

The Empires of Western Asia and the Assyrian World Empire

Gojko Barjamovic

Inventing Empire

The history of empire in Western Asia before the Common Era is one of intensifying political integration and territorial expansion. From the earliest well-documented manifestation in the twenty-fourth century BCE,¹ imperial states built on a formation of composite statehood that was tied to the joint rise of city and state on the alluvial plains of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers a millennium earlier. This shaped the conditions under which early empires rose and ruled, and city-states remained the chief building blocks of most larger states until the first millennium BCE.² The political dynamic between the cities was the raw material out of which empires were created and maintained. Often it was also the cause of their failure. In addition to the territorially defined urban communities, kinship-based polities or groups that lacked a territorial cognate played a key role in state and empire formation and maintenance. But since written documentation derives mostly from institutional and urban contexts, the demonstrably complex interplay between city and tribal identities is often obscure.³

The fusion of urbanization and state formation in Western Asia led to the rise of the highly integrated state form commonly referred to as “city-states.”⁴ This characteristic type of micro-polity was only gradually demolished or incorporated by the larger and looser empires, ceasing to exist as independent social and political units toward the middle of the first millennium BCE.⁵ Empires became increasingly dominant over time, from just two well-documented examples in the third millennium BCE to the more-or-less permanent partition of Western Asia into imperial states from the seventh century BCE. They also grew progressively in size, with the important exception of the first imperial state to arise in the region. The empire of Akkad in the twenty-third century BCE controlled a territory larger than any of its

¹ See Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume.

² Barjamovic 2012a.

³ von Dassow 1999; Barjamovic 2004; Fleming 2004; Porter 2013.

⁴ Hansen 2000.

⁵ Larsen 2000.

successors for almost 15 centuries and came to stand as an imperial ideal during the following almost two millennia.⁶

Although empires were often transient, and always based on the self-governed cities and tribal groups, their continued reappearance suggests that they possessed organizational capabilities beyond those of their constituent components. Their long-term triumph as a political and social form of organization is also implied by their steady geographical spread. At the beginning of the second millennium BCE only the densely settled regions along the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris had seen anything but intermittent imperial unification. By the end of the Bronze Age (ca. 1100 BCE) the entire territory between Iran and Egypt had been split between a handful of imperial states in a peer polity international system that had lasted for centuries. In spite of their success, it is suggestive of the strength and stability of the city-states that they continued to endure and prevail over political superstructures for nearly three millennia. A return to a regional system of micro-states occurred at least three times in Mesopotamian history: in the late third, early second, and early first millennia BCE.

In terms of origins, the history of empire in Western Asia begins with the unification of the cities of present-day Iraq, Iran, and Syria under Sargon of Akkade in the twenty-fourth century BCE. However, earlier states, such as Kish and Lagaš in Iraq, Susa in Iran, and Ebla in Syria, constitute examples of what one might call “proto-empires” at least in the sense that these were larger states with hegemonic claims. They were created through military conquest, and sought to establish territorial and political unification and the economic exploitation of a cluster of formerly sovereign polities under the authority of a single city. The imperial phenomenon in Mesopotamia may therefore to some extent be linked to state formation itself, and the notion of empire was already rooted both historically and ideologically in the area by the second millennium BCE. A specific and shared cultural sense of a “Mesopotamian world” also reaches back at least into the third millennium BCE, independent of the presence of a unifying state.⁷

The dynamics of state and imperial formation in Iran are less well understood but seem to have mirrored the Syrian and Mesopotamian ones in terms of institutions and the play between sovereign city-states and imperial unification.⁸ Also this region was unified by a shared material culture, religion, language, and notion of territory. In Anatolia the process of state formation happened later than in the rest of Western Asia and Egypt, with the first large urban communities forming during the third millennium BCE. In parallel to the dynamics of the south, polities with a shared core culture coalesced into larger territorial units during the following centuries in a process that culminated with the formation of the loose imperial states of Anitta and Hattusili I.⁹

⁶ Liverani 1993; Foster 2016; Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume.

⁷ Yoffee 2005.

⁸ Potts 1999.

⁹ Beal 2011; Barjamovic et al. 2012, ch. 2.

The continuous formation and collapse of empires in Western Asia were dependent upon a dynamic interaction between economic centralization, agricultural expansion, and urban transformation. Theoretical studies of state dynamics in the region have mostly concentrated on pristine or primary state formation with less attention devoted to the subsequent process of regional integration and different phases of imperialism. Early writers focused on conquest, emphasizing the coercive role of empires in general¹⁰ and religious imperialism in particular.¹¹ Later, structural typologies of social evolution, world-systems theory, and center-periphery took over as dominant explanatory models.¹² Focus has shifted toward imperial ideology and elite self-representation.¹³ Recent studies also explore the social basis of political and infrastructural power with prominence given to an understanding of social and political networks¹⁴ and the limits of state power.¹⁵

Particular to the study of empires in Western Asia is the fact that writing was developed for and tied to clay as a medium. Clay survives well in the ground, making the area that used cuneiform writing one of the historically best documented in ancient times.¹⁶ Records exist in several languages, including Akkadian, Elamite, Hittite, Hurrian, Luwian, Old Persian, Sumerian, Ugaritic, and Urartean, and derive from a variety of contexts, states, and periods. They are mainly documents of practice that have remained in the ground since their time of use, offering both advantages and profound challenges in the writing of history.¹⁷ Their direct survival, not by textual transmission, produces an uneven account of situations and events, biased more by ancient literacy and archaeological sampling than ideology. An extensive material and visual record adds key data to the study of imperial culture and its diffusion¹⁸ alongside work on early landscape, movement, and environment.¹⁹

Due to the nature and prevalence of archival texts, evidence on essential aspects of Mesopotamian statecraft is absent or only indirectly available, including demographic data, production, and surplus. This makes it difficult to identify political strategy or factors that trigger expansion or slippages, except in a most general way.²⁰ The magnitude of the written and archaeological data also means that scholars struggle to quantify and process an overwhelming amount of information related to the primary production (e.g., of food, fiber, textile, timber, skin, stone, and metal) that formed the economic foundation of early states. Conversely, the fact that written cuneiform culture covers more than three millennia of documentation

¹⁰ Olmstead 1918; Wittfogel 1957; Garelli 1974; Pečirková 1987.

¹¹ Albrektson 1967; Oded 1991; Holloway 2002, 40–64.

¹² Larsen 1979; Postgate 1992; Lamprichs 1995; Parker 2001.

¹³ Liverani 1973, 1979, 2017; Winter 1981; Machinist 1993; Bahrani 2008; Siddall 2013; Feldman 2014; Karlsson 2016; Lavan, Payne, and Weisweiler 2016.

¹⁴ Parker 2001; von Dassow 2011.

¹⁵ Ando and Richardson 2017.

¹⁶ Streck 2010.

¹⁷ Van Der Mieroop 1999.

¹⁸ Parker 2011.

¹⁹ Ur 2017; Altaweel et al. 2016; Weiss 2017.

²⁰ Morris 2013.

offers a unique opportunity to trace social dynamics and follow historical development across an exceptionally long diachronic perspective.²¹

Empires in Western Asia after 2000 BCE

Following the collapse of the Empire of Ur,²² periods of political unification and fragmentation in Western Asia prior to the Persian conquest in 539 BCE can be divided into three blocks. Dates follow the so-called Middle Chronology²³ and are approximate only.

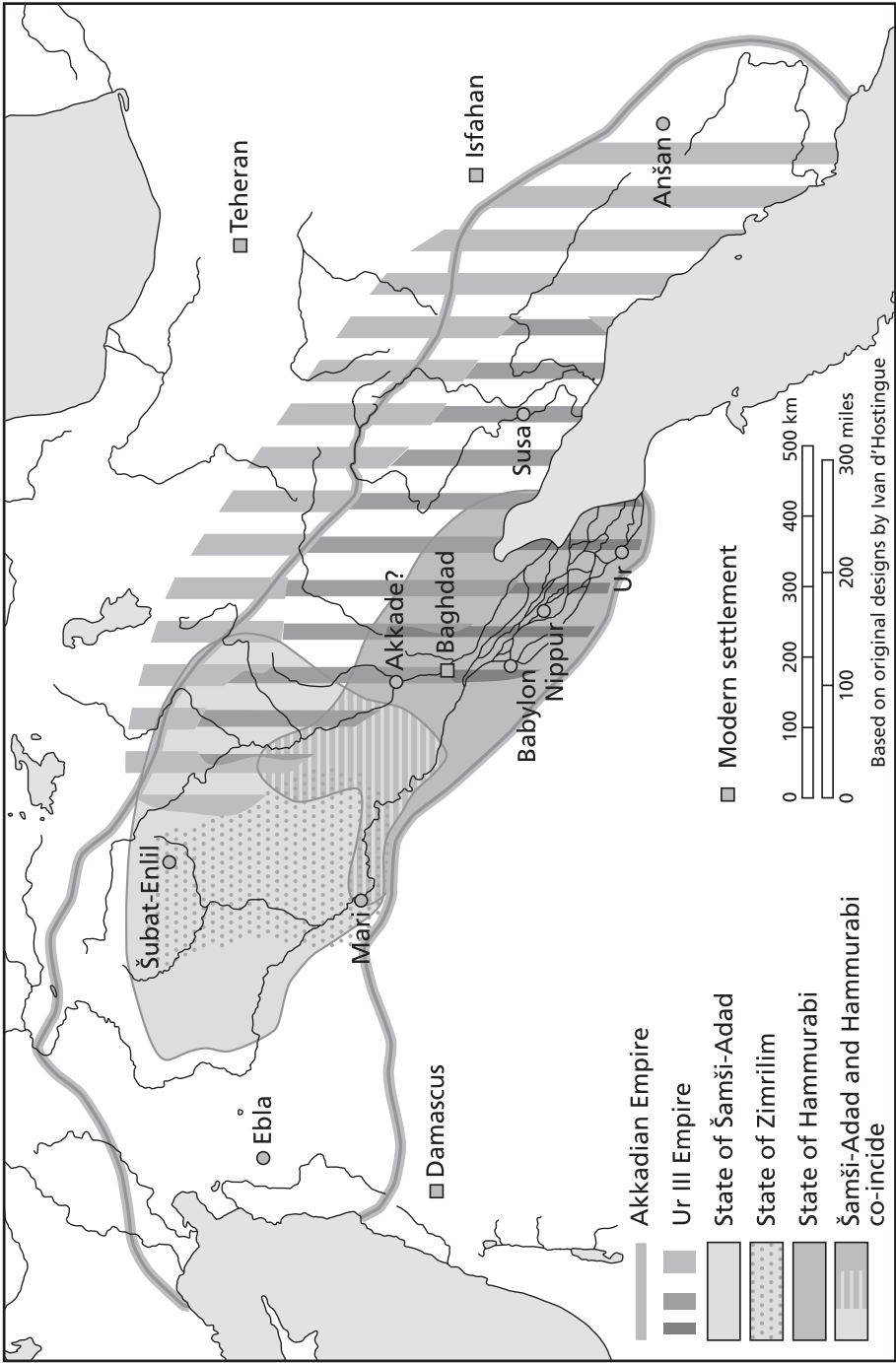
- (1) *Conglomeration*. Western Asia circa 2000–1760 BCE was divided into hundreds of micro-polities forming shifting military and political alliances. Southern Mesopotamia became unified in a closely integrated imperial-type state under Hammurabi of Babylon and his dynasty (1792–1595 BCE). Governors sought to implement regulations on economic policies in the conquered regions and attempts were made to bypass local political authority and channel resources directly to the capital. In reality, the state often had less success in penetrating existing urban power structures and appropriating resources than it was prepared to broadcast.²⁴ Imperial overtures rarely outlived their founder. Similar attempts at regional integration failed to gain permanency in northern Syria (e.g., the state of Šamši-Adad I). Instead, the area was dominated by smaller networks led by regional centers, such as Mari, Aleppo, and Tiganunum.
- (2) *Regional empires* (map 3.1). After 1600 BCE the area between Iran and Egypt was united into a dynamic regional system of empires. Mitanni covered northern and western Syria and northern Iraq circa 1550–1340 BCE, but succumbed to internal strife and the pressure of the expanding Assyrian Empire of northern Iraq and Syria circa 1360–609 BCE. Both states were structured into territorial provinces ruled by governors appointed by the ruler. Southern Mesopotamia (at times including territories in the Persian Gulf) was controlled by the Sealand (ca. 1600–1460) and the Kassite state (ca. 1600–1155 BCE) and later by the rulers of Isin and various smaller dynasties. Elam and Anšan in western Iran went through a period of centralization and consolidation of royal power to form a loose imperial state circa 1500–1100 BCE. Anatolia was unified under the waxing and waning fortunes of the Hittite Empire circa 1650–1100 BCE that successfully expanded its borders to clash with Assyria, Egypt, and the early Greek states. The period saw the large-scale founding of capitals across the region that were physically removed from

²¹ Radner and Robson 2011.

²² See Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume.

²³ Brinkman 1977.

²⁴ Richardson 2012.



Map 3.1.1. Empires of the Near East, ca. 1500–1100 BCE.

Source: Bang and Scheidel, 2013, *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, map 4.2 Copyright: Oxford University Press.

traditional seats of political and religious power. These include Akhetaten in Egypt, Tarhuntassa in Hatti, Kār-tukultī-Ninurta in Assur, Dūr-Kurigalzu in Babylonia, and Dūr-Untaş in Elam. The location of these capitals points to a shift in perception of monarchic rule and the intentional physical seclusion of the royal court from those it ruled as individual charismatic (and sometimes divine) rulers and their personal retinue in the early empires gave way to courts as institutions and a heightened emphasis upon the theatrical aspects of kingship.

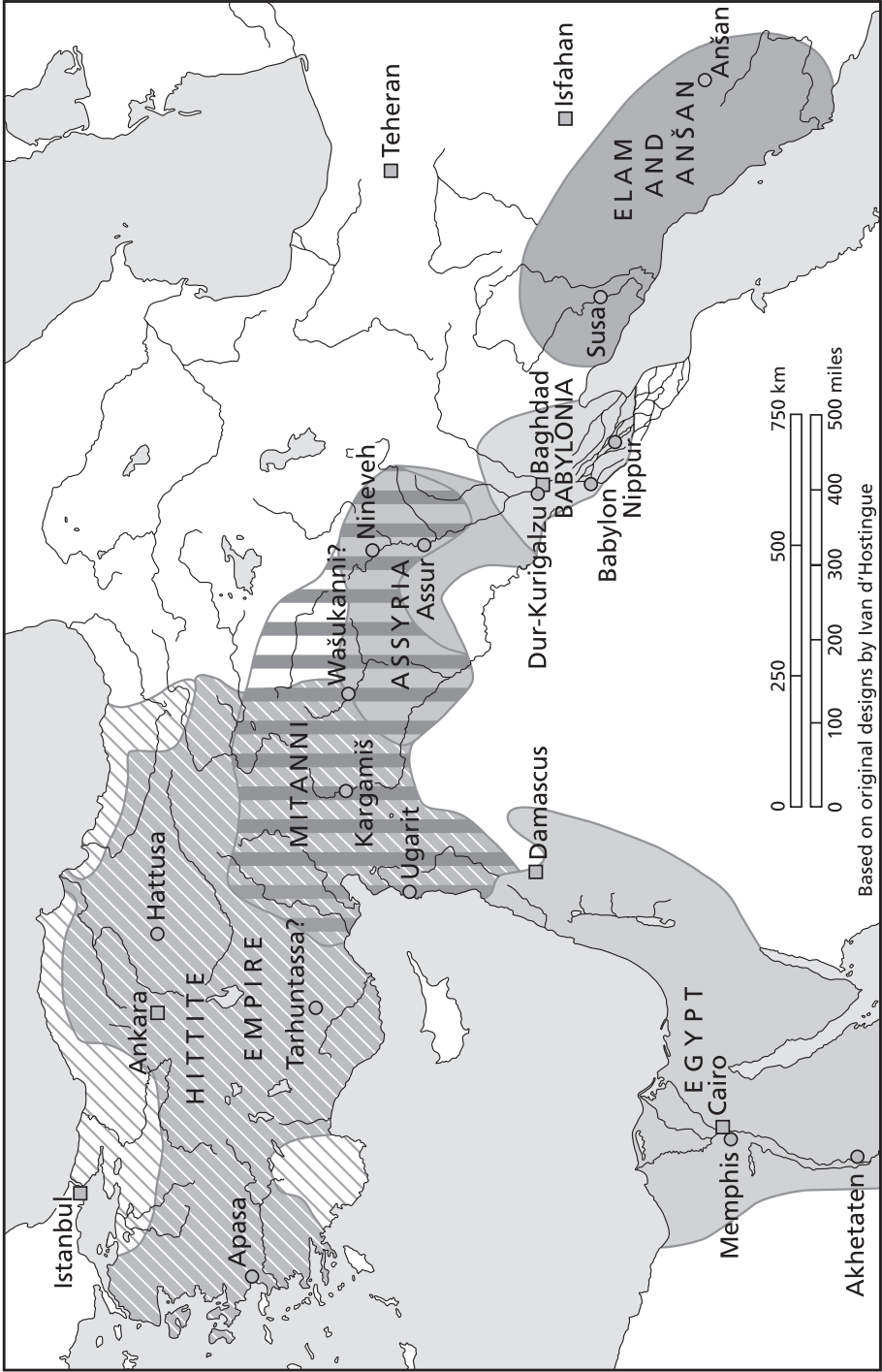
- (3) *Universal empires* (map 3.2). A period of political fragmentation swept across the Near East and the Mediterranean circa 1050–900 BCE, leading to mass migration and shifts in population.²⁵ Assyria and Egypt survived in a diminished form, while present-day southern Turkey, Syria, and southern Iraq reverted to a conglomerate of self-governed city-states, small territorial principalities, and tribal nations. All were gradually integrated into the Assyrian Empire. Its expanding political and military power was based on the economic development of territorial provinces, diplomatic relations with client states, centralized taxation, and a standing army—all enveloped in a universal ideology. The expansion culminated in the conquest of Elam and Egypt in the first half of the seventh century BCE and led to the political unification of Egypt and all of Western Asia, with the exception of Anatolia, into a single state. Beyond its territories, the disintegration of the Hittite Empire had split up central and western Asia Minor into the states of Phrygia, Lydia, and the principalities or city-states of Tabal (circa 1100–550 BCE). At its peak, Phrygia formed an empire with a transregional elite culture, a loose provincial system, and a retinue of client states. Later, the Lydian state expanded eastward to become a small and relatively short-lived empire.²⁶ Tradition asserts that it established a frontier with the empire of the Iranian Medes (circa 640–550 BCE) along the Halys River. To the east, the empire of Urartu (circa 830–600 BCE) covered the highlands of eastern Turkey, Armenia, and northwestern Iran.²⁷ Its administrative system, political structures, and royal ideology were to some extent modeled on Assyria. After the fall of Assyria, the Babylonian Empire (626–539 BCE) developed the Assyrian imperial template into a regional model of political control and state administration.²⁸ A parallel administrative hierarchy of large temple institutions, based on transferable prebends and enormous landholdings, played a key role in society. Territories covered the entire Near East from Iran to the Sinai before the empire fell to the Persian invasion of Cyrus the Great. The Neo-Elamite state in Iran (circa 750–550 BCE) developed as a loose confederation under Assyrian military pressure, but survived

²⁵ Drews 1993.

²⁶ Waters, Chapter 4 of the present volume.

²⁷ Salvini 1995.

²⁸ Jursa 2014.



Map 3.2. Empires of the Near East, ca. 900–550 BCE.

Source: Bang and Scheidel, 2013, *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, map 4.3. Copyright: Oxford University Press.

its chief antagonist before being engulfed by the emerging Iranian state of the Medes and Persians.²⁹

This tripartite division of political history in early Western Asia is of course greatly simplified, and the existence of empires at a given point depends upon the definition of the term itself. Here it is left deliberately vague to denote any type of territorial state that (a) held political hegemony over several formerly sovereign cities and kinship groups through military power, (b) formed a supranational elite, and (c) developed a sense of state ideology distinct from that of the individual communities it controlled.³⁰ Structural features are given precedence to variables that are hard to measure in ancient states, such as territorial size and degree of state integration. The definition produces a number of outliers (Anitta's kingdom, Hammurabi's Babylon, the Kassite state), and some authors would reject broad classifications in favor of a more fine-grained terminology.³¹ But the list above permits comparative analysis and highlights a repeated oscillation between political fragmentation and centralization in Western Asia. It also emphasizes the overall shift from micro-polities toward imperial states during the two millennia covered by the chapter. From the Assyrian expansion in the eighth century BCE, the heartland of Mesopotamia essentially remained under control by changing empires for nearly three millennia. Such continuity of imperial rule is distinctive to the region, and although a sweeping historical overview conceals major political and social breaks, there appears to be a remarkable bias at play in favor of large-scale territorial integration in the region where states first arose.

Some empires did not outlive their founder (the Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia), while others existed for generations and were formative for the tradition of statehood in the region (the Akkadian Empire, the Assyrian Empire). Some were large, loosely based networks of power with limited ability or ambition to penetrate underlying society (Mitanni); others were small, territorially integrated units that rested on provincial rule and a strong centralizing principle with direct control of workers, infrastructure, and resources (state of Ur). In some cases the foundation of society rested upon an explicit expansionist ideology (the late Babylonian Empire). In other instances the empires were an end result of outside pressure (Urartu, Media). Territorial expansion could take place through diplomacy as well as conquest, and some empires were successful in attracting and keeping clients mainly through structural force (Hittites).

Principles of military mobilization would vary from period to period with a trajectory toward permanence and professionalization. Military contingents were generally paid directly or by land allotment, while territorial armies were drafted through systems of *corvée*. The importance of taxation as a source of state income also increased through time. The early city-states did not support themselves by

²⁹ Potts 1999; Waters 2000.

³⁰ Mann 1986; Runciman 2011.

³¹ Liverani 2005; Garfinkel 2013.

levying taxes directly on land or production, but set aside prebendary lands to generate an economic surplus for the support of its central institutions. Imperial taxation strategies would include such systems of *corvée* and generally make use of already existing systems of land ownership. They would in time include also direct taxation of land and estimated crop surplus. Levies were imposed primarily on a provincial basis through local officials and were often entirely dependent upon the resolve and skill of such areas to organize the collection themselves. One may conceptualize institutions and individuals as operating within vertical patrimonial structures, rather than referring to abstract entities, such as “administration” and “empire.”³² But crosswise forces were also always in operation, with authority being shared and contested between urban officials and kinship groups, popular assemblies, merchant councils, and religious institutions.³³

Imperial economic policies are visible in the textual record mainly in relation to production. They include the founding of settlements dedicated to a particular purpose (cattle stations, fortifications, logging communities, ports of trade), communication infrastructure (roads, inns, postal systems), and promoting agricultural specialization (viticulture, olive growing, date cultivation, etc.) through a control of labor forces. The distortion of the sources often makes it impossible to determine what level of private entrepreneurship existed at any given point in complement to the state-controlled economy, but there seems to be a developmental trend toward increased privatization.³⁴

The Mesopotamian alluvium is suited for supporting a large population through irrigation-based agriculture and animal husbandry. During periods of political stability the soil was capable of producing one of the largest crops known in pre-modern times. At the same time, the fertile river valleys lack a number of key strategic resources, including stone, quality timber, and metal. This situation led to a permanent dynamic in which all states centered on the floodplains supported a differentiated economy through varied measures of conquest, the establishment of new industries, and support of long-distance exchange. Trade was probably always a major source of state income, as well as a venue of social mobility, but since the domain of writing usually concentrated on central imperial administration, extant sources seldom overlap with the world of trade.³⁵ Its importance is mostly indirectly visible in the form of traded goods in both texts and excavations, and through the strategies by which empires strove to control trade routes and restructure administrative procedures and systems of production³⁶ in order to promote industries for the benefit of consumption and business.

A series of interlocking circuits of exchange connected Mesopotamia to remote resource areas, including tin mines in Central Asia, copper from Oman and Cyprus, gemstones from Afghanistan, silver from Anatolia, spices from Southeast

³² Schloen 2001; Ur 2014.

³³ Barjamovic 2004; von Dassow 2011.

³⁴ Hudson and Levine 1996; Postgate 2001a.

³⁵ Larsen 1967; Joannés 2004, 38–39; Warburton 2016.

³⁶ Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume.

Asia, gold from Egypt, and aromatics from South Arabia.³⁷ High-quality textiles constituted a chief Mesopotamian export commodity. In addition, people in the region generated revenue from its control of the major transit routes that connected Asia, Africa, and Europe. As a rule, silver bullion functioned as base currency. Income generated by trade was subject to imperial taxation in various ways, including mandatory gifts, the right of pre-emption on select cargo at favorable prices, requirements that private merchants carry out trade on behalf of state institutions, and through the collection of duty or tolls on imports or traffic in transit. Trading communities were often kept under indirect state control, presumably to outsource economic risk, and due to the fact that private entrepreneurs may have been better suited to negotiate transnational commercial ventures. Social issues may have been at stake as well, as suggested by the common physical separation of the state administration and trading communities.³⁸ The fact that market trade is often visible only on the periphery of our sources signals a public attitude toward the potentially inauspicious effects of trade on established patterns of social mobility and political influence among those who produced most of the written record. Nevertheless, the importance of international trade for the economy and strategy of early empires is evident³⁹ and points to the control over trade and trade routes as one triggering factor of imperial expansion.

The City Assur and the Land of Assyria

After the collapse of the Ur III state,⁴⁰ its former imperial provinces reverted to the political landscape of city-states and tribal groups tied into networks of changing political alliances that they had been prior to the imperial conquest. This included the city-state of Assur, located on the northern fringes of the empire at an important crossing of the Tigris River. The city established a prolific long-distance trade in raw metal and luxury textiles. Wealth flowed into a society controlled by an elite of investors and financiers, and a ruling dynasty acted as religious figureheads and chairmen of a bicameral parliament controlled by wealthy traders. After almost two centuries during which the city maintained its parliamentary constitution and neutrality as a port of trade, Assur was conquered in 1808 BCE by the warlord Šamši-Adad I and incorporated into his short-lived empire.⁴¹ A few centuries later Assur fell to the Syrian-based empire of Mitanni, perhaps to become a client kingdom with its own dynastic line. Its strategic position and proactive trading policy seem to have continued to secure it a status as a commercial hub, but historical sources for the period between 1750–1360 BCE are few. The weakening of Mitanni during

³⁷ Barjamovic 2018.

³⁸ Gledhill and Larsen 1982; Barjamovic 2012a.

³⁹ Laursen and Steinkeller 2017; Barjamovic 2018.

⁴⁰ Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume; Barjamovic forthcoming.

⁴¹ Charpin 2004.

the fourteenth century BCE and the expansion of the Babylonian and Hittite states led to changes in governance and economic structures in Assur.⁴² Mitanni became caught up in a war of succession and Assur reclaimed its independence to begin a process of rapid territorial expansion and transformation to a “Land of Assur.”⁴³

The resulting state in some sense represents the second culmination of the imperial drive in Mesopotamia by expanding its borders beyond the standards set by the Akkadian kings a millennium before.⁴⁴ Assyria ruled as an empire for over three-quarters of a millennium and was able to act on a wider scale than any state before it. It became a prototype for transnational imperialism, royal ideology, and court culture, establishing a model that would reach beyond its own history and the geographical area in which it had evolved. Through alternating periods of expansion and contraction it extended its hegemony to the edge of the urban world. Its rulers refined policies of territoriality and authority, adapting to past experience and existing challenges.

During the early phase of empire, ca. 1360–1080 BCE, that is commonly known as the Middle-Assyrian period, the empire rose to power with provinces extending across northern Iraq and Syria.⁴⁵ The era is characterized by a dismantling of the city-state and the consolidation of an expansive territorial empire. It is unclear exactly how the process of political centralization occurred. The popular assembly in Assur apparently continued to rule in local matters for another millennium,⁴⁶ but on a larger scale the city-state had to be dissolved for the empire to function. There are indications that trade continued to play an important role in political life, and that the important families, which came to constitute the landed gentry of the empire, were to some extent descendants of the commercial elite that had started the trade centuries earlier.⁴⁷

The later or “Neo-Assyrian” phase of the state, ca. 883–609 BCE, traditionally refers to a second era of rapid expansion, which culminated in the formation of a universal empire that brought together the Near East from Egypt to Iran under a single ruler. Internal restructuring transfigured Assyria from a system of isolated administrative focal points toward a state of territorial integration.⁴⁸ In between were years of weakness and partial collapse, but dates are conventional and mainly refer to deteriorating conditions of elite political structures and the complex urban economy. A distinctive state and identity existed throughout the 15 centuries of recorded Assyrian history, ca. 2100–600 BCE,⁴⁹ and the modern chronological partition into “Middle” and “Neo-Assyrian” conceals what was internally perceived as

⁴² Postgate 2013.

⁴³ Postgate 1992; Machinist 1993.

⁴⁴ Steinkeller, Chapter 2 of the present volume.

⁴⁵ Liverani 1984; Jacob 2003.

⁴⁶ Barjamovic 2004.

⁴⁷ Postgate 1992.

⁴⁸ Garelli and Lemaire 1997; Radner 2004; Liverani 2017.

⁴⁹ Frahm 2017.

a historical continuum. At least since 1350 BCE Assyria was an empire ruled by a single dynasty that held the city of Assur as its religious and ideological center.

The Assyrian fusion of royal and priestly power was different from the tradition in Babylonia, where kingship was separated from the religious institutions during the second millennium BCE. Particular to the first centuries of the Assyrian Empire was a tendency to restructure or demolish local political institutions in newly conquered areas and insert a local ruling class of ethnic Assyrians. With the growth of the universal state in the ninth century BCE this practice was abandoned and the Assyrian imperial elite became inclusive, multicultural, and multiethnic. Assyrianized nobility from subordinate states could work their way into the imperial elite by openly emphasizing their commitment to the ruler.⁵⁰ This process was tied to a gradual transfer of power from a hereditary landed aristocracy to a nobility whose position was personal, based on royal appointment, and dependent upon individual loyalty.⁵¹

First Empire

From the ascension of Aššur-uballit I (1353–1318 BCE), Assyria underwent the first phase of rapid growth, both through military conquest and diplomatic overture. During its initial stages the empire formed a loose network of control, based on territorial provinces and client states. The role of the monarch changed so that the king, in addition to his priestly duties, took on the role of supreme judge (a role formerly reserved for the Assembly) and the position as military commander of a powerful army. The core provinces consisted of a region around the city of Assur itself and the ancient urban centers of Nineveh, Kirkuk, and Arbela. Conquered states were kept as clients or were turned into imperial provinces headed by governors. From early on, the western territories held a special status under the administration of an imperial viceroy.⁵² During the early phase of expansion, territories were divided into “provinces” (*pāhutu*) and “fortresses” (*halšu*) with the fortresses joined to the provinces at a later stage.⁵³ After a century of territorial expansion, the imperial territory remained relatively constant ca. 1250–1080 BCE.

Religious and militaristic ideology placed the king in the center of the universe and presented Assyria as a land enclosed by a ring of evil.⁵⁴ Social justice was a royal domain, and it was the sovereign’s prime duty to subjugate internal malevolence and eliminate outside threats to civilization. A number of characteristic elements in Assyrian imperialism were instituted already during the fourteenth to twelfth centuries BCE, including the systematic deportation of populations to concentrate

⁵⁰ Lumsden 2001; Parpola 2004, 2007.

⁵¹ Garelli and Lemaire 1997; Cancik-Kirschbaum 1999.

⁵² Jakob 2003; Tenu 2009.

⁵³ Postgate 2007.

⁵⁴ Machinist 1993.

labor resources and weaken local identity. Other elements include the creation of a provincial and transport infrastructure based on military fortresses and administrative centers,⁵⁵ and the creation of standing garrisons that could operate in addition to larger hosts levied through drafts.⁵⁶

Assur-uballiṣ I was the first Assyrian ruler to assume the traditional Mesopotamian royal title of “king” (*šarru*),⁵⁷ and his royal epithets underline his priestly duties, his functions as shepherd of the people, builder, and supreme judge. Governors bore the overall responsibility for local economy and public safety in the provinces. A fundamental task was to oversee the cultivation of crown land, the storage and distribution of products, and the upkeep of military and strategic infrastructure.⁵⁸ Duties included the supervision of local labor forces and the coordination of their duties to the state in return for payment in kind. Governors were also required to deliver regular offerings (*ginā'u*) to the central temple in Assur,⁵⁹ and acted as imperial representatives in the diplomatic relation to other states. They would maintain foreign contacts, implement imperial policy in the borderlands, and ensure the safety and security of envoys passing through their territory.⁶⁰ On a local level, the heads of town administration (*haziānu*) would represent local elites and be given hereditary positions, even if they were formally approved and appointed by the ruler.⁶¹ Their agricultural and judicial duties were similar to those of the provincial governors within the single settlement.

The mechanisms of taxation in the early empire are not well understood but appear to have been based on trade and the access to land.⁶² New areas were put under cultivation, with the royal family itself becoming the largest landowner. Plots of crown land were allocated to individual users in exchange for military and civil services (*ilku*). The state would also recruit people based on privately owned land that came without an *ilku*-obligation, but how this was practiced is less clear. The only direct taxes payable by individuals were levied on imported goods—sometimes as much as 25 percent of the final price.⁶³ Finally, there was a variety of income flowing directly to the ruler and his family; key terms include “tribute” (*madattu*) that was paid also by the client states, “audience gifts” (*nāmurtu*) presented at court, and “booty” (*hubtu/šallatu*) collected during military campaigns. An important dynamic existed between royal and temple administrations in regard to the storage and accumulation of agricultural surplus.⁶⁴

Other than permanent garrisons, the early empire had no standing army.⁶⁵ Instead, the state maintained detailed registers of personnel—sometimes counting

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Akkermans 2006.

⁵⁶ Jakob 2003, 195ff; Postgate 2007, 2008.

⁵⁷ Seux 1967.

⁵⁸ Faist 2006.

⁵⁹ Holloway 2002; Gautier 2016.

⁶⁰ Jakob 2006.

⁶¹ Jakob 2003.

⁶² Postgate 1971, 1982, 2013.

⁶³ Jakob 2003, 170–172.

⁶⁴ Gautier 2016.

⁶⁵ Postgate 2008.

more than 2,000 individuals⁶⁶—who could be mobilized quickly on a short-term basis for defensive operations, military campaigns, and civil projects. The military leaders constituted the highest officials of the royal administration, and included the “vizier” (*sukkallu*), the “commander-in-chief” (*tartenmu*), and the “herald” (*nāgīru*). During the late empire these men came to form a group known collectively as “the magnates,” who may have been part of a royal council.⁶⁷

Rebirth

The period of general instability that struck the Near East in the twelfth century BCE caused states to collapse and populations to move. Assyria lost control of most of its western possessions, and territories that had formerly been under imperial Hittite, Assyrian, Kassite, and Egyptian control coalesced into a system of city-states, tribal holdings, and small territorial federations in Babylonia, Syria, the Levant, and southern Turkey.⁶⁸ From the early ninth century BCE the process of Assyrian conquest regained speed under Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) and his son Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE)—initially as a restoration of lost provinces, and later as a regular territorial expansion.⁶⁹ Conquered lands were submitted to provincial or client rule, and the royal capital moved from Assur to Kalhu and was transformed into a political and administrative center of the new state.

Imperial growth went along with the formation of a distinctive state ideology and an institutionalized court protocol tied to the dramatic setting created at the new royal seat. Formal etiquette and a rigid social hierarchy were combined with strict rules of physical access and an appropriation of space on both an ideological and physical level to sustain an image of a universal empire with the Assyrian king at its central axis.⁷⁰ The city walls of Kalhu enclosed an area of some 380 hectares, and elaborate canal systems were constructed to provide water for its burgeoning population.⁷¹ Settlers were brought from across the empire, both to provide the manpower needed to maintain the new center of government, and to strengthen the position of the king at the expense of the traditional urban elites of the Assyrian heartland.⁷² The highest administrative and military offices were now given mainly to eunuchs, who had their ties to family and outside loyalties severed by castration.⁷³ Individual merits, devotion, and loyalty became more important than pedigree for the privileges bestowed upon each officer. The highest positions came with extensive territorial provinces, and evidently the chief executors of the empire

⁶⁶ Postgate 2003.

⁶⁷ Mattila 2000.

⁶⁸ Thuesen 2000; Larsen 2000.

⁶⁹ Liverani 2004, 2005.

⁷⁰ Barjamovic 2011.

⁷¹ Altaweel 2008; Ur 2013; also Kertai 2015.

⁷² Lumsden 2001; Ur 2010.

⁷³ Radner 2011.

were absent from the royal court for parts of the year to manage their households in the provinces, to lead armies in military campaigns, and to perform political or ritual obligations on behalf of king and empire. Yet, most, if not all, of the magnates maintained extensive households in the capital, where presence at court was presumably of vital importance and perhaps even required for upholding their social position.

After the reign of Shalmaneser III followed a period of weakness in royal authority as provincial governors gained an extensive measure of sovereignty and *de facto* turned their territories into client states. The Urartean Empire at the same time expanded in the direction of Assyria and threatened its interests in the Anatolian and Iranian Highlands.⁷⁴ The fact that the imperial provincial administration maintained territorial status quo during this period of royal weakness, but did not embark upon further expansion, suggests that a strong centralized power was fundamental for Assyrian imperial growth, and was tied to central authority and its ability to coordinate resources. As political power became concentrated within a narrow circle of people, it could in principle be shared between them; but as the empire grew, and the estates of the provincial governors became increasingly distant from the capital, authority shifted to the periphery and began threatening state integrity. This development was effectively curtailed by the absolutist reforms of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BCE), who reorganized the provincial system to reduce the power of the governors, restructured the imperial army and its supportive infrastructure, and revived an aggressive and expansive Assyrian foreign policy against Urartu, Egypt, and the tribal groups of Babylonia. By the end of his reign, Assyria had severely restrained opposition in the west, had secured authority in large parts of Syria, and had gained control over most of the city-states in Babylonia.

The following four reigns of Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal mark the apex of Assyrian power and a closing “golden age” of the empire. Wars and civil uprisings continued on the margins of the realm, which grew steadily as Assyria eliminated its enemies through conquest and diplomacy. In the core regions, peace was lasting, and some provinces in Syria and northern Iraq saw economic prosperity with little or no conflict for two centuries.

By the time of Assurbanipal (668–627 BCE) a devastating civil war broke out between the king and his brother, who held the crown of Babylon and had allied himself with Elam. The conflict lasted five years, draining Assyrian resources and permanently alienating several of the Babylonian communities. A retaliatory attack on Elam effectively laid waste Assyria’s eastern neighbor, but opened up its flank to the emerging Median state in Iran.⁷⁵ After the death of Assurbanipal the empire descended into internal and external strife, and between 614 and 609 BCE it succumbed to a military alliance of Babylonians and Medes.

⁷⁴ Salvini 1995.

⁷⁵ Radner 2013.

Economy

The Assyrian heartland was formed by a rich agricultural zone that was less dependent upon artificial irrigation than the cities of the south. A number of big settlements lay along the Zagros foothills, the rivers descending from the mountains, and the Tigris River. In addition to staple crops, the area supported vineyards, orchards, and open grasslands suited for animal husbandry. Stretching west was the open steppe settled by smaller towns and groups of itinerant herdsman. A “signature landscape”⁷⁶ still recognizable in the archaeological record came to characterize the countryside of the imperial heartland as its agricultural potential was developed to support the burgeoning population of the royal and provincial capitals. Imperial officials planned grand new cities and imposed a regular landscape of towns and villages⁷⁷ sustained by elaborate hydraulic projects⁷⁸ and a commercial and defensive infrastructure of fortifications, bridges, and roads.

At first, the expansion of the empire stimulated local economy by concentrating wealth and manpower and submitting it to centralized control. More permanent effects were achieved through a continuous readjustment of production, labor, and infrastructure. Methods applied were in essence time-tested approaches, such as the reorganization of the agricultural sector and the use of organized labor to open up new lands, but Assyria took such endeavors to a different scale. The concentration of wealth in the capital cities gave strength and authority to the ruler, and was the necessary adjunct to a political system that was turning increasingly absolutistic. Conversely, the state grew progressively more vulnerable to disruptions of supplies from its outlying regions as the population not directly engaged in food production grew.⁷⁹ To counter such tendencies, suitable ecological zones and areas of resource extraction were singled out to accommodate a production on an industrial scale. Examples of such areas include wine in the Kashiari Mountains,⁸⁰ cereals in the Jazira,⁸¹ and olive production in Palestine.⁸² In some areas the empire promoted cultural hybridization and economic specialization as two approaches to the same end.⁸³ Local physical infrastructure was enhanced and provincial centers constructed or refurbished to function as nodes in this system.

A precondition for such activities was a system of large-scale deportations that began already during the early empire period.⁸⁴ Although these are described in the Assyrian royal inscriptions primarily as political or military maneuvers, their function was presumably more related to issues of growth. Shifts in the demography transformed the economy of the empire and literally changed the face of the

⁷⁶ Wilkinson 2003; Ur 2017.

⁷⁷ Ur 2005.

⁷⁸ Bagg 2000.

⁷⁹ Bedford 2007.

⁸⁰ Fales and Postgate 1995.

⁸¹ Ur 2010.

⁸² Gitin 1997.

⁸³ Lamprichs 1995; Lumsden 2001.

⁸⁴ Oded 1979.

state.⁸⁵ Instead of relying upon a gradual increase in population, Assyria actively changed settlement patterns through relocation. Deportation formed a component in all the strategies mentioned earlier: agriculture and industry were boosted by the influx of laborers, provincial capitals were built and settled with deportees, and ambitious waterworks were constructed for the swelling agriculturalist population whose surplus production was used to support the burgeoning royal elite and army. Voluntary movement caused by economic incentives may also account for some of the demographic shifts on the imperial frontier, but this is less clear.⁸⁶

The importance of slavery for the imperial economy is uncertain; people referred to as slaves in the textual record mainly appear to have been indentured by themselves or a family member, and were generally not chattel slaves or prisoners of war. They mostly appear in the possession of affluent urbanites, and could themselves own property under the head of the household.⁸⁷ But whether this image is representative of reality is debatable, and it can be a problem to distinguish between slaves, prisoners, and deportees.⁸⁸ Certainly, there was a market for (free) hired labor as well.⁸⁹

It is unknown whether the large expanses of new land that came under cultivation in theory all belonged to the ruler.⁹⁰ In reality, conquered areas were often divided into estates that went to private ownership. A growing proportion of the farmland came to belong to a group of people of mixed heritage, whose loyalty was directly tied to the Assyrian king. In return for their services they had resources put at their disposal, including the benefit of labor, irrigational works, and transport systems. Wealth became increasingly concentrated within a small group of people, many of them with military titles.⁹¹ Such new elites had no ties to the traditional seats of power, but were linked to the estates they had bought or received as grants. Alongside the court eunuchs and free specialists (scholars, priests, artisans), they came to form a class of royal dependents, whose fortunes were directly linked to the ruler.⁹²

The overall administrative division of the empire can be described as a system of provincial territories surrounded by client states, although in reality territorial dominance never became continuous or fully integrated. At any given point, an inventory of the empire would include crown land, privileged cities, temple estates, territorial provinces, private lands, itinerant tribal groups, client communities, and semi-independent buffer states.

Corvée service (*ilku*) and taxes on trade were claimed in the provinces,⁹³ while tribute was imposed upon the outlying clients; tribute came under the direct jurisdiction of the king, while the governors collected the provincial taxes as part of

⁸⁵ Wilkinson et al. 2005.

⁸⁶ Radner 2007.

⁸⁷ Radner 2003.

⁸⁸ Saggs 1982; Zawadzki 1995.

⁸⁹ Radner 2015a.

⁹⁰ Postgate 1989.

⁹¹ Kwasman and Parpola 1991; Fales and Postgate 1995; Mattila 2002.

⁹² Parpola 2007.

⁹³ Postgate 1992.

their enterprise and presumably made a profit from it. Corvée service, grain tax and straw tax were also levied in the provinces, and there were agents who gathered horses and raised troops for the royal armies.⁹⁴ Beyond the confines of the imperial provinces the economy of the subjugated areas varied according to local conditions.

The border regions remained under the control of the highest military officials—the “commander-in-chief” (*turtānu*), the “treasurer” (*masennu*), the “cupbearer” (*rab šāqê*), and the “palace herald” (*nāgir ekalli*). These were located in strategically sensitive areas along the upper stretches of the Euphrates, the Tigris, and along the Zagros Mountains.⁹⁵ Their provinces were militarized and dedicated to the defense of the empire, while economic development was concentrated in regions further from the contested zones.

Newly annexed regions would see considerable initial investment in order to secure Assyrian rule and to set up a functioning infrastructure. This could include the construction of a provincial center and military installations, the reorganization of the local settlement structure,⁹⁶ the linking up with the imperial information network,⁹⁷ and the enhancement of agricultural potential by way of introducing new agricultural techniques and irrigation projects.⁹⁸ The territory of a province was sometimes divided into smaller units, once imperial control had been consolidated and local agriculture developed,⁹⁹ presumably because such tactics encouraged micro-management of the provincial economy and diminished the economic power of the individual governor.

The management of merchant communities was left particularly weak and the capacity of frontier cities to act as interstitial ports of trade was actively promoted.¹⁰⁰ With the exception of Sidon, the Phoenician city-states in the Levant were not incorporated into the provincial system and instead the Assyrian annexation presumably became an impetus for the Phoenician maritime expansion through the stability, investments, and market provided by the empire.¹⁰¹ Also the subjugated polities along the northern frontier toward Phrygia and Urartu were left under indirect rule. There, patron-client relations were established with local rulers to create a band of strategic buffer states between the two contending empires.¹⁰²

Trading policies included the establishment of “ports” (*kāru*) and “trading houses” (*bēt kāri*), e.g., on the Iranian frontier,¹⁰³ and the forceful opening of Egypt’s maritime ports to trade with Assyria.¹⁰⁴ Some provinces even appear to have been

⁹⁴ Postgate 1974, 1979.

⁹⁵ Radner 2006.

⁹⁶ Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000.

⁹⁷ Radner 2015b.

⁹⁸ Ur 2005.

⁹⁹ Radner 2006, 48–53.

¹⁰⁰ Frankenstein 1979; Monroe 2018.

¹⁰¹ Postgate 1979; Radner 2004.

¹⁰² Parker 2001; Radner 2012.

¹⁰³ Radner 2004, 162.

¹⁰⁴ Stern 2001, 21.

formed specifically to manage trade relations with areas beyond the control of the state.¹⁰⁵ Examples include Ashdod (in 711 BCE), which was charged with overseeing traffic with Egypt and the kingdoms of South Arabia, and Sidon (in 677 BCE), which in addition to strategic political considerations probably constituted an attempt to profit more directly from Mediterranean maritime trade.¹⁰⁶ Following the conquest of Carchemish in 717 BCE an influx of vast quantities of silver facilitated a change from a copper to a silver standard that was already underway.¹⁰⁷

The private sector of the Assyrian imperial economy is not well represented in the surviving evidence.¹⁰⁸ However, there are enough data to demonstrate an advance in the degree of monetization of exchange¹⁰⁹ as an important first step to facilitate the introduction of coinage. As shown by Radner,¹¹⁰ former assumptions about a gradual shift from a mercantile economic system toward a largely tributary mode of production in Assyria seems more predicated upon contemporary ideology and the products of Assyrian state propaganda than actual fact.

Administration and Army

Assyrian imperial administration left a much smaller number of records than some of the preceding states in the region. The surveys of the economic underpinnings of the Assyrian Empire undertaken by Postgate¹¹¹ are still the authoritative account of the matter. Cuneiform writing appears to have served primarily to pass on messages instead of being used in bookkeeping and the administration of resources. To a large extent this may be the result of developments in the writing system, since texts were increasingly written in the Aramaic language and on perishable materials. But it is equally clear that Assyrian management was hierarchal and based on an oral command structure grounded in personal relations of trust that would not always have required writing.¹¹² The state archives do contain judicial records, administrative texts, decrees, state treaties, and even scholarly works, but their main bulk is made up by an extensive correspondence that bears witness to a complex social hierarchy in which rank and status were linked directly to mandate. Many of the letters that ended up in the archives were produced lower down in the chain of command and appear to have been sent to the palace for final authorization.

Through a strict but simple system centered on taxation, military service, and *corvée*, and based on a direct line of authority that connected individual estates to the mayor and provincial governors, and the governors to the king, an effort was

¹⁰⁵ Gitin 1997; Radner 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Bagg 2011; Master 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Radner 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Radner 1997; Müller 2004; Galil 2007; Nielsen 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Fales 1996; Gaspa 2014.

¹¹⁰ Radner 2004.

¹¹¹ Postgate 1974, 1979, 1982.

¹¹² Postgate 1986, 26–37; 2007.

made to reduce the number of administrative steps needed to move resources from their place of origin to their intended destination.

The provincial governors served as military commanders and facilitated diplomatic relations with neighboring foreign and client states. Examples of direct correspondence between heads of state are not as common as one would expect, presumably because the governors had been put in charge of managing everyday contact and only sent reports to the capital as issues arose. This decentralized system took full advantage of a familiarity with local affairs and shortened response time, but the letters sent from provincial administrators also show that imperial policy was not left to local interpretation. A course of action was charted from the capital and implemented by the governors.

Information would pass to and from the royal court by way of road stations, fast couriers, and a network of spies.¹¹³ The imperial provinces, whose number varies greatly through history from a dozen to more than 70,¹¹⁴ were subdivided into districts managed by a hierarchy of civil servants that included superintendents, mayors, town managers, village inspectors, and fortress commanders.

All state officers were in principle appointed directly by the king, but they were often actively promoted for royal approval by local authorities and served within their confines. On a local level, communities were often headed by city elders or tribal leaders, who would function as semi-autonomous bodies of government.¹¹⁵ Royally appointed delegates would transcend such local networks of power to act with supreme authority on specific matters. Cadres of civil servants, many of them eunuchs, ran the central and provincial administrations.¹¹⁶

Legal institutions in a physical sense (e.g., court buildings) were not maintained by the state¹¹⁷ and the imperial administration would influence existing local systems of adjudication mainly through the appointment of key officials. Any relationship between central and local legislation is unclear, but the acknowledgment of existing community jurisdiction and enforcement of property rights was probably the rule. Arbitration could be provided and regulated by the state, and ideally the ruler functioned as supreme judge and highest court of appeal.¹¹⁸ The administrative and legal system is primarily known through private judicial documents and financial records, royal decrees, and letters. Only a single compilation of normative regulations known as the “Middle Assyrian Laws” (mostly eleventh-century BCE copies of fourteenth-century originals) survives from Assyria itself. This collection is characterized by references to physical brutality and principle of retaliation without a trace of the flexible system of arbitration and mediation evidenced in earlier Assyrian history.¹¹⁹ It is unclear whether these “laws” refer to actual practice

¹¹³ Guo 2004; Dubowsky 2006; Radner 2014.

¹¹⁴ Radner 2006.

¹¹⁵ Barjamovic 2004.

¹¹⁶ Parpola 2007.

¹¹⁷ Lafont 2003; Radner 2003.

¹¹⁸ Fales 2017.

¹¹⁹ Hertel 2013.

or project a societal ideal. Taken at face value, they present an image of a ruthless and misogynous society with less capacity for clemency than its historical predecessors.

In the client states, local rulers would renounce their right to lead an independent foreign policy and agree to interact with their neighbors only through Assyrian mediation.¹²⁰ In return for their loyalty, the empire would guarantee protection against foreign and domestic enemies and the assertion of local dynastic continuity.¹²¹ Subordinate elites were tied to the Assyrian king through redistribution of imperial revenue, public displays of friendship and alliance, the celebration of religious festivals, local grants of privilege, dynastic marriages, and the education of young nobles from the client states at the imperial court. Their vested interest in nurturing a close institutional and personal relationship with the empire¹²² was underlined in state treaties¹²³ and reiterated at ceremonial gatherings at the royal capital.¹²⁴ Children of client rulers were brought to live in the Assyrian palaces and would receive formal training as part of the cosmopolitan scene of the imperial court. Ideally, they would become loyal subjects of the empire, who would one day return to rule their country of origin. De facto, they were also hostages in case of rebellion. Political refugees from rival states were likewise stationed in the royal palaces, and Assyria kept a permanent store of disappointed claimants, defeated rebels, and dispossessed foreign rulers, who supposedly held their allegiance to the crown, and who were ready to be used in negotiations or placed on their native throne with Assyrian support.

Instead of turning them into a rallying ground for resistance, local civic institutions were usually left intact and were co-opted by the empire. The impact of the empire on existing social order was therefore limited¹²⁵—provincial towns and client states held virtual autonomy in local matters and many leaders were appointed by the communal institutions with imperial approval. Ideally, they were elected by peers to act as an instrument of the community both internally and in relation to the central power. In reality, Assyrian policy actively sought to draw the loyalty of local leadership away from its constituency so as to penetrate and coordinate aspects of society to which the empire had only limited direct access. The process of submission could take place at any level in the social hierarchy, but the basic element of reciprocity remained the same: subjects were bound by oath to certain obligations and would receive a number of privileges in return. In reality, a pro-Assyrian movement seems to have existed in most places, ready to form partnerships built on mutually reinforcing strategies.

In addition to a policy based on voluntary cooperation, the empire actively pursued a coercive approach. In some situations it would take what it wanted by

¹²⁰ Parpola 2003.

¹²¹ Barjamovic 2012b.

¹²² Lamprichs 1995.

¹²³ Launiger 2012.

¹²⁴ Parpola 2003; Barjamovic 2011.

¹²⁵ Barjamovic 2004.

strength alone, giving little or nothing in return. Through systematic demonstrations of destruction and cruelty in controlled doses, the empire would successfully build up an anticipation of violence.¹²⁶ Hostages and kidnapped foreigners and gods were used to force reluctant polities into submission or were taken for the purpose of a later exchange or trade of prisoners.¹²⁷ But at the same time, it was made clear that violence could be avoided by accommodation so that power to hurt was transferred into bargaining power. Detailed pictorial representations of torture and death shown in the Assyrian palace decorations are products of this ideology.¹²⁸ Scenes of rebellion and punishment were set in direct relation to each other and presented as inseparable and inevitable.¹²⁹

During the late empire period, client states were transformed into provinces only when they proved too unstable to control through indirect hegemony. In many cases, revolts against central authority would first result in the disloyal ruler being replaced with a more devoted local subject. When a former client was turned into an imperial province, a governor would be appointed and the population given status as imperial citizens and subjected to regular taxation. In the rhetoric of the royal inscriptions, the God Assur delivered the territory to Assyria “for administration and direction” and the king would begin the task of “taking and reorganizing” the new land, to impose taxes and service “like Assyrians,” and “count its people as citizens of Assyria.”¹³⁰ A clear institutional hierarchy was imposed and implemented in places where it did not already exist, and local systems of labor, production, and military service were reorganized. Imperial control was reinforced by a manipulation of religious institutions and practices, e.g., through exceptional grants and privileges accorded to sanctuaries.¹³¹ By this process, Assyria gradually changed from what had in essence been a territorial core with an irregularly distributed outer network of provinces and clients connected by transportation and communication corridors¹³² into a more territorially integrated state¹³³ policed by a professional army.

During the late empire, the term “king’s unit” (*kišir šarri*) is thought to refer to the standing army.¹³⁴ Infantry (*raksūte*) formed the backbone of the army and continued to be conscripted through the *ilku*-system according to which usufruct of land was linked to state service (in person or through substitute) in military or public works for a certain time each year. Veterans could be settled in military settlements established on newly acquired territory. As more troops were required, even an extension of the corvée system beyond landholding arrangements could not keep up with the demands of the expanding army. In addition to the conscripts,

¹²⁶ de Backer 2009; Radner 2015c.

¹²⁷ Zawadzki 1995; Holloway 2002; Zaia 2015.

¹²⁸ Bersani and Dutoit 1985; Bahrani 2008.

¹²⁹ Barjamovic 2012b.

¹³⁰ Machinist 1993; Parpola 2004, 13–14.

¹³¹ Bidmead 2002; Holloway 2002.

¹³² Parker 2001.

¹³³ Radner 2004; Bedford 2009.

¹³⁴ Dalley 1985.

various auxiliary troops came to form part of the Assyrian army. These included specialized and foreign troops, such as charioteers, Elamite bowmen, and Gurrean spearmen. One group in particular, the Itu'ean archers, appear to have been feared for their brutality, and their mere mention in letters from the Assyrian king to unruly subjects often seems to have been sufficient to set things straight.

Military specialists included sappers, engineers, battlefield couriers, guards, and various policing units. Protective armor encompassed various types of pointed helmets, sizes and shapes of shields, and later also scale-mail and breast-plates.¹³⁵ Hand-to-hand combat was fought in open or closed formation with various types of swords, daggers, spears, and lances. Ranged weapons included arrows, spears, and heavy slings. Cavalry (*ša pēthalli*) was mounted on horses bred mainly in the mountains and steppes north of the Assyrian heartland. Early on, they served as a single group, but were later split into lancers and mounted archers. Urartian experts in rearing and training horses would serve as equestrian advisors and even auxiliary cavalry. During the ninth century cavalymen worked in pairs as a bowman and a partner in charge of protecting the bowman with a shield. Later, cavalry are shown lined up in battle formation and with increasing amounts of armor. Chariots were employed in open battle as heavy weapons of destruction, often led by a nobleman “knight” and his team of a rein-holder and a shield bearer.¹³⁶

The late imperial period saw a continuous development in military camps and siege equipment,¹³⁷ which enabled the army to efficiently fight aggressive wars of conquest when required. Census lists were maintained in each province for efficient conscription, substitution, and exemption, and the army was grounded in a system of provisioning, standardization, a developed intelligence network, and skilled corps of engineers.¹³⁸ Together, they formed the military juggernaut that ultimately allowed for the imperial successes of Assyria, and earned it a less than flattering place in the histories of its contemporaries, whose armies it all surpassed in both skill and size.¹³⁹

Religion, Art, and State Ideology

The royal court in the capital city formed the pivot around which the empire was structured and organized. As a social institution, it was set within the spatial framework of the imperial palaces. Physically, it was a locale for the king and elite to interact, and the focal point of the state administration. As a setting, it was a main venue for the advertisement and manifestation of royal power and ideology, and a

¹³⁵ Postgate 2001.

¹³⁶ Dalley 2017.

¹³⁷ De Backer 2013.

¹³⁸ Dalley 1995; Jakob 2003; Deszö 2006; Postgate 2007; Fales 2010.

¹³⁹ Odorico 1995; Deszö 2012a, 2012b, 2016; Trimm 2017.

conspicuous backdrop for military reviews, political negotiations, and the reception of foreign dignitaries.¹⁴⁰

Assyria had a number of royal and provincial palaces, and the imperial capital moved several times. During the early empire, Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1244–1208 BCE) made an effort to move his residence from its traditional seat in Assur to a newly constructed city on the opposite bank of the Tigris River. He failed, and was ultimately murdered, in part presumably due to the resistance to his project by the urban elites of Assur. The first successful relocation of the seat of royal power took place in the early ninth century BCE when Assurnasirpal moved the state capital to the city of Kalhu, almost 100 kilometers upriver.

The urban layout and program of decoration chosen for this new royal palace reflects the confident self-perception of a reviving empire. It reinterprets the traditional functions of a royal seat and publicizes abstract concepts of rule and universal dominance through the symbolic appropriation of space. Its art was set to glorify the ruler and celebrate the universal empire. It emphasizes social hierarchies and defined actions, mobilizes societal core ambitions, forming a system of communication and representation and an instrument of state integration through the symbolic language of power.¹⁴¹ Monumental inscriptions were carved onto the palace walls in the cuneiform script; together with statuary and stone reliefs, they form an artistic unit, set to convey an official notion of kingship that justifies both political convergence and the physical separation between ruler and ruled.¹⁴²

It is hard to say to what extent such monumental backdrops contributed to the formation of a state-wide elite identity, but there were clearly competing ideas about hegemony in circulation. The surviving correspondence between kings and royal scholars¹⁴³ shows that opposing views were present at court, and that political rivalry was an important royal mechanism of elite control. A retinue of scholarly advisors guided royal decision-making through the observation and analysis of omens and the performance of rituals.¹⁴⁴ Extensive libraries holding a range of scholarly works were assembled in the state capitals and the imperial palaces.¹⁴⁵ This was the intellectual environment within which Assyrian imperial ideology was formed and transformed; a process which one can follow at times in the correspondence of the individuals involved.¹⁴⁶ To what degree the narrative passages of the royal annals and carved scenes of the palaces were the result of the personal preference of the individual rulers is debatable, but the scholars and artisans clearly worked for an audience whose essential values and ideas they would want to capture and perhaps reshape to provide with new and enhanced meaning.

¹⁴⁰ Barjamovic 2011.

¹⁴¹ Liverani 1979; Reade 1979; Russel 1991; Winter 1993, 1997; Lumsden 2004; Ataç 2010.

¹⁴² Russel 1998.

¹⁴³ Parpola 1993.

¹⁴⁴ Radner 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Frahm 2011; Ryholt and Barjamovic 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Parpola 1993.

Beyond the visual apparatus of the royal palaces, a characteristic imperial iconography was designed and disseminated through smaller media. A distinctive design kit co-opted well-known and easily recognizable symbols of power into particular contexts, including royal furniture, jewelry, and drinking sets. Such material elements of elite culture were appropriated by both local and foreign leaders, and used to legitimize and accentuate current relations of power through imitation. As the empire expanded and became increasingly culturally and politically diverse, graphic representations took on a growing importance as a vehicle for immediately decipherable and translatable claims to political authority. Significant parts of this “royal package” were ultimately passed down alongside the palace blueprint to succeeding states from India to Iberia.¹⁴⁷

Assyria bolstered its dominance in elite art through the development of a distinctive iconography that tied certain symbols directly to the executive power of particular institutions. A case in point are the so-called bureau seals, which were associated with a precise household and could be identified through iconography alone.¹⁴⁸ These were not only an innovation that allowed officials to manage the delegation of institutional authority within the rapidly expanding empire of the ninth century BCE. The extension from traditional cylindrical inscribed seals to non-inscribed and impersonal stamp seals also meant that messages of imperial presence were constantly circulated and rendered immediately present and prolific among a geographically dispersed body of imperial subjects. The iconography of the bureau seals would broadcast short coded messages in a way similar to later coinage, and in fact, the characteristic seal of the Assyrian “royal bureau” that shows the king as a slayer of a lion was appropriated into later Achaemenid iconography and found its way onto the silver coins of fourth-century BCE Sidon.

Particular to Assyrian visual art was the extensive use of historical narrative to relay imperial claims to universal power.¹⁴⁹ The astonishing scale on which the state represented itself through this medium is unrivaled in the ancient world, with more than three kilometers of decorated relief panels uncovered in the so-called North-West Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Kalhu alone. A new historiographical genre was developed alongside the visual representations¹⁵⁰ to situate and explain political events through lengthy poetic discourse.

The impact of such vehicles of imperial ideology upon its audience is perhaps best revealed by the systematic way in which they were targeted by the forces who laid waste to the empire in the late seventh century BCE.¹⁵¹ Hundreds of images were laboriously altered through chiseling and hammering to relay a counter-message of liberation and imperial collapse. In one example, a lion—the Assyrian king’s enemy—was set free from the hold of the king by someone cutting its tail in the image.¹⁵² In another

¹⁴⁷ See, e.g., Dalley 1998; Panaino 2000; Aruz et al. 2014.

¹⁴⁸ Radner 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Winter 1981.

¹⁵⁰ Fales 1981; Gerardi 1987; Pongratz-Leisten 2015.

¹⁵¹ Nylander 1980; Porter 2009; May 2010.

¹⁵² Reade 2000, 613.

elaborate example, the king's face was mutilated, his wrists severed, and his bowstring cut.¹⁵³ This pointed destruction underlines the importance of imperial iconography and hints at the power of its imagery.

Assyrian imperial religion and ideology legitimized domination and provided a rationale for territorial growth, but a particular creed was not proselytized.¹⁵⁴ Religion was inclusive in character and the power of deities was considered universal.¹⁵⁵ A theologization of the cult of Assur was introduced during the early empire period, which promoted his image in particular as world ruler.¹⁵⁶ Kingship had in essence been religious in character at least since the city-state period,¹⁵⁷ but with the rise of the empire, the king's role as interlocutor of Assur's property became increasingly emphasized in state-sanctioned representations.¹⁵⁸ The ruler was portrayed as the result of a separate act of creation, and sometimes stated to belong to a distinct physical category between gods and humankind.¹⁵⁹ However, unlike Egypt or Hatti, deification of the king (living or dead) did not take place. The ruler was a physical agent and a link between humans and deities; he was presented alternately as a being of supernatural perfection, and the humble shepherd under God's bidding. The historical role of the king as a *primus inter pares* thus remained conceptually intact, even if it had become increasingly hypocritical in practice.

Empire Entrenched

As wealth was concentrated in a small circle of royal dependents with their fates linked directly to the ruler in exchange for wielding executive power, the state grew stronger in authority but more fragile in structure.¹⁶⁰ Elites transcended the imperial melting pot and came to represent more than the sum of the provinces. On a cosmological level this was celebrated in grand triumphs,¹⁶¹ elaborate court ceremonies,¹⁶² and imperial gardens that set the precedent for the later Persian paradises.¹⁶³ In parades of vanquished enemies and the relocation of plants and animals from the four corners of the world, a new and fictitious imperial landscape of universal power was fashioned and projected.

The cosmopolis of the great imperial capital at Nineveh itself came to embody the empire in its diversity and fragility. Ambivalence toward foreign influences

¹⁵³ Porter 1989, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Holloway 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Bottéro 2001.

¹⁵⁶ Karlsson 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Labat 1939; Larsen 1976.

¹⁵⁸ Cancik-Kirschbaum 1995; Maul 1999; Radner 2010; Parker 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Hrouda 1965.

¹⁶⁰ Yoffee 1988.

¹⁶¹ May 2012; Nadali 2013.

¹⁶² Barjamovic 2011, 2012b.

¹⁶³ Albenda 2008; Amrhein 2014.

is manifest in anxieties of adaptation and counteracted by tendencies of anti-quarianism and exoticism.¹⁶⁴ Foreign traditions were both fused and rejected in policy, art, and scholarship, leading to a radical restructuring of imperial identity. Gravitation toward the capital at the expense of the provinces became problematic as there was little focus on promoting an Assyrian identity outside the imperial elite. The two major vehicles of integration and assimilation—large-scale deportation and the imperial army—ultimately proved counterproductive as national identities were retained (and sometimes even emphasized) in exile or through ethnically based military auxiliaries. Professional identities became gradually emphasized in the imperial core¹⁶⁵ as the empire stretched between simultaneous cultural homogenization and ethnic fragmentation. The foundation of cities populated by people from across Western Asia was a new phenomenon, decisive for the flux in political and cultural identities that shaped the environment in which the foundational religious and moral traditions of new religions and philosophies were formed. But Assyrian views on Assyria also reveal a struggle between imperial and ethnic identities of the subjugated people, many of whom were “counted as Assyrians” and became part of the imperial conglomerate.¹⁶⁶

Rulers made use of both stick and carrot to hold on to power, often at great expense for the royal treasury. Financial support for the cities of Babylonia during the reign of Sargon II according to his own estimate exceeded 4.5 tons of gold and 50 tons of silver. This staggering sum is indicative of a somewhat uneven policy toward the old cities of the south¹⁶⁷ that combined ambivalence of conquest with cultural reverence and included the imposition of rule as well as exemption from normal levies of *corvée*, taxation, and military drafts. The ideology of Babylonia as the “cultural cradle” of Assur led to hesitant and oftentimes contradictory policies¹⁶⁸ that proved dangerous to imperial integrity in the long run.

With the increased aligning of power around the king as individual, royal death became an auspicious time that left the state in a dangerous state of limbo. Loyalties were personal and had to be reaffirmed. All treaties, which were always individual and predicated upon oaths rather than being ratified between abstract state entities, had to be renegotiated. Principles and policies were re-established. All offices were reappointed. After the particularly long reign of Assurbanipal (668–ca. 627) this system suffered a shock and was never properly reset. As new loyalties were formed, several candidates for the throne emerged, and opposing alliances weakened the chain of command. As long as the empire would offer opportunity as a viable alternative to devastation, the system would endure. Once it ceased to do so, the structure collapsed.

¹⁶⁴ Feldman 2014.

¹⁶⁵ Lumsden 2001.

¹⁶⁶ Machinist 1993.

¹⁶⁷ Frame 1992; Frahm 2017.

¹⁶⁸ Holloway 2002.

The fall of the Assyrian Empire has been called a “historical scandal” due to its apparent inexplicability and suddenness.¹⁶⁹ But the imperial template or “idea” of how an empire styles itself endured and came to form a model for the empires that followed. Assyria itself fell into ruin within a generation of its peak and disappeared almost without physical trace after 1,500 years as a vivid political and cultural force. According to later tradition, the catalyst for its downfall was a coalition of discontented Median and Babylonian tribal leaders.¹⁷⁰ In fact, the empire had been torn by civil wars and court rivalry several times in history, and yet, it had always survived such periods of internal weakness and dynastic strife. It seems to be the unprecedented territorial expansion and political centralization of the last century of empire which brought about the societal changes on a deeper level that rendered the structure vulnerable.¹⁷¹ Assyria had become more dependent upon its ability to rule through existing local political and social structures and had grown more inclusive and tolerant of regional variation within its frontiers at the expense of cultural integrity and administrative homogeneity. The mass deportations had culminated during the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon, and Sennacherib, and appear to have decreased during the final two generations of the empire. Perhaps they had proved too costly or too difficult to manage, or perhaps there were fewer people left to move. The great urban centers of Nineveh, Kalhu, and Arbela had grown to a point where they could no longer survive on local agricultural production and were dependent upon outside labor and provisions. In spite of the effort to create the required physical infrastructure and the use of designated agricultural areas to intensify food production for the cities, the income that was generated in the extensive newly subjugated areas may have proven lower than the cost of the required military presence.

It also became increasingly difficult to isolate imperial clients from each other, and the upkeep of the civic privileges that were used to bargain for loyalty from local authorities became progressively more demanding on the imperial treasury. The system of royal patronage was strong at the center but not very far-reaching, so to penetrate underlying structures, the empire made use of a developed network of resident state agents who actively sought to capitalize on local political dissent. Such attempts often backfired, at least in part due to the complex network of states and local political alliances surrounding Assyria that had been strengthened under imperial pressure. Indirect hegemony through local clients presumably began as a cost-effective approach but proved insufficient in the longer run. Eventually client states were either *de facto* abandoned by the empire (Central Anatolia, Egypt) or were turned into provinces (Cilicia, Commagene, Sidon). In some cases, the heavy tribute levied from client rulers would be a cause of conflict between local elites and their subjects and could later lead to imperial intervention and trigger the

¹⁶⁹ Garelli and Lemaire 1997, 123, 227.

¹⁷⁰ Zawadzki 1988.

¹⁷¹ Yoffee 1988; Machinist 1997; Liverani 2001, 2008; Fuchs 2014.

transformation of a client state into an imperial province. But more often, emphasis appears to have been upon ensuring security in lieu of an irregular income from outlying areas. In essence, Assyrian imperialism became a self-perpetuating mechanism in search of security, resources, and a balance of power and funding that could not be achieved.

Power struggles between the city-states and tribal or kinship groups in Babylonia were a particular stumbling stone.¹⁷² The old urban centers were revered by the Assyrians for reasons of culture, and peace was preserved both through civic privileges and by actively manipulating Babylonian urban traditions of kingship in relation to the resident tribal groups.¹⁷³ The urbanites traditionally defined themselves in political and cultural terms; their populations were multiethnic, proclaimed no common ancestry, and shared their language, religion, and culture with a number of other cities. They defined themselves on the basis of a civic identity and local belonging, and were characterized by a formal and highly institutionalized type of community. The tribal groups (Aramean, Chaldean, and Arab) identified by affiliation to a common ancestor and were not primarily bound by territory. Assyria's failure to divide and rule these two groups in the long run became an important reason for its downfall. After the devastating civil war of 652–648 BCE, significant parts of the population in Babylonia had become permanently alienated from the empire. In addition, the retaliatory attack that destroyed Elam for its support of Babylonia in the war led to a fundamental shift in the political power balance and an opening up of the eastern flanks of the empire.

The inner threat to the head of state by palace intrigue and dynastic squabble also meant that Assyria gradually came to hollow out its own infrastructure of power in favor of autocracy.¹⁷⁴ Provincial governors and high-ranking military officials held positions of great political and social authority until the mid-eighth century BCE, but with the reforms of Tiglath-Pileser III, the king in effect became an absolute ruler. The magnates, most of whom were eunuchs, were dependent upon the king as person for their position, and held no claim to authority through hereditary right. The uppermost echelon of society grew separate from the traditional landed elite, and the latter appears to have had mounting difficulties in meeting the requirements of the former. The late Assyrian Empire promoted the idea of a multinational state and came to invest its legitimacy directly in the public personality of the current ruler instead of the institutions of monarchy and aristocracy. When Assurbanipal died in ca. 627 BCE after almost four decades of rule, the transition of authority did not go smoothly and, in reality, the empire never recovered. As enemies struck the weakened Assyria, it shattered not only the empire. The heartland reverted to agricultural subsistence¹⁷⁵ and its population collapsed. Presumably, tens of thousands starved or fled.¹⁷⁶ The traditional elites of the heartland had been eliminated as a

¹⁷² Frame 1992; von Dassow 1999.

¹⁷³ Barjamovic 2004.

¹⁷⁴ Yoffee and Cowgill 1988.

¹⁷⁵ Liverani 2001; Yoffee 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Ur 2017.

hindrance to royal centralization and military efficiency. This explains why Assyria disappeared so totally after its defeat. There was no default structure to fall back on, and nothing from which to build. Without the king, there was no state.

Assyrian Blueprints

A dynasty based on the Chaldean tribal confederation rose out of the former Assyrian provinces in Babylonia to gain status of world power in the sixth century BCE. This was a period of economic and demographic growth and expansion, urbanization, and increased agricultural productivity.¹⁷⁷ The new empire took over elements of the previous infrastructure and state paraphernalia, but was based on a somewhat different economic setup.¹⁷⁸ The city-states of the south had remained strong during Assyrian rule, and the kings of Babylon created a distinct domain that was defined in relation to the powerful local religious and civic institutions. The main temples played a central role in both state identity and economy.¹⁷⁹ They owned huge rural and urban estates, and were a nexus of urban society that most citizens were affiliated with one way or another. Unlike Assyria, the strong southern regionalism meant that the cities and temples of Babylonia survived also the demise of the Chaldean dynasty to continue under the changing rule of Achaemenid, Seleucid, and Parthian kings. The transformation from city-state to city in the south was slow, perhaps first linked to a reversal in the prevailing trend of de-urbanization¹⁸⁰ and later to a gradual reorganization of imperial space itself.¹⁸¹ New farmland was opened up to agriculture through state-sponsored irrigation projects in the south, and large populations converged in recently founded urban centers.¹⁸² When Assyria had been dominant in the Near East, it had been an integrated multiethnic state ruled from an imperial court of grand proportions. With the progressive integration of foreign and local dignitaries, it changed its focus to universalist claims and ethnic pluralism centered on the patronage of an absolute ruler. The same approach was not reproduced in Babylonia, where royal power was separate from the religious institutions, and local communal authorities, ethnic leaders, and social corporations continued to play a vital role.

The Achaemenid conquerors¹⁸³ introduced a new order under which the center of political power lay in Iran. The new dynasty was the first one to rule Mesopotamia without embracing its culture (at least not exclusively) or to place its political center in its territory. Also, unlike rulers of Assur and Babylon, the Achaemenid kings

¹⁷⁷ Jursa 2010, 2014.

¹⁷⁸ Beaulieu 2018.

¹⁷⁹ Waerzeggers 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Adams 1981.

¹⁸¹ Kosmin 2014.

¹⁸² Christensen 1993; Boiy 2004.

¹⁸³ Waters, Chapter 4 of the present volume.

reserved high offices in the empire mainly for their own kinsmen. Yet, the new state in some ways came to represent the ultimate realization of political ambition and a culmination of unification that had its roots in Mesopotamian tradition. Although the Assyrian dynasty ceased to exist, and the state itself was demolished, the notion of universal empire had become deeply entrenched, and continued to define society for centuries to come. The successes achieved by Assyria in bringing massive diversity under a single-state ideology and personal direction proved so robust that it became a foundational prototype for a succession of empires across Eurasia.

Bibliography

- Adams, R. M. 1981. *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates*. Chicago.
- Akkermans, P. M. M. G. 2006. "The Fortress of Ili-pada: Middle Assyrian Architecture at Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria." In P. Butterlin, M. Lebeau, J.-Y. Monchambert, J. Montero Fenollós, and B. Muller, eds., *Les espaces syro-mésopotamiens: Dimensions de l'expérience humaine au proche-orient ancien. Volume d'hommage offert à Jean-Claude Margueron*, 201–211. Turnhout.
- Albenda, P. 2008. "Assyrian Royal Hunts: Antlered and Horned Animals from Distant Lands." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 349: 61–78.
- Albrektson, B. 1967. *History and the Gods*. Lund.
- Altaweel, M. 2008. *The Imperial Landscape of Ashur: Settlement and Land Use in the Assyrian Heartland*. Heidelberg.
- Altaweel, M., A. Palmissano, and S. Muhl. 2016. "In the Land of the Highlanders: From the Kingdom of Simurru to Mazamua in the Shahrizor." In J. MacGinnis, D. Wicke, and A. Stone, eds., *The Provincial Archaeology of the Assyrian Empire*, 121–131. Cambridge.
- Amrhein, A. 2014. "Neo-Assyrian Gardens: A Spectrum of Artificiality, Sacrality and Accessibility." *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 35, no. 2: 91–114.
- Ando, C., and S. Richardson, eds. 2017. *Ancient States and Infrastructural Power: Europe, Asia, and America. Empire and After*. Philadelphia.
- Aruz, J., S. B. Graff, and Y. Rakic, eds. 2014. *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age*. New York.
- Ataç, M.-A. 2010. *The Mythology of Kingship in Neo-Assyrian Art*. Cambridge.
- Backer, F. de. 2009. "Cruelty and Military Refinements." *Res Antiquae* 6: 13–50.
- Backer, F. de. 2013. *L'art du siège néo-assyrien*. Leiden.
- Bagg, A. M. 2000. *Assyrische Wasserbauten: Landschaftliche Wasserbauten im Kernland Assyriens zwischen der 2. Hälfte des 2. und der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* Mainz.
- Bagg, A. M. 2011. *Die Assyrier und das Westland: Studien zur historischen Geographie und Herrschaftspraxis in der Levante im 1. Jt. v.u. Z.* Leuven.
- Bahrani, Z. 2008. *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia*. Cambridge, MA, and London.
- Barjamovic, G. 2004. "Civic Institutions and Self-Government in Southern Mesopotamia in the Mid-First Millennium BC." In J. G. Dercksen, ed., *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 47–98. Leiden.
- Barjamovic, G. 2011. "Pride, Pomp and Circumstance: Palace, Court and Household in Assyria 879–612 BCE." In J. Duindam, T. Artan, and M. Kunt, eds., *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, 27–61. Leiden.
- Barjamovic, G. 2012a. "Mesopotamian Empires." In P. F. Bang and W. Scheidel, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancient State in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean*, 120–160. Oxford.

- Barjamovic, G. 2012b. "Propaganda and Practice in Assyrian and Persian Imperial Culture." In P. F. Bang and D. Kolodziejczyk, eds., *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, 43–59. Cambridge.
- Barjamovic, G. 2018. "Interlocking Commercial Networks and the Infrastructure of Trade in Western Asia during the Bronze Age." In K. Kristiansen, T. Lindkvist, and J. Myrdal, eds., *Trade and Civilisation. Economic Networks and Cultural Ties, From Prehistory to the Early Modern Era*, 113–142. Cambridge.
- Barjamovic, G. Forthcoming. "Assur Before Assyria. A History of Assur from the Early Periods to the 14th c. BC." In G. Rubio, ed., *A Handbook of Ancient Mesopotamia*. Boston and Berlin.
- Barjamovic, G., T. Hertel, and M. T. Larsen. 2012. *Ups and Downs at Kanesh: Observations on Chronology, History and Society in the Old Assyrian period*. Leiden.
- Beal, R. 2011. "Hittite Anatolia: A Political History." In S. R. Steadman and G. McMahon, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Anatolia 10,000–323 BCE*, 579–603. Oxford.
- Beaulieu, P.-A. 2018. *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC-AD 75*. Chichester.
- Bedford, P. R. 2007. "The Economy of the Near East." In J. G. Manning and I. Morris, eds., *The Ancient Economy: Evidence and Models*, 58–83. Stanford, CA.
- Bedford, P. R. 2009. "The Neo-Assyrian Empire." In I. Morris and W. Scheidel, eds., *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, 30–65. Oxford.
- Bersani, L., and U. Dutoit. 1985. *The Forms of Violence: Narrative in Assyrian Art and Modern Culture*. New York.
- Bidmead, J. 2002. *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia*. Piscataway, NJ.
- Boiy, T. 2004. *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon*. Leuven.
- Bottéro, J. 2001. *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Chicago.
- Brinkman, J. A. 1977. "Appendix: Mesopotamian Chronology of the Historical Period." In A. L. Oppenheim, ed., *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 335–348. Chicago.
- Cancik-Kirschbaum, E. 1995. "Konzeption und Legitimation von Herrschaft in neuassyrischer Zeit. Mythos und Ritual in VS 24, 92." *Welt des Orients* 26: 5–20.
- Cancik-Kirschbaum, E. 1999. "Nebenlinien des assyrischen Königshauses in der 2. Hälfte des 2. Jt." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 26: 210–222.
- Charpin, D. 2004. "Histoire Politique du Proch-Orient Amoritte." In D. Charpin, D. O. Edzard, and M. Stol, eds., *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit*, 25–480. Fribourg and Göttingen.
- Christensen, P. 1993. *The Decline of Iranshahr: Irrigation and Environments in the History of the Middle East 500 B.C. to A.D. 1500*. Copenhagen.
- Dalley, S. 1985. "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II." *Iraq* 47: 31–48.
- Dalley, S. 1995. "Ancient Mesopotamian Military Organization." In J. M. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 289–300. New York.
- Dalley, S. 2017. "Assyrian Warfare." In E. Frahm, ed., *A Companion to Assyria*, 522–533. Hoboken, NJ.
- Dalley, S., ed. 1998. *The Legacy of Mesopotamia. Legacy Series*. Oxford.
- Dassow, E. M. von. 1999. "On Writing the History of Southern Mesopotamia." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 89: 227–246.
- Dassow, E. M. von. 2011. "Freedom in Ancient Near Eastern Societies." In K. Radner and E. Robson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, 205–224. Oxford.
- Deszö, T. 2006. "The Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Army as Depicted on the Assyrian Palace Reliefs, 745–612 BC." *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57: 87–130.
- Deszö, T. 2012a. *The Assyrian Army I: The Structure of the Neo-Assyrian Army, 1. Infantry*. Budapest.
- Deszö, T. 2012b. *The Assyrian Army I: The Structure of the Neo-Assyrian Army, 2. Cavalry and Chariotry*. Budapest.
- Deszö, T. 2016. *The Assyrian Army II: Recruitment and Logistics*. Budapest.
- Drews, R. [1993] 1996. *The End of the Bronze Age Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe ca. 1200 B.C.* 3rd edition. Princeton, NJ.
- Dubovský, P. 2006. *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies: Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Intelligence Services and Its Significance for 2 Kings 18–19*. Rome.

- Faist, B. 2006. "Itineraries and Travelers in the Middle Assyrian Period." *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 25: 147–160.
- Fales, F. M. 1996. "Prices in Neo-Assyrian Sources." *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 10, no. 1: 11–53.
- Fales, F. M. 2010. *Guerre et paix en Assyrie: Religion et impérialisme*. Paris.
- Fales, F. M. 2017. "Assyrian Legal Traditions." In E. Frahm, ed., *A Companion to Assyria*, 398–422. Hoboken, NJ.
- Fales, F. M., ed. 1981. *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis*. Rome.
- Fales, F. M., and J. N. Postgate. 1995. *Imperial and Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*. Helsinki.
- Feldman, M. 2014. *Communities of Style: Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant*. Chicago.
- Fleming, D. 2004. *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance*. Cambridge.
- Foster, B. 2016 *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia*. New York, NY.
- Frahm, E. 2011. *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries: Origins of Interpretation*. Münster.
- Frahm, E. 2017. "Assyria and the South: Babylonia." In E. Frahm, ed., *A Companion to Assyria*, 286–298. Hoboken, NJ.
- Frahm, E., ed. 2017. *A Companion to Assyria*. Hoboken, NJ.
- Frame, G. 1992. *Babylonia 689–627 B.C.: A Political History*. Leiden.
- Frankenstein, S. 1979. "The Phoenicians in the Far West: A Function of Neo-Assyrian Imperialism." In M. T. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, 263–294. Copenhagen.
- Fuchs, A. 2014. "Die unglaubliche Geburt des neubabylonischen Reiches oder: Die Vernichtung einer Weltmacht durch den Sohn eines Niemand." In M. Krebernik and H. Neumann, eds., *Babylonien und seiner Nachbarn in neu- und spätbabylonischer Zeit*, 26–71. Münster.
- Galil, G. 2007. *The Lower Stratum Families in the Neo-Assyrian Period*. Leiden.
- Garelli, P. 1974 "Remarques sur l'administration de l'empire assyrien." *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 68: 129–140.
- Garelli, P., and A. Lemaire. 1997. *Le Proche-Orient asiatique*, Tome 2: *Les empires mésopotamiens*. Israël. 3rd edition. Paris.
- Garfinkle, S. 2013. "The Third Dynasty of Ur and the Limits of State Power in Early Mesopotamia." In S. Garfinkle and M. Molina, eds., *From the 21st Century B.C. to the 21st Century A.D.* Winona Lake, IN.
- Gaspa, S. 2014. "Silver Circulation and the Development of the Private Economy in the Assyrian Empire (9th–7th centuries BCE): Considerations on Private Investments, Prices, and Prosperity Levels of the Imperial Élite." *Studia Mesopotamica: Jahrbuch für altorientalische Geschichte und Kultur* 1: 85–136.
- Gauthier, P. E. 2016. *Managing Risk for the Gods: The Middle Assyrian Ginaw Agency*. PhD diss., University of Chicago.
- Gerardi, P. 1987. *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*. PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Gitin, S. 1997. "The Neo-Assyrian Empire and Its Western Periphery: The Levant, with a Focus on Philistine Ekron." In S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting, eds., *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project*, 77–103. Helsinki.
- Gledhill, J., and M. T. Larsen. 1982. "The Polanyi Paradigm and the Dynamics of Ancient States: Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica." In C. Renfrew, M. Rowlands, and B. A. Segraves, eds., *Theory and Explanation in Archaeology: The Southampton Conference*, 197–229. New York and London.
- Guo H. 2004. "The Assyrian Intelligence Activities during the Assyrian Empire." *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18, no. 2: 59–71.
- Hansen, M. H. 2000. "Introduction: The Concepts of City-State and City-State Culture." In M. H. Hansen, ed., *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, 11–34. Copenhagen.
- Hertel, T. K. 2013. *Old Assyrian Legal Practices: Law and Dispute in the Ancient Near East*. Leiden.

- Holloway, S. W. 2002. *Aššur is King! Aššur is King!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Leiden.
- Hrouda, B. 1965. *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes*. Bonn.
- Hudson, M., and B. A. Levine, eds. 1996. *Privatization in the Ancient Near East and Classical World*. Cambridge, MA.
- Jakob, S. 2003. *Mittelassyrische Verwaltung und Sozialstruktur: Untersuchungen*. Leiden and Boston.
- Joannès, F. 2004. *The Age of Empires: Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC*. Edinburgh.
- Jursa, M. 2010. *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC: Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth*. Münster.
- Jursa, M. 2014. "The Neo-Babylonian Empire." In M. Gehler and R. Rollinger, eds., *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte: Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche*, 121–148. Wiesbaden.
- Karlsson, M. 2016. *Relations of Power in Early Neo-Assyrian State Ideology*. Boston.
- Kertai, D. 2015. *The Architecture of the Late Assyrian Royal Palaces*. Oxford.
- Kosmin, P. J. 2014. *The Land of the Elephant Kings*. Cambridge, MA, and London.
- Kwasman, T., and S. Parpola. 1995. *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh. Part I: Tiglath-Pileser through Esarhaddon*. Helsinki.
- Labat, R. 1939. *Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babylonienne*. Paris.
- Lafont, S. 2003. "Middle Assyrian Period." In R. Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, Vol. 1, 521–553. Leiden.
- Lamprichs, R. 1995. *Die Westexpansion des neuassyrischen Reiches: Eine Strukturanalyse*. Neukirchen-Vluyn.
- Larsen, M. T. 1967. *Old Assyrian caravan procedures*. Leiden.
- Larsen, M. T. 1976. *The Old Assyrian City-State and Its Colonies*. Copenhagen.
- Larsen, M. T. 2000. "The Old Assyrian City-State." In M. H. Hansen, ed., *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, 77–87. Copenhagen.
- Larsen, M. T., ed. 1979. *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*. Copenhagen.
- Lauinger, J. 2012. "Esarhaddon's Succession Treatu at Tell Taynat: Text and Commentary." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64: 87–123.
- Laursen, S., and P. Steinkeller. 2017. *Babylonia, the Gulf Region and the Indus: Archaeological and Textual Evidence for Contact in the Third and Early Second Millenia BC*. Winona Lake, IN.
- Lavan, M., R. E. Payne, and J. Weisweiler. 2016. *Cosmopolitanism and Empire. Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*. Oxford.
- Liverani, M. 1973. "Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts." *Orientalia* 42: 178–194.
- Liverani, M. 1979. "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire." In M. T. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, 297–317. Copenhagen.
- Liverani, M. 1984. "Land Tenure and Inheritance in the Ancient Near East: The Interaction between 'Palace' and 'Family' Sectors." In T. Khalidi, ed., *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, 33–44. Beirut.
- Liverani, M. 2001. "The Fall of the Assyrian Empire: Ancient and Modern Interpretations." In S. E. Alcock et al., eds., *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, 374–391. Cambridge.
- Liverani, M. 2004. "Assyria in the Ninth Century: Continuity or Change?" In G. Frame, ed., *From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea: Studies on the History of Assyria and Babylonia in Honour of A. K. Grayson*, 213–226. Leiden.
- Liverani, M. 2005. "Imperialism." In S. Pollock and R. Berbeck, eds., *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*, 223–243. Malden, MA.
- Liverani, M. 2008. "La madre di tutte le catastrofi." *Studi Storici* 49, no. 2: 277–292.
- Liverani, M. 2017. *Assyria: The Imperial Mission*. Winona Lake, IN.
- Liverani, M., ed., 1993 *Akkad, the First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*. Padua.
- Ludlow, F., and J. G. Manning. 2016. "Revolts under the Ptolemies: A Paleoclimatological Perspective." In J. J. Collins, and J. G. Manning, eds., *Revolt and Resistance in the Ancient Classical World and the Near East: The Crucible of Empire*, 154–171. Leiden.

- Lumsden, S. 2001. "Power and Identity in the Neo-Assyrian World." In I. Nielsen, ed., *The Royal Palace in the First Millennium BC: Regional Development and Cultural Exchange between East and West*, 33–46. Athens.
- Lumsden, S. 2004. "Narrative Art and Empire: The Throneroom of Aššurnasirpal II." In J. G. Dercksen, ed., *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 359–385. Leiden.
- Machinist, P. 1993. "Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C." In K. Raaflaub, ed., *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*, 77–104. Munich.
- Machinist, P. 1997. "The Fall of Assyria in a Comparative Perspective." In S. Parpola and R. McCray Whiting, eds., *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project*, 165–178. Helsinki.
- Mann, M. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power*, Vol. 1: *A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*. Cambridge.
- Master, D. M. 2014. "Economy and Exchange in the Iron Age Kingdoms of the Southern Levant." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 372: 81–97.
- Mattila, R. 2000. *The King's Magnates: A Study of the Highest Officials of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Helsinki.
- Mattila, R. 2012. *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh. Part I: Assurbanipal through Sin-šarru-iškun*. Helsinki.
- Maul, S. M. 1999. "Der assyrische König: Hüter der Weltordnung." In K. Watanabe, ed., *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, 210–214. Heidelberg.
- May, N. M. 2010. "Decapitation of Statues and Mutilation of the Image's Facial Features." In W. Horowitz, U. Gabbay, and F. Vukosavić, eds., *A Woman of Valor*, 105–118. Madrid.
- May, N. M. 2012. "Royal Triumph as an Aspect of the Neo-Assyrian Decorative Program." In *Proceedings of the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, 461–488. Winona Lake, IN.
- Mieroop, M. van de. 1999. *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History*. London.
- Monroe, C. 2018. "Marginalizing Civilization: The Phoenician Redefinition of Power circa 1300–800 BC." In K. Kristiansen, T. Lindkvist, and J. Myrdal, eds., *Trade and Civilisation. Economic Networks and Cultural Ties, From Prehistory to the Early Modern Era*, 195–241. Cambridge.
- Morris, I. 2013. *The Measure of Civilization: How Social Development Decides the Fate of Nations*. Princeton, NJ, and Woodstock, NY.
- Müller, G. G. 2004. "Zur Entwicklung von Preisen und Wirtschaft in Assyrien im 7. Jh. v. Chr." In H. Waetzoldt, ed., *Von Sumer nach Ebla und zurück: Festschrift für Giovanni Pettinato*, 185–210. Heidelberg.
- Nadali, D. 2013. "Outcomes of Battle: Triumphal Celebrations in Assyria." In A. Spalinger and J. Armstrong, eds., *Rituals of Triumph in the Mediterranean World*, 75–94. Leiden.
- Nielsen, J. P. 2015. "Taking Refuge at Borsippa: The Archive of Lâbâši, Son of Nādinu." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 53: 93–109.
- Nylander, C. 1980. "Who Mutilated 'Sargon's' Head?" In B. Alster, ed., *Death in Mesopotamia*, 271–272. Copenhagen.
- Oded, B. 1979. *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Wiesbaden.
- Oded, B. 1991. "The Command of the God as a Reason for Going to War in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions." In M. Cogan and I. Eph'al, eds., *Ah, Assyria . . . Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, 223–230. Jerusalem.
- Odorico, M. de. 1995. *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*. Helsinki.
- Olmstead, A. T. 1918. "The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 38: 209–263.
- Panaino, A. 2000. "The Mesopotamian Heritage of Achaemenian Kingship." In S. Aro and R. M. Whiting, eds., *The Heirs of Assyria: Proceedings of the Opening Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project*, 35–49. Helsinki.
- Parker, B. J. 2001. *The Mechanics of Empire: The Northern Frontier of Assyria as a Case Study in Imperial Dynamics*. Helsinki.
- Parker, B. J. 2011. "The Construction and Performance of Kingship in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 67: 357–386.

- Parpola, S. 1993. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian scholars*. Helsinki.
- Parpola, S. 2003. "International Law in the First Millennium." In R. Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, Vol. 2, 1047–1063. Leiden.
- Parpola, S. 2004. "National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times." *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18, no. 2: 5–49.
- Parpola, S. 2007. "The Neo-Assyrian Ruling Class." In T. Kämmerer, ed., *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient: Tartuer Symposien, 1998–2004*, 257–274. Berlin.
- Pečirková, J. 1987. "The Administrative Methods of Assyrian Imperialism." *Archiv Orientální* 55: 162–175.
- Pongratz-Leisten, B. 2015. *Religion and Ideology in Assyria*. Boston and Berlin.
- Porter, A. 2013. *Mobile Pastoralism and the Formation of Near Eastern Civilizations: Weaving Together Society*. Cambridge.
- Porter, B. N. 1989. *Assyrian Bas-reliefs at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art*. Brunswick, ME.
- Porter, B. N. 2009. "Noseless in Nimrud: More Figurative Responses to Assyrian Domination." In M. Luukko, S. Svärd, and R. Mattila, eds., *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars*, 201–220. Helsinki.
- Postgate, J. N. 1971. "Land Tenure in the Middle Assyrian Period: A Reconstruction." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34: 496–520.
- Postgate, J. N. 1974. *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire*. Rome.
- Postgate, J. N. 1979. "The Economic Structure of the Assyrian Empire." In M. T. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, 193–221. Copenhagen.
- Postgate, J. N. 1982. "Ilku and Land Tenure in the Middle Assyrian Kingdom: A Second Attempt." In M. A. Dandameyev, I. Gershevitch, H. Klengel, G. Komoroczy, and M. T. Larsen, eds., *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of I. M. Diakonoff*, 304–313. Warminster.
- Postgate, J. N. 1986. "Middle Assyrian Tablets: The Instruments of Bureaucracy." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 13: 10–39.
- Postgate, J. N. 1989. "The Ownership and Exploitation of Land in Assyria in the 1st Millennium BCE." In M. Lebeau and P. Talon, eds., *Reflets des deux fleuves: Volume de melanges offerts à André Finet*, 141–152. Leuven.
- Postgate, J. N. 1992. "The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur." *World Archaeology* 23, no. 3: 247–263.
- Postgate, J. N. 2001a. "System and Style in Three Near Eastern Bureaucracies, Economy and Politics in the Mycenaean Palace States." In S. Voutsaki and J. T. Killen, eds., *Economy and Politics in the Mycenaean Palace States*, 181–194. Cambridge.
- Postgate, J. N. 2001b. "Assyrian Uniforms." In W. H. V. Soldt, J. G. Dercksen, N. J. C. Kouwenberg, and T. J. H. Krispijn, eds., *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, 373–388. Leiden.
- Postgate, J. N. 2003. "Documents in Government under the Middle Assyrian Kingdom." In M. Brosius, ed., *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World*, 124–138. Oxford.
- Postgate, J. N. 2007. "The Invisible Hierarchy: Assyrian Military and Civilian Administration in the 8th and 7th Centuries BC." In J. N. Postgate, ed., *The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assyria: Studies on Assyria 1971–2005*, 331–360. Oxford.
- Postgate, J. N. 2008. "The Organization of the Middle Assyrian Army: Some Fresh Evidence." In P. Abrahami and L. Battini, eds., *Les armées du Proche-Orient Ancien: IIe-Ier Mill. av. J.-C.*, 83–92. Oxford.
- Postgate, J. N. 2013. *Bronze Age Bureaucracy. Writing and the Practice of Government in Assyria*. Cambridge.
- Potts, D. T. [1999] 2016. *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*. 2nd edition. Cambridge.
- Radner, K. 1997. *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt*. Helsinki.
- Radner, K. 1999. "Money in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." In J. G. Dercksen, ed., *Trade and Finance in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 127–157. Leiden.

- Radner, K. 2003. "Neo-Assyrian Period." In R. Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, Vol. 2, 883–910. Leiden.
- Radner, K. 2004. "Assyrische Handelspolitik: Die Symbiose mit unabhängigen Handelszentren und ihre Kontrolle durch Assyrien." In R. Rollinger and C. Ulf, eds., *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction*, 152–169. Stuttgart.
- Radner, K. 2006. "Provinz. C. Assyrien," In M. P. Streck, ed., *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Vol 11/1–2, 42–68. Berlin.
- Radner, K. 2007. "Hired Labour in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 26: 185–226.
- Radner, K. 2008. "The Delegation of Power: Neo-Assyrian Bureau Seals." In P. Briant, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper, eds., *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis: État des questions et perspectives de recherches*, 481–515. Paris.
- Radner, K. 2010. "Assyrian and Non-Assyrian Kingship in the First Millennium BC." In G. B. Lanfranchi and R. Rollinger, eds., *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity*, 25–34. Padua.
- Radner, K. 2011. "Royal Decision-Making: Kings, Magnates, and Scholars." In K. Radner and E. Robson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, 358–379. Oxford.
- Radner, K. 2012. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Musasir, Kumme, Ukku and Šubria—the Buffer States between Assyria and Urartu." In S. Kroll et al., eds., *Urartu-Bianili: The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12–14 October 2007*, 243–264. Leuven.
- Radner, K. 2013. "Assyria and the Medes." In D. T. Potts, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, 442–456. Oxford.
- Radner, K. 2014. "An Imperial Communication Network The State Correspondence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire." In K. Radner, ed., *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From the New Kingdom to the Roman Empire*, 64–93. Oxford.
- Radner, K. 2015a. "Hired Labor in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." In P. Steinkeller and M. Hudson, eds., *Labor in the Ancient World*, 329–343. Dresden.
- Radner, K. 2015b. "Royal Pen Pals: The Kings of Assyria in Correspondence with Officials, Clients and Total Strangers (8th and 7th Centuries BC)." In S. Procházka, L. Reinhardt, and S. Tost, eds., *Official Epistolography and the Language(s) of Power*, 61–72. Vienna.
- Radner, K. 2015c. "High Visibility Punishment and Deterrent: Impalement in Assyrian Warfare and Legal Practice." *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 21: 103–128.
- Radner, K., and E. Robson, eds. 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford.
- Reade, J. E. 1979. "Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian art." In M. T. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, 329–343. Copenhagen.
- Reade, J. E. 2000. "Restructuring the Assyrian Sculptures." In R. Dittmann et al., eds., *Variatio Delectat. Iran und der Westen*, 607–625. Münster.
- Richardson, S. 2012. "Early Mesopotamia: The Presumptive State." *Past and Present* 215, no. 1: 3–49.
- Runciman, W. G. 2011. "Empire as a Topic in Comparative Sociology." In P. F. Bang and C. A. Bayly, eds., *Tributary Empires in Global History*, 99–107. London.
- Russel, J. M. 1991. *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival at Nineveh*. Chicago.
- Russel, J. M. 1998. "The Program of the Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud: Issues in the Research and Presentation of Assyrian Art." *American Journal of Archaeology* 102, no. 4: 655–715.
- Ryholt, K., and G. Barjamovic, eds. 2019. *Libraries before Alexandria. Ancient Near Eastern Traditions*. Oxford.
- Saggs, H. W. F. 1982. "Assyrian Prisoners of War and the Right to Live." *Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft* 19: 85–93.
- Salvini, M. 1995. *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer*. Darmstadt.
- Schloen, J. D. 2001. *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake, IN.
- Seux, J.-M. 1967. *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes*. Paris.
- Siddall, L. R. 2013. *The Reign of Adad-nīrārī III: An Historical and Ideological Analysis of an Assyrian King and His Times*. Leiden.

- Stern, E. 2001. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible II: The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE*. New York.
- Streck, M. P. 2010. "Großes Fach Altorientalistik: Der Umfang des keilschriftlichen Textkorpus." *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 142: 35–58.
- Tenu, A. 2009. *L'expansion médio-assyrienne: Approche archéologique*. London.
- Thuesen, I. 2000. "The Neo-Hittite City-States." In M. H. Hansen, ed., *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, 43–55. Copenhagen.
- Trimm, C. 2017. *Fighting for the King and the Gods: A Survey of Warfare in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta, GA.
- Ur, J. A. 2005. "Sennacherib's Northern Assyrian Canals: New Insights from Satellite Imagery and Aerial Photography." *Iraq* 67: 317–345.
- Ur, J. A. 2010. *Urbanism and Cultural Landscapes in Northeastern Syria: The Tell Hamoukar Survey, 1999–2001*. Chicago.
- Ur, J. A. 2013. "The Morphology of Neo-Assyrian Cities." *Subartu* 6–7: 11–22.
- Ur, J. A. 2014. "Households and the Emergence of Cities in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 24: 249–268.
- Ur, J. A. 2017. "Physical and Cultural Landscapes of Assyria." In E. Frahm, ed., *A Companion to Assyria*, 13–35. Hoboken, NJ.
- Waerzeggers, C. 2010. *The Ezida Temple of Borsippa: Priesthood, Cult, Archives*. Leiden.
- Warburton, D. A. 2016. *The Fundamentals of Economics: Lessons from the Bronze Age Near East*. Neuchâtel.
- Waters, M. W. 2000. *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History*. Helsinki.
- Weiss, H. 2017. "4.2 ka BP Megadrought and the Akkadian Collapse." In H. Weiss, ed., *Megadrought and Collapse: From Early Agriculture to Angkor*, 93–166. Oxford.
- Wilkinson, T. J. 2003. *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East*. Tucson, AZ.
- Wilkinson, T. J., and E. Barbanes, 2000. "Settlement Patterns in the Syrian Jazira during the Iron Age." In G. Bunnens, ed., *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age*, 397–422. Leuven.
- Wilkinson, T. J., E. Wilkinson, J. A. Ur, and M. Altaaweel. 2005. "Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 340: 23–56.
- Winter, I. J. 1981. "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs." *Studies in Visual Communication* 7: 2–38.
- Winter, I. J. 1993. "'Seat of Kingship'/'A Wonder to Behold': The Palace as Construct in the Ancient Near East." *Ars orientalis* 23: 27–55.
- Winter, I. J. 1997. "Art in Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology." In S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting, eds., *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project*, 359–381. Helsinki.
- Wittfogel, K. A. 1957. *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*. New Haven, CT.
- Yoffee, N. 1988. "The Collapse of Ancient Mesopotamian States and Civilization." In N. Yoffee and G. Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, 44–68. Tucson, AZ.
- Yoffee, N. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. Cambridge.
- Yoffee, N. 2007. "Collapse in Ancient Mesopotamia: What Happened, What Didn't." In P. A. McAnany and N. Yoffee, eds., *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, 176–203. Cambridge.
- Yoffee, N., and G. Cowgill, eds. 1988. *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*. Tucson, AZ.
- Zaia, S. 2015. "State-Sponsored Sacrilege: 'Godnapping' and Omission in Neo-Assyrian Inscriptions." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 2, no. 1: 19–54.
- Zawadzki, S. 1988. *The Fall of Assyria and the Median-Babylonian Relations in the Light of the Nabopolassar Chronicle*. Poznan and Delft.
- Zawadzki, S. 1995. "Hostages in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions." In K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors, eds., *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East*, 449–458. Leuven.