimatic and geographical data and only later layers in the historical information, a much greater connection is discovered. Time lags are to be expected between precipitation in the mountains and snowmelt that fills the rivers; between diminishing of montane precipitation and diminishment of streamflow. So too should we expect time lags to exist between climatological shifts and its recognized impact upon populations— especially in a world much less heavily populated, in which anthropogenic stresses have yet to account for a significant portion of environmental change on a global level. This, at least, Reculeau recognized as a possibility: “Yet, this does not exclude the possibility that the cumulative effects of centuries of drought, tougher with several other political or socio-economical elements, had played a significant role in weakening the situation of Assyria and of many other polities throughout the Near East. This

⁹³³ Wilkinson 2004: 187, *apud* Reculeau 2012, 68.

reflects the differences in processes, dates and forms of the so-called ‘1200 BCE collapse’ ... and can even be tracked down for the MA period in documents pertaining to the administration of crown-land...”⁹³⁴

⁹³⁴ Reculeau 2012 68-69.

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