“Nation” and Empire as Two Trends of Political Organization in Iron Age Levant

“Nation” and Empire as Two Trends of Political Organization in Iron Age Levant

A dissertation presented by

MEI Hualong

to

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the Subject of

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Oct. 2019

Dissertation Advisor: Prof. Peter Machinist MEI Hualong

Abstract

The subject of this dissertation is the development and characteristics of two trends in Iron Age Levantine domestic and international politics: the emergence of what may be labeled as ancient "nations" in the Levant, on the one hand, and the rise of universal empires that dominated the Levant and the wider Near East, on the other. A deeper understanding of the features and the interaction of the two political phenomena will help us make sense of their conceptual common grounds as two types of expansive, trans-regional political entities.

In order better to define the subjects of examination, I integrate theoretical considerations into the study of ancient phenomena and concepts. With regard to "nation", which is often considered as an exclusively modern concept, I propose that one not cling to one specific definition and prioritize one particular people/polity as a classical example of a "nation". Instead, while not dispensing entirely with the term "nation" as a referent to a socio-political entity, I suggest that we explore different degrees and kinds of influence of ethnic and cultural commonness on collective political identity within and beyond one polity's boundaries. With regard to the universal empire, I note that imperial universalism, which views the world as a hierarchical system with the empire as the center, is sometimes ideological and rhetorical in nature, and that historical circumstances often remind the powerful universal empire of the limits of its authority.

Building upon these theoretical discussions, the subsequent sections of the dissertation should be classified as a study of important concepts illustrated by terminologies attested in different sources and languages. These terminologies include, for instance, native terms

translatable as “people” and “nation” (e.g. עם and גוי in biblical and other West Semitic sources), proper nouns (e.g. the meaning and the intended extent of such terms as “Israel”, “Aram” and “Assyrian”), appellations and titles (e.g. “king” vs. the *nisbe* or the gentilic as a royal title in Assyrian sources), metaphorical terms (e.g. “brother” in international relations) and other phrases illustrative of the perception of one polity of another (e.g. “a large land”) and the relationship between different political actors (e.g. “to serve”, “tribute”, “bow down to the feet of...”). The terminological study is accompanied by an analysis of the textual and historical contexts.

Two major issues emerging from this collection of relevant terms and concepts, which I then examine. The first is the ancient Levantine conception of ethno-cultural commonalities as a source of political cohesion in trans-local political entities as well as the extents and limits of such culturally and ethnically derived political identity. In addition, there are the situations in which a people extends either its political authority or the influence of its cultural attributes (e.g. the “national” god) beyond the limits of its political identity. Second, with regard to the universal empire, a polity that often claims to know no limits and borders, I will investigate the awareness of its limits that was heightened as the universal empire--here the Neo-Assyrian Empire is my principal concern--came into close contact with other political actors, including those in the Levant.

The present study contributes not only to our understanding of certain key political terminologies and concepts in the Iron Age Levant and the wider ancient Near East, but also to wider debates in political science in general. The parallel study of “national” and “imperial” ideologies is particularly meaningful. In the modern context nation and empire are

often viewed as two categories of political organizations that stand at two opposing ends, that is, empires subsume nations and nations grow out of and assert their own identities over against the multi-ethnic empires. But in reality, on the conceptual level nation and empire share much in common. Both national and imperial ideologies function as the ideological support to justify trans-local and trans-tribal political organization. Both national and imperial polities may exhibit the tendency to expand beyond a local political center, yet the principles by which they expand differ. While a national polity relies on the belief that people sharing common sociocultural attributes should form one political entity, an empire aims to maximize one political center's control over resources, trade and manpower and justifies its expansion by claiming its ability to bring peace, order and prosperity to the conquered peoples. More importantly, in this study I find that, under certain circumstances, one type of polity, either the national polity or the empire, may appeal to the strategies, principles or ideologies of the other in order to justify, reinforce and adjust its own trans-local political identity, or transform itself in effect into the other. The conceptual transformation of the one to the other is closely related to the political entity's consciousness and interpretation of "limits", political and cultural, real and imagined. In the end, the human effort to establish and consolidate trans-regional political unity is essentially a dynamic process of setting up and tearing down limits.

Acknowledgement

I am deeply indebted to my teachers, advisors, institutions, friends and family who have helped me enormously in this long, challenging but very much rewarding journey, as I pursued a doctoral degree as an international student in a field that is well beyond my own culture and background.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Peter Machinist, my teacher and advisor since 2011. Prof. Machinist has guided me through my entire graduate studies with his knowledge, experience and wisdom. I have benefited greatly from his lectures, remarks, writings and detailed, enlightening feedback on my work. When I encountered serious difficulties with my dissertation, it was my conversations with Prof. Machinist that reoriented me in my research and writing. In him I see the image of a true scholar who is not only keen to explore important issues in the ancient Near East and in humanities in general, but also cares to pass on his knowledge and thoughts to the next generation of students.

This dissertation has also benefited from the insightful comments and criticisms of Prof. Pitor Steinkeller and Dr. Gojko Barjamovic, the other two members of my committee, who have helped me realize the shortcomings of my arguments and revise the thesis towards a more acceptable state. I am grateful for the time they have spent reading my drafts and discussing with me ways to develop more balanced ideas about the topics I examine.

In addition to my advisors, I would also like to thank all my teachers at different institutions who have introduced me to the fascinating world of the Hebrew Bible, Assyriology, the ancient Near East, Judaism and the ancient world in general.

In 2006, I applied for, and was later accepted by, the Hebrew Language and Jewish

Culture program at Peking University, not knowing much about either the Hebrew language or the Jewish culture. It was Prof. XU Zheping who took us through the initial perplexities of learning a new language, without whom I would not have been able to study more advanced topics in Hebrew and Judaic studies. I also appreciate the balanced program offered by Beida that combined the modern Hebrew language and courses on the modern State of Israel with biblical Hebrew, Hebrew Bible and ancient Judaism, with courses taught by Profs. WANG Yu and CHEN Yiyi. It was also at Beida that I began to learn about the ancient Western Asia, taking courses with Profs. GONG Yushu and YAN Haiying, among others. To all these Beida teachers I own an enormous amount.

Also to be thanked are my teachers at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem during my semester there in 2010-2011, particularly Prof. Wayne Horowitz, Dr. Tania Notarius and Mr. Elnathan Weissert. My experience at HUJI proved pivotal for my later studies, as it was at HUJI that I made the final decision to pursue the ancient roots of the Hebrew and Jewish culture in my future studies.

At Harvard (both the HDS and NELC), I have had the precious opportunity to study with many other excellent scholars and teachers, all of whom contributed to my intellectual and academic development. Here I would like to thank, in particular, Prof. Peter der Manuelian, Prof. Jon Levenson, Prof. D. Andrew Teeter, Prof. Shaye Cohen and the late Prof. Lawrence Stager.

In addition to the Beida, HUJI and Harvard, several other institutions have offered me valuable help with my studies and particularly with my dissertation writing. I would like to express my gratitude for the Noble Group (Hong Kong, China) which generously granted me

a fellowship for my research at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem (AIAR). The outstanding library resources at AIAR were essential for the initial stages of my writing. My sincere thanks should also go to the Department of Theology and the Institute of the Ancient Orient at Leipzig University as well as Prof. Dr. Andreas Schüle, Prof. Dr. Angelika Berlejung and Prof. Dr. Michael Streck. The bulk of the dissertation was written in the university library and the Altorient library at Uni-Leipzig.

Throughout my studies, I am fortunate to have met (more advanced) colleagues and friends whose expertise and insights enhanced my own learning and thinking. Among them are my NELC teaching fellows and classmates Dr. Jonathan Kline, Dr. Matthew Rasure, Dr. Iosif Zhakevich, Dr. Gabriel Hornung, Dr. Cian Power, Dr. Ryan Winters, Jae-Hwan Kim, Reed Carlson, CHEN Zhan and Andrew Pottorf. As I wrote the dissertation, I also benefited from many others who inspired me with their insightful comments and suggestions, sometimes providing me with bibliographical information and other resources that had been beyond my knowledge. Special thanks are due to Dr. JIA Yan (Beijing), ZHANG Hongwei (Chicago), CHANG Yangming (Beijing), LI Zhi (München), Hannes Leonhardt (Leipzig), DONG Xiaobo (Liverpool), XIE Guosheng (Shanghai), YANG Guang (Beijing) and WANG Zihua (Hangzhou).

Finally, I am so grateful for the unflagging support my family has given me during the years of my studies.

I am thankful that my parents, LI Chuanhua and MEI Xingliang, who themselves never had the chance to go to college, carefully fostered my curiosity about the history and society, allowing me to make all the important decisions in my life, including doing a PhD in a field

they do not quite understand.

Three of my grandparents unfortunately did not live to see the day I complete my PhD studies, including my maternal grandmother who passed away as I was finishing the final revisions. I cherish the childhood days I spent with them, which I will never experience again.

I am deeply indebted to my wife ZHENG Peng, who partly sacrificed her own career to accompany me in my studies. In the past years, she suffered from my not-so-interesting lectures on topics that interest me and has now become a semi-specialist. I am also grateful that our children, Zhaoxi and Zhaoyi, have magically grown up alongside my dissertation. Without them, I may have completed my PhD project earlier, but the process would undoubtedly have been much less memorable and meaningful.

Abbreviations

ABC	*Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles.* [Grayson, Albert Kirk, Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1975.]
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [N. Freedman et al eds, 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 1992.]
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	*The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. [Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, Edward Robinson, Wilhelm Gesenius, and Maurice A. Robinson, Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979.]
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
CAD	*The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* [Roth, M. et al eds., The Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956-2010].
CAT	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts: From Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places.* [M. Dietrich, Oswald. Loretz, and Joaquín. Sanmartín, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995]
CHLI	*Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* [Hawkins, John David., *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*. Untersuchungen zur indogermanischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft; N.F., 8. Berlin, New York: W. De Gruyter.]
CTU	*Corpus Testi Urartei* [Salvini, Mirjo, Roma: CNR: Istituto di Studi sulle Civiltà dell'Egeo e del Vicino Oriente, 2008-2012.]
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible.* [van der Toorn, K, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst eds.. Leiden, Boston: Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999]
EA	*El-Amarna Letters*
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Ludwig Köhler et al, translated and edited by M. Richardson et al. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1994.]
HeBAI	*Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IAHLI	*Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions.* [Payne, Annick., edited by Craig Melchert. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.]
JAOS	*Journal of American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPS	*The Jewish Publication Society*

JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* [Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969.]
KUB	*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (Berlin 1921 ff.)*
NABU	*Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires (Paris 1987 ff.)*
OIP	*Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago 1924 ff.)*
PNA	*The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*
RIMA	*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto 1987 ff.)*
RIMB	*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods*
RINAP	*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie.* [Ebeling, Erich, Bruno Meissner, Ernst F. Weidner, Wolfram Von Soden, Dietz Otto Edzard, Michael P. Streck, and Gabriella Frantz-Szabó. Berlin ; Leipzig: W. De Gruyter, 1928-2017.]
SAA	*State Archives of Assyria*
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SAAS	*State Archives of Assyria Studies*
SMEA	*Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [Botterweck, G. J. and Helmer Ringgren eds., translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.]
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Jenni, E. ed., with assistance from Claus Westermann, translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.]
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction: New Trends in Iron Age Levantine Polities and Politics

Setting up the problem

Thanks to its pivotal location, the Levant[1] has always been the crossroad of different cultures and political forces in antiquity. This is particularly true of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 16th to early 12th centuries BCE), when major Near Eastern kingdoms constituted "a club of powers" that maintained regional peace for the large parts of several centuries (see Tadmor 1979:3-4; see also Liverani 1990; 2001). In this period which witnessed highly developed diplomacy in the region, the territorial kingdoms in the northern Levant[2] and city-states in both the northern and the southern Levant[3] served as the major arena where various powers of the international system competed for control and influence: first Egypt and Mitanni, then Egypt, Hatti and Assyria. As the political equilibrium collapsed at the end of the Late Bronze Age, the Levantine city-state system also came to an end. In the following Iron Age (12th to 6th centuries BCE), while certain political and cultural actors survived the radical changes and adapted themselves to new political and demographic environment (the Phoenician city-states and the Neo-Hittite/Luwian states), the emergence of new peoples, e.g. the Israelites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Arameans and the Philistines, profoundly

[1] The scope of the geographical and cultural concept of "the Levant" (Latin levare; French lever, "to rise", "the East") is rather fluid. Mostly it refers to the East Mediterranean region in general, including the Asiatic part of Turkey and Syria-Palestine, although the concept of "the Levant" may sometimes be extended to include Egypt and Greece. See "Levant" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2017). For the use of "Levant" and "Levantine" in Near Eastern archaeology, see also Dever 1997. For the purpose of this study, the Levant refers to modern day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan and southeastern Turkey. The Sinai Peninsula, now part of Modern Egypt, was often involved in ancient Levantine polities. In the Iron Age, the Levant corresponds largely to the West Semitic and Neo-Hittite world, with some northern Arabian elements in the southernmost fringe of the region. I will consider Egypt, Mesopotamia and the main part of Anatolia as external to the Levant.

[2] For example, the Lands of Amurru, Nuhašše, Aštata, Alalakh, etc. For further discussion on these some of the Syrian territorial polities in the Late Bronze Age, see Chapter 2 under "Territorial Polities: Organizational Features and Cultural Elements".

[3] Such as Ugarit in northern Syria and Beirut, Byblos, Sidon, Gezer, Shechem, Jerusalem, Megiddo, Gath and so forth in southern Levant.

changed the geopolitical and cultural landscape of the Levant. These peoples, with the exception of the Philistines who founded different new city-states in an interconnected city-state system, established territorial polities that usually covered an extended area of land consisting of more than one urban center. In the Cis-/Transjordan, moreover, such multi-city territorial polities seemed to have corresponded to distinct cultural and ethnic groups who inhabited in these polities, forming political communities labeled by some as ethnic states and by others as ancient "national" states (see below in "Previous Scholarship and Issues for further Exploration" and Chapter 2). Yet it should be noted that, whatever the nomenclature, the most significant characteristic of such new polities is that the political identity seemed to be interwoven to a considerable extent with cultural commonalities, which function under some circumstances as the primary source of political cohesion. Notably, this phenomenon was not limited to just one or one type of political entity in the Levant in this period. In addition to the more typical "ethnic" or "national" states, the Levant was also home to several ethno-cultural groups with varying levels of internal cultural homogeneity, i.e. Arameans, Neo-Hittites, Phoenicians and Philistines. As we will see, shared cultural and ethnic traits influenced the domestic and international politics of various groups of polities in different and complex manners.

The Iron Age also witnessed the rise of the universal empire in Mesopotamia that gradually overshadowed all surrounding peripheral regions, including the Levant. Instead of being the target of constant competition of two or more imperial powers as in the Late Bronze Age, for the most part of the Iron Age the Levant served as the periphery of one superpower that aimed at universal dominance. The spread of imperial universalism contributed to the

reconfiguration of worldview on the receiving end, i.e. in the Levant, with regard to political integrity, identity, the sense of centrality and ideas of universality.

The present study focuses on these two trends of the domestic and international politics in the Iron Age Levant, namely, the role of cultural and ethnic features in the political life of certain Levantine polities and the impact on the Levant of the emergence and expansion of universal imperialism, primarily from Mesopotamia. But why study the two phenomena together? Contemporaneity, though important in many ways, may have been merely the result of historical coincidence. There is no reason to assume, at any rate, that the emergence of ethnically defined polities was a result of or connected in some way to the imperial universality of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. What, then, do the two trends have in common, the first seeking political cohesion from cultural commonness among people and peoples, and the second pursuing territorial expansion to incorporate various peoples and polities into the imperial core? I submit that both serve as principles by which political elites at the center attempt to establish and reinforce trans-local, trans-tribal and trans-regional political (and cultural) unity beyond the confines of nuclear political centers. To be sure, the two trends are powered by different ideologies: the former by the belief that people deemed to be culturally and ethnically related should engage in joint political actions or even achieve complete political unification, and the latter by the claim that the enlargement of territory fulfills divine commands and spreads order, peace and prosperity to all the four quarters of the world. Yet in the end, both ideologies aim to justify the efforts to expand one's domination, to incorporate others and to forge and reinforce a new identity.

Furthermore, all forms and instances of expansion are conditioned by the existence and

awareness of limits. Ideally speaking, a "national" expansion hits its limits when territories inhabited by all people deemed to belong to the same cultural or ethnic group have been incorporated into one extensive polity., while universal empire, by definition, knows no limits. The reality, however, is much more varied and sophisticated. Not all people of one ethnic group will end up living in one political entity. More importantly, a "national" state may very well expand beyond the cultural boundaries of its own people and annex territories inhabited by other peoples for geopolitical and economic purposes. Conversely, not only can a universal empire encounter natural and human-made barriers that physically halt further expansion, but it may attempt or manage to set up conceptual boundaries at a certain stage of its development between itself and the outside world, forging a new, synthetic, cultural identity by highlighting linguistic and religious commonality. At any rate, the boundary between the interior and the exterior of an empire is always a fluid and dynamic one. Likewise, the contrast between "self" and "other" in an empire is equally complex, as the contrast can be administrative, military and political, but also cultural and even "ethnic" or "national", as some scholars argue (see Chapter 7). In other words, another issue that links the two ideologies and phenomena is exactly the concept of "limit": a polity that relies on ethnic distinction may cross the limit, while a polity that breaks all limits can choose eventually to build and accentuate new limits between itself and the outside. In the Iron Age Levant and the Mesopotamian universal empire such mutual transformations may have occurred on the factual level, while even more can be said from the conceptual perspective.

Previous scholarship and issues for further exploration

When put in the modern context, the interaction between nation and empire as two types

of political organizations, on the one hand, and between nationalism and imperialism as two political ideologies, on the other, has attracted the attention of historians and theorists alike. In an ancient context, however, studies that combine both subjects largely remain a desideratum, due not the least to a shortage of sources that may shed light on the topic. Yet an even greater challenge is the perceived gap between modern political organizations and political thoughts and those that existed in an ancient society, prior to fundamental social and political changes that occurred several hundred years ago in early modern West Europe. This has prompted some scholars to consider certain topics current in modern discourse, such as "nation", to be anachronistic in a different temporal and geographical setting (B. Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; more in Chapter 2).

At the same time, as I mentioned above, the Levant since the beginning of Iron Age I became home to extensive territorial polities that in many ways corresponded to cultural and ethnic groups, which encouraged both theorists and historians to challenge the modernist understanding of "nation". On the theoretical side, works by Steven Grosby (2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2005) and Anthony Smith (2004) stand out as systematic critiques of the modernist view and formulations of new interpretation of "nation" as a historical phenomenon found in temporal and geographical contexts other than the modern West. Both scholars choose to draw upon ancient Near Eastern history and assessed the nationhood of such cultures as ancient Egypt, Israel/Judah, Aram and Armenia (in a later period) sometimes in comparison to other ancient cultures like the Greeks. Smith, in particular, proposed a revised definition of nation that accounts for ancient examples of the political phenomenon which stresses the role of such symbols as kinship, proper name, religion, language, territory

and law in defining a national group. Grosby, on the other hand, advocates the recognition of Judah in the 7th century BCE as a full-fledged ancient "nation" which enjoyed political autonomy under a central authority, with a centralized cultic center and the Josianic law binding on all citizens. I will assess their proposals in further detail in Chapter 2, but it suffices to say here that their definitions seem to rely on a literal reading of certain biblical accounts. Also, the high significance they attach to certain criteria seem to prioritize specific ancient peoples as nations. Instead, one may argue that the impact of the aforementioned cultural elements on political organizations was also found among other peoples in Iron Age Levant and in various different formats.

Archaeologists and historians seem to be less strict with the application of the terminology and the concept of "nation" to ancient groups, such as the Israelites and their Transjordanian neighbors, but also Arameans and others. Buccellat (1967) has argued, primarily on the basis of textual sources, that the new polities in Iron Age Levant, i.e. Israel, should be labeled as "national states", for it derived its political cohesion from supposed kinship ties shared by people belonging to the same tribal entity and later, the same "nation". Relying primarily on archaeological sources, Joffe names the newly formed polities in the Iron Age Levant "ethnic states" or "ethnicizing states", which in his opinion differed from city-states in that "ethnicizing states are not simply by and for elites" as in the city-states, but exhibit common cultural characteristics distributed to different strata of society via the promotion of central and local elites. While he avoids the loaded term "nation", Joffe does mention that various techniques and conditions that gave rise of modern nationalism, such as cultural and ethnic symbols, dislocation, the role of intellectuals and political elites, seemed

to be at work in the Levantine ethnic/ethnicizing polities in the Iron Age (particularly the 9th century; Joffe 2002:455-56).[4]

The issue of empire in the ancient Near East and its impact on local politics in Iron Age Levant is much less controversial than the subject of "nation". The expansion of Mesopotamian empires into peripheral regions like the Levant was not only propelled by geopolitical and economic considerations, but also fueled by the rhetoric and ideology of imperial universality (see Barjamovic 2012; Liverani 1979, 2017b) that consider the subjugation of all peripheries under one authority as a means by which cosmological order is established. The interaction between the Levant and the empire has also been the subject of numerous studies (e.g. Perdue and Carter 2015; essays in Aster and Faust 2018). Some scholars have specifically studied the role of the empire and its encounter with Levantine polities in the formation of local identities. Liverani (1992) ascribes the emergence of recognizable Israelite/Judean national identity to the Assyrian and Babylonian imperial policy of mass deportation (which first affected the Northern Kingdom in the late 8th century) that created a multi-ethnic society which in turn prompted the rise of national self-identification. Machinist (2000b), from a different perspective, convincingly argues that Assyria serves as the "other" against which biblical authors constructed their own identity.

The present study does not aim to be a theoretical reconstruction of what constituted a "nation" or an "empire" in the Iron Age Levant, nor is it a history of specific Levantine "nations" and the activities of Mesopotamian empires in the Iron Age Levant. Rather,

[4] Studies on the ethnicity and ethnic identity of Iron Age Levantine polities and peoples, particularly Israel and Judah, are more abundant. See Machinist 1991, 1994; 2000b; Brett 1996; Mullen 1993; 1997; Sparks 1998; Kletter 2006; Miller 2008. For the formation of the "Jewish" (national) identity in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods, see Goodblatt 2006; Gelander 2011.

building on the aforementioned works, the present work offers a parallel study of the manifestation(s) and development of two political concepts or phenomena in the Iron Age Levant, namely, the role of cultural communities in creating trans-regional political cohesion, and the rise of an all-encompassing universal empire that claims to subsume all humankind under the domination of one political center symbolizing peace, order and prosperity. The present work, it should be emphasized, is anchored in the historical context, focusing primarily on textual and particularly terminological data. Therefore, I expect to refine our understanding of our two political concepts by the systematic study of selected key terminologies and expressions as attested in contemporary and transmitted[5] Levantine and extra-Levantine texts, including but not limited to such genres as royal inscriptions, chronicles, prophecies, international treaties and diplomatic correspondence.

Furthermore, the empire in this discussion is not just some kind of vague background or "other" stimulating the formation of an ancient Israelite or Judean identity (or that of other Levantine polities), or the "other" against which a local identity is strengthened and crystallized. The empire, or rather the imperial ideology, also functions as a *conceptual template* for local Levantine polities in which the latter developed and refined their own justifications for trans-regional cultural and political expansion (cf. Josiah's attempt to annex the north) along the line of ethno-cultural distinctiveness and boundaries, and in which they attempted to preserve their identity and enhance their status in a multi-ethnic environment by

[5] The most important transmitted Levantine text is of course the Hebrew Bible, which contains materials of various genres dated to different periods. Naturally, a considerable portion of the material relevant to our subject was composed centuries after the period they purport to record, which not only casts doubt on the historicity of the events described, but also reminds us that they reflect the ideas not of contemporary Israel and Judah but of later cultural elites who composed this texts under different historical circumstances. However, a study on Levantine perceptions of the impact of ethno-cultural characteristics on political organization cannot do without biblical accounts. The issue of late composition and historicity, viewed from a different perspective, reveals the way earlier Israelite and Judean historical experience was understood and reworked and the historical circumstances under which their authors expressed these views. For the relationship between the Bible and history, see most recently essays in Grabbe 2019.

reinterpreting their god as the universal ruler (see Chapter 7). In other words, imperial and universal concepts offered smaller groups an opportunity to reformulate ideals about their particular identities, which often emerged first in a different context, e.g. in the rivalry of neighboring Levantine polities at the beginning of Iron Age II. The conceptual similarities of the two trends, universal imperial and local Levantine, may also cause the transformation in the reversed direction, i.e. the creation of a "national" identity of an empire. While the existence of the latter phenomenon in the Iron Age Near East is ambiguous at best, the question of its existence is certainly worthy of investigation.

A note on the term "polity"

The two trends to be explored in this study, namely, the role of cultural elements in political behaviors and the impact of the universal empire in the Levant, concern the construction and interpretation of power relations concerning what is most commonly dubbed as "the state". These power relations involve both the internal operation of a "state" and the relationships of "states" as constituent units in the larger framework of an imperially dominated international system. Yet the "state" in the Iron Age Levantine context is never a straightforward issue. What constitutes a state in this region and period? Since when in this period can one speak of a state in this period? What shape, size and format does an entity need to possess to qualify as a state? All this, it must be stated, is further complicated by the gradual encroachment of empires on the autonomy of the local "states".

It is thus no wonder that discussions of state and state formation based on various models abound in the study of sociopolitical developments in the southern Levant of the Iron Age, particularly between the 12th and the 9th centuries. One example is the tribal state model

(e.g. Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001), which stresses the role of unilineal genealogy in the ideological construction of state structures.A second example is the patrimonial state model (see Stager 1985, Schloen 2001, Master 2001), which highlights the metaphorical agglomeration of individual houses (the four-pillared house in the archaeological context) into a complex of houses (biblical בית אב; the "house" here stands for both the physical dwelling and the family unit occupying it) in the conception of power relations in the early Israelite state. Studies like these certainly have deepened our understanding of the complexities involved in how sophisticated political organizations emerged and how members of these societies may have perceived their power structures (for a summary see Routledge 2004:1-26; 114-32). They all tend to understand the state as a political organization that evolved from institutions structurally and ideologically similar to, but less expansive and less complex than, what is labeled as a "full-fledged" state. Yet it is not always clear when the defining moment comes in the transformation to the state. For example, it is uncertain when and how a tribal entity becomes a state and on what scale the agglomeration of paternal houses creates a state.

In a recent study on the formation and development of the Ammonite political entity in the Iron Age, C. W. Tyson expressed his preference for the terminology "polity" over "state" as a "general descriptor of political organization and government without implied correlates such as bureaucratic administration or a monopoly on power" (Tyson 2014:13). Indeed, whatever model and criteria one uses to identify a certain phase of development as the emergence of a state, what concerns us in the present study is how the ancients organized their political life in the broad sense. This organization of collective political life concerns a

series of issues: for example, a certain level of organized production and redistribution, the means to coordinate familial and local power centers at a higher level, the maintenance of internal peace and justice, the organization of collective cultural and religious activities and the protection of group security against possible external threats. Ours is not so much a study of the important theoretical question of state formation as it is an investigation of terminologies, conceptions, principles and interpretations of collective human political behaviors and phenomena, although the formation of specific complex political entities may be discussed when relevant. Moreover, I will focus not on individual political acts and decisions, but those of a group-- a group large enough to necessitate some sort of central leadership, with a certain degree of political autonomy and a common name that often functions as a geographical name as well. Following Tyson, I prefer to call such a group a "polity", i.e. any society that can be identified as a political unit--an umbrella term under which kingdoms, tribal groups, city-states, territorial states with multiple urban centers and empires can be subsumed.

Therefore, the present discussion will need to cover political units of various sizes and characteristics within the Iron Age Levant as well as those based outside that exert direct influence on these Levantine polities. The focus of my attention will be not so much on the form of the state, the tribal group or the empire, nor on the formation of certain types of political units, but on those domestic and international political processes that have been affected and reformulated by sociocultural elements and/or imperialism, the two phenomena I have already noted in Iron Age Levantine history. Certain processes, needless to say, will prove to be the result of the accumulated influence from both phenomena, or the reworking of

one in light of the other.

Plan of the Study

The main body of the study consists of two parts: Part I (Chapters 2-4) on the role of common cultural and ethnic elements in political organization in the Iron Age Levant, and Part II (Chapters 5-7) on the political and intellectual or ideological interaction between the universal empires and imperial universality on the one hand, and the Levantine polities on the other. In Part I, Chapter 2 begins with a critical review of selected theoretical debates on the issue of nation in antiquity and in Iron Age Israel and Judah in particular, which is followed by a detailed examination of ancient terminologies from the Levant (terminologies from the Hebrew Bible and their cognates in other West Semitic sources) which may have denoted socio-political entities resembling "nations" in the modern sense. In Chapters 3 and 4, instead of singling out certain groups as ideal-typical "nations" in the Iron Age Levant, I will assess the influence of cultural identity on different types of Levantine polities according to different regions. A particularly intriguing case is Israel and Judah, as the relationship between cultural and political identities is complicated by the special links between the two "Hebrew" kingdoms featured in biblical texts and, more exiguously, in non-biblical sources.

Part II opens with a theoretical introduction on empires and imperial ideology--for the latter, especially on claims to universality. Subsequent case studies will focus not so much on the universal claims of a world empire and its strategies to achieve universal domination as on its limits. In particular, I will investigate whether the Neo-Assyrian Empire considered any competitor as its equal, which would certainly indicate the the universal empire's awareness of its limits and its strategies to come to terms with them. In Chapter 6 I will examine the

impact of imperial expansion, of the Neo-Assyrian but also of the Neo-Babylonian empires, and the spread of universal rhetoric and ideology across the Levant in the Iron Age. As a region of great geopolitical significance, the Levant was far from an empty or desolate periphery awaiting imperial exploitation. Through the interaction between, and the mutual perception of, the universal empire and the local polities, I will again consider the changing limits of empire and the changing functions of imperialism. On the one hand, the empire may destroy and conquer all its enemies, but it can also encounter formidable challengers even in the Western periphery full of small regional political forces. On the other hand, imperial ideology could overstep its own limits as a justifying tool for the ruling elites of the empire, thus creating a mentality that the political elites in the Levantine periphery could instrumentalize, identify with, copy and rework for their own interests. The point is that the universal empire did not really possess absolute, universal power, and could be subject to ideological manipulation by small, peripheral communities. This complex situation leads us to the final chapter, where the imperialistic and universalistic claims made by Levantine polities, both in the political and in the theological realms, will be examined side by side with its opposite or complement: the possible emergence of a common cultural identity within a world empire, which some scholars go so far as to label as “nationhood” (Parpola 2004).

Part I:

Chapter 2: Territorial state, nation and ethnicity in the Ancient Levant:

Theoretical Debate and a Survey of Native Terminologies

Introduction

After the collapse of the city-state system at the end of the Late Bronze Age and the temporary retreat of imperial powers from the southern Levant in the same period, new peoples gradually established new political organizations in the region, while some groups survived the radical social and political changes. Buccellati, whom I have noted in the preceding chapter, argues that the new polities in the southern Levant mainly derived their political cohesiveness from what were perceived kinship ties and other sociocultural factors. In fact, he does not hesitate to label these polities as "nations" and the states they founded "national states" (Buccellati 1967:75-135). Without using such theoretically loaded terms, Joffe, again whom I have noted earlier, takes a step back and calls these new polities "ethnic or ethnicizing states," which achieved maturity mostly in the 9th century BCE. These ethnic states seem to have been the political representation of different ethnic groups, whose elites utilized "local identity and organization" that "developed during the centuries of relative dislocation". The ethnic characteristic of such states can be demonstrated by "the extensive use of symbolism and particular forms of administration" that "make the ethnic state archaeologically detectable" (Joffe 2002:426). In both Buccellati's and Joffe's presentations, the first from a textual (biblical and cuneiform) and the second from an archaeological perspective, the Iron Age the southern Levantine polities are understood as those in which

ethnic or cultural distinction and political independence are interwoven.

Are "national state" and "ethnic state" legitimate terms to describe ancient polities? Or do they constitute anachronisms? Beyond the nomenclature, do the descriptions by Buccellati and Joffe of the development of new polities in the era agree with what we know from textual and other sources? To evaluate the two scholars' theories, we need first to revisit the nature and format of the Iron Age Levantine polities and analyze how they differ from surrounding political entities in size, organizational mechanisms and source of cohesion. Such a discussion necessarily requires the examination of related theoretical debates about the relevance of nation and ethnicity in antiquity in general, as well as in the Iron Age Levant in particular.

Furthermore, to supplement the two cited studies, one should study native Levantine terms that may have denoted groups which resembled ethnic or national groups. It will be useful to compare a such study of ancient terminologies over against modern theoretical constructions of nation, ethnicity and the politicization of ethnic and cultural traits. Although the ancient materials were often composed after the period they purport to record, they were nevertheless temporally and conceptually closer to Iron Age I and II than to our own time. When, admittedly in rare cases, the chronological order of some attestations of certain terms can be established, one may also discern the development of the terminology and conception of politicized cultural groups in the Iron Age Levant, particularly in biblical Israel and Judah.

Territorial Polities: Organizational Features and Cultural Elements

In the Late Bronze Age, the predominant form of polities in the southern Levant was the city-state, which is usually defined by archaeologists simply as a "city plus (economically

and socially integrated) hinterlands" (Charlton and Nichols 1997:1) or more specifically as "a highly institutionalized and highly centralized micro-state consisting of one town (often walled) with its immediate hinterland and settled with a stratified population" (Hansen 2000:19). The economic, political and cultural life of such a city-state is usually operated around one major urban center, where a large portion of the city's population, particularly those occupying a relatively higher social status, reside and work. The hinterland, on the other hand, presumably provides the urban center with food and other supplies, and often the living quarters for some of those working in the center. The city-state system that dominated the southern Levant in the Late Bronze Age when the region was under imperial control is also demonstrated by the fact that their rulers are most commonly referred to as a *ḫazannu*, which usually means a chief magistrate of a town, a village, a quarter of a city, but not that of a more extensive polity (Moran 1992: xxvii; CAD H "*ḫazannu*", 164). However, not all Levantine polities in the Late Bronze Age were typical city-states with one major urban center only. A significant exception to the city-state culture of the period is the Kingdom of Amurru located north of the Byblos region, which was apparently established by highland Amurru tribes. In one letter to the Egyptian Pharaoh, Aziru, ruler of the Land of Amurru, speaks of "my cities" in the plural (EA 161, rev. 37). A more direct piece of evidence is that Amurru gradually annexed such sizable lowland urban centers as Ṣumur, Tunip and Ullasa (I. Singer 1991: 140). Scholars have thus correctly labeled the Kingdom of Amurru as a territorial kingdom (I. Singer 1991: 140; Buccellati 1967:79-80), which is differentiated from the city-state not only by the former's possession of multiple urban centers, but also by its

stronger tendency to expand.[6]

In the subsequent Iron Age such territorial polities became more prevalent in both the northern and the southern Levant. To be sure, the city-state culture did survive the turmoil at the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age (i.e. the Phoenician city-states). Yet many of the newly emerged political entities in the Iron Age Levant apparently took the form of a polity composed of multiple urban centers, sprawling over a tract of territory confined to a limited size. Such polities primarily include the Hebrew Kingdoms in the southern Levant, the Transjordanian kingdoms and, to some extent, Aramean kingdoms and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms in the north.[7] How should one understand their internal organization which may in turn influence their views of important issues in domestic and international politics, such as sovereignty, territory and border? First, although many of them (with the clear exception of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms) may have originated from kinship-based tribal organizations, these kingdoms later adopted more complex administrative institutions that downplayed (but never fully eliminated) the role of kinship structures in the operation of the state and strengthened central control of peripheral regions. Therefore, it would be misleading to label them as "tribal kingdoms". Second, although these polities may sometimes occupy a considerable tract of land, they are certainly to be differentiated from such sizable polities as empires for obvious reasons: their limited size in most cases on the one hand, and the fact, on the other, that they normally do not exert influence on peoples or polities of other ethnic and cultural

[6] Amurru is normally referred to as "the Land of Amurru" in the Amarna correspondence (e.g. EA 60, obv. 8; EA 70, rev. 25; EA 82, Up. Ed. 48, etc.) but once as "the City of Amurru" (EA 162, obv. 01), which may either be a mistake or reference to the capital city of the land. Other territorial polities in the Levant in this period include Nuhašše (with different towns, see Klengel 2000: 610), Alalakh and Aštata, etc. With regard to Nuhašše, one should note that it is unclear to what extent this land was politically united in different periods. Although it seems to be ruled by a king, in EA 161, rev. 36ff., Aziru, ruler of the Land of Amurru, mentions the "kings" of the Land of Nuhašše who were hostile to him (LUGAL.MEŠ ^{KUR} *Nu-ḫa-aš-še na-ak-ru it-ti-ia*).

[7] For the existence of multiple urban centers in Aramean and Neo-Hittite kingdoms, as reflected by Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, see relevant discussions on Aramean and Neo-Hittite polities in Chapter 4.

backgrounds.[8] Finally, the existence of several urban centers in each of these polities, though naturally of varying sizes, clearly distinguishes them from such typical city-states in the region as those of the Phoenicians and Philistines. Israel and Judah, for instance, certainly possessed more than one urban center[9] during the periods when they enjoyed certain degrees of independence, despite the prominent size and status of the capital city in certain periods of their development[10] (Buccellati 1967: 236-38; see also Na'aman 2007a). Beyond such towns and cities, Israelite and Judean control over the land is likely to have extended to rural areas between urban centers, such as unfortified villages and farmsteads.[11] In other words, Iron Age kingdoms like Israel and Judah sprawled over a contiguous territory interspersed with settlements of varying sizes, complexity and importance. The same is true, to different extents, of neighboring states in the region, too.[12]

Thus, it seems reasonable to label these Iron Age Levantine states as "extended

---

[8] This is not to deny that these polities also experienced a phase of expansion and unification in their own formative periods, during which some of the techniques they adopted may resemble tactics of imperial expansion in nature, such as sending governors to replace or at least inspect local ruling elites. The difference lies in that this process is often done in regions occupied by former kinship groups that belong culturally and linguistically to the same larger group that had become a kingdom. For the relationship between the periphery and the center of power in Iron Age polities of limited sizes, see Uziel and Maeir 2012 and Kleiman 2017.

[9] E.g. Josh. 15:21-61, as a later reflection of a list of Judean towns; for major towns in the Northern Kingdom during the Omrides' reign, see I. Finkelstein 2013:105-09; see also the reference to the cities of Samaria in 2 Kgs 17:24. See also Sennacherib's recount of the defeat of Judah at the end of the 8th century: "(As for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered forty-six of his fortified walled cities (URU.MEŠ-*šú* BÀD.MEŠ) and small(er) settlements (URU.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ) in their environs, which were without number..." (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 004, 49); cf. 2 Kgs 18:13. עָלָה סַנְחֵרִיב מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר עַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבְּצֻרוֹת וַיִּתְפְּשֵׂם.

[10] Albrecht Alt argues that Israel and Judah each consisted of a "national state" (rooted in the tribal structure) and a city-state (Samaria and Jerusalem). See Alt 1967. Buccellati (1967:236-38) disputes this interpretation, and maintains that although the newly founded "national state" of Israel and Judah absorbed the old city-state structure, the new political entity demonstrated a stronger tendency for national unity which renders the interpretation of these political entities as a national state coupled with a city-state less than appropriate. For him, Samaria and Jerusalem were no more than capitals of the respective kingdoms. For the development of Jerusalem into a large city in the 8th- 7th centuries BCE, see Na'aman 2007a.

[11] For the classification of settlements in ancient Israel and Judah that draws upon terminological and archaeological evidence, see Shafer-Elliot 2013: 33-58. The author suggests that settlements can be classified according to the presence or absence of fortification as well as an official function, be it administrative, military or cultic. Rural settlements usually depended upon nearby fortified towns for these functions.

[12] This observation does not suggest that local political elites were completely eliminated after the formation of the Israelite and Judean states. See Uziel and Maeir 2012 for possible attestation to a multi-generaltional רפא family that played an important role in local administration in and 9th century BCE and after the Judean annexation of this area in the 8th century. Kleiman (2017) also points out that local clans (e.g. one bearing the name נמש, which is the same as Jehu's grandfather's name) in Northern Israel which had a significant role in the royal administration at the beginning of the 9th century may have changed sides when Aram-Damascus expanded southwards, only to be reintegrated into the Israelite system at the beginning of the 8th century. Local strongmen and other elites may exist in such polities and sometimes may even enjoy a certain degree of independence in their relations with political entities other than the state center.

territorial states"[13] in contrast to city-states. What structural features characterize such (extended) territorial polities? From a slightly different perspective, that is, that of early state formation, the archaeologist Bruce Trigger offers an in-depth analysis that juxtaposes city-states with what he calls "territorial states", of which ancient Egypt, Inca and China serve as salient examples, as two major models of early states. Without explicitly offering a clear-cut definition of "territorial states" or attempting to ascribe the emergence of two forms of early states to different geographical or ecological circumstances, Trigger implies, in his description of the aforementioned examples, that territorial states are states that control a expansive tract of land with multiple settlement centers, usually from the beginning of their existence. Trigger identifies a prominent governing upper-class at the top of elaborate administrative hierarchies as a key structural feature of territorial states.[14] In addition, he also observes that, in comparison with city-states, territorial states are substantially larger in size, enjoy more surplus for the production of luxurious elite artifacts and architecture, with cities less populous and more confined to an upper-class elite, a more centralized economy and rural regions less dependent on urban centers with regard to self-defense and exchange of products (Trigger 2003:110-113).

How does this model fit the realities in the Iron Age Levantine polities in question? To

[13] This preliminary label, proposed on the basis of the more commonly used "territorial state" (see earlier in this section) and to be modified later on account of cultural elements in such states' behavior in their foreign relations, focuses on the polity's overall features relevant to its mostly state-led interaction with others as a whole entity. It simply means that it is a state that covers multiple urban centers and a territory larger than that of the city-state. I do not contend that territoriality itself is a defining feature, for territoriality is an important element in all polities' (including the city-state) internal organization and foreign relations, as conflicts, cooperation and compromises in one polity's relationship with another usually originate from or concern claims over land and it is assumed that a polity's relationship with land, its varying sizes and the way land is managed by the authority. Moreover, the label does not place too much emphasis on early state formation in the region, for which many models have been proposed in recent years (see a summary in Master 2001). Models of state formation in ancient Levant may certainly be helpful for our purpose in some cases, particularly when it concerns the relationship between the center and the local political elites.

[14] Such structures existed in Iron Age Levantine polities as well. Kleiman reconstructs royal administrative networks in Northern Israel and traces its development in the 9th and 8th centuries, on the basis of hippo jars, inscriptions and stamped jar handles that indicate the role of local political elites in the formation and operation of the administrative system of which the center gravitated increasingly to Samaria. The impact of such a system spread to Judah in late 8th century. See Kleiman 2017.

begin with, some structural similarities can be detected. For example, when Trigger attempts to dispute some scholars' classification of the Shang State in early China as a hegemonic city-state that managed to subdue other city-states (cf. Yates 1997), he argues that the Shang state seems to have used several capital cities simultaneously and that in the later Shang the rulers lived a peripatetic life, moving from one capital to another while performing relevant administrative, military and cultic duties. In other words, the Shang's control over a large tract of territory (or at least the road network that connects them) in which the king was able freely to move was for Trigger a key reason to consider Shang less as a city-state or a city-state network than as a bona fide territorial kingdom (Trigger 2003:108-109).[15] Similarly, as I have shown above, Iron Age Levantine states like Israel and Judah also had multiple towns and regional centers that did appear to have been integrated into the kingdom's administrative system to varying degrees, as the local epigraphic evidence discovered at Arad and Lachish suggests (cf. for example Avishur and Heltzer 2000:92-94 on local

[15] During the earliest stage of the Shang State, two major cities 90km away from each other coexisted for about two centuries, i.e. Zhengzhou Shang City and Yanshi Shang City. See Li Feng 2013: 59. The coexistence of the two large cities, however, has also been interpreted by some scholars as the indication that they were competing powers instead of integral parts of one political entity. See Yoffee's quotation and assessment of Jing's personal communication in Yoffee 2004: 50-51. Yet other evidence seems to favor the classification of Shang as a territorial kingdom. Smaller urban settlements headed by noblemen also existed, e.g. Henan Sheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo 2003: 306. Within the large city, while such terms as "the Great Shang Settlement" (*Da Yi Shang*, 大邑商) attested in Anyang Oracle bone texts apparently indicate that the core of the state is a great city, there seemed to have been different levels of settlements both within the central settlement and in its surroundings. Indeed, the Da Yi Shang was likely a metropolis consisting of a core and smaller settlements (see Tang and Jing 2009 for the internal structure of large and small settlements; WANG Zhenzhong 2007). The areas that immediately surround the capital (*Wangji*, 王畿) consists of farmland and possibly villages and smaller towns. Some texts refer to incidents that hostile states invaded the suburban periphery (*Bi* "鄙") of the regions surrounding the capital and "took a few towns/settlements (yi, 邑)". For textual references see, for example, Bi Aonan 2011: 3.

Therefore, one may argue that, although the Shang state as a whole may be considered a confederation of polities with one hegemonic core (for the hegemonic role of the Zhengzhou Shang city in the early Shang period and the "imperial expansion" of the Erligang culture in the 16th -14th centuries, see Wang Shuicheng 2014), the core itself is not simply one city-state, but more likely multi-town region with residential, administrative, cultic and agricultural functions. Outside this core region, other Shang fortresses were built for the protection of trade routes and mining, while vassal polities of various sizes existed in other regions (interspersed, of course, with hostile and independent polities), which were responsible to pay annual tributes to Shang (Anyang texts show that the king of Shang divines about the agricultural yields of "the Four Lands", see ZHOU Shucan 2010: 4 for textual references) and offer military aid when demanded by the Shang court (Zhou 2010: 3).

On the relationship between the core of the Shang State and other regions under Shang overlordship through kinship ties and treaties, as well as native terms describing such relationships, see for instance, LI Sheng 2006. For the formation of early Chinese state, particularly the transition from kinship-settlement based state consisting of multiple settlements to territorial states, see Li Feng, 2013, Chapters 4, 7, 8, 9.

administration in the Judean kingdom; see also Kleiman 2017). In other words, however central Jerusalem was as the capital of Judah, the role of secondary regional centers in the administrative system of the kingdom cannot be underestimated.

However, the structural similarity between the early territorial states in Trigger's studies (e.g. Egypt, China, Inca, etc.) and some of the newly formed polities in the Iron Age Levant, i.e. the fact that both had multiple urban centers and that the administration of neither concentrated solely on the capital, cannot reveal the complete picture regarding extended territorial polities. We also need to consider the issue of cohesion, their internal organizing principles as well as their behavior in foreign relations. Territorial polities in the Iron Age Levant like Israel, Judah, those of Transjordan and certain of the Aramean polities, among others, demonstrate particular qualities beyond organizational and administrative patterns that differentiated them from city-states. In addition to the fact that all governed multiple urban centers and rural settlements with a system built around the political elite, the polities displayed a certain level of internal homogeneity with regard to their languages, cultures, religious and cultic matters that correlates largely with the recognized confines of the entire political entity and not just limited to one metropolitan urban center (see below). Such homogeneity, to be sure, does not eliminate regional and areal variations (customs, dialects, etc.), nor does it require absolute unity (neither administrative, nor cultural, e.g. belief in Yahweh and Baal may still co-exist and compete with each other within Israel).[16] What is essential for their cohesion as polities is an apparently stable, widely accepted situation where

[16] Liverani also differentiates between what he calls an ethnic state (cf. Joffe 2002) from a city-state, noting that an ethnic state established on the belief of common kinship is usually larger, while its population density is significantly lower than that of a city-state.. Cf. M. Liverani 2005: 75-76. Aside from the issue of ethnicity in antiquity, the relationship between cultural unity and political organization may turn out to be more varied than this division between two ideal types of states, as I will discuss below.

cultural and religious affairs are conducted in a way that transcends local entities yet within a certain range of land, corroborated by a common mythical belief in common ancestry of the members which is widely accepted by members of the society or at least propagated and upheld by the political and cultural elites. For example, Trigger points out the correlation that can usually be attested between a certain civilization and what he considers as a territorial state, as in the cases of Egypt and the Inka. In geographically less closed regions, e.g. ancient China (perhaps down to the unification by Qin, when former Chinese states were transformed into provinces), Trigger sees the possibility of several coexisting territorial states bearing generally similar cultural traits (Trigger 2003: 104). While he does not elaborate on the constituent elements of what he calls a common civilization or culture, he states that in addition to distinctive behavioral patterns among the Egyptian elites, a common language shared by the mass population prior to the unification "probably made it easier to promote a sense of national identity" (Trigger 2003: 106; more in Kemp 2006:19-25).

The role of cultural elements and the identity of members in the formation and organization of political entities is also hinted at in Buccellati's understanding of early states in the ancient Near East, which resembles Trigger's theory on a certain level despite the nomenclature. While labeling "city-states" as "nuclear territorial states", noting that excessive stress on the city as the core of sedentary settlements downplays the structural dimension of such states, Buccellati proposes another type of states which he names "expansive territorial states". The expansive territorial state, according to Buccellati, consists of nuclear urban centers and rural settlements exceedingly distant from those centers or separated from each other as well as the cities by geographical obstructions (Buccellati 1967; Buccellati 2013:

105-118; he also raises Urkesh as an example, see Buccellati 2013: 109-112). If political unity can be achieved despite such forbidding situations, Buccellati argues, the solidarity of the group should be based on elements beyond territorial congruity, which in this case cannot glue the members together. While he accedes to the indispensable role of a nuclear urban center in the emergence of trans-local political identity among residents of various villages, he insists that the fundamental cohesion among the people, transcending such geographical barriers and limits, precedes a concept of common territory: "Possiamo dire che è il popolo che lega il territorio, non il rovescio" (Buccellati 2013: 108). It should be noted that this statement is highly reminiscent of the biblical account (regardless of its historicity for this matter) of the Israelite arrival in and occupation of the Land of Canaan, according to which a common identity of people has been formed before the establishment of territory-oriented institutions (e.g. the division of tribal lands in the Book of Joshua).[17]

Trigger's and Buccellati's statements on the source of political cohesion in extended territorial polities can serve as our point of departure for further discussion on the factors that constituted people's solidarity in such extended political communities as Israel, Judah, the

[17] As I noted earlier, there were territorial polities in the Levant before the Iron Age. However, it is often unclear to us from what elements they derived their political solidarity, if it ever existed. The nature of documentation often limits our knowledge about the internal structure, linguistic and religious features of such societies as Amurru. In the case of Aštata, a vassal of the Hittite kingdom (under the kingdom of Carchemish, where the Hittite viceroy resided) along the west bank of the middle Euphrates, we do have access of domestic archives discovered at the site of Emar, often understood to be the capital of Aštata (Archi 2014:144). However, if appears that the land of Aštata, with Emar as the political and cultic center, was fundamentally different from Iron Age territorial polities in the Levant in several aspects. First, although the local language must have been a West Semitic dialect, with certain Hittite and Hurrian influence, the language was never recorded. All domestic documents, including legal and economic texts, were written in the Akkadian languages, while some religious texts were composed in Hittite and Hurrian. The West Semitic substratum is demonstrated often by the vocabulary only (Pentiuc 1999). Second, while some deities in various sources (including onomastical sources) appear to be typical Northwest Semitic deities, such as Baʿal and Dagan (widely attested), Hittite, Mesopotamian and Hurrian deities were also widely attested (Beckman 2002). A certain "Ilū Emar" (DINGIR^{MEŠ} ^{URU}*E-mar*) is attested (Beckman 2002:44), but the plurality of the term reveals that no single supreme deity or divine council could have served as an identity marker of the city. Much less is known about the religious affiliation of the land of Aštata as a whole. Third, we do not possess accounts comparable to some historiographical narratives in the Hebrew Bible or the Mesha Stele that may shed light on the Emariotes' own understanding of their identity and the identity of Aštata. In sum, with regard to the internal solidarity of territorial polities, the Iron Age southern Levantine polities seem to serve as better objects of research than their Late Bronze Age counterparts.

Transjordanian polities and some of the Aramean polities. Before I examine these factors, however, let us first review some scholars' claim that such polities, particularly Judah, should be considered as an ancient "nation" due to the fact that they formed trans-local political communities which derived their solidarity from factors beyond the political and administrative domain. I would like to examine the applicability and utility of such a loaded term as "nation" in antiquity in general and in the Iron Age Levant in particular. I will also attempt to deconstruct different definitions of "nation" in light of our questions regarding the non-political factors in the formation of extended political cohesion in the Iron Age Levantine polities.

Cultural Commonness and its Impact on Political Acts: a Debate on "Nation" in Ancient Societies

1. *The Modernist definitions of nation*

I have noted above that various scholars have advocated for the significant role of cultural factors and a common identity in the formation of trans-local, territorial political entities in antiquity. Different appellations have been employed to designate or describe such polities, e.g. Joffe's "ethnic/ethnicizing states" (Joffe 2002; cf. Liverani 2005:75-76) and Buccellati's "national states" (1967), both referring specifically to some of the newly established polities in the Iron Age Levant. Some scholars have also described ancient Egypt as a political unit possibly with a common national identity (Trigger 2003: 106). Yet the application of such terms, particularly "nation" and "national states", in an ancient context is not without its problems. For some Mondernist theorists, the description of ancient peoples as "nations" constitutes an anachronism, for they insist that nation, like nationalism and the

nation state, is a concept and a phenomenon that first emerged in industrialized West Europe, "notably the age of revolutions in the later eighteenth century" (A. Smith 2004:4), with the ideology of nationalism, itself a product of modernity, serving as the catalyst for, or even the creator of, so-called "nations" (for a critical review of Modernist views of nation and nationalism, see A. Smith 2004:13-15; 33-61; 82-101).

A major reason why nation is perceived by some scholars as a primarily or even exclusively modern phenomenon is that in their definitions, the emergence of nation is contingent upon historical and technological conditions that only began to be present in Western Europe in the Modern period. This is best articulated by Gellner:

"The great, but valid, paradox is this: nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way round. It is not the case that the 'age of nationalism' is a mere summation of the awakening and political self-assertion of this, that, or the other nation. Rather, when general social conditions make for standardized , homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy. Only then does it come to appear that any defiance of their boundaries by political units constitutes a scandal" (Gellner 1983:55).

Though not explicit in this formulation, it appears that only with the development of mass media and education, which presumes in turn advanced techniques in administration and bureaucracy, more developed road systems, faster means of transportation and printing, etc., can "centrally sustained high cultures" become pervasive also among ordinary members

of a society. This process is later specified as "generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication" (Gellner 1983:57). It is under such social conditions that "cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy" (see above). However, while these technological developments and the accompanying social changes may have facilitated the spread and indoctrination of elite-controlled high cultures into other strata of society, thus giving rise to a collective sentiment that seeks political legitimacy from certain shared cultural trains, it is not established that they are the only means by which such a sentiment can be formulated and transmitted. In other periods of human history, other factors such as public festivals and rituals, may also have served to awaken and strengthen a sense of cultural commonness as a source of political solidarity among social members, although possibly less efficiently than do modern technologies in our period.

Benedict Anderson, who has famously defined the nation as an "imagined community", has also argued that such a community is imagined as both a limited and a sovereign community. He contends that such a community became plausible only after the Enlightenment and the revolutions had "destroyed the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm", rendering at the same time the concept of universal religion inappropriate in the face of the plurality of different faiths. He believes that a nation's freedom from the intervention of a higher power was guaranteed only by a sovereign[18] state

[18] Many scholars have argued that "sovereignty" was a modern concept. Jouvenel contends that "...it is a mistake to suppose that overtime Sovereignty has merely changed masters. More than anything else, history records the actual erection of this boundless and unregulated Sovereignty of today, of which our ancestors had no conception". In his opinion, undisputed power and authority vested in one single ruler never existed in Medieval Europe characteristic of its vassal-suzerain contractual relationship which is stipulated in great details, a situation fundamentally different from one that highlights a ruler's unregulated right over others within a certain territory (Jouvenel 1957:170-71). Beyond a certain ruler's realm, the existence of transnational authorities in the Middle Ages , i.e. the Church in religious affairs (and beyond) and the Holy Roman Empire in temporal affairs, not only confines one polity's potential to fully exercise its authority in its

(B. Anderson 2006:6-7). According to this definition, a nation is closely related to, if not equated with, a sovereign nation-state, which only emerged rather recently in Modern Europe.

However, although the existence of overlapping or competing authorities in one region and the lack of clear demarcation of territory in some cases may have rendered any single group's claim of supremacy and complete autonomy in the pre-modern period problematic, one may argue that even then the archetypes of such key elements of sovereignty as authority, supremacy and territoriality (cf. Philpott 2011:561-62) were present in ancient political entities. Such elements were demonstrated by ancient peoples' sense of collective political identity and behavior, both in regard to their own political organization and in their interaction with other polities, particularly their decisions and policies concerning territorial disputes, economic activities and security issues, etc. As some scholars put it, "sovereignty is as much a reflection of core social principles regarding the development of humans as both individuals and groups as it is a feature of any historical era or civilization...while not all tribes or groups possess a sovereign, or a given structure of law, they do have an identifiable sense of the internal and external facets of their group. This in itself is enough of an organizing principle by which to produce internal cohesion and desire predictability and preservation in relations with others" (Williams et al 2012:96-97). An imagined "sovereign" community, accordingly, may very well have existed in the ancient world.

---

interaction with others (Philpott 2011: 565), but also results in overlapping authorities on the international stage. Indeed, sovereignty, first monopolized by individual rulers, then popularized at least conceptually in the 19th and 20th centuries in a given polity, is more often than no understood as a modern phenomenon that first rose in 16th -17th centuries Western Europe as the consequence of the territorization of European polities and the precursor or precondition of related concepts, e.g. the sovereign state, the non-intervention principle and eventually, the modern international system (cf. Williams et al. 2012:101-102; Grimm 2015:77-81). Below I will argue, however, that elements of "sovereignty" were also present in ancient political entities.

Furthermore, one might also question whether a national community's political awareness has to be displayed as the self-identification with a sovereign entity or a sovereign state. In everyday discourse a nation is often considered to be identical with a sovereign nation-state. However, even in the modern period, there are communities often referred to as "nations" that have not achieved or do not yet aspire to achieve full legal and political sovereignty independent of other political entities. Anthony Smith asks the following rhetorical questions with regard to the case of Poland which experienced dismemberment in the 19th century: "Had it been a nation before 1772, ceased to be one thereafter, and become a nation once again in 1918?" (A. Smith 2004:16) If one understands nation to be the same as a nation state, then the answer to all three questions should be "yes". However, if the equation is valid, then one might ask whether, for instance, the Jewish people should not be referred to as a nation between the fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom and the founding of the modern State of Israel. As Goodblatt observes, scholars show no hesitation in using such terms as "nation", "national" and "nationalism" in the context of the status of the Jewish people in ancient and pre-modern periods, including periods when the Jewish people did not appear to possess political sovereignty (Goodblatt 2006:1-2). As Kimmerling and Migdal suggest with regard to nationhood in the modern Middle East, the formation of a national group is a long, ongoing process that often lacks a "defining, 'founding' moment in history" (cf. Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: xv-xvi; also A. Smith 2002:29). The founding of a sovereign state, though a crucial moment in any nation's history, should nevertheless not be considered as the birth of the nation itself. Moreover, if the connection between nation and the nation state is downplayed, then there is no reason to assume that no national group ever existed prior to the

age of sovereign states or to avoid using the term "nation" in ancient contexts.

2. The Ethno-symbolic approach to nation and nation in antiquity

Our discussion above has shown that the Modernist view of nation may very well prove incompatible with cases of local nation formation in other periods and regions (cf. Tønnesson and Antlöv 1996), due largely to the overemphasis on the role of the technological achievements and historical experience of the Modern West Europe in recent centuries in the emergence of the nation as a concept and a political phenomenon. It is undeniable that such factors may have facilitated and accelerated the emergence of modern nations in Europe and given rise to a sharpened concept of nation in other parts of the world, yet I am not convinced that the political consciousness of communities with real and imagined non-political internal ties living on a common territory appeared only under the circumstances listed in the Modernist definitions of nation. An alternative to the Modernist approach is Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolic approach that understands the nation as essentially an entity that developed from an ethnic core which often had ancient roots.[19] By the same token, the ethno-symbolic approach allows for the emergence, existence and survival of ancient national communities as it does not depend on modernity as a precondition of nation, but instead regards it as one of the many circumstances under which a nation can be formed and to which an ethnic group can adapt itself.

Before one can evaluate the plausibility of Smith's approach to nation in the modern and

[19] According to A. Smith (2002:14-15), the ethno-symbolic approach stresses: "1. the need for an analysis of the persistence of collective cultural identities over la longue durée; 2. the importance of continuity, recurrence and appropriation as different modes of connecting past, present and future; 3. the significance of the ethnic type of collective cultural identity and of ethnic communities or ethnies in the formation of nations; 4. the importance of symbols, memories, myths, values and traditions for an understanding of ethnic and other kinds of collective cultural identity; 5. the peculiar role of memories of golden ages, myths of origin and ethnic election, cults of heroes and ancestors, homeland memories and attachments in the formation and persistence of national identities; 6. the different kinds of *ethnie* that serve as bases and points of departure for the formation of various kinds of nation; 7. the special contribution of the modern ideology of nationalism to the dissemination of the ideal of the nation and the role of nationalists as 'political archaeologists'.

the ancient contexts, one must provide a summary of his definition of a nation. According to A. Smith, a nation displays the following features:

1. Self-definition with a proper name; a growing sense that separates insiders from outsiders;
2. Shared myth and memory of one or more constituent communities;
3. Development of a uniform, distinctive public culture forged from the cultural heritage influencing all members of the community;
4. Territorialization of an ancestral homeland within clear and recognized borders and the development of collective attachment to the territory;
5. Legal standardization by the spread of customs and laws to be observed by all members of the community (summarized from A. Smith 2004: 17, 136)

This definition combines cultural factors that reveal the ethnic core of the nation, exemplified primarily by 1, 2 and 3, with the political nuance of nationhood. First, the reference to recognized borders and territorial (4) rights suggests a considerable level of political autonomy while implying at the same time the group's status in relation to its neighbors and peers. In other words, a group that meets such criteria may be seen as an actor in international relations. Second, legal standardization (5) demonstrates a certain level of internal political and administrative unity of the group concerned.

It is clear from this summary that while Smith attempts to downplay factors or characteristics too readily attributable to modernity in the Modernist definition of nation, such as mass education, nationalistic ideology, mass participation in politics and a system of nation states and sovereignty, his definition, which allows for the existence of nation in

pre-modern times, differs for the most part only in degree rather than in nature. Legal-political uniformity and clear borders still remain decisive elements, although he does not appeal directly to the concept of sovereignty. Also, his stress on a common public culture is only short of "mass education system" and "media" as a means of its realization. The existence of a highly developed and internally unified political system is assumed, while a system of different polities, if not states or nation states, is also implied. One may conclude that nation is, according to Smith, a *political* mechanism bearing the features of, and often transformed from, a common *cultural* and particularly *ethnic* identity.

Although A. Smith's approach offers us an opportunity to evaluate the relevance of nation to societies of broader historical backgrounds, it also creates certain problems and ambiguities. As far as modern nations are concerned, it has been suggested that A. Smith's definition "might not apply to multi-ethnic and multicultural nations, such as Canada, Belgium, or even the US" (Karolewski and Suszycki 2011:16), to which list we may add other modern nations deriving from an imperial past (e.g. China, Russia, Turkey) or those that resulted from European colonialism and immigration (e.g. Australia and Brazil). How can one argue that members of those nations developed from one ethnic core, with the same shared myth of ethno-genesis and shared historical memories? Yet in defense of A. Smith, one may suggest that the discrepancy derives primarily from different definitions of "nation" applied to the same question. It appears that such entities as Canada or the US are labeled as "nations", exactly because of the modern definition that blurs the difference between a sovereign state and a nation as well as the tendency to consider the contemporary international community as a system of "nation states". If the concept of "nation" is

understood differently, for instance, when shared cultural attributes are emphasized in addition to legal and political features, then one may argue that multi-ethnic entities should not be called “nations” in the first place (perhaps simply as a “ multi-ethnic” polity). In the end, this criticism originates from the pluralism of the definition of nation as a complex concept.

A more serious problem with Smith’s ethno-symbolic approach to both modern and ancient nations is the subjective attempts he has made to differentiate between an *ethnie* and a nation (cf. Karolewski and Suszycki 2011:28) A. Smith’s defines:

1. an ethnie as a named community of shared origin myths, memories and one or more element(s) of common culture, including an association with a specific territory; and

2. a nation as a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs (A. Smith 2002:15)

In a different study he again summarizes the attributes of an *ethnie* as follows:

1. self-definition, including a collective proper name

2. a shared myth of common origins and ancestry

3. shared memories of past communal events, places and personages

4. one or more elements of shared culture

5. some sentiments of solidarity, at least among the elites

This is followed by a condensed list of attributes that characterize a nation:

1. self-definition, including a collective proper name

2. shared myths and memories of origins, election, etc.

3. a distinctive common public culture

4. possession/occupation of a historic homeland

5. common rights and duties for all members (A. Smith 2004: 18)

It goes without saying that his definitions of the two categories of collective identity bear striking resemblance to each other. Both groups have a common proper name, shared origin myths and memories and some sort of common public culture. Other features that supposedly distinguish a nation from an *ethnie* seem to be that a nation has an intensified version of key cultural and political characteristics of present in an *ethnie*: instead of the vague "elements of shared culture" one now speaks of "a distinctive common public culture" (in 2004). Likewise, "some sentiments of solidarity" are replaced by administrative and legal developments typical of a mature political unity, i.e. "common rights and duties for all members". While in A. Smith 2004 (18) only the nation is said to possess a historical homeland, in his 2002 study an *ethnie* is also associated with a specific territory. In short, according to these definitions the differences between a nation and an *ethnie* seem to be exceedingly subtle and considerably subjective.[20] Both are described as a cultural community with a common political consciousness ("solidarity", "territory", etc.), although the political overtone is somewhat more prominent in the definition of "nation".

In order to differentiate a nation from an *ethnie*, scholars of the ethno-symbolic school

[20] The similarity in the use of "nationhood" and "ethnicity" in also attested in other theoretical works on "nation". For instance, in Armstrong 1982, which he discusses the formation of collective identities in premodern Christian and Islam societies that he calls "nations", he opens his discussion with a survey of ethnic identities and ethnic boundaries (3-7) and continues along this line throughout his study. This also echoes with historical studies of nation and nationalism pertaining to certain groups and periods. For example, in a meticulous recount of secondary scholarship on ancient Jewish nationalism and theories on nationalism and ethnicity, Goodblatt concludes that "I find it difficult and not helpful to distinguish ethnicity from nationality" at least in the ancient Jewish context. (Goodblatt 2006:26) The mixed use of the two terms is not all that surprising, for historically shared cultural, religious, linguistic and literary traditions as well as internal political ties can serve to highlight the boundary between the self and the other on different levels. Our point is not that lack of differentiation between the two concepts reflects constitutes a serious methodological problem. Instead, I would like to suggest that, once nation is approached from an ethno-symbolic perspective, which stresses ethnic and cultural elements in the formation of nations, the boundary between the two concepts become blur, so that any attempt at sharper differentiation may prove rather subjective and even unhelpful.

may choose, in a rather subjective manner, to emphasize the nationhood of certain communities as empirical examples over against others that are categorized as *ethnie*s. As a result, certain elements of a community's cultural and political attributes may be prioritized as the key markers of nation in contrast to *ethnie.* For example, in many of his studies on nation in antiquity, Grosby advocates for the nationhood of Judah in the 7th century BCE. In so doing he apparently elevates certain features of the ancient Judean society to the status of defining characteristics of an ancient national group. For example, the emphasis on the legal-political facet of nation is demonstrable, as is shown by his selection of ancient Judah and Armenia as two unarguable examples of pre-modern nations (for Armenia, see Grosby 2002c:137-145), both of which are closely tied to religious, administrative and legal institutions linked with or conducive to state mechanisms (e.g. reaffirmation of Yahweh worship in Josiah's reign, Grosby 2002b: 68; the Armenian council that meets after the kidnapping of the Armenian King Tiran, 2002c: 145). More specifically, Grosby considers the state as well as the founding of a state religion ("god of the land"; Armenia's collective conversion to Christianity)[21] as a prerequisite for nation formation in the case of ancient Israel, while disputing Alt's and Wellhausen's opinion that Israel had already been a national group before state formation and the integration of exclusive, state-run, Yahweh worship into the collective consciousness within a bordered territory, which he dates to the 7th and 6th centuries (2002b: 52-68; see a similar analysis in Liverani 1992). A. Smith agrees in general with Grosby's evaluation of the cases of Judah and Armenia, concluding that political action

[21] He denies ancient Greeks' nationhood due to the lack of a unified state religion. Grosby 2002b: 58-59. At the same time, Grosby considers ancient Egypt a nation, with the important status of the Pharaoh, the belief that Egypt belongs to Egyptians, attachment of Egyptian individuals to the land (cf. Sinuhe) and the ascendancy of some syncretized gods of the land widely worshiped through out Egypt (Horus-Seth and Amen-Re). See Grosby 2002a:30-31. As we will see, Smith does not consider Egypt a nation, prioritizing other criteria.

was the main factor in the ethno-genesis of both national groups, in addition to other, also significant, factors, such as religious and cultural ones (A. Smith 2004: 146). The stress on legal unity and uniformity (e.g. the promulgation of Josiah's law code), which more often than not derives from the political unity in a state, is also highly valued by these scholars.[22]

Compared with A. Smith's definition of nation cited above, the identification of biblical Judah as an ideal-type of ancient nation rather than merely an *ethnie* highlights the following cultural and political factors: the development of a uniform, distinctive public culture (e.g. centralized Yahwistic state cult), a bordered territory (apparently presupposed by these scholars from the reading of biblical materials) and a common law binding to all members of the community (e.g. Josiah's laws). In other words, what distinguishes an ancient nation from an *ethnie*, according to Grosby and Smith, seems to be the presence of a state with centralized administrative and religious institutions that facilitate the emergence of all of the said three attributes.

Even if their understanding of ancient Judah in the 7th century is accurate, some questions remain unanswered with regard to the ethno-symbolic definition of nation and the attempted differentiation between nation and *ethnie*. A crucial issue is to what extent the supposed centralized polity overlaps in its extent and scale with the cultural community. The definition does not seem to account for the situation in which a trans-local cultural and ethnic community has founded more than one political entity. How many nations are we dealing with in this case? A case in point, which I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 3, is the

[22] For Smith, the reason for his reservations about the nationhood of the ancient Egyptians, despite of the resiliency of an ancient Egyptian state, a common self-definition by ancient Egyptians as well as the strong attachment to the native land of Egypt (as the aged Sinuhe's yearning for home indicates), is that ancient Egypt "was a very unequal society" where one cannot speak of common rights and duties as the biblical law code appears to suggest according to some scholars (A. Smith 2004: 147)

status of the Northern Israelite kingdom in the 9th and 8th centuries. It appears that it also demonstrated a series of the major characteristics of nation according to A. Smith's definition,[23] yet it is unclear whether it should be classified as a separate nation, part of the same nation as Judah (on account of biblical narratives about the United Monarchy; see Chapter 3) or part of the same *ethnie* as Judah which, nonetheless, did not belong to the same nation.[24] Likewise, if one selects a certain Greek city-state with its own proper name, origin myth (cf. the foundation myths of Greek cities), a cultic center, a centralized political system, legal traditions[25], a public culture and recognizable boundaries, can one suggest that members of this particular city-state should be considered as a nation in its own right? If so, how does one account for the trans-local nature of the Greek culture in general that transcended the borders of individual Greek city-states, although the complete pan-Hellenic unification of religious and political institutions were never really achieved in antiquity?[26] In short, the

---

[23] Some salient points can be mentioned here, although more detailed discussions will be saved for Chapter 3. With regard to culture, the Northern population was likely Hebrew-speaking who also created and transmitted beliefs in common kinship and motifs of primary importance for the forging of a common sense of history (see, for example, Northern traditions of the Jacob Cycle and the special status of the Exodus in biblical texts of northern background. See Gelander 2011: 114-16; Finkelstein 2013: 141-50). In addition to religious reorganization that elevated the status of Samaria as the cultic center. (Finkelstein 2013: 138-39) Although religious syncretism may have been prevalent, the status of Yahweh as the national god is demonstrated not only by the abundant attestation of Yahwistic names (for the presence of gods other than Yahweh in Israelite onomastics evidenced by inscriptions, see e.g. Tigay 1986: 65-73) as well as the term "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" (on the first pithos of the Kuntillet Ajrud collection) in epigraphical materials from the source (e.g. the Samaria ostraca, Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions etc.), but also by the external reference to Yahweh as Chemosh's divine opponent in Mesha's account of the warfare between Israel and Moab (Mesha Stele, line 18; contra Smith 2004: 141).

Politically speaking, the Northern Kingdom seems to have enjoyed considerable political and administrative unity (Kleiman 2017) despite frequent dynastic changes, indicated on the one hand by the fact that different towns and clan territories send wine to the political center of Samaria, as recorded in the epigraphical data (Ahituv 2008: 258-261), and on the other hand by its image as a prominent regional power in biblical accounts as well as contemporary Levantine (e.g. Mesha Stele, Tel Dan Stele) and cuneiform sources. Political borders, in addition, certainly existed and marked the confines of a Northern Israelite kingdom. In fact, a relatively separate Northern Israelite political identity may have persisted even during the supposed United Monarchy in biblical accounts, as the (self-) designation "Israel" or even "all Israel" in relevant contexts is likely to have referred to the Northern tribes exclusively, particularly when "Israel" is juxtaposed with "Judah". (1 Sam 11:8; 2 Sam 2:9; see discussion on the term "Israel" in S. Gelander 2011: 6-13) So did Northern Israelites comprise a separate nation as opposed to the Judeans, especially when a separate Israelite kingdom existed? Or should the ancient Israelites and Judeans be collectively regarded as one nation in two states in the 9th and 8th centuries, on account of cultural and religious elements common to both the North and the South? The problem of the Northern Kingdom highlights the complications regarding the cultural and the political facets of ancient nationhood according to Smith's and Grosby's understanding.

[24] However, A. Smith's definition seems to emphasize the close link between a nation and an ethnic core. It is unclear whether multiple nations are allowed by this definition to sprout from one ethnic group.

[25] Law was written in different Greek cities already in the archaic period. See Gagarin 2008:39-66.

[26] Although the Greeks primarily lived in a city-state system consisting of politically independent cities with its own political and cultural traditions, a common Greek culture characterized by similar linguistic backgrounds, a common

extent of a political community, with or without full sovereignty, might not always be coterminous with that of an ethnic or cultural identity. In addition, cultural commonalities can be attested on different levels, from the common traditions of the clan, the tribe, or the city to common customs, thoughts and behaviors with a wider currency across a broader region. It is not always certain, at least when judged from the ethno-symbolic perspective, which level of common identity over against other levels should be referred to as "nation".

3. Beyond definitions and ideal-types: influence of cultural identity on collective political behavior

Despite all their differences, what do the Modernist and the ethno-symbolic approaches to nation have in common? If one compares the definitions proposed by different scholars, it appears that the common ground among them is the understanding that a nation is at one time a cultural and political concept. According to Gellner, the high cultures manipulated by the elites in the modern period can now serve as natural repositories of political legitimacy (see Gellner 1983). For Anderson, nationalism, as a source of political assertion, emerged in an age when political and other types of solidarity produced by such ancient cultural systems as universal religion began to lose their "axiomatic grip on people's mind" (Anderson 2006:36), largely as a result of technological and social changes. The cultural roots of the imagining of nation, therefore, is demonstrated by the fact that the nation serves as the successor to religions as a phenomenon and a notion that grant groups their identities, while providing individuals with new possibilities to make sense of his relationship with the world (cf. also

---

pantheon and shared mythological traditions as well as pan-Hellenic rituals and sports events, was very much recognizable. Under certain circumstances one can detect traces also of political integration that led to the formation of multi-city polities (Morris 2013) or even a pan-Hellenic sociopolitical identity in the face of a common foreign enemy (e.g. the Achaemenid Persian Empire). See Hall 2002; Kyle 2009.

Anderson 2006:11-12)[27]. The ethno-symbolic approach, finally, places undeniable emphasis on cultural and ethnic commonness as the roots from which political self-assertion grows.

It is more productive and helpful to consider their common ground rather than their divergences as a basis for further discussion on the issue of trans-local political solidarity in the Iron Age Levant. My purpose is not to formulate or advocate for a systematic definition of nation and related concepts in antiquity or to single out any ancient people group as an ideal-typical nation or *ethnie*. I will in fact try to avoid dwelling upon the issue of definition of a single type. Instead, I consider it more helpful to explore how *cultural* affinities affected each polity's perception of and conduct in their *political* behavior, both domestic and international. For example, one may ask whether a common cultural and ethnic identity necessarily leads to political cohesion and unification, resulting in the establishment of "one people in one state". This issue in turn concerns conceptions about the source and extent of sovereignty of such ethnic or kinship-based polities and, possibly, their view of ethnic or cultural boundaries versus political ones (again, take the Hebrew Kingdoms for example). Also, as I have noted earlier, the extents of a cultural community need not always overlap with the confines of individual political entities. Therefore, one may also examine whether polities with shared cultural features (like the Aramean kingdoms) engage in concerted political actions and when this happens, what role cultural commonness and geopolitical concerns respectively play.[28] I will not claim to drop such loaded terms as nation or ethnic

---

[27] Anderson (2006:12) proposes that "(W)hat I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not wit h selfconsciously held political ideologies, but wit h the large cultural systems that preceded it, out o f which — as well as against which - it came into being."

[28] The correlation between cultural or ethnic ties among different polities and concerted political actions among them is demonstrated by the historical experience of other ancient societies as well. The formation of a pan-hellenic identity that transcends the city-state as the basic political unit and local Hellenic ethnicities could be traced to united military actions against a common external enemy, e.g. the Persian Empire. See Hall 1997. See also Morris 2013.

Likewise, In the period of Spring and Autumn and the Warring States in Zhou China, although local polities have in

group/*ethnie* completely, for at times no good substitute is available. However, native terminologies may prove at times more appropriate as a point of departure for the analysis of concrete examples of the politicization or lack thereof of cultural communities. I would thus like to continue my discussion with a critical overview of the meanings and usages of native terms of culturally and politically defined peoples from the Levantine documents themselve.

Native terminologies of "nation" and the impact of cultural elements on politics

Our sources on native Levantine terminologies that shed light on the impact of sociocultural factors on the political practice of a polity in the Iron Age are primarily written in Northwest Semitic languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician and the Transjordanian languages of Moabite, Ammonite and Edomite. Inscriptions in Luwian from the Neo-Hittite states, though providing us with important information on historical events, building activities of individual rulers and local international politics, are of limited value when one wants to examine in detail the use and meaning of certain key terminologies bearing resemblance to "nation" or "people", due to the relatively small scale of the sources, the imperfect state of our understanding of the Luwian language and the pictographic writing system adopted by the Neo-Hittites.[29] In fact, information offered by non-biblical sources in the Northwest Semitic languages is also rather limited. Therefore, the discussion on native

---

reality developed into autonomous kingdoms no longer responsible to the central Zhou court, the role of cultural and linguistic identities as well as later fabricated kinship ties between groups formerly not regarded as Chinese (i.e. Qin, Chu, Wu, Yue) and the imagined ancestors of central Chinese contributed to the formation of a Chinese identity in contrast to surrounding peoples of other customs and languages (Zhuxia vs. Yi/Di "barbarians") as well as the pursuit of political unification of all Chinese polities which was considered a political ideal by some rulers and thinkers. Peng 2016: 19-112.

[29] There is some information about the concept of "people", or sometimes translated as "nation", in Luwian inscriptions. One example is the Phoenician-Luwian bilingual inscription from Karatepe, which mentions "the people who dwell in it (the city) (*ʿm z ʾš yšb bn*)" (line A iii 7-8 in the Phoenician version). In the Luwian version, the equivalent of the West Semitic term *ʿm* is the logogram "REGIO-" (**utni*-) in the plural (REGIO-*iá*), which some translate as "nation" (cf. CHLI vol. I KARATEPE line LIV). In the Phoecian version, one could argue that here *ʿm* simply refers to the residents of the city, without a clear ethnic overtone. However, since the plural form of the Luwian term otherwise known as one referring to "land" and "people" is used here, we might be dealing with different recognizable groups residing in the city as "citizens". In other words, the Luwian term "REGIO" may be a term with an ethnic dimension. However, this line does not reveal the functions, characteristics and status of such groups.

terminologies of "nation", or better, the political behavior of socioculturally unified groups, has to rely predominantly on biblical sources, which fortunately are extremely rich and varied.

I will begin my discussion with an overview of major kinship terms denoting different levels of social units in Northwest Semitic and primarily biblical sources. My focus will then be placed on the two most widely attested biblical terms that designate an extensive, trans-local and trans-tribal entity, i.e. עם and גוי. I will then first survey in what ways both terminologies serve as designations for groups with sociocultural commonalities cited in modern definitions of a nation or an ethnic group, e.g. linguistic unity, a common "national" god and kinship ties. When it is established that both terms can designate such cultural entities with a certain level of internal commonness, I then examine how such an entity, as imagined by ancient authors, acts in political contexts. Since these terms are often equivalent to "kingdoms" or states, contexts in which such groups function as a unit in international politics will attract special attention. At the end of the discussion I will present a brief synthetic overview of the two less widely used terms often used in late texts, לאום and אומה, along the same line of investigation, which will essentially reinforce conclusions I draw from the more extensive discussion on the two major terms. It will be demonstrated, at least in some salient cases, that sociocultural groups can play active roles also as political entities.

1. Kinship Terminologies as social institutions in the biblical and other Northwest Semitic traditions

A series of terminologies, often with a kinship background, are used in the Hebrew Bible and other Northwest Semitic documents to designate groups and entities of various sizes that

share certain common links, such as “house of...” (-בית)[30] and the related “sons of...” (-בני),[31] “clan” (משפחה),[32] “tribe” (מטה/שבט) and terminologies that are used to designate a broader, more extensive group with internal ties that often transcend the limits of tribal and local boundaries, e.g. “people” (עם) or what is commonly translated as “nation” (גוי) and less commonly, לאום and אומה.[33] Among these terms, the exact extent of a “house” or “sons” of a certain personified name varies, from a single (extended) family to a full-fledged kingdom. Other terms, on the other hand, can be ideally placed at different ranks, from the “family”, “clan” to the “tribe” and then to a whole “people”. In reality, however, the boundary between different ranks of unity is never clear-cut, and the issue is further complicated by the application of different proper nouns to designate the same entity, e.g. Sons of Ephraim, Sons of Jacob and Sons of Israel, all of which could be used to designate residents of the Northern Kingdom. Likewise, the very term “Israel” can serve as a designation of Northern tribes, the

---

[30] The proper noun following “house of” is often a real or imagined individual (or house of the father, as a generic term, see Stager 1985: 19-23) who is deemed to be the founder of the household which later developed into a larger group. For the concept of “house of father” in the Aramean society, see Kühn 2014:41-43. In the political domain it can refer to the ruling dynasty of a certain polity (House of David in biblical and epigraphical sources, house of Omri in biblical and Assyrian sources, see Sader 2014:23 on Aramean “houses”) or serve as a designation of the entire political entity, particularly tribal entities which coincide with states centered on a large royal city among the Arameans in Assyrian and Aramaic sources. Younger sugests that “house of PN” in Assyrian sources functions as a designation of a socially constructed group in the Levant and the Jezirah, such as a tribal kingdom, with both political and geographical meanings, in addition to constructed relatedness on the basis of the actual or, more often than not, created kinship ideology. Younger 2016:43-48.

[31] In the Hebrew Bible, “Sons of...” can serve as a designation of members of a clan or tribe (Sons of Ephraim, e.g. Num 10:22; 26:35, 37; 34:24; Josh 16:5, 8; 1 Chr. 9:3; 12:31; 27:10, 14; 25:7; 28:12; Ps 78:9, etc) or members of a broader entity consisting of tribes which later functioned as a full-fledged ancient state, e.g. Sons of Israel (in both tribal and monarchical periods; for Sons of Israel as a designation of northern Israelites in the period of divided kingdoms, cf. E.g. 1 Kgs 20:15, 17, 29. etc.), Sons of Judah and most interestingly, Sons of Ammon, of which name “sons” has become an integral component even preserved in the Akkadian transliteration of the name. (“Ban Ammanaya”, “the Ammonite”, SAA 01 110, r7; more numerous attestations of “House of Ammon” in royal inscriptions, e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47, r 10’; 3-1 Sennacherib 4, 37; 16, iii 20; 4 Esarhaddon 1, v 62; 5-1 Ashurbanipal 6, ii 36’) See also Younger 2016: 43-48.

[32] In some verses the word משפחה denotes the kinship group above the level of the immediate relatives in one household, or “house of father”, which likely means the clan consisting of more distant relatives, e.g. Gen 24:38; Judg 9:1. In other cases, however, the kinship nuance might become less real and more figurative, when it is best understood as a division in a tribal entity, e.g. Jer 2:4. In yet other cases the term seems to denote the highest level of ethnic division, differentiating one ethnic or political group from another, e.g. Gen 12:3, Amos 3:2, “all the families of the earth” (כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה) and Jer 25:9, “peoples (families) of the North” (כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת צָפוֹן). It should be noted that whatever the extent of the people group called a משפחה, it is exactly the kinship background of the term in its original meaning that reveals the worldview of biblical authors who later use this term reinterpret the relationships between various types of entities.

[33] These terms are closely related in Northwest Semitic languages. In different Targumim, a certain term in Hebrew (e.g. גוי) can be translated by עם (Targum Onkelos) or אומה (Targum Pseudo-Jonathon), which is of course related to dates and specific features of each Aramaic dialect.

Northern Kingdom or, in many biblical sources, the entire Hebrew-speaking community in the southern Levant. Needless to say, each term would experience certain changes in its own history of usage and throughout the history of the groups it designates.[34]

All these terminologies draw heavily upon notions of the household and the family, that is, kinship and consanguinity. However, Rabinowitz has suggested that the terms may have been metaphorical in nature, as members of groups designated by the terminologies more often than not do not descend from the same biological ancestors but instead share other sociocultural links which define the group: "Just as 'a son of a prophet' did not necessarily mean a person whose father was a prophet, so 'a son of Israel' did not necessarily mean one whose father was literally a carrier of the genes of the patriarchs,[35] but one who shared the characteristics--history, way of life, and destiny--that constituted the 'people' of Israel" (I. Rabinowitz 1962: 452). At the same time, it goes without saying that the very employment of these kinship and household terms indicates that, whatever the origin of such sociocultural links, the ancients chose to reinterpret and reformulate them by means of the kinship ideology, befitting the needs to retain a stronger sense of trans-local, trans-tribal unity for groups that tend to sprawl over a large geographical area, such as the territorial kingdoms in the Iron Age Levant.[36]

---

[34] For an overview of the above-mentioned terms as well as their role as designations to social institutions in the Hebrew Bible itself see Wright 1992; see names for ethnicized social institutions in Younger 2016:48-63. For a detailed synthetic study see for example Gottwald 1979:237-337.

[35] Similarly, in the *Myth of Adapa and the South Wind*, Adapa is called "Son of Ea" (*mār* ^{d}*Ea,* Fragment B, Obv. 11'), which obviously should not be interpreted literally. See Izre'el 1997:16. In Mesopotamia, the term "son" (*māru*) also denotes "citizen", without indicating that they were biologically related to a common ancestor. See CAD M-1 "*māru*" 5, p315.

[36] We can take tribal entities in the Old Babylonian period as another example, which relied on geographical affinities as well as the kinship ideology to hold all the members together. Although Fleming has suggested that "...what we call 'tribal' organization is distinguished more by geographic range across more localized political entities than by any greater reliance on the idea of common descent than might be found elsewhere" and that "(t)he main difference between a 'son of Sim'al' and a 'son of Ekallatum' is defined by the geographic-political ranges of the two types of social organization, not by the presence or absence of kinship ideology" (Fleming 2004:31-32), the kinship ideology may prove more effective when a certain group starts to occupy a larger area, e.g. through pastoralist migration. Scholars have observed the phenomenon of mirrored toponyms, when a certain migrant group names sites in a newly settled region with names from their early homes,

Among these terms, עם and גוי (as well as the two less commonly attested terms, לאום and אומה) are used to refer to the most extensive level of a group of people. Can we suggest that they seem closest in meaning and scope to the concept of "nation"? On the one hand, the assumption appears reasonable, on account that "nation" has become, through the Latin translation (*natio*), a common translation of the Hebrew word גוי in English bibles (e.g. JPS). On the other hand, I must reiterate that in my terminological analysis I do not aim to prove or disprove the existence of nations in the Iron Age Levant. Instead, I would like to assess to what extent and on what occasions terms denoting population groups bear both sociocultural commonness and political significance, and how such groups participate directly in political behaviors. In addition, I would like to examine what kind of population group a polysemic terminology likely describes when it is used in different political contexts.

2. Rost and Speiser on עם and גוי

Two early, systematic studies of these two terms are available to us as a point of departure. Leonhard Rost examined עם and גוי within the framework of terminologies for land (אדמה and ארץ) and people, and concludes that גוי concerns a situation where "eine Menschengruppe nach Abstammung, Sprache, Land, Gottesverehrung, Recht und Heerwesen zu einer Einheit zusammengefaßt und gegen Außenstehende abgeschlossen" (Rost 1934:141), and is often attached to a territory and a state in the form of a kingdom (ממלכה) (138). The

---

and more importantly, carried with them rituals of worshiping dead ancestors to new locations. See Dominique Charpin,2003: 16. In the Der near Mari, the Sim'alites celebrated the Derītum festival which they carried with themselves from the Der near Balikh, the cultural center of their tribe. In the festival they not only re-visualized the rituals attached to their original territory, but also worshiped dead ancestors, some of whom lived in that original land, so that geographical links now merge with the kinship ideology: the ancestral land together with the real and imagined ancestors serve to reinforce and perpetuate an identity. Cf. Jean-Marie Durand and Michaël Guichard) 1997: 40. For comparative examples in the Modern West Asia and North Africa, see for example Salzman 1978.

in the Iron Age Levant, while pastoralism and migration is still a relevant issue, it is more important to consider the fact that certain populations are now replacing the Late Bronze Age city-state system with the concept of more extensive territorial kingdoms glued together by sociocultural commonalities yet over a larger geographical area, sometimes threatened by rival ethnic and political grouPs It is against this background that one can make sense of the reformulation of cultural and social links in kinship terms.

term, if so interpreted, appears to correspond nicely to a national group in the broad sense (see discussion in the preceding section on "nation"), as it highlights both sociocultural links, such as common descent, language and god, and political factors such as law, territory and defense. In contrast to גוי, Rost considers the עם "die Mannschaft eines Volkes als Zusammenfassung der verheirateten, auf eigener Scholle sitzenden Vollbürger mit dem Recht zur Dienstleistung im Heerbann, zur Teilnahme an der Rechtssprechung und zur Ausübung des Kultes" (147). A series of elements seem to be common to both terminologies as defined by Rost: both terms indicate some sort of common sociocultural characteristics of members of the community on the one hand, such as blood ties ("Abstammung", i.e. ancestry vs. "der verheirateten...", i.e. extended relatives through marriage), common religious and cultic characteristics, and administrative, political factors on the other, such as the attachment to a territory and a shared legal tradition, etc. The difference between the two terms, according to Rost, lies not so much in the specific features and qualities as it does in the perspective: עם is described as a community of members with internal commonalities, such as common rights, obligations and expectations in the military, legal and cultic realms, while גוי stresses the collectivity of the members as an entity ("Einheit") which is differentiated from the outside by internal linguistic, religious, legal and political homogeneity.

Speiser's concise and illuminating study on the meanings of and differences between the two terms עם and גוי is largely in agreement with Rost's earlier conclusions. However, he notes that the two terms can be more clearly differentiated, suggesting that while עם emphasizes "the suggestion of blood ties and the emphasis on the individual" (thus translatable as "people"), גוי "comes rather close to the modern definition of 'nation'" as it is

often linked with a state or a kingdom (e.g. Gen 10:10), and thus functions as a political unit (Speiser 1960:159-60). The latter point is further explained in his note that the Table of Nations (Gen 10:10) speaks only of גויים which dwell in their "lands" (בְּאַרְצֹתָם), according to their languages (לִלְשֹׁנֹתָם) and "families" or "clans" (לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם) (vv. 5, 20, 31), which indeed befits a description of an ancient "national" group with linguistic ties and territories. So for Speiser, the difference between the two terms is more than a matter of perspective. Speiser argues, by citing the Table of Nations, that unlike עם, "there is not the least hint of personal ties under the concept of 'גוי'", adding that מִשְׁפָּחָה must therefore denote an "administrative rubric"[37] (Speiser 1960: 159). This conclusion is followed by other scholars who also argues that while עם stresses kinship, גוי emphasizes political and social rather than kinship bonds (e.g. D. Christensen 1992). Gottwald, while accepting the rough distinction between עם as a social and cultural term and גוי as a chiefly political term, warns that "the two terms are not used with absolute rigor" (Gottwald 1979:241; cf. Clements 1977:427).

Gottwald's and Clements' view that the distinction between the two terms is not always

[37] See the note on this term at the beginning of the section. It is true that the term sometimes refers to technical divisions of Israelites (1 Chr 2:53, etc.) and others (Gen 36:40; Ps 22:28; Ps 96:7=1 Chr 16:28). But it is important to note, as I have pointed out above, that it is often difficult to ascertain whether kinship ties are intended or assumed when the term functions as a tag of an administrative division. It is indeed the use of kinship idioms that sheds light on biblical understanding of the nature of internal links among members of a socio-political entity, as in the case of contemporary tribal entities in the Middle East. Salzman argues that kinship terms come to the fore when a group experiences territorial instability, which could be the norm in the history of many tribal entities, and is preserved in the reservoir of ideologies that can be resorted to in order to protect the cohesion of the group when it settles down, as in the case of the Bedouins of Cyrenaica. Alternatively, even territory-based tribal groups can still stress lineage ideologies, especially when the geographical distribution of individual branches of a tribal entity corresponds to established kinship divisions (perhaps still partly constructed), as in the case of the Yomut Turkmen. See Salzman 1978:625-29. Both cases may shed light on our understanding of the ancient Israelites and the highlighted kinship ideology as well as the application of kinship idioms to describe administrative relations. While biblical accounts of the migration and conquest of the Israelites during a period of territorial instability are not to be accepted at the face value, experience of the exile and diaspora may also facilitate the reaffirmation of any kinship ties when the group can no longer be safely defined by territory and its partial political autonomy only. Kinship ideology, together with the rise of religious uniqueness in the shaping of a new group identity.

Returning to Gen. 10, it seems more plausible to suggest that since the term משפחה has a well-established status as a kinship term (with administrative uses, of course, see above), גוי in this context certainly occupies a position in the kinship worldview with which biblical authors observes and makes sens of their own and other peoples' social institutions.So interpreted by, e.g. Fischer 2018:559. Fischer, following others, interprets Gen 5, 20 and 31 as containing a summary of for important aspects of a people: land and territory (ארץ), culture and language (לשון), family ties (משפחה), and political or ethnic unity (גוי). While the analysis is appreciated, one should note that גוי and משפחה need not be so clearly separated (Fischer himself mentions both political and ethnic aspects of the former, and as I noted earlier in this chapter, the concept of ethnicity draws heavily upon the kinship ideology) but instead should be considered holistically.

rigorously maintained is to be accepted. It must be noted that the Table of Nations is essentially presented as a genealogical list, which renders the argument for the lack of personal and family in the meaning of גוי ties less convincing. In verses 20 and 31, it is explicitly written that "these are the *Sons of* (בני) Ham" or "Shem" who are presented "according to their clans (למשפחותם) and languages (ללשנתם), by their lands (בארצתם) and *nations* (בגויהם) (Gen 10:20)". In other words, even if גוי denotes a political group, it is nevertheless still understood as a unit of a larger entity which is, interestingly, designated with a kinship term ("sons of PN").[38]

As far as the attributes or qualities of each term are concerned, one must submit that Rost's less differentiated description might prove more in line with its usage in Gen 10 than Speiser's proposal that גוי as a term highlights the political side of a given group while עם stresses kinship and possibly the cultural facet. It is true that עם is inherently and etymologically closely related to kinship, for in the West-Semitic world it could refer to the paternal uncle (Speiser 1960:160; A. R. Hulst 1997). There is possible, yet not unequivocal, evidence suggesting that גוי also has a etymological background from which its link with kinship could be derived.[39] Yet as Gen 10:20 and 31 indicate, גוי may certainly be placed, at least figuratively, in a constructed kinship rubric with linguistic and cultural commonness. Furthermore, as with עם, גוי, even if it is viewed primarily as political concept, is nevertheless not devoid of a social and cultural nuance.[40] Likewise, I will also demonstrate

---

[38] On the relationship between the concept consaguinity and גוי, see below. See also Clements 1977:428. For the term משפחה as an administrative unit or a kinship unit, see no. 37.

[39] On the the term *gāwum/gāyum/gāʾum* attested in Mari texts and the possibility that it denoted a gentilic or kinship unit, see summary in Hulst 1997; see also D. Fleming's long discussion on the role of the *gāyum* as a kinship division of the Sim'alites in the Mari texts. Fleming 2004:50-58.

[40] Note that a גוי is still considered recognizable when scattered among another גוי, which not only highlights the cultural boundary between groups so designated, but also suggests that a גוי does not always have a stable, well-defined political form. E.g. "Or has any god ventured to go and take for himself one nation from the midst of another (לָקַחַת לוֹ גוֹי

below that עם, a more complex term due to its fluid and polysemic nature, and despite its emphasis on blood ties and interpersonal relationships, may in some cases carry a stronger political nuance than indicated by Speiser, as עם alone can function as a political actor or unit in certain contexts.

3. Sociocultural elements of עם and גוי: language, religion and kinship ideology

Ethno-symbolic theories about nation in antiquity, as I discussed in the first half of this chapter, often draw upon such elements as a common designation or self-designation, linguistic unity, a common deity, kinship ideology and attachment to a well-defined territory often in the form of a political entity. I have proposed that rigid definitions that stress all these elements cannot stand an empirical test, not the least due to the fact that ancient sources, especially terminologies, cannot always illuminate all these constructed criteria. Instead of highlighting certain candidates as proto-nations, I prefer to evaluate the effect of sociocultural factors, and thee clustering thereof, on ancient peoples' conception of their political life. This said, one must admit that the above listed sociocultural aspects of a group, whether or not one chooses to follow the ethno-symbolic school, indeed constitute the point of departure in any investigation of the impact of sociocultural factors on ancient political organizations. Biblical and other West Semitic terminological evidence does shed light on these questions.

Before I approach the more complex issues of language, religion and the kinship ideology, I ought to address briefly the issue of the common designation or self-designation of groups labeled as עם or גוי. Common designations for peoples which inhabit a region, apparently beyond the confines of single urban centers, are frequently attested in the Hebrew

---

מִקֶּרֶב גּוֹי) (Deu 4:34 TNK)..." "Another nation" here clearly refers to Egypt. Cf. Perlitt 2013:359.

Bible. However, proper nouns are not always accompanied by עם or גוי. Sometimes the proper nouns alone serve to designate the group or polity, such as "Israel", while proper nouns with additional elements can also function this way, e.g. "sons of Israel". In many other cases, עם and גוי can clearly refer to a group with a common designation that occurs in the immediate context, for example, in Jer 25:12 Babylon and "the land of the Chaldeans" are clearly to be equated with "that nation" (הַגּוֹי הַהוּא). More commonly attested are references to peoples as "the People (of)..." (...עם), particularly in the case of Israel and Judah, e.g. עם ישראל (2 Sam 18:7; 19:47; Ezr. 2:2; Neh 7:7) or העם ישראל (Josh 8:33; 1 Kgs 16:21; Ezr. 9:1); עם יהודה (2 Sam 19:41; 2 Kgs 14:21; 2 Chr 26:1; Ezr. 4:4; Jer 25:1f; Jer 26:18; Hos 12:3) and עם בני ישראל (Exo. 1:9).

A. Linguistic characteristics of a "national" group

(1) Internal linguistic unity

In biblical accounts, an עם is understood to display particular linguistic characteristics, often in the form of internal linguistic unity. This feature of an עם is best demonstrated by the biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). In v.1 of the episode, the author states that the whole earth was "of one language and the same words" (שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֲחָדִים).[41] In v. 6, furthermore, the author has Yahweh observe that the people are "one people (with) one language for all" (עַם אֶחָד וְשָׂפָה אַחַת לְכֻלָּם) and capable of achieving all they desire, which prompts Yahweh to confuse the language common to all the earth (בָּלַל יְהוָה שְׂפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ v.9). Although some scholars argue that in both verses the term "שפה" means discourse, so that one "speech" essentially refers to "unanimity", rather than ("merely")

[41] For the adverbial use of the phrases, see Power 2015:95. For the disputed meaning of the phrase "דְּבָרִים אֲחָדִים" see Power 2015:98-111.

monolingualism (cf. Uehlinger 1990: 348-49, Croatto 1998; see Power 2015:95), Power has convincingly argued, following other scholars (e.g. Block 1984; Berlin 1985: 42-43), that reading שפה as "a particular language"[42] common to one linguistic homogeneous group well befits the Babel narrative (Power 2015: 96). If so, one can suggest that a basic biblical notion about one constituent attribute of a people group designated a "עם" is internal linguistic unity. As we will discuss below, the correlation between עם and language is attested elsewhere in biblical accounts.

In the following biblical texts the terminology עם occurs in the proximity of שפה, לשון or both, which terms almost certainly denote particular languages rather than speech in general:

a. Truly, he will speak to this people (אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה) in a stammering speech (לַעֲגֵי שָׂפָה) and an alien tongue (לָשׁוֹן אַחֶרֶת) (Isa 28:11 TNK; modified).

b. No more shall you see the barbarian folk (עַם נוֹעָז), the people of speech too obscure to comprehend (עַם עִמְקֵי שָׂפָה מִשְּׁמוֹעַ), so stammering of tongue that they are not understood (נִלְעַג לָשׁוֹן אֵין בִּינָה) (Isa 33:19 TNK).

c. For you are sent not to a people of unintelligible speech and difficult language (עַם עִמְקֵי שָׂפָה וְכִבְדֵי לָשׁוֹן), but to the House of Israel -- not to the many peoples of unintelligible speech and difficult language (עַמִּים רַבִּים עִמְקֵי שָׂפָה וְכִבְדֵי לָשׁוֹן), whose talk you cannot understand. If I sent you to them, they would listen to you (Ezek 3:5-6 TNK).

d. A good number of their children spoke the language of Ashdod (אַשְׁדּוֹדִית) and the language of

[42] For a list of biblical verses in which שפה most likely refers to a particular language (admittedly few in relation to cases where it refers to "speech" in general), see Power 2015:44-45. Particularly noteworthy is the phrase שפת כנען (Isa 19:18), which has been interpreted as a reference to the use of the Hebrew language in Egypt, perhaps due to Judean settlement in Egypt in the 7th or 6th centuries (thus not befitting an 8th-century date assigned in general to First Isaiah). See Roberts 2015:263.

those various peoples (וְכִלְשׁוֹן עַם וָעָם), and did not know how to speak Judean (יְהוּדִית) (Neh 13:24 TNK).

e. Dispatches were sent to all the provinces of the king, to every province in its own script (כִּכְתָבָהּ) and to every people in its own language (וְאֶל־עַם וָעָם כִּלְשׁוֹנוֹ), that every man should wield authority in his home and speak according to the language of his own people (כִּלְשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ) (Esth 1:22 TNK; modified).[43]

In the Aramaic portion of Daniel, the phrase "peoples, nations and (people of) languages" occurs in as many as seven verses.[44] For example:

f. The herald proclaimed in a loud voice, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations and (people)[45] of every language (עַמְמַיָּא אֻמַּיָּא וְלִשָּׁנַיָּא) (Dan 3:4 TNK; modified).

A few preliminary observations can be offered regarding the verses cited above: 1. In examples a-c שפה is paralleled with לשון, a word that more commonly refers to an individual language (cf. Power 2015:28-42), while in other cases only לשון is attested. In examples a and c, in particular, one can argue that "speech" may also serve as an appropriate rendering of the terms in question, yet the foreignness of the people(s) with whom the Israelite(s) cannot communicate confirms that it is the use of non-Israelite languages that hinder mutual understanding, rather than, vaguely, "convoluted speech". 2. While examples a and b are attested in First Isaiah (possibly pre-exilic), and c (Ezekiel) dates to the Exilic period, the majority (9 out of 12) of cases in which "particular languages" occur as the hallmark of "peoples" are found in texts dating to the post-exilic period (Ezra, Esther and

[43] For similar cases in Esther where עם and language occur in proximity, see also Esth 3:12; 8;9.
[44] Also Dan 3:7, 29, 31; 5:19; 6:26; 7:14; 8:23.
[45] The term "language" has extended its meaning to refer to a linguistic community. See the parallel development in Late Biblical Hebrew in Isa 66:18 and Zech 8:23. See below.

Daniel). 3. In examples c-f, the historical and social setting of these verses where one finds the juxtaposition of עם and language is that of an empire, drawing possibly upon the coexistence of languages and peoples under the rubric of a world empire that has subsumed all groups under its control.

More specifically, examples a-c stress the correspondence between a language and a people through the negation of the ability of Israelites to comprehend peoples "of obscure speech" or plainly, "of another language". The contrast between "this people" with "another language" (a), the link between "a barbarian/fierce folk" and "an incomprehensible language" and the contrast between "peoples of hard speech" with "House of Israel" (c) clearly demonstrates the assumption that a עם is first and foremost a linguistic community. In other examples the link between a עם and their specific language is more directly revealed, whether by the explicit reference to "a people and its language", the juxtaposition of "languages of peoples" with individual tongues (Ashdodite and Judean) or the parallel of peoples (עם), languages or linguistic groups and other terms that designate a nation-like people group in the Book of Daniel. (אֻמָּה).

A גוי, too, is often understood as a linguistic community with a strong connection with the term לשון. I have mentioned above the correspondence among גוי, משפחה, ארץ and לשון in the Table of Nations (Gen 10:5, 20, 31), which clearly describes the גוי as a community with kinship bonds as well as linguistic homogeneity that inhabits a certain territory. In Deut 28:49 and Jer 5:15, passages reminiscent of the cursing section in Near Eastern treaties, Yahweh threatens that his people's disobedience and corruption will incur the invasion of a ruthless, distant people (גוי) whose dreadfulness is marked by the incomprehensibility of their

language (גוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִשְׁמַע לְשֹׁנוֹ Deut 28:49; גוֹי לֹא־תֵדַע לְשֹׁנוֹ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע מַה־יְדַבֵּר Jer 5:15). Furthermore, in two eschatological episodes dating to the Post-exilic Period the word לשונות not only occurs in connection to גוים, but it has also become the substantive embodiment of peoples comparable to the גוי:[46]

For I know their deeds and purposes. The time has come to[47] gather *all the nations and tongues* (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְהַלְּשֹׁנוֹת); they shall come and behold My glory. (Isa 66:18 TNK)

Thus said the LORD of Hosts: In those days, ten men (עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים) from nations of every tongue (lit. *"ten men from the languages of nations"* מִכֹּל לְשֹׁנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם) will take hold -- they will take hold of every Jew by a corner of his cloak and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech 8:23 TNK)

In both cases linguistic affiliation functions as the defining characteristic of the "national group", to the extent that the two become essentially interchangeable. These and other examples clear demonstrate that גוי, like עם, is primarily a people group with their own language which is usually different from that of other peoples or nations.[48]

---

[46] See linguistic analysis in Shalom Paul 2012:626; cf. the Aramaic term לשן that occurs seven times in the Book of Daniel as "peoples of languages" cited above.

[47] The text is corrupted. Perhaps "I am coming to gather all the nations...". See notes in *BHS*; see Blenkinsopp 2003:310; Paul 2012: 626.

[48] In an important passage that sheds light upon biblical notions about the relationship between the two Hebrew-speaking polities, the Northern Kingdom ("Joseph, Ephraim and all the Sons of Israel, his companions") and the Southern Kingdom ("Judah and Sons of Israel, his companions"; for the two names see Ezek 37:16; cf. 35:10) are called "two nations" and "two kingdoms" to be merged by Yahweh in the future into "one nation" under the rule of "one king" (v. 22; "nation"=גוי in this verse), as the two rods so named are metaphorically united. See Zimmerli 1969/1979:912-13; Greenberg 1997:756. In v. 22b Northern and the Southern Kingdoms are referred to as two different nations (cf. Jer 33:24 where the two kingdoms are called two families but one nation), which not only highlights the strong political nuance of the term גוי, but also raises the question of the linguistic links between the two "Hebrew" kingdoms. If a foreign גוי is typically depicted as a people who speak an alien, sometimes exceedingly difficult, language, why can both "Hebrew" kingdoms be labeled as two nations? The historical situation of the relationship between languages of the North and the South will be reviewed below. In biblical accounts we hear only of "the Judean language" (2 Kgs 18:26, 28=Isa 36:11, 13; 2 Chron 32:18; Neh 13:24) but not the Israelite language. The Rab-Shaqeh episode, placed after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kings (but not in Isaiah and 2 Chronicles) may have prompted the hypothesis that Rab-Shaqeh was an Israelite by origin who was taken captive by the Neo-Assyrian Empire, although this is by no means apparent in the biblical text. See Cogan and Tadmor 1988:230. The basis of this hypothesis is of course the assumption that the language of the Northern Kingdom is identical to that of Judah (not just mutually intelligible, for the Judeans immediately recognizes Rab-Shaqeh's speech as one made in their own local tongue). I will save our overview of the historical Israelite dialect as attested by biblical and epigraphical evidence for later discussion, yet it should be noted here that we lack information about the biblical perception of the northern vernacular. See also Machinist 2000a, Power 2015:250-58.

(2) More on linguistic distinction between peoples: the familiar stranger

Another issue to be addressed is the linguistic characteristics of a foreign people designated by עם or גוי. If people belonging to the same עם or גוי are presumed to be mutually intelligible, as Gen 11:6 and Ezek 3:5-6 suggest, is a foreign people absolutely incomprehensible in the linguistic respect? Biblical sources on this issue indicate that only a subset of foreign peoples are to be be classified as linguistically incomprehensible from Israel's and Judah's perspectives. The phrase "of a difficult language" in various verses listed above more possibly functions as an attributive that describes certain but not necessarily all foreign peoples. Moreover, linguistic obscurity is closely related to geographical remoteness: "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, which will swoop down like the eagle -- a nation whose language you do not understand (Deu 28:49 TNK)." In other words, it is here assumed that a distant people is likely to be unintelligible, whether due to the linguistic divergence resulting from geographical distance or, at least, to lack of exposure to that language on the Israelite part.

If so, how about a foreign people that resides in the vicinity of another people? Will it be considered as linguistically distinguishable from the other people? Historical situations varied greatly in the ancient Near East as elsewhere in the world, from the side-by-side coexistence of two radically different languages (e.;g. Sumerian vs. Akkadian in 3rd millennium Mesopotamia or Luwian vs. Aramaic in the 1st millennium Northern Levant), to a linguistic

---

In Ezek 3:5-6 cited above, "House of Israel", that is, Ezekiel's own people, contrasts a people (עם) of a difficult language. However, it should be noted that the setting of the Book of Ezekiel is the Babylonian Exile, so that House of Israel in this context most likely refers to the Judeans, both those in exile and those who remained in Judah. See Greenberg 1983:16.

The discussion above does not lead us to any firm conclusion. Calling the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms two "nations" may or may not indicate linguistic differences, which were certainly present. Knowing that the Northern Dialect must have been intelligible with the Judean vernacular, one may suggest that the linguistic distinctiveness of a גוי might not be so prominent as political separation.

continuum of local vernaculars which are separated more in political and geographical terms than in linguistic terms, e.g. the Canaanite "languages" in the southern Levant, perhaps throughout ancient Levantine history.[49] How does the Hebrew Bible depict (speakers of) foreign languages that in all likelihood resembled the Judean tongue? One example is Isa 21:11-12, which features direct speech of a voice from Seir/Edom. Power has examined possible traces of style-switching by drawing on verbal roots and unusual morphological features rarely used in biblical Hebrew (Power 2015:201-03). However, there is no reason to contend that these foreign elements point to a distinct Edomite language.[50] In the case of Moabite, Power, following Rendsburg (Rendsburg 1995:184, n.30; contra Holmstedt 2010: 47-48; 107-08), suggests that the author of the Book of Ruth does not emphasize Ruth's foreignness with peculiar or specifically Moabite linguistic forms, but instead depicts her as a conversant speaker of Hebrew (Power 2015:206). There is no reason to assume that people from neighboring Northwest Semitic speaking polities were consistently considered linguistically distant by biblical authors.

It is against this background that the reference in Neh 13:24 to the Ashdodite and languages of various peoples, in contrast to Judean, is particularly noteworthy. In the previous verse it is noted that Judean men had married foreign women of Ashdodite, Ammonite and Moabite descents, yet in v. 24 only Ashdodite and "languages of various peoples" are

[49] See S. Schwartz 1995:9, where the author argues that the political fragmentation of the eastern Mediterranean was not accompanied by a corresponding linguistic diversity. This is not to suggest that Canaanite speakers were unaware of the subtle differences between local varieties of the Canaanite languages, as the famous "Shibboleth/Sibboleth" episode (Judg 12:5-6) suggests. In fact, as I will argue below, such small differences as the use of the sibilants were probably highlighted under certain circumstances as an identity marker (although the exact pronunciation of either version is unclear; see Soggin 1981: 221-22).

[50] The verbs בעה and אתה are more commonly attested in Aramaic, while the retention of the root letter Yod is infrequently attested in Biblical Hebrew with similar forms found in Old and Imperial Aramaic, Ugaritic and Byblian Phoenician. See Power 2015: 201-03. None of these elements is clearly Edomite or Transjordanian, although the verb אתה occurs in the 8th-century Book of Balaam Son of Beor found in Deir Alla on the East Bank of the Jordan (line 1; see e.g. Ahituv 2008:435). The location, however, is in the north of the Transjordanian territories while the kingdom of Edom is located in the South.

mentioned. So presumably Transjordanian tongues are here subsumed under "languages of various peoples".[51] From a purely linguistic perspective, it is rather surprising that these neighboring languages should be contrasted with Judean in the Persian context. We know from epigraphic evidence from the Transjordan indicates that Ammonite and Moabite, though bearing peculiarities,[52] are closely related to ancient Hebrew and must have been comprehensible to Hebrew speakers. How about Ashdodite? Was it a Philistine language of Aegean origin still in use, so that it is completely "gibberish" to the Hebrew ears, hence Nehemiah's complaint? Or was "Ashdodite" a term for unintelligible foreign languages in general (cf. Ullendorf 1961-62: 372)? The probability of both, if one considers extrabiblical evidence discussed below, is extremely low.

Although the early Philistines may have spoken non-Semitic languages in the 12th -11th centuries, when they first appeared in the southern Levant, at least a portion of them most likely switched to Canaanite tongues within some time, in any case by the 8th century at the latest. All Ashdodite rulers attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions in the late 8th century and the 7th century bore West Semitic names, such as Azuri (*ʿ*zr* Fuchs 1994, Ann. 241; Prunk 90), Aḫi-meti (ibid; also Fuchs 1998, VII b 3), Iāmānī,[53] Mitinti (cf. Hebrew מתן) and Aḫi-milki.[54] Inscriptions excavated in Philistine sites are largely composed in a Canaanite

---

[51] The Septuagint omits "languages of various peoples" and adds "Ammonite" and "Moabite".

[52] More in Chapter 3.

[53] Perhaps related to the root *ymn*, "right". Not read as "the Greek". See *PNA* 2, p. 491 for further reference on the interpretation of the name.

[54] Not all residents of these Philistine polities bore West Semitic names in this period. An ostracon from Ashdod dated to the 7th century reads "*ldggrt*", "to/for Dggrt", which is not readily explainable as a West Semitic name. Concerning this and other unusual names, Naveh notes that they "display a new phenomenon in the Palestinian onomasticon...I leave open the question whether the bearers if these names were the descendants of the twelfth-eleventh century Philistines, or a new ethnic element in the region, e.g. Greek mercenaries." Naveh 1985:21. The only non-Semitic name borne by Philistine rulers attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions is Ikausu, king of Ekron, who was active in Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal' times. The same ruler is attested in a dedication inscription found in Ekron, where the ruler's name is spelled *ʾkys* (cf. אכיש king of Gath in e.g. 1 Sam 21:11) Gitin and Naveh argue that the name should be vocalized as "Akhayus" (based on the Greek vocalization in the Septuagint) translated as "the Achaean" a suggest that the naming of a king of Ekron as "the Greek" in the 7th century by his father who born a Semitic name (*Pdy*=Padî in Assyrian sources) may suggest the Greek origin of the

language certainly comprehensible to a contemporary Judean.[55] Although the script, developed from the Judean version of the Old Hebrew script, exhibits local characteristics,[56] and despite the more Phoenician-like orthography (Ahituv 2008:335), the oral language must have been mutually intelligible with the vernacular spoken in Judah, possibly even more so in the Persian Period. Therefore, it appears unrealistic that Ashdodite speaking half-Judean children should be blamed for not knowing Judean.

Machinist has noted that it is the active proficiency of the Judean language that is in question here ("and they do not know to speak Judean" וְאֵינָם מַכִּירִים לְדַבֵּר יְהוּדִית Neh 13:24; see Machinist 2000a:74, n. 76; followed by Power 2015:373). In other words, those "Ashdodizing" Judeans who may very well understand Judean, failed to speak the proper Judean variety of Canaanite, which, one should note, most likely demonstrated only minimal differences from the Ashdodite (and Transjordanian) vernacular, perhaps including preference of certain words over others, preference of one stem over another when using a certain verbal root, different stresses, accents, occasional "odd" word order, etc. These seemingly trivial details, however, must have been essential to Nehemiah's author, for it is exactly such details that distinguished between closely related varieties in a dialect continuum.[57]

Returning to the discussion on עם and גוי, one must agree with Power's analysis that

---

Philistines, which is demonstrated by the material culture. Gitin and Naveh 1997:11, n.30. However, one must account for the gap of some 4-5 centuries between the present inscription and the 12th century. One wonders if this interesting name is indicative a new wave of Greek influence (if not migration) in the Levant and the Near East in general. See another case of a non-Semitic name with a Semitic patronymic excavated in Tell Jemmeh in the 8th - 7th centuries with further reference in Lipiński 2006:66.

[55] Some inscriptions contain non-Semitic names. See footnote above. Cf. The dedicatory inscription from Ekron in Gitin, Dotan and Naveh 1997; Ahituv 2008:335-40. The orthography is more Phoenician than Judean.

[56] For local features see Naveh 1985; Naveh, Dotan and Gitin 1997; most recently Pottorf 2017, particularly 190-91 on the peculiar Lamed in Ashdod.

[57] Linguistic factors may serve as identity markers on different levels. In the Shibboleth episode, the pronunciation of the sibilant effectively differentiates the Ephraimites from the Gileadites from the east of the Jordan. While the account resembles that of an ethnic conflict (cf. Niditch 2008: 137), the Ephraimites' accusation that Jephthah did not invite them to participate in their war against the Ammonites and Jephthah's response suggest that some sort of shared identity, if not merely political alliance, was assumed by both the Ephraimites and the Gileadites. Judging from the broader context of Judges, in this episode linguistic factors served to mark the tribal or regional identity within a larger group.

this passage is indicative of "linguistic nationalism" (Power 2015: 374-77) against the imperial background: the political unity created by the universal Achaemenid Empire demanded the removal of political boundaries and facilitated trans-regional migration of individuals within in the empire (at least in certain regions), which were often rather subtle in the first place in the southern Levant in Iron II. With the downfall of local political entities, cultural identity had to be carried on by material culture as well as religious and linguistic elements. This is why otherwise unimportant differences in the oral languages, which possibly never quite hindered communication, is now stressed, sharpened, and possibly "enshrined" and perpetuated as an prominent cultural hallmark which in a sense substitutes the now defect political divisions: cultural facets of a people are now "politicized", not unlike in the history of modern nationalism.[58] Judeans must speak good Judean, no matter how similar it is to Ashdodite, Ammonite and Moabite, for this is in part how Judeans can remain as a recognizable עם separated from neighboring עמים in the universal empire.[59]

B. A common deity as an identity marker of עם and גוי

In addition to a common language, groups designated as עם or גוי in biblical texts are

[58] See Jovanović 2018 on the role of small differences in the oral and written language in the formation of modern Montenegrin nationalism. On the role of specific linguistic features in the construction of identity, see Fought 2006:22.

[59] S. Schwartz (1995:9-10) has argued that, due to the lack of linguistic diversity in the Iron Age the southern Levant, language cannot have played a significant role in the formation and development of nationalist sentiments. He argues that "(T)he Israelites of the Iron shared a language but apparently attached little importance to this fact, for they shared it also with their neighbours; later, the Jews did not share a language but still often thought of themselves as a nation". Citing Neh. 13:23-30, he suggests that the fact that the half of the mixed children spoke Ashdodite did not figure in the rest of Nehemiah's arguments, which focus on intermarriage rather than on linguistic purity. The observation is accurate. Yet Schwartz seems to have failed to note the significance of v.24ab "and they did not know to speak Judean", which I have discussed above. In other words, no matter how similar Judean was to Ashdodite, Ashdodite did not "sound right", which is but one of the destructive consequences of intermarriage, a practice that in turn threatens the purity and even the existence of the Judean community. The argument Schwartz makes about the later Jewish "nation" which did not often share the same language, as Jews lived in different lands, is only plausible to the extent that it correctly recognizes the fact that language alone could not have differentiated one national or ethnic group from another (note that the the majority of the Hui Muslim ethnic group in China speak the local variety of the Chinese language). Yet even here I have to point out two linguistic issues with regard to the preservation of the Jewish identity in diaspora: 1. Though defunct as an everyday language, Hebrew remains the "holy language" (לשון הקודש) and the language in which the Jewish scripture was written. 2. Words of Hebrew origin are present in hybrid languages spoken by Jews in various regions, from Yiddish, Ladino to Judeo-Arabic. These facts suggest that the linguistic facet of nationalism cannot be neglected even in the case of the Jewish people.

also defined by their special, usually one-to-one, correspondence with a "national" god. Grosby has argued (e.g. 2002a:13-51) that the national character of a certain group can only be fully established when a monolatrous religious system is at work, particularly when cultic centralization (e.g. the reform by Josiah) has been carried out. This statement is not without its problems, as it does not adequately appreciate the unifying effect of widely worshiped pantheon (particularly with representative main deities) across a given cultural or civilizational realm (in ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, modern India, etc.). Even so, one must admit that the Hebrew Bible does tend to depict different peoples in the Levant as worshipers of deities particular to certain ethnic groups, such as Yahweh (and El, with different epithets) of Israel and Judah, Dagon of the Philistines, Chemosh of Moab (though Chemosh is called god of the Ammonites in Judg 11:25) and Milkom of the Ammonites. The close link between a people group and its god is all the more prominent when one considers the phrases highlighting such correspondence: one finds both the phrase "god of a people (or an ethnic, national group)" and "people of a god" in biblical sources.

"God of a people", i.e. a deity serving as the main protector of a certain culturally unified group, is attested in several different variant forms. First, one finds the generic phrase "god(s) of peoples/nations", in which both עם and גוי are attested: אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים, "gods of the peoples",[60] i.e. foreign gods or idols (1 Chr 16:26=Ps 96:5) whom the Israelites should not worship. In both cases the phrase refers to foreign gods. In 2 Chr 32:19, the juxtaposition of Yahweh (here with the epithet unique in the Bible, "God of Jerusalem"[61]) with "gods of the

[60] Deut 6:14; 13:8; Judg 2:12; 1 Chr. 16:26= Ps 96:5.

[61] Levin draws attention to "Yahweh, God of Israel, the god that is in Jerusalem" when commenting on the title here (Levin 2017:345), although this does not explain why it is applied in the current context. Perhaps this is to be connected to the fact that Jerusalem, the Judean capital, is now under siege, so that Yahweh's role as the protector of the city is to be stressed. Japhet has observed that in the passage Yahweh is referred to with various titles, Yahweh God of Israel (v.17), God

peoples of the land" by the Assyrian messenger is ridiculed by the Chronicler as the latter is "work of men's hands". (v.19) "Gods of the people" ("people" in singular) is attested once, in 2 Chr 25:15, where it refers to the gods of Sons of Seir (here =the Edomites; verb in plural: אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הִצִּילוּ אֶת־עַמָּם מִיָּדֶךָ) (v. 14) Similarly, אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם[62] refers to gods of גוים as political groups, while אֱלֹהֵי גוֹיֵ הָאֲרָצוֹת[63] is a variant phrase. Except for Deut 29:17, in which the phrases clearly refers to "gods of (other) nations" that Israelites should not worship, the phrases "gods of the nations" or "gods of the nations of the countries" all occur in the context of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in which Rab-Shaqeh or an unnamed official convey the Assyrian king's message to the besieged Judean capital. In thie context the phrases should be understood as all the gods of all the different national groups as political entities defeated by the Assyrian Empire. Additionally, sometimes god of a nation or people is expressed by the pronominal suffix, i.e. אַשְׁרֵי הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו הָעָם בָּחַר לְנַחֲלָה לוֹ ("Happy the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen to be His own." Ps 33:12 TNK).

Beyond the general phrases, we also encounter, more frequently, god(s) of an particular extended territorial polity or a specific people, and of cities. In some cases the name of the polity follows "god of", which, due to the polysemic nature of these proper nouns, can also be interpreted as a collective noun referring to the "people" of the polity. Such phrases are widely attested when referring to the Israelite god, e.g. אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, often preceded by the deity's name or epithet "Yahweh" (e.g. Isa 21:17) or "Yahweh of the Hosts" (e.g. Jer 25:27),

---

of Hezekiah (v. 17) and God of Jerusalem, as these are the three elements threatened by Assyria. Japhet 2003:431. Note also that in 2 Chr 28:23, gods of Damascus are also "gods of the kings of Aram", which also equates the deities of a capital city with (personal) deities of the rulers of a more extensive socio-political entity.

In Hebrew epigraphical sources there is one possible attestation of "God of Jerusalem" (Graffiti in a burial cave in Khirbet Beit Lei), possibly dated to the early 6th century BCE, but the reading is very uncertain. Most importantly, the Heh in "ʔlhy" is beyond recognition. For different transliterations, see Ahituv 2008:233-35.

[62] E.g. Deut 29:17; 2 Kgs 18:33, 19:12; Isa 36:18, 37:12; 2 Chr 32:14.

[63] E.g. 2 Chr 32:13, 17.

while foreign deities are also designated as "god" of a particular group (e.g. "God of Edom" in 2 Chr 25:20), sometimes preceded by the deities' names identical to the format "Yahweh God of Israel": e.g. "For they have forsaken Me; they have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Phoenicians,[64] Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milkom the god of the Ammonites...(1 Kgs 11:33 TNK; cf. 11:5)".[65] In such cases, one is tempted to suggest that these deities were understood by authors of the biblical text as "national" gods of apparently monolatrous ethnic groups, with one god assigned to each group, although this designation of certain groups and its categorization as an ethnic group with national gods might not agree with the historical reality or later perception of the groups in question, e.g. the Phoenicians.[66] However, since the word אלהים occurs consistently in the plural, the phrase "god of ..." does not always imply monolatry, particularly when typical polytheistic cultures are in question. For instance, when "gods of Egypt" are mentioned, the context clearly implies that the plural form is intended.[67] Finally, one must be reminded that the polity whose god is mentioned need not be an ethnic group dwelling in a extensive territorial kingdom. Instead, the Hebrew Bible also speaks of deities of individual cities or city-states, such as Baal-Zebub, God of Ekron (2 Kgs 1:2, 3, 6, 16), gods of Syrian states of different types mentioned in 2 Kgs 18:34 (=Isa 36:19)

---

[64] lit. God of the Sidonians, "אֱלֹהֵי צִדֹנִין", possibly with Aramaic plural ending. It is noteworthy that the term "Sidonians" also serves as a general term for all Phoenicians in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 3: 9; Josh. 13: 4, 6; Judg 18: 7; 1 Kgs 11: 5) as well as in Greek sources. See Edrey 2018:8.

[65] See also Judg 10:6, where the Israelites are said to have worshiped "the Baals and Ashteroth" and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines etc. "Baals and Ashteroth" served as generic designations of foreign deities. The list alludes to the list of foreign enemies mentioned multiple times in the framework of the Book of Judges. See. Groß 2009:574.

[66] In the Iron Age, Phoenician city-states began to have different city gods in addition to a shared pantheon. See Edrey 2018:177-81.

[67] "For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and I will mete out punishments to *all* the gods of Egypt (וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם), I the LORD. (Exo 12:12 TNK) See also the phrase "houses (temples) of the gods of Egypt" (בָּתֵּי אֱלֹהֵי־מִצְרַיִם Jer 43:12, 13)

It should also be noted that the plural form of god as a singular is also attested in other West Semitic sources. For instance, the term *hʔlm* ("the god") is used in reference to Azatiwada's dynastic god in the exemplar inscribed on a statue of Baal. For the reference and further discussion see Burnett 1999:34. This usage also occurs in Late Phoenician and Punic sources. See ibid. 34-37.

and god(s) of Damascus, capital of one of the Aramean kingdoms (2 Chr 28:23; here also titled "gods of the kings of Aram").

In sum, in biblical sources there indeed seems to be a correspondence between a certain deity and a particular people group, as a deity or a group of deities (see example of gods of Egypt) are understood by biblical authors to be more typically worshiped by a particular people or polity and to function more properly in a specific cultural domain, although a certain deity may be readily accepted by foreigners due either to his/her fame and effectiveness, which may spread to other cultural groups, or to intermarriage and merger of kinship units, which is aptly expressed by the basic meaning of the term עם: "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16 TNK)

In addition to "god of a people/nation", "people/nation of a god" is also a widely attested phrase that illustrates the correspondence between a common god of the land and a particular people group, which depicts the people or polity as the figurative possession of a specific deity (see discussion on Deut 32:8-9 below). While Judg 20:2 speaks of the assembly of "people of God" (קְהַל עַם הָאֱלֹהִים), elsewhere the phrase "people of Yahweh" (עַם יְהוָה) is attested as a designation of Israel, e.g. Num 11:29, 17: 6 and Zep. 2:10,[68] etc. As the term עם can also refer to "troops" or a group of people with a specific role or function, which I will discuss in further detail below, the exact meaning and extent of עַם יְהוָה may not be always explicit. In 2 Sam 1:12, for example, David and his entourage mourned and fasted for Saul, Jonathan his son, "the people of Yahweh" and "the House of Israel" who fell in their battle against the Philistines. Although the juxtaposition of "people of Yahweh" and "House of

[68] The designation of a certain polity or national group with the major god is not restricted to Israel and Judah in the Hebrew Bible, as one also finds Moab referred to as "People of Chemosh" (Num 21:29; Jer 48:46)

Israel" in this verse seems to indicate that the entire Israelite community is in question, the reference to warfare renders the translation "troop of Yahweh" also possible; hence different translations by scholars.[69] It may very well refer to the portion of "the people of Judah" and "House of Israel" who were killed in battle. Equally ambiguous are Judg 5:11 and 13, two difficult verses in the Song of Deborah, where the battle motif complicates the translation of עַם יְהוָה (e.g. "Troops" in Boling 1975: 102; "People" in Coogan 1978). In other cases the interpretation of "People of Yahweh" as a designation of members of the entire community is more certain, such as 2 Sam 6:21,[70] where "the People of Yahweh" is followed by the apposition "Israel"[71] and 2 Kgs 9:6, where both "People of Yahweh" and "Israel" refer to the Northern Kingdom. Moreover, an interesting case is Ezek 36:20, Yahweh's announcement about the exile: "But when they came to those nations, they caused My holy name to be profaned, in that it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD (עַם יְהוָה), yet they had to leave His land.'[72] (Ezek 36:20 TNK)" In this context, the exiles of the House of Israel (v.17) are designated as "People of Yahweh", attached to the god's land, by foreigners in a foreign land, which clearly shows that the common deity is perceived by outsiders as a sociocultural identity marker of a displaced people who used to live in a particular land. Here

[69] E.g. "Army of Yahweh" in McCarter 1984:55; "People of Yahweh" in Caquot and de Robert 1994:363. JPS Tanakh also opts for "troops of Yahweh". The Septuagint has "(mourned for...) the People of Judah" (ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν Ιουδα), see Auld 2011:354. It should be noted that Saul is not frequently mentioned with "Judah" in his lifetime. In 1 Sam 15:4, one of the few such cases, Saul mustered 200,000 troops, in addition to whom 10,000 Judeans were also enrolled. It thus appear that Saul's kingdom has a stronger Northern association and that Judah is considered as an affiliated unit. See Finkelstein 2013:37-61. Therefore, the reading "people of Judah" in 2 Sam 1:12 is less likely than "... of Yahweh". One wonders, too, whether "House of Israel" here refers to the northern tribes, as it does the Northern kingdom in 2 Kgs 9:6.

[70] The Septuagint has "his people", and it is unclear whether "he" refers to Yahweh or "your father" (Saul) in this context. The former seems more likely.

[71] A few manuscripts have "upon People of Yahweh and upon Israel" rather than "upon the People of Yahweh; upon Israel". The version with "and" would weaken our hypothesis that People of Yahweh refers to "Israel" per se and could heighten the possibility that here, too, "troops", the military sector of the polity, is intended .

[72] "Desecration" in the sense that foreigners would claim that Yahweh cannot save his own people. Alternatively, as Greenberg notes, the conjunction need not be understood as "yet" or "but", but instead simply as "and". Therefore, the desecration would be the fact that the Judeans were so corrupt that the foreigners would call Yahweh the god who created, fostered and spewed out such a people from His land. See Greenberg 1997:729.

we see the close links among the god, the god's land and the god's people.[73]

In contrast to עם of a specific deity, no such phrase as "גוי of a deity" is attested in the Hebrew Bible. A גוי can be compared to the possession of a deity only in indirect expressions: "...but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ, Exo 19:6a TNK)" The two unique phrases "kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation" follow another term used likewise to illustrate Israel's special relationship to Yahweh, i.e. "personal property" (וְהָיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה v. 5, for the word and its cognates in Akkadian and Ugaritic, see Greenberg 1951; Hamilton 2011:303). For Benno Jacob, these phrases stress the correspondence between a deity and his own nation, not unlike Chemosh's relationship with Moab mentioned above (B. Jacob 1997:538). However, the theology of the biblical authors that depicts Yahweh as a universal god renders the correspondence restrictive only to Israel, who belongs only to Yahweh but not to other gods, while Yahweh owns "the whole land" (v.5; cf. Jacob 1997:538; Dohmen 2004:61)[74]. Furthermore, Hamilton points out that the correspondence between Israel and Yahweh formulated in this verse, with the former designated as the latter's people, also differs from the simple link between a national god and a people in that it is conditional, and Israel is expected to listen to Yahweh's instructions and

[73] Finally, in Ps 47, a psalm celebrating Yahweh's status as a universal king over all peoples and nations (see also Chapter 7 on the presence of national and imperial tones), there is a dubious occurrence of the phrase "People of the God fo Abraham" (נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ עַם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם כִּי לֵאלֹהִים מָגִנֵּי־אָרֶץ מְאֹד נַעֲלָה V. 10) The Septuagint translates the phrase as "with the God of Abraham", reading עִם instead of עַם. The *BHS* also suggests that perhaps the text should be "with the people of..." and one of the words was dropped by haplograhpy. Seeligman, following Beaucamp 1957, argues that the MT text should be preserved, for the preposition עִם is not used with the the verb אסף in the Niphal stem. Seeligman 1980:35-36. For Beaucamp, "People of the God of Abraham" is certainly related to "People of Yahweh", which I have discussed, but it should be distinguished from the latter, as he proposes that God of Abraham differs from God of Isaac and God of Jacob in the early period, to which he dates Psalm 47. He also argues that the נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים (v.10a) is in apposition with עם אלהי אברהם in v.10b, so that they refer to the same, extensive group (not necessarily foreign peoples vs. Israel) who worship the God of Abraham. Beaucamp 1957:459-60. Seeligman also reads the two as in apposition with one another and suggests that the "People of the God of Abraham" now find among themselves foreigners, for which reason he dates this portion of the psalm to the Post-Exilic Period when some foreigners may have desired to become part of "House of Israel" for religious reasons. Seeligman 1980:36. If the reading is correct, one can say, at the very least, that in a psalm full of the interplay of national or local elements and the imperial or universal tone one sees the national god of Israel serve as a sociocultural identity marker of a specific people.

[74] For the relationship between Yahweh, El Elyon and Israel in Deut 32:8-9, see discussion below on boundaries between עמים.

bear specific attributes. Israel has been called Yahweh's people earlier in the Book of Exodus (Exo 3:7, 5:23, etc). Here, in the context of the covenant, the two parties are entering into a new phase of their relationship (Hamilton 2011:301), i.e. not simply Yahweh's nation or people, but specifically "a kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation", both of which highlight special qualities assigned to this particular nation, from "all the peoples" of "all the land" that belongs to Yahweh (v.5), that allow them to achieve close and direct encounter with the divine power as "priests" and as a sanctified people belonging to Yahweh (תִּהְיוּ־לִי, "you shall be to me...) (Dohmen 2004:63; see Propp 2006:158). Finally, the occurrence of the phrase "a holy nation" instead of the more common "a holy people" (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21; 28:9) is possibly facilitated by the well attested juxtaposition of "kingdom" (ממלכה) and "nation" (גוי) in the Hebrew Bible (see Rost 1934; Speiser 1960; Jacob 1997:537; Propp 2006:157-58)[75]. In addition, one should note that the verse is found in the context of the Exodus, i.e. a crucial moment in the transformation of the status of the Israelites from a community dispersed among foreigners to an organized ethnic and political entity with its own leader and institutions after their departure from Egypt. It is also possible that the use of the word גוי serves to mark this transformation (cf. Speiser 1960: 163).

While "the גוי of a deity" is not attested, as a pronominal suffix a deity can function as the "owner" of a גוי, though also rarely (cf. Clements 1977:427). In a judgment on Judah's enemies in the Book of Zephaniah, Yahweh proclaims the fall of Moab and the Sons of Ammon: "The remnant of My people shall plunder them, The remainder of My nation shall possess them. (Zeph 2:9 TNK)" Here "my people" (עַמִּי; also in v. 8) is paralleled with "my

[75] עם and ממלכה can also occur in parallel with one another, although less frequently. E.g. 1 Chr 16:20=Ps 105:13.

nation" (גוֹיִי, the Qere form; cf. "ἔθνους μου" in the Septuagint). Elsewhere in this chapter of Zephaniah גוי occurs in verses 1, 5, 11, 14, where it refers either to a foreign nation or a species of beasts (v.14). The phrase יתר גויי occurs only in Zeph 2:9 in biblical texts,[76] and the similar phrase with the plural form, i.e. בְּיֶתֶר הַגּוֹיִם (Jos 23:12), clearly refers to foreign peoples. The other occurrence of גוי of Yahweh is Ps 106:4-5, where the term is paralleled with three others, all denoting Yahweh's elected people: "Be mindful of me, O LORD, when You favor Your people (עַמֶּךָ); take note of me when You deliver them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of Your chosen ones (בְּחִירֶיךָ), share the joy of Your nation (גּוֹיֶךָ), glory in Your very own people (נַחֲלָתֶךָ). (Ps 106:4-5 TNK)" Again, גוי occurs as "a foreign nation" elsewhere in the psalm (vv. 27, 47). In contrast to the rarely attested "גוי" with a pronominal suffix referring to a deity, עם is far more frequently attested in this structure (notably, "this nation is your people", עַמְּךָ הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה Exo 33:13), with the suffix usually referring to Yahweh (עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל 1 Sam 9:16; 1 Kgs 8:16; Jer 30:3; Ezek 25:14, etc), but also occasionally to deities of other polities or peoples (Jer 49:1, "his people" referring to Sons of Ammon, people of Milkom: מַדּוּעַ יָרַשׁ מַלְכָּם אֶת־גָּד וְעַמּוֹ בְּעָרָיו יָשָׁב).

In sum, it has been demonstrated that a people group termed עם or גוי in the Hebrew Bible derives its identity also from its special relationship, often in the form of one-to-one correspondence, to a major god or, less frequently, gods, who can be termed as "national" gods. Whether monolatry is implied in each case, such a common god shared by all group members clearly serve as a representative of this group. It also functions as an identity marker and a symbol of cultural affiliation and allegiance (Ruth 1:16). Sometimes the

[76] For the significance of the expressions "שארית עמי" and "יתר גויי" in Zephaniah's theology that does not provide any hope for the majority of people, emphasizing that only a portion of Judah will inherit Moabite and Ammonite possessions, see Ben Zvi 1991:171.

correspondence between a god and a people or nation, as we will see in further details below, bears a special political nuance, as a deity functions as the land-giver of his people (see the interesting statement in Judg 11:26[77]) and the protector of his people and their land in war.[78]

C. The kinship aspect of עם and גוי

Another key element in the formation and perpetuation of the sociocultural cohesion of peoples of different sizes is, of course, kinship ideology, i.e. the belief that members of the group are related by blood and descend ultimately from the same ancestor. The element of lineage ideology is certainly present in such biblical terms of "house of...", "sons of ...", "family" and "clan". Can we identify traces of kinship ideology in terms used to designate more extensive groups, such as עם and גוי? In the case of עם the answer seems self-evident, since, as noted earlier, scholars have pointed out that the term etymologically denoted father's brother in Northwest Semitic languages, which was partly preserved in ancient Israelite onomastics (cf. the following biblical examples: אליעם, עמינדב, עמישדי, etc. See *HALOT* "עם", and discussion in Speiser 1960). Moreover, biblical accounts clearly demonstrate that the term can indeed be used to designate the kindred of an individual, not just metaphorically, e.g. Gen 25:8; 32:8; Exo. 30:33; Num 17:4; 20:17. Note particularly, Judg 14:3: "His (Samson's) father and mother said to him, 'Is there no one among the daughters of your own brothers (אַחֶיךָ) and among all my kinsmen עַמִּי)[79], that you must go and take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" (Judg 14:3 TNK; modified) In this narrative, kinship idioms likely assuming a limited extension is used by the narrator in contrast not to some individual

[77] Note that Jephthah's messenger is speaking with the king of Ammonites (Judg 11:14), while the god of the Ammonites is incorrectly named "Chemosh", who is the god of Moab.

[78] A motif extensively attested in the Hebrew Bible, e.g. 2 Chr 25:15. See also the Mesha Stele.

[79] *BHS* notes that the Lucian recension of the Septuagint and the Peshitta have "your" (2sg.) instead of "my". The use of singular pronouns instead of 1st person plural "our" suggest that here a more restricted extent than "people" or "Israelites" is intended.

strangers who are not "our kin", but to an entire foreign people with a common name (the Philistines) and cultural distinctions (uncircumcised). This usage well illustrates how the intended scope of a kinship term can be extended in certain contexts to cover a much larger group, from the family to a people or nation. Therefore, it is sometimes impossible to determine precisely which level of people group is meant by such a terminology.[80]

גוי, on the other hand, is indeed less frequently used to describe a group of people so clearly related by blood ties as עם does in the cases cited above. However, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter, the appearance of גוי in a genealogical list, used side by side with such more kinship-oriented terms as משפחה, clearly indicates that the term occupies a certain position in the kinship worldview of ancient peoples. In addition to Gen 10, there are a few other verses in which גוי is attested alongside משפחה. In Jer 10:25,[81] Ezek 20:32, Nah 3:4 and Zech 14:17-18 גוי is paralleled with משפחה and both seem to refer to entire communities. Note particularly that the plural גוֹיִם occurs side by side with מִשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאֲרָצוֹת(Ezek 20:32),[82] in which phrase the term משפחה should best be understood figuratively as a more extensive concept than "family" (families of the lands=national groups of the foreign lands). In Ps 22:28 we see the unique phrase מִשְׁפְּחוֹת גוֹיִם, i.e. "families of the nations", which is reminiscent of "families of the peoples (עמים)" (1 Chr 16:28=Ps 96:7). The phrase "families of the nations" suggests that an entity designated by the term "גוי" can be perceived as one consisting of sub-units designated by such kinship idioms as משפחה, i.e. the "nations" are constituted by "families". Finally, in Jer 33:24, a passage dated by Holladay to

[80] See also Ruth 1:16, where עם can also be interpreted in different ways, i.e. Naomi's kindred or perhaps Naomi's people, that is, the Israelites.

[81] Some manuscripts as well as the Targum and the Vulgata read "מַמְלָכוֹת", as in Ps 79:6. The parallel of גוי and ממלכה is attested much more frequently, as has been widely noted.

[82] The phrase also occurs in Zech 14:17, and at the end of v.18 it is also paralleled with גוֹיִם.

the Post-exilic Period, one finds the clustering of three terminologies all referring to Israel and Judah: "You see what this people[83] said: 'The two families (שְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת)[84] which the LORD chose have now been rejected by Him.' Thus they despise My people (עַמִּי), and regard them as no longer a nation (גוֹי)[85]." (Jer 33:24 TNK) Read as a whole, the verse indicates that a גוי can be equated with an עם consisting of two family branches, thus enriching our understanding of the kinship elements implied by the term גוי. (cf. Rost 1934)

In some other cases, particularly in Genesis, a גוי is depicted as product of human recreation via family relations. "Nations" can descend from a father (Gen 17:4-5; 35:11; 48:19) or a mother (17:16; 21:23; 25:23). In the cases of Abraham (17:4-5), Jacob (35:11) and Rebecca (25:23), different גויים are said to descend from the same father or mother, so that these various "nations" can be figuratively perceived as brothers and kinsmen, if the metaphor is extended.

To summarize my discussion so far, it can be established that not only is עם ultimately a kinship term whose meaning was gradually extended to refer to larger, trans-tribal and trans-local entities, but also גוי is not devoid of kinship ideology, since it is sometimes juxtaposed with more explicit kinship idioms and placed in a system perceived to resemble a kinship network by biblical authors. While עם places stronger emphasis on its kinship root,

---

[83] The identification of "this people" is unclear. Lundbom (2004:545) suggests that it could refer to Judah (as elsewhere in Jeremiah, cf. 4:10-11; 5:14, 23, etc.). However, the content of v.24b makes this interpretation rather awkward. Two possibilities can be proposed: either "this people" refers to a foreign people, or v.24b is a late addition, as Duhm has suggested, which reinterprets the quoted words as those from a foreign, perhaps hostile, people. Duhm 1901 cited in Holladay 1989:230.

[84] Some ancient and contemporary commentators have connected "the two families" with the Davidic Dynasty and the Levites (vv. 17-18; 21-22; Zech 12:12-13, see Holladay 1989:230); others propose "Judah" and "Benjamin". The second half of the phrase and v.26 favor instead "Israel and Judah". See Fischer 2005:238 for a summary. Holladay cites Duhm's suggestion that v.24b was a late addition. Duhm 1901 cited in Holladay 1989:230.

[85] Cf. Jer 31:36. Fischer 2005:238. Ceasing to be a nation perhaps refers to the lack of political autonomy, if one follows scholars' suggestion that גוי stresses the political facet of the group. Alternatively, "not being a nation" may also refer to the captivity which scatters people of Israel and Judah among all peoples, so that the cultural boundary (and not just the political boundary) between Israel/Judah and others is blurred.

as the term may refer to family members or relatives, גוי can designate a group which, when viewed as a whole, either consists of kinship units or occupies a position in a kinship network. As Clements argues: "The element of common racial origin, with its basis in consanguinity, plays an important part in the structure of a goy, even though it is more strongly expressed in the OT by the terms ʿam and mishpachah" (Clements 1977:428). Although I would not call upon the loaded concept of "race", it must be said that consanguinity does feature in the concept of גוי as in that of עם, as indicated by the examples cited above. Again, as Gottwald states, the two terms are not used with absolute rigor (see above), even in respect to the kinship background.

4. The political dimension of עם and גוי: political functions of an entity with sociocultural commonness

A. גוי as a political entity

The political facet of both terms should be sought in contexts where their attachment to a territory, their role in the administrative structure of a political society and their role in a polity's political behavior are described. In the Hebrew Bible, a גוי can either possess an ארץ (e.g. Deut 4:38; 2 Kgs 19:17) and serve as the synonym of "a land" in the sense of a "polity" (e.g. 1 Chr 14:17; Ezek 22:15; 30:23). In addition to territory, a גוי is usually ruled by a monarch, who performs administrative responsibilities and leads the "nation" in battle: "...that we may be like all the other nations (כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם): Let our king rule over us and go out at our head and fight our battles." (1 Sam 8:20)" Of course, the term "all the nations" here most likely serve to contrast Israel with the all others and to reproach Israel for hoping to "be like" other peoples. Yet this does not weaken its relevance to our understanding of the political

characteristic of a גוי, that is, its status as a group of people, in a specific territory, governed by a monarch, who perform collective military actions[86] together with their political leader. In Isa 14:9 and 18 we read references to deceased "kings of nations" (מַלְכֵי גוֹיִם) aroused by the downfall of the king of Babylon, who used to be the one who "makes the earth shake and kingdoms tremble". (מַרְגִּיז הָאָרֶץ מַרְעִישׁ מַמְלָכוֹת v.16) Indeed, scholars' recognition of גוי as a political and administrative concept is primarily based on the widely attested parallel of גוי and ממלכה, that is to say, a גוי is often understood as a kingdom or a polity par excellence (see above, Rost 1934, Speiser 1960). Finally, we have read in 1 Sam 8:20 that a גוי needs its king to fight its battles. In fact, a גוי itself can also function as the unit in international warfare, in parallel with none other than עם. In the eschatological prediction of the elevation of Yahweh as a universal ruler in the "last days", Isaiah proclaims that "(T)hus He will judge among the nations (וְשָׁפַט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם) and arbitrate for the many peoples (וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים), and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not take up sword against nation (לֹא־יִשָּׂא גוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב); They shall never again know war." (Isa 2:4 TNK; cf. also Micah 4:3) The assumption here is that גוי is the basic actor in international warfare, a situation to be ended by the elevation of a universal god. In short, a גוי is a people group with sociocultural characteristics and, at the same time, closely related

[86] Though without a monarch, the Israelites who wandered in the wilderness are called "the nation, men of war" in Josh 5:6, apparently explaining the term גוי here as a body of members of a socio-political group with a particular status or purpose. The context of circumcision suggests that here the "גוי" as "men of war" refers to "all males who were able to fight". The Israelites are called a גוי instead of a עם five times in the Book of Joshua (3:17, 4:1, these two times in the context of crossing the Jordan; 5:6; 5:8, these two times in the context of renewed circumcision; 10:13, the poem about the sun standing still; see Dozeman 2015:292), of which 4 times (except 10:13) follow the verb תמם (the verb occurs in 10:13, but there the subject is not גוי). It is unclear whether the coexistence of the verb and the noun reflects certain scribal preference and suggests any connection between these verses.

The cognate of גוי, "*gw*" in late Phoenician can designate the body of citizenry, as the major component of the city-state. See KAI 60 (possibly early 1st century BCE, see KAI II, 73), where the *gw* can have a ruler, *nśʾ hgw* (line 2), and is paralleled with "the People of Sidon" (*ʿm ṣdn*, line 1) or "the Sidonians" (*hṣdnym*, line 7).

to such motifs as king, kingdom and territory.[87] The political attribute of a גוי is demonstrated by the fact that it can also be described as a participant in international warfare.

B. The political facet of עם

Although עם is often known for its kinship background, the political and administrative role of the collective body of people called a עם cannot be underestimated. Rost has already observed that this terminology refers to "die Zusammenfassung der Männer zu gemeinsamem Beraten und Handeln, der Männerbund, der verantwortlich ist für den Bestand des Staates im Krieg und Frieden durch Pflege der Wehrhaftigkeit, des Rechts und des Kultes" (Rost 1934:146) This observation aptly reveals the administrative function of groups designated as a עם[88] in the biblical description of the operation of the state as a label both for the collective entity of all residents and for the personnel that specializes in particular functions and tasks (e.g. troops, Rost 1934: 145; see below).

Like the גוי, the עם is attached to a certain land of their residence (e.g. Num 13:18), although the nature of their right to the land is not always clear. For example, in Gen 23, "people of the land" (עם הארץ, vv. 12, 13), i.e. the "Sons of Heth", seem to be the owner of the land on which they live and have the right to give a tract of land to Abraham, who, as a "sojourner" (גר ותושב, v.4), is not entitled to use without permission and payment.[89] In

---

[87] The role of עם also has a politicla dimension in this verse. We will discuss this subject below.

[88] The composition of the עם as a collective body of residents is best summarized in the idealized description in Deut 31:12: "Gather the people (הָעָם) -- men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities (הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטַּף וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ)-- that they may hear and so learn to revere the LORD your God and to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching." The עם, therefore, consists of adults of both genders, minors as well as non-native sojourners, which differs from the concept of "citizenry" in most ancient and modern societies, as both children and foreigners are included in the community. According to Deuteronomy, all these people, regardless of gender, age and origin, are subject to the same divine law.

[89] Despite the inclusive definition of the עם in Deut 31:12, עם הארץ sometimes seems to exclude גרים. See also Ezek 22:29. However, the relationship between the sojourner and "people of the land" is complex, since in the same verse "the poor and the needy" are also listed along side the sojourner as people oppressed by "people of the land". In fact, this suggests that the phrase sometimes simply refers to the majority of common people of a polity or a land. For a different interpretation, see below.

contrast, although the Hebrews are called "people of the land" by Pharaoh in Exod 5:5, they are by no means regarded as owner or even the native population the land. In most of the occurrences of this term, which concentrate in 2 Kings (with parallels in 2 Chronicles), Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it is best understood as the common people of a certain polity (mostly the Southern Kingdom[90]), sometimes listed alongside and possibly in contrast to other strata of society who may be labeled as "political elites", e.g. the ruler and the officials, e.g. 2 Kgs 11:14, 19; Jer 1:18; 34:19; 37:2; 44:21; 52:25; Ezek 7:27; Dan. 9:6 and Zech 7:5 (priests and people; after the fall of the monarchies). See for example, Jer 1:18: "...against the whole land -- against Judah's kings and officers, and against its priests and people of the land. (Jer 1:18 TNK; modified)" In short, as plebeians or commoners, "people of the land" constitute the majority of the members of a polity, whose identity is marked, among others, by their attachment to the land.[91]

---

[90] E.g. 2 Kgs 11:14, 18ff; 15:5; 16:15; 21:24; ; 23:30, 35; 24:14; 25:3, 19; 2 Chr 23:13, 20f; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1; Jer 1:18; 34:19; 37:2; 44:21; 52:6, 25; 7:27; 12:19; 22:29; 33:2; 39:13 (parallel with House of Israel, often referring to Judah in Ezekiel); 45:16 (future restored kingdom), 22; 46:3, 9; Dan 9:6 (Jerusalem, v.2); Hag 2:4 (people of the Province of Judah); Zech 7:5.

[91] The exact meaning of the term "people of the land" is debated and often ambiguous. Some scholars, particularly when attempting to interpret the frequently attested phrase in 2 Kings, have postulated that the phrase refers to a specific group of "land-owning" elites, which in turn explains their active role in some of the major political events in the Kingdom of Judah. See e.g. Cogan and Tadmor 1988:129-30, who hold this view, with further references. Lipiński (2001:174) argues that "people of the land" is to be differentiated from residents of Jerusalem, citing 2 Kgs 11:20a: "All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet (וְהָעִיר שָׁקְטָה)." However, it is not obvious in the text that "people of the land" is hear paralleled with the city. It is best to understand the verse literally, i.e. the people rejoiced and the city (not the city dwellers) was quite after the enthronement of the new legitimate king (v.19).

Many of the studies there mentioned have been recently critically reviewed in Thames 2011:109-16. Thames has pointed out often this interpretation is not supported by any further evidence than the plot narrated in the immediate context, which can often be interpreted differently. In 2 Kgs 15:5, where "Jotham, the king's son, was in charge of the palace and governed the people of the land", it was clearly not just a group of elite citizens that are placed under the king's son. Instead, it refers to the entire body of the עם of the polity. In 2 Kgs 24:14 one finds a reference to "the poor of the people of the land", which certainly contradicts the reading that "people of the land" refers to a special group of elite, land-owning citizens. See Thames 2011: 124. Talmon (1986) has suggested that one should differentiate the technical terminology "land of the people" as a special group of elite citizens, often in the "Deuteronomistic History", from a more general use of the phrase elsewhere. However, this differentiation itself can be highly subjective. Instead, Thames suggests that perhaps the application of "people of the land" in many of the accounts simply reflects the author's indifference to the specific identity of the actors. He writes: "Quite contrary to this proposed identification is the idiomatic interpretation, which, as we have seen, finds the phrase to be employed exactly and consistently when the author has no real interest in or other means of identifying the subject" (Thames 2011:125). However, to his conclusion I would like to add the qualification that despite the anonymity implied by the phrase, these unnamed actors are still considered and described as hailing from the "people" of the land, a group that is listed alongside political and religious authorities (see examples above). In other words, the unnamed actors are identifiable as the people, rather than any otherwise influential figure, at least according to these accounts.

The term also occurs in Phoenician inscriptions, for example KAI 10 (5th- 4th centuries BCE, see KAI II: 11) from

As the lower layer in the administrative system of a political society, the עם is placed under officials and the ruler, as in Exo. 18:25 when Moses imposes chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens as heads above the people. Sometimes an עם is referred to as the possession of the leader of the community, either Moses (e.g. Exo. 32:7) or an actual monarch (e.g. Num 24:14, 1 Kgs 22:4; 2 Kgs 3:7; 2 Chr 13:9; 21:14). In the latter cases, as we will see, the meaning "people" is sometimes indistinguishable from the sense "troops" of the term עם. Although the עם occupies a lower administrative layer of the political society, they are not always depicted as a passive body of people with no power. They can function as a major political force in cultic reforms (עם הארץ destroying non-Yahwistic altars in 2 Kgs 11:18) and intervene with the succession of the royal dynasty:

"But the people of the land put to death all who had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his stead. (2Ki 21:24 TNK)"

"Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz; they anointed him and made him king in place of his father." (2 Kgs 23:30 TNK)[92]

The political role of the עם is not limited to "people of the land" only, whether or not the phrase designates a special body of elite citizens. Indeed, העם ("the people") can voice their opinions regarding a certain legal case, e.g. when priests and prophets demanded the execution of Jeremiah, the officials (השרים), *all the people* (כל העם) as well as elders of the

---

Byblos which records the building and dedication of an alter to the goddess of Byblos by the king Yehawmilk. In line 10 of the inscription Yehawmilk asks the goddess to grant him favor in the eyes of gods and in the eyes of "people of the land" (*wttn [lw hrbt b]ʿlt gbl ḥn lʿn ʾlnm wlʿn ʿm ʾrṣ*).

[92] See the note above. The recognition and acceptance by the people are essential for a ruler. For different interpretations of the phrase "people of the land" in 2 Kings, either as a technical designation for a small body of influential elite citizens or simply some people from the general population of a polity, see again Thames 2011. For the political role of the עם of a polity, see again KAI 10, lines 9-10 for the ruler's wish to seek favor in the eyes of gods and the "people of the land" alike, in which context Yehawmilk, king of Byblos, claims to be a "righteous king" (*k mlk ṣdq hʾ*, line 9), which would justify his request for long life as well as divine favor and popular favor from the goddess. For this interpretation see Lipiński 2001:167.

land (זקני הארץ) spoke in his defense against the prosecutors (Jer. 26:16, 17) Also, as a political body, the עם of a polity in general can enter into a covenant[93] with the deity and, more importantly, with the ruler of the polity, possibly to reinstate loyalty to a Davidic King: "And Jehoiada solemnized the covenant between the LORD, on the one hand (וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוֹיָדָע אֶת־הַבְּרִית בֵּין יְהוָה וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם), and the king and the people (וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם), on the other -- as well as between the king and the people[94] -- that they should be the people of the LORD." (2 Kgs 11:17 TNK; see also Josh 24:25; Jer 34:8)[95] Also, according to biblical accounts the Northern tribes following Jeroboam also participated in their negotiation with Rehoboam before the secession of the North (1 Kgs 12), who are designated as "all Israel" (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל) (e.g. v. 2), "all the congregation of Israel" (כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל) (e.g. v.3) or simply, "the people" (הָעָם) (v. 5) or "this people" (הָעָם הַזֶּה). (vv. 6, 7, 9, 10, 27) While they accompany the protagonist, i.e. the new Northern leader Jeroboam, in most of these instances, in v.27 the people clearly constitute a political force within the newly established to be reckoned with.

One should of course not exaggerate the degree to which the עם participated in ancient Israelite and Judean politics as an active force. As Gottwald argues, in most cases the "people", however they are designated, appear to be the object of government policies and

---

[93] For the phrase "ברית עם" in Deutero-Isaiah, with "עם" interpreted as humanity in general (Isa 42:6) or Israel in particular (Isa 49:8) based on the contexts, see e.g. Elliger 1989234:35; Berges 2008: 236-37 (on 42:6). Hermisson 2003:378 (on Isa 49:8). Blenkinsopp 2002:212 suggests that while in Isa 42:6 the universal sense is intended, "it is easily reapplicable to Israel.

[94] Not in 2 Chr 23:16, where Jehoiada concludes a covenant between himself on the one hand, and both the king and the people on the other. There the role of the religious authority is elevated. Although some commentators suggest, on the basis of 2 Chr 23:16 that 2 Kgs 11:17b is a mistake due to dittography and only one covenant between god and the people plus the king was concluded, Cogan and Tadmor point out that a covenant between the people and the king is already mentioned in 2 Chr 23:3. Cogan and Tadmor 1988:132-22. Ishida suggests that the treaty between the people and the king "implies the Davidic covenant in which a Davidic king serves as mediator between Yahweh and the people". Ishida 1977:115, cited in Cogan and Tadmor 1988:113, n. 6.

[95] In Esarhaddon's succession treaty with vassal city rulers, the other parties of the treaty include: 1. the city ruler; 2. his sons and offspring/grandsons; 3. all men (LÚ.ERIM-MEŠ) under the city ruler's control (you and old, as many as there are from sunrise to sunst); 4. all those over whom (*ina* UGU-*ḫi-šú-nu*) Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, exercises kingship and lordship. At least conceptually, the subject of the vassal polity and beyond, (all considered as the subject of Esarhaddon the Great King) enters into a treaty relationship as a collective body with the Assyrian king. See Watanabe 1987:57, lines 7-8.

taxation. When they do participate in political events, they do so in unison and together with politically more prominent figures,[96] without individual voices being highlighted.[97] Even so, biblical accounts and other Levantine sources like KAI 10 (see above the footnote on the phrase עם הארץ) clearly suggest that the people can be depicted as an actor with some sort of collective function and consciousness, who at least can often be utilized by the elites who ruled the society and produced these texts in order to justify their own status, policies, decisions and interpretations of historical events, not unlike in other periods of human history.

C. עם as an entity involved in foreign relations

(1) Boundary between peoples

Beyond domestic administrative and political functions, the political nuance of the terminology "עם" also extends to the international domain which is first and foremost demonstrated by the attachment of an עם as an entity not just to a land of their residence, but to a territory with borders, a concept central to the constructed definition of a "nation" in the ancient context that has been advocated by some modern theorists. (see above) Without evaluating the validity of such definitions, suffice it to suggest that examples of this usage would further corroborate my proposal that עם as a term sheds light on both the sociocultural and the political facets of a people group from the perspective of international politics. Two biblical passages come to mind. One is a verse from the famous "Song of Moses" (Deut 32:1-47):

[96] In the form of "the people", "all the people", etc., together with officials or the ruler. See examples in the previous paragraph; cf. Gottwald 2001:231-35.

[97] The role of the council of "people of Sidon" and the "*gw*" of the city (e.g. KAI 60, an inscription that records the decision of the Sidonians in the colony in Piraeus regarding the payment made to the community leader; 96 BCE) represents a new development in West Semitic politics in the Late Hellenistic Period, when the community ("gw") begin to play a more significant role in the decision making process in the polis.

When the Most High gave nations (גוֹיִם) their homes (הַנְחֵל, lit. "to give as inheritance") and set the divisions (פ-ר-ד, Hif.) of man (lit. "humanity", בְּנֵי אָדָם), He fixed (יַצֵּב lit. "to establish, to set up"; see Ps 74:17; Prov 15:25; see Lundbom 2013:877) the boundaries of peoples (גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים) in relation to Israel's numbers[98] (Deut 32:8 TNK).

In the other attestation of the phrase "boundaries of peoples" in the Hebrew Bible, the author has the Assyrian king boast about removing the boundaries between peoples:

For he thought, "By the might of my hand have I wrought it, by my skill, for I am clever: I have erased (וְאָסִיר[99]) the borders of peoples (גְּבוּלֹת עַמִּים); I have plundered their treasures, and exiled (lit. "brought down") their vast populations[100] (Isa 10:13 TNK).

In both verses a supreme authority acts to determine the boundaries between entities of a lesser rank, i.e. "the peoples". The division of territories and the establishment of order between peoples is considered to derive from a higher sovereign, whether the universal god "Most High"[101] or the self-claimed supreme authority in the system dominated by a universal empire like the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Wazana 2013:11; 14; 39 n.11).[102] It is also noteworthy that the destructive deed of the Assyrian king, i.e. the removal of borders between peoples,

---

[98] It has been widely pointed out that this final phrase has been emendated. As evidenced by the Septuagint and 4QDeut^{J}, the original text may have been "sons of God". See e.g. Lundbom 2013:877-78. For a detailed account of the textual history, see M. Smith 2008: 195-212. Otto 2017:2147.

[99] The Peshitta, the Targum and the Vulgata translations of this verse translate this verb in the preterite tense, which has prompted scholars to read it as a Vav-consecutive. See e.g. Blenkinsopp 2000:252, Machinist 2016:197.

[100] For the possible historical background of the monologue of the Assyrian king (vv. 8-14), see Blenkinsopp 2000:254; Machinist 2016, particularly pages 197-98.

[101] For a recent summary of past scholarship on the identification of Elyon/Most High and his relationship with Yahweh in v. 9, see M. Smith 2008: 195-212; Otto 2017: 2176-77. It has been suggested that the Elyon/Most High here is the epithet of the supreme god El in the Canaanite (e.g. Ugaritic) divine council, in which case Yahweh in the following verse should be one of the "sons of El" in v. 8. Some scholars have suggested that the identification of Elyon and Yahweh is not secondary, but rather an original attempt that reflects upon polytheistic traditions and formulates it in a monotheistic way. See M. Smith 2008:203. If Yahweh is to be identified with Elyon, then he would be the one who allocates peoples to "angels" or foreign lesser deities. For this image of Yahweh, compare Deut 4:18-19, where Yahweh allots idols to other peoples (עמים).

[102] For the imperial authority's role in the establishment, removal and change of borders between vassals, see Machinist 1983:72. See also Machinist 2016:197. See also examples mentioned in Chapter 5, on the "multicentric" view and the borders between ancient polities. For examples concerning Judah and its neighbors, see particularly Sennacherib's allocation of Judean towns to neighboring Philistine states after the latter was defeated, so that the once powerful regional kingdom that had neglected the Assyrian authority is not "reduced" in size by the Assyrian Great King. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4, line 53. See discussion in Chapter 6.

essentially serves, according to the biblical author, to undo their establishment by the supreme deity, a constructive act by the god. This attempt to overthrow divinely determined orders was certainly not to be tolerated, as we see in the polemic against this narcissistic monologue of a foreign king in v. 15, where he is compared to a tool that boasts itself over its maker or user (see Eidevall 2009: 45; Machinist 2016:184-85).

Viewed from the perspective of the target of divine or imperial territorial (re-)organization, it is noteworthy that עמים in both passages refers to the major entities between which boundaries are established or removed. In both cases it is obvious that the "boundaries between peoples" refer not to the cultural boundaries, such as different languages, customs, religion and kinship relations, but instead to the concrete political borders between states. In Deut 32:8, terms with a stronger kinship and cultural nuance, i.e. בני אדם and עמים, occur in parallel with גוים, which according to some scholars designates a "nation" primarily as a political (instead of kinship) unit (see above). In Isa 10:16, moreover, the removal of boundaries between peoples is attested in the context of an intensive form of international politics, that is, war and imperial control of small polities. In sum, עמים in these two examples certainly bears a clear political nuance as the basic political units in international relations.[103]

(2) עם participating in collective political actions in foreign relations

a. Wars

Let us look more specifically now at how an עם as a collective body participate in

[103] The motif of setting boundaries and the term "עם" is also attested in Exod 19:12 (וְהִגְבַּלְתָּ אֶת־הָעָם סָבִיב לֵאמֹר הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בָּהָר וּנְגֹעַ בְּקָצֵהוּ כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהָר מוֹת יוּמָת Exo 19:12), yet here no political nuance is at work. Here the Deity simply commands that Moses set boundaries around the mountain so that the "people", as the major component of the Israelites or the Israelites themselves, do not trespass on sacred domain.

inter-polity political activities, such as wars and diplomacy. The fact that the עם, from the perspective of internal politics, usually occupies the lowest rank in a traditional political society after the monarch, the officials and the priests (cf. Jer 1:18) renders it rather unlikely that the עם can function as the main actor in any activities of international and inter-polity relations. Nevertheless, as "people" of a polity or a political group they are certainly involved from time to time in such affairs.

To begin with, a polity as an actor in warfare with others is expected to fight foreign forces for its עם, i.e. the members of the political community. When faced with the joint attack of the Arameans and the Sons of Ammon, Joab divides his forces with his brother Abishai and encourages the latter with the following words: "Let us be strong and resolute for the sake of our people (בְּעַד־עַמֵּנוּ) and cities of our God (עָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ); and the LORD will do what He deems right. (2 Sam 10:12 TNK; modified)" The meaning of עַמֵּנוּ is ambiguous in this context, as it may very well refer to "people following us", i.e. the soldiers fighting under both Israelite generals. Indeed, עם occurs in this sense (in parallel with בחרי ישראל in v. 9, perhaps "trained troops" selected from העם in general) in v.10 ("the rest of the people/troops", יֶתֶר הָעָם) and v. 13 ("the people/troops that are with him" וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ). This more restricted sense of עם in the context of war, as we will see later, often complicates our interpretation of its exact meaning in a certain verse. In 2 Sam 10:12, again, the sense "troops" cannot be excluded. However, the juxtaposition of "for the sake of our people" and "for the sake of the cities of our god"[104] appears to indicate that the broader sense of the term, that is, "the people" of the political entity for which the Israelite troops fight, is also intended.

[104] "Cities of our god" is a *hapax legomenon* in the Bible and, as Auld has pointed out, defining the people of Israel by the cities is also unique in the Hebrew Bible. He also notes the lack of mention of the King (David) in Joab's words. Auld 2011:446. The phrase seems to suggest that the Israelite polity is here depicted as a multi-city entity with one "national" god.

In the end, defeat of the troops at the battlefield will lead to the conquest of the land, destruction of the cities and the sufferings of the people. As Israelite in this period is depicted as a kinship-based, culturally unified group who just founded their own state, this very verse, if "our people" does refer to the people of Israel as an ethno-political group, clearly reveals some form of national awareness projected by the author to the early monarchic period, as kinship and sociocultural links are now described as a motivating factor in political actions.

Similarly, in the quoted message from Sennacherib to Hezekiah and "all Judah" (2 Chr 32:9), i.e. the Assyrian king attempts to terrify his audience by claiming that they should not be misled by false hopes promised by Hezekiah "(f)or no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to save his people from me or from my fathers (כִּי־לֹא יוּכַל כָּל־אֱלוֹהַ כָּל־גּוֹי וּמַמְלָכָה לְהַצִּיל עַמּוֹ מִיָּדִי וּמִיַּד אֲבוֹתָי) -- much less your God, to save you from me!" (2 Chr 32:15 TNK) Here the "עם" again closely follows "גוי" and "a kingdom", i.e. more stable formats of political entities in Speiser's words, (Speiser 1960:159; 162-63) and essentially refers to human components of any such polity. As "people" of the god of the "nation" or the "kingdom", they are expected to be saved by the deity, the failure of which results in the fall of the inanimate political entity and the sufferings of the "עם", i.e. the human residents of the land governed by the polity. In another version of the speech placed in the mouth of Rab-Shaqeh, the Assyrian official thus warns the residents of Judah: "Did any of the gods of other nations save his land from the king of Assyria (הַהַצֵּל הִצִּילוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם אִישׁ אֶת־אַרְצוֹ מִיַּד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר)... Which among all the gods of those lands (אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת) saved their countries (אַרְצָם) from me, that the LORD should save Jerusalem from me?" (2 Kgs 18:33, 35 TNK; modified) Comparing the two versions of the rhetoric questions one immediately notices the

interchangeability of some important terms denoting a political entity: god of a "nation" (גוי)/kingdom (ממלכה)/land (ארץ) on the one hand, and saving people (עם)/land (ארץ) on the other. This by no means implies, of course, that all these terms are synonyms. Suffice it to note that עם can indeed be placed side by side with other terms in the context of international relations as a collective element involved in or affected by a political actor's behavior and performance.

In other cases, one may argue that the עם seems to participate more directly and sometimes more actively in interstate conflicts, representing or serving as the embodiment of the political entity as a whole. For instance, in Num 22:3 Moab is said to dread "the people" (וַיָּגָר מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי הָעָם) which is great in number, and in the context "the people" is identified as "Israel" (v.2) and "Sons of Israel" (v.3b) that advanced all the way from Egypt, defeating on the path the Amorites. Notably, "Israel" as a tribal entity in Num 22 is typically referred to as "a people", "the people" or "this people" (e.g. v.6, v.11; cf. B. A. Levine 2000: 144)-- as the entity coming into direct conflict with Moab (אולַי אוּכַל לְהִלָּחֶם בּוֹ וְגֵרַשְׁתִּיו, v. 11, i.e. when Balak plans to fight againt "the people") and the target of Moab's intended curse through the mouth of Balaam.

Another noteworthy case concerns a narrative about the early monarchy, when the Ammonite ruler launched an attack on the Transjordanian Israelite region, Jabesh-gilead. (1 Sam 11) The condition for a peace treaty demanded by Ammon is meant to be an insult, as its ruler commands that the right eye of the residents of Jabesh-gilead be gouged out. Interestingly, this threat of harsh treatment of a city at the edge of the Israelite realm is designed to serve as a humiliation for "all Israel" (וְשַׂמְתִּיהָ חֶרְפָּה עַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, v.2), obviously

indicating a sense of trans-local cultural and political unity among all Israelite regions from the perspective of a foreign polity.[105] The subsequent verses confirm this reading. As the messengers of Jabesh was sent to "all the territory of Israel" (וְנִשְׁלְחָה מַלְאָכִים בְּכֹל גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל v. 3) to inform "the people" (וִיְדַבְּרוּ הַדְּבָרִים בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם v. 4) of Ammon's threatening words, "all the people" (כָּל־הָעָם v. 4) broke into tears. Later, Saul symbolically cut the oxen into pieces and sent messengers again to "all the territory of Israel" in order to mobilize the Israelites to fight the invaders. (v.7) Then "the people", out of fear of Yahweh, prepared for battle "like one person" (כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד v.7). In this case the "עם" most likely refers to all the Israelites ("sons of Israel" *plus* "men of Judah"[106] in v.8), who, as the members of a cultural and political entity in foreigners' eyes and with a well-defined territory, participate actively as a united force to rescue an outlying city deemed their own. The account not only highlights the trans-local, almost national, unity assigned to the Israelites in the early monarchical period by its author,[107] but also reveals that the עם as a kinship-based cultural entity can be described as the main actor in an international political affair.

---

[105] It is all the more interesting to note that the people of Jabesh themselves initially proposed to act independently as a political actor by proposing to sign a peace treaty with Ammon and serve the latter as a vassal city, without accounting for the legitimacy of such behavior from the perspective of the newly founded Israelite Monarchy. The author of the narrative implies his disapproval of this mentality and decision by letting the foreign invader to point out the Israelite identity of this town. While in a vassal treaty the suzerain is sometimes expected to protect the vassal, with the threat of harm preserved for the cursing (cf. McCarter 1980: 203), here the proposal of Jabesh is met with the harshest response from the beginning. Auld (2011:121) points out that "all the other talk in the books of Samuel of 'treaty' or 'covenant' is connected with David's becoming king and lacks any mention of cruel or hostile terms", and he asks, "Is this episode intended to mark a contrast? Or is it a timely warning of the dangers of making oneself over to a king as his servants or slaves?" While this may be the case, on account of the anti-monarchical tone of some of the preceding passages in 1 Samuel (e.g. 8: 11-18; 10:19), one should note that the current narrative concerns a foreign king. It may also be read as a polemic against surrendering to foreign powers, particularly as part of the whole Israelite cultural and political entity. This motif is more visible elsewhere in the Deuteronomistic History, such as kings of the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms in the face of Aramean and Mesopotamian powers. For this motif, see Na'aman 2006c.

[106] "Sons of Israel" here refers to the non-Judean tribes. However, "all Israel" and "all the territory of Israel" in preceding verses should best be understood as referring to all Israelite tribes including Judah. The separate counting is considered literary by Auld. See Auld 2011:122-23 as well as n. 15 for a list of separate counting of Israelites and Judeans in the books of Samuel. See relavant discussion in Gelander 2011:6-13.

[107] McCarter notes that Saul's role as a military leader in the story is reminiscent of the recurring theme of charismatic trans-tribal military leadership in the Book of Judges, yet here the leadership is transformed into a permanent pan-Israelite kingship. The charismatic background of kingship is considered as a deeply rooted northern tradition. McCarter 1980: 205-06.

However, due to the polysemic nature of the term, it is often difficult to determine whether עם, when attested in the context of war and battle, really refers to the people of a certain polity that are engaged in the collective political act against another polity. As I noted above, the term עם can also refer to a group of people with a special task, particularly in the sense of "troops" or soldiers. (besides 2 Sam 10, see also עַם הַצָּבָא in Num 31:32; כָּל־עַם הַמִּלְחָמָה in Jos 8:1, 3) In Josh 8:5, the narrative about the destruction of Ai, Joshua mentions "all the עם that are with me" (כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתִּי), which clearly refers to the selected warriors (אִישׁ גִּבּוֹרֵי הַחַיִל, v. 3) rather than the entire Israelite tribal league. Similarly, the "עם as numerous as sands of the seashore" (עָם כַּחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׂפַת־הַיָּם לָרֹב 1 Sam 13:5) should also be understood as the troops of the Philistines rather than the Philistines as a "people". A typical example is the account of Absalom's death on the battlefield in Transjordan, in which "הָעָם" is juxtaposed with Israel (וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם הַשָּׂדֶה לִקְרַאת יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 6), referring not to another people or national group versus Israel, but to David's troops in contrast to the conscript army of Israel led now by the rebellious Absalom (2 Sam 18:6) .[108] In v.7 the phrase "עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל" is defeated by "the servants of David" (="הָעָם" in v.6), which in this context is most properly to be translated as "the army of Israel" rather than "the Israelite people".[109]

In other cases the translation could be more equivocal, for instance:

The Israelites fled before Judah (וַיָּנוּסוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי יְהוּדָה v.16), and God delivered them into their hands. Abijah and his army (אֲבִיָּה וְעַמּוֹ) inflicted a severe defeat on them; 500000 men of Israel fell slain. (2 Chr 13:16 TNK)

---

[108] Cf. 2 Sam 17:24, 26, where Israel/man of Israel clearly refers to the troops that crossed the Jordan with Absalom. For the translation of עם as "troops" in 18:6-7, see for example McCarter 1984: 396 and JPS Tanakh 1985. Caquot and de Robert 1994: 543 and Auld 2011:525 opt for "people".

[109] "Israel" and "troops of Israel" refer to the supporters of Absalom in this narrative, possibly due to the fact that as a usurper Absalom has established him as the legitimate ruler of Israel in its political center west of the Jordan.

While this translation in the JPS Tanakh (1985) perfectly suits the battlefield context of the episode, one may argue that here עַמּוֹ could simply mean Abijah's people. (see translations in Myers 1965:77, Japhet 2003:163, etc.) Furthermore, the reference to "Judah" in v. 16 and elsewhere in the passage may even warrant the interpretation that here the king's "people" is to be understood as the people of Judah who figuratively participate in the North-South war as a collective political entity with their leader. Examples like this one render it rather challenging and perhaps undesirable to pinpoint an exact translation of the term עם in certain contexts. To summarize the discussion above, one may suggest that, despite considerable ambiguities and uncertainties in translation and interpretation, a group designated by the terminology עם in biblical texts can indeed function as a political factor in international politics, particularly as a party affected by and sometimes participating in wars with other political entities.

b. Diplomacy

In addition to international and inter-polity warfare, עם can occasionally appear in a diplomatic context. Isa 2:4 (cf Micah 4:3) speaks of Yahweh as an arbitrator for "many peoples" (וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים). Theological considerations aside, the verse depicts "peoples" as actors in international relations with legal nuance. I have noted above, in the section on the role and function of the עם in a domestic political context, that a עם can enter into a treaty with the supreme religious and political authority within a polity. Elsewhere the עם can function as a party in an international treaty alongside the political authorities of the people's polity. In the Aramaic Sefire Treaties between the Aramean kingdom of Arpad/Bīt Agūsī in northern Syria and the mysterious state of KTK (for details see relevant sections in Chapter

4), different components of each political society are listed as parties entering the treaty relationship. In the second of the two lists (Sefire I B lines 1-6), after enumerating the rulers of each polity, their sons and descendants, the tribal elements of the Arpadite state as parties of the treaty, the author then lists the pair "lords of KTK" (line 4) versus "lords of Arpad and *its people*" (*...ʿd]y bʿly ktk ʿm ʿd[y bʿly ʾ]rpd wʿm ʿmh*; lines 4-5) as additional parties on each side that enter this treaty. However one chooses to interpret the term "lord",[110] the occurrence of "עם" not only reflects the drafter's attempt to include all social components of the Arpadite polity somewhat listed in accordance with the internal social hierarchy of the state, but also demonstrates clearly, in a context of international relations, the political function of the body of residents called "עם" in the Aramean and maybe wider Northwest Semitic cultural domain.[111]

To sum up, it is apparent that עם, as a term that often emphasizes internal sociocultural links between members of an entity, can also be interpreted as a politically functional unit affected by or participating in the political actions of the polity. Occasionally such sociocultural links can be even depicted as a cause or motivation for a polity's resistance of foreign invasion. All these cases clearly demonstrate that in many biblical accounts here discussed kinship ties and other sociocultural links cannot be separated from the political behaviors of polities who claim to be the political representative of the people group.

---

[110] On the different interpretations of the term "lords", whether as the aristocracy and officials as opposed to commoners or as residents (cf. Sefire iii line 26), see discussion in Chapter 4.

[111] Elsewhere in the treaty עם also occurs as an entity affected by this international treaty alongside the state of Arpad or the tribe. For the former, see Sefire I A 30, in the curse of the treaty: "May the gods send every sort of devourer against Arpad and against its people (*wbʿmh*)!" For the latter, see Sefire I B line 11, (*ʿmh*, "its people") referring to the people of the tribal entity Bêt gūš in the context of a passage which advocates for the wide transmission of the treaty within a certain region.

"People of GN" appeared in the context of diplomacy also in earlier period. In the historical introduction of the treaty between Muwattalli II and Talmi-Šarrumma of Aleppo, "people" of Aštata and Nuhašše reportedly requested and received towns and border districts formerly belonging to Aleppo after its destruction (Beckman 1996:89). Archi goes so far as to interpret this phrase as indicating that Aštata and Nuhašše were not ruled by a king at that time (Archi 2014:143). However, this example differs from our case in the Sefire treaties, for "the people" do not function as a party in the treaty.

sociocultural factors, therefore, certainly have a role to play in legitimizing and encouraging collective political actions of such entities as those designated as עם or גוי.

5. An Overview of לאום and אומה

The term לְאֹם which occurs more than 30 times[112] in the Hebrew Bible is another terminology that is often translatable as "nation". In Akkadian lexical lists a word "*līmu*",[113] which editors of the CAD consider as a West Semitic loan word, is equated with such words as *ummānu* and *kimtu*, i.e. "troops" or "kinship" (see CAD L: 198, "*līmu*" C). It is unclear whether this word or the Akkadian/West Semitic cognate is related to the more commonly attested meaning of "*līmu*", i.e. "one thousand" or perhaps "one thousand men" (CAD L: 197-98, "*līmu*" B).[114] Even if they are related, there is certainly still a large gap between "military or administrative units of one thousand members" and an extensive socio-political entity often paralleled with גוי and עם (see below). A more certain cognate is *lim* attested in Late Bronze Age Ugaritic documents, (Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003:487-88), where this term possibly refers to "people" in general or residents of a certain region.[115] We do not know whether the "people" form any type of political unity. That the plural of the term is attested in Ugaritic seems to suggest that a *lim* is indeed some sort of a unit with boundaries. Similarly obscure are the internal sociocultural ties of people in a *lim*. Anat's epithet *ybmt limm* (CAT 1.3, II 33; "In-law of the Peoples" in Parker 1997: 108; "Intended of the peoples"

---

[112] Gen 25:23; 27:29; Ps 2:1; 7:8; 9:9; 44:3; 47:4; 65:8; 67:5; 105:44; 148:11; 149:7 (emended); Prov 11:26; 14:28, 34; 24:24; Isa 17:12f; 34:1; 41:1; 43:4, 9; 49:1; 51:4; 55:4; 60:2; Jer 51:58; Hab 2:13

[113] Note, however, that the Hebrew word contains a duplicated *m* when the word is followed by a vowel.

[114] By analogy, it is noteworthy that the Hebrew word אלף also seems to have two basic meanings, i.e. a tribal or military unit and "thousand". It has been suggested that the number "1000" should not be understood to be the accurate number of members in a so-named unit. Mendenhall also argues (1958:66) that the term "originally referred to a subsection of a tribe; the term was then carried over to designate the contingent of troops under its own leader which the subsection contributed to the army of the Federation".

[115] See examples cited in Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003, particularly CAT 1.5 VI 23: "*tmḫṣ lim ḫp ym*" ("She struck people on the seashore").

in Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003:488), though connecting a divine name with *lim*, hardly suggests Anat's status as a "national" deity of any single group, as indicated by the plural form of *lim*.

In the Hebrew Bible, where the term is more widely attested (yet almost exclusively in poetry), our understanding of its basic meaning of the term often derives from its parallel of לאם with more common terms that designate peoples as a socio-political entity: with גוי\גוים (Gen 25:23; Ps 2:1; 44:3; 105:44; 149:7; Prov 14:34; Isa 43:9) and עם\עמים (Gen 27:29; Ps 47:4; 67:5; Prov 14:28; 24:24; Isa 17:12-13; Isa 51:4; Jer 51:58; Hab 2:13). Once it is paralleled with "islands" (איים; Isa 49:1), which in this case should be understood as a political term referring to island polities. In certain cases the political facet of the term is also demonstrated by its parallel with "kings of the earth, officials and judges of the earth" (מַלְכֵי־אֶרֶץ וְכָל־לְאֻמִּים שָׂרִים וְכָל־שֹׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ Ps 148:11). In addition, sometimes a specific state is named or implied in the immediate context of לאם and other terms paralleled with it, e.g. the reference to the Neo-Babylonian Empire in Jer 51:58 and the possible hint at the same empire Hab 2:13 in similar wording.[116]

Finally, the plural לאומים can also be paralleled with terms that designate the entirety of humanity, such as "the earth" (ארץ) (Isa 34:1; 60:2) and "all land" (תבל) (Isa 34:1; Ps 9:9). More often than not, the term לאם is attested in the plural form, particularly when it is

[116] "Thus said the LORD of Hosts: Babylon's broad wall shall be knocked down, and her high gates set afire. Peoples shall labor for naught, and nations have wearied themselves for fire." (Jer 51:58 TNK) and "So that peoples have had to toil for the fire, and nations to weary themselves for naught! Behold, it is from the LORD of Hosts: (Hab 2:13 TNK)" The reference to Babylon in Hab 2:13 and its context is likely, though not explicit. Cf. Andersen 2001: 242; Fabry 2018:276. Lundbom (2004:500), noting the similarities of the two phrases, suggests that peoples and nations "laboring for naught" (with the fire imagery) and "wearying themselves for fire" are perhaps old proverbs cited here to describe similar situations. This is possible, and one must suggest that the use of such a proverb in both passages may indicate that in Hab 2:13 Babylon is also intended. Fischer also believes that both passages refer to Babylon, noting that the the verses contain the only attestations of לאם in Jeremiah and Habakkuk. Fischer 2005:626. The two views are mutually supplementary. In any case, it is certain that the Neo-Babylonian empire, with the city Babylon as the center is considered as one of the עמים and לאומים.

paralleled with synonyms. In these cases, it serves as a term for entities otherwise designated as עמים and גוים. On many occasions the parallelism of לאם and other terms (particularly "kings of the earth") is our only hint at the nature of the characteristics of such a group, as the content of the verses does not directly elaborate on the internal mechanisms and characteristics of a לאם. A לאם can figuratively listen to divine words (Isa 34:1; 51:4), unite with other peoples (Isa 43:9) and renew its strength (Isa 41:1), yet almost all occurrences depict the לאם as an outwardly unified group without specifying its other qualities, nor is there evidence describing explicit political activities engaged in by לאומים. In the singular form it should more properly be translated as "people", either people in general (Prov 11:26) or people as opposed to the ruler, i.e. "subjects" (in parallel with עם; see Prov 14:28)". In the latter case the לאם constitutes the major components of a polity, occupying of course a lower status than the monarch, a widely attested meaning of עם.

The sociocultural characteristics of a group called "לאם" are even more obscure, due likewise to the poetic nature of the verses in question. In Isa 51:4 Yahweh addresses Judah as עַמִּי וּלְאוּמִּי (Isa 51:4), which indicates that a group designated by this this term, like עם and גוי, can correspond to what appears to be a "national" deity. Our sources do not shed light on linguistic issues and internal kinship relations of a לאם.

The other term designating an extensive socio-political group is אֻמָּה, which is attested three times in Hebrew[117] and eight times in the Aramaic portions of the Hebrew Bible.[118] The cognate of the word does not seem to be attested in contemporary Iron Age Levantine epigraphic sources, although Ugaritic texts again offer us some additional information about

[117] Gen 25:16; Num 25:15; Ps 117:1.
[118] Ezra 4:10; Dan 3:4, 7, 29, 31; 5:19; 6:26; 7:14.

the meaning and function of this term. The beginning of the Epic of Kirta speaks of the near extinction of the royal family and possibly makes reference to the "אמה" of Kirta: "*umt [krt.] ʿrwt*[119]*/bt [m]lk itdb (read: itbd)*", i.e. "the clan of Kirta was consumed; the house of the king has perished" (CAT 1.14 I line 6). The interpretation "family" or "clan" is plausible, on account that both "house" (*bt*) and brothers (*aḫ* and *bn um*) are mentioned in the same passage (line 9). The other example is less certain. In the Epic of Aqhat *ʿl umty* occurs in parallel with *aḫy* (my brother),[120] which is translated by Parker simply as another phrase meaning "my brother", lit. "my mother's child", reading *umt* as *um* (mother) (Parker 1997:80). However, the word "mother" does not seem to be regularly spelled with a *t* in Ugaritic (Cf. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003:69-70). Also, "*bn um*" (see above) is a more established phrase meaning "brother". Therefore, we may very well have another attestation of the cognate of אֵמָּה, i.e. *umt* meaning "clan" or "family". Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín interpret the phrase as "child of my clan", i.e. "my kin" (cf. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003:75; 157-58).

This more restrictive meaning of *ʾ-m-h/(t)* is preserved in Gen 25:16 and Num 25:15, i.e. two of the three attestations of the term in Hebrew.[121] Gen 25:16 serves as a summary of previous verses that record Ishmael's twelve sons: "These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names by their villages and by their encampments: twelve chieftains of as many tribes (Gen 25:16 TNK; לְאֻמֹּתָם, lit. "according to their tribes/clans"; cf. לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם in Gen

[119] In *CAT.* Transliteration of this line is not given in Parker 1997. For the reading and translation of *ʿrwt*, see Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003:185.

[120] "*imḫṣ mḫṣ aḫy/akl [m]/kl[y ʿ]l umty*" (I will slay the slayer of my brother/I will finish the one who finished my kin.) CAT 1.19 IV lines 35. For the reconstruction see repetition in the third person in line 40 (tmḫṣ mḫṣ aḫ[h]/tkl mkly ʿl umt[y...).

[121] Some commentators consider the application of these terms in these two passages, both dealing with North Arabian populations, as influence by Arabic or North Arabian languages. See Westermann 1989: 488 on Gen 25:16 and H. Seebass 2007:142 on Num 25:15.

10:20; cf. also Gen 36:40).” The structure and wording of the verse bear some resemblance with such summarizing lines in Gen 10, a more extensive “family history” (תּוֹלְדֹת) of Noah’s descendants, like “These are the descendants of Ham, according to their clans (לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם) and languages, by their lands and nations. (Gen 10:20 TNK)” Both verses present the descendants of a patriarch according to certain criteria of subdivision, i.e. settlement and tribal or kinship ties in 25:16 and settlement, languages, kinship ties and socio-political organizations in 10:20. אמה in Gen 25:16 is possibly comparable to משפחה and גוי in meaning and function. What is certain from the genealogical style of this passage (Gen 25:12-16) is that the term אֻמָּה does have a kinship background, that is, it is a socio-political entity (translated by Soggin simply as “Einheiten” in Soggin 1997:332) bound together at least partially by the kinship ideology.

In his commentary on Num 25:15, which I will discuss later, B. Levine argues, perhaps on the basis of the number twelve in Gen. 25:16, that “אֻמָּה” as applied to Ishmael’s descendants and, by extension, the Midianites (in Num 25:15) would correspond to “tribe” (שֵׁבֶט or מַטֶּה) in the Israelite social structure of the pre-monarchic period (Levine 2000:291). However, it is true that in Genesis Ishmael’s sons are described as twelve rulers (שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר נְשִׂיאִם in Gen 17:20; 25:16) according to “their אמות”, the exact number of the “אֻמָּה” here is not specified, which means that the exact level it occupies in the social structure and its correspondence with an Israelite tribe are unclear. This brings us to a closer look at Num 25:15: “The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur; he was the head of an *ʾummot bêt-ʾāv*” (רֹאשׁ אֻמּוֹת בֵּית־אָב) in Midian. (Num 25:15 TNK)” The rather complex title of Zur is interpreted by Levine as head of the ‘leagues’ (אמות) that were

comprised of the patriarchal "houses" (בית אב, collective in Levine's opinion; Levine 2000:290-91). That Zur is the "head" of more than one such "league" (as the plural אֻמּוֹת indicates) appears to suggest that the term אֻמָּה cannot correspond to such a high level of social institution as "tribe" in this context (contra Levine 2000:291), but instead a more restrictive concept of "clans" or "kin" (cf. the Ugaritic example in *Aqhat* discussed above). In fact, one wonders if the full title could be רֹאשׁ אֻמּוֹת instead of simply רֹאשׁ , that is, "head of kinship units" which should be understood not verbatim, but instead in a less strict manner as "people's cheif". This title (רֹאשׁ אֻמּוֹת of a בֵּית־אָב) may in turn correspond to נשיא in v. 18 where Cozbi is called "daughter of a chieftain (נשיא) of Midian".[122] Note also the nice parallel with the title of the father of the Israelite man who is killed (v. 14): Zimri, son of Salu, chieftain of a *bêt-ʾāv* in the Simeonite Tribe (נְשִׂיא בֵית־אָב לְשִׁמְעֹנִי). In sum, one may argue that, essentially, Zur is a "people's chief" at the level of a בית אב. Although all this analysis is highly speculative, it establishes, nevertheless, that אֻמָּה may be used as a term denoting a relatively low-level unit in a social structure. Also, it is clear that the term draws upon kinship ideology, as it appears in a list of family history (Gen 25:12-16) and is paralleled with the term בית אב.

In contrast to these two examples, in Ps 117:1 and the Aramaic occurrences of the term in the Bible (Ezra 4:10; Dan 3:4, 7, 29, 31; 5:19; 6:26; 7:14), אֻמָּה apparently refers to a socio-political entity of a much larger scale. This is demonstrated by the parallelism and juxtaposition of this term with גוי (Ps 117:1), עם and לשן (e.g. Dan. 3:29; for more examples and the latter term as a linguistic community, see above). The occurrence of לשן

[122] Note again that in Gen 25:16, the twelve sons of Ishmael are presented as chieftains (נשיאים) according to their clans, or perhaps chieftains in charge of clans or families (of people). A נשיא is thus a head of such clans or families.

implies that a אֻמָּה likewise can be defined by its own language.In these Aramaic texts, all peoples and nations, including, thus, the אמה, which designate "national" groups, are said to have been subsumed by the empire (cf. Dan. 7:14; cf. also Ezra 4:9-10, all the peoples settled by Assyria in Samaria). In other words, an אמה in this context does not refer to a political entity with a certain degree of autonomy, but instead a socio-political community which remains recognizable as a constituent member of a multi-ethnic and multicultural world empire.

6. Terms of "national" groups and the category of the polity

To conclude the current section, I want to synthesize the theoretical and terminological discussions so far presented in this chapter and briefly address this important question: are such native terms as עם, גוי, לאום and אמה reserved for one particular type of political entity in biblical and other West Semitic documents that somehow bear resemblance to prototypes of "nations" according to modern, constructed definitions? The answer to this question is probably "no", as the terms can serve as the designation of political entities with different kinds of organizational characteristics and principles.

First, the term עם may refer to a tribal entity, e.g. the ancient Israelites, but also to an extensive territorial polity that, according to idealized historical narratives, develops from tribal leagues, e.g. the united Israelite monarchy, the divided Hebrew monarchies in the Hebrew Bible and their neighbors east of the Jordan. In addition, העם הזה can also refer to fractions of such a tribally based kingdom (e.g. 1 Kgs 12:6ff.) which may again be transformed into a separate polity. In addition, although scholars have noted that the term עם stresses the kinship ties between members of the same עם in biblical accounts, this term can

also be applied to city-states (e.g. 1 Sam 5:10, עם of Ekron)[123] which, according to modern interpretations, derive their sense of solidarity not so much from kinship and ethno-cultural links among its people as they do from common geographical ties and the link between the subject and the ruler (cf. e.g. Buccellati 1967:56-64).

Likewise, a group designated a גוי does not always exhibit both cultural and political distinctions if one considers extra-biblical information. In 2 Kgs 19:12-13, at least some of the "גוֹיִם" mentioned in Sennacherib's message are different branches of Arameans who seemed to shared a common name (ארם, *Aramu*) not only in biblical and Middle/early Neo-Assyrian documents, but also in native Aramaic sources, although they certainly displayed political and perhaps cultural differences among them. Why are they considered as different "nations" by Sennacherib as narrated by the biblical author? Is it the political disunity that prompted Sennacherib or the biblical narrator to consider them as different "nations"? Was the effect of political disunity so great that they were seen as cultural distinct as well? Is the term גוי here functioning as a political term only? Or were the questions simply not the concern of the ancient sources?[124]

A final example is Jer 25:12, where the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire which once served as Yahweh's "servant" to punish Judah (v.9), is now predicted due to its excessive brutality. Here Yahweh juxtaposes three entities: "I will punish the king of Babylon (מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל) and that nation (הַגּוֹי הַהוּא) and the land of the Chaldeans (אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים) for their sins...(v. 12)"[125]

---

[123] Cf. "This city" (*hqrt z*; the city to be rebuilt at the site of Karatepe; Gibson 1982:41) and "this people who dwell in it" (*ʿm z ʾšr yšb bn*) in Karatepe A iii 7-8.

[124] Also relevant is Ezek 37:22, where Israel and Judah are called two גוים to be merged as one, see above under the linguistic homogeneity of a גוי. Other examples of the term גוי, as I discussed above, suggest that the cultural and even kinship facet of the term should not be ignored. It is thus not always clear why culturally and ethnically closely related groups are called גוי. For the cultural and political features of the Arameans and the Aramean polities in the Iron Age, see more in Chapter 4.

[125] The syntax is slightly more complicated than is reflected in the JPS Tanakh translation: אפְקֹד עַל־מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַל־הַגּוֹי

"That nation" may very well be interpreted as referring to the Neo-Babylonian or the Chaldean Empire in general. If this is the case, then גוי can also designate a multi-ethnic, multilingual polity which, from the modern perspective, is nothing but the opposite of a politically autonomous and culturally distinct "nation" (see more in Chapter 7).

It thus seems likely that the ancients did not have a clear concept or definition of what qualifies as an עם or גוי, or a group designated by a similar term (one of the אמיא in Ezra 4:9-10 is "Urukeans"). They never attached to these terms such restrictions and qualifications as "extensive territory", "more than one urban nucleus", "non-imperial (that is, not controlling other such "peoples")", "absolute linguistic uniqueness" or the like. For them, עם and גוי could be used to refer to different kinds of political entities, some of which may very well fall under categories other than "territorial national polities" according to modern definitions. On the other hand, the ancient authors certainly had a clear sense that a particular people group occupying a certain land often display a series of cultural distinctions, from a common name, a common language to a common god, which separate them from the

---

הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶת־עֲוֹנָם וְעַל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים (lit. "I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, declares Yahweh, for their iniquities, and the Land of the Chaldeans"). The relationship among the three entities is thus ambiguous, particularly what exactly is meant by "that nation". Some commentators have argued, following the reading of the Septuagint (ἐκδικήσω τὸ ἔθνος ἐκεῖνο φησὶν κύριος), that the Babylonian references in this oracle are a late addition. Others even suggest that the entire verse or even the passage vv. 11-14 is secondary. See summary in Lundbom 2004:250. Lundbom then argues that, if the Babylonian oracles in Jer 50-51 are considered original, there is no reason to assign the current passage to a later date. He also suggests that the omission of "the king of Babylon" in the Septuagint can be ascribed to haplography. In fact, if we follow vv. 11-12 in the Septuagint version, it would appear that τὸ ἔθνος would refer to "Judah", if we understand the verb "ἐκδικέω" not as "to punish" but to "procure justice for" (cf. Lk. 18:3, 5). If so, however, the reference to "making it a desolation forever" later in v.12 would be completely out of place (as Judah is supposed to be vindicated after the 70 years). Therefore, one should follow Lundbom that at least the reference to the Babylonian King alongside "that nation" is original, though later omitted by the Septuagint. The status of "the Land of the Chaldeans" is still dubious. But for the juxtaposition of people (ruler and nation) and land, see G. Fischer 2005:742. Whether "the Land of the Chaldeans" is original, however, we have a case of גוי referring to Babylonian Empire. In addition, it is also possible that here "this nation" and "the Land of the Chaldeans" serve to specify what בבל refers to, that is, not the city of Babylon alone, but the whole political entity with Babylon as its center, a land which is, in this period, inhabited also by the Chaldean tribes. P. Machinist, personal communication. It has been pointed out that the title king of Babylon in Akkadian referred strictly to the king of the City of Babylon, until the Greeks extended the meaning of Babylon to refer to the entirety of southern Mesopotamia. Due to the presence of multiple important cities in southern Mesopotamia, it is possible that Babylon alone, despite being the nucleus of various dynastic kingdoms in the South, never achieved the status of the namesake of the entire region (unlike the city of Assur), although the title "king of Babylon" (cf. king of Kish) certainly assumed more than just local significance, for the Assyrian kings also adopted this title when the south was under their control. See Machinist 1986: 187, n.16 for further references.

outsiders. They were also aware that such a group can also conduct political acts as a political entity, sometimes serving as a synonym of the "kingdom" itself. Moreover, as these authors in the the southern Levant observed the world around them, they may very well have projected their knowledge of the socio-political structures and characteristics of their own and related peoples/polities to their description of other groups which by modern standards might not be readily called a עם or a גוי. To sum up, the present investigation of native Levantine (mostly biblical) terminologies reveals that ancient authors were aware of the existence of politically active groups with distinct sociocultural traits, yet they certainly did not reserve any terminology to narrow types of polities or peoples, as modern theoretical discussions tend to do.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined certain characteristics of newly emerged territorial polities with multiple urban centers in the Iron Age Levant and the role of cultural, kinship, linguistic and religious ties, real and imagined, in the formation and reinforcement of the identity of such political entities. In this process I have reviewed debates about the issue of nation in the ancient world, examining among others the problems and limitations of favoring a certain definition of nation and elements it involves, which have been derived more often than not from particular preferred models. I also discussed the difficulty regarding the separation between nation and ethnicity in pre-modern times. Maybe Greenblatt is essentially correct in downplaying the differences between the two concepts of nation and ethnicity, although complete elimination of any differentiation, as I have discussed, appears excessive and simplistic. In any event, what ultimately interests us here and in the following two

chapters is not a clear-cut differentiation between national and ethnic groups or a definition that renders certain ancient polities as the rare models of either kind. Instead, I prefer to explore the influence of cultural features within or beyond a political entity on the conception and strategies of domestic politics as well as international relations of that entity.

Our examination of native terminologies of peoples and "nations" suggests that biblical authors and authors of other Iron Age West Semitic documents were aware of the presence of different kinds of political entities. Underlying their knowledge of such peoples and the corresponding terminologies are first of all kinship ideologies that interpret larger groups as extended family. In addition, groups so named are also perceived to be linguistically and religiously distinguishable from others. More importantly, in many cases such groups can be involved in collective political acts. Finally, it should be noted that there is no neat correspondence between an עם or גוי and the modern classification of "ethnic/national groups", despite a considerable level of overlap.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I aim to survey these issues as they apply across major political entities in the Iron Age Levant, including the Cis-/Transjordanian states, which at certain periods of their development may indeed demonstrate some sort of "national" characteristics, as well as other polities, which displayed only trans-local cultural commonalities but not political uniformity. It is important, after all, in whether actors involved in certain events were somehow affected in political decisions and conducts by cultural and social elements beyond political calculations.

Chapter 3: Cultural Characteristics and Their Impact on Politics: "Nations" in Iron Age II Levant

Introduction

In the Iron Age Levant, particularly in the Iron II period, a series of polities emerged in the Cis-/Transjordan periods that seem to qualify as "ethnic/ethnicizing states" (e.g. Joffe 2002) or nations (e.g. Grosby 2002). Whatever the exact modern terminology, these polities demonstrate that cultural factors can considerably influence political behaviors and ideologies of ancient polities. In this chapter I will investigate these polities, i.e. Ammon, Moab, Edom and Israel/Judah， and examine how their cultural characteristics affected the formation and development of political identities. It will be argued that, while the Transjordanian polities offer us interesting evidence for ancient polities in which a cultural identity corresponds to, results in and is strengthened by a political identity, in the Cis-Jordanian case, namely of Israel and Judah, the dynamic relations between the two politically independent, yet culturally linked kingdoms test the limits of the effect that cultural commonalities can have on political unity and cohesion. It is hoped that the theoretical and terminological discussions in the preceding chapter will be exemplified and deepened by these historical case studies.

Ammon, Moab and Edom: nations in the Iron Age Levant?

The three Transjordanian polities, Ammon, Moab and Edom, are Israel's and Judah's most important neighbors that share with them linguistic and cultural commonness as well as a similar trajectory of polity formation in the Iron Age. In the Hebrew Bible we see not only the parallel of Ammon and Moab (e.g. Deut 23:4; Judg 11:15; 1 Kgs 11:7),[126] but also the

[126] The two polities are sometimes juxtaposed without Edom, possibly due to the supposed close relationship between them, as reflected by the biblical legend about their origins as half-brothers fathered by Lot who committed incest with his

juxtaposition of the three polities: "They (=Israel and Judah) shall pounce on the back of Philistia to the west, and together plunder the peoples of the east (בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם; lit. "sons of the east"); Edom and Moab shall be subject to them and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa 11:14 TNK; modified). Although the identification of "sons of the east" is uncertain, Ammon, Moab and Edom are clearly grouped together, perhaps due to the fact that they are all located in the same region east of Israel and Judah.[127] I will briefly review the possible tribal roots of these three Iron Age polities and their cultural attributes, which contributed to the formation of their distinct political identities as well as their internal unities.

1. Transjordan before Iron Age II

Our knowledge about Transjordan in the Iron Age and the preceding transitional period from the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I derives from both archaeological and textual evidence.[128] In the earlier period (Late Bronze Age II, ca. early 13th to mid-12th centuries, see Fischer 2014:568-70; and Iron Age I, ca. mid-12th to 11th centuries; see Herr 2014: 654-58), it

---

two daughters (Gen 19:30-38).

[127] In Isa 11:14, the prophet first declares that reconciled Israel and Judah will "pounce on the back" of Philistia in the west and then moves his focus to the east. However, the relationship between v.14ab (concerning "sons of the east") and v.14b is uncertain. It is unclear whether "sons of the east" here serves as an umbrella term for Ammon, Moab and Edom, in which case the three polities would be perceived to form a separate category among Israel's and Judah's other neighboring rivals. It is also possible that the phrase refers to other peoples living in the east of the Jordan. Knauf (1992a) suggests that in different contexts the phrase "sons of the east" may refer to different peoples east of the Israelites, including the Asian parts of the Persian Empire (1 Kgs 5:10), the bedouins (Judg 6:3; 7:2; 8:10; Isa 11:14; Jer 49:28; Ezek 25:4, 10) or the Arameans (Gen 29:1). Roberts (2015:187) believes that in Isa 11:14 the Arameans are intended by the phrase "sons of the east", referring first to Gen 29:1 "land of the sons of the east" designates a North Syrian area populated by Arameans. With regard to First Isaiah, Roberts refers to 9:11 and 2:6 where the Arameans (more certainly in 9:11) are connected to the direction "east", that is, as a power coming from the east. However, it is unclear whether the opposite is true, i.e. whether the east is exclusively connected to the Arameans. To sum up, it cannot be ascertained whether or not "sons of the east" in Isa 11:14 could have served as the cover term of the three Transjordanian polities. Some commentators, it should be pointed out, seem to have assumed this, e.g. Childs 2001:104, where the author identifies only four enemies to be conquered by united Israel and Judah: Philistia, Ammon, Moab and Edom, apparently considering "sons of the east" the synonym of the three Transjordanian peoples/polities. Our conclusion is that the phrase in general may refer to various peoples that inhabited regions east of Israel and Judah in different periods and in different biblical contexts. Whether or not it is used in apposition with Ammon, Moab and Edom in Isa 11:14, what is certain is that the three polities are juxtaposed in one verse, forming some sort of a group east of the Jordan, from the Israelite and Judean perspective.

[128] For the archaeological evidence of Late Bronze Age Transjordan,see Fischer 2014; for Iron I Transjordan, see Herr 2014. For recent, up-to-date surveys of Iron II archaeological evidence of individual Transjordian polities, see Younkder 2014; Steiner 2014 and Bienkowski 2014. All with further references. For systematic studies of archaeological and textual sources, see, among others, B. MacDonald 2000, with attempts to synthesize archaeological and textual evidence in sites so far studies. For Ammon (archaeological and historical studies), see further B. Macdonald and Younker 1999; Tyson 2014. For Moab, see B. Routledge 2004. For the interaction of Moab with surrounding powers, see Timm 1988, Chamaza 2005; For Edom, see relevant articles in Bienkowski 1992a; Edelman 1995.

is archaeology that offers us the most information. After the fall of the Late Bronze Age international system in the Levant, which had been dominated to a large extent by the Egyptian New Kingdom, Transjordan experienced a period of decline, which witnessed the transition from the presence of fortified cities under Egyptian political and cultural influence to less intensive settlements, with some urban centers destroyed in the 13th or 12th centuries and a limited degree of continuity.[129] In the subsequent Iron Age I (12th to 11th centuries), the continued use of sites from the transitional period between the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age was accompanied by the emergence of new sites, some of which were built on a destruction layer. For Herr, this phenomenon suggests "dynamic sedentary activity after a disruption" (Herr 2014:654-57).

For this period, almost no native textual evidence exists. Most of the textual evidence for the Transjordanian region in Late Bronze age II and Iron Age I hails from Egypt (see Kitchen 1992), which is sometimes supplemented by archaeological evidence. While archaeological findings do not directly attest to the existence of regional kingdoms beyond remnants of Late Bronze Age cities or city-states (e.g. Pella), Kitchen (1992) demonstrates that both Edom/Seir and Moab are attested in Egyptian textual sources dated to the Amarna Period (e.g. land of Sheru in EA 288:26 as Seir) as well as to Merneptah's, Ramesses II's and Ramesses III's reigns (late 13th- 12th centuries; 1992:26-29). Kitchen (1992:27) claims that, in the case of Seir, the local political entity should be considered as a pastoralist polity ruled by

[129] Fischer identifies a certain level of cultural unity in the Late Bronze Age among southern Levantine sites under Egyptian domination, including what he calls "uniform religious faith" embodied by the *midgo*l temple at Pella, dated to 1350 BCE, which resembles similar temples from Shechem and Hazor. He connects the replacement of this temple by an Iron Age temple from Pella to the breakdown of this uniform religious organization that resulted from the disintegration of Egyptian influence in Transjordan. Fischer 2014:573-74. It is unclear to what extent architectural commonalities reflect the uniformity of religion in this period, although it is plausible to suggest that some local deities were possibly widely worshiped.

"tent-dwelling" tribal kings, perhaps related to the *Shasu*.[130] From the archaeological perspective, however, intensive sedentary settlement with large urban centers in the land of Edom first appeared only in Iron Age II,[131] with a gap of four to five centuries between the Egyptian textual and Transjordanian archaeological evidence (see Hart 1992; Bienkowski 1992b; 1995:45-47; 2014). If any polity existed in Late Bronze Age Edom, it is possible that they did not establish any sedentary administrative center, befitting Kitchen's interpretation of the political organization as a pastoralist, tribal kingdom.

With regard to Moab, the name "*m(w)-y-b(w)*" has been attested in the Luxor and ʿAmāra-West lists as well as in the inscription between the east gate and the pylon on the east wall of the court of the Luxor temple, all dated to Ramesses II (Timm 1988:5-33). Kitchen has also found references to what he interprets as cities in the Land of Moab in the lower register of the Luxor temple war scenes, including *btrt* (Butartu) and *tpn* (Dibon; see (Kitchen 1992:27).[132] Also interesting are two Egyptian-style or Egyptianizing statues discovered in Moab itself, the Baluʿa and the Shihan stelae, of which the relief of the former is well preserved, displaying an Egyptian deity[133] on the left, an Asiatic figure in the middle and a goddess with Asiatic associations on the right.[134] While Kitchen interprets all these sources as evidence of the existence of a political entity called Moab in the (Kitchen 1992: 29), other

---

[130] See also Younker 1999 for the *Shasu* in the region Ammon in Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

[131] No Iron I settlements have been excavated south of Wadi al-Hasa in historical northern Edom, see Herr 2014:657. For human activities of this period without signs of settlement near Wadi Faynan prior to the late 8th century, see Levy, T. E.; Adams, R. B.; and Shafiq, R. 1999 The Jabal Hamrat Fidan Project: Excavations at the Wadi Fidan 40 Cemetery, Jordan (1997). Levant 31: 293-308.

[132] See the debate on the readings in pages 28-29. For Late Bronze Age and Iron I Egyptian textual and visual sources, see the survey in Kitchen 1992. For further reference see also Routledge and Routledge 2009:75 n.27.

[133] Some identify the figure with Chemosh, although the status of this deity at the end of the Late Bronze Age or the early Iron Age is uncertain. See B. Routledge and C. Routledge 2009:83-84.

[134] The archaeological context of the stela is complex and the stela may have been reused as building material in Iron Age II. B. Routledge and C. Routledge surmise that, because it is made of basalt, the origin is likely near the site. Findings from periods prior to Iron I in Khirbet Baluʿa are scarce, so the original occasion on which the stela was erected remains unclear. B. Routledge and C. Routledge 2009:74. The stela is dated to the 14th to the second half of the 12th century on stylistic grounds. See summary in B. Routledge and C. Routledge 2009: 81-83.

scholars are more cautious with their interpretation of the evidence in the archaeological context. For Miller, the end of the Late Bronze Age date assigned to the stela is doubtful, and the stela may have been erected much later in Iron Age II, so that its significance for the existence of any sort of political entity in the Land of Moab in the 13th to 12th centuries would be irrelevant (Miller 1992:78[135]). Dearman, on the other hand, is more optimistic about the existence of a massive, fortified administrative center at Khirbet Baluʿa at the beginning of Iron Age I, together with other such centers on the roadway across the Mujib, e.g. ʿAraʿir and Lehun, although he refrains from claiming that both Baluʿa and ʿAraʿir were built by the same people group (Dearman 1992:71[136]). Yet the relationship between the community responsible for these sites and the Iron Age II Moabite Kingdom is less clear. Recently, from a perspective that does not depend on the existence of a Moabite monarchy in Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I , B. Routledge and C. Routledge suggest that the Egyptian style of the monument in a Transjordanian context and the central non-Egyptian figure (perhaps a *Shasu*) in Egyptian gala robe receiving blessing and authority from the deity seem to indicate the acceptance and skilful exploitation of Egyptian iconography and the imperial visual language by local actors, who were definitely not "isolated tribes" (B. Routledge and C. Routledge 2009:91).[137]

So how should one interpret such early attestations of the names Moab and Edom in Egyptian sources and the possible presence of local authorities in Khirbet Baluʿa (who need not be labeled "Moabite")? The names may have functioned primarily as geographical

[135] Early monarchy in moab? In Early Edom and Moab, 77-91

[136] Settlement patterns and the beginning of the Iron Age in Moab, 67-75.

[137] One sees similar phenomenon in the Levant under the Neo-Assyrian Empire, when local rulers embraced the imperial ideology and adapted it to their own advantage, as demonstrated by some textual sources. See Chapters 6 and 7.

designations, not unlike "Amurru" in cuneiform sources dated prior to and after the Amarna Period.[138] However, it is uncertain to what extent Moab and Edom were inhabited by peoples bearing the same name and whether they formed any type of unified cultural and political identity as early as in the Late Bronze Age. In fact, we do not know if there existed peoples of these names in this period who passed their appellations to the regions in which they were active as geographical designations. Equally possible is the reversed process that the regional designations Moab and Edom/Seir had existed (origins known) before certain peoples dwelling in each region became known as their namesakes. What is notable is simply the existence of what appears to be names of regions not identical to city names, if Kitchen's identification of Dibon in the Luxor temple war scene is correct (Kitchen 1992:27-28). That is to say, certain regions in Transjordan may have been referred to by general designations that did not derive from individual city names and apparently transcended individual local settlements. However, I should stress again that it is unclear whether those urban centers were established by peoples called Moab or Edom/Seir, even if such groups existed.

Therefore, it is still premature to speak of distinct "ethnic" or even "national" groups in Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I in Transjordan, although "Moab" and "Edom/Seir" as regions with urban centers have been attested as toponyms. Even if such groups with a common name, a common culture and (real or imagined) kinship ties existed, they were probably labeled vaguely as the *Shasu* or the *Hab/piru* pastoralist groups, without further differentiation, and as such left little trace of monumental structures. Only biblical accounts

[138] It should be noted that Amurru in the Late Broze Age or during the Amarna Period can serve as the name of a regional territorial state, which I have discussed at the beginning of Chapter 2. Before and after the Amarna Period, the term refers loosely to Syria in general and later specifically to central and southern Syria (Singer 1991:131). After the collapse of the Amurru polity, the term returned to its geographical sense in most of the Iron Age, designating regions west of Mesopotamia proper. However, it is noteworthy that the inscription dated paleographically to the 11th century mentions a certain "king of Amurru" in a late period (See Singer 1991:178).

depict the three groups as political entities, indeed as ancient nation-states with cultural distinctions and political unity, in a relatively early period, possibly corresponding to the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age if put in archaeological terms (Num 22; Judg 10:6-12:7, the Jephthah narrative; Gen 36:31-32=1 Chr 1:43). Yet these sources are likely to have been composed in a much later period, e.g. the exilic and post-exilic period, thus reflecting not contemporary but Iron Age II political situations.

2. Overview of cultural characteristics of the Transjordanian polities and their political dimensions

The relationship between Iron Age II polities named (Sons of/House of) Ammon, Moab and Edom, on the one hand, and the exact nature of Moab and Edom (Ammon is not explicitly mentioned) attested in Egyptian sources in the end of the Late Bronze Age on the other, remains unexplained. They could essentially be the descendants of the Late Bronze Age tribal coalitions consisting of the *Shasu* with these appellations, although it cannot be excluded that the three peoples were comprised of new peoples who later adopted these geographical names. In either case, only starting from the 9th century BCE do we possess adequate evidence about the formation of three multi-city, trans-local and possibly trans-tribal entities with somewhat centralized and hierarchical structures.[139] Although our knowledge about the emergence and reinforcement of these distinct entities is still limited, several

[139] Different models have been introduced to understand state formation in Transjordan. According to the tribal kingdom model, kinship ideology and other common cultural characteristics led to the formation of regional monarchs, yet centralization was never achieved, as findings in local sites indicate. According to this model, the attestation of "Edomite" pottery in the Negev need not be explained as state-led Edomite military expansion, but perhaps only the penetration of Edomite tribes, over whom the Edomite ruler never had full control, into former Judean territory. See summary in Bienkowski 2014. See also LaBianca 1999; Younker 1999; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001. For B. Routledge, on the other hand, segmentation within the Moabite society created both hierarchy and a common identity, in which the role of the central political authority cannot be underestimated. See B. Routledge 2004. Both models account for the impact of sociocultural elements on political unity or lack thereof. Placing stress on archaeological evidence or textual evidence (e.g. the Mesha Stele) may lead to different interpretations of the sources, which should best be understood in a balanced way.

cursory preliminary observations can be offered, before they are discussed in further details below:

1. The three major polities[140] that flourished in Iron Age II, with or without earlier predecessors, are all identifiable as territorial kingdoms with more than one urban center in addition to numerous small, unfortified settlements,[141] despite the elevated status of the respective capital cities: Dibon of Moab, Rabbath-Ammon of the Ammonites and Bozrah of Edom.

2. The names of the kingdoms differ from those of their capitals, so that they were not the expanded version of city-states centered around these said urban centers. Their common identities, therefore, originate from the relatively extensive geographical regions, which in turn may possibly derive from the respective peoples or, more specifically, tribal entities bonded partially by kinship ideologies (see below for further details).

3. The three polities share a high level of cultural commonness among themselves and within the broader the southern Levant, in such aspects as pottery, artifacts, language and script. Despite the overall commonalities, specific peculiarities in each polity can also be identified. I will return to this point later.

4. Another rather obvious point is that, although the three Transjordanian polities had much in common, they nevertheless lack a common, supra-regional designation both in

[140] I do not include the "sons of the east" as a separate political entity in this the east of the Jordan in the Iron Age, since various groups in the Hebrew Bible can be designated by this phrase. For further details see footnote on "sons of the east" at the beginning of the preceding section.

[141] For the three-tier settlement pattern (larger towns, small towns and blockhouses/agricultural compounds) in Ammon, see Younker 2014:761-62. Likewise, archaeological sites of towns in the Moabite Kingdom include Dhiban/Dibon, Khirbet al-Mudayna and Tell Madaba, among others. For information on Moabite towns, fortresses and villages, see Steiner 2014:772-74. In the case Edom, Bienkowski argues that the sites in Iron Age II Edom are very different and lack consistent hierarchical differences. Apart from Busayra (bilical Bozrah), most sites are small. There area also mountain top sites in the Petra, including a large one in Qurayyat al-Mansur, which is the second largest site after Busayra. See Bienkowski 2014:787-89. The lack of secondary cities does not change the fact that Edom is sizable territorial polity with extensive hinterland and villages. For textual sources, see references to different settlements and towns in the Mesha Stele and consider the phrase "cities of the Sons of Ammon" (2 Sam 12:31=1 Chr 20:3).

native and in external sources, in contrast to the Arameans and the Philistines (see Chapter 4). In other words, Ammon, Moab and Edom were never considered as one ethnic group and remained distinct cultural-political entities, or distinct "nations" as some scholars call them,[142] which are separate from each other as well as from other neighboring Canaanite/the southern Levantine polities, such as Israel, Judah and the Phoenician states, with which they undoubtedly shared cultural ties in the broad sense.

In sum, we encounter in the case the Transjordanian polities three extensive territorial polities with largely similar sociocultural features which remain politically and culturally independent. In what ways, if at all, do sociocultural elements contribute to the formation and development of individual Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite polities? How did the political elites of these polities utilize existing cultural distinctions in the details to reinforce the polity's political identity? Did political divisions reshape the cultural attributes of one polity in relation to its geographical and cultural neighbors? In the rest of the section I will survey the sociocultural characteristics of these political communities in Iron II Transjordan and investigate what possible distinctions that existed between these polities. It is not always certain that it is sociocultural factors that contributed to internal political unity and mutual political distinction, for many other factors must have also had an effect, such as geographical boundaries and limits. Also, cultural distinctions that became more pronounced only after the emergence of well-attested, relatively full-fledged kingdoms, may indicate the reverse phenomenon, namely, that political divisions result in or heighten cultural divergences. The

[142] For Knauf, the name "Idumeans" in Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods referring to Edomites who migrated westwards to southern Palestine suggests that a "national" identity had been formed at least by then. Knauf 1992b:51-52. At least, it is clear that a culturally based identity (with Edomite names that contain local theophoric elements) was at work among the Edomites and later Idumeans, even though an Edomite state came into being comparatively late (in the late 8th century).

interaction between cultural and political factors with regard to ancient "national" groups (in the making) must have been rather complex and dynaMic

A. Material culture: uniformity and distinction

The material culture in the Transjordanian polities during Iron Age II when they resembled "ethnic kingdoms" (see Joffe 2002) seems to bear considerable common characteristics among themselves and beyond Transjordan, such as the Cisjordan and Phoenicia. As far as pottery shapes are concerned, the pottery from Khirbet al-Mudayna in Moab, dated to the end of the 7th century BCE, features large, deep, four-handled, hole-mouthed vessels with a folded rim. While in Moab similar pottery is so far found only in Dhiban, two- and four-handled deep bowls with thickened rims have been commonly discovered in Edom. Likewise, small cups found at the same site have parallels also Ammonite sites (Steiner 2014:776). Stern argues that "it is almost impossible to define a separate and independent Moabite material culture" in Iron Age II (Stern 2002:267). He also summarizes that Ammonite pottery prior to the Assyrian domination of the southern Levant demonstrated what he calls common "Israelite-Phoenician traditions", visible in bowls, jugs, and juglets (Stern 2002: 257). Cultic objects such as statuettes of deities also display features attested in different regions in the southern Levant; for instance the figure of the divine consort of the main god is found to be depicted as a fertility goddess supporting her breasts in both Edom and Ammon, "the standard depiction in all other Palestinian states" (Stern 2002: 248; 288). Other forms of cultic objects common to both Moabite and Edomite cultures include ceramic statuettes and pillar statuettes with a disc in their hands discovered both in the vicinity of Khirbet al-Mudayna and Qitmit and Ein Hazeva in the Negev (Steiner

2014:776).

Under the surface of general commonness, however, lie possible "national" distinctions. To be sure, in many cases the distinctions were better described as "regional" than "national" or "ethnic". For example, within the Edomite sphere, painted pottery from Busayra and the Negev (possibly under Edomite control) in the north is "demonstrably different" from that in Southern Edom (e.g. Petra), which often lacks painted decoration (Bienkowski 2014:790). On the other hand, "Phoenician" style Proto-Aeolic capitals have been discovered both in Jerusalem and Ramat Rachel in Judah and in Khirbet al-Mudayna and Kerak, perhaps due to the relative geographical vicinity of the two polities on either bank of the Dead Sea and Judean cultural influence on Moab (see Stern 2002:264). This said, the three kingdoms do demonstrate distinctive attributes and features unique to each polity. Again, focusing on ceramics, the sturdy cooking vessels with a square rim and two handles found at Khirbet el-Mudayna (c. 600 BCE) have so far only been reported from Moab and the eastern Jordan Valley (Steiner 2014:776). Also, a large portion of Edomite pottery found at the major urban center of Busayra is famous for its decorations with concentric decoration bands or lines in various colors. Other Edomite decorated pottery has also been found at such sites of Tawilan, Tell al-Kheleifeh and the Negev (Bienkowski 1995: 49-53; Stern 2002:288; Bienkowski 2014:789)[143]. Finally, two unique styles distinguish Ammonite pottery from that of neighboring Judah and Moab: red slipped and pained pottery dated to Iron II B[144] and black

[143] Note that the amount of painted pottery found in the Petra region is limited, which is known for its relatively distinct local material culture, exemplified by the mountain-top sites with long-room houses. Bienkowski (2007:37) suggests that the local varieties of Edomite material culture reflects the relative decentralization of the Edomite polity. Even so, the painted pottery from other Edomite sites may still be considered as representative features of the Edomite culture.

[144] This type still follows a regional tradition close to that of Samaria/Israel and Phoenicia. See Daviau and Dion 2007:304. But it should be noted that it was not found across the southern Levant, but were limited to the Ammonite territories in Transjordan, certain sites and Phoenicia and Syria. Within Transjordanian polities, this type seems to be unique to Ammon. See discussions in Daviau and Graham 2009:41.

slipped and burnished ware that appeared towards the end of Iron II B and lasted into Iron II C an the Persian Period (Daviau and Dion 2007: 302-04 on distinctive architecture, artifacts and ceramics in general). Some of the black slipped and burnished ware from Tell Jawa in Ammon bear similarities in form with small carinated bowls excavated from Nimrud in the Assyrian heartland (Daviau and Graham 2009). In other words, regional characteristics in one Transjordanian polity may have developed on the basis of cultural influence from the external imperial center.

To sum up the selected examples, it appears that material culture in Transjordan display general patterns common to the entire southern Levant with influence from external powers, such as Egypt in prior to Assyrian expansion to this region (e.g. anthropoid clay coffins, possibly modeled on 26th Dynasty Egyptian stone anthropoid coffins) and Assyrian in Iron II (see above; consider also the replacement of Egyptianized anthropoid coffins with Assyrian clay coffins; Stern 2002:256). Against this background one nevertheless detects details that distinguish the material culture (particularly ceramics, as discussed above) in one Transjordanian polity from not only the culture of the other two but also from that of other the southern Levantine polities such as Judah.

To be sure, few of the distinctive features are limited or original to one polity (as they may be found outside of Transjordan). Instead of absolute uniqueness, I would like to stress their possible role in the accentuation of one's distinctive status in relation to its neighbors in east and west of the Jordan which do not share a certain feature. One should be reminded that distinct types of ceramics, due to the close link between pottery and daily life, may possibly served as some sort of identity marker. Another uncertainty has to do with the fact that the

relatively late dates of the pottery types discussed above, which suggests that cultural divergences arose only after, and perhaps as a result of, political divisions. We cannot conclude from these differences that it was cultural distinctions that led to the emergence of distinct political identities. However, it is possible that cultural distinctions in the material culture can serve to reinforce awareness of ethnic as well as political distinctions among these southern Levantine polities.

B. Language and script: "The difference is in the detail"

In Chapter 2 I have discussed, from both the theoretical and the terminological perspectives, the important status of language and script in the formation and reinforcement of a people group's internal unity and the boundary between different groups I also mentioned biblical passages that equates an עם or גוי with a linguistic community (Dan 3:4 et al; Isa 66:18), sometimes with its own script (Esth 1:22). As far as the Transjordanian polities are concerned, two issues stand out with regard to the role of language and script in affecting the cultural identities of the different entities.

First, as in the case of material culture, not only do the three sociocultural groups, i.e. Ammon, Moab and Edom, share a high degree of commonness with regard to the written, and possibly also the oral, forms of their languages, but the three groups as a whole also find themselves in the middle of a broader "southern Levantine" or "Canaanite" koine that extends from the Phoenician city-states to Israel, Judah and the Semiticized Philistine city-states. Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite are commonly classified as members of the Canaanite branch of the Northwest Semitic languages with a considerable amount of common features in vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax that separate the Canaanite

languages from other West Semitic languages such as different varieties of Old Aramaic.[145] Indeed, the Canaanite tongues, including Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite, may very well have constituted a dialect continuum with a high level of mutual intelligibility. From the perspective of scripts, all three scripts ultimately derive from the Old Phoenician script that spread to the Cis-/Transjordan possibly in the 9th century at the latest, with secondary dependence on the Aramaic or Hebrew scripts.

Second, again as with the material culture, differences in the details of the languages and scripts may sometimes serve to distinguish one language from another, although usually in a relative rather than absolute manner. While the three share a number of common features (with Phoenician), some of which distinguish them from the neighboring Judean Hebrew (such as the monophthongization of diphthongs, see Garr 1985:223-25), no two languages among the three are identical, particularly from the morphological and lexical perspectives. Each language seems to have possessed certain features, whether an innovation shared with Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic or a phenomenon inherited from the stock of common Semitic or common Northwest Semitic languages, that serve in effect to separate to a certain degree

[145] For overall features of the Northwest Semitic languages, see Gzella 2011. For common characteristics of the Canaanite languages see e.g. Huehnergard 1991:285-86, Pardee 2008:106, Hackett and Pat-El 2010. Most recently, Pat-El and Wilson-Wright (2018) review the characteristics of Canaanite and other Northwest Semitic languages and maintain that the Canaanite languages and Aramaic share the same ancestor, forming a separate "Arameo-Canaanite" in Northwest Semitic, due to the common features of both groups of languages that are found in Canaanite languages prior to the elevation of Aramaic to the status of an international language. It has been suggested by Garr (1985:227-31) that two linguistic centers exhibiting different features were at work among Northwest Semitic languages in the Iron Age, i.e. Standard Phoenician and Old Aramaic dialects. Cis-/Transjordanian languages displayed shared innovations with both languages to varying degrees, with Hebrew serving possibly as a secondary regional linguistic center which spread certain innovations to Moabite and perhaps Edomite (230). In general, Ammonite, Edomite and Moabite, together with Hebrew, share with Phoenician most of their phonological and morphological innovations, e.g. the definite article ה- instead of א- in Aramaic, the correspondence between the voiced interdental fricative with [z] and the emphatic voiced interdental fricative with ṣ, etc. Garr's analysis (cf. 228-29) shows that Ammonite and Edomite are closer to Phoenician, while Moabite shared certain features with Hebrew (e.g. the nota accusativi את) and Aramaic (e.g. the form of the third person mas. Sing. Suffix on plural nouns [*ôh(u/i)*]. Others have proposed that Ammonite should not be classified as a Canaanite language and connects it with North Arabian (Garbini 1974:159-68) or Old Aramaic (Gzella 2011:431). However, the general lexicon, morphology and phonology of Ammonite suggests that it is indeed more closely related to such typical Canaanite languages as Phoenician and Hebrew. See See Jackson 1983:107-09; Aufrecht 1999a; Ahituv 2008:363. On the affiliation of the dialect in which the Deir ʿAlla inscription was written, see below.

one language from another. For instance, -*īn* as the masculine plural absolute ending in the Mesha Stele is also found in Aramaic, yet in practice this feature sets it apart from Ammonite, Edomite as well as Hebrew. In Ammonite, the relative particle אש (e.g. in Tell Hisban Ostracon No. 1), also used in Standard Phoenician, may have differentiated it from Moabite and Judean Hebrew, which mostly used אשר.[146] The attestation of -ש in Ammonite Seals 49 (ca. late 7th century BCE), if it is established to be Ammonite (Jackson 1983:77), may also have differentiated Ammonite from the other two Transjordanian languages and aligned it with biblical texts usually considered to be of Northern Israelite origin (e.g. Judg 5:7; Song 1:6), although there is no direct evidence of -ש in Hebrew epigraphic sources (Garr 1985:85). Due to the scarcity of texts in Edomite, it is difficult to identify its "diagnostic features". One point that is worth mentioning the verbal root *brk* attested in the Hifil Stem, meaning "to bless" (Ḥorzat ʿuzza, line 2), which, however is expressed with the D-Stem of the same verbal root in contemporary Hebrew[147] and Phoenician. Yet it is difficult in general to distinguish Edomite from Hebrew (cf. Vanderhooft 1995; see summary in Gzella 2011:430-31). In sum, although few features can be exclusively associated with "Moabite", "Ammonite" and "Edomite", since a specific feature is likely to be areal rather than a particular trait one language, and despite the fact that the three languages are not sufficiently attested to allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the relationship among themselves and

[146] However, note that on an incense altar from Khirbet Mudeiyineh at the heart of the land of Moab, אש is used instead of אשר as the relative pronoun. See Ahituv 2008:424.

[147] The root "*brk*" is occasionally attested in the Hifil stem in Hebrew texts discovered from Qumran, e.g. להברך in 1QS 6:5, 6; הברכנו in 1QS 10:6. See DCH II, 271. It must be noted that 1QS 10:6 has variants in which the Piel is used, e.g. 4QS MS B Frgs. 8, 2:4; 4QS MS D Frgs. 4; 1:3, which indicates that the two stems have the same meaning, at least in this context. Elsewhere in 1QS (The Community Rule), the Piel of *brk* is frequently attested, e.g. 2:1; 10; 10:16. It is difficult to speculate on the origin of the Hifil form in Hebrew. It may very well have been a by-form used in certain dialects which is apparently less popular than the Piel form even in this late form of Classical Hebrew. In the biblical time, only the Piel form is attested so far in biblical and epigraphical sources. For the letter, see the greeting "I blessed you to Yahweh" in different texts, e.g. Kuntillet ʿAjrud; Arad 16, lines 2-3. For this formula see Ahituv 2008:115.

with others, texts from the three regions still demonstrate some particular traits that may have served to distinguish speakers/users of one vernacular from those of another.

With regard to the script, scholars have nevertheless recognized the existence of three different "national" scripts with distinct letter forms and details by 700 BCE (Herr 1980:32). Without getting into the details, it can be summarized that the three "national" scripts can be divided into two groups, namely, Ammonite vs. Moabite and Edomite. Ammonite, perhaps due to its northernmost location, originated from the Aramaic script and became independent from the mother script towards the latter half of the 8th century, evolving at a lower speed than Aramaic,until it was replaced in the late 6th century by the Official Aramaic script of the Achaemenid Empire (Herr 1980:21-26; Aufrecht 1999a:167-68). Moabite and Edomite, on the other hand, are closely related to the Hebrew script, with the Mesha Stele serving as the earliest attestation of the Hebrew variety of the alphabet. Moabite and Edomite are differentiated from Ammonite early on, most prominently by the leftward curve of the vertical stroke of such letters as *Kaf, Mem, Nun* and *Peh*. Towards the mid- 8th century, the Moabite and Edomite script began to diverge from the Hebrew script, until separate development emerged in Moabite and Edomite around 700 BCE (Herr 1980:33). Later, characteristics of the contemporary Aramaic script began to influence all the three Transjordanian scripts from the late 7th century on, as Aramaic became an imperial administrative tool. Finally, it is also possible that some of the features shared by the three scripts, e.g. the start-shaped *Aleph*, were the result of mutual borrowing within Transjordan (Herr 1980:33).

In what ways are these possible characteristics of the language and the script related to

the political division between any of the three polities and its neighbors, both east and west of the Jordan? One the one hand, again it should be noted that differences in speech may very well have been "regional", with geographical divisions exerting certain influence (cf. Judg 12:5-6). Yet it is uncertain what kind of role such distinct features of the spoken language ever played in the formation of different political identities.[148] It is unclear whether minor differences in language were deliberately utilized by political and cultural elites to contrast the cultural and ethnic Self with the Other in early Iron II Transjordan, although such an attitude cannot be excluded. Notably, elite Judean returnees aiming for ethnic purification in the Persian Period did call upon the linguistic identity of Judeans (Neh 13:24; see discussion in Chapter 2).[149] Conversely, it has been proposed that the political circumstances in different regions in the Iron Age Levant may have resulted in different linguistic situations. For instance, Garr (1985:235) argues that while Aramaic texts produced by different Aramean polities preserved different dialects, texts excavated from multiple Judean sites seem to reflect the same variety of Canaanite language. Moreover, he suggests that the similarities shared by Moabite and Judean Hebrew might be tentatively ascribed to political links between the two polities dating to the Davidic and Solomonic eras. Plausible as it may be, this proposal cannot be supported by concrete evidence beyond the similarities themselves. Indeed, to what extent political divisions affected the oral language in the Iron Age Transjordan, with regard to the choice of words and the accent, and which social strata may

[148] In the Hebrew Bible we have better examples of this phenomenon. For instance, the Shibboleth/Sibboleth story in Judg 12 suggests that linguistic differences can play a significant role in political conflicts as an identity marker.

[149] In modern nationalistic movements this phenomenon is better attested. See Jovanović's recent study for Montenegrin cultural elites' efforts to highlight certain minor, sometimes inconsistent, features in phonology as well as vocabulary typically used in the Montenegrin region, in order to contrast the Montenegrin national identity with the Serbian identity. By so doing they also aimed to separate the Montenegrin variety of Serbo-Croation from other local tongues as a full-fledged language. It should be noted that, as in the case of ancient the southern Levant, regional features of Montenegrin may very well be found in other ethnic groups in neighboring regions belonging now to other political entities, e.g. Serbs in Herzegovina. See Jovanović 2018.

have been influenced if such a situation existed, are not revealed by the written evidence and can only be speculated on the basis of contemporary analogies.[150]

On the other hand, differences in the written language, particularly the letter forms and the orthography, can more plausibly be attributed to already existing political divisions, as scribal activities in the Iron Age Levant are closely connected the local political institutions (Herr 1980). At least, as Pottorf postulates, political factors such as state-sponsored scribal institutions may have unconsciously facilitated and perpetuated such cultural variations as distinct letter forms which may have originated from regional rather than explicitly ethnic or national sub-types.[151]

To summarize this survey of evidence, it appears that while both the oral and the written forms of the Transjordanian languages share much in common, there are differences in details that may have served to distinguish an Ammonite speaker, for instance, from Moabite, Edomite and Hebrew speakers. In the end, our sources are all written, so that little can be said regarding the accents with which ancients spoke different varieties of Canaanite languages or the exact pronunciation of a phoneme. It can thus only be postulated, on the basis of external evidence (cf. the biblical story in Judg 12:5-6), that a certain degree of self-consciousness of

---

[150] In ancient societies without mass education, mass media and the popular publishing industry, the influence of political division between linguistically similar communities on the speech of the speakers is impossible to trace, even if it occurred. The Book of Nehemiah does not record Nehemiah's solutions to the problem that some Judean children spoke other West Semitic languages, except that he punished some of the Judeans and had them take the oath that they would not marry their children with foreigners. (Neh 13:25) Beyond this it is unknown whether the mixed children were forced to acquire better proficiency in Judean as active speakers (on the issue of active knowledge of Judean in this case, see Machinist 2000a:74), or, on account of the similarity between Judean and Ashdodite, Ammonite and Moabite, to speak with a "better" Judean accent and use the "right" words. It can only be postulated that in the cultural and quasi-political entity of post-exilic Judah in the Achaemenid Empire, the local authorities did have the motivation to stress the purity of speech, so to speak, in order to establish a clearly defined Judean sociocultural identity (combined with religious purification, see v. 26). In contemporary societies, political division certainly contributes to the emergence of different varieties of the oral language. For instance, post-1949 Standard Mandarin in Taiwan and Mainland China are differentiated from each other not only by the written form (syntax and vocabulary, in addition to the standardization or creation of simplified forms of several hundred characters in the Mainland), but also distinct accents (although both are based on the Beijing accent), pronunciations and choice of words in the oral language. Such differences should certainly be ascribed, among others, to the political division of the two sides, which also resulted in the two systems of education and mass media. See Diao 2013 for a survey.

[151] See Pottorf 2017:178, n. 13, for further references.

being indigenous to one region ruled by a certain polity might have been at work in the Transjordan in the Iron Age. In the written language, political divisions may have helped preserve certain distinct forms and techniques, as differences often arose with the consolidation of local political entities and often survived their fall (cf. Herr 1980).

The mutual influence of political factors and linguistic identities is also demonstrated by the following fact: it is the existence of such עמים, or sociocultural entities with a political organization (e.g. Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites), that facilitated ancient and modern awareness of "their" languages (cf. again Neh 13:24, "languages of various peoples", possibly including languages spoken by the Moabite and Ammonite wives mentioned in v.13), however close they may have been to neighboring vernaculars. Conversely, when a local dialectal and scribal tradition lack a clear political affiliation, e.g. in the case of the Balaam text from Deir Alla in the Transjordan,[152], we as modern readers find it difficult even to name the language of the text properly.[153] Much less can one reconstruct regarding the context in which such a text was composed and to what audience it was addressed. In other words, linguistic divisions and political divisions reinforce each other.

C. Religion and "national gods"

Sources about the religion of the Transjordanian polities in the Iron Age primarily derive from both archaeological evidence, such as architecture interpreted as temples or sanctuaries and cultic objects (e.g. figurines), and textual evidence, such as native inscriptions

[152] See Hackett 1980, where she classifies this text as more closely related to South Canaanite languages than to Aramaic, although Aramaic features can be identified. (Hackett 1980: 124) The script is recognized as being based on Aramaic, with new developments that point at the direction that eventually came to be known as the Ammonite script (Hackett 1980: 9-19). Huehnergard considers it a separate branch of Northwest Semitic. Huehnergard 1991. For a recent review of past scholarship on the classification of the text and further evidence about the classification of the text as Canaanite, see Pat-El and Wilson-Wright 2015.

[153] In other words, it is a local dialect but does not occupy the status of a "national" language assigned by some to Hebrew, Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite.

mentioning deities and religious affairs, biblical references to Transjordanian cults and deities (e.g. 1 Kgs 11:7, referring to shrines of Chemosh and Molech/Milkom) and onomostic information in native, biblical and Assyrian sources. Just as in the case of other cultural features, the religion of Iron II Transjordnian polities is also characterized by both shared features and means of differentiation that are based upon mutual traditions common to all southern Levantine or Canaanite cultures.[154] As far as common Canaanite heritage is concerned, the Transjordanian polities may have inherited the concept of a divine council, which is also (partly) manifest both in Late Bronze Age Ugaritic texts (see M. Smith 2001:41-53) and Iron Age Phoenician[155] and Hebrew texts.[156] This is possibly reflected by the phrase "*bn ʔlm*" ("son or sons of gods") in the Amman Citadel Inscription (Ahituv 2008: 357, line 6), although it cannot be determined whether the singular or the plural form of *bn* (son) is intended. In addition, the plural form "gods" (*ʔlhn*) occurs as the subject of a plural verb (*ʔmrw*) in a 7th-century Moabite legal document regarding the ownership of the chairmanship of the Marzeah banquet and other properties, in which they decide in favor of one party. Ahituv argues that plurality is not necessarily intended here, that is, "gods" here may function as "plural of majesty".[157] However, the most straightforward interpretation is indeed that a group of gods are making a legal decision as judges. The plural form "gods" (*ʔlhn*) is also attested several times in the Balaam Text from Deir Alla, once in direct

[154] For general features of the Canaanite religion, particularly the contrast between the official, sacrificial religion and the household and personal faiths, see Aufrecht 1999b:153-54.

[155] E.g. Karatepe 3:19.

[156] Ps 29:1; 82; 89:7; possibly Deut 32:8 (see Chapter 2). Possible traces in Gen 1:26; 3:22.

[157] Ahituv cites a number of biblical texts where אלהים is used together with the plural form of a verb or an adjective, while referring likely to a single deity. Some of his examples are convincing, e.g. Josh 24:19 (תֹּוכְלוּ לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָֹה כִּי־אֱלֹהִים קְדֹשִׁים הֻוּא) and 2 Sam 17:26, 36 (אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים). In other examples, however, the plural form "gods" may be intended, e.g. 1 Kgs 19:2 (words of Jezebel, who, not being a devour Yahwist, may very well be speaking of "gods"). Particularly interesting is the Exod 22:8, in which "אלהים" or "האלהים" serve as arbiters of legal cases. The definite article before "god/gods" in v.7 and v.8 (עַד הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֹא דְּבַר־שְׁנֵיהֶם) as well as the plural verb used in v. 8 (אֲשֶׁר יַרְשִׁיעֵן אֱלֹהִים; the one whom gods consider guilty) seem to favor the understanding of "god" in this context as a common noun in plural. The Moabite Marzeah Papyrus, notably, also concerns a legal context where gods serve as arbiters.

reference to a divine council: "gods gathered together and the 'Shaddayin'[158] took their places in the assembly" (*ʾl[h]n ʾtyḥdw wnṣbw šdyn mwʿd*, combination1, lines 5-6; cf. Ps 82:1, see Hackett 1980:39-40). Here the plurality of gods is obviously intended. In this text El (combination 1, line 2; combination 2, line 6) is the only deity that is named among the "gods", which indicates his position as the president of the divine council. In sum, direct and indirect references to a divine council have been attested at different locations in the Transjordan in the Iron Age, which indicates that the idea of the divine council may have served as the foundation of Iron Age Canaanite religion in this region, as perhaps also in Israel and Judah.

Another common feature emerging from this Late Bronze Levantine background is the elevation of a male warrior god, within the divine council, sometimes replacing the original role of El that presided over the council as the supreme god and eventually merging with El as one and the same deity (on Yahweh and El, see e.g. Cross 1973a:44-76, M. Smith 2001:142-45). This process, attested in Ugaritic mythology (with Baal as the new supreme god) and plausibly reconstructed in the case of Yahwism and Israel/Judah (M. Smith 2001:143-44), perhaps saw parallel developments also in the religious history of other Iron Age ethnic or "national" groups in the southern Levant. This common process, however, results in divergence and differentiation, as different polities apparently elevated different gods as the protector, warrior and supreme god of the people, who is accompanied by his divine consort.[159] In Israel, we encounter "Yahweh (of Samaria, of Teman) and his Asherah"

[158] Possibly referring to the deities that gathered in the assembly of El (cf. "oracle of El", *mśʾ ʾl*, combination 1, line 2). For the relationship between this term with El Shadday, see Hackett 1980:85-89.

[159] The goddess may have been Athirat, the consort of El, who was the original supreme god. In the case of Israel, with the merger of El and the "national" god Yahweh, the goddess became the local deity's wife. See M. Smith 2001:45, 47. On the debate about whether Asherah was considered a goddess or just a cultic object in ancient Israel, see M. Smith 2001:73-74.

in epigraphical sources (for the inscription see Ahituv 2008:315-20; for a detailed study see Hadley 2000), although biblical accounts rail against the legitimacy and necessity of a divine consort (M. Smith 2001:47-53).

Such parallel processes may also have occurred in the Transjordan in the same period. In Moab, although there is no direct evidence for the remnant of an El-led divine council,[160] El is still attested in onomastic sources as a theophoric element.[161] The identification of El and the Moabite god Chemosh in this period is perhaps demonstrated by the patronymic "*kmšʾl*" in a Moabite seal dated to the 8th or 7th centuries by Timm (Timm 1989:168, o. 3). Although Timm asserts that the name should be translated as "Chemosh is god" rather than "Chemosh is El" (Timm 1989:170, n.19), the inherently ambiguous meaning of the word renders either interpretation possible.[162] With regard to the divine consort, the evidence in Moab is again unclear. Although Ashtar-Chemosh mentioned in the Mesha Stele (line 17) is often understood as Chemosh's consort, two problems arise: 1. Ashtar is to be differentiated from Ashtart/Ashtoret, and Ashtar was a male deity in Canaanite traditions[163]; 2. even if the goddess Ashtart/Ashtoret is meant and even if she is here considered Chemosh's consort, the

---

In other cases, the goddess can hardly be identified with Athirat, but possibly with Athtart/Astarte. See below.

[160] Note the reference to "gods" in the divine verdict mentioned above.

[161] E.g. *ʾlšmʿ* in the inscription on an incense stand, Ahituv 2008:423-26. The name *ʾmrʾl* on a seal (ca. 750 BCE) (Timm 1989:189-90, no. 10; Avigad and Sass 1997:376, no. 1019); *ʾltmk bn ʿmsʾl* (7th century BCE) (Timm 1989:229, no. 29), considered Moabite because of the letter forms. Timm 1989:230. Admittedly, "El" as a theophoric element, either as "god" or "El", is not widely attested.

[162] One may surmise that in by the 8th century the syncretization of El and Chemosh, if it occurred, should have been completed, so that El cannot denote "El". However, since El is still a widespread theophoric element in the neighboring Ammonite polity (again, the translation is ambiguous; see below), it cannot be excluded that El was still understood an active divine figure who is also known as Chemosh. For structure and meaning of "equating" names ("theophoric element A is theophoric element B": e.g. *bʿlyh* in 1 Chr 12:6), see Albertz and Schmitt 2012:348-50.

[163] Athtar and Athtart are two different deities in Ugaritic texts. While Athtart is a goddess (later equated with Astart, biblical עַשְׁתֹּרֶת, see Wyatt 1999:109-114), Athtar/Ashtar is a male god of astral background. (see M. Smith 2001:62) In the Baal Cycle, Athtar/Ashtar is apparently one of El's sons, supported by El as Baal's competitor. (M. Smith. 136-37) Can Ashtar-Chemosh in the Mesha Stele be a syncretized god of the two male deities? Unfortunately, we do not have much evidence for the presence of a male Ashtar in Iron II Levant. Ahituv mentions a Christian source about Ashtar as a male god in South Arabia in the 5th century CE (Ahituv 2008:409), but his piece of evidence is much removed temporally and geographically from 9th century Moab. Weippert suggests that Ashtar-Chemosh may be related to the goddess ʿAttāar-šamin who was worshiped in the Oasis of Duma in north Arabia. Weippert 1973:44ff. Cited in Chamaza 2005: 45, n. 287. Furthermore, a certain pair "Shagar and Ashtar" is attested in the Balaam Text (Combination 1, line 14), which mayb be related to fertility and denote "offspring" in this context. The gender of the deity here is not specified. (Ahituv 2008:453)

process of Chemosh's elevation as the "national" god differs from Yahweh in Israel in that his consort is not Asherah (Athirat in Ugarit), El's consort, but a warrior goddess from a lower tier in the divine assembly.[164] Therefore, the reference to Ashtar-Chemosh cannot serve as unequivocal evidence for a ruling divine couple in Moab. However, what is certain is the elevated status of Chemosh in Moab (like Baal's elevation in Ugarit and Phoenicia[165]) as a "national" god, which is so widely attested in epigraphical sources.[166]

In Ammon, there is little evidence for the remnant of a divine assembly led by El.[167] However, the high frequency at which El is attested as the theophoric element in Ammonite names (including royal names[168]) has prompted scholars to regard El as the "national" deity of Ammon.[169] If this is the case, we would have an example of not only the survival of the cult of El into Iron Age II (as in Moab, Israel and Judah), but also the transformation of the supreme god of the divine council in the Canaanite cultural domain into a deity corresponding to a specific sociocultural and political community, without being replaced by

---

[164] The relationship between Baal and Athtart/Ashtoret/Astarte is a complex issue. In Ugaritic sources, there is no direct evidence that Athtart is Baal's consort (Wyatt 1999:110), although there is a title associating the two: *ʿṯtrt šm bʿl*. Scholars have interpreted this title as evidence that Athtart was considered as Baal's name-hypostasis. Later traditions in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Judg 2:13) and Hellenistic Phoenician sources (Philo of Byblos) also suggest strong links between the two deities. Philo reports that Baal and Astarte ruled the land together with the consent of El, which prompted Olyan to conclude that the goddess was indeed Baal's divine queen. Olyan 1988:48. It is uncertain whether this theology was already at work in early Iron II.

[165] This is not to suggest that Baal was a "national" god in Ugarit or Phoenicia. In addition to the issue of applying the term "nation" to city-state or city-state systems, where the extent of the political identity does not overlap that of the cultural identity, one has to account for the fact that the worship of Baal was not restricted to one specific cultural and political group. Not only was the worship of Baal pervasive in the lands inhabited by Canaanites, but it was borrowed by the Egyptians since the Middle Kingdom. See W. Herrmann 1999a:133. However, it is undeniable that Baal was elevated to the status of the supreme god according to mythological sources from Ugarit. In Iron Age Phoenicia, although Baal may have functioned as the most prominent male god in the pantheon, the situation is complicated by the emergence of local patron deities of each city-state since the 10th century, see Edrey 2018:177. I would only like to stress that Baal was elevated in the pantheon, partly replacing El, in Canaanite and Phoenician cultures. To what extent it served as an identity marker, if at all, is unclear.

[166] In the Mesha Stele Chemosh is Moab's warrior protector god who fights on his land's behalf. Chemosh is also attested as the theophoric elements in royal names (in Moabite and Neo-Assyrian inscriptions; Chamaza 2005:202) and in other names on Moabite seals (Timm 1989: 162-84; nos. 1-7; plus nos. 1009, 1031, 1035 in Avigad and Sass 1997) Furthermore, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, Chemosh is also attested in the Hebrew Bible as god of Moab (Num 21:29; Judg 11:24; Jer 48:7, 46). In Num 21:29 and Jer 48:7

[167] On "son(s) of god" in the Amman Citadel Inscription, see above.

[168] E.g. ^{m}*bu-du*-DINGIR in RINAP 3.1 Sennacherib 4:37, *hṣlʾl* in th Tell Siran Bronze Bottle Inscription line 2.

[169] Aufrecht argues that it is hard to see why Milkom was seen as god of Ammon, for the majority of personal names contain "El" as the theophoric component, although other gods, including Milkom, are also attested. See Aufrecht 1999b:157, n. 25. Daviau and Dion also identify the Atef-crowned (Egyptian style) divine figure dicovered in Tell Jawa with El, on account of onomastic data. Daviau and Dion 1994:164.

or identified with a younger warrior god (like Yahweh and presumably Chemosh). This situation, however, seems to be contradicted by the reference to Molech/Milkom as god of the Ammonites in the Hebrew Bible (Molech[170]: 1 Kgs 11:7; Milkom: 1 Kgs 11:5; 33; 2 Kgs 23:13). One solution to this problem is to suggest that "Milkom" (based on *mlk*, possibly with the archaic *-um* case ending) served as an epithet of El.[171] For W. Herrmann, however, the "El" element in these names should be interpreted as a common noun referring to none other than Milkom (W. Herrmann 1999b:277). Likewise, Stern suggests that El is a generic term for the Ammonite national deity Milkom, who is also identified with Adon and Baal, the latter of whom is attested in the end-of- 6th century Amman Theater Inscription which may have mentioned the building of a temple of Baal (Stern 2002:248)[172]. As far as the divine couple is concerned, we hear about statuettes and clay figurines as well as depictions on Ammonite seals that display a naked goddess supporting her own breasts, which Stern identifies with the Astarte/Ashtoret/Ashtart of Milkom (Stern 2002:248). The identification, one should note, is not supported by textual evidence. In sum, in Ammon El may have been preserved and transformed into a national deity of the polity also known by his epithet Milkom. A different line of development, namely, that Milkom, like Chemosh, Yahweh and Baal, was originally a warrior god later elevated as the divine king of the council and identified with El, cannot be excluded, although the limited presence of Milkom in the onomasticon remains unexplained (Aufrecht 1999b:157, n.26, with 6 names containing Milkom).

---

[170] Molech is primarily depicted as a god to whom some Israelites sacrificed their children. In most cases, e.g. Lev 18:21; 20:2; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35, it is not explicitly connected with Ammon.

[171] Cf. Ps 47:7: "For God (אֱלֹהִים) is the king (מלך) over all the earth (Psa 47:7 TNK)." For this interpretation see also Daviau and Dion 1994:164, n. 17. Burnett 2009.

[172] Baal as a theoporic element occurs in at least 6 names found at Ammonite sites. See Aufrehct 1999b: 156, n. 19.

In Edom, likewise, direct evidence of an El-led or any divine council is largely absent. Dearman disagrees with the observation that Qos dominated the Edomite pantheon from the late Assyrian to the Persian periods, as a particular pantheon unique to Edom was not attested in this period[173] (Dearman 1995:128-31). One can only find a limited number of attestations of "El" in Edomite onomastic data, where it is again uncertain whether it is to be treated as the generic term for deity or a proper noun.[174] The deity Baal is not commonly attested.[175] If any remnant of a divine council is lacking, can we identify traces of a divine couple? Dearman suggests that the three horned "goddess" discovered among the cultic materials at Qitmit in the Negev may represent the Edomite version of Astarte/Ashtaroth/Athtart, but it is difficult to ascertain, in the first place, which male figurine represents Qos (Dearman 1995:131; see also Bartlett 1989:194). At any rate, there is no textual evidence for the existence of a divine consort of Qos. What is certain, as in the case of Ammon and Moab, is that a patron deity representing and corresponding to the sociopolitical entity of Edom has been widely attested in Edomite and Assyrian onomastic sources,[176] although the Hebrew Bible surprisingly contains no explicit allusion to the name of the Edomite deity.[177] In

---

[173] Dearman notes that "gods of Edom" is mentioned in 2 Chr 25:20, to which one may add the "god of the Sons of Seir" mentioned earlier in the same narrative (v.14), where it is more certain that phrase refers to a group of gods rather than one god (unlike 1 לְכְמוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב Kgs 11:33), for Amaziah is said to have bowed down to "them" and made sacrifice to "them". (וַיַּעֲמִידֵם לוֹ לֵאלֹהִים וְלִפְנֵיהֶם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְלָהֶם יְקַטֵּר). However, the phrases could simply have meant divine figurines taken as booty from Edom, without special collective correspondence to Edom as a group.

[174] E.g. *bʿzrʾl* on seal No. 1052 and *[qw]ʿsʾm* (son of) *lʿdʾl* on No. 1056 in Avigad and Sass 1997.

[175] On one Edomite seal, an individual is titled "servant of the Baal". It is unclear whether this title should be interpreted as "the lord", that is, a human being, or a deity. See Avigad and Sass 1997, No. 1052.

[176] Bartlett argues that the status of Qos in the Edomite polity remains uncertain, noting, however, that the divine name was incorporated into Edomite royal names as the theophoric element in the mid- 8th century at the latest (Qaušmalaka king of Edom is attested in Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions). In addition to Qaušmakala and Qaušgabri in Assyrian sources, Bartlett also lists 21 names containing "Qos" in Edomite seals found in Edom and southern Judah and a few names in Achaemenid cuneiform sources. Bartlett 1989:204-05. Scholars have also suggested that Qos may have been the god of the North Arabian tribes (Bartlett 1989, Dearman 1995) who was later borrowed by the West Semitic majority of the residents of Iron II Edom (Knauf 1992b:49).

[177] Note the personal name "Barqos" (Ezra 2:53; Neh 7:55). On the relationship between Yahweh and Seir and, furthermore, the possibility that the cult of Yahweh is related to the cult of Qos, see the discussion in Bartlett 1989:194-200. In Nah 1:1, the prophet is called "the Elkoshite" (הָאֶלְקֹשִׁי), which has been interpreted by some commentators as "Qos is God", perhaps a location to be sought in southern Judah near the border with Edom (see J. J. M. Roberts 1991:41 for further references). It should be noted that in Edomite sources, the name is almost always spelled with ס rather than ש, while the ו is always present, suggesting that the diphthong may have been retained in the name (cf. Also the Akkadian transliteration of

addition to the onomosticon, in the Ḥorvat ʿuzza inscription the sender of the message writes that "and I have blessed you to Qos" (*whbrktk lqws*, lines 2-3), which also indicates the central status of Qos in Edom (Cross 1983:36-37; Dearman 1995:129). Such a situation is doubtless closely related to the formation of a separate Edomite cultural and political identity, although it is again unclear whether religious identity precedes political centralization. Qos as a deity is attested already in Egyptian texts dating prior to the formation of an Edomite polity in Transjordan, in lists of *Shasu* clans in the 13th century BCE (Knauf 1999:674-75). A stronger correlation between Qos and an Edomite polity may have been reinforced after Edom overthrew Judean domination[178] (1 Kgs 22:48; 2 Kgs 8:20, 22; 2 Chr 21:8, 10; but cf. 2 Kgs 3:9ff.[179]).

In sum, while religion and "national" gods constitute the strongest evidence for cultural division between the three Transjordanian polities with a possible political impact, it should not be neglected that even in this respect the three polities have much in common among themselves and with their southern Levantine neighbors. This is particularly true of possible traces of a divine council in the Transjordan (Deir Alla, Moab, cf. the Hebrew Bible) and at

---

Edomite names in the footnote above). Even if the connection of this toponym with Qos is correct, it does not change the fact that the Hebrew Bible does not refer to a deity called Qos or any other deity as the "national" deity of Edom (Knauf 1999:677). References to gods of Seir do not contain the names of the deities (cf. 2 Chr 25:14, 20)

[178] Edom may have possessed certain affinities with Israel and Judah (cf. Edom as Israel's brother, cf. Deut 23:8, perhaps in the religious sense; cf. also Yahweh's connection with Seir in Deut 32:2, Judg 5:4 and Hab 3:3, etc.) and it has been proposed that the Edomites may have worship Yahweh. Bartlett even suggests that Yahweh fell out of favor as the Edomites knew that this was their oppressors' god, choosing Qos as their god (Bartlett 1989:199). This speculation, it must be pointed out, is not based on concrete evidence.

[179] 1 Kgs 22:48 suggests that Edom was then administered by a Judean deputy (וּמֶלֶךְ אֵין בָּאֲדוֹם נִצָּב מֶלֶךְ), which situation only changed under Joram's reign when Edom rebelled against Judean rule (2 Kgs 8:20). However, in 2 Kgs 3:9, when Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah, the Israelite and the Judean kings went on campaign with an unnamed Edomite king. According to Tadmor and Cogan (1988:44-45), it is possible that the king in 2 Kgs 3:9 is no one else but the deputy mentioned in 1 Kgs 22:48, for a governor established by an overlord may sometimes be called a king, as in the Tell Fekheriye inscription, where the governor of Gozan calls himself a king in the Aramaic version of the Akkdo-Aramaic bilingual inscription. A major difference between that inscription and the Book of Kings, however, is the fact that the governor of Gozan calls himself a king in an inscription written in the local language, possibly targeted on a local audience. The Book of Kings, in contrast, is a Judean record and one wonders if the Judean author would readily call a Judean vassal "king" (note that in 1 Kgs 22:48 it is emphasized that "there was no king in Edom"). One possible solution to this problem is to argue that the two accounts were somehow written by two different authors who applied different terminologies. In any case, the fact that Edom joined the Israelite-Judean alliance possibly reflects its political allegiance to Judah.

least the survival of an El cult,[180] as well as the presence of a divine couple as the chief deities of the polity. Parallel processes of the elevation of a male deity as a patron of the particular polity took place in all three polities as in Israel/Judah. It is against this common background that the distinguishing effect of distinct deities is better appreciated.

D. (Self-) designation and kinship ideology

The names that are employed to refer to cultural-political entities in contemporary sources usually illuminate ancient conceptions of the scope and nature of a certain identity, and the way it is constructed and interpreted. Does the name of the polity refer to the region or the people? Or both? Does the name take the form of an eponym of a common ancestor? Does it draw on kinship and household idioms? These questions are particularly relevant in a discussion on the Transjordanian polities, which are considered by some scholars (cf. Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001) as typical tribal kingdoms built at least in part on kinship ideologies. In these regard, note the connections that have been made between such tribal groups in the Transjordan of the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age II (cf. E.g. Kitchen 1992; Knauf 1992:49; LaBianca 1999; Younker 1999). In the following section I will investigate the (self-)designations of the Transjordanian peoples. Beyond proper names and kinship terms in the narrow sense, I will also survey under what circumstances these Transjordanian polities are referred to as "עם", "גוי" and similar terms.

(1) Sons of Ammon

Known widely as "Sons of Ammon", this (self-)designation of the ancient Ammonites,

[180] M. Smith has observed that in Iron Age Transjordan "(A)lthough state cults of the first millennium Levant had patron deities other than El, this situation did not issue in the immediate loss of El's cult. After all, Baal was the dynastic god of Ugarit, but this fact did not result in the loss of El's cult at Ugarit. The evidence for El's cult in the first millennium is ambiguous, as van der Toorn observes, but this difficulty of evidence hardly settles the issue. Indeed, the apparent evidence for El in epigraphic South Arabian texts36 might also warrant caution against dismissing first-millennium Levantine evidence for the cult of El" (M. Smith 2001:139).

reminiscent of the sociopolitical structure of tribal polities, best illustrates the concept of kinship as a foundation of shared cultural identity of a political community. The name "Sons of Ammon" is attested in native sources such as the inscription on a bronze bottle from Tell Siran in Amman (ca. 600 BCE on paleographical grounds, see Cross 1973b), where the names of three generations of Ammonite rulers are given, all titled "king of the Sons of Ammon" (Ahituv 2008:363). It is interesting to note that the kinship element "sons" appears to be an inseparable component of the proper name, which we will see in external sources as well. This is in sharp contrast to the application of kinship terms in titles of Aramean rulers in Old Aramaic inscriptions from the 9th and 8th centuries.[181] "Sons of Ammon" is also attested in other Levantine documents, e.g. in a Moabite royal inscription (dated to the mid- 8th century BCE, Ahituv 2008:419) that mentions "captives of Sons of Ammon". That "Sons of Ammon" rather than "Ammon" alone is understood as the designation of Moab's northern neighbor as an entity is demonstrated by the fact that "Sons of Ammon" is preceded by the third person singular form of verbs in the same inscription,[182] either to be interpreted as a collective noun, i.e. "the Ammonites" (Ahituv 2008:423) or perhaps to be considered as supporting the understanding of "Sons of Ammon" as the name of the polity (rather than the residents). In addition, in the Hebrew Bible, "Sons of Ammon" serves as the standard designation of the Ammonite polity, occurring over 100 times, with a high frequency in the Deuteronomistic History and Jeremiah. Only once in the MT do we find "Ammon" alone, i.e

[181] In Aramaic inscriptions, rulers of Aramean polities can be designated as "son of" a tribal name (e.g. "Bar Gush" in Zakir Inscription, A 5), king of "Aram" (for the debate on provenance of the Barhadad inscription, see Chapter 4; also Zakir inscription, a 4) or king of the polity (usually named after the capital city). king of "Sons of..." is not attested. In the Sefire Treaty, although "Sons of Gush" are listed as one of the parties on Mati^{ʿ}el's side entering the treaty, the ruler himself is invariably called "king of Arpad" but never "king of Sons of Gush". Sefire I B line 3. See chapter 4.

[182] "*wyrʾ bnyʿmn ky ḥlh bkl...*", line 5. That *ḥlh* is in the singular is certain. With regard to *rʾh*, the lack of mater lectionis at the end of the word, which is attested elsewhere in this (e.g. *ky*) and other Moabite inscriptions (*ʿśw lkm* in Mesha Stele, line 24), suggests that the form is also singular. In the Hebrew Bible, however, "Sons of Ammon" can serve as a plural noun taking verbs in the plural form, e.g. 2 Sam 10:6=1 Chr 19:6; 2 Sam 10:8=1 Chr 19:8.

1 Sam 11:11, although some manuscripts as well as Greek, Latin, Aramaic and Syriac translations insert "Sons of" before "Ammon" (see specific references in *BHS*). As in Ammonite sources, the Hebrew Bible also uses "Sons of Ammon" in such phrases as "Land of the Sons of Ammon",[183] "territory/border of the Sons of Ammon",[184] "Rabbah of the Sons of Ammon" (the capital of Ammon),[185] "king of the Sons of Ammon"[186] and "God of the Sons of Ammon".[187] In sum, the vast majority of references to the Ammonite people and polity in native and foreign sources use the appellation "Sons of Ammon".

The most important evidence proving the integration of the household elements into the designation of the polity is Assyrian sources that identify the Ammonite polity primarily as "House of Ammon" (Bīt Ammana/Bīt Ammān[188]), a name not attested in the Hebrew Bible or Transjordanian sources. This form may have been the Assyrian reinterpretation of the native West Semitic name "Sons of Ammon" on the basis of its knowledge of similarly named Aramean political societies. However, the sociopolitical structure behind the Ammonite tradition cannot be equated with the Aramean pattern, as shown at least partly by the differently formed royal titles of each tradition. The native name is preserved in an interesting reference to the tributes from emissaries of "^{KUR}*ba-an-am-ma-na-a-a*" (the *nisbe* form; SAA 01 110, r 7=SAA 19 159, r 7) , which curiously reflects the singular form of "Son of Ammon", while West Semitic sources use the plural "Sons of Ammon". Notably, it is not translated into "DUMU/*mar*" plus the eponymic name as in the case of Aramean polities. There is also one

[183] Num 22:5; Deut 2:19, 37; Josh 13:25; Judg 11:15; 2 Sam 10:2; 1 Chr. 19:2; 20:1.
[184] Num 21:24; Deut 3:16; Josh 12:2; 13:10.
[185] Deut 3:11; 2 Sam 12:26; 17:27; Jer 49:2; Ezek 21:25.
[186] Judg 11:12ff, 28; 1 Sam 12:12; 10:1; 1 Chr. 19:1; 27:5; Jer 27:3; 40:14.
[187] Judg 10:6; 1 Kgs 11:33.
[188] With *nisbe*/gentilic forms. Both the original form and the *nisbe* are usually preceded by KUR, less frequently by URU. For a summary of Assyrian designations of selected Levantine polities including the Transjordanian ones based on Bagg 2007, see Chart 6.1 in Chapter 6.

uncertain case of "^{KUR}*a-ma-na-a*" without the household/kinship element[189] (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2, ii 95).

While "Sons of Ammon" appears to be the full and predominant name of the polity in native and external sources since the 8th century BCE, the name "Ammon" alone is also attested in indirect forms. The eponym in the "sons of" structure in the West Semitic traditions, e.g. the Hebrew Bible, usually refers to a common ancestor who need not have been a political ruler.[190] In reality, this eponym may have been a geographical concept simultaneously functioning as the descriptor of a people (cf. "Israel" and "Judah" in the Hebrew Bible). In the case of "Ammon", we have only limited evidence for the independent use of the name (without "sons of") as a geographical and political term. An interesting example is rarely attested gentilic/*nisbe* of Ammon (עַמּוֹנִי).[191] Among these attestations, 1 Sam 11:1 and 2 are particularly noteworthy, as "הָעַמּוֹנִי" here apparently serves as the title of Nahash, ruler of Ammon ("Nahash the Ammonite"), who is known as "Nahash, king of the Sons of Ammon" in 1 Sam 12:12.[192] If this interpretation is correct, then we have a rare case of the *nisbe* functioning as a foreign ruler's title, a phenomenon widely attested in 9th- and 8th- century (and less extensively in 7th- century) Assyrian inscriptions and state correspondence (more in Chapter 5).

---

[189] Ba'asa, son of Ruhubu, the Ammonite, in the list of kings that resisted Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar. Cross 1973b understands him as a king of Ammon, despite the rather unusual spelling of the name, with only one *m* (apparently the only such occurrence, Bagg 2007:46-48) and no "House of...". Alternatively, he could have been a member of a Rehobite dynasty (compare sons of Rehob in 2 Sam 8:3, 12) called Amana. See discussion and further reference in Na'aman 2006a:26.

[190] Ammon itself does not occur as a personal name in the biblical narratives. In the etiological account about the origin of Moab and Sons of Ammon, the son of Lot with his elder daughter is called conveniently Moab, so that the Moabites are considered his descendants (Gen 19:37). However, the son of Lot with his younger daughter, who is the ancestor of the Ammonites, are not simply called "Ammon" but instead "Ben Ammi", perhaps due to the need for etymological effect.

[191] Deut 2:20, 23:4; 1 Sam 11:1-2; 1 Kgs 11:5; 1 Chr 11:39, 2 Chr 20:1; 26:8 and Neh 2:19, 4:1.

[192] W. Dietrich comments that the lack of royal title perhaps indicates that Nahash was not yet the king of the Ammonites. However, the very next time Nahash is mentioned (1 Sam 12:12), he is already called "king of the Ammonites". There is no reason to assume that he had not become the king when he launched the attack at Jabesh-Gilead. W. Dietrich 2010:504.

Finally, "Sons of Ammon" can occasionally be described as an עם or גוי affiliated with a certain deity who served as its identity marker (see the discussions in Chapter 2 regarding the attributes of an עם and גוי). For instance, in Jer 49:1, "Sons of Ammon" are designated as the people of Milkom.

(2) Moab

I have already noted that Moab as a geographical concept has been attested in Late Bronze a Egyptian sources. (see above) In Iron II, the proper name Moab is found in native Moabite sources (as mʔb), biblical texts (as מאב ,מואב) as well as Assyrian sources ($^{KUR/URU}$*Mā'aba/Mu'aba*; $^{KUR/URU/LÚ}$*Mā'abaya*, for a list see Bagg 2007:161-62).[193] In Moabite and Hebrew sources the proper name serves both as the geographical-political designation of the region controlled by a Moabite polity and as the sociocultural concept of the Moabite people. As in the case of Israel, Judah and other proper names, it is not always clear whether the term "Moab" refers to the entity "Moab" or the "Moabites". Strictly speaking, such phrases as "Land of Moab",[194] "territory/border of Moab"[195], "god of Moab"[196] and "king of Moab"[197] can be interpreted as the land, territory and ruler either of a geographical entity or of a group of people.[198] In comparison with Ammon, kinship terms are much less frequently attested in designations of Moab. There is only one reference to "sons of

[193] See above for early attestations of the name Moab in Late Bronze Age Egyptian sources.
[194] Deut 1:5; 28:69; 32:49; 34:5f; Judg 11:15, 18; 48:24, 33.
[195] Num 21:13, 15; 33:44; Deut 2:18; Judg 11:18; Isa 15:8
[196] Judg 10:6; 1 Kgs 11:33.
[197] Num 21:26; 22:10; 23:7; Josh 24:9; Judg 3:12, 14f, 17; Judg 11:17, 25; 1 Sam 12:9; 22:3f; 2 Kgs 3:4f, 7, 26; Jer 27:3; Mic 6:5.
[198] In some cases Moab functions as an entity, e.g. "On that day Moab submitted to Israel" (וַתִּכָּנַע מוֹאָב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא תַּחַת יַד יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתִּשְׁקֹ Judg 3:30; verb in the feminine singular form; cf. Also 2 Sam 8:2); "Moab rebelled against Israel (2 Kgs 1:1 TNK)" (וַיִּפְשַׁע מוֹאָב בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל 2 Kgs 1:1; verb in the masculine singular form). In other cases, however, "Moab" is best to be translated as "Moabites", with verbs in the plural form, for instance 2 Kgs 3:22: "The Moabites saw the water from the opposite side, as red as blood" (וַיִּרְאוּ מוֹאָב מִנֶּגֶד אֶת־הַמַּיִם אֲדֻמִּים כַּדָּם 2 Kgs 3:22; see also vv. 21, 24).

Moab" (1 Chr 20:1[199]) and no reference to "House of Moab" in biblical sources. Finally, Moab is also designated with the West Semitic terms closest in meaning to "a national group" in the Hebrew Bible, namely, עם and גוי.[200]

(3) Seir, Edom and Esau

The term Seir, as I noted above, may have existed already in the Late Bronze Age (see above). The Iron II polity of Edom is normally known both as "Edom" and "Seir" in the Hebrew Bible, while in some prophetic texts "Esau" serves as the poetic name for the same region and entity.[201] In Assyrian sources, the name is transliterated as "$^{KUR/URU}$*udūmu*; ^{KUR}*udūmaya*" (for a list see Bagg 2007:265-66). As in the case of Moab, the term Edom can also refer both to a geographical-political concept and to its residents. For instance, in 2 Kgs 8:20, 22 (=2 Chr 21:8, 10), when Edom is reported to have "rebelled" against Judah, the name Edom is preceded by the 3rd person masculine singular form of the verb, apparently treated as a political entity as a whole in the region of Edom.[202] Much less frequently, Edom can denote "the Edomites" in the plural sense, e.g. 2 Kgs 14:7: "He defeated ten thousand (עֲשֶׂרֶת אֲלָפִים) Edomites (הוּא־הִכָּה אֶת־אֱדוֹם) in the Valley of Salt (2 Kgs 14:7 TNK)". Here the word "Edom" is followed by a numeral, as if it is a countable concept which is best understood as "the Edomite people".[203] In addition, in the Hebrew Bible the *nisbe*/gentilic of Edom is also attested.[204] One can propose, on account of these examples, that Edom

---

[199] Textual, commentary

[200] Moab is equated with "the people of Chemosh": אוֹי־לְךָ מוֹאָב אָבַדְתָּ עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ (Num 21:29=Jer 48:46) and listed as one of the "גו'ים" from which David obtained booty (1 Crhon. 18:11). Also, Moab twice appears in Jeremiah's oracle against Moab as an entity that will be so decisively weakened that it will stop being recognized as a people/nation: אֵין עוֹד תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן חָשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ רָעָה לְכוּ וְנַכְרִיתֶנָּה מִגּוֹי (Jer 48:2); וְנִשְׁמַד מוֹאָב מֵעָם כִּי עַל־יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל (v. 42) In the Mesha Stele, Mesha recounts that he commanded "all the people" (*kl hʿm*) to build cisterns. But here the term עם apparently refers to a much more limited group of people, i.e. people, possibly all the population of the newly conquered town of Yahaṣ. Cf. Ahituv 2008:414.

[201] Jer 49:8, 10; Obad 1:6, 8, 9, 18, 19, 21; Mal 1:3.

[202] cf. also Num 20:20, 21, 24:18; and Jer 49:17; Mal 1:4, verbs in feminine singular.

[203] "Sons of Seir" in 2 Chr 25:11.

[204] Deut 23:8; Josh 19:33; 1 Sam 21:8; 22:9, 18, 22; 1 Kgs 11:14; Ps 52:2 (singular); 2 Kgs 16:6; 2 Chr. 25:14; 28:17

functions as a geographical-political concept in its entirety, referring to the so-named Iron II political entity and its people in southern Transjordan.[205] Finally, the other widely attested name of the broader Edomite region is Seir, which is primarily the name of a mountain in southern Levant, a region considered to be inhabited by the Edomites (Gen 36:8, 9), while "Sons of Seir" are reported to be "inhabitants of the land" (Gen 36:20). According to Bartlett (1992:14), the region Seir is "associated in the biblical texts with the land south of Judah, between Mount Horeb and Kadesh-barnea, and with the regions of Sinai and Para, west of the Wadi Arabah", i.e. the Western part of the Iron II polity of Edom. The personified namesake of the region Seir (the person Seir in Gen 36:20), which initially was the inhabited by the Horites[206] (cf. Gen 14:6) whom the "Sons of Esau" dispossessed and annihilated according to Deuteronomy (Deut 2:12, 22), is also connected with Esau's descendants (Edomites in the narrower sense) through intermarriages in the genealogical list composed by the author of Gen 36 (vv. 20, 21, 30; see Bartlett 1965, 1989:94-102; 1992:14)。

The constructed genealogical connections among branches of "Edomites" in Gen 36 highlights the biblical author's perception of the Edomite polity as a kinship-based entity. Indeed, Gen 36 depicts Edom as a tribal organization comprised of different clans, each with its own chief (אלוף). Furthermore, the kinship ties of Edom are extended to Israel, since Edom is famously depicted Israel's "brother", as the narrative about Jacob and Esau reflects (Gen 25:19-34; 26:34-28:9), In Deuteronomy, it is prescribed that "(Y)ou shall not abhor an

---

(plural).

[205] As in the case of "Sons of Ammon" and "Moab", Edom also occurs in a series of phrases referring to the land, ruler and god of the Transjordanian polity, e.g. "Land of Edom" (Gen 36:16f, 21, 31; Num 20:23; 21:4; 33:37; Judg 11:18; 1 Kgs 9:26; 1 Chr. 1:43; 2 Chr. 8:17; Isa 34:6), "territory/border of Edom" (Josh 15:1, 21), "territory/border of the Land of Edom" (Num 20:23), "king of Edom" (Num 20:14; Judg 11:17; 2 Kgs 3:9, 12, 26; Jer 27:3; Amos 2:1) and "god of Edom" (2 Chr 25:20).

[206] Whether or not the Horites should be identified with the Hurrian may have been the pre-Edomite inhabitants of Seir is debated. See Tigay 1996:27 for different opinions and see n. 21 for further references.

Edomite, for he is your kinsman (lit. "your brother", אָחִיךָ). (Deut 23:8 TNK; cf. Deut 2:4, 8)"[207] Within the polity of Edom, the kinship idiom is also demonstrated by such phrases as "Sons of Edom"[208] and "Sons of Seir",[209] and occasionally "Sons of Esau"[210]. In addition to "Sons of Esau", "House of Esau" is used to designate the Edomites in Obadiah's oracle against Edom. (Obad 1:18) Moreover, Edom is clearly considered a "עם"[211] in biblical texts.

In sum, the three Transjordanian polities of Ammon, Moab and Edom are known by their own designations that refer both to the geographical and political concept, on the one hand, and the collective community of peoples, on the other. It must admitted that it is usually difficult to differentiate between the two meanings. Kinship idioms, especially "Sons of..." and "House of ...", are less consistently used with the proper names of Moab and Edom than with Ammon. In the last case, these kinship elements constitute integral components of the polity's name. Genealogical lists such as Gen 36:15-30 further demonstrate that the Edom is perceived as a polity with a strong tribal background, which corresponds to archaeological evidence in Edom that indicates the late emergence (only in the 8th century BCE; significantly later than Israel and Moab, for instance) of complex state institutions in Edom as well as its relatively low level of urbanization (cf. Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Bienkowski 2014). There is only slight biblical evidence of the names and kinship terms that might bear on the Moabite polity and its kinship ideology, and so this evidence must be supplemented by

---

[207] On the issue of brotherhood of, and ethnic links between, Israel/Judah and Edom on literary and religious levels, see Dykehouse 2008 treaty betrayal 38-63.

[208] Only once in the Hebrew Bible: Ps 137:7.

[209] The phrase can refer to sons of the individual called Seir (Gen 36:20, 21; 1 Chr 1:38) and, figuratively, to people of the Edomite polity, e.g. 2 Chr 25:11, 14. In 2 Kgs 14:7 "Edom" is used. In 2 Chr 25:14 "Sons of Seir" is paralleled with "Edomites".

[210] In Gen 36, the phrase should often be understood literally, i.e. the Sons an te offspring of the individual called Esau. In Deut 2 (vv. 4, 8, 12, 22,, 29) Sons of Esau "who live in Seir" clearly refer to a large sociopolitical group.

[211] Isa 34:5, "people that I devoted to judgment" ("עַם חֶרְמִי לְמִשְׁפָּט"); Mal 1:4, "people towards whom Yahweh is indignant forever" (הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־זָעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם).

an examination of the most informative native Transjordanian text, i.e. the Mesha Stele. To this stele I now turn.

3. Case study: the Mesha Stele and the cultural impact on political activities in the Moabite monarchy

I have surveyed different aspects of the cultural characteristics of the Transjordanian polities in the Iron Age (in particular Iron II) as well as possible links between these factors and the formation and reinforcement of the political divisions at issue. I concluded that although the polities can be classified as multi-city/town territorial kingdoms with more ore less distinctive cultural features (material cultual, language, script, religion, name and kinship ideology), the differences are often hidden within the context of largely similar cultures, so that it is often unclear whether cultural divergences resulted in or from political division. In either case, it is clear that at some point in Iron Age II, three Transjordanian sociopolitical entities emerged and appeared to be differentiated by at least conceptual boundaries, as biblical accounts speak of "all Moab" and "all Edom" (see Grosby 2002c: 123-37), both of which are in contexts of international politics.[212] This evidence suggests that the Transjordanian polities at some point of their history did form entities in which political unity within a territory was at least partly reinforced, if not determined, by sociocultural factors.[213] To further illustrate the interaction between cultural and political factors of a sociopolitical entity and possibly, the impact of the former on the latter, I will briefly examine the Mesha

[212] "All Moab" occurs in 2 Kgs 3:21, in the narrative about the joint Israelite-Judean-Edomite campaign against Moab, where "all Moab", or better, "all Moabites" heard the news and prepared for battle. "All Edom" occurs in 2 Sam 8:14 and 1 Chron 18:13, where "all Edom" (2 Sam 8:14) or "all Edomites" (1 Chr 18:13) is depicted as a territorially defined entity or a political group subject to Israel as a vassal. In Ezek 35:15, "all Edom" in parallel to Mount Seir is treated as a defined geographical concept which occurs in an oracle against Edom on account of the latter's atrocity against "sons of Israel" (perhaps referring to Judah in this context), which can also be considered as a context of international politics.

[213] It should be noted that scholarly discussions usually allow for the use of the term "nation" and "national" in a broad sense, e.g. Routledge 2004:153, particularly in the subsequent Persian Period and beyond, see Knauf 1992b:53.

Stele, a precious source of native thoughts on this issue.

It is reasonable to expect that the ancients were aware of a certain level of internal linguistic, cultural and religious cohesiveness within their own and their neighbors' political entities as well as the subtle differences between one polity and its neighbor. Such awareness, furthermore, may have influenced one's understanding of the way the polity is organized, particularly regarding the functions and purposes of war, peace, hostility and alliance in relation to a polity's formation, self-recognition and self-expression. While the major Transjordanian states, namely, Moab, Ammon and Edom, exhibit such features to different degrees, Moab provides us with the richest textual sources that shed light on the polity's political activities and international relations. In the Moabite Mesha Stele, dated to the mid-9th century BCE,[214] Moab is described by the first person "author", King Mesha of Moab, as one collectivity consisting of local entities, some having been long oppressed by its neighbor Israel and its ruler. Most prominently, the toponym "Dibon" occurs several times in the inscription (lines 1-2; 21; 28), in addition to other territories implied to be Moabite territory (some "occupied" by Israel).[215] The status of Dibon is central to the narrative account constructed by Mesha, who, while serving as the king of the larger concept of Moab, is identified as "the Dibonite" at the beginning of the inscription (lines 1-2). Later, he

[214] The historical background of the Mesha Stele is the liberation of Moab under Mesha's leadership from Israelite domination during the Omride Dynasty between ca. 880-850 BCE. In this period, Israel was a regional power who formed an Anti-Assyrian coalition with Hamath and Damascus, among others. See Dearman 1989:157-59. ed. A. Dearman, 155-210.The influence of external imperialism has been understood as an important factor that contributed to the formation of ancient ethnic and national identities, cf. Liverani's general account of the rise of Judean "nationalistic" views under the influence under the universal empires 1992. In the case of 9th century Moab, although the intrusion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the West under Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III certainly constituted part of the general background, which possibly contributed to the weakening of Israelite political influence in neighboring regions like Moab, (Chamaza 2005:59-60) the formation of the Moabite religious and political identities was nevertheless more closely and more immediately related to the confrontation with Israelite expansion, as we will see below. The regional international system with the quasi-imperial conduct of Israel possibly had more weight in the formation of Moabite polity and identity than the Assyrian imperial expansion.

[215] E.g. "Land of Madeba" (line 7-8; for the early Iron Age Madeba and the local political development anticipating the situation described in the Mesha Stele, see Harrison 2009), Ataroth (line 10), Sharon and Maharot (lines 13-14, "men of" these two regions).

mentions withdrawing 200 men from "Moab", seizing the town of Yaḥaṣ from Israel and adding it to "Dibon" (not to Moab). In line 28, he mentions "armed men of Dibon" (*ʾš dybn ḥmšn*; *ḥmšn* literally meaning "fifty"[216]) and "all Dibon" (*kl dybn*, perhaps "all the Dibonites") who are referred to as "subjects" (*mšmʿt*). As the phrase "all Dibon" is reminiscent of ethnoterritorial entities with confined boundaries, such as "all Edom", "all Israel" and "all Aram" in the region (cf. Grosby 2002c:123-137; Wazana 2008), one wonders what the relationship between Dibon and Moab was in the structure of Mesha's kingdom. More specifically, the issue concerns the interaction between different levels of sociocultural and political identities as well as the role of such identities in collective acts by members of political communities. In the Mesha Stele, such collective acts in domestic and international affairs include the mobilization of Moab and "all Dibon" in battle and building activities. Routledge considers the reference to Dibon and other local places and quasi-sociopolitical entities ("men of Sharon and Maharot" lines 13-14) as the indication of the segmentary nature of the Moabite polity (Routledge 2004a:151; cf. Petter 2014:56-74).

Local segmentation aside, Mesha claims to have drawn "200 men from Moab", indicating his ability to mobilize on a trans-local range, and to have led the attack on an Israelite stronghold (line 20). In addition, the inscription records his expansive building activities in existing and newly annexed towns, ruling over the residents in settlements which he "added to the land" (line 29). As Routledge points out, this inscription functions in essence as a text in which " the logic of local segmentary identities is expropriated and expanded to present the politically (*sic*) unification of Moab as an *idea* (italics mine) with both moral

[216] For the meaning "army" as "groups arrayed in groups of fifty", see HALOT "חמש", p331.

force and cultural resonance" (B. Routledge 2000: 247). Here "idea" may be understood as the concept of "Moab" as a common identity under which residents in various sub-regions were to be subsumed. It is reasonable to expect that efforts to unite populations and territories politically would resort to elements contributing to ethnic/national commonalities, using kinship as an organizing mechanism (Joffe 2002: 454). Most important among these would be the elevation of the common self-designation and concept of the native territory of "Moab" above, yet not in place of, local cultural and political identities (Routledge 2004a:151-52).

Further traces can be found in this vein. In addition to the common name and military mobilization in this name, religious and cultic centralization may also have contributed to the formation of a unified Moabite "idea" or perhaps, collective cultural consciousness (line 3, the building of a high place/sanctuary for Chemosh in Qarḥô). The god Chemosh is depicted as a "national" deity in the narrative much in the fashion of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible, who is not only Israel/Judah's protector but also the deity who controls the fortune of his land. For instance, Moab's subjection to foreign forces is interpreted as the result of Chemosh's anger with Moab, "his land" (*ky yʾnp kmš bʾrṣh*, "for Chemosh was angry with his land" lines 5-6), which is reminiscent of 2 Kings 17:18 that ascribes Israel's downfall by the hands of the Assyrians to Yahweh's wrath, expressed by the same verbal root (in a different stem): "The LORD was incensed at Israel and He banished them from His presence." (וַיִּתְאַנַּף יְהוָה מְאֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְסִרֵם מֵעַל פָּנָיו) As Ahituv observes, here Israel is used by Chemosh as a tool to punish his own "nation", just as Assyria serves as Yahweh's instrument to punish the disobedient Israelites and Judeans. (Ahituv 2008:398-99) Also in the Mesha Stele, Chemosh saves Moab

and its human ruler from his rival kings (line 4), not unlike Yahweh who saves Israel from his enemies. (e.g. Exod 14:30; Deut 20:4; Judg 2:18; 1 Sam 14:23; 2 Sam 8:14; 2 Kgs 14:27 etc.) Likewise, it is Chemosh who commands the human ruler, his deputy, to wage war against Moab's enemies for the sake of territorial recovery or expansion (line 14, "Go! Seize Nebo against Israel!"; line 32, "Go down! Fight against Hawronen!")[217] and fights Moab's enemies on behalf of his people and land ("He drove him out before me" line 19, cf. Josh 24:18, both with *g-r-š*). Furthermore, the conflict between Moab and Israel is here explicitly narrated as a one that directly concerns the two gods responsible for respective ethno-political entities, most vividly reflected in the account of the transfer of cultic spoil from Nebo: "And I took from there the vessels of Yahweh and I hauled them before Chemosh" (lines 17-18).[218]

In sum, in the Mesha Stele such cultural divergences as different national gods serve to interpret the political conflicts between the two polities in religious and cultural terms, constructing in this process a cultural and political other, i.e. Israel, which in return necessitates, justifies, facilitates and reinforces the integration of local entities into one, at least formally united, Moabite polity and identity.[219] It is this process that renders Mesha's

---

[217] Chemosh is here depicted as the deity who guarantees the territorial integrity of his land by helping the human king to recover lost territory. This is possibly related to the idea that each land is divinely assigned to a certain ethno-political group (cf. Deut 32:8) and should not be seized by foreigners. Cf. Deut 2:9: "Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war. For I will not give you any of their land as a possession; I have assigned Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot. (Deu 2:9 TNK)" This notion is vividly demonstrated in the arguments presented in Jephthah's diplomatic message to the Ammonites in Judg 11:14-27, although there Chemosh is incorrectly referred to as the Ammonites' god. Note particularly v. 24: "Do you not hold what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we will hold on to everything that the LORD our God has given us to possess. (Judg 11:24 TNK)"

From a different perspective, one can argue that the "national" god is encouraging territorial expansion, as Aššur encourages the Assyrian king to enlarge his land (see Chapters 5, 7). The competition between two ethno-political groups vying for the control of disputed lands may indeed draw upon imperial overtones. See Chapter 7.

[218] Cf. also Judg 11:23-24, where an sociopolitical entity's territory is considered to be conferred on them by their god. Each group is supposed to hold on to what its god has given them as possession and not to covet the other group's possession. It should be noted that the name of the Ammonite god is here incorrectly referred to as Chemosh, who is god of Moab. For a systematic comparison of Chemosh in the Mesha Stele and the elevation of the Yahwistic cult in biblical narratives about David's early wars with the Philistines and the creation of collective identity in each polity, see O. Sergi 2015.

[219] In his analysis of the Mesha Stele, Routledge cites Jones' theory (Jones 1997:92-105) that "ethnogenesis can be located in the distinct experience of cultural contact and conflict, when the forcible encounter with 'foreignness' results in the explicit reflection on cultural differences and hence 'ruptures' the take-for-granted nature of daily practice". Routledge further proposes that "(T)he immediate experience of Israel's oppression of Moab provides a context were (sic) the contrast

efforts to popularize and emphasize the common self-designation and concept of "Moab" as a trans-local political identity of an originally segmentary region. In this process he creates a new hierarchy, with Dibon, his native region, and his (father's) dynasty elevated to the dominant position (Routledge 2004:152).

To be sure, this theory may not fully capture the process of polity formation in Moab and the Transjordan, since Bienkowski has argued that Routledge's theory rests excessively upon the one text of the Mesha Stele and does not adequately engage with archaeological evidence from the ground.[220] Rather, Bienkowski, together with Steen, has suggested that "tribal state" is an alternative model to understand the formation of the polity in Iron II, for it directly addresses the lack of a centralized state structure in Moab and the likelihood of the survival in it of earlier tribal distinctions in material culture (Bienkowski and Steen 2001; Bienkowski 2007; 2014). Essentially, these scholars cast doubts on the ability of the so-called capitals of the Transjordanian polities effectively to exercise authority over the constituent tribes. Commenting on Edom as another exmaple, Bienkowski and others argue that Edom in

---

between Israel and a unified 'land of Moab' could gain particular saliency...Mesha's hegemonic claim succcessfully narrowed the meaning of Moab to refer specifically to a land that he ruled" (Routledge 2004:153). Slightly different from Jones' statement, one may suggest that in the case of the Moab and Israel in the 9th century BCE it is not necessarily cultural contrast experienced in cultural contact and cohabitation that has caused the conflict and the emergence or strengthening of ethnic identity, unlike, for instance, Hellenistic and Roman authors' observation of and satirical comment on Jewish beliefs and customs, see P. Schäfer 1997: 69-77; 77-81. Instead, it appears that it is political conflicts over territory and authority that initiated the enmity between Israel and the land of Moab, in which process existing cultural elements such as possible kinship or tribal ties and particularly the "national god" were utilized by one political leader to promote his acceptance among all territories that were identified as Moab. In other words, we have a good case of cultural impact upon political decisions and practices in Iron II Moab.

Political and military conflicts between Moab and its northern Transjordanian neighbor, "Sons of Ammon", are recorded in another Moabite royal inscription dated possibly to the 8th century, where Ammonite prisoners were used as labor for building activities. However, the fragmentary nature of this inscription makes it difficult to assess the role of cultural and religious contrast (beyond different proper names of the sociopolitical entities themselves) in political conflicts. See Ahituv 2008:419-23. For different scenarios of the relationship between Moab and Ammon under external influence from the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Northern Kingdom of Israel and Damascus in this period, see Dearman 2009.

[220] Bienkowski (2007:37-38) argues essentially that Routledge's model fails to account for the variations in Moabite ceramics, which he thinks reflects "tribal groupings with different core areas". Instead of a hierarchy imposed from the center, Bienkowski argues that the ceramic evidence reveals a heterarchical society with multiple centers. The difference between the two models, in short, is whether one gives Mesha the credit in creating a centralized political identity based on hierarchy, with his dynasty and the Dibon region serving as the political center of otherwise segmented political units, each with its own cultural distinctions. Note also Harrison's archaeological study of the Land of Madeba in the early Iron Age and the transition from Iron I to Iron II, which he thinks confirms local political development anticipating Mesha's "nation-building" efforts which integrated different local political units. Harrison 2009.

the Iron II should be more properly interpreted as a polity of largely independent tribal groupings held together by "bonds of cooperation and allegiance to a supra-tribal monarchy", while the capital Busayra was no more than "supra-tribal" center (Bienkowski and Steen 2001:40; Bienkowski 2014:786). This interpretation is possible, but one has to ask why these tribes agreed to be tied to this particular monarchy located at a large town and why they may have been designated as "Edomites" at all. In any case, Edom was not simply Busayra. One has to explain why there may have been other political units than the capital (with an unrelated name!) which were identified with an outwardly distinguishable (in biblical and Assyrian sources) entity called "Edom".

One wonders if Routledge's and Bienkowski's models have to conflict with each other at all. On the one hand, regional variations in the material culture, stressed by Bienkowski et al, may very well have survived the formation of a monarchy in the Transjordanian polities, particularly in Edom but also in Moab. On the other hand, Mesha the Dibonite, as king of Moab, did claim to have united different units under the banner of "Moab" through annexation, building and warring with a foreign other. The emergence of a monarchy does not have to eliminate all regional sub-cultures. It is even possible that Mesha and his dynasty never tried to unify all pottery types. Perhaps he was more interested in celebrating the Moabite identity (against the Israelite one and above regional ones) so as to legitimize his claim on regional political units. It was neither necessary nor achievable to unify all cultural features.

Finally, one should clarify that this debate is important but not central to our interest. More important for us is the fact that Routledge and Bienkowski/others recognize, indeed

highlight, the role of sociocultural factors in the formation some level of political unity in early Transjordanian polities of the Iron II. That is, while Bienkowski (and others) stresses the survival of tribal structures and ideologies on different levels,[221] Routledge emphasizes segmentary local identities with an imposed hierarchy from a center.[222] Again, both theories only strengthen our argument that affinities and differences of culture played a crucial role (but perhaps in different ways) in the formation of the Iron Age II Transjordanian polities.

Israel and Judah: one nation-two polities?

1. Israel and Judah in the Iron Age: cultural unity and political division?

As new ethno-cultural groups established new polities in the Transjordan in the Iron Age II Period, in the west of the Jordan one encounters the classic examples of ancient Israel and Judah. However, the manner in which cultural elements affect the formation of independent political identities in the highlands of central Palestine is not straightforward, due in part to the complex and special political experience of the ancient Israelite and Judean communities which, according to the somewhat idealized biblical accounts, first formed a united tribal coalition, then a united monarchy and finally divided into two kingdoms with fluctuating bilateral relations. How do we identify the effect of cultural commonness on political cohesion and political activities in general in the whole process? In such a discussion

[221] Bienkowski (2014:786) mentions several definitive characteristics of the tribe from which tribal coalitions and tribal monarchies can grow, including belief in common descent, shared ideology, language and culture, mutual economic and social activities and a core geographical area of habitation. Bienkowski explains that the supra-tribal monarchy was tied together by bonds of cooperation and allegiance, and perhaps in common interests in trade (see Bienkowski and Steen 2001). One wonders, however, whether the kinship ideology should suddenly be downplayed at a certain level: is it possible that the tribes were bonded through perceived kinship ties, while the monarchy failed to recognize and manipulate the kinship ideology in order to expand the kinship network? Did the monarchy fail to fabricate or utilize a common regional identity (as Mesha's Moab did) and if it did, would it not have tried to weave kinship ideology into its propaganda? One suspects that this is very likely in Transjordan, just as biblical historiography (of admittedly a later period) did try to interpret the Israelite tribes as descending from one ancestor and forming one tribal coalition, i.e. a supra-tribal entity.

[222] Routledge (2004:151) argues that,due to the lack of sufficient centralization and institutionalization, Iron II Moab cannot be defined as a nation. However, he still recognizes cultural features, particularly the common god, as the foundation of some sort of centralization of different local communities.

considerable weight would have to be placed on the "united" stage of the ancient Hebrew speaking people(s), which would resemble and shed light on the situation in individual Transjordanian polities. Regrettably, this early period (corresponding to the tribal coalition and the United Monarchy in biblical accounts) lacks contemporary textual witness.[223] While biblical accounts are certainly helpful for textual, terminological and conceptual studies, it is possible, indeed probable, that they also reflect later ideologies and notions. Archaeological evidence and textual evidence regarding this period composed in a different date certainly illuminate one's understanding of early Israelite state formation, yet speculation and interpretation are unavoidable.[224] It thus remains uncertain if the early Israelites, whether in the form of united tribal coalitions or a monarchy with centralized administrative institutions,

---

[223] For the earlier period of an entity known as "Israel", one thinks of the famous reference to one of the Asiatic peoples destroyed by Merneptah on his stele. (end of 13th century BCE), where it is accompanied with the determinative denoting "a people". The nature of this entity and it components are not clear from this Egyptian inscription alone.On the significance of this piece of evidence for ancient Israelite ethnicity and the nature of this entity marked as "people" in the Egyptian text, see Sparks 1998:95-109, with related evidence. In addition, Van der Veen et al refers to a possible reference to "Israel" on a name ring which dates to the 19th Dynasty (12th century) and may be copied from archaic sources from the early Late Bronze Age. However, if Israel had existed in Canaan during the good part of the Late Bronze Age, one wonders why it was not explicitly mentioned in the rich diplomatic documents from that period. See Van der Veen et al. 2010.

[224] It is true that the United Monarchy of ancient Israel as depicted in the Hebrew Bible provides us with another group of evidence regarding the formative phase of a state consisting of a population of shared religious and linguistic characteristics. The political and cultic centralization during David's and Solomon's reign aims to reinforce the ties between the tribes united under Judean hegemony. Relevant accounts in the Hebrew Bible will still serve as the major source for textual and terminological analysis when relevant, although this by no means presumes the historicity of the recorded events, which not only depends on archaeological corroboration of the correlation between a complex state structure in the southern Levant in Iron IIA with the biblical United Monarchy, itself being a complicated issue, but also has to be judged on account of heavy theological and ideological reworking of historical sources in the composition of Deuteronomisitc history and the Chronicles.

While archaeologists have identified building activities in Iron IIA, without contemporary written sources it is difficult to equate the urban expansion or extensive building to David's and Solomon's kingdom centered in Jerusalem. Centralized polities may be responsible for such archaeological finds, but the identification of them with one, united, polity that covered both the North and the South can hardly be established in archaeological terms only (cf. A. Mazar 2005:23-24). If Shishak's list of towns can be correlated to the reign of Rehoboam in late 10th century (which is disputed by F. Clancy 1999), the list, from the preserved part of which Jerusalem is missing, in any event does not imply a sense of trans-local identity shared by the towns or sides raided by Shishak, or among some of them. Aside from the issue of the historicity of a United Monarchy, it seems that even with its existence a well-established sense of trans-local political or cultural unity (cf. "Land of Hatti" in Assyrian inscriptions referring to Neo-Hittite states) is not reflected in this piece of extra-biblical evidence. On disputes about the chronology of the 10th and 9th centuries, see summary in A. Mazar 2005; on the early history of the Iron IIA period, see A. Mazar 2007, 2010; Finkelstein 2010. Finkelstein seems to see the North as an entity separate from Jerusalem in the 10th century (for the debate on his lower chronology of the expansion of Jerusalem see A. Mazar 2007), cf. Finkelstein 2013: 37-82. Cf. Also Liverani 2005: 77-103.

This said, I do not argue for or against the historicity of a United Monarchy that covered both the North and the South in the 10th century. I am more interested in biblical authors' notion (particularly if some of the accounts in the Deuternomistic History contains certain) of common identity among all previous tribal groups and the idea of a united monarchy that may have played a role in the interaction between the Hebrew kingdom(s) and other political entities and between the divide kingdoms, for which period more extra-biblical evidence is available.

ever formed, and functioned as, one people or one "nation".

For this last question, the biblical account of the development from national unity to schism is rather unrealistic for some scholars. For example, Finkelstein and Silberman point out that the north and the south of the central highland have always faced ecological and economic differences through the millennia, which may also have contributed to political division all along. They also argue that the purpose of the depiction of the Northern kingdom as both a sister state and an apostate, antagonistic neighbor in the biblical parallel history of the northern and the southern kingdoms was to legitimize the Judean claim over Northern territory in the 7th century during Josiah's reign. Therefore, it is for them possible that the political unity depicted by the Hebrew Bible was to a large extent a later literary invention for the same purpose (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 149-68). This interpretation is not impossible, but as we will see later in the chapter, a sense of cultural link between the North and the South may have existed well before the fall of the Northern kingdom and certainly before Josiah's reign. And the cultural link may well have had at the same time a political dimension. Nonetheless, different interpretations and debates mentioned above demonstrate that the issue about the presence and the characteristics of a unified sociocultural and political entity of early Israel in Iron I and Iron IIA is highly complicated.

More interesting for our purpose is the period of divided kingdoms. I have mentioned in passing that the coexistence of Israel and Judah complicates discussions on ancient Levantine nationhood, as Grosby's and A. Smith's recognition of 7th century BCE Judah as an ideal type of ancient nations without adequate comment on the status of Northern Kingdom of Israel (see Chapter 2). Were "Israel" and "Judah" (or "House of David", to begin with), only

political identities without an ethnic background (Fleming 2002:252-55)? Was Northern Israel (until its downfall in 722/721 BCE) another "nation"? Or was it part of the same Israelite "nation" that contained also Judah? For this very reason, I have proposed not to dwell upon a debate on definitions and ideal types, but instead investigate the impact of sociocultural factors on political behaviors of polities, which, it is hoped, will illuminate our understanding of the shape and identity of the polities concerned. In Iron Age II B-C, the relationship between Israel and Judah was rather ambiguous and multifaceted in biblical accounts, when the two polities could be at war or at peace with each other (e.g. Elgavish 1978) and form alliances either between themselves (e.g. 1 Kgs 22:1-12; 2 Kgs 3:4-27) or separately with other actors against the other (2 Kgs 16:5ff; Isa 7:1ff.; 2 Chr 28:5-8).

Yet international relations alone cannot fully capture the depiction of the north-south relationship in biblical accounts. If we focus on international relations only, one cannot but note that the antagonism between the two states and the pragmatic strategies employed by one side against the other appear to suggest that the two could be considered as two neighboring political actors with distinct interests, with bilateral relations comparable to those between any Transjordanian polities in this period. At the same time, both narrative accounts and prophecy in the Hebrew Bible sometimes present the two entities as belonging to one people and subject to the same deity. So what is the nature and source of the "shared identity", if it existed, of the two polities? Do biblical accounts of "sister states" have any ground? If so, what cultural factors might have been at work? With what terminologies and conceptions are special connections between the North and the South expressed in biblical accounts? With a survey of these questions, I would like to examine to what extent we can speak of a "one

‘nation’, two states” situation in the Iron II southern Levant. In addition, Israel and Judah provide us with an occasion to investigate the role of sociocultural factors in political affairs both within and beyond a polity’s limits, as an interesting variant of Iron II cultural-ethnic polities exemplified by the Transjordanian kingdoms.[225]

2. *Cultural factors and their political impact on two co-existent polities*

I will first briefly survey sociocultural features of the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms in Iron II, with a particular focus on extra-biblical sources, whenever possible, as they are usually more securely dated to the period of our interest. I will discuss the following issues: 1. Did any external reference to Israel and Judah hint at special connections between the two? 2. What entities did the designations “Israel” and “Judah” and others refer to? 3. Material culture of the two polities in the divided period. 4. Northern language and script vs. Southern language and script. 5. religious issues and the common god.

A. External references to Israel and Judah in juxtaposition

[225] For Finkelstein (1999), the crux of the questions is not so much whether Israel and Judah formed or derived from one nation as it is the fact that, for him, while Judah could be classified as a typical Iron II ethnic or national state, Israel was a heterogeneous kingdom consisting of different populations, including Israelites, Phoenicians, Arameans, etc. As I mentioned above, Finkelstein and other scholars have pointed out that the contrast of the North and the South is deeply embedded in the geographical and environmental differences that affected settlement patterns and polity sizes in the region since the Early Bronze Age. He also identifies stronger continuity of Late Bronze Age Canaanite urban traditions in Iron Age Israel than in the south. In sum, in his opinion Israel is more heterogeneous, more “Canaanite”, more urban, more metropolitan and more powerful, while Judah is more homogeneous, more rural and more marginal, with more emergent Iron Age features shared with Transjordanian polities who also have a pastoral past.

However, despite all these observations, Finkelstein also admits that the biblical depiction of two sister states seems justified at least at first glance, as both kingdoms “worship Yahweh,shared the same tales of a common past, spoke similar languages (or dialects) and wrote in the same script”. It is the archaeological evidence that indicates the aforementioned structural and qualitative differences. Yet one should note that the differences are not so absolute. For one thing, the biblical depiction of David’s Jerusalem appears to be reminiscent of a Late Bronze Age city-state (cf. Alt 1967) of heterogeneous populations. The Jerusalem resident Araunah (2 Sam 24; “Ornan” in 1 Chr 21), from whom David purchased the threshing floor to build an altar for Yahweh, is not only labeled as a “Jebusite”, but also bears a non-Hebrew, non-Semitic (perhaps Hurrian) name which reminds readers of the king of Jerusalem Abdi-Hepa who bore a mixed Canaanite-Hurrian name in the Amarna Letters. Hardly any Levantine polity in this period was demographically homogeneous, and Judah, like its neighbors, was most likely built on a Late Bronze Age substratum.

More importantly, it is noteworthy that, although Finkelstein considers the biblical picture of sister states unlikely from the archaeological perspective, he still notes the basic cultural similarities and connections of the two polities. Supposing that the two were really so sharply contrasted, why did they share these common traditions and characteristics? What did this commonness mean for these two kingdoms who were admittedly rather unequal in strength? Were they the same people who settled in different Canaanite cities and their hinterlands, and they developed two different territorial kingdoms, or were they separate peoples all along who chose to adopt some of the same traditions at one point? No firm answers can be offered, yet in any case, the differences highlighted in Finkelstein’s study also serve to underline the cultural similarities and commonness, as well as their impact on political policies and ideological views of the two kingdoms.

References to both Israel and Judah in the same contexts are possibly attested in the Mesha Stele and the Tel Dan Stele. In the Mesha Stele, which abounds with references to Israel, possible yet uncertain references to Judah occur in lines 12 and 31. In line 31 the reading is slightly more likely: *...yšb bh bt []wd*, which some scholars have interpreted as "(the) House of David dwellt in it".[226] In line 12 the reading is rather certain (*wʾšb mšm ʾt ʾrʾl dwdh*), but the translation of the phrase "*ʾrʾl dwdh*" is highly speculative. In lines 16-17, where the content is in partial parallel with line 12,[227] Mesha mentions the dedication of Yahwistic cultic vessels (*[k]ly yhwh*) to Chemosh. This has prompted scholars to interpret the "*ʾrʾl dwdh*" of line 12 also as a term for some sort of cultic objects, although the exact identification remains elusive.[228] For example, Ahituv argues that the phrase should be translated as "its Davidic cultic hearth", which is possible on orthographical and syntactical grounds.[229] As far as the historical context is concerned, Ahituv postulates that the Gadites, as part of Israel, could naturally possess cultic objects "from King David, the founder of the Jerusalem Dynasty" (Ahituv 2008:406-07). Unfortunately, the exact meaning of "Davidic hearth" remains unclear and is without parallel in biblical materials. If this proposal were

---

[226] E.g. Routledge 2004:136, following Lemaire 1994. This is also the reading in Ahituv 2008:417. However, K. P. Jackson and Dearman read the final Dalet as a Qof in an earlier study. K.P. Jackson and Dearman 1989:95.

[227] Both recount the destruction of Israelite towns, the massacre of their residents, the confiscation of what may be cultic objects and the dedication of booty to Chemosh.

[228] See Routledge 2004:237-38, n. 8 for further references and a summary of the discussion.

[229] The word *ʾrʾl* in the phrase has been understood as a cultic hearth on the basis of the biblical usage of the word אריאל in Ezek 43:15-16, possibly a hearth for burning offerings. See *HALOT* "אריאל", p87. Although the term "אראל" in 2 Sam 23:30 (=1 Chr 11:22) and Isa 33:7 more possibly refer to people, the context of Mesha Stele line 12 (semantic parallelism with lines 16-17) favors "cultic hearth". The pronominal suffix "-h" attached to *dwd* could be intended for *ʾrʾl*, as Ahituv (2008:406) suggests, and this is well in line with Hebrew syntax (cf. הר קדשו=his holy mountain, lit. "his mountain" of holiness" rather than "mountain of his holiness"). The suffix "-h" according to the orthography of Mesha Stele could either be 3rd person masculine (e.g. "*wygršh*" in line 19, referring to the king of Israel) or feminine ("*ʾḥzh*" in line 16, referring to Nebo). Here in line 12, the -h most likely refers to the city of Atarot, mentioned earlier in the same line (*hqr*). The biggest uncertainty in this phrase is of course the meaning of "*dwd*". Due to the defective orthography in this inscription, Waw should best be considered as a consonant. If so, one must admit that Ahituv's translation of the word as "David" is phonetically probable (Ahituv 2008:406-07). However, it is unclear what "its cult hearth of David" is supposed to mean. Ahituv's proposal "its Davidic hearth" is not impossible, but it should be noted that we do not seem to have comparative examples of "David" used as a cultic designation, i.e. "the Davidic religion". Again, the meaning of such a term remains unclear.

supported by other evidence, the reference to Davidic religious facilities (or better, of the standard religion of the Davidic Dynasty?) in a Northern Israelite town could indicate assumed links between Israel and Judah.

In the Tel Dan Inscription, the word "*bytdwd*" (Fragment A, line 9), which has provoked much scholarly debate (see e.g. Athas 217-26), occurs in juxtaposition to "Israel" (line 8) which refers here to the Northern Kingdom. If it refers to Judah, then here we have another case of the juxtaposition of Israel and Judah in an non-Hebrew source. In this inscription, as in the Mesha Stele, it is unclear that the juxtaposition of Israel and Judah indicates (nor does it exclude!) any sort of special relationship, such as cultural affinities. Without further evidence, it appears that external references to Israel and Judah in juxtaposition with each other did not explicitly reveal, to the outsiders' eyes, special connections between the two polities beyond geographical vicinity and possible political alliance against the common powerful northerly enemy of Damascus (in Tel Dan).

B. Designations of Israel and Judah

The Northern and the Southern kingdoms as geographical and political concepts are designated by different names in biblical and extra-biblical sources. In addition to "Israel", the Northern kingdom is also known as "Ephraim" in a *pars pro toto* manner, a designation particularly widely represented in 2 Chronicles, First Isaiah and Hosea.[230] Another name for the Northern kingdom is Jacob or House of Jacob, although it is not always clear whether

[230] 2 Chr 17:2, "cities of Ephraim", in parallel with "Land of Judah"; 25:7, "sons of Ephraim" equated with Northern Israel; perhaps also 28:7 and 12, though it is hear uncertain whether Ephraim refers to a constituent portion of Israel or not. Isa 7:2, 5 (in parallel with Aram as the other invading force, replacing the name "Israel"), 8 (prophesying "Ephraim"'s loss of the עם status, clearly referring to the North as a whole), 9 ("the chief of Ephraim is Samaria", clearly equating Ephraim with the Northern Kingdom), 17 (in contrast to "Judah"); 9;8, 20; 11:13. Hos 4:17; 5:3, 9, 11, 13; 6:4; 7:1, 8, 11; 8:9, 11; 9:3, 8, 11, 13, 16; 10:6, 11; 11:8f; 12:1f, 9, 15; 13:1, 12; 14:9. See also Ps 78:9 and 67 (in the latter verse Ephraim is paralleled with Jacob), the important passage Ezek 37:16-28 which prophesies the reunification of Ephraim/Jacob and Judah, Zech 9:13, 10:7 and possible uses in Isa 28:1, 3; Jer 31:18, 20.

only the North[231] or both communities[232] are intended. Neo-Assyrian sources employ such designations as the eponymistic name House of Ḫumrî/Omri or Humria and occasionally use the capital city Samaria to refer to the Northern kingdom. The southern kingdom is almost invariably called "Judah" in biblical[233] and Assyrian sources (starting with Tiglath-pileser III), although in the Tel Dan Inscription and perhaps also in the Mesha Stele (see above) the dynastic designation "House of David" serves as the descriptor.

An important question for us is whether the designation of one polity is ever used in documents from or texts about this period to refer to the other polity or a larger concept that includes the other. Such a phenomenon is not attested in contemporary extra-biblical sources. As Fleming (2012:23) rightly observes, the inscriptional evidence "provides no basis for viewing Judah as part of Israel". However, in the Hebrew Bible the situation is more complex. One the one hand, it is certain that "Judah" only designates the southern kingdom alone, rather than a supra-regional community that includes the Northern kingdom. On the other hand, "Israel" has a much broader and sometimes ambiguous usage in the Bible.[234] If we limit ourselves to the parallel histories of the northern and southern kingdoms in the Books of Kings (starting with 1 Kings 12) and Chronicles (which focuses on Judah), the large parts of which recount a period when both polities functioned as political actors with a certain level of autonomy, our first observation would be that "Israel" more often than not refers not to a

---

[231] E.g 1 Isa 10:20, for the identification see Beuken 2003:289; see also Ezek 37:16, 19.

[232] E.g. Isa 2:3, 5 (see Deuken 2003:94) and the widely attested phrase "God of Jacob" in Exod 3:6, 15; 4:5; 2 Sam 23:1; Ps 20:2; 46:8, 12; 75:10; 76:7; 81:2, 5; 84:9; 94:7; Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2. See Blenkinsopp 2000:191. Note the interesting wording of Isa 48:1a: "Listen to this, O House of Jacob, who bear the name Israel and have issued from the waters of Judah..." (Isa 48:1 TNK)

[233] "House of Judah" is another possibility. E.g. 1 Kgs 12:23 (the schism), 2 Kgs 19:30, 2 Chr 11:1; 19:11; 21:20; Isa 22:21; Jer 3:18, "House of Judah" in juxtaposition with "House of Israel", etc.

[234] For example, Jacob's other name, the collective designation of all twelve tribes, designation of the united monarchy (but not always, see Gelander 2011:13), designation of the Northern kingdom and the northern region, a name later used to refer to the north and the south after the fall of the Northern kingdom and the ethno-religious community in the Persian period, etc. See Linville 1998:43; Gelander 2011:8.

trans-local, trans-tribal community, as it often did in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, 1 Kings 1-11 and 1 Chronicles (1 Chr 9 to 2 Chr 9).[235] This is also true of some of the Prophetic texts, e.g. the Book of Hosea, where Israel is also often contrasted to or juxtaposed with Judah (Hos 2:2; 4:15; 5:5; 8:14; 12:1; also Amos 2:4 vs.2:6; Mic 1:5; Ezek 9:9; 25:3; 27:17 etc.).

How do we account for the lack of collective use of Israel in the historical accounts of the two kingdoms in the Hebrew Bible? One possibility is that, assuming that a pan-Israelite identity existed before the division of the two monarchies and that "Israel" first appeared as the appellation of all the Hebrew-speaking people, the stronger branch, i.e. the Northern kingdom, managed to monopolize the name "Israel" after the schism,[236] which was not only recognized by the Moabites, the Arameans and the Assyrians (see the reference to Sir'alaya in RIMA 3 A.0.102.2, line 92), but also accepted by the Southern kingdom and the authors of the Deuteronomistic History (Dannel 1946, Linville 1998:180). However, this interpretation does not fully explain the juxtaposition of Israel and Judah or the separate listing of Judah in accounts on periods before the division of the North and the South (e.g. 1 Sam 11:8; 1 Kings 4:20), when "Israel" could have served as the umbrella term for the entire Hebrew-speaking sociopolitical entity, including Judah. Alternatively, the name "Israel" might have referred solely to the Northern kingdom without an embedded collective sense until the downfall of the Northern kingdom, when "Israel" was preempted and gradually exploited by the southern

[235] It should be noted that even in narratives about the "tribal coalition" and the "united monarchy", "Israel" (even "all Israel") often refers to the Northern tribes only in contrast to Judah, most prominently in 1 Kgs 4:20. For Israel as an appellation of the Northern tribes only in such cases, see the analysis in Gelander 2011:6-13. Note particularly 2 Sam 2:9, where the territory under Ishbaal's rule is listed and named "all Israel" (יִשְׂרָאֵל כֻּלָּהּ), which excludes Judah.

[236] One should note that the war between the Benjaminites and the rest of the Israelites is recounted as the war between Benjamin and Israel in Judg 20:21-22, 24, as if Benjamin were not part of the collective concept of Israel. This is perhaps a case of the "majority" privilege regarding the use of the name "Israel" in biblical accounts.

kingdom that coveted the northern territory and reached mental reconciliation with the now defunct rival. Temporary union of the two, if it did occur, did not erase the divisions between the two entities, hence the contrast of Israel against Judah in narratives about the early united monarchy (cf. Gelander 2011:11-12). If so, Israel may have served, for a very short period of time, as the collective designation for a united polity, but soon regressed to its former status as an appellation for the Northern political entity.

Whatever its original sense, we see in the Books of Kings, which contain the richest information about the two polities, a general lack of an inclusive, collective usage of the term "Israel"--that is, as a term covering both the North and the South-- although Linville argues that in some cases, while it apparently refers to the Northern kingdom, a pun or at least a more inclusive reading might be justified (Linville 1998:180-91). The phrase "(Yahweh), God of Israel" which occurs over 40 times in the Books of Kings, is likely to be understood in the inclusive sense, that is, God of the entire Yahwistic community. However, even this interpretation depends on the assumption that Yahweh was indeed also "God of Judah", a phrase nowhere attested in biblical texts. In biblical accounts, of course, the South with its cultic center in Jerusalem is depicted as the more legitimate and more loyal Yahwistic community, with multiple references to "House of Yahweh" attested in relation to the Southern kingdom. Also, in 2 Kgs 11:17, Judah vows to be "People of Yahweh" (cf. Linville 1998:187). Even so, the phrase "(Yahweh) God of Israel" occurs in relation to Judah only after the fall of the Northern Kingdom.[237] Indeed, the fall of the Northern kingdom constitutes a crucial turning point in the meaning of "Israel" in biblical historical narratives.

[237] E.g. 2 Kgs 18:5; 19:15, 20; 21:12; 22:15, 18; see also "the Holy one of Israel" as Yahweh's epithet in stories about Judah, e.g. 2 Kgs 19:22. For the references and further discussion see Linville 1998:188.

After the fall of Samaria, Hezekiah, king of Judah launched his cultic reform in which "(H)e abolished the shrines and smashed the pillars and cut down the sacred post...broke into pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until that time the Israelites had been offering sacrifices to it (עַד־הַיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה הָיוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַטְּרִים לוֹ); it was called Nehushtan" (2 Kgs 18:4 TNK). Since the Northern "Israelites" have by now ceased to be an independent kingdom and have been exiled by the Assyrian Empire, here the term is either inclusive and comprehensive, covering both North and South, or refers specifically to the southerners instead. If so, for the first time, the subject of the Southern kingdom is designated as "Israelites" rather than Judeans.[238]

Before the fall of the Northern kingdom, few references showing Judah's original association with Israel are attested in biblical historiography. One indirect reference is 1 Kgs 18:31, in which the Northern prophet Elijah took twelve stones "according to the number of the tribes of the Sons of Jacob" to build an altar in his duel with Baal's prophets. The number 12 is suggestive of an "all Israel" tribal perspective (Cogan 2001:442; Thiel 2007:174), although Judah is not explicitly mentioned in this context. However, 1 Kgs 18:31-32 may be a later insertion, as v.30 speaks of Elijah having repaired Yahweh's altar, while in vv.31-32 he builds the altar again. In fact, Thiel (2007:174) dates the verses to the post-Exilic period on the basis of the quotation of Gen 35:5 in v. 31b. Whatever the date of the text,it does not seem an original part of the narrative, so that the significance of "12 tribes" in the legend of a 9th

[238] In the Books of Chronicles, which "Israel" still primarily refers to the Northern Kingdom, there is a slightly stronger tendency than Kings to use "Israel" to designate Judah. The majority of such cases also concentrate on narratives about the southern kingdom after the downfall of northern Israel (e.g.2 Chr 29:24; 30:5). Even then, it is not te norm to designate the surviving southern kingdom as "Israel" or to refer to the collective pan-Israelite identity, cf. 2 Chr 30:6. There are also occasional cases where Israel is used to designate Judah in episodes about the southern kingdom before the fall of Samaria, for no obvious reason, e.g. 2 Chr 12:5 and 6, where "officials of Judah" in v. 5 becomes "officials of Israel" in v.6 (these verses are not attested in the version in Kings). It is possible that in the period when the Chronicles was written the inclusive meaning of Israel became more prevalent.

century BCE Northern prophet is unclear.[239]

Another trace of the collective meaning of the name "Israel" possibly against the background of the divided monarchies is Mic 5:1. Here the 8th -century Judean prophet, who was active under Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, pronounces, following a section about the attack launched by Judah's enemies and their lack of success, that a future ruler will come forth from Bethlehem Ephrath, a small clan of Judah, to ruler over "Israel" (לִהְיוֹת מוֹשֵׁל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל). The term "Israel" in this verse obviously refers to the collective community consisting of both the North and the South. If so, the prophet is arguing that the Southern dynasty has legitimate, divinely sanctioned claim over a political entity named "Israel", perhaps in the collective sense of the name. It should be noted, however, that the date of this passage (Mic 5:1-3) is far from certain. Although Micah, who is quoted in Jer 26:18, is widely accepted as an 8th century prophet (Mic 1:1; Jer 26:18), no consensus exists regarding which parts of the book can be attributed to this prophet as his original work (see summary in Jenson 2008:96-99). The particular verse in question cannot be firmly dated, due to the lack of historical details and the general nature of its theological message (Mays 1976:112). The preceding section describes a situation of distress caused by foreign attack, which, as Jensen summarizes, "has been variously associated with the towns lost by Hezekiah to Sennecharib, the insults dealt him by the Assyrian spokesman (2 Kgs 18:13–27), the siege and exile of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 24:10–12) and the terrible fate of Zedekiah in 587 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 25:5–7)." (Jenson 2008:155) Some scholars have suggested that the subsequent reference

[239] In addition to this verse, in 2 Kgs 14:28 the text reads "(T)he other events of Jeroboam's reign, and all his actions and exploits, how he fought and recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kgs 14:28 TNK)" The meaning of "for Judah in Israel" (לִיהוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) is evasive and has sparked scholarly discussion. Cogan and Tadmor suggest that "for Judah" should be omitted and "in Israel" be changed to "for Israel" (see also the Syriac translation). All other suggestions seem overly speculative. See Cogan and Tadmor 1988:161-62. In any case, this curious phrase does no shed light on possible earlier associations between Israel and Judah.

to Assyria (e.g. Mic 5:4-5) may be a code-name for any world power of the period (Mays 1976:119). Therefore, this verse offers us little information about the status of the name "Israel" in relation to the southern polity in the period of the divided monarchies and may very well reflect theological and political traditions that became popular, again, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom.

In general, there is meager evidence in both biblical (e.g. the Deuteronomistic History) and extra-biblical evidence dating to or concerning the 9th and the early to mid- 8th centuries that "Israel" was ever understood as a collective concept that covered both the Northern Kingdom of this name and its neighbor to the south, Judah. This observation, to be sure, does not exclude the possibility that "Israel" did have such a function in the period of the co-existence of the two polities, but it does indicate that special links in the sociocultural between the two are not to be sought in "the naming of names".[240]

C. *Material culture*

Seeking an pan-Israelite ethnic identity in the archaeological evidence is a difficult and controversial task.[241] As in the case of Transjordanian kingdoms, it is plausible to suppose that widespread, pan-Levantine traits as well as common sources of external influence must have affected the material culture of Israel and Judan in the 9th and 8th centuries.[242] Against this background scholars have identified different styles and features that developed in each

[240] I will discuss below that in Hos 2:1-3 and 3:5, we may have 8th-century biblical evidence for the perception of Israel and Judah as two polities of one ethno-religious group that ought to become one political entity. However, even there the name "Israel" need not be understood as the inclusive descriptor of both the North and the South.

[241] For the complex relationship between archaeology and Israelite and Judean ethnicity, see Kletter 2006, where the author recognizes common features in the material culture which indicate that Israel and Judah may have constituted ethnic communities. Kletter (2006:585) does not explicitly argue that the two kingdoms belonged to one ethnic group with shared characteristics in material culture. See also Fleming 2012:251-52, where the author argues that it is difficult to seek ethnic distinctions in archaeological evidence in the Iron Age southern Levant, as efforts of self-distinction on ethnic grounds cannot be established.

[242] For instance, the production of figurines of goddesses, based in general on the Phoenician style (Mazar 1990:501-02). See also seal engravings on hard, sometimes precious stones with inscription and decorations, widely found in Aramean, Phoenician, Hebrew and Transjordanian circles (505-07).

polity. For example, Finkelstein reports that the settlement pattern and conceptual function of administrative centers in the Northern kingdom, such as Megiddo, are profoundly different from those of the administrative centers in the Southern kingdom, e.g. Beer-Sheva, Beth-Shemesh and Tell Beit Mirsim. The former more closely resembles the structure and characteristics of Late Bronze Age Canaanite administrative centers where large parts were devoted to public buildings and open areas and only limited areas had domestic functions, housing social and political elites. He believes that southern towns "were laid out according to a new architectural concept,[243] one which developed from local Iron I building traditions that developed mainly in the highlands" (Finkelstein 1999:46). This and other differences, e.g. the higher number of monumental buildings and luxury artefacts discovered in the North and often from an earlier date, may have derived from the closer connection of the Northern kingdom with Canaanite urban traditions and its more flourishing economy (Finkelstein 1999:46). As far as pottery is concerned, which may better reflect the development of local traditions, A. Mazar summarizes that different traditions developed in the North and the South in th 9th and 8th centuries. In the North, an inventory of pottery characterized by burnished red slip applied to bowls and jugs has been found in such sites as Hazor, Samaria and Tell el-Farʿah, in the 9th and the 8th centuries. In addition, Mazar identifies what he considers as genuine "Samaria Ware", i.e. "thick bowls with thick walls and a high foot, red slipped and burnished or in some cases black slipped". In the South, Mazar remarks that the development of pottery forms was slow and gradual. Characteristic in the Southern inventory is "a repetitive repertoire of shapes appearing throughout the kingdom in almost identical

[243] Exemplified, according to Finkelstein, by a peripheral belt of two-to-four room houses, a peripheral street and storehouses with pillars, features that first appeared at hill-country sites in the Iron Age I (by the middle of the 11th century). They also appear in Iron II towns in Judah often attributed to royal construction. See Finkelstein 1988:260.

form and production technique", particularly a the "wheel-burnished" (burnished while being turned on the potter's wheel) vessels with an orange -red slip that were dated to the 8th and the 7th centuries (A. Mazar 1990:508-09). Detailed differences in the art, such as the style of figurines of a goddess, also separate northern naturalistic statuettes from Judean "pillar figurines" (A. Mazar 1990:501-02).

In sum, it appears that Israel and Judah, while both belonging to the Levantine traditions, produced different stylistic characteristics in their material culture. Just as in the case of the Transjordanian polities, one cannot simply group the two cultures together just because of their similarities which they also shared with neighboring political and cultural entities. Similarities in this aspect were not indicators of special links between the North and the South.

D. Language and script of the Northern and the Southern polities

I have noted, in the section on the linguistic characteristics of the Transjordanian polities, that different polities and peoples in the Iron II southern Levant spoke languages that were closely related to one another. Different words might be preferred or dominant in certain languages, such as *kwn* and *pʿl* in Phoenician, and *hyh* and *ʿśh* in Hebrew, but in general these vernaculars, particularly those in Cis- and Transjordan, seem to share much in phonology, morphology and vocabulary. Against this background of overall similarity and intelligibility, differences in detail may have been felt by speakers from different regions (see the discussion on Transjordanian vernaculars above; also and particularly Garr 1985). What is unknown to us is whether these differences served as identity markers in the sociocultural or political senses. In the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, people from different towns and regions

most likely spoke with different accents and local peculiarities, with preferred forms and lexemes understood yet not necessarily used by non-locals (see again the "Shibboleth" episode in Judg 12:5-6). Some scholars have even argued for the existence of two distinct Hebrew dialects, one Northern, "Israelian" dialect, represented by the Samaria ostraca and other Northern epigraphic sources as well as biblical texts deemed to hail from the North, and one Southern, "Judean" form, represented by Southern epigraphic evidence and the majority of biblical texts (see especially Rendsburg 1999, 2000, 2003). Although the existence of different local vernaculars in the two kingdoms was most likely, we possess little data to propose exact regional divisions that account for systematic groupings of lexical, phonological and morphological differences, as one would expect in the dialectal study of contemporary languages. Examples of the Northern variety usually concern individual words and isolated attestations. What is worse, a Northern provenance of many biblical texts is not always straightforward and the reasoning may prove circular. Therefore, it is not clear that we can expect firmly to identify two major branches of the same language, supported by standardized separate scribal traditions and attested in texts clearly ascribable to different regions (e.g. as in the case of Babylonian and Assyrian varieties of Akkadian; cf. Pat-El's convincing discussion in Pat-El 2017). Pat-El has argued that some of the forms labeled as "Northern" do not occur consistently in inscriptions found at Northern sites.[244] Some of them are also found in biblical texts not considered "Israelian" but "Judean" by scholars advocating the existence of separate Northern and Southern dialects.[245] Therefore, one

[244] For instance, although the word "wine" is spelled as "*yn*" in the Samaria Ostraca, with the diphthong collapsed, the word "*byt*" (house) is found without the collapse in Tell Qasile 2.1. See Pat-El 2017:5.

[245] As Pat-El summarizes regarding the lexemes: "There are 30 lexemes of this type, for example עיר 'donkey' (IH Judg 10:4 / JH Isa 30:24), ערש 'bed' (IH Amos 3:12 / JH Ps 6:7), פעם 'foot' (IH Ps. 58:11 / JH 2 Kgs. 19:24). If a feature is not restricted to an assumed Israelian text, it is difficult to argue that it is specific to that dialect rather than being common

cannot define a Northern Hebrew dialect in contrast to a Southern dialect in a clear and unequivocal sense.

It is true that certain features might occur more consistently in Northern texts, such as the lexeme *št* ("year", not *šnh*) consistently attested in the Samaria Ostraca. Also, it is not impossible that the clustering of certain forms may be attested at a higher frequency in the North. However, we simply do not know the systematic characteristics of the Northern dialect. In fact, there might have been multiple dialects spoken across the North and the South, forming a dialect continuum, cutting across political boundaries.[246] No standard Northern Hebrew is attested, due in part to the lack of monumental inscriptions from the North. However, it is noteworthy that in the fragment of the only stele discovered from Samaria (8th century), the only preserved word is *ʾšr*, the "standard" relative particle (rather than *šeC*- in alleged Northern Israelian) in the biblical texts as well as Southern epigraphic sources (and the Mesha Stele) (Dobbs-Allsopp et al 2005:496-97; Ahituv 2008:257; Pat-El 2017:5). That it appears on a stele is noteworthy, as it suggests that the "official" form of Hebrew adopted by the Northern political elite for formal occasions may have been largely identical to Classical Biblical Hebrew.

In sum, it is likely that residents of the two kingdoms did not know two systematically distinct dialects. It should be noted that authors of the Hebrew Bible refers only to the "Judean" language (2 Kgs 18:26,[247] Neh 13:24), naming their language after their own polity.

Hebrew. Several lexical items on the list are morphologically or semantically expected forms. For example, the noun נאם 'speech' occurs hundreds of times in the Bible, but Rendsburg claims that when the speaker is human (e.g., Num. 24:3-4), the text is IH, rather than JH. The linguistic justification for this assumption is never offered." Pat-El 2017:44.

[246] Not unlike the situation of Bavarian and Alemmanic German, or the Shtokavian and Chakavian dialects of Serbo-Croation.

[247] Cogan and Tadmor (1988:232) suggest that here the language is contrasted to the language of the Northern Kingdom. However, this is by no means clear in the text.

There is no evidence to prove or disprove whether a Northerner's language was also considered as "Judean". In any case, linguistic division among Hebrew speakers, if it existed, was possibly not realized along the North-South political boundary.[248] However, equally unknown is whether a Northerner would "sound" like "one of us" in the South in contrast to someone from Moab, Ammon or Edom. In conclusion, one cannot judge whether linguistic issues were conducive or harmful to the the existence of a common identity shared by members of both the Northern and the Southern polities.

As far as the written forms of the language and the scripts are concerned, early inscriptions dating to the 11th- 10th centuries have been discovered both in the North and in the South. Texts dating to this early period, e.g. the Gezer Calender from the North (Ahituv 2008, 2013), the undeciphered inscription on a pithos from the Ophel of Jerusalem (E. Mazar, Ben Shlomo and Ahituv 2013) and several inscriptions recently discovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa (30 km. southwest of Jerusalem) (Galil 2009; Garfinkel, Golub, Misgav and Ganor 2015), were written in the Proto-Canaanite script without the later regional features. These texts themselves, in addition to other early inscriptions, also exhibit considerable differences in letter forms, letter stances, orthography and direction of writing, suggestive of no uniform, centralized scribal tradition despite a degree of basic similarities (see the chart in E. Mazar, Ben Shlomo and Ahituv 2013:46). Indeed, the exact linguistic affiliation of some of the texts cannot always be pinned down. For example, scholars have debated whether the language of the Gezer Calendar is Hebrew or Phoenician (e.g. I. Young 1992, Naveh 1997:76; Pardee 2013). The language of the Ophel pithos inscription cannot be determined, and the

[248] Note again features shared by both "Israelian" and "Judean" texts in the Bible. Cf. Pat-El 2017:16-22.

epigraphers have conjectured that the text might represent a non-Semitic language (Jebusite?) in 11th to 10th century Jerusalem (E. Mazar, Ben Shlomo and Ahituv 2013:47). However, one inscription found at Khirbet Qeiyafa in 2008, dated to the early 10th century (Galil 2009), shows a clustering of words and roots more commonly used in Hebrew than in Ugaritic, Phoenician and other Northwest Semitic languages (e.g. *ʿśh* vs. the Phoenician *pʿl*; for a detailed summary, see Galil 2009: 219-20). Important as it is for our understanding of early Hebrew epigraphy and the ethnic affiliation of the site Khirbet Qeiyafa, from a paleographic perspective it shows nothing "Hebrew", since the script is Old Canaanite and the inscription is written from the left to the right. We cannot consider this inscription as unequivocal evidence for centralized scribal activities conducted by one or more Hebrew-speaking polities.

During the early half of the "divided kingdom", it does seem reasonable to suggest that Israel and Judah shared a common script characterized, among others, by the curved leftward diagonals on the vertical stroke of *kaf*, *mem*, *nun* and *peh*, the semi-circular head of *waw* and the X-form of *taw* (Naveh 1997:66), as demonstrated by such 8th century sources as the Samaria ostraca from the North and the Siloam Tunnel Inscription from the South.[249] This Hebrew Alphabet was believed to have spread to neighboring Moab and Edom when the two

[249] Rollston (2006:65-67) notes that, although he recognizes two dialects of ancient Hebrew, the scribal tradition regarding the orthography of the two dialects remains consistent. He suggests that "here is a national Old Hebrew script; it is standardized and reflects synchronic consistency, in the face of diachronic development; and, in addition, it differs markedly from the national Phoenician script and the national Aramaic script. Ultimately, I would contend that the precision, meticulousness, and consistency of the Old Hebrew script (and its marked and consistent differences with the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts) are features that reflect formal, standardized scribal education".The synchronic consistency and diachronic developments within the Hebrew script is attested both in Northern and Southern texts, so that Pat-El understands Rollston's statement to mean that there was a single scribal tradition in ancient Israel and Judah. Pat-El 2017:5. The political, social and institutional backgrounds of the supposed single scribal tradition are not specified. Logically, if this interpretation is correct (at any rate, the commonness shared by northern and southern epigrahpic sources seems unmistakable), it may derive from past political unity, as biblical accounts suggest, or some sort of mechanism of cultural contact even after the "division". If so, a certain degree of shared cultural identity between the two is not to be excluded. Alternatively, it may also have been caused by southern political subjection to the north or the South's desire to imitate northern conventions. This does not contradict some sort of shared identity.

was under Israelite and Judean domination (Naveh 1997:101-05), which developed their own variety of the southern Transjordanian alphabet around the mid- 8th century (Herr 1980). Early inscriptions from Moab, such as the Mesha Stele and the inscription from Kir-Moab mentioning Kemoshyat, Mesha's father, are actually considered as typical presentations of the early stage of the Hebrew variety of the southern Levantine alphabet with discernible features of Hebrew writing (Naveh 1997:65).

Whether or not the rather plausible speculation about direction and cause of transmission reflects historical reality, the similarities shared by the script used in Israel, Judah, Moab and Edom from the 9th to the 8th centuries (and well into the 7th century in the case of Judean sources) indicate two important issues regarding the effect of the Hebrew script on Israelite and Judean identity in Iron Age II B and C: first, it does seem reasonable to suggest that Israel and Judah shared a common script (see above for representative features);[250] second, the spread of a basic form of this script to neighboring polities, such as Moab and Edom, and perhaps also the Philistine states (see Pottorf 2017), indicates that the script was perhaps more regional than "ethnic", at least in the 9th to the mid- 8th centuries. Or rather, it was the differences in details that served to differentiate one sub-branch from another. How this combination of commonness and dissimilarities operated in the context of the two

[250] Rollston (2006:65-67) notes that, although he recognizes two dialects of ancient Hebrew, the scribal tradition regarding the orthography of the two dialects remains consistent. He suggests that "here is a national Old Hebrew script; it is standardized and reflects synchronic consistency, in the face of diachronic development; and, in addition, it differs markedly from the national Phoenician script and the national Aramaic script. Ultimately, I would contend that the precision, meticulousness, and consistency of the Old Hebrew script (and its marked and consistent differences with the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts) are features that reflect formal, standardized scribal education". The synchronic consistency and diachronic developments within the Hebrew script is attested both in Northern and Southern texts, so that Pat-El understands Rollston's statement to mean that there was a single scribal tradition in ancient Israel and Judah. Pat-El 2017:5. The political, social and institutional backgrounds of the supposed single scribal tradition are not specified. Logically, if this interpretation is correct (at any rate, the commonness shared by northern and southern epigrahpic sources seems unmistakable), it may derive from past political unity, as biblical accounts suggest, or some sort of mechanism of cultural contact even after the "division". If so, a certain degree of shared cultural identity between the two is not to be excluded. Alternatively, it may also have been caused by southern political subjection to the north or the South's desire to imitate northern conventions. This does not contradict some sort of shared identity.

contemporaneous Hebrew-speaking polities in the period of their co-existence is unknown. Apparently, they shared largely the same script, which was certainly differentiated from the Aramaic and the Phoenician alphabets since the 9th century (Rollston 2006), while it remained identical or only mildly differentiated from the Moabite and the Edomite writing until the mid- 8th century at the earliest (Herr 1980:32-33). It is equally unclear how much weight residents, or perhaps the cultural and political elites, of either kingdom attached to the commonalities in the written form of their language(s) in relation to different neighbors, which certainly served as a medium for the transmission of political ideologies.

E. Yahweh as the "national" god in both Israel and Judah

As far as the religion(s) of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms are concerned, much of what has been said of the Transjordanian societies remains valid, e.g. the possible background of an El-led divine council, the existence of different deities as suggested by biblical accounts as well as epigraphic and onomastic data of both kingdoms and the possible presence of an elevated divine couple.[251] What distinguishes the situation in Israel and Judah from that of their Transjordanian neighbors is the status of Yahweh as the protector, representative and the supreme deity of both kingdoms, which constitutes the strongest piece of evidence substantiating undeniable special links between the two polities. This picture is not only established in biblical texts, where the North, particularly its political elites, is often depicted as disloyal to Yahweh,[252] but also verified by contemporary epigraphic and onomastic evidence discovered in northern and southern sites alike. In a study of such documents, Tigay concludes that in the corpus of over 1200 pre-exilic Israelite and Judean names (90% hailing

[251] E.g. "Yahweh and his Asherah" (Hadley 2000); see also the aforementioned figurines of the goddess supporting her breasts found both in Israel and Judah (and Transjordan) in A. Mazar 1990: 501-02; Stern 2002:248; 288.

[252] Some Southern rulers are also depicted as disloyal to Yahweh, especially Manasseh.

from the South) about half are theophoric, of which 557 are Yahwistic, 77 contains ʔEl or *ʔElî*,[253] while only 35 seem to refer to other deities. Within the last group, virtually no name explicitly contains deities of surrounding peoples, such as Chemosh, Milkom/Molech, Hadad, Melqart or Aššur,[254] apparently suggesting that these deities were considered by ancient residents of Israel and Judah as the representatives and protectors of "others", which concept hints at the "national" nature of the worship of Yahweh as well (for the statistical data see Tigay 1986: 9-13).[255] Tigay points out that the overall situation seems to indicate that practice of polytheism in pre-exilic Israel and Judah was not so widespread as biblical condemnation of the worship of other deities suggests, which he thinks is particularly true in Judah (Tigay 1986:36, 37-41).

However, even in the Northern kingdom, although one does find names bearing other deities, Yahwistic names are still the majority in theophoric names. According to Zadok's recent study, 44 out of the 84 pre-720 BCE names[256] found at Northern sites are theophoric, of which 30 are Yahwistic, 9 contain ʔEl, *mlk* and kinship terms, while only 5 names (all attested in the Samaria ostraca) have "Baal" as the theophoric element (Zadok 2015:176-78). As Tigay argues, even in the latter names it is not always certain that "Baal" designates the Canaanite deity, as it can also be interpreted as "Lord" and thus refer to Israel's own god (Tigay 1986:14; see Hos 2:18). That is to say, over 2/3 of the theophoric names in the 8th

[253] "El" as the theophoric element can be interpreted in different ways: 1. as a generic term for "god"; 2. as the god of the divine council in the Ugaritic and Canaanite pantheon; 3. El as a god already merged with Yahweh. It is difficult to judge which interpretation fits each name. In the case of "Elî", it seems to be more appropriate to understand "El" as a common noun for "god", as in the name אליהו (Elijah, "my god is Yahweh").

[254] In the Hebrew Bible a name possibly with the Edomite theophoric element is attested, i.e. Barqos in Ezra 2:53; Neh 7:55 (see above).

[255] For the rise of Yahwism and ancient Israel as a nation of Yahweh from the onomastic perspective, see also Sanders 2015.

[256] Most names should date to the last 3 generations before the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, thus reflecting the onomastic practice of the early to mid- 8th century BCE. Zadok 2015:165.

century Northern Kingdom are Yahwistic. In the Hebrew Bible, 7 out of 19 northern kings since the division of the monarchies have Yahwistic names, while others' names are usually non-theophoric or perhaps hypocoristic.[257] Baal is attested only in the second king of the Saulide Dynasty, Eshbaal/Ishboshet, who apparently ruled over the northern region and the East of Jordan while David established his reign in Judah (see 2 Sam 2:10). Therefore, it seems plausible to conclude that Yahweh was the major deity both of the North and of the South,[258] although in both regions other deities were also worshiped by certain members of society.

Just as in the case of the Transjordanian polities, religious and cultic affairs, including attempts at cultic centralization, are closely related to political institutions.[259]. In addition to biblical accounts that mention the state institutionalization of Yahwistic worship, it is again noteworthy that the Mesha Stele clearly describes Yahweh as the "national" deity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 9th century, fighting on behalf of its protegee and human representative (the Israelite ruler; see above). Therefore, while religious affairs can be categorized as a cultural factor in the broad sense, they certainly had far-reaching and substantial political implications in Israelite and Judean politics in relation to each other and to their neighbors.

---

[257] Two rulers are called Jeroboam ("may the uncle/people be great"), with the common West Semitic theophoric/kinship element עם, which does not indicate a particular relationship with a certain religious tradition. See Zadok 2015:162.

[258] Other calculations yield different exact figures but present more or less the same picture. For instance, Albertz and Schmitt report that they calculate 404 Hebrew theophoric personal names from 1978 epigraphic records with 28 different theophoric elements. 59.4% of all these theophoric names contain Yahweh as the theophoric element while "El" names account for 13.1% of all Hebrew theophoric names in their study. They report only 11 names with Baal (2.8% of all the theophoric names). They observe similar tendencies in Transjordan, where Chemosh appear in 37.9% of all Moabite theophoric names. I have discussed the status of "El" in Ammon, where theophoric names with El account for 67.8%. They also observe that the distribution of theophoric names suggests that polytheism seems more restricted in Israel, Judah, Moab and Ammon than in Phoenician and Aramean polities where names with primary gods account for a lower percentage of theophoric names (Edom is not included in hi statistics due to the smaller number of names. For Qos in Edomite names, see above). Albertz and Schmitt 2012:340-44.

[259] For the relationship between the national god and the royal ideology of ancient Israel and Judah, see M. Smith 2001:157-63.

F. Summary

It is clear from the preceding discussion that special links between Israel and Judah in the sociocultural sense can be safely sought only in the religious aspect. Other links which point to common ethnicity may have been felt by ancient Israelites and Judeans, such as shared legends about common ancestry, linguistic similarities, artistic commonness, etc. (cf. Miller 2008:174-75), yet there is no firm, unambiguous evidence of the existence of such awareness. As I have discussed, external references to Israel and Judah when the two are listed side by side does not assume any special link between the two polities, so that the juxtaposition may very well derive from geographical and political factors only. The (self-)designations of Israel and Judah also present a complex picture, since it is not clear where in biblical and extra-biblical historical contexts the appellations "Israel", "Sons/House of Israel" and "(Sons) of Jacob" designated a collective, pan-Israelite identity that also included Judah. To be sure, linguistic similarities are significant, and it is likely that the North and the South shared a high degree of linguistic similarities and perhaps the same scribal tradition, so much so that distinct regional variations cannot be detected along the North-South political border. However, one should ask again, as in the case of Transjordanian polities, to what extent a linguistic identity of the Hebrew-speakers could be securely established against the background of the large number of shared features of all Canaanite languages in the Iron Age southern Levant. In sum, our only evidence that the "one nation-two polities" situation as indicated in the biblical accounts of the history of the Northern and the Southern kingdoms after the schism might be not too far removed from reality lies in the religious domain, namely, the fact that different social strata of both Israel and Judah seemed

to have worshiped Yahweh as their state deity. This is suggested not only by references to Yahweh as Israel's patron deity in the Mesha Stele, but also by the widespread Yahwistic names in onomastic sources from both the North and the South dated to the 9th[260] to the 7th centuries.

While some scholars consider biblical accounts of the "sister kingdoms" of Israel and Judah largely as literary invention (e.g. Finkelstein and Silberman 2001; Na'aman 2007a:30), we must account for the fact the two kingdoms very likely shared the same patron deity. The origin and historical background of shared traditions about the elevation of Yahweh in both kingdoms, to be sure, is an exceedingly complex issue. Whatever the origin, however, it is not too far-fetched to suppose that peoples who considered the same deity as their major protector would feel some sort of special connections between them. In the Iron II these peoples in Palestine were surrounded by neighbors who worshiped other gods that demonstrated particular links with their peoples. It is thus not impossible that Israelites and Judeans, whatever their earlier relations, could have derived some sort of common identity from a common patron god. This sentiment of special links could have spread from the religious domain to other aspects of culture, including the fabrication of a common past. Finally, similar artistic and linguistic characteristics retained from a common Levantine or West Semitic stock, at the very least constituted no hindrance to such a process. In short, "one nation-two polities" might be too strong a term, but "cultural similarities shared by two political groups" would not be too distant from the reality of Iron II Israel and Judah.

[260] Epigrahpic evidence from the Southern Kingdom is admittedly scarce before the late 8th century, but one can refer to the partly preserved "-*yhw*" in the name of ruler who is possibly labeled "king of the House of David" in the Tel Dan Stele (line 8), which suggests that Yahwism was probably in practice in the South, at least among the political elite, already in the late 9th to early 8th centuries. For the dating of the Tel Dan Stele in Athas 2003:174 on paleographic grounds and Younger's recent discussion of Hazael's reign in relation to this inscription. Younger 2016:592ff. For the rise of Yahwism see also Sanders 2015.

To further our understanding of the so-called "one nation-two polities" concept, or the construction of such a mentality, we need to return to biblical accounts. In historical narratives and prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible, the special relationship of Israel and Judah as sister states that used to be one united political and cultural entity is recounted in a matter-of-fact manner. These biblical accounts reveal both special religious, kinship and other cultural connections and how such links came to reshape the authors' understanding of the bilateral relations of the two neighboring kingdoms. After the fall of the North, as I will examine briefly, former cultural ties, real or imagined, continued to contribute to the Southern view of Israel as their kin and the Israelite territory as their ancestral land, leading eventually to the formation of the Judean/Israelite "national identity" in the post-exilic period.

Biblical views on "one nation-two polities"

1. Israel and Judah in biblical historiography of the divided kingdoms

A. "Brothers"

The term "brothers" and the concept of "brotherhood" have been at the center of ancient Near Eastern concepts of inter-polity relations since the 3rd millennium. In the field of international relations, the kinship concept of "brotherhood" denotes the status of an ally, i.e., a peaceful relationship between two or more parties on an equal footing (Liverani 1990;197-202; Podany 2010). A system of brotherhood of regional powers is typical of the Late Bronze Age, when "great kings" of Egypt, Babylonia, Hatti, Mitanni (occasionally Alashiya) and later Assyria addressed each other as "brother", while local Levantine kings belonged to lower rank in the international hierarchy. In the Iron Age, although the rise of one superpower, such as the Neo-Assyrian Empire, fundamentally changed the earlier

international system of equal powers and weakened the "brotherhood" concept, the employment of "brother" by one ruler to his counterpart in international correspondence did not disappear completely for two reasons: on the one hand, despite its monocentric rhetorics, the Neo-Assyrian Empire at least temporarily treated some large and powerful polities as nominal equals, a phenomenon I will briefly investigate in Chapter 5. On the other hand, smaller polities in and beyond the Levant formed their own regional international system in which allies of equal status could still address each other as "brothers". For instance, in a letter (ca.840 BCE) from Marduk-apla-uṣur, the largely independent ruler of Suhu, to Rudamu/Urtamis, king of the northern Levantine kingdom of Hamath, the former calls himself "your brother" (ŠEŠ-*ka-a*, line 2) and addresses the recipient "my brother" (ŠEŠ-*ia-a*, line 4; Parpola 1990). In addition, the political connotation of "brotherhood" is also preserved in letters by Neo-Assyrian officials to other political figures considered to belong to the same rank (Luukko 2012). This usage of "brother" is also preserved in some biblical accounts, e.g., 1 Kgs 9:13 (Hiram calling Solomon "my brother", "אָחִי") and 1 Kgs 20:32, 33 (Ahab and Ben Hadad[261]).

Individuals addressing each other as brothers in such letters are certainly not considered

[261] This episode (1 Kgs 20) narrates the Aramean invasion of the Northern Kingdom. At the beginning of the narrative, Ahab addresses Ben Hadad as "my lord" and agrees to pay tribute. (v.4) When the Arameans were defeated by Ahab, the proposed hierarchical relationship is reversed as Ben Hadad offers to surrender and calls himself "your servant" (v.32), while Ahab calls him "my brother", raising his defeated enemy to an equal level, which is soon accepted by the Aramean side "Yes, Ben-hadad is your brother." (1Kgs 20:33 TNK) The account ends with the treaty between Israel and Damascus in Israel's favor (the previous unequal relationship is now terminated, with Israelite cities occupied by Aram returned and Israel given the privilege to set up markets in Damascus; v.34). See Thiel 2000-2019:426. biblischer kommentar altes testament.

Cogan argues that Damascus is not relegated to the status of a vassal (as indicated by the diplomatic term "brother"), so that the "markets" (חוּצוֹת) to be established in Damascus by Israel should not be understood as the trading colonies (*kāru*) set up by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in conquered territories. Instead, the item means that Damascus is forced to lift the restraints on foreign traders so that Israelite traders can enter this important hub of international trade. Cogan 2001:469. However, in v.34 it is revealed that when Israel was a vassal during Ben Hadad's father's reign, Damascus was allowed to set up markets in Samaria. Apparently, this privilege serves as the marker of overlordship. It is unclear whether the Damascene markets continue to exist after this new treaty. In general, long-term, dynamic equality between Israel and Damascus is restored by the current, temporary unequal relationship resulting from one battle. Ahab's refusal to assume formal overlordship demonstrates his diplomatic tactics, since his victory was won only in a defensive war which cannot be equated with the conquest of Damascus.

to be biological brothers sharing common ancestry. Instead, the meaning of the terminology is metaphorical, stressing friendly and equal relations. Indeed, when one party wants to deny either element of the relationship, he would resort to rejecting the metaphor. This is the case in the widely cited letter from a Hittite king to the Assyrian king, who has addressed the former as a "brother" in an earlier letter.[262] In this letter, the Hittite king reluctantly accepts the Assyrian king's status as a "great king", which derives from Assyria's power now undeniably on par with other powerful kingdoms. Yet agreeing to be addressed as a "brother" assumes goodwill between two equal actors, which is naturally not always granted by the other party (Liverani 1990:200).

In the Hebrew Bible, however, while the word "brother" (אח) also has this political meaning of "equal partners" without assumed kinship ties whatsoever (see 1 Kgs 9:13; 20:32-33), it seems also to denote another type of relationship between different political entities or peoples, that is, between two groups considered to belong to one and the same ethnic entity that are involved in collaborative[263] or even hostile political acts. Here the kinship overtone of the term "brother" does not appear to be metaphorical, but instead

---

[262] "Why should I write to you in (terms of) brotherhood? Who writes to another in brotherhood - are not friends who write each other in brotherhood? Why should I write to you in brotherhood? Are we perhaps sons of the same mother? Since my father and my grand-father did not write to the king of Assyria in brotherhood, so you too do not write to me in brotherhood." (KUB XXIII 102: I 10-19; cited in Liverani 1990:200)

[263] For instance, in Judg 1:3 and 1:17, Judah invites Simeon, "his brother," to join him in their war against the Canaanites. Here the two tribes are described as two individuals (with singular verbal forms and pronouns), each of whom each has his own tribal territory. According to Josh 19:1 and 19:9, the allotted territory of Simeon is located in the midst of Judah's lot. Also, the individuals Judah and Simeon, according to Genesis, were sons of the same mother, Leah, so that they are full brothers. Sasson suggests that, although the literal meaning of "brother" seems to be dominant in our understanding of this story, the political metaphor of "brother" which demonstrates the equality of both sides in power and prestige may also be at work here, as Judah and Simeon are particularly close in Hebrew traditions. Sasson 2014:127. However,it should be noted that the passage does not concern the bilateral relationship between Judah and Simeon as two tribal entities. Therefore, the literal meaning, or rather, the kinship connotation, is more prominent in this case. Judah and Simeon are called brothers not because they are equal partners with peaceful diplomatic ties, but because they are both constituent tribes of "Israel", belonging to the same ethno-religious entity.

This concept of "brotherhood" between two tribal or ethnic entities is not limited to Israelite tribes in the Hebrew Bible, as Deut 23:8 orders the Israelites not to abhor an Edomite, "for he is your brother" (כִּי אָחִיךָ הוּא). Cf. also Num 20:14, which occurs in a context of diplomacy (Moses and Israel asking for the Edomite king's permission in order to enter his territory). However, it is unlikely that the term here denotes an "ally", as the Edomite king's flat rejection of thee request indicates. For the biblical concept of Israel-Edom/Jacob-Esau brotherhood and the post-exilic date of most sources attesting to such a concept, see B. Dicou 1994:167-81.

something based on factual or imagined kinship ties between these entities.

As far as hostile "brothers" are concerned, in biblical accounts entities considered to have ethnic and cultural connections can engage in political and military confrontations among themselves, while being still designated as "brothers". Here the peaceful connotations of "brother" in Near Eastern diplomatic documents fully disappear. For example, again within the tribal framework of pre-Monarchic Israelites according to Judges, the Benjaminites are called the "brothers" of (the rest) Israel throughout the account of the hostility between the two sides, which was provoked by the infamous abuse and murder of the Levite's concubine in Gibeah. In Judg 20:13, the "sons of Benjamin" did not wish to yield to the demand of "their brothers, Sons of Israel" (אֲחֵיהֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) to surrender the rapist murderers of the concubine. Later, when the war broke out between Benjamin and the rest of Israelite tribes, the Israelites had to inquire of Yahweh when Benjamin inflicted upon them a substantial defeat: "Shall we again join battle with our kinsmen (lit. "Sons of Benjamin, my brother", בְּנֵי בִנְיָמִן אָחִי) the Benjaminites? (Judg 20:23 TNK; see also v. 28)" The battles between Benjamin and the other Israelite tribes are largely depicted as the military conflicts between any independent actors, with different names (consistently recounted as the war between "Benjamin" and "Israel", e.g. 20:20-22, 24), which incurred heavy loss on the defeated side, e.g. the near extinction of the Benjaminites (e.g. 20:48). However, despite all this cruelty, Benjamin is considered a "brother", whose defeat and extinction were later mourned as the loss of "Israel" in the collective sense: "The Israelites now relented toward their kinsmen (lit. "Benjamin, his brother", "בִּנְיָמִן אָחִיו"), the Benjaminites, and they said, 'This day one tribe has been cut off from Israel!' (Judg 21:6 TNK)" Niditch (2008:203)

points out that the Benjaminites' refusal to cooperate with the demand of their "brother", the Israelites (20:13b), to surrender the rapist murderers demonstrates that "loyalty to a pan-Israelite entity, also acknowledged and described literally as 'their brothers' or kin, is less important to them than loyalty to their more immediate kin." One may further argue that the centrality of the pan-Israelite identity resurfaces as the major motif in Judg 21 about the restoration of the tribe of Benjamin by means of forced intermarriage with women from other Israelite tribes. The restored Benjaminite tribe would then remain the kin or brother of the entire Israel.

This usage of "brother" is also attested in stories about the early monarchy, in which the division between the North and the South serves as the background for certain conflicts. One such case is the civil war between Ishbaal and David, which was clearly fought along the North-South division, despite the formal unity of Saul's kingdom.[264] In 2 Sam the troops of Ishbaal (under Abner) encountered the troops of David (under Joab) at Gibeon and engaged in a deadly battle, in which Abner urges Joab to order his soldiers to terminate the war, while Joab accuses Abner of the culprit who caused the hostility. Both commanders appear to call the opposite troops "brothers". In the MT of v. 26, Abner asks, "(H)ow long will you delay ordering your troops to stop the pursuit of their kinsmen (lit. "their brothers", אַחֵיהֶם)?"[265] (2 Sam 2:26 TNK), while in v. 27 Joab claims that without Abner's provocative remarks, the troops would have refrained from pursuing each other (lit. "man from behind his brother",

[264] Finkelstein, for instance, argues that the Saulide polity was a North Israelite polity all along, to be dated to the 10th century, so that it competed with, rather than preceded the Jerusalem polity in the South. See Finkelstein 2013:37-61.

[265] Septuagint has "our brothers" (τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν). Auld suggests that the Septuagint might reflect an older Hebrew version of the text that predates the predecessor of the MT. Auld 2011:4-7. If so, "our brothers" would simply mean "my troops", indicating no "brotherhood" recognized by both sides.

אִישׁ מֵאַחֲרֵי אָחִיו) from the morning.[266] Apparently, the two sides with different allegiances now at war with each other still recognize each other as "brothers". A more certain case of this usage of "brothers", referring to Israel and Judah within the framework of the united monarchy, occurs in 2 Sam 19:42, where "all the men of Israel" question why "men of Judah, our brothers" would "steal" the king by bringing David and his entourage back the West of the Jordan, as they were "the first to propose that our king be brought back" (2 Sam 19:44 TNK; see vv. 10-12). Despite the clear animosity in the exchange of words (vv.42-44), which may be due to the anticipation of political privilege in the restored rule of David, and despite the clear division between Israel and Judah in narratives about the early monarchy in general (cf. Gelander 2011:6-13), the other ten tribes of "Israel" (in the collective sense; see "ten shares" in v.44, "עֶשֶׂר־יָדוֹת לִי בַּמֶּלֶךְ"; Auld 2011:560) are still presented as calling "Judah" "our brothers". This call upon kinship, however, is meant to stress this group's close political link with David, which is soon refuted by the Judeans claim of closer kinship ties with the king[267] (v.43).

This concept of brotherhood as something shared by members of a larger, collective entity, whether tribes of pre-monarchic Israel or Israel and Judah in the early monarchic period, is also reflected in narratives about the divided kingdoms. In such contexts, it is two neighboring polities, each with its own territory, capital, troops and geopolitical interests, which are depicted as "brothers", not in the sense of an equal ally, but instead in the sense of a ethnically and culturally related adversary. As I pointed out above, the two sides had no

---

[266] This phrase may not be a significant piece of evidence for brotherhood between Israel and Judah in times of hostility, as it is possible that the phrase simply means "each other". Cf. Joel 2:8a: וְאִישׁ אָחִיו לֹא יִדְחָקוּן גֶּבֶר בִּמְסִלָּתוֹ יֵלֵכוּן.

[267] "Because the king is our relative! (lit. "Because the king is close to me." כִּי־קָרוֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלַי)" (2 Sam 19:43 TNK) The word "קָרוֹב" often denotes closeness in family and kinship relations, e.g. Lev 21:2; 25:25; Num 27:11. See more in *HALOT*, "קָרוֹב".

qualms about waging wars against each other according to biblical accounts (e.g. 1 Kgs 14:30; 15:16) over territorial conflicts, sometimes annexing towns on the other side (2 Chr 13:19). Within the regional international system, no special alliance based on beliefs and myths about common kinship seems to have existed between Israel and Judah. In fact, the two apparently signed treaties with non-Hebrew polities and would not hesitate to ally themselves with the latter against the other Hebrew kingdom. For example, Asa of Judah, in the face of Israelite threats, bribes Ben Hadad king of Aram-Damascus to renew the treaty between Judah and Damascus while abolishing the latter's treaty with Basha of Israel (1 Kings 15:17-19; 2 Chr 16:1-10). The Syro-Ephraimite war in the late 8th century (1 Kings 16:5-9) is a most illuminating example of how the interstate warfare between the North and the South features against the background of Assyrian imperial intervention in the West, when Ahaz of Judah offered to become Assyria's vassal in exchange of the latter's military aid against Israel and Aram (2 Kings 16:5-9). And Ahaz did this, because Israel had joined Aram against its Hebrew counterpart, Judah. On the other hand, biblical historiography sometimes does attempt to weave the consciousness of commonness and kinship into accounts of North-South relations, sometimes referring to the "brotherhood" concept. Gottwald is certainly right to observe that "Samuel-Kings and Chronicles sometimes depict the feuds between the North and the South as 'a family quarrel'" (Gottwald 2001: 74), beyond the actual intermarriage between the two royal families recounted by biblical authors (2 Kgs 8:26-27). For instance, when Rehoboam prepares his assault of the Northern tribes who just seceded from the Davidic kingdom, the prophet Shemaiah warns Judean forces not to engage in battle with the

“your brothers, Sons of Israel” (אֲחֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, 1 Kgs 12:24).[268] Likewise, the Chronicler’s account of Syro-Ephramite war reports the prophet Oded’s intervention with Israel’s massacre and plunder of Judeans, again addressing the Southerners as Israel’s “brothers” (2 Chr 28:8, 11). Israel’s maltreatment of the Judeans is considered outrageous by Oded, a prophet in Samaria (v.9):

> “Now then, listen to me, and send back the captives you have taken from your kinsmen (lit. “your brothers”, אֲחֵיכֶם), for the wrath of the LORD is upon you!” (2 Chr 28:11 TNK)

Judah, like the Sons of Israel themselves, is subject to the same deity’s judgment which has caused Israelite defeat of Judah (as a punishment, see v.9) and now prohibits the North from committing further atrocities against the South, for according to Oded and the Chronicler they are “brothers”.[269] Japhet points out that this idea is in line with the Chronicler’s overall notion that the North is an integral part of the collective concept of “Israel” (Japhet 2003:353).

These two passages likely date to the post-exilic period (see Noth 1983:279-80 and E. Knauf 2016:379 on 1 Kgs 12:21-24; for the date of Chronicles see Kalimi 2011), when the pan-Israelite identity is stressed in narratives about earlier periods, as I will demonstrate below. Also, both texts deal with major crises in North-South relations, i.e. the schism itself, and the Syro-Ephraimite war in which the North, in alliance with a non-Hebrew power,

---

[268] Israel and Judah are not called “brothers” again in the Books of Kings. The content of 1 Kgs 12:21-24 suggests that these verses form a separate passage. For instance, while v.20 claims that only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to Rehoboam, v.21 says that both Judah and Benjamin followed the Southern king. (cf. v.24u, the addition in the Septuagint, which also reports that “and there follow him the whole tribe of Juda, and the whole tribe of Benjamin.”) For M. Noth, the juxtaposition of Judah and Benjamin does not reflect Judean occupation of Benjamin at the beginning of the divide kingdoms period, but instead the post-exilic reality that the community then consisted of Judahies and Benjaminites (cf. Ezr. 1:5; 4:1; 10:9; Neh 11:4; 11:2531; 11:36). The passage is thus dated by Noth to the post-Exilic period. See Noth. 1983:279-80.See also E. Knauf 2016:379, where this passage is considered as a post-Chronicle addition.

[269] Later in the story these Judean captives are sent back to their “brothers” at Jericho, here likely referring to fellow Southerners. (v.15)

inflicted heavy losses on the South. In the eyes of later historians seeking to justify "national" unity when Judeans returned to Jerusalem under Persian rule, such events marking North-South antagonism may have required revision and reinterpretation, calling upon the perceived brotherhood of the two polities not otherwise attested in Kings. Yet it is exactly such possible ideological reworking of historical accounts that highlights the significance of kinship terms as a helpful means of expounding complex biblical concepts of the role of cultural identity in North-South relations and international relations in general.[270] In the end, the presentation of Israel and Judah as polities with a common cultural identity is not limited to such late sources. As Gottwald summarizes, "Samuel-Kings have grasped the fundamental point of a shared identity that, although unable to sustain political union, nevertheless endured amid political divisions and, at the same time, endlessly complicated those divisions" (Gottwald 2001: 75).

B. "Like my people, like your people"

The phrases "Like me, like you; like my people, like your people; like my horses, like your horses" (כָּמֹונִי כָמֹוךָ כְּעַמִּי כְעַמֶּךָ כְּסוּסַי כְּסוּסֶיךָ 1 Kgs 22:4) and its variant occur in three biblical passages: 1 Kgs 22:4 and its variant in 2 Chr 18:3 as well as 2 Kgs 3:7 (cf. Ruth 1:17, "עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי"). All three passages pertain to the military alliance of Israel under Ahab and his successor Jehoram and Judah under Jehoshaphat. Under the reign of Jehoshaphat (872-848 BCE), the hostile relations that had existed between Judah under Jehoshaphat's father Asa and its northern neighbor were replaced by military alliance with financial goals

[270] Israel and Judah are also compared to siblings in contexts of international relations as the general background, though not pertaining to their bilateral relations. A well-known example is Ezekiel's prophetic tirade against Samaria and Jerusalem is also noteworthy, in which the two Hebrew kingdoms are compared to as "sisters" married to the same deity, who contaminated the relationship with their short-sighted engagement with imperial powers. (Ezek 23; see Gottwald 1964: 304-06) As in 2 Chr 28, kinship terms are here intertwined with shared religio-cultural identity in the context of international relations.

between the two polities. At this time, Judah itself also became an important geopolitical player in the region, as supported by textual and archaeological evidence (cf. McKinny 2016:158). In 1 Kgs 22:4 and 2 Chr 18:3, Jehoshaphat responds to Ahab's invitation to launch an attack against Ramoth-Gilead now in the hands of Damascus by emphasizing that the two rulers, peoples and troops (horses) are like one; in other words, Jehoshaphat agrees to join the expedition. Although the occurrence of "עם" in his remarks bears a strong "kinship" overtone, the story as a whole hardly indicates special kinship ties or cultural relations between Israel and Judah. When Ahab claims that Ramoth-Gilead used to belong to "us"(22:3), he was speaking to "his servants", i.e. officials of the Northern Kingdom, rather than a joint Israelite-Judean group of officials. Also, the term עם, as I discussed in Chapter 2, can often denote "troops" (hence the TNK translation, "my troops shall be your troops"), which would befit the military context of current verse and of the following verse: "my horses as your horses" (v.4). This last phrase, notably, is omitted in 2 Chr 18:3, replaced by "I will be with you in the war", which changes the reply in 1 Kgs 22:4 to a more direct answer to Ahab's question in the same verse: "Will you go with me to ..." (Japhet 2003:225-26). It is not inconceivable that the deletion of "horses" may have been an attempt to downplay the military sense of עם, so that the kinship or even "national" links between the divided kingdoms are heightened, which tendency is well represented elsewhere in the Chronicles (e.g. 2 Chr 28:8, 11). However, since the military context of the whole passage remains unchanged, this interpretation is speculative at best.

The other attestation of the phrases in almost identical wording in 2 Kgs 3:7 has Moab as a new target of joint military expedition. It cannot be excluded that this passage is modeled

on the earlier episode. One may argue that special cultural links between the North and the South are not assumed by these phrases, since Edom, perhaps a vassal polity of Judah at this time, is also part of the coalition, too (v.9). However, a closer reading of vv. 7-9 suggests that the phrase "like my people, like your people" applies first and foremost to Israel and Judah (v.7), with Edom mentioned only later with regard to the route to be taken by the Israelite-Judean troops (v.8). Therefore, cultural links may still be at work in this story.

In sum, it is possible that this phrase is in general political in nature (through political intermarriage), whether the relative status of Israel and Judah is unequal (with Judah serving as the obedient vassal; Cogan and Tadmor 1988:44) or equal (McKinny 2016:50; 158). Mutual defensive obligations against common enemies, after all, are widely attested in Near Eastern treaties,[271] and there is no reason to assume that the two parties involved always shared imagined kinship ties. Even so, the wording of the phrase under discussion, especially the use of the term עם, indicates that it cannot be excluded that cultural links between Israel and Judah are intended by the biblical authors.

2. *Israel and Judah as one "nation" in pre-exilic prophecy: a Northern perspective*

Historical accounts in the Hebrew Bible that describe Israel and Judah as two sociopolitical entities sharing special ties, either with or without formal political unity, may date to different periods, so that it is not easy to trace the emergence and development of the biblical notion that Israel and Judah co-existed as sister states culturally related to each other despite recurring warfare. It has been suggested that this notion of North-South ties first appeared in the South after the fall of the Northern kingdom, as Judah under Josiah sought to

[271] E.g. K4/E.6 to E.8 in the Egyptian version and E.6 to E.9 in the Akkadian version of the treaty between Ramesses II and Hattusili III.

legitimize their claim on former Northern territory after the retreat of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (cf. Liverani 1992). However, do we have any evidence in the Hebrew Bible that hints at the earlier existence of some sort of cultural and political connections between the Northern and Southern kingdoms? To be sure, both pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets tend to consider both kingdoms as being subject to Yahweh's judgment and custody,[272] which well befits the picture of widespread Yahwism in both polities reflected among others by the onomastic data in epigraphic and biblical evidence. What we are looking for here is more explicit reference in pre-exilic sources to the assumption that, because of the religious and other perceived links between Israel and Judah, cultural and political unity is expected.

One possible, though by no means certain, example, is the Book of Hosea, which is usually assigned to a Northern prophet active in the mid- to late 8th century BCE. It is widely accepted that many of the messages in Hosea do engage with the politics of his time, thus possibly dating prior to the fall of the Northern Kingdom (see the summary in Moughtin-Mumby 2011). In this prophetic book, two passages indicating North-South ties are noteworthy:

The number of the people of Israel shall be like that of the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted; and instead of being told, "You are Not-My-People," they shall be called Children-of-the-Living-God. The people of Judah and the people of Israel (בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) shall assemble together (וְנִקְבְּצוּ בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יַחְדָּו) and appoint one head (רֹאשׁ אֶחָד) over them; and they shall rise from the ground -- for marvelous shall be the day of Jezreel! Oh, call your brothers "My

[272] For instance, Amos, a Judean prophet from the 8th century, prophesies primarily against the sins of the Northern kingdom, which is called "Yahweh's people" (7:15). In Amos 7:12-17 a priest of Bethel, the Northern cultic center, actually urges Amos to leave Israel for Judah and "eat bread" in Judah. Amos responds by stressing that he was sent by Yahweh to prophesy to god's people (v.15). As for post-exilic prophecy that considers both Israel and Judah as Yahweh's people, see again Ezek 23, for example.

People," and your sisters "Lovingly Accepted!" (Hos 2:1-3 TNK)

Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the LORD their God and David their king -- and they will thrill over the LORD and over His bounty in the days to come. (Hos 3:5 TNK)

These verses in their final forms obviously convey a clear message about the author's assumption of preexisting special connections between Israel and Judah, not only with regard to religion, as the prophecy itself is a religious message from Yahweh, the god worshiped both in the North and in the South, but perhaps also with regard to kinship links.[273] Moreover, these verses explicitly predict the political unification of the North and the South. In 3:5, in particular, seeking Yahweh and David, the king of the United Monarchy, are to be understood as the two facets of "national" reunion: reaffirmed religious unity and the merger of two polities into one (also 2:2) as in David's time.[274]

The crucial question is of course the the date of the verses and whether they are original to the Book of Hosea. There is no linguistic or historical feature in these verses that demands a later date. Therefore, any attempt to interpret these verses as later Judean additions (e.g. Buss 1969: 34) is based solely upon the content and preconceived assumptions about Hosea's theology as well as the history of ancient conceptions of North-South relations, of which we unfortunately have no direct knowledge. References to Judah in relation to Israel are frequently made in Hosea's messages (see below), so such references alone hardly indicate

[273] Freedman and Andersen (1980:202, 207) argue that the term "Sons of Israel" in Hos 2:1 and 2 must refer to the collective entity of whole "Israel", as the promise in this verse (offspring numerous as sands the sea) goes back to Abram/Abraham (Gen 22:17) and Jacob (Gen 32:13). They also postulate that Lo-Ruhama and Lo-Ammi represent Israel and Judah in this passage, while Jezreel "stands for the original and future nation of the united tribes". These interpretations are indeed speculative, but the connection between the "sands" metaphor and "descendants" does hint at kinship ties. The phrase "sands of the sea" itself, however, need not refer to all Israel, as it is also attested in relation to the Northern Kingdom only (Isa 10:22, see J. Roberts 2015:170) and the Davidic Dynasty (if it refers more directly to Judah), e.g. Jer 33:22.

[274] It should also be noted that these two passages are the only two from the fourteen passages about kingship in Hosea that treat kingship positively (Machinist 2005:162). As Machinist observes, Hosea as a whole does not consider kingship an inherently negative institution. Instead, as an institution to be guided by Yahweh, kingship could be considered positive. It seems that positive kingship in these two verses happens to be the kingship of a trans-tribal, united rulership projected to the future and the past (that is, under David). Cf. Machinist 2005:180-81. For the originality of the verses, see below.

Southern or later origin of the passages (Kelle 2005:215-16).

Various scholars have recognized 2:1-3 to be essentially original to Hosea's prophecy. E. Jacob et al have argued that the call for "national" unification befits the historical background of the prophecy which was made after the Syro-Ephramite war, in which Israel and Judah were engaged in fratricidal conflict (E. Jacob et al 1965:25). Mays suggests that, even if the verses do not derive from Hosea himself, its various references to other motifs and traditions that are more certainly attributable to the prophet indicate that they originate from Hosea's time and his prophetic circle, e.g. the motif of the cessation of Israel's growth (4:10; 9:12, 16; 14:1) and the hostility between Israel and Judah as the cause of divine wrath (5:8-14; Mays 1969:31). Wolff notes a few points that separate Hos 2:1-3 from exilic or post-exilic prophecies that advocate for the reunion of Israel and Judah. For example, in Hos 2:2 the Sons of Israel and the Sons of Judah will simply "assemble" (וְנִקְבְּצוּ) without having to be brought back by Yahweh from foreign lands to their homeland (Wolff 1990: 31), as in Ezek 37:21: "I am going to take (לֹקֵחַ) the Israelite people from among the nations they have gone to (מִבֵּין הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ־שָׁם), and gather (וְקִבַּצְתִּי) them from every quarter, and bring them (וְהֵבֵאתִי אוֹתָם) to their own land (Ezek 37:21 TNK)." Here in Hos 2:2 all these details are missing, so that it is likely that members of both polities are still found in their homelands, i.e. prior to the end of the Northern kingdom. In addition, various scholars point out that the sentence, "and they shall rise from the land" (וְעָלוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ), can hardly mean "they shall rise from the lands (of their exile)", as "the land", in the singular form with the definite article, almost always denote either "the land of Canaan" (1:2; 2:18; 4:1, 3; see Mays 1969:33; Wolff 1990:31-32) or "the earth" (2:23-24).

Also important for some commentators is the term "head" (ראש) used in 2:2 to designate the future leader of the united pan-Israelite polity, which some consider to originate outside of the Judean circle and to be related to pre-monarchic terminology.[275] In Ezek 37:21, in contrast, "king" (מלך) is used to designate the future ruler of the united nation (Emmerson 1984:97; Wolff 1990:31). The strength of this argument, to be sure, is questionable (see "king" of Israel in Hos 3:4); however, one should note that in Isa 7:8-9, about the Syro-Ephramite invasion of Judah, Rezin and Pekah (son of Remaliah) are named as the "Heads" of Damascus and Samaria, respectively. The similar chronological framework and historical background suggest that "head" as a title for the ruler may indeed have a Northern overtone. At least, as Emmerson concludes, "nothing in 2:1-2 precludes its attribution to Hosea". Despite possible Judean influence (e.g. "Sons of Judah" preceding "Sons of Israel"), "the essence of the saying is entirely consistent with Hosea' s circumstances and outlook" (Emmerson 1984:98).

The other verse that explicitly calls for the political and religious reunification of Israel and Judah is Hos 3:5: "Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the LORD their God and David their king (וּבִקְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵת דָּוִד מַלְכָּם) -- and they will thrill (פחד; lit. "to fear") over[276] the LORD and over His bounty in the days to come (Hos 3:5 TNK)." The verse appears at the end of the chapter in which Yahweh again commands Hosea to "love" an adulteress woman, just as Yahweh loves the Sons of Israel, who nonetheless have worshiped other gods (v.1). Hosea obeys the command and tells the woman that she should refrain from

[275] Some would go so far as to argue that the future union of the North and the South will assume the format of an unstructured polity, beyond and without kingship, for instance Landy 2011:23. However, there is no reason to assume that Hosea is against the institution of kingship (see Emmerson 1984:105-13). This understanding also does not take into consideration the fact that "head" can indeed refer to individuals otherwise known as kings, as in Isa 7:8-9 mentioned below.

[276] The verb is translated as "to acknowledge with reference" in Machinist 2005:159.

intimate relationship with men, just as Israel will remain without king, officials, sacrifice and cultic objects. Verse 3:5 follows this prohibition and predicts the restoration of positive relationship between Sons of Israel and Yahweh. The chapter flows rather straightforwardly, except that the direct reference to David as "their (Israelites') king" remains difficult to account for. Some scholars have proposed that the phrases "David, their king" and "at the end of days" are the product of later Judean redaction (Mays 1969:60). The attribution of "David" to later addition is possible, though this is not absolutely the case.

First, it appears that v.5 is an integral part of the message of Hos 3, without which the prophecy contains only the separation of Israel from inappropriate practices. This in itself does not mean that vv. 1-4 are incomplete. However, if we consider the negative commands in v.3 ("Do not fornicate, do not be with a man") as corresponding to the negative commands in v. 4 ("no king, no official, no sacrifice etc."),[277] then וְגַם־אֲנִי אֵלָיִךְ at the end of v.3, if it is not read negatively,[278] should correspond to a positive prediction featuring the restoration of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, which is exactly the content of v.5. Second, if v.5 is original to chapter 3, is "David, their king" an original part of the verse? No certain answer can be offered. Emmerson suggests that, if the deprivation in v.4 is both political and religious/cultic, then the restoration in v.5 should also be two-fold, which is perfectly demonstrated by the juxtaposition of "Yahweh, their god" and "David, their king" in this

[277] Note the repetition of the phrase "many days" (ימים רבים) with which the divine commands in both v.3 and v.4 begin.

[278] The Hebrew says "וְגַם־אֲנִי אֵלָיִךְ", while the *BHS* supplies "לא אבוא" after אני, so that the sentence is understood to be "I will not go into you as well". Freedman and Andersen (1980:305) argue that if this part of v.3 is parallel to the beginning of v.5 (the repentance of Israel), then the negative should not be read. Cf. Also Landy 2011:49, where the author does not exclude the this possibility. Although the translation of "גם" would be difficult in this case, it may be understood as introducing a contradictory idea (*BDB* גם 5) as in Ps 95:9, 129:2; Ezek 20:23, i.e. "but I will be towards you". Therefore, the addition of "לא אבוא" is unnecessary, if we understand v.4 to correspond to the rest of v.3 (negative commands) and v.5 to correspond to this particular part of v.3 (that is, a positive assertion of Yahweh's relationship with Israel). That is to say, v.4, abstinence from unnecessary people and objects, is symbolized by the abstinence from illegal sex, while Israel's return to Yahweh represents the only legitimate relationship between Hosea and the woman at the end of v.3.

verse (Emmerson 1984:102-03), unless the author originally chose another, Northern, human ruler as the model king which was later censored by Judean redactors. However, this last possibility is purely hypothesis, without any textual support.[279] Therefore, as Emmerson suggests, it is not impossible that David is considered as the legitimate ancestor king in some Northern circles.[280] In any case, we do not possess sufficient knowledge of Hosea's theology or Northern theology in general, and a theology that values North-South links and favors the Davidic dynastic might have been one of the views current in the late Northern Kingdom.

In sum, if the original status of Hos 2:1-3 and 3:1-5 is accepted, we may have a rare case in pre-722/21 materials that illuminate the contemporary conception of North-South unity, which, as both passages indicate, rests upon both the religious and the political domains, while calling upon a common past. Emmerson is correct in identifying the priority of religious unity over narrow "nationalism" of each polity (that is, Israel and Judah respectively) in Hosea's notion of North-South relations (Emmerson 1984:100-01). Perhaps this mentality is to be interpreted as another kind of "nationalism", along my line of argument so far, a kind that transcends the parochialism of each political entity perceived to belong to a larger sociocultural entity, an attempt to establish or restore trans-local, trans-tribal solidarity in a time of distress for both Israel and Judah, namely, in the shadow of revived and intensified Neo-Assyrian imperial expansion to the Levant and the collision of the North and the South

[279] Textual emendation that results in the replacement of another individual's name with "David" in order to glorify the latter is not unattested in the Hebrew Bible. One possible case is the identity of Elhanan, son of Jair-Oregim the Bethlehemite, who according to 2 Sam 21:19 as the one who killed Goliath, although according to the better known narrative in 1 Sam 17 it is David who killed the Philistine warrior. According to 1 Chr 20:5, Goliath is the one who slew an unattested "Lahmi", brother of Goliath, which is apparently a name invented on the basis of לחמי of בית הלחמי (the Bethlehemite), which in 2 Sam 21:19 refers to Elhanan's father. However, this example cannot be used to support the hypothesis that Hos 3:5 experienced similar emendation, for we do not have any other evidence.

[280] Emmerson even suggests that the tradition may be traced back to David's position as Saul's successor over against Ishbaal. Emmerson 1984:103, followed by Landy 2011:51. This is of course hypothetical. In extra-biblical sources, the few references to "House of David" (Tel Dan, possibly Mesha), clearly refer to the Southern Kingdom only.

in the Syro-Ephramite War (cf Machinist 2005:155-58).

3. *From two monarchies to one "nation": Israel and Judah in biblical historiography on the post-722/21 period*

As I have noted above, historical accounts in the Hebrew Bible pertaining to periods after the fall of the Northern Kingdom tend to indicate more explicitly assumed links between Israel of Judah, which is first and foremost demonstrated by the more frequent occurrences of the inclusive meaning of Israel as the designation of the collective entity of all "Israelites". In addition, biblical texts about the "post-Samaria" period start to recount Judah's political and cultural involvement with former Northern territories and residents. For example, the Chronicler has recast the reign of the Hezekiah, who was active around the time of the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom, in the light of pan-Israelite identity. While 2 Chr 29:21 speaks of sin offering "for the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah", in v. 24, the priests expiate "all Israel" (לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל) and it is stressed that King Hezekiah designated the sin offering for "all Israel" (לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הָעוֹלָה וְהַחַטָּאת). What does "all Israel" mean in v.24 in contrast to "Judah" in v.21? While Rudolph thinks that "all Israel" means Judah (Rudolph 1955:294), others (e.g. Williamson 1982:357-58) consider "all Israel" to bear the collective meaning, covering also former residents of the Northern Kingdom and even those now in exile (=all the Israelite people). The collective meaning seems to be the more plausible interpretation, as Hezekiah's concern and involvement with Northern affairs are further unfolded subsequently in 2 Chr 30 which recounts the pan-Israelite Passover.[281]

[281] In 2 Chr 30, to be sure, Israel and Judah are sometimes still referred to as separate entities (e.g. in v. 1, "Israel and Judah", v. 25; also 31:5-6), with Northern elements specifically named (e.g. "Ephraim and Manasseh" in v.1; Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun in vv.10-11; vv. 18-19; For an analysis of the Northern tribes here mentioned, see Y. Levin 2017:319-22). However, the entire event of Passover is depicted as Hezekiah's efforts to incorporate members of Northern tribes to a common religious festival in the Southern political and cultic center of Jerusalem, now without any Northern

The pan-Israelite Passover in 2 Chr 30 calls upon the political unity once enjoyed by the North and the South. In 2 Chr 30:26, the Chronicler claims that "(T)here was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for since the time of King Solomon son of David of Israel nothing like it had happened in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:26 TNK), referring to King Solomon who ruled a united monarchy before the schism. The Chronicler's intentional emphasis on pan-Israelite religious unity becomes explicit when compared with other statements about Passover celebration in both the Books of Kings and in Chronicles, e.g., 2 Chr 35:18 and 2 Kgs 23:22, both referring to Josiah's Passover. In 2 Chr 35:18, as in 2 Chr 30:26, it is stated that no such Passover has been celebrated since the time of Samuel and the kings of Israel, again employing language of unity by mentioning Samuel, the prophet of all Israelites who anointed both Saul and David (the latter from Judah), and kings of "Israel" only, which should apparently be understood as the collective designation of both the North and the South. This is to be contrasted with 2 Kgs 23:22: "Now the Passover sacrifice had not been offered in that manner in the days of the chieftains who ruled Israel (lit. "since the days the judges who judged Israel", יְמֵי הַשֹּׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁפְטוּ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל), or during the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah (2 Kgs 23:22 TNK)." Here, although pan-Israelite mentality is hinted at by reference to the judges, kings of Israel are nevertheless still juxtaposed with kings of Judah, with no reference to rulers of Israel as one collective political entity (e.g. "Solomon" in 2 Chr

---

competitor. Northerners are not only invited (v.1, vv. 10-11), but specific regulations are also stipulated for Northern participants of Passover to accommodate their particular circumstances (vv.18-19).

The inclusive efforts are best demonstrated by the summary of attendants in v. 25: "All the congregation of Judah and the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came from Israel, and the resident aliens who came from the land of Israel and who lived in Judah (2 Chr 30:25 TNK)" Moreover, after the Passover Hezekiah executed the cultic purification as "all Israel who were present" (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּמְצָאִים) destroyed the unorthodox cultic objects "throughout Judah and Benjamin, and throughout Ephraim and Manasseh" before "all the Sons of Israel" (כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) returned to their own towns. Japhet (2003:406-07) traces this verse to 2 Kgs 18:4: " He abolished the shrines and smashed the pillars and cut down the sacred post. He also broke into pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until that time the Israelites had been offering sacrifices to it; it was called Nehushtan. (2Ki 18:4 TNK)". She observes a few differences between 2 Chr 31:1 and 2 Kgs 18:4, among those the participation of the people (rather than king alone as the actor) as well as the expanded geographical framework, which she suggests demonstrates the inclusion of Northerners through cultic centralization. Japhet 2003:406-07.

30:26; "kings of Israel" in 2 Chr 35:18). Indeed, no Northerners are said to have participated in Josiah's Passover according to the Books of Kings, and Josiah's purification efforts took place only in the Land of Judah and in Jerusalem in this episode (v.24; Josiah's activities in the north mentioned in vv. 15-20). In 2 Chronicles 30 and 35, for instance, explicit reference to political division as in 2 Kgs 23:22 is suppressed (although reference to the cultural division of northern tribes and the South persists), whereas elements such as "Samuel" (35:18) or Solomon (30:26) as signs of united leadership are preserved and highlighted.

Accounts about Hezekiah's accomplishment in the partial reunification of the "nation" in Chronicles may have prompted modern interpretation of certain archaeological discoveries as evidence for Hezekiah's policies about the Northern Kingdom. Among these interpretations is the view that enlargement of Jerusalem in the 8th century as evidence for Hezekiah's acceptance of refugees from the North after the fall of the Kingdom of Israel in the late 8th century (for review of scholarship see Na'aman 2007a:21-24). If it can be established that Hezekiah really accepted large numbers of Northern refugees, one might be tempted to consider the role of cultural, religious and kinship ties on this decision of political (both international and domestic) significance. Unfortunately, the evidence is far from unequivocal. Na'aman has argued that the growth of Jerusalem was a gradual process in the 8th century, to which the building activities of various predecessors of Hezekiah contributed. He contends that it is also unrealistic to expect that Hezekiah, possibly an Assyrian vassal since Sargon II's reign,[282] could accept runaways from the North, as the ancient Near Eastern and, in particular, the Neo-Assyrian norm was that the vassal (or an ally) had to extradite

[282] See Na'aman 2007a: 28-31. But one should note that Judah is in the list of southern Levantine vassals who were supposed to send tributes and gifts to Assyria but sought alliance with Egypt (Fuchs 1998: 46; text VII b. 26). Judah's allegiance might have been questionable. See Chapter 6.

fugitives (see also Na'aman 2014).[283] At any rate, Na'aman convincingly argues that most of the content about Hezekiah's deeds in or pertaining to the North was the Chronicler's literary invention to aggrandize the Judean king (Na'aman 2007a), with considerable parallels with accounts about Josiah's reign in the Chronicles. The elevation of a pan-Israelite identity well befits these literary and ideological goals, which possibly occurred after the fall of the Northern kingdom.

This tendency is also attested in biblical accounts about Josiah's deeds in or pertaining to the former Northern Kingdom. As in the case of Hezekiah, the motif of pan-Israelite identity further developed in the Chronicles version of Josiah's reign in comparison with the accounts in 2 Kings. The latter, to be sure, already exhibit certain traces of pan-Israelite mentality under Josiah, when Neo-Assyrian domination of the Levant was on the wane and Egypt reemerged as a major external power in the region (see e.g. Schipper 2011).[284] The inclusive

---

[283] See Na'aman 2007a:31-35. Na'aman stresses from the perspectives of international relations and international law of this period, Hezekiah could not have accepted Northern refugees, citing comparable examples in the Neo-Assyrian period, e.g. Esarhaddon's demand that Shubria return Assyrian refugees (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33) and Ashurbanipal's mention of accepting Elamite refugees seeking food in Assyria when famine struck Elam and returning them only after the famine (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, line iv 20-23) as well as not returning political refugees to Teumman, king of Elam (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, iv 80-v.4a). It is noteworthy that in the case of Shubria's refusal to return Assyrian refugees and Ashurbanipal's refusal to return Elamite refugees, the people concerned are politically significant. In the former case, included in the runaways are "governors, overseers, leaders and soldiers" (^{LÚ}NAM *ak-li šá-pi-ru re-du-u*, RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33, o ?, ii 3), while in the latter cases it was the former Elamite King's sons that took political asylum in Assyria. (see above) Accepting refugees who fled from famine perhaps belongs to a different category of international politics, as Ashurbanipal emphasizes not the immediate return of those people but instead his hospitality as he hosted them until the famine in Elam was over, which clearly counted as one of the favors he did his Elamite counterpart. One wonders if such refugees differed from those political fugitives as they valued much less politically. The motif of people of one place fleeing to another place when their homeland is hit by famine or war is also a recurring motif in the Hebrew Bible. (cf. the sojourn of the Shullamite woman in the Land of the Philistines, 2 Kgs 8:1-6) There is no reason to assume that refugees resulting from the fall of the Northern Kingdom consisted mainly of politically important figures, and one wonders if this would facilitate Hezekiah's acceptance of them in Jerusalem without irritating the Assyrian king. At any rate, Na'aman also postulates that Jerusalem may have housed refugees from surrounding Judean towns who fled to Jerusalem when their homes were overrun by Sennacherib's troops. These people, though Judeans, could also have been considered as captives that should be extradited to Assyria. If they could flee to Jerusalem, northern commoners may also have did so previously. Of course, this does not constitute any firm evidence that northerners did flee to the South. The point is that this possibility cannot be fully excluded.

[284] In 2 Kings the pan-Israelite mentality has not fully replaced memories of the political division between the North and the South, as kings of Israel and kings of Judah are still juxtaposed in 23:22. However, 2 Kgs 23:15-20 reports that Josiah destroyed shrines and altars at Bethel (v.15) and across "towns of Samaria" (v.19), apparently considering the custody of religious affairs in the North as his own obligation. Yet this religious pan-Israelite mentality does not explicitly extend to the political realm, not only because the name "Israel" in v. 19 (parallel to "cities of Samaria" in the same verse) more possibly still refers to the North, but also due to the clear reference at the end of the passage that Josiah "returned to Jerusalem" after his cultic purification in the North. Although some scholars argue that Josiah took advantage of the retreat

tendency is further developed in the Josiah narratives in 2 Chronicles (chapters 34-35). Here Northern towns are included in Josiah's religious reformation (2 Chr 34:3-7),[285] highlighting the ties between these regions and the Judean kingdom. Elsewhere in Chronicles, Israel is also often incorporated into the reformed ethno-religious community in cultic and festive events, e.g. in 2 Chr 34:21, 35:17. In 2 Chr 34:21, in particular, Josiah urges his officials to inquire of Yahweh for the sake of himself and of "those who remain in Israel and in Judah" (הַנִּשְׁאָר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִיהוּדָה),[286] while the same detail in 2 Kings 22:13 reads "for my sake, for the sake of the people and for all Judah" (בַּעֲדִי וּבְעַד־הָעָם וּבְעַד כָּל־יְהוּדָה), without any reference to Israel, whether in the collective or exclusive sense. For the Chronicler, Josiah has by then clearly already extended some kind of influence to former Northern territories (Y. Levin 2017:414). In 2 Chr 34:33, "Israel" explicitly refers to the collective community, as the author refers to "all the lands that belonged to Sons of Israel" (כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), and "all those who were present in Israel" (כל־הַנִּמְצָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל), obeying Josiah's instruction to remain loyal to Yahweh. Here Josiah's influence on the northern members of the community is strengthened by the fact that the "Israel" is no longer a separable component of the community, but has transferred its name to the entire community, as in the days of the

---

of the Assyrians and gained control of at least some parts of former northern territory, others argue that the accounts in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles are largely unhistorical, and that the rise of Egypt did not leave Josiah any room to expand as a local power. For a summary of different scholarly views, see Levin 2017:388-91. For the political motivation of Josiah's encounter (military or otherwise) with Necho II at Megiddo at a time when Egypt was extending its influence to the Levant, vying for domination with the Babylonians, see e.g. Cogan and Tadmor 1988:300-02. In general, 2 Kings does not indicate that Josiah attempted to establish permanent rule or political control in former Northern territory, although his encounter with Egyptian troops in which he was killed took place in Megiddo,which used to belong to the Northern kingdom before it was transformed into an Assyrian province

[285] In the exclusive use of "Israel" is still attested in this account of cultic purification, for example, in v. 7 "all the Land of Israel" where Josiah performed cultic purification corresponds to "the towns of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali" in v. 6 (cf. 2 Kgs 23:19), i.e. the northern regions. However, the content of the passage is again the inclusion of Israel into Josiah's religious reformation.

[286] "those who remain in..." reminds the readers of the exile, perhaps the Northern one, cf. 34:9: "from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (2 Chr 34:9 TNK)" (Japhet 2003:470) Levin argues that the reference is to the exile of some Northerners, while the Chronicler makes no mention of their own, the Judean, exile. Y. Levin 2017:414. However, the syntax of 2 Chr 34:21 favors the current translation, i.e. the remnant of both Israel and Judah, perhaps hinting at both exiles.

supposed United Monarchy (35:3 and 4 mention David and Solomon). In 35:4-5, furthermore, reference is made to the pan-Israelite kinship structure with "clans" and "houses of father" (בית אב, פלגה, מחלקה, see Japhet 2003:485-86) as the basic components of the whole people, "as prescribed in the writing of King David of Israel and in the document of his son Solomon (2 Chron 35:4 TNK)".

In short, in his reworked historical account addressed to a post-exilic audience, the Chronicler manages to combine religious, genealogical as well as political (references to the United Monarchy) pan-Israelite identities, reconstructing Israel, more clearly than before, as two political entities that merged from, and were reunited as, one and the same "nation" (cf. Gelander 2011).

4. *Israel and Judah as one nation in later Prophetic texts*

I have noted that in the historical accounts in the Bible, there is a clear tendency, in later materials, i.e. materials pertaining to or dating from periods after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, that authors increasingly attempt to bridge the gap between the North and the South by depicting the two as two branches of the same sociocultural entity with religious connections, kinship ties, common history and memory as well as preexisting political links. In exilic and post-exilic sources this tendency becomes even stronger, with prophets (usually of a Southern background) becoming more outspoken about not only the common past but also the common future of all "Israel" in the collective sense.

Many examples can be cited and I will only mention a few in passing to showcase this tendency. One example is a passage about North-south reunion in First Isaiah which possibly dates to a later period (see below):

He will hold up a signal to the nations and assemble the banished of Israel (נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), and gather the dispersed of Judah (נְפֻצוֹת יְהוּדָה) from the four corners of the earth. Then Ephraim's envy shall cease and Judah's harassment shall end; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. They shall pounce on the back of Philistia to the west, and together plunder the peoples of the east; Edom and Moab shall be subject to them and the children of Ammon shall obey them (Isa 11:12-14 TNK).

These verses are located in a larger passage of Isa 11:11-16 about the return of the remnant of Yahweh's people (שְׁאָר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁאֵר, v.11) from different foreign lands and the unity of the North and the South against common enemies, compared to a new exodus (v.16). Isa 11:11-16 is, in turn, connected with 11:1-9, a prophecy about the peaceful and just kingdom to be ruled by a descendant of Jesse (v.1). Although the passage is included in First Isaiah, the reference to not only "the banished of Israel", but also "the dispersed of Judah" apparently presupposes the exile of both kingdoms, which points to the exilic or early post-exilic period as the possible date of composition. It is thus widely recognized by commentators that the background of these verses is to be sought in the Persian Period (Wildberger 1980; E. Jacob 1987:166; Blenkinsopp 2000:268; Beuken 2003:306), when the exile was a historical fact while the restoration became hopeful. It seems certain that the supposed reconciliation of the two groups in this passage is set against a later period when both kingdoms have long disappeared, and the hoped for revival has to be sought against the reality that they exist now under imperial dominion without political autonomy.

"National" restoration that includes also the North also occurs in the Book of Jeremiah. In Jer 3:6ff, an oracle against both Israel and Judah which have been treacherous to Yahweh,

the two kingdoms are compared to two sisters (3:6-10; cf. Ezek 23) who betrayed their husband. This attack on apostasy is followed by a call for repentance and return to Yahweh, in which Jeremiah is commanded to deliver god's speech specifically to the North (וְקָרָאתָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה צָפוֹנָה) in order to bring Israel back to the legitimate worship of Yahweh. Although addressed partly to the North, the positive future prophesied by Jeremiah is clearly "Judah-centric", with the South serving as the center of the reunion (e.g. the reference to Zion, וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם צִיּוֹן, v.14), which is religious in nature with a political overtone (e.g. the reference to "shepherds" in v.15). The shift from Israel to Judah is further demonstrated by the elevated status of Jerusalem in the future:

And I will give you shepherdsd after My own heart, who will pasture you with knowledge and skill. And when you increase and are fertile in the land, in those days-declares the LORD-men shall no longer speak of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, nor shall it come to mind. They shall not mention it, or miss it, or make another.At that time, they shall call Jerusalem "Throne of the LORD," and all nations shall assemble there, in the name of the LORD, at Jerusalem. They shall no longer follow the willfulness of their evil hearts. In those days, the House of Judah shall go with the House of Israel; they shall come together from the land of the north to the land I gave your fathers as a possession (Jer 3:15-18 TNK).

Here Jerusalem serves not only as the new "national" center, but also as a holy center for all nations, marking the merger of pan-Israelite national sentiments with the universal mentality which possibly derives from Judah's encounter with universal empires. In v.18 the earlier focus of the North is revisited, now with Judah walking side by side with Israel.[287] In

[287] Fischer observes here that 8 out of 10 occurrences of the juxtaposition of 'House of Judah" and "House of Israel" are found in the Book of Jeremiah, while the first attestation in 1 Kgs 12:21 which recounts the war between the two

general, the reunion of the two branches of Yahweh's people emphasizes the following elements: religious reunification centered on Yahweh with a certain degree of political effect (v.15); and the heightened role of Jerusalem and the South as the center in the reunion and the return of exiles of both Israel and Judah to a homeland. The general picture certainly demonstrates an unmistakable "national" dimension. Therefore, again it seems that post-exilic theology[288] reinterpreted traditional views of North-South relations, although by then the Northern community had long become politically defunct. The restoration of the Judean community is now understood to require the reestablishment of both branches in the ancestral land, which, in the historical background of the Achaemenid Empire, was probably home to various other peoples (cf. Ezra 4) that would challenge the Judeans' claim over the homeland.

This view of North and South as adumbrated in Jer 3:15-18 echoes Ezekiel's famous prophecy on the future reunion of Ephraim and Judah (Ezek 37:15-28), which expresses a similar set of elements in a more systematic manner and more explicit language. Here are the critical verses:

Thus said the Lord GOD: I am going to take the stick of Joseph -- which is in the hand of Ephraim -- and of the tribes of Israel associated with him, and I will place the stick of Judah upon it and make them into one stick; they shall be joined in My hand...I am going to take the Israelite people from among the nations they have gone to, and gather them from every quarter, and bring them to

---

"houses" that resulted in the political and cultic schism of the two (Fischer 2005:196). Here the juxtaposition of Israel and Judah marks the end of the schism.

[288] Although the oracle is claimed to date to the time of Josiah (v.6), it certainly experienced different stages of historical development, with Judah transformed from a more disloyal community than Israel to the center of future pan-Israelite restoration (cf. Brueggemann 1998:41-42). The cited verses and vv.15-18 as a whole, on the other hand, are thought to be a late redaction (but note that Zion is already mentioned in v.4) for structural reasons ("in those days" in vv. 16 and 18) and because of the presupposition of the return of the Judean exile (Allen 2008:57).

their own land (וְהֵבֵאתִי אוֹתָם אֶל־אַדְמָתָם). I will make them a single nation (לְגוֹי אֶחָד) in the land, on the hills of Israel, and one king shall be king of them all (וּמֶלֶךְ אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְכֻלָּם לְמֶלֶךְ). Never again shall they be two nations (שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם), and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms (שְׁתֵּי מַמְלָכוֹת) (Ezek 37:16-22, followed by prophecy about the restoration of Davidic kingship and renewal of the covenant).

In these verses of Ezekiel, the return of Judean exiles to Judea is again envisioned as the restoration of the entire pan-Israelite community, that is, the religious as well as political unification (under one king v.22; one Davidic "shepherd" v.24) of the North and the South, on their own ancestral territory. Two issues are particularly interesting. First, it should be noted that in Ezekiel, the phrase "House of Israel", of which 83 out of the 146 occurrences are attested in this one book, more often than not designates Judah and the Judeans (also "Israel" in general, see Greenberg 1983:16). In the cited passage "tribes of Israel" are attached to both Judah and Joseph/Ephraim.Therefore, the concept that Judah is the new Israel functions as the background to Ezekiel's prophecy about future reunion. Second, in Ezek 37:22 the historical division between the North and the South is perceived as one between two גויים, which highlights the political facet of the division (in parallel with ממלכה). That the North and the South are considered as two "nations" before the reunion, with implied traditional ethnic distinction (Lust 1999), is rather surprising in Ezekiel and seems incompatible with the pervasive cultural commonalities and (metaphorical) kinship ties (e.g. v. 23) highlighted elsewhere in the book. However, one should note that the phrase "two nations" is preceded by the preposition "-ל", which, combined with the verb "היה", should

better be translated as "to become", implying change of status or conditions.[289] Therefore, the clause "they shall no longer be two nations" can also be interpreted as "they shall no longer become two nations", parallel to the following clause "they will no longer be separated into two kingdoms" (Ezek 37:22). These phrases do describe the historical reality of political division, but at the same time they also indicate the anticipation of future changes: prolonged political division and cultic schism may further sever the remaining ties between peoples that once perceived themselves as one and the same cultural entity. At any rate, this potential process will be terminated, according to Ezekiel, as Yahweh promises the political and religious reunion of Israel and Judah.

More examples could be cited, e.g. Zech 10 (particularly vv. 6-7) against the background of the Achaemenid Empire,[290] but the brief overview of passages from the three major prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) has demonstrated the general trend, i.e. prophetic call for the restoration of the Judean community with a pan-Israelite perspective, while Jerusalem serves as the undisputed new "national" center, in both the political and the religious senses. The historical background for this notion is deeply rooted in Judah's encounter with the imminent threat or the direct dominion of the universal empire as well as experience in the exile, when the cultural and social elites of Judeans, either in exile or in Judea, found themselves in the danger of being engulfed by different ethnic and cultural groups within the imperial framework. The preservation of an identity and the legitimate

---

[289] See *HALOT* "היה", p. 244. -היה ל in *HALOT* is assigned four meanings: 1. "to serve as" (Isa 2:1) 2. "to become" (Gen 2:7; Num 10:31), 3. "to have" (Exod 20:3) and 4. "to happen to" (Exod 32:1). Clearly, "to have" and "to happen to" reflect a different structure and does not fit the context of Ezek 37:22. The other two meanings in HALOT indicate the change of status. See also Gen 2:10, 24; 17:11; 31:44; 2 Sam 5:2; 1 Chr 11:6; Isa 22:23; Jer 31:1; Ezek 17:23; 37:23, etc. The change of status indicated by most of the occurrences of the phrase reminds us that here in Ezek 37:22 the preposition cannot be simply overlooked.

[290] For the dating of Zech 9-14 to the mid- 5th century, see S. Cook 2011.

claim over a homeland (ideally including both the historical North and the South) require the emphasis of ethnic and religious ties, which became particularly essential with the absence of political autonomy and a ruling dynast who could have functioned as a source of allegiance and unity. In this sense, the advocacy of trans-tribal, pan-Israelite unification, with some hope of political autonomy, well befits the mental and spiritual needs of the Judeans in the Babylonian and Persian periods. As the fate of the historical Northerners became obscure, "Israel" could now function not only as the name of the idealized collective community but also of the Judeans themselves (as in Ezekiel),[291] while residents in historical Northern territories and their descendants in Judah continued to be portrayed as the "other" (already in 2 Kgs 17; Ezra 4; Neh 3:33-4:17). As for the unification of all Israelites often accompanied by the elevation of Yahweh not only as a national god, but also as a universal ruler, this is a theme I will further investigate in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

In this chapter I reviewed five prominent examples of what some scholars may have understood as Iron Age Levantine ethnic states/polities, i.e. Ammon, Moab, Edom, Israel and Judah. These polities were not exactly small, nuclear polities centered on one single urban complex nor large, multi-ethnic empires. Because of their limited size and scale, these polities did operate around one major urban center, yet they certainly contained a number of other fortified cities of a lower rank (perhaps with the exception of Iron II B-C Edom). As multi-city territorial polities, they resemble empires in that they are by nature trans-local and

[291] G. Knoppers (2011:60) has pointed out that "there are good reasons to doubt a historical progression over the course of the centuries that involves simply broader definitions of Israelite identity in the Neo-Babylonian period becoming much more narrow definitions of Israelite identity in the Achaemenid period. Rather, one should think of the coexistence of a number of overlapping and competing understandings of Israelite identity", which include, according to him, a Judah-centered reinterpretation of "Israel", a religious understanding of Israel as all people of Yahweh and also a traditional view that considers Israel as the name of the surviving descendants of all Israelite tribes.

trans-tribal, although the guiding principle for the formation and development of such polities derives not from some sort of imperial universality, but from a narrower perspective that stresses the cohesion of their residents based o sociocultural, or at least non-political factors, like those of language, religion, art and ethnicity, the latter especially a belief in shared kinship ties. These factors, of course, are usually closely linked with one another in the way they exert influence on the political identities of the ancients.

The present chapter continues the theoretical and terminological study of the influence of sociocultural factors on the political organization of ancient people by drawing from concrete case studies attested in contemporary and transmitted texts and, to a lesser extent, from the non-written material culture. Several observations emerge from these case studies: 1. These Iron II polities do exhibit a considerable level of correspondence between a certain ethnic or cultural group, with relatively distinct linguistic, artistic and religious characteristics, and a political entity with its own political and administrative institutions. 2. The distinctions, however, were not always definitive, due to the large number of cultural similarities shared by all Iron Age southern Levantine peoples. This fact, in turn, reveals the dynamic nature of the interaction between culture and (domestic and international) politics in the region, as seemingly small and immaterial differences as well as the complex idea of different yet overlapping kinship affiliations might be singled out, utilized, then magnified and perpetuated, by emerging political elites to justify the rise of an institutionalized political structure within a certain ethnic or cultural group. 3. Due in part to the similarities in language and cultural in general, peoples in this region are best differentiated by the elevation of "national gods", which played a key role in the formation of internal cohesion and the

creation of a hostile other. (e.g. the Mesha Stele; various examples in the Hebrew Bible) 4. Political developments also contributed to the reinforcement of the ethnic and cultural identity, as peoples that migrated to other regions (e.g. later Edomites/Idumeans) or displaced from their autonomous political entities (Judah) sought to preserve their identities despite the absence of a state, when their homelands had already been subsumed into an ethnically and culturally diverse empire. 5. Against this background it is understandable that biblical ideas about a pan-Israelite "nation" usually originated from later periods when both Hebrew kingdoms ceased to exist. However, cultural connections, involving in particular common scribal traditions and a common deity as well as occasional references to special ties between the North and the South in materials that might date prior to the fall of the Northern Kingdom (cf. Hosea 2:1-3; 3:5), suggest that biblical notions of "sister states" might not have been complete fabrication. In any case, North-South relations provide us with a good example to investigate how cultural ties may or may not have any influence on political strategies of each polity.[292]

Although I do not hope to argue for the emergence or existence of ancient nations in Iron II Levant, these examples certainly demonstrate that discussion of this very question is not always improper or futile. The awareness and, more importantly, deliberate exploitation of the cultural attributes of one polity in order to distinguish it from its neighbors for political purposes were not a modern phenomenon, but instead deeply rooted in earlier other periods.

[292] As far as Israel and Judah are concerned, it should again be argued that the influence of cultural links on political affairs of the two polities is not apparent in contemporary extra-biblical sources. However, the worship of the same patron deity and a common script which possibly originated from a common scribal tradition suggest that some cultural ties may derive from some sort of (former) political connections between the North and the South. Finally, the impact of such ethnic and cultural ties on political ideology are stressed in developed in biblical texts, mostly dated to the post-722/721 period but occasionally prior to the fall of the Northern polity (Hosea). Subjects that reveal this kind of impact include the expectation of the future political (in addition to cultic) reunion of the two polities, the designation of one side as the other's "brother" in accounts of North-South antagonism and possible reference to the relationship between the peoples of the polities ("like my people, like your people"; see e.g. 1 Kgs 22:4).

To be sure, in the Iron Age Levant, the relatively high correspondence between ethnic groups or cultures and political entities, as in the cases from the Cis-/Transjordan, of course, was not the only form of the realization of these thoughts and practices. Sometimes people with a certain degree of cultural and ethnic commonness may form different political entities (as in the case of Greek city-states) and not operate their political life in a centralized territorial polity. Yet even then, one wonders if cultural ties ever influenced the political behavior of polities having the same ethnic background, e.g. in the form of collaborative political action. I will examine a few different cases in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Cultural Commonness and Inter-polity Relations: Case Studies on Other Levantine Polities

Introduction

The correspondence of one culturally and ethnically definable group with a political entity, as in the cases of Iron Age Transjordanian polities and to a lesser extent, Israel and Judah, was certainly not the norm in Iron Age Levantine history. Another form of the impact of cultural elements on political practice and awareness may be identified in local and external sources, which ideally features a political network in which a cultural or ethnic group with different political centers, though not united under the banner of one central authority, may exhibit a certain level of political uniformity. What is meant by the vague phrase "a certain level of political uniformity" here? It refers to both such administratively influential institutions as a political confederacy and, more realistically, to concerted political actions, such as waging war as a coalition of powers or entering into a treaty as one united party over against the other party on certain occasions. What I would like to explore is whether and how trans-regional political uniformity and joint political behaviors by multiple political actors is influenced by cultural commonalities shared by the participants. I will examine all Levantine cultural groups not discussed in chapter 3 (in which the ethnic/cultural elements largely overlap with the political shape of a people), i.e. the Aramean polities, the Philistine city-states, the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, the Phoenician city-states and the Arab polities. As a preliminary observation, different linguistic groups, each with multiple polities, can be identified in these regions. Furthermore, sometimes the linguistic groups display other cultural commonalities, such as religion, lifestyle and kinship ideologies. However, it appears

that only rarely did such cultural ties influence the political behavior of polities within the same cultural circle or the relationship between them and cultural/ethnic outsiders. Even so, it is still beneficial to examine and summarize the different manners in which cultural and political elements of the polities interacted in these Levantine groups.

Aramean states and the Philistines: on the impact of cultural/ethnic commonness on interstate political collaboration

1. The Arameans

A. The Arameans before the 9th century

A region called "ʾ *rm*" possibly located in north-central Syria has been attested in an Egyptian list of place names from the 14th century BCE, although not much information is revealed by this reference (Younger 2016:35-36). First attestations of Aram with more concrete information about their role in international politics are found in Assyrian royal inscriptions dated from the late 12th and early 11th centuries the reign of Ashurnasirpal II in the early to mid-9th century. In these attestations Arameans are most commonly referred to as a territory-based people with a tribal structure which posed a threat to Assyria. More specifically, out of the 23 occurrences of Arameans, 20 label the Arameans with the determinative KUR (^{KUR}Aramu; vowel harmony results in such forms as "Arumu" or "Arimi", depending on the case ending), and of these about 5 use the gentilic (Ahlamû[293] ^{KUR}Armaya; ^{KUR}Ahlamû ^{KUR}Armaya).[294] While the former term, ^{KUR}Aramu, treats Aram as a tract of land that may or may not possess complex and centralized political institutions,[295] the gentilic

[293] On the relationship between Ahlamû and Aram, see Younger 2016:80-88.

[294] The other 3, without KUR, are partially broken and restored. A.0.87.2 line 28 is restored; A.0.89.7 iii 19 is partly restored and the reading is dubious; A.0.89.7 iii 23 is also restored. See RIMA 1.

[295] In Assyrian Royal inscription of early Iron Age, including the transition from the Middle to the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the determinative KUR may designate in general a piece of land without further differentiation. KUR may designate

indicates that the nature of this particular territory is one that is associated with a particular people group.[296] Although the organizational structure of these Arameans in this period is unclear, in the inscriptions they do appear to be understood as one undifferentiated group, launching attack or suffering defeat together, as far as the authors of Assyrian inscriptions are concerned. Alternatively, it is also possible that Assyrians simply called all Aramean groups, with whom they fought in various locations,[297] "the Arameans", without further differentiation. If this is the case, then there is no evidence for any sort of joint military actions of a collective group called "Arameans".

We do not know much about other cultural attributes of the Arameans in this pre- 9th century period to determine whether or not they functioned as some sort of a socioculturally based ethnic group. Archaeological evidence from Iron Age Syria displays the establishment of an increased number of smaller rural settlements of a more egalitarian nature in comparison to the previous Late Bronze Age (Sader 2014: 17-18),[298] yet this alone cannot reveal much about the ethnic or cultural components of the occupants of these sites. As far as

---

1. a historical region that is named after a previous political entity now bearing no more than cultural and geographical significance, e.g. ^{KUR}Hatti, ^{KUR}Hannigalbat, which by this period had witnessed the emergence of numerous local political entities with cities as their centers; 2. similarly, KUR may be used to designate a vast region not named after historical states, which is also home to smaller polities with their individual rulers. Sometimes the internal complexity of the region is demonstrated by the application of the determinative KUR.KUR, as in most of the references to Nairi (later Urartu), while KUR is also attested in Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions (e.g RIMA 1 A.0.101.19 lines 27, 93). In Urartian royal inscriptions belonging to Sarduri I, for instance, the singular determinative KUR is also used. (cf. Salvini 1998: RlA vol. 9, p89); 3. KUR may be used to designate individual polities. Under the umbrella of KUR.KUR Nairi, Tiglath-PIleser I lists individual KUR-s that waged war against his advances in unison (it is not apparent whether these KUR-s share cultural commonness) in RIMA 1 A.0.87.1 col iv lines 72-83; 4. As in the case of the Arameans, KUR may designate a population group (although not necessarily in the form of a gentilic, as in the case of ^{KUR}Aramu), e.g. ^{KUR}*Pap-ḫe-e*^{MEŠ} (RIMA 1 A.0.87.1 35-65), which refers to a group of people with a common name engaged in concerted military efforts to resist the Assyrians according to the context. The context does not require the phrase "All the Papḫûs" (*kúl-lat* ^{KUR}*Pap-ḫe-e* ^{MEŠ}) to be interpreted as a fixed term of political significance like "all Aram" or "all Israel", although some sort of political unity among these people can be assumed on account of the attestation of an individual king of the Papḫûs named "Kili-Teššub" the "Errupi" (a Hurrian title). RIMA 2 A.0.87.1 lines ii 16-30.

[296] 3 from 12th - 11th centuries; 2 from late 10th - mid- 9th.

[297] For instance, Aššur-bēl-kala (mid- 11th century) records his campaigns against the Arameans in different regions in different months of the same year. See RIMA 2, Aššur-bēl-kala, A.0.89.7, iii 1-iii 28.

[298] As Sader summarizes, the new sites in early Iron Age Syria indicate an economy based predominantly on agriculture and small cattle breeding. The architecture of the sites shows a high level of equality among members of society, as each house has its own storage and work areas (e.g. sites in Tell Afis and Tell Deinit). The sites lack public monumental buildings in general. See Sader 2014:18 for further references.

kinship ideology is concerned, one can postulate that the Arameans of this period, just like the Arameans after the 9th century when they established various kingdoms, may ahve organized their society on the basis such tribal structures as "house of so-and-so". Such terms, of course, need not reflect absolute historical reality, as kinship relations can often be employed for social and political purposes.[299]

With the absence of native texts prior to the 9th century, the names "Aram" and "Arameans" as attested by Assyrian sources are our main clue to the possible homogeneity of the group so designated. If these names do suggest a certain level of cultural and perhaps ethnic uniformity, Assyrian texts also demonstrate, though in generalized and sometimes ambiguous terms, that whatever subdivisions may have existed within this Aramean group, they have not yet established their own states, as indicated by the lack of reference to individual rulers in the inscriptions and the absence of large urban centers in archaeological evidence.[300]

B. Aramean polities in the 9th and 8th centuries

(1) The emergence of individual territorial Aramean polities

The next stage of Aramean history differs considerably from the idealized biblical presentation of the ancient Israelites. Whether due to a larger number of people, more

[299] Buccellati (1967:111-25) understands both tribal societies and what he labels as "nations" to be offshoots of kinship-based political organizations. He identifies tribal leagues as a type of Iron Age "national state" which formed around central religious institutions and demonstrated considerable political integration, though administratively less unified than kingdoms that developed from tribal leagues. For a detailed discussion on the tribe and other socially constructed groups in the Aramean society, see Younger 2016:43-63.

[300] One Assyrian inscription by Shalmaneser III (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2, ii 38) from the mid-9th century makes reference to a supposed "king of the Land Aram" who seized Assyrian towns in northern Syria during the reign of Aššur-rabi II (late 11th to early 10th centuries).. Identifications of this "king of Aram" at such an early age have been suggested (see references in Yamada 2000: 127, n177). However, Yamada has collated the text and concluded that the sign "MAN" (=king) does not occur in this inscription, rendering discussion on the significance of a "king of Aram" in the early 10th century moot. See Yamada 2000:127, n177; Younger 2016: 138, n92.

expansive lands or geographical features,[301] secondary state formation under the influence of the Assyrian and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms resulted not in one united Aramean polity, as in the case of biblical Israel before the division according to biblical accounts, but instead, in the emergence of, by the 9th century, a series of individual tribal polities named "House of..." (their rulers called "Son of..."; see Younger 2016: 43-63), with capital cities as their political centers. Despite the rise of capital cities, it appears that these Aramean polities were not simply city-states with tribal elements, for some of them apparently incorporated or developed different urban centers, thus forming multi-city territorial polities. For example, Shalmaneser III records his campaign in the cities (URU.MEŠ-*ni*) of Arame, ruler of Bīt Agūsi, in which he captured his royal city (URU MAN-*ti-šu*) Arnê while destroying "one hundred cities" in total (RIMA 3 A.0.102.6 lines 58-60).[302] Even so, it is true that even such polities with different cities were primarily known and designated by their capital cities. As far as the political implication of this phenomenon is concerned, Sader considers the administrative and economic centralization of the former tribal entities in one major urban center, which occurred in many Arameans polities in the 9th and the 8th centuries BCE, as a process parallel to the replacement, in Assyrian sources, of the title "Son of" the eponymous ancestor with the gentilic/*nisbe* based on the capital city and with the title "king of GN" as the designation of a polity's ruler in local Aramaic inscriptions (Sader 2014: 26). This conclusion, however, should be be viewed with caution.[303]

---

[301] For the last point see a survey of the geographical conditions of Aramean lands, particularly the mountain ranges in the West, in Younger 2016: 1-22

[302] This is certainly an exaggeration. For a survey of major cities of Bīt Agūsi, see Younger 2016: 510-16.

[303] In RIMA 2, A.0.99.2, 100b-104 mentions that in 894 BCE Adad-nērārī marched to Gozān/Guzānu and entered the neighboring city of Sikān, where he received gifts from Abī-salāmu, "son of Baḫiāni" (DUMU-*ba-ḫi-a-ni*), who "held" the city Guzānu (*ú-kal-lu-ú-ní*). Here we see the parallel between the tribal affiliation of the Aramean ruler and his status as the ruler of a major city, which is made rather explicit in the lines. While this could be interpreted as the beginning of the transition from a tribal entity to an urban-based entity that results in the change of Aramean royal titles as Sader argues, it

(2) "Aram" as a trans-local cultural identity

Whatever the nature of such individual Aramean polities, an ethno-cultural collectivity that transcended the boundaries of them all was likely recognized by both Arameans and outsiders. This is reflected first and foremost by the designation "Aram" (used by others) as an umbrella label for different individual Aramean political entities in biblical sources, such as Aram-Rehob, Aram-Zobah (e.g. 2 Sam 10:6; cf. Berlejung 2013: 68-74) and Aram-Damascus (e.g. 2 Sam 8:6; cf. Berlejung 2013: 74-78). The question of an overriding collectivity depends, furthermore, in the extent to which cultural and ethnic commonness (see below) affects the political domain and leads to political unity among, or collaboration between, various Aramean polities.

For Mazar (1962), the correspondence between the Aramean people and a Aramean polity is reflected in the emergence, in the 9th century, of an Aramean empire with Damascus as its center (1 Kgs 20:24), which, if it ever existed, could be called an Aramean "national" empire which later intruded into non-Aramean lands (e.g. Israel in the south; for the concept of Aramean imperialism, see more in Chapter 7). Even if a united Aramean state did not exist, D. Kahn identifies periods during which certain Aramean polities maintained hegemonic positions among all Aramean political entities, e.g. the supremacy of Aram-Damascus under the rule of Hazaʾel (ca. 823-ca. 805 BCE), later replaced successively by the Kingdoms of

may also be due to the fact that power centralization in a city is not necessarily linked with the change of title, as one titled a tribal leader is exactly a city ruler at the same time.

Also, the rise of the *nisbe* (e.g. X of Y city) as a designation of foreign rulers in general (of the Urartian ruler in particular) in the 9th and 8th centuries is rather prominent and may reflect conceptual developments on the Assyrian side which is not restricted to the sociopolitical format of Aramean polities (see Chapter 5). In fact, although Sader claims that Hayyānu is called "son of Gabbar" in the 9th century, while Panamuwa is designated "the Sam'alite" in 8th-century Assyrian texts, Hayyānu is actually called "Hayyānu the Sam'alite" (m*ḫa-a-a-nu* KUR*sa-ma-ʾa-la-a-a*) several times in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions from the 9th century, e.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.1, 53', 54' 67', 94'; A.0.102.2, i 53, 54. Finally, as for "king of GN" in Aramaic documents, we can perhaps ascribe the regular attestation of this designation instead of "son of PN" as a royal title since the earliest Old Aramaic royal inscriptions to the fact that these inscriptions were perhaps intended for a local audience. See the different titles (governor vs. king) in the Akkadian and the Aramaic versions Tell Fekhriyeh Inscription.

Hamath-Luʿash (roughly the first half of the 8th century) and Arpad/Bīt-Agūsi (ca. 754-ca. 740 BCE). During these periods, some sort of political centralization of Aramean polities may have occurred, although the scope and nature of these temporarily unified entities certainly varied (see D. Kahn 2007), and it is unclear whether cultural commonness of some sort played a role in the process. In the case of Aram-Damascus, for example, its special status among Aramaean polities is reflected by the biblical phrase "the head of Aram is Damascus" (כִּי רֹאשׁ אֲרָם דַּמֶּשֶׂק, Isa 7:8[304]), and by the equation of the Damascus-centered polity with the supposedly broader term of "Aram" as a political entity in both Hebrew and Aramaic sources (e.g. the Zakkur Inscription A line 4, Bar-Hadad III is titled "king of Aram", see below).[305]

The Zakkur (otherwise transcribed as "Zakir") Inscription (from Hamath, early 8th century BCE) further indicates that, although Bar-Hadad III, the leader of the military coalition consisting of polities located in central and northern Syria,[306] is designated as "Son of Hazaʾel, king of Aram",[307] the ruler of the other major Aramean polity in the coalition, Bar

[304] "For the head of Aram is Damascus; the head of Damascus is Rezin...and the head of Ephraim is Samaria; the head of Samaria is Son of Remaliah" (Isa 7:8-9). The text contains certain difficulties and may be corrupted (see Roberts 2015:111-13), but the parallel is clear: Aram is to Damascus as Ephraim is to Samaria. We know that Samaria is the capital city of Northern Israel, which is depicted as a territorial kingdom in biblical historiography and is here referred to as "Ephraim", so according to these verses, Damascus (the city) is perceived by the author of the biblical text as the capital of a territorial kingdom called Aram (as the title "king of Aram" suggests in the Zakkur Inscription). The scope of this Aram is of course unclear. Alternatively, the parallel may be less strict, so that Damascus as a polity itself is considered as the leading polity of all Aramean polities. In either case, Aram appears to be a broader concept than Damascus. Two interpretations are possible: the Damascus-centered territorial polity is the most powerful Aramean polity, so that it is equated with the larger concept of Aram (although other Aramean polities exist); or Damascus itself is the designation of a territorial polity (rather than a city) which is considered as the representative of the larger cultural concept of Aram. The comparison of the verses seem to prefer the first alternative.

[305] For a summary of the archaeological and textual evidence regarding the extent of the "empire" of Damascus under Hazaʾel's reign, see Ghantous 2013: 20-113.

[306] The other polities in Bar-Hadad led coalition include: Bêt Guš/Arpad, Que, Unqi, Gurgum, Sam'al, Melid. Names of the rest are either broken or unmentioned in the inscription ("seven" other kings; line 8). Of the preserved polities, Arpad and Sam'al are linguistically largely Aramaic (Sam'alite with its own features), while the others are more commonly considered in modern studies as Neo-Hittite polities.

[307] However, Dušek argues that "Aram" should be understood as "Arameans" in various Aramaic, Hebrew and Assyrian sources (Dušek 2017), so that Bar-Hadad is simply to be understood as "king of Arameans" in the Zakkur Inscription. Yet it should be noted that Zakkur himself bears an Aramaic name and produces the inscription in the Aramaic language and script. Zakkur does not mention his father in the inscription and states that it was the god Baalshamayn who made him king (lines 2-4). It is thus possible that he usurped the throne from the preceding Neo-Hittite dynasty of Irhuleni

Gush of Arpad/Bīt-Agūsi, is still labeled as one of the sixteen kings (line 5). In other words, even if the "empire" established by the Damascene Hazaʾel expanded to incorporate various other polities, Aramean and otherwise (see D. Kahn 2007: 70-72; Younger 2016: 591-632), it never subjugated all Aramaic-speaking regions within its own centralized administrative system,[308] so that an Aramean "nation-state", in which the Aramean cultural identity would overlap with a political entity, was never formed. As I will further discuss in Chapter 7, there is perhaps more evidence for Damascene imperialism than Aramean "nation-state".

In addition to the question of a common designation, I also need briefly to discuss their religion, language and script, which, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 2, contribute to the cultural attributes of a people. First, Niehr has correctly pointed out that a pan-Aramean religion hardly ever existed in this period, and that what religious characteristics are evident seemed to be disparate and demonstrate regional variations. However, although the panthea of different regions contained different deities, the storm god Hadad occupied the central position of the panthea across the Aramaic-speaking regions[309] (Niehr 2014).

Second, from the linguistic perspective, some scholars have argued that the Old Aramaic language had different varieties and should thus be more properly understood as a dialect continuum lacking uniformity, with each local variety exhibiting its own peculiarities (see

---

and established an Aramean dynasty (see Gibson 1975:6). Moreover, Bargush mentioned in the inscription also bears a typical title of the Aramaic tribal ruler in the Aramaic language. Therefore, it would be rather odd if only Bar-Hadad III is highlighted as a king whose subject consisted of Arameans by the author of this inscription, who himself founded an Aramean dynasty. It is more straightforward to argue that here the title "king of Aram" indicates that the Damascene polity is equated conceptually with Aram as a geographical concept. On "Bar-Hadad, king of Aram" in the Melqart Stele, see below.

[308] Note that biblical accounts (1 Kgs 20; especially v. 24) claim that some sort of administrative reform that demanded the replacement of kings with officers in the Damascus-led "empire" (see Mazar 1962:108) already took place during the reign of the Israelite king, Ahab (prior to mid- 9th century). The Zakkur Inscription seems to reflect a different picture, that is, the Damascene king is still a hegemon rather than an emperor of some sort.

[309] The high status of a storm god is widely attested in different periods and regions in the West Semitic sphere and is not in and of itself an Iron Age Aramean phenomenon. See Schwemer 2001: 6-7. Not only Hadad/Addu, but also Baal of the Ugaritic and later the Phoenician world and Yahweh of Israel and Judah bear characteristics of the storm god. Scholars have pointed out that the name "Baal" ("lord") was initially an appellation for the great Syrian Storm-god because of his supremacy, which subsequently became the proper name since the Middle Bronze Age. See A. Green 2003:173.

Yun 2008:450-66; cf. Younger 2016:34). The standardization of the Aramaic language, Yun correctly notes, must have taken place only after Aramaic became an important administrative language in the western region of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, when many of the previous Aramean polities had already lost their political independence (Yun 2008: 466). Therefore, the rise of the Aramaic language was the product of an imperial rather than a national enterprise. On the other hand, when Aramaic began to serve as the administrative language of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, it was known in Assyrian and biblical sources as "Aramaic" (e.g. SAA 17 002; 2 Kgs 18:26=Isa 36:11) rather than "Damascene" or "Arpadite", which obviously suggests that the language was considered by contemporary outsiders as a recognizable whole.

Finally, the so-called Aramaic script derived from the Phoenician script and did not demonstrate clear Aramaic distinctions until the end of the 9th century (Gzella 2014:78). In the early 8th century Zakkur Inscription, the letter *zayin* resembles the modern Roman letter "Z", which is taken as one of the distinct features of the Aramaic variety of the alphabet (see fig. 1 in Naveh 1970). However, it is uncertain how widespread the feature was in the same period. For example, in the Tel Dan Inscription, which is largely dated to the last quarter of the 9th century (Athas 2003:165; cf. Younger 2016: 592), only one *zayin* is preserved (in Fragment B, line 1). This *zayin* has an interesting form that leans to the left, with the connector stroke tilting to the right rather than being perpendicular to both horizontal strokes. The angle of the connector stroke has prompted Athas to suggest that it reflects the transition from the older "Phoenician-Aramaic" form of *zayin* to the later Z-shaped *zayin*, typical of the

Aramaic variety of the script[310] (Athas 2003:147-49). At any rate, the *samekh* of the Zakkur and the Tel Dan inscriptions show no trace of the cursive form, in which the vertical stroke does not cross all three horizontal strokes but touches only the third one. This seems to suggest that by the end of the 9th century distinctive traits of the Aramaic Script in lapidary inscriptions had not fully developed. Later inscriptions dating to the 8th century from various regions display the older forms of *zayin* and *samekh* as well. Therefore, Naveh's conclusion that a distinctive Aramaic lapidary variety with

[310] It should be noted that similar cursive forms do not necessarily imply the same origin, but may derive from similar writing techniques and habits. For instance, the letter *zayin* in some of the Samaria ostraca (e.g. No. 1, line 5; No. 2, line 3; see Ahituv 2008:262; 265) is also written with only one stroke, although the resultant "Z" form is wider and flatter than the *zayin* in the Aramaic cursive, with a little tick at the end of the lower vertical line.

Monumental scripts from the ninth and eighth centuries B. C. E.
(drawn by Abbé J. Starcky; see A. Dupont-Sommer & J. Starcky, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré*, Paris 1958, Pl. 24; courtesy of the author and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres)

1 Mesha; mid-9th century; **2** Kilamuwa; late 9th century; **3** Zakir; beginning of the 8th century; **4** Hadad; early 8th century; **5** Sfire; mid-8th century; **6** Karatepe; second half of the 8th century; **7** Panammu; *c.* 730; **8** Bar-Rakib; late 8th century

Figure 1 Monumental scripts from the 9th and the 8th centuries BCE; cited in Naveh 1970: 49

No.	Image	Location	Occurring Word
B-1		Line 1	[...]וגזר[...]

No.	Image	Location	Word Occurrence
A-1		Line 2	[...]יסק

No.	Image	Location	Occurring Word
B-1[108]		Line 6	אסרי

Figure 2 *zayin and samekh* in the Tel Dan Stele, Fragment A and B. Athas 2003:147

cursive features appeared as a full-fledged script only after the mid-8th century (in the Panamuwa and the Bar-rakib Inscriptions from Sam'al) is still to be preferred (Naveh 1970:15). As far as the cursive script is concerned, Gzella suggests that already in the cursive letters in the Deir ʿAlla Text (ca. 800 BCE) one can detect early forms of cursive Aramaic letters, such as open *ṭet* and *qoph* (Gzella 2014:79; see Naveh 1970:15, n.44), to which one may add the small Z-shaped *zayin*, among others (e.g. Combination I, lines 1, 14). However, since Deir ʿAlla is located in the Transjordan and the language is not clearly Aramaic (see e.g. Hackett 1980), it is hard to evaluate the relationship between the cursive forms in this text and those in late 8th century Aramaic texts from Nineveh and Nimrud (see fig. 2:1-2 in Naveh 1970).

To summarize the discussion on the Aramaic script so far, it is unclear how widespread

the cursive features were before the late 8th century, although its appearance in Deir ʿAlla, which is located in northern Transjordan (south of the Aramean lands), indicates that forms attested in northern Syria (Hamath and later, Sam'al) may also have been present to the south . However, we do not have convincing evidence for this hypothesis. In any case, as with the standardization of the Aramaic language, the emergence and development of the cursive Aramaic features of the script are "undoubtedly connected with the rise of the Aramaic language and script as an international means of communications" (Naveh 1970:15).

(3) Summary

From the cultural perspective, the Arameans in Iron Age Syria were known by a common appellation, worshiped different deities with the storm god often at the top of the pantheon, spoke different varieties of what, however, can be classified as the Aramaic language and gradually developed a separate branch of the alphabetic script (though at a later stage). The term "Aram" was not only used by the Neo-Assyrian Empire and biblical authors to refer to members of polities established by these people, but it was also employed in Aramaic sources to designate another Aramaic polity (Zakkur Inscription) or one's own polity (the Melqart Stele). From the political perspective, the political structure of the Arameans in the late 2nd millennium remains unclear. In the 1st millennium, the Aramaic speakers established different political entities, most with a tribal background, that were centered on a major urban center (though they often had other fortified towns). There is no reason to assume any organized pan-Aramean political entity, although the very existence of the umbrella appellation "Aram" in expressions like "king of Aram" in Aramaic and biblical sources possibly signifies some sort of superordinate collectivity. It is just not clear to what

extent this represented a pan-Aramean political arrangement. Closest to this speculation is the fact that the Damascene kingdom was known in Aramaic and biblical sources as the namesake or perhaps some kind of a representative of Aram, due to its strength and geopolitical significance in the 9th and early 8th centuries (for the term "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties, see below). The exact relationship between Damascus and Aram, however, remains ambiguous.

C. The Question of "All Aram"

I have noted above that a united Aramean polity with one political center most likely never existed. If so, can we nevertheless detect a league of Aramean states (culturally and ethnically speaking) that engaged in concerted political action on the international stage, one that would resemble Greek city-states resisting the Persian invasion, unified by both geopolitical factors as well as ethno-cultural elements common to all members? Two biblical passages hint at the possibility that Arameans of different individual polities may have allied with one another in warfare with other peoples. The first is 2 Sam 8:3-6, in which Aram-Damascus provides military aid to Hadadezer of Zobah when the latter was defeated by David. The second is 2 Sam 10 (particularly verses 6, 16, 19), when Hadadezer "brought Arameans from beyond the River (Euphrates)" to support Aram-Rehob and Aram-Zobah, which, in turn, had been hired by the Ammonites to fight Israel. Contextually, these Arameans from beyond the River may have been led by "all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer" (v19), indicating a hierarchical international order in which the Arameans would be engaged in joint military acts. Textual ambiguities and the issue of historicity aside, however, it is unclear whether all Arameans were included in such a political circle, nor is there any

evidence to suggest that collaborative military campaigns here recounted were conducted out of any other purpose (e.g. a common Aramean cultural or ethnic identity) than geopolitical concerns .

More evidence can be gathered from Aramaic sources. The famous and somewhat mysterious phrase "all Aram" (apparently consisting of "Upper" and "Lower Aram" according to the treaties; see below)[311] attested in the Sefire Treaties[312] between Bar Gaʾyah, king of KTK[313] and Matiʿʾēl, king of Arpad, has been understood by some scholars as an indicator of potential pan-Aramean political collectivity in the first half of the 8th century BCE.[314] It has been argued that "all Aram", like the terms "all Israel" (e.g. 2 Sam 2:9, where the same structure is used) and "all Edom" (e.g. 2 Sam 8:14),[315] suggests the emergence of an Aramean "nation" anticipatory of a territorial entity (Grosby 2002d:150-65) that was "united by more than just a military alliance of city-kingdoms bound by a common enemy" but at the same time "not yet a crystallized political entity" (Wazana 2008:728-29). Wazana

---

[311] "*ʾrm klh*", "all Aram"; *"kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth*," "all Upper Aram and Lower Aram (lit. All Upper Aram and its Lower part)" in Sefire I A lines 4-6. "all Aram" is perhaps mentioned again in Sefire I B line 3, but only the Aleph is preserved.

[312] The three treaties found in the village of Sefire near Aleppo in 1931 are related to one another by their provenance, content and the script. The content of the three treaties is largely not repetitive, so that they are not three copies of the same treaty. The first two explicitly refer to Bar Gaʾyah and Matiʿʾēl, while the third does not make explicit reference to the two rulers. They may either be the same treaty or three forms of the treaty between the two polities renewed at different stages. For further references on related speculations, see Fitzmyer 1995:18.

[313] On different identifications of KTK, see summaries in Bagg 2011:41-52 and more recently Younger 2016:538-45.

[314] On the dating of the Sefire Treaties, see for example Gibson 1975:21; Fitzmyer 1995:19 and most recently Dušek 2019. Dušek argues that Sefire I B, 7 contains the name of the Assyrian king Aššur-Dan III, of whose name only "n" is fully preserved. This identification would help the author provide a more precise dating of the treaties (or at least Sefire I), i.e. 754 BCE for Sefire I B, and perhaps an earlier date for Sefire I A. The dating is contingent on the reading of the badly damaged letter before Nun in line I B, 7 as a Dalet as much as it depends on the understanding that the phrase "great king" (מלך רב) in line 7 can only refer to the Great king of Assyria. Dušek contends that the title "great king" is used 'as a royal title identifying a ruler as king of one of the major powers versus petty kings' This is evidently not the case with Bar-Gaʾyah. It is much more likely that the title in Sefire I B, 7 refers to a king of Assyria rather than to any of the Levantine kings". (Dušek 2019:4-5) However, we should not forget that the current treaty is concluded between two local rulers (assuming that Bar Ga'yah is not an epithet of the Assyrian king or an Assyrian official) in the Aramaic rather than Akkadian language, so that the application of the title may reflect local rather than Assyrian customs. There are at least two cases in which a "petty" king from the Levant or its surrounding regions is titled a "great king". First, Wasusarmas of Tabal retains the Hittite title "great king" in his Luwian inscription as late as in the latter half of the 8th century; second, Bar-rakib from Sam'al calls his peers "great kings" (mlkn rbrbn) in Bar-rakib Inscription, line 13. Therefore, it seems risky to suggest that Aššur-Dan is attested Sefire I B, 7, on the basis of the badly damaged letter and the phrase "great king". In the end, we do not know the identification and status of Ktk and its ruler in Levantine geopolitics of the first half of the 8th century, when Assyria's control of the region was at least not at its peak.

[315] Mazar (1962:119-20) has connected the term in the Sefire Treaties with the Greek term "*Koile Syria*", used in the Hellenistic period. The etymology of "*koile*" has been linked with the Aramaic word "כל".

calls “all Aram” a “geograhpical-religious-sociological” entity which is not political. However, if their interpretation of “all Aram” as a referent to ancient Syria with distinct Aramean demographic, linguistic and religious elements is correct, one may even argue that this entity is indeed political at least to a certain degree, as they are collectively conducting political actions by entering a treaty with a political entity, possibly with the kingdom of Arpad as their representative.[316] In other words, “all Aram” would resemble Greek city-states in their struggle against the Persian Empire, in which correlations between the Panhellenic identity and collective political decisions can be attested.[317] While one cannot speak of internal political, much less administrative, unification of all Arameans into one “nation state”, one can nevertheless sense another case where cultural and political facets of nationhood converge.

However, such an interpretation of a text with numerous textual difficulties is far from a scholarly consensus. Scholars have made various attempts to decipher the nature and scope of “all Aram”, the exact identification of the kingdom of KTK as well as the relationship

---

[316] B. Mazar considers the toponyms in Sefire I B lines 9-10 as the outline of entire Syria as a geographical concept. See B. Mazar 1962. Without drawing upon comparisons in the Hebrew Bible, Dupont-Sommer has suggested already in 1949 that “all Aram” in the Sefire Treaties “désigne l’ensemble des Etats araméens; ceux-ci, en dépit des liens assez lâches qui les unissaient les uns aux autres, en dépit de leurs mutuels conflits, gardaient un certain sens de leur communauté raciale et politique: d’instinct, quand les circonstances étaient graves, ils se rapprochaient pour faire front ensemble.” Dupont-Sommer 1949: 58.

[317] Greco-Persian relations during the Achaemenid Period were certainly more complex, as the Persian Empire aimed to keep balance between Athens and Sparta, the two major powers in the Greek World, while controlling many Ionian city-states in West Anatolia who sided with the Persians in conflicts that occurred between the two sides in the 5th and the 4th centuries BCE. A sustainable and lasting commonwealth of all Greek city-states that existed and functioned during times of both war and peace cannot be attested. Even so, there is no denial that Greek city-states organized joint military campaigns, itself a political act, against Persian invasions, during which time Greek intellectuals also called for the cultivation of Hellenic unity in place of interstate differences “in a common crusade against the ‘eternal enemy’, Persians.” (Hall 2002: 205). In other words, an effect of mutual strengthening may be detected between joint political action across polities (often caused by external political pressure) on the one hand, and common ethnic and cultural backgrounds on the other, even if these polities are not united as one political entity. For the links between Athenian political and cultural ascendancy and Athenian advocacy for Panhellenism and ancient debates on whether ethnicity and blood ties or cultural elements should define hellenicity, see detailed discussions in Hall 2002: 205-220. It should be noted in any case that the conflicts with the Achaemenid Empire served as the general background for intensified Hellenic attempts at higher political unity and *homonoia* within individual and among different Greek city-states. On the role of sports and war on Greek concepts of Panhellenic unity and particularism during the Persian War in the early 5th century , see D. Kyle 2009. For the expression of the Greek identity in contrast to the Persians, see Aeschylus’ *The Persians*, for a recent study of the play in relation to ancient Judean/Jewish identity in reaction to the Achaemenid legacy, see Machinist 2018a.

between the two primary parties of the treaty. Unlike Grosby and Wazana, other scholars prefer not to understand "all Aram" as an ethno-cultural/quasi-political pan-Aramean entity. Na'aman, for example, considers "Aram" in the Sefire Treaties as reference to the kingdom of Aram-Damascus, arguing that the toponyms in Sefire I B lines 9-10 function as border points that delineate the boundaries of this kingdom which serves as KTK's ally in the treaty (N. Na'aman 1978:226; see summary and criticism in Pitard 1987: 179 and Kahn 2007: 78). However, it should be noted that this interpretation does not account for the semantic significance of "all" (*klh*) in the term "all Aram", in addition to the unexplained identification of Damascus as KTK's ally. If "Aram" refers to "Aram-Damascus", that is, name of the leading Aramean polity, then one has to explain why it is Arpad that appears to function as the representative of "all Aram". Fitzmyer vaguely indicates in his commentary on the treaties that Arpad is the capital city of "all Aram" and that the reference to "all Aram" "expresses the extent of the coalition or union which Bar-Gaʔyah has set up". It is unclear what is here meant by the coalition set up by the king of KTK, since "all Aram" appears to be on the side of Matiʿʔel rather than that of Bar-Gaʔyah in the treaties (Fitzmyer 1995: 65). Pitard, on the other hand, believes that "all Aram" in this context refers only to the Aramean kingdoms in northern Syria that are vassals of Arpad, noting that "(t)here are no indications in the treaty or other contemporary sources that Arpad's hegemony extended past its southern border with Hamath...during this period Damascus appears to have been within the political orbit of Israel to the south under Jeroboam I" (Pitard 1988: 11). However, that certain Aramean polities in the south were subjugated by non-Aramean polities cannot preclude their inclusion in a general Aramean ethno-cultural entity, just as the Greek states in Anatolia

which participated in the Ionion Revolt and joined hands with other Greek polities against Persian forces were formally part of the Achaemenid Empire. Indeed, cultural commonness among different political units does not need to presume the complete autonomy of individual polities belonging to the cultural unity.

Yet other scholars argue that "all Aram" here is no more than an epithet of an individual Aramean state. Kahn considers "all Aram", "upper and lower Aram" as well as the geographical description in Sefire I Face B 8-10 as three different ways to designate the territory controlled by Mati^ʕel, understanding the latter as the delineation of his kingdom. He later identifies "all Aram" as constituting the territories of Arpad and Hamath (which he equates with Bêt ṢLL, understood by him as the tribal eponym of Hamath); Hamath, he argues, fell under Arpad's control after the Assyrian onslaught of Hazrach in 755 BCE (Kahn 2007: 81-82). This interpretation of "all Aram" is based on the assumption that the toponyms in Face B 8-10 offers an delineation of this "all Aram" as consisting of "upper and lower Aram," and within the latter, Hamath. But this assumption here is unproven. Similarly, there is no further evidence for Kahn's connection between Hamath and the puzzling Bêt ṢLL. Younger, in a more recent analysis of this document, claims that "all Aram" refers to none other than Arpad itself (Younger 2016: 508). This connection is facilitated the identification of Bar-Hadad "king of Aram" in the Melqart Stele with an otherwise unattested ruler of Arpad based on a reading of the patronymic (Puech 1992[318]); the connection is supposed to rectify the assumption that Damascus is the only Aramean polity known simply as "Aram".

[318] Pitard, reading the patronymic as *ʿtrhmk* instead of *ʿtrsmk*, thinks that this Bar-Hadad is not a king of Arpad (perhaps another son of *ʿtrsmk*) but instead a ruler of a small kingdom in Norther Syria, which he in turn links with the phrase "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties. In other words, Pitard claims that the phrase "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties provides evidence that Aram can serve as the designation of northern Syria, where the Melqart Stele was found. Pitard 1988: 11-13.

Yet it must be noted that the identification of "all Aram" and Arpad is based on one scholar's attempts to decipher a severely damaged line in the Melqart Stele, which renders the reading less than certain (cf. Lemaire 2007:284). Younger, to be sure, reinforces his interpretation by pointing out that "all Aram" occurs in parallel to Mati^{ʕ}el's other realms (his court, Arpad, *bny gš*), so that "all Aram" is likely to be another label of the entity under his rule. Younger also appeals to a similar structure in a royal inscription of Adad-nērārī II, where the Assyrian king records receiving tributes from the Land of Laqē "to the entirety of its territory above and below" (*a-na paṭ gim-ri-ša e-liš ù šap-liš*), which he thinks further proves the equation of "all Aram" with Arpad (Younger 2016: 57-508). However, that "all Aram" occurs among other names designating entities or domains ruled by Mati^{ʕ}el (see Tables 1 and 2 below, which shows the syntactical relationship between the phrase and other entities entering the treaty) does not necessarily mean that "all Aram" should be equated with the kingdom of Arpad. It is equally possible that the place names refer to different ranks or facets of the entities within the orbit of Mati^{ʕ}el's political influence. On the other hand, the Assyrian parallel cited by younger cannot support his equation of "all Aram" with Arpad, despite the apparent verbal similarities (all..., upper/above; lower/below), since in the Assyrian text Laqē is the only toponym that occurs in this context, so that any further description undoubtedly concerns none other than Laqē. In the Sefire Treaties, on the contrary, "all Aram" occurs after other toponyms with which it is not easily identifiable.[319] In other words, the occurrence of multiple place names (which may be the names of different ranks or facets of entities under Mati^{ʕ}el's influence) is indeed what renders such equation doubtful.

[319] The verbal similarity is obvious: in Adad-nērārī II's text, he refers essentially to "Laqē in its entirety" (or "all Laqē"), upper Laqē and lower Laqē. The Sefire treaties, on the other hand, refer to all Aram, upper Aram and lower Aram. Yet this piece of evidence cannot be used to support the equation of Aram with Arpad, since Arpad does not occur in the structure.

Even if "all Aram" refers to Arpad (or a united kingdom of Arpad and Hamath), as suggested by Younger and Kahn, one has yet to explain why such a political entity can bear the general term of "Aram". Scholars have correctly pointed out that Aram need not be exclusively used to designate Damascus (see above), yet this designation was used in the Hebrew Bible and the Zakkur inscription to refer to the Damascene polity, and that usage reflects the fact that the "empire" created by Hazaʾel made the kingdom of Damascus the political representative of a broader cultural entity of "Aram". J. Dušek's recent study on "Aram" in the Sefire Treaties seems to offer a different interpretation of this phenomenon of *pars pro toto* designation, in which he suggests that Aram in Aramaic, Hebrew and Assyrian sources refers to people rather than a region, thus "the Arameans".[320] The Land of Aram, in turn, would mean any land inhabited by Aramean populations. Therefore, Damascus can be designated as Aram because the majority of its residents are Aramean, not because--although Dušek does not point it out explicitly--it is the most powerful kingdom established by Arameans or it is some sort of a political representative of Arameans. He cites Sargon II's stele found in Hamath, in which the people of Hatti and Aram are juxtaposed with residents of Unqi and Bīt Agūsī, so that correspondence between Hatti and Unqi on the one hand, and Aram and Bīt Agūsī on the other, may be at work (Dušek 2017: 19-20). If so, any polity with substantial Aramean populations, an Aramean tribal structure and an Aramean dynasty could

[320] Though not explicitly formulated, this interpretation of "Aram" as a descriptor of people rather than a region or a political entity is also at work in Na'aman's recent effort (2016) to decipher the meaning of "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties. He argues that "Arpad" and "all Aram" indicate the dimorphic nature of the Arpadite kingdom, with Arpad referring to the urban administrative center and "all Aram" referring to the tribal elements. "All upper and lower Aram", furthermore, would refer to northerners and southerners in the tribal structure, not unlike the Bene Sim'aland Ben Yamina of the Mari society in the Old Babylonian Period, when the ruler of the Mari Kingdom is considered both as the ruler of the city/state and the ruler of the tribal members. By the same token, Bar-Hadad in the Melqart Stele is titled as "king of Aram", i.e., "king of the Arameans". This interpretation is attractive, but it is by no means explicit in the text that "Aram" refers to "tribal members". Also, it does not seem to pay adequate attention to "all" in the treaty. Should we assume that "all Aram" simply refers to the Aramean tribal members in the Arpadite polity, on the account that "Aram" is apparently a very extensive term (e.g. Damascus as Aram)? I will discuss this issue in further details in this paragraph.

be designated as "Aram". Therefore, Dušek further argues, "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties should be interpreted as referring to all the Arameans subject to the kingdom of Arpad, rather than to a region called Aram or the entire Aramean population. Despite its merits, the interpretation that Aram must denote a population group rather than a region in this treaty is not without problems.[321] Also, even if "all Aram" (lit. "Aram, all of it") refers to all the Arameans of Arpad only, one wonders why no further geographical restriction is placed on the phrase (one hypothetical version could be "all Aram/Arameans *of Arpad* or *of his land*"), considering that Aram certainly had a more extensive meaning. Elsewhere in the Sefire Treaties the phrase "the Lords *of Arpad* and *its* people" is attested the list of parties (see the charts below), with restrictions placed on *extensive terms*, limiting their relevance to the polity of Arpad only. Would such a broad term as "Aram" not need further explanation, if only Arpadite Arameans are in question?[322]

Kahn also rejects this interpretation of "all Aram" as denoting the concept of an Aramean ethno-cultural community with the argument that while Wazana considers such an

---

[321] For instance, Dušek argues that "all Aram" in this document (e.g. Sefire I A. 5 and Sefire I B 3–4 s) occurs in the context of human beings as treaty parties rather than place names, yet this does not account for Arpad and KTK as the two parties entering the treaty alongside human beings, such as rulers, tribal members and their offspring. Also, the scope within which the content of the treaty is expected to be heard is also expressed in geographical terms (Sefire IB, 9ff. e.g. "Lebanon", "the Valley"...). Therefore,it cannot be excluded that Aram, just like Arpad and KTK, can be considered as geographical terms (not just as political entities consisting of human beings). See Dušek 2017: 5.

[322] However, there are cases in non-Aramaic sources where a more extensive term is apparently used to designate a portion of a larger group in a limited geographical context. Esarhaddon records that sometime in the 670s BCE a rebel among the Arabs called Uabi incited "all the Arabs" (LÚ*A-ru-bu ka-li-šú*) to revolt against the up-to-then loyal Arab ruler Iataʾ and that "all the Arabs" were trampled by Assyrian troops. (see e.g. RINAP 4, Esarhaddon iv 17-31). According to the context, Iataʾ and his father Hazaʾel seem to be related to the city of Adummatu/Duma, which makes one wonder whether here "all the Arabs" refers to Arabs in that city and its environs only. Inserted in this account is a reference to a lady called Tabūa who was returned to her country to become ruler over "them" (lines iv 15-16). She is probably another ruler of the Arabs who rules in a different polity, as Hazaʾel and Iataʾ seem to be contemporaneous with her so that she cannot be another ruler of Adummatu (Eph'al 1982: 127-28). In other words, "all the Arabs" in the episode of rebellion against Iataʾ most likely includes Arabs of one polity only. This said, "all Aram" in the Sefire treaty differs from "all the Arabs" in Esarhaddon's inscriptions in two ways: first, it occurs in the context of a treaty of which an Aramean polity is a party, so that one would expect a more specified designation (for it is important to stipulate to the Arameans belonging to which polity the treaty is binding); second, in Esaharddon's inscriptions the determinative LÚ clearly precedes "*Arubu*" so that there is no doubt that here it refers not to the land, but to the people. This is not unambiguous in Aramaic due to the restrictions of the writing system. Therefore, this piece of external evidence cannot resolve our questions about the meaning of "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties. "All Aram" can still refer to the the entire geographical and cultural realm known as "Aram".

entity as a "nation" in the making but not yet a "crystallized political entity" with "restrictive, compelling borders" (Wazana 2008: 729), a party in treaty should not be merely an emerging concept: "A contract is never an abstract between not yet existing parties. 'All Aram' had linear, recognizable borders in reality. It was not a vague, emerging concept, but an existing entity with clear borders under the sovereignty of Mati$^{\varsigma}$-ilu, king of Arpad." (Kahn 2007: 79) However, one wonders whether this assertion is warranted. That "all Aram" does not have fixed borders as an established, unified polity cannot necessarily lead to the conclusion that it is not an "existing party". It could indeed be an existing cultural unity with a certain level of collective political awareness under special circumstances unknown to us.

Finally, we should briefly revisit two key points in the meaning and connotation of the term "all Aram". First, as noted by Younger, one should appeal not only to the historical background and the geopolitical situation of Syria in the 9th and 8th centuries when aiming to reveal the implications of the term "all Aram". Crucial for one's understanding of "all Aram" are the structural features of the Sefire Treaties, to be more exact, the context in which "all Aram" occurs as one of the parties of the treaties as well as its relationship with other entities serving as parties. There are two occurrences of the term "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties, one complete (Sefire I A line 5), the other partially reconstructed (Sefire I B lines 3-4). Here let us leave for the moment such issues as the relevant order in which the two parties appear, the titles used to address the two rulers in connection with their relative status and the occurrences of the Aramaic term "*ʿdy*" (treaty). Rather, let us focus on the series of individuals or entities that enter into the treaties and explore whether they may shed light on the political connotations of "all Aram".

I now summarize the parties of the treaty on both sides that occur in the context of the two attestations of "all Aram" in the following charts:

Table 1 Context of "all Aram" in Sefire I A lines 1-6

	Party A	Party B	Notes
1	br gʾyh mlk ktk=Bar Gaʾyah, king of KTK (line 1)	mtˁʾl br ˁtrsmk mlk [ʾrpd]=Matiˁʾel, son of ˁtrsmk, king of (Arpad) (line 1)	Two individual rulers as "king (mlk)" of a certain entity, possibly the royal city ("Arpad" broken; see lines 3 and 4, where "Arpad" is preserved)
2	bny br gʾyh /bny bny br gʾ[yh wˁqr]h=sons of Bar Gaʾyah/grandsons of Bar Gaʾyah (lines 2-3)	bny mtˁʾl /ˁqr mtˁʾl br ˁtrsmk mlk ʾrpd=sons of Matiˁʾel/offspring of Matiˁʾel, son of ˁtrsmk, king of Arpad (lines 3)	Future rulers of the two polities (not-yet-existing groups of people); the occurrence of Arpad indicates that a city is recognized as the innermost center of the king's influence.
3	Ktk=KTK (line 4)	([ˁdy]) ʾrpd=(treaty) of Arpad (line 4)	the two royal cities (respective centers of the two polities); the word treaty is possibly repeated at the beginning of the phrase denoting the latter party
4	bˁly ktk=lords of	bˁly ʾrpd=lords of	"Lords"[323] of both royal cities (again,

[323] Fitzmyer recognizes the possibility that *bˁly* can refer to citizens, citing Aramaic and Hebrew parallels, although he

Table 1 Continued

	KTK (line 4)	Arpad (line 4)	human beings)
5	Ḥb[wr]=Habur? (line 4)	ʾrm klh /mṣr /bnwh zy ysqn bʾšr[h] /[mlky[324]] kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth /kl ʿll byt mlk=all Aram/Mṣr/his sons who will succeed him/(kings?) of all upper Aram and lower Aram/all those who enter the palace	1. The meaning and nature of the restored term Ḥb[wr] remains uncertain.[325] 2. The phrase "*bnwh*" suggests that "*mṣr*" seems to be an individual, possibly a ruler.[326] The relationship between this person and "all Aram" in the previous phrase is essential. Is it part of "all Aram", that is, a smaller entity is now mentioned after a broader concept? Or is it an ally of "all Aram" (which would then have a closer relationship with the previous entities more certainly associated with the Arpad and its ruler)? Or does

prefers to understand this term as a reference to the city aristocracy, noting that common citizenry is designated as *ʿm* elsewhere in the treaty (Sefire I A 29, 30 B 5, 11; II B 3, C 16). Cf. 41. However, in Sefire iii line 26, it is stipulated that the city Talʾayim, together with its villages and its "lords" (*wkfryh wbʿlyh*), should be returned to Ktk. The context here seems to favor the translation common "residents" or "citizens", which, together with the villages of the city and the city itself would imply the totality of the territory to be returned (cf. Gibson 1975:51), although Fitzmyer chooses to render it as "lords" (Fitzmyer 1995:141).

[324] Restored in Fitzmyer 1995: 42; Younger suggests "lords" (*bʿly*) as another possibility (Younger 2016: 506).

[325] Some scholars understand this word as a reference to a "federation" or "alliance" of entities (ḥbr as a verbal root). If this interpretation stands, then its juxtaposition with "all Aram" makes it more likely that the latter, too, may have been a designation of a union of polities sharing some sort of "Aramness". See a summary in Fitzmyer 1995: 65-66. Fitzmyer links this place name to the one mentioned in the Aramaic version of the Tell Fekhriyeh Inscription (line 16), in which this toponym certainly refers to the Habur river, as the Akkadian version of this line contains the determinative for river (ÍD). It is unlikely, however, that a river could serve as a party of an international treaty.

[326] See a summary of major interpretations of *mṣr* (either as a place name or a personal name) in Fitzmyer 1995: 65-67. Kahn speculates that this *mṣr* could be identified as a ruler of *byt ṢLL* (Sefire I B line 3) which he identifies with Hamath, now a client state of Arpad. See Kahn 2007: 82. This identification also seems to suggest that *mṣr* hails from an Aramean sphere, thus being part of "all Aram".

Table 1 Continued

		(lines 4-6)	it denote a larger political entity of which "all Aram" and preceding parties are vassals? 3. "(kings) of upper and lower Aram" is a restoration based on the assumption that "upper and lower Aram" is a geographical concept.[327] Since both "all Aram" and "upper and lower Aram" refer to the extent of Aram as an entity, then "*mṣr*" found in between would more likely refer to a ruler of a member polity of this "Aram". 4. This list ends with a less general term referring to all that enter the palace (cf. Akk. *ērib ekalli*). While from the perspective of social classes the term is less inclusive than "all Aram", the geographical scope of this phrase may still be the entirety of

[327] See Dušek 2017: 10-12, where this phrase is understood from a societal perspective as denoting those of a high social rank and those of a low social rank (among the Arameans), with parallels in Neo-Assyrian treaties. Such an interpretation may well correspond to the reference to "its (Arpad's) people" (*ʿmh*) in Sefire I B line 5. However, on the one hand Dušek fails to provide more parallels in Aramaic texts where ʿlh and tḥt bear such a sociological sense, on the other, if *bʿly* in line 4 already means the nobles of Arpad, one wonders why this needs repeating in the phrase in question.

Table 1 Continued

			“Aram” on account of the context.

Table 2 Context of “all Aram” in Sefire I B lines 1-6

	Party A	Party B	Notes
1	Beginning of face B badly damaged	only *-pd* at the beginning of Sefire I B 1 is preserved; most likely part of *ʾrpd* (=Arpad)	Since the next line mentions sons of the rulers of each polity, it may be deduced that the preceding line refers to the rulers of the two polities themselves, hence individuals. (1st group in the first list)
2	bny br gʾyh=sons of Bar Gaʾyah (line 1)	bny mtʿʾl=sons of Matiʿʾel (line 1)	Future rulers of the two polities (not-yet-existing groups of people), cf. Sefire I A line 3. (2nd group in the first list)
3	[bny bny br] gʾyh=(grandsons of Bar) Gaʾyah(lines 1-2)	ʿqr mtʿʾl /ʿqr kl mh mkl zy [ysq wymlk] bʾšrh (lines 2-3) //bny gš (line 3) //byt Ṣll (line 3)	1. The word ʿdy occurs again before the reference to Bar Ga’yah’s offspring (lit. grandsons), followed by an extended list of parties that enter the treaty on Matiʿʾel’s side, which

Table 2 Continued

		//ʾ[rm klh]=offspring of sons of Matiʿʾel/offspring of whatever king who (succeeds and reigns) after him
		//sons of Guš
		//House of Ṣll
		//(all Aram)
			begins with his offspring, the future rulers, i.e. not-yet-existing groups of people. (extension of the 2nd group in the first list)
			2. Then the scope of the list expands to include the tribal members (again human beings) of the Arpad-centered kingdom, i.e. Bêt Guš (not in the first list).
			3. Fitzmyer summarizes scholarly discussion on the identification of "byt Ṣll". This is either interpreted as a place name or a dynastic name, i.e. a prominent family of Arpad (see Fitzmyer 1995: 100). Kahn recently considers it the ruling family of Hamath, now understood as a part of Matiʿʾel's kingdom (Kahn 2007: 82).
			4. Finally, a possible attestation of the term "all Aram" (beginning and core of the 5th group in the

Table 2 Continued

			first list) appears at the end of this sub-list of human partners of the the treaty. Within this sub-list, one observes the expansion of treaty partners on Mati^{ʕ}el's side from the the future members of the royal house to larger circles, i.e. tribal members, possibly culminating in "all Aram".
4	Ktk=KTK (line 4)	ʔrpd=Arapd (line 4)	The two royal cities as the political centers of the respective kingdoms. (3rd group of the first list)
5	b^{ʕ}ly ktk=lords of KTK (line 4)	b^{ʕ}ly ʔrpd (lines 4-5) /^{ʕ}mh=lords of Arpad and its people (line 5)	1. "Lords" of both royal cities representing the kingdoms (human beings again; 4th group in the first list). For the term "b^{ʕ}ly", see the preceding chart. 2. The scope is expanded to include the "people" of Arpad, perhaps in contrast to the "lords" (this element is not attested in the

Table 2 Continued

			first list). See parallel in Sefire II Face B line 3, where nobles are designated as "*rbwh*" in a series of curses.
6	ʔlhy ktk=gods of KTK (line 5)	ʔ[lhy ʔrpd]=g(ods of Arpad) (lines 5-6)	Gods of the two polities designated by the royal cities as their centers (this element is not attested in the first list).

Several observations can be made about the two lists of parties: 1. Despite numerous similarities, the two lists seem to be composed independently, with elements in the second absent from the first, in addition to the different order of elements that appear in the lists; 2. Conceptually, the first list seems to follow the "small to large" or "specific to general" principle more closely (individual kings>royal family/future kings>royal cities>nobles of royal cities> "all Aram" et al.), although the very last element (nobles, lit. "all those who enter the palace") slightly disrupts the sequence. 3. The second list may follow this order: individual kings>sons of the kings>future kings>tribal elements of Arpad (sons of Guš; the unknown House of Ṣll)>possibly "all Aram">the royal cities of the two parties> "lords" of the two polities named after the royal cities (and people of Arpad)>patron gods of the two polites (again, named after the royal cities). The sequence seems to defy clear definition, although it is possible to understand part of the list (after the references to future kings and before references to gods) as one that begins with a broader circle beyond the royal city of Arpad (the tribe and even all Aram) and then continues to refer to the more confined circles

of the polities, i.e. their royal cities. Alternatively, one may also argue that here the author begins with tribal elements of Arpad and turns to Aram as a supra-tribal cultural entity, before he approaches Mati^{ʕ}el's power circle from the perspective of the royal city (i.e. treaty between two cities and treaty between the nobles of the cities). Could this be explained as a vestige of the supposed tribe-city dichotomy of Aramean states?[328] In any case, although neither list can be perfectly interpreted as one that consistently follows a fixed order, a general tendency seems to be present. The Arpadite ruler's circles of influence is described in two ways: first, from the smaller circle of the royal city to "all Aram" in the first list, and second, from the broader circle of the tribe and all Aram as a cultural community back to the royal city in the second list. The ruler of Arpad is thus linked with a a trans-local, trans-tribal cultural identity through his authority in one leading royal city (Arpad) on the one hand, and through his authority in a leading Aramean tribe (Bêt Guš) on the other. This high-level common designation is none other than "all Aram".

A final point that needs to be addressed has to do with the geographical description in Sefire I B lines 9-10:

[but let them be heard from] ^{ʕ}Arqu to Ya^{ʔ}d[i and] BZ, from Lebanon to Yabrud, from Damascu]s to ^{ʕ}Aru and M ...W, [and fr]om the Valley to KTK.

Some scholars have assumed that this is the description of the linear boundaries of "all Aram"/ "upper and lower Aram" (B. Mazar 1962; Na'aman 1978; Grosby 2002d:150-65; Kahn 2007), whatever the nature of this "Aram" (namely, an Arpad-led coalition, or Damascus, or the Arpad-Hamath confederacy). Wazana, comparing these phrases with

[328] For the transition from kinship-based tribal organization to the rise of royal cities in Aramean polities in the 9th century, see Sader 2014:21-27.

extremities formula in border descriptions from other ancient Near Eastern sources, convincingly reveals the unlikelihood that these descriptions refer to actual borders, given the vagueness of some of the elements that appear in the list, among others (Wazana 2008: 720-723). Instead, she considers this description a case of spatial merism, where the "from...to..." structure denotes the entirety of a geographical concept. She notes that the sites mentioned in this structure are representative in nature and belong to different categories, ranging from geographical features of the landscape (the Lebanon) to political units (KTK), thus not appropriate for the exact delineation of a region's borders (Wazana 2008: 726). She further suggests, on the basis of the inclusion of KTK in this list of representative sites of "all Aram" and a parallel in the Book of Amos (Amos 1:5), that KTK should be identified with Bêt ʿeden/Bīt Adini, an Aramaic polity now serving as the seat of the Assyrian *turtānu* Šamši-ilu (Wazana 2008: 730). If KTK is really within the general geographical and cultural circle of "all Aram", however, then it would seem odd that KTK is signing a treaty with this same "all Aram" represented by Arpad, especially on account that KTK, supposedly part of "all Aram" under Arpad's influence, has the upper hand in the treaty.

Kahn argues that this list delineates the territory of Arpad, which he considers as the vassal kingdom of KTK. He also suggests that it is within this territory that the treaties need to be obeyed (cf. "let not one word be silent" Sefire I B line 8b), presumably because only the weaker side is required to adhere to the treaty (Kahn 2007: 80). However, it should be noted that the treaties are binding for both sides, even if Matiʿʾel appears to be the less powerful side. In Sefire I B lines 24-25 and Sefire II B lines 5-7, it is stipulated that Bar-Gaʾyah and his offspring are not allowed to attack Matiʿʾel's kingdom, as long as the latter remains faithful to

the treaty. Therefore, it may be proposed that the description in Sefire I B lines 9-10 simply refers to the entire region within which the current treaty (Sefire I) will be enforced, i.e. both partners of the treaty: all Aram represented by these typical sites as well as KTK itself (appearing at the end of the place names), the latter possibly being not part of all Aram at least according to this document.[329]

In conclusion, our discussion so far cannot yield definitive results. What is certain is that no united, pan-Aramean national state ever existed, yet clearly "Aram" served as a common identity marker of (self-)designation, although possibly with different meanings (e.g. as a region, as a collective noun for the people; or another appellation of the Damascus-centered polity). This brief analysis of the lists of treaty partners as well as the geographical description in the current document, furthermore, appears to suggest that "all Aram" may indicate the highest level of identity among different Aramean polities, above the tribe, the city-state and the individual ruling families, even if not all Aramean speakers, all Aramean tribes or states were included in this "all Aram".[330] The phrase more likely refers to a group of polities that shared common Aramean cultural and social features, perhaps all with Aramean tribal structures internally in addition to varieties of the Aramean language, who chose to pick Aram as a common denominator in this context. How inclusive or exclusive this phrase is in reality cannot be judged. Finally, while the nature of the identity is largely

[329] Na'aman (2016) also suggests that the spatial merism describes the entire region within which the current treaty is to be enforced, although he insists that it refers to a territory at least partially outside of the Kingdom of Arpad and "all Aram", where the residents should "should be aware of the treaty and thereby learn of the power of the king of KTK and his superiority over their strong neighbour, the king of Arpad". This is certainly possible, although it remains unclear why "all Aram" cannot be another appellation of this vast territory. In other words, it is possible that this vast territory refers to a region outside of the direct control of Arpad, but it nevertheless is equated with "all Aram", in which Arpad functions as the hegemon. All polities here mentioned would be culturally "Aramean".

[330] The Zakkur Inscriptioni which I discussed above is written in an Old Aramaic dialect by an Aramean ruler of Hamath. However, Zakkur refers to Bar Hadad as "king of Aram", which either means that Aram in this context has a narrow meaning, referring only to Damascus (note that Bêt Guš is also listed separately), or that Zakkur does not view his polity as "Aramean", perhaps because of the Luwian background of Hamath. If the latter, then the extent of all Aram was possibly never quite certain in antiquity, as one who might be considered as Aramean by outsiders might not identify with "Aram".

cultural and perhaps ethnic, the presence of political elements is also likely. Although a united Aramean polity, as the one suggested by Mazar (1962), might not be fully tenable, the fact that "all Aram" is represented by Arpad as a party in international treaties indicate that the Arameans as an cultural community may have engaged in joint political acts, at least conceptually.

2. Philistia and the Philistines

In Chapter 2 I began our discussion by asking how we can classify multi-city-states confined largely to a limited territory. I then tried to identify the cultural background of certain Iron Age Levantine multi-city polities and shifted our exploration to the question of the role of cultural identity as a source of political cohesion in Iron Age Levantine polity formation and international politics. I have also noted that not all Iron Age Levantine ethnocultural groups established political entities that largely corresponded to their ethnic and cultural boundaries. For instance, in the case of the Yahweh-worshiping, Hebrew-speaking peoples in the central highlands of southern Canaan, two neighboring kingdoms were attested in the 9th to the late 8th centuries. The multi-city, territorial Aramean polities, moreover, apparently never established an ethnically based political unity beyond the possible monopoly of the name "Aram" by some powerful Aramean polities in certain periods and, even more vaguely, the concept of "all Aram" participating in joint political acts. Along this line, some peoples in the Iron Age Levant, though possibly sharing certain cultural features, never extracted political cohesion from such common traits to organize their political life in polities larger and more complex than a city-state. A city-state, as Buccellati sees it, differs from an ethnic or national state fundamentally, as it does not derive its cohesion from the

common identity of the people (Buccellati 1967:56-63) At the same time, however, such city-states are often found in a city-state system in which the individual city-states shared considerable ethnic and cultural links with one another, as in the case of the Sumerians and Greeks. If no unified trans-local polity resulted from such links, what role did these cultural links play in the inter-polity contacts of these cities?

The Philistines in the Iron Age serve as a more dubious case of the last-mentioned scenario. Although their primary political organization is undoubtedly the city-state,[331] the possibility of the impact of cultural homogeneity on their political conducts is worth discussing. Conventional scholarship on Philistine identity has recognized the Philistines as one group of the Sea Peoples who began to settle in the southern coast of the Levant at the outset of the Iron Age in the 12th century BCE, with a common ethnic identity most saliently demonstrated by particular pottery types that had Aegean roots during three centuries of its arrival in the Levant (Stone 1995: 17-19; see also Faust and Lev-Tov 2011). While scholars have made attempts to revise this general narrative, noting scribal and archaeological evidence that points at diverse foreign origins of Philistine culture in addition to later fusion with local Levantine elements (Maeir et al 2013), the existence of a common Philistine identity in a region gradually called "Philistia" in biblical, Assyrian (see summary in Stone 1995: 19-20 during the period of Assyrian domination over the region) and Greek sources remains largely unchallenged.

The question, of course, is the nature of the relationship between the cultural and

[331] As in the case of Phoenician city-states (see below), a Philistine city-state may have consisted of one major urban center plus satellite settlements also called towns. In 1 Sam 27:5 David requested that the king of Gath let him live in one of the "towns of the country(side)" (עָרֵי הַשָּׂדֶה) rather than the "royal city" (עִיר הַמַּמְלָכָה, cf. Akk. "*āl šarrūti*") and was finally assigned the town Ziklag. David's sojourn in the town is described as a stay in the "country" (שדה) of the Philistines. The differentiation in nomenclature between the royal city and the towns of the country reveals the sharp contrast between the metropolitan area and surrounding, possibly much more limited, towns.

political elements, if any, of this identity. To be sure, due to the scarcity of indigenous Philistine written sources, it is difficult even to speak of an "identity", which rests not only on shared external features detectable in the material culture, but also on ideas and beliefs of which this material culture provides evidence. External sources (e.g. Egyptian, Assyrian and biblical) may offer us some fundamental information about the Philistines in the Iron Age Levant. That the Philistines may indeed constitute one separate group with common features at the beginning of their attestation is reflected by the depiction of their appearance and dress on the Medinet Habu reliefs, which differentiates them from other sea peoples (see Stone 1995: 17). As they arrived in the coastal region of the southern Levant in Iron Age I, differences in dress, language and diet may have served to distinguish the Philistines as an ethnic group from other new peoples who arrived in Canaan after the fall of the Bronze Age city-state system, e.g. the early Israelites.[332] In addition, the Assyrian designation of the region as "Pilište/Palastu" (see Fales 2013:58-60) as well as the biblical references to "the land of the Philistines" (ארץ פלשתים; e.g. Gen 21:34; Exo. 13:17; 1 Sam 27:1; Jer 25:20) also indicate that outsiders regarded the Philistines as a people group engendering and correlated to a geographic concept that transcended the borders of individual city-states. It is important to note that, although the Philistine city-states were quickly acculturated to a common Canaanite culture under the influence of Phoenician city-states and Judah, as later inscriptions discovered from Philistia suggest (cf. Pottorf 2017), the region was still known as "Philistia" in Assyrian sources dating from Sennacherib's (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4,

[332] Some scholars have postulated that dietary customs such as the ingestion or abstinence of pork may have served to separate early Philistines from Israelites, cf. Stager 1991:24-37, 40-43. However, other scholars have argued that the ingestion of pork may reflect social rather than ethnic difference, as in Ashkelon pig bones were more often discovered in remains of houses in the exterior of the town, while social elites in the town did not seem to have consumed as much pork. They also pointed out that the amount of pork bones decreased after the first century of the the settlement of Philistines at the site. See B. Hesse and P. Wapnish 1997:263.

69=15, v 44=16, v 67=17, v 53; 3-2 Sennacherib 1015, 11') and Esarhaddon's (e.g. SAA 02 05, line iii 15', 19') reigns. To be sure, "Philistia" in the 8th and 7th centuries may be a vestigial geographical rather than ethnic or political concept, as "Hatti" or "Hanigalbat" after the disappearance of the respective polities. However, the discovery of non-Semitic personal names in the late 8th century from Philistia just may indicate the continuity of Philistine tradition that survived the Canaanization of Philistines.[333]

In contrast to the considerable level of cultural and, as some argue, ethnic homogeneity[334] of the Philistines in Iron Age I and perhaps also in Iron II, political unity never seems to have existed among different Philistine city-states (Allen 1997: 294-96; Strange 2000:137). Stone considers the juxtaposition of the kings of different Philistine city-states as a group in biblical sources that date to the 8th and 7th centuries (such as Amos 1:7-8, which mentions different cities and put them under the cover appellation "the Philistines"; see also Jer 25:20) as indicating that Israel/Judah still recognized city-states in Philistia as "a discrete political and cultural unit" (Stone 1995: 20). Yet the enumeration of kings of separate city-states as "kings of the land of Philistines" (Jer 25:20) does not necessarily hint at political unity beyond perceived cultural commonality and geographical proximity. Domination of one city-state over surrounding smaller polities is archaeologically established (Allen 1997: 295; Maeir et al. 2013:24), yet impressions of political unity among the Philistines as a whole are found only biblical accounts of the conflicts between the

[333] Fales 2013:59; Lipiński 2006: 66. For the examples, see our discussion in Chapter 2 under the section "More on linguistic distinction between peoples: the familiar stranger". There I have noted that the majority of preserved personal names from Iron II Philistine seem to be Semitic, so that the late discoveries may reflect recent immigration from the Greek or Anatolian world, depending on the linguistic classification of the names. However, it cannot be completely excluded that old Philistine traditions did survive or experienced some sort of renaissance in this period for reasons unknown to us.

[334] E.g. bichrome pottery found at early Philistine settlements and a common appellation used at least by outsiders, see Stone 1995:17; see also Faust and Lev-Tov 2011.

Israelites and the Philistines (cf. Machinist 2000a: 57-59). In these texts the Philistines are depicted as Israel's arch-enemy prior to and at the inception of an Israelite state, mostly in the books of Judges and Samuel. At this early stage, the Philistines in their five major towns (Josh 13:3) are governed by rulers titled s*eranim* (Josh 13:3; Ju. 33, 1 Sam 6:4, 16, 18, etc.) of the Philistines, as if they form a confederation. More importantly, the Philistines under the rule of these lords would act in a concerted manner, forming a coalition in their warfare against the Israelites. The *seranim* not only perform cultic duties together with other members of the community (Judg 16:23), but also convene to make political and military decisions collectively, as they convene to discuss the treatment of the Ark of God (1 Sam 5:8) and decide to reject David from their troops due to distrust (1 Sam 29:1-9). Another reference that may hint at the existence of a Philistine confederation is Zeph 2:5, which mentions חבל "of the seashore", referring back to the four Philistine city-states in v. 4 (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron). It has been suggested that the term חבל could denote a confederation, rather than simply "inhabitants" or "region" (Machinist 2000a:58; see there n. 26 for further references). Scholars have thus concluded that Philistine experienced the transition from a confederation to separate city-states (Gitin 1998:164 cited in Strange 2000: 136). However, this interpretation derives from the plain reading of the biblical accounts of the competition between Israelites and Philistines, which may very well have been composed as a literary rewriting of history in order to elevate a sense of Israelite ethnic identity against the creation of the "other" (Barth 1969; cf. Stone 1997, Lemche 2012). Therefore, political unity among all Philistine sites before the rise of the city-states cannot be firmly corroborated. In any case, biblical accounts that depict the early political unity of the Philistines as a cultural group,

regardless of its historicity, provide us with further evidence of biblical, if not Philistine, understanding of the role of ethnic unity in domestic as well as international politics.

The Neo-Hittites, the Phoenicians and the Arabs: possible cultural commonness without impact on political organization

1. Neo-Hittite kingdoms

Although the Neo-Hittite kingdoms in Northern Levant demonstrate unmistakable cultural commonalities recorded by both indigenous and external sources, a common cultural identity cannot be easily established. Within Neo-Hittite kingdoms, the use of the Luwian language and the Luwian hieroglyphic script, common religious traditions,[335] material evidence with similar stylistic features (Mazzoni 1997; Aro 2003) as well as the continued use of Late Bronze Age Hittite royal titles and names (in addition to Luwian names), among other elements, constitute major characteristics of a common culture among the political elites of each polity (Bryce 2012:47). While a common self-designation seems to be missing from the local inscriptions, in Assyrian sources the geographical term "the land Hatti" is widely attested, which largely corresponds to the location of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms.[336] The *nisbe* "Hittite" is also attested, e.g. the evil Hittite (^{LÚ}*Ḫat-tu-u lem-nu*, Fuchs 1994: 222; Prunk 113), referring in that text to Muttallum, ruler of Kummuh. The plural form of the same term, "evil Hittites" (^{LÚ}*ḫat-te-e lem-nu-ú-ti*), is also used in an inscription of

[335] In the second millennium, Luwian texts found at the center of the Hittite empire may be interpreted as indicators of a Luwian religion, with its own sets of values, concepts of sacredness and man, rituals and religious festivals, which not only inherited common Indo-European religious traditions, but were also influenced by other Anatolinian religious thoughts, e.g. Hattian and Hurrian traditions. It has been suggested that these second millennium traditions continued in general to the 1st millennium, although not without changes. See M. Hutter 2003.

[336] On the range of the Land of Hatti, Hawkins (1999:154) suggests that it is largely limited to northern Syria. More specifically, Bryce summarizes: "...the term Hatti could be applied in the Iron Age to a complex of lands and kingdoms extending southwards from Malatya in the north-east along the Euphrates to Bit-Agusi, and westwards from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, with the inclusion of Gurgum and Sam'al in the north, and the kingdoms of Patin on the coast and Hamath in the Orontes valley. Most of the states within the region belonged to the group of so-called Neo-Hittite kingdoms. But two of them, Bit-Agusi and Sam'al, were Aramaean foundations. " (Bryce 2012: 52) Occasionally other polities in the West can also be designated as being part of the land of Hatti. See below.

Esarhaddon to designate residents of Cilicia who refused to submit to the Assyrian Empire (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, iii 49). Now it seems certain that some Luwain/Neo-Hittites of individual cities and polities were indeed designated with the umbrella term "Hittites" in Assyrian sources. However, one should also note that Iaubi'di, ruler of Hamath who apparently bears a Semitic name, is also called an evil Hittite by Sargon II (Fuchs 1994: 200; text Prunk 33), possibly due to the Neo-Hittite background of the previous dynasty (Parita, Irhuleni and Uratami, in the 9th century, see Bryce 2012:134-36) of the kingdom of Hamath. Furthermore, the king of Ashdod, who is undoubtedly not Luwian speaking, is once listed together with the rulers of Carchemish, Hamath and Kummuh, three traditional Neo-Hittite states,[337] as "evil Hittites" (Fuchs 1994: 63; text Stier 18). It is thus also possible that in Assyrian sources "Hatti" is more properly to be understood as a geographical term which coincides to a high degree, but not exclusively, with Luwian speaking polities in general. In addition, biblical references to the Land of the Hittites (e.g. Josh 1:4[338]; Judges 1:26) and "kings of the Hittites" (1 Kgs 10:29; 2 Kgs 7:6; 2 Chr 1:17) also seem to be suggestive of the existence of an Iron Age people group in northern Syria and possibly in Canaan that may be related to the Neo-Hittites[339] (G. McMahon 1992; Hawkins 1999: 155 with further references; Bryce 2012: 64-75).

However, it is difficult to judge whether a Neo-Hittite/Luwian ethnic identity can be established in the Iron Age. Since most of the Luwian epigraphical sources functioned as

[337] It should be noted again that during Sargon II's time the ruler of Hamath was the Aramean Iaubi'di. In fact, since the beginning of the 8th century, the ruling dynasty of Hamath had borne Aramaic names. See Bryce 2012: 137-38.

[338] "Land of the Hittites" missing from the Septuagint.

[339] The Hittites of Palestine mentioned in the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen 23) seem to be a separate group of people. Van Seters (1972) argues that the term Hittites and Amorites as appellations of indigenous inhabitants of Canaan are two general terms devoid of historicity, and that the reference to "Hittites" as people residing in Syria-Palestine in general might reflect knowledge of "Land of Hatti" of in Neo-Assyrian sources (cf. Josh 1:4). Even if this is the case, inhabitants of Israel and Judah, particularly Israel, may very well possessed independent knowledge of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms which were contemporaneous with them in the large parts of the 9th and 8th centuries.

monumental inscriptions, it may well be the case that the language and the script were mainly used by political elites in different Neo-Hittite dynasties. However, non-monumental inscriptions, particularly the Assur Letters (provenance unclear, maybe Carchemish; see CHLI vol. I, part 2 : 533) dealing with non-royal and likely non-administrative matters, suggest that the use of the Luwian language and the hieroglyphic script was not an elite monopoly, but instead an indicator of a common population of Luwian descent. As Bryce points out, Luwian presence in northern Levant since the Late Bronze Age, after Carchemish became the viceregal capital of the Hittite kingdom, may indeed be linked to continuous Luwian emigration to the region, perhaps including those who settled there after the collapse of Hittite kingdom. Yet the population of these kingdoms consisted of other components as well, including indigenous peoples of Late Bronze Age northern Levant (perhaps Hurrians and Semities) and later, Arameans[340] (Bryce 2012:60). To this one may add cultural influence from the Phoenicians on some Neo-Hittite states (Cilicia), where the bilingual Karatepe inscription in Phoenician and the Luwian language and script has been found.[341] Therefore, whether within individual Neo-Hittite kingdoms or from the perspective of the Neo-Hittite world in general, a homogeneous people with beliefs in common descent, a common self-designation, a common language across different social layers (other languages may have been used by residents of the same polity) and collective self-consciousness as "Hittites" cannot be firmly established, despite the existence of significant common cultural traits in certain facets and certain strata of their societies (e.g. religion, art and architecture of the

[340] Both common people and dynastic rulers, such as Zakkur of Hamath who replaced the Luwian dynasty in the early 8th century. Shalmaneser III in the mid-9th century separates Irheluni, ruler of Hamath (with KUR), from "Kings of Hatti" (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2, line 60), even though the ruler bears a Neo-Hittite name. So it is possible that Hamath had been considered no entirely Neo-Hittite before the dynastic change. Dynastic conflicts also in Masuwari/Til Barsip.

[341] For the Phoenician influence on northern Levant and southern Anatolia and its links to trade, see Fales 2017.

royal cities, language and script). The best evidence of ancient awareness of Luwian/Neo-Hittite as an ethnic concept derives not from internal but from external sources. I have already noted above that both Neo-Assyrian and biblical sources mention the land of the Hittites, which, to be sure, is not always a clear-cut category. However, the fact that "Hatti/Hittites" in these sources is sometimes differentiated from land of *Amurru* and *Arumu* (the Arameans/Aram) may indicate some kind of the ethnic basis of the geographical dimension of the term "Hatti" in the Iron Age (Hawkins 1999:154).

So what is the nature of the individual Neo-Hittite kingdoms from the perspective of domestic and international political behavior? Many Neo-Hittite polities in the region undoubtedly possessed multiple towns, thus qualifying as a multi-city territorial polities of considerable scale, with a certain level of administrative complexity and strategic resources (Aro 2003:298-99). For instance, Shalmaneser III claims in one of his royal inscriptions to have approached "cities of Irḫulenu, the Hamatite (KUR *a-mat-a-a*)" and "captured the cities Adennu, Pargâ, (and) Arganâ, his royal cities (URU MAN-*ti-šu*)" (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2, line 88), to which list one may add Qarqar (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.76).[342] As individual polities, it is difficult to judge whether one should consider the

[342] A number of Neo-Hittite kingdoms seemed to have extended over territories with multiple urban centers at some point of their history, here are some examples:

1. Carchemish: during the reign of Kuzi-Teshub, mid-12th century, who claims to be the Great King; Assyrian sources normally use the determinative "KUR" to refer to Carchemish. in the 9th century, Ashurnasirpal II commemorates the conquest of the city Ulluba of Sangara, king of Hatti (here referring to Carchemish specifically RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.90); Shalmaneser III speaks about razing Sazabû, a fortified city (URU *dannuti*) as well as cities in its environs (URU MEŠ *ša limētušu*) (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2 lines 19-20a); in mid-8th century, Kamanis, the Country Lord (IUDEX-sa) of Carchekmish purchases a town from another city (CEKKE inscription, IAHLI 2.3.8). All seems to suggest that Carchemish was a multi-city polity throughout most of its history. The Assyrian reference to the rulers of Carchemish as "king of Hatti" also indicates the elevated status of the kingdom among Neo-Hittite states that persisted after the disintegration of the 12th century kingdom.

2. Malatya, originally part of Carchemish in the 12th century; normally written with the determinative of "city" in both Assyrian and Luwian sources. (Bryce 2012: 99) Yet some rulers boast building other cites and territorial expansion in general, e.g. the ruler Taras in 11th - 10th centuries Izgin 1, lines 4-6. (CHLI vol I Part 1: 315); later in the 8th century, Urartian king Agishti I records his siege of the city Malatya in 784 BCE after occupying Sasi, Hilaruada's royal city (URU MAN-nu-si, A 9-4, lines 18-22; in CTU vol. I, 431-32). In other words, Hilaruada, ruler of Malatya, controlled other cities.

3. Kummuh (with the determinativer KUR, in RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.1 line 96, or URU, in Shalmaneser IV

Neo-Hittite territorial kingdoms as political entities enjoying internal cultural and ethnic solidarity, especially on the account that we lack literary and historiographical sources from these kingdoms comparable to biblical narratives that may shed light on the self-perception of the people or at least the cultural elites of these kingdoms.

Likewise, it is difficult to identify a confederation of Neo-Hittite kingdoms on the international stage that correspond to or sprout from a common Neo-Hittite cultural identity. If anything, rulers of the first Iron Age dynasty at Carchemish bore the title "Great King" and may have dominated surrounding Luwian-speaking polities (see Bryce 2012:83-88). Later, the local international system in the Iron Age "land of Hatti" witnessed internal incorporation of smaller states into larger kingdoms (as in the Tabal region, see Bryce 2012:141), and sometimes consisted of leagues of local entities of varying ranks. An inscription by Tabalean king Wasusarmas (latter half of the 8th century before he was deposed by Tiglath-pileser III) bearing the imposing titles of "Great King" and "Hero", mentions that "eight kings, lesser and more important, were [hostile]; three kings were friendly to me: Warpalawas, Kiyakiyas, and the charioteer (?) Ruwatas" (TOPADA line 4; CHLI vol. I Part 2: 453). In the face of Assyrian Western expansion, as in the case of other regions, while some Neo-Hittite kingdoms decided to surrender and remain loyal to the Assyrian overlord (e.g. Kummuh in the 8th century), many organized coalitions in resistance of Assyrian troops. Such military alliances, again as in most cases, was established without any significant influence of a common ethnic or cultural identity but instead on the basis of geopolitical concerns,

---

A.0.105.1) appeared to have been granted Malatya by Assyria in the 8th century, thus possessing another major city for a while. In addition, hieroglyphic inscriptions dating to late 9th and 8th centuries (reign of Suppiluliuma and Hattusili) mention individuals bearing the title of "river-lord" or certain towns who consider themselves the servants of the Kummuhite ruler. See Bryce 2012: 114.

consisting mostly of polities of various cultural backgrounds.[343] There was no question of "all Hittites" (cf. "all Aram") united, at least conceptually, under the banner of one leader Neo-Hittite polity. Quite the contrary, the common threat, Assyria, was invited to function as the arbiter when territorial disputes broke out between two Neo-Hittite polities, as indicated by the boundary stele issued by the Assyrian king to mark the border between Kummuh and Gurgum (RIMA 3 Adad-Nārārī III A.0.104.3). In sum, neither on the factual level nor on the conceptual or ideological level do we detect traces of a pan-Luwian political awareness in the interactions between Neo-Hittite states or between them and other polities.

2. Phoenician city-states

As in the case of the Philistines, the political system adopted by the Phoenicians in the Iron Age was that of city-states. Indeed, the Phoenician cities constitute an example *par excellence* of ancient city-state system, composed of the limited scale of each city,[344] disunity within the system and persisting competition among the cities (e.g. Tyre and Sidon) -- a rare case of the survival of the Late Bronze Age international scenario in the Levant when

[343] For example, Shalmaneser III claims to have defeated a league of Sam'alite, Patinean, Bīt-Adini and Carchemishite forces, with two Aramean polities (Sam'al and Bīt-Adini; Sam'al with linguistic distinctions) and two Neo-Hittite polities (Pati and Carchemish). RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.1.

[344] However, it should be noted that Phoenician city-states may have had urban holdings outside of and in addition to the metropolis (see the footnote on Gath and Ziglag in the Bible above). For instance, Esarhaddon (RINAP 4, Esarhaddon 1 col. ii 65-col. iii 19) mentions the conquest of certain towns/cities in the environs of Sidon (URU.MEŠ-*ni ša li-me-et URU ṣi-du-un-ni*) and the transferral of certain towns to Tyre after the its king's (Abdi-Milkūti) failed attempt at revolt and the allocation of two cities formerly owned by the Sidionian king to Baʿal, king of Tyre. There are also cases where Tyre and Sidon are written with the determinative KUR (e.g. RINAP 4 34 12'). Tyre is one of the few city names more frequently attested with KUR while in the case of Sidon only one or two attestations exist, and both had been attested with KUR before/without the establishment of a province with the city as the center of administration (thus extending the correlation of the toponym with the actual site to a broader territorial scale), which in other cases would possibly explain the origin of using KUR instead of URU. One wonders if this is because such typical city-states in fact contain other urban centers. For detailed statistics of determinatives attached to Western toponyms in Neo-Assyrian sources, see Bagg 2011: 102-111; for the specific treatment of Tyre and Sidon, see 110.

Yet it is difficult to determine the sizes and the levels of structural complexity of these towns, for the word "*ālu*" can refer to both large metropolitan areas and smaller towns, as well as villages or estates, in the Akkaidna language (see CAD A1 "*ālu*" 3, p. 386). In this inscription, the cities are specifically referred to as "places of pasturing and watering" (*ašar ri-i-ti u maš-qí-ti*) of Abdi-Milkūti's stronghold (É *tuk-la-a-ti-šú*). Earlier in the inscription the city Sidon itself is labeled as his stronghold city (URU *tuk-la-a-ti-šú*), indicating that the cities mentioned in the vicinity of Sidon may have had close functional relations with the urban larger urban center of the state. Therefore, the city-state model is still more suitable than understanding the Phoenician polities as territorial entities with multiple independent cities.

Canaanite city-states were under Egyptian domination (Gilboa 2005; Edrey 2016: 43). In addition to political disunity, the Phoenicians also did not have a common collective appellation and never called themselves "Phoenicians", a term used by the ancient Greeks. Sometimes the name of a leading city (Tyre or Sidon) could serve as a common designation of the Canaanite-speaking residents of the coastal cities in today's Lebanon.[345] An established belief in common descent and kinship relations among the inhabitants of different Phoenician city-states was also largely missing (Edrey 2018:253-54, with further references).

Even so, recently it has been proposed that Phoenicians in the Iron Age, like their inland neighbors of the Israelites, Arameans, Moabites, should be considered as an ethnic group with shared cultural and linguistic features, as long as ethnicity is detached from such loaded concepts as nationalism and state formation. Edrey traces the root of a common Phoenician ethnicity to commonness in production and exchange which are all closely linked with the maritime economy, in turn shaped by the geographical features of what is later known as Phoenicia in the southern Levant since the Bronze Age. Edrey identifies the material culture (particularly the maritime architecture) and maritime cult, among other elements, as salient representatives of Phoenician ethnic culture which separates them from other Iron Age peoples in southern Levant (Edrey 2016: 42; 45-47; Edrey 2018:253-75).

On the basis of Edrey's study, one can briefly evaluate the level of cultural unity demonstrated by the Phoenician polities and its possible influence on the politics of

[345] A relevant issue is whether the word "Canaan" has any currency in the first millennium. In the Hebrew Bible, the term can refer both to the former residents of Palestine before the arrival of the Israelites, as is abundantly attested, and possibly to the Hebrew speakers themselves. For the latter use, see the term "the language of Canaan" (Isa 19:18). With regard to "Canaanites" as a name for Phoenicians, Gen 10:15 claims that Sidon, the Phoenician city-state, is son of Canaan. In Amarna Letters, city rulers from the southern Levant are sometimes called "Canaanites" (e.g. EA 30 o 31). However, we do not have direct evidence from the first half of the first millennium that labels any specific Phoenician city-state as "Canaanites", although in the Hellenistic and Roman periods people from Beirut and Carthage may still be called "Canaanites" (e.g. KAI 116; see Edrey 2018:7).

individual Phoenician city-states and their international relations. First, as Fales suggests, Phoenicia may indeed be regarded as a largely defined geographical area, as some Neo-Assyrian terms indicate ("kings of the seacoast"), although there is by no means a precise correlation between Phoenician cities and terms like "kings of the sea cost", as the latter can include surrounding polities as well (see Fales 2017: 187 and n.28). Such a geographical term is reminiscent of the term "Hatti" employed mostly to refer to the Neo-Hittite kingdoms. If Hatti still hints at the cultural or ethnic background on which the geographic framework is built, a term like "kings of the seacoast" obviously contains merely geographical indications.

Second, also noteworthy is the fact that, although a distinct city god or goddess heads the cult in each Phoenician city-state as a patron deity in the 1st millennium (see Clifford 1990:56-67; Edrey 2018:177), a Phoenician pantheon is still attested in some contexts. On the one hand, the storm god Baal also appears mostly as a local variation, often with an epithet (Edrey 2018:177), which appears to weaken Edrey's advocacy for unified Phoenician ethnic identity.[346] On the other hand, however, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent a local deity function exclusively as patron gods of a specific city-state. For instance, while Melqart is the patron deity of Tyre, the worship of Eshmun is found at various Phoenician sites, including Arwad and Sidon (Edrey 2018:178-79). In Esarhaddon's treaty with Baal, king of Tyre, moreover, a series of deities on the Tyrian side are invoked in the cursing, including three manifestations of Baal (Baal Shamaim Baal Malagê and Baal Saphon), Melqart, Eshmun and Astarte (SAA 2 05, lines iv 10'-19'). Here it appears that local variations of Baal and local

[346] One should note that the rise of the cult of city gods and goddesses was not a new invention at the beginning of the 1st millennium, but more likely the institutionalization of existing practice. The old pantheon headed by El continued into later periods, as in other parts of southern Levant (particularly Israel and Ammon). See Markoe 2000:115-19.

deities together with Astarte, who was influential throughout the region, form a representative collection of "Tyrian" gods at least from the Assyrian perspective. One wonders if this could be interpreted as evidence for the currency of a Phoenician pantheon.

Third, what further complicates the picture is that, although a general confederation of Phoenician states was never attested, possible cases of the incorporation of certain towns by another polity seems to have occurred. Lulî/Eloulaious apparently exerted royal powers over both Sidon and Tyre, with surrounding towns, in the 8th century (between the reign of Ethbaal I and 701 BCE), as Neo-Assyrian sources describe his holdings as extending from Sidon to the mainland of Tyre (Katzenstein 1997: 224; Boyes 2012: 39). Even so, it seems safe to conclude that, whatever regional integration occurred or military leagues were organized, they were not achieved in the name of a common national, ethnic or cultural identity, nor does their formation lead to the strengthening of such an identity. This observation applies to the Neo-Hittites as well as the Phoenicians in the Iron Age, possibly also the Philistines outside of biblical sources.

3. An unclear case: the Arabs

Individuals and groups designated as Arabs (either the *nisbe Arbaya* or a toponym "KUR*Arubu/Arabi/Arabu*", "KUR*Aribi*"; עָרָב and possibly עֶרֶב, עַרְבִי; see a summary of designations in Eph'al 1982: 6-7) are attested both in cuneiform sources (since Shalmaneser III, mid -9th century) and in the Hebrew Bible as a group active in the ancient Near East including the Levant. According to both groups of sources, these so-called Arabs were engaged in economic (particularly caravan trade) as well as political activities (as vassals or enemies of the world empire) that entail interaction with surrounding peoples and political

entities engaged in international trade and politics,[347] although the forms of their internal political organization seem to be less than clear and uniform (for Arabs in the Iron Age, see primarily Eph'al 1982; Retsö 2003: 119-211). Without enumerating all the attestations of Arabs in Assyrian and Hebrew sources, I would like to examine briefly the following questions: do Arabs dwelling in and near the Levant exhibit a certain degree of common ethnic or cultural characteristics? Is there any trace of joint political action by different Arab groups or polities, if so, does cultural or ethnic commonality play a role?

In his review of various scholarly attempts to decipher the origin and nature of pre-Islamic Arabs, Retsö expresses reservations about Von Grunebaum's understanding that the ancient Arabs (under Persian and Roman rules) formed a *Kulturnation* that "is kept together by common expectations, associations...community of language and religion (though not of denomination) is, in most cases, a required concomitant or precondition" (Von Grunebaum 1963: 10). Rather, Retsö contends that ancient Arabs or others in antiquity did not have such a concept, and that "nation", as I have discussed in Chapter 2, is an exclusively modern concept. He also doubts that linguistic features may have determined the nature of an Arab (Retsö 2003: 103-104). However, as he notes, "(T)here must have been a reason for using the word 'Arab' as a designation for a group or groups of people during this long period" (since early 1st millennium BCE; Retsö 2003:112). One still wonders whether common cultural elements such as language, lifestyle and kinship ties may have led to their designation, at least by outsiders (Assyrians and authors of the Hebrew Bible), as "Arabs" in the Iron Age. Indeed, in his analysis of Arabs in cuneiform and biblical sources about Arabs

[347] See also Bagg 2010 for an overview of different modes of interaction between the Arabs and the Assyrian Empire as well as local Levantine states as attested in Neo-Assyrian sources.

active in many parts of the Levant, northern Arabia and the Sinai, Retsö more often than not resorts to the common designations already mentioned (e.g. Arubu, Arbaya), linguistic issues,[348] and the Arabs' typical role in certain forms of economic activities and lifestyle (the camels and trade). To this list we may add certain links in biblical name lists and the "table of nations" (Gen 10) that implicitly call upon perceived geographical and kinship ties among different Arab and other groups as observed by the ancient Arabs' contemporaries. In other words, Retsö still makes wide use of what could broadly be termed "cultural features" of the Arabs, even if he had decided to reject such concepts' role in the study of early Arabs. In any case, one cannot ignore the fact that certain groups and not others in Assyrian and biblical sources are labeled as Arabs and that they are differentiated from neighboring polities and peoples with a common designation.

A. Material culture, language and script of the Arabs in the early 1st millenniums BCE

Do the Arabs in the Levant and its vicinity (e.g. northwestern Arabia) exhibit common cultural features in the 9th to 6th centuries, or more broadly in the Iron Age? Magee notes that "simultaneous settlement intensification" occurred in southeastern, southwestern and northwestern Arabia since the early 1st millennium BCE. While in northwestern Arabian oasis polities (Tayma, al-Lua, Qurayyah and Dumat al-Jandal, etc.) the evidence for economic, cultural and even political regional integration is less prominent than in southern Arabia, Magee refers to the spread of material culture characteristic of certain sites to regions beyond the oasis center, such as the discovery of Tayma-type pottery at many sites in northern and eastern Saudi Arabia (Magee 2014: 257-58). Magee also notes that the so-called Midiante

[348] E.g. the identification of Arab ruler's name Gindibû "the Arbaya" in RIMA 3 A.0.102.2, ii 93 as "a good Arabic name", Retsö 2003:126.

pottery (Rothenberg and Glass 1983) found at different sites in northwestern Arabia (e.g. Qurayyah) and the southern Levant, dating to different time frames from the 13th to the 6th centuries BCE, is not only "more likely to represent a lengthy stylistic tradition than any single group of nomads" (i.e. the Midianite traders), but may have been produced at multiple locations rather than the Hijaz only. In other words, according to him, the so-called Midianite pottery cannot support the hypothesis that Midiante caravan traders transported Arabian commodities to the southern Levant from the Hijaz in the early Iron Age, since this style may have lasted much longer and was found on pottery made both in northern Arabia and locally in the southern Levant (Gunneweg et al. 1991: 249-50 cited in Magee 2014: 262). The relatively broad spread of certain stylistic features of northwestern Arabian material culture, however, is not sufficient evidence for any sort of unified cultural features that could be attached to a people group called "the Arabs" active in the southern Levant and neighboring Arabia. At the same time, it cannot be excluded that some sort of cultural interconnectedness may have resulted from dromedary trade routes across Arabia.

There is little evidence sheds light on the linguistic situation of northwestern Arabian polities and groups in the early 1st millennium BCE. It can only be assumed that the ancient North Arabian dialects (with *hn*-, *h*- or "zero" as the definite article; see Macdonald 2000), consisting of Taymanitic, Dadanitic and Dumaitic etc, which were better attested much later in history in the Roman Period, were probably spoken in the oases. There is thus no reason to assume any sort of linguistic unity among the northwestern Arabs mentioned in Hebrew and Assyrian sources, in contrast to, for instance, the language of the Arameans. Both Assyrian (SAA 17 02, see below) and biblical (2 Kings 18:26) sources refer to "Aramaic" as one

undifferentiated language from the perspective of outsiders, despite the existence of different dialects in Old Aramaic (see Yun 2008; Fales and Grassi 2016). Nevertheless, a Luwian inscription by Yariris, ruler of the Neo-Hittite state of Carchemish (early 8th century BCE), makes reference to the Taimani script as one of the four scripts mastered by the erudite ruler (*ta-i-ma-ni-ti*, Karkamiš A15b, line 19; CHLI vol. I Part 1: 131). Hawkins interprets this script as the Aramaic alphabet (followed by Payne in IAHLI: 87), citing an Aramean tribe called the Temanites living in the historical region of Hanigalbat who featured Adad-nērārī II's inscriptions (RIMA 2 Adad-nērārī II A.0.99.2, 39, 46, etc.; p133). Yet one wonders why a Luwian ruler living around 800 BCE would name the Aramaic script after a tribe which had been annexed by Assyria by 894 BCE (see Younger 2016: 241-42, who rejects the identification of the Taimani script with the Aramean Temanites). Others have associated this script with South Arabian (see references in CHLI vol. I Part 1: 133) or, more likely, the North Arabian script from Tayma (Macdonald 2000: 42-43, Magee 2014: 264, Younger 2014).[349] Macdonald suggests that, due to the similarity in form of the Dadanitic, Dumaitic and Taymaitic scripts, one might refer to them as "the Oasis North Arabian Script" unless

[349] In the same inscription Yariris boasts that he knows four scripts: the script of the "City", i.e. the script of his native Carchemish (the Luwian hieroglyphs), the script of Assyria (the Neo-Assyrian cuneiforms), the script of a certain Sura/i and the "Taimaniti" script. The identification of Sura with Tyre (i.e. the Phoenician alphabet) is interpreted by some scholars as a supportive piece of evidence for the identification of Taimaniti with the Northern Arabian polity Tayma, as this would place Caarchemish "at a central node, with Phoenicia the main maritime merchant power to the west, Assyria the main political power to the east and Tayma the main power to the south". (Magee 2014: 264, following Livingstone 1999: 233-36; Macdonald 2000:42). This interpretation is reasonable, particularly if we consider the positive role of linguistic skills in international trade relations as well as the other three polities' role in international trade of the time: one as the maritime trading power, one as the major empire and one as the master of dromedary-borne trade. Yet it must be noted that this Sura is also attested in another inscription of Yariris's (Karkamiš A6, line 6) together with what might be Egypt, Babylonia (uncertain), Lydia and Phrygia, where Yariris has established his fame. Hawkins identifies the Sura here and in the other inscription as Urartu (CHLI vol. I Part 2: 126, 133), which is also the opinion of Wilhelm, who notes that the Sura mentioned together with these important powers must be "eine wichtige geographisch-politische Einheit". Wilhelm then points out the the term ^{KUR}Šuraua/Šurele in Urartian royal inscriptions since Išpuini's reign, whose meaning cannot be differentiated from Biainili (Urarutu) and both may refer to either the Urartian empire or its heartland (Wilhelm 1993: 138-39). It is unclear whether the script of Sura here refers tot the Urartian cuneiform script which is similar to the Assyrian script. However, it cannot be excluded that Sura could mean Tyre also in this context, as it was indeed a prominent and wealthy merchant city-state (thus sufficiently important to deserve mentioning) and may here serve as a representative of southern Levantine polities in general. If Sura means Tyre, then the script could refer to the northwest Semitic alphabet in general (including the newly emerged Aramaic branch), which would render the identification of Taimani as Aramaic unnecessary.

there is evidence in certain texts to justify further division (Macdonald 2000:33) Since some seals with inscriptions in this script has been found in Mesopotamia and dated by Sass (1991) to the 8th century BCE, Macdonald sees a connection between Yariris' reference to this "Taimani" script with the "Oasis North Arabian" script. Could this indicate that in the 8th century BCE some Arab groups were known to have adopted a certain common script, known by outsiders as the script of the important polity of Tayma? The evidence is suggestive at best.

Due to the scarcity of internal evidence, it is difficult to assess to what extent the groups designated as Arabs by contemporary sources or modern scholars bear common cultural characteristics. Alternatively, Eph'al has assumed that the name "Arabs" attested in different languages indicates a certain lifestyle and a mode of production, i.e. "tent-dwellers" and "nomads" or "bedouins", noting that such attributes as "who dwell in the desert" often accompany the name "Arabs" and that nomadic groups in the east of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, who "had no ethnic connection with the nomads of the Syrian desert and were probably not even Semites", were also called "Arabs" (Eph'al 1982:5-6). However, as the same scholar notes, residents of oasis cities (e.g. Duma, Tayma) are labeled as "Arabs" (Eph'al 1982:5, n.7), too, so there is no reason to assume that "Arabs" meant "nomads" (Retsö 2003:107-08;113-16). With regard to "Arabs" in Iran, it is equally possible that "Arabs" here serves as a poetic name for peoples with a similar lifestyle (Fuchs 1994: 424).[350] Finally, Retsö seems to favor, yet with reasonable reservations, the possibility that the name "Arabs" derives from the root "*ʿ-r-b*" meaning "mixed" in Hebrew (cf. Exod 12:38;

[350] Retsö (2003: 150-51) contends that those groups in Iran were actually related to Arabs in Arabia or the Syrian Dessert, because at least two seals bearing the South Arabian script has been found in Iran. However, the relationship between the South Arabian cultures and the "Arabs" in the Syrian Desert and northern Arabia is unclear.

Neh 13:3), thus "mixed peoples" (Retsö 2003:111). Yet logically, it remains unsolved why some people(s) belonged to these supposed mixed peoples (nomads or sedentary populations) while others (such as the Transjordanians, the Hebrew speaking peoples and the Arameans) did not. Whatever the etymology of the name, it appears more sensible that starting from the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, outsiders like the Assyrians could rather clearly, certainly with exceptions, differentiate Arab groups from others. What constituted the "diagnostic features"? It at least cannot be excluded that material culture and other cultural elements such as language and script, in addition to a common lifestyle, may have served the purpose.

B. Arbaya vs. Arubu: one people group?

This subject is complicated by additional issues, particularly whether "Arubu/Aribi/Arabi" (as a geographical term or a collective noun) and the *nisbe* "Arbaya" refer to the same group of people and whether "Arabs" referred to in the forms above really served as an umbrella term for subgroups. An undated list of deportees from Nineveh mentions cohort commanders who are in charge of bringing the fugitives of the Arbaya to a woman called Samsi and bringing the fugitives of Samsi to the Arbaya (SAA 11 162). If Samsi is to be identified with the Queen of the Arubu/Aribi (*šarrat* ^{KUR}*a-ri-bi*) attested several times in Tiglath-pileser III's and Sargon II's inscriptions as a rebellious and then defeated vassal (cf. the transgression of her divine oath, RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 20, 18'), then the relationship between the Arbaya and the Arubu/Aribi would be that between two related yet essentially separate groups: it is the queen of the *Arubu/Aribi* who would receive fugitives of the *Arbaya*, while the fact that an exchange of personnel occurred between this

individual and the Arbaya suggests that they are somehow different (Fales and Postgate 1995: xxix, Retsö 2003:132). Yet this piece of evidence is far from conclusive. Even if Samsi is indeed the Queen of the Arubu/Aribi, it is still uncertain whether the difference between the Arbaya and the Arubu/Aribi lies in social status, ethnicity or political affiliation.

The difference between the distributions of the two designations (Arubu/Aribi and the Arbaya) may be approached through several aspects: medium (inscriptions vs. other texts), historical period and content. First, in the royal inscriptions[351] the KUR/LÚ/LÚ KURArubu/Aribi occurs more than 60 times,[352] while KURArbaya occurs only twice: once as an individual in Shalmaneser III's list of anti-Assyrian kings at the Battle of Qarqar (853 BCE), where Gindibuʾu "the Arbaya" is mentioned (RIMA 2 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2, ii 94), and once as a people group resettled in Samaria by Sargon II (Fuchs 1994 Ann. 121). In the Assyrian letters and administrative texts, "KUR/LÚArbaya" or "Arbaya" alone occurs 28 times (not including fully reconstructed occurrences),[353] mostly as a people group, while KUR/LÚArubu/Arabu/Aribi or without any determinative occurs only 6 times.[354] In a treaty between Ashurbanipal and the Qedarites "Arubu" may have occurred, though this part of the text is badly damaged (SAA 02 10, o6'). In another vassal treaty, where the vassal's identity is not preserved, there is possibly an attestation of "KUR*arubu gabbu*" (all Arabia), although the line is again broken (SAA 02 13, o ii 8'). "KURArabi" occurs once in a Neo-Babylonian Chronicle as a people group (ABC No. 5=Glassner 2004 No. 24, line 9'). It appears from

[351] First attested in Shalmaneser III, mostly found in inscriptions dated to Tiglath-pileser III and the Sargonids, namely, mid- 8th to mid- 7th centuries.

[352] Mostly referring to either land or people, once possibly as a designation equivalent to the "roayl *nisbe*": "*[...i]-di-bi-ʾi-i-lu KUR.a-ru-bu [...]*" (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 22:13')

[353] SAA 01 82, r10; 84, r4; 173, o12; 177, r7; 178, o6; 179, o5, o23, b.e. 29, r2, r9; 193, o8; SAA 07 05, o ii 49; 58, r ii 5'; SAA 10 175, o8; SAA 11 162, o3'; o7'; SAA 14 021, o2', o5', o11'; SAA 16 50, o5; 129, r5; 135, o8; SAA 19 03, o9; 12, r2'; SAA 21 22, 42; 23, r17; 25, r7.

[354] SAA 07 58, r ii 28', r ii 36'; SAA 10 351, r1; SAA 18 148, o10; 149, o10; SAA 21 138, o11'.

these data that “Arbaya” mostly occurs in less formal contexts, such as letters and administrative texts.

In terms of historical periods, “the Arbaya” occurs in texts dating to the 9th and 8th centuries, while Arubu/Aribi is attested in royal inscriptions since the mid- 8th century, including those belonging to Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. It may also have occurred in Ashurbanipal’s treaty (uncertain occurrence) and the Neo-Babylonian chronicle mentioned above. In letters and administrative texts, “the Arbaya” is attested in letters and administrative texts from Tiglath-pileser III (e.g. SAA 19 003, o9; 012, r2; perhaps SAA 11 162, if Samsi is the Queen of the Arabs dated to Tiglath-pileser III’s reign), Sargon II (e.g. SAA 01 82, o5 and other 10 occurrences from letters dating to Sargon II’s reign) and one possible post-Sargon text (SAA 07 058, r ii 4; for the dating see Fales and Postgate 1992: xiv), whereas two certain attestations of LÚArabi are found in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian correspondence (SAA 18 148, o10; 149, o10), another two from the possible post-Sargon text (SAA 07 058 r ii 25, 35), and one partly broken attestation from Esarhaddon’s letters (SAA 18 154, b.e. 7’). Therefore, “the Arbaya” seems to be more extensively used in pre- 7th century texts of different categories, while Arubu/Aribi/Arabu began to be used from Tiglath-pileser III. Of course, the limited total number of attestations and the uneven distribution of letters and other texts must be taken into account.

The summary above prompts us to think of the Arbaya as a name is more commonly used in less formal texts, particularly in the 8th century, while Arubu/Aribi/Arabu occurs in royal inscriptions already in the 8th century and enters less formal texts (such as letters and administrative texts) in the 7th century (only 6 attestations). Could both terms refer to the

same general group of people and simply have different registers, on the account that both terms can be accompanied by either KUR or LÚ? Yet Retsö seeks to identify a difference in status between the two groups of people, citing among others the text about Samsi and the Arbaya. He points out that some "Arbaya" seem to be under the control of the Assyrian governors (SAA 01 082) and are involved in trade and other activities within the framework of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. He argues that "the difference between the Arubu and the Arbaya was that the former was a group formally allied to Assyria like other foreign peoples, whereas the latter were people, perhaps individuals, who were employed more or less as officials" (Retsö 2003:153). However, one must note that elsewhere in the letters and the administrative texts the Arbaya are reported to have raided Sippar (SAA 01 084; Sargon II) and to have been defeated by the Assyrian *turtānu* on the battlefield perhaps due to conflicts about trade routes (SAA 19 003; Tiglath-pileser). The Assyrians also prohibited selling iron to the Arbaya, perhaps in order to restrict their military capabilities (SAA 01 179 o3; Sargon II). Thus, instead of a subordinate group employed by the empire, as Retsö proposes, it is more reasonable to suggest that the Arbaya were a migrant group involved in regular and sometimes rather intensive interactions with the Assyrian Empire and its various regional centers, both peacefully and otherwise. In comparison with Arubu/Aribi/Arabu in the royal inscriptions, the Arbaya appear to lack institutionalized kingship and may have been organized as tribal entities, for we do not have any case of "King/Queen of the Arbaya" in Assyrian texts[355] but only one possible attestation of "*nasīku arbaya*" (the Sheikh of the

[355] Note that in the name" Gindibuʾu the Arbaya" (RIMA 2 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2, ii 94), Arbaya occurs in the singular form, that is, the *nisbe*, referring to the ruler as an individual.

Arabs) in a record of items issued to visiting delegations (SAA 07 58, r ii 5').[356]

In summary, it appears from the content and context of the limited evidence available that the Arbaya may have been considered by Assyrians as somehow different from the Arubu/Aribi/Arabi. Yet even if such differences existed, they did not concern their cultural or ethnic characteristics but rather their social organization and relationship with the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This is particularly likely in cases where the Arbaya were apparently contrasted with individuals tied to the Arubu/Aribi/Arabu (SAA 11 162) or where both terms occur in the same text (SAA 07 058 r ii 5', "Arbaya"; 25', 35', "aribi/arubu"). However, one must stress again that this tentative conclusion is based on limited evidence and the difference of the two names can also be ascribed to the different media and historical periods in which they occur. So it is plausible to suggest that both terms serve as an umbrella term for people considered by outsiders as belonging to the same cultural or ethnic group.[357]

C. Political disunity

---

[356] In the Hebrew Bible the phrase "Kings of the Arabs" always contains the collective noun עֲרָב and possibly עֶרֶב (Jer 25:24; 2 Chr 9:4; 1 Kings 10:15), although the collective noun can also designate a people group without its ruler being mentioned. The *nisbe* עַרְבִי is used to designate individuals (Neh 2:19, 6:1) or a people group (in plural, Neh 4:1; 2 Chr 21:26, 22:1, 26:7 and 17:11) and never accompanies the word "king". It seems that all attestations, particularly those of the *nisbe*, date to the exilic or post-exilic periods.

[357] The extent of "Arabs" is unclear and depends on one's interpretation of certain key texts. For instance, Retsö argues that "the distant Arbaya who dwell in the desert" at the end of a list of different peoples (^{LÚ}Tamudi ^{LÚ}Ibadidi ^{LÚ}Marsimani ^{LÚ}Hayapa) in Sargon II's annals does not function as a summary of four different subgroups all known as Arabs. Similarly, he also suggests that the Qedarites, mentioned in conjunction with Iautaʾ son of Hazaʾel "king of the Arabs" (Iautaʾ is in fact called king of the Qedarites on many occasions, e.g. RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 3 vii 77) were also to be differentiated from the Arabs, although the two groups are closely related (Retsö 2003:161-66).

The Nabayot/Nabayateans (*na-ba-a-a-ti/te*) in Ashurbanipal's "Arab Wars" (to be differentiated from the Aramean *Nabātu* mentioned in Tiglath-pileser III's and Sennacherib's inscriptions and the Nabateans, spelled with a *ṭ* , see Younger 2016: 699-702) are also considered a separate group according the the same author (168-69). However, in SAA 18 149, a letter dating to Ashurbanipal's reign, when the author reports "news about the Arabs" ("^{LÚ}*a-r-a-bi*", line o10), he recounts that after a caravan left the (land of the) Nabayateans, Aya-kabar "the Massa'ean" (which may be a ruler of this group, if the *nisbe* is to be understood as a "royal *nisbe*") attacked the caravan, killing many, with one survivor entering the king's city for self-protection. Who are the Arabs in this letter, about whom the King demands information? The caravan working for the Assyrians or the Nabayateans and the Massa'eans? If this letter is read together with SAA 18 148 from the same sender, in which the Arabs (^{LÚ}*a-ra-bu* SAA 18 148, o10) reportedly attacked Assyrians, "the King's servants", it is most likely that in this context the Arabs are not working for the Assyrian Empire. Therefore, "the Arabs" in SAA 18 149 about whom the news is about should refer to the Nabayateans and the Massa'eans (for biblical and Akkadian sources on this group see Eph'al 1982: 62-63; 87-88). Younger 2016: 701 also concludes that the Nabayateans were possibly an Arab group. This case confirms that at least some groups in the desert east of the Levant were considered by the Assyrians as subgroups of the Arabs (cf. "the Sons of Ishmael", Gen 25:13-15; 1 Chr 1:29-30), contrary to Retsö"s helpful yet overly cautious suggestions.

That the Arabs in the early to mid- 1st millennium BCE never formed any significant sort of political unity, let alone political unity or alliance based on common ethnic or cultural features, seems to be quite obvious. In a passage recounting his campaign against Tyre and Egypt (671 BCE), Esarhaddon mentions that he collected camels from "all the kings of the Arabs" (LUGAL.MEŠ KUR*a-ri-bi ka-li-šú-un*, RINAP 4 034, r2). Ashurbanipal also speaks of "the kings of the Arabs" (LUGAL.MEŠ KUR*a-ri-bi*) who violated his treaty (RINAP 5 11, x89; cf. Je. 25:24, 2 Chr 9:4, etc.), Retsö argues that in Esarhaddon's case the plural "kings" indicates some sort of political alliance among the Arab kings (Retsö 2003:159), although the context depicts the kings of the Arabs as passive objects not engaged in active joint political or military activities. On the contrary, these two passages provide us with firm evidence that multiple rulers and polities existed among the Arabs near the Levant and in northwestern Arabia in the 7th century, and there is not much reason to expect larger political unity before the 7th century. Furthermore, if the Nabayateans, among others, were to be considered "Arabs" (SAA 18 149, see footnote above), they obviously had their only ruler (see Natnu, king of Nabayatu, e.g. RINAP 5 3, viii 43; "Natnu the Nabayatean", SAA 18 147, o6-o7).

However, what complicates the issue is that before Esarhaddon we seem to encounter individual "king/queen of the Arabs" (MAN/LUGAL/*šarrat* KUR/LÚAribi/Arabi) only (attested since Tiglat-pileser III), in addition to the 9th century Gindibuʔu "the Arabaya" (see above). What does the title "king/queen of the Arabs" mean in these contexts? Does it indicate some sort of pan-Arab political unity or alliance in the Iron Age, or at least before the 7th century BCE? One may cite an incident that seems to contradict any sort of pan-Arab political unity in this period. Esarhaddon recounts that his father, Sennacherib, once conquered the city

Adummatu (Duma), called "a fortress of the Arabs (URU *dan-nu-tu* ^{LÚ}*a-ri-bi*)", and brought the gods of the Arabs and Apkallatu, "the queen of the Arabs", to Assyria. Later, during Esarhaddon's reign, a certain Hazaʾel, "king of the Arabs (⌜LUGAL⌝ ^{LÚ}*a-ri-bi*) visited Esarhaddon in Nineveh and did obeisance to Esarhaddon (RINAP 4 001 iv 1-14). While we do not know the exact relationship between this Hazaʾel and Apkallatu, the context seems to indicate that the former might have been a successor of the latter as the ruler of Adummatu. Furthermore, both Hazaʾel and his son, Iautaʾ, who featured in Ashurbanipal's Arab Wars, apparently remained on the throne as kings of the Arabs after the father's visit to Nineveh (iv 19-22). In the same episode, Esarhaddon incidentally mentions returning a woman named Tabūa, who grew up in Sennacherib's palace perhaps as a royal hostage, to her own land, also with her gods, and placed her upon "them" (undesignated; the passage as a whole deals with "Arabs") as a queen/ruler (*a-na* LUGAL-*u-ti*) (cf. RINAP 4 001 iv 1-31). Though, again, the relationship between this Tabūa and either Apkallatu or Hazaʾel and his son is unclear from the context (Eph'al 1982:127-28), it appears that Tabūa as a ruler of Arabs was contemporaneous with Hazaʾel and his son, both titled "king of the Arabs". In other words, there was more than one "king/queen of the Arabs" at one time, perhaps ruling in different political centers. Therefore, it is most appropriate to understand "King/Queen of the Arabs" as a ruler who reigns over an Arab subject or a polity of which most residents are Arabs.[358] There is no need to understand the title as indicating that all the Arabs were under the rule of one ruler.

Conclusion

[358] Cf. Dušek 2017 on the meaning of "Aram" as Arameans, so that "king of Aram" could be understood as king of a polity of Aramean inhabitants as the majority..

Chapter 4 serves as a continuation of Chapter 3. In both chapters I examined the impact of cultural commonalities on the political organization of certain Levantine peoples. But the two chapters are different: I have argued in Chapter 3 that while no Levantine polities in the Iron Age can be readily designated as a "nation", in certain polities in the Cis- and Transjordan, the role of a common god, a common language and script, a common ethnonym and belief in the kinship ideology did serve to highlight the differences between neighboring cultures and polities which otherwise shared many similarities. Such internal cultural traits were utilized and politicized, as indicated by the Moabite Stele and biblical historiography (some of the latter from a later period), to heighten the political cohesiveness of various components of a trans-local, trans-tribal entity from the inside, and to legitimate political conflicts with neighboring polities from the outside. In other words, in Chapter 3 I focused on polities that to a large extent corresponded to one people, with one (self-) designation and one patron god, among other common cultural elements.[359]

In the current chapter our point of departure is essentially the same question: to what extent did shared cultural and ethnic characteristics, if they existed, influence the political concepts and practices of Iron Age Levantine polities. However, in this chapter I am focused on peoples that established multiple political entities. In other words, the cultural boundary of the peoples surveyed in the current chapter did not overlap with the political boundaries of the polities they founded. In other words, idealized correspondence between one ethnic group and one political entity was by no means a prevalent phenomenon. Already with regard to

[359] I covered Israel and Judah in Chapter 3, primarily because the presumed unity of the Israelite and Judean people, as indicated by biblical accounts about the Israelite tribal coalition, the so-called United Monarchy and the future "reunion" of the North and the South. The other reason why I have discussed Israel and Judah in Chapter 3 was that the two polities did seem to share the same patron deity, which may indicate political links.

ancient Israel and Judah, discussed in Chapter 3, I have noted that we may here have a case of two neighboring polities with factual and imagined ethnic and religious connections, which enjoyed political unity only for a limited period of time, if at all. In this chapter I have extended the discussion to cover other peoples in the Iron Age Levant and neighboring regions, often with more political centers than the Hebrew-speakers in the Iron Age and with much more limited political unity among different centers.

A few observations arise from this discussion: first, it seems clear that distinguishable trans-regional cultural and ethnic groups did exist in the Iron Age Levant, often separated (though not in a sharp and clear-cut manner) from others by language, script and sometimes also by material culture, religion and a common trans-local (self-)designation. These groups include the Arameans, the Philistines, the Luwians/Neo-Hittites, the Phoenicians and the Arabs. Second, these cultural and ethnic groups each organized their political life in numerous polities mostly independent from one another, without founding a trans-regional polity that coincided with the territories of the majority of the members of each cultural and ethnic group. Third, against this background one can conclude that different peoples displayed varying degrees of political integration and cooperation. Although our sources are inconclusive and sometimes ambiguous, it seems that the Arameans, of all the groups I discussed, may very well have developed a trans-regional common identity, however fluid it was, that assumed a certain level of political significance, as some individual Aramean polities were perhaps called "Aram" by outsiders and Aramaic speakers themselves (Melqart Stele, Zakkur Inscription). The phrase "all Aram" in the Sefire treaty further indicate that some sort of pan-Aramean awareness might have been appealed to in such a political act as

entering into an international treaty. Finally, it must be admitted that apart from the Arameans, and to a lesser extent, the Philistines (in biblical accounts), the role of cultural and ethnic commonness on politics is even less prominent and more equivocal in the case of other Levantine cultural and ethnic entities discussed here in Chapter 4. In some cases, such as the Neo-Hittite polities, the Phoenicians and the Arabs, it is safe to conclude that there is little evidence for such influence.

Part II:

Chapter 5: Empire, Universal Empire and Imperial Ideology: Theoretical Concerns and Case Studies

Introductory remarks to Part II and the present chapter

In the first part of the study I have analyzed an important phenomenon that began gradually to influence the internal organization and cohesion as well as external relations of Levantine polities in the Iron Age, viz., the increasingly significant role of cultural and ethnic elements in political affairs and inter-polity interactions. One effect of cultural and linguistic elements in Levantine politics is the tendency of some groups, such as the Transjordanian polities and, to a lesser extent, Israel and Judah, to develop into trans-local territorial entities that cover all areas believed to belong to a certain cultural and linguistic, or "national", group. In this process, local power centers are transformed and then integrated into the supraregional entity, which is often facilitated by the adoption of strategies that deal with center-periphery relations.[360] Alternatively, as in the case of Aramaean states, one wonders whether common linguistic, religious and cultural features, particularly under the pressure of a mutual enemy (e.g. the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 9th to 8th centuries), may have resulted in some sort of collective identity among different political entities sharing these common traditions (Grosby 2002d: 150f.). With or without eventual political unity, ancient "national" elements may indeed have resulted in the tendency for some peoples to expand beyond the confines of nuclear cities and towns.

The tendency of political expansion, however, is not unique to these Iron Age polities

[360] For the transformation of local power centers into integral parts of the newly established administrative system of such Iron Age kingdoms as Israel, see see Uziel and Maeir 2012 and Kleiman 2017.

and groups. Indeed, expansionist policies and practices constitute the hallmark of a particular format of political mechanism, i.e. the empire, with which the Levantine polities were quite familiar. Obviously, these Levantine states and peoples did not exist in a geopolitical vacuum. On the contrary, after the temporary retreat of external intervention of the Late Bronze Age empires, as the Late Bronze Age international system collapsed, in the 1st millennium the Levant witnessed the revival of imperial influence from different directions. A new trend in external influence on Levantine polities and politics in the Iron Age, is the unparalleled rise of the superpowers, often termed "universal empires", from Mesopotamia that managed to overshadow single-handedly the entire Levant through direct annexation and indirect control. In chapter 5, I will consider theoretical issues about the concept of empire; the so-called universal empire as well as the self-perception of universal empires in relation to others. I will also examine whether an empire that engages in universal rhetorics would regard anyone else as its peer, or more importantly, whether and how compromises are made when the historical circumstance diverges from the monocentric mentality of its imperial ideology.

These issues serve as a prelude to an analysis of the influence of imperial activities on Levantine polities. The existence of external imperial influence from the north and the south on Levantine polities certainly had repercussions on local conceptions of sovereignty, boundary and the limits of one's own power. Furthermore, one wonders how the superpower, i.e. Mesopotamian empires like the Neo-Assyrian Empire, perceived and dealt with the seemingly minor polities lying beyond the heartland of the universal empire. Are they recognized as legitimate local entities? Are they part of the universal empire? What is their position in the world order under the empire's supposed "universal" dominion? Conversely,

as the universal empire came into direct contact with Levantine polities of various sizes and types, the latter also produced documents in which they reuses and reinterprets the phenomenon of the universal empire and the imperial ideology. The interaction between empires, particularly the Mesopotamian superpower, and the Levantine polities, will be the topic of Chapter 6.

A second subject of discussion, to which this chapter also serves as a theoretical and historical introduction, is the issue of local Levantine "imperialism" in the 1st millennium. I have noted that "national" groups may naturally have opted to develop beyond the nuclear cities and form a contiguous territorial polity consisting of towns and their environs sharing the same cultural traditions. Within the Levant itself, in the first millennium BCE we see for the first time records casting certain practices of local Levantine polities--some with so-called "national" features--in an imperial light.[361] Even if traces of imperial terminologies and conceptions that appear in Levantine sources do not always reflect historical reality, they may nevertheless point to the influence of imperial ideology prevalent in the age of universal empires in the entire ancient Near East, e.g. a small polity's reinterpretation of one's own status in reaction to and in light of the universal mentality.

Essentially, the issue of "nations" as "empires" touches upon the central question of the growth and crystallization of political entities: by what principle and for what purpose did political entities expand and when does this expansion end? Is it ethnic, linguistic and religious commonalities, or rather, an ideological belief in their significance, that serve to

[361] Here I use "imperial" as a feature of political behaviors of one polity that results in its expansion into regions inhabited by other sociopolitical groups, which often results in conquest and annexation. For the definition of an empire as a state or a nation that annexes another state or nation, see P. Rosen 2003: 84. I will discuss the definition of empire in further detail later.

promote expansion and merger on the one hand, and provide a check on further growth on the other? Or, as we will see in the case of empires, does some sort of combination of practical concerns, such as economic and geographical factors, and ideological pursuit for the enlargement of territory and direct influence prove to be more decisive? Can we draw a line between the two paradigms, and how permeable is this line? It is for this reason that we also need to examine the opposite side of the question: can an empire sometimes strive to become a group with pronounced internal cultural, ethnic and religious homogeneity that sets itself apart from other polities which are not only lower in rank in the imperial hierarchy but also culturally separated from the empire? Can an empire, indeed an empire with universal claims, become a "nation" that derives its political cohesion from some sort of internal cultural commonness?

Before I proceed to discuss the impact of external empire on Levantine polities and internal Levantine imperial activities, let us first focus on empires themselves. In the following sections I will examine issues of ancient empires, definitions and criteria as well as the ideologies and worldviews of universal empires with regard to their conceptual and actual positions in relation to others, particularly their few but by no means negligible rivals.

Issues of definitions and criteria

Unlike the concept of "nation state" or the issue of the impact of cultural and ethnic issues on international relations in antiquity, the existence of empires as a crucial form of political organization in the ancient world is almost uncontested. Indeed, it is an ancient empire, *Imperium Romanum*, that has shaped Western definitions and subsequent understandings of empire as a political phenomenon that has influenced different peoples and

lands (K. Morrison 2001:1-3; Cólas 2007). The ancient Near East (including ancient Iran, Egypt and Anatolia) and particularly Mesopotamia witnessed some of the earliest efforts of political expansion by internally centralized and consolidated states in search of dominance over other resources and trade routes as well as political societies, that lie beyond the traditional limits of its core territory, bequeathing us with a rich history of ancient forms of empire-building and imperialism (for a history of Mesopotamian empires and imperialism, see, among others, Larsen 1979; Barjamovic 2013; Steinkeller, forthcoming). Ancient empires in the context of the Near East also served as a major source of inquiries and discussions on empire and imperialism (cf. Dan 2:36-45; 7:3-8)[362], leaving us with the ancient theory of *translatio imperii*.[363]

But what is an empire, in the first place? And which polities can be understood as empires in the Iron Age Levant? In order to understand imperialism as source of influence on the conception of polity in the Iron Age Levant,[364] I need briefly to note how empires are defined in general, which has always been a source of scholarly debate. Some scholars understand empire as an unequal relationship between different entities, i.e. the control of one society by another (Doyle 1986: 30), the rule over various polities by one multinational or multiethnic state (E. A. Cohen 2004: 50), over one nation by another nation (P. Rosen 2003: 84) or structurally speaking, the control of the periphery by the imperial center (Zürn 2007:

[362] It should be noted that no Aramaic term for "empire" is used in this passage, as all the four successive "empires" are called מַלְכוּ (kingdom; vv. 39-40).

[363] Lit. "transfer of rule". The dreams of Nebuchadnezzar II in the book of Daniel reports the images of a statue of body parts made of different materials (2:36-45) and four animals (7:3-8). These four elements have been interpreted as referring to four subsequent external imperial powers that dominated the Near East, possibly the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Media, Persia and Macedonia. See summary and discussion in Kratz 1991, Liverani 2017b: 534-45 and most recently, Machinist 2019:229-31, with references to Greek, Roman and Mesopotamian sources which also presented history in terms of the succession of different kingdoms, ages or empires.

[364] See Frevel 2018 for a recent critical review of the scholarly history of identifying an Aramean empire, which hinges on the issue of criteria and definitions.

690).[365] One wonders what the result of this power relationship is in terms of the newly formed political entity: is the empire, from a "static" point of view, a new, enlarged state, or still a group of states with the core dominating the rest? At different stages of the life of a certain empire, the answer to this question seems to differ. One may argue that the result of imperial expansion may lead eventually to the complete merger of previous political societies and the formation of a new state, with increasingly stable political and cultural boundaries and a new collective identity with multi-layered traditions, as in the case of imperial China over the centuries (see Ge 2018: 95-121, especially 111-15). At the inception of empire building, however, the links between the imperial core and the periphery as well as those between different parts of the newly formed empire may still be considerably weak and subject to reversion to political plurality.

How do these definitions and observations help us identify candidates for empires or imperial activities in the Iron Age Levant? More specifically, how can imperial expansion be differentiated from other forms of interstate warfare, campaigns, raids and territorial disputes over the control of a certain town that were typical of ancient polities in the first millennium BCE? Imperial activities of ancient polities were certainly not limited to the economic

[365] Instead of stressing the center-periphery model, Charles Maier (2007:7), for instance, views empire from the perspective of the internal hierarchy of both the center and the rest of the empire: "Empire is a form of political organization in which the social elements that rule in the dominant state—the "mother country" or the "metropole"—create a network of allied elites in regions abroad who accept subordination in international affairs in return for the security of their position in their own administrative unit (the "colony" or, in spatial terms, the "periphery"). While this structural model encourages us to combine the horizontal, center-periphery view of empire with a vertical view that stresses the class difference common to both societies, historical records suggest that in many cases the establishment of such a "club of elites of different ranks" may not prove stable, particularly in empires built upon conquered polities. From Assyria to Han China and the Ottoman Empire, the center may eventually choose to replace local elites with imperial officials sent from the center, complicating the reality at the imperial margin. (Chen 2005; Faroqhi 2004: 75-97) The theoretical commonality of interests shared by all elites against the ruled does not mean that the redistribution of privileges dictated by the supreme elite in the system is invariably accepted, as the numerous revolts in the history of Mesopotamian empires testify. See also Liverani 1979 (297), where he argues that an empire imports the systemization of unbalance from the inside to the outside of a political society, so that the vertical stratification in a society becomes also horizontal, as different units of the empire occupy different positions in the imperial system. If we combine the two views, it should be noted again that the newly formed horizontal unbalance and inequality may also remain vertical if viewed from the perspective of the entire empire.

domain, that is, control of resources and trade routes as well as collection of taxes and tributes. Administrative tactics and cultural policies of one polity's expansion should also be considered when gauging the extent to which such a polity can be understood as an empire. Several tentative criteria regarding the administrative and cultural aspects may be listed.[366] First, an empire should display efforts to extend its political influence to or to annex regions traditionally belonging to "foreign" peoples, i.e. different linguistic, ethnic or cultural groups, sometimes different in modes of production and political organization (as in the case of Egypt's attempt to control the Levant). This is particularly significant when one considers the fact that some quasi- "national" groups, like the Israelites or the Moabites in the Iron Age Levant, also attempted at territorial expansion beyond single urban centers to include other tribal entities or settlements of the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In the following sections I choose to focus on polities that aim to conquer or control territories inhabited predominantly by *other* peoples instead of territorial expansion powered by the desire for some sort of "national unification". It should be noted, however, that often the boundary between the two political phenomena could be rather blurred (see discussion in Chapter 7). Second, to differentiate imperial expansion from sporadic raids, I seek to find efforts of abiding control of one political entity or people group by another, which often manifest themselves as administrative reorganization of the conquered region to different degrees. Third, apart from economic integration and administrative reorganization, an empire also has a cultural dimension that serves to buttress its political cohesion. This cultural dimension often concerns the employment of strategies motivated by an imperial ideology that justifies

[366] See Frevel 2018: 418 for the references on the preference of a descriptive definition of empire and imperialism, with, of course, a different set of criteria.

the expansion, sometimes with religious elements, claiming to bring order, safety, prosperity, royal or divine favor and civilization in general to other--ideally all--peoples (cf. Cólas 2007). Traces of such an imperial mentality in antiquity need to be sought in documents containing elements of self-designation, self-perception and self-legitimation, such as royal inscriptions, political correspondence and official historical records.

Among these factors, the role of imperial ideology is particularly emphasized by Liverani in his most recent efforts to analyze the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Liverani 2017a, 2017b). As he sees it, material interests so crucial to ancient and modern imperial centers alike are always justified by an imperial ideology, formulated by imperial rhetorical expressions. He thus defines the empire as "a political-territorial formation that sets as its program, its goal, to enlarge its borders incessantly, to subjugate the rest of the world through direct conquest or indirect control, to the point where its frontiers are coterminous with those of the entirety of the inhabited world" (Liverani 2017a: 6). Furthermore, Liverani also contests that polities largely "devoid of an imperialistic ideology", particularly the Hittite kingdom in the Bronze Age, should not be considered an empire (Liverani 2017b: 535). Yet it must be noted that the proposed ideology of an empire that aspires for universal rule (see below for more discussion on the concept of the universal empire in the ancient Near East) should often be separated from the behaviors of, and strategies adopted by, a powerful empire in the real world. So the "imperial ideology" should often be interpreted as rhetorical discourses employed by the political elites of an empire, which, while reflecting their worldview to an extent, do not always indicate existence of a set program aiming at endless territorial expansion.

Moreover, historical cases from the ancient Near East suggest that imperial practice is not always accompanied by a clearly formulated imperial ideology, at least not by an ideology that stresses incessant expansion or universal rule. For instance, although Liverani contends that the Hittite kingdom lacked an "imperialistic ideology" (see above), the the terminology and content of Hittite treaties with minor states still indicate a clear concept of hierarchy within the system headed by the "Great King" of Hatti and the demand of the latter states' obedience, especially in their foreign relations[367]--they still present a hierarchical political system. Historically speaking, too, Hatti did evolve from an Anatolian kingdom to a major power on par with Egypt, Babylonia and later Assyria, expanding its power well beyond its traditional realm into western Anatolia and northern Levant in the Late Bronze Age (particularly in the 14th century BCE), receiving tributes from regions incorporated into the orbit of Hittite political influence (Gurney 1979).

Therefore, one may suggest that while an explicitly formulated imperial ideology is indeed a crucial lens through which we can observe the internal rhetoric and logic of a polity's worldviews generating its strategies and practices, a political entity that effectively controls other states and peoples does not necessarily publicize its grand plan, even if there is one. Imperial ideology, if understood as a set of ideas "manipulated by the power that be--and powers that want to be" (Freeden 2003:1), need not always take the form of the advocacy of

[367] Consider such phrases as "I am the subject of my Lord", "To my lord's enemy I am hostile; with my lord's friends I am at peace" in the treaty between Suppiluliuma I and Niqmaddu II of Ugarit, which clearly indicates the hierarchical relationship between the two parties in international relations. Beckman 1996:30-31. Also noteworthy is the phraseology of subjugation and obeisance in some treaties, e.g. " But Aziru, king of the land [of Amurru], came up from the gate of Egyptian territory and became a vassal [of] My Majesty, [King] of Hatti....Because Aziru [knelt down] at the feet [of My Majesty, and] came from the gate of Egyptian territory, and knelt [down at the feet of My Majesty]" in the treaty between Suppiluliuma I and Aziru of Amurru, Beckman 1996:33. The terminology employed in diplomatic correspondence between the Hittite kingdom and its vassals is also reminiscent of the relationship between the Egypt and vassals of the Egyptian empire in the Late Bronze Age Levant. For instance, in the letter from the king of Hanigalbat, now a vassal of Hatti, the sender addresses the Hittite king as "father" and calls himself "your son". See Beckman 1996:142.

territorial expansion, as it may sometimes stress the concept of hierarchy, the prioritization of regional peace and, in contemporary cases, such values as freedom and progress, etc. In certain cases the ideology may not even employ imperial terminology at all; hence the much discussed distinction between a "formal empire" and an "informal empire" (Leitner 2011:54-62). To sum up, when examining internal and external efforts by political entities to exert political influence beyond its boundaries, we will need to take into account both imperial materiality and reality on the one hand, and rhetorical expressions of imperialism on the other, although in a study of ancient imperialism our sources may not always allow for a holistic evaluation the covers both sides.

With the aforementioned criteria in mind, one can name a few imperial powers that were active in the Levant in the first millennium (down to the 4th century BCE). External powers that intervened with local Levantine affairs include the Mesopotamian empires (the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its successors), Egypt (intermittently between the 10th and the 7th centuries) and marginally speaking, Urartu (active in the northern Levant). I will review the imperial activities of these polities in Chapter 6. Within the Levant itself, the very existence of any "empires" is questionable. However, the textual and some of the archaeological evidence we have seem to suggest that some Levantine polities attempted to extend their control beyond their political, "ethnic" or "national" boundaries, or at least presented certain periods of their histories in this light. This latter group of examples will be studied in Chapter 7.

Another theoretical issue that should be briefly discussed is the external relations of an empire and the relationship between empires and international relations. Two types of

external relationships can be identified. The first type is of course the relationship between the empire and external powers not under the domination of the said empire, which itself could be another imperial power or at the very least a largely sovereign state that the empire is either reluctant to or unable to annex. Although the Mesopotamian Empires in the Iron Age tend to present themselves as powers possessing universal authority, they never managed completely to eliminate other centers of power. As a universal empire (see below) expands, it almost always encounters peripheral peoples or polities upon which it fails to exert direct or indirect political influence. Another type of "external" relations is at first glance not so external, as it concerns the relationship between the imperial core and polities under the formal control of the empire as well as the inter-relations of those peripheral polities. Spruyt suggests that the external relations of formal empires differ from those of informal empires. In a formal empire, the empire aims at the administrative transformation of the annexed polity into an integral part of the imperial core, thus controlling both the internal and the external relations of the subjugated polity and eliminating its foreign relations (Spruyt 2013: 24). The relationship between the imperial core and the subjugated polity itself thereby becomes the internal relations of one state, with governors sent from the center replacing local rulers. In an informal empire, Spruyt argues, as the imperial core does not seek the full integration of the subjugated polities, central control of the periphery's foreign relations demonstrates a higher level of latitude and flexibility, with local collaborators still enjoying considerable power (Spruyt 2013:24-25). In fact, even in an formal empire, different levels and forms of control coexist, with some regions integrated entirely into the empire as provinces while others retaining its local dynasties who remained in partial power due to their

loyalty and collaboration or practical difficulties that prevented full integration. Local rulers may very well secretly develop ties with other power centers and remain active in regional power struggles with other semi-autonomous regions of the empire.[368] Even provinces ruled by metropolitan elites installed by the imperial core may demonstrate a centrifugal tendency during periods of weakness in the center.[369] As Buzan and Little, an empire can be understood as a state, but it can also be considered as a submerged international system in and of itself (Buzan and Little 2000:6).[370]

The Universal Empire?

1. The concept and ideology of the universal empire

No empire in human history ever ruled the entire world. Even the most prominent superpowers in each region and era can never formally subjugate all surrounding polities and peoples under its own absolute political domination, let alone other political and cultural centers that may very well evade their knowledge and attention. However, the ancients did have an idea of the unrivalled status of certain large powers within a certain period of time. This may be illustrated by the Mesopotamian concept of the "bala" (Akk. "*palû*"; lit. "reign,

---

[368] Note the important role of Herod the Great in Roman-Parthian relations. See J. M. Schlude and J. A. Overman 2017. See also the role of client rulers in the margins of the Ottoman Empire discussed in Faroqhi 2004:75-97, with case studies on the Hijaz and Dubrovnik.

[369] See, for example, the rise of Muhammad Ali Pasha in early 19th-century CE Egypt, which transformed Egypt into a largely independent regional power under the nominal leadership of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt's independent diplomatic interests are reflected by its expansion beyond its traditional boundaries, clashing with the Ottoman imperial center. See Sayyid-Marsot 1984:196-231.

[370] Buzan and Little (2000:6) thus remark, with regard to the Roman Empire and the Soviet Union: "...(W)e need, for example, to be able to identify empires as international systems. Conventionally, when we follow the history of the Roman Empire, what we observe is a city-state expanding into an established international system to form the Roman Empire--a large and complex form of state. From our perspective, however, the Roman Empire constitutes a phase in the longer story of a Mediterranean/Middle Eastern international system: a phase in which the system's political structure takes a hierarchical rather than an anarchical form...this change of labels matters in metaphorical terms. Just as it made a difference during the Cold War whether one thought of the Soviet Union as a state or as an empire (and thus as a kind of submerged international system), so it makes a difference whether analysts have to think of the Roman Empire as a state or as an international system in hierarchical form". If we view the Roman Empire or the Soviet Union both as "empires", that is, large, multi-ethnic states, and hierarchical international systems, we need also to adjust, as the authors further contend (2006:6), our understanding of actors in an international system. They suggest that actors in such systems do not have to be sovereign states as in the Westphalian system. That is to say, political units with partial sovereignty may also develop relations with other such units.

term of office; hegemony") of not only individual kings, but also specific polities or dynasties, which may be transferred to a different one.[371] The ancients' awareness of the unparalleled supremacy of a single political power in a certain era is more prominently demonstrated by the above-mentioned "*translatio imperii*" in the book of Daniel. The metaphors in Daniel clearly shows that the ancients recognized different empires as the dominant world power of one period, a phenomenon reminiscent of the concept of a universal empire. Furthermore, from the perspective of propaganda, either in order to justify existing political dominance over its neighbors or favorably to present its ruler to his gods and subject, the political elites of an empire may choose to adopt "a hierarchical conception of rulers and statehood" that has been interpreted by some scholars as "imperial universalism", i.e. rhetorical tools that often serve to present the empire as the supreme political organization in the known world and its ruler, the ruler of the world (see Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012: 11; Barjamovic 2012). Yet as all other forms of ideological and rhetoric discourse, the nature of "imperial universalism" has always been complicated by the combined influence of historical circumstances and the medium of expression.

In fact, some form of a hierarchical conception of international politics seems to be charactersitic of all empires, yet not all imperial propaganda clings to explicit expression of universalism on all occasions, particularly when historical conditions render the unqualified expression of such a mentality less than realistic and appropriate. Let us first consider the well-known "club of great powers" that characterized the ancient Near Eastern international system of the Late Bronze Age (see Tadmor 1979:3-4; see also Liverani 1990; 2001).

[371] See CAD-p, p73, "*palû*" 3. See the example "*pa-li Akkadîm ga-mir*" Yale Oritental Seires 10, 61:10.

Membership in a club of great powers, usually displayed by the assumption of the title "Great King" or the mutual appellation of one's counterpart as a "brother" in such bilateral documents as treaties and international correspondence, can also be interpreted as part of an imperial ideology. Yet this kind of imperial ideology does not rely on the absolute dominance of one "universal" ruler, but instead on the mutual recognition of a selected class of rulers above all others, who collectively partake in the dominion over the world.[372] It is both the historical reality, i.e. the undeniable existence of other political centers, and the medium of communication, i.e. diplomatic documents, that render universalislitic rhetorics less than effective and desirable in such situations.

Yet under other historical circumstances and on media targeted to a different group of audience (i.e. locals, deities, etc.), the political elites of an empire may choose solely to stress its supposed absolute authority in the international political system, staking "a claim to be the supreme monarch in the sea of contentious and rival lordships; all others ranked below him and were thus, in a sense, part of his hegemony, *even if they eluded direct control*" (Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012: 11; italics mine). Such a claim, it should be noted, is only partially dependent on realpolitik and should essentially be understood as a rhetorical claim revealing an important facet of the empire's ideological self-perception. In the Egyptian New Kingdom, when the Pharaoh was very much aware of the existence of distant powers on par with

[372] Liverani 1990: 201 cites correspondence between Egypt and Hatti after the treaty between Hattusili III and Ramesses II which mentions, in a very positive and proud tone, the union between two great kings and two great countries. See particularly KUB III 24+59, Vs 6'-8'. It is also widely known that in the Amarna Letters "Great King" is not simply a decorative title, but instead the marker of first-class powers whose rulers had a certain self-consciousness of the privileges and other connotations attached to the title. For instance, in EA 11 Burra-Buriash of Babylon complains to Amonhotep IV of Egypt that sending the betrothed Babylonian princess with an escort of only five chariots will be considered inappropriate by kings in his environs: "...the neighboring kings [will say, sa]ying 'The daughter of the great king (DUMU MUNUS LUGAL GAL) have they borne to Egypt with (only) five chariots!"(lines 21-22). Similarly, Aššur-uballiṭ I of Assyria, writing to the Egyptian Pharaoh in terms of brotherhood and calling himself "Great King" in the greeting formula, also complains that the gift he received from Egypt was not compatible with the status of a Great King. (EA 16, line 13). It is clear that Great Kingship enjoyed by a class of first-rank powers is regulated certain protocols and expectations shared only by members of this class.

himself, as indicated by the "brotherhood" terminology in diplomatic letters, on ceremonial and memorial inscriptions from the Egyptian homeland the Pharaoh clearly depicts himself not only as the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, but also as one who subdues foreign lands surrounding Egypt, one who expands the political domination of Egypt at the expense of all known enemies. For example, a stele of Amenhotep III from his mortuary temple in western Thebes records the blessing of the god Amun:

Turning my face to the south I did a wonder for you, I made the chiefs of wretched Kush surround you, Carrying all their tribute on their backs/ Turning my face to the north I did a wonder for you, I made the countries of the ends o f Asia come to you, Carrying all their tribute on their backs. They offer you their persons and their children, Beseeching you to grant them breath of life./ Turning my face to the west I did a wonder for you, I let you capture Tjehenu, they can't escape! Built is this fort and named after my majesty, Enclosed by a great wall that reaches heaven, And settled with the princes' sons of Nubia's Bowmen./ Turning my face to sunrise I did a wonder for you, I made the lands of Punt come here to you, With all the fragrant flowers of their lands, To beg your peace and breathe the air you give (Lichtheim 2006:46-47).

Amenhotep III, the "Great King" who addresses rulers of Babylonia and Mitanni, among others, as brothers in their correspondence, is here presented in the universalistic light as a ruler of the Egypt-centered world. If one can extract a New Kingdom Egyptian imperial ideology from different types of sources, one may suggest that this ideology in its different forms of expressions invariably highlights a hierarchical worldview, although they differ from one another with regard to the number of centers recognized by the Egyptian ruling elites. The universalistic view exhibited in some of the internal Egyptian sources in the Late

Bronze Age (cf. Liverani 1990:44-48) is mitigated by the need to accommodate the existence of other powers beyond its reach and the prevalent idea of brotherhood between coexistent great powers (Liverani 1990: 200-01).

In the subsequent Iron Age the political landscape in the ancient Near East changed tremendously. With the decline and political fragmentation of Egypt (Taylor 2000) and the fall of the Hittite kingdom (Bryce 2005: 327-46), the "club of great powers" of the Late Bronze Age also collapsed. While Mesopotamia were also struck by political turmoil that overran different parts of West Asia, including the conflicts between Assyria and Babylonia and the invasion of the early Arameans/the Aḫlamû, the two Mesopotamian powers, and particularly Assyria, largely survived the political chaos at least as independent centers of power. Such new developments resulted, simultaneously, in two new trends in the relations between former imperial centers in the region: First, while the strength of the Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian kingdom fluctuated, towards the late 10th century it increasingly became the single superpower in the region and began to take up a path of expansion, partially in order to recover lost land in the West.[373] Second, with the collapse of the Late Bronze Age international system headed by the Great Kings, and with the disintegrated Egypt temporarily detached from Asia, the historical foundation for a developed form of great power diplomacy also faded away, leaving us much less impressive records that might shed light on Assyria's relationship with other political centers, if they existed. The two factors, i.e. changed historical reality and the resulting change in the nature of preserved documentation, in addition to the desire of the Neo-Assyrian rulers to revive the glory of the

[373] Note the motif of recovering Assyrian territory later occupied by the Arameans in 9th century Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. See RIMA 2 A.0.101.19 lines 92-95; RIMA 3 A.0.102.2 col. ii lines 35b to 38.

Middle Assyrian Empire, led to the rise of the age-old Near Eastern traditions that saw empires as world-conquerors, with universalistic imperial rhetorics serving as a major instrument with which the Assyrian ruler formulated the relationship between Assyria and the rest of the world.[374]

While the claim that the Neo-Assyrian Empire harbored a plan incessantly to extend its territory until the end of the world might be exaggerated (see Liverani 2017a:6), universalistic motifs did feature in numerous expressions of Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology, most prominently with respect to the royal titles adopted by the kings and the motif of expansion into foreign, sometimes unknown lands.

First, kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire bore such epithets as "king of the four quarters" (*šar kibrat erbeti*) or "king of the universe" (*šar kiššati*) in their royal inscriptions, in addition to "king of Assyria" and "Great King".[375] Such titles, which follow a centuries-old tradition of Mesopotamian royal appellation,[376] reveal the Assyrian rulers' claim for supreme, absolute authority over the entire known world and above all other rulers ("king of Kings", *šar šarrāni*), a mentality which in theory allows no equal counterparts (cf. *rubû lā šanān*; RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 03 line 2). Although the titles by no means indicate that the Neo-Assyrian Empire ever planned to conquer the entire world, nor do they suggest that Neo-Assyrian rulers cannot tolerate the existence of other powerful rulers in reality, they do demonstrate

[374] The first empire in Mesopotamian and Near Eastern history is the Sargonic empire in Akkad, which in many ways shaped the ancients' perception of empire. For the impact of the Sargonic Empire on later Near Eastern understanding of the empire as a political phenomenon and for the role of the Sargonic Empire as a model emulated by later polities, from Elam under Puzur-Inšušinak, the Ur III Empire, Šamši-Adad I down to the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which admired its scale of conquests and dominium over vast and diversified regions, see discussions in Steinkeller, forthcoming.

[375] For a sketch of Neo-Assyrian royal titles expressing imperial universalism, see Barjamovic 2012: 45; see also Liverani 2017a: 107-16. For a study of Mesopotamian royal titles in general, see Seux 1967.

[376] The title "king of the universe" was already born by Sargon, e.g. RIME 2 E.2.1.1.2, line 6; E.2.1.1.3, lines 4-5. "king of the four quarters" was used by Naram-Sin (RIME 2, E.2.4.1, lines 6'-7') of the Sargonic Empire and Ur III kings (e.g. RIME 3-2 E3/2. 1.2.23, lines 4-6), among others.

their empire's ideological claim for a unique, unrivaled dominion to be extended to the end of the world. Rhetorical tools as they are, the adoption of these titles and epithets was never entirely detached from and independent of the historical reality and the relative relationship between the empire and the surrounding world. On the one hand, a diachronic overview of Assyrian royal titles reveals that the classic universalistic title, "king of the World", which was introduced to Assyria by the conqueror Šamši-Adad I, was used more often than not during the rise of Assyrian power in different periods.[377] On the other hand, among contemporary rulers, the Neo-Assyrian kings were possibly those who most consistently assumed titles indicative of imperial universalism, which corresponds to the historical fact that the Neo-Assyrian Empire, though not without its rivals, was the most dominant world power in the period.[378]

Second, various motifs in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions highlight the empire's expansionist tendency. One such theme is the celebration of the ruler or the gods as those who expand the territory of the empire.[379] The motif of territorial expansion, to be sure,

---

[377] Šamši-Adad I, as a ruler of a territorial kingdom consisting of various former city-states, assumed different titles that corresponded to his various roles, which is best reflected in a text recording his building of a temple for Dagan in Terqa: "Šamšī-Adad, king of the universe, appointee of the god Enlil, worshipper of the god Dagan, vice-regent (*išši'aku*) of the god Aššur..." (RIMA 1 Šamši-Adad I A.0.39.8, lines 1-5), where "king of the Universe" appears side by side with the traditional royal title of the Assyrian ruler. Šamši-Adad I emulated the Sargonic kings by trying to establish, at least ideologically speaking, his dominion in all directions, claiming to have received tribute from Iran and Anatolia. To buttress his claim for universal overlordship, Šamši-Adad I may also have established diplomatic ties with the southern region of Dilmun. See Eidem and Højlund 1993:444; Steinkeller 2014:702, n.37.

After Šamši-Adad I, the traditional title "the vice-regent of the god Aššur" reappeared and the universalistic titles began to be used again only in Adad-Nārārī I's royal inscriptions which for the first time recounts Assyria's wars with its neighbors and the conquest of Hanigalbat (e.g. RIMA 1 Adad-Nārārī I A.0.76.3, line 1-2). It is noteworthy that, although Aššur-uballiṭ I already called himself a "great king" in his letter to the Egyptian Pharaoh (see above), in his inscriptions he did not assume the title "king of the universe", which was reintroduced when Assyria began to expand. The title continued to be used in attested inscriptions of most of the subsequent kings of the Assyrian kingdom in both the Middle Assyrian and the Neo-Assyrian periods, with the exception of Aššur-rēša-iši II and Tiglath-pileser II. Even when Assyrian domination was seriously weakened by the Arameans in the West (after ca. mid- 11th century), Assyrian rulers (from Erība-Adad II to Shalmaneser II) continued to use the title "king of the universe". Since Aššur-dan II, universalistic titles seem to be used consistently in Assyrian royal inscriptions.

[378] Royal titles with universalistic overtones were also used by early kings of the Urartu Kingdom in the 9th century (see below). In the Levant, however, none of the local royal inscriptions seem to have ever used "king of the universe", "king of kings" or "king of the four quarters", although the title "great king" which does not emphasize universality is used by some Neo-Hittite kings from the beginning of the Iron Age down to the 8th century (see Chapter 7).

[379] The motif of further the enlargement of the state's territory, as Radner has pointed out, is not an exclusively

should not be equated with the claim for universal rule. Yet such epithets as "the one who expands the territory" and the motif of widening one's territory at the coronation ceremony[380] do indicate the imperial mentality that is always ready to tear down physical and mental boundaries that separate the self from the other, thus incorporating foreign lands and peoples into one's own political orbit. A related theme is the imperial ruler's campaigns in difficult mountains and on untrodden paths in order to subjugate disobedient peoples and annex their lands, in which process he effectively transforms the formerly unexplored periphery into imperial territory (cf. Liverani 2017a: 41-54; e.g. RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.1, lines i 42-43; RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 16, lines v 11b-16). When even the most forbidding natural environment is subject to imperial control, the empire's rule is conceptually extended to cover the entire known world. Esarhaddon thus boasts that neither the sea nor the mountain could harbor his enemies and that those who fled tot the sea did not escape from his pursuit, for "(W)here can the fox go to get away from the sun?" (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, line v25)

Neo-Assyrian concept, as the king of Eshnuna in the Old Babylonian period also assumed the epithet "the one who enlarges Eshnuna". See Radner 2010: 29, n2. In the Middle Assyria Period, Tiglath-pileser I recounts in his inscription that Aššur and other great gods commanded him to enlarge the territory of Assyria (*mi-ṣir* KUR-*ti-šu-nu ru-up-pu-ša iq-bu-ni* RIMA 2 Tiglath-pileser I A.0.87.1, lines i 48-49). In the Neo-Assyrian Period, the title "the one who expands the territory of Assyria (or 'his land')" (*mu-ra-pi-šu mi-ṣir* KUR-*šu*) appears in one of Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions (RIMA 2 Ashurbanipal II A.0.101.40). The motif of gods' widening Assyrian territory also occurs in Adad-Nārārī III's inscriptions (RIMA 3 Adad-Nārārī III A.0.104.1, line 18; A.0.104.6, line 9) Later, in the early 7th century, the motif of Aššur giving a scepter which "widens the borders/land" (*murappišat miṣrī/mātī*) occurs several times in Sennacherib's and Esarhaddon's inscriptions (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 34, line 5; RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 111, line vii 9').

[380] The motif of territorial expansion already features in a Middle Assyrian prayer at the coronation ritual of a king (Müller 1937:4-89; obv. Col. Ii, lines 30-36). It is also attested in a text from Ashurbanipal's coronation ceremony, where calls for further widening of the land reflect the Assyrian imperial ideology that sees territorial expansion as a core element of kingship. For instance, the king is commanded by gods to "(S)pread your land wide at your feet" (*ina* GÌR.2-*ka* KUR-*ka ru-up-piš*; SAA 3 11, line o 3). The gods are expected to bestow the king with an upright sceptre that widens not only the land but also peoples (^{GIŠ}PA *i-šir-tu a-na ru-up-pu-uš* KUR *u* UN-[MEŠ-*šú*] *lid-di-nu-niš-šú*; line o 17). The motif does not seem to occur in texts recording the coronation ceremony from other periods. For example, in Ur-Namma's coronation text, although the king is called a king of the four quarters, the sceptre granted to him by Enlil (Nunamnir) is called one for "guiding all the people" (un šár si si-e-sa; Hallo 1966: 139, line 16), without explicit reference to territorial expansion. In a Neo-Babylonian myth about the creation of man and king, the motif of kings bestowing royal attributes and objects upon the king is again mentioned (lines 37'-41'). Here absent from the list is a sceptre that widens the territory, which motif is not attested anywhere in the preserved portions of the myth. See Mayer 1987:56. Mayer suggests (1987:67-68) that the Assyrian coronation texts might have borrowed from this Neo-Babylonian myth about the creation of king, for there is nothing typically Assyrian in those texts. However, the motif of territorial expansion is exactly a topic not found in this Neo-Babylonian text. It is also absent from the Neo-Babylonian king Nabopolassar's coronation text, although the latter text mentions the conquest of enemies and foreign lands. See Grayson 1975:78-85. For Mesopotamian coronation texts in general, see Ben Barak 1980.

Conceptually, the second point concerns also the way territory and boundary are understood and managed within and beyond the imperial framework. This is an important issue, not only because it treats how imperial activities affect surrounding polities and peoples, but also because this subject offers us a good opportunity to evaluate the interaction between the ideological and rhetorical expressions of the empire which often claims universal rule on the one hand, and historical realities on the other. I will therefore begin the discussion on the limits of imperial universalisms in general and in the Iron Age in particular by reviewing ancient ideas of boundary, borders and limits of a polity's power and authority.

2. Territory, boundary and the recognition of multiple centers

Although it has been asserted that linear borders emerged only as a modern phenomenon,[381] one may argue that at least other institutions facilitating the divisions of territories existed in pre-modern, and indeed, in ancient societies. The emergence of linear borders, it may be argued, constitutes not so much a chronological question, as it does a question of the requirements of the physical environment and the historical realities of a given period and region, often in the form of the balance of power between political entities. These factors are succinctly summarized by Liverani, followed then by Wazana, as resulting in conceptual preferences favoring either a monocentric view of territory, boundary and

[381] A clear, unequivocal concept of boundary, particularly in the form of linear borders, it has been suggested, emerged only with the modern sovereign nation states in West Europe, a narrative we have by now encountered several times in the conventional understanding of a series of key concepts in international relations. Before modern boundaries were established between sovereign states, the interface between political entities were primarily frontiers, which is "(E)ssentially a zonal concept, a belt of transition between one state and another" that developed from no man's land lying in inhospitable environments and separating ancient kingdoms (Mello 1989:74). As settlements spread and the density of population increased, such no man's land presumably decreased in size and became belt-like strips of zones susceptible to lack of effective administration, incursions of hostile groups and direct conflicts between the two major political units on both sides of the frontier. It is furthermore argued that institutional and ideological developments in Post-Reformation Western Europe , e.g. "(I)deas of sovereignty, exclusive control over contiguous territory, the nation-state and the juridical equality of different states in an international society regulated by...international law", contributed to the unified, common understanding of frontiers among European states. (M. Anderson 1996: 12) The collaborative effects of the aforementioned factors, along this line of arguments, resulted eventually in the replacement of frontiers by international boundaries, now presumably conceptual lines on the map sometimes demarcated with physical barriers in reality. (cf. Prescott and Triggs 2008: 1; 51-90).

perhaps also sovereignty, usually typical of an empire of undisputed power within a certain (especially a relatively isolated) region, or a multicentric view acknowledging the existence of neighboring powers whose political interests cannot be ignored, usually befitting a situation where different political entities found themselves competing with one another without being able to absorbing the other completely into one's own orbit of authority (Liverani 1990:33-65; Wazana 2013:11-22).

The conception of distant regions as frontiers of a potentially ever-growing empire, Liverani suggests, necessarily relies on and strengthens the differentiation of the core as a prosperous, orderly and peaceful center from the periphery deemed a tumultuous chaos awaiting imperial reorganization (Liverani 1990:33-65). While such landmarks as walls (the Ur Wall, Hadrian's Wall, the Chinese Great Wall) resemble linear borderlines, scholars have suggested that they in fact functioned as defensive fortresses which did not mark the fixed border between the empire and the outside world, since the empire is entitled to conduct further expansion when necessitated by the political situation and economic concerns. Instead of fixed, self-limiting linear borders, such defensive facilities may have constituted an integral part of the (zonal) frontier of the empire which is subject to change (Wazana 2013:15-16; cf. Colás 2007:45-47 on Roman frontiers).[382]

[382] One good example of the defensive function and unfixed nature of such fortresses is the role of the Great Wall and its relationship with imperial boundary in the early Qin-Han Period (ca. late 3rd century BCE to late 2nd century CE). After Qin's unification of Chinese Warring States and the founding of the Qin Empire in 221 BCE, the Great Wall built in earlier periods by Qin and other Northern Chinese States (Zhao, Yan) served as the de facto border between the Qin Empire and nomadic peoples in the north and the west. However, the status quo was accepted by the Qin Empire only reluctantly. In 215-214 BCE, after a series of victories against these nomadic peoples, Qin expanded its territory further to the north and the west, where new fortresses (also in the form of the Great Wall) were constructed to defend the Qin Empire against nomadic incursions. With the collapse of the short-lived Qin Empire at the end of the 3rd century BCE, nomadic peoples reconquered territories lost to the Chinese Empire in 215-214, so that the "old fortresses" ("故塞") again became the de facto border between Qin's successor, the Chinese Han Empire and the nomadic peoples. Han recovered these lost territories (from the Chinese perspective) only around 127 BCE, when the old Great Wall once again ceased to function as the actual boundary. Therefore, it is clear that while such fortresses could serve as temporary de-facto borders, they nevertheless could not confine further expansion of the empire for material and ideological ("reconquista") purposes, when geopolitical factors demanded and permitted expansionist policies. See a detailed study with ancient textual references on the change of the

However, not all ancient polities invariably held this view of moving, unfixed boundary. Under certain circumstances ancient political entities had to recognize their neighbors as legitimate centers of authority in their own right, with security concerns and territorial entitlements like their own, so that the division between one entity and another had to be stable and respected, thus demanding careful delineation and recording (Liverani 1990:66-78; 87-114). It is not difficult to imagine that, in antiquity, this multicentric view was often held by polities limited in size and power. This is first and foremost demonstrated by the famous case of the Umma and Lagash border disputes and, even more strikingly, by the detailed and quantitative border inscriptions by Lugalzagesi of Umma dating to mid 24th century BCE, in which the border is explicitly recorded as a line connecting one dot after another along a canal system. (text and discussion in Wazana 2013:28-30) Essentially, it is the balance of power of the two contiguous city-states that renders anything but a multicentric view of territory and boundary unrealistic, as not a single state is sufficiently powerful to subjugate and annex the other.

As in the case the Umma and Lagash border disputes where the king of Kish serves as the arbiter, the borders between different kingdoms within the Hittite imperial system are also determined in detailed descriptions by the Hittite king. Again, it is the lesser kingdoms on the same rank that are demanded by an overlord to recognize and respect each other's realm of authority (see Wazana 2013:30-44). Similar cases are also attested under the Iron Age imperial system, in which the Neo-Assyrian kings drew up the borders between client states and granted the border stone to the parties involved. Adad-nārārī III (late 9th century to early

---

northern boundary of the Qin-Han Empire and the changing role of the Great Wall in this process in Zhao 2011.

8th century) together with Šamši-ilu the commander-in-chief demarcate the boundary/border (*taḫūmu*; *miṣru*) between the domains Zakkur, ruler of Ḫamat (lit. The Hamathite), and Ataršumki, ruler of Arpad (no title), using a stele that clarifies the ownership of certain settlements and designates the Orontes as the border (cf. RIMA 3 Adad-Nārārī III A 0.104.1.2 lines 4-8a). Another text by Adad-nārārī III and his mother Semiramis recounts the erection of boundary stone between Ušpilulume, king of Kummuh (lit. the Kummuhean King: MAN URU*ku-mu-ḫa-a-a*) and Qalparuda, king of Gurgum (MAN URU*gur-gu-ma-a-a*) (RIMA 3 Adad-Nārārī III A 0.104.1.3 lines 17-18). Under the reign of Shalmaneser IV (early 8th century), Šamši-ilu again grants a boundary stone to the king of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Kummuh, although the exact borders as well the other parties concerned are not explicitly mentioned (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser IV A 0.105.1).

Yet this multicentric worldview which required the recognition of the limit of one's authority in relation to that of another ruler or polity was not incompatible with political entities that are more inclined to expand their domains. When large kingdoms such as those in the Late Bronze Age "balance of power" system met with their counterparts, and when expansion at the expense of an equally powerful neighbor was unlikely, the territorial integrity of all major members of the international system had to be acknowledged and respected (see Liverani 1990: 66-78). It is noteworthy that even Egypt in the Late Bronze Age, which Liverani understands as a representative of the monocentric worldview (Liverani 1990), produced a series of boundary stelae dating to the Middle Kingdom and, more interestingly, the imperial New Kingdom (see Vogel 2011). In this period we even encounter cases in which a powerful kingdom may choose to delineate its borders with a party of an

apparently lesser rank, which serves as a sign of the former's recognition of the latter's (at least partial) sovereignty. In the Akkadian version of a 14th-century treaty between a Hittite king (presumably Tudhaliya II) and Sunaššura, king of Kizzuwatna, although the general wording of the treaty still indicates the unequal relationship between of the two kingdoms,[383] the painstaking border description specifying the ownership of certain towns and the location the border or frontier, in strikingly equal terms.[384] This clearly reveals that even the territorial integrity of a vassal needs to be respected, especially when full control over the vassal was either unnecessary or unachievable in a particular political situation.

In the Iron Age, when the Assyrian Empire became increasingly dominant as the superpower of the Near East, the perception of the Land of Assyria as a country with a relatively confined territory nevertheless still occurs side by side with claims of universal dominance. In one of his royal inscriptions where the Assyrian king is quite conventionally addressed with epithets like "king of the universe" and "ruler of all lands", Šamši-Adad V recounts how the entire land of Assyria (which had just been subdued after major rebellions) showed obeisance to him after his first campaign against the Land of Nairi. The description of the Land of Assyria adopts a series of extremities formula ("from...to...", cf. Wazana 2013:58), which bears striking resemblance to the description of the land promised to Israelites according to biblical traditions as well as phrases prevalent in other Near Eastern

[383] Beckman notes the complicated textual history of the treaty, which reflects "increasing domination of Hatti over Kizzuwatna during the reign of Sunashshura." Following Korošec, (1982), Beckman (1996:14) considers parts of the treaty a version of an earlier parity treaty, while items like 9-10 suggest more clearly the subordination of Kizzuwatna to Hatti. One may also note that the Hittite king is addressed as the Great King or His Majesty, while Sunaššura appears without any title throughout the treaty.

[384] Note the following terms: "The City of Saliya belongs to his Majesty (*ša* ^{d}*Šamši*^{ši}) and the cities of Zinziluwa and Erimma belong to Sunaššura (*ša Šú-na-áš-šú-ra*). The border district (*pāṭa*) will be surveyed and divided between them. His Majesty shall not fortify Saliya... The Great King should hold (*li-ki-il*) that which is on Hatti's side (*šá i-na i-di māt* ^{āl}*Ha-at-ti*), and Sunaššura should hold that which is on Adaniya's side...The Samri River is its frontier (*pāṭu-šú*)..." selected terms from A iv 43-61. For translation, see Beckman 1996:20-21; for transliteration, see Weidner 1923.

texts (Wazana 2013:58). Indeed, such extremities formulas aim primarily to highlight the vastness as well as the completeness of the land united in their obedience to the new king. Yet the emphasis of completeness simultaneously reveals a clear and practical recognition of the presence of perceived *limits* of the empire, from one side to the other in each direction, particularly on the account that the Land of Assyria is here referred to not vaguely as ^{KUR}*Aššur* but as *miṣir* ^{KUR}*Aššur*: the term *miṣru* denoting both the border or frontier and a tract of land in the sense of the territory of a political entity (RIMA 3 Šamši-Adad V A 0.103.1, lines ii 7-16).[385]

Parallels from other historical contexts also confirm that an empire that has adopted expressions and the ideology of imperial universalism knows its limits and end. This realistic mentality mindful of the political situation by no means contradicts the imperial ideology in function, due in part to the different audiences to whom a treaty or any another international diplomatic document on the one hand, and a royal inscription on the other, are addressed. In the end, imperial ideologies remain ideologies, in that they represent a goal or an ultimate source of legitimacy and never have to correspond completely to the actual political circumstances. In certain cases, moreover, the imperial ideal may be *revised and reinterpreted* in accordance to an updated appreciation of the empire's relationship with the surrounding world and its role in the system. As one Chinese scholar points out, despite the traditional Chinese imperial ideology that regards the whole world as lands potentially belonging to the Chinese Son of Heaven,[386] the Chinese concept of "Tianxia" (all the land under the Heaven,

[385] See also Parpola 2004: 5, n2 on the differentiation between the Land of Assyria, i.e. land incorporated into the Provincial system, from non-annexed vassals and allies. Parpola also emphasizes the abundant references to "border" and "crossing, violating the border" in Assyrian sources, although it is desirable to distinguish the meanings of these terms (*miṣru, taḫūmu*), i.e. whether they denote a tract of land or the linear boundary, as in the case of Hebrew גבול.

[386] "溥天之下，莫非王土。"(No land under the Heaven does not belong to the King; Shijing, Xiaoya, *Beishan*)

later denoting the land divinely appointed to the sovereign rule of the Chinese ruler), which initially did not have clear boundaries, gradually transformed into better defined political domains of the Chinese Empire derived from geographical and civilizational limits. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE), when the Chinese Empire became greatly weakened, Song China began to recognize the existence of non-Chinese states as important members of the international system rather than chaotic, barbaric entities awaiting conquest and integration.[387] Along with this recognition was naturally a heightened awareness of borders with neighboring powers like the Khitans (Ge 2017: 37-40, with ancient sources).

Likewise, the Chinese emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (late 14th century CE), the founder of the Ming Dynasty, also expressed a strong sense of territorial limits and boundaries in his diplomatic correspondence with neighboring kingdoms. It is noteworthy that at this time what concerned the emperor was not just borders with rivals in the north, but also those between China and small, tributary states. For example, he ordered Chinese officials in charge of households and taxation to clarify with the Korean king China's the border with Korea.[388] In his domestic speeches, he reportedly warned Chinese soldiers to "defend the territories and the borders" ("固守疆圉", see Wan 2010:77-79 for further reference) This multicentric view regarding territory and boundary, it should be noted, does *not* conflict with a continuing focus on the China-led international system in which states are still assigned to different ranks, i.e. the Chinese empire as the nominal overlord and surrounding states as tributaries that would send tributes to Ming China in accordance with established institutions (Wan 2010:80-81).

---

[387] For more on the image of the Khitan in Song sources, see Tao (1983:67) Tao points out that trade conducted in equal terms yet disguised as a tribute system existed even during the rule of the powerful Han and Tang empires, when they faced the challenge of the Xiongnu and the Tibetan Epire respectively.

[388] 《明太祖實錄》卷 187，洪武二十年十二月壬申。(Ming Taizu Records vol. 187, Hongwu Year 20, Month 12, Day 9)

Indeed, only seven years after Zhu Yuanzhang died, the Ming Empire launched the first of a series of naval expeditions into the Indian Ocean led by Zheng He, bringing to China exotic animals and products while spreading the name of China as the universal empire (see Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012:9; Dreyer 2007). It may be said that in the early Ming Dynasty, a revised version of the imperial ideology was formed that synthesizes the traditional imperial emphasis on universal order and a realistic awareness of relatively fixed boundaries. The causes of this development, of course, lies beyond the scope of the present study.[389]

We now return to the ancient Near Eastern universal empires that most directly influenced Iron Age Levantine polities, namely, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (and occasionally its successor, the Neo-Babylonian Empire). I have mentioned Shamshi-Adad V's recognition of the limits of the Assyrian Empire (during temporary weakness of Assyria after revolts) from an internal perspective. As in the cases of various Chinese empires, Mesopotamian universal empires also had to accept, at least temporarily, the existence of formidable rivals and equal powers from the outside. The interaction between the universal empire and equal actors in the international system illustrates the highly nuanced relationship between expressions of the monocentric *Weltanschauung* and the application of multicentric strategies of the universal empire. In the next sections I will discuss a few salient examples that shed light on this subject.

The Mesopotamian universal empire and its limits

[389] For an overview of the formation of a sense of political (in additional to cultural and ethnic) "boundary" as well as its relationship with "Tianxia" in imperial China, see GE Zhaoguang 2018 (translation of the Chinese original, 葛兆光 2011)

One may argue that land-based territorial empires, China had long developed into a better integrated polity with the establishment of centralized bureaucratic institution largely staffed by civil (rather than military) officials that infiltrated deeper into the local society, or as Cólas puts it, Han Empire's "organization along a (however imperfectly) symmetrical, hierarchical and centralized bureaucracy delivered something closer to a modern state: a territorially delimited and standardized polity." (Cólas 2007: 17) One may indeed ask, whether this kind of convergence of empire-building and state-building was in fact more prevalent among traditional imperial powers, including ancient Near Eastern ones.

1. Awareness of other powers: ceremonial sources vs. non-ceremonial sources

Did the Assyrian Empire have an equal in the first millennium BCE? Was an equal ever recognized by the Assyrians themselves? Or did the Assyrian ruler, who claims to be a universal ruler, really view everyone else as absolutely inferior, ranking all below himself (cf. Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012: 11)?

In the Neo-Assyrian period, the geopolitical developments in the Near East seem to justify a claim by the Assyrian king of superior status on the international scene. Indeed, Assyria and its monarch had no equals in economic and military strength, although various powers may have posed a threat to the imperial center. One example that illustrates the clear self-consciousness as a unique, supreme power is the outrage caused by the the land of Tabal's refusal to visit the Assyrian court: "[U]assurme of the land Tabal (lit. "the Tabalean") acted as if he were the equal of Assyria" (*[^{m}ú]-as-sur-me* ^{KUR}*ta-bal-a-a a-na ep-šet* ^{KUR}*aš-šur*^{KI} *u-maš-šil-m*a RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47 Rev. 14). A second example may be found in an inscription Esarhaddon, who apparently quotes his own letter to the ruler of Shubria, in which he questions the latter as follows:

"Did you ever hear a mighty king (*šarru dannu*) (give his) order twice? But I am an almighty king (*šarru dandannu*) (and) I have written to you three times (and) you have not listened to the words of my lips! You had no fear of deceiving me and you paid no attention to my message(s). You began war and battle against me and (by so doing) you called up the fierce weapons of the god Aššur from their sheaths" (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon o i 29-32).

It is noteworthy, however, that the in this letter Esarhaddon not only reminds the recipient of his absolute power as an almighty king, but implies that there can be a lesser rank

of kings who are nevertheless still to be considered “mighty”, to which rank the ruler of Shubria certainly does not belong. This text at once demonstrates the absolute universalistic supremacy of Assyrian kingship and the possibility that other powers, though of a lower rank in the eyes of Assyria, can also be at least hypothetically tolerated by the Assyrian king’s worldview.

The answer to the question “whether the Assyrian rulers in the Iron Age considered anyone as their equals” is also often obscured and complicated by the general lack of bilateral sources in this period, e.g. international correspondence and treaties comparable to the rich documentation dating to the Late Bronze Age. Due to their function as a medium to propagate Assyrian imperial ideology, Assyrian royal inscriptions almost always depict competing large kingdoms in a negative light, recording the Assyrian monarch’s victory over them as subordinate polities that ought to have accepted Assyrian domination. Exchange of gifts may be represented as the payment of tribute, while a one-time victory over a powerful kingdom on the battlefield can be recounted as the subjugation of revolting subordinates. Even military threats by these powers, in turn, can be presented as temporary disruption in the divinely sanctified world order that ought to be corrected.

For example, when the powerful kingdom of Urartu extended its power into the northern Levant and formed an alliance with Arpad as well as other Aramean and Neo-Hittite polities against Tiglath-pileser III, Sarduri II, the Urartian king, is described as “revolting” against the Assyrian king (*it-ti-ia* BAL-*ma*; RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39 lines 20b-21). Even though Sarduri was defeated by Tiglath-pileser, Urartu does not seem to have become Assyrian

vassal until Ashurbanipal's rule.[390] The verb "to revolt", thus, in effect reinterprets historical events in light of the Assyrian monocentric worldview, according to which competing powers are relegated to the same class as rebellious smaller kingdoms, all of which form the disorderly, threatening non-Assyrian world.

On non-monumental media one can detect traces of more practical appreciation of the existence and influence of other powers. For instance, one letter from Sargon II to to Aššur-šarru-uṣur, the Assyrian governor of Que, reports that Midas king of Phrygia (^{KUR}*mus-ka-a-a*) intercepted a 14-person embassy of Que sent from Urik[391] to Urartu (now under Rusa I's rule) and handed them over to Aššur-šarru-uṣur. On the one hand, this letter (SAA 01 001) shows that independent diplomatic ties initiated by the puppet ruler of Que were apparently not to be tolerated. More interesting for our purpose, though, is the fact that Sargon II appears rather delighted by Phrygia's gesture of friendliness, as he now calls him an

[390] Urartu never appears in Tiglath-pileser III's lists of tributaries, although Sarduri II's defeat in battle is recounted in detail. Tiglath-pileser III also mentions the erection of his royal image in front of the city Turushpa, which is "his (Sarduri II's) city". See RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser 39 line 24a. Na'aman has pointed out that the erection of royal images with symbols of gods in palaces and temples of vassal kingdoms is well-documented. Yamada, followed by Na'aman, suggests that royal images as well as symbols of the gods served as divine witnesses on the occasion of swearing an oath, either in a legal context or in the establishment of vassalage. (Yamada 2000: 296-97; Na'aman 2004:57) In our case, the erection of only the royal image is mentioned, without reference to Assyrian gods (contrast the example of Gaza, Na'aman 2004:56), which situation is attested elsewhere, too (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser 17 line 8, in newly conquered lands and cities in the East). However, Urartu's case might have been an exception to Yamada's otherwise convincing proposal, for Urartu is not mentioned as a tribute bearer, nor is any submissive gesture (e.g. "to seize my feet") mentioned in addition to the defeat inflicted upon the land. Therefore one should not assume that an oath was taken in our case. More importantly, Urartu certainly continued to pose a major threat on different frontiers of the Assyrian Empire (including Neo-Hittite states in the West), which way surpasses any expected behavior of a vassal.

[391] Urik is the supposedly the client-king of Que who's post was preserved after the installation of a governor over him. Here his name is not accompanied with any title. We know from Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions (738 BCE, 732 BCE) that a king of Que called Urik(ki) was a tribute bearer together with other Levantine rulers. See for example, RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35 col. iii line 8. Here he is mentioned alongside other as a king collectively (MAN line 1), and individually with a *nisbe*. It seems that although Que had become a tributary with an Assyrian governor monitoring the local affairs, Urik was still able to seek ties with such a distant power as Urartu. Bryce proposes that the motives for his decision ot develop relations with Urartu (if this is the same Urik) have to do with the fact that, having been a loyal client-king of Assyria since Tiglath-pileser III's reign, he was disenchanted with Assyria after Assyria imposed a governor as his overseer. See Bryce 2012:158-59. The Çineköy inscription and the Karatepe inscription from Que suggest that, on the one hand, Urik used to maintain cordial ties with the Assyrian king (see Çineköy inscription, lines 6-7 of the Luwian version and line 7b-10a of the Phoenician version: "The king of the Assyrians became my father and mother", "Hiyawa/dnnym and Assyria/the Assyrians became one house." For the text and the translation of the Luwian version, see IAHLI: 42-44) on the other hand, Que never abandoned hopes for more autonomy and developed ties, perhaps sometimes forced to do so, with both Phrygia and Urartu. Urik celebrates the building of fortresses (*ḥmyt*) in Çineköy inscription; Azatiwada, Urik's successor, resumed defense work and embarked on local expansion when Assyrian interference declined temporarily after the death of Sargon II. (CHLI vol. I Part 1: 44-45) Urik's attempt to build ties with Urartu fits well in this picture.

"ally" (*a-na sa-al-mi-ni it-tu-ar* line 10).

2. The Mesopotamian universal empire and other big powers: an overview

A few comments are due with regard to the candidates for "equals" of the universal empires of Mesopotamia.[392] By "candidates for equals" I tentatively refer to polities of considerable sizes and strength that were not firmly placed under effective Assyrian (or Babylonian) control for an enduring period of time and those that at least temporarily vied for domination over certain regions with Assyria, if not launching attacks at integral parts of the Mesopotamian Empire itself. Yet it should also be clarified that these alternative political centers need not formally constitute an empire. We consider here their relations with the superpower rather than their absolute status of power or their political organization. By these criteria, it should be noted, all polities within the Levant are practically excluded, so we have to extend our search beyond the Levant. In the ancient Near East, three major Late Bronze Age powers (aside from Assyria) survived, after periods of instability, into the Iron Age, i.e. Egypt (later ruled by a Nubian dynasty, perhaps to be labeled as "Egypt-Nubia"), Babylonia and Elam. Although all the three were subjugated by the Assyrians at certain stages, and in the case of Babylonia, the annexation had long-lasting effects, at times diplomatic relations

[392] The power of the Assyrian State experienced ups and downs since the collapse of the Late Bronze Age international system. Between ca. 1050 and 935 Assyria suffered major territorial loss in regions previously held by the Middle Assyrian Empire. However, even then traces of previous imperial ideology still survives in, for example, Shalmaneser II's stele where he assumes the title "Great King" (MAN GAL) and "king of Totality" (MAN KIŠ) (RIMA 2 Shalmaneser II A.0.93.1 line 3. Frahm believes that the core of the Assyrian heartland was firmly under the control of the Assyrian kings and understands the fact that Shalmaneser II and his successors in the revitalization period chose royal names reminiscent powerful Middle Assyrian kings indicates "thir determination to restore Assyria's former glory". (Frahm 2017: 167) Between Shalmaneser III and Tiglath-pileser III Assyria experienced decentralization and the rise of magnates (such as the Field Marshal). Although the number of royal inscriptions dropped accordingly, magnates themselves, particularly Šamšī-ilu, erected their own stelae which, falling short of assuming the royal title, demonstrate the Assyrian imperial power no less than those authored by kings. Frahm, following others (e.g. Siddal 2013:81-132; contra Fuchs 2008) believes that the magnates and provincial governors management of portions of Assyrian territories did not weaken Assyria's position as a whole (Frahm 2017: 173-74) on the international stage, which opinion is corroborated by other sources like the chronicles. It is also noteworthy that Aššur-nērārī V who left no royal inscription but only a royal decree (RIMA 3 A.0.107) and was defeated by the Urartian Sarduri II still forced the rising powerful Aramean kingdom Arpad to accept vassal status in a treaty (SAA 02 002). Therefore, one may tentatively conclude that at least the self-perception of Assyria by Assyrian kings (and other de facto rulers) as the single great power possibly survived the entire transition from the Middle Assyrian period to the Neo-Assyrian period.

between Assyria and these polities or other actions indicative of a multicentric approach towards them were maintained, particularly during periods of Assyria's weakness. Also noteworthy are of course Iron Age powers in the north of the Assyrian Empire, namely, Urartu, Phrygia and later Lydia.

Egypt, for example, plunged into prolonged periods of political decentralization after the New Kingdom, culminating in the Assyrian conquest of Egypt in 671 BCE (671-655 BCE). Yet before the Assyrian conquest Egypt was largely considered a polity lying beyond Assyrian control. The border between the Assyrian domain (with Levantine polities like Gaza turned into client kingdoms) and the Sinai frontier of Egypt proper served as an important theme in inscriptions and marked the farthest point reached by Assyria's western campaigns (Na'aman 2004: 63). The Arab tribal leader Ibdi-ʔilu was appointed near the border with Egypt as "gatekeeper" (^{LÚ}Ì.DU$_8$-*ú-ti*) by Tiglath-pileser III in the second half of the 8th century (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 42 line 34'; 44 line 16'; 47 line r6'). In addition to the border that separates the Mesopotamian sphere from the Egyptian world, which itself reflects a multicentric view of the world on the Assyrian part, economic relations between Assyria and Egypt cannot be explained as a one-way movement of commodities in tribute only,[393] as Assyria seemed to have established trading ports (*kāru*) in bordering regions in southern Levant designed for reciprocal trades (Elat 1978). After the rise of the Neo-Babylonian empire[394] and the revitalization of Egyptian power in the second half of the 7th century, Egypt

[393] Egypt has also been depicted as a tributary on a number of occasions. Shalmaneser III in the mid- 9th century claims to have received tribute (*ma-da-tu*) of exotic animals from a land called Muṣri, the content of which indicates that it was indeed Egypt. (RIMA III Shalmaneser III A.0.102.89; see Yamada 2000: 157) Similar gifts consisting of exotic animals were given by the Egyptian king (MAN ^{KUR}*Mu-uṣ-re-e*) to Aššur-bēl-kala in as early as the 11th century. (RIMA 2 Asshur-bel-kala, A.0.89.6 lines 29-30). Elat correctly observes that the term *madattu* (tribute) may very well be an exaggeration to exalt the Assyrian king's status. Elat 1978: 22.

[394] As the successor of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Neo-Babylonian Empire bequeathed us fewer sources that may shed light on the universal mentality of the its rulers. Most of the royal inscriptions, with the possible exception of those

clashed with Neo-Babylonian forces on the battlefield as a major rival in the West (see Langdon 1912: 207; Nebuchadnezzer II 48 line 13-18, event dated to 568 BCE). In the Neo-Babylonian Period, as before, Gaza (^{KUR}*Ḫa-az-za-ti*) was referred to by Nabonidus as the border with the Land of Egypt (*pa-aṭ* ^{KUR}*mi-ṣir*) (Langdon 1912:220; Nabonidus 1 col. i line 39-40, mid- 6th century).

If one focuses on the Neo-Assyrian Empire alone, then Babylonia, too, was treated more or less as an equal power before its Assyrian annexation (745-625 BCE), when it became a special semi-autonomous kingdom of within the Assyrian Empire (cf. Brinkman 1979:238).[395] The *Synchronistic History* recounts the border conflicts between Assyria and Babylonia (*ABC*; Glassner 2004), which resulted in treaties settling border disputes between the two competing kingdoms in the 9th century BCE.[396] One treaty that has survived from this period is that between Šamši-Adad V and Marduk-zākir-šumi (ca. 820 BCE), in which, it should be stressed, the Babylonian King appears to be on the stronger footing,[397] perhaps

---

produced by the last Neo-Babylonian King Nabonidus, focus not so much on the military conquests of foreign lands but instead on the building activities of the Neo-Babylonian kings which demonstrate their piety to gods. Therefore, we do not often encounter such familiar expressions as "subduing the whole world" in Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions. Nevertheless, we still find motifs that indirectly illuminate the universal mentality of the empire, though expressed in a different way. To begin with, the production of royal inscriptions in the Western periphery of the Empire, such as the Biqa' Valley in Lebanon, as well as the making of reliefs with the image of Nebuchadnezzar II fighting a lion, is indicative of the king's attempt to display his power as a powerful ruler in the distant lands subjugated by his empire, a theme much more prominently attested in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and art. (Da Riva 2012:11) Also, occasionally the text of the inscriptions may very well be resonant with recurring motifs in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, e.g. the image of the king as one who pioneers on untrodden paths and in unexplored lands (The Brisa Inscriptions, III WBA, lines 10-18). In addition, one may suggest that the universal mentality of the empire is expressed in a more subtle and peaceful in Babylonian sources. Instead of enumerating his victories on the battlefield, Nebuchadnezzar II proudly recounts that he roofed Emahtila in Borsippa with the strong cedars he cut with his pure hands from Lebanon. (IIIb WBC lines 5*-11*; VI WBA, lines 16-23) By so doing, the king symbolically connects the distant periphery as an exploitable source of much needed resources to the imperial heartland of Babylonia, the center of both the human and the divine world. For the inscriptions see Da Riva 2012.

[395] It should be noted that, internally, Babylonia in the 1st millennium was a monarchy that had fragmented into local city-states characterized by a high level of self-government. See Barjamovic 2004.

[396] E. Weidner (1966: 45-46) cites the reference to Assyrian, Babylonia, the city of Anat, the Land of Suhu and so on. Weidner considers this text (KAV 141+KAV 139+VAT 11537) as a fragment of a border treaty between the two kingdoms after warfare rather than an itinerary, as it appears to be. See also Brinkman 1990:97. Both scholars speculate that the text dates most likely to Ashurnasirpal II.

[397] Only the Babylonian King is mentioned with the royal title. Šamši-Adad V is also required not to say evil things about a certain Marduk-remanni (the exact meaning of the line and the identity of the individual are unclear; SAA 02 001 line o8'-o9'). Regarding fugitives, it appears that both parties have certain obligations. If line o14' is the continuation of the *šumma* clause, then the Babylonian King should also notify Šamši-Adad V of Assyrian fugitives (*mun-nab-˹tu*˺ [x x x x x x in]-˹na˺-bi-tu-ni* LUGAL ˹*la*˺ *i-qab-ba-áš-šú*). Therefore, it is possible that Assyria and Babylonian were more or less equal

because Šamši-Adad V owed the restoration of stability in Assyria to the Babylonian king's help.[398]

Another survivor of the Bronze Age international system that continued to feature as major power in the Iron Age is Elam, which often interfered with internal affairs in Babylonia (for a recent review of Assyro-Elamite relations see Dubovský 2018). We will soon return to evidence reflecting Assyria's diplomatic relations with the Elam and its view of Elam as a rival possibly of equal status.

In addition to these three survivors of the Bronze Age international system, two aforementioned kingdoms that rose to power in the Iron Age Near East have also competed with Assyria for control over smaller polities or posed a direct threat to Assyria proper, namely, Urartu and Phrygia. The interaction between these two and Assyria did not seem to have lasted long according to Assyrian sources, though the well-documented rivalry between Urartu and Assyria for over two centuries (9th -7th centuries BCE) sheds light on Assyria's view of powerful competitors in the international system. Another Iron Age power that was involved in indirect relations with Assyria in the early and mid- 7th century was Lydia, a dominant kingdom in western Anatolia which sought alliance with Egypt at Assyria's expense (see RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, ii 113).

I will make some brief comments on Urartu's and Phrygia's roles in Northern Levantine affairs in chapter 6. Then, in the rest of this chapter I will examine some salient features and

---

allies with the Babylonian King occupying a more senior position in his personal relationship with his Assyrian counterpart, yet this is certainly tied to the temporary weakness of the Assyrian state. Cf. discussion in Brinkman 1968: 204; Brinkman 1990: 96-97.

[398] Šamši-Adad V's predecessor Shalmaneser III provided assistance for Marduk-zākir-šumi when the latter's brother revolted against him, which reflects the alliance between Assyria and Babylonia in this period. See for example RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.5 col. iv 1-5a. Radner has noted that this serves as a typical case in which the Assyrian king is willing to depict foreign rulers as his equal, citing a relief that presents both the Assyrian and the Babylonian kings as equal, balanced counterparts. IM 65574, Front of the throne podest of Shalmaneser III from Kalḫu. Radner 2010: 28.

developments in the Assyrian presentation of two major Iron Age rivals: Urartu and Elam. In these case studies I hope to answer two questions. The first is whether a powerful state is ever differentiated from smaller polities in its depiction in Assyrian sources. Since I have noted that the interaction between powerful kingdoms and the Neo-Assyrian Empire is sometimes described in similar terms to events concerning Assyria and small vassals, I now choose to approach the issue from a different, often overlooked, perspective, namely, the title or designation used by the Assyrians to refer to the rulers of larger kingdoms (with Urartu as a most prominent example). The point is whether rulers of larger kingdoms are distinguished from those of smaller polities in different periods. Second, I will survey cases in which the relationship between Assyria and another large kingdom is expressed in terminologies and phrases of equality. On these two questions our sources include Assyrian royal inscriptions, royal correspondence, treaties, oracles and chronicles, which pertain primarily to Urartu and Elam, although other polities, big and small, will occasionally be discussed.

Assyria and other large states: from a terminological perspective

1. Designation of foreign rulers: Urartu and others

A. General observations

In the Neo-Assyrian Empire and in ancient political entities in general, inter-polity relations in practice can often resemble interpersonal relations, with the king of the univeral empire occupying the center of the network (cf. Barjamovic 2012). The relationship between two polities is first and foremost presented as the relationship between two individuals. Therefore, the appellation of a foreign ruler in various types of sources (royal inscriptions, correspondence within the empire, treaties and international correspondence) can often reflect

the empire's attitude towards the polity itself as well as the empire's perception of the outside world in general.

We know from Assyrian royal inscriptions, letters and other texts that foreign rulers are normally designated in several ways.[399] Among these designation, an interesting title is indeed the lack of any title beyond the geographical or ethnic affiliation of the ruler, that is, the gentilic or the *nisbe*.[400] It is difficult to judge the connotation of using the *nisbe* to designate foreign rulers over against other designations, f, indeed, a contrast is intended. Lanfranchi simply states that this elliptical designation necessitates the mention of only the land or city and avoids the need for a title for a foreign ruler (Lanfranchi 2003: 93). Fales, on the other hand, argues that a contrast exists between rulers mentioned only by the *nisbe* and those mentioned by their personal names plus the *nisbe* in both the East and the Levant, contending that the former rulers are perceived as anti-Assyrian while the latter are counted somehow to Assyria's allies (Fales 2013: 61). Despite the perceptiveness of this interpretation, the dichotomy is unfortunately far from consistent.[401]

Other explanations can be postulated. For example, on account of possible Late Bronze

---

[399] Several titles are employed in Assyrian sources to designate foreign rulers: a. king of a land or a city (*Šar* $^{KUR/URU}$GN); b. the "royal" *nisbe* (in Fales' term; Fales 2013: 60), i.e. designating a ruler of a polity as "the GN-ean" ($^{KUR/URU}$GN-*a-ya*; occasionally *-u/ú* in the nominative; the determinative LÚ may precede the *nisbe*); c. not infrequently one encounters the combination of the two: the GN-ean King (*Šarru* $^{KUR/URU}$GN-*a-ya* e.g. SAA 01 029 o11, o14, referring to the Urartian king); d. rulers of a possible tribal background is often addressed as "Son of" the tribe's name, in the form of a patronymic: Son of PN (*mār* PN); e. special titles to designate the rulers of certain polities or polities in a certain geographical or cultural environment during certain periods, e.g. *bēl āli* as a title of the Zagros polities, particularly the Medes. Other examples include *šaknu/šakin māti*. (see Lanfranchi 2003: 92-96) All the designations, in particular the "royal" *nisbe* may be used with or without reference to the individual's personal name. In addition, in some cases no title at all is attested when the name of a foreign ruler occurs. Also, one ruler may be referred to only by his land (in the context, not necessarily immediately preceding the name) and his name, plus an explanatory phrase "...GN...and PN, its king (*šarru*)", yet this is strictly speaking not a title. Moreover, rulers may be designated collectively as "kings", but individually as PN plus *nisbe*. Finally, one form that requires the mention of the personal name yet is semantically similar to the "royal" *nisbe* is "PN of GN" (PN *ša* GN). (see Lanfranchi 2003: 93)

[400] Note the usage of "royal *nisbe*" in Hebrew, "the Ammonite" for the Ammonite ruler (e.g. 1 Sam 11:1-2). See Chapter 3.

[401] For instance, in one inscription of Shalmaneser III, the ruler of Melid is depicted as a submissive tribute bearer yet still designated with only the *nisbe* without his name. (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.29 line 29; date of the event unclear) Conversely, sometimes foreign rulers designated with both the *nisbe* and the personal names are depicted as rebels or enemies. (e.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A. 0.102.12 lines 21-30, Hazaʾel the Damascene; ca. 856 BCE; no submission or tribute mentioned)

Age parallels, one could argue that the *nisbe*, as opposed to the more straightforward "king", serves as a less glorified title of a lesser ruler. Yet it is difficult to judge the validity of the comparative evidence dating to different periods and from different centers of power.[402] Moreover, even if designating foreign rulers with the *nisbe* rather than real "kings" somehow reflects the monocentric worldview of the universal empire, one has to explain why many foreign rulers throughout Neo-Assyrian history are called "kings".[403] It is also unclear whether the royal title reflects the size or strength of a given polity, for rulers of Urartu, the major threat to the Assyrian Empire, are almost consistently called "the Urartian" in Shalmaneser III's, Tiglath-pileser III's and Sargon II's inscriptions.[404] In contrast, rulers of smaller polities in the textual or geographical proximity of "the Urartian" may be labeled as a "king".[405] Moreover, there is no reason to assume that the "*nisbe* vs. 'king'" helps to

---

[402] In EA 9 Burr-Buriash, king of Babylon calls the Assyrian ruler as "the Assyrian" (*aš-šur-ra-a-a-ú*) in a letter to the Egyptian Pharaoh, protesting diplomatic relations between Egypt and Assyria, which he considers as his vassal (*da-gi-ʿilʾ pa-ni-ia*, lines 31). One can certainly sense that the *nisbe* here demonstrates disapproval and disrespect. Moreover, the royal *nisbe* may be semantically related to the title LÚ GN (*awīl* GN), attested since the Old Babylonian Period as a royal title (see examples from Mari and the Amarna letters in CAD A2 "*awīlu* 4d"). In the Amarna letters of the Late Bronze Age, it is used as a designation of city rulers (otherwise called "mayors", hazannu) used both by themselves (e.g. EA 201, 203 etc.) and by their overlord, the Egyptian Pharaoh (e.g. EA 162, 367, 369-70 etc.). See Moran 1992: xxvii n.73. See Na'aman 1988: 179 for references to other letters from this period found at Kamid el-Loz which bear similar features of terminology and format. Na'aman points out that the title "king" might be used internally as a Canaanite title of Levantine rulers, as the plural form usually occurs in EA (see Na'aman 1988: 182-83 n18 for a list of letters where "the kings" of the Levant is attested). He also points out the in EA 227:3, the ruler of Hazor calls himself "king of Hazor" to a letter written to the Pharaoh, which Na'aman interprets as a scribal slip. To this one may add that in EA 228: 4, the ruler of Hazor calls himself "man of GN" instead. It thus seems that in the Amarna system "man of GN" is considered a less glorified title than "king of GN" used specifically to designate client kings in the Levant. If the *nisbe* in Assyrian sources has a similar connotation, the fact that it is used by Assyrian kings and scribes to designate foreign rulers, including those of powerful kingdoms, indeed demonstrate their monocentric view that refuses to grant equal dignity to most if not all foreign rulers (cf. Liverani 2017a: 59). One should of course caution against depending too much on Late Bronze Age parallels, for the concept and customs of international relations in the Amarna letters may very well differ considerably from Assyria's worldview. For instance, in letters from the Pharaoh to vassal kings in the Levant mentioned above (and beyond), the subordinate party's name is always mentioned first, which would not be possible in Assyrian correspondence. See Moran 1992: xxvii.

[403] Both *šarru* and *malku* are used in the latter case. For the term *malku* as a possibly disparaging term for rulers of lesser polities, see discussion in Machinist 2016:199.

[404] Another example is Damascus, which became a major regional power in the mid- 9th empire. The ruler of Damascus is designated either as "PN of Damascus" (*šá*-KUR.ANŠE-*šu*) e.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A. 0.102.12, 21. Although neither Hazaʾel nor Hadad-ezer, who ruled at the heyday of the so-called "Damascene Empire", was designated as a "King", in Adad-nērārī III's inscription a certain Mariʾ (see Younger 2016: 580-90 for his identification and whether this is an Aramean title) is called "king of Damascus" when he submitted to the Assyrian king. (RIMA 3 Adad-nērārī III A.0.104.8, 15) Yet the same episode is recounted elsewhere when this Damascene ruler is called by the name only (6, 19) or with the *nisbe* (7, 7).

[405] E.g. Kakia/Kāki, "King" of the city Ḫubuškia, RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.1 line 23; campaign against Urartu mentioned in line 29b-30; Kings of Zanziuna and Gilzanu in A.0.102.2 col. ii 56b-63a, mentioned after the campaigned against Aramu "the Urartian" in line 48.

distinguish allies or submissive vassals from enemies or rebels.[406] Yet it is possible, as we will see below, that the designation of a foreign ruler with the *nisbe* may reflect a sense of rivalry or confrontation. Consider in this regard that a ruler or an official of Assyria is called "the Assyrian" in inscriptions from local rulers in Suhu from the first half of the 8th century.[407] Finally, it can also be excluded that the designation is "country-specific" in Neo-Assyrian sources (i.e. preserved for the ruler of Urartu only), as it is used not less frequently to designate rulers of other (admittedly less powerful) polities.[408] Occasionally it is used to designate rulers of more powerful kingdoms, such as Egypt (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2 89b-102)[409] and Elam (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 22 col v 1: "Kudur-Nahhundu, LÚ*e-la-mu-ú*", 7th campaign; in the same context he is also called "king of the Land of Elam", col v 12).[410]

---

[406] For example, the same king Kāki of Ḫubuškia is designated as a king (MAN) both when he was defeated and submitted and paid tribute (A.0.102.1 lines 25-29a; ca. 859 BCE) and when he waged war without explicit reference to submission. (A.0.102.2 col ii line 63b-66a; ca. 856 BCE) Likewise, the ruler of Gilzanu is designated once with the *nisbe* (A.0.102.1 lines) and once as a "king" (A.0.102.2 lines 60b-63a 37-40) when he in both cases submitted to the Assyrian troops without fighting. Titles may switch within a short distance in one text when a foreign ruler and the bilateral relations between Assyria and the foreign polity are found in similar circumstances, as the aforementioned case of Kudur-Nahhundu suggests

[407] E.g. RIMB 2 S.0.1002.4, 5b-15=S.0.1002.9, 6-22a=S.0.1002.10, 15-23a by the local ruler of Suhu Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur, in which the king of Assyria is obviously depicted as a hostile ruler that mistreats Suhu, seizes territory from Suhu and even political entities (e.g. the city of Anat) that surrender to its power voluntarily. Frame suggests that the identity of "the Assyrian" is unclear and it could refer to the king or the Assyrian governor in a nearby region. However, the episode occurs immediately following the account about Tabnea, governor of Suhu, who reportedly visited the Land of Assyria with tributes but was murdered in Assyria. The reference to an audience tribute (GUN-*šú šá* IGI.DU) seems to suggest that the court of Assyria is in question, so that "the Assyrian" in the immediate context may also refer to the Assyrian king. This cannot be established with certainty, of course. Na'aman, following Cavigneaux and Ismail (1990:325, n.22), has suggested that the "Assyrian" here is actually the powerful governor of a large region, Nergal-eriš appointed by Adad-nērārī III. Na'aman 2003:102.

[408] Including but not limited to: Neo-Hittite rulers in Syria and southern Anatolia, the southern Levantine rulers (Philistine city-states, Israel and Judah, Transjordan, when king of Israel is not referred to as Son of PN) and Aramean rulers when they are not referred to as a tribal ruler.

[409] But see Yamada 2000: 158 n.282 for the possibility that the toponym here refers to a polity in the Levant. Whether the toponym refers to Egypt or another polity, it should be noted that the translation "1000 troops of Egypt" adopted in RIMA 3 or Yamada 2000: 157 might be better rendered as "1000 troops of the Egyptian (ruler)" (supposing that Egypt is the correct identification), on the basis of the syntax (troops of an person written with the *nisbe* rather than a place: *šá* KUR*mu-uṣ-ra-a-a*) and the parallel in the context, where some rulers' names are given. However, one must note the rarity with which the ruler of Egypt is designated with the *nisbe*, for this as far as I can find is the only case in RIMA, RINAP and published inscriptions of Sargon II in which a ruler of Egypt is possibly designated with the *nisbe*. Elsewhere Egyptian rulers are consistently addressed as "kings", including in texts in which an Egyptian ruler is depicted as paying tribute to Assyria, e.g Fuchs 1994 text Prunk 27. One wonders whether this would argue against the identification of KUR*mu-uṣ-ra-a-a* with a ruler of Egypt in the Battle at Qarqar.

[410] It should be noted that the Elamite example is from a later period than most of our examples so far discussed, around 692 BCE. For the short rule of this Elamite king and the relationship between Assyria and Elam in this period, see

Returning to the original question, i.e. whether the ruler title used to with regard to a powerful rival differs from titles of lesser rulers, a general observation is that no obvious differentiation is attested in Assyrian sources. Does this situation differ from one period to another? Are rulers of Urartu and other large kingdoms differentiated from other rulers in later periods? I will further review the chronological development of designations of foreign rulers in Assyrian sources of different genres, with a focus on the universal empire's key rival, Urartu.

B. Chronological development: from "the Urartian" to "king of Urartu"

(1) Shalmaneser III to Tiglat-Pileser III: "The Urartian"

If we focus, for a moment, on the designation of the Urartian ruler and Urartu's status in relation to Assyria, a change in the preferred designation seems to occurred in the late 8th century. In all 25 references to the Urartian ruler in Shalmaneser III's royal inscriptions spanning from 859 BCE to around 830 BCE,[411] the ruler is always designated as "PN, the Urartian". The rulers concerned include Aramu, in most cases, and Sarduri I (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A. 0.102.14 144=A. 0.102.16, 232', event dating to 832 BCE). The Urartian ruler's fortified city (*āl dannūtišu*) or royal city (*āl šarrūtišu*) is often mentioned in these contexts. Most references recount the battles between the two sides, in which the military prowess of the rising enemy is demonstrated not only by the rivalry lasting for three decades, but also in specific cases where the Urartian king's challenge is ascribed to his trust in "his

Waters 2000: 31-33.

[411] Including those restored on the basis of parallels and copies: RIMA 3 Shal III A.0.102.1, 29b; A.0.102.2, col. i 24; A.0.102.2, col. ii 48; A.0.102.5 col ii 5b; A.0.102.6 col. i. 65; A.0.102.6, col. iii 39; A.0.102.8, 1' (restored); A.0.102.8, 49'; A.0.102.10, col iii 26; A.0.102.12, 16-17; A.0.102.13, 1' (restored); A.0.102.14, 43-44; A.0.102.14, 144; A.0.102.16, 19-20; A.0.102.16, 232'; A.0.102.23, 17; A.0.102.24, 7; A.0.102.28, 38; A.0.102.29, 37; A.0.102.30 14-15; A.0.102.31, 15; A.0.102.32, 8; A.0.102.33, 11-12; A.0.102.64; A.0.102.71.

mighty troops" (*a-na gi-piš um-ma-ni-šú ma-aʾ-di it-ta-kil-ma*; A.0.102.14, 144-145; "he has put trust in the massed body of his large army"). Yet Urartu is almost invariably depicted as the losing side, once mentioned to have paid tribute (A. 0.102.30 14-15, a detail not found in similar passages; cf. also conquest of the Land of Urartu mentioned in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions; e.g. A.0.102.12, 16).

Šamši-Adad V recounts the defeat of Ušpina (Išpuini) by the Assyrian chief eunuch in 820 BCE, in which context only the name of the Urartian ruler is mentioned (RIMA 3 Šamši-Adad V A.0.103.1, col ii 26). Later in around 780 BCE, the Assyrian field marshal (*turtānu*) Šamšī-ilu once refers to his defeat of the Urartian ruler Argišti I, still designated with the *nisbe*,[412] the number of whose powerful troops "is huge like a thick cloud" (Adad-nārārī III A.0.104.2010, line 11). In another inscription of Šamšī-ilu, Argišti I is mentioned with the personal name only (Adad-nārārī III A.0.104.2011, line 5'). In the next a few decades, perhaps due to Assyria's temporary retreat from the northern frontiers, reference to the Urartian rulers in the Assyrian inscriptions became scarce.

In the mid- 8th century, direct confrontation between Assyria and Urartu was resumed as the latter was extending its influence westwards up to northern Levant. In Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions, Sarduri II of Urartu is usually designated as "Sarduri, the Urartian"[413] and twice mentioned with only his personal name.[414] In royal correspondence dating to Tiglath-pileser

[412] Spelled ^{KUR}*ú-ra-ʿar-ṭuʾ-u*, which form of the nibe of Urartu is attested only once in Assyrian inscriptions. This non-Neo-Assyrian *nisbe* of toponims occurs also in "the Elamite" mentioned above, which form is attested in all but one (in 39) occurrences (the exception is the Neo-Assyrian form, *Elamaya*) of the *nisbe* of Elam in Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, as well as in such phrases as "the Assyrian god" (ʿDINGIRʾ *áš-šu-ru-ú*; RIMA 2, Ashurnasirpal II, A.0.101.17, col. v 89) and "the Assyrian Enlil" (^{d}BAD *aš-šur-ú*; RIMA 3 Adad-nērārī III A.0.104.2, 11), as well as the more frequently attested phrase "*kī ša Aššurī*" in the mid- 8th century. (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 5, 11).

[413] 5 times in fully and partly preserved occurrences inlcude: RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 035, col i 24'; 32'; 039, 20b; 041, 15'b; 21b, while more can be restored on the basis of parallel inscriptions.

[414] RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 09, 8'b; 10' (partly restored).

III's reign, both the *nisbe* (without personal name)[415] and the personal name alone[416] are attested as designations of the Urartian ruler. In other words, down to around 730 BCE one finds no other title than the *nisbe* when a ruler of Urartu is mentioned in Assyrian sources, whether the royal inscriptions or the letters.

(2) Sargon II: mixed use of the nisbe and "King"

In Sargon II's annals, although the *nisbe* with or without the personal name is still the most frequently used "title" of the Urartian ruler,[417] with the personal name without any title as an alternative,[418] we now find cases where the word King is used as a title of the Urartian ruler. In the royal inscriptions, at least three occurrences of "PN, king of (MAN/LUGAL [*ša*]) Urartu" are attested in Sargon II's inscriptions. These occurrences are found in various contexts: when Ursa/Rusa[419] and Midas established contact with Ambaris of Tabal (Ann. 199), when Ursa I committed suicide after being defeated by Assyria (Prunk 76) and when Muttallum of Kummuh sought alliance with Argišti II. (Prunk 113)[420]

In a letter to the god Aššur focusing specifically on Sargon's eighth campaign against Urartu and surrounding polities (for historical background see W. Mayer 2013: 46-76), the distribution of titles for the Urartian rulers differs from that of the annals, with 10 occurrences

---

[415] SAA 19 070, 4, r12, e1. The context of the letter seems to suggest, however, that here "the Urartian" (if it is not the plural, as Saggs' translation suggest; Saggs 2001: 110-11) later in the letter refers to the Urartian governor mentioned in line 4, since he is the one who captured a fortress on the Assyrian border. Yet it is also possible that the military activities of the governor is considered as attack by the Urartian ruler, as the governor was perceived as acting in his behalf.

[416] Rusa I in SAA 19 071: 3; 072: 17, r4.

[417] E.g. In the royal inscriptions (mostly with the personal name of Rusa I) Fuchs 1994, Ann. 66-67; 78; 84; 101; 133; 149; 164; Prunk 31=Ann 199 (same content); Prunk 37=Ann 78 (same content); Prunk 39=Ann. 101 (same content); Prunk 42; Prunk 72-73=Ann 149 (similar content); in the letters, e.g. SAA 05 035: 19, 24; 092: o7; 114:3; 164:o4, etc. Fuchs 1998 III.e. Ass.12; IV.a,3.

[418] E.g. SAA 05 031:r7; 095:6; 162:14 (Rusa I); Fuchs 1998 IV.b-d,29; V.a, 4, VI. d, 4 (Rusa I)

[419] For issues regarding the identification of this Rusa, see Roaf 2012.

[420] The first two events, however, have parallels in which the Urartian ruler is designated with the "conventional" *nisbe* (Prunk 31 and Ann. 164, respectively). Interestingly, while Ursa is called "the Urartian" in this version, Midas appears as "king of Mušku" in both versions.

of the personal name (Ursa/Rusa son of Argišti),[421] 5 occurrences of the *nisbe* with the personal name,[422] 5 occurrences of the title "King"[423] and 3 occurrences of other titles (1 title contains both king and another title).[424] The title "king of Urartu" (LUGAL ^{KUR}*Ur-ar-ṭi*) is used primarily to designate two of Rusa's predecessors (Sarduri II and Argišti II, plural LUGAL.MEŠ in line 398), whose objects were taken by Sargon as booty. When Ursa, Sargon's archenemy, is mentioned with a title, he is never designated as "king of Urartu" in this text. In addition to the *nisbe*, he is once designated as "their ruler" (*ma-lik-šu-nu*,[425] line 148; "they"=the troops of Urartu), once "the King, their ruler" (LUGAL *ma-lik-šu-nu*, line 202; "they"=people of the fortress Ulhu) and "their Lord" (EN-*šu-nu*, line 174; "they"=people of the fortress Ušqaya). Also noteworthy in this text is that Ursa is referred to as one who does not abide by and revere the oath (*zikru, mamītu*) of Aššur and Šamaš (lines 92, 94, 148). One wonders if this description is indicative of some sort of treaty relationship between Assyria and Urartu after Tiglath-pileser III's decisive victory of Sarduri II in the west and in Urartu itself three decades before.

In Sargon II's correspondence one also starts to encounter passages in which the Urartian ruler is called a "king", but in a mixed form of the word "king" and the *nisbe*: "the Urartian king" (LUGAL ^{KUR}URI-*a-a*).[426] At least two letters with this designation were sent

---

[421] Mayer 2013, lines 56, 85, 91, 163, 213, 216, 277, 358, 403, 411. The higher percentage of occurrences of the personal name without any title is to be explained by the fact that this text highlights a specific event with Urartu as a focus, which renders it unnecessary always to repeat the identification of Ursa and his country. When a title is used, it often occurs at the beginning of a new passage or when Rusa appears in a list of defeated foreign rulers (lines 421, 422).

[422] Mayer 2013, lines 81, 92, 123, 421, 422.

[423] Mayer 2013, lines 202, 398, 400-402.

[424] Mayer 2013, lines 148, 174, 202.

[425] For the term *malku* as a designation of foreign rulers, particularly in Neo-Assyrian texts, see CAD m1 "*malku* A" b) 1', 2'. Machinist (2016:199) has noted that the term might be disparaging. But we should also note that the term can also be used to refer to kings in general as well as Assyrian and Babylonian kings, see "*malku* A" a), c).

[426] E.g. SAA 01 031: o9; r2; r9; r19 (intelligence report, quotation from letters sent by the Ukkean ruler); SAA 05 086 o5; SAA 05 091 o7, etc.

by the crown prince and the next king of Assyria, Sennacherib.[427] In one letter (SAA 05 31) from an official, Sargon II is quoted as having used the title "the Urartian king" in a previous letter (line 9). Therefore, if seems that it was acceptable for the the Assyrian king and his closest circle to address this major rival as a "king", although the *nisbe* form is retained.

(3) After Sargon II: "king of Urartu"

After Sargon II, when the Assyrian Empire reached the peak of its power, "PN, king of Urartu" seems to have become the new standard title in the place of the *nisbe*, a phenomenon that accompanies a clear drop in the number of references to Urartu and its ruler. In Sennacherib's inscriptions or royal letters there is no clear reference to an Urartian ruler. However, as I have noted above, several letters sent from Sennacherib as the crown prince to Sargon II employed the title "the Urartian king" instead of merely the *nisbe*.

Two queries to Šamaš from the reign of Esarhaddon refer to "Ursa, king of Urartu" (LUGAL šá *Urarṭu*),[428] demonstrating Assyria's concern about Urartu's military actions.[429] In other texts, Esarhaddon also twice refers to the Urartu ruler as "king of Urartu".[430] In Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, "king of Urartu" (LUGAL/MAN ^{KUR}Urarṭi) (Ursa and Sarduri III) is also mentioned several times.[431] Once Sarduri III is addressed only with the personal name without a title, but that occurrence immediately follows one with the full royal title three lines before. In Ashurbanipal's letter to Sarduri III, who had by then become a formal vassal of the Assyrian universal empire, an important development in the bilateral relations between

[427] SAA 01 029: o11, 14; 01 030: o5'.
[428] SAA 04 018, o4, r6; 019, r9 (all partly restored).
[429] Note that in a prophetic text dating to Esarhaddon the *nisbe* is used to designate the Urartian ruler. SAA 09 2 III 13', in reference to the messengers of the Elamite, Mannean and Urartian rulers, all in the *nisbe*.
[430] RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 033, r iii 29'; 1012, o1.
[431] RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 06 vii 20'; 07 vii 11; 11 x 40; 23 121; 035 3-4.

Assyria and Urartu to be further discussed, the title of the Urartian ruler is broken. However, it can be confirmed from the preserved portion (-URI) that no *nisbe* is present, so that in this bilateral document, too, Sarduri III (now as a vassal) is still designated with the *nisbe* (SAA 21 o2). It can be concluded that since Esarhaddon's time, if not earlier, the ruler of Urartu is invariably called "king of (the Land) of Urartu" and that the *nisbe* has fallen out of use. The transition from the royal *nisbe* to "king of Urartu" as the rival ruler's title appears to be contemporaneous with the consolidation of Assyria's status as the sole superpower (cf. Frahm 2017). Before one tries to make sense of the title change and its relationship with the development of Assyrian imperial ideology, one should first discuss whether Urartu is differentiated from smaller polities in earlier periods as well as this new phase of the universal empire.

C. Comparisons: royal titles of Levantine minor polities

That Urartu was certainly a powerful rival is widely acknowledged in Assyrian sources (e.g. Mayer 2013 line 123, "his vast country"). The threat and rivalry of Urartu also prompted the Assyrians to monitor closely the internal affairs of Urartu beyond the border (cf. e.g SAA 01 31; see also Dubovský 2006). However, as a foreign ruler, the monarch of Urartu is hardly ever differentiated for this or other reasons when mentioned together with other rulers. If anything, what seems to be characteristic of the Urartian ruler is the consistent use of the *nisbe* until the late 8th century as the sole title attached to him. Yet in this relatively early period, rulers of smaller polities in the north and northeast, in the proximity of Urartu, or rulers in the Levant, are also often designated with the *nisbe*, particularly when they appear in

a list.[432] If the transition from the *nisbe* to "king of GN" occurred for Urartu's ruler possibly during and after Sargon II's reign, did this trend affect rulers of small kingdoms? A similar trend indeed seems to be at work in the Levant as well. In inscriptions from the 9th and 8th centuries, the rulers of Tyre, for instance, are always designated with the *nisbe* but as kings.[433] In Sennacherib's inscriptions, Levantine kings are sometimes designated with the *nisbe*, while the occurrence of "PN, king (LUGAL, MAN) of GN" occurs far more often than before. While rulers in lists of foreign rulers (as tributaries) are designated with the *nisbe* (though collectively referred to as "kings of the land of Amurru", "LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni* KUR MAR.TU^{KI}," e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 004, 36-38), individual kings may often be designated as "PN, king (LUGAL, MAN) of GN".[434] For instance, the ruler of Ashdod, who is designated with the *nisbe* in lists of Levantine tributaries, is called "Mitinti, the king of (the land of) Ashdod" in the context of Sennacherib assigning former Judean towns to loyal vassal kingdoms including Ashdod (e.g. 004 53).[435]

Hezekiah of Judah seems to be an exception, for he is never called "king of (the land of) Judah" in Sennacherib's inscriptions, where he is featured as a disobedient minor king in the west. In all recognizably preserved occurrences of Hezekiah, he is designated 17 times with the *nisbe*, 7 times with the personal name only and 4 times as "...Judah...Hezekiah, its king"

---

[432] Other titles are certainly used. See above for cases of both hostile and allied/vassal kings in the region designated as "king of GN". See Lanfranchi 2003 for the tile "city rulers" specially attached to rulers of the Medes.

[433] E.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.101.10, iv 10-11; 16, 160; in all 10 occurrences of Tyrian rulers (Hiram, Metenna, Tubaʾil) in Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions, e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser 035, iii 6.

[434] It is clear that the word *šarru* rather than *malku* (ruler, sometimes disparaging, see Machinist 2016:199) is intended. See the spelling of "kings (LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni=šarrāni*) of the land of Amurru" in Sennacherib 004, 36-38.

[435] Many similar examples can be cited: e.g. Lulî, ruler of Sidon, is called a king in the context of his flee to Cyprus (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 004, 32), while the new King enthroned by Esarhaddon is designated with the *nisbe* in the list of tributaries, which again demonstrates that a polity's relationship with Assyria does not seem to exert explicit influence on the use of title in Assyrian inscriptions. In letters and administrative records, Levantine rulers are designated with the *nisbe*: e.g. Padî of Ekron, who is called a "King" in the royal inscriptions (e.g. 004, 42), is called "the Ekronite" in SAA 11 050, SAA 19 159, r13. The king of Gaza, who is always called "king of Gaza" in the inscriptions, is designated with the *nisbe* in SAA 19 159 r11.

but never “king of Judah”. Again, we cannot ascribe the lack of attestation of “king of Judah” to Hezekiah’s hostility against Assyria, for other hostile or rebellious minor kings have been referred to as “kings”. Since Transjordanian rulers (Moab, Edom and Bīt-Ammon) were also invariably designated with the *nisbe*, one might be tempted to propose a regional difference between coastal Phoenician and Philistine city rulers (who can be called a King) and inland Cis-/Transjordanian rulers (always *nisbe*). However, since all occurrences of the Transjordanian rulers occur in lists of tributaries where all rulers are attached by the *nisbe*, this hypothesis cannot be proved conclusively.[436]

In Esarhaddon’s and Ashurbanipal’s sources, however, minor rulers from the Levant start to be predominantly, though not always, designated as “king of GN”.[437] Baal of Tyre is titled “king of Tyre” at the beginning of his treaty with Esarhaddon.[438] (SAA 02 005, o i 2) In the inscriptions the same Levantine ruler is invariably called a “king of (the City) Tyre” (5 times plus once in “..Tyre...and PN its King”) both as a submissive vassal (e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 001, v 55) and as a rebel who violated the treaty. (034 o13’). In fact, all the rulers from the Levant and Cyprus that appear in the list of tributaries (RINAP 4 001, v 54-72) in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions are designated as kings, including Manasseh king of Judah and Transjordanian rulers, who were still designated with the *nisbe* in Sennacherib’s time. A similar list is found in Ashurbanipal’s annals, although here the determinative used is KUR instead of URU,[439] perhaps demonstrating further developments in scribal traditions.

---

[436] In the vicinity of Urartu, Kumme, Muṣaṣir and Shubria are not attested in Sennacherib’s sources, the ruler of Ukku Maniye is always designated as “king of Ukku” whenever he appears with a title (seven times) as an disobedient king. (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 16, v12; 19 iv, 39 etc.) Ukku is not attested in Pre-Sennacherib inscriptions. In Sargon II’s letters, the ruler is referred to with the *nisbe*, e.g. SAA 01 141, o7, o17. See Radner 2012a.

[437] “GN...PN its king” also occurs, e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 002 i 19.

[438] Although in the title of the tablet at the end of the treaty he is called Ba’alu the Tyrian. (r.e.20)

[439] RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 011, vii 109, 110, 112 seems to be the only place where Levantine polities are written with the determinative URU in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions, which may very well be a scribal mistake due to the clustering of

(RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 006 ii 25'-52')

D. "The Elamite" in the late 8th and the 7th centuries

From the perspective of the royal title, the ruler of Elam was predominantly called "king of (the Land of) Elam" in Assyrian royal inscriptions since Sennacherib. In Sargon II's inscriptions, however, the Elamite rulers Humbanigaš and Šutur-Naḫundi, opponents of the Assyrian king at Dēr and in Babylonia, are more often than not designated with the *nisbe*[440] and only twice called "king of Elam" (Fuchs 1994 Zyl. 17; Stier 13). Unlike the case of Ursa, ruler of Urartu, in Sargon II's inscriptions from Khorsabad no mixed use of the *nisbe* and "king of Elam" occurs in the same inscription. From Sennacherib's reign on, as in the case of Urartu, "king of GN" became more prevalent than before,[441] although the *nisbe* is still attested in Sennacherib's and Ashurbanipal's inscriptions multiple times.[442] In Esarhaddon's inscriptions, perhaps due to the temporary peace between the two sides achieved in 675-674 BCE (Dubovský 2018: 328), direct encounter with Elamite rulers on the battlefield does not feature in his inscriptions. There are two possible occurrences in Esarhaddon's inscriptions of the *nisbe* as the ruler of Elam, once in a royal inscription (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 1, v 26) and once in prophecy (SAA 09 002 III 13')[443]. The percentage of the *nisbe* of Elamite royal titles certainly decreases from Sargon II's inscriptions to Sennacherib's and later to Ashurbanipal's,

---

toponyms and the recurrence of the sign URU.

[440] Fuchs 1994 Ann 257, 295, 308, 309; Prunk 23=Ann 20 (restored); Prunk 119=Ann. 416 (restored); Prunk 123=Ann 257; Saal XIV 7; S4, 15. 9 times fully or partly preserved; twice restored.

[441] E.g. RINAP 3-1 15 v4=16 iv 64 etc. More than 35 fully or partly preserved occurrences in Sennacherib's inscriptions; reference to the Elimate ruler is rare in Esarhaddon's reign, perhaps due to the temporary peace between the two sides, "king of Elam" is attested once in Esarhaddon's inscription (RINAP 4, ii 25); references to Kings of Elam abound in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, amouting to possibly 100+.

[442] 9 times in Sennacherib's inscriptions, particularly scattered in RINAP 3-1 23 and 24; 7 times in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions referring to Urtaku (with a few copies) and once to Ummanaldašu. (RINAP 5 11, 127)

[443] Both describe diplomatic interactions between Assyria and Elam. The inscription refers to Elamite and Gutian rulers sending messengers to Esahaddon and swearing an oath. Leichty translates the *nisbe*s as plurals (the Elamites and Gutians), yet the following phrase "obstinate rulers" seem to suggest that they refer to rulers instead (^{KUR}*e-la-mu-ú* ^{KUR}*qu-tu-u ma-al-ki šip-ṣu-u-ti*). The prophetic text mentions envoys of the Elamite and the Mannean rulers and the messengers of the Urartian ruler.

if we consider Esarhaddon's sources as an exception. On the one hand, we again observe that after the consolidation of the Neo-Assyrian Empire under Sargon II, the use of *nisbe* gradually fell out of favor in royal inscriptions and other sources. On the other hand, while Urartu's ruler was largely no longer called "the Urartian" in both Assyrian and bilateral sources, Elam became the major kingdom whose ruler almost monopolized the admittedly few cases in which the foreign ruler is designated with the *nisbe*. What has changed is that in the 7th century Elam replaced Urartu as the major enemy, as it constantly attempted to interfere with Babylonian affairs, among others.

E. An attempt of rationalization: titles of foreign rulers and the development of the universal mentality

This survey of royal titles of the Urartian and other rulers in Assyrian sources suggests that while the transition from a higher concentration of the *nisbe* to a higher concentration of "PN king of GN" occurred in reigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib, in neither period was Urartu, as a powerful kingdom and an empire in its own right, differentiated from smaller polities in terms of royal titles. In comparison to the rulers of other large kingdoms, Urartu's ruler is more typically (almost exclusively in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III and his predecessors) designated with the *nisbe* until the attestation of "the Urartian king" and "king of Urartu" in Sargon II's sources.

It may be suggested that the Assyrian attitude towards other powerful kingdoms should not be understood in contrast to its perception of smaller polities and other polities in general, but instead as an integral part of Assyria's changing perception of the relationship as well as the boundary between itself, the universal empire, and the outside world. One hypothetical

way to make sense of the difference between the *nisbe* and the more straightforward and generic royal title "king of GN" is to interpret the *nisbe* as a title attached to political entities deemed to be an untamed challenger, one not belonging to the sphere perceived to be under Assyrian control (military and political, not necessarily administrative) and, at the same time, posing a substantial threat to it, while "king of GN" is used to designate rulers of lands situated in the recognized world system with Assyria as a center, although they are not always integrated into the Assyrian imperial system.[444] In both situations, temporary allies and enemies may exist, so that we are here not dealing with distinctions in geopolitics but developments in cosmic imperial mentality. The division, if it really existed, was certainly dynamic and fluid. As the empire was gradually consolidated, its readiness to acknowledge former untamed challengers as coexisting polities with their own legitimate kings also increased.

Furthermore, the consolidation of the Assyria-led imperial system in the late 8th and the

[444] References to individual rulers of Egypt are not widely attested. In addition to the aforementioned dubious reference to "the Egyptian" in Shalmaneser III's account of the Battle of Qarqar, the *nisbe* is not used to designate the Egyptian ruler in the inscriptions. In the letters, one possible case of designating the Egyptian ruler with the *nisbe* is SAA 01 110, r4=SAA 19 159, r4, with regard to "envoys of the Egyptian ruler...", yet here the *nisbe* could be understood as an adjective ("Egyptian envoys"). In Sargon II's inscriptions the Egyptian ruler is called "king of Egypt": in Fuchs 1994 Ann. 123 and Prunk 27, "Pirʾû king of Egypt"; in a fragment of prism from Nineveh the name of the "Pirʾû" is given: *ši-il-kan-ni* LUGAL GN=Osorkon IV, who gave an audience gift to Sargon II in his 5th regnal year (VA 8424, col B 8 in Weidner 1941-44: 42-43). In later inscriptions, Sennacherib speaks of "Kings of Egypt", while Esarhaddon assumes the title "king of the Kings of Egypt". Ashurbanipal names individual vassal kings installed by Esarhaddon in such passages: "(As for) Necho, king of the cities Memphis and Sais, Šar[r]u-lū-dāri, king of the city Pelusium, Pi-[š]an-Ḫuru, king of the city Natho, P[a]-qruru, king of the city (Pi)šaptu, (ii 80´) I[na]ros (N[iḫe]rau), king of the city Athribis, (and) N[aḫk]ê, king of the city Heracleopolis, [thos]e ki[ngs] (LUGAL MEŠ), governors (LÚ.NAM MEŠ), (and) officials (^{LÚ}*qe-pa-ni*) wh[om] the father who had engendered me had appointed [in Egypt]..." (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 006, ii 76'-83'). In sum, the Egyptian ruler is rarely, if ever, designated with the *nisbe*, perhaps due to the reputation of Egypt in the previous international system which renders it an accepted component of the known world from the Assyrian perspective.

Neo-Assyrian sources also speaks of the kings of Babylonia and other southern regions when it was not directly ruled by the Assyrian king or a member of the Assyrian royal family, e.g. Shalmaneser III recounts his assistance to Marduk-zākir-šumi "king of Karduniaš" (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.101.5, iv 1); King is also the standard title assigned to the Babylonian king in the treaty between Šamši-Adad V and Marduk-zākir-šumi (SAA 02 001). "lings of Chaldea" appears in RIMA 3 Adad-nērārī III A.0.104.8, 22; later, Merodach-Baladan II of Bīt Yakin is called "king of Sealand" (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 047, o26-o27, as a tributary who "kissed the feet" of the Assyrian king), king of Chaldea (in Sargon II's inscriptions e.g. Fuchs 1994 Ann 255) and "king of Karduniaš" in (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 01, 6; 02, 5; 03, 5; 04, 5 etc.). The wide use of "king" rather than the *nisbe* (which almost never occurs) is hardly surprising, on the account that Babylonia is the most familiar neighbor of Assyria proper and held in high esteem as the center of the world (Liverani 2017a: 55). For the royal title attached to Elamite rulers, see below.

early 7th centuries BCE also indicates that this universal empire had by then reached its own limits. Indeed, history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the mid- to late 7th century does suggest that the empire was struck by political unrest which led to its disintegration rather soon after it reached the peak of its power. However, the inscriptions of the great kings of Assyria rarely betray explicitly their awareness, let alone acknowledgement, of the limits of its expansion. Indeed, as the empire reached its peak, we find the most classic expressions of Assyria's imperial universalism that stresses its king's unparalleled lordship in inscriptions of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. For instance, one inscription produced by Esarhaddon to commemorate his invasion and short-lived occupation of Egypt presents the ruler as:

"Esarhaddon, great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, king of Sumer (15) and Akkad, king of Karduniaš (Babylonia), (king of) all of them; king of the kings of (Lower) Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Kush; the one who re[veres the] great [gods], maje[stic] [dra]gon; [beloved] of the gods Aššur, Šama[š], Nabû, and Marduk; king of kings...(RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 98, lines o13-19)".

Esarhaddon's claim for universal dominion in this inscription is demonstrable and, historically speaking, quite justified. However, even in this inscription commemorating the annexation of Egypt, which temporarily extends Assyrian rule to the heart of another center of power with a long tradition of independence, we find references to legitimate foreign kings. After he ousted Tarharqa, king of Kush, from Egypt, Esarhaddon conducts political reorganization in Egypt by establishing not only governors and officials, but also actual kings in Egypt: "Over Egypt, all of it, I appointed anew kings, governors, commanders, customs

officers, trustees, (and) overseers" (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 98, lines r47-48a). Notably, here the new kings are not named merely as "*malkū*", which is often used to designate kings of lesser polities in Assyrian inscriptions "who are understood not to have the status or power of the Assyrian monarch and are often, indeed, ruled by him" (Machinist 2016:199; cf. the discussion on Isa 10:6), but as actual "*šarrāni*" (LUGAL MEŠ). These legitimate Egyptian kings, later named individually by Ashurbanipal (RINAP 5-1, Ashurbanipal 006, ii 76'-83'), are enthroned by no one else but the Assyria great king himself. This phenomenon is also attested in Esarhaddon's enthronement of Tabua, a queen of the Arabs, upon some Arab groups (*ᶠta-bu-u-a tar-bit* É.GAL AD-*ia a-na* LUGAL-*u-ti* UGU-*šú-nu áš-kun-ma*; "I placed Tabua, who grew up in my father's palace, upon them to exercise *kingship*", RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 1, iv 15-16). Let us not forget that, returning to the inscription about the invasion of Egypt, two of the titles Esarhaddon assumes in the quoted inscription are "king of kings of (lower) Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Kush" and "king of kings" in general.[445] In other words, other "kings" are recognized as legitimate members of the Assyria-led world system.

Therefore, even Esarhaddon's bold annexation of Egypt is conducted on the basis of the recognition, and indeed the Assyrian enthronement, of legitimate foreign kings. This is likely not simply a one-time expedient consideration designed specially for the administration of Egypt. It may have reflected the Assyrian Empire's unwillingness or inability to handle further expansion and consolidate they control upon newly conquered lands in a more direct

[445] The title "king of kings" is attested in Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian kings. For example, Tiglath-pileser I in the late 12th century BCE bears the following titles: "strong king, unrivalled king of the universe, king of the four quarters, king of all princes (LUGAL DÙ *mal-ki*.MEŠ), lord of lords, chief herdsman, king of kings (MAN MAN.MEŠ), attentive purification priest..." (RIMA 2 Tiglath-pileser I A.0.87.1, col. i. 30). Both *malku* and *šarru* are used here to refer to foreign rulers. This title is also attested in inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala (RIMA 2 Aššur-bēl-kala, A.0.89.2, 6') and Ashurnasirpal II (e.g. RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.1, col i. 21).

manner.[446] One may even argue that the Assyrian kings became aware of the universal empire's limits, as they tacitly realized that the world consisted of Assyria as the undisputed center surrounded by foreign rulers now viewed not as evil challengers to be conquered (as were the rulers of Urartu in the 9th and the first half of the 8th centuries) to be conquered, but as obedient yet legitimate foreign kings. Beyond this circle lie the domains of foreign kings that evaded full Assyrian control. The latter kings, therefore, coexisted with the Assyrian king at the center, though they certainly occupied a lower rank in the international system. The increased designation of foreign rulers, including those of Urartu, Assyria's long-time adversary, simply as "kings" rather than with the apathetic or perhaps disparaging *nisbe* might just be one facet of this Assyrian consciousness of its limits and of the coexistence of different domains surrounding the imperial core. After all, the peak of power and limits for further extension might be understood as two sides of the same coin.

---

[446] Major expansion and annexation was achieved under Tigalat-Pileser III and Sargon II, see the map illustrating different stages of Assyrian exampansion on Frahm 2017: 179. Assyrian control over Egypt and Elam was substantially different from its rule over Mesopotamia, southern Anatolia and much of the Levant. Geographical obstacles (the Sinai, the Zagros) and the resulting perception of these regions as lying beyond the traditional Mesopotamo-centric world might have contributed to the lack of abiding direct control in this regions and, more typically, the lack of attempt to annex Urartu until the end of the Assyrian Empire (as the frontiers had become rather stable). For Assyrian foreign policy regarding Egypt and Elam in the 8th -7th centuries, see respectively Grayson 1981 and 1986.

I have discussed the annexation of Egypt under Esarhaddon, as a result of which petty kings were established in Egypt as Assyrian vassals. Later, Egypt was invaded again by Ashurbanipal in 663 BCE after Psamtek I, an Assyrian vassal, succeeded Necho I as the ruler of Egypt at Sais. But the vassal king soon achieved more autonomy and threw off Assyrian control in the mid-650s with aid from Lydia and trade links with the Greeks and Phoenicians (Lloyd 2000: 365-66).

Likewise, although Assyria subjugated Elamite kings as subordinate rulers (cf. RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal x17-x20; 023, 99b-100) down to the sack of Susa in 647 BCE, after 647 the status of Elam is unclear. Possibly references to "prefect of the Elamites" are found in list of officials (SAA 07 005, r i 11-12; perhaps also SAA 11 130 o2), although the date of neither document is certain. In 625 BCE "Nabopolassar returned to Susa the gods of Susa whom the Assyrians had carried off and settled in Uruk" according to the Nabopolassar Chronicle (ABC: 88; see Potts 1999: 289), which may be suggestive of revived independence of the Elamite kingdom(s) by then. For an evaluation of the status of post-647 Elam by the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire see Potts 1999: 288-90; cf. also Waters 2000:81-100. It is noteworthy that even when Ashurbanipal served as an overlord of Elam, the Elamite rulers were still referred to primarily as "kings". Again, full integration into the established provincial system of what is now to be seen as Assyrian central land was not achieved or perhaps not scheduled. For a different interpretation, see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: XX.

In sum, campaigns in the post-Sargon II period can be regarded as means to reinforce the existing empire rather than further, incessant expansion. See L. Levine 1982:53 for the general peace during Sennacherib's reign, apart from his campaigns in the south and the west, his campaign to Mt. Nipur in 699 and two campaigns by his generals in the northwest in 698 and 695.. Under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, i.e. the heyday of the Assyrian Empire, the empire has reached the zenith of its power, further expansion was indeed conducted (e.g. Sidon, Egypt and Elam), although full integration of newly conquered lands that lay beyond the traditional confines of the Mesopotamian and Syrian world was hardly ever achieved. Even the small polities in southern Levant, such as Judah and the Transjordanian polities, remained semi-independent until the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

An accompanying result is that the monocentric ideology of the universal empire now begins readily and systematically to recognize all foreign rulers, even petty ones like the ruler of Judah, that existed beyond the boundary of the empire as more or less legitimate, coexistent actors in the world system ideally led by Assyria,[447] although larger powers like Urartu and Elam can enjoy a de facto equal status for some time (see below). A comparison between Sennacherib's sources on the one hand, and Esarhaddon's as well as Ashurbanipal's sources on the other, provides us with a microscopic view of this transition in the Levant, when first the coastal Phoenician and Philistine rulers, and then the Cis-and Transjordanian ones began to be called kings and became absorbed into this imperial ideological system as legitimate non-Assyrian regional centers. In this new era there can be various rebels and temporary enemies, but not many enduring challengers which may affect the overall mechanism of the system designed by the world empire. Again, the empire has reached its peak and entered an era of sustainable stability. At the same time, it has also reached its limits.[448]

2. *Brotherhood and others: terminologies of equality in the age of the universal empire*

While Urartu and Elam were the major challengers and powerful enemies of the

---

[447] The *nisbe* is still used occasionally in later inscriptions to designate foreign rulers. In one of Esarhaddon's inscriptions "the Elamite" is mentioned together with "the Gutian", the latter being the name of traditional eastern barbarians in the late 3rd millennium (v 26) but in the first millennium it is used in the geographical in the astrological literature (see Hallo 1971: 717-19). Also, the Cimmerian ruler who is called "a barbarian whose home is remote" (ERIM.HI.A-*man-da šá a-šar-šú ru-ú-qu* RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, iii 43-44). Esarhaddon claims to have struck down (*russubu*) the Cimmerians, although no further details of destruction or annihilation are given, which may reflect the limited scale of success in this battle. While this seems to conform to our hypothesis that the *nisbe* is used primarily to designate challengers who do not belong to the recognizable world, one must note that this is not always the case. The submissive ruler of the Gambulian tribe who paid tribute to Esarhaddon is also designated witht the *nisbe* (iii 71), while the eight rulers of "the land Bāzu, a district in a remote place, a forgotten place of dry land, saline ground, a place of thirst, (iv 55) one hundred and twenty leagues of desert, thistles, and gazelle-tooth stones, where snakes and scorpions fill the plain like ants" are called kings. (iv 53-77, note that these rulers are not depicted as barbarians) Our hypothesis should be considered as describing a tendency rather than a clear-cut principle.

[448] The *nisbe* is still saved for the major threat to the universal empire, such as Elam during the reign of Ashurbanipal, whose rulers are designated with the *nisbe* (though not very frequently). For Elam as a new major rival of Assyria in the 7th century, see below. Cf. Waters 2000; Potts 1999: 259-302; Dubovský 2018.

Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 9th to 7th centuries, there is also sporadic evidence that peaceful diplomacy was conducted between Assyria and the two kingdoms. Under certain circumstances, the peaceful relationship was even expressed as "brotherhood", a diplomatic terminology typically used in the preceding Late Bronze Age, when rulers of Egypt, Babylonia, the Hittite kingdom, Mitanni and later Assyria as well as occasionally other (possibly less powerful) polities (e.g. Alashiya) addressed each other as brothers in international correspondence and treaties (Liverani 1990: 197-202; Podany 2010). In this section I will examine the survival of political "brotherhood" as a term and concept used between large powers in the age of the universal empire, a phenomenon of crucial significance for our understanding of the complex relationship between the concepts of equality and of universal power and sovereignty.

A. Assyria and Urartu

(1) Treaty and brotherhood

As I have pointed out above, although Urartu was a major rival of the Neo-Assyrian Empire from the northeast in the 9th and particularly the 8th centuries, in the 7th century the hostility between the two powers seems to have abated. Particularly noteworthy is a letter to the god Aššur (RINAP 033) in which Esarhaddon recounts his conquest and annexation of Shubria (673/672 BCE), the buffer state between the two powers, which had repeatedly refused to extradite Assyrian refugees back to Assyria. He also mentions that Ik-Teššub, the ruler of Shubria, offered asylum to Urartians that fled from their country and replied insolently to the request for extradition by Ursa (son of Argišti), king of Urartu. (r iii

28'-30')[449] Interestingly, Esarhaddon reports that he has returned those Urartians to Urartu after capturing and interrogating them "[in] order to keep the treaty and because of the truth and justice the great gods gave to me" (*[áš]-šú a-de-e na-ṣa-rim-ma ki-tú u mi-šá-ri iš-ruk-in-ni* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ) (32'). Radner connects this text to SAA 04 018, Esarhaddon's query about the possibility of Urartu's attack on Shubria (SAA 04 018, o6-o11). Comparing this query text with SAA 04 020, where Esarhaddon inquires whether the king of Scythia will keep the treaty (o8-o9), she also suggests that the query regarding Urartu may also have been performed before signing a treaty with Ursa was considered (Radner 2012a: 263). Although a treaty is not explicitly mentioned in SAA 04 018, the reference in RINAP 033 to Esarhaddon's obligation to abide by items regarding extradition in a treaty strongly indicates that a parity treaty may have been signed prior to Esarhaddon's campaign against Shubria (it is unclear whether it was signed after the query SAA 04 018).[450] In other words, we may here have indirect legal evidence implying that, even during the heyday of the Assyrian Empire in the early 7th century BCE, Assyria still had to accept other powers as equals (for the treaty with Elam, see below).

Whether or not the supposed treaty between Assyria and Urartu mainly concerned

[449] Rusa, son of Argišti; see Roaf 2012: 188.

[450] Our speculation that the treaty between Assyria and Urartu was a parity treaty is not based simply on the fact that Assyria is also required to abide by the terms in the treaty. Indeed, even in the treaty between Yahweh and the Israelites in the Hebrew Bible, the deity is also obligated to protect Israel. However, what is interesting here is that Assyria is required to return Urartians to Urartu. If we compare this detail with items in Hittite treates from the mid- 2nd millennium, it appears that in most treaties between the Hittite kingdom as the overlord and a vassal, only the weaker side is required to return Hittite fugitives. This is particularly true after the Hittite kingdom reached the peak of its power int he 14th century. In some treaties, it is plainly stipulated that "it is not permitted" for the Hittite kingdom to return vassal's fugitives (No. 6 in Beckman 1996, treaty with defeated Mitanni; No. 13, with Wilusa). In some treaties (No. 10, with Hapalla and No. 11 with Mira-Kuwaliya), it is in general "not permitted" for the Hittite kingdom to return fugitives to the vassal, unless the fugitive is a professional who failed to finish his work. In yet other treaties, the Hittite king may or may not return the vassal's fugitives, but he is the only authority to make the decision (No. 5 with Amurru, No. 7 with Nuḫašši and No. 9 with Ugarit). The Hittite kingdom is required to return foreign fugitives in some early treaties with Kizzuwatna (No. 1 in Beckman 1996; from the 15th century) and, more prominently, in the famous treaty between Hattusili III and Ramesses II, both being "great kings". Therefore, it appears that the Hittite kingdom is willing to return fugitives only when its power and authority are not absolute and when the partner is its equal. Returning to the supposed treaty between Assyria and Urartu in the early 7th century, one wonders if the reference to Assyria's readiness to return Urartian captives hiding in Shubria indicate the equal status of the two as far as the treaty is concerned.

Shubira or general relations between the two powers, Urartu did not honor the treaty for a long time. In the 5th regnal year of Ashurbanipal (663 BCE), a governor of Urartu called Andaria reportedly invaded Uppumu and Kullimmeri, capitals of the two provinces occupying the territory of the former Kingdom of Shubira (cf. Radner 2012a: 260) and was beheaded after his defeat in Kullimmeri.[451] In an inscription of Ashurbanipal dated to 652 BCE, Rusa,[452] king of Urartu is reported to have sent an envoy to "inquire about my well-being" (*a-na šá-ʾa-al šul-mì-ʿia*ˮ[453]) with a "audience gift" (*tāmartu*[454]) to Ashurbanipal (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 007 vii 15).[455] However, the impact of the delivery of an "audience gift" on the status of Urartu in relation to Assyria is not certain.

While Ursa may have decided to send gifts to Assyria and maintain peaceful relations between the two kingdoms after the failed attack at former Shubria, it is during Sarduri III's

---

[451] RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 003 iv 6- iv 14=004 iv 1- iv 8; in 006 v 13 Andaria's title is "Field Marshal"; in 007 iv 66'' his title is broken.

[452] On the identification of the Rusa, see CTU vol. 1: 23 which identifies him as Rusa son of Erimena, and Roaf 2012 which identifies him with Rusa son of Argišti.

[453] In letters, this greeting format itself can occur in letters between two equals and does not necessarily indicate a hierarchical relationship. See Luukko 2012. This is also the case in the West Semitic world. In the Aramaic Sefire iii 8, one of the items of the treaty stipulates that future kings of Arpad should keep the road open when a future king of KTK sends messengers for "peace" (*lšlm*) to other kings in his vicinity (Gibson translates the word *sḥrty* as "with whom I have trading relations", on the basis of Hebrew and later Aramaic examples, Gibson 1975:53) or his allies. Here "for peace" may refer to "inquiring about one's peace". See Fitzmyer 1995:136. In either case, the fact that king of KTK, the dominant party of the Sefire Treaties, refers to himself as inquiring the well-being of others (particularly his ally/friend, "*rḥm*"), suggests that the term itself hardly indicate a lower status in bilateral relations.

[454] This term may or may not denote long-term vassalage. In his inscriptions Ashurbanipal recounts that Arwad "had never bowed down" to previous Assyrian kings, and that it was during his rule that the Phoenician city-state submitted to Assyrian rule with "substantial audience gifts" (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, ii 66-67; ii 80; also 6, ii 34',which lists Yakīn-Lû as one of the kings who paid audience gifts). However, Sennacherib has already listed Arwad as one of the polities of the Land of Amurru which brought extensive gifts (*igisû*) and heavy audience gifts to Assyria. Therefore, Ashurbanipal's account is either an exaggeration, which is not uncommon in royal inscriptions, or an indication that the use of the term "*tāmartu*" has no bearing on the official status of another polity in relation to the Assyrian Empire, i.e. the payment of an audience gift does not assume official vassalage. The change in status of Arwad is recounted in more explicit terms in another version of its submission, where Ashurbanipal clearly notes that "bowed down to do obeisance to me and (now) he pulls my yoke. Yearly, I imposed upon him (a payment of) gold, red-purple wool, blue-purple wool, fish, (and) birds", that is, with unequivocal reference to "obeisance" (*ardūtu*, i.e. "servitude") and an annual (*šattišam*), rather than sporadic, tribute (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 74, r36-37). Notably, in SAA 16 127 and 128 the ruler of Arwad is depicted as someone who was able to act with high autonomy at the expense of Assyrian economic interests (see Chapter 6). If the letters were sent prior to Ashurbanipal's submission of Arwad, then the audience gift received by Sennacherib could be a one time gift which did not denote vassalage. The other interpretation is of course that Arwad was not a loyal vassal, so to speak, yet it is curious that this point is not made clear in Ashurbanipal's account of the final subjugation of the city. In sum, it is possible that an audience gift can be sent both by a vassal and by a polity that is not considered a vassal.

[455] RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 006 vii 20'-26' (largely restored); 007 vii 11-18. 035, 3b-8 (this passage does not mention the audience gift). Apparently Rusa's softened attitude towards Assyria is used as an example for Elam, as these passages also record that Elamite scribes with "insolent messages" were ordered to stand before the Urartian envoy with messages inquiring about the Assyrian king's well-being and possibly a gift.

reign that a qualitative change occurred in Assyro-Urartian relations. Ashurbanipal recounts that Sarduri III, a new king of Urartu (LUGAL ^{KUR}*ur-ar-ṭi*; attested in 642/639 BCE), for the first time accepted vassal status, describing the matter in a passage rich in information about the effect of terminology and phraseology on the change of status in international relations. Interestingly, it is in this context that more explicit reference is made to previous "brotherly" relations between Assyria and Urartu. Ashurbanipal first refers to Sarduri's predecessors, "kings, his ancestors", who "used to regularly send (messages) of brotherhood/brotherly relations (lit. 'to send brotherhood') to my ancestors" (*a-na* AD.MEŠ-*ia iš-ta-nap-par-u-ni ŠEŠ-ú-tú*, RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 011 x 41-42), which offers indirect evidence of previous equal relations between the two powers (see above for Esarhaddon's possible treaty with Urartu). Therefore, it is confirmed that the universal empire of Assyria maintained diplomatic correspondence with Urartu in which "brotherhood" terminologies were used.

A few more remarks can be made on the political usage of "brother/brotherhood" in Neo-Assyrian sources. Although most of the occurrences of "brother" refer to biological brothers in both the royal inscriptions and the letters, occasionally the term is used to designate an individual who is at an equal status to that of the author of letters.[456] The Assyrian king only rarely addressed or was addressed by foreign rulers as a "brother" (see examples in letters to and from Elamite rulers below), which corresponds well to the image of Assyria as the universal empire with no parallel. One interesting case of mixed semantic values of the term, of course, is Šamaš-šumu-ukin, king of Babylon, who was also the biological brother of Ashurbanipal. In letters to Ashurbanipal he addresses the Assyrian great

[456] E.g. SAA 05 081; SAA 13 042; SAA 18 096; SAA 21:154. For a systematic study of greeting formulas of letters sent to equal partners using the term "brother" see examples in Luukko 2012.

king naturally as “my brother” (e.g. SAA 21 101; 104). In inscriptions, Ashurbanipal also refers to Šamaš-šumu-ukin either as “my beloved brother” (ŠEŠ-*ia*$_5$ *ta-li-me*; e.g. RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 72, o11) or “the unfaithful brother” (ŠEŠ *la ke-e-nu*; e.g. RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 23, 108), depending on whether Šamaš-šumu-ukin was loyal to Assyria. Here we have a case of biological brotherhood associated with *political* relations between two polities of special connections. Yet the term “brother” most likely does not carry any sense of political equality between the two rulers, as Babylonia was a semi-independent constituent polity of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Finally, under some circumstances Ashurbanipal was so enraged by Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s rebellion that the latter is labed a “no-brother”.[457] While “brother” may not be political in the reference to Ashurbanipal’s biological brother, “no-brother” certainly contains an interesting and informative political message regarding the political layer of the newly coined term based on brotherhood.

(2) From “brothers” to “father and son”

As Urartu continued to decline under Rusa’s and Sarduri III’s reigns, Sarduri III now constantly sent “messages (concerning my) dominion (lit. “to send lordship”, RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, x 45 vs. “to send brotherhood” x 42) to Ashurbanipal “like a son to his father” (*ki-ma šá* DUMU *a-na* AD-*šú* x45). He specifically records the change of greeting format in new international messages sent from Urartu as a matter of particular significance: “Moreover, he constantly sent (messages) according to this wording, saying: ‘May it be well with the king, my lord’” (x 46-x 48). Finally, he also recounts that Sarduri III now “constantly sends me a audience gift” (*ta-mar-ta-šú ka-bit-tú uš-ta-né-eb-ba-la a-di maḫ-ri-ia*

[457] SAA 21 002: o 1'; SAA 21 002: o 14'; SAA 21 003: o 4; SAA 21 005: r 2'; SAA 21 069: r 4. cf. לא-אל “No-god” and לא-עם ”no-people” in Deut 32:21

x 49-x 50).[458]

Although no "brotherly messages" between Assyrian and Urartian kings have survived, we do have letters between the two states reflecting the new relationship which confirms Ashurbanipal's account of the turn of events in his inscription. In a fragment of a letter from Ashurbanipal to a Urartian ruler ([KUR].URI is preserved, SAA 21 078, o2), possibly Sarduri III, the Assyrian king addressed his counterpart as "his son" (o2).[459] In the greeting Ashurbanipal first writes that his palace and land are well, yet instead of "you can be glad", as is typical in letters to vassals or subordinates (cf. 075 o2), he apparently also inquires about Sarduri's well-being (partly preserved in line o4). Later in the preserved parts of the letter mentions "that you sought goodness/friendly relations" (MUN *tu-ba-ʾu-u-ni* line o7), placing the letter in the context of the event recounted in the aforementioned inscription.

In a letter from Urartu to Assyria, of which the sender is broken away (most likely Sarduri III) but the self-designation "king of Urartu" is largely preserved (SAA 21 12, o5), the Urartian king addresses the Assyrian king as "my lord" (e.g. in o6, o18, r1, r9). However, the tone of this response to Assyria's request for lapis lazuli was by no means humble and submissive, as he rejects the request and declares that even if the Assyrian sends a troop to obtain the lapis lazuli, he will not be afraid:

"If it is agreeable to the king, let a huge army come and take the lapis lazuli. If, when they come,

[458] One wonders if this is indicative of an institutionalized annual gift, although the word tribute (*biltu*) is not used. RINAP 5-1, 121b-124a omits the sentence about the audience gift.

[459] In his analysis of the usage of "father" and "son" in Late Bronze Age international correspondence, Liverani argues that "father" and "son" in those contexts denote seniority and the state of being a young and often inexperience ruler, but do not imply political hierarchy. Suzerainty is expressed with "lord" and "servant" only. Liverani 1990: 198-99. Even if this is the case in the Late Bronze Age, our current cases in Assyro-Urartian relations seem to suggest exactly the opposite. The "father" and "son" terminology is contrasted by the previous brotherly relations and, in the letter sent from Sarduri III to Ashurbanipal, as we see below, this relationship is expressed by the "lord and servant" terminology, which demonstrates that both of the two groups of terms have a political sense and more precisely, that they both denote difference in the international political hierarchy. Cf. Also biblical sources, e.g. 2 Kgs 16:7 (עַבְדְּךָ וּבִנְךָ אָנִי), in which Ahaz, king of Judah, calls himself "servant and son" at once in a letter to Tiglath-pileser III. See also Lanfranchi 2009: 138-39.

I shall not dine with them, nor proceed at their side, nor rise before your messenger, nor ask about the well-being of the king (*ù šul-mu LUGAL be-lí-ía ul a-šá-aʾ-al*, r10-r11), my lord, let the king not consider it as (my) fault." (r1-r11)

It appears that the Urartian ruler, even in a period of substantial decline and towards the very end of the once powerful empire[460] and after formally accepting a lower-rank status in its relationship with Assyria, Sarduri III did not fully embrace the idea of behaving as a minor king on the international arena. His self-designation as "king of Urartu" as well as his threat not to ask the Assyrian king's well-being (compare Ashurbanipal boasting to Rusa's envoy who was sent to ask his well-being) reveals the complex interrelations among the use of terminologies and formats in diplomatic texts, the actual domestic and international political situation and a given polity's self-perception and self-expectation.

B. Assyria and Elam: treaty and brotherhood against the background of intensified conflicts

(1) Treaty between Assyria and Elam during Esarhaddon's reign

Although Elam and Mesopotamia had a long history of interaction, particularly in the Middle Elamite III Period (1200-1100 BCE according to Potts 1999) towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, when Elam and Babylon waged war with one another, the relationship between Elam and Mesopotamia, including Assyria, was rather obscure in subsequent centuries. Archaeological finds in Susa and Fars yield scanty evidence of continuity within Elam itself (Potts 1999: 262), which reflects internal political turmoil and may indirectly

[460] For the decline and the disappearance of the Kingdom of Urartu, see detailed summary of scholarly debate in Hellwag 2012: 227-41. She is in support of Kroll, who has proposed that Urartu as a political entity came to an end in the mid-7th century, perhaps during Sarduri's reign to which period the destruction at Karmir-Blur, Armavir, etc. can be dated (ca. 625 BCE).

explain Elam's disappearance from Assyrian sources. Elam was not mentioned at all in Ashurnasirpal II's and Shalmaneser III's accounts of eastern campaigns (Dubovský 2018: 323); it is attested first in Šamši-Adad V's inscriptions recording Elam's involvement in the war between Babylonia and Assyria in 819 BCE (RIMA 3 Šamši-Adad V A 0.103.1 iv 38; Elam also mentioned in A 0. 103.4 24'). Traces of diplomatic relations between Elam and Assyria are also found in texts dating to the early 8th century, for example, in a wine list dating to 784 BCE, which records the assignment of 100 bowls to an Elamite envoy (LÚ.MAḪ ^{KUR}*elam-ma-a-a*) (CTN 3 no. 145, iv. 25-26).

Later in the 8th century Elam's intervention in Babylonian affairs intensified interaction, peaceful and otherwise, between Assyria and Elam. One may even suggest, as I indicated earlier in this chapter, that Elam replaced Urartu in the early 7th century as Assyria's major rival and the most serious threat to the order established by the universal empire. This change might have been reflected in the fact that Elam's ruler was almost the only foreign ruler designated (though occasionally) with the *nisbe* in this late period, a title used quite consistently to refer to the Urartian ruler in the 9th and 8th centuries. Without reviewing the complex history of Assyro-Elamite relations in the first half of the 7th century, I will briefly note several cases in which Elam was treated as an equal, sometimes only from the terminological point of view. The actual historical contexts and the actual status of Elam in relation to Assyria certainly varied case by case.

That Elam was likely the major challenger of the outwardly well-established Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 7th century is revealed also by the fact that for a while its ruler was addressed as a full equal of the almighty king of Assyria. In a letter from Esarhaddon to

Urtaku, king of Elam, the Assyrian king addresses his Elamite counterpart in a manner reminiscent of the correspondence between great kings in the Late Bronze Age:

"A tablet from Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, to Urtaku, king of Elam, [my] br[other] (ŠEŠ-*ia*). I a[m] well, your sons and daughters are well, my country and magnates are well. May Urtaku, king of Elam, my brother (ŠEŠ-*ia*), be well, may my sons and daughters be well, may your magnates and your country be well!" (SAA 16 01 o1-o8)[461]

Although Esarhaddon appears first in the greeting, indicative of a higher status, in this letter Urtaku is called a "brother", a rare but not isolated case in which a foreign ruler is so addressed by a almighty king of Assyria (see above for the "brotherly messages" between Esarhaddon and Urartu's ruler). Also suggestive of the equal status between the two states is the fact that the two sides have exchanged royal hostages,[462] if lines o4 and o7 are correctly understood. A treaty may have been signed by the time this letter was written, as the letter apparently mentions: "(the gods) have developed our f[rie]ndship to (its) peak".[463] If the reading "DÙG.GA-*ti*" is correct, then a treaty between the two sides might be in question, as

[461] A series of events preceded the establishment of peaceful relations between Assyria and Elam and the composition of this letter. Tensions could be felt between the two kingdoms, as Elam continued to intervene with Babylonian affairs, presenting itself as an ideal destination for asylum. For example, in 681 BCE, i.e. Esarhaddon's 1st regnal year, the rebellious governor of THE Sealand, Nabu-zer-kitti-lišir, son of the Merodach-baladan II, fled to Elam (e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, col ii. 55, 03 col. I 16'-28'; 06, col. ii line 2', etc .) However, for unknown reasons the Elamite king, Humban-haltaš II (681-675 BCE), killed Nabu-zer-kitti-lišir, an incident recorded by Chronicle I (*ABC*:82; Chronicle 1, iii 42). While one is tempted to consider the killing of an Assyrian refugee, who can be potentially used against Assyria, as a friendly sign on the Elamite side, the relations between Assyria and Elam did not improve after the incident. For instance, Elam invaded and massacred Sippar in Esarhaddon's 6th regnal year (*ABC*, Chronicle 1,iv 9). However, a series of other incidents which took place in Esarhaddon's 6th and 7th regnal years may have resulted in the eventual deescalation of Elam's rather aggressive acts in its relations with Assyria. First, Assyria reinforced its defensive system against Elam by stationing ("locking up") the Gambulian ruler near the border "like a door in front of Elam". Second, Elam may also have experienced some internal political unrest, for its king Humban-haltaš II died suddenly in Elam "without becoming ill" (*ABC*, Chronicle 1 iv 16-18). Perhaps these factors contributed to the temporary balance between the Assyria and Elam around 675 BCE. As his Urtaku ascended the Elamite throne, (statues of) gods of Agade (here referring to Babylonia) returned from Elam to Babylon in the 7th year of Esarhaddon (the 2nd year of Urtaku; Chronicle 1, iv 16-18) which may very well have accompanied the establishment of peaceful relations between the two sides. SAA 16 01 was probably drafted against this background.

[462] Cf. Parpola 1972: 34 n. 66; Waters 2000: 44. The presence of foreign nationals, possibly as hostages, at the Nineveh court has also been discussed by Radner (Radner 2012b, 471-79), where she argues that a witness of a sale contract named Shusanku (titled "king's in-law") is none other than one of the Egyptian princes captured at the Battle of Eltekeh in Palestine in 701 BCE. See in particular, p475.

[463] "L[Ú EN.DÙ]G.GA-*ti-ni a-na ap-pi ú-se-ṣi-u*" (o13), rendering the line "(gods) have developed our friendship to its peak". While the meaning of the phrase "*ana appi šūṣû*" is difficult to interpret in any case, the translation "friendship" depends upon the reading of the sign before GA, of which only two winkelhackens remain.

the term which means "friendship" (*ṭābtu* in Akkadian) or mercy in general is sometimes juxtaposed with specific terms denoting "treaty" or "oath" specifically.[464] In any case the reference to gods in this letter, of which one is an Elamite deity (Manzinri line o11, cf. Lambert 1987-90:346), and the reference to them having established what they had said (line o11-12), is highly relevant in the context of a treaty. In a royal inscription of Esarhaddon, however, the possible treaty relationship is depicted in a more monocentric perspective:

The Elamites (and) Gutians,[465] obstinate rulers (*ma-al-ki šip-ṣu-u-ti*), who used to answer the kings, my ancestors, with hostility, heard what the might of the god Aššur, my lord, had done among all of (my) enemies, and fear and terror poured over them. So that there would be no trespassing on the borders of their countries they sent their messengers (with messages) of friendship and peace (*ṭu-bi u su-lum-me-e*)[466] to Nineveh, before me, and they swore an oath by the great gods (MU DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *iz-ku-ru*)[467]. (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, v26-33a)

The occurrence of treaty and oath terminologies (*ṭu-bi u su-lum-me-e*; MU DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *iz-ku-ru*) makes it very likely that this passage records the signing of the treaty between Assyria and Elam, which was accompanied or followed by the exchange of royal hostages, Esarhaddon's letter and perhaps the return of divine statues from Elam to Babylon. Notably, in the royal inscription the equal terminology in SAA 16 01 is replaced by the one-sided presentation of Elam as actively and earnestly seeking peace with Assyria out of

---

[464] RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 1 ii 41-42 (juxtaposed with *adê*); RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, viii 68 (juxtaposed with *mamītu*).

[465] Perhaps "the Elamite ruler and the Gutian ruler".

[466] For this phrase as referring to friendly relationship effected by treaty, see Moran 1963: 174, with references and parallel in the Aramaic Sefire treaties. See also CAD Ṭ, 117 ṭubu d), referring to personal relations; 116 ṭubtu, with examples of the juxtaposition of ṭubtu and sulummû in context of international relations. CAD S, 372, sulummû a), with examples of this term in context of concrete peace agreements or treaties.

[467] See also CAD-Z *zakāru* 2, "to invoke a god". For parallels of this term as referring to an oath between different political entities, see e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhadon 01 iii 26, (MU DINGIR.MEŠ-*šú-nu it-ti a-ḫa-meš iz-kur-u-ma*) referring to the oath between Sanda-uarri, king of the cities Kundi and Sissû and Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, which they swore in order to "help one another" (iii 25).

fear, while no encounter on the battlefield is mentioned in this context. In an oracle (SAA 04 076) Esarhaddon inquires the Sungod whether Urtaku, king of Elam, is sending "true and sincere words".[468] In addition, Waters refers to a letter (BM 99020) which records the *adê* treaty[469] between the king of Elam and the king of Assyria (not specified) and presents the two rulers as equals. Waters points out that this document, too, reflects the treaty relationship between the two kingdoms (Waters 2000:43).

The real motive underlying the two sides' decision temporarily to end the hostility is not recorded in any source. It is possible that while Esarhaddon was hard-pressed to eliminate Elamite intervention in Babylonia, having to establish the Gambulean fortress Ša-Pī-Bēl as a stronghold against Elam, Urtaku found it necessary to concentrate on internal affairs after the sudden death of the previous king.[470] Finally, although the treaty between Assyria and Elam seems to have been be honored in the early years of Ashurbanipal's reign until Urtaku invaded Babylonian in 664 BCE, of which Ashurbanipal explicitly speaks (see Potts 1999: 276), negative description of Elam is preserved in Esarhaddon's inscriptions. It occurs in the latter's inscription from Sippar, composed after 671 BCE (since "king of the Kings of Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and Kush" appears as one of his titles), where Elam is depicted as "...disobedient (*ú-la še-mu-ú*; lit. 'one who does not listen to...')" and "the evil enemy". Curiously, Elam is also referred to as "the powerful offspring of the gods (*nab-nit* DINGIR.MEŠ *ra-ṣu-un-du*)" that "rose up against the wishes of the gods (*ina la ṭè-e-mu*

[468] Compare SAA 04 20, 22. See Radner 2012a: 263 on queries in the context of treaties.

[469] For the term *adê* see Watanabe 1987, 2014; Fales 2012; Lauinger 2013.

[470] While the chronicles record the death of kings regularly, Humban-haltaš II is the only Elamite king who died without being ill (Glassner 2004: 80). The Esarhaddon Chronicle (No. 14 in ABC) even specifies that he died "appearing healthy" (TI-*su*) (line 16). It is possibly that the sudden death of the king which drew the attention of the scribes, whether natural or not, had an impact on the internal politics of Elam and may have conceivably left behind challenges when Urtaku ascended the throne. Of course, we do not have direct evidence for internal turmoil after Urtaku's predecessor's death. Urtaku himself is not attested in Elamite inscriptions (Potts 1999: 275).

DINGIR.MEŠ)[471] and set out to attack...of Akkad" (RINAP 4 112, iv 8-11). Does this reference record Elam's otherwise unattested violation of the existing peace treaty during Esarhaddon's reign, or does the "attack of Akkad" refer to the massacre of Sippar by Urtaku's predecessor (Humban-haltaš II, see *ABC* Chronicle 1, iv 9) in around 676 BCE, before the treaty was concluded, possibly in the next year (note also that the provenance of this prism is Sippar)? According to Ashurbanipal, as I mentioned above, Urtaku violated the treaty and launched an attack on Babylonia only during his own reign (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, iv 30-31). Therefore, it is more likely that in this inscription of Esarhaddon's under discussion a previous incident is being referred to. Even so, it is still noteworthy that a formal ally at present is described as an evil, ungodly opponent because of hostile deeds committed prior to 675 in a text composed well after 671 BCE, that is, while the peace treaty is already in effect. This again reveals the sharp contrast in terminology and overall presentation of foreign lands and rulers between internal sources and diplomatic texts.

(2) Brotherhood with Ashurbanipal

Even after Urtaku's violation of the peace treaty and the beheading of Teumman, which events not only marked the end of the peaceful relationship between Assyria and Elam,[472] but also substantially weakened the latter's power, we still find, rather surprisingly, occasional correspondence between Ashurbanipal and various Elamite Kings that employed terminology of equality. These letters concern three Elamite rulers who reigned during a period when

[471] According the the CAD the phrase "*ṭè-e-m ili(m)*" is attested in various contexts, from the building of a city (Fuchs 1994, Ann. 235) to the protection of Esarhaddon in a secret place during the succession crisis (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon, i 39). It is thus unclear what is meant by "the divine plan/command" in the current inscription. One wonders whether the divine plan here could refer to peaceful relations or even the treaty which is witnessed by gods, although this cannot be established. See CAT-Tet *ṭemu* 3b.

[472] Ashurbanipal still mentions the former "brotherhood" in accounts of later events, cf. RINAP 5-1 75, 20, where he calls himself "the brother of their (Tamarītu et al) father (Urtaku)".

Elam became a subordinate yet hostile[473] polity in the Neo-Assyrian imperial system:[474] Tammarītu II, once Ashurbanipal's protegée and later established as king of Hidalu; Indabibi, a usurper and Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), with whom the Elamites replaced Indabibi.

Letters to Tammarītu In SAA 21 059, a letter written in the Neo-Babylonian script and dialect, from Ashurbanipal to Tammarītu, here designated "king of Elam", he apparently calls Tammarītu his "brother" (o3).[475] Contrary to many letters to subordinates, Ashurbanipal also inquires about the Elamite King's well-being (o4) after saying that he himself is well (o3). While the terminology "brother" does not occur in other preserved letters from Ashurbanipal to Tammarītu, in SAA 21 063 Ashurbanipal also inquires about the latter's well-being (o3), while reminding him of the treaty (restored) that he had made Tammarītu to swear (*ú-tam-mu-ka-a-[ni]*, r24), revealing that while Elam is considered subordinate, some sort of privilege is assigned to this old rival in the greeting format. Yet instead of "brotherhood", Ashurbanipal here draws on the father-son metaphor (compare Ashurbanipal's correspondence with Sarduri III of Urartu, see above): "I [have done] and given to you this favor which not (even) a father would do for a son (*šá* AD *a-na* DUMU *la ep-pa-áš-u-ni*,

[473] The kings have been involved in anti-Assyrian activities including offering aid to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, attacking Babylonian cities, providing asylum to Nabû-bel-šumati (Sone of Merodach-Baladan II, a former servant of Ashurbanipal) and his accomplices whom Ashurbanipal sought, etc. See Waters 2000: 56-80 for Assyro-Elamite relations in this period.

[474] See Waters 2000: 57. Waters suggests that Elam was turned into an Assyrian "province" after the Ashurbanipal deposed and killed Teumman, citing such phrases like "(T)he brilliance of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Ištar overwhelmed the land Elam and they (the Elamites) bowed down to my yoke." (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 003, v 96) However, although this phrase certainly indicates submission and a subordinate status, it does not necessarily refer to provincialization. In other documents there are indeed references to "Prefect (LÚ.GAR-*nu*) of the Elamites" in lists of officials (SAA 07 005, r i 11-12; perhaps also SAA 11 130 o2) but the date of the text and the nature of the position remain unclear Yet in the context of Teumman's defeat and beheading we lack more explicit references to the establishment of a governor or similar phrases. In contrast, when Sennacherib put Bēl-ibni on Merodach-Baladan II's (called king of Karduniaš) throne (*i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA LUGAL-*ti-šú*) over of the "People of Akkad" (the Babylonians), he also sent eunuchs as governors (a-na EN.NAM-ti) over the districts of Chaldea, possibly marking the reorganization of the region alongside the division of between Babylonians and Chaldeans. (RINAP 3-1 4, 11) Likewise, in the case of Hirimmu which "since time immemorial did not submit to my yoke", Sennacherib massacred the population and explicitly "reorganized the district" (*na-gu-ú šu-a-tu a-na eš-šu-ti aṣ-bat*). (1, 59) It is possible that Elam became a vassal rather than a province with its own king (with or without an Assyrian overseer) established by Ashurbanipal (Humban-nikaš II; RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 03, v97). The phrase "a creation of my own hands" which Waters cites may refer to Humban-nikaš II rather than a governor.

[475] Only the right part of the sign is preserved, with three winkelhackens which could be the remnant of the Neo-Babylonian "ŠEŠ" sign. Personal communication, Hannes Leonhardt.

r19)", emphasizing Elam's subordinate status. In SAA 21 064, a letter congratulating a victory of Tammarītu's, the greeting format is typically what would appear in a letter to subordinates and vassals: "I [am well]; you [can be] glad." (o2) Since we do not know the sequence of the letters, it is difficult to detect a change of Ashurbanipal's attitude towards Tammarītu. In Tammarītu's letters to Ashurbanipal, however, he invariably calls himself "your servant" and Ashurbanipal "the King, my lord" (SAA 02 119-121).

Letters to Indabibi In SAA 21 060 (649 BCE; again in the Neo-Babylonian script), addressed to Indabibi, titled king of Elam, Ashurbanipal again addresses the Elamite ruler as his brother and inquires about his well-being, (o3-o5) apparently showing Indabibi considerable respect as he ascended the throne. One wonders if Ashurbanipal considered Elam as essentially lying beyond the traditional domain of Assyria, so much so that the preservation of Elam as a friendly neighbor by enthroning a pro-Assyrian ruler rather than complete annexation was preferred in Assyria's strategy until it repeatedly proved impossible.

The Letter from Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III Conversely, we also have one case in which the Elamite ruler (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III) mentions himself first in a letter before Ashurbanipal and addressed the Assyrian king as "my brother"[476] (SAA 21 122, dated to 646 BCE). Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III is said to be the son of a certain Atta-metu, who may be identified with the chief-archer dispatched by Humban-nikaš II to fight the Assyrians, later beheaded by the Assyrian troops (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, vii 10; vii 23). Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III does not seem to owe his ascent to the throne to Assyria's assistance from the beginning like

[476] "A tablet of Ummanaldasi, king of Elam, to Assurbanipal, king of Assyria: good health to my brother." (IM ^{m}*um-man-al-da-si* LUGAL KUR.NIM.MA.KI *a-na* ^{m}AN.ŠÁR—DÙ—A LUGAL KUR—AN.ŠÁR.KI *lu-u* DI-*mu a-na* ŠEŠ-*ia*; lines o1-o3). This is a typical Assyrian greeting format in letters between equals. See SAA 19 165, 1-3 ("my brother" in that letter also occurs after the recipient's name) dated to late Tiglath-pileser III's reign, cited in Luukko 2012: 107; 112, n. 81.

Ḫumban-nikaš II and Tammarītu II. Instead, it is the Elamites' rebellion against Indabibi, whose refusual to send Nabû-bēl-šumāti to Assyria incurred Ashurbanipal's threat to attack Elam, that gave Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III the opportunity to ascend the throne (e.g. RINAP 5-1 006, ix 11''-52; cf. 008, ix 22'-37'). One wonders if the apparent lack of direct Assyrian assistance in his enthronement may have contributed to his assumption of a more equal status in this letter. Even so, one should note that Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III announces the return of Nabû-bēl-šumāti's corpse to Assyria in a tone of obedience. Waters notes that "my brother" and Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III's clear awareness of the boundary between Assyrian and Elamite territory[477] might indicate a treaty-relationship between himself and Ashurbanipal, although the latter is the dominant partner of the treaty. If such a treaty existed, it is noteworthy that at least it formally contained some elements of equality.[478]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the definitions and the characteristics of empire as a form of political organization in the ancient Near Eastern context. I then focused specifically on the practice, conception and ideology of the universal empire, a phenomenon that shapes ours as well as the ancients' understanding and interpretation of historical developments in the Iron Age Levant and the Near East in general. In this period, large empires with universal claims, e.g. the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its Neo-Babylonian and later Achaemenid successors, dominated Levantine and wider Near Eastern politics (cf. again the concept of "*translatio*

[477] "If they are in my country, I shall hold them accountable, and if they have crossed the river, you [...], and seek compensation among them." (*šum-ma ina* KUR-*ia šu-nu ana-ku ina* ŠU.2-*šú-nu ú-[ba-ʾa] ù šum-ma* ÍD *e-tab-ru at-ta ri-ʿi**ʾ*-[bu]*) SAA 21 122, o17-18.

[478] In SAA 21 123, another letter assigned to Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III (although his name is not attested therein), he apparently calls Asshurbanipal "the King, my Lord" (r 5'). It is impossible to decipher the content of the letter due to severe damage. The change of the tone on the Elamite King's part would probably have to do with a more "realistic" recognition of his own power in relation to Assyria, whether or not this was demanded by Ashurbanipal.

imperii" in Daniel; see Machinist 2019). To examine the operation of the universal ideology of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which has bequeathed us with the most extensive sources on universalistic rhetorics and ideology, I further discussed its perception and treatment of other political entities, particularly the case of competing powerful kingdoms that challenged its unqualified claim for unrivaled, universal domination. Our tentative conclusion was, on the one hand, that special terminologies and concepts may have been preserved for major rivals and challengers to the imperial order in certain periods, and, on the other hand, that an expedient attempt to come to terms with the existence of such competing powers was indeed to grant such powers, at least temporarily, the status of "equal partners", as in the case of the preceding Late Bronze Age.

The interaction of the universal empire with large and powerful competitors demonstrates more clearly the limits of such an unparalleled political giant. Yet more frequently in the process of expansion, the universal empire had to deal with smaller political entities and groups that awaited conquest, reorganization and acculturation, often not without resistance, failures and setbacks. In such processes, the universal empire's experience with larger rivals serves as a two-fold point of departure for further investigation: one the one hand, both small polities and large competitors are treated as subordinates of the imperial center in theory, at least in ceremonial sources; on the other hand, in practice the small, peripheral polities can often prove to be threats to the empire, particularly when they form coalitions, not less noticeable and formidable than the classic rivals of the universal empires. Both small and large, thus, test the unilateral, overwhelmingly majestic claims of the universal empires, although in different manners and to different degrees. So, how did the empire(s) extend their

influence to the peripheral regions, particularly the Levant which featured sophisticated internal political complications, sometimes contested by alternative centers of powers? In the next chapter I will move my focus to the Levant and examine attempts of imperial expansion into the Levant from different directions. Then I will concentrate my discussion on the practice and limits of the Mesopotamian universal empires in their encounters with the Levant. More specifically, we will look at how both the empire and the local Levantine polities struggled to deal with the encounter between the center and a politically complex and culturally advanced periphery.

Chapter 6: External Imperialism in the Levant: Its Impact and Mutual Perception of the Center and the Periphery

Introduction

The Levant in the Iron Age, as in the previous Late Bronze Age, continued to serve as an important arena in which internal and, equally or even more prominently, external political powers vied for control and dominance. Despite the Iron Age expansion of the Mesopotamian empires to a kind of universal reach, which since the mid- 8th century BCE dwarfed both local and other imperial ambitions for political ascendancy, other external powers also extended their influence to the Levant at different stages, in particular when the Assyrian Empire experienced internal difficulties. Sometimes the expansionist practices of these alternative centers of power also exhibited certain features of imperialism and even imperial universalism, as some of the terminologies adopted in their sources reveal. I will briefly discuss two such powers, one from the south, i.e. Egypt and the other from the north, i.e. Urartu (plus a short note on Phrygia), which influenced at least the respective portions of the Levant for some time, in competition with the universal empires *par excellence*, that is, the Neo-Assyrian and later, the Neo-Babylonian Empires.

The most significant encounter with empire that Levantine polities experienced in the first half of Iron Age was, of course, the one with the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which gradually placed the region under indirect or direct control between the mid- 9th and the 7th centuries. In comparison with Egypt or Urartu and with its Babylonian successor, the Neo-Assyrian Empire produced far more extensive documentation on its campaigns, conquests, strategies and tactics employed in the empire building process in the Levant. I will examine some of the

sources, focusing first on some salient characteristics of the universal empire in the Levant in this period, especially factors that limit or challenge its absolute domination in the periphery, and then move my focus to the depiction and interpretation of its encounter with the Levant which further demonstrates the ideological elements that justify, explain and sometimes reinterpret the advance and temporary setbacks of the empire. Moreover, since Assyrian documents are fortunately not our only source of information on the interaction between the empire and the Levantine periphery, I will also analyze the reception of imperial practice and ideology on the other end, that is, in Levantine sources. As we shall see, Levantine political and cultural elites were not only familiar with the behavior and propaganda of the universal empire, but they sometimes chose to embrace the key values expressed in the imperial ideologies, e.g. peace, order and mutual prosperity enjoyed by all in the imperial system.

Non-Mesopotamian Imperial Intervention in the Iron Age Levant

Unlike the Late Bronze Age, during which various external powers, first Egypt and Mitanni and later Egypt and the Hittite kingdom, eventually also Assyria, competed for control over the Levant, in the first half of the first millennium the universal empires from Mesopotamia apparently dominated the Levant's interaction with external powers. Even so, it should be noted that other powers were far from absent from the Levant. Various external actors in the south and the north of the Levant attempted, during periods of their own strength and Assyrian weakness, to extend their influence over this region of crucial economic and geopolitical significance. A brief note on the imperial intervention of the non-Mesopotamian external powers should be made before we direct our attention to the universal empire's impact on Levantine polities. Despite the limited amount of evidence, the following overview

offers us an opportunity to compare the Levantine strategy of these powerful polities and their attempt at an imperial ideology.

1. Egypt and the Levant in the Iron Age

A. Sheshonq I's campaign in the southern Levant

The southern Levant suffered two waves of destruction during the transitional period between the Late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age. The Iron Age IA (first half of the 12th century BCE) marks the last phase of Egyptian domination in the southern Levant, when a series of sites, such as Beth-Shean, Megiddo and Lachish, etc., were rebuilt with Egyptian characteristics in their artifacts and architecture (e.g. papyrus-shaped stone capitals of the temple in Area P of Lachish VI) after their destruction towards the end of the 13th century (A. Mazar 1990:296-300). Some findings from these southern Levantine sites bear the name of Ramesses III, e.g. a bronze plaque inscribed with his name discovered in Stratum VI of Lachish (A. Mazar 1990:299), which suggests that the southern Levant was firmly under Egyptian control during the Twentieth Dynasty.

Although Egyptian domination of the southern Levant declined after Ramesses III due to internal political crises in Egypt, with the prestige of the Pharaoh reduced overseas (cf. *Wenamun*; the story of Solomon's marriage with the Egyptian princess, 1 Kgs 3:1; Taylor 2000: 325-32; 343), archaeological evidence found in the Levant, consisting of small artifacts of the Egyptian style (e.g. scarabs) and Egyptian pottery, demonstrates continued ties between Egypt and the Levant. The focus of intense contact and Egyptian presence then transferred from Phoenicia in Iron I to the south in Iron II A and Iron II B, spanning the Twenty-first and the Twenty-second Dynasties when internal stability was gradually

reestablished in Egypt (Ben Dor Evian 2011: 94-119). The connection between the Levant and Egypt apparently surpassed commercial and cultural interactions, particularly during periods of temporary political unity within Egypt. For example, there are the military activities beginning with Shoshenq I's well-known campaign in the southern Levant (latter half of the 10th century BCE), which was recorded in the Bubastite Portal at Karnak with a long list of captured towns in the region (Ritner 2009: 193-213; cf. 1 Kgs 14:25-26; 2 Chr 12:2-9). The conquest of the town of Megiddo is also attested in the discovery of a fragment of a stela at the site (Ritner 2009: 218-19; text 51). While Shoshenq I's royal title does not contain elements of explicit imperial ideology, much less of imperial universalism[479], the divine prophecy in biblical account (2 Chr 12:5-8) seems to suggest that some sort of subordinate status might have ensued Israel's defeat by the Egyptian king (כִּי יִהְיוּ-לוֹ לַעֲבָדִים, "for they will be his servants"). This could be interpreted as evidence for knowledge or awareness of an Egyptian imperial system in the Levant, the nature of which remains unclear. However, it should be borne in mind that the Book of Chronicles was composed several hundred years after the period under discussion and may have been colored by the authors theological interpretation of historical events.[480] In any case, Sheshonq I's victory did not seem to have had an enduring impact on the Levant, as the relations between Egypt and the Levant soon reverted to economic ties only after his death (Taylor 2000: 330).

B. "Subduing all foreign countries": ephemeral universal imperialism under Osorkon

---

[479] "(6) the king of Upper and lower Egypt, lord of ritual performance, Hedjkheperre-setepenre, (7) bodily son of re, whom he (re) loves, Sheshonq, beloved of Amon, (8) image of re, Foremost of the two lands, beloved of the lord of the Gods, given all life, stability, and dominion, and all health like re forever. the protection of all life, stability, and dominion is all around him like re." Lines 6-9, Ritner 2009: 196.

[480] In 2 Chr 12:7-8, Yahweh says: "Since they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them but will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. They will be subject to him, and they will know the difference between serving Me and serving the kingdoms of the earth (כִּי יִהְיוּ־לוֹ לַעֲבָדִים וְיֵדְעוּ עֲבֹדָתִי וַעֲבֹדַת מַמְלְכוֹת הָאֲרָצוֹת)." The motif of serving foreign kings apparently serves to highlight Israel's revolt against their god. This detail is absent from 1 Kgs 14:25-26.

II

More reliable indication of Egyptian imperial ideology during the Twenty-first and the Twenty-second Dynasties can be found in a line in Osorkon II's Bubastis Jubilee Reliefs (cf. 853 BCE), which is reminiscent of the kind of imperial universalism of Egypt at the zenith of its power in the New Kingdom or the universal mentality of Iron Age Mesopotamian empires:

"(1) All lands, all foreign countries, (2) upper Syria-Palestine, (3) lower Syria-Palestine, (4) all remote foreign countries (5) are at the feet of this Good God. (6) All living citizens." (Register I, Below Litter; Ritner 2009:326)

Here the term "this Good God" (*nṯr pn nfr*) refers to the Pharaoh himself, as a previous line shows.[481] This passage explicitly depicts the subjugation of "all (remote) foreign countries",[482] particularly Syria-Palestine, by the Egyptian monarch, which constitutes a typical declaration of imperial domination abroad. Notably, the expression "all lands, all foreign countries (*tꜣ .w nb ḫꜣ s.t nb(.t)*)...at the feet of (*r rd.wy*)" is reminiscent of the Akkadian phrase "to subdue all foreign lands at my feet" (*mātāti napḫaršina ana šēpīya kanāšu*) and its variants, often attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions in the same period, when Assyria also aimed at imperial expansion to reconquer lands previously controlled by the Middle Assyrian kingdom.[483] Archaeological evidence, on the other hand, suggests that this inscription is coeval with the final phase of 10th- 9th century Egyptian dominance in the Levant, for Egyptian pottery disappeared from the southern Levant for over a century after

[481] "the Good God, (2) Usimaʿresetepenamon, whom Amon loves more than any king, (3) Osorkon, beloved of Amon, son of bastet, (4) son of re, chosen of (5) Atum, (6) given all life. (7) [the protection of] all [life, stability, dominion, and] health like re." Ritner 2009: 326.

[482] *ḫꜣ s.t nb(.t). ḫꜣ s*.t refers to "foreign lands" or "hill country, desert". See Faulkner 1962: 185.

[483] This phrase is particularly common in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions, who dates to the same period. Under his and his predecessor's rules, Assyrian imperial expansion entered an intensive phase. E.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2: i 11; A.0.102.6: i 25; A.0.102.8: 21; A.0.102.10: i 15; A.0.102.11: o 11'; A.0.102.14: 18; A.0.102.38: 2'.

850 BCE, possibly due to internal political unrest in Egypt after the reign of Osorkon II, which forced Egypt to withdraw from overseas expansion (Ben Dor Evian 2011:113). The nature of Egyptian dominance in this period as a whole does not seem to surpass economic relations accompanied by military deterrence.[484] No Egyptian administrative institution or officials comparable to possible residencies of a governor in the preceding Late Bronze Age are attested (cf. Oren 1984; Kochavi 1990; Gadot 2009).

C. "All foreign countries beneath your sandals": the Nubian universal rulers and the Levant

Egyptian pottery reappeared in the southern Levant through trade relations at the end of the 8th century (Ben Dor Evian 2011:113). In the same period, the Nubian rulers of the 25th Dynasty pursued an expansionist policy, which is reflected in the titles adopted by these rulers, which, as royal titles assumed by Osorkon II, depict the Pharaoh as a universal ruler. Shebitku, ruling at the end of the 8th century, boasts about his dominion over "every foreign land" (*ḫꜣ s.t nbt*; Ritner 2009: 500-501; text no. 153). In another inscription the deity Amon-Re announces to Shebitku that "I have given to you all lands in [bowing (?)], with all foreign countries beneath your sandals (*ḫꜣ s.t nb ḫr ṯbw.ty=k*)", while Mut speaks of placing the terror of this Pharaoh among Southern and Northern countries (Ritner 2009: 505. text no. 154). The same theme also occurs frequently in the inscriptions of Taharqa (e.g. Ritner 2009:

[484] The degree of Egyptian military control over Syria-Palestine may have been rather limited, despite Osorkon II's imposing self-depiction. It is notable that possibly in the same year as Osorkon II's inscriptions were created, Egyptian troops possibly encountered Assyrian military advance at Shalmaneser III's battle at Qarqar. According to the Assyrian source, Egypt dispatched only 1000 troops, a modest size in comparison with the Israelite, Hamathite and Damascene troops (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2 89b-102). In this inscription the Egyptian ruler is addressed with the gentilic. It is unclear whether this military confrontation may also have contributed to Egypt's withdrawal from the Levant. However, it should be noted that while Egypt was certainly mentioned elsewhere by Shalmaneser III, this particular occurrence is uncertain, for the toponym *Muṣri* may refer to other polities in Syria our the southern Levant. See discussions in Yamada 2000: 158 n.281 and n.282. But I have discussed above under "Designation of foreign rulers: Urartu and others" the designations of Egyptian kings ("king of Egypt" vs. "The Egyptian") in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. I have observed that the rarity with which the Egyptian ruler is called "the Egyptian" may diminish the probability that Egypt is referred to in the Battle at Qarqar.

544; text no. 162 main text line 15).

With regard to the Levant, specific reference to "restraining the Asiatics" is found in a passage on the door frame of the Kawa hypostyle hall (MacAdam 1955, pl. XI cited in Ritner 2009: 526-27). In what way does this imperial claim over the Levant reflect historical reality? We learn from biblical about Egypt's renewed interest in the southern Levant. For instance, Hoshea, king of Israel, who conspired with So', king of Egypt[485] in around 724 BCE, three years before the fall of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:4). Another example is Tirhaqa (identifiable with Taharqa), king of Kush, who seems to have sent troops to the Levant against the Assyrians during Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem (701 BCE; 2 Kings 19:9; Isa 37:9).[486] In Neo-Assyrian sources (e.g. RINAP 3 Sennacherib 015, iii 8'-25'; RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 34, line 12'), Nubian/Egyptian intervention in Levantine affairs was also attested, although it did not seem to be successful in the long term and eventually incurred the Assyrian invasion and occupation of Egypt proper (Taylor 2000: 332; 352-354).

D. The Pharaoh as the "Lord of Kings" in the Levant in the late 7th century

Under the reign of Psammetichus I and Necho II in the late 7th century, with the decline of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Egypt sought imperial expansion in the Levant once again, a period well-documented or indirectly reflected in various sources, including the Hebrew

[485] On the identification of So' see Goedicke 1963, Day 1992 (both identify So' with Tefnakhte who ruled at Sais, hence the name So' due to confusion) and Shea 1992, who identifies So' with Piye (Peh confused with Samekh in the later Hebrew script), who was the more powerful ruler in Egypt. See most recently T. Schneider 2018, who also identifies So' with Piye, on the basis of the reading of the name as "Adramelech, the Ethiopian who lived in Egypt" in the Antiochian textual tradition.

[486] The purpose and motives of Taharqa's intervention in the southern Levant has been a topic of scholarly debate, with some scholars assigning Egyptian policy in the Levant in this period to expansionism while others to commercial interest. In a recent review of the issue, Pope analyzed in detail relevant sources and scholarly proposals and concludes that Taharqa 's Levantine policy has to be studied beyond the Egyptian rivalry with Assyria and placed in the context of the 25th Dynasty's overall political and economic policies, including economic interests and issues of legitimacy in the Nubian heartland. He argues that the Levant was important for the Nubian Kings primarily for economic reasons, including resources such as timber and trade routes. Egyptian intervention, often defensive in nature and moderate in degree, was carried out for the purpose of assuring supplies of needed goods and the security of major trade routs rather than territorial expansion. J. Pope 2014.

Bible (Book of Kings, Chronicles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel etc.), Hebrew Ostraca (the Mousaieff Ostraca, for references see Schipper 2011:281-82, n. 90) and the Babylonian Chronicles etc. The rivalry between the rising power of Babylonia and that of Egypt, which attempted to help the now failing Assyrian Empire, drew the Levantine polities (including Judah) into a precarious situation as a buffer zone sandwiched between major powers (as during the Amarna Period), a situation, if not properly handled, could have resulted in serious strategic fallacy on the small polity's side (See Malamat 2001a for a detailed analysis of the international relations of Judah in this period; Cf. Relevant chapters in Breier 2000: 239-312, especially 286-97).

While in Egypt's eyes the vassal system of Levantine polities may have primarily served the kingdom's economic interests (e.g. control of trade routes in southern Judah, ports in Philistia, etc.; receipt of tribute, see Schipper 2011:281-82), the local polities may have expected to receive Egyptian support during military confrontations in exchange for their service and loyalty (cf. Malamat 2001a, Schipper 2011:283; T.G.H. James 1991: 714-20). This mentality is best reflected in a letter written by a certain Levantine King Adon[487] to the Egyptian Pharaoh (end of the 7th century), asking Egypt to send troops against Babylonian invasion (line 4, Porten 1981: 36). The phraseology and terminology demonstrate the nature of the imperial system current in the Levant and the vassal's perception of the relationship. Consider two lines from the preserved portions of the papyrus, for example:

"To Lord of Kings (*mrʾ mlkn*) Pharaoh, your servant (*ʿbdk*) Adon, king of (*mlk*)... (line 1)... your servant preserved his good relations (*wṭbth ʿbdk nṣr*, line 8).

[487] Identified as the king of the Philistine city-state Ekron by Porten. See Porten 1981.

Here the Pharaoh is addressed as "Lord of Kings", a title, as recognized by Porten, that designated Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal in Assyrian royal correspondence ("*bēl šarrāni*", e.g. SAA 16 127, 1; SAA 21 115, 1; 144, o10'; Porten 1981: 45). As in the case of the powerful Assyrian kings, the terminology in this letter pictures Egypt as the supreme overlord in the hierarchy, a position further demonstrated by the author's self-designation "your servant". In addition, the term "good relations" (*ṭbh*) might refer to a formal treaty signed by the two sides,[488] according to which the Levantine polity's loyalty and cooperation in trade and other economic affairs were expected, at least in Adon's understanding, to be repaid by Egyptian military protection.

From this cursory overview of historical, archaeological and most importantly, terminological evidence, it can be concluded that although Egypt's strength was much reduced in the Iron Age, it still exerted imperial influence in the southern Levant sporadically, when local polities and other external powers experienced periods of internal turmoil and instability. Moreover, Egypt and its client polities in the Iron Age also employed terminologies and epithets explicitly presenting Egypt as a dominant power in the international system ("lord of kings"; a power that subdues "all foreign lands").

2. From the north: Urartu and Phrygia

A. Urartu: the Universal Empire from the Northeast

(1) "king of the Universe": Urartu as a universal empire and its interference in Northern Levant

[488] Cf. Sefire Face I C 4-5 (if the Lamedh is to be construed as a *nota accusativi*, as interpreted by Fitzmyer 1995), particularly Face II B 2, where *ṭbh* is juxtaposed with ʿdy. For secondary scholarship on the possible meaning of ṭbh as a concrete treaty, see Fitzmyer 1995: 116-117. For Akkadian parallels, see examples in CAD Ṭ p16-p17, Ṭābtu B b, where the word is used in parallel with terms denoting treaty or oath.

The northern region of the Levant, mostly Neo-Hittite states in northern Syria and Southern Anatolia and some Aramean states further to the South, became targets of expansions of first Urartian and then Phrygian powers in the 8th century. Urartu possibly adopted an imperial policy already in the 9th century, when Sarduri I employed imperial tutelary resembling contemporaneous Neo-Assyrian terminologies adopted by Assyrian rulers like Ashurnasirpal II, such as "Great King", "king of the universe" and "king who has no equal".[489] While some of the epithets were later dropped, "Great King" was preserved alongside "king of kings", "king of lands" in later ruler's inscriptions (Zimansky 1985: 50-53). As in the Assyrian case, gods (particularly Haldi) are depicted as a major actors in Urartu's imperial ideology with the human king as the agent. The god Haldi is described as fighting on behalf of Urartu in the royal inscriptions, with such phrases as "Haldi departs with his lance", "Haldi is victorious", "the lance of Haldi is victorious", etc. Although the Urartian state centered on the vicinity of Lake Van, its sphere of influence extended both northwards and southwards.

In the latter case, Urartian imperial expansion into Southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria brought itself into direct conflict with the Neo-Assyrian Empire, whose expansionist policy in the West also reached a new, more intensive level in mid- 8th century BCE (see Zimansky 1985: 53-60 for Urartian conquests; see Çifçi 2017: 161-62 for Urartian influence on Neo-Hittite states in northern Syria). It is apparently the strategic role of some northern Syrian states (e.g. Carchemish) on the trade routes that attracted Urartu's attention, although no concrete material evidence supporting Urartian control over the Northern port of Al Mina

[489] For the relationship between Urartian writing and Assyrian writing and that between Urartian and Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and the possibility that the Urartian ones follow the Neo-Assyrian model, see Zimansky 2007:265-66 followed by Machinist 2007.

has been found (Çifçi 2017: 161). Whatever the motive for southwestwards expansion, between 780-743 BCE Urartu seems to have exerted considerable influence upon some Neo-Hittite and Aramean polities to the West of the Euphrates in Southern Turkey and northern Syria, e.g. Kummuh (Qumaḫa in Urartian sources), Gurgum, Malatya[490], Que, Hamath and further south in the Aramean polity of Arpad (Bīt Agūsī). Neo-Hittite lands in Tabal were also under Urartian influence (Çifçi 2017: 162; 267-68).

(2) Tribute, submission and annexation: Terminologies of Urartian imperialism in Northern Levant

Urartian dominance over Neo-Hittite kingdoms was established through military conquests that were usually accompanied by the payment of tribute. Minua (early 9th century) already recounts in an inscription (CTU A 5-5) that he received tributes (*meše-*) from the the King (MAN) of Miliṭia in his campaigns in the Lands of Ṣupa and Ḫate (Malatya). A key question is whether the payment of tribute implies long-term vassalage in northern Syria and Southeastern Turkey. Çifçi (2017:268) distinguishes one-time surrender tribute, which functioned as a symbolic gift, from annual tribute which "provided the imperial power with the economic bases". Çifçi points out that annual tribute is attested in only two cases in Urartian royal inscriptions, one in northwestern Anatolia, the other in modern day Armenia. In northern Syria and southeastern Turkey, which fall into "the Levant" in the broader sense, only surrender tribute has been attested. Yet the content of the tribute, listed for instance in the account of the conquest of Kummuh (Qumaha) by Sarduri II (A 9-3 IV lines 54'-56'),

[490] The region in which the city Miliṭia (with the determinative URU) is located is called the Land of Ḫate (with the determinative KUR) in Urartian texts (see for example, CTU A 5-5 lines 11, 16). See Kroll, Gruber, Hellwag, Roaf and Zimansky 2012: 15.

indicates that the economic impact of such one-time tributes cannot be underestimated[491] (Çifçi 2017: 268-73).

Yet there are signs that Urartian military activities were not always meant to be one-time raids. In the context of the payment of tribute one often finds reference to terminologies suggestive of the small polity's subservient status in relation to the conqueror. A typical expression has to do with prostration and "embracing the feet" of the conqueror, a term widely used in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and attested in Osorkon II's stela discussed above, e.g. "Hilaruada (king of Miliția) prostrated himself before me (Sarduri II) and embraced (my) feet" (CTU A 9-4 lines 23-24, "^{m}*ḫi-la-ru-a-da-ni ka-u-ki-e su-lu-uš-ti-i-bi šá-tú-a-li ku-ri-e-li*" before mid- 8th century BCE). A similar expression is "to cast the land before...", which Salvini translates as "to cast the land before the feet of...", e.g. "He (the god Haldi) cast the land (Qumaha) before Sarduri (II), son of Argishti" (KUR-*ni te-qu-ni* ^{mD}*sar$_5$-du-ri-ka-i* ^{m}*ar-giš-ti-ḫi-ni-e*, CTU A 9-3 IV lines 37'-38' before mid- 8th century BCE). In both cases the imposition of tribute is eventually mentioned (CTU A 9-4 line 26; A 9-3 IV lines 54'-56').

While such phrases employ common Near Eastern imperial terminologies depicting the surrender of certain polities to the conqueror, they do not in themselves indicate a long-term vassal status. Yet additional information seems to confirm the abiding effects of Sarduri II's imperial expansion in this region. In the case of Miliția, nine fortresses (É.GAL^{MEŠ}) of Miliția were annexed by Urartu ("I annexed to my land" *a-bi-li-du-bi* ^{KUR}*e-ba-ni<-ú>-ki-di*, CTU A 9-4 line 27). Qumaha, more interestingly, is possibly referred to as being "rebellious" which

[491] The tribute on Kummuh includes 40 mina of gold, 800 mina of silver, 3000 garments, 2000 bronze shields, 1535 bronze cups.

indicates that, at least from Urartu's perspective, Qumaha should have remained loyal, even though no treaty or oath is mentioned. In CTU A 9-3 IV two campaigns against Qumaha are mentioned.[492] After Qumaha was defeated the first time, Kushtashpi, king of Qumaha is perhaps called a "rebel"[493] ("...was a rebel" *a-ni-ia-ar-du-ni ma-nu* CTU A 9-3 IV line 42'a). This translation seems to fit the following sentence that "no other king went to campaign there" (*ú-i a-i-ni-i* MAN *is-ti-ni uš-tú-ri* line 42'b-43'a), indicating that no other polity joined Qumaha's rebellion. It is also noteworthy that after the conquest of a few "royal towns" (URU MAN-*nu-si*; see parallels in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions) of Qumaha, Kushtashpi is said to come to Sarduri II's presence and "cast himself before me (Sarduri II)" again (line 53'), and only then was a substantial tribute imposed upon Qumaha (lines 54'-56'). These details suggest that Urartian influence on the Neo-Hittite states in northern Syria and southeastern Turkey was not manifest in one-time raids but rather, planned imperial expansion with long-term goals toward establishing a relationship not to be easily subverted. In any case, after Qumaha's rebellion met with Urartian crackdown, stronger loyalty was likely demanded by the Urartian overlord.[494]

Sarduri II also tightened control of regions adjacent to these two newly subjugated states by installing a governor (^{LÚ}EN.NAM) in charge of the province (lit. "land" ^{KUR}*ebani*) that

---

[492] Alternatively, the first reference to the defeat of Qumaha may be a summary of the following lengthier description. In either case, Qumaha is called a "rebel" which presupposes the long-term vassal status of the polity.

[493] The meaning of the word is uncertain. Salvini translates it as "...era rubello" in CTU A 9-3 IV line 50'. Salvini 2008: 426. Çifçi notes that Salvini translates the term as "vassal" which he prefers to Diakonoff's "sinner" or "guilty" (Dianokoff 1989:94). However, Salvini's translation in CTU is "rubello" rather than "vassal". In fact, as I will point out, "rebel" or "sinner" would fit the context better. See Çifçi 2017:270 n.307.

[494] Tadmor suggests that Kushtashpi's underlying loyalty had always remained with Assyria, since he appeared at the first position of all lists of tribute bearers in Tiglath-pileser III's royal inscriptions, which Tadmor interprets as a sign that Kummuh consistently recognized Assyria's overlordship. Tadmor 2007: 266. One wonders whether his latent allegiance to Assyria, i.e. not rebellious against Assyria, prompted Sarduri II to call him a "rebel" from the Urartian perspective. However, in the inscriptions Kushtashpi was mentioned alongside Sarduri and other Neo-Hittite rulers as trying to capture and plunder (*ka-šá-di šá-la-li*) Assyrian territory (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47 obv. Line 46), which is hardly an act of loyalty. Perhaps Kummuh paid tributes to both Urartu and Assyria, which ignited suspicion on both sides. At one moment Urartian control was strong in northern Syria, so that Kushtashpi had no choice but participate in the anti-Assyrian coalition.

extends "all the way to" (*pari*) the City of Miliția and the City of Qumaha (CTU A 9-18 lines 8-9; see discussion on Urartian provincial administration in this region in Çifçi 2017: 205-09; see also Zimansky 1985: 77-94). Therefore, Sarduri II seems to have pursued a long-term imperial policy to strengthen Urartian control of the northern Levant.

(3) Two great powers clash in the West: Tiglath-pileser III and Sarduri II

Urartu's activities the southwest were facilitated by temporary internal crises in Assyria which suspended the latter's Western expansions in the early half of the 8th century. With Assyria focusing on domestic problems, Urartu's influence extended further south to Aramean polities. Urartu formed alliance with Arpad and, together with a series of Neo-Hittite kingdoms including Miliția and Qumaha, Urartu and Arpad clashed with Assyria which revived its expansion in the West in 743, the 3rd regnal year of Tiglath-pileser III.[495] While Urartian domination over some of the Neo-Hittite states is demonstrated by Urartian royal inscriptions, there is no clear reason to suppose that Arpad became its client state. In one of Tiglath-pileser III's inscription it is Mati^{ʕ}el king of Arpad who is described as the mastermind of the "rebellion" who "fomented a rebellious insurrection (*bar-˹tu na˺-bal-kat-tú*) against Assyria" and supposedly "violated" (*ú-ḫa-˹ṭa˺-[a]*) the oath (broken) by collaborating with Neo-Hittite states and Urartu and causing "enmity against Assyria (*ze-rat* ^{KUR}*aš-˹šur˺*) in all the lands"[496] (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35 col. i line 21'-27'), This picture seems to be compatible with the rise of Arpad among northern Syrian states, not the least revealed by its relationship to "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties with KTK (see Chapter 4; see Kahn

[495] The Urartian-North Syrian alliance which controlled eastern and western trade routes certainly caused severe problems with the economy of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. See Winter 1973 cited in Frankenstein 1979: 271, n. 16.

[496] Perhaps hinting at the treaty between Aššur-nērārī V and Mati^{ʕ}el. See SAA 2 2.

2007).[497]

Sarduri II, by contrast, is listed together with Neo-Hittite rulers without any differentiation in power and title (all are addressed collectively as LUGAL in line 22' and individually with the *nisbe* form, i.e. "the Urarian"). In another inscription, Sarduri II is said to have "revolted" against Assyria (*it-ti-ia* BAL-*ma*) and "conspired (*iš-ku-na pi-i-šú*) with Mati^{ʕ}el". Here Sarduri II is again written with the *nisbe* form without a separate royal title (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39 lines 20b-21). Although the implications of these terminologies cannot be determined with certainty,[498] it suffices to point out that Urartu is not depicted as Arpad's overlord in Assyrian sources.[499] Instead, both are singled out as the leaders of the anti-Assyrian campaigns in northern Syria in 743 BCE.[500] In sum, during Sarduri II's reign Urartu successfully extended its control to northern Syria at the expense of local Neo-Hittite kingdoms as well as Assyria. Though no vassals of Urartu are found in Syria, its emergence in the northern Levant still reshaped the international scene, culminating

[497] The internal problems in Assyria apparently facilitated the growth of local polities like Arpad as well as distant powers like Urartu. Aššur-nērārī V, who signed a vassal treaty with Arpad later to be violated, is reported defeated by Sarduri II in a battle. See CTU A 9-1.

[498] At least Urartu never appears in Tiglath-pileser III's lists of tributaries, although Sarduri II's defeat in battle is recounted in detail. Tiglath-pileser III also mentions the erection of his royal image in front of the city Turushpa, which is "his (Sarduri II's) city". See RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser 39 line 24a. Na'aman has pointed out that the erection of royal images with symbols of gods in palaces and temples of vassal kingdoms is well-documented. Yamada, followed by Na'aman, suggests that royal images as well as symbols of the gods served as divine witnesses on the occasion of swearing an oath, either in a legal context or in the establishment of vassalage. (Yamada 2000: 296-97; Na'aman 2004:57) In our case, the erection of only the royal image is mentioned, without reference to Assyrian gods (contrast the example of Gaza, Na'aman 2004:56), which situation is attested elsewhere, too (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser 17 line 8, in newly conquered lands and cities in the East). However, Urartu's case might have been an exception to Yamada's otherwise convincing proposal, for Urartu is not mentioned as a tribute bearer, nor is any submissive gesture (e.g. "to seize my feet") mentioned in addition to the defeat inflicted upon the land. Therefore one should not assume that an oath was taken in the present case. More importantly, Urartu certainly continued to pose a major threat on different frontiers of the Assyrian Empire (including Neo-Hittite states in the West), which way surpasses any expected behavior of a vassal.

[499] Dupont-Sommer suggests that the Sefire Treaties may be related to the insurrection organized against Assyria which is supported by Urartu. But he does not go so far as to equate Sarduri II with Bar-Ga'yah in the Sefire Treaties. (see Dupont-Sommer 1949: 56-59; contra Fitzmyer's citation in Fitzmyer 1995: 59). In any case, Dupont-sommer does detect the connection between Arpad's coalition with Urartu and other polities with the Sefire Treaties. But it should be noted that while "all Aram" is mentioned as one of the parties of the treaty, the polities in the Urartu and Arpad led coalition are Neo-Hittite states.

[500] The eponym of 743 BCE is "The land Urartu [was defea]ted at the city Arpad." (SAAS 2; cited in RINAP 1 p17) although according to the inscriptions Sarduri II was defeated in the Lands of Kištan and Ḫalpa, districts of the city of Kummuh (cf. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39 lines 21-22.

its collaboration with the rising Arpad against the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

(4) Epilogue

Urartian influence in the West did not disappear completely after the defeat in 743 BCE, although it was substantially weakened (see W. Mayer 2011: 44-45). Urartu apparently collaborated with Que, Assyria's vassal in Southern Anatolia (see SAA 01 001). In Sargon II's 9th regnal year (714 BCE) Ambaris (Amris) king of Tabal and Hilakku, Sargon's son-in-law whom Sargon enthroned as a client king of Tabal (Bīt Burutaš), enraged Sargon by secretly sending messengers to Rusa I (Ursā in Assyrian sources) of Urartu (^{I}*Ur-sa-a* ^{KUR}URI-*a-a*) and Midas king of Phrygia (^{I}*Mi-ta-a šar*$_4$ ^{KUR}*Mu-us-ki*), and plotting with these two powers to seize Sargon's territory (*e-ke-me mi-iṣ-ri-ia*). Sargon II exacted revenge by deporting Ambaris, his family and nobles as well as his chariots to Assyria, settling Assyrians in Tabal and installing a eunuch as a governor (EN.NAM)[501] over the people, on whom he also imposed tribute and duties (GUN *ma-da-at-tu*) (Fuchs 1994: 199-200 text Prunk 29-32). In the 10th regnal year of Sargon II, Urartian and Phrygian intervention with the western frontiers of the Neo-Assyrian Empire prompted him to establish strongholds near Til-Garimmu (in central Anatolia, north of Syria) to fend off the southward intrusions of the two powers (Fuchs 1994:127-28; text Ann. 217-219). Later in the 14th regnal year of Sargon II, Muttallu, ruler of Kummuhu/Qamaha, is recounted, from the Assyrian perspective, to have broken the gods' oath (*zik-ri* DINGIR.MEŠ) and put his trust in the Urartian king Argishti (Son of Rusa I) (UGU ^{I}*Ar-giš-ti šàr* KUR *Ur-ar-ṭi...it-ta-kil-ma*), which provoked Sargon II

[501] An Assyrian overseer (a chief eunuch) was already installed in Tabal by Tiglath-pileser III together with the enthronement of Ḫullî (Ambaris' father) RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47 Rev. 14'-15'. Whether the explicit labeling of the new Assyrian overseer as a "governor" after Ambaris' attempt to establish contact with Urartu and Phrygia reveals a different phase in provincialization requires further study. Interestingly, at both phases tributes are extracted from Tabal, although in the earlier case the tribute is called with a different term, *tāmartu* ("an audience gift" RINAP Tiglath-pileser III 49 Rev. Line 28, partly restored). Whether this marks any distinction of status also needs further exploration.

to annex his kingdom and reorganize it as a province with a governor (Fuchs 1994: 222-224; Text Prunk 112-117). This episode again reveals the relatively strong ties between Qumaha/Kummuh and Urartu in the latter half of the 8th century. Finally, in the early 7th century Urartu would still conduct military activities in western regions, slightly north of the Levant. For instance, Rusa II (a contemporary of Esarhaddon, Ursā in Assyrian sources, ca. 670 BCE) mentions the deportation and resettlement of foreigners including Assyrians, Phrygians and the Neo-Hittite Tabaleans in CTU A 12-1 VI lines 10-11. However, the southern limit of Urartu's influence on the West had apparently been moved northwards by then.

B. A brief note on Phrygia as an external power in Northern Levant

Finally, a few words can be said about Phrygia's role as an Anatolian power exerting influence on the northern regions of the Levant. Phrygia in the second half of the 8th century became a competitive rival of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the Northwest and exerted influence in such Western (from Assyria's perspective) polities as Tabal and Que, as I have discussed above. Sargon II recounts in his inscriptions that in his 5th regnal year Pisiri, ruler of Carchemish, violated the "oath of the great gods" (*i-na a-de-e* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *iḫ-ṭi-i-ma* Fuchs 1994, p93; text Ann. 72) and sent words causing "enmity against Assyria" (*ze-ra-a-ti* ^{KUR}*aš-šur*^{KI}, text Ann. 73) to Midas "king (LUGAL) of the Land of Phrygia" (text Ann. 73). Carchemish was severely punished, with the ruler, the nobility, treasures, chariots and troops deported to Assyria. Sargon settled Assyrians in the Carchemish and placed on them "the Yoke of Aššur" (*ni-ir* ^{D}*Aššur*^{KI}) (Text Ann. 76). The ties between Carchemish in northern Syria and Phrygia reveal that Phrygian influence on international politics extended

to the far south from its center in central Anatolia. In addition, at some point Midas captured three fortress towns of Que, which was reclaimed by Sargon II in his 7th regnal year (715 BCE)[502] (Fuchs 1994:109-10; text Ann. 119-120). By that time these towns had been occupied by Midas "since the distant past"(*ul-tu* UD.MEŠ *ru-qu-ú-ti*; Ann. 126, here only two towns are mentioned by name), revealing the relatively abiding influence of Phrygia in southern Anatolia near Syria. In this context Sargon II mentions defeating Midas twice "in his broad district" (*i-na na-gi-šu rap-še* Ann 125), which demonstrates the vast scale of Midas' powerful kingdom and the threat it posed to Assyria.

The defeat on the battlefield did not put an end to Phrygian influence. In the 10th regnal year of Sargon II, Tarhunazi of Meliddu (the modern site of Arslantepe; 170 km north of the Syrian border) also broke its oath with Assyria by possibly establishing ties with Midas, which incurred Assyrian destruction of his land (Fuchs 1994: 125-28; text Ann. 204b-221).

[502] This is the first direct act of hostility between Assyria and Phrygia recorded in Sargon II's inscriptions. Lanfranchi suggests that, since in SAA 1 01 Sargon II was very delighted as Midas' sign of friendliness "without a battle or anything" (line 8), the letter was composed before the battle in 715 BCE. (Contra Saggs 1958; Postgate 1973: 33-34) Following other scholars, Lanfranchi dates the provincialization of Que in 715 BCE, which prompts him to argue that the installation of the Assyrian governor who wrote to Sargon II occurred in the same year, exactly because Urik's ties with Urartu had been discovered. Therefore, Lanfranchi believes that Midas' act of friendliness was done right before the battle in 715 in which three towns of Que, which had been annexed by Phrygia between 718-715, were seized by Sargon II. So the sequence of events according to Lanfranchi is as follows: 1. Urik sent an embassy to Urartu, which was discovered by Assyria; 2. Punishment of Urik and the installation of the governor (together with the provincialization of Que; which he dates to 715 BCE); 3. Midas sent Urik's embassy (somehow in his hands) to the newly installed Assyrian governor as a friendly act (later in 715 BCE); 4. The governor notified Sargon II and the composition of SAA 1 1; 5. Changes in the political situation triggered the battle in which three towns were seized by Sargon II (he follows other scholars in suggesting that SAA 1 1 was never sent due to rapid developments in international politics). The motive of Midas' friendly act was to avoid the further tightening of Assyrian control over Que. Lanfranchi 1988.

The assumption of this reconstruction is that no mixed rule ever existed in Que and that the installation of the governor is a result of Urik's independent diplomatic policy in 715 BCE. For the issue of mixed rule, I will discuss further below. For the moment other factors can be considered. 1. Sargon II mentions in his annals that the three towns of Que which were captured in 715 by Assyria had been seized by Phrygia "in the distant past". (Fuchs 1994: 110; Ann. 126) This seems to contradict Lanfranchi's reconstruction that the three towns were annexed by Phrygia less than 3 years before the battle. If so, his hypothesis is also weakened that the capture of the towns forced Que to defect to Phrygia and Urartu, for Urik had remained a loyal vassal of Assyria in the past decades (cf. Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions and the Çineköy inscription). So the reason for Urik's eventual anti-Assyrian behavior has to be sought elsewhere, and it may have been caused, as Bryce suggests, by the appointment of Assyrian governor in charge of the region, in which case, some sort of mixed ruled possibly existed. See Bryce 2012;287. 2. Midas' sending of Que's embassy must have been a valuable act that truly reflects its "sincerity" in establishing friendly ties with Assyria. Hence Sargon II's excitement. If so, revealing the conspiracy before the Assyrians discovered it on their own would have been more logical and more conducive to such an effect; 3. Assyria's annexation of Carchemish in 717 BCE could already serve as a motive for Phrygia to the allay possible Assyrian hostility towards Midas, who was involved in Carchemish's rebellion. In sum, it is still not impossible that the governor had been established before Urik sought ties with Urartu. It does not need to be assumed that the governor was dispatched only after the rebellious act, although further punishment is guaranteed.

Phrygian influence on the western frontiers of the Assyrian Empire perhaps abated after the defeat of Midas by the Assyrian governor of Que in the 12th regnal year of Sargon II and the submission of Phrygia in the following year:[503] "he sent me his messenger to do obeisance and carry tribute and gift (*e-peš ar-du-ti ù na-še-e bil-ti* IGI.SÁ-*e*)" (Fuchs 1994: 171-75; 234-35 Text Ann. 385-393; Prunk 150-153a).[504] This description of complete Phrygian submission to Assyrian overlordship, of course, reflects Sargon II's perspective and could be propagandistic in nature. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, at least according to Sargon II's inscriptions and chronicles, Phrygia never again appeared as a threat to Assyria's northwestern frontiers[505] (see also Lanfranchi 1988 and Muscarella 1998 for Phrygian conflicts with Assyria surrounding Neo-Hittite polities).

The Mesoptamian empire and the Levantine periphery: expansion and limits

Unlike the cases of Egypt, Urartu and Phrygia, one hardly needs to glean information from sporadic records bearing for Mesopotamian imperial expansion into the Levant. Quite the contrary, in comparison with Egypt and Urartu, Mesopotamian empires, particularly the Neo-Assyrian Empire, have bequeathed to us by far the most extensive sources bearing on

---

[503] Fuchs sees no causality between the defeat of Phrygia by an Assyrian governor and his friendly gesture and considers the passage a later stylistic composition in the royal inscription. Fuchs 1994: 463. He bases his argument on the assumption that SAA 01 01 was written after the battle between the governor and Phrygia in Sargon II's 12th regnal year, in which Sargon II apparently does not link Phrygia's friendly gesture with their defeat on the battlefield. However, the event described in the letter need to be the same one celebrated in the inscriptions. It would be rather odd that not any detail of Midas' sending of gifts (whether they are to be labeled tribute) was mentioned, given its similar significance to that of sending rebels, if not more, if the two documents referred to the same event, unless the content of the inscription is completely fabricated. See also Postgate 1973 and Lanfranchi 1988.

[504] It is noteworthy that "*ana epēš ardūti*" occurs elsewhere in Sargon II's inscriptions together with "to seize my feet", which phrase is widely used in the context of submission and possibly recognition of the Assyrian king as the master: Fuchs 1994: 151-52; text Ann. 298-301. This passage reports the conquest of two Jadburu towns (Aramean tribes) on the border with Elam. After the town leaders brought tribute and "sezied my feet to do obeisance" (*a-na e-pe[š]*$^{!}$ *ar-du-t[i] iṣ-ba-t{u}* GÌR^{1}-*ia*), the towns were annexed into Assyrian territory. (*a-na mi-ṣ[ir-{ia}]*) Of course, the exact meaning of the latter phrase with regard to change of status and its different possibilities should also be further investigated. The significance of this phrase used in the context of a former power's relationship with Assyria, despite the propagandistic nature of royal inscriptions, should not be underestimated.

[505] Fuchs observes that in the 14th regnal year of Sargon II, one year after Phrygia's submissive gesture, Kummuh conspires with only Urartu but not with Phrygia in its anti-Assyrian activities. (Fuchs 1994: 464.) For possible Phrygian presence in Tuwana, in the southern Tabalian region, and the possibility that Phrygia exercised overlordship over this Luwian state after Sargon II's death in 705 BCE, see Bryce 2012:150-52.

the relationship and interaction between the universal empire and smaller polities in the Levant roughly between the 9th and the 6th centuries. Different modes of operation were at work at different stages of the extension of Mesopotamian imperial mechanisms in the Levant, from military campaigns, the subjugation of tributary vassals, the oppression of repeated revolts to the provincialization of former states. These topics have been extensively studied by scholars and are at least indirectly touched upon elsewhere in the present study.[506] Here I am more interested in the spread of the imperial order in the Levantine periphery and its reception by the Levantine polities. The establishment of Neo-Assyrian imperial order is realized by means of imperial institutions and the accompanying imperial ideology. Imperial ideology will be analyzed at length in the following two sections, from the imperial and the Levantine perspectives respectively; in this section I will briefly survey a few microscopic examples of the limits and setbacks faced by imperial institutions and the imperial authority in general in relation to local Levantine polities.

1. Levantine polities vying for interests with the empire

The peripheral polity in the face of the overwhelming imperial system may still maintain considerable ability to compete with the empire for control over trade, resources and other economic gains. In a group of undated letters from Itti-Šamaš-balaṭu, an Assyrian official stationed in Phoenicia,[507] he reports that the Yakīn-Lû, the ruler of Arwad,[508] has attempted

[506] On a recent overview of the Assyrian Empire and the West, see Bagg 2017:268-73. For a more detailed analysis of Assyrian expansion in and imperial administration of the West see Bagg 2011:187-308; for a structural analysis of the Assyrian Empire in the Levant see Lamprichs 1995:49-408. For Assyrian policies in the West, see Berlejung 2012.

For the administration Assyrian provinces in southern Levant, see Zilberg 2018. For the Archaeological records of southern Levant under Assyrian domination, see Faust 2018: 20-55.

For the interaction between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the West, biblical accounts (the concluding chapters of 2 Kings; Jeremiah) offer us historical narratives of the empire's conquest of the West from the periphery's perspective. Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions offer us indirect evidence about imperial activities in the West. See Da Riva 2012 and Chapter 5.

[507] It has been suggested that in the Neo-Assyrian imperial system Phoenician city-states preserved a high level of autonomy due to its status as a specialized area in trade and the local manufacturing industry of goods needed in Assyria. See

to monopolize maritime trade at the expense of imperial economic benefits. I will further discuss certain terminologies in the letters below. Here it suffices to quote the passage in the letter that describes the Arwadite ruler's bold behavior, which occurs ironically after the official's flattering reference to the submission of all lands "(f)rom where the sun rises to where it sets before the feet of the king, my lord" by the hand of Šamaš (SAA 16 127, lines o10-o12):

The king, my lord, knows the nature of the land where the king, my lord, placed me. Ikkilû (= Yakīn-Lû, here spelled differently) does not let the boats come up to the port of the king, my lord, but has turned the whole trade for himself. He provides for anyone who comes to him, but kills anyone who docks at the Assyrian harbour, and steals his boat. He claims: "They have written to me from the palace: 'Do only what is good for you!'" (lines o13-o23).

Since the letter is undated, it is uncertain what the relationship was between Arwad and the Neo-Assyrian Empire when the letter was sent. Whether dated to the late reign of Esarhaddon or to Ashurbanipal (see Elayi 1983:50-53), it appears that Arwad's encroachment of Assyria's interests most likely predates Ashurbanipal's subjugation of Yakīn-Lû "who had not bowed down to the kings, my ancestors" (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, ii 64), since no reference to the revolt of Arwad is recounted in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. Indeed, after the death of Yakīn-Lû, his sons, as loyal vassals, appealed for Ashurbanipal's intervention with the succession (Ashurbanipal 3, ii 75-86a; Elayi 1983:51). One can thus propose that when

---

Frankenstein 1979: 271. As we will see, this policy may also reflect the empire's inability to control all the trade coming through Phoenician states, as the peripheral polity may be able to monopolize trade at the expense of the Assyrian Empire. Phoenician states also maintained trade relations with other polities in the region in the late 8th and 7th century, particularly coastal city-states in Philistia, but also Judah. See L. Singer-Avitz 2018:186-215.

[508] None of his letters are dated. J. Elayi, perhaps on account of relevant passages in Ashurbanipal's annals referring to the submission of Arwad, assumes that the figure was active during Ashurbanipal's reign and that the recipient of letters is Ashurbanipal. Elayi 1983:50-53. Luukko and Van Buylaere date his letters to the latter years of the reign of Esarhaddon on the basis of a portion of a treaty quoted in SAA 16 126. See below.

Yakīn-Lû's monopoly of trade occurred, Arwad had not been formally incorporated into the Neo-Assyrian Empire, perhaps not even as a regular vassal. If this is the case, then what further complicates the issue is the apparently close connections the Levantine ruler has maintained within Assyria. Although the identification of the "they" at the end of the passage quoted above who had written from "the palace" is unclear, one wonders if they could be some of the "many in the entourage of the king (^{LÚ}*man-za-za pa-ni ša* LUGAL EN-*ia*)...who have invested silver in this house" (lines r7-r8). Therefore, Arwad at this moment should best be understood as a Levantine polity right on the boundary the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which has managed to collaborate with "insiders" at the center of the empire in favor of its own economic interests. The degree of autonomy and indeed, insolence, with which it acts towards the empire despite the formal authority of the Neo-Assyrian Empire over this periphery polity, vividly reveals that full control over the Levantine periphery was sometimes more the ideal than the reality even when the universal empire was at its peak.

2. The issue of "mixed rule"

Just as in the case of other empires throughout history, Mesopotamian universal empires often chose to rely on existing local political elites, particularly the local ruler himself, for the operation and administration of peripheral regions. However, the feasibility of this strategy was often threatened by different factors, including the deposition of the pro-imperial ruler or governor (appointed from the locals) by other political forces in the peripheral region[509] and the widely attested revolts of local rulers who, often in coalition with other client rulers, aspired to restore political autonomy. The challenge to the established imperial order would

[509] E.g. the "governors, nobles and people of Ekron" who deposed Padî, king of Ekron (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4, 42) and Gedaliah, governor of Judah, who was appointed by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and then murdered by Ishmael son of Nethaniah (2 Kgs 25:25; Jer 41:1-3)

certainly have incurred retaliation of the empire, which often resulted in either the restoration of the loyal local ruler or, more likely, the appointment of a governor dispatched from the imperial center to exercise direct rule.[510] Interestingly, under certain circumstances one finds traces for possible mixed rule in the periphery, i.e. the simultaneous presence of both a local dynasty and a governor sent from the imperial center. A good example in the southern Levant has been discussed by M. Cogan (1993:407-08), that is, Ashdod during the reigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib. After its conquest by Sargon II, he appointed an Assyrian administrator (*šūt rēši*) over Ashdod and its newly settled foreign peoples. However, after a decade Mitinti, a king of Ashdod, is recorded to have paid homage to Sennacherib. Cogan concludes that after its formal incorporation into the empire, Ashdod was allowed to reinstate a king, "who reigned alongside the Assyrian governor" until 669 BCE, when Šamaš-kāšid-ayyābi, governor of Ashdod, served as eponym, while Ahimilki was king of Ashdod.

Now let us turn to a less certain example in the northern Levant. I have briefly discussed the possibility of mixed rule in Que prior to Urik/Warikas's attempt to establish ties with Urartu (SAA 01 01), which likelihood is upheld by some scholars (e.g. Bryce 2012:284-85) yet doubted by others (e.g. Lanfranchi 1988). A quick review of relevant sources does not yield a conclusive answer:

1. Que under Urik/Warikas remained a loyal vassal during Tiglath-pileser III's reign (see e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35, iii 8, where Que appears as a tributary, and the Çineköy Inscription by Warikas, where Assyria and Que become "one house").

[510] One possible exception is Judah under Hezekiah. According to biblical accounts (2 Kgs 18:7, 20), Hezekiah of Judah rebelled against the Assyrian Empire but was left on the throne after the Assyrians retreated. However, it is not so certain whether Judah had been a loyal vassal of the Assyrian Empire before Sennacherib's campaign to the West. See below for a discussion on Judah being referred to as "a recalcitrant and strong" state in Assyrian inscriptions as well as its status before the Assyrian campaign.

2. Although Aššur-šarru-uṣur, the recipient of SAA 01 01, was already the governor of Que (see SAA 01 01, o 35) when he sent the letter to Sargon II, it is unclear when he began his office. Did Urik's failed attempt to contact Urartu take place during his governorship? Or was Urik's disloyalty the cause of his appointment as the governor? If the former, then we would have evidence for dual rule in Que prior to SAA 01 01. This, unfortunately, is uncertain.

3. A certain date (715/7th regnal year of Sargon II) in the relations among Assyria, Que and Phrygia is the battle between Assyria and Phrygia in which three towns of Que were recaptured from Phrygia (Fuchs 1994, Text Ann 126). This battle likely occurred after Sargon II drafted SAA 01 01 in which he celebrated Phrygia's extradition of envoy from Que to Urartu, which was done "without a the battle" (line o8).[511] Therefore, SAA 01 01 was most likely drafted before 715 BCE, whether or not mixed rule was at work then.

4. In SAA 01 110, a letter from Marduk-remanni, the emissary (LÚ.MAḪ) of Que (r 14) is mentioned after references to the emissaries of Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab and Ammon who visited Kalhu/Calah to pay tribute of horses (lines r4-r9). Also mentioned in this context are the rulers of Gaza, Ekron and perhaps Ashdod (r10-r13). The reference to emissaries from Que seems to suggest that it had not been put under direct Assyrian rule, and that the local semi-autonomous polity might still be functioning. How should one date this letter? The delivery of horses from Egypt, which is recorded by SAA 01 110, is mentioned several times in Sargon II's inscriptions. One inscription records the delivery of 12 horses from

[511] Postgate, following Saggs 1958, associates this letter with the submission of Phrygia to Sargon II in the 13th regnal year (709 BCE) and dates the letter to the same year, apparently without accounting for Sargon II's reference to the lack of previous hostility between the two sides. See Postgate 1973: 33-34. As pointed out above, no reference to gifts is made in SAA 01 01, which is recorded in the royal inscriptions recording the submission of Phrygia. Another discrepancy, i.e. the fact that Sargon II calls Midas an ally (*salmu)* in the letter and depicts him as a subjugated servant in the inscription is also notable, although this could be explained by the tendency to exaggerate gains in the inscriptions as a genre.

Silkanni/Osorkon IV (Fuchs 1998, Text III e Ass. 8-11). This may be the same event (cf. Fuchs 1994:451) as the delivery of Egyptian tribute in the 7th regnal year (715 BCE) (Fuchs 1994, Ann. 123-25, together with Arabian rulers and rulers at the sea coast; Prunk 27, together with Arabian rulers). Later, Egypt is mentioned as delivering horses to Assyria again in the 13th regnal year of Sargon II (709 BCE) (Ann. 448-51; Prunk 183).

If SAA 01 110 is related to the celebration in 709 BCE (Fuchs 1994:452), then it would imply that in that year Que, with an Assyrian governor in place, still occupied a sufficiently independent position to have sent an emissary to the Assyrian court. This, in turn, may be our indirect evidence for mixed rule in Que. However, Postgate has pointed out that, assuming that Marduk-remanni was the governor of Calah when he sent SAA 01 110, the letter could not have been dated after 713 BCE (and before 709 BCE), because in 713 BCE Aššur-bani, a different Assyrian official, became the governor of Calah (Postgate 1973: 11, n.29a; cf. "Aššur-bani", the eponym of 713 BCE in SAAS 2). This dating contradicts the assignment of the event in SAA 01 110 to the year 709 BCE.

The other alternative date of SAA 01 110, as I mentioned above, is 715 BCE. However, the fact that Que perhaps still functioned as a vassal which could send emissaries rather than a province in 715 BCE is no sure evidence for mixed rule in Que, either. Again, we do not know when exactly Aššur-šarru-uṣur began to serve as the Assyrian governor in Que. Theoretically, the series of events discussed in points 2-4 could have taken place in one and the same year: a. Que sent an emissary to Calah; b. Que tried to establish ties with Urartu, which failed due to Phrygian interception of its messengers later sent to Assyrian forces; c. Urik of Que was deposed and Aššur-šarru-uṣur became governor of Que; d. Sargon II drafted

SAA 01 01; e. battle between Assyria and Phrygia over three towns of Que. All could have occurred in the year 715 BCE.

5. In Karatepe I, an inscription by Aztiwadas, servant of Urik/Warikas who claims to have put sons of his lord on the their father's throne (line 16; Payne 2012:25). This inscription certainly sheds light on the post-Warikas era of Que, most likely to be dated after 715 BCE. Yet absence of an Assyrian governor or Assyria altogether from the inscription as well as the references to local expansion in Que possibly points to a later period after Sargon II's sudden death in 705 BCE (cf. Bryce:2012:160-61). That Que may have broken away from Assyria after 705 BCE is hinted also by the statement by Sennacherib that he forced people of Que, among others, to serve as labor. There he calls the people of Que and others "those who had not submitted to my yoke" (*a-na ni-ri-ia la kit-nu-šú*; RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 1, 71). Therefore, it is possible that under Aztiwadas Que had regained independence without the presence of an Assyrian governor, while in the preceding years (between 715-705 BCE) no local ruler was on the throne. In other words, no mixed government was ever adopted.

While there is no hard evidence for mixed rule in Que (for the possibility, see footnote above), one might argue for the presence of mixed government in the northwestern periphery of the Neo-Assyrian Empire as a whole in this period. After Aššur-šarru-uṣur had been installed as the governor, perhaps based in Que, he was apparently in charge of other regions in southern Anatolia as well. One of them is the semi-autonomous Neo-Hittite polity of Tuwana in the greater Tabal region (Tuhana in Assyrian sources). SAA 01 01 refers to Urpala'a (=Warpalawa, king of Tuwana in Luwian inscriptions), who had been a loyal vassal

since Tiglath-pileser III's time (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 15, 1). In the quoted letter from Aššur-šarru-uṣur the Assyrian governor reported that a messenger of Urpala'a had come to him with a Phrygian messenger for a court audience (*a-na* DI-*me ina* UGU-*ḫi-ia it-tal-ka*; line o 27) and expressed his worries about the Luwian ruler's loyalty (lines r43-r46). It is obvious that Aššur-šarru-uṣur functions as a representative of Assyrian authority in the northwestern frontiers of the Assyrian Empire, monitoring local rulers' behaviors and serving as a bridge connecting the local polities and the imperial center. Tuwana, on the other hand, maintained its own semi-independent ruler after the appointment of an Assyrian governor in charge of the region for at least another generation (see Bryce 2012:284-85).

Also noteworthy is the fact that a certain Kilar reportedly requested four towns from Aššur-šarru-uṣur, apparently using Phrygian pressure from the North as an excuse. Sargon II commanded that Aššur-šarru-uṣur reject his request, as Phrygia was now at peace with Assyria, warning him that Kilar would become his "equal" (*˹la˺ a-na mi-iḫ-˹ri˺-ka-a i-˹tu˺-ar* "he will indeed become your equal"; o 34) if the four towns would be granted to him and that he himself would have nothing to exercise governorship over (*at-ta-ma ina* UGU *mi-i-ni* LÚ*pa-ḫa-tu-˹ú-tú˺ tu-up-pa-áš* ,"over what will you exercise governorship?"; o 35). Kilar is to be demanded to be content with the current situation "under the protection of the King" (GIŠ.MI LUGAL; r40) The meaning of the name "Kilar" is unclear, though it is at least not Assyrian (cf. PNA 2: 616). Therefore, Kilar is most likely not another Assyrian official in the region, but instead a local ruler in the Tabal region and near Que. The fact that he is required to stay under Sargon II's protection indicates his vassal status, while his correspondence with the governor of Que rather than directly with the Assyrian king corroborates the hypothesis

that Aššur-šarru-uṣur is the overseer of a large region in the northwestern periphery of the empire, with local dynasts under his supervision in the Assyrian imperial administrative system (hence "wouldn't he become your equal?" if the towns are granted), who in principle has the power to redraw the borders.[512]

In sum, mixed rule consisting of Assyrian governors alongside and above local rulers was sometimes practiced in the Neo-Assyrian Empire: most prominently in Ashdod, while traces of mixed rule can also be found in the northern Levant and southeastern Anatolia. On the one hand this was caused by particular historical circumstances, e.g. the challenge of an external power like Phrygia, that require the addition of an intermediate layer in the administration to reinforce the links between the periphery and the imperial center; on the other hand, mixed rule demonstrates the unwillingness and perhaps inability of the empire to absorb an entire peripheral region all at once. Indeed, as noted by many scholars, local autonomy of tribal groups and cities more often than not coexisted with empires which openly claim universal control.[513]

3. Centrifugal forces in provinces

While the incorporation of formerly independent polities into the universal empire often proved to be a complex process with compromises and setbacks, regions already under (formal) direct imperial control ruled by governors could also display traces of the centrifugal tendency, particularly during periods of internal instability in the Assyrian heartland. The

[512] Que is considered as Aššur-šarru-uṣur's direct domain, so Sargon II warns him that he would have less territory to govern if he grants the towns to Kilar. In other words, as the overseer of a large region he controls a certain area more tightly and regularly.

[513] See chapter 4 for the role and status of the Arabs, some of whom were nomadic groups, in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. For the resurgence of the city-state tradition in Babylonia under the Assyrian Empire, see Larsen 2000. For local self-government and autonomy of cities (and tribal groups) in the Neo-Babylonian as well as the Neo-Assyrian Periods, see Barjamovic 2004.

complex political developments in Assyria between the second half of the 9th and the second half of the 8th centuries have been studied by many scholars, some of whom focused particularly on the rise of political strong men who shared the power with the king, such as Šamši-ilu and Nergal-eriš, and the provincial governors who remained in power for a particularly long time (see Grayson 1993; particularly 24-26; Dalley 2000). This complicated question cannot be treated in any detail here, although we can mention two examples in passing. The first example has to do with Suhu, a region located in the Middle Euphrates. Since the Middle Assyrian period Suhu had fallen into the Assyrian sphere of influence, although it continued to be contested by Babylonian rulers, nomadic groups and local political actors (Beaulieu 2011:261). While Ashurnasirpal II claimed to have conquered the region, Assyrian control in the 9th century was not undisputed, as reflected by the local international correspondence between Marduk-apla-uṣur, ruler of Anat, and Rudamu/Urtamis of the Levantine state of Hamath around 840 BCE, which indicates a high level of autonomy in Suhu's international relations (Parpola 1990). Parpola has argued that the Neo-Assyrian Empire placed its protegé in the core region of Anat (i.e. Marduk-apla-uṣur in this letter), leaving only the rest of Suhu in the hands of the local ruler, who also considers himself the legitimate governor of Suhu (i.e. Adad-nādin-zēri in the letter) (Parpola 1990: 262). If this interpretation is correct, then it is noteworthy that even the Assyrian protegé was free to conduct diplomatic correspondence with a Levantine king, whom he addressed as his brother, and reassures the interests of his own domain (r 12'- 14'; king of Assyria not mentioned in the letter). Later, in the second quarter of the 8th century, Suhu became the realm of an independent dynasty of hereditary governors (^{LÚ}GAR=*šaknu*) who produced a number of

"royal" inscriptions recording their own campaigns and building activities, falling short of using the title "king", although the "throne" (^{GIŠ}GU.ZA=*kussû*) of governorship (*šaknūtu*) is mentioned.[514] This leads to a brief note on our second example, in which a local governor does call himself "king". This is the widely cited Tell-Fekheriyeh bilingual inscription from Guzanu/Gozan dating perhaps to the mid-9th century (for the debate on dating see Lipiński 1994:21-26; Yun 2008: 8-27, also on the issue of the archaizing script), in which the author calls himself and his father "governor" (GAR=*šaknu*) of Gūzānu/Gūzānu, Sikānu and Zaranu in the Akkadian version of the inscription but "king" (*mlk*) of the same polity in the Aramaic version. It has been suggested that this situation is due to the possibility that the ruler and his father are local Aramean dynasts (Bīt Baḫiāni) who were given the status of provincial governors after the Assyrian annexation of the region (Younger 2016:265). The centrifugal tendency in the new province is thus preserved in the royal terminology perhaps deliberately adopted in the local script for a local audience, to whom the ruling family continued to present themselves as legitimate kings.[515]

These examples have demonstrated that the expansion of the universal empire in the periphery, including in the western regions, did not result in a monolithic entity with a rigorous administrative system tightly controlled by the imperial center. Competition between peripheral polities and the empire and provisional compromise made by the empire render it

[514] For an overview of the history of Suhu and its relationship with the Neo-Assyrian Empire in this period see Brinkman1968:184-87, n. 1127; Beaulieu 2011: 261 with further references. Although Assyria and the Assyria ruler or the high official in charge of this region are sometimes presented as an enemy of Suhu and Anat (e.g. RIMB 2 S.0.1002.4, 5b-15=S.0.1002.9, 6-22a=S.0.1002.10, 15-23a, inscriptions of Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur), Assyria is sometimes juxtaposed with Suhu, apparently on the same side. When he recounts his defeat of the Saguru clan, he calls its herald Samma'gamni "the dishonest servant of the Land of Suhu, the Land of Assyria and my fathers". (RIMA S 0.1002.1, 40) One wonders is some sort of connection between Suhu and Assyria is still acknowledged in this period.

[515] Note also the fact that the Aramaic *mlk* is cognate with the Akkadian word "*malku*", which is offen used to refer to petty kings in the Levant as well as other regions. See CAD m1 "*malku* A" b) 1', 2' for the term *malku* as a designation of foreign rulers, particularly in Neo-Assyrian texts. I have mentioned that Machinist (2016:199) considers the term disparaging, yet it should also be noted that the term also refers to kings in general as well as Assyrian and Babylonian kings, see CAD m1 "*malku* A" a), c).

more appropriate to compare the Assyrian Empire to a network of different political forces often pulling in different directions. Although a hierarchical system, centripetal and centrifugal forces as well as interlinks between peripheral units and beyond sometimes transformed the empire into an international system in and of itself (Buzan and Little 2000:5-6). With all these interactions, setbacks, compromises and readjustments, one wonders how the center and the periphery came to make sense of the different forms of encounter between them and how this was reflected in terminologies, phrases and expressions adopted in imperial and local Levantine sources. To this subject I now turn.

The universal empire and the Levantine periphery: terminologies and conceptions

We have seen from the examples above that the Levant served as a major target of Assyrian campaigns and territorial annexation since the early periods of revived Neo-Assyrian imperialism. Despite the idealized universalism in most, but not all, Assyrian sources as we have explored, I have noted that imperial control of Levantine polities and provinces was often not undisputed or unchallenged. Local political forces with different ties to the universal empire sometimes competed with imperial institutions, the imperial court or other local entities for political and economic interests. The periphery in this case was hardly a vacant land devoid of people or simply a dangerous, unfamiliar area overrun by untamed barbarians. As is widely known, the Levant in the Iron Age has developed its own highly advanced cultures, complex political organizations and its own scribal traditions producing written records in local languages. The interaction between Mesopotamia and the Levant, both at a high level of social, cultural and political complexity, prompts us to explore further the dialog and mutual understanding between them. Let us examine, therefore, the

terminologies and conceptions with which the universal empire and Levantine polities perceived each other and made sense of their encounter.

1. Levantine polities in the eyes of the universal empire

Were local Levantine polities, being on the Western periphery of the world dominated by the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, seen by the latter as a monolithic whole by the imperial center? One would imagine that the universal empire would likely regard the outlying lands and their peoples as a passive, dehumanized mass offering resources and wealth to the imperial heartland and facilitating trade and further expansion, thus serving as "the disposable periphery" in Liverani's terms (Liverani 2017a: 61-65). Yet demands of governance and administration prompted the Assyrians to intensively interact with the periphery, including the Levant, and even to establish a highly developed system of intelligence (Dubovský 2006:189-260), which undoubtedly enriched Assyrian understanding of the region. As in the cases of other peripheral regions of the universal empire, Assyrian sources such as royal inscriptions and political correspondence reveal a sophisticated knowledge of the Levant not as one piece, but instead as internally differentiated from various perspectives and by different standards. In addition to knowledge of the existence different regions, polities and peoples with different names (see Liverani 2017a: 59 and further references), the Assyrian imperial elite also observed, evaluated and interacted with Levantine polities, peoples and their rulers. In so doing the Assyrians recorded their knowledge of their different sizes, power and status, previous and current relationship with the imperial center as well as the nature of their political organizations (as a country, a city, an ethnic group or tribal group, etc.). The efforts to identify and present the differences in the

periphery suggest that imperial universalism, while highlighting the absolute, elevated status of the center, also seeks to observe and depict the periphery in a pragmatic and analytical manner.

A. Large countries and small countries in the Levant in Assyrian sources

(1) "Wide land"

Almost all Levantine polities were dwarfed both in size and in strength by the mighty Neo-Assyrian, and later, the Neo-Babylonian Empires, as the geographical and political environments in the region were not conducive to the emergence of large territorial kingdoms that might withstand Assyrian or Babylonian expansion or compete with them for control over the Levant and other regions. Even so, it is noteworthy that Assyrian sources sometimes recognize the strength and considerable size of certain Levantine polities that may at times pose a threat to the execution of imperial expansion and the establishment of the imperial order in the West. In the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the Assyrian king would boast of the large number of cities he plunders or conquers in his campaigns against polities, including Levantine ones. Shalmaneser III, for example, records his achievements in his Levantine campaign:

In my eighteenth regnal year (841 BCE) I crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time. Hazael of Damascus, trusting in the might of his soldiers, carried out an extensive muster of his troops. (iii 50) To save his life he ran away (but) I pursued him. I imprisoned him in Damascus, his royal city, cut down his gardens, (and) burned his shocks. .....I marched to Mount Ḫaurānu (and) razed, destroyed, burned, (and) plundered cities without number (URU.MEŠ-*ni a-na la ma-ni*). I marched to Mount Baʾaliraʾasi, which is a cape (jutting out into) the sea before the land of Tyre, (and) (iv 10) erected my

royal statue there. I received tribute from Baʾali-manzēri of Tyre (and) from Jehu (Iāu) of the house of Omri (Ḫumrî) (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.10, iii 45b to iv 12).

Mount Ḫaurānu is identified with Jabal al-Durūz which is located ca. 120 km southeast of Damascus in southern Syria near the Jordanian border (Bagg 2007: 101). In all likelihood, the context suggests that these unnamed cities seem to have been annexed by the Kingdom of Damascus (see Younger 2016: 557-60).[516] By recording his plunder in these numerous cities, Shalmaneser III in effect recognizes Damascus as a sizable territorial kingdom that extended its power to regions far removed from its political center.

Sargon II refers to at least two western lands as "wide" countries. One is the Neo-Hittite state Gurgum in the southern Anatolia, just north of the Levant, and the other is Ashdod in the southern Levant. In a palace inscription Sargon reports that he made the entire "wide land of Gurgum" (^{KUR}*Gur-gu-[me]* DAGAL-*tim*) part of the Assyrian Empire (Fuchs 1994:76, text Saal XIV, 11). In the next passage he also records in detail the flee of Iamani, the Ashdodite, to Egypt, the annexation of Ashdod into the Assyrian Empire and the appointment of a governor over Ashdod's people and its "wide" land (KUR-*šú* DAGAL-*tim*, line 12).

In his famous third campaign to the southern Levant in 701 BCE, Sennacherib attacked and plundered various Levantine polities that defied Assyrian overlordship. He records that he conquered as many as 46 fortified cities of Judah (cf. 2 Kgs 18:13) and, again, "countless" settlements in the environs of these cities, thus emphasizing the strength of this southern Levantine polity otherwise not well-known for its vastness and power:

(As for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered forty-six of his fortified

[516] Younger locates two important fortified cities of Hazael, Danabu and Malaha, mentioned in RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.16, 157', in the Ḫaurānu region. See Younger 2016: 559-60 for a review of different proposals.

walled cities and small(er) settlements in their environs, which were without number (*ša ni-ba la i-šu-ú*), (50) by having ramps trodden down and battering rams brought up, the assault of foot soldiers, sapping, breaching, and siege engines. (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 04, 49).

In fact, Sennacherib explicitly calls Judah "the wide district, Judah" (*rap-šú na-gu-ú* ^{KUR}*ia-ú-di*, RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 34, 15; damaged parallel in 26, i 12') when he claims to have destroyed and exercised lordship upon it after this campaign. The phrase "wide land" is used to describe Assyria's enemies of different sizes and in various regions, usually in context of conflicts. Sometimes polities of significant size or strength are designated as "wide" lands, such as Urartu and Elam, both major rivals of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Tiglath-pileser III refers to "the wide Urartu" (^{KUR}*ur-ar-ṭi rap-ši*; RINAP 1 39, 24) in his account of Assyrian victory over the northern Levantine league led by Arpad and Urartu in 743 BCE. Sennacherib's inscriptions record that Elam, which offered assistance to Merodach-Baladan II's uprising in Babylonia, was directly invaded by Assyria, most likely in order to deprive Merodach-Baladan II's of his major source of military aid (Dubovský 2018: 326-27). In his sixth campaign (694 BCE), Assyrian troops reportedly destroyed numerous cities in Elam proper and "poured devastation upon the wide Elam" (UGU ^{KUR}ELAM.MA^{KI} DAGAL-*tim it-bu-ku šá-aḫ-ra-ʿarʾ-tú*; see RINAP 3-2 46, 102). Apart from Judah, other Levantine regions and polities can also be labeled as being extensive in size, e.g. Damascus/Bīt Haza'ili in the context of its annexation into the Assyrian Empire is called "the wide Bīt Haza'ili" (RINAP 1 Tiglat-Pileser III 49, r3; largely damaged but restored in 42, 7'; 50, r3). To sum up this selective survey of the sources, the label "wide land/district" could serve as a tag of Levantine city-states (e.g. Ashdod), territorial polity of various sizes (e.g. Judah and

Damascus) as well as large kingdoms that competed with the Assyrian Empire. Therefore, it is likely that the adjective "wide" is not reserved for powers of a certain order. Instead, it serves rhetorical purposes that aimed possibly to highlight Assyrian military prowess in the face of formidable challengers.

(2) "Recalcitrant and strong"

The Assyrian scribes not only called Judah a wide land, but also explicitly a "strong" (see below) country which may be contrary to one's expectation given the limited size and strength of the Levantine polity. In the inscription on the four human-headed winged bull colossi from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh, which summarizes the king's first five campaigns and probably dates to 694 or early 693 (RINAP 3-2, pp. 64-67), Sennacherib adds two more adjectives to his description of Judah and names it a "recalcitrant and strong" land (*šep-ṣu mit-ru*[517]; alternatively, "a strong power", see CAD-Š1: 481) (RINAP 3-2 Sennacherib 44, 21; restored in 42, 10). What does this not so widely attested label mean? What does it reveal about the status of Judah in the eyes of the powerful universal empire?

The combination of these two terms also occurs in Sennacherib's recount of his Babylonian campaign against Merodach-Baladan II and his allies (704-700 BCE), when the city of Hirimmu, which is located in the East Tigris region near the Assyrian border (see e.g. Levine 1982: 37), was sacked and its residents massacred. In this context, Hirimmu and its people are described as a disobedient city previously not fully integrated into the imperial system: "the people of Hirimmu, dangerous enemy who since time immemorial had not

[517] The word is attested only in Sennacherib's inscriptions. That this rarely attested word denotes "strong" or "strength" is known not only from the context, but more explicitly from synonym lists in which it is equated with words like "*rašbu, dannu, dannatum*", see references to Malku I 41and Explicit Malku I 132 in CAD-m2: 139-40. There is one possible attestation in one of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. See below.

submitted to the kings, my ancestors" (*ba-ḫu-la-te* ^{URU}*ḫi-rim-me* ^{LÚ}KÚR *ak-ṣu ša ul-tu ul-la a-na* LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni* AD.MEŠ-*ia la ik-nu-šu*; RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 1, 58; also 213, 57).[518] Later, when Sennacherib recounts the massacre of the hostile population (or enemy soldiers), he again stresses the history of noncompliance of this city: "a recalcitrant and strong (force) which had not submitted to my yoke" (*šep-ṣu mit-ru ša a-na ni-ri-ia la ik-nu-šu*; RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 1, 62; a slightly different variant in 213, 61). Since the phrase "to submit to/to bear the yoke" of the Assyrian king or the god Aššur is widely recognized as an expression referring to the conquest and incorporation of new territories into the imperial system (cf. Machinist 1993: 86), here the city Hirimmu is even more clearly depicted as a city formerly not regarded as an integral part of the Assyrian Empire, although Babylonia as a whole had been conquered for decades.[519] A third region called "recalcitrant and strong" by Sennacherib consists of a group of cities located on Mount Nipur, near the border of the Land of Katmuhu that resisted Assyrian aggression in Sennacherib's campaign to the Northwest in 699 BCE. As in the case of Hirimmu, in the immediate context of this expression one finds an explicit reference to these polities' previous status as regions not subject to Assyrian overlordship "which since time immemorial (20) were a recalcitrant and strong force (*šep-ṣu mit-ru*) that did not know how to respect (any) authority during (the reigns of) the kings, my ancestors" (RINAP 3-2 Sennacherib 222, 19-21).

Finally, there is an uncertain attestation of the phrase *šepṣu mitru* in a slightly different form in one of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, where the Assyrian king recounts his campaigns and conquests in different directions, including his deeds in Egypt, the city of Qirbit, Lydia

[518] For the theme of polities that did not submit to preceding kings, see Liverani 2017a: 47-48.

[519] Note that Sennacherib also mentions the reorganization of the city (*na-gu-ú šu-a-tu a-na eš-šu-ti aṣ-bat*) in, for example, RINAP 3 1, 59.

and the Phoenician city-state of Arwad in the Levant. As a summary to these events Ashurbanipal makes the following statement:

With the support of the great gods and the god Sîn who lives in the city Ḫarrān, my lord, the wicked bowed down, (and) recalcitrant and strong [force]s (*ši-ip-ṣi [mit-ru]-ʿti?*ʾ) kissed my feet. I conquered lands that had not bowed down to me (and) [carr]ied off their substantial booty (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, r39).

The place where the plural of an adjective "*mitru*" supposedly occurs is unfortunately damaged, yet both the intact attestation of "*šepṣu*" the theme of "previously untamed foreign lands" seem to justify the editor's reconstruction in RINAP. Notably, this theme of either "lands not incorporated into Assyria" or "lands who dared to disrupt the imperial order" recurs in all the preceding passages recounting Ashurbanipal's deeds in different regions.[520] It can thus be deduced from these examples that the phrase "*šepṣu mitru*", a relatively rare expression, is reserved for polities that defied the all-encompassing framework of the universal empire, which naturally sees the existence of such polities as illegitimate from the perspective of imperial universalism.

Returning now to Sennacherib's campaign in Judah, we find that the depiction of Judah as a "wide" district with a considerable number of towns and countless smaller settlements, and more importantly, as a stubbornly "strong" land, not only highlights Sennacherib's prowess, since even such a large and mighty Levantine polity (of course, this depiction may no be historically true and can very well be an exaggeration) was eventually subdued by the

[520] o6'-o12', Taharqa of Nubia and Egypt as a foreign invader who seizes Egypt from the Assyrian Empire; r13, Qirbit, as remote city who did not fear the lordship of Assyria; r20, Lydia, as remote land unknown to former Assyrian kings, whose ruler Gyges has voluntarily submitted to Assyria; r29, Tabal, depicted as a vassal who rebelled against Ashurbanipal's predecessors; r35, Arwad, depicted as a polity not yet fully incorporated into the imperial system.

king of the universal empire, but also emphasizes the ubiquity and sacredness of the universal imperial order. Anyone who falls out of the order, that is, out of the imperial system, eventually has to face the power of the order to force it back in. Indeed, in one version of the accounts of Sennacherib's campaigns and building activities (starting with RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 15, written in 697 BCE, with similar and enlarged versions written in subsequent years), Hezekiah, the "Judean", is explicitly referred to as someone "[who had not] submitted to my yoke"[521] (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 15 iv, 7), a theme not found in previous accounts of the Judean campaign (e.g. the Rassam Cylinder, i.e. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 04, 49, cited above). Although direct reference to the "wide district" of the "recalcitrant and strong" occurs only in later summaries of the campaign, here we already encounter the depiction of Judah as a polity not yet fully incorporated into the imperial system.[522]

Let us consider, finally, one further example from the Levant. Though this text does not employ Sennacherib's terminology, it does express a similar understanding of the relationship between strength and size, on the one hand, and rebellion to the established order of the universal empire, on the other. Adad-nērārī III recounts his campaign across the Euphrates to

[521] 2 Kings records the Hezekiah's rebellion (מרד) against Sennacherib before the campaign (18:7; 20), which some scholars think stems the death of Sargon II and the regaining of power of Merodach-Baladan II in Babylonia in 705. Cogan and Tadmor: 1988: 221, 249. The reference to rebellion then assumes that Judah had been a loyal vassal of the Assyrian Empire during Sargon II's reign. See S. Dalley 2008: 173. Fales suggests that Hezekiah may have been tempted, after the sudden death of Sargon II, to defect to an alliance led by Merodach-Baladan II of Babylonia, related in 2 Kings 20:12-19, Isaiah 39:1-8, and 2 Chronicles 32:31, which may have occurred before Sennacherib's campaign despite the biblical sequence of events. Fales 2014: 242-43. See also Na'aman 2007a:28-31. However, one should also note that Judah is in a list, dating to Sargon II's reign, of southern Levantine vassals who were supposed to send tributes and gifts to Assyria but sought alliance with Egypt (Fuchs 1998: 46; text VII b. 26). This would indicate that even under Sargon II's reign Judah's allegiance was not always firm.

Therefore, the line in Sennacherib's inscription calling Judah a polity that had not capitulated to Assyria's yoke possibly stems exactly from the lack of firmness of Judah's loyalty. Alternatively, Sennacherib may also tend to stress that while Judah had submitted to his father, to him the new king it had been rebellious.

[522] In Sargon II's inscriptions, Judah is mentioned together with Moab, Edom and the Philistia as kings dwelling on the coast, whose Kings are supposedly tributaries of Sargon II yet have written evil words about Assyria to the Egyptian Pharaoh, "a ruler (*malku*) who is not their savior". Fuchs 1998: 45-46. Text VII b, 25-31. Text VII reports the conquest of Ashdod by Assyria. Na'aman suggests that in this period Judah lied beyond the Ashdod border, being subservient to Assyria yet not an integral part. The context of Text VII in Fuchs 1998 also indicates that Assyrian control over Judah and the southern Levant was not firm in any case, as the latter sought Egyptian intervention to counter Assyrian influence. Against this background, Hezekiah's revolt against Sennacherib can also be understood as the continuation of Judah's history of noncompliance as a peripheral polity lying just beyond the boundary of the empire. Na'aman 1974: 32-33.

the Land of Hatti (Neo-Hittite as well as Aramean polities in northern Syria, see Bryce 2012: 245-47) in the 5th year of his reign (805 BCE) against the kings of "the wide (˹DAGAL˺-*te*) (Land of Hatti), who, in the time of Šamšī-Adad V, my father, had become strong (*id-nin-ú-ma*) and withheld their [tribute]" (RIMA III Adad-nērārī III A.0.104.06, 14-15). Being strong again accompanies or results in the rejection of the established imperial order in the form of the cessation of tributes. At the end of the campaign these northern Levantine polities not only "seized the feet" of the Assyrian king but also paid tribute and tax, marking the restoration of the the "correct" order (16-18). To sum up, in the world ruled by the universal empire, peripheral polities can exist but cannot be physically or conceptually large or strong, as they should ideally remain small and immaterial. And this leads to the final point of this section.

(3) Small or Smaller: back to the normal order

I have discussed Levantine and other polities that are labeled as "extensive" and/or "strong" in Assyrian royal inscriptions. Can one find any occurrences of the opposite of such expressions, i.e. "a small country" (**mātu ṣehertu*), for instance? Unfortunately, such a phrase is hardly ever attested in Assyrian sources. What we do find are references to small cities and towns belonging to political entities in the environs of the fortified towns that are conquered or destroyed by the Neo-Assyrian Empire (e.g. RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 1, 39). Individual polities are rarely, if ever, called a "small country". In chapter 5 I have discussed one of Esarhaddon's letters to gods quoting his own furious message to Shubria (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33), in which Esarhaddon reminds ruler of Shubria that he is an "almighty king" (*šarru dandannu*, o i 30). Although this inscription illustrates in a relatively clear manner the

hierarchy of powers in the international system headed by the universal power, the author of the inscription nowhere calls Shubria a “small land” or its king a “small king” or “weak king”. Indeed, defeat of a weak or small king would not be so impressive a feat for the mighty kings of universe. On the contrary, the opponent has to be depicted as strong and the campaign should be adequately challenging so as to glorify the universal empire (cf. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33, o i 36-38, recounting a difficulty campaign to the capital of Shubria).

While other polities are rarely called “small” ones, as noted above, they can nevertheless be made smaller. Sennacherib makes references to two cases of reducing the territory of defeated foreign polities in his inscriptions in similar wording. On his second campaign (703 BCE), Sennacherib marched to the southeast and attacked, among others, the Land of Ellipi located at the Zagros. The theme of making this land smaller is not found in earlier versions of Sennacherib’s campaigns (not in RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 2 and 3), where only the annexation of certain towns of Ellipi into the Assyrian Empire is mentioned (2, 27-32; 3, 27-32). Only in the Rassam Cylinder (RINAP Sennacherib 4) and later editions on this model is explicit reference to making the land smaller attested (*ú-ṣa-aḫ-ḫi-ir ma-a-su* 4, 27; for text editions of the second campaign, see Louis Levine 1973). The Rassam Cylinder which records the first three campaigns of Sennacherib also contains the first reference to making Judah smaller after Hezekiah was defeated by the Assyrian troops (*ú-ṣa-aḫ-ḫi-ir* KUR-*su* 4, 53).

The reports of the campaign in Ellipi and the campaign in Judah share other thematic commonalities. For instance, both passages refer to the conquest or destruction of a considerable number of fortified cites and surrounding smaller towns/settlements (e.g.

RINAP 3-1 4, 26, 28 with regard to Ellipi; 49 with regard to Judah) and the reorganization of the defeated lands territories by the empire. In the case of Ellipi, the towns are incorporated into the Assyrian Empire (UGU *mi-ṣir* ^{KUR}*aš-šur*^{KI} *ú-rad-di*, line 28), while the Judean towns are granted to loyal Philistine vassals of Assyria, Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza (line 53). It should be noted that Ellipi in this text is called a "wide land" (KUR-*šu* DAGAL-*ti*, line 26), a tag not attached to Judah here in the Rassam Cylinder but only in later summaries (RINAP 3-1 26; 3-2 34, 42, 44, 45).

The reduction of the territory of Ellipi and Judah certainly served concrete political purposes.[523] With regard to Judah, Na'aman points out that in the last decades of the 8th century Judah was likely the strongest polity in the Assyrian-Egyptian frontier, as Egyptian's interest in southern Levant revived under the Nubian kings (see above). Assigning certain territories to loyal vassals of Assyria would create a local balance between several southern Levantine polities of equal strength, which would reinforce regional stability and render Egyptian aid to a single southern Levantine polity less than effective as an effort to upset the local balance of power at the Assyrian frontiers (Na'aman 1974: 35-36).

Beyond political calculation, I propose that the explicit reference to "making the land smaller", together with the already discussed cases of designating some minor polities as being extensive and strong, is also indicative of the universal ideology of the empire, according to which periphery lands are assigned a subordinate status, which in turn requires them to remain moderate in size. For these polities, being too large and powerful, or better, larger and mightier than ideally allowed by their status, would be interpreted as a challenge to

[523] Changing boundaries between smaller polities functioned as a means of political control in the periphery. See Wazana 2003.

the imperial order and an aberration to be corrected. A large and strong land formerly not subdued by the universal empire or that had broken away from the imperial framework should ideally be defeated, conquered and weakened, with its territory reduced so that it can be relegated to the more appropriate status of a small land, even though this status is almost never explicitly formulated. Enlargement of territory, as I have discussed in Chapter 5, is a privilege reserved for the empire, which is executed either by the god Aššur as "the one who enlarges the land of Assyria" (e.g. Radner 2010; Liverani 2017a, 2017b) or by his human agent, i.e. the Assyrian king (See Machinist 2006:157-59). The enlargement of land occurs when a vassal polity or a province is added to Assyria. For instance, when Ashdod is incorporated into Assyria, Sargon II claims to have "enlarged the territory of Aššur, king of Gods" (Fuchs 1994:76, text Saal XIV, 12). Also, after Ellipi had been made smaller, as a few of its towns were transformed into Assyrian territory, Sennacherib renamed the city Elenzaš "Kār Sennacherib", placed the region under the administration of an Assyrian governor and thus "enlarged my land" (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4, 30). Likewise, a peripheral polity can legitimately gain territory only through the reorganization of the Assyrian king as a universal ruler, as in the case of Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza who received Judean towns in return of their faithfulness to Assyria. So in Levantine inscriptions resonating with the Assyrian imperial ideology, the addition of territory to the local Levantine polity is also presented as a process enabled and sanctioned by the Assyrian Empire. In the Sam'alean Panamuwa inscription by his son Bar-rakib, dating to the second half of the 8th century BCE, Bar-rakib recounts that it was Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria, who added towns from Gurgum to the territory of Panamuwa, a loyal vassal of the Assyrian king (Gibson 1975:80, Text 14 lines 14-15).

Furthermore, Sargon II gave the Land of Hilakku to Amris, ruler of Tabal, together with his daughter, thus enlarging the latter's land (*ú-rap-piš* KUR-*su*; Fuchs 1994:199; text Prunk 30). As Gallagher puts it, the loss of Hezekiah's land is an example of Sennacherib's "justice", as it is a punishment for Hezekiah and a reward for loyal petty kings (Gallagher 1999: 135). One may also argue that making Judah smaller and others larger restores the "justice" in the sense that the logic and order of universal empire is now reaffirmed, since a polity that grows unduly large (at least in Assyria's eyes) among its peers should be put back to its assigned status.

B. Challengers vs. (voluntary) conformists

(1) Challengers: those who do not "put their trust" in Assyria

a. "Trust" in a political sense

I have proposed above that a peripheral polity such as those in the Levant, when described or presented in Assyrian sources as an extensive and strong land, may be considered by the imperial center as a challenger to the existing or expanding imperial order in which no peripheral polities or groups are supposed to grow beyond the ideally assigned size and status. Of course, an imperial system, even one with universal ideologies such as the Neo-Assyrian Empire, often faces challenges from within and without. As a system that thrives on the hierarchical interrelations between different power centers and consists of multiple ethnic and religious groups, an empire always has to defend itself against those that challenge the existing power relations in the empire. In the Neo-Assyrian Empire, as in other empires, a constituent part or a client state of the empire can challenge the status quo by rebelling in the general sense, and more specifically, breaking the oath it has sworn or the

treaty it has signed with the imperial center and withholding tributes and taxes (Liverani 2017a: 132-37). External forces, moreover, lying beyond the civilized world of the universal empire, may pose threats imperial security and prosperity by launching raids (Liverani 2017a: 116-24). All these are objective practices that local or external political elites can resort to when the imperial order is deemed to be to oppressive or when imperial control and influence is interpreted as weakened or even vulnerable. Can we, however, identify a common cause or motive behind these internal and external challenges to the imperial order? Undoubtedly, historical case differ from one another, and in most cases, different political and economic factors must have played significant roles, so that a common cause is not to be identified. However, in the Assyrian presentation and interpretation of the challenging, hostile and rebellious behaviors of these peripheral states, they seem to have one thing in common: they are often, though not always, described as putting trust in something, which could be their own military power, a remote location or forbidding natural environment, the aid of another large kingdom, alliance with other large or minor polities and sometimes, a wrong god. Put in negative terms, in all these cases the peripheral polities do not trust in the order and rules of Assyrian Empire, its almighty king and great gods, and do not trust that Assyrian retaliation will smash all their plans and efforts. A challenger is thus someone who trusts in something or someone other than Assyria, an attitude certainly not to be tolerated by the universal empire which by definition rejects challenges to its supreme authority.

"Trust" (*takālu* and *raḫāṣu* in Akkadian) can be thought of "as an attitude or as a relationship with practices attached" (Tilly 2005:12). In both domestic and foreign politics trust can help to form long-term relationships and networks that demand conformity and

provide long-term reciprocity and projection as a form of compensation for conformity (Tilly 2005:12-13). Although the establishment of imperial control in peripheral regions is usually achieved by violent means, the integration of the periphery often requires more than just the military prowess or the administrative institutions of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. In a sense one can argue that the empire is built and maintained through a interstate and interpersonal trust system, in which local political elites need to trust, positively, in imperial peace and prosperity as well as the guarantee of their own privileges in the local society, as long as they put trust in the great king and remain loyal. Conversely, as I have pointed out above, they need to trust in the universal empire's all-encompassing power to render any attempt at subverting the imperial order fruitless and unworthy, as fatal punishments would ensue.

b. Putting trust in the Assyrian king

In the ideal imperial system, as Liverani puts it, "(T)he king trusts (*takālu*) in the god, while the land trusts in the king" (Liverani 2017a:112). While there are abundant references to the king's trust in the god or divine messages in Neo-Assyrian sources, which I will briefly discuss later, we do not seem to have direct reference to the land's trust in the king.[524] Yet it should be noted that domestic and inter-polity political relations in a pre-modern empire often operated not as relationships between full-fledged states or political units, but rather in the form of interpersonal relations between individual members of political elites at the center and elsewhere, particularly with the king as a focus (cf. Barjamovic 2012: 51). Therefore, although we do not have direct textual evidence regarding the land putting trust in the king,

[524] In a letter from Esarhaddon's exorcist, Adad-šumu-uṣur, to the king, the author expresses his delight at the appointment of Ashurbanipal as Esarhaddon's successor and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn as king of Babylon. He also writes on the reciprocal relationship between the Land of Assyria on the one hand, and the king with his sons on the other: "May you be good to Assyria — may Assyria be good to you!" (*lu* DÙG.GA-*a-ku-nu* ^{KUR}*aš-šur ina* UGU-*ḫi-ku-nu lu ṭa-ba-at*; SAA 10 185, r3-4) Although it does not describe the trust relationship, it nevertheless highlights the mutually beneficial relationship between the land and the ruler(s) which is at work definitely during periods of trust and peace.

we nevertheless do have texts written by members of the ruling class and the literati, including those stationed in the periphery of the empire, in which they declare their trust in the supreme ruler of the mundane world.

For example, the exorcist of Esarhaddon, Adad-šumu-uṣur, stresses that "I put my trust in my lord" (*a-na* MAN EN-*ia ˹tak˺-[ku-la-ku]* SAA 10 185, e.1) in his lengthy letter to the king about the appointment of the king's sons. A priest working on the rebuilding project of Babylon called Raši also reaffirms his trust in Esarhaddon the king in contrast to Marduk-zēru-ibni that reportedly puts his trust in other individuals, who he describes are conspiring for their own interests.[525] Itti-Šamaš-balaṭu,[526] the Assyrian official stationed in the Phoenician coast twice declares his trust in the king in the context of reporting the attempt of Yakīn-Lû, the ruler of Arwad, to monopolize maritime trade, sacrificing the economic interests of the Assyrian Empire. In his declaration Itti-Šamaš-balaṭu appears to be in great distress, as the Arwadite ruler and his accomplices, some of whom are possibly Assyrian officials at the imperial court,[527] have been threatening him in this matter:

The king, my lord, should know that there are many in the entourage of the king (*ma-du-ti ina* LÚ*man-za-za—pa-ni ša* LUGAL EN-*ia*), my lord, who have invested silver in this house — they and the merchants are systematically scaring me (*i-na bat-ta-ta-a-a ú-pal-làḫ-u-ni*). I (however) put my trust in the king, my lord (*a-na-ku a-na* UGU LUGAL EN-*ia tak-ku-lak*). I don't give one shekel (or even) half a shekel to anybody but the king, my lord. The king, my lord, should know (this) (SAA 16

[525] "*a-na* UGU LUGAL *be-lí-ía ra-aḫ-ṣa-ku*"; "*a-na-ku a-na* UGU LUGAL *be-lí-ia tak-lak*" (SAA 13 174, r2; r9-10) For the verb "*raḫāṣu*" (mostly attested in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian sources), see CAD-R *raḫāṣu* C (74-75).

[526] For possible dates of the letters, see Elayi 1983 cited above.

[527] SAA 16: XXV. See SAA 126, r2'-6', by the same author, where he mentions that there are people in the entourage o the king who have made investments with the merchants and there is a strong alliance over a distance (*sa-la-mu dan-nu a-na* ˹UGU?˺ *ru-˹qi*, r5'-6') which may also hint at the involvement of certain figures at the royal court in the business in the Levant which menaces Assyrian benefits.

127, r6-14).

In this letter the author's "trust" in the Assyrian king not only serves to prove his own innocence against the many in the king's entourage in whose unlawful business he denies participation, but also aims to highlight the Assyrian king as his source of help when his life is in danger. Indeed, he even explicitly proclaims the human king as "my god": "The King is my god (LUGAL DINGIR-*a-a*, r17)!"[528] He reports the affair in similar wording in SAA 16 128, where he again highlights his trust in the king (lines r9'-10').

It is interesting that in SAA 16 126, another letter sent by the same Assyrian official in the Levant, Itti-Šamaš-balaṭu, he refers to the curses in a certain treaty[529] and possibly contends that he has behaved exactly according to the treaty (lines o 19-26). One wonders whether his mindfulness of the treaty, perhaps one between the Assyrian king and his subordinates and local administrators in the peripheral of the empire, is somehow related to his emphasis on his trust in the king in other letters, as oath taking functions as one of the common means of trust confirmation (Tilly 2005: 16). If read together, all these three letters serve to stress his allegiance to the king and, by extension, his full acceptance of, and reliance on, the existing imperial order which he hopes will protect him from dangers lurking in the less orderly Levantine periphery where he represents imperial interests.[530] It is also noteworthy that while Itti-Šamaš-balaṭu claims to put his trust in the king, the Arwadite ruler

[528] Machinist has remarked that Assyrian royal ideology in the Neo-Assyrian period, while stressing some of the similarities and connections between the human ruler and the divine world, never equates the ruler with gods. One is more properly said to be "like" a god, which differentiates the royal ideology of this period from that of the Old Akkadian and Ur III periods. Machinist 2006: 185. The quoted sentence from the letter by no means contradict this observation. It should be noted that here the sentence is quoted from a political letter which does not reflect, at least not directly, the official royal ideology of the empire. Exaggeration is of course another factor in this letter requesting king's help.

[529] Luukko and Van Buylaere (2012:XIX) identify the quotation as a few lines from Esarhaddon's succession treaty, thus dating the letters to 672-671 BCE..

[530] In a letter from the city of Assur the author reports on certain inappropriate behaviors of another, claiming that "(H)e has silver at his disposal and trusts in his gold; but I trust in the king, my lord" (SAA 13 45, r9-10). At the beginning of the same letter, the authors writes that he abides by the king's treaty:
"The king's order is now fixed in my mouth, and I keep the king's treaty." (EN—*a-de-e ša* LUGAL *a-na-ku*, lines o7'-8').

who is harming Assyrian imperial interests is said, in one of Ashurbanipal's royal inscriptions, which records the subjugation of this polity (RINAP 5-1 74, r 35), to have relied on his own forbidding geographical location in the middle of the sea, thus not trusting in the Assyrian king.

c. Putting trust in the great gods

I have mentioned above that, just as an individual member of the Assyrian political personnel should trust in the Assyrian king, the king, in turn, often proclaims his trust in the great gods.[531] In some cases it is the divine message that demands the human ruler's trust. In an astrological report sent from Munnabitu, an astrologer from Babylonia, the author notifies the king that in the eclipse of the moon Jupiter stood, which means that there is well-being to the king as a famous important person will die in his stead. The astrologer asks the king to "have much trust in this omen" (*ina* UGU *šu-mu a-ga-a* LUGAL *ma-aʾ-du lu-ú ra-ḫu-uṣ*), as it is the message of well-being to the king by the king of the gods of heaven and earth (SAA 8 316, r3-7). Trust in divine messages is also emphasized in the context of military campaigns against powerful enemies of the empire. In Ashurbanipal's 7th campaign, the king requested divine instruction from Ishtar of Arbela regarding the troublesome challenger of Assyria, Teumman, king of Elam. The detailed account records the entire process of soliciting a divine message, which was eventually communicated to Ashurbanipal in a dream through a dream interpreter, in which the goddess promises to defeat the enemy on behalf of the King (RINAP

[531] The relationship between Assyrian kingship and divinity has been studied extensively. It is widely recognized that the Assyrian king is often depicted as the representative, priest, the loved one or even the one birthed by gods, sometimes presented as divine though not necessarily perceived a real god as in the Old Akkadian and Ur III periods or in Egyptian and Roman traditions. Sometimes kings can possess divine attributes,such as the divine terror or radiance, which I will discuss below in relation to their role in prompting peripheral polities to surrender to the universal empire. For this and other aspects of Assyrian kingship and divinity, see primarily Machinist 2006. Moreover, the king's trust in the gods and divine messages is a very important theme in inscriptions and oracle texts, see examples in Liverani 2017a: 30-31, with regards to communication with gods and 37-38, on trust in divine assistance in war.

5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, v48b-72). Putting trust in the divine assurance Ashurbanipal launched his campaign against Elam:

In the month Ulūlu (VI), "the work of the goddesses," the festival of the exalted (god) Aššur, the month of the god Sîn, the light of heaven and netherworld, I trusted in the decision (*purussû*) of the bright divine light (Sîn) and the message (*šipru*) of the goddess Ištar, my lady, which cannot be changed (*at-kil ana* EŠ.BAR ^{d}ŠEŠ.KI-*ri nam-ri ù ši-pir* ^{d}15 GAŠAN-*ia šá la in-nen-nu-u*). I mustered my battle troops, warriors who dart about in the thick of battle by the command of (*ina qí-bit*) the deities Aššur, Sîn, and Ištar. I set out on the path against Teumman, the king of the land Elam, and took the direct road. (v73-79a.

Trust in divine instructions and commands in political and military affairs certainly derives from one's trust in the great gods themselves, who occupy the supreme position in the imperial cosmos. In the same inscription Ashurbanipal proudly states that he trusts in "the goddess Ištar, who had encouraged (*tukkulu*) me" (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, v2). In another version of the inscription (RINAP 5-1 07=Prism Kh) a whole list of great gods appears which includes Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl (Marduk) and Nabû, Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela (07, v66-67). In a hymn to Nabû which records the dialog between Ashurbanipal and the god, the king calls the god "the trust of Ashurbanipal for ever and ever" (*[at-ta-ma tu]-kul-ti* ^{m}AN.ŠÁR—DÙ—A *a-na ur-kiš a-na ma-te-ma*, SAA 03 13, o 4). Indeed, putting trust in gods rather than mortals is perceived as the only correct attitude in general, thus records an oracle of encouragement to Esarhaddon:

Do not trust in man (*ina* UGU *a-me-lu-ti la ta-tak-kil*). Lift up your eyes, look to me! I am Ištar of Arbela; I reconciled Aššur with you. When you were small, I took you to me. Do not fear; praise

me! (SAA 09 01, o ii 27')

Trust in the great gods of Assyria, who have entrusted the rule of the universe to the their human appointee, the Assyrian king, is thus not only required of the Assyrian king himself, but also of all that participate in political relations with the great king within Assyria and beyond. This presumably includes Assyrian officials, vassal rulers and even rulers of competing powerful kingdoms beyond of the actual confines of the universal empire. Those who challenge the world order sanctified by the great gods are interpreted as having been oblivious of the power and the decisive role of these gods. An interesting case in Ashurbanipal's inscription is his depiction of Taharqa king of Egypt and Nubia, an important rival of Assyria over the Levant in the late 8th and 7th centuries, according to which Taharqa has no trust in, but instead forgets "the might of Aššur, the goddess Ištar, and the great gods, my lords" (*da-na-an* AN.ŠÁR ^{d}15 *u* DINGIR.˹MEŠ GAL˺.MEŠ EN.MEŠ-*ia im-ši-ma*), which act is accompanied by the statement that he "trusted in his [o]wn c[ounsel]" (*it-ta-kil a-na ˹ṭè?˺-[em] ˹ra˺-ma-ni-šú*)[532] (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, i 52-53). According to this ideology, even Assyria's major competitors are expected to be mindful of and respect the supreme status of Assyrian gods and, by extension, the unrivalled power of the Assyrian king and his empire in the world order. This perfectly illustrates the ideal of the universal empire that views the whole world as a hierarchical system governing all polities and peoples Any challenge to such an assigned status can be interpreted and presented as placing one's trust to lessor, unreliable forces.

If a major rival of Assyria, which is essentially an alternative center of power, is

[532] For the role of the rulers of Egypt and Nubia in the Levant in the late 8th and early 7th centuries, see above. In RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 06 (=Prism C), ii 10' has "*e-˹muq˺...*" (his own strength) instead of "his own counsel".

expected to trust in the Assyrian imperial order established and sanctified by the might of the Assyrian gods', minor polities in the peripheral must be demanded fully to conform to the imperial order. Accepting the assigned status in the imperial system ideally generates benefits to the smaller polity. For example, Ashurbanipal recounts that Gyges of Lydia defeated the Cimmerians that had been molesting his land with the help of Assyrian kings by the mere mention of Ashurbanipal's name (*ina ni-bit* MU-*ia šá-pal-šú ik-bu-su*, RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, ii 119). However, when Gyges ceased to honor the words of the gods and rejected Lydia's vassal status, as he "trusted in his own strength" (*a-na e-muq ra-man-i-šú it-ta-kil-ma*, ii 113) and sought alliance with Egypt, the Cimmerians quickly overran entire Lydia again. In sum, attempts of the peripheral polities to challenge or reverse their assigned status in the imperial system, regardless of the specific political maneuvers and calculations themselves, are often interpreted and presented by the imperial center as tge insensible misplacement of one's trust in ineffective and unworthy forces. Obviously, they cannot offer help and salvation, but instead incur danger and destruction.

d. Putting one's trust elsewhere: Levantine challengers to the imperial order

As peripheral polities, Levantine states are most likely expected to conform to the established imperial order by putting trust in the might of Assyrian gods and the great king, who will retaliate any attempt to rebel with a heavy hand. Yet as elsewhere in the empire, Levantine polities often seek to break away with the imperial control imposed on them, which act is presented in Assyrian sources as putting their trust in other sources of power. One can identify the following categories of "misplaced trust" in Assyrian and, occasionally, Levantine sources:

1. In some cases revolting Levantine polities are depicted as putting their trust in natural and geographical factors, possibly in the hope that the remoteness of the location from the imperial center can guarantee their political autonomy free of imperial domination or weaken the existing ties between themselves and the center and that the forbidding natural circumstances can impede the advance of the Assyrian troops. A few such cases in the Levant are attested in Esarhaddon's and Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. In 677 BCE, Sidon decided to revolt against the imperial rule (Elayi 2018: 166-69):

Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, (who) did not fear my lordship (and) did not listen to the words of my lips, who trusted in the rolling sea (UGU *tam-tim gal-la-tim it-tak-lu-ma*) and threw off the yoke of the god Aššur...(RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, ii 65-67)

In the northwest of the Levant proper, Cilicians are said to have put their trust in inaccessible mountains:

I trod on the necks of the people of Cilicia, mountain dwellers who live in inaccessible mountains in the neighborhood of the land Tabal, evil Hittites, who trusted in their mighty mountains (*ša* UGU KUR.MEŠ-*ni-šú-nu dan-nu-u-ti tak-lu-ú-ma*) and who from earliest days had not been submissive to the yoke (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, iii 47-51).

Ashurbanipal also interprets the self-assurance of Arwad on the Phoenician coast, which had not been fully subjugated by the Assyrian Empire, as a sign of their trust in rolling sea, as in the case of Sidon:

(As for) Iakīn-Lû, the king of the land Arwad, who lives in the wide sea, (whose) location is situated like a fish in an unfathomable amount of water (and) the surge of powerful waves, who put his trust in the roiling sea (UGU *tam-tim gal-la-ti ˹tak˺-lu-ú-ma*) and (therefore) did not bow down to

the yoke... (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, r33-36)

The implicit logic in the Assyrian inscriptions ascribing disloyalty behaviors of peripheral polities to trust in natural barriers is that, at least according the cosmic ideology of the universal empire, nature does not constitute exceptions to the almighty, all-encompassing power of the universal empire, its king and its great gods who aim to explore and eventually regulate the entire world, overcoming all obstacles, human-made and natural.[533]

2. Reliance on natural barriers and geographical inaccessibility is sometimes combined with trust in other factors, such as human forces. One can first of all trust in his own strength which, in addition to the favorable natural conditions, is unrealistically considered efficient to enable him to challenge the universal empire. Right after Esarhaddon's destruction of Sidon (677 BCE), he proceeds to conquer Sidon's ally in Cilicia, Sanda-uarri, king of the cities Kundi and Sissû:

...Sanda-uarri, king of the cities Kundi and Sissû, a dangerous enemy, who did not fear my lordship (and) abandoned the gods, trusted in the impregnable mountains (*a-na* KUR-i *mar-ṣu-ti it-ta-kil*). He (and) Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, agreed to help one another, swore an oath by their gods with one another, and trusted in their own strength (*a-na e-mu-qi ra-ma-ni-šú-nu*) (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon, iii 20-27).

Notably, the arrogance of the western enemies who remove their trust in the Assyrian king and the great gods by relying on mountains, seas and their own strength is contrasted with the faithfulness of the king of Assyria who, as I mentioned above, properly puts his trust in the great gods of Assyria and Babylonia despite his own extraordinary military strength:

[533] The universal empire is understood as the conqueror of not only human but also natural enemies. See Barjamovic 2012: 46; Liverani 2017a: 41-54.

I trusted in the gods Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, and Nabû, the great gods, my lords, besieged him, caught him like a bird from the midst of the mountains, and cut off his head (iii 28-29).

The same contrast is in fact already hinted at in his account of the destruction and annexation of Sidon. In contrast to the Sidonian ruler who trusts in natural barriers, Esarhaddon attributes his victory to the command (*ina qí-bit* ^{d}*aš-šur* EN-*ia*, lines ii 72) and help of, or trust in, (*tukultu*, from the root "*takālu*", i.e. "to trust"), the god Aššur (*ina tu-kul-ti* ^{d}*aš-šur* EN-*ia*; line iii 9).

3. Indeed, foreign polities putting "trust" in human strength in general is also a prominent theme in Assyrian sources with different variants depending on the historical situation. Peripheral polities may put their trust in their own military prowess, in their alliance with other minor polities or in a large kingdom, often an alternative center of power rivaling the Assyrian Empire. In Assyrian inscriptions on Levantine polities we encounter all these types of "unworthy trust" dating to all periods of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

Some polities are depicted as putting trust in their own strength or in the military prowess of their own troops. For instance, Ashurnasirpal II recounts that in his 878 BCE campaign to Bīt-Adini, the Aramean polity in northern Syria:

After crossing the Tigris I marched to the land Bīt-Adini (and) approached the city Kaprabu, their fortified city. The city was well fortified; it hovered like a cloud in the sky. The people, trusting in their numerous troops (*a-na* ERIM.ḪI.A.MEŠ-*šú-nu* ḪI.A.MEŠ *it-dàk-lu-ma*), did not come down (and) submit to me (RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II, A.0.101.1, iii 50-52).

This formidable and arrogant enemy who trusts in his own human power was, surely enough, defeated by divine means, more specifically, by the command of Aššur, whose divine

standard goes before the human king's troops:

By the command of Aššur, the great lord, my lord, and the divine standard (^{d}ÙRI.GAL=*urigallu.* See Pongratz-Leisten 1992:318-21) which goes before me, I besieged the city (and) conquered ...I razed, destroyed, burnt, (and) consumed the city. (Thus) I imposed awe of the radiance of Aššur, my lord, upon Bīt-Adini (line iii 52).

The same theme of defeating a self-assured enemy in the West also occurs in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions. In 841 BCE, Shalmaneser III defeats Hazaʾel of Damascus who "trusts in the might of his soldiers" (*a-na gi-piš* ERIM.ḪI.A.MEŠ-*šú it-ta-kil-ma*) (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.8, 3''-4'').

Sometimes polities forming anti-Assyrian coalitions are said to have put their trust in human allies, in the hope of subverting Assyrian domination with united forces which often proved futile in the face of the omnipotent Assyrian king and the great gods:

Moving on [from the city] Gurgum I approached the city Lutibu, the [fortified] city of Hayyānu, the Samʾalite, Hayyānu, the Samʾalite, Sapalulme, (55′) the Patinean, [Aḫunu], the man of Bīt-Adini, (and) Sangara, the [Carchemishite], put their trust in each other (*ʿa-na re-ṣu-te aʾ-[ḫa-miš] ʿitʾ-tàk-lu-ma*) and prepared for war. They attacked me to do battle. With the exalted might of the divine standard which goes before me (and) with the fierce weapons [which] Aššur my lord gave to me, I fought (and) defeated them (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.1, 53'-58').[534]

Moving on from the land Ḫatti I approached the city Aleppo (Ḫalman) (and) made sacrifices before the god Adad of Aleppo (Ḫalman). Moving on from Aleppo (Ḫalman) I approached the city Qarqar. Hadad-ezer (Adad-idri), the Damascene, (and) Irḫulēnu, the Ḫamatite, together with twelve

[534] See Bryce 2012: 219-21 for possible exaggeration of Assyrian victory in this battle.

kings on the shore of the sea, trusting in their united forces (*a-na* Á.MEŠ *a-ḫa-miš it-tàk-lu-ma*)[535] attacked me to wage war and battle. I fought with them (RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.6, ii 28-29).

[In] my [third palû, (the god) Aššur, my lord, encourag]ed me [and ...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [... Sulumal of the land Mel]id, Tarḫulara of [the land Gurgu]m, [... (5′) ...] ... in all lands, [they trusted] in one another's strength (*a-ʿnaʾ e-muq a-ʿḫaʾ-meš [it-tak-lu ...]*)[536], [... With] the power and might of (the god) Aššur, my lord, [I fought] with [them (and) defeated them. ...] (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III, 5').

In the last case the coalition in which its members trust also includes the powerful riyal of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 8th century, i.e. Urartu. In other cases one finds more direct reference to a smaller polity's trust in an alternative imperial center in defiance of Assyria, which understandably infuriates the Assyrian king who in theory views all others lower in rank and tolerates no rivalry in world dominion. In the north and south of the Levant, candidates for alternative external power on which some local polities rely are, of course, Urartu and Egypt, respectively.

Sargon II recounts the rebellion Kummuh in vivid terms, calling Muttallum, the ruler of Kummuh "an evil Hittite" (^{LÚ}*Ḫat-tu-u lem-nu*) who "does not fear the word of the gods" (*la a-dir zik-ri* DINGIR.MEŠ). His cessation of tributes and gifts to Assyria is interpreted and presented as putting "his trust in Argišti, king of Urartu". Ignorance of the gods is the presented as an accompanying act of trusting in a non-Assyrian human power, which, Sargon promptly adds, is "a helper that does not save him" (UGU ^{m}*ar-giš-ti* LUGAL ^{KUR}*ur-ar-ṭi*

[535] From the account of the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. The theme of the coalition forces "trusting in their united forces" recurs in accounts in later Western campaigns.

[536] See above for the clash between Tiglah-Pileser III and Sarduri II in northern Levant in 743 BCE. The phrase is here broken, but the verb "to trust" is partly preserved in RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 35, i 26'.

ne-ra-ri la mu-še-[zi][!] *-bi-šú*; Fuchs 1994, 222-23; Prunk 112-113). Obviously the only truly reliable source of help is the Assyrian king and his gods.

Likewise, I have mentioned Esarhaddon's account of his the alliance between Ba'alu, king of Tyre and Taharqa, king of Kush:

In the course of my campaign, I set up fortifications against Baʾalu, the king of Tyre, who trusted in his friend Taharqa, the king of Kush (*a-na* ^{m}*tar-qu-u* MAN ^{KUR}*ku-u-si ib-ri-šú it-tak-lu-˹ma˺*), threw off the yoke of the god Aššur, my lord, and kept answering (me) with insolence. I cut off the supply of food and water that sustained their lives (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 34, o 13').

It is noteworthy that Taharqa, the Nubian king who apparently harbored imperial ambitions, as his intervention in affairs in Lower Egypt and the southern Levant demonstrates (see above), is labeled as a "friend" (*ibru*) rather than the "lord" of the ruler of a minor peripheral polity from the Assyrian perspective.[537] This is again reminiscent of the universal ideology of the Assyrian Empire, according to which Assyria is the sole center of the world with its king functioning as the only legitimate lord in any unequal inter-polity relationship. Everyone else is in principle qualitatively different, so that the relative status between two foreign polities is insignificant.

[537] In Neo-Assyrian sources, "friendship" in the context of international or inter-polity relations certainly denotes a peaceful relationship which requires mutual protection and assistance, as reflected in a passage of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions where he notes that the Assyrians that the had dispatched to Nabû-bēl-šumāti, governor of Sealand, used to "walk back and forth to protect his land like a friend (*ibru*) and ally (*tappû*)". (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, vii 67 and other versions) It is not immediately transparent whether this mutually beneficial relationship is equal or hierarchical in nature. Sennacherib mentions that Merodach-Baladan II used to seek "friendship" (*ibrūtu*) with Šutruk-Naḫḫunte II, "the Elamite", for which purpose the Babylonian ruler had to "grant" (*šutlumu*) treasures and wealth to his Elamite counterpart. The verb *šutlumu* is used in various contexts, including gods granting attributes or power to human beings (see examples in CAD-Š3, *šutlumu* b) and human beings granting gods certain presents (*šutlumu* a). Therefore, the verb itself does not assume an unequal relationship. At least there is no indication of Merodach-Baladan II accepting a subordinate status in his attempt of seeking "friendship" with another ruler.

In fact, it appears that *ibru* and *ibrūtu* more likely denotes an equal relationship between polities or rulers of the same rank. Ashurbanipal refers to Urtaku not honoring the "friendship" (*ibrūtu*) between himself and Esarhaddon, which we know from other sources (SAA 16 01, see Chapter 5) constituted an equal relationship, i.e. "brotherhood", between Assyria and Elam.

The theme of a peripheral polity putting trust in a competing power of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is also attested in local Levantine sources. In the Hebrew Bible, for instance, Rabshaqeh, the Assyrian official who was sent to convey Sennacherib's message to the officials and residents of Jerusalem, as the Assyrian troops arrive to attack the city, essentially gives a speech about the "trust" of the Judeans and their King Hezekiah. As he begins his speech to induce the capitulation of the city's residents, he quickly throws out two questions by the king of Assyria, both regarding trust and reliance: "What is the trust that you have (lit. trust)? ...Now, in whom do you trust that you have rebelled against me?"[538] (2 Kgs 18:19-20 TNK) Putting trust in Egypt was soon precluded as a viable solution to Judah's current distress, as Egypt is here famously compared to "a staff of the crushed reed which pierces a man's hand as he leans on it" (v21 TNK modified).[539] Later Hezekiah and Judah are again mocked for having trusted in Egypt for chariots and horsemen (v24). Just as Sargon II dismisses Urartu as a helper that will not save Muttallum, ruler of Kummuh (see above), Sennacherib, according to the biblical author, also regards Egypt as an ineffective source of assistance. In fact, the Egyptian Pharaoh bears a similarly unflattering epithet in Sargon's inscriptions, when rulers of Philistia, Judah, Moab and Edom are said to have sent messages to the Pharaoh, "a ruler unable to save them" (*mal-ku la mu-še-zi-bi-šú-nu*) (Fuchs 1998: 46; text VII b. 26, cf. Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 231). Sennacherib's implicit message in this context, if read against Assyrian texts about trust and mistrust of foreign polities in various types of forces, is again the argument that only Assyria, as the universal empire, is the trustworthy source of help and reliance that guarantees life and prosperity (cf. vv. 31-32).

---

[538] מָה הַבִּטָּחוֹן הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּטָחְתָּ (2 Kgs 18:19) and עַתָּה עַל־מִי בָטַחְתָּ כִּי מָרַדְתָּ בִּי (2 Kgs18:20)

[539] עַתָּה הִנֵּה בָטַחְתָּ לְךָ עַל־מִשְׁעֶנֶת הַקָּנֶה הָרָצוּץ הַזֶּה עַל־מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִסְמַךְ אִישׁ עָלָיו וּבָא בְכַפּוֹ וּנְקָבָהּ כֵּן פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם לְכָל־הַבֹּטְחִים עָלָיו (2 Kgs 18:21) Cf. Also 2 Kgs 19:9 when Tirhaqa (Taharqa) is reportedly providing Judah with military aid.

4. Finally, the polemics of Rabshaqeh's speech direct one's attention to the issue of putting trust in gods other than the Assyrian great gods and their human representatives, i.e. the Assyrian kings. I have noted above that, in contrast to foreign rulers who mistakenly trust in nature, their own strength or non-Assyrian alliances , Assyrian sources tend to emphasize the Assyrian king's unflagging faith in the great gods. I have also mentioned that foreign rulers are not viewed to lie beyond the influence of the great gods, as Taharqa is described as having forgotten the might of Assyrian gods by trusting in his own strength. While trust in non-Assyrian gods depicted as the cause of a foreign polity's misconduct is rarely attested in Assyrian sources, Rabshaqeh's speech explicitly mock the Judah's possible reliance on Yahweh as another ineffective source of help similar to Egypt, the human alliance.[540] The reason for Yahweh's ineffectiveness varies in this and other messages by Assyrian emissaries. In this first speech Yahweh's power is not denied but essentially respected, yet his willingness to save his land is cast in doubt. In v.22, Rabsheqeh's logic is apparently that Yahweh would be unwilling to assist his own people, because Hezekiah destroyed local altars and the Asherah in order to promote cultic centralization, which the Assyrians interpreted as blasphemy.[541] Assyrian intelligence may also have gathered information about the locals' dissatisfaction with Hezekiah's reform, which in this speech can serve to further demoralize residents of the Jerusalem (v.4; see Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 231). According to v.25, the king of Assyria even claims to be encouraged by Yahweh to destroy Judah and Jerusalem.[542]

---

[540] After the questions in vv. 19-20, Rabshaqeh answers his own questions by excluding Egypt (vv. 21, 23-24) and Yahweh (vv. 22, 25), respective, as a source of help. His arguments are mixed and could be reorganized accordingly (e.g. 19-21, followed by 23-34, then 22, 25), yet this does not mean that the original verse order was different and then became confused in the process of transmission. It is more probable that Rabshaqeh or the biblical author switch between two arguments to in order to render his main point, that is, "neither is reliable", stronger and more persuasive.

[541] The points made by Rabshaqeh may very well be the externalized version of an internal Judean debate on the theology supporting Hezekiah's cultic reforms. See Machinist 2000b: 163-64.

[542] For local deities abandoning their own lands and join the Assyrian side as a theme in royal inscriptions, see Cogan

In v. 30 Rabshaqeh warns Jerusalemites not to be deceived by their ruler into trusting in Yahweh, for he will not save Judah. Here again Yahweh's power to save is not rejected, but it is implied that Yahweh is unwilling to save his people. In the letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah, however, the emphasis is switched to the inability of the god of Judah (here unnamed) to save Judah and Jerusalem: "'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you (אַל־יַשִּׁאֲךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ) saying, 'Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria'" (2 Kgs 19:10). Here the god of Judah is depicted as a incompetent deity who entertains false hopes, not unlike any other lessor deities that could not save their lands and peoples (v.12). In sum, biblical references to Assyrian mocking of local polities' trust in their own deities enrich our knowledge of the Assyrian rhetoric against those whose behavior is interpreted as a challenge to the established imperial order.

(2) "Voluntary" conformists

a. "Peaceful" subjugation

While a peripheral polity, such as those in the Levant, may be considered a force challenging the establishment or spread of the cosmic order, it can also be depicted as embracing and conforming to this order of universal imperialism from the perspective of the imperial center. More often than not this process occurs as defeat on the battlefield by the imperial troops force the peripheral polity to surrender to the advancing Assyrian ruler by "bowing down at/seizing/kissing his feet" (*ana šēpīya kanāšu/šēpīya ṣabātu/šēpīya našāqu*) and submitting to the "yoke of Aššur" (*nīr Aššur*). Beyond these metaphorical expressions,

---

and Tadmor 1988: 232. Blenkinsopp, when commenting on the same passage in Isaiah (Isa 36: 4-10) adds that the theme of ascribing destruction by foreign hands to Yahweh's wrath is a common topic in prophetic preaching. Blenkinsopp 2000; 471-72. For the Assyrian Empire serving as Yahweh's agent or instrument, see Isa 10:5-15, see Eidevall 2009:45; Machinist 2016:184-85.

subjugated polities in reality have to pay taxes and tributes and send gifts (*biltu, maddattu, tāmartu*,[543] etc.) to Assyria and bear the economic burden of the empire "as Assyrians" (*kī ša Aššurî*). Sometimes the empire chooses to depose the local dynasty, "reorganize" the region (*ana eššūti ṣabātu*) and send a governor to bring the formerly independent state fully into Assyrian imperial administration as a province (for terms of Assyrian conquest and incorporation of peripheral territory, see Machinist 1993; for terms regarding governorship and provincialization, see Liverani 2017a: 179-86).

While most enemies are depicted as previous challengers to the imperial order who are subdued only by Assyria's unparalleled military prowess, there are also cases in which foreign lands surrender to the Assyrian Empire not as the direct result of a decisive victory by the Assyrians on the battlefield. Indeed, sometimes foreign countries are presented in Assyrian sources to have entered the presence of the Assyrian king without any preceding military encounter, voluntarily joining the imperial framework in one way or another: either as a vassal or as a friendly ally. I consider these polities and political leaders as a more typical and more ideal embodiment of the conformity to the universal empire than those who are defeated and directly forced into the imperial framework. Liverani has aptly noted that they "are prompted by the fame of the Assyrian king's extraordinary triumphs and conquests, which extends to the world's utmost periphery. Texts refer both to the 'name' (*šumu*), which represents the growing fame that accompanies many victories, and the terrifying radiance (*puluḫtu* and comparable terms...) that emanates from the head of the king and symbolizes his

[543] "*biltu*" is the most commonly used term for "tribute" paid by subjected peoples and polities. See CAD-b, "*biltu* 5". "*maddattu"/"mandattu*" is another term for "tribute" which seems indistinguishable from "*biltu*". See CAD-m1 "*maddattu*". For the term *tāmartu* ("an audience gift"), see footnote 444. It is possible that the imposition of *tāmartu* does not necessarily indicate formal vassalage.

power as a combination of respect and terror, generated even at great distance" (Liverani 2017a: 49-51). Liverani has mentioned and analyzed a series of examples dating to the Neo-Assyrian Period, featuring polities in all directions that voluntarily submit to Assyrian dominance. I will focus on Levantine polities only, including Neo-Hittite and Arab polities that are located slightly beyond the conventional confines of the Levant.

b. Cases of "voluntary submission" from the Levant and the surrounding region

First, although the typical presentation of voluntary conformists has these foreign polities surrender to the empire without meeting the powerful Assyrian troops on the battlefield, in some borderline cases military encounter is indeed involved. What distinguishes such cases from the more common theme of defeat and conquest is the fact that sometimes the military encounter does not serve as the direct cause of the foreign polity's submission. Sometimes the advance of the Assyrian troops toward a certain polity would prompt it to submit to the formidable power before fighting bursts out. Adad-nērārī III recounts that in his campaign to the Land of Hatti, which had withheld their tribute in his father's reign, the terrifying radiance (without pronominal suffix) overwhelmed the kings of the land of Hatti who submitted to Assyrian again (RIMA 3 Adad-nērārī III, A.0.104.6, 16). On Sennacherib's third campaign, the Assyrian king marched to the land of Hatti, when his "lordly radiance" overwhelmed Lulî, king of Sidon (*pul-ḫi me-lam-me be-lu-ti-ia is-ḫu-pu-šu-ma* RINAP 3-1, Sennacherib 4, 32). While the Sidonian ruler fled to the midst of the sea,[544] his fortified cities and fortresses were overwhelmed by "the awesomeness of the

[544] RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4, 32; 140, 15'. Other versions of the account add that he "disappeared" (*šaddâšu ēmid*) in the midst of the sea: RINAP 3-1, Sennacherib 15, iii 5; 16, iii 2; 17, ii 61; 22, ii 40; 23, ii 38; 30, i 2'; 46, 19. Others specify that he fled to Cyprus in the midst of the sea and disappeared there "for fear of war" (*e-du-ra ta-ḫa-zi*): RINAP 3-1, Sennacherib 42, 8; 44, 17; 45, 2'; 46, 18. The phrase "for fear of war" indicates that the surrender of the Sidonian cities after the flee of their king was achieved without fighting, which was imminent.

weapon of my lord Aššur" and bowed down at his feet (*ra-šub-bat* GIŠ.TUKUL ^{d}*aš-šur* EN-*ia is-ḫu-pu-šú-nu-ti-ma ik-nu-šú še-pu-u-a*; line 34). When the Sidonian ruler chose to flee from his homeland and from the reaffirmation of Assyria's imperial order, Sennacherib enthroned another ruler in the now submissive land (line 35), thus absorbing Sidon into the imperial system (cf. Katzenstein 1997:223-24). Here the terrifying radiance of not only the human king but also the Assyrian god render any resistance out of the question.

Another interesting case is the surrender of Jerusalem. Although he deprived Judah of numerous fortified cities, as I mentioned above, the Assyrian king's attack on the capital Jerusalem does not appear successful even in the unilateral, propagandistic presentation in the royal inscription, which only mentions that Hezekiah was confined in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage" yet no destruction of the city is mentioned (RINAP 3-1 4, 52). Biblical sources claim that the Assyrian troops suffered severe loss during the campaign, which the biblical author ascribes to miraculous divine intervention by Yahweh's messenger, and retreated without breaking into the Judean capital (2 Kgs 19:35-36=Isa 37:36-37; 2 Chr 32:21). Despite the apparent failure to conquer Jerusalem, Assyrian sources record that "(A)s for Hezekiah, fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him" (*šu-ú* ^{m}*ḫa-za-qi-a-ú pu-ul-ḫi me-lam-me be-lu-ti-ia is-ḫu-pu-šú-ma*; line 55) and that the Judean ruler sent a substantial tribute consisting of gold and silver, precious artifacts, weapons and personnel to Nineveh, as well as "a mounted messenger of his to me to deliver (this) payment and to do obeisance (*e-peš* ARAD-*ú-ti*; lne 58)".[545] Interestingly, all this took place apparently after the retreat of

[545] See 2 Kgs 18:15-16, according to which, however, Hezekiah's payment of tribute was done before the Assyrian troops arrived at the wall of Jerusalem. This detail was omitted in 2 Chronicles. According to 2 Chr 32:23, Judah reportedly received, rather than sent, gifts, as many brought presents (מנחה) to Yahweh in Jerusalem, while Hezekiah is exalted among the nations. One wonders if this interesting note not found in 2 Kings and Isaiah could be an indirect response to Assyrian propaganda of Judah sending gifts to Assyria after the lift of the siege, although the late date of composition should

the Assyrian troops (EGIR-*ia*, "after me" or "after my departure", line 58). In other words, although the Assyrian troops apparently did not break into the city of Jerusalem, the terrifying radiance of the king of the universal empire promptly replaced direct warfare and miraculously subjugated the tenacious enemy who had defied the imperial political and economic order, which in this particular case had been established by Sargon II in his campaigns (Fales 2014: 248).[546]

Second, sometimes a foreign polity would actively recognize the central position of the Assyrian Empire in the international system without any imminent threat of war (cf. Phrygia's friendly gesture in SAA 01 01, lines 7-10). Knowledge of Assyria's sweeping victories in neighboring regions can already prompt peripheral rulers not subjugated by previous Assyrian kings to submit to the empire before war breaks out in their own lands. Tiglath-pileser III recounts that after he conquered Gaza, a certain ruler[547] who had never submitted to his predecessors, voluntarily sent his envoys to Kalhu to do obeisance, after he had "heard" of Tiglath-pileser III's deeds in Syro-Palestine (*ki-šit-te* ^{KUR}*ḫat-ti iš-mé-e-ma*). His submission is interpreted as the effect of being overwhelmed by the terrifying radiance (*na-mur-rat aš-šur EN-ia [is-ḫup-šú-ma]*) of the god Aššur (RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 48, 20'-22'a; 49, r23-25).

In other cases, rulers of distant lands who had never been incorporated fully into the

---

contradict this hypothesis. For the Chronicler's rewriting of the story, which depicts Hezekiah as completely faithful ruler who puts all his trust in Yahweh, see Kalimi 2014.

[546] Fales also suggests that that the lift of the siege was not the result of bargaining between the two sides which some scholars think may have involved the release of Padî, the former king of Ekron who was handed to Hezekiah. Fales understands Hezekiah's surrender as voluntary, as I have noted here, citing also the "terrifying radiance" and 2 Kgs 18:14. It should be noted, however, that according to some of the Assyrian sources the payment of tribute took place only after the departure of Assyrian troops. Hezekiah's motivation to pay a large amount of tribute after the siege ended was probably to prevent further Assyrian expeditions and sieges which must have caused internal crises in Judah. Fales 2014: 247-48.

[547] The ruler's name is not preserved. The following passages in RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 48 suggests that this should be an Arab ruler whose polity is located in or not far from the southern Levant.

imperial system would see or hear the mighty deeds of the great gods of Assyria or the of the Assyrian great king, who acts on behalf the gods, and voluntarily surrender to the Assyrian Empire without fighting. Ashurbanipal records several such cases from the Western periphery:

Rulers (who reside in) the middle of the sea and kings who reside in the high mountains saw the might of these deeds of mine and became frightened of my lordly majesty (*da-na-an ep-še-ti-ia an-na-a-˹ti˺ e-mu-ru-ma ip-la-ḫu* EN-*u-ti*). (As for) Yakīn-Lû, the king of the land Arwad, Mugallu, the king of the land Tabal, (and) Sanda-šarme of the land Ḫilakku (Cilicia), who had not bowed down to the kings, my ancestors, they bowed down to my yoke. They brought (their) daughters, their own offspring, to Nineveh to serve as housekeepers, together with a [sub]stantial dowry and a large marriage gift, and they kissed my feet (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, ii 63-72).

The submission of Mugallu of Tabal is recounted separately in another text where it is particularly stressed that "terror fell upon" Mugallu in his own faraway land and that no military action was needed to prompt the active willingness of the Southern Anatolian Neo-Hittite kingdom to accept Assyria's universal rule:

(As for) Mugallu, the king of of the land [Tabal], who lives in the mountains — dangerous mountain terrain — who readied (his) weapons against the kings, my ancestors, and answered (them) with disrespect, terror fell upon him in his land and fear of my royal majesty overwhelmed him (*qé-reb* KUR-*šú ḫat-ti ˹im˺-qut-˹su˺-ma pu-luḫ-ti* LUGAL-*ti-ia is-ḫup-šú-ma*). Without waging war (or) armed [combat] (*ba-lu e-peš* MURUB$_4$ ˹GIŠ.TUKUL˺ [MÈ]), he sent to Nineveh and appealed to my lordly majesty (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 74, r28-31).

The same is true of the submission of Natnu, king of the Nabayateans (to be

differentiated from the Nabateans in the Roman period) who were possibly a subgroup of the Arabs (see Younger 2016:701), again depicted as a "remote" polity who had never before served as an Assyrian vassal. Natnu "heard about" the might of Aššur and Marduk (*da-na-an* AN.ŠÁR ^{d}AMAR.UTU), supreme gods of Assyria and Babylonia respectively, and sent envoys to Assyria and signed a treaty with the Ashurbanipal. In some versions of the account the immediate cause for Natnu's voluntary submission to the Assyrian Empire is also specified. It has to do with Iauta' (son of Hazael), king of the Arabs who, though an Assyrian vassal, had fled to Natnu and the land of the Nabayateans (again, not the Nabateans in the Roman Period; see Chapter 4). In order not to incur Assyrian intervention, Natnu decided to submit himself to the almighty king of Assyria. Notably, the Assyrian scribe decided to quote from what this minor king supposedly said to Iauta', the potential trouble maker: "Can I myself be spared from the grasp of Assyria (ŠU.II ^{KUR}aš-šur^{KI} *ul-te-zi-i-bi*)? But you have made me your stronghold!" (e.g. RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 6, x 7'-8') This interesting quotation not only reveals the political calculation of this minor Levantine polity, but also aptly demonstrates the gist of Assyrian imperial universalism put in the mouth not of the Assyrians but of a subjugated polity located in a remote land: no one on earth can escape from or resist Assyria.

However, the cordial relationship between Assyria and the Nabayateans did not last too long, as Natnu had possibly built ties with Assyria's enemies, e.g. Abī-yate, king of the land of the Arabs after Iauta' (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, viii 46-47) and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, king of Babylon between 651and 638 BCE[548] (see RINAP 5-1 11=Prism A/Rassam Cylinder;

[548] See the detailed study of events related to the Arabs in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions and letters in Eph'al 1982: 142-69.

SAA 18 147). Another inscription of Ashurbanipal's from the Ishtar Temple recounts that Natnu withheld tributes which caused Assyrian invasion and the complete destruction of Nabayatean towns[549]. This upsetting of the imperial order in the relations between Assyria and the Nabayateans was corrected as Ashurbanipal restored Nuhūru son of Natnu who had fled from the Assyrian troops (lit. "the weapons of Aššur and Ištar ") to his father's throne. The inscription recounts that Nuhūru was "overwhelmed" by some characteristic or object of these gods, which word is broken, and brought a substantial gift to Ashurbanipal. It is possible that the word was a term denoting "terrifying radiance"(*melammu, puluḫtu, namurratu, rašubbatu,* etc.), "might" (*danānu*) or "deeds" (*epšētu*). Here we have yet another case of a foreign (would-be) ruler, overwhelmed by the Assyrian gods (or the king), who is presented to submit himself to the Assyrian Empire without imminent threat of war, as he had apparently fled from Assyrian troops (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 23, 124b-131a). Eventually, the Nabayateans returned to the Assyrian Empire. Natnu's alleged assessment of the political situation was indeed correct: no one could escape from Assyria.

c. A note on the "terrifying radiance"

The above examples have demonstrated that foreign rulers and peoples can be overwhelmed (*saḫāpu*) by the "might" (*danānu*) , "deeds" (*epšētu*) and weapons (*kakku*) of either the gods or the Assyrian king, or the abstraction of power, termed "terrifying radiance" (*melammu, puluḫtu, pulḫu, namurratu, namrīru, rašubbatu*, etc.),[550] or . Two additional notes can be made with regard to the "terrifying radiance":

[549] Perhaps a separate war from the Babylonian War and the Arab War in 651-648 BCE and the second Arab war in 641-638. Eph'al 1982: 165.

[550] See stduies in Oppenheim 1943, Cassin 1968: 10-15 (for a critical review of Oppenheim's view), 17-22 (a review of terms), Machinist 2006: 159,n.28, 162, 164; Ataç 2007, Liverani 2017a: 38-39.

1. Not all references to the overwhelming effect of divine or royal terrifying radiance indicate peaceful, voluntary submission of the foreign polity. Yet even so, sometimes it is exactly war itself that embodies the terrifying radiance. One example is Ashurnasirpal's campaign against Bīt-Adini in northern Syria (878 BCE), in which account he claims that "I razed, destroyed, burnt...consumed the city. (Thus) I imposed awe of the radiance of Aššur, my lord, upon Bīt-Adini" (RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II, A.0.101.1, iii 54). Clearly, the imposition of divine radiance was achieved, in terms of the royal rhetoric of the text, only after war and destruction. That is to say, under certain circumstances, perhaps when the enemy is too resistant or considerably strong, the terrifying radiance alone cannot be fully effective until military encounter proves resistance to the universal empire unsurprisingly futile.

2. It has been widely recognized by scholars that the terror or terrifying radiance can emanate from the divinity or from the human king, with the god as its ultimate source (e.g. Cassin 1968; Machinist 2006: 162; Ataç 2007, R. J. Thompson 2013:227-29, with a comparison with the fear of Yahweh). In addition to the terrifying radiance, the mighty deeds and weapons are also attached either to god(s) or to the Assyrian king when recounting the defeat or voluntary surrender of peripheral polities. It seems that, however, although the reference to "fear" or "radiance" of the human king is attested already in early Neo-Assyrian ideology from the 9th centuries,[551] the majority of references to royal radiance subduing

[551] E.g. "With the support of Aššur, my lord, I overwhelmed all their lands with my fear." (*pu-ul-ḫi ú-sa-ḫi-pi-ši-na*) in Tukulti-Ninurta II's inscription (around 890s BCE), RIMA 2 Tukulti-Ninurta II, A.0.100.5, 4; Ashurnasirpal II, A.0.101.1, iii 23, 24, "fear of my lordship", "terror of my weapon"; RIMA III Shalmaneser III A.0.102.2, i 21 "they feared the flash of my weapon" ("flash"=*namurratu*), ii 68 "He became afraid in the face of the flash of my weapons (and) my lordly brilliance (*melamme ša bēlūtīya*)"; A.0.102.5, iii3 "I laid my lordly brilliance over the land Urarṭu" (*namurrat bēlūtīya*), A.0.102.6, iv6-7, 24 (*melam bēlūtīya*); Shamshi-Adad V A.0.103.1, iii 7 (*melamme bēlūtīya*), iii 69 ("*pulḫi melamme*" in the context of the king thundering upon enemies like Adad);

enemies or faraway polities occur in inscriptions dating to later periods of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. References to divine radiance or mighty deeds, on the other hand, are attested in inscriptions dated to all periods.[552]

Thus, in the 8th century, while there is a very limited number of reference to non-divine radiance subduing peoples,[553] references to both divine and royal radiance occur in Sargon II's inscriptions describing the same event. For example, he mentions that "the radiance of Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed" the king of Meluhha who extradited Iamani of Ashdod to Assyrian hands. (Fuchs 1994: 76, text Saal XIV, 14).[554] The same episode is recounted in different terms in the Prunk inscription, where the king of Meluhha allegedly "heard from afar the might (*da-na-an*) of the gods Aššur, Nabu and Marduk" and "became terrified by my royal radiance" ([*pul*]-*ḫi me-lam-me* LUGAL-*ti-ya ik-tu-mu-šu-ma*) (Fuchs 1994: 222, text Prunk 111). Here we have a case of the combined effect of divine and royal might or radiance on the submission of foreign rulers and peoples.

After Sargon II, there is a rise of references to the king's radiance in Sennacherib's inscriptions, where the theme of the "terrifying radiance" subduing foreigners is attested in the contexts of Assyria's subjugation or defeat of Sidon and Judah in the third campaign, Chaldea in the fourth campaign and Elam in the fourth and eighth campaigns. In the case of

---

[552] The standard phraseology of the terrifying radiance overwhelming foreigners in inscriptions of kings of the 9th century who campaigned intensively, is "(awe of) the radiance of Aššur (or another god, e.g. Marduk, in context iof Babylonian and Chaldean affairs), my lord, overwhelmed..." (*pulḫi melamme ša* DN *bēliya...isḫup*, Ashurnasirpal's inscriptions: RIMA 2, Ashurnasirpal II, A.0.101.1, i57; i80; ii46; ii80-81; similar occurrences in A.0.101.17, in total 7 times; Shalmaneser III's inscriptions, RIMA 3, Shalmaneser III A.0.102.1, 27; A.0.102.2, i22-23; i 30; ii 74; A.0.102.5, vi 7, etc., a total of 16 times; RIMA 3, Shamshi-Adad V A.0.103.1, ii 42; iv 5; A.0.103.2, iii 25'-26' (*namurrat aššur bēliya*), a total of 3 times; Adad-nērārī III A.0.104.5, 7; A.0.104.8, 17. For later occurrences, see discussion below.

[553] In the 8th century, in Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions divine radiance is the major substance that overwhelms enemies and foreign polities (6 to 9 occurrences, preserved and restored, e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 24, 4 "*namurrat aššur bēlīya*", etc), without explicit reference to the king's terrifying radiance with the same effect. There is one certain reference to enemies frighted by "the terrifying radiance of my weapons" (*namurrat kakkīya iplaḫma*), RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 39, 22. The same passage is damaged in text 41, 19' which may contain the same phrase.

[554] For the radiance of Aššur overwhelming the Egyptian Pharaoh (Osrokon IV), see also Fuchs 1998 text III e Ass 8-11.

Sidon, both "fear of my lordly radiance" (*pulḫi melamme bēlūtīya*) and "the awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord" (*rašubbat kakkī Aššur bēliya*) serve to overwhelm the Sidonian ruler and cities (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 4, 31; 34; also in later versions). In the accounts of the subjugation and defeat of Judah and Elam only human factors are mentioned. "Fear of my lordly radiance" (*pulḫi melamme bēlūtīya*) overwhelms Hezekiah (4, 55, also in later versions), while Sennacherib himself pours "terrifying radiance" (*namurratu*) upon the king of Elam (16, iv 64). "Terror of doing battle with me" (*ḫurbašu tāḫāzīya*) is yet another element that could fall upon the Assyrian king's Chaldean and Elamite enemies, respectively (22, iii 55; vi 26). Furthermore, the wall of Nineveh constructed by Sennacherib is named "bàd ní.gal.bi lú.kúr-ra šú.šú" (=*dūru ša namrīrūšu nākirī saḫpū*; RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 8, 11'), whose Sumerian name and the Akkadian translation mean "the wall whose radiance overwhelms enemies". The term ní.gal=*namrīru*/*namrirru* often denotes the glow that a temple projects near and far (Cassin 1968:3). One certain reference to divine radiance only as the matter that subdues foreign lands in Sennacherib's inscriptions seems to be an epithet of Šamaš (*nam-ri-ir-˹ri˺ [be-lu-ti-šú? ...]* KUR.MEŠ *ma-ti-tan*; 36, o 6-7).

In Esarhaddon's inscriptions, however, divine radiance or awesomeness is more frequently attested than the king's radiance as the element that subdues foreign people.[555] Still, we have a few references to the human radiance subduing or falling upon foreigners. Bēl-iqīša, a Gambulian ruler in Chaldea, who submitted himself to Esarhaddon, was reportedly overwhelmed by both the divine radiance of Aššur and the lordly radiance of the

[555] "Fear of the great gods, my lords" (*puluḫti ilāni rabbūti bēlīya*) or more often "fear of the radiance of Aššur, my lord" (*pulḫi melamme ša aššur bēliya*) are most commonly attested. E.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon, 1, i 72; iv 37; *puluḫtu rašubbat aššur bēliya* 2, iv 7 and duplicate passages in other versions of the inscription. Sometimes the enemies, such Elam and "the Gutians" would hear the "might of Aššur, my lord" (*danān aššur bēliya*) (1, v 28) The epithet of Šamaš attested in Sennacherib's inscription is also found in RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 4 48, o 6.

king (e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 31, o 10'). The divine origin of the king's overwhelming radiance[556] is best summarized in a passage in Esarhaddon's inscription which enumerates all the powers of the king that were endowed or enabled by great gods, among which is that Marduk causes the fear of his kingship to overwhelm the mountains: "the god Marduk, king of the gods, made the fear of my kingship (*pu-luḫ-ti* LUGAL-*ti-ia*) sweep over (*ú-šá-as-ḫi-pu*) the mountain regions like a dense fog" (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 4, ii 34-35).

Finally, in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions references to both divine and royal radiance, awesomeness and might are abundant. Divine elements that overwhelm and subjugate enemies and foreign polities include, for instance, the radiance of Aššur's weapon (*rašubbat kakkī Aššur*, e.g. RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, ii 4 and similar passages in other versions of the annals), the fear of the great gods of Assyria (13, viii 24-26) and most prominently, the radiance of Aššur and Ištar as divine duo which is attested 10 times.[557] References to the royal radiance of the human king occur more frequently than in, say, Esarhaddon's inscriptions. Sometimes the terrifying human element occurs on its own, e.g. "fear of my royal majesty" (*puluḫti šarrūtīya*, e.g. in 12, vi 22') and sometimes it is fear caused by the advancing troops led by the Assyrian king. (e.g. 4, iv 14'-15') More often than not, royal terrifying radiance is mentioned in conjunction with divine radiance, as in the following cases:

The people of the cities Ḫilmu (and) Pillatu heard about the assault of my mighty battle array as I was marching to the land Elam. The awe-inspiring radiance of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Ištar, my lords, (and) fear of my royal majesty overwhelmed them (*nam-ri-ri* AN.ŠÁR *u* ^{d}*15* EN.MEŠ-*ia*

[556] See Machinist 2006: 162; Ataç 2007.

[557] "*namrīri Aššur u Ištar* "RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 3, i 77; 4, i 61; 6 ii 69' (largely restored); 9, iii 41; 11, i 84; 11, iv 119; 11, vii 75. "*melamme Aššur u Ištar*", 3, v 95; 4, v 57''; 7, vi 8'.

pu-luḫ-ti LUGAL-*ti-ia is-ḫup-šú-nu-ti*). They, their people, their oxen, (and) their sheep and goats, (iii 45) arrived in Assyria to do obeisance to me and they grasped the feet of my royal majesty (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 9 iii 41-42; 5th campaign, to Elam).

(As for) Rusâ, the k[ing of the land] Urarṭu, [he heard about] the might of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Ištar, [my] lords, and fear of my royal majesty [overwhelmed hi]m (*da-na-an* AN.ŠÁR *u* ^{d}*15* EN.⌜MEŠ⌝-*[ia iš-me-e]-ma pu-luḫ-ti* LUGAL-*ti-ia [is-ḫup]-⌜šú?⌝-ma*); (vii 15) [he (then) sent] his envoys [to me in the city Arbela] to inquire about m[y] well-being (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 7, vii 12-14).

Sometimes it is explicitly pointed out that the royal radiance is a divine gift endowed to the human king, as the passage in Esarhaddon's inscription:

> [Fear o]f my royal majesty—with [which] the great gods [had end]owed me (*[šá ú-za]-⌜ʾi⌝-nu-in-n*i DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ)—overwhelmed [the land Elam] (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 7, ix 3-5).

To summarize my observations so far, it seems that the terrifying radiance or the terror caused by this and other elements which subdues foreign groups, sometimes on the battlefield yet often without fighting, is presented since the 9th century as a characteristic ultimately possessed by gods but often shared by their human representative, the great king of Assyria. References to royal radiance or fear of kingship increase in inscriptions produced by the Sargonids, especially under Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal. In the latter's inscriptions, references to divine radiance alone still abound, but attestations of human elements alone or the combination of divine and human radiance or terror add up to about the same number of occurrences as that of the divine radiance (both around 15 times). Of course, one should not

conclude from the limited evidence that there is a clear tendency in the changing proportion of divine or royal radiance. In fact, there is hardly any contrast between the two elements, as the kingship in Assyrian religious and political traditions is considered, in various respects, as the representation and embodiment of certain divine traits and functions, as Machinist has analyzed in detail.(2006). Yet it is still possible that certain kings, particularly the Sargonids who ruled the Assyrian Empire at its peak, saw it appropriate further to highlight the manifestation of the divine magical power in his own great kingship. In any case, it was in the texts of the Middle Assyrian king,Tukulti-Ninurta I, that the *melammu* and other divine attributes were first associated with to the Assyrian king (Machinist 2006: 162). If this could reflect a new development in Assyrian royal ideology and imperial ideology in the Middle Assyrian period, than by analogy, the relative increase of the use of human radiance and fear of the king side by side or even in the place of divine radiance in inscriptions of the Sargonids may also reveal subtle changes in the overall imperial ideology and the role of the Assyrian king in relation to the empire and its foes.

C. Different categories of political organizations in Assyrian eyes?

Levantine polities behaved in widely different ways as they interacted with the universal empire that encroached upon their interests in the course of its take-over of the region for the imperial system. Instead of the specific political strategies and individual decisions of the Levantine polities, in the sections above I have reviewed more closely the Assyrian presentation and interpretation of the status and behavior of Levantine polities as well as the interaction between the empire and the peripheral polities. In this section I would like to investigate whether and how how the Assyrians observed and described the existence of

different formats of political organizations in the Levant and whether Assyrian sources perceive and identify cultural and ethnic commonality within one political entity or among various polities in the Levantine periphery. This very complex issue can only be treated here in a brief and selective manner.

The Assyrians certainly possessed an enormous knowledge of the lands, peoples and political organizations that exist in the peripheries of their universal empire, as their king and gods explore d the world in campaigns, which enriches their geographical and cosmological knowledge of their current and potential domains (cf. Liverani 2017a: 41-65). The West, as other peripheral regions, was hardly a homogeneous, undifferentiated piece in the eyes of the universal empire. It is thus also possible that they also perceived the different sizes of peripheral polities, including those in the Levant, as well as different ways in which they organized and administered their polities. While their possibly unwitting categorization of different polities most likely differs from modern, idealized ways of placing polities in different types according to abstract, highly theorized criteria, they nevertheless did show awareness of the existence of different types of political entities. For a glance at this issue one should naturally examine the determinatives applied to toponyms referring to political and supra-regional entities as well as the derivative gentilics (*nisbe*) of these names, some of which have been discussed in preceding chapters in the context of individual polities.

The following chart, based on the summary of data in Bagg's detailed work on the spellings of occurrences of Levantine toponyms in Assyrian sources[558] (Bagg 2007; for an analysis see Bagg 2011:106-29), aims to visualize the application of different determinatives

[558] In terms of genre, the sources include royal inscriptions, letters as well as legal, economic, administrative and astrological texts. For further information of the corpus he used to collect the occurrences, see Bagg 2007: lxviii-lxix.

with selected polities in the Levant as well as *nisbe*s derived from these toponyms by presenting the number of occurrences of relevant forms (including duplicates and variants). I have selected polities from each geographical and/or cultural circle in the Iron Age Levant, including the Cis-/Transjordanian polities, Aramean polities, Neo=Hittite/Luwan polities, Phoenician states and Philistine polities.

Table 3 Occurrences of Levantine polity names

and corresponding *nisbe*s with different determinatives

	Toponym				*nisbe*			
Det. / Polity	KUR	URU	LÚ	Others	KUR	URU	LÚ	Others
Judah	10	4[559]	none[560]	none	19	2	none	none
Israel (Sirʾala)	none	none	none	none	1	none	none	none
Israel (Bīt-Ḫumrī)	16	none	none	none	none	none	none	none
Moab	5	7	none	none	10	3	1	none
Edom	3	5	none	none	9	none	none	none
Ammon (Bīt Ammān)	1	6	none	none	10	2	none	2[561]
Damascus (Bīt Hazāil)	1	none	none	none	none	none	none	none

[559] Duplicate texts. In RINAP 4 this form is only attested in Esarhaddon 1, v 55.

[560] Bagg (2007:128) refers to a certain attestation of "^{LÚ}Iaudi" (OIP 2, 76ff., 21 T 27). The new edition in RINAP 3-2 44, 21 reads KUR instead.

[561] Once without determinative; once accompanied by "URU+KUR".

Table 3 Continued

Damascus (Ša-imērīšu)	37	none	none	none	6	none	1	none
Bīt Agūsi	6	none	none	none	none	none	none	none[562]
Carchemish	21	100+	none	28[563]	3	22	none	1[564]
Kummuh	11	20	none	none	21	7	3	none
Que	37	11	none	5[565]	24	none	none	none
Tyre	21	19	none	1[566]	13	10	0[567]	2[568]
Sidon	2	47	none	none	12	11	3	1[569]
Arwad	27	11	none	1[570]	none	7	none	none
Ekron	2	23	none	none	2	1	none	1[571]
Ashkelon	2	27	none	none	6	none	none	none
Ashdod	2	24	none	1[572]	5	7	none	none
Gaza	6	26	none	none	4	4	none	none

The interpretation of the information summarized in the chart is by no means straightforward, as the use of determinatives may have been influenced by many variables, including the genre and the date of the sources. For instance, Bagg has pointed out that most

[562] With the exemption of Bīt Ammān, the *nisbe* form seldom derives from the "House of ..." structure. Instead, a person from this Aramean polity can be designated as "Son of Agūsi", which occurs 9 times in Assyrian sources.
[563] 28 occurrences without determinative.
[564] Once without determinative.
[565] 5 occurrences without determinative.
[566] Once without determinative.
[567] Bagg counts 2 (Bagg 2007:236), yet the determinatives are broken away. See Radner 2002:198, text 173, r5'.
[568] Once without determinatve; once with MUNUS, referring to a female.
[569] Once without determinative
[570] Once with LÚ+KUR
[571] Once without determinative.
[572] Once without determinative.

attestations of "URU" as the determinative of a toponym which normally refers to a "land" occur in texts dating to Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (Bagg 2011:108). Such changes in Assyrian scribal practice may confuse our assessment of the data when it comes to polities whose interaction with the Neo-Assyrian Empire intensified only in later periods, such as the Transjordanian states,[573] or polities which did not survive into the 7th century, e.g. Israel. Also, sometimes the land and the capital city may share the same name, e.g. Carchemish, which further complicates our understanding of the data.[574] For reasons like these, the interpretation of the data can only be highly speculative.

With these reservations in mind, I can offer some initial observations:

1. Regardless of the geographical and cultural circles of a certain polity and whether the polity is known, at least in modern scholarship, as a city-state, the *nisbe* form of a polity is usually accompanied with "KUR", often at a higher frequency than cases with "URU".

2. Polities that are otherwise (e.g. through archaeological evidence and indirect textual references) known as territorial polities of considerable sizes with multiple urban centers and fortified towns, e.g. Judah, Israel, Damascus,[575] Bīt Agūsi, Que, etc., are more often than not preceded by "KUR", in both the original and the *nisbe* forms. Exceptions to this observation include Transjordanian polities, of which the *nisbe* forms still more often than not take

---

[573] Of all the 10 occurrences of URU+Moab or its *nisbe*, 9 are attested in sources dating to Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. The ratio is 7 out of 8 in the case of Ammon and 5 out of 5 in the case of Edom.

[574] Another question is whether URU+the name of a land may refer to the capital city of the land, e.g. "city of Judah" referring to Jerusalem in 2 Chr 25:28 (while Lachish in v. 27 is simply referred by its name). One of Esarhaddon's inscriptions has Manasseh designated as "king of the city of Judah" (^{m}*me-na-si-i* LUGAL URU *ia-ú-di*) (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 1, v 55) in a list of Levantine and Cypriote rulers, whose polities are marked with the determinative "URU" (v 54-73a). There is no reason to assume that here URU+GN is intended to refer to the capital of the polity. In one case, this possibility can be safely excluded: Ashurbanipal recounts that he has stationed troops in different towns in other polities, e.g. "at the ... of the cities Azarilu (and) Ḫiratāqaṣāya, in the land (lit. "city") Edom, (vii 110) in the pass of the city Yabrūdu, in the land (lit. "city") Bīt-Ammon, in the district of the city Ḫāurīna, in the land (lit. "city") Moab" (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, vii 108-112). Should "the city" of the three Transjordanian polities be understood as the respective capital, it would be difficult to explain where there are "cities" in the capital cities. It is more likely that here URU instead of KUR is used to designate these territorial polities for reasons unclear to us.

[575] For Damascus as a territorial polity, cf. e.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.10, iii 45b to iv 12.

“KUR” as the determinative, and two Neo-Hittite kingdoms, Kummuh and Carchemish. The *nisbe* form of Kummuh, again, is still more frequently preceded by “KUR”. Both states have capitals that share the names of the polities.

3. The selected Phoenician states, which are often known as city-states, do not necessarily favor “URU” as the determinative. In the case of Tyre, “KUR” and “URU” are almost evenly applied in both the original and the *nisbe* forms of the toponym. Arwad, furthermore, even shows more forms with “KUR” in the original form, although all *nisbe* forms are preceded by “URU”, which defies explanation. The limited number of attestations, as always, renders any interpretation highly doubtful. In contrast to these two states, Sidon is predominantly attested with “URU” in the original form, although the *nisbe* form does not show preference for either determinative. Notably, as I mentioned in chapter 4, Sidon is preceded by “URU” (Lulî, king of the *City* of Sidon) even when other cities that belong to Sidon’s ruler are mentioned (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 15, iii 1-14). It appears from this passage that the entire polity governed by the ruler is viewed as an “URU”.

4. Names of the Philistine states, which again are known as city-states in modern studies, are predominantly preceded with “URU” in the original form. The *nisbe* forms do not show preference of either form, although Ashkelon notably is never attested with “URU” in the *nisbe*. It is possible that these polities are primarily viewed as those whose political activities concentrate on one major city which not only contributes its name to the entire polity, but also makes “URU” the preferred determinative in Assyrian sources. As in the case of Sidon, this situation by no means implies that a Philistine state consists of only one single city with its hinterland. For example, Sargon II mentions his campaign against Azuri, “king

of the *City* of Ashdod" (Fuchs 1994: 132; text Ann. 241), in which he conquered Ashdod, Azuri's royal city together with the cities of Gimtu and Asdudimmu (Fuchs 1994:134; text Ann. 250-51; 220, text Prunk 104).

5. While the *nisbe* forms of all polities often tend to be accompanied by "KUR", in a few cases the number of attestations of "URU" approximate or exceed that of "KUR" in the *nisbe* forms: Carchemish, the Phoenician and Philistine states (with the exception of Ashkelon). With regard to the original forms, in the following cases "URU" is used more often than "KUR": Carchemish, Kummuh, Sidon and the Philistine states. The intersection of the two groups includes Carchemish, the Phoenician states and the Philistine states.

6. The determinative LÚ is rarely attested. When it is used, it appears as the determinative of the *nisbe*s of different types of polities, from a large kingdom like Damascus to what appears to be a "typical" city-state, such as Sidon.[576] Therefore, there is no reason to assume any special link between LÚ and the awareness of any identifiable ethnic or kinship-based group. For Assyrian awareness of supra-regional Levantine ethnic groups and their relationship with political entities, I have briefly discussed in chapter 4 such issues as the early Aramean groups, the meaning of "the Hittites" and the Arabs. The use of determinatives in Assyrian sources also does not seem to offer further information about internal correspondence between a certain people and individual polities in the Levant, an issue I discussed in chapters 3-4.

To sum up, one cannot draw any firm conclusions from the data presented in the chart.

[576] Here LÚ refers more likely to any individual from that polity instead of the ruler. I have noted in Chapter 5, under the *nisbe* as a royal title, that in OB and Amarna texts LÚ GN (man of GN) can serve as the royal title of a polity's ruler. In the data I have gathered here in the chart, one finds LÚ+*nisbe* instead of GN.

One may tentatively suggest, however, that Assyrian sources do reflect a preliminary, yet non-consistent, awareness of the difference between extensive territorial kingdoms and what could be labeled as city-states, on account of observations number 2 and numbers 3-5. Yet Assyrian differentiation of the Levantine polities may not always agree perfectly with modern scholarly typology of ancient states. For instance, Tyre, which is commonly described as a typical Phoenician city-state in scholarly literature (cf. Niemeyer 2000), is more often than not referred to as a "KUR" in Assyrian sources, although, as I have pointed out, the considerable frequency of "URU" with its *nisbe* form remains more in line with city-states. The reference to cities and towns belonging to an "URU" with its own ruler, as in the case of Sidon and Ashdod (see above), also prompts us to reconsider the definitions of a city-state, which often sees it as a unit consisting of "city plus (economically and socially integrated) hinterlands" (Charlton and Nichols 1997:1) or as "a highly institutionalized and highly centralized micro-state consisting of one town (often walled) with its immediate hinterland and settled with a stratified population" (Hansen 2000:19). Yet the fact that such polities are still written with "URU" more often than with "KUR", likely reveals Assyrian knowledge of their internal structure which does gravitate predominantly towards a metropolitan urban center in contrast to its hinterland and other, possibly much smaller, towns, which somehow sets such a city-state apart from a polity like Judah, Israel and Damasucs in the Assyrian eyes. Although not much information about peoplehood, ethnicity or even "nationhood" can be gleaned from the use of determinatives preceding the names Levantine polities, an overview of determinatives of selected polities of various types nevertheless demonstrates yet again that the universal empire is not only conscious of the subtle differences among peripheral

peoples and polities, but also manages to present them in a very perceptive way.

Universal Empires in the Eyes of Levantine Polities

1. A quick overview of biblical presentation of the overwhelming empire

Fortunate for modern readers is the fact that the Assyrian sources are not the only witness of the interaction between the universal empire and the periphery. Levantine polities provide us with a considerable number of documents in local languages and scripts through which they now become the observer, with the universal empire being transformed into the object of observation and analysis whose image can be readily manipulated and reworked to reflect the local polity's worldview. In addition to royal inscriptions in Semitic and Luwian languages, the most important reservoir of Levantine perception of the universal empire is the Hebrew Bible. Knowledge of a number of empires, particularly universal empires in the Iron Age Near East, can be gathered in different genres of biblical sources, from genealogical lists, chronicle or historical narratives, novellas and most importantly, prophecy.[577] In biblical sources can be attested the trajectory of the development of different attitudes towards the empire and the universal empire, which ultimately derives from the changing modes of interaction between the Hebrew kingdoms and the overwhelming external powers from the Neo-Assyrian period on, sometimes possibly as a result of direct exposure to Assyrian imperial propaganda through different media (Liverani 1979; for Isaiah's knowledge of Assyrian royal ideology, see Machinist 1983:729-37 and Aster 2017).

The image of the universal empire varies in biblical sources of different genres dating to

[577] For instance, for a full list of references to the Assyrian Empire in the Hebrew Bible see Machinist 1983:719-21, n.1. References to Babylonia and Achaemenid Persia as empires and the expansion of Egypt are also found in both historical and prophetic sources. See Vanederhooft 1999; Eidevall 2009; Machinist 2018a.

different periods. First, the empire can be presented as an invincible and relentless enemy that bears striking resemblance with Assyrian royal inscriptions themselves. In an important study Machinist has concluded that the image of Assyria in First Isaiah is primarily "that of an overwhelming military machine, destroying all resistance in its path, devastating the lands of its enemies, hauling away huge numbers of spoils and captives to its capital or elsewhere in its realm, and rearranging by this devastation and deportation the political physiognomy of the entire region" which is "also very much at the center of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions" (Machinist 1983:722). Sometimes the empire can also be further presented as the evil enemy *par excellence* of Israel and Judah as well as Yahweh, which is particularly true of the Neo-Babylonian Empire that inflicted Judah with utter destruction in 587/586 BCE (Eidevall 2009: 107-29; 131-32). Furthermore, the power and effectiveness of the universal empire and its great king are sometimes nullified by their incapability to function, since the authority over the world is ultimately considered to be in the hands of the universal god, Yahweh (e.g. Hos 5:13-6:1[578]; for the motif in Isaiah see Aster 2017:275-314).

The downfall of a universal empire is often celebrated or pronounced not only as the sign of divine vengeance (e.g. Isa 10:16-19) but also as an indication that Yahweh, instead of the universal empire and its king, functions as the true ruler of the world and the defender of the persecuted in general, in relation to both imperial and other forms of social oppression.[579] That the destiny of the empire is subject to divine judgment (e.g. Nah 2:2) is also related to the transformation of the empire from the invading enemy to an instrument of Yahweh to

[578] In this passage Ephraim/Israel and Judah sent envoys to Assur/Assyria and to the "Great King" (מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב Hos 5:13; see Paul 1986:199; for another reference to an Assyiran king as a great king, see אָסְנַפַּר רַבָּא Ezr 4:10) but cannot be healed by the Assyrian king. The healing power is performed only by Yahweh after he tore the rebellious people, as a vassal is pardoned by an overlord. See also Aster 2018.

[579] E.g. the Book of Nahum, see Wöhrle 2018:547 and Machinist 2018b:108-09.

bring judgment upon his own people (e.g. Isa 7:20; 10:15; 19:25, as "the work of My hands"). The ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Nebuchadnezzar II, is also labeled as Yahweh's servant by the prophet Jeremiah, who will be established by the god of Judah to punish his own people who insist on fleeing to Egypt (Jer 43:10). This transformation indicates two conceptual developments of the image of a universal empire like Assyria in the Hebrew Bible: first, the almighty universal empire, particularly its king, which is depicted as an unstoppable, active actor that reshapes the world according its own imperial ideology in Neo-Assyrian sources, is now rendered as a "passive" tool[580] designed and used by Yahweh. Second, as a divine tool to punish and purify Yahweh's people, the universal empire which usually brings about destruction now somehow serves a constructive purpose, at least in the theological sense. In the following sections I will briefly discuss two additional variants. or further developments, of this motif on the basis of both biblical and other Levantine documents, i.e. the universal empire as mercenaries hired by human rulers in the Levant and, furthermore, the empire as a benign protector of local polities. From the brutal destroyer to a constructive instrument, and eventually, to the benevolent metaphorical parents of the local polity, the changing image of the universal empire in Levantine sources is certainly linked with the increasing influence of the universal empire in the Levant as well as the accompanying spread of imperial universalism in the periphery.

2. The empire as "mercenary"

Closely related to the image of Assyria as an agent or instrument is the presentation of the might Assyrian Empire as some sort of mercenary, which may serve peripheral polities as

[580] "Passive" in the sense that the empire's action and energy are understood to emanate from a power outside of and above that of the empire itself.

paid labor. This motif is attested in both biblical sources and epigraphical evidence from other Levantine polities. As the instrumentalization of the Assyrian Empire in some biblical polemics, the implied rhetorical effect of depiction of imperial empire as purchasable service also serves to render the powerful universal empire as a passive force. While acknowledging the effectiveness of imperial intervention in regional conflicts, the stories nevertheless focus on the motives and the geopolitical needs of the peripheral polity which is now in a sense transferred to the center of the stage.

The invitation of the imperial forces to provide military aid certainly involves substantial payment to the empire. While imperial documents, such as the Assyrian royal inscriptions, would conventionally present such payments as the submission of a peripheral polity, Levantine sources adopt a different phraseology to recount the same story. One detail concerns the terminology denoting the payment to the superior power. For example, biblical sources relate that Ahaz, king of Judah, sent a message to Tiglath-pileser III in which he addressed himself as "your servant and your son" (עַבְדְּךָ וּבִנְךָ אָנִי 2 Kgs 16:7; for the terminology see Tadmor and Cogan 1979: 504-07; see also Na'aman 2006c: 264-65), in order to procure the latter's military assistance against the invading Damascene and Israelite troops. The message was accompanied by a payment by Ahaz to the king of Assyria consisting of gold and silver from the Temple and the palace[581] (2 Kgs 16:8, 18). Although the situation perfectly fits the standard depiction of the submission of a peripheral polity to the empire in

[581] RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47 r 11': "Jehoahaz the Judean" (^{m}*ia-ú-ḫa-zi* ^{KUR}i*a-ú-da-a-a*, possibly the full name of Ahaz) is among Levantine tributaries (734 BCE). Cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:230. Tadmor and Cogan suggest that it is unclear whether Ahaz appealed for Assyrian help prior to or after the 734 BCE event. Tadmor and Cogan 1988:191. If, however, the term "bribe" denotes a sum of money paid to someone to request additional favor (payment of bribe in court solicits the judges favor, see examples below), then one may postulate that when Ahaz paid the bribe, Judah was not yet officially a vassal of Assyria protected by treaty. That is why "for the Deuteronomist, Ahaz' appeal brought Assyria to the area" (Tadmor and Cogan 1988:191).

Assyrian documents, in Kings the terminology adopted for the payment is worth further discussion. Instead of Hebrew terms denoting tribute (e.g. מִנְחָה e.g. Judges 3:15, 17), here the author designates Ahaz' payment to Tiglath-pileser III (cf. 2 Kgs 16:8) as "שֹׁחַד", usually translated as a "bribe". The king of the Assyrian Empire is depicted as a rather passive figure in the whole episode in which he simply "listened to" (וַיִּשְׁמַע אֵלָיו מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר 2Kgs 16:9)[582] the request of the Judean king, accepted the offer and accomplished the mission (v. 9). In all other verses the main character is Ahaz, which differs considerably from Assyrian accounts of the Assyrian king offering military aid to vassals, in which the Assyrian king is either depicted as the one who initiates the intervention or explicitly transforms the event into his own military political achievement to Assyria's advantage.[583]

It must be noted that "שֹׁחַד" is not attested in other accounts of the Syro-Ephramite War.

---

[582] The phrase "to listen to" does not reveal unequivocal information about the relative status of the two sides. Elsewhere in the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic sources,שמע אל could refer to God listening to humans (Deut 3:26; Judg 9:7; 2 Kgs 13:4) or an individual of a lower rank (not) listening to one of a high rank (Deut 17:12). In other biblical sources, likewise, different possibilities exist: 1. God listening to humans: Gen 21:17, 30:17, 22; 2. humans listening to God: Isa 48:12; king of Judah (not) listening to a powerful foreign king (Necho of Egypt): 2 Ch. 35:22; an individual of a higher rank listening to one of a lower rank: 1 Kgs 12:15. It seems unlikely, on the basis of this varied evidence, to conclude that Tiglath-Pilser III listening to Ahaz would indicate that a lower status is assigned to the Assyrian king in this story. Other phrases denoting "to listen to", with other prepositions and the use of "קול" (voice), seem to show a preponderance towards "humans listening to God" as opposed to the other way around. See Strawn 2005, with detailed discussions on the meaning and connotations of "to listen to" in Aramaic, Phoenician and biblical sources.

In Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, smaller polities are often the ones that are expected to "listen to" the Assyrian king in the context of international relations. Refusal to listen to the command of the Assyrian king is considered as a sign of rebellion. E.g. "In my second campaign, (as for) Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, (who) did not fear my lordship (and) did not listen to (*la še-mu-u zi-kir šap-ti-ía*) the words of my lips, who trusted in the rolling sea and threw off the yoke of the god Aššur..." (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 6, ii 10'-12'). An actor of a higher rank may also listen to a subordinate figure, yet in Assyrian sources this almost always concerns gods listening to the supplication of the Assyrian king, which is widely attested in Assyrian inscriptions. In fact, almost all occurrences of "A listens to B" in Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian inscriptions (up until the late 9th century) concern a god offering a listening ear to the king's prayers (e.g. RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.17, v 26). The motif of foreign rulers listening or refusing to listen to the Assyrian king appears primarily to feature in inscriptions dating to Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal's reigns.

In sum, while Tiglath-pileser III listening to Ahaz may depict the former as a rather passive figure in the story, it by no means indicate the lower status on the Assyrian side in international relations according to the author's understanding.

[583] Tiglath-pileser III's aid to Judah certainly works in favor of Assyria, as it allowed Assyria to strengthen its influence in the Levant. Yet this is certainly not the focus of the biblical account, where the presentation of the empire is much less impressive due to its passivity. In contrast, Sargon II relates his aid to Ellipi at the request of its ruler, on several occasions, where the role of the empire is much more active and visible than the biblical account. In Ann. 172-184, a very damaged part of Sargon's annals, he recounts the rebellion within the vassal state of Ellipi and Assyria's role in suppressing the rebellion. He mentions that he "listened to" the vassal ruler's request, yet only after he relates his victory over the rebels, highlighting his own active role as the vassal's savior. In Prunk 70-71 of the episode, Sargon II omits Ellipi's call for help altogether, recording only his defeat of the rebellious districts of Ellipi. In Prunk 117-121, one of the ex-ruler Daltā's son turned again to Sargon II for help when his Elam-backed brother and he vied for the throne after the death of Daltā. This time the request precedes Sargon's dispatch of troops, although Sargon does not include the detail of "I listened to" his request. Sargon II then highlights his own role in enthroning the more "rightful" candidate. See relevant texts in Fuchs 1994.

In 2 Chr 28:21, only the verb "to give " (נתן) is used, without a noun designating the treasure plundered from the Temple, the palace and the officials' private wealth. Also, in Isa 8:7-8, the prophet only warns Ahaz of the danger of soliciting imperial aid which may eventually overwhelm Judah itself, without any reference of payment made to the great empire.[584] Therefore, the application of the terminology in 2 Kings 16:8 not only affects the image of both the sender and the recipient of such a gift, but also reveals the Deuteronomist's particular judgment of the nature of the event as well as the Judean protagonist.

In one study on this and other terminologies in this passage, Tadmor and Cogan (1979) consider the term "שֹׁחַד", deeply rooted in the legal parlance of the biblical world, as a deliberately chosen terminology to express the authors' disapproval of Ahaz' attempt to obtain Assyrian assistance. They have also rightly analyzed other cases in which the terminology is attested in both biblical and Assyrian sources, some of which are worth quoting and examining here in the present discussion. The only other biblical attestation of the term "שֹׁחַד" in the context of international relations is 1 Kings 15:17-22, in which Asa, king of Judah, paid a "bribe" to Ben Hadad, king of Damascus, again with wealth collected from the Temple and the palace (v.18), in order to convince Ben Hadad to relinquish the treaty relationship between Damascus and Israel, whose king Baasha was launching an attack at Judah. Here the term "שֹׁחַד" is interestingly put in the mouth of Asa in the first person, i.e. "I have herewith sent you a 'bribe' of gold and silver" (v. 19). It is possible, as Tadmor and Cogan have suggested, that here too the term indicates moral criticism (Tadmor and Cogan

[584] For the differences of the three accounts (particularly the discrepancies between the Deuteronomist's and the Chronicler's versions) and the possibility to read the stories both as historically reliable in general, see Siddall 2009 TP III's Aid to Ahaz, where the author argues that while 2 Kings 16:5-9 focuses only on the Syro-Ephramite war and the effect of Assyrian intervention in this event, 2 Chrons. 28:5-21 takes other related events, such as Judah's border crises in the south and the east and the eventual Assyrian control of Judah in the long term. Therefore, Assyrian intervention is considered effective in 2 Kings, whereas in 2 Chronicles it is concluded that Assyrian intervention was futile and counter-productive.

1979:502-03; Na'aman 2006c), even though Asa qualifies in general as a righteous king according to the Deuteronomist (1 Kgs 15:11-14). This seems to be corroborated by the fact that the term is deleted in 2 Chr 16:3, which reads "I have herewith sent you gold and silver", corresponding to the Chronicler's tendency, which has been widely noted, to lessen or omit possible moral flaws of righteous kings (see Kalimi 2014 on the Chronicler's account of Hezekiah[585]).[586] In addition, paying a bribe in the context of international relations is also attested in Assyrian (e.g. "*ṭātu*", Cogan and Tadmor 1979:500, n.34) and Aramaic sources ("*wyšḥdn*", Sefire III, 28, context unclear).

Despite possible exceptions (see footnote above), it is certain that "שֹׁחַד" carries a negative connotation in most of its occurrences in the Bible, just like *ṭātu* in Akkadian. A further question to be examined, however, is how both the sender and the recipient are depicted in cases where "שֹׁחַד" occurs. Tadmor and Cogan seem to assume that the criticism and disapproval indicated by this term is directed primarily at Ahaz, the Judean king, who sends the "bribe". A closer look at other attestations of the terminology in non-diplomatic contexts suggest that more often than not it is primarily the recipient who is criticized as being blinded by the bribe, subverting justice and murdering the innocent.[587] The God of

---

[585] Note that Hezekiah also used temple and palace treasures to pay Sennacherib according to 2 Kgs 18:14-16, a detail not mentioned in 2 Chr 32. Na'aman argues that Hezekiah's payment of treasure under the threat of siege may not have been described in a negative tone. See Na'aman 2006b:44, n19.

[586] Alternatively, though perhaps less likely, one may argue that the term "שֹׁחַד" does not always a convey negative connotation, given that Asa's payment of "bribes" to Ben Hadad does not seem to backfire, nor is it ensued by more certain wrongdoings comparable to Ahaz' building of altars of the Damascene style. While most attestations of "שֹׁחַד" carries a negative tone, in a few cases, particularly in the Proverbs, the negativity of "שֹׁחַד" is downplayed or even absent, while its effectiveness is stressed. Consider, for instance, the following verses: "A bribe seems like a charm to him who uses it; He succeeds at every turn. (Prov 17:8 TNK)"; "A gift in secret subdues anger; a present in private (lit. "a bribe in the fold of the garment" שֹׁחַד בְּחֵק), fierce rage. (Prov 21:14 TNK)". In other cases, "שֹׁחַד" occurs, as in Prov 21:14, in parallel to terms meaning "gift" or "price", without explicit moral judgment on the payment per se.

[587] E.g. "Do not take bribes, for bribes blind the clear-sighted and upset the pleas of those who are in the right." (Exod 23:8 TNK; cf. Deut 16:19) ; "Cursed be he who accepts a bribe in the case of the murder of an innocent person." (perhaps "to strike down an innocent person" after accepting a bribe: אָרוּר לֹקֵחַ שֹׁחַד לְהַכּוֹת נֶפֶשׁ דָּם נָקִי Deut 27:25 TNK); "But his (Samuel's) sons did not follow in his ways; they were bent on gain, they accepted bribes, and they subverted justice." (1Sa 8:3 TNK); "(The one who can dwell in Yahweh'ss tent is one) who has never lent money at interest, or accepted a bribe against the innocent." (Ps 15:5 TNK); "The wicked man draws (lit. "to take, to accept" יִקָּח) a bribe out of his bosom To

Israel is explicitly titled as a god who does not accept a "שֹׁחַד" (Deut 10:17; cf. 2 Chr 19:7), which, by the principle of *Imitatio Dei*, would indicate that accepting bribes is an ungodly practice. Indeed, in the 23 verses where "שֹׁחַד" is attested, 13[588] explicitly upbraid the recipient. In 5 cases[589] it is not immediately certain whether the recipient or the sender is the target of criticism. In addition, in 4 cases, as I pointed out above, the negativity of the term is questionable (see above). In only one case is the one who bribes others directly reproached, in which case Jerusalem is compared to a harlot who pays, rather than charges, her lovers.[590] Therefore, one can argue that "שֹׁחַד" is best defined as a payment to another party in the expectation to receive additional support at the expense of the third party. The biblical moral judgment on bribery, moreover, happens to concentrate on the recipient of such an inappropriate gift.

This observation by no means suggests that the sender is free of moral criticism, yet it draws one's attention also to the image of Assyria as the powerful empire invited to interfere with Levantine conflicts: just as one who accepts bribes, Assyria is here presented as a dangerous external power now called upon by Ahaz, a force that is unjust, violent, relentless and brutal just like the recipient of a bribe. This image is closely in line with the presentation of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in other biblical sources, particularly in the prophets (see again Machinist 1983, Eidevall 2009). The service here purchased may be helpful only in the short term (cf. Siddall 2009:103), for in the long run the empire, as a brutal and greedy external

---

pervert the course of justice." (Pro 17:23 TNK); "(Woe to the ones) Who vindicate him who is in the wrong in return for a bribe (עֵקֶב שֹׁחַד), and withhold vindication from him who is in the right." (Isa 5:23 TNK); "They have taken bribes within you to shed blood." (לְמַעַן שָׁפְךְ־דָּם Ezek 22:12 TNK)

588 Exod 23:8; Deut 10:17; Deut 16:19; Deut 27:25; 1 Sam 8:3; 2 Chr. 19:7; Ps 15:5; Prov 17:23; Isa 1:23; Isa 5:23; Isa 33:15; Ezek 22:12; Mic 3:11

589 1 Kgs 15:19; 2 Kgs 16:8; Job 6:22; Job 15:34; Ps 26:10.

590 "Gifts are made to all prostitutes, but you made gifts to all your lovers, and bribed them (וְתִשְׁחֲדִי אוֹתָם) to come to you from every quarter for your harlotries" (Eze 16:33 TNK).

power always attempting to expand, will end up as a much more formidable enemy in the region.[591]

One more point to be raised is that in the two cases where "שׂוֹחַד" is used in the context of international relations, one do not detect fundamental difference between the image of Assyria and that of Aram-Damasucs. Both function passively as a hired labor who acts at the request of Judah. Both disappear at least temporarily from the narrative after they accomplish their task. Finally, as I just pointed out, both take share in the negativity assigned to the recipient of a "שׂוֹחַד" as a potentially dangerous or unjust external force. Therefore, the image Assyria (2 Kgs 16:8, 18), which is depicted as the unparalleled, unstoppable force in First Isaiah, can hardly be differentiated from that of Damascus in 1 Kgs 15:17-22. Now Assyria is considered as a hired force and loses its claim to unrivaled status at the top of all polities in the world.

This is also true of other Levantine sources in which Assyria is depicted as no more than hired mercenary. While in Isaiah 7:20 Assyria is compared to a "hired razor"[592] with which the biblical god punishes its own people (the image of the instrument), in other contexts

---

[591] After devouring Damascus and Israel, Assyria will eventually confront Judah directly. See Isa 7:17-25; 8:7-8. In the case of Asa inviting Ben Hadad, Damasucs is also a somewhat "external" force in relation to Judah and Israel from the perspective of biblical historiography that views the two Hebrew Kingdoms as forming one cultural and "national" community. In addition, as the recipient of the bribe Aram-Damascus is certain also cast in a negative light. First, Ben Hadad is incited by Asa to violate his treaty with Israel, a serious sin in biblical and other Near Eastern cultures (Deut 31:16 et al, see Na'aman 1995:45); second, again as Na'aman points out, Aram inflicted Israel with immense destruction (1 Kgs 19:20). While Asa's image is definitely not commendable in this case, Ben Hadad and Aram-Damascus, as the invited mercenary, also suffers from severe moral defect. Na'aman 2006b:45.

[592] The syntax is complicated. A few difficulties are found in the lengthy phrase בְּתַעַר הַשְּׂכִירָה בְּעֲבֶרִי נָהָר בְּמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר (Isa 7:20). The first word "with (a) razor" is written without the definite article, while the Greek translation "τῷ ξυρῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ" indicates that a definite article is used. Also, "with the king of Assyria" might be a late addition (pace Blenkinsopp 2000:235). If there is a definite article in the first word, then the phrase would mean "with the hired razor". Alternative, Beuken suggests, without emendating the text, that תער and השכירה form a construct chain, "razor of the 'hired (army, troops)'", which he understands as a *genetivus epexegeticus* or apposition of תער. Beuken 2003:186. בְּעֲבֶרִי נָהָר could be the place where the razor is hired and "king of Assyria" could be the apposition of "the razor", that is, Assyria is compared to the razor. Alternatively, maybe all three phrases with ב- are in apposition to one another: the hired razor="Beyond the River" (Mesopotamia)=king of Assyria. Blenkinsopp's translation of the verse "the Sovereign Lord will shave with a razor borrowed from the king of Assyria across the Euphrates..." does not seem to be supported by the MT text, unless one changes ב- to מ-. The greek translation uses the genitive βασιλέως Ἀσσυρίων, "of the king of the Assyrians". In sum, it is best to understand "king of Assyria" as the apposition of "the hired razor".

Assyria is outright presented as the hireling of peripheral rulers in the Levant. The Sam'alean ruler Kilamuwa relates in his inscription (for the historical background see Gibson 1982:30-31) that the king of the Danunians (Adanawa/Hiyawa) used to dominate Sam'al, so that the latter "hired" the king of Assyria against him, which apparently caused the demise of the hostile neighbor at a more than affordable price[593] (Gibson 1982: 34; Text 13/KAI 24, lines 7-8). This episode is located in a context that recounts Kilamuwa's accomplishments in defending the security of his state among polities in the region and in establishing prosperity within his domain, so the hiring of the powerful king of Assyria is cast in a very positive light as an effective tactic adopted by the competent king of the local polity rather than a ill-conceived decision that encroaches on his state's sovereignty. Again, the Levantine ruler is here presented as the center around whom the event revolves[594] (Fales 1979:19).

By placing himself at the center of the events, the Levantine ruler inadvertently depicts the universal empire as an unimportant helper: unimportant in the sense that, theoretically, any other force can satisfy the same need, so that the universal empire need not considered unique. In biblical sources, we have a few cases in which one polity is said to have hired another force against its enemy. For instance, the Ammonites hired certain Aramean forces

---

[593] Fales, following and building on Rosenthal, suggests that the subject of line 8 ("he gave me a maid at the price for a sheep, a young man for a garment") is actually the king of Assyria, so that the meaning of the curious line is that, while Kilamuwa paid a tribute to "hire" the king of Assyria, the deportees from the defeated Adanawa redistributed by the king of Assyria contributes cheap labor to Sam'al in exchange of sheep and garment, possibly less expensive than human labor in the Syro-Anatolian economic environment. Whether this interpretation is accurate, Fales has cogently argued that Kilamuwa has successfully turned the image of one appealing for the help of a powerful empire by paying tribute into the image of a shrewd peripheral king who uses one foreign ruler against another, achieving crucial help with minimal price (Rosenthal considers line 8 a proverbial phrase meaning a good bargain)--indeed, he may have made profits from the Assyrians. This propagandistic reworking of "reality" is of great significance for your understanding of the image of Assyria in Levantine sources. Fales 1979:16-21; see also Rosenthal 1969:654 cited in Fales 1979. This interpretation is also indicated in Tadmor and Cogan 1979:503, n. 43. See also Sperling 1988: 333 who essentially follows and revises Rosenthal's view.

[594] The image is markedly different from later presentations of the relationship between Sam'al and the Neo-Assyrian Empire, as in Bar-rakib's inscriptions to be discussed below. Yet in both cases, it should be noted, Assyria plays a constructive role, just to different degrees. A comparison between the two (groups) of Sam'alean inscriptions composed in the latter half of the 9th century and the latter half of the 8th century respectively reveals the development of the Levantine perception of the universal empire at different stages of its relationship with the universal empire, i.e. as an (largely speaking) outsider and as an insider, as well as the gradual spread of the imperial ideology in peripheral regions.

against David (2 Sam 10:6; 1 Chr 19:6-7). Also, during the siege of Samaria, when the Arameans heard the noise of troops made by the God of Israel as a miraculous deed to save Israel, they mistakenly surmised that the king of Israel may have hired troops from the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt (2 Kgs 7-6), possibly hinting that hiring mercenaries is a common practice in ancient Levantine and Near Eastern warfare. Finally, when Amaziah planned to hire Northern Israelite troops in his campaign against the Edomites, he was promptly discouraged by a certain "Man of God". Indeed, those Israelites eventually caused severe lost in Judah, perhaps out of their dissatisfaction as they were not allowed to take share in Judah's spoil from Edom (2 Chr 25:5-15). Yet even here, hiring mercenaries in warfare is not considered inappropriate in itself, say on the basis that hiring a third party deviates from accepted rules of warfare (contra Tadmor and Cogan 1979:503). Instead, the Man of God argues that hiring mercenaries from the Northern kingdom will be useless, as Yahweh, who determines one's fortune on the battlefield, is not with the North (vv. 7-8). Returning to Kilamuwa, one may propose that Kilamuwa's description of his relationship with the Assyrian king as that between an employer and a hireling against the background of the widespread practice of hiring mercenaries in wars serves to lessen the qualitative difference between the universal empire and other polities, a subject often mentioned in imperial sources.

In sum, in Levantine sources one can identify the extension of the perception of the universal empire as god's tool, that is, the depiction of the great empire as a human agent that serves local Levantine interests. Levantine presentation of empires in such cases reveals mixed feelings towards the involvement of imperial forces in local affairs. While the power

and effectiveness of imperial intervention are not always openly celebrated, due in part to the author's theological and ideological reservations about potential negative consequences, the empire in such contexts nevertheless functions in favor of the Levantine polities, at least temporarily. In other cases, as we will see shortly, negative attitudes disappear altogether, replaced by full acceptance of the imperial ideology.

3. The empire as a merciful protector

A. A loyal vassal of the benevolent king: the Panamuwa and the Bar-rakib inscriptions

While as an agent or an instrument the empire tends to be presented as playing a constructive yet passive role in its interaction with the periphery, on occasion the empire is depicted as an active and benevolent force which reinforces local polities in favor of loyal minor rulers. This image is closely linked with important elements of the imperial ideology which emphasize peace and prosperity as the prize for the acceptance of the imperial order. Lanfranchi has cogently argued, in an article on the Çineköy bilingual inscription from Que/Adanawa/Hiyawa which I will turn to shortly, that violent force in the form of overwhelming military might which features so prominently in Assyrian royal inscriptions and some Levantine sources, e.g. the Hebrew Bible, was not the sole instrument with which Assyria extended its universal reign. The Neo-Assyrian Empire also sought to build ties and collaborate with peripheral political elites by showing the latter mercy and grace, providing assistance to a favored party in a local polity's internal power struggles as well as spreading the metropolitan culture from the core of the empire to the periphery (Lanfranchi 2009). Therefore, for some members of the local elites, Assyria is not a destroyer but rather an enabler, as the Assyrian king often enthroned local kings when these individuals or their

states were entangled in crises. In Assyrian sources, where this theme is frequently attested, enthronement of local rulers is often accompanied with the imposition of tribute. For instance:

I placed Tu-Baʾlu on his royal throne over them (Sidon; *i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA LUGAL-*ti-šú* UGU-*šú-un ú-še-šib-ma*) and imposed upon him tribute (and) payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (to be delivered) yearly (and) without interruption.

I brought out Padî, their king, from the city Jerusalem and placed (him) on the lordly throne over them (*i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA *be-lu-ti* UGU-*šú-un ú-še-šib-ma*), then I imposed upon him payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 04 35, 48).

Levantine sources offer us a rare chance to examine how Assyrian assistance is presented on the receiving end. The Sam'alean ruler Bar-rakib recounts the turmoil that struck his country in the past generations and the restoration of order during the reign of Panamuwa, his father, in which Assyrian assistance played a pivotal role. In line 7 of the Panamuwa inscription (second half of the 8th century), Bar-rakib points out that it was the Assyrian king who enthroned Panamuwa his father as king of Sam'al, "his father's house" (*wmlkh*[595] *ʿl byt ʾbh* "and he made him king over his father's house". Text 14, line 7, Gibson 1975:80) after Panamuwa presumably carried tribute to the king of Assyria.[596] Unlike the biblical account about Ahaz tribute to Tiglath-pileser and the Kilamuwa inscription, here Assyria is not depicted as hired force which served the smaller kingdom. Instead, Tiglath-pileser III is wholeheartedly celebrated as the overlord of Panamuwa in this Levantine inscription, to whom Panamuwa turned for help and received the Assyrian king's recognition for his

[595] Pael form of "*m-l-k*".
[596] The object of the verb "he carried " (*ywbl*) is broken.

unflagging loyalty.

In this and other inscriptions, Bar-rakib does not veil his and his father's outspoken acceptance and support of the Assyrian imperial ideology. Panamuwa is described as an active participant in Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns as he "ran at the wheel of his lord, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria" (*bglgl mrʾh tgltplsr mlk ʾšwr*) all over the "four quarters of the earth" (*rbʿt ʾrq*; lines 13-14), which is apparently a verbatim translation of the famous Akkadian phrase that features numerous Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (e.g. RINAP 1 Tiglath-pilser III 37, 12; see Gibson 1975: 85). Later he recounts further that his father participated in wars in which the imperial strategy of deportation was conducted (line 14). The adoption of the phrase denoting imperial universalism and the reference to typical imperial strategy in a positive tone in the local inscription not only reveals that local elites must have been exposed to Assyrian imperial ideology, but also suggests that the ideology is cordially supported in an inscription by a local ruler in the local language and script, possibly primarily intended for a local audience, e.g. Sam'alian political and cultural elites and even the common people.

I have already mentioned that, notably, in this Levantine inscription the depiction of the local ruler as one that fully endorsed and, indeed, sacrificed his life for imperial enterprises (line 16, "...my father died at the feet of his lord, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria"), does not seem to require any justification for his capitulation to the empire in this inscription. Bar-rakib proudly recounts that other vassal kings of the Assyrian Empire, the whole camp of the king of Assyria and perhaps even Tiglath-pileser III himself, wept for Panamuwa, the valorous Assyrian vassal who died for the imperial cause and may have set up an image of

Panamuwa (lines 16-18). While this detail possibly contained a touch of truth, one may argue that it certainly serves to justify yet again his loyalty to the empire. In addition to the recognition of his loyalty, a more concrete reward was Tiglath-pileser's reorganization of vassal territory in which he assigned a few towns of Gurgum, apparently a disloyal vassal, to Sam'al (lines 14-15). Furthermore, more important for the local population is the restoration of order and stability as well as the appeasement of the severe inflation which was accomplished as a result of Assyrian assistance (lines 7-10). Given these rewards, Barrakib's unveiled allegiance to the empire and full acceptance of the vassal status hardly needs further justification even among his own people and the local elites, for the empire, as imperial ideology always promises, did bring peace and prosperity to all in the small kingdom.

In Bar-rakib's other inscriptions the theme of loyal vassal serving the merciful Assyrian lord who protects the peripheral polity is expressed in equally unequivocal terms. He begins one inscription (Text 15 in Gibson 1975) by calling himself "king of Sam'al, servant of Tiglath-pileser, lord of the four quarters of the earth", adopting once again the classic Assyrian phrase in the royal epithet of Tiglath-pilser III which celebrates imperial universalism. Without recounting the details of his father's and his own service to Assyria on the battlefield and otherwise, he again notes that it was Rakeb-El, the patron deity of his dynasty (Gibson 1975:70) and Tiglath-pileser III, his human lord, who seated him on his father's throne because of his father's and his own righteousness (*ṣdq*; text 15 lines4-5; Gibson 1975:89; Text 16 line 5, as a static verb; Gibson 1975:92). Here the verbal root (*y-š-b*) is the same as the one used in Assyrian royal inscriptions on the same subject (*hwšbny mrʾy rkbʾl wmrʾy tgltplysr ʿl krsʾ ʾby*, Text 15 lines 5-7; see RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 04 35, 48,

cited above). Another recurring theme in this inscription is the depiction of the local ruler as one who "runs at the wheel of my lord, king of Assyria" (lines 8-9).

One additional terminological detail that sheds light on the structure and principles of the Assyria-led hierarchical international system occurs in both Bar-rakib's inscription commemorating his father (Text 14 in Gibson 1975) and the palace inscription (Text 15 in Gibson 1975). This is the reference to other minor kings as "brothers"[597] of Panamuwa and Bar-rakib, who campaigned alongside Tiglath-pileser III, "their lord". In text 14, the brother kings (lit. "his brothers, kings", *ʾyḥh mlkw*, line 17) reportedly wept for the death of Panamuwa together with the Assyrians. In text 15, Bar-rakib's brother kings (*ʾḥy mlkyʾ*) "were envious because of all the goodness of my house" (lines 14-15). His brother kings were envious for a good reason, as the preceding lines of the same inscription boast about the fact that Bar-rakib's house has been made wealthier and more prosperous than the house of anyone of the "powerful kings" or "great kings" (*mlkn rbrbn*, line 13). The reference to "powerful kings" as his peers is striking, as the epithet on its own could refer to the ruler(s) of a hegemonic power such as the Assyrian king.[598] Yet we know from the context that this imposing title refers, somewhat ironically, to the vassal rulers of Assyria, who "run at the wheel of" Tiglath-pileser alongside Bar-rakib: "...and I have run at the wheel of my lord, the king of Assyria, *in the midst of* powerful kings (*bmṣʿt mlkn rbrbn*), possessors of silver and possessors of gold" (lines 9-10). Sam'al's enviable wealth in comparison with fellow Assyrian vassals, according to text 14, may have been accompanied by its relatively higher position during Panamuwa's reign which was sanctified by the Assyrian king: "...and his lord,

[597] See discussion on political brotherhood between Levantine polities in Chapter 3.

[598] Note again that Esarhaddon calls himself an "almighty king" (*šarru dandannu*) in his quoted letter to the ruler of Shubria (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 33, o i. 29-30), which corresponds well to "*mlk(n) rbrb(n)*".

the king of Assyria, positioned him over powerful kings as the head (*wḥnʾh mrʾh mlk ʾšwr ʿl mlky kbr[y] brš*, line 12)",[599] although the reading is rather uncertain (see Tropper 1993:119-20). Whether this indicates that Sam'al really occupied a more prominent position in the Assyrian imperial hierarchy in relation to "brother" states, of course, cannot be ascertained. In any case, that a vassal ruler dared to call his "brothers" "(all-)powerful kings" (*mlkn rbrbn*), which title most likely does not serve as a technical term corresponding to a rank in the system (note, however, that Bar-rakib does not explicitly include this epithet in his own title at the beginning of text 15) may betray in a not-so-subtle way the desire of the local kings for glory even under Assyrian domination.[600] This rather unorthodox designation of vassal rulers can only be mitigated, from the Assyrian perspective, by the clear reference to the Assyrian king as "king of the four quarters of the earth" at the beginning. In other words, even the vassals of the king of the universal empire qualify as the "powerful kings".[601]

Finally, while the peripheral rulers of the Neo-Assyrian Empire are designated as brothers, a terminology of international relations with kinship connotations, Tiglath-pileser III is invariably referred to as the "lord" of Panamuwa and Bar-rakib, without the employment of any familial terminology such as "father", which could, to be sure, denote hierarchical

---

[599] Tropper reads "*mlky kbry*" in line 10 as well, yielding "my father Panamuwa (exalted among powerful kings)", although the reading is uncertain (Tropper 1993:117-18). For the theme of an overlord placing a preferred ruler above others who technically belong to the same rank, cf. Ps 45:8: "עַל־כֵּן מְשָׁחֲךָ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן שָׂשׂוֹן מֵחֲבֵרֶיךָ", where the god of Israel acts as the overlord rather than a human ruler. The term for equality in this case is the Hebrew word "חָבֵר". Cf. the discussion on the Akkadian cognate "*ibru*"which is also used in the political sense.

[600] The reference in Sam'alean sources to the other kings in the periphery (from the perspective of the Assyrian Empire) as powerful kings can be traced back to the late 9th century, in the Kilamuwa inscription where the author states that the house of his father was among "powerful kings" (*mlkm ʾdrm*) who kept fighting with Sam'al (Gibson 1982:34, text 13, lines 5-6). In this context, however, these rulers are not explicitly designated as the Sam'alean ruler's peers. On "great king" as a title among Neo-Hittite rulers, see Chapter 7.

[601] Compare Isa 10:8: "Are not all my officials kings?" See most recently, Machinist 2016:197-98 for the meaning of the verse of the interlingual wordplay. The boastful language assigned to Assyria in Isaiah could be reworked here by Bar-rakib, in a more positive tone, as a justification for calling his own peers as "powerful kings". Just as king of Assyria could brag about his officials serving as local kings or vice versa, Bar-rakib could justify his bold terminology in text 15 by arguing: "Are not all the vassals of my lord, king of the four quarters, great kings?" The glory of the empire and that of the local polities, therefore, can be merged.

relationship in international relations.[602] Although he may have wept for the death of a loyal vassal, Tiglath-pileser III and his universal empire are in general depicted in the inscriptions from Sam'al as a merciful yet still distant overlord.

B. The Assyrian king as "father and mother"

The "father-son" terminology is indeed used in both Assyrian and Levantine (biblical) source to refer to the relationship between the Assyrian overlord and his client ruler (e.g. RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 11, x 42; SAA 21 078, o2; 2 Kgs 16:7). In the Çineköy bilingual inscription from Que/Adanawa/Hiyawa (second half of the 8th century; for the text see Payne 2012:42-44) which has been mentioned above, a different type of parental terminology is adopted. In both the Phoenician and the Luwian versions of the inscription, the local ruler Warikas (see Chapter 5) states that "the Assyrian king and the entire house of Assyria became father and mother to me" and that "Hiyawa and Assur[603] became one house" (lines 6-7 in the Luwian version and lines 7-10 in the Phoenician version). With respect to the parental metaphor, Lanfranchi has on the one hand convincingly connected the phrase "to be/become father and mother" with a similar phrase in another Luwian-Phoenician bilingual inscription from Que, Karatepe I (see IAHLI:20-42), in which the deity Tarhunzas (Baal in the Phoenician version) turned Aztiwadas, a high official of Que, into "father and mother" of the population of his polity (line 3 of the Luwian version and line I.3 of the Phoenician version).[604] On the other hand, Lanfranchi has also compared the phrase with various cases

---

[602] See chapter 5 for "father and son" denoting hierarchical difference in international relations. Cf. Lanfranchi 2009:138-39. Likewise, non-familial terms such as "friend" could have been used to refer to an equal counterpart (cf. Ps 45:8).

[603] "Danunians" and "Assyrians" in the Phoenician version.

[604] In the Kilamuwa inscription from Sam'al (late 9th century) the local ruler claims to be the benefactor of his subject: "...to some I was a father, to some I was a mother, to some I was a brother". Here, as in some other cases I will cite (e.g. EA 286:10-13), "father" and "mother" are not used in hendiadys. Lanfranchi noted that in the case of the Çineköy inscription, the king of Assyrian naturally cannot be compared to a brother but only a father and mother, due to his higher rank in the

of the Assyrian king referred to or acting as "father" of a vassal ruler (see above) and proposed that the parental metaphor denotes a relationship achieved through some sort of mutual agreement (treaty or pact), while also drawing upon the imagery of an orphan put into power which occurs in Assyrian sources (Lanfranchi 2009:137-42).

One wonders if the phrase "father and mother" in hendiadys reveals a tradition which is conceptually related to yet somewhat different from the "father-son" terminology applied occasionally in the context of international relations. In Neo-Assyrian inscriptions deities are sometimes compared to the king's parents who offer support to the child. In his inscription commemorating the rebuilding of Babylon, Esarhaddon entreated Marduk and his divine spouse Zarpanītu to grant him longevity and, like a father and a mother, stand by his side on the battlefield:

...like a father and mother, may they come over to my side in battle and warfare; may they come to my aid; (and) may they make my weapons rise up (and) kill my enemies (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 106, v 20-26).

The same phrase is attested also in the inscriptions of Sîn-šarru-iškun, who ruled after Ashurbanipal (d. 627) during the closing years of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. In some inscriptions he recounts that the great gods, Aššur, Bēl (Marduk), Nabû, Sîn, Šamaš, Ninurta, Nergal, and Nusku, guided him "like a father and a mother" and killed his enemies (e.g. RINAP 5-1 Sîn-šarru-iškun 10, 18). It is noteworthy that all the deities mentioned in this context are in fact male, which further suggests the idiomatic nature of the phrase, possibly distinguishing it from the "father-son" terminology.

international system. See Lanfranchi 2009: 142.

In the biblical tradition, Yahweh may also act as a parent to the king of Israel or Judah or the the Israelites as a people (see Dille 2004[605]). Although an explicit comparison of Yahweh to "father and mother" is lacking in the Bible, in Ps 27 the "I" of the psalm, gratefully acknowledges Yahweh's potential role as surrogate parents, when one's biological father and mother abandoned him: "כִּי־אָבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי וַיהוָה יַאַסְפֻנִי" ("Though my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will take me in." Ps 27:10 TNK). Dahood connects this verse with the interesting remarks by Abdi-Heba, ruler of Jerusalem, in his letter to the Egyptian Pharaoh in one of the Amarna letters (Dahood 1965:169). In EA 286, the Jerusalemite ruler states that "neither my father nor my mother (*la-a* ^{LÚ}*a-bi-ia ù la-a* ^{MUNUS}*ú-mi-ia*) put me in this place. The strong arm of the king installed me (lit. "caused me to enter", *ʿú ʾ-še-ri-ba-an-ni*) in the house of my father" (EA 286, 10-13. Rainey et al 2014:1106). By negation Abdi-Heba reveals the assumed role of the parents in a ruler's enthronement, who can be conceptually replaced by the intervention of a superior power.[606] It is thus possible to view "father and mother" as a widespread metaphor designating benefactors of a higher rank in the ancient Near East.

Lanfranchi has aptly observed that in the Çineköy inscription Assyria is depicted as benign, helpful yet at the same time authoritative, due to his supreme position in the imperial system (Lanfranchi 2009:142). To this one may add that, while the "father-son" terminology emphasizes the issue of hierarchy in international relations, "father and mother", possibly due to the softening effect of maternal love, stresses instead the parental support that is always available to a child in need. In all of the cited cases, it is not the issue of different ranks but

[605] God as mother and father in deutero-isaiah

[606] Cf. The reference to Tiglath-pileser as the one who enthrones Panamuwa and Bar-rakib in the inscriptions from Sam'al.

rather the immensely positive effect of benevolent parental support that is at work, be it victory of the Assyrian king on the battlefield with the parental help of gods (see above), expansion of a small kingdom[607] guarded by the universal empire or prosperity, wealth and political stability enjoyed by the local subject[608] whose king acts as "a father and mother".[609]

As I have discussed above, a secured position under the wing of the empire frees the local rulers from the molestation of internal contestants of power and external enemies, sometimes accompanied by territorial reorganization by the empire as an arbiter in favor of the loyal vassal. More importantly, the overwhelming empire can sometimes be presented, whether out of fear or genuine gratitude on the local ruler's side, as fostering an intimate emotional relationship with local rulers as "a father and mother", so that the two sides (parents and the child) merge, rather naturally, into "one house" (Çineköy Inscription, line 7 of the Luwian version; line 10 of the Phoenician version; Payne 2012:43). The familial unification is certainly reminiscent, as Lanfranchi rightly observes, of the language of unity attested in various Neo-Assyrian royal inscription, such as "to put (different peoples) at one mouth" (Lanfranchi 2009: 146; see further discussion in Chapter 7). The administrative and possibly cultural unification represented by this Akkadian phrase is transformed in the

---

[607] Warikas claims that, with the Assyrians acting as the protector, he smote enemy fortresses and built his own fortresses to defend his territory: "And so the king of the Assyrians35 and the entire house of Assur became fa[ther and mother] to me. And Hiyawa and Assur became one house. Indeed I smote strong fortresses(?). [And I built] towards the east 8, towards the west 7 fortresses." Translation in Payne 2012:44.

[608] " I am Azatiwadas...Tarhunzas made me mother and father to Adanawa, and I caused Adanawa to prosper (lit. "I made the Danunians live"; *yḥw ʾnk ʾyt dnnym*). I extended the plain of Adanawa on the one hand towards the west and on the other hand towards the east, and in my days Adanawa had all good things, plentiness, and luxury. I filled the Taharean granaries, and I made horse upon horse, and I made army upon army, and I made shield upon shield, all with (the help of) Tarhunzas and the gods." Translation in IAHLI:39.

[609] One should point out that the hierarchical structure of the parental metaphor (great gods>Assyrian king>local rulers>local populations) is reminiscent, at least partially, of the structural feature of the "trust" system discussed above, according to which the Assyrian king puts his trust in the great gods, while the land, consisting of common people and foreign rulers, should trust in the Assyrian king and the empire. Of course, in the case of parental support we have more concrete evidence about each level of the structure and their interrelationship. Both cases illustrate not only the structural characteristics of the Assyrian imperial system, but also the ideological principles governing the interaction between the imperial center and peripheral polities such as the Levantine ones.

Levantine inscription into familial harmony, in which process the peripheral polity no longer serves as a passive object being placed at one mouth by the great king but merges with the empire in a more voluntary manner.

The composition of Bar-rakib's and Warika's inscriptions itself clearly demonstrates that the ideology of the universal empire, featuring unity, peace, and mutual prosperity, was indeed considered favorably effective and cordially embraced at least by some Levantine rulers at the periphery. This is hardly surprising. Although the imperial center and the periphery certainly occupy administratively and conceptually different ranks in an imperial system, the ruling elites in the periphery still enjoy a series of privileges in comparison to other members of society, as long as they remain in power after imperial control is extended to their realms. Therefore, at least in some cases, the elites of peripheral polities had every reason to collaborate with the empire. In a sense, the ruling elites in both the center and the periphery of an empire occupy a higher political and social rank than the subject populations across the empire, thus forming a network of political elites who would quite understandably embrace the imperial propaganda of unity and mutual prosperity (cf. C. Maier 2007:7). Imperial prosperity in the ideal form benefits not only the elites in the center, i.e. the great king as the overlord, but also loyal vassals at the periphery, although perhaps to a lessor degree, for they too are the elites.[610]

Conclusion

In this chapter I reviewed imperial intervention in the Levant in the Iron Age from different external powers, including Egypt in the southern Levant (in 10th, mid- 9th, late 8th

[610] Parpola 2007 cited in Lanfranchi 2009: 150; see also Richadson 2016 for a debate on Assyrian cosmopolitanism and local elites. See also V. Herrmann 2018.

and late 7th centuries), Urartu in the Neo-Hittite and occasionally northern Aramean sphere (mostly in the 8th century) and of course, the Mesopotamian superpowers. This overview clearly shows that the Mesopotamian Empires, particularly the Neo-Assyrian Empire, were not the only external imperial powers that coveted the strategically important region of the Levant. The fluctuation of Assyrian control of the Levant, which is usually related to Assyrian's internal political situation as well as the political strength of Levantine polities, also gave alternative centers of power opportunities to benefit from the retraction of Assyrian power.

The control of the universal empire not only faced competition from other larger powers, but was also often restricted by political forces and specific political situations in the Levantine periphery itself. Sometimes a small local polity may dared to encroach upon imperial interests, while in other cases Assyrian governors did not replace local ruling elites but instead only served as a regional overseer. Finally, there are also cases in which provincial elites and officials accumulated or preserved sufficient autonomy against the imperial center, which is sometimes demonstrated by terminologies (e.g. "king" in the Tell Fekheriyeh Inscription) adopted in their own documents.

The complex and dynamic interaction between the empires and the Levant, i.e. between the force that stresses hierarchy, unification, order and stability on the one hand, and local forces that sometimes accepted but often resisted such imperial mission on the other, certainly compels both sides constantly to readjust their reaction to, and interpretation of the other side's practices and ideas. I have thus demonstrated, albeit with selected examples, that the universal empire often provides us with detailed and insightful observations on such

peripheral regions as the Levant. Beyond the exact historical, geographical and possibly ethnographical information recorded in the annals of the king's campaigns, I decided to concentrate on how the periphery, with the Levant as a salient example, was depicted in sources composed in the imperial heartland. I attempted primarily to analyze how the universal mentality of such a great empire as the Neo-Assyrian one grappled with the existence and the temporary vitality of minor polities not too far away from the imperil center. My observations include, among others, that the universal empire never simply dismissed the periphery as an uninteresting or insignificant region inhabited by inconsequential political actors. On the contrary, Assyrian sources acknowledged the existence of strong and powerful opponents even in the periphery, some of which had to be reduced in size and power so that the fundamental difference between the supreme power and surrounding actors could be reaffirmed. I have also studied the operation, maintenance, temporary disruption and the inevitable restoration of the "correct" order by examining two extreme roles played by Levantine and other peripheral polities in the imperial system, i.e. polities that dare to challenge the imperial order and those that voluntarily surrendered to the universal power of the empire under difference circumstances. Essentially, I have devoted a considerable portion of the chapter to the varying images of the Levant in the eyes of the Assyrian overlords, which information ultimately bears on the Assyrian expectations of the establishment and maintenance of imperial order and the spread of imperial ideology as well as the various types of reaction it receives from the Levant.

In this chapter as well, I also examined a few cases of the Levantine perception of, and interaction with, the external imperial power and the imperial ideology. As we have seen,

although the empire is often depicted as the evil enemy and the relentless conqueror in Levantine sources, echoing depictions of brutality in the Assyrian sources themselves from the perspective of the receiving end, Levantine sources offer us a variety of different views about the universal empire and different Levantine interpretations and reworkings of its role in international politics as well as in the destinies of local Levantine polities. As enemies, the sweeping victories of the empire are nevertheless reinterpreted as the design of local deities, with the empire functioning as God's tool. This "instrument image" is in turn closely related to the presentation of the empire as hired forces fighting, at least initially and nominally, for the interests of local rulers and polities. Different degrees of conceptual and mental resistance, from hostility, sarcasm to the instrumentalization of the empire completely disappears in Bar-Rakib's and Warikas' inscriptions, in which the Assyrian king and the Assyrian State are depicted as an indispensable benign overlord not lacking in emotional ties with the local ruling elites, while the imperial universalism in the form of peace, prosperity and unified harmony seems to be fully accepted and espoused by the local elites.

We will see in the final chapter of the study that levantine interaction with imperialism and imperial universalism does not simply end here. Essentially, one wonders if there are cases that may illustrate the possible interaction not just between the two regions (Mesopotamia and the Levant) or two groups of political entities, a topic discussed in this chapter, but also the interaction between the two major *trends* and essentially, two *notions* or *concepts*, in Iron Age Near Eastern politics: "nationalism" and "imperialism" in their ancient Levantine and Mesopotamian forms.

Chapter 7: When the Two Trends Meet: Imperialism of "Nations" vs. The Universal Empire as a "Nation"---Possibilities and Uncertainties

Introduction

In the introductory remarks to Part II of the study (in Chapter 5) I noted that nationalism and imperialism can be understood, from a static perspective, as two different organizing principles of multi-city, trans-local and trans-tribal political entities. As such, they provide the political and cultural elites of such polities with ideological tools to advocate for political cohesion in a certain territory, employing different forms of administrative structures. From a more dynamic perspective, both nationalism and imperialism serve to promote and justify the territorial expansion of the core of a political entity, although they differ in theory with regard to the limits of such expansion, that is, while a polity that derives its legitimacy for growth and expansion from some sort of common ethnic, religious and cultural identity may claim all the territory inhabited by people belonging to the said identity, an empire may conceptually consider perpetual, limitless expansion as an ultimate, divine sanctioned, goal of its very existence, although such imperial expansion is often activated by a politico-cultural core.

In practice, however, the distinction between the two mentalities can be blurred by historical circumstances. A culturally defined people group may continue to grow beyond its boundaries for economic or geopolitical purposes, justifying its expansion by divine proclamation that the new territory "should", or "used to", be assigned by the "national" god to his own people. Alternatively, under certain circumstances the ethnically confined ideology can be adapted in accordance with new political needs to a form of universalism, often by

attributing to the "national" deity universal authority. This mentality can in turn affect the historical presentation of the people's past, interpretation of its present as well as expectations for its future. Conversely, as a universal empire continues to expand, it may meet with geographical barriers and political rivals that in effect put its expansion to a halt. Technological and administrative restrictions may also force the empire actively to abandon excessive expansion for the sake of political stability and financial sustainability. Whether faced with such challenges, will a universal empire like the Neo-Assyrian Empire choose to prioritize internal stability by heightening a common cultural identity of all Assyrians? Can the empire as a political entity be reformulated as one that derives its unity and cohesion from common linguistic and religious characteristics? Such questions also deserve closer examination in this chapter.

From the theoretical perspective, the mutual transformation of the two sets of ideologies may very well originate from the underlying similarities common to both mentalities, i.e. the tendency of trans-local polities to expand according to certain principles. Buccellati has pointed out that, compared with city-states whose residents direct their allegiance to the city and its deity, Iron Age "nations" tend with different degrees of success (see Chapters 3, 4) to expand and include more territories deemed to belong to speakers of the same tongue and worshipers of the same major deity who are tied together by kinship ideologies (Buccellati 1967:108-09). In fact, in Buccellati's words, the division between "nationalistic" expansion and imperial expansion is rather blurred: "(T)he boundaries of the national state are wherever the population of the state reaches. Therefore, the national state does not shy away from

annexing into a unified organism independent states which may be in its way" (ibid. 109)[611]. His description clearly reminds us of the expansion of an empire. It has also been further suggested that "...Napoleon, surging out of a revolutionary France experimenting with nationalism, attempted to breath fresh life into the idea by proclaiming a new empire to order his Europe" (see Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012:8 for further references). Likewise, historical cases in various regions have demonstrated that empires consisting of multiple ethno-cultural groups and subgroups can also crystallize as a new cultural entity which may survive the political downfall of the empire itself (see below under the section "an Assyrian nation?" for examples from the non-Near Eastern world). However, In the Iron Age Levant, particularly in the Iron Age II, such ahistorical factors as conceptual commonalities of the two political phenomena were also subject to the historical influence of one on the other, due to Mesopotamian universal empires' frequent and profound interactions with Levantine politie. The literary, artistic and ideological influence of the empire on the local Levantine polities was particularly likely, which is demonstrated on literary motifs and terminological similarities in Levantine sources that undoubtedly betray knowledge of, and play upon, certain themes in Neo-Assyrian sources.[612] This kind of influence not only facilitated the

[611] National unification by imperial means is more explicitly attested in more recent history, e.g. the national unification of Germany in the form essentially of a Prussian empire in 1871 CE. See e.g. Stürmer 2002, particularly Chapter 3. For a systematic study of the interconnection between German imperialism and German nationalism, see Fitzpatrick 2008.

[612] The Levant was certainly exposed to imperial literary and artistic materials as Mesopotamian empires conquered and provincialized large parts of the Levant. The locus of direct contact with Neo-Assyrian sources could theoretically be in Assyrian, as Levantine vassals needed to send embassies and deliver tributes to the overlord. Alternatively, the Assyrian Empire also actively transmitted its imperial ideology by setting up royal statues and inscriptions in the West, in addition to having vassals and officials all over the empire to sign treaties (e.g. the Esarhaddon Succession Treaty) of which copies have been discovered in Western regions. For the two possibilities, see Machinist 1983:730-34, who also postulates that Aramaic may have served as the intermediary for the transmission of Assyrian royal propaganda. For the discovery of textual Assyrian royal texts in the West, see the copy of the Esarhaddon Succession Treaty found at Tell Tayinat. Lauinger 2012. See also fragments of Assyrian steles recently discovered in Southeastern Turkey, possibly belonging to Sargon II, Lauinger and Batiuk 2015. For the arguments for the presence of literary and ideological influence of the Esarhaddon Succession Treaty on Deuteronomy, see Crouch 2014:3-11. The conclusions of her study, however, challenge such a view.

Nevertheless, in general it is highly possible that some cultural and religious elites in the Levant were familiar with various motifs of imperial ideology, including the universal mentality. For instance, in this chapter I will discuss the role of Yahweh as a divine helper who causes foreigners to submit to rulers and peoples he favors or as a divine king to whom foreign peoples bow down in reverence. Although this theological interpretation of Yahweh's status could have been

spread of the the imperial culture, but may also have led to the emergence of local varieties of imperial mentalities. Levantine territorial polities with certain ethnic and culture cohesion are probably most susceptible to the ideology of imperial universality, as they already possessed certain features, such as ethnic and religious unity, that helped one political core to expand beyond local and tribal limits.

In the final chapter of the study, I will first survey textual and other evidence for the expansion of local Levantine polities that involved the subjugation and occupation of foreign lands, paying close attention to terminologies reminiscent of ancient Near Eastern imperialism employed in such Levantine records. Of the examples here discussed, i.e. the United Monarchy of Israel in the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles, Aramean polities (particularly Damascus) and Neo-Hittite polities, Israel (at least in biblical accounts) and Aram, as I have noted in Chapters 3 and 4, demonstrate more prominently the impact of cultural and ethnic factors as a source of political cohesion. Imperialism of such polities, therefore, highlights the dynamic nature of the principles and limits of trans-local political integration. Moreover, the synthesis of "national" sentiments and imperial universalism is best epitomized by biblical reinterpretation of the "national" god of Yahweh as a divine king and creator as a universal authority. Finally, I will examine whether an empire, indeed a universal empire, will demonstrate, under certain circumstances, a more uniform cultural identity than normally allowed by its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature and whether it

---

independently developed, such themes are certainly reminiscent of claims made in Assyiran royal inscriptions that refer to the Assyrian king as a universal ruler to whom all lands prostrate themselves. For instance, Sennacherib claims that the god Aššur "made [all of the black]-headed (people) from the Upp[er] Sea of the Setting Su[n] (i 20) to the Low[er] Sea of the Rising Su[n] bow down [at my] fe[et]" (RINAP 3-1 Sennacherib 15 i 18-i 22). Esarhaddon also states that "I made the rulers of the four quarters bow down at my feet" (RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 01, ii 28). Also, royal titles suggestive of imperial universalism are also attested in royal inscriptions in the Neo-Babylonian (e.g. Nabonidus' Ehulhul Cylinder, line I 2; Schaudig 2001: 415) and Achaemenid periods (Cyrus Cylinder, line 20; Schaudig 2001: 552).

will appeal to such an identity for political purposes.

Levantine Imperialism in the Iron Age

1. Biblical accounts about an Israelite empire: terminologies and concepts

A. Issues about criteria and sources

In idealized biblical historiography, the Israelites began to be described as a political actor in international politics already in the event of Exodus and the subsequent journey to the Land of Canaan. This status becomes more prominent as the Israelites occupied their own territory in Joshua and Judges, when the tribes of Israel became involved in various inter-polity interactions either within the tribes themselves (intertribal war in Judg 20-21) or with surrounding peoples, both diplomatic and violent. Even without an institutionalized central authority like kingship, Israelites in these accounts sometimes subjugated other peoples and polities. For instance, in Judg 3 the Israelite judge Ehud assassinated Eglon, king of Moab, before the Israelites defeated the Moabites on the battle field. As a conclusion of this episode, the biblical author states that "(O)n that day, Moab submitted to Israel (וַתִּכָּנַע מוֹאָב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא תַּחַת יַד יִשְׂרָאֵל); and the land was tranquil for eighty years" (Judg 3:30 TNK). Similarly, "Sons of Ammon" submitted to sons of Israel after being defeated by Jephthah (Judg 11:33; same verb). 1 Sam 7:13-14a report that the Philistines submitted (וַיִּכָּנְעוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים) to the Israelites and ceased to invade Israelite territories, with occupied Israelite towns returned. Scholars have pointed out that this episode may contain long-standing traditions about Samuel but is instead modeled upon other war reports (e.g. 1 Sam 7:14a; 2 Sam 8:1, where כנע is also attested), implying the impact of later circumstances or simply literary patterns (Auld 2011:89). In fact, none of these reports are necessarily based on historical

reality, yet it is interesting that biblical authors imagined pre-monarchic Israel as a full-fledged participant in regional international relations that could subjugate foreign peoples and polities. However, although the subjugation of foreign peoples features in these stories, the three examples here cited imply neither long-lasting control over foreign territories and peoples nor the establishment of institutionalized administrative systems in foreign lands (see Chapter 5). Indeed, the verbal root כנע, meaning "(to be) subdue(d)", does not inherently imply the annexation and occupation of foreign territory (see also 1 Chr 20:4). In 2 Chr 13:18-19, the annexation of Northern towns by Abijah occurs only as a result of further pursuit of the Judean troops after Israelites were subdued by them. Therefore, the stories about pre-monarchic Israelites mentioned above cannot be understood as literary examples of biblical imperialism. More explicit examples have to be sought in literary accounts about the Monarchic Period, after institutionalized administration is established first and foremost within the ancient Israelite and Judean kingdoms.

The most prominent example of biblical Israelite imperialism is set against the background of the United Monarchy, particularly its formative period under David. Interestingly, this partially imperial kingdom, or at least later description of Israelite imperialism in the early monarchic period, lays the foundation for later Israelite/Judean "nationalism", or the pan-Israelite identity, alongside Yahwistic religion (see Chapter 3).[613] Liverani sees the literary presentation[614] of the Davidic era as that of an essentially imperial

[613] Surely, other traditions, such as Abraham, Moses and the historiography of the pre-Monarchic period also contributed to the foundation of an Israelite/Judean identity. Yet the Davidic Monarchy certainly offered the most prominent source of Israel's political identity alongside its religious identity. Here I want again to refer to, for example, Hos 3:5: "Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the LORD their God and David their king-and they will thrill over the LORD and over His bounty in the days to come" (TNK). For a discussion, see Chapter 3.

[614] Although not put explicitly, it is argued that the historiography about David and Solomon may have been a flashback to the exilic period. See Liverani 1992. I have briefly discussed the early history of Israel in Chapter 3, under the section about the cultural and ethnic commonness of Israel and Judah. I will also touch on the issue of historicity and dating

polity, which began to assume "national" characteristics only under Solomon's rule:

"Under David, the kingdom of Israel can hardly be defined as a national state. The division between Judah and Israel is paramount in the formative process, the capital city is chosen outside the tribal territory, and the extent of the kingdom encompasses non-Israelite elements (from the Canaanite towns to the neighboring peoples). The ideal borders of Israel move from a national horizon (from Dan to Beersheba) to an imperialistic one (from the Euphrates to the—brook of Egypt). Even the army shifts from national to professional, and the palace administration is largely a legacy of the Canaanite polities. The composite nature of the Davidic state is inherited by Solomon, whose administrative structuring and building programs may have produced some degree of national self-identification, but had been overevaluated by later traditions" (Liverani 1992; with further reference).

A thorny issue with regard to Israelite imperialism during the United Monarchy is that it is often difficult to evaluate, in historical and archaeological terms, the historicity of an Israelite Empire and its further features. Claims of the existence of an Israelite Empire or at least hegemony are usually based predominantly on biblical accounts, particularly the relevant chapters in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings that recount David's wars with the Philistines, the Transjordanian polities and the Arameans and the prominent international status of Israel under Solomon's rule (Meyers 1983; Malamat 2001b). Due to the rarity of direct extrabiblical evidence, it is difficult and sometimes controversial to gauge the accuracy of the accounts, particularly considering that archaeological evidence is also subject to interpretation often overshadowed by biblical texts (see e.g. A. Mazar 2007, 2010; Finkelstein 2010).

---

in relevant sections below. However, it must be admitted that a systematic evaluation of this important topic is beyond the scope of the present study.

Nevertheless, the issue of historicity aside, the Hebrew Bible provides us with important information about the authors' conceptions about not only the imperialism of external powers but also the imperialistic deeds by the ancient Israelite polity.[615] Such conceptions, furthermore, may have been subject to external influence independent of the historical reality of the narrated period and events, i.e. age-old Near Eastern royal traditions or their contemporary and most outstanding presentation, the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (cf. Liverani 2010; on the influence of royal ideology of the Ur III Dynasty on the periphery, see Steinkeller 2017:153-54). With this recognition in mind, one finds interesting elements describing imperial reality (again, regardless of the historicity of individual events) and indicative of the imperial ideology in narratives about David's and Solomon's reign.

B. The United Monarchy as an empire: biblical notions about conquest, administration and enlargement of territory

To begin with, imperial techniques may have been employed in the formation of multi-city, trans-local polities of a smaller scope, such as the United Monarchy in the biblical presentation. Some scholars have argued that the newly founded monarchy depicted in the biblical texts, if read against archaeological evidence which features administrative buildings and relatively little development in domestic architecture (see Fritz 1996: 195), displays some sort of disembedment, with a capital and provincial capitals somewhat detached from the

[615] Some narratives about the United Monarchy may certainly contain a kernel of truth. For instance, it is true that scholars have recognized that the details of David's campaigns with other polities, those with the Arameans included, cannot be established with extrabiblical evidence even though they are not impossible in theory (Na'aman 2006a: 34-35, 2006b: 55 with references to scholarly rejection of Jerusalem-based great kingdom during David's reign). Nevertheless, based on certain details, e.g. the designation of Aramean kingdoms with tribal elements (Aram Bêt-Rehob in 2 Sam 10:6; on "Son of Rehob" in 2 Sam 8 as a possible title, see footnote below) in the biblical narratives about David's wars with the Arameans which do not fit in with Israelite history after the 8th century, Na'aman concludes that relevant portions of the Deuteronomistic History indeed contain sources from an earlier stage, i.e. before the 8th century (Na'aman 2006a; 2006b). Yet the dating of these materials cannot be further pushed backward, as parallels between Hadadezer of Rehob and Zobah on the one hand, and Hazael on the other hand, indicate that stories of David's campaigns against Rehob and Zobah are possibly modeled upon later conflicts between Israel and Damascus, thus being unlikely to derive from contemporaneous, independent sources dating back to the 10th century (Na'aman 2006b: 27-28).

local populations (cf. the story of the Jebusites and David, 2 Sam 5:6-9; see B. Halphern 1996: 73 following Alt 1953, Joffe 2002). Local political elites, moreover, may have retained certain roles in the organization of a royal network of administration which could be loosened during the weakness of the central control (Kleiman 2017). If so, the construction of the Davidic state in general, and the building of administrative centers as well as the establishment of district governors over local populations in specific (cf. 1 Kings 4; perhaps non-Israelite populations, see Halpern 1996: 73; Alt 1953) appears to have adopted certain techniques commonly employed to control and reorganize the local political landscape in the building of empires, in an effort to combine Israelite tribal elements with previously existing urban entities (D. Master 2001).

In biblical historiography, one encounters details that more explicitly draw upon imperial terminology and conceptions. As the Jerusalem-centered kingdom was founded, it soon engaged in peaceful and belligerent international relations with surrounding peoples and polities. Some of the same techniques discussed above, which may have helped the early Israelite polity to control and integrate local elites, continued to function in the new power's dealings with newly conquered lands. The expansion of Israel during the Davidic and Solomonic periods is sometimes recounted with specific imperial terminologies, such as "to serve" and "servants", used to describe the subjugated party, "tribute" paid to the overlord, the installation of "governors", etc.

For instance, in accounts of David's and Solomon's relations with polities and peoples explicitly considered foreign by biblical authors, we also find terminologies reminiscent of imperial reality and imperial policies. For example, after David defeated the Moabites and

massacred many of the residents, Moab became "servants" to David (2 וַתְּהִי מוֹאָב לְדָוִד לַעֲבָדִים Sam 8:2=1 Chron 18:2) and paid tributes (מנחה). The latter term which in cultic matters means a type of offerings to the deity is often attested in the context of international relations as a gift from the side that serves (עבד) the other and are called their servants (עבדים) (Ju. 3:14, 17-18; 2 Sam 8:6=1 Chr 18:6; 1 Kgs 5:1; 2 Kgs 17:3-4).[616] In 2 Kgs 17:3-4, Hoshea's payment of tributes (2 וַיָּשֶׁב לוֹ מִנְחָה Kgs 17:3) as a servant (וַיְהִי־לוֹ הוֹשֵׁעַ עֶבֶד 2 Kgs 17:3) of Shalmaneser V certainly marks the Israel's status as a client state of Assyria, with international relations expressed in interpersonal terms. The payment of tribute in this case was supposed to be an annual event (2 כְּשָׁנָה בְשָׁנָה Kgs 17:4) indicating Assyria's long-term control over Israel. It is unclear whether 2 Sam 8:2 aims to depict Moab's payment of tributes to David as a one-time war compensation or an annual practice incurred by the vassal status. As far as history of this period is concerned, both biblical texts (e.g. 2 Kgs 1:1) and the Mesha Stele indicate that Moab remained as Israel's vassal until the mid- 9th century, although in these sources it is the Northern Kingdom that subjugated the neighboring Transjordanian polity, without clear reference to a Jerusalem-based overlord.

In 2 Sam 8:6 Arameans from Damascus who came to help Hadadezer of Zobah were defeated by David and then described in the same terms as in Moab's case, i.e. as tribute bearing servants (עֲבָדִים נוֹשְׂאֵי מִנְחָה). It is noteworthy that here David reportedly established

[616] Sometimes no servant status is assigned to the side paying tributes, although the context still suggests that the recipient is holding sway among surrounding polities. In 2 Chr 17:10-11, surrounding states do not dare to fight with Jehoshaphat, while in 2 Chr 26:6-8 Uzziah apparently conquered considerable land from the Philistines and built new cities in Philistine lands, defeating also the Arabs. The Ammonites were paying tribute, possibly due to Uzziah's temporary hegemonic status in the region. מנחה can also refer to tributes paid by the districts to the center, cf. 2 Chr 17:5. In Akkadian, tribute can be imposed on regions already under the direct imperial rule as a province (*nagû*) in the charge of a governor (*na-gu-ú šu-a-tú a-na eš-šu-te aṣ-bat* LÚ *šu-ut* SAT-*ia a-na* LÚ.NAM-*ti* UGU-*šu-nu aš-kun-ma* GUN *ù man-da-at-tú* UGU *šá maḫ-ri ut-tir-ma e-mid-su*) in RINAP 4, Esarhaddon 1 col. iii 12-15, here in the context of Esarhaddon's campaign in Sidon which resulted in the latter's destruction. In 2 Sam 10:19, Arameans who used to serve as Hadadezer's servants became David's servants without the mention of tributes.

נְצִבִים in Damascus (the term is missing in 1 Chr 18:6 perhaps due to scribal error[617]). The meaning of the term is not certain, although the verbal root and the form are semantically comparable to the Akkadian verbal root *š-k-n* and the derivative noun *šaknu* (governor).[618] Auld posits that the larger distance from Damascus to Jerusalem than that between Moab and Jerusalem "requires the establishment of one or more fortified positions to guarantee its client status" (understanding the term נצבים as fortified positions or garrisons; Auld 2011: 429). However, the same institutions are reported installed again in the nearby Edom in 2 Sam 8:14 (=1 Chron 18:13), with "all Edom" subdued as David's servants.[619] It is possible that the term is here used in the same way as it is used for Solomon's officers appointed to govern different districts of his kingdom (see for example, 1 Kgs 4 and 5). One may thus conclude that, according to biblical authors, David's conquest of surrounding polities, particularly in the cases of Aram-Damascus and Edom, was followed by institutional changes in those regions. First, a hierarchical structure (with the subdued designated tribute bearing "servants" as in typical imperial systems) was established to regulate the relations between Israel and the

---

[617] 2 Sam 8:6 reads "וַיָּשֶׂם דָּוִד נְצִבִים בַּאֲרַם דַּמֶּשֶׂק" (and David established נְצִבִים in Aram-Damascus), while 1 Chr 18:6 has "וַיָּשֶׂם דָּוִיד בַּאֲרַם דַּרְמֶשֶׂק" (and David established...in Aram-Damascus). The verb שים in 1 Chr 18:6 lacks a direct object.

[618] Gordon translates the term as "a prefect", citing the LXX (φρουρά) and Josephus (Ant. 7:104). McCarter1984: 244. Targum Jonathan translates the Hebrew term into the Greek loanword "אסטרטיג" "a commander". The term is possibly related to the Nifʿal of the same root which in certain cases denote a chief officer (e.g. 1 Kgs 4:5; 7; 5:7; 30; 22:48). The Nifʿal participle in 1 Kgs 4:7 clearly shows that the term designates a local officer in charge of a constituent region of a larger entity (see following verses). 1 Kgs 22:48, in which Edom is recorded as lacking a king and being ruled by a "נִצָּב" (וּמֶלֶךְ אֵין בֶּאֱדוֹם נִצָּב מֶלֶךְ), indicating that the term means a non-royal high official. LXX 1 Kgs 16:28 has νασιβ (perhaps the transcription of נָצִיב) instead of "נִצָּב" (the Greek form is often used to denote the other major meaning of the Hebrew word: a garrison), which probably reveals that in some Hebrew manuscripts נָצִיב occurs instead (in the meaning "governor, official"). In any case, it seems that נָצִיב and נִצָּב may be used interchangeably in this particular meaning (in 1 Kgs 4:19 נָצִיב is attested while elsewhere in 1 Kgs 4 and 5 the other form is attested) (M. Cogan 2001: 202), and the Targum employs the same Greek loanword, denoting "commander" to translate both Hebrew terms in the aforementioned verses. Indeed, it is possible that the vowel combination in נָצִיב derives from the G passive participle in Aramaic, although the root and its derivatives do not have the meaning "governor" in Aramaic. This is also related to the passive semantic sense of the stative *šaknu* in Akkadian, thus "the one who is placed (upon a duty or a region)".

[619] Throughout the passage, different manuscripts show variants between Aram and Edom, due to the similarity of the letters Daleth and Resh. 2 Sam 8:13 recounts David victory over the Arameans, which, in this context is better understood to be the Edomites (cf. 1 Chr 18:12 which assigns the victory to Abishai; cf. Also the LXX), which ascription is geographically also more likely. The location "Valley of Salt" is attested also in the context of Amaziah's defeat of Edom/Seir (2 Kgs 14:7; 2 Chr 25:11). Auld (2011:430) thus argues that "the author of Samuel reattributed to David a victory over Edom by one of Zeruiah's sons--perhaps to ensure that David's reputation is not outdone by Amaziah, one of his minor successors".

conquered regions. Second, David's conquest also resulted in an institution designed for what appears to be long-term administration, perhaps a combination of civil and military natures.[620]

David's control over surrounding polities and regions was retained during Solomon's reign, according to biblical accounts. For instance, 1 Kgs 9:26 mentions the establishment of a fleet at Ezion-geber near Eloth in the land of Edom, thus signaling Israel's long term administration in Edom. In general, biblical authors apply terms highly indicative of imperial prosperity to passages about the Solomonic period. 1 Kgs 5:1 (=2 Chr 9:26) and 5:4. According to these verses, Solomon "reigns over" (משל ב-)[621] "all the kingdoms" (כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת 1 Kgs 5:1) or "kings" (כָּל־הַמְּלָכִים, 2 Chr 9:26) from the Euphrates to the Land of the Philistines till the border with Egypt" (1 Kgs 5:1) or "all the kings of Beyond the River" (5:4),[622] here meaning the west of Euphrates. In 5:1, it is further stated that the foreign kingdoms/kings are tribute bearing servants of Solomon (מַגִּשִׁים מִנְחָה וְעֹבְדִים אֶת־שְׁלֹמֹה), as in the case of David's relations with Moab and Aram-Damascus. However, as scholars have observed, these descriptions are likely to be secondary insertions, on the account that 4:20-5:1 and 5:4-5 disrupt the otherwise continuous description of Solomon's administrative institutions both at the royal court and in the districts (4:1-5:8). 4:20-5:1 and part of 5:4-5 appears not in the corresponding position in the Lucianic recension of the LXX but instead in the supplements in 2:46 (b, f). Moreover, the reference to the toponym "Beyond the River" as a geopolitical concept of the Persian period also reveals the late origin of the verse (Cogan

[620] For the military side of the term see 1 Sam 10:5; 13:3-4.

[621] The verb is used in the context of one political entity ruling over another elsewhere, e.g. Deut 15:6; Judg 14:4; 15:11 (Philistines ruling over Israel).

[622] In 5:4 רדה is used instead of משל, which occurs in Ezek 29:15 (Egypt ruling over other nations) and Isa 14:6 (Babylon as the subject).

2001: 213; Wazana 2013: 292; Knauf 2016: 182). “Tiphsah” which is attested in Xenophon’s Anabasis (I .4, 11, 17; Cogan 2001: 213) may derive from the name “Tapsuhu” which first occurred in Nabonidus’ time (Knauf 2016: 182). Therefore, these descriptions of the hegemony of Israel within a defined political unit reminiscent of the Promised Land (Gen 15:18; Cogan 2001: 212) reflects the imperial ideal that only makes sense in geopolitical reality of the author’s own day, that is, the Persian Period (Wazana 2013: 292). The verb משל as well as the ideology of the passage in 1 Kings also reminds the readers of Deut 15:6b: “You will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you (וּמָשַׁלְתָּ בְּגוֹיִם רַבִּים וּבְךָ לֹא יִמְשֹׁלוּ).” One thus wonders if the late insertion was placed in this context as part of the Deuteronomistic redaction. In sum, Solomon’s peaceful rule over other kingdoms in imperial terms may have been rather removed from the historical reality due to the late date and ideological weight of these verses.[623] Furthermore, the imperial imagination may not be attributed to the Hebrew kingdoms in the Iron Age but to a later stage after the fall of both Israel and Judah. I will note later in this chapter that further evidence of the imperial imagination of the Israelite polity and the Israelite deity is attested in materials possibly composed after the fall of the Hebrew kingdoms.

In addition to imperial practice, can we also identify imperial ideology (in Liverani’s terms, see Chapter 5) in the biblical accounts about David’s and Solomon’s kingdom? First, while we do not find in these contexts divine commands for expansion, as in the Assyrian royal inscriptions (see Chapter 5 under “The concept and ideology of the universal empire”), the role of the divine assistance in Israel’s expansionist wars is sometimes highlighted (e.g. 2

[623] 1 Kgs 11:14-25 contradicts the absolute peace dominance assigned to Solomon’s international relations in 5:4. See Werlitz 2002: 70.

Sam 8:6b; 14b). Also, booty from the such expansionist wars are dedicated to the deity (2 Sam 8:11). In fact, the theme of "enlarging (הרחיב) Israel's borders (גבול)" is attested in the Pentateuch in the form of divine promise rather than divine command (Exod 34:24; Deut 12:20)[624]. In both cases Yahweh, instead of at human ruler, is the agent who expands His people's territory. Nevertheless, these observations do not mean that the reality depicted in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings does not presuppose any sort of imperial ideology. As a literary account, at least, imperial ideology certainly underlies the presentation of Solomon's kingdom as a leading political power in the region, an opulent trading center receiving respect and gifts from distant lands (e.g. the visit of the Queen of Sheba, fleet of Tarshish and Tyre; see 1 Kgs 10) and a cultic center of international significance (Meyers 1983: 421). One detail of comparative value is the reference to exotic objects and animals brought to Solomon (1 Kgs 10:22; perhaps apes and peacocks or another type of primates[625]), a theme also attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions (e.g. Aššur-bēl-kala, RIMA II A.0.89.6, lines 4'-5', restored; A.0.89.7, col. iv. Lines 29-30; Shalmaneser III, RIMA III A.0.102.89, *mandattu*/tribute from Egypt). This motif reveals the imperial mentality to collect specialties from the outside world and perhaps displaying them to his subjects at home (RIMA II A.0.89.7, col. iv. Lines 30), an act that symbolically absorbs distant lands into the center of the world (Meyers 1983: 422) and brings together the exterior and the interior of the empire.

2. Expansionist practice of Levantine polities after the 10th century BCE

During the period of the Divide Kingdoms, a period better supported by extra-biblical

[624] According the 2 Kgs 14:23-27, the Northern Kingdom in the 8th century experienced a temporary revitalization, as Jeroboam II "restored the territory of Israel (הֵשִׁיב אֶת־גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל) from Lebo-hamath to the sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the promise that the LORD, the God of Israel, had made through His servant, the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-hepher" (v.25).

[625] See *HALOT* for different possible meanings of תֻּכִּיִּים (1Ki 10:22 WTT).

sources, the Omride Dynasty in the first half of the 9th dynasty aimed to expand the Northern Kingdom to regions inhabited by non-Israelite populations. After the highland tribes consolidated their power in the local center of Samaria and established the Omride Kingdom, the Northern Kingdom became a major player on the international arena in the region as reflected by Aramean, Moabite and Assyrian sources (Blackaby 2003; Na'aman 2007b: 407-08). An important piece of evidence bearing on both Israelite control over a foreign polity and the latter's own *reconquista* and expansions is the Mesha Stele (cf. 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4ff.). On the Israelite side, Omri is said to have "oppressed" (*wyʿnw*; line 5) Moab, a term with some political sense (cf. Num 24:24).[626] Moreover, Omri has reportedly "taken possession of" (*wyrš*; line 7) the Land of Madeba from Moab and during both Omri's and half of his son's reigns it remained Israelite territory, for forty years. One would imagine that administration was extended to this formerly Moabite territory during Israel's rule.

Conversely, the stele also records, more elaborately, Moab's expansion at the expense of surrounding polities. Mesha first conquered Ataroth, which had been Gadite[627] territory under Israelite rule, by slaying its residents and settling it with other populations (lines 12-14). Later, at divine command the king also annexed non-Moabite territories (see Na'aman 2006d: 189), i.e. Nebo from Israel (lines 14-18, which also recounts Mesha's confiscating of Yahwistic cultic property for the sake of Kemosh) and Hawranen, maybe from "House of

[626] B. A. Levine (2000:206-07) goes so far as to translate it as "to render tributary, to subject, to subjugate", commenting on Num 24:24 and citing the current line in Mesha Stele. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the verb means "to afflict" on a people group (e.g. 2 Sam 7:10; Psalm 94:5), particularly Sons of Israel in Egypt (e.g. Gen 15:13; Exo 1:11, 1:12, Deut 26:6, 2 K 17:20), the Davidic Dynasty (Ps 89:23; 2 Sam 7:10), Israel/Judah as a political entity (Isa 60:14, Zeph 3:19). Note that in Isa 60 it occurs in the context of the prophecy about other kingdoms and peoples serving Israel (Isa 60:3-16).

[627] Na'aman, following others, argues that here the Gadites refer to a Moabite tribe, so that Ataroth is Moabite territory occupied by Israel, for Mesha would hardly emphasize the antiquity of Gadite presence in the region if they belonged to the enemy side (line 10). See Na'aman 2006d: 191. It is also possible that a Transjordanian tribe called the Gadites shifted allegiance between Israel and Moab during the rivalry between the two larger entities. See Weippert 1997:26. For the identity of the Gadites and different interpretations, see Petter 2014:72.

David" (line 32ff. See Lemaire 1994 and Ahituv 2008:417 for the reading; see Na'aman 2006d: 192 for an alternative interpretation), while the seizure of Yahaṣ from Israel (lines 18-21) is also attributed to divine assistance. Such elements of divine commands, massacres and resettlement with other populations are highly reminiscent of Assyrian imperial ideology and policy, although they are most likely not derived from Assyrian influence. Divine commands in the Mesha Stele do not explicitly refer to the theme of enlarging Moabite territories but instead focus on justifying the conquest of individual regions and towns (e.g. *lk ʾḥz ʾt nbh ʿl yśrʾl* "Go, seize Nebo against Israel." line 14). This said, such details of "adding" (*lspt* line 21) Yahaṣ to Daybon may hint at territorial gains as a purpose of these wars, in addition to liberating Moab from a foreign oppressor.

Finally, the Southern Kingdom of Judah, although often overshadowed by its northern neighbor, also extended its influence over surrounding polities in different periods. Before the fall of the Northern Kingdom, 1 Kgs 22:48 states that during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the mid- 9th century BCE, there was no king in Edom and that a "governor" acted as a king (וּמֶלֶךְ אֵין בֶּאֱדוֹם נִצָּב מֶלֶךְ). Neither the identity of the governor nor his relationship with Judah is explicitly offered. If we consider the defeat of Edom by David (2 Sam 8:14=1 Chr 18:13) and Solomon's control of Eloth (1 Kgs 9:26) mentioned above, and the reference to the rebellion of Edom against Judah later during Jehoram's reign when they enthroned their own king (2 Kgs 8:20), then the statement in 1 Kgs 22:48 may very well indicate standing, institutionalized Judean (compare the attestations of the term נצב in accounts of the Davidic and Solomonic eras) suzerainty over the Land of Edom, i.e. a land inhabited by people not

identified as Judeans.[628] This seems to be in line with the relatively late urbanization in Edom and and the late formation of centralized polity in Edom, which did not occur in large scale until the 8th century (Bienkowski 2014). McKinny suggests that this long lasting Judean control of Edomite land is not only related to seaborne trade in the Red Sea (1 Kgs 22:49-50), but also to metallurgical activities in the Land of Edom, as recent archaeological discoveries indicate (McKinny 2016:83-85). Such geopolitical and economic concerns certainly aroused abiding interests in the region on the Judean side which justified political and military investments in the region.

After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Judah, like the southern Levant in general, gradually became the vassal of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which rendered any attempt at local expansion increasingly unlikely. However, towards the last quarter of the 7th century, as Assyrian control of the region loosened, Levantine polities apparently began to regain some autonomy, which in turn exerted influence on local geopolitics. Judah during Josiah's reign, for example, possibly took advantage of the new circumstances and engaged in moderate expansion in different directions. For example, the letter of complaint from the site Meṣad Hashavyahu in northern Philistia, addressed to an local official (titled "שר") with a Yahwistic name and written in good Judean Hebrew, provides us with some hint of Judean control over this region during Josiah's reign (Ahituv 2008:158). Moreover, as Assyrian control over the Levant and the entire empire further weakened, it is possible that Josiah attempted to extend his authority to former Northern territories, as I have discussed in Chapter 3. I have also

[628] Biblical records suggest that Edom remained under Judean control until the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, thus indicating Judah's temporary expansion towards its eastern neighbor. בְּיָמָיו פָּשַׁע אֱדוֹם מִתַּחַת יַד־יְהוּדָה וַיַּמְלִכוּ עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ (2 Kgs 8:20) reports that Edom "revolted" (פשע) "from under the hand" (or control) of Judah and enthroned their own king. See 2 Kgs 8:20-22.

noted that "national" consciousness may have been appealed to in this process, at least according to later historiography about this period. Of course, any Judean expansion had to come to halt with the renewed imperial expansion of external powers, primarily Egypt and later Babylonia.

Above is a quick overview of expansionist attempts of some Levantine polities in Iron II A and B. Can we thus speak of mini-empires in these cases as presented in the Mesha Stele? The limited size of these polities seems to render "empire" as a less than appropriate label. However, from the perspective of the regional power relations between polities and on account of territorial expansions ascribed to certain religious and ideological factors, the historical events here recounted do bear certain similarities with more typical imperial activities in the ancient Near East, e.g. the subjugation of foreign peoples and lands and the establishment of abiding administrative institutions in conquered regions.

3. Imperialism of Aramean polities?

In Chapter 4 I have reviewed and examined different scholarly views on the phrase "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties. One opinion that cannot be excluded is that a certain level of the awareness of a pan-Aramean cultural and ethnic consciousness may have had a political ring in certain contexts in the early to mid- 8th century BCE. The present discussion, however, focuses not on the cultural or even "national" elements of the Arameans, but rather on the attempts by some Aramean polities to establish hierarchical political order beyond their own borders into non-Aramean territories. With the working criteria (see Chapter 5) for imperial mentalities and activities in mind, I am more interested in assessing whether or not traces of Aramean expansion affected non-Aramean polities and populations and whether long-term

administrative institutions may have been established in such cases. Direct evidence of either aspect of possible Aramean imperialism, one must admit, is scarce and often ambiguous.

To begin with, biblical accounts recounting Israel's warfare with external forces during the "United Monarchy" hint at the hegemony of certain Aramean polities among their peers (regarding the issue of time of composition and historicity, see e.g. Na'aman 2006a). In the narrative of David's war with the Ammonites and the Arameans, Hadadezer, apparently a ruler of the Aram-Zobah and Rehob (2 Sam 10:8; not explicit here but cf. 2 Sam 10:16 and 8:3, where his title occurs with Rehob appearing as a patronymic[629]), seems to have exerted some sort of influence on other Aramean groups "beyond the River", as he could organize them in a confrontation with David's Israel (2 Sam 10:16). What is more interesting is that when they allied troops were defeated by David, a reference is made to "all the kings, servants of Hadadezer" (10:19). The terminology "to serve" or "servant", as I noted in preceding sections, is usually indicative of vassalage in an imperial system. Therefore, one wonders whether its occurrence here is also indicative of a system of polities in which a certain hierarchy has been established, with Hadadezer and his polity at the top. What is lacking in this obscure textual evidence is reference to the control over foreign lands and peoples in such an Aramean "empire". Furthermore, due to the rarity of contemporary

[629] Na'aman interprets the title, citing Assyrian parallels (the Kurkh Monolith), as a dynastic name. Na'aman 2006a: 26. If this is the case, then this may also reflect the previous tribal nature of the Aramean state (cf. Sader 2014:26). The double title in 2 Sam 8:3 would suggest that, as in the 8th century case of Arpad and Bēt Guš, Beth Rehob and Zobah refer to the same political entity with Beth Rehob referrring to the tribal elements in the land and Zobah as the center or capital city (see Malamat 2001: 210; see Berlejung 2013: 69 for further references on the possibility of identifying the two entities as the same). However, 2 Sam 10:6 presents Aram-Beth Rehob and Aram Zobah as two different entities. B. Halpern points out that in Assyrian sources a king is either titled "son of" a dynastic name or ruler of a certain land, while in 2 Sam 8:3 both appear. This prompts Halpern to interpret Rehob here as the actual father of Hadadezer who is king of Zabah rather than the dynastic title. Halpern 1996: 63. If so, then the ambiguity caused by "son of Rehob" and "Beth Rehob" is only accidental. In either case, it is more likely that the title alone does not support the identification of Hadadezer as king of Rehob and Zobah as one polity. For the complicated issue of the number of polities constituted by Aramean toponyms in 2 Sam 10, see Berlejung 2013: 69-70. However, even if Hadadezer rules directly over only Zobah, 2 Sam 10:19 still depicts him as an overlord of a number of Aramean polities, with kings as his "servants".

extrabiblical texts that attest to the earlier Aramean polities in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Berlejung 2013:69-70),[630] it is impossible to analyze, even if such a small "empire" existed, to what extent internal administration operated and whether non-Aramean polities were absorbed into Hadadezer's realm.

A more widely discussed candidate for an Aramean "empire" is Damascus[631] in the second half of the 9th to early 8th centuries, during the temporary weakness of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the West, which is indirectly attested by biblical, Old Aramaic and Assyrian sources (see B. Mazar 1962 as a prominent example of studies vouching for an Aramean Empire; for a critical review of this tendency that recognizes imperialistic aspects of Damascus, see Frevel 2018). According to Mazar, that the Aramean polity of Damascus became an empire is indicated, for instance, by the biblical reference to the replacement of kings who accompanied Ben-Hadad in his campaign against Israel (1 Kgs 20:24), that is, an administrative reform that aimed at increasing the central authority of Aram-Damascus (Mazar 1962:108). As for the rise of Damascene domination among polities in Syria, Na'aman speculates that Damascus, which offers military aid to Hadadezer of Rehob/Zobah, was depicted by the author of the biblical source as one of the conquered regions of Bēt Rehob and only later became the seat of an Aramean kingdom established by Rezon, of whom Hadadezer king of Zobah is called a master (אדון, 1 Kings 11:23-24; see Na'aman

[630] The narrative in 2 Chron 19, which differs from 2 Sam 10 in some key places (4Sam[a] offers another variation of 2 Sam 10:6-7, Cross, Parry, Saley and Ulrich 2005: 136; cf. Auld 2011: 445), not only presents a different list of Aramean polities hired by the Ammonites, but also replaces "Hadadezer" with "Aram (Arameans)" as the subject that sent for other Arameans from beyond the River. (2 Chron 19:16) Moreover, at the end of the narrative, the tantalizing reference to "all the kings" (= "servants of Hadadezer") is missing from 2 Chron 19:19. In other words, all traces of the domination of Hadadezer of (Beth-) Rehob/Zobah over other Arameans polities have been blurred in this version of the story.

[631] According to some scholars, Arpad has also achieved the dominant position in northern Syria after the decline of Damascus and the annexation of Hamath, which Kahn postulates on the basis of the delineation of "all Aram" in the Sefire Treaties. This interpretation depends on the identification of Bêt ṢLL as a dynastic name of Hamath. See Kahn 2007: 81-83. I have discussed the implications of "all Aram" seemingly headed by Arpad in Chapter 4.

2006a: 27). As Damascus increased in power, this Aramean polity expanded both northwards and southwards (see e.g. Hasegawa 2012: 52-83;Younger 2016: 591-632). What is less certain is the nature of Damascene rule beyond its heartland, particularly in areas traditionally affiliated to other political entities. In the north, Younger suggests that Damascene influence may have extended to Pattina/Unqi, citing the "Hazael Booty Inscriptions" which possibly reflects the latter's campaign in the region. If this interpretation is correct, Damascus may have held sway over both Unqi and Hamath-Luǵath which lies between Unqi and Damascus (Younger 2016: 630). In addition to the Zakkur Stele which refers to Hamath-Luǵath fighting a coalition of Aramean and Neo-Hittite polities led by Bar-Hadad III of Damascus (son of Hazael) (see discussion in Chapter 4), a fragment of another stele excavated at Tel Afis possibly mentions Hazael directly, as here the name is preceded by a preposition, thus hardly being a patronymic. However, the fragmentary nature of the stele makes it difficult to interpret beyond demonstrating Hazael's presence of some kind in northern Syria in the 9th century (Amadasi Guzzo 2009; 2014: 55; Younger 2007:139). Should both Hamath-Luǵath and Unqi have been vassals, I would tentatively conclude that Hazael's "empire" controlled both Aramean and Neo-Hittite domains. However, the evidence currently available does not allow us to judge the nature of Damascus' presence in the North or whether one can speak of an empire in the first place.

Damascus has also penetrated into the southern Levant, as demonstrated by the Hebrew Bible and the Tel Dan inscription referring to the conflicts with Israel and Judah (cf. Halpern 1994; Biran and Naveh 1995; Schniedewind 1996; Athas 2006; Suriano 2007, among others; cf. 2 Kgs 9:14-29). The Hebrew Bible also mentions Hazael's campaigns in Philistia and his

destruction of Gath (2 Kings 12:17). Within the realm of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the status of Gilead is of considerable interest for one's assessment of Damascus' candidacy for "Levantine imperialism". Biblical accounts record that Hazael "struck" (הכה) Israel through out the territory of Israel during Jehu's reign, singling out territories in Transjordan (2 Kgs 10:32-33). Hazael also "oppressed" (לחץ) Israel throughout the reign of Jehu's son (2 Kgs 13:5), Jehoahaz king of Israel (2 Kgs 13:22), until Jehoahaz's son Joash recovered Israelite towns in his wars with Ben Hadad/Bar Hadad (II) son of Hazael (13:25) from "under the hands of the Arameans" (מתחת יד-ארם) (2 Kgs 13:5). Halpern dates Joash's revolt against Damascus to the years before 796 BCE when he was recorded in Adad-nērārī III's Tel El-Rimah stele as a a tributary separate from the Damascene ruler (B. Halpern 1994:72-73). Beyond military confrontations between Israel and Damascus, the strategy of Hazael and Bar Hadad (II) resulted in territorial gain and perhaps the establishment of Aramean governance in towns formerly affiliated to non-Aramean polities. These towns were located near the cultural boundary between Israelite and Aramean populations (Younger 2016: 622; Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits 2011: 151-53; cf. Gen 31:44) and each side may have attempted to conquer towns settled by the other (cf 1 Kgs 22:3 regarding the status of Ramoth Gilead). Na'aman posits that the Land of Gilead remained under Aramean control until the Assyrian conquest in the 720s BCE, citing Assyrian sources that list the town of Gilead as within the border of Damascus with Israel, while considering biblical sources (2 Kgs 10:33, 15: 29) as later redactions (see Na'aman 2005: 46). Whether the Assyrian reference to Gilead should be interpreted as the entire Land of Gilead (ארץ גלעד) or the city (with the determinative URU) of Gilead (see Hos 6:8, where Gilead is called a "קריה"; 12:12; Num

32:39; cf. Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits 2011: 137), one may conclude that some Israelite territory remained in Damascene hands for almost a century, and this territory may very well have undergone certain administrative reorganization. In addition to Gilead, it has been suggested that Hazael may have rebuilt Dan (erecting the Stele, Stratum IV A) and Hazor (Stratum VIII) which were annexed from Israel (Hasegawa 2012: 75; for a different opinion see Younger 2016: 624).

In sum, Damascus may indeed have experienced an imperial period, with numerous expansionist wars in different directions. However, it is uncertain who became their vassals and whether vassalage incurred oaths or then regular delivery of tributes. Some foreign territories came under direct Damascene control, although evidence of direct governance over foreign populations or territories is meager. We also have too little evidence to postulate a Damascene imperial mission or ideology that shaped and/or sprouted from its policies of imperial expansion[632] (cf. Frevel 2018: 426).

4. The Great Kings of Neo-Hittite kingdoms

As I already mentioned in Chapter 4, cultural and ethnic commonality did not seem to have served as a source of political cohesion among different Neo-Hittite kingdoms in the Iron Age. That said, some sort of internal political structure appeared to be at work in different periods of Neo-Hittite history. Among the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, the early kings of Carchemish (from Kuzi-Teshub in the 12th century to Ura-Tarhunza in ca. Later 11th century) inherited the title "Great King" from the Bronze Age Hittite kingdom. At the beginning of the Iron Age, it appears that this title may have corresponded to the political reality in northern

[632] For the rise of Arpad in the 8th century among Aramean polities, see discussion and references in Chapter 3.

Syria, with Carchemish, the previous seat of the Hittite viceroy, serving as the most important political entity among Luwian-speaking heirs of the Hittite kingdom (cf. Bryce 2012:83-88). An inscription from Malatya, dating to the 12th century BEC, refers to a certain Great King named Ir-Teshub, maybe a king of Carchemish (see Bryce 2012:86-87 for different interpretations) who gave three towns to a local ruler of "POCULUM" (KARAHÖYÜK line 16; CHLI vol. 1 Part 1: 290). One wonders if this reflects the Great King's power to reorganize the local administration of polities under its domination. In any case, the city of Malatya by the reign of Kuzi-Teshub's two grandsons may have been a subordinate kingdom under Carchemishean dominion (CHLI vol. 1 Part 1:286; Bryce 2012: 99). Beyond the northern regions of the Levant in southwestern Anatolia an already mentioned inscription from Tabal dated to the latter half of the 8th century (see chapter 5) is worthy mentioning, in which the Tabalean ruler Wasusarmas retains the title "Great King" in a relatively late period despite Assyrian influence in the Levant and Southeastern Anatolia (TOPADA line 4; CHLI vol. 1 Part 1: 453). In this inscription, Wasusarmas recounts his military activities and his prominent role in local international relations. Interestingly, the same king of Tabal is mentioned in Tiglath-pileser III's as "trying to be equal to the deeds of Assyria" (*[^{m}ú]-as-sur-me* ^{KUR}*ta-bal-a-a a-na ep-šet* ^{KUR}*aš-šu*^{KI} *u-maš-šil-m*a RINAP 1 Tiglath-pileser III 47 Rev. 14) and refusing to come before the king of Assyria (*a-di maḫ-ri-ia la il-li-ka* ibid) despite being listed as a tribute bearer (line Rev. Line 9'). It is tempting to suggest that the imperial tone of his inscriptions may have been heard in Assyria, which replaced him as ruler of Tabal by a certain Ḫullî (14'-15'; Bryce 2012:144; 271).

More explicit evidence of imperial ideology is attested in the Karatepe inscription,

which celebrates Azatiwada's expansion of Que's frontiers (Lines A i 4-5). In this inscription, Azatiwada, the regent of the local kingdom claims in somewhat grandiose terms to have "extended the land of the plain of Adana from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Lines A i 4-5), namely, from the east to the west. Wazana comments that "(T)his inscription demonstrates that the frontier concept and the desire to expand were not unique to the imperial rulers", ascribing the imperial style to Azatiwada's acquaintance with Assyrian summary inscriptions and traditions of Mesopotamian historiography (Wazana 2013:56). Another link between this local royal inscription and imperial ideology attested in Near Eastern empires is the depiction of the frontier (lit. "the far regions/edge [*qṣyt*] on the borders/boundaries [*gblm*]") as a dangerous area full of evil people and gang leaders, where Azatiwada built fortresses, subjugating and then bringing order to this former chaotic peripheral region (Lines A i 13-16; cf. Liverani 1990:41-43). It is also interesting to note, however, that well integrated into the expansionist ideology exhibited in the inscription is a sense of the existence of actual confines of the kingdom's territory, demonstrated by none other than the multiple references to boundaries or the edge of the frontier.[633] In other words, the expansionist mentality has its limits, which, in the case of this local kingdom soon to be overshadowed by the Assyrian superpower, serve as a factual and conceptual check to the imitation of the imperial style and mindset.

These traces of imperial phenomenon and mentality scattered in various periods of the history of Neo-Hittite polities can be interpreted as limited but clear evidence for expansionist policies employed by Neo-Hittite states and some sort of a hierarchical

[633] E.g. "I settled them on the edge of my borders (*qṣt gbly*) at the setting of the sun" (A i 20-21).

international system in Norther Syria and beyond. However, it would be far-fetched to identify local empires on the basis of the unsystematic attestation of individual elements.

When the national god becomes the universal god: "Yahwistic imperialism" in the Hebrew Bible

So far I have discussed Levantine sources demonstrating traces of possible imperial practice and the imperial ideology of Levantine polities in the Iron Age. In addition to this ideological construction of imperial activities on the political, or better, mundane level, biblical theology has also developed what could be dubbed as "religious imperialism", that is, the elevation of Yahweh in some sources from Israel's/Judah's "national god" to the status of an universal god who determines the fortunes of not just his own people but also the entire world, not unlike the roles of Aššur in Assyrian imperial and religions ideologies (see e.g. B. Levine 2005; R. Thompson 2013). The status of Yahweh in relation to other peoples and polities is often described by terminologies that indicate imperial domination over conquered lands in Assyrian and other Near Eastern sources. In other words, the theological interpretation of reality is expressed in political terms. However, while the biblical sources shed light on developments in the conception of trans-local and even universal authority conveyed in theological terms, they naturally have only limited relevance to our understanding of modes of imperial expansion or administration. The following review of salient examples, therefore, only concerns the ideological presentation of Yahweh as the true ruler of other peoples and the universe.

1. *Yahweh as the human actor's helper in the subjugation of other peoples*

As I have discussed previously in this study, imperialism is displayed not only by a

political center's behavior with regard to other entities and actors, but also by its perception and presentation of other polities and peoples as well as the entire world around it, as an object of conquest, as the periphery and as members of the imperial system of a lower rank. A recurring motif in Assyrian royal inscriptions and other traditions (e.g. Egyptian and Urartian royal inscriptions, see Chapter 6) that vividly depicts the establishment of such a relationship between the imperial center and other peoples is the presentation of conquered rulers, peoples and polities in the periphery as "bowing down to"/ "prostrating oneself before"/ "kissing"/ "seizing" the feet of the great king of the imperial center, a gesture betokening obeisance, often accompanied by the acceptance of the imperial yoke and the payment of tribute. Cifarelli observes that the phrase is not simply a metaphorical phrase denoting submission, but instead describes the actual gesture performed by foreign rulers who surrendered to the Assyrian great king, which is attested not only in textual sources, but also in Assyrian royal visual art, where foreign rulers are depicted as kneeling with their palms and foreheads touching the ground near the feet of the Assyrian king (Cifarelli 1995: 209-12, 1998: 218). Posture of this kind, i.e. prostrating oneself towards (the feet, etc.) of an authoritative figure is also widely attested in the Hebrew Bible (expressed by such verbs as השתחוה, קדד, נפל, כרע, sometimes in combination with phrases of direction, e.g. לאפיו, ארצה), which also reveals the hierarchical relationship between the two sides as well as the respect and obeisance paid by one side towards the other, e.g. an individual may bow down to his king or superior (1 Sam 24:9, 25:23; 2 Sam 18:28). In the context of international relations, foreigners are also depicted as prostrating themselves to Israel or its ruler in obeisance (.e.g. 2 Sam 24:20, 28), not unlike foreign rulers' submission to the Assyrian great king in Assyrian sources. An

interesting variant of gestures denoting the conquest of foreigners is the victor's placing of feet on the necks of the defeated, a motif most directly attested in Josh 10:24, when five foreign kings are to be executed after their defeat at Gibeon (cf. also Ps 110:1, עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ הֲדֹם לְרַגְלֶיךָ; see Boling 1975: 286). This imagery is also widely attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions depicting the Assyrian king's subjugation of foreign enemies.[634] Visual presentation of the gesture seems to indicate that placing one's feet upon the enemy's neck presupposes the latter's prostration on the ground, i.e. the latter submission to the powerful victor.[635]

I have noted that in Assyrian imperial ideology the god Aššur and other Assyrian deities are understood as the divine helper who guarantees the Assyrian king's victory over his enemies (cf. "the terrifying radiance" of the Assyrian deities, see Chapter 6). More specifically, Tukulti-Ninurta I contextualizes his subjugation of other polities and peoples, metaphorically phrased as "treading upon the neck of foreign lands", with Aššur's nomination of him as the ruler, granting him the scepter and the crown.[636] In the Hebrew Bible, too, Yahweh is understood as the deity who causes foreign peoples to submit to and prostrate themselves before the ruler or people of his choice. For instance, in 2 Sam 22 (=Ps

[634] The image of the victorious Assyrian king treading the necks of defeated rulers is already attested in Middle Assyrian sources. For example, Tukurti-Ninurta I claims to have trodden the "lordly neck" of Kaštiliašu, king of Babylonia who was captured in battle: "In the midst of that battle I captured Kaštiliašu, king of the Kassites, (and) trod with my feet upon his lordly neck as though it were a footstool" (*i-na qé-reb tam-ḫa-ri šá-a-tu* ^{m}*kaš-til-a-šu* MAN *kaš-ši-i qa-ti ik-šud* GÚ *be-lu-ti-šú ki-ma gal-tap-pi i-na* GÌR.MEŠ-*ia ak-bu-us*, RIMA 1 Tukulti-Ninurta I A.0.78.5, 59-62). It is also attested in later royal inscriptions dating to the Neo-Assyrian period, for instance, Ashurnasirpal II is celebrated as the ruler who "treads upon the necks of his foes" (*mu-kab-bi-is* GÚ *a-a-bi-šú*, RIMA 2 Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.1, i 14-15), while Shalmaneser III is honored with the same title in his inscriptions (e.g. RIMA 3 Shalmaneser III A.0.102.28, 8). In the 7th century this phrase appears in Esarhaddon's inscriptions in relation to his subjugation of the people of Cilicia: "I trod upon the necks of the people of the Land of Cilicia" (*ak-bu-us ki-šá-di* UN.MEŠ ^{KUR}*ḫi-lak-ki*, e.g. RINAP 4 Esarhaddon 1, iii 47).

[635] Cf. The Bas-relief from the Central Palace at Nimrud (Plate LXXXIX, BM 118933; Barnett and Falkner 1962:139), which presents Tiglath-pileser III standing on the neck and shoulder of an enemy prostrating himself on the ground. JIA Yan, personal communication.The image is possibly the visualization of Tiglath-pileser III's campaign in Media in his 2nd regnal year. See Barnett and Falkner 1962:29.

[636] "When Aššur, my lord, faithfully chose me to worship him, gave me the scepter for my office of shepherd, (presented) me in addition the staff for my office of herdsman, granted me excellence so that I might slay my enemies (and) subdue those who do not fear me, (and) placed upon me the lordly crown; (at that time) I set my foot upon the neck of the lands (and) shepherded the extensive black-headed people like animals." (RIMA 1 Tukulti-Ninurta I, A.0.78.1 ,i 21-31)

19), a psalm of thanksgiving assigned to David also known as "the Song of David", Yahweh is said to have caused David's enemies (lit. "those who rise up against me") to kneel down before him (תַּכְרִיעַ קָמַי תַּחְתָּנִי, v.40). In v. 48, likewise, the author thanks Yahweh for "humbling[637] peoples under me", which highlights the critical role of the national god, or indeed the author's personal god (cf. v. 7) in the defeat and conquest of other "peoples", implying a stronger imperial overtone that elevates one polity or people group over others. A similar case is 1 Kgs 5:17, in which Solomon mentions the delivery of David's enemies "under the palms of his feet", although some manuscripts and 5QKgs has "my feet" instead. In both cases, it is clear that the author ascribes the victories of the "United Monarchy", the period in Israelite history that is reinterpreted as one of imperial expansion, to divine intervention with human international politics.

The same understanding of political victories of the Israelites against other polities and peoples as the result of the magnificent deeds of their god is also demonstrated by Ps 47:4: "He subjects peoples to us, sets nations at our feet" (יַדְבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּינוּ וּלְאֻמִּים תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ). Whether or not the Israelite imperialism in the early period is historically established, it is undoubtedly interpreted by later authors as a phenomenon realized by religious means. Indeed, Yahwistic religion is not simply a facet of the biblical imagination of Israelite imperial ideology, but human political behavior is regarded as the materialization of divine will. Just as Liverani comments on Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology: "the religious character of imperial ideology is not an additional element...it is in fact the very form of that ideology in its general terms" (Liverani 1979:301).

[637] The MT of 2 Sam 22:48 reads "מוריד" (to cause to descend), while 4QSam[a] has "מרדד", perhaps "to subjugate, to conquer" in Qal, cf. Isa 45:1, see *HALOT*: 1189. The meaning of Polel is uncertain, although it is likely similar to the meaning of the Qal stem. Ps 18 instead has "וידבר" (to drive back; cf. Ps 47:4).

Moreover, Yahweh is not simply the national or local deity who places his own ruler or people at the highest rank of the international political hierarchy. Nor is biblical imperial universalism limited to the mundane level, i.e. the political success of the Israelite polity. On the contrary, Yahweh can also serve as the divine helper and enabler of foreign rulers or the sovereign over foreign kings (Levine 2005:423-35), now reinterpreted as Yahweh's chosen one. The most typical example is certain Isa 45:1-8, where Cyrus the Great is titled as Yahweh's "anointed one" (מְשִׁיחוֹ) whose right hand the deity has taken so that he could subjugate nations before himself. (אֲשֶׁר־הֶחֱזַקְתִּי בְיִמִינוֹ לְרַד־לְפָנָיו גוֹיִם). Whether or not the name Cyrus is a later addition, Baltzer has rightly argued that Deutero-Isaiah in its entirety is too deeply interwoven with the events and problems of the Persian Period for a simple deletion of a name to "make any essential difference" (Baltzer 2001: 223). So it appears that Yahweh is indeed now presented as the divine power that propels the Achaemenid king's conquest of the world (cf. vv. 2-3). How does one make sense of the installation of a foreign ruler as Yahweh's "anointed one", who, with the divine help of Yahweh, conquers all nations? Baltzer suggests that the prototype of this kind of ruler is none other than David, Yahweh's chosen ruler, who also subjugated other peoples as I have discussed above. With the collapse of the Judean polity, no Davidic king can be expected to function as Yahweh's ruler, so now Cyrus is mentally transformed into the new David (Baltzer 2001: 225). Historically speaking, as Fried points out, granting the Persian king the title of the local ruler is widely attested in the early Achaemenid Empire, particularly in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Therefore, the biblical title of "the anointed one of Yahweh" to be in line with the same political phenomenon of presenting the imperial ruler in accordance with local theology, which most likely originated

from local religious elites' attempt to collaborate with the ruling empire (Fried 2002: 383-93).

2. Yahweh as divine helper and the universal ruler

In two of the passages mentioned above where Yahweh functions as the divine helper of human imperial activities, this image is deeply rooted in the Yahweh's more central role as the divine ruler of the universe himself. Let us begin with Isa 45:1-8, with which I ended the preceding section. I have mentioned that Fried has attempted to associate the biblical title of "the anointed one of Yahweh" with the well attested phenomenon of re-presenting the Persian king as the legitimate ruler of conquered peoples elsewhere in the early Achaemenid Empire (see above). However, there is a difference between the biblical transformation of the Persian king and parallel processes elsewhere. If one compares Isa 45:1-8 with the Egyptian titles granted to Cambyses and Darius, it is clear that in Egypt the transformation of the Persian king into an Egyptian Pharaoh focuses almost entirely on the issue of localization. The Persian emperor now assumes such titles as "king of Upper and Lower Egypt" and "Master of the Two Lands", as if he were exactly and merely an Egyptian Pharaoh. The association with Egyptian deities seems to have the same effect of situating the foreign ruler in a highly localized Egyptian context (see examples in Fried 2002:384-85). In Isa 45:1-8, however, the theology seems more complex and multidimensional. To be sure, Yahweh's installation of Cyrus as his anointed one and his assistance with Cyrus' conquests are also followed by a reference to the local tradition (v.4).[638] Yet this proclamation is soon elevated to the cosmic level, casting Yahweh as the creator of the whole universe in monotheistic terms:

I am the LORD and there is none else; beside Me, there is no god. I engird you, though you have

[638] "For the sake of My servant Jacob, Israel My chosen one, I call you by name, I hail you by title, though you have not known Me." (Isa 45:4 TNK)

not known Me, so that they may know, from east to west, that there is none but Me. I am the LORD and there is none else, I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I the LORD do all these things. Pour down, O skies, from above! Let the heavens rain down victory! Let the earth open up and triumph sprout, yes, let vindication spring up: I the LORD have created it (Isa 45:5-8 TNK).

So here the installation of Cyrus as Yahweh's chosen ruler not only recognizes him as the legitimate ruler of the Israelite/Judean community, but also welcomes Cyrus as ruler of the world. Or rather, the theology of Deutero-Isaiah reinterprets Persian universal imperialism as one authorized and determined by the Israelite god Yahweh. That the Israelite god has this authority is corroborated by the fact that he, and only he, is the creator of the heaven and the earth, and by extension the divine helper of the human universal ruler (cf. vv. 9-13; Fried 2002: 392). In other words, "nations" should bow down to Cyrus, for the world has to prostrate itself before Yahweh the divine ruler. The mundane facet and the theological facet of imperialism now merge. As far as the historical background of this mentality is concerned, contemporary tradition of equating the Persian emperor with the local ruler attested also in Egypt and Mesopotamia certain servesy as a crucial parallel of the image of Cyrus in Deutero-Isaiah. Ultimately, one might seek the origin of this tendency not only in the willingness of local elites to collaborate with the Persian imperial center, but also in the psychological compensation that local communities needed to make sense of the loss of political autonomy. As Baltzer observes, in comparison with the Deuteronomistic History, prophecy in the Exilic and post-Exilic periods as well as the Chronicles highlight a position that "was able to address and come to terms with the collapse of national existence through

the downfall of Jerusalem and the exile, and could therefore see even foreign rulers as legitimate" which was certainly facilitated by the fact that "(B)elief in Yahweh as creator and king of the world makes it possible to relativize earthly sovereignty" (Baltzer 2001: 225). The foreign earthly sovereign is now recognized as a benign force who liberated the exiled Judean people. Yet here one must note the critical difference between this recognition and Levantine sources (e.g. Bar-rakib's inscriptions and the Çineköy inscription) that readily embraces the imperial ideology of the universal empire. In these inscriptions, the harmony between the subjected polities and the imperial center originates from the willingness of the former to incorporate themselves into the universal ideology propagated by the empire. In Deutero-Isaiah, instead, it is the theological imperialism, authored by the small, local community of Judah, that conceptually subjugates the universal superpower of the Achaemenid Empire and incorporates it into its own understanding of world and history.

The same can be said of Ps 47, a psalm in which foreigners' subjugation to the human political entity is also interwoven with subjugation to the divine ruler of the universe. I have noted that in Ps 47:4 Yahweh is celebrated as the divine helper who causes foreign peoples to submit to "us", i.e. the Israelites. As in Isa 45:1-8, this divine-facilitated imperial image is followed conceptually by a reference to key "national" elements of Israelite theology, i.e. the divine election of Israel's inheritance (v.5; cf. Isa 45:4). Moreover, the "national" sentiment is again mixed with a universal perspective which is pervasive in this psalm. For instance, all peoples are described as participating in the celebration of the Israelite god (v. 2), i.e. Yahweh who is explicitly titled as "the great king upon all the earth" (v.3) and "king of all the earth"

(v.8).[639] In v.9 the Israelite god is said to reign over the nations and sit upon his holy throne (מָלַךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל־גּוֹיִם אֱלֹהִים יָשַׁב ו עַל־כִּסֵּא קָדְשׁוֹ). Therefore, the imperial overtone of this psalm is also demonstrated on two levels: on the mundane level, foreign nations are subjugated by god before the Israelites; on the theological level, the Israelite god himself is perceived by all as the divine king over the whole earth and over all peoples.[640] As in Isa 45:1-8, it is the universal authority of Yahweh that renders the imperial conquest of other peoples conceptually comprehensible. In other words, the imperial sentiment is likewise rooted in and supported by the "national" identity of the community. As Brueggeman and Bellinger summarize: "The psalm in fact does not resolve this tension between the cosmic and particular, and indeed neither does the Bible more generally. There can nonetheless be no doubt that this divine sovereignty extends both in generic rule over the nations and particular chosenness concerning the status of Israel" (Brueggeman and Bellinger 2014:221).

3. Bowing down to Yahweh: Yahweh as the universal sovereign

Prostration before Yahweh's people or chosen ruler, as I have demonstrated, is conceptually and theologically related to the exalted status of Yahweh as a universal god. Naturally, such a divine ruler need not always serve merely as the divine protector and helper

[639] The theme of Ps 47 seems to be continuous with the end of Ps 46, e.g. v.11: הַרְפּוּ וּדְעוּ כִּי־אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים אָרוּם בַּגּוֹיִם אָרוּם בָּאָרֶץ. See Goulder 1982: 151.

[640] See also Chapter 2. For the Sitz im Leben of the psalm, some scholars in the 20th century have argued that Ps 47 is associated with the annual cultic ritual divorced from specific historical events. See summary in Goulder 1982:151. However, others still attempt to associate the the psalm with concrete historical periods or events. For instance, J. J. M. Roberts (1976:132) argues for the antiquity of the psalm, dating it to the recent victories of David's age, when Israel rose from provincial obscurity to an empire of the first rank. For Seeligman (1980:36), moreover, while the whole psalm "appears" to be ancient, the last verse reflects the historical background when non-Israelites participate in the worship of Yahweh as the universal ruler, which he thinks is unthinkable before the Second Temple Period. Ross (2013:115) argues that the psalm "no doubt sprang from some amazing victory of Israel over its enemies" but could then be used on any similar occasion or at great festivals. In the present author's opinion, what matters more than the date and the historical background of the psalm is of course the interplay of the imperial, cosmic view with embedded local, national elements (Seeligman 1980; Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014: 221). It is difficult to date the origin of such sentiments, which has parallel developments in various historical and geographical contexts. However, the conceptual similarity between this psalm and passages like Isa 45:1-8 seems to suggest that external influence from universal empires cannot be ignored, so that a relatively late date is not to be excluded.

of human rulers or polities, to whom subjugated peoples prostrate themselves when defeated. In many other texts foreign peoples and the whole world can directly bow down to Yahweh to show their obeisance and respect to the divine ruler, in which contexts Israel's national god is also often depicted as the creator of the universe, the ruler of all peoples and all lands, or simply, the king (as in Isa 45:1-8 and Ps 47). Sometimes the recipient of universal worship also includes objects, places or concepts related to Yahweh and his authority, such as his divine mountain, his abode, city and his chosen people. Also, the conceptual rise of Yahweh understandably goes hand in hand with the restoration and elevation of the Israelites or Judeans as his people and the transformation of Jerusalem and Zion from Israel/Judah's "national" center to a universal center, i.e. "navel of the world".

Verbs used on such occasions include השתחוה, כרע, קדד, etc., and the first is by far the most commonly used one. Indeed, השתחוה is often attested in passages about people's worship of Yahweh, whether the subject is an individual (e.g. Gen 24:26; 48; 52) or a group of people, i.e. a congregation (e.g. Exod 4:31; 12:27). In biblical texts it is more often than not the Israelites, as Yahweh-worshipers, who bow down to their own deity. Occasionally, one finds foreign individuals who not only bow down to Yahweh, but also function on his behalf, e.g. Balaam the Seer who bows down to Yahweh when his eyes were opened by Yahweh (Num 22:31). In prophetic sources and psalms, the image of foreigners and the whole world bowing down to Yahweh and his affiliates is more frequently attested. For example, in Deutero-Isaiah Yahweh proclaims that "kings will see and rise" and "officials will prostrate themselves" (מלָכִים יִרְאוּ וָקָמוּ שָׂרִים וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, Isa 49:7) in front of Yahweh's

servant[641] for the sake of Yahweh himself. In Isa 60, a hymn highlighting the central status of Jerusalem and Zion, imperial mentality is first and foremost revealed by the depiction of Zion as the center of the world from which light comes forth and foreign peoples and rulers as residents of the dark periphery who approach the light (vv. 1-3; cf. Blenkinsopp 2003:210). V. 12 also makes use of imperial terminology, claiming that a nation or a kingdom (הַגּוֹי וְהַמַּמְלָכָה) that does not "serve" Zion (אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעַבְדוּךְ) is doomed to destruction. Against this background, Yahweh further proclaims that Zion's oppressors will come forth and prostrate themselves to the palms of Zion's feet (וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּ עַל־כַּפּוֹת רַגְלַיִךְ כָּל־מְנַאֲצָיִךְ). Although this image bears resemblance with the aforementioned pictures in which Yahweh causes foreigners to bow down to the people, ruler or polity of his choice, it is different in that Yahweh does not explicitly act to subjugate foreign enemies or offer help in the conquest. Instead, the process takes place naturally and spontaneously. Foreign peoples submit to Zion not by the hand of Yahweh, but because of Yahweh. Or perhaps Zion, as Yahweh's city (v.14b), is to be understood as the hypostatization of Yahweh's presence ("my holy place" and "my footstool", v. 13b), so that bowing down to this center of the world is conceptually equated with the worship of Yahweh by the whole world. The central position of Zion and Israel in the world rests likewise upon the undisputed central status of Yahweh from the theological perspective,[642] which, on the other hand, is again closely intertwined with "national" elements such as the patriarchal promise of land and inheritance at the very end of the hymn

[641] The identity of the servant here in v.7 is considered to differ from that of the unnamed servant in vv. 1-6, who is appointed by Yahweh not only to gather and restore the Israelites but also as the light for all nations and the salvation of the whole earth. In this verse, the title of the "servant" is "servant of rulers" (עֶבֶד מֹשְׁלִים), i.e. the enslaved of foreign rulers. If so, here the servant to whom officials and kings shall stand up and bow down refers to Israel. See Blenkinsopp 2000: 305. Hermisson 2003:367.

[642] Yahweh replaces the Sun and the Moon, i.e. the celestial powers, as Israel sole source of light. See Blenkinshopp 2003: 217.

(vv. 21-22; cf. Blenkinsopp 2003:217).

In yet other texts Yahweh himself, instead of his associates, receives foreigners' reverence as the latter prostrate themselves before him. For instance, Isa 66 ends with a passage consisting of different universalistic notions. First, "nations and linguistic groups" are not only sent by Yahweh to yet other foreign peoples to spread the glory of Yahweh (vv. 18-19), but Yahweh will also select priests and Levites from them (v.21). Second, "all flesh" will regularly come and prostrate themselves before Yahweh (יָבֹוא כָל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנַי, v.23b), which obviously refers to a much broader scope of peoples than Judeans living near Jerusalem, befitting the context of unmistakable universal ideology (Koole 2001: 528; Blenkinsopp 2003:316). This universal perspective is again interwoven with other theological motifs. On the one hand, Yahweh's universal authority is stressed also by the reference to "the new heavens and the new earth" (v.22; cf. Isa 65:17) which he has made as the creator of the universe. On the other hand, the participation of foreigners in the worship of Yahweh is also accompanied by the return of Israelites who have gone into exile and the restoration of the Israelite community (v..20; v.22, see Koole 2001:527). Finally, the passage is also characterized by the use of imperial terminologies that appear otherwise both in political and in religious contexts. For instance, the Israelites who are returned by foreign nations are compared to the "offering" (מִנְחָה, v.20) delivered by Israelites to the temple. As I discussed above, the term "offering" also denotes "tribute", particularly when delivered by foreign peoples and polities. Also, in the final verse of the chapter which depicts the dreadful image of the disobedient, the latter are called "those who rebel against me" (הַפֹּשְׁעִים בִּי, v. 24), which terminology also occurs in contexts of internal or international politics, especially when a

vassal revolts against the overlord (2 Kgs 1:1; 3:5, 7; 8:20, 22; 2 Chr 21:8). To be sure, these terminologies are by no means limited to international relations or imperial structures, yet their occurrence in this context well demonstrates that theological universalism centered around Yahweh is readily expressed by terminologies and images reminiscent of political imperialism.[643]

Another case of universal worship of Yahweh is Zeph 2:11, a prophetic message about the shriveling of "all gods of the earth" (כָּל־אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ) by Yahweh and the prostration of people in all habitable lands (lit. "all the islands of the nations", כָּל אִיֵּי הַגּוֹיִם, for the meaning see Ben Zvi 1991:175) towards Yahweh. The verse is founded in the middle of a series of oracles against nations largely separated into two sections by v. 11, the former against Philistine city-states and Transjordanian polities (vv. 4, 5-10), while the latter group is set against more distant and more powerful enemies, i.e. Ethiopians/Kushites and Assyria (v.v. 12-15), and is considered by some commentators to be only loosely connected with the oracles (J. Roberts 1991: 201; Ben Zvi 1991:176). However, in the present position the verse is indeed conceptually linked with the previous section, where neighboring polities are destroyed and punished. Destruction on the human political level is naturally interpreted as the defeat of these polities' "national" deities by Yahweh (J. Roberts 1991:202-02),[644] perhaps by means of constricting their territories (Berlin 1994:110), which leads to the

[643] Blenkinsopp points out that v.24 forms a conclusio with such passages as Isa 1:27-31, where the same image of rebels being destroyed also occurs. He also argues indirectly that v.24 assures that the book does not end with a universalisitic tone. (following Whybray 1975:293, cited in Blenkinsopp 2003:316). However, it appears that the last verse by no means weakens the universal mentality so thoroughly expressed by preceding verses. It is stated that the rebellious will become an abomination for "all flesh" (as in v. 23). In other words, just as the worship of Yahweh becomes universal, punishment of the rebellious few also serves as a universal warning. As in the case of empires, punishment of rebellious vassals does not mean that the message is not universal. Quite the contrary, all vassals and subjects are expected to learn a lesson from this message.

[644] For the motif of Yahweh defeating or even killing other gods, see Ben Zvi 1991:174. It should be noted that, while this verse shares the universal perspective with Isa 45:1-8, it lacks the latter's more explicit monotheistic claims. All foreign gods are weakened by god of Israel, yet they are not denied their divine status. Zeph 2 in general also does not call upon Yahweh's role as the sole creator of the whole earth.

transformation of all peoples living all over the world into worshipers of Yahweh. While v. 11a may well be compatible with the theology in the Monarchic period, when defeat of foreign polities in real life can certainly be associated with the defeat of one's own national god of others' (cf. The Mesha Stele, see Chapter 3), the more straightforward universal worship of Yahweh by foreigners seems to be more closely in line with theological developments in the post-Monarchic period.[645]

Further examples of the universal worship of Yahweh include Zech 14:16 and 17, which is usually dated to the Persian period. (see summary of relevant issues in Petersen 1995:5). The verses found themselves in an eschatological message about "the Day of Yahweh", when foreign peoples who warred against Jerusalem will "make a pilgrimage year by year to bow low to the King LORD of Hosts (לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְמֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאֹות) and to observe the Feast of Booths" and "(A)ny of the earth's communities that does not make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow low to the King LORD of Hosts shall receive no rain" (Zech 14:16-17). In these verses Yahweh assumes kingship over all the earth and becomes the sole ruler of the universe (v.9), which is followed by his defeat of hostile nations and the subjugation of the survivors of these peoples as Yahweh's worshipers. Again, the universal sovereignty of Yahweh is realized by his status as Israel's divine warrior who shakes the cosmos and foreign peoples. It is his absolute authority over his own people and the whole world that turns foreign enemies into obedient worshipers (Petersen 1995:154-58; Boda 2004:525-29).

Finally, prostration before Yahweh as the universal ruler as a motif is also attested in a number of psalms, including Pss. 22, 29, 95 and two from a group of psalms termed as

[645] For the dating of the Book of Zephaniah and the role of the superscription which sets the book to the reign of Josiah, see evaluation of Ben Zvi's post-monarchic dating (in Ben Zvi 1991) in Berlin 1994: 33-47.

“Enthronement Psalms”, i.e. Pss. 47 and 96. In Ps 22, a psalm about personal salvation (vv. 1-22) with collective elements, e.g. references to “seed of Jacob”, “see of Israel” and the congregation (vv. 23-27), the psalmist switches to a more universal perspective towards the end of the psalm when he urges “all the ends of the earth” (כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ, v.28a) to remember and turn to Yahweh and “families/clans of all nations” bow down to him (וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם, v. 28b; also v.30), for Yahweh possesses the kingship and functions as the ruler of nations (v.29). The increasing extension of praise of Yahweh as the savior from the individual, to “my brother” (v.23), the great congregation (v. 26) and eventually well beyond Israel parallels the multiple facets of Yahweh as a deity, as a personal deity (see analysis in Brueggemann and Bellinger 117-18: 2014), a national deity and a universal god, the last of which is determined not only by his power of salvation, but also by his role as the divine king (v.29). In Ps 29, a hymn to Yahweh whose Canaanite background has been discussed by scholars (e.g. Cross 1950; Loretz 1984; Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014: 146-49), “sons of gods”, i.e. members of the divine council[646] are summoned to pay homage to Yahweh and prostrate themselves before him in his majestic holiness (vv. 1-2). The urge for divine beings to bow down to Yahweh is closely linked with Yahweh’s enthronement upon the flood[647] as king forever (v. 10), while the psalm ends with a more “national” perspective in v.11. The elevation of Yahweh in this psalm is more theological than political, so to speak, as it celebrates Yahweh’s position as king of gods rather than explicitly as the king of the world.

Moreover, the theme of Yahweh as the king of gods is also attested in Ps 95:3 (כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל

[646] The Hebrew phrase is “בְּנֵי אֵלִים” rather than “בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים” as in Job 2:1. In Ugaritic texts “bn ʔil”, i.e. “Sons of El”, the divine name “El” occurs in the singular. See discussions on the difficulty of the phrase in Ps 29:1 in Ross 2011: 651, n.2.

[647] For the relationship between Yahweh’s enthronement and Baal’s defeat of Yamm and Yahweh’s status as a storm god, see e.g. R. Müller,2008.

יְהוָה מָלָךְ גֵּאוּת לָבֵשׁ לָבַשׁ יְהוָה עֹז הִתְאַזָּר אַף־תִּכּוֹן תֵּבֵל בַּל־תִּמּוֹט׃), in which psalm Yahweh's role as creator and the demythologized victor against the sea is also stressed (vv. 4-5). In v. 6, the psalmist invites others to join him in bowing down and kneeling down to Yahweh, their creator (בֹּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרָעָה נִבְרְכָה לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה עֹשֵׂנוּ), where both השתחוה and כרע are attested, which occur only in cases of paying homage to the deity rather than human figures (Levenson 1997:6-7; Ego 2010:289-90; Machinist 2018a:116). The phrase "our creator" (v.6b), "our god" (v.7a) and references to the Wilderness motif in the latter half of the psalm with Deuteronimistic influence (cf. Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014:411) seem to place the focus of this invitation on Israel itself. However, the more universalistic tone of the first half renders a more inclusive interpretation of v.6a also possible, i.e. all creatures should pay homage to the Creator, who of course has a special relationship with Israel. The mixture of national and universal sentiments is found also in other passages on Yahweh's status of universal ruler, as I have discussed above. In Ps 96, the universal tone is more pervasive, as "all the earth" (v.1b) and "families/clans of peoples" (v.7a) are included in the worship of Yahweh, who is above all other gods (v.4b) as the creator and true god. (v.5) All the earth bearing tributes to Yahweh's courts while bowing down to him (vv. 8-9) is reminiscent of vassals gather to the capital of the universal empire with tributes to pay homage and obeisance to their overlord, when the latter is promptly proclaimed as king ruling over all nations and judging all peoples (אִמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם יְהוָה מָלָךְ, יָדִין עַמִּים בְּמֵישָׁרִים, v.10).

4. Summary

Our survey of some salient examples from the Hebrew Bible has demonstrated that the Israelite god Yahweh plays a crucial rule in the biblical understanding and expression of

imperial thought. As a relatively small and politically unimportant polity in the periphery which later lost its independence to the expanding universal empire, ancient Israel and Judah developed their own version of theological imperialism according to which Yahweh was increasingly perceived as the ruler of the whole world, which position is closely related to Yahweh's status as the creator on the one hand, and its special relationship with the Israelite and Judean communities on the other. In this section I paid particular attention to the phrase "bow down to (the feet of)" which is attested both in political and in cultic contexts. Through this lens I have examined such motifs as rulers and peoples (Israelite and foreign) being helped by Yahweh with the subjugation of their enemies, foreign nations and foreign deities prostrating themselves to Yahweh as the ruler of the universe, Yahweh as the creator receiving homage from all creatures as well as Yahweh as the king receiving tributes (offerings). All these motifs are of course interwoven, painting together the image of a ruler living in the center of the world (Jerusalem/Zion), whose authority conceptually extends from the center to all peripheries, just like that of the imperial overlord.

This imperial image is widely attested in sources datable to the post-exilic period, when the Judeans had been in close contact with universal empires for centuries, under the dominance of the universal Persian Empire. Yet one cannot ascribe theological imperialism simply to the influence of universal empires on Judeans as subjects of the empire, for such concepts are also attested in cultic materials (e.g. festal and enthronement psalms) which lack a clear historical context. Such celebratory psalms may have been composed either as a result of temporary Israelite or Judean victory over its neighbors or as a mental and ideological response of a regional, peripheral polity to the increasing threat of great powers.

Cultural commonness and the Neo-Assyrian Empire:internal and external perspectives

1. An Assyrian "nation"?

I have noted note only that the imperial practice and ideology are compatible with some of the smaller political entities in the Iron Age Levant, but the Levantine version of universal mentality may originate from the transformation of national symbols, such as the national deity, into the embodiment of universal authority. Can one detect the reverse phenomenon in the ancient Near East in the Iron Age, that is, the movement from imperial universalism to national distinctiveness? I have mentioned earlier in the study that the universal, monocentric mentality of empires sometimes has to be readjusted when the empire is confronted with limits and restrictions in reality, both natural and political ones. Would such restrictions prompt cultural and political elites of the universal empire to reassess the limits of its expansion and reformulate the principle by which the empire is held together? The Neo-Assyrian Empire reveals different possibilities.

As a universal empire, the Neo-Assyrian Empire displays simultaneously a high degree of internal ethnic and cultural plurality, due in large part to imperial expansion and mass deportations of conquered peoples to the Assyrian heartland (Oded 1979), and overall political unity as an all-encompassing whole absorbing different political and cultural entities into its domain, at least viewed from the outside (Parpola 2004: 6). From the perspective of the modern Western historical experience, the making and the maintenance of empire depends upon the recognition and manipulation of cultural, religious, ethnic and later, national differences within one's own empire and in rival empires. While efforts are made to prevent local identities in one's own empire from being interwoven with separate political

allegiances, complete acculturation and assimilation into the imperial core could hardly be ever achieved in European empires in the 19th century, since "too much had been built on the accommodation and manipulation of difference for a homogenizing nationalist mission to seem a realizable imperial project" (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 368). Yet in a different geopolitical and historical context, imperial and cultural identities may go hand in hand and reinforce one another.[648] One wonders whether the Neo-Assyrian Empire, during years of its existence, ever attempted or managed to forge a common cultural and even ethnic identity and, if so, whether the combination of cultural and imperial elements influenced the empire's political strategies and foreign relations.

As other major empires in human history, the Neo-Assyrian Empire was never merely built on military conquest, economic exploitation and an imposed administrative network. An

[648] E.g. China before and after the Qin unification (221 BCE) and the subsequent Han Empire (202 BCE-220 CE). Scholars have argued that the Western Zhou State enjoyed a limited degree of political unity that was first and foremost based on kinship relations among the elites of different principalities and local states in the Western Zhou period (11th century to 8th century BCE) who functioned as agents of the king of Zhou in peripheral regions, attended ceremonies and rituals held in the center, paid regular visits of the king and providing military aids when necessary (see Li 2008: 256-68; 294-98). In addition to this basic structure of power relations, however, Zhou China (spanning from the Western Zhou to the later Eastern Zhou Period of political disunity) could also be considered a cultural entity with a common written language (later with variations reunified only fater the Qin unification), a standardized "koine" vernacular "Ya Yan" ("雅言"; for the relationship between the common language and local varieties of Old Chinese and perhaps other languages, see Hua 2001: 29-135; Wang, Meng and Zhang 2014:17-56), shared cultural identity (cf. Trigger 2003:104) of the "Zhuxia" (诸夏, lit. "the multiple Xias"; inhabitants of what is now central China) against surrounding "barbarians". These elements were sometimes accompanied by common political and military obligations, shared literary, philosophical and cultural heritage throughout the Western and the Eastern Zhou periods, and all of these factors seem to have fostered a "Chinese" identity at least among political and cultural elites of various states that endured the weakening of the Zhou court and advocated for political unity as an ideal status conducive to peace and prosperity. (e.g. Mencius Book IA 7: "How can the 'Under the Heaven' be settled?" "Through unity."; see Mencius/Bloom and Ivanhoe 2009: 6) The unification by Qin, followed by 4 centuries of Han imperial rule, not only built upon the existing cultural commonalities among former Warring States (while downplaying political and cultural differences (on the management and abolition of local kingdoms in early Han China, see Chen 2004; 2005), but also made possible the extension of "Chineseness" to the peripheral and newly conquered regions. For the development of "Chinese identity" in both the cultural and the political senses in the Zhou, Qin and Han periods, see Peng 2016.

More evidence showing the transformation of "Han" from the name of the empire to the designation of people with common cultural traits began to appear exactly after the fall of the Han Empire, when other peoples in the north established new local dynasties that usually ruled over Chinese populations from the former Han domain, who were labeled as "Han" People with the absence of a Han empire. Most strikingly, "Han" became a self-identification during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) that founded the other most powerful Chinese empire. For instance, "Han" occurs along side "Da Tang (the Great Tang)" as designations of the Tang Empire in contrast to the Tibetan Empire in the Chinese version of "Tang-Tubo (Tibet) Alliance Monument" (early 9th century CE; see Wang Y.: 1980). "Han" also occurs in a Tibetan letter found in Xinjiang referring to Chinese residents of the Tibetan Empire. For this and various other texts (annals, histories, contemporary literary texts) in which Han serves as the (self-)designation of the Chinese in the Tang period with certain commonalities in language, dress and customs, see Wen 1982. For the application of "Han" as a name of the population in central, eastern and southern China under either Chinese or non-(Han) Chinese rule from the Han to the Qing Dynasties see Jia J. 1985; Xu:1992:215-24.

empire always has a cultural facet. In the case of the Assyrian Empire, the Aššur cult and the Assyrian pantheon, Assyrian art and architecture served not only to heighten cultural uniformity in the Assyrian heartland but also to transmit the Assyrian culture to other parts of the empire.[649] Although local political and religious elites may have been exposed to the media that helped transmit Assyrian universalism,[650] it is often unclear to what extent such efforts affect lower strata of the peripheral society who may very well continue to speak their own languages, worship their own "national" (given that cultic centralization of some sort was at work in the local polity) gods and personal gods and cling to the traditional lifestyle in general.

Parpola maintains that the Neo-Assyrian Empire has become a full-fledged ancient nation by the 7th century BCE, with people from different parts of conquered territories obtaining a common identity fostered by political allegiance on the one hand, and increasing cultural homogeneity on the other:

"The long-term strategic goal of Assyria thus was not the creation of an empire upheld by arms, but a nation united by a semi-divine king perceived as the source of safety, peace and prosperity. As we have seen, this goal was achieved through a systematically implemented assimilation and integration policy geared to delete the ethnic identities of the conquered peoples and to replace them with an Assyrian one " (Parpola 2004: 14).

---

[649] Richardson summarizes that in the Assyrian Empire "...an emergent universalism has been seen in Assyria's production of imagined geographies through cosmological texts and idealized gardens, in an accelerating registration of populations through census projects, in the administration of loyalty oaths to those same populations, in the rise of Aramaic as a lingua franca, in experiments and reforms of cult practice, in a diffusion of trade goods and decorative styles, and in the gathering of knowledge texts at Nineveh. To this list of universalizing impulses, one may add that there was even a corresponding reduction in Assyrian traditions about its own heroic past, since those stories tended to emphasize Assyria's local particularity." Richardson 2016:38.

[650] See for example, Shafer's study on the role of royal monuments in the periphery in transforming a region into part of the Land of Assyria. See Shafer 2007:133-59.

He suggests that by the end of the 7th century, i.e. towards the collapse of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the boundary separating Assyrians from others had been largely established:

"The common religion, culture, world-view and value system, and above all, the common unifying language (Imperial Aramaic) effectively set Assyria apart from the rest of the world and created a feeling of unity and solidarity within the country. The inherent notion of 'us' against 'all the others' that came with this dichotomy—Aramaic was not spoken outside the Empire—agreed well with the dualistic ideology of the Empire, which saw Assyria as the kingdom of God commissioned to spread the light of civilization to the world surrounding it" (Parpola 2004: 15).

It is interesting that Parpola attaches high significance to the role of large-scale settlement of Arameans and the spread of Aramaic in what he describes as the formation of an Assyrian national identity, since at first glance, the influx of a large number of foreign populations formerly labeled as enemies since the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (11th century) and the rise of use of a new language as well as a new script different from Akkadian and unconnected to cuneiform traditions, would create nothing but a hiatus in any potential process of identity formation within the Assyrian Empire. To propose a form of Assyrian identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, one has to explain how Aramaic and Arameans fit in the general picture: what would assimilation and cultural unification mean with Aramaic offering an option alongside and in addition to Assyrian/Akkadian?

According to Parpola, Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire "was not the language spoken by ethnic Arameans but a creation of the Empire, a lingua franca born from the interaction of numerous ethnic groups and therefore serving as a unifying rather than separating factor"

(Parpola 2004:14). This observation, however, does not stand scrutiny. To be sure, the influence of Aramaic on the administration and everyday life of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, particularly in the 7th century BCE demonstrated by references to Aramaic scribes and Aramaic letters/documents in texts and visual arts, is widely recognized by scholars (cf. Tadmor 1991). The influence of Arameans was not restricted to language and writing, but it was extended to legal concepts and the field of international relations (e.g. *adê*)[651] (Zehnder 2007). Even so, one hardly sees official efforts to promote and facilitate the further popularization of Aramaic and other Aramean elements. While the installation of Aramaic scribes and the application of Aramaic in documents in imperial administration may be interpreted as means of accommodating the already ubiquitous use of the Aramaic language, Akkadian remained an important, all-purpose language for written records in different fields, from political correspondence to legal transactions discovered both in the heartland and in the West (e.g. the private archive from Tell Halaf consisting of cuneiform tablets and Aramaic dockets, see Pedersén 1998: 175). As Beaulieu observes, the spread of the Aramaic language provoked adversarial reactions among Assyrian ruling elites (Beaulieu 2007:193). One example is that Sargon II explicitly prohibited one of his officials from sending messages in Aramaic in a widely quoted letter:

[As to what you wrote]: "There are informers [... to the king] and coming to his presence; if it is acceptable to the king, let me write and send my messages to the king on Aram[aic] parchment

[651] Some scholars have suggested that this terminology has an Akkadian rather than Aramaic background, i.e. *adû*, "work assignment, duty". See Lauinger 2013 for a review of this view and further references. If the word has an Akkadian etymology, it remains to be explained whether the Aramaic *ʿdy* is related to the Akkadian word. If so, one wonders why the Aramaic word begins with an Ayin instead of Aleph, as the Akkadian word by the 1st millennium was unlikely to begin with an Ayin, particularly on account that the "a" in the word does not change to "e", which would have taken place if an Ayin had been present in the word.

sheets[652]" — why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian (*ak-ka-da-at-tu*)? Really, the message which you write in it must be drawn up in this very manner — this is a fixed regulation (*i-da-at*)[653]! (SAA 17 002, o13-o21)

Although the letter reveals that Aramaic documents were perhaps quite prevalent in the imperial administration of Assyria, this situation was probably seen as more regrettable than desirable by the king, who considers Akkadian rather than Aramaic as a founding element of the Assyian identity.

Furthermore, imperial ideology was still conveyed almost entirely in the Neo-Assyrian dialect of Akkadian and in the cuneiform script, both in the Assyrian heartland and in peripheral regions. As Millard points out, even in the environs of the Aramean homeland in the West, the monolingual stelae in Neo-Assyrian so far discovered after the provincialization of the former Levantine polities suggest that "Assyrian kings celebrated their triumphs in their own language and script alone" and that the Aramaic language and script were not employed by the Empire to convey its political and ideological messages to residents who were most likely more familiar with Aramaic (Millard 2009: 206; cf. E. Stern 2001:14-18, J.D Hawkins 2004, Horowitz, Oshima and Sanders 2006; Lauringer and Batiuk 2015). In addition, semi-independent vassal rulers from Tell Fekheriyeh, Til Barsip and Arslan Tash produced monuments in local languages in addition to, not place of, cuneiform Akkadian (Millard 2009:206). In other words, Akkadian and the cuneiform script were imposed on the West as the primary vehicle of the political and in a way, cultural influence from the core of

[652] The word "Aramaic" is largely broken, but it can be deduced from the context, the preceding word "*sipru*" which refers to an Aramaic document and the remnant of "...*[á]r-ma*...", a spelling that is attested in the word "Armaya". (e.g. SAA 01 032, o21; 06 314, e.1; 16 063, o14).

[653] "*ittu*", from stative of the root "idat-", meaning "characteristic", translated by the editors of SAA 17 as "a fixed regulation". See CAD I-J, "*ittu* A" 2'.

the empire.[654] It should be noted that, while one may contend that a much larger number of Aramaic administrative documents written on perishable materials once existed, the Aramaic language and script are naturally not incompatible with monumental inscriptions on stelae, as is shown by numerous Aramiaic stelae found in Aramean polities. Yet within the Assyrian Empire royal inscriptions in Aramaic conveying the imperial message *of the center* have so far not been discovered either in the West or in the heartland.[655] In sum, one may argue that the popularization of Aramaic in the Empire did not dissolute the social, cultural and hierarchical distinctions between Aramaic and Akkadian. The persistence of Akkadian as the sole medium for the recording and dissemination of the imperial messages on inscribed monuments as well as a medium to preserve Mesopotamian culture and thoughts in general reflects the uneasy situation where the political elites tries to heighten the contrast between "self" and "the other" against the background of the increasing influence of Aramaic,[656] which, in the everyday operation of the empire, is something to be accommodated and accepted. Any claim of national sentiment or identity against such a background seems rather premature, if not improbable.[657]

---

[654] In the periphery of the Neo-Assyrian Empire many monuments and stelae were erected which display the royal image and, in many cases, an Akkadian inscription. Both themes of the visual art and the written text serve to convey the imperial message to regions far beyond the Assyrian heartland and mark the periphery as integral parts of the empire: "In the process of translating this text idiom from the center to the periphery, the Assyrians ensured a strong symbolic association between the empire's center and its borders. By extension, the peripheral ritual activities—including the making of the monument itself—might be understood as the activities necessary for the 'building' of the Assyrian imperial space." Shafer 2007: 148.

[655] The Tell Fekheriyeh Bilinguial Inscription reflects the local royal ideology in both the Aramaic and the Akkadian versions, appealing to Adad rather than Assyrian deities.

[656] Machinist comments on the supposed hardening of attitude against the conquered in post-Sargon inscriptions: "It may also be a reaction against an increasing openness in practice to the newcomers in society and administration--an effort ideologically to clarify boundaries between 'us' and 'them' precisely because the boundaries were dissolving." See Machinist 1986: 184-91 and 1993: 94. I submit that the lack of use of Aramaic in monumental materials may also reflect this nuanced attitude of the Assyrian political elites.

[657] Beaulieu notes that while one may speak of an "imagined community" in the multi-lingual Late Babylonia, the urban elites passed on traditional Mesopotamian learning by means of the Akkadian language and the cuneiform script rather than Aramaic, which functioned almost entirely as an administrative language. The Aramaic culture was not the dominant culture in the Mesopotamian empires, despite the presence of a large number of Arameans. As a result, the way in which the Aramaic language gained popularity was to a large extent regulated, if not designed, by the Mesopotamian cultural and political elites (even if they may be of partial or full Aramean or Chaldean descent, as the Neo-Babylonian rulers). So the

2. Assyrians and Others

If the Neo-Assyrian Empire till its fall in the 7th century BCE cannot be described as a political entity with the sort of "national" identity proposed by Parpola, can we nevertheless trace the distinction between Assyria and the outside world as well as the boundary between Assyrian and non-Assyrian people? If so, did the boundary have a cultural and even ethnic dimension beyond administrative concerns? Emberling's assertion that the Neo-Assyrian Empire, placing much emphasis on land and territory, was rather indifferent to ethnic distinctions and/or cultural unity in contrast to Egypt, Achaemenid Persia and the Roman Empire, does not seem to conform to apparent efforts to distinguish Assyrians from others in Assyrian texts,[658] yet his suggestion that a (weak) idea of Assyrian identity "was continually modified by linguistic, cultural and artistic practices encountered during imperial expansion" should be appreciated (Emberling 2014: 169). In an important study on the concept of Assyria and Assyrians in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, Machinist traces the development of not only designations of the land of Assyria and the people of Assyria, but also idioms and phrases employed in inscriptions that describe the subjugation of non-Assyrian lands and the transformation of foreign lands and foreign peoples into integral components of the Assyrian Empire at different stages through the imposition of tributes and taxes on the one hand, and the teaching of the Assyrian culture and rules on the other (Machinist 1993: 80-91). Therefore,

imagined community, if it existed, should be labeled as a Mesopotamian, cuneiform learned community, which may not have influenced other strata and sectors of society. See Beaulieu 2007:211-13.

[658] Richardson (2016:40) argues that "it cannot be said that such terms ('Assyrian', etc.) ever attained to a conception of ethnicity, under which identity was an imbrication of blood, land, and language. And ethnonyms had still less capacity to form or change notions of class or rank, only something closer to an administrative filing status for one's taxes or residential identity for jurisdictional purposes. In short, to be counted as an 'Assyrian' carried little weight or advantage vis-à-vis other ethnonyms, except insofar as taxes and service were concerned". This could be the case, although one should point out that, in Sargon's Cylinder text discussed below, "Assyrians" are described as "versed in all the proper culture" or "proper knowledge" (*inu*). That is to say, being "Assyrian" was not simply a passive tax and legal status, but it also involved active knowledge of the right "way", both religious and political ("fearing god and king", see below). It is this cultural facet of "Assyrianness" that requires the sending of "native" Assyrians to acculturate the deported foreigners, for putting the latter under Assyrian jurisdiction alone does not automatically make them Assyrian.

the confines of the Land of Assyria as well as the meaning of being Assyrian were rather fluid concepts, and the boundary between Assyrians and non-Assyrians, i.e. the world of order and the world of chaos according to the Assyrian imperial ideology, was constantly changing (Machinist 1993: 84; 102). While non-Assyrians can become Assyrians (note such phrases as "counting them as Assyrians=*ana/itti nišē māt Aššur manû*"; "like Assyrians=*kî ša aššurī*"; for the meaning of "Assyrians" and relevant terms see footnote below), ideally the differentiation of Assyrians from non-Assyrians persists even at the exact moment when the transformation occurs, as Sargon's Cylinder text dating to the end of the 8th century shows:

72 The population of the four (quarters), of foreign tongue and divergent speech, inhabitants of mountain and plain, all whom the Light of the gods, the lord of all, shepherded, 73 whom I had carried off with my powerful scepter by the command of Aššur, my lord--I made them of one mouth (*pâ ištēn ušaškinma*) and put them in its (=Dur-Šarrukin's) midst, 74 Assyrians (*mārē māt Aššur*^{KI})[659],

[659] Literally "Sons of Aššur". "Assyrians" can also be designated by the *nisbe* form of the toponym and "UN MEŠ KUR *aš-šur*^{KI}". See Machinist 1993: 81; Fales 2009: 188. Parpola considers both "sons of Aššur" and "people of Aššur" as semantically equivalents for "Assyrian citizens", which, of course, depends on the meaning of citizen in an era where native terms did not exist. While citizen in the sense of Greek city-states or the modern sense did not exist, it is possible that such terms did imply certain rights and obligations attached to people labeled "sons of Aššur". Parpola 2004: 13 n.37. See Fales 2009: 191 n.26 for a critical comment and 192 n.28 for his preference of "sons of a city" as a term for citizens of a city whose origin and permanent residents is in a particular city, such as Uruk, Borsippa or Babylon) While scholars recognize that "Sons of Aššur" and the *nisbe* form are sometimes interchangeable, Machinist has tentatively suggested that "Sons of Aššur" may denote a different social status, citing the differentiation between the *nisbe* (perhaps a commoner) and *awīlu* (perhaps a "full citizen") in Middle Assyrian Laws. Machinist 1993:82; Fales argues that the difference between the *nisbe* form and "Sons of Aššur" lies in the register of the language, with the latter serving as a "higher" form of expression employed in royal inscriptions, also meaning "full-fledged Assyrians" yet termed "of Assyrian stock".

The difference between the *nisbe* and "Sons of Aššur" is best reflected by Esarhaddon's succession treaty with the ruler and the people of Nahšimarti (SAA 6), where both forms occur in a list of people that may potentially revolt against the new king: 162 *sum-ma lu* LÚ *aš-šur-a-a lu da-gíl pa-ni šá* KUR *aš-šur*/163 *lu-u* LÚ.*šá ziq-ni lu-u* LÚ SAG *lu* DUMU KUR *aš-šur*^{KI}/164 *lu* DUMU KUR *šá-ni-tim-ma lu ina sik-nat* ZI-*tim ma-la ba-šú-u*

It should be noted that the *nisbe* form and "Sons of Aššur" do not occur side by side. Structurally, this list consists of three pairs plus one concluding phrase:

Pair 1: LÚ *aš-šur-a-a* vs. *da-gíl pa-ni šá* KUR *aš-šur* (Assyrian vs. Assyrian vassal)

Pair 2: LÚ.*šá ziq-ni* vs. LÚ.SAG (bearded officials vs. "eunuchs", i.e. officials without beards)

Pair 3: DUMU KUR *aš-šur*^{KI} vs. DUMU KUR *šá-ni-tim* (people/sons of Aššur vs people/sons of another country).

Summary: *ina sik-nat* ZI-*tim ma-la ba-šú-u* (any living being)

The second pair is obviously a term *per merismum*, i.e. using binary terms to designate to entire palace personnel (cf. "great and small"; "high and low" that occur in other Near Eastern texts), for eunuchs by nature have no beards. Deller 1999: 308. See the entire article for the translation of LÚ SAG as "eunuch". If so, one may argue that pairs 1 and 3 also employ merism, so that all the three pairs plus the summary highlight the entirety of people that should be prevented from revolting from the new king. Therefore, the meaning of the *nisbe* should be understood against the meaning of "a vassal of Assyria", i.e. an Assyrian here refers to a resident of the provinces and the heartland, while "a son of Aššur" is the opposite of complete foreigners, so it here may refer to anyone subject to the rule of the empire in one way or another. Of course, the

versed in all the proper culture (*ini kalāma*),[660] I ordered as overseers and supervisors to give them instruction in fearing god and king (Translation by Machinist, in Machinist 1993:95).

To place foreign populations at "one mouth" in this context most likely means harmonizing different people into the state as a whole, not necessarily from the linguistic perspective, but more possibly from the political perspective, i.e. from a state of divergence to a state of unanimous obedience towards the Assyrian king and the God Aššur (line 74) (Machinist 1993:96). Liverani interprets the phrase as referring to the mouth of the conqueror rather than the mouth of the conquered, i.e. placing everyone at the mouth (command) of one monarch (Liverani 2017b: 540). The two interpretations supplement each other: the varied nature of peoples, languages and customs line 72 will be transformed in to the same political, cultural and religious awareness in line 73 through the planning and commandment of one authoritative source of power.[661]

---

interpretation depends on the meaning of KUR Aššur, for if the phrase refers to the heartland of Assyria only, the third pair would be understood as anyone from outside the heartland. Yet whatever the exact meaning of "land of Aššur", the most important point to be made is that Aššuraya and DUMU KUR Aššur do not form a contrasting pair, so that it is not necessary to expect any fundamental difference between the two phrases in meaning.

Within the same treaty, a more extensive list of pairs occurs in lines 216-223, regarding pretenders to the throne:

Pair 1: *lu-u šá ina* KUR-*aš-šur šu-nu-u-ni* vs. *Lu šá ina* KUR *šá-ni-tim-ma in-nab-tu-u-ni* (the Land of Aššur vs. Another country)

Pair 2.1: *lu-u ina kal-zi* É.GAL *qur-bu-ti* vs. *lu-u ina kal-zi* É.GAL *pa-ti-ú-ti*

Pair 2.2: (structurally different) *lu-u ina kal-za-a-ni* GAL.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ

(2.1 consists of the contrast between one from the nearby area of the palace and one from the open area of the palace; 2.2 supplements the pair with another all areas connected with the palace, which itself is presented as a contrast between big and small *k.* areas)

Pair 3: (structurally different) *lu-u ina* GAL.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ-*te* (old vs. young)

Pair 4: *lu-u ina* DUMU-SIG$_5$.MEŠ vs. *lu-u ina* DUMU *muš-ke-nu-ti* (the well-to-do vs. the poor)

Pair 5: *lu šá* LÚ.*ziq-ni* vs. *lu* LÚ.SAG (see above)

Pair 6: *lu-u ina* LÚ.ARAD.MEŠ vs. *lu-u ina* LÚ.ŠÁM.MEŠ (slaves and bought slaves)

Pair 7: *lu ina* DUMU KUR *aš-šur lu ina* DUMU KUR *šá-ni-tim-ma* (see above)

Summary: *lu-u ina nap-har ṣal-mat* SAG.DU *mal ba-šu-u* (all the commoners)

Again, we have a list of merisms that serve to stress the completeness of people of various kinds covered by the current treaty. Here "DUMU KUR Aššur" occurs again in contrast to people of a different country, whereas the *nisbe* form is not attested, leaving any possible contrast between the two forms comparable to that between the *nisbe* and *awīlu* in Middle Assyrian Laws out of question. Therefore, it is entirely possible that the two forms in the Neo-Assyrian texts are essentially synonyms.

[660] For the meaning and other attestations of "*inu*" see CAD-I, p152, "*inu* B". The CAD also mentions a parallel expression "*mudût šipri kalāma*" ("those who know all the practical knowledge"). Machinist refers to 2 Kings 17:27, where similar instructional idioms about the "law of the Land" is mentioned (וְיֹרֵם אֶת־מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ). Machinist 1983: 729; Machinist 1993:98. In both studies, Machinist points out that the text reflects the influence of Assyrian literary themes on non-Assyrian thoughts and expressions.

[661] The phrase by itself does not necessarily indicate the assimilation of the people. In some contexts, the phrase is

Such strategies of unification by the empire with a universal mentality is well noticed and sometimes appreciated in the periphery. I have discussed in Chapter 6 the merger of Que and Assyria into "one house", which is celebrated with pride and gratitude in the Çineköy Inscription (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, a late case of the imperial literary theme with striking similarities to the passage from Sargon II's inscription is 1 Macc. 1:41-43, in which Antiochus IV writes to his entire kingdom, so that "all should give up their particular customs" (ἐγκαταλιπεῖν ἕκαστον τὰ νόμιμα αὐτου 1 Macc 1:42) and "all should become one people" (εἶναι πάντας εἰς λαὸν ἕνα 1 Macc 1:41). All the nations and many from the Israelites are said to have accepted the king's commandment (1 Macc 1:42). Here again, through the king's mouth different constituent groups of the empire are expected to be transformed into one people. Yet Sargon II's passage contains more information, i.e. even during the very process through which one becomes part of the Assyrian Empire, "full-fledged" Assyrians are still differentiated from would-be Assyrians, with the former serving as the medium of Assyrianization and occupying specific positions of a higher rank (for "Assyrians" as an "institutional-hierarchical marker", see Fales 2009: 189-193).

---

better understood as the subjugation of different polities and peoples to the authority of one overlord, which does not presuppose the complete absorption of the regions into the Assyrian state or the transformation of non-Assyrians into Assyrians. An early attestation of the phrase is from an inscription Tiglath-pileser I (early 11th century) in the context in a summary of his victories in various regions in the first five years of his reign. Here the king mentions taking hostages from these polities, which indicates that the polities became vassals rather than an integral part of Assyria after Tiglath-pileser I's campaign. (RIMA II A.0.87.1 col. v. line 46) In one of Adad-nērārī II' inscriptions, the phrase occurs after the account of the annexation of the Land of Hanigalbat, here "to place at one mouth" has a closer relationship with the addition of new territory to the empire. (RIMA II A.0.99.2 lines 99b-100a) In Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions the phrase is attested at least 7 times. 2 occurrences are found in the commemoration of the king's campaign in the Zamua lands, A.0.101.1 col. ii line 47=A.0.101.17 col. iii line 22 (after "they seized my feet" in line 46; tribute and corvée mentioned); in 4 cases, the phrase is used in the context of a summary of the king's victories from "the east to the west":RIMA II A.0.101.1, col. v line 132=A.0.101.26 line 46 (after the phrase "to cause...to bow to my feet", here the object includes foreign lands and foreign kings); RIMA II A.0.101.2 line 21=A.0.101.23 line 14. It is uncertain whether the subjugation of vassals or the annexation of enemy land into imperial territory is indicated. In all cases "to place at one mouth" precedes the account of the deportation of foreign peoples and the settlement of them in Calah, but the policies adopted in the defeated lands are not explicitly recorded; finally, RIMA A.0.101.40 line 7a precedes the epithets of Ashurnasirpal II as "Avenger of the land of Aššur, the one who broadens the territory/boundary of the land of (Aššur); king of kings and Lord of lands". (lines 7-9) Here Ashunasirpal is certainly depicted as one who has recovered former Assyrian territories and annexed new lands to Assyria, although the theme of assimilation of the conquered peoples is by no means explicit. In Tiglath-pileser's time, "to place at one mouth" would occur in the proximity of "assimilation", see RINAP 1 5 lines 11-12.

One may argue that the transformation from non-Assyrian to Assyrian was always a dynamic process with inconsistencies and exceptions in different periods and perhaps different regions of the Assyrian state. The boundary between Assyrians and Non-Assyrians, between Self and Other, was constantly changing. Former enemies, such as the Arameans, may end up being an integral part of the Assyrians. Yet even in the 7th century, when Parpola argues that an Assyrian nation has already formed, Arameans, who supposedly contributed to the formation of the "nation" by spreading their language as a major unifying force throughout the empire, are still singled out as a group with a separate identity and sometimes their own political decisions in various contexts. In a political context, Assurbanipal's Annals mention Arameans (^{KUR}*a-ru-mu/a-ra-mu*) in Babylonia as a separate group alongside Chaldeans, people of the land of Akkad, Sealand who sided with Šamaš-šuma-ukīn in the latter's rebellion (Prism A=RINAP 5 011 col. iii line 98; iv line 92; RINAP 5 023 line 109). A letter from the Nippureans to Assurbanipal reports Arameans (LÚ.*a-ra-mu*, again alongside Chaldeans) participating in conspiracy against the king of Assyria by "making peace with the enemy" (SAA 18 199 =CT 54 454 lines 11-15). In both cases, Arameans (at least those in Babylonia) at the peak of the Assyrian Empire still exist as an identifiable people group capable to conduct their own political maneuvers. It is true that Babylonian should be considered to lie beyond traditional Assyrian heartland, yet by the reign of Assurbanipal it had been integrated into the Assyrian Empire for a considerable amount of time, despite constant centrifugal efforts such as the rebellion led by Ashurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. Interestingly, Arameans in or near the heartland of Assyria may also have preserved a separate identity. In a legal text recording the transaction of land and people

possibly dating to the 7th century,[662] an "town of Arameans" (^{URU}*ar-ma-a-a*) was mentioned in the description of the land (SAA 14 345=Ki 1904-10-9, 135+Ki 1904-10-9, 373=ADD 1222, line 11). The term suggests that even in the 7th century Arameans in some regions were still considered a distinct group with places named after their Aramean identity in everyday discourse.

In sum, the contrast between insiders and outsiders, Assyrians and non-Assyrians, in the Neo-Assyrian Empire never disappeared, but was instead constantly adjusted in accordance with particular historical and social settings, which is not atypical for empires in human history. Beyond political unity, which in itself is a complex issue for empires, language as well as other cultural elements certainly function as crucial determiners of possible national consciousness. In the case of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, we seem to see parallel use of the Akkadian language and the traditional cuneiform script on the one hand, and Aramaic on the other, in everyday documents and the domination of Akkadian in official, ceremonial use till the end of the Empire, which can hardly be interpreted as linguistic homogeneity of any sort. Assyrians are differentiated from non-Assyrian inhabitants for administrative and possible also cultural reasons, which may very well indicate awareness of Assyrian ethnicity of some sort (cf. Beaulieu 2007). Against this background, a supra-ethnic Assyrian cultural identity was still largely absent. Indeed, if the foreignness of even the Arameans in the late periods, who brought an important common language for the administration of the empire, can still

[662] No dating is preserved. Mattila (2002: XXI-XXII) points out that the undated texts included in SAA 14 mostly do not show explicit early features, e.g. fingernail prints and using copper as the currency. Even these, she suggests, do not have to be absolutely early. This particular text contains no such features. Regarding the origin of the text, as a non-epistolary document it is likely that it was composed in the vicinity of Niniveh. Furthermore, the names of the witnesses seem to be predominantly Assyrian. (e.g. Ša-Issar-šunu; Aššur-XXX)

resurface and be reemphasized[663] under certain circumstances, any claim of the existence of an Assyrian nation glued together by Aramaic and other factors in the 7th century would stretch the definition of nation too much.[664]

3. Restoring land to the Assyrians: "Assyrian identity" and conquest

Now I will briefly discuss how the differentiation between Assyrians and non-Assyrians may have exerted any effect on the foreign relations and warfare of the Assyrian Empire. In certain royal inscriptions dating to periods when most Arameans were still considered outsiders, the restoration of the Assyrian territory (from the hands of none other than the Arameans) was also connected with the resettlement of "Assyrians", thus presenting the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in regions once ruled by Assyria in the light of a reconquista for the "Assyrian people".[665] Ashurnasirpal II in the 9th century speaks of taking possession (*a-na ra-me-ni-ia ú-ut-te-ra*[666]) Assyrian fortress towns, Sinabu and Tidu near the

---

[663] In other words, when certain Aramean groups revolted (see examples cited above), the news is not formulated as "residents of XXX cities or regions", but explicitly as Arameans (KUR/LÚ *a-ru-mu/a-ra-mu*), with KUR (land, foreign land) or LÚ (people group) as the determinative. Here it is clear that KUR is not a historical toponym as in the case of "Land of Hatti" in Iron Age Assyrian texts, for the residents obviously come from Babylonia. They are identified as a people group descending from a foreign land.

[664] This is not to reject that the population of Assyrian Empire could not have developed into a more unified group with more homogeneous or more clearly defined linguistic and other cultural characteristics, or even a proto-nation, as Parpola seems to argue in the second part of his articl. (Parpola 2004; although the connection between ancient Assyrian "nation" and modern Christians who identify as "Assyrians" may be open to discussion, see Butts 2017). What I have tried to suggest is that this process was far from complete before the collapse of the Assyrian state, despite different imperial policies of assimilation and cultural unification. The fall of the empire and the destruction of major urban centers made impossible the continuous development of an Assyrian identity that combines cultural and political elements.

[665] During the reign of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, while the motifs of expansion and annexation were widely attested, the theme of assimilating newly conquered peoples is rare in comparison to the reign of, for example, Tiglath-pileser III. (Liverani 2017a: 204; for the rise and fall of assimilation terminology in the royal inscriptions, see also Machinist 1993: 94-95) If this is the case, one may speculate royal propaganda may serve to sharpen the contrast between for Assyrian territories and the Aramean occupation, which renders the resettlement of Assyrians, possibly residents of the Assyrian heartland, in these regions as a symbolic policy to reestablish the Assyrianness of these occupied territories. For "Assyrians" (in the plural) as a institutional-hierarchical status denoting long-standing Assyrians vis-à-vis newly conquered groups or, in this case, territory, see Fales 2009: 198-199. However, Liverani's conclusion needs a qualification. While explicit references to "counting as my people" or "like Assyrians" may not abound in inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the phrase "to place at one mouth" (*ana pâ ištēn šakānu*) occurs at least 7 times in Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions. Of course, in those texts the phrase often highlight the subjugation of certain polities and peoples by one overlord rather than the complete absorption of the region into the Assyrian state.

[666] Although the verb *târu* means "to return", the phrase "*ana (ranamīšu) târu*" does not always indicate the restoration of control over territory which used to be someone's possession. Instead, it seems simply to mean "to take possession of", regardless of previous ownership. See examples in CAD-T, *târu* 11h, p. 276. See also the passage from Ashurbanipal's inscription cited below.

Land of Nairi, which had been captured by the Arameans and resettling Assyrian people (LÚ MEŠ-*e* KUR *aš-šur-a-ia=amīlē Aššuraya*) who had been subdued by Arameans (*šá* KUR *a-ru-mu ik-bu-su-šú-nu-ni*) in these towns (RIMA 2 A.0.101.19 lines 92-95). Shalmaneser III, in an inscription dating possibly to the mid- 9th century BCE, also refers to the restoration to Assyrian rule of Assyrian towns in the West established by Tiglath-peleser I which had been seized by the Arameans (KUR *a-ru-mu*)[667] in the time of Aššur-rabi and the resettlement of Assyrian people in those towns (DUMU.MEŠ-*e* LÚ *áš-šu-ra-a-a*[668] *ina lìb-bi ú-še-šib*) (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2 col. ii lines 35b to 38). The same motif recurs in inscriptions dating to the peak of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, when Ashurbanipal records his campaign in the Land of Mannea, during which he "conquered, burn[ed] with fire, (and) plundered the cities in the environs of the city Paddiri, which the Manneans had taken away (and) appropriated for themselves (*a-na i-di ra-ma-ni-šú-nu* ˹*ú*˺*-ter-ru*) in the time of the kings, [my ancestor]s. I returned those cities to the territory of Assyria (URU.MEŠ *šá-a-tu-nu a-na mi-ṣir* KUR ˹AN.ŠÁR˺.KI *ú-ter*)" (RINAP 5-1 Ashurbanipal 03, iii 52b-56; see also 69b-75) In this passage no resettlement of Assyrians in these towns is mentioned.

It should be noted that resettling Assyrians in former Assyrian towns is by no means explicitly presented as national liberation. In other words, reclaiming land for the "Assyrian Nation" did not function as the motive of Assyrian expansion and conquest in this period. Instead, as in other periods and contexts, divine commands that the Assyrian king expand territory in general and to seize certain towns in particular still serve as the ideological and logical motivation for aggressive strategies in Assyria's imperial foreign policy. For example,

[667] For the sign "MAN" which is not attested in the inscription, see Chapter 4 under the section "The Arameans before the 9th century".

[668] Note that this appellation is a mixed form of "DUMU XXX" and the *nisbe*.

in the preceding passage of the same inscription, Shalmaneser III recounts the conquest of northern Syrian towns including Til-Barsip of Bīt Adini and the settlement of Assyrian populations therein "by the command of Aššur (*ina qí-bit aš-šur*), the great lord, my lord" (line 33). The recovery of former Assyrian territory is set in the same period (*in* UD-*šú-ma*) and possibly affected by the same flow of logic, thus being rooted also in the religiously sanctioned imperial ideology of expansion rather than some sort of nationalistic imperialism.[669] In fact, in the passages cited above, the verbs used to describe the restoration of Assyrian sovereignty over lost territory does not explicitly denote "return", as the translations indicate. Instead, the verb can describe any conquest of foreign territory by any political actor. In RINAP 5 Ashurbanipal 03, iii 54, the Mannean's conquest of Assyrian towns and Assyrian reconquest of the same towns are recounted with the same verbal phrase: "*ana (ranamīšu) târu*". Therefore, it is not at all clear that the author of the Assyrian royal inscriptions ever attempted to differentiate conquest from reconquista. The restoration of Assyrianness, even when the resettlement of Assyrians is recorded, seems only to have been performed for the sake of reestablishing the imperial rather than ethnic (much less "national") status quo.

Conclusion

Different principles can be employed in trans-regional political integration. Earlier in this study I have examined two ideological trends in the Iron Age Levant and the Near East in

[669] The recovery of Assyrian towns and resettlement of Assyrians in them in these passages is not presented very differently from cases in which Assyrians are settled in territories completely foreign to the Assyrian Empire, for instance, Elam. In one text Ashurbanipal recounts the defeat of Te'umman, king of Elam, and the enthronement of a puppet king of Assyria in Elam by divine command (here several major Mesopotamian deities are mentioned in addtion to Aššur, e.g. Bēl, Nabû, Nergal, Ištar of Nineveh and the Lady of Arbela). In order to strengthen Assyrian overlordship Ashurbanipal settles Assyrians ("Sons of the Land of Aššur", [DUMU].MEŠ ^{KUR}*aš-šur*^{KI}) in Elam and imposes tribute on them (syntactically "them" here refers to the Assyrian settlers, "*e-te-[mi-i]s-su-nu* x x x", although it is logical to consider it a collective imposition on the new Elamite polity). SAA 03 31, r12-r17.

general that may have served as a source of political cohesion for different ancient polities: common religious, ethnic and cultural background on the one hand, and imperial universalism which regards the whole world as would-be portions of the universal empire, on the other. Both trends may have the effect of promoting trans-local and trans-tribal political unity, although they derive their legitimacy from difference origins. While some polities derive a certain level of political cohesion from the worship of a common god, a common identity embodied by the same name (as a toponym and an ethnonym), common language and script and constructed belief in common ancestry, a universal empire relies on divine command for expansion and the presentation of absolute authority of the imperial center in relation to other parts of the empire.

Despite the conceptual and practical differences, the two principles share some core commonalities. One critical similarity is that both may lead to territorial expansion. A political entity that calls upon a shared identity of a broader group of people, naturally tends to expand beyond the limits of the nucleus urban center which is the seat of the ruling dynasty. In some cases this expansion can continue beyond the ethnic and cultural boundary of the constituent units of the territorial polity, which in effect turns the expansion into an imperial process, as in the case of various Aramean polities and the Israelite United Monarchy according to biblical accounts. In practice, as conflicts of one such polity against another are sometimes interpreted by the ancients as the rivalry of two "national" deities, the defeat of one party represents the enlargement of not only the human political but also the divine realm of the victorious side. On the conceptual level, furthermore, the national god of a smaller Levantine people (e.g. the God of Israel) can assume universal authority and replace the

deities and the rulers of universal empires as the true force that determines of the fortune of all peoples. This mental and theological development was essential in helping the religious, cultural and political elites of the peripheral polity to make sense of imperial domination, defeat and destruction and the lack of autonomy, i.e. it is not the distant, strange and violent empire and its gods that defeated us, but instead our own god, who punishes us for moral and political reasons. The national and the universal merge, shifting the center of the world to the periphery. Therefore, one encounters in texts possibly dating to the period when Israel and Judah had lost their political independence, heightened expressions of both the motif of national restoration (with a stronger stress on the pan-Israelite identity, see Chapter 3) and the motif of the universal authority of Yahweh.

Another similarity of the two political principles here discussed is the fact that both also have a clear knowledge of their limits. A universal empire that frequently conducts expansionist wars may very well encounter natural and human barriers that restrict its expansion, which forces it to adopt a more multicentric view of the world, recognizing the existence of other centers of powers. More importantly, the universal empire, for example, Neo-Assyrian Empire, always needed to seek other means of consolidation in addition to administrative reorganization of conquered lands and peoples, including political and cultural assimilation that transforms foreign peoples into “Assyrians”. While the term “Assyrian” may have primarily been a juridical and administrative concept within the imperial framework, a survey of some salient examples does suggest that a cultural facet may also be at work. For example, according to Sargon II (see above), one difference between Assyrians and non-Assyrians (or new Assyrians) was that the former group was more well-versed in

knowledge and crafts and can instruct the latter to fear gods and the king in a properly Assyrian manner. But it should be recapitulated that, such cultural elements in the forging of an Assyrian identity shared both by those at the core and those at the periphery did not lead to the emergence of an ancient Assyrian nation by the time the Neo-Assyrian Empire collapsed in the 7th century BCE. The possibility was greatly complicated by the inherent multiplicity of the empire and the rise of the Aramaic language as an administrative tool, on the one hand, and by the fact that the Assyrian elites did not explicitly differentiate the restoration of occupied Assyrian territory from the conquest of new lands.

Concluding Remarks

The present study does not focus the complex relationship between a specific nation and an empire, between nations and empires as political organizations or between nationalism and imperialism--all topics of considerable significance in the recent history of the world and even of more than a little relevance to antiquity. Instead, my subject has been first and foremost the characteristics of two trends in political organization in the Levant during the Iron Age as well as their impact on various Levantine polities and peoples: the emergence of polities that at least partially derive their political cohesion from cultural and ethnic bonds on the one hand, and the rise of an all-encompassing universal empire that influenced and gradually incorporated the Levant, on the other. I have compared how these two political trends were expressed and developed conceptually in the Iron Age. I have also considered how these trends as concepts related to the actual history of the universal empires and "ethnic states" or "national states" in the Iron Age Near East--labels used by scholars but largely avoided here.

The reason why I tend not to cling to these particular terminologies is the fact that these labels, particularly "nation" and "national states"/ "nation states", are usually regarded as anachronisms by political scientists when they appear in discussions of ancient political entities, since as actual historical phenomena, these two labels, together with such related concepts as sovereignty, political border and international relations, are understood to be exclusively the product of modern European political history. With this question I began the theoretical and terminological investigation in Chapter 2, where I reviewed some representative theoretical works, usually known as the "ethno-symbolic theory", which, in

contrast to most Modernist scholars, recognize the existence of "nations" in antiquity as a culturally and politically definable group. However, my evaluation reveals that the ethno-symbolic school has placed excessive emphasis on certain factors, such as a clearly defined territory with borders, a law (e.g. Josiah's law) binding to all "citizens" and a centralized "national" cult, and relies excessively on biblical accounts of Judah in the 7th century to reconstruct and comprehend the complex history of Judah, Israel and the Israelites as a sociocultural group. Instead of prioritizing a rigid definition of ancient "nation", I attempted to extract relevant information from such definitions and reformulate the question, with the new political developments in the Iron Age Levant in mind: in what ways, if at all, did shared ethnic and cultural elements as broadly defined, such as a common proper name, a common god, language (and script), artistic style and belief in kinship ties, exert influence on the political organization, practice and ideology of ancient peoples in the Iron Age Levant? With such a reformulated question, one no longer needs to limit the discussion to one specific type of polity. Instead, one could move the focus from "nation" to the more dynamic question of the different degrees of influence of a certain principle or ideology (i.e. that cultural and ethnic commonness can serve as a source of political solidarity) as the conceptual basis of organizing trans-local and trans-tribal political entities. The mentality in question, I would like to reiterate, is the belief that cultural and ethnic ties within and beyond a people can or should play a role in a its political organization, political identity and foreign relations

The theoretical discussion only makes sense when native understanding of the politicization (and the lack thereof) of cultural commonalities is also examined. The systematic study of the extant native Levantine terminologies commonly translatable as

“nation” or “people” (עם, גוי, אומה, לאום; mostly from biblical sources, with some cited from other West Semitic documents) reveals that, despite detailed differences among the terms, the authors of these texts did understand such terms (particularly the more widely attested עם and גוי) as referring to an ethno-cultural group with a common name, a common ancestor, a common language and a common patron deity, which often organizes its own political institutions on its own territory and sometimes participates in inter-polity relations as a collective actor. Whether nor not one insists on the term “nation” for such polities, the political entities designated by such terms did appear to be socio-political entities with a strong ethnic background. Yet I also cautioned against seeking a one-to-one correspondence between such terms and a particular type of polity (e.g. an “ethnic state” or a multi-city territorial kingdom), as the biblical authors do not seem to have differentiated these terms and categories of polities.

The theoretical and the terminological investigations serve as the prelude to the discussion on the impact of cultural commonalities on various Levantine polities. By examining such ethno-cultural elements as language and script, belief in ancestry, patron deity, proper name, material culture, etc., I concluded that the new polities that emerged in the Cis-/Transjordan of the Iron Age shared many common cultural features among themselves, which at the same time highlighted the distinctions in details that separated one group from another. Such differences, whether the adoption of a different deity or a different (tribal) genealogy, may very well have been manipulated and reinforced by political elites of each region in their attempts at building trans-local and trans-tribal entities with internal political cohesion and outward cultural and political distinction. This was certainly the case

with narrative historical accounts preserved in the Mesha Stele in the Iron II and the biblical historiography referring to the same period, which was nevertheless possibly composed at a later date.

Political integration of such socio-political groups, however, did not always result in the formation of an "ethnic" or "national" state that ideally incorporated all territories inhabited by a certain group in one political unit. Sometimes full integration could not be achieved or maintained, as biblical accounts of the divided monarchies indicate. Although non-biblical sources seem to support the claim that Israel and Judah shared many key cultural characteristics, particularly the common patron god Yahweh and a common script which are suggestive of some sort of political connection at one stage, the two polities throughout the years of their coexistence largely functioned as separate political entities, each with its own geopolitical interests, forming alliances with others and sometimes warring with each other. Biblical texts that emphasize pan-Israelite unity of this monarchic period in Israel seem to date, with a few exceptions, to a period after the disappearance of both kingdoms. As I discussed later in the study, such pan-Israelite sentiments served to justify the expansionist claims of later Judean elites which were sometimes expressed in conjunction with even larger claims of universality. Outside of the Cis-/Transjordan, the political effect of cultural commonalities seems to have been even more complex, fluid and less consistent. Political expansions were certainly carried out by these other Levantine states, yet few were done in the name of some sort of "national unification". Only in some vague but intriguing cases, e.g. the Arameans and "all Aram", do we find traces of possible, though uncertain, trans-regional political consciousness and concerted political action of people deemed to belong to the same

ethno-cultural group.

The logical line of the second part of the study, comprising Chapters 5-7, proved to be less uniform, thus requiring more detailed recapitulation to reveal the interlinks between individual chapters as well as those between the first and the second parts. I began this second part in Chapter 5 with an investigation of empire and imperialism in the Iron Age Levant. Here I discussed first the definition(s) and characteristics of the empire and particularly the ideology and rhetoric of an empire with universal claims that stress universal authority and, sometimes, territorial expansion. I noted in this chapter an ancient concept of a series of universal empires, or unparalleled superpowers, that each dominated a certain age, that is, the concept of "*translatio imperii*" in Dan 2 and 7 (perhaps the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Media, Achaemenid Persia and Macedonia). One soon realizes that the monocentric worldview and universal claims of the empires, including those of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, were not without restrictions. From time to time the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which gradually became the undisputed superpower in Western Asia in the 9th to the 7th centuries, was forced by geopolitical circumstances to recognize, however reluctantly, other powerful polities as coexisting players in international politics.

Specifically, I studied in Chapter 5 the distribution and change of different royal titles used to designate foreign rulers in Assyrian sources (royal inscriptions, correspondence, etc.) and discovered that the "royal *nisbe*", which is most typically used to refer to the Urartian ruler, was not simply a disparaging or belittling title attached to rulers of non-Assyrian polities. Also, the use of the *nisbe* alone is neither an indicator of the size and power of the polity in question nor a marker of peaceful or hostile bilateral relations. Instead, I proposed

that the change from more frequent attestations of the *nisbe* in the 9th to mid- 8th centuries to increased usage of the title "king" to designate foreign rulers after the late 8th century coincides with the consolidation of the Neo-Assyrian Empire: in the years of major expansion, the *nisbe* functioned as the most commonly used title to designate rulers of newly emerging or unfamiliar political entities (e.g. Urartu, new peoples in the Levant and on the eastern periphery) that had yet to accept, and posed a threat to, the Assyria-led international system. As the frontiers of the Neo-Assyrian Empire were consolidated in the late 8th and the early 7th centuries, an increasing number of rulers either submitted to it or became as regular members of the Assyria-led international system, and in so doing they became more readily recognized as legitimate "kings" of foreign polities, regardless of temporary peace or hostility.

How do we make sense of this seemingly odd title change over against the background of Assyrian's ascending power? We should note that as the empire reached the peak of its power as the most powerful polity in the Near East, it at the same time also reached its own limits. Historically speaking, most major expansions and provincialization that resulted in stable Assyrian control over newly conquered lands were mostly conducted prior to Sennacherib. During the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, new expansions were carried out, e.g. the temporary annexation of Egypt and the conquest of Elam, but these military actions did not seem to have led to long-term, sustained Assyrian control of new foreign territories, perhaps due to the geographical barriers that marked the extremities of the traditional Mesopotamian and Syrian world. From the perspective of imperial ideology, one wonders if this situation prompted the Assyrian ruling elites to realize the limits of its power, which in turn would facilitate the recognition of not only the existence

but also the de facto legitimacy of other political centers in they Assyria-led world system. This situation might be comparable to another historical case briefly discussed in Chapter 5, that is, China's heightened awareness of boundary and border between itself and the surrounding, smaller polities in the Ming Dynasty, which by no means weakened China's claim to be the top leader of the East Asian international system as well as a universal empire ready to explore faraway lands in the early 15th century CE. The awareness of its own limits and the legitimacy of others does not need to be contradictory to the rhetorical claim for supremacy or the imperial view of the cosmic order. As the Neo-Assyrian Empire reached its real and conceptual limits in the early 7th century, it began to regard itself as simultaneously the center of the universe and a member of the international system: one of many, but nevertheless the absolutely supreme one in the many. Finally, it is also in the late 8th and early 7th centuries that one finds more traces of unmistakable expressions temporary equal relations between the Assyrian universal empire and other powers whose ruler was called the great king's "brother".

Moving the focus to the Levant specifically, I discovered in Chapter 6 that the Assyrian ruling elites' awareness of the "limits" of their universal empire was not confined to their interaction with competing powerful kingdoms like Urartu and Elam. The Levant, due to its strategic geopolitical location, was subject to the imperial intervention of different external powers even during the Iron Age, particularly when the Neo-Assyrian Empire experienced temporary internal instability. The presence of non-Assyrian external forces on the Levant together with the complex politics within the Levant rendered the Levant much more than the disposable periphery of one universal empire exposed to easy conquest, integration and

exploitation. Various political forces complicated the interaction between Assyria and the Levant as well as the image of the Levant in Assyrian eyes. The integration of this pivotal region into the empire was not an easy task but instead a long, sophisticated and, to an extent, incomplete process that constantly reminded the universal empire of its limits and inabilities. It is for this reason that the Assyrian perception of this peripheral region was highly complex and diversified, paying attention to both strong and weak political forces, and both challengers and conformists in the region. The interaction between universal imperialism and local Levantine political traditions is thus presented as a dynamic process of establishing an all-encompassing system often interrupted by irregularities and obstacles posed by the Levantine polities.

One has also seen in Chapter 6 that the spread of universal imperialism prompted local Levantine political elites, who possessed their own rich literary and political traditions, to come to terms with, reinterpret and manipulate the image of the unstoppable empire and its claims of universal authority. The Assyrian Empire which was dragged into a prolonged process of examining and readjusting its limits also provoked heated debate on the receiving end about the image and function of the universal empire. The image of a threatening and violent empire projected by the empire's elites was sometimes neutralized and instrumentalized by certain Levantine authors (as in, for instance, Isa 10:5-15, see Machinist 2016), while on other occasions universal claims were readily accepted, as some Levantine polities celebrated their collaboration with the empire and the merger with the empire for the benefits of all. The combination of instrumentalization and willing acceptance of the imperial ideology, as one has seen in the Chapter 7, was the prelude to the emergence of local

Levantine universal mentality. Although not all expansionist attempts that took place in the Levant were influenced by the imperial ideology of the universal empire, contact with imperial propaganda at least contributed to the reinterpretation and re-presentation of one's own political experience in imperial terms. Moreover, theological inquiries offered biblical thinkers the most appropriate and the freest opportunity to experiment with their own version of universal mentality. One important experiment involved the Israelites and Judeans, who combined imperial universality with traditional beliefs in the "national" deity as the protector of the now elevated group of people. The "national" deity, Yahweh, now becomes the creator of the universe who replaces the human ruler of the universal empire as the true ruler of the world, ruling over all nations from the center.[670]

It is no wonder that Levantine imperial thoughts often find their fullest expression in biblical texts that simultaneously call for "national" independence and restoration. In general, both "national" sentiments that advocate for the unification of people of the same language and the same god, on the one hand, and the imperial ideology that justifies expansion, on the other, essentially serve as the conceptual foundation for the establishment of trans-local and trans-tribal political identity. In particular, paradoxically, although signs of the special links between Israel and Judah can be attested already in some pre-exilic northern sources (see my discussion of Hosea 2:1-3 and 3:1-5 in Chapter 3), the loss of political independence paved

[670] It is likely that Levantine political and cultural elites as well as common people were exposed to Assyrian imperial propaganda (cf. 2 Kgs 18; note also our discussion of Levantine use of Assyrian imperial propaganda and ideology in Chapter 6 with further references). Biblical expression of what I have labeled as theological universalism may also have been influenced by Assyrian and perhaps later Achaemenid imperial ideologies. What I have emphasized is the conceptual similarity between biblical theological universalism and Mesopotamian imperial universalism, for both recognize a center of the world, a ruler who claims to control of entire universe, a hierarchical world system, etc., and appeal to such images as vassals paying tributes to and prostrating themselves in front of the center. I do not want to overemphasize the relevance of monotheism in this regard. Monotheism is indeed in harmony with theological universalism, but it need not be the only expression of this thought. Also, the elevation of Aššur in the Assyrian state cult is of course an important religious development, and likely plays an important role in Assyrian imperial ideology, but we do not need to understand the elevation of Yahweh in relation to the elevation of the deity Aššur (contra Levine 2005). A more direct comparison can be made between Yahweh as a universal ruler with the Assyrian king and with Assyria as a polity on the political level.

the path for the ascendancy of pan-Israelite awareness in post-exilic biblical texts, possibly those composed by Judean authors, which crossed former political boundaries between Israel and Judah. Such sources include not only certain prophetic sources, such as Ezek 37:16-22, but also a reworked historiography of the books of Chronicles which further stress the special cultural and political interconnectedness of the two regions. However, biblical historiographers were not content with the depiction of an Israelite tribal coalition and a united national monarchy, as they further developed the image of the united Israelite polity into that of an empire in its own right that established lasting control over surrounding peoples and states with the help of their national deity, Yahweh. Together with this development comes the theological elevation of Yahweh as a deity that controls the fortunes of not only his own people, but also of all peoples in the world. This elevation of Yahweh is often expressed in the Hebrew Bible by the application of imperial terminologies (e.g. vassals carrying tributes to the universal god; peoples bowing down to Yahweh as defeated polities bow down to the king of Assyria, etc.) and finds its fullest and most extensive expression in post-exilic sources.

Historically speaking, although conceptual similarities between "national" and imperial ideologies render it difficult to pinpoint the specific date of every interwoven expression of Israelite nationalism and imperialism, the Achaemenid Period seems to be the most likely milieu of the formation of its most advanced and complete form (when the return of the Judean exile was already realized).[671] Although the Achaemenid Empire did not carry out

[671] It is difficult in general to date the origin of the presentation of Yahweh as a universal god, sometimes in imperial terminology, for it may either derive from a period when Israel really enjoyed some sort of ascendancy in the southern Levant or from the influence of universal empires. This mentality can find parallel developments in various historical and geographical contexts. The presentation of Yahweh as the universal ruler may very well date to earlier periods (e.g. see our discussion on the dates of certain enthronement and festal psalms in Chapter 7). Also, already in the pre-exilic period one

forced deportation of conquered peoples as did the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural world empire still facilitated the migration of various peoples into the historical territory of others. In addition, to reinforce its rule over the multiple ethnic and linguistic groups in the empire, the Achaemenid ruling elites did not attempt to eliminate cultural differences and export the Persian identity to conquered regions.[672] Instead, the empire recognized the ethnic differences, respected local languages, customs and religions, and adopted the "cosmopolitan practice of subordination, which operated in conjunction with the horizontal assimilation of a culturally distinct ruling class" (Lavan, Payne and Weisweiler 2016:17-18; cf. Barjamovic 2012:47). Here the horizontal assimilation refers to the recognition of the legitimacy and authority of local ruling elites in each region and ethnic group in the empire as fellow elites, though of a lower rank, that collaborated with the Persian rulers and helped the latter maintain the world empire.

By manipulating and reproducing the differences between various peoples and former political entities, the Achaemenid Empire "consolidated a network of sub-elites subordinate to the ruling Persians", from which they justified trans-regional and trans-cultural power. The local elites, who benefited from the Achaeminid recognition of local cultural and ethnic distinctiveness, were also able to "retain their political traditions and identities and maintain the confidence of their constituencies" (Lavan, Payne and Weisweiler 2016:19). The reinstated Judean political and religious elites were one group of such local elites who

finds Assyria reinterpreted as a tool of the true ruler, Yahweh (Isa. 10:5-15, see Machinist 2016).

[672] It is unlikely that the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian Empires aimed to eliminate cultural differences between the conquered peoples and the Assyrians and those among the other peoples themselves. Yet we do have some evidence for the transformation of non-Assyrians to Assyrians, though it is not always certain whether this concerned the cultural domain or the administrative realm only. See Machinist 1993. See also our discussion on Assyrian and others in Chapter 7. As I will mention below, both the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian Empires engaged in mass deportation that in effect blurred the boundaries among peoples. However, it should also be noted that when deported populations were resettled in Babylonia, they may still have lived in their own ethnic communities (e.g. *āl Yahūdu* "Judah Town"; see Pearce and Wunsch 2014) for a considerable period of time.

grabbed the chance to reinforce the cultural and ethnic identity of the Judeans who had by then experienced the loss of political autonomy and forced deportation. For the new Judean elites, the cosmopolitan policy of the empire provided them with the incentive to enlarge the areas under their influence and compete with neighboring peoples with similar claims, with the approval of the Achaemenid Empire and within the framework of the empire (see Ezra 4; Neh 3:33-4:17). Against this background, attempts to reformulate religious and kinship bonds shared by the North and the South and to emphasize the dominant position once enjoyed the United Monarchy in relation to surrounding peoples served to maximize, justify and to reinforce the "Jewishness" of the historical territories of former Israel and Judah. Yet the biblical authors chose not to focus solely on the "national" side of this reconstructed narrative. For them, "Israel" as a regional, peripheral polity in the southern Levant with its own national god would have been too unimposing an image to put them ahead in a competition for prestige and privilege with other peoples. Also, overemphasis on "national" distinction, which is already a crucial theme in the Hebrew Bible, would run the risk of exciting suspicion about the Judeans' loyalty to the imperial center. Therefore, the best solution was to invent a universal deity who protects not only his own people but also the entire universe, including the world empire as well as its rulers and subjects, with the Persian king sometimes reinterpreted as Yahweh's chosen one (Isa 45:1-8). This theological universalism would also be in concord with imperial universalism that accentuates political unity (despite cultural diversity in the Achaemenid Empire) and common prosperity shared by all constituent parts of the empire. In other words, cultural and ethnic particularity is best expressed in universal terms.

A final note on the Neo-Assyrian Empire is also necessary, which I also addressed in Chapter 7. Unlike the Achaemenid empire, the Neo-Assyrian Empire did not develop an advanced network of local elites who took a share in imperial cosmopolitanism. Individual local rulers who chose to collaborate were preserved and trusted, of course (see Richardson 2016), and in some cases the ruling elite of specific polities can perceive themselves as benefiting from the spread of Assyrian universal imperialism, e.g. the Sam'alite kingdom in the late 8th century (see Chapter 6; cf. V. R. Herrmann 2018). However, the more institutionalized and consistently implemented policy was one that depends on the weakening and even elimination of local elites and the substitution of local elites with Assyrian officials. Mass deportation, though without a mission to merge nations and unite the world as its objective (Oded 1979:74), in practice blurred ethnic and cultural differences between the deported and the host.[673] Furthermore, the Neo-Assyrian Empire also aimed to spread the Assyrian art, cult and ideology to the conquered lands.[674] As a result, the "Assyrians" were not preserved as a more or less fixed ethnic concept side by side with conquered ethnic groups, as in the case of Persians (and Elamites and Medians) in the Achaemenid Empire (Lavan, Payne and Weisweiler 2016:7), but the boundary between "Assyrian" and "non-Assyrian", the "insider" and the "outsider", remained problematic and fluid. Although the difference was never transformed into an ethnic divide, the role played by cultural elements like religion and customs in the assimilation of non-Assyrian populations resettled in the empire (see Chapter 7) indicate that the difference was not simply administrative and

[673] However, ethnic distinctions, especially in the Assyrian heartland, was still maintained. The Arameans in different parts of the empire were still a recognizable group. See our discussion in Chapter 7 on the issue of "an Assyrian nation".

[674] As far as religion is concerned, Assyrian practice is complex. Although the "symbol" of Aššur" and other Assyrian divine images were more more commonly found in provinces, there are cases in which they were erected in vassal states, e.g. Philistia. See Holloway 2002:198.

legal. A clearer concept of the dichotomy between self and other in comparison with the Achaemenid Empire possibly bestows the Assyrian Empire greater potential to manipulate the dichotomy, enlarge the "self" at the expense of the "other" and, with time, even transform the empire into a socioculturally distinctive group which is at the same time a political entity. However, despite this possibility and potential, the Neo-Assyrian Empire never became a "nation" in any sense by the time it collapsed in the late 7th century (contra Parpola 2004; see my discussion in Chapter 7). If certain Levantine polities developed their own version of imperialism, and if the "national" revival of the Judeans is expressed in "imperial" terms in some biblical texts, we do not seem to have a clear example in the ancient Near East of the opposite, that is, the transformation of an empire into a "nation".

It is hoped that my study of the two trends in the organization of and the interaction between Iron Age Levantine politics, that is, the emergence of polities that in principle derive their political cohesion from cultural and ethnic and the rise of an all-encompassing universal empire that affected Levantine polities, has also yielded some helpful results for political science in general. It has first been shown that when studying certain concepts in an ancient context, such as the "nation", one should not always cling to clear-cut definitions which are usually derived from the modern political history of the West and argue that no such concept ever existed in antiquity. A more productive method is to extract the criteria and characteristics from classic modern examples and definitions and then examine whether and how they may manifest themselves in a different, in our case, an ancient historical context. In the case of "nation", I have proposed to study the correlation between a cultural identity and a political identity, or rather, the impact of ethno-cultural commonness on the political

behaviors of ancient polities as a source of political cohesion. I have not argued for or against the existence of full-fledged "nations" in the Iron Age Levant. Instead, I evaluated relevant textual and archaeological data and investigated the influence of common cultural bonds on various types of political entities in the region.

Another conclusion that may have broader relevance in political science is the relationship and interaction between the national and the imperial mentalities. In the modern world, such as 19th-century Europe, nation and empire can be viewed as two categories of political organizations that stand at two opposing ends: empires subsume nations and nations grow out of and assert their own identities over against the multi-ethnic empires (Burbank and Cooper 2010:336-38). However, on the conceptual level nation and empire share much in common, a subject I discussed at the beginning of Chapter 5. To briefly recapitulate my points, both national and imperial ideologies serve to justify trans-local and trans-tribal political organization. Both national and imperial polities may exhibit the tendency to expand beyond a local political center, yet the principles by which they expand differ. While a national polity relies on the belief that people sharing common sociocultural attributes, such as a common language, common traditions about kinship ties and a common god, etc., should form one political entity, an empire aims to maximize one political center's control over resources, trade and manpower and justifies its expansion by claiming its ability to bring peace, order and prosperity to the conquered peoples. Under certain circumstances, one type of polity, either the national polity or the empire, may either appeal to the strategies, principles or ideologies of the other in order to justify, reinforce and adjust its own trans-local political identity, or transform itself in effect into the other (Chapter 7). The German

unification in the 19th century CE, which draws from German cultural nationalism, was realized essentially in the form of Prussia-dominated new empire (see Stürmer 2002, particularly Chapter 3). The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, aimed to create a new Ottoman identity in the 19th century in order to save the empire from decline and disintegration, although the effort failed due largely to the inherent difficulty in fostering unity out of an empire's ethnic, linguistic and religious multiplicity (Ahmad 2014:3-4). The present study of ancient Levantine and other ancient Near Eastern examples demonstrate that the interaction of national and imperial ideologies as two principles to strengthen trans-local sociopolitical cohesion has a much longer history. In the end, the two ideologies bore conceptual similarities that transcend historical particularities. The conceptual transformation of the one to the other is closely related to the political entity's consciousness and interpretation of "limits", political and cultural, real and imagined. In the end, the human effort to establish and consolidate trans-regional political unity is essentially a dynamic process of setting up and tearing down limits.

Works cited:

Ahitiv, S.

2008 *Echos from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period*. Jerusalem: Carta.

2013 "Gezer Calender." Pages 60-61 in E*ncyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics.* Edited by G. Khan, Leiden: Brill.

Ahmad, F.

2014 *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs, 1908-1918.* Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

Albertz, R., and Schmitt, R.

2012 *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Winona Lake: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Allen, L.

2008 *Jeremiah: A Commentary.* Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press.

Allen, M. J.

1997 "Contested Peripheries: Philistia in the Neo-Assyrian World System." PhD Diss. University of California, Los Angeles.

Alt, A.

1953 "Israels Gaue unter Salomo." Pages 76-89 in his *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israels* Munich: Beck, 1953.

1967 "The Monarchy in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah." Pages 311-35 in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* by Albrecht Alt, Translated by R. Wilson, Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor. Translation of "Das Königtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda." *VT* 1 (1951):2-22.

Amadasi Guzzo, M.

2009 "Un fragment de stèle araméenne de Tell Afis." *Orientalia* 78 (2009): 336-47.

2014 "Tell Afis in the Iron Age: The Aramaic Inscriptions." N*ear Eastern Archaeology* 77 (2014): 54-57.

Andersen, F.

2001 *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

Anderson, B.

2006 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Rev. ed., London, New York: Verso.

Anderson, M.

1996 *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World.* Cambridge, UK; Oxford, UK; Malden, MA, USA: Polity Press ; Blackwell Publishers.

Armstrong, J.

1982 *Nations before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Archi, A.

2014 "Aštata: A Case of Hittite Imperial Religious Policy." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 14 (2014): 141-63.

Aro, S.

2003 "Art and Architecture." Pages 281-337 in *The Luwians*. Edited by H. C. Melchert, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Aster, S.

2017 *Reflections of Empire in Isaiah 1-39: Responses to Assyrian Ideology*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press.

2018 "Treaty and Prophecy: A Survey of Biblical Reactions to Neo-Assyrian Political Thought." Pages 89-118 in *The the southern Levant under Assyrian Domination.* Edited by S. Aster and A. Faust, University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns.

Aster, S., and Faust, A. eds.

2018 *The the southern Levant under Assyrian Domination.* University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns.

Ataç, M.

2007 "The Melammu as Divine Epiphany and Usurped Entity." Pages 295-313 in *Ancient near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter*. Edited by J. Cheng, and M. Feldman, Boston: Brill.

Athas, G.

2003 *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation*. Sheffield; New York: Sheffield Academic Press.

Aufrecht, W.

1999a "Ammonite Texts and Language." Pages 163-88 in *Ancient Ammon*. Edited by B. MacDonald and R. Younker, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

1999b "The Religion of the Ammonites." Pages 152-62 in *Ancient Ammon*. Edited by B. MacDonald and R. Younker, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Auld, A. G.

2011 *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library, Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press.

Avigad, N., and Sass, B.

1997 *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals.* Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Avishur, Y. and Heltzer, M.

2000 *Studies on the Royal Administration: in Ancient Israel in the Light of Epigraphic Sources*. Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication.

Bagg, A.

2007 *Die Orts- Und Gewässernamen Der Neuassyrischen Zeit. Répertoire Géographique Des Textes Cunéiformes*, Wiesbaden: Reichert.

2010 "Interaktionsformen Zwischen Nomaden Und Sesshaften in Palästina Anhand Neuassyrischer Quellen." *Welt des Orients* 40 (2010): 190-215.

2011 *Die Assyrer Und Das Westland: Studien Zur Historischen Geographie Und Herrschaftspraxis in Der Levante Im 1. Jt. V.u. Z.* Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters En Departement Oosterse Studies.

2017 "Assyria and the West: Syria and the Levant." Pages 268-74 in *A Companion to Assyria*. Edited by E. Frahm. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Baltzer, K.

2001 *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*. Translated by M. Kohl, edited by P. Machinist, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Bang, P. and Kołodziejczyk, D.

2012 " 'Elephant of India': Universal Empire through Time and across Cultures." Pages 1-40 in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Barjamovic, G.

2004 "Civic Institutions and Self-government in Southern Mesopotamia in the Mid-first Millennium BC." Pages 47-98 in *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*. Edited by J. Dercksen, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten.

2012 "Propaganda and Practice in Assyrian and Persian Imperial Culture." Pages 43-59 in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

2013 "Mesopotamian Empires." in *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean.* Edited by P. Bang and Walter Scheidel. Electronic Version, New York: Oxford University Press.

Barnett, R. and Falkner, M.

1962 *The Sculptures of Aššur-nasir-apli II, 883-859 B.C.: Tiglath-pileser III, 745-727 B.C. [and] Esarhaddon, 681-669 B.C., from the Central and South-west Palaces at Nimrud*. London: The British Museum.

Bartlett, J.

1989 *Edom and the Edomites. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Barth, F.,

1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen, London:

Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin.

Beaucamp, E.

1957 "Psaume 47 verset 10a." *Biblica* 38 (1957): 457-60.

Beaulieu, P. A.

2007 “Official and Vernacular Languages: the Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-millennium BC Mesopotamia.” Pages 187-216 in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*. Edited by S. Sanders, Chicago: OIC, 187-216.

2011 “Sūḫu/i.” Pages 259-62 in *RlA* 13.

Beckman, G.,

1996 *Hittite Diplomatic Texts.* Edited by and H. Hoffner, Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press.

2002 “The Pantheon of Emar.” Pages 39-54 in Silva Anatolia: Festschrift M. Popko. Edited by P. Taracha, Agade.

Ben-Barak, Z.

1980 “The Coronation Ceremony in Ancient Mesopotamia.” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 11 (1980): 55-67.

Ben Dor Evian, S.

2011 “Egypt and the Levant in the Iron Age I–IIA: The Ceramic Evidence.” *Tel Aviv* 38 (2011): 94-119.

Ben Zvi, E.

1991 *A Historical-critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah.* Berlin; New York: De Gruyter.

Berges, U.

2008 *Jesaja 40-66*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2008.

Berlejung, A.

2012 “The Assyrians in the West: Assyrianization, Colonialism, Indifference, or Development Policy?” Pages 21-59 in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*. Edited by M. Nissinen, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

2013 “Nachbarn, Verwandte, Feinde und Gefährten: die „Aramäer im Alten Testament.” Pages 57-86 in *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millenium BC* Edited by A. Berlejung and M. P. Streck, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Berlin, A.

1985 *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

1994 *Zephaniah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

Beuken, W.

2003 *Jesaja 1-12*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg: Herder.

Bi, A.

2011 "The Frontier of the Yi-based State to the Territorial State--an Essay on the Formation of Frontiers in the Pre-Qin Era." *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies* Di 21 Juan, 4 (2011): 1-11 ["Cong Yitu Guojia dao Lingtu Guojia de Bianjiang--Xian Qin Shidai Bianjiang Xingcheng Kaocha." *Zhongguo Bianjiang Shi Di Yanjiu* vol. 21, 4 (2011):1-11.] (In Chinese)

Bienkowski, P.

1992a *Early Edom and Moab : The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

1992b "The Date of Sedentary Settlement in Edom: Evidence from Umm el-Biyara, Tawilan and Buseirah." Pages 99-112 in *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

1995 "The Edomites: The Archaeological Evidence Transjordan." Pages 41-92 in *"You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother": Edom and Seir in History and Tradition.* Edited by D. Edelman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

2014 "Edom during the Iron Age II Period." Pages 782-94 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE.* Edited by Margreet Steiner and A. Killebrew, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bienkowski, P., and van Der Steen, E.

2001 "Tribes, Trade, and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and the Negev." *BASOR* 323 (2001): 21-47.

Blackaby, N.

2003 "The Impact of the International Policy of the Omride Dynasty on Israel." PhD. Diss. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph.

2000 *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday

2002 *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

2003 *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Anchor Bible/Doubleday.

Block, D.

"The Role of Language in Ancient Israelite Perceptions of National Identity." *JBL* 103 (1984): 321–40.

Boda, M.

2004 *Haggai, Zechariah.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Boling, R.

1975 *Judges.* Anchor Bible. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Boyes, P. " 'The king of the Sidonians': Phoenician Ideologies and the Myth of the Kingdom of Tyre-Sidon." *BASOR* 365 (2012): 33-44.

Breier, I.

2000 "Buffer States in the Ancient Near East in the Biblical Period." PhD. Diss. Bar-Ilan University. (in Hebrew)

Brett, M.

1996 *Ethnicity and the Bible*. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill.

Brinkman, J.

1968 *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158-722 B.C*. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.

1979 "Babylonia under the Assyrian Empire: 745-627 B. C.." Pages 223-50 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

1990 "Political Covenants, Treaties, and Loyalty Oaths in Babylonia and between Assyria and Babylonia." Pages 81-111 in *I Trattati Nel Mondo Antico: Forma, Ideologia, Funzione.* Edited by L. Canfora, M. Liverani, and C. Zaccagnini. Roma: "L'Erma" Di Bretschneider.

Brueggemann, W.

1998 *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

Brueggemann, W. and Bellinger, W.H.

2014 *Psalms.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Bryce, T.

2005 *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. 2nd ed. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

2012 *The World of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms: A Political and Military History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buccellati, G.

1967 *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria: an Essay on Political Institutions with Special Reference to the Israelite kingdoms*. Rome: Istituto Di Studi Del Vicino Oriente, Università Di Roma, 1967.

2013 *Alle Origini Della Politica: La Formazione e La Crescita Dello Stato in Siro-Mesopotamia*. Milano: Jaca Book.

Burbank, J., and Cooper, F.

2010 *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Burnett, J. S.

1999 "A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim." PhD. Diss. Johns Hopkins University.

Buss, M.

1969 *The Prophetic Word of Hosea; a Morphological Study.* Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann.

Butts, A.

2017 "Assyrian Christians." Pages 599-612 in *A Companion to Assyria*. Edited by E. Frahm. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Buzan, B., and Little, R.

2000 *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations.* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Caquot, A. and de Robert, P.

1994 *Les Livres De Samuel*. commentaire de l'ancien testament 6, Genève: Labor Et Fides.

Cassin, E.

1968 *La splendeur divine. Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne*. Paris: Mouton & Co.

Cavigneaux, A. and Ismail, B.

1990 "Die Statthalter von Suḫu und Mari im 8. Jh. v. Chr. anhand neuer Texte den irakischen Grabungen im Staugebiet des Qadissiya-Damms." *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990): 364-365, 378-380, 423, 434.

Chamaza, G.

2005 *Die Rolle Moabs in Der Neuassyrischen Expansionspolitik.*Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Charlton, T. and Nichols, D.

1997 "The City-State Concept: Development and Applications." Pages 1-14 in *The Archaeology of City-states: Cross-cultural Approaches.* Edited by D. Nichols and T. Charlton, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Charpin, D.

2003 "La «toponymie en miroir» dans le Proche-Orient amorrite." *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 97 (2003): 3-34.

Chen, S.

2004 "A Study of Kingdoms in the Early Han Empire." *Journal of Chinese Historical Studies* 3 (2004): 27-40. ["Han Chu Wangluo Zhidu Kaoshu." *Zhongguo Shi Yanjiu* 3 (2004):27-40.]

2005 "On the 'Changing the Duke's Fief' Policy and the 'Dispatching Dukes to their Fiefs' Decree in the Reign of the Wen Emperor of Han." *Historical Research,* no. 4 2005: 22-31. ["Han Wen Di 'Yi Hou Yi' ji 'Ling Lie Hou Zhi Guo' Kaobian." *Lishi Yanjiu*, no. 4 2005:22-31]

Childs, B.

2001 *Isaiah: a Commentary.* Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press.

Christensen, D.

1992 "Nations." in *ABD*, Edited by D. N.

Freedman et al, New York: Doubleday.

Cifarelli, M.

1995 “Enmity, Alienation and Assimilation: The Role of Cultural Difference in the Visual and Verbal Expression of Assyrian Ideology in the Reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.).” PhD. diss., Columbia University,

1998 “Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria.” *The Art Bulletin* 80 (1998): 210-28.

Clancy, Frank,

1999 “Shishak/Shoshenq's Travels.” *JSOT*, 86 (1999): 3-23.

Clements, and Botterweck,

1977 “גוי.” Pages 426-33 in *TDOT* II.

Clifford, R.

1990 “Phoenician Religion.” *BASOR* 279 (1990): 55-64.

Cohen, E. A.

2004 “History and the Hyperpower.” *Foreign Affairs* 83/4 (2004): 49-63.

Cogan, M.

1993 “Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion.” *JBL* 112 (1993): 403-14.

2001 *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday.

Cogan, M., and Tadmor, H.

1979 “Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser in the Book of Kings: Historiographie Considerations.” *Biblica* 60 (1979): 491-508.

1988 *II Kings: A New Translation.* Anchor Bible, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Colás, A.

2007 *Empire*. Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity.

Coogan, M. D.

1978 “A Structural and Literary Analysis of the Song of Deborah.” *Scrinium: Revue de patrologie,* d*'hagiographie critique et d'histoire ecclésiastique* 40 (1978): 143-66.

Croatto, J. Severino.

1998 “A Reading of the Story of the Tower of Babel from the Perspective of Non-Identity: Genesis 11:1–9 in the Context of Its Production.” Pages 203–223 in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.

Cross, F. M.

1950 “Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament.” *BASOR* 117 (1950): 19-21.

1973a *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press.

1973b "Notes on the Ammonite Inscription from Tell Sīrān." *BASOR* 212 (1973): 12-15.

1983 "The Epic Traditions of Early Israel: Epic Narrative and the Reconstruction of Early Israelite Institutions." Pages 13-39 in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism.* Edited by R. E. Friedman, Chico: Scholars Press.

Crouch, C. L.

2014 *Israel and the Assyrians : Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

Çifçi, A.

2017 *The Socio-Economic Organisation of the Urartian kingdom*. Leiden: Brill.

Dahood, M. J.

1966 (-1970) *Psalms* Anchor Bible. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday.

Dalley, S.

2000 Shamshi-Ilu, Language and Power in the Western Assyrian Empire." Pages 79-88 in *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age.* Edited by G. Bunnens, Louvain; Sterling, VA: Peeters Press.

2002 "The Identity of the Princesses in Tomb II and a New Analysis of Events in 701 BC." Pages 171-75 in *New Light on Nimrud: Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002.* London: British School for the Study of Iraq.

Danell, G.

1946 *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament* Translated by S. Linton, Uppsala, Appelbergs boktrykeri-a.-b., 1946.

Da Riva, R.

2012 *The Twin Inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar at Brisa* (Wadi Esh-Sharbin, Lebanon): A Historical and Philological Study. Wien: Institut Für Orientalistik Der Universität Wien.

Daviau, P. and Dion, P.

1994 "El, the God of the Ammonites? The Atef-Crowned Head from Tell Jawa, Jordan." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 110 (1994): 158-67.

2007 "Independent and Well-Connected: The Ammonite Territorial Kingdom in Iron Age II." Pages 121-28 in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan.* Edited by Thomas Evan Levy, P. M. Michele Daviau, Randall W. Younker, and May Shaer, London: Routledge.

Day, J.

1992 "The Problem of 'So, king of Egypt' in 2 Kings Xvii 4." *VT* 42 (1992): 289-301.

de Vaux, R.

1973 *Histoire ancienne d'Israël*. Vol. 2.

Paris: Lecoffre.

Dearman, J.

1989 " Historical reconstruction and the Mesha Inscription." Pages 155-210 in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*. Edited by J. Dearman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

1992 "Settlement Patterns and the Beginning of the Iron Age in Moab."*Early Edom and Moab : The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

1995 "Edomite Religion: a Survey and an Examination of Some Recent Contributions." Pages 119-36 in *"You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother": Edom and Seir in History and Tradition.* Edited by D. Edelman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

1999 "Moab and Ammon: Some Observations on Their Relationship in Light of a New Moabite Inscription." Pages 97-116 in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters.

Deller,

1999 "The Assyrian Eunuchs and Their Predecessors." Pages 303-11 in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East--the City and Its Life Held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo), March 22-24, 1996*. Edited by K. Watanabe, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag.

Dever, W.

1997 "Levant." in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East.* Edited by E. M. Meyers, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Electronic version.

del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, J.

2003 *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Third Revised ed. Translated by W. Watson, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Diakonoff, I.

1989 "On Some New Trends in Urartian Philology and Some New Urartian Texts." *Archaeologische Mitteilungen Aus Iran* 22 (1989): 77-102.

Diao, Y.

2013 "The Differences between Mainland and Taiwanese Mandarin and their Causes from the Perspective of Two GaPs" in *Bulletin of Hangzhou Normal University (Social Sciences)* 03 (2013): 67-71. ["Cong Liang Ge Juli Kan Liang An Gongtong Yu de Chayi ji qi Chengyin." Hangzhou Shifan Daxue Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban) 03 (2013):67-71]

Dicou, B.

1994 *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist:*

The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press.

Dietrich, W.

2010 *1 Samuel 1-12*.Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Dille, S.

2004 *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. London; New York: T & T Clark International.

Dobbs-Allsop, C., Roberts, J., Seow, C. and Whitaker, R.

2005 *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.

Doyle, M.

1986 *Empires.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Dohmen, C.

2004 *Exodus 19-40.* Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Dozeman, T.

2015 *Joshua 1-12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dreyer, E.

2007 *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Dubovský, P.

2006 *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies: Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Intelligence Services and Its Significance for 2 Kings 18-19.* Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

2018 "Elam and the Bible." Pages 323-39 in The Elamite World. Edited by J. Álvarez-Mon, Gian Pietro Basello, and Yasmina Wicks, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Duhm, B.

1901 *Das Buch Jeremia*. Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Dupont-Sommer, A.

1949 *Les Araméens*. Paris: Dépôt: A. Maisonneuve.

Durand, J. and Guichard, M.

1997 "Les rituels de Mari." *Florilegium marianum* 3 (1997): 19-78.

Dušek, J.

2017 " 'Aram' in the Aramaic Inscriptions from Sefire." *Aramaic Studies* 15 (2017): 1-22.

2019 "Dating the Aramaic Stele Sefire I." *Aramaic Studies* 17 (2019): 1-14.

Edelman, D.

1995 *"You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother": Edom and Seir in History and Tradition.* Edited by D. Edelman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

Edrey, M.

2016 "Phoenician Ethnogenesis: the Crucial Role of Landscape in the Early Shaping of Phoenician Culture." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 47 (2016): 41-52.

2018 "The Phoenicians in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Iron Age I-III, ca.1200-332 BCE: Ethnicity and Identity in Light of the Material Culture." PhD. Diss., Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz.

Ego, B.

2010 "The Book of Esther: A Hellenistic Book." *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1 (2010) 279–302.

Ekholm, K. and Friedman, J.

1979 " 'Capital' Imperialism and Exploitation in Ancient World Systems." Pages 41-58 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Eidem, J., and Højlund. F.

1993 "Trade or Diplomacy? Assyria and Dilmun in the Eighteenth Century BC." World Archaeology 24, no. 3 (1993): 441-48.

Eidevall, G.

2009 *Prophecy and Propaganda: Images of Enemies in the Book of Isaiah*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns.

Elat, Moshe.

1978 "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt." *JAOS* 98 (1978): 20-34.

Elayi, J.

1983 "Les cités phéniciennes et l'empire assyrien à l'époque d'Assurbanipal." *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 77 (1983): 45-58.

2018 *The History of Phoenicia*. Atlanta, GA: Lockwood Press.

Elgavish, D.

1978 "War and Peace in Israel-Judah Relations Models of International Relations in the Biblical Period." ("Milḥamah ṿe-shalom Be-yaḥase Yiśra'el-Yehudah: Degamim Ba-yeḥasim Ha-benle'umiyim Bi-teḳufat Ha-Miḳra.") Master's Thesis, Ramat-Gan: Universitat Bar-Ilan, 1978. (In Hebrew)

Elliger, K.

1989 *Deuterojesaja 1 Jesaja 40,1 - 45,7*.2., durchges. Aufl. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Emberling, G.

2014 "Ethnicity in Empire: Assyrians and Others." Pages 158-74 in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean.* Edited by J.

McInerney.Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Emmerson, G.

1984 *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Encyclopædia Britannica，

2017 "Levxant." *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 13 Oct. 2017. academic-eb-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Levant/47955. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

Eph'al, I.

1982 *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th-5th Centuries B.C*. Jerusalem: Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University; E.J. Brill.

Fabry, H.

2018 *Habakuk, Obadja*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Fales, F.

1979 "Kilamuwa and the Foreign Kings: Propaganda vs. Power." *Die Welt des Orients* 10 (1979): 6-22.

2009 "Ethnicity in the Assyrian Empire. A View from the *nisbe* (II): Assyrians." *Isimu: Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la Antigüedad* 11 (2009): 183-204.

2012 "After Ta'yinat: the New Status of Esarhaddon's Adê for Assyrian Political History." *Revue d'Assyriologie et a'archéologie Orientale* 106 (2012): 133-58.

2013 "Ethnicity in the Assyrian Empire: a View from the *nisbe* (I): Foreigners and Special Inner Communities." Pages 47-73 in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist.* Edited by D. Vanderhooft and A. Winitzer. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

2014 "The Road to Judah: 701 b.c.e. in the Context of Sennacherib's Political-Military Strategy." Pages 223-48 in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography.* Edited by I. Kalimi and S. Richardson, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

2017 "Phoenicia in the Neo-Assyrian Period: An Updated Overview." *SAAB* 23 (2017):181-295.

Fales, F., and Postgate, J.

1995 *Imperial Administrative Records.* SAA 11. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press.

Faroqhi, S.

2004 *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It*. London ; New York: I.B. Tauris.

Faulkner, R. O.

1962 *A Concise Dictionary of Middle*

Egyptian. Oxford: Printed for the Griffith Institute at the University Press by V. Ridler.

Faust, A.

2018 "The Assyrian Century in the the southern Levant: An Overview of the Reality on the Ground." Pages 20-55 in *The the southern Levant under Assyrian Domination.* Edited by S. Aster and A. Faust, University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns.

Faust, A., and Lev-Tov, J.

2011 "The Constitution of Philistine Identity: Ethnic Dynamics in Twelfth to Tenth Century Philistia." *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 30 (2011): 13-32.

Finkelstein, I.

1988 *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

1999 "State Formation in Israel and Judah: A Contrast in Context, a Contrast in Trajectory." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62 (1999): 35-52.

2010 "A Great United Monarchy? Archaeological and Historical Perspectives." Pages 3-28 in *One God - One Cult - One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives.* R. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann. Berlin; New York: Walter De Gruyter.

2013 *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press.

Finkelstein, I. and Silberman, N.

2001 *The Bible Unearthed : Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. New York: Free Press.

2006 "Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology." *JSOT*, 30 (2006): 259–85.

Finkelstein, I., Koch, I. and Lipschitz, O. "The Biblical Gilead: Observations on Identifications, Geographic Divisions and Territorial History." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 43 (2011): 131-59.

Fischer, G.

2005 *Jeremia 1-25*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

2018 *Genesis 1-11*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Freiburg ; Basel ; Wien: Herder.

Fischer, P.

2014 "The the southern Levant (Transjordan) during the Late Bronze Age." Pages 561-76 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE.* Edited by Margreet Steiner and A. Killebrew, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fitzmyer, J.

1995 *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

Fitzpatrick, M.

2008 *Liberal Imperialism in Germany: Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848-1884.* New York: Berghahn Books.

Fleming, D.

2004 *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

2012 *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics and the Reinscribing of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fought, C.

2006 *Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Frahm, E.

1997 *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften*. Wien: Institut Für Orientalistik Der Universität Wien.

2017 "The Neo-Assyrian Period." Pages 161-208 in *A Companion to Assyria*. Edited by E. Frahm. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Frankenstein, S.

1979 "The Phoenicians in the Far West: a Function of Neo-Assyrian Imperialism." Pages 263-94 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Freeden, M.

2003 *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freedman, D. and Andersen, F.

1980 *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Frevel, C.

2018 "Was Aram an Empire?" *Semitica* 60 (2018): 397-426.

Fried, L. S.

2002 "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1." *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002): 373-93.

Fritz, V.

1996 "Monarchy and Re-urbanization: A New Look at Solomon's Kingdom." Pages 187-95 in *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. Edited by V. Fritz and P.R. Davies, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Fuchs, A.

1994 *Die Inschriften Sargons II. Aus Khorsabad.* 1. Aufl. Ed.. Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag.

1998 *Die Annalen Des Jahres 711 v. Chr. Nach Prismenfragmenten Aus Ninive Und Assur*. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

2008 "Der Turtan Šamšı-ilu und die große Zeit der assyrischen Großen

(830–746)," *Welt des Orients* 38 (2008):61–145.

Gadot, Y.

2010 "The Late Bronze Egyptian Estate at Aphek." *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 48-66.

Gagarin, M.

2008 *Writing Greek Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galil, G.

2009 "The Hebrew Inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa/Neta'im." *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 41 (2009): 193-242.

Gallagher, W. R.

1999 *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Garr, W. R.

1985 *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ge, Z.

2017 *Here in "China" I Dwell : Reconstructing Historical Discourses of China for Our Time.* Translated by J. Field and Qin Fang, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

2018 *What Is China?: Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History.* Translated by M. G. Hill, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Gelander, S.

2011 *From Two Kingdoms to One Nation: Israel and Judah*, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Gellner, E.

1983 *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ghantous, H.

2013 *The Elisha-Hazael Paradigm and the Kingdom of Israel: The Politics of God in Ancient Syria-Palestine.* Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited.

Gibson, J.

1975 *Textbook of Syrian Semitic inscriptions 2 Aramaic inscriptions, including inscriptions in the dialect of Zenjirli*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

1982 *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions 3: Phoenician Inscriptions: Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect of Arslan Tash.*Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gilboa, A.

2005 "Sea Peoples and Phoenicians along the Southern Phoenician Coast - a Reconciliation: An Interpretation of Sikila (SKL) Material Culture." *BASOR* 337 (2005): 47-78.

Gitin, S.

1998 "Philistia in Transition: The Tenth Century BCE and beyond." Pages 162-83 in *Mediterranean Peoples in*

Transition. Edited by S. Gitin and A. Mazar and E. Stern, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Gitin, S., Dotan, T. and J. Naveh.

1997 "A Royal Dedication Inscription from Tel Miqneh/Ekron." *Qadmoniot: A Journal for the Antiquities of Eretz-Israel and Bible Lands* 113 (1997): 38-43.

Glassner, J.,

2004 *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

Goedicke, H.

1963 "The End of 'So, king of Egypt'." *BASOR* 171 (1963): 64-66.

Goodblatt, D.

2006 *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gottwald, N. K.

1964 *All the Kingdoms of the Earth : Israelite Prophecy and International Relations in the Ancient Near East*. New York: Harper & Row.

1979 *The Tribes of Yahweh: a Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

2001 *The Politics of Ancient Israel.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Goulder, Michael D.

1982 *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah.* Sheffield [England]: JSOT Press.

Grabbe, Lester L. ed.

2019 *The Hebrew Bible and History : Critical Readings.* London; New York: T & T Clark.

Grayson, A. K.

1975 *Babylonian Historical-literary Texts*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

1981 "Assyria's Foreign Policy in Relation to Egypt in the Eighth an Seventh Centuries BC." Journal for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities 2 (1981):85-88.

1986 "Assyria's Foreign Policy in Relation to Elam in the Eighth an Seventh Centuries BC." *Sumer* 42 (1983): 146-48.

1993 "Assyrian Officials and Power in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries." *SAAB* 7 (1993): 19-52.

Green, A.

2005 *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns.

Greenberg, M.

1951 "Hebrew Sĕgullah: Akkadian Sikiltu." *JAOS* 71 (1951): 172–74.

1983 *Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor

Bible. 1964 ; v. 22. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983.

1997 *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

Groß, W.

2009 Richter. Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Freiburg Im Breisgau: Herder.

Grosby, S.

2002a " Religion and Nationality in Antiquity." Pages 13-51 in his *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published as "Religion and Nationality in Antiquity: The Worship of Yahweh and Ancient Israel." *European Journal of Sociology* 32 (1991): 229-65.

2002b "Kinship, Territory and the Nation in the Historiography of Ancient Israel." Pages 52-68 in his *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105 (1993): 3-18.

2002c " Borders, Territory, and Nationality in the Ancient Near East and Armenia." Pages 120-49 in his *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally Published in *JESHO* 40 (1997): 1-29.

2002d "*ʔAram Kulloh* and the Worship of Hadad: A Nation of Aram?" Pages 150-65 in his *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published in *ARAM* 7 (1995): 337-52,

2005 *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gunneweg, J., Th Beier, U. Diehl, D. Lambrecht, and H. Mommsen.

1991 " 'Edomite', 'Negbite' and 'Midianite' Pottery from the Negev Desert and Jordan: Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis Results." *Archaeometry* 33 (1991): 239-53.

Gurney, O. R.

1979 "The Hittite Empire." Pages 151-65 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Gzella, H.

2011 "Northwest Semitic in General." Pages 425-51 in *Semitic Languages: An International Handbook.* Edited by Stefan Weninger, Geoffrey. Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C. E. Watson, Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

2014 "Language and Script." Pages 71-108 in *The Arameans in Ancient Syria*, Edited by H. Niehr, Leiden: Brill.

Hackett, J.

1980 *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*.

Boston: Brill.

Hackett, J. and Pat-El, N.

2010 "On Canaanite and Historical Linguistics: A Rejoinder to Anson Rainey." *Ma'arav* 17 (2010):173-88.

Hadley, J.

2000 *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, J.

1997 *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hallo, W.

1966 "The Coronation of Ur-Nammu." *JCS* 20 (1966): 133.

1971 "Gutium." Pages 708-20 in *RlA* 3.

2002 *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Halpern, B.

1994 "The Stela from Dan: Epigraphic and Historical Considerations." *BASOR* 296 (1994): 63-80.

1996 "The Construction of the Davidic State: An Exercise in Historiography." Pages 44-75 in *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. Edited by V. Fritz and P.R. Davies, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Hamilton, V.

2011 *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker AcadeMic

Hansen, M.

2000 "Introduction: the Concept of City-State and City-State Culture." Pages 11-34 in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-state Cultures: An Investigation.* Edited by M. H. Hansen, Copenhagen: Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.

Harrison, T.

2009 " 'The Land of Mēdeba' and Early Iron Age Mādābā." Pages 27-46. *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters.

Hart, S.

1992 "Iron Age Settlement in the Land of Edom." Pages 93-98 in *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, England: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

Hasegawa, S.

2012 *Aram and Israel during the Jehuite Dynasty*. Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

Hawkins, J. D.

2004 "The New Sargon Stele from Hama." Pages 151-64 in *From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea. Studies on the History of Assyria and Babylonia in Honour of A.K. Grayson.* Edited by G.Frame and L.S.Wilding, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten.

Hastings, A.

1997 *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hellwag, U.

2012 "Der Niedergang Urartus." Pages 227-41 in *Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich, 12-14 October 2007*. Edited by S. Kroll, and C. Gruber and U. Hellwag and M. Roaf and P. Zimansky, Leuven: Peeters.

Henan Institute of Antiquities

2003 *Huixian Meng Village*, Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Press of Ancient Texts. (Henan Sheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo, *Huixian Meng Zhuang*. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe, 2003. (In Chinese)

Hermisson, H.

2003 *Deuterojesaja. 2. Teilband, Jesaja 45,8-49,13*. Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag.

Herr, L.

1980 "The Formal Scripts of Iron Age Transjordan." *BASOR* 238 (1980):21-34.

2014 "The the southern Levant (Transjordan) during the Iron Age I Period." Pages 649-59 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE.* Edited by Margreet Steiner and A. Killebrew, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herrmann, V.

2018 "Cosmopolitan Politics in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." *Semitica* 60 (2018): 493-535.

Herrmann, W.

1999a "Baal." Pages 132-39 in *DDD*.

1999b "El." Pages 274-80 in *DDD*.

Hesse, B and Wapnish, P.

1997 "Can pig Remains Be Used for Ethnic Diagnosis in the Ancient Near East?" in *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present*. Edited by N. A. Silberman and D. B. Small, Shefield, England: Shefield Academic Press.

Hobsbawm, E.

1990 *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hoffner, H.

1973 "The Hittites and Hurrians." Pages 197-228 in *Peoples of Old Testament*

Times. Edited by Donald J. Wiseman, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holladay, W.

1989 *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 26-52*. Edited by Paul Hanson, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Holloway, S.

2002 *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Holmstedt, R.

2010 *Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

Horowitz, W. Oshima,T. and Sanders, S.

2006 *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient times.* Jerusalem: Hebrew University.

Hua, X.

2001 *A History of Old Chinese Dialectology in the Zhou, Qin, Han and Jin Periods*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press. [*Zhou Qin Han Jin Fangyan Yanjiu Shi*, Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe]

Huehnergard, J.

1991 "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages." Pages 282-93 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-evaluated. Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* Edited by. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, Leiden: Brill.

Hulst, A. R.

1997 "גוי/עם" in *TLOT* II.

Hutter, M.

2003 "Aspects of Luwian Religion." Pages 211-80 in *The Luwians*. Edited by H. C. Melchert, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Ingram, P.

2018 "nation-state" in Brown, Garrett W, et al. *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*. 4th ed., electronic version, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ishida, T.

1977 *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-dynastic Ideology*. Berlin; New York: W. De Gruyter.

Izre'el, S.

2001 *Adapa and the South Wind: Language Has the Power of Life and Death*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Jackson, K. and Dearman, J.

1989 "The Text of the Mesha Inscription." Pages 93-95 in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*. Edited by J. Dearman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars

Press.

Jacob, B.

1997 *Das Buch Exodus*. Stuttgart: Calwer.

Jacob, E.

1987 *Esaïe 1-12*. Commentaire de l'ancien testament, Genève: Labor Et Fides.

Jacob, E., Keller, C. and S. Amsler.

1965 *Osée*. Commentaire de l'ancien testament, Paris: Neuchâtel, Delachaux Et Niestlé.

James, T. G. H.

1991 "Egypt: the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties." Pages 677-747 in *The Cambridge Ancient History vol. III Part2: The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and other States of the Near East, from the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.* 2nd Edition, edited by J. Boardman, I. Edwards, N. Hammond and E. Sollberger with the assistance of C. Walker, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Japhet, S.

2003 *2 Chronik*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003.

Jenson, P.

2008 *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: A Theological Commentary*.New York: T&T Clark.

Jia, J.

1985 "On 'the Han People'. " *Chinese Social Sciences* 6 (1985):99-109. ["Han Ren Kao." *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* 6 (1985):99-109.]

Joffe, A.

2002 "The Rise of Secondary States in the Iron age Levant." *JESHO*, 45 (2002): 425–67.

Jones, S.

1997 *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the past and Present.* London; New York: Routledge.

Jovanović S.

2018 "The Discursive Creation of the 'Montenegrin Language' and Montenegrin Linguistic Nationalism in the 21st Century." *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: European and Regional Studies* 13, (2018): 67-86.

Kahn, D.

2007 "The Kingdom of Arpad (Bīt Agūsi) and 'All Aram'." *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 44 (2007): 66-89.

Kalimi, I.

2011 "1 and 2 Chronicles." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible.* Edited by M. Coogan, http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/article/opr/t280/e86 (accessed 24-Sep-2019).

2014 "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: The Chronicler's View Compared with

His 'Biblical' Sources." Pages 11-50 in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography.* Edited by I. Kalimi and S. Richardson, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Karolewski, I. P., and Suszycki, A. M.

2011 *The Nation and Nationalism in Europe: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Katzenstein, H.

1997 *The History of Tyre, from the Beginning of the Second Millenium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.* 2nd, Rev. ed. Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press.

Kelle, B.

2005 *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective.* Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

Kemp, B.

2006 *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*. 2nd ed., Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Kitchen, K.

1992 "The Egyptian Evidence on Ancient Jordan." Pages 21-34 in *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

Kleiman, A.

2017 "A North Israelite Royal Administrative System and its Impact on Late Monarchic Judah." *HeBAI* 354-71 6 (2017): 354-71.

Kletter, Raz.

2006 "Can a Proto-Israelite Please Stand Up? : Notes on the Ethnicity of Iron Age Israel and Judah." Pages 573-86 in *"I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Edited by Aren M. Maeir and Pierre De Miroschedji, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Knauf, E.

1992a "Peoples of the East." in *ABD*.

1992b "The Cultural Impact of Secondary State Formation: the Case of the Edomites and Moabites." Pages 47-54 in *Early Edom and Moab : The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

1999 "Qôs." Pages 674-77 in *DDD*.

2016 *1 Könige 1-14*. Freiburg Basel Wien: Herder.

Knoppers, G.

2000 "Introduction." Pages 1-19 in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah :*

Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History. Edited by G. Knoppers, and J. G. McConville. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns.

2011 "Did Jacob Become Judah?: the Configuration of Israel's Restoration in Deuter-Isaiah." Pages 39-70 in *Samaria, Samarians, Samaritans Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics*. Edited by Józesf Zsengellér, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.

Kochavi, M.

1990 *Aphek in Canaan: The Egyptian Governor's Residence and Its Finds* (Israel Museum Catalogue 312). Jerusalem: Israel Museum.

Koole, J.

2001 *Isaiah III. Vol. 3.* Leuven: Peeters Publishers.

Korošec, V.

1982 "Über den nichtparitätischen Charakter des Šunaššura-Vertrages (KBo I, 5)." Pages 168-72 in *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Vorträge Gehalten Auf Der 28. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Wien, 6.-10. Juli 1981*. Archiv Für Orientforschung. Beiheft; 19. Horn, Austria: F. Berger & Söhne.

Kratz, R. G.

1991 *Translatio Imperii : Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Kroll, S. Gruber, C., Hellwag, U., Roaf, M. and Zimansky, P.

2012 "Introduction." Pages 1-38 in *Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich, 12-14 October 2007*. Edited by S. Kroll, and C. Gruber and U. Hellwag and M. Roaf and P. Zimansky, Leuven: Peeters

Kühn, D.

2014 "Society, Institutions, Law, and Economy." Pages 37-70 in *The Arameans in Ancient Syria*, Edited by H. Niehr, Leiden: Brill.

Kyle, D.

2009 "Pan-Hellenism and Particularism: Herodotus on Sport, Greekness, Piety and War." *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26 (2009): 183–211.

LaBianca, Ø.

1999 "Salient Features of Iron Age Tribal Kingdoms." Pages 19-29 in *Ancient Ammon*. Edited by B. MacDonald and R. Younker, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Lambert, W. G.

1987-90 "Manziri." in *RlA* 7.

Lamprichs, R.

1995 *Die Westexpansion Des Neuassyrischen Reiches : Eine Strukturanalyse.* Kevelaer : Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker ; Neukirchener Verlag.

Landy, F.

2011 *Hosea.* 2nd ed. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press.

Lanfranchi, G.

1988 "Sargon's Letter to Aššur-šarru-uṣur: an Interpretation." *SAAB* 2 (1988): 59-64.

2003 "The Assyrian Expansion in the Zagros and the Local Ruling Elites." Pages 79-118 in *Continuity of Empire (?) Assyria, Media, Persia*. Edited by G. B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, R. Rollinger, Padova, S.a.r.g.o.n. Editrice e Libreria.

2009 "A Happy Son of the king of Assyria: Warikas and the Çineköy Bilingual (Cilicia)." Pages 127-50 in *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola.* Edited by M. Luukko, S. Svärd and R. Mattila Studia Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.

Larsen, M.

1979 "The Tradition of Empire in Mesopotamia." Pages 75-103 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

2000 "The City-States in the Early Neo-Babylonian Period." Pages 117-28 in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-state Cultures: An Investigation.* Edited by M. H. Hansen, Copenhagen: Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.

Lauinger, J.

2012 "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary." *JCS* 64 (2012): 87-123.

2013 "The Neo-Assyrian *Adê*: Treaty, Oath, or Something Else?" *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 19 (2013): 99-115.

Lauinger, J., and Batiuk, S.

2015 "A Stele of Sargon II at Tell Tayinat." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 105, no. 1 (2015): 54-68.

Lavan, M., Payne, R. and Weisweiler, J.

2016 "Cosmopolitan Politics the Assimilation and Subordination of Elite Cultures." Pages 1-28 in *Cosmopolitanism and Empire Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean.* Edited by Myles Lavan, Richard E. Payne and John Weisweiler, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leitner, U.

2011 *Imperium: Geschichte Und Theorie Eines Politischen Systems.* Frankfurt; New York: Campus Verlag.

Lemaire, A.

1994 " 'House of David' Restored in Moabite Inscription." *BAR* 20 (1994): 30-37.

2007 "West Semitic Inscriptions and NinthCentury BCE Ancient Israel." Pages 279-303 in *Understanding the*

History of Ancient Israel. Edited by H. Williamson, The British Academy.

Lemche, N.

1985 *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society Before the Monarchy*. Leiden: Brill.

2012 "Using the Concept of Ethnicity in Defining Philistine Identity in the Iron Age." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 26 (2012): 12-29.

Levenson, J. D.

1997 *Esther: A Commentary.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Levin, Y.

2017 *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah: 2 Chronicles 10-36: A New Translation and Commentary*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc..

Levine, B.

2000 *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

2005 "Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism." *Iraq* 67 (2005):411-27.

Levine, L. D.

1973 "The Second Campaign of Sennacherib." *JNES* 32 (1973): 312-17.

1982 "Sennacherib's Southern Front: 704-689 BC." *JCS* 34 (1982): 28-58.

Levy, T., Adams, R. and Shafiq, R.

1999 "The Jabal Hamrat Fidan Project: Excavations at the Wadi Fidan 40 Cemetery, Jordan (1997)*." Levant* 31 (1999): 293-308.

Li, F.

2008 *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

2013 *Early China: a Social and Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Li, S.

2006 "An Essay on the Format of the State, Territory and 'the Four Lands--Focusing on Narratives of the State in the Yinshang Period.' *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies* 16 (2006) 1-8. ["Xian Qin Guojia Xingtai yu Jiangyu Situ Chujian--Yi Yinshang Guojia Xushu Weizhu." *Zhongguo Bianjiang Shi Di Yanjiu* 16 (2006): 1-8] (In Chinese)

Linville, J.

1998 *Israel in the Book of Kings: The past as a Project of Social Identity*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

Lipiński, E.

1994 "The Bilingual Inscription from Tell Fekherye." Pages 19-81 in his *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, Leuven: Peeters.

2006 *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches*. Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006.

Lipiński, E and von Soden, W.

2001 "עם." Pages 163-77 in *TDOT* XI.

Liverani, M.

1979 "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire." Pages 297-318 in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires.* Edited by M. Larsen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

1990 *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East Ca. 1600-1100 B.C.* Padova: Sargon.

1992 "Nationality and Political Identity." in *ABD*, Edited by D. N. Freedman et al, New York: Doubleday.

2005 *Israel's History and the History of Israel*. London, Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub.

2010 "The Book of Kings and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography." Pages 165-80 in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception.* Edited by A. Lemaire, H. Baruch and M. Adams, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

2017a *Assyria: The Imperial Mission*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

2017b "Thoughts on the Assyrian Empire and Assyrian kingship." Pages 534-46 in *A Companion to Assyria*. Edited by E. Frahm. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Livingstone, A.

1999 "Taima: A Nexus for Historical Contact and Cultural Interchange within the Desert Borders." Pages 233-36 in *Languages and cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilisations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm--Proceedings of the 42nd RAI, Leuven*. Edited by K. Van Lerberghe and G. Voet.

Lloyd, A. B.

2000 "The Late Period. 664-332 BC." Pages 364-87 in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt.* Edited I. Shaw, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Loretz, O.

1984 *Psalm 29: Kanaanäische El- Und Baaltraditionen in Jüdischer Sicht*. Altenberge: CIS-Verlag; Soest : Vertrieb und Auslieferung, CIS-Verlag.

Lundbom, J.

2004 *Jeremiah 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.

2013 *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Lust, J.

1999 "Exile and Diaspora: Gathering from Dispersion in Ezekiel." Pages 99-122 in *Lectures et relectures de la Bibe: Festschrift P. M. Bogaert* (BETL 144)

Edited by J. Auwers and A. Wénin, Leuven.

Luukko, M.

2012 "On Standardisation and Variation in the Introductory Formulae of Neo-Assyrian Letters." *Iraq* 74 (2012): 97-115.

Luukko, M., and van Buylaere, G.

2002 *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon.* SAA 16. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

MacAdam, M.

1955 *History and Archaeology of the Site: Text, Plates.* Vol. 2 of *The Temples of Kawa*. London: Griffith Institute.

MacDonald, B.

2000 *"East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures.* Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research.

MacDonald, B., and Younker, R. eds.

1999 *Ancient Ammon*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Macdonald, M. C. A.

2000 "Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11 (2000): 28-79.

Machinist, P.

1983 "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah." *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719-37.

1986 "On Self-Consciousness in Mesopotamia." Pages 183-202 in *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations.* Edited by S. Eisenstadt, Albany: State University of New York Press.

1991 "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 33 (1991): 196-212.

1993 "Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millenium B.C." Pages 77-104 in *Anfänge Politischen Denkens in der Antike: die Nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen*. Edited by K. Raaflaub and E. Müller-Luckner, München: R. Oldenbourg.

1994 "Outsiders or Insiders: The Biblical View of Emergent Israel and Its Contexts." Pages 35-60 in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History. Constructions of Culture and Identity* Edited by J. Silberstein and R. L. Cohn; New York: New York University Press.

2000a "Biblical Traditions: The Philistines and Israelite History." Pages 53-83 in *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment.* Edited by Eliezer D. Oren. Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Philadelphia.

2000b "The Rab Saqeh at the Wall of Jerusalem: Israelite Identity in the Face of the Assyrian 'other'." *Hebrew Studies Journal* 41 (2000): 151-68.

2005 "Hosea and the Ambiguity of Kingship in Ancient Israel." Pages 153-81 in *Constituting the Community : Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Edited by John

T. Strong, and Steven Shawn Tuell, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

2006 "Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria." Pages 152-188 in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion.* Edited by G. Beckman and T. J. Lewis.Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies.

2016 " 'Ah, Assyria ...' (Isaiah 10:5ff.): Isaiah's Assyrian Polemic Revisited." Pages 183-217 in *Not Only History: Proceedings of the Conference in Honor of Mario Liverani Held in Sapienza–Università Di Roma, Dipartimento Di Scienze Dell'Antichità, 20-21 April 2009*. Edited by Gilda Bartoloni, Maria Giovanna Biga, Armando Bramanti and Mario Liverani, Winona Lake: Pennsylvania State University Press.

2018a "Achaemenid Persia as a Spectacle. Reactions from Two Pripheral Voices: Aeschylus, The Persians and the Biblical Book of Esther." Pages 109-123 in *Eretz Israel* 23 (Lawrence Stager Volume), Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society in cooperation with The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

2018b "Nahum as Prophet and Prophetic Book: Some Reconsiderations." Pages 103-29 in *The Book of the Twelve Prophets.* Edited by H. Fabry, Leuven; Paris; Bristol, CT: Peeters.

2019 "Periodization in Biblical Historiography." Pages 215-37 in *Historical Consciousness and the Use of the Past in the Ancient World*. Edited by J. Bains, H. van der Blom, Y. S. Chen and T. Rood, Shefield and Bristol, CT: Equinox.

Maeir, A. M., Hitchcock, L. and Horwitz, L.

2013 "On the Constitution and Transformation of Philistine Identity." *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 32 (2013): 1-38.

Maier, C.

2006 *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors.* Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Magee, P.

2014 *The Archaeology of Prehistoric Arabia: Adaptation and Social Formation from the Neolithic to the Iron Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malamat, A.

2001a "The Kingdom of Judah between Egypt and Babylon: a Small State within a Great Power Confrontation." Pages 322-37 in his *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill. Originally published in *Studia Theologica* 44 (1990):65-77.

2001b "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and its Relations with Egypt." Pages 189-207 in his *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill. Originally published in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers*

Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5-7 December, 1979. Edited by T. Ishida, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Markoe, G.

2000 *Phoenicians*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.

Master, D.

2001 "State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel." *JNES* 60 (2001): 117–31.

Mattila, T.

2002 *Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh, Part II: Assurbanipal through Sin-Sarru-iskun.* SAA 14, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

Mayer, Walter.

2013 *Assyrien und Urartu, I: der Achte Feldzug Sargons II. im Jahr 714 v. Chr.* Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Mayer, Werner R.

1987 "Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs." *Orientalia* 56 (1987): 55-68.

Mays, J.

1969 *Hosea, a Commentary.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

1976 *Micah: A Commentary. Old Testament Library*. London: SCM.

Mazar, A.

1990 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.

2005 "The Debate over the Chronology of the Iron Age in the the southern Levant." Pages 13-28 In *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating.* Edited by T. Levy and H. Thomas.

2007 "The Spade and the Text: The Interaction between Archaeology and Israelite History Relating to the Tenth–Ninth Centuries BCE." Pages 143-71 in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel*. Edited by H. Williamson, The British Academy.

2010 "Archaeology and the Biblical Narrative: the Case of the United Monarchy." Pages 29-58 in *One God - One Cult - One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives.* R. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Mazar, B.

1962 "The Aramean Empire and Its Relations with Israel." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 25 (1962): 98-120.

Mazar, E., Ben-Shlomo, D. and Ahituv, S.

2013 "An Inscribed Pithos from the Ophel, Jerusalem." *Israel Exploration Journal* 63 (2013): 39-49.

Mazzoni, S.

1997 " The Gate and the City: Change and Continuity in Syro-Hittite Urban Ideology. Pages 307-38 in *Die orientalische Stadt: Kontinuitdt,*

Wandel, Bruch. Edited by Gernot Wilhelm (1. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 9.-10. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale). Saarbrücken: in Kommission Bei SDV, Saarbrücker Druckerei Und Verlag.

McCarter, P. K.

1980 *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

1984 *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

McKinny, C.

2016 *My People as Your People: A Textual and Archaeological Analysis of the Reign of Jehoshaphat.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

McMahon, G.

1992 "The Hittites in the Old Testament." in *ABD.*

Mellor, R.

1989 *Nation, State, and Territory: A Political Geography*. London; New York: Routledge.

Mencius

2009 *Mencius*. Translated by Irene Bloom, Edited by P. Ivanhoe. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mendels, D.

1997 *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism.* New York: Doubleday; Second Edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Mendenhall, G. E.

1958 "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26." *JBL* 77 (1958): 52-66.

Meyers, C.

1983 "The Israelite Empire: In Defense of King Solomon." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 22 (1983): 412-28.

Millard, A.

2009 "Assyria, Arameans and Aramaic." Pages 203-14 in *Homeland and Exile : Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded.* Edited by G. Galil, M. Geller, and A. R. Millard, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Miller, J. C.

2008 "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects." *Currents in Biblical Research* 6 (2008): 170-213.

Miller, J. M.

1992 "Early Monarchy in Moab?" Pages 77-92 in *Early Edom and Moab : The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Sheffield, [England]: J. R. Collis Publications in Association with National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

Moran, W.

1992 *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Morris, I.

2013 "Greek Multicity-states." in The *Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morrison, K.

2001 "Sources, Approaches, Definitions." Pages 1-9 in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History.* Edited by S. Alcock, Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Moughtin-Mumby, S.

2011 "Hosea." in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*. Edited by M. Coogan, New York: Oxford University Press. (electronic version)

Mullen, E. T.

1993 *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity*. Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press.

1997 *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations : A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch. Semeia Studies*. Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press.

Muscarella, O. W.

1998 "Relations between Phrygia and Assyria in the 8th Century BC." *Uluslararası Assiriyoloji Kongresi* 24 (1998): 6-10.

Müller, K.

1937 "Das assyrische Ritual." *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischtischen Gesellschaft*, 41 (1937): 4-19.

Müller, R.

2008 J*ahwe als Wettergott: Studien zur althebräischen Kultlyrik anhand ausgewählter Psalmen.* Berlin, New York, N.Y.: de Gruyter.

Na'aman, N.

1974 "Sennacherib's 'Letter To God' on his Campaign to Judah." *BASOR* 214 (1974): 25-39.

1978 "Looking for KTK." *Die Welt Des Orients* 9 (1978): 220-39.

1988 "Biryawaza of Damascus and the Date of the Kamid el-Loz ʿApiru Letters." Ugarit-Forschungen 20 (1988): 179-93.

2003 "Two Additional Notes on the Suhu Inscription *NABU* 92 (2003): 101-02.

2004 "The Boundary System and Political Status of Gaza under the Assyrian Empire." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 120 (2004): 55-72.

2005 "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead." Pages 40-55 in his *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 111 (1995): 105-17.

2006a "Sources and Composition in the History of David." Pages 23-37 in his *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, Orignally published in

pages 170-86 in *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. Edited by V. Fritz and P.R. Davies, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

2006b "In Search of Reality behind the Account of David's Wars with Israel's Neighbors." Pages 38-61 in his *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, Orignally published in *Israel Exploration Journal* 52 2 (2002): 200-24.

2006c "The Deuteronomist and Voluntary Servitude to Foreign Powers." Pages 259-73 in his *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published in *JSOT* 65 (1995):37-53.

2006d "King Mesha and the Foundation of the Moabite Monarchy." Pages 187-97 in his *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Originally published in Israel Exploration Journal 47 (1997): 83-92.

2007a "When and How Did Jerusalem Become a Great City? The Rise of Jerusalem as Judah's Premier City in the Eighth-Seventh Centuries B.C.E." *BASOR*, 347 (2007): 21-56.

2007b "The Northern Kingdom in the late tenth-ninth centuries BCE." Pages 399-418 in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel.* Edited by H.G.M. Williamson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2011 "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform." *JBL*, 130 (2011): 47-62.

2014 "Dismissing the Myth of a Flood of Israelite Refugees in the Late Eighth Century BCE." *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 126 (2014): 1-14.

2016 "Arpad and Aram: Reflection of a Dimorphic Society in the Sefîre Treaty." *Revue D'assyriologie Et D'archéologie Orientale* 110 (2016): 79-88.

Naveh, J.

1970 *The Development of the Aramaic Script*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

1985 "Writing and Scripts in Seventh-Century B.C.E. Philistia: The New Evidence from Tell Jemmeh." *Israel Exploration Journal* 35 (1985): 8-21.

1997 *Early History of the Alphabet : An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography*. 2nd Rev. ed. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University.

Niditch, S.

2008 *Judges: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Niehr, H.

2014 “Religion.” Pages 127-203 in *The Arameans in Ancient Syria*, Edited by H. Niehr, Leiden: Brill.

Niemyer, H.

2000 “The Early Phoenician City-States on the Mediterranean. Archaeological Elements for the Description.” Pages 89-116 in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-state Cultures: an Investigation.* Edited by M. H. Hansen, Copenhagen: Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.

Noth, M.

1983 *1 Könige 1-16* .2. Aufl. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Oded, B.

1979 *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire.* Wiesbaden: Reichert.

Olyan, S.

1988 *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

Oppenheim, A. L.

1943 “Akkadian Pul(u)ḫ(t)u and Melammu.” JAOS 63 (1943): 31-34.

Oren, E. D.

1984. “ ‘Governors’ Residencies in Canaan under the New Kingdom: A Case Study of Egyptian Administration.” *Journal of Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 14 (1984):37–56.

Otto, E.

2017 *Deuteronomium 12-34: Teilband 23,16-34,12* .Freiburg Basel Wien: Herder.

Pardee, D.

2008 “Canaanite Dialects.” Pages 103-07 in *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*. Edited by R. Woodard, New York: Cambridge University Press.

2013 “A brief case for Phoenician as the language of the ‘Gezer calendar’.” in *Linguistic Studies in Phoenician: in Memory of J. Brian Peckham*. Edited by R. D. Holmstedt and A. Schade, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Parker, S. ed.

1997 *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

Parpola, S.

1972 “A Letter from Šamaš-šumu-ukīn to Esarhaddon.” Iraq 34 (1972): 21-34.

1990 “A Letter from Marduk-apla-usur of Anah to Rudamu/Urtamis, king of Hamath.” Pages 257-65 in *HAMA. Fouilles et recherches de la Fondation Carlsberg, II 2: Les objets de la période dite Syro-Hittite*. Edited by P.J. Riis and M.-L. Buhl, Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet.

2003 “Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and

7th Centuries and Its Long-Term Repercussions in the West." Pages 99-111in *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina.* Edited by William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

2004 "National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-empire Times." *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18 (2004): 5-22.

2007 "Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship and their Heritage in Mediterranean Antiquity." Paper delivered at the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop "Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity." Padua, November 29, 2007. (Cited in Lanfranchi 2009)

Parpola, S., and Watanabe, K.

1988 *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. SAA 2, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

Pat-El, N.

2017 "Israelian Hebrew: A Re-Evaluation." *VT* 67 (2017): 227-63.

Pat-El, N., and Wilson-Wright, A.

2015 "Deir ʿAllā as a Canaanite Dialect: A Vindication of Hackett."Pages 13-23 in *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible: Methodological Perspectives on Philological and Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Jo Ann Hackett*. Edited by J. Hutton, and A. Rubin Atlanta, GA:Society of Biblical Literature.

2018 "Features of Aramaeo-Canaanite." *JAOS* 138 (2018): 781-806.

Paul, S.

1986 " 'Masa Melekh Sarim': Hosea 8: 8-10 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Epithets." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 31 (1986): 193-204.

2012 *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary*. Cambridge, U.K. ; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

Pearce, L. and Wunsch, C.

2014 *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*. Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press.

Pedersén, O.

1998 *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500-300 B.C*. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press.

Peng, F.

2016 *A Study on Ethnicity and Political Identity in the Pre-Qin and Han Periods.* Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press. [*Xian Qin Liang Han Minzu Guannian he Guojia Rentong Yanjiu*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe]

Pentiuc, E.

1999 "West Semitic Terms in Akkadian

Texts from Emar." *JNES* 58 (1999): 81-96.

Perdue, L., Carter, W. and Baker, C.

2015 *Israel and Empire: A Postcolonial History of Israel and Early Judaism.* London, England; New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Perlitt, L.

2013 *Deuteronomium*. Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament; Bd. 5/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Petersen, D.

1995 *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Petter, T. D.

2014 *The Land between the Two Rivers: Early Israelite Identities in Central Transjordan*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Pitard, W.

1988 "The Identity of the Bir Hadad of the Melqart Stela." *BASOR* 272 (1988): 3-21.

Podany, A.

2010 *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Pope, J.

2014 "Beyond the Broken Reed: Kushite Intervention and the Limits of L'histoire événementielle." Pages 105-60 in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography.* Edited by I. Kalimi and S. Richardson, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Porten, Bezalel.

1981 "The Identity of King Adon." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 44 (1981): 36-52.

Postgate, J. N.

1973 "Assyrian Texts and Fragments." 35 (1973): 13-36.

Pottorf, Andrew R.

2017 "A Regional Analysis of Epigraphic Data from Philistine Sites during the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BCE." *Kleine Untersuchungen Zur Sprache Des Alten Testaments Und Seiner Umwelt* 22 (2017) 173-204.

Potts, D. T.

1999 *The Archaeology of Elam : Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Power, C.

2015 "Many Peoples of Obscure Speech and Difficult Language: Attitudes towards Linguistic Diversity in the Hebrew Bible." PhD Diss. Harvard University.

Prescott, V. and Triggs, G.

2008 *International Frontiers and Boundaries: Law, Politics and Geography*. Leiden: Brill.

Propp, W.

2006 *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 2006.

Provan, I., Long. P. and Longman, T.

2015 *A Biblical History of Israe*l. Second ed., Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.

Puech, É.

1992 "La stèle de bar-hadad à melqart et les rois d'Arpad." *Revue Biblique* 99 (1992): 311-34.

Rabinowitz, I.

1962, "Government." in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* vol. 2, Edited by G. Buttrick, New York: Abingdon Press.

Radner, K.

2000 "Iāmānī." in *PNA* 2. Edited by H. D. Baker, Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

2002 *Die Neuassyrischen Texte aus Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad*. Berlin: D. Reimer.

2010 "Assyrian and non-Assyrian kingship in the First Millennium BC." Pages 15-24 in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity*. Edited by G.B. Lanfranchi & R. Rollinger. Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N.

2012a "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Musasir, Kumme, Ukku and Subria-the Buffer States between Assyria and Urartu." Pages 243-64 in *Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich, 12-14 October 2007*. Edited by S. Kroll, and C. Gruber and U. Hellwag and M. Roaf and P. Zimansky, Leuven: Peeters.

2012b "After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court." Pages 471-79 in *Stories of Long Ago. Festschrift Für Michael D. Roaf.* Edited by H. Baker and K. Kaniuth and A. Otto, Ugarit-Verlag: Münster, Germany.

Rainey, A., Schniedewind, W. and Cochavi-Rainey, Z.

2014 T*he El-Amarna Correspondence (2 Vol. Set): A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*. Leiden: Brill.

Rendsburg, G.

1995 "Linguistic Variation and the 'Foreign' Factor in the Hebrew Bible." *Israel Oriental Studies* 15 (1995): 177–90.

1999 "Notes on Israelian Hebrew (I)." Pages 255-58 in *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer* Edited by Y. Avishur and R. Deutsch, Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications.

2000 "Notes on Israelian Hebrew (II)." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 26 (2000): 33-46.

2003 “A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew.” *Orient (Tokyo)* 38 (2003): 5-35.

Richardson, S.

2016 “Getting Confident: The Assyrian Development of Elite Recognition Ethic.” Pages 29-64 in *Cosmopolitanism and Empire Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean.* Edited by Myles Lavan, Richard E. Payne and John Weisweiler, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ritner, R.

2009 *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period*. Atlanta, GA.: Society of Biblical Literature.

Roaf, M.

2012 “Could Rusa son of Erimena have been king of Urartu during Sargon’s Eighth Campaign?” Pages 187-216 in *Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich, 12-14 October 2007*. Edited by S. Kroll, and C. Gruber and U. Hellwag and M. Roaf and P. Zimansky, Leuven: Peeters.

Roberts, J. J. M.,

1976 “The Religio-political Setting of Psalm 47.” *BASOR* 221 (1976): 129-32.

1991 *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

2015 *First Isaiah: A Commentary. Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Peter Machinist, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Rollston, C.

2006 “Scribal Education in Ancient Israel.” *BASOR* 344 (2006): 47-74.

Rosen, P.

2003 “Ein Empire auf Probe.” Pages 240-55 in *Empire Amerika, Perspektiven einer neuen Weltordnung.* Edited by Ulrich Speck und Natan Sznaider, München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

Rosenthal, F.

1969 “Canaanite and Aramaic Inscriptions.” Pages 653-62 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by J. Pritchard. 3rd Edition, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ross, A.

2013 *A Commentary on the Psalms. Vol. 2.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional.

Rost, L.

1934 Leonhard Rost, “Die Bezeichnungen fur Land und Volk im Alten Testament.” Pages 125-44 in *Festschrift Otto Procksch: Zum Sechzigsten Geburtstag Am 9. August 1934*. Edited by Albrecht Alt, Leipzig: Deichert.

Rothenberg, B. and Glass, J.

1983 "The Midianie Pottery." Pages 65-124 in *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-west Arabia*. Edited by J. Sawyer and David J. A. Clines Sheffield: JSOT Press.

Routledge, B.

2000 "The Politics of Mesha: Segmented Identities and State Formation in Iron Age Moab." *JESHO* 43 (2000): 221-56.

2004 *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Routledge B. and Routledge, C.

2009 "The Baluʿa Stela Revisited." Pages 71-96 in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*. Edited by P. Bienkowski, Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters.

Rudolph, W.

1955 *Chronikbücher*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck).

Sader, H.

2014 "History." Pages 11-36 in *The Arameans in Ancient Syria*, Edited by H. Niehr, Leiden: Brill.

Saggs, H. W. F.,

1958 "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part IV." 20 (1958): 182-212.

2001 *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

Salzman, P.

1978 "Ideology and Change in Middle Eastern Tribal Societies." *Man*, 13 (1978): 618-37.

Sanders, S.

2015 "When the Personal Became Political: An Onomastic Perspective on the Rise of Yahwism." *HeBAI* 4.1 (2015): 78-105.

Sasson, J.

2014 *Judges 1-12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sayyid-Marsot, A.

1984 *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schäfer, P.

1997 *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Schaudig, H.

2001 *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen Samt den in ihrem Umfeld Entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe Und*

Grammatik. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Schipper, B.

2011 "Egyptian Imperialism after the New Kingdom." Pages 268-90 in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel, Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, Edited by S. Bar, D. Kahn and D. Shirley, Leiden: Brill.

Schloen, J. D.

2001 *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Schlude, J. and Overman, J.

2017 "Herod the Great: A Near Eastern Case Study in Roman-Parthian Politics." Pages 93-110 in *Arsacids, Romans, and Local Elites: Cross-cultural Interactions of the Parthian Empire.* Edited by J. Schlude, and B. Rubin, Oxford; Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books.

Schwemer, D.

2001 *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Seebass, Horst.

2007 *Numeri 22:2-36:13*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Seeligman, I.

1980 "Psalm 47." *Tarbiz* 50 (1980):25-36. (in Hebrew)

Sergi, Omer.

2015 "State Formation, Religion and 'collective Identity' in the the southern Levant." *HeBAI* 4 (2015): 56-77.

Seux, M.

1967 *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes*. Paris: Letouzey et Ane.

Shafer, A.

2007 "Assyrian Royal Monuments on the Periphery: Ritual and the Making of Imperial Space." Pages 133-60 in *Ancient near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter*. Edited by J. Cheng, and M. Feldman, Boston: Brill.

Shafer-Elliot, C.

2014 *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Shea, W.

1992 " 'So', Ruler of Egypt." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 30 (1992): 201-15.

Siddall, L.

2009 "Tiglath-pileser III's Aid to Ahaz."

Ancient Near Eastern Studies 46 (2009): 93-106.

2013 *The Reign of Adad-nırarı III: An Historical and Ideological Analysis of an Assyrian king and His Times*, Leiden: Brill.

Singer, I.

1991 "A Concise History of Amurru." Pages 135-95 in *Amurru Akkadian: A Linguistic Study*. S. Izre'el, GA.: Scholars Press.

Singer-Avitz, L.

2018 "On Phoenicia's Trade Relations with Philistia and Judah under the Assyrian Hegemony: The Ceramic Evidence." Pages 186-215 in *The the southern Levant under Assyrian Domination.* Edited by S. Aster and A. Faust, University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns

Smith, A. D.

2004 *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity, 2004.

Smith, M.

2001 *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sparks, K.

1998 *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns.

Speiser, E. A.

1960 " 'People' and 'Nation' of Israel." *JBL* 79 (1960): 157-63.

Sperling, S.

1988 "KAI 24 Re-examined." Ugarit-Forschungen, no. 20 (1988): 323-37.

Soggin, J.

1997 *Das Buch Genesis: Kommentar.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Spruyt, H.

2013 "Empires, Past and Present: the Relevance of Empire as an Analytic Concept." Pages 19-40 in *Empire and International Order.* Edited by N. Parker, Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

Stager, L.

1985 "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel." *BASOR* 260 (1985):1–35.

1991 "When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon." *BAR* 17 (1991): 24-37, 40-43.

Steiner, M.

2014 "Moab during the Iron Age II Period." Pages 770-81 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE.* Edited by Margreet Steiner and A. Killebrew, Oxford:

Oxford University Press.

Steinkeller, P.

2014 “Marḫaši and Beyond: the Jeroft Civilization in the Historical Perspective.” Pages 691-707 in *“My Life Is like the Summer Rose”: Maurizio Tosi E L'archeologia Come Modo Di Vivere : Papers in Honour of Maurizio Tosi for His 70th Birthday*. Edited by C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, B. Genito and B. Cerasetti, Oxford, England: Archaeopress.

2017 *History, Texts and Art in Early Babylonia: Three Essays*. Boston: De Gruyter.

Forthcoming “The Sargonic and Ur III Empires.” in *The Oxford World History of Empire*. Edited by P. Bang, C. Bayly and W. Scheidel, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, E.

2001 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*, *732-332 BCE*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday.

Stone, B.

1995 “The Philistines and Acculturation.” *BASOR* 298 (1995): 7-32.

Strange, J.

2000 “The Philistine City-States.” Pages 129-40 in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-state Cultures: An Investigation.* Edited by M. H. Hansen, Copenhagen: Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.

Strawn, B. A.

2005 “Who's Listening to Whom?” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 37 (2005): 621-41.

Stürmer, M.

2002 *The German Empire: A Short History.* New York: Modern Library.

Tadmor, H.

1979 “The Decline of Empires in Western Asia ca. 1200 BCE.” Pages 1-14 in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)* Edited by F. M. Cross, Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research.

1991 “On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire.” Pages 419-35 in *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-fifth Birthday.* Edited by M. Mori, H. Ogawa and Y. Mamoru. Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz.

Talmon, S.

1986 “The Judean ʿAm Haʾareṣ,” in idem, *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel: Collected Studies* Jerusalem: Magnes. Originally published in *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies.* Edited by The World Union of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967.

Tang, J. and Jing, Z.

2009 “The Shang city and the Big City of Shang at Anyang.” *Antiquity* 9 (2009):70-90 [“Anyang de Shangyi he Dayishang.” *Kaogu* 9 (2009): 70-90.] (In Chinese)

Tao J.

1983 “Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Sung Images of the Khitans.” Pages 66-86 in Rossabi ed. *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries.* Edited by M. Rossabi, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Taylor, J.

2000 “The Third Intermediate Period.” Pages 324-64 in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt.* Edited by I. Shaw, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thames, J.

2011 “A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase ʿam Hāʾāreṣ in the Hebrew Bible." *JBL* 130 (2011): 109-25.

Thiel, W.

2000-2019 *1 Könige 17-22*. Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag Des Erziehungsvereins.

Thompson, R. J.

2013 *Terror of the Radiance: Assur Covenant to YHWH Covenant*. Fribourg; Göttingen: Academic Press; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Tigay, J. H.

1986 *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

1996 *Deuteronomy= [Devarim]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

Tilly, C.

2005 *Trust and Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Timm, S.

1989 *Zwischen Den Mächten: Studien Zu Historischen Denkmälern Und Texten*.Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Tønnesson, S. and Hans. Antlöv (eds.)

1996 *Asian Forms of the Nation*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.

Trigger, B.

2003 *Understanding Early Civilizations: a Comparative Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tropper, J.

1993 *Die Inschriften von Zincirli: Neue Edition und Vergleichende Grammatik des Phönizischen, Samaʾlischen und Aramäischen Textkorpus.* Münster: Ugarit-Verlag,.

Tyson, C.

2014 *Ammonites: Elites, Empires, and Sociopolitical Change (1000-500 BCE)*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Uelinger, C.

1990 *Weltreich und "eine Rede": eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung (Gen 11, 1–9)*. Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Universitätsverlag.

Ullendorff, E.

1961-62 "The Knowledge of Languages in the Old Testament." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44 (1961–2): 455–65.

Uziel, J. and Maeir, A. M.

2012 "The Location, Size and Periods of Settlement at Tell es-Safi/Gath: The Surface Survey Results." Pages 173-81 in *Tell es-Safi/Gath I: Report on the 1996-2005 Seasons.* Edited by A. Maeir. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Vanderhooft, D.

1995 "The Edomite Dialect and Script: a Review of Evidence." Pages 137-58 in *"You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother": Edom and Seir in History and Tradition.* Edited by D. Edelman, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

1999 *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets.* Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

van der Veen, P., Theis, C., and, Manfred, G.

2010 "Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Merenptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687." *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, vol. 2 No. 4 (2010):15-25.

van Driel, G.

2005 "Ethnicity, How to Cope with the Subject." Pages 1-10 in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Leiden, 1-4 July 2002*. Edited by W. H.van Soldt in Cooperation with R. Kalvelagen and D. Katz, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten.

van Seters, J.

1972 "The Terms 'Amorite' and 'Hittite' in the Old Testament." *VT* 22 (1972): 64-81.

Vogel, C.

2011 "This Far and Not a Step Further! The Ideological Concept of Ancient Egyptian Boundary Stelae." Pages 320-41 in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel, Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, Edited by S. Bar, D. Kahn and D. Shirley, Leiden: Brill.

von Grunebaum, G.E.

1963 "The Nature of Arab Unity Before Islam." *Arabica* 10 (1963): 5-23.

Wan, M.

2010 "The Evolution of Notions of Diplomacy in the Ming Dynasty: Ideas of 'Tianxia' and the State in the Decrees of Ming Tai Zu." *Journal of Ancient Civilizations*, no. 2, 2010:71-88. ["Ming Dai Waijiao Guannian de Yanjin: Ming Tai Zu Zhaoling Wenshu zhi suo Jian Tianxia Guojia Guan." *Gudai Wenming*, no. 2 2010:71-88.]

Wang, S.

2014 "China's First Empire?: Interpreting the Material Record of the Erligang Expansion." Pages 67-97 in *Art and Archaeology of the Erligang Civilization*. Edited by Kyle Steinke with Dora C.Y. Ching, Princeton: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University in Association with Princeton University Press.

Wang, Y.

1980 "Commentary of the Tang-Tubo (Tibet) Alliance Monument." *Historical Studies* 4 (1980):93-108. ["Tang Bo Hui Meng Bei Shu Shi." *Lishi Yanjiu* 4 (1980):93-108.]

Wang, Z.

2007 "The Du, Bi, Yi and Luo Structures of the Shang Dynasty and the Ruling Mechanisms of the Shang King." *Chinese Social Sciences* 4 (2007):184-203 ["Shang Dai Du Bi Yi Luo Jiegou he Shang Wang de Tongzhi Fangshi." Zhongguo Shehui Kexue 4 (2007):184-203.] (In Chinese)

Wang, Zhiping; Meng, P. and Zhang, J.

2014 *Epigraphic Sources and Dialect Geography of the Pre-Qin to Han Periods.* Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press.

Watanabe, K.

1987 *Die Adê-Vereidigung Anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann.

2014 "Esarhaddon's Succession Oath Documents Reconsidered in Light of the Tayinat Version." *Orient* 49 (2014): 145-70.

Waters, M. W.

2000 *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History.* Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

Wazana, N.

2003 "I Removed the Boundaries of Nations" (Isa 10:13): Border Shifts as a Neo-Assyrian Tool of Political Control in Hattu." *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies* 27 (2003):110-21. (In Hebrew)

2008 "From Biq'at to KTK: 'all Aram' in the Sefire Inscription in the Light of Amos 1:5." Pages 713-32 *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient near Eastern Literature, and Post:Biblical Judaism: Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*. Edited by C. Cohen, Winona Lake: Pennsylvania State University Press.

2013 *All the Boundaries of the Land : The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Weidner, E.

1923 *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien. Die Staatsverträge in akkadischer Sprache aus dem Archiv von Boghazköi* Boghazköi-Studien 8, Leipzig: Hinrichs.

1941 "Šilkan(ḫe)ni, König von Muṣri, ein Zeitgenosse Sargons II. Nach einem neuen Bruchstück der Prisma-Inschrift des Assyrischen Königs." *Archiv Für Orientforschung* 14 (1941): 40-53.

1966 "Assyrische Itinerare." *Archiv Für Orientforschung* 21 (1966): 42-46.

Weippert, M.

1973 "Menahem von Israel und seine Zeitgenossen in einer Steleninschrift des Assyrischen Königs Tiglathpileser III. aus dem Iran." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 89 (1973): 26-53.

1997 "Israélites, araméens et assyriens dans la Transjordanie Septentrionale." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, no. 113 (1997): 19-38.

Wen, J.

1982 "Han Chinese under Tibetan Rule." *Tibetan Studies* 3 (1982):30-39. ["Tubo Zhi Xia de Han Ren." *Xizang Yanjiu* 3 (1982):30-39.]

Werlitz, J.

2002 *Die Bücher der Könige*. Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar. Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk.

Westermann, C.

1989 *Genesis 12-36*. 2. Aufl. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag.

Whybray, R. N.

1975 *Isaiah 40-66*. London: Oliphants.

Wilhelm, G.

1993 "Sura/i in Karkamiš und das urartäische Gentiliz Surele." *SMEA* 31 (1993) 135-41.

Williamson, H.

1982 *1 and 2 Chronicles. New Century Bible Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI.; London: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., ; Marshall, Morgan & Scott Pub..

Wildberger, H.

1980 *1 Jesaja 1-12.*, verb. Aufl. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Winckler, H.

1889 *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons.* Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer.

Winter I. J.

1973 "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C., with Special

Reference to Ivory Carving." PhD. Diss. Columbia University.

Wolff, H.

1990 *Dodekapropheton*.4. Aufl. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Wöhrle, J.

2018 " 'Woe to the Bloody City' (Nah 3:1): Postcolonial Perspectives on the Image of Assyria in the Book of Nahum and Its Early Reception History." *Semitica* 60 (2018): 537-55.

Wright, C.J.H.

1992 "Family." in *ABD*, Edited by D. N. Freedman et al, New York: Doubleday.

Wyatt, N.

1999 "Astarte עשתרת." Pages 109-14 in *DDD*.

Xu, J.

1992 *A History of the Han People.* Wuhan: Wuhan University Press. [*Han Minzu Fazhan Shi.* Wuhan: Wuhan Daxue Chubanshe]

Yamada, S.

2000 *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmanesar III Relating to His Campaigns in the West.*Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Yates, R.

1997 "The City-State in Ancient China." Pages 71-90 in *Archaeology of the City-State: Cross-Cultural Approaches*. Edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Thomas H. Charlton, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Yoffee, N.

2004 *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Young, I.

1992 "The Style of the Gezer Calendar and Some 'Archaic Biblical Hebrew' Passages." *Vetus Testamentum* 42 (1992): 362-75.

Younger, K. L.

2007 "Some of What's New in Old Aramaic Epigraphy." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70 (2007): 139-46.

2014 "The Scripts of North Syria in the Early First Millennium: the Inscription of Yariri (KARKAMIŠ A15b) Once Again." Pages 169-83 in *Transeuphratène 46 (= Volume d'hommages pour André Lemaire).* Edited by. Jean-Marie Durand and Josette Elayi. Paris: Gabalda.

2016 Younger, K. Lawson. *A Political History of the Arameans: from Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2016.

Younker, R.

1999 “The Emergence of the Ammonites.” Pages 189-218 in *Ancient Ammon*. Edited by B. MacDonald and R. Younker, Leiden; Boston: Brill.

2014 “Ammon during the Iron Age II Period.” Pages 757-69 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE.* Edited by Margreet Steiner and A. Killebrew, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yun, I.

2008 “The Aramaic and Akkadian Bilingual Inscription from Tell Fekheriyeh and the Dialects of Old Aramaic.” PhD. Diss. Johns Hopkins University.

Zadok, R.

2015 “Israelites and Judaeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 b.c.e.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment.” *BASOR* 374 (2015): 159–89.

Zehnder, M.

2007 “Die ‚Aramaisierung‘Assyriens als Folge der Expansion des assyrischen Reiches.” Pages 417-38 in *“... der seine Lust hat am Wort des Herrn!“, Festschrift für Ernst Jenni*, Edited by Jürg Luchsinger, Hans-Peter Mathys and Markus Saur, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Zhao, Z.

2011 “Study on the Boundaries of Northern Frontier in the Late Years of the Qin Dynasty and the Early Years of the Former Han Dynasty.” *Journal of Chinese Historical Geography* 3 (2011):68-80. [“Qin Mo Han Chu Beibu Bianjie Kaolue.” *Zhongguo Lishi Dili Luncong* 3 (2011):68-80.]

Zhou, S.

2010 “On the Issues of Vassalage and Sovereign of the ‘Four Lands’ from the Perspective of the ‘Waifu’ System.” *China’s Borderland History and Geography Studies* 3 (2010):1-8 [“Cong Waifu Zhi Kan Shang Dai Si Tu de Fanshu Tizhi yu Zhuquan Xingtai.” *Zhongguo Bianjiang Shi Di Yanjiu* 3 (2010):1-8.] (In Chinese)

Zilberg, P.

2018 “The Assyrian Provinces of the the southern Levant: Sources, Administration, and Control.” Pages 56-88 in *The the southern Levant under Assyrian Domination.* Edited by S. Aster and A. Faust, University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns.

Zimansky, P. E.

1985 *Ecology and Empire: the Structure of the Urartian State.* Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Zimmerli, W.

1969/1979 *Ezechiel*. Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament ; Bd. 13. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.

Zürn, M.

2007 “Institutionalisierte Ungleichheit in

der Weltpolitik. Jenseits der Alternative ‚Global Governance, versus ‚American Empire‘ in Politische Vierteljahresschrift.” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Vereinigung Politische Wissenschaft* 48/ (2007): 680-704.