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The Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem: Some Reflections

In der Geschichte des assyrischen Staates blieb Babylonien ein ständiges und vielschichtiges Problem, das während der Periode der neuassyrischen sargonidischen Könige (8. bis 7. Jh. v. Chr.) besonders akut wurde. Nach gängiger Geschichtsauffassung standen die Assyrer zumindest vor einem Verwaltungsproblem: Wie sollte Babylonien nach seiner Eingliederung in das assyrische Reich verwaltet werden? Wie konnte man Bestrebungen, die assyrische Herrschaft abzuschütteln, in Schach halten? Umstritten ist dagegen die Frage, ob der Konflikt mit Babylonien einen kulturellen Aspekt hatte und in welcher Weise die herrschende assyrische Elite davon beeinflusst wurde. Dieser Aufsatz nimmt diese Frage wieder auf unter Berücksichtigung der früheren, mittlassyrischen Beziehungen mit Babylonien. Die These ist, daß trotz des wichtigen kulturellen Einflusses, den Babylonien auf die sargonidische Führerschaft ausübte, diese darauf nicht einfach mit Begeisterung oder heftigem Widerstand reagierte, sondern sich bemühte, diesen Einfluß zu absorbieren und ihn so zu ersetzen.

I.

The Babylonian imprint on Mesopotamia, culturally speaking, appears to have been so pervasive that not occasionally there has been the tendency to operate as if Babylonian and Mesopotamian culture were essentially the same. To be sure, homage has always been paid to the other main actor on the Mesopotamian scene in the historical periods, Assyria. But of real attention Assyria has received far less than Babylonia; and one can still find traces of the old view, whose roots lie in the Hebrew Bible, that the Assyrian achievement embraced little more than imperial, military conquest. Or as the archaeologist Jacques de Morgan put it, around the turn of the century: *L'Assyrien n'est ni un artiste, ni un littérateur, ni un juriste. C'est un parasite, appuyant l'organisation du pillage sur une formidable puissance militaire.*'

Fortunately, there have always been those to protest against such one-sided assessments; and particularly in the last twenty or so years, a new round of studies, in such areas as language, literature, art, and religion, have pointed up features which do not seem to have parallels in the Babylonian south. The result has been a growing appreciation for the status of Assyrian culture in its own right, and for the extent of its continuity back even into prehistoric times.

Withal, a good deal of the character of Assyrian civilization, in this long-term continuity, is still to be clarified. An important part of the matter is the native self-understanding - or, more precisely, given the available sources, the self-understanding of the ruling elites in court and temple. To grasp this in its overlapping varieties, however, we cannot focus just on the indigenous, unparalleled features in Assyria. As with any group, we must ask also about influences from the outside. And when we do so, we are brought back inevitably to Babylonia.

For if Assyria can no longer be seen as a barbarian »parasite« of Babylonia, one must nevertheless admit that the Assyrian elites had a special sensitivity to Babylonia and things Babylonian, which they displayed toward no other outsider. The manifestations of this have been noted many times: the composition, for example, of official Assyrian texts in basically literary Babylonian dialects; the permeation of the Assyrian pantheon by gods of Sumero-Babylonian origin; the adoption by the Assyrian kings of Babylonian royal titles; occasionally, even the direct assumption of the Babylonian throne upon the conquest of Babylonia - the only victim of Assyrian conquest so honored. But what such manifestations mean for the self-understanding of the Assyrian elites needs further study.

Most revealing in this regard are a series of episodes, between the high Middle Assyrian period in the thirteenth century B.C. and the end of the Neo-Assyrian in the seventh, in which Assyrian imperial expansion directly collided with the south. And of these episodes the most informative, by reason of its length and the abundance and variety of its sources, is the century of the four Sargonid kings: Sargon II (721-705 B.C.), Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), and Assurbanipal (668-627 B.C.).

II.

What, then, was the »Babylonian problem« for these Sargonids? At minimum, modern scholarship agrees, it was a political and military issue: how to govern a Babylonia which shortly before the Sargonids, under Tiglath-pileser III, had been incorporated into the Assyrian empire, only to prove a highly troublesome vassal. Thanks to a number of recent studies, we can follow in some detail how the Sargonids met this challenge: ruling Babylonia now by loyal natives, by Assyrian deputies, including royal heirs, or directly by taking the Babylonian throne themselves; then by setting native Babylonians in the older cities against »tribal« groups of Chaldeans and Arameans also in the area; lastly, by large-scale measures toward the capital and most important city of Babylonia, Babylon. The latter included Sennacherib's destruction of the city in 689, then its comprehensive rebuilding under Esar-

haddon and Asurbanipal, ca. 680-669, with new, though less severe destruction by Ashurbanipal in 648, in the course of crushing the Babylonian insurrection led by his brother, Samassumukin.²

The tortuous persistence of the Sargonid kings on the governance issue bespeaks its great importance for them. Clearly, Babylonia, once annexed, was just too powerful and strategically located a vassal to be lost without irrevocable harm to the rest of the empire and to the Assyrian heartland as well - the heartland, by this point, needing the empire far more than the empire needed it. But in talking about Babylonia as a problem of governance, one should not miss the ideological actions and expressions - most of them, as one would expect, of a religious import - which permeate our sources on the matter. Many of these are well known; but as their significance is still disputed, perhaps another look at them will not be superfluous.

We begin with a brief review of the principal phenomena:³

1) The Assyrian equation of the national god, Assur, with the Babylonian cosmogonic deity, Ansar, such that Assur can now be found written as Ansar. This equation, obviously facilitated by the phonetic similarity between the two names, is first attested in the reign of Sargon II and continues through the remaining Sargonids. The texts for it come especially from the old Assyrian capital at Assur; and it is there as well that Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, erects a statue to Assur-Ansar.⁴

2) Sennacherib's assertion, in the Bavarian inscription, that his attack on Babylon (689) »completely blotted out« the city by flood to its »foundations«, destroying with it Babylon's temples and even smashing its gods, i. e., the divine statues. And all this was done »so that in days to come the site of that city, (its) temples and gods might not be remembered.«⁵ Particularly striking here is the smashing of the gods - it is also noted in a foundation stela from Assur⁶ - for we should have expected Sennacherib to say, following the standard Mesopotamian justification of victory, that he carried off the gods to his homeland (thus demonstrating their approval, without which he could not have done this).

3) The Bavarian inscription, however, though not the Assur stela, does not mention the principal Babylonian god, Marduk, and his son Nabu: they appear, in fact, in the introductory list of gods, headed by the Assyrian A3šur, who are invoked by Sennacherib as his guardians.⁷ This mention is all the more significant, as Sennacherib seldom refers to Marduk and Nabu in his official texts, by comparison with his predecessor, Sargon II, and his successors, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.⁶

- 4) Similarly, as against these three other kings, Sennacherib does not take for himself the Babylonian royal titles.⁹
- 5) Although the Bavian and Assur stela texts affirm the destruction of the Babylonian divine statues and property, later Assyrian texts record that Sennacherib did bring out from Babylon the throne of Marduk and the ceremonial bed Marduk shared with his consort, Sarpanitu, and set them up in the Assur temple in Assur for Assur-Ansar and his consort, the originally Babylonian goddess Nina¹⁰
- 6) Following his destruction of Babylon, Sennacherib renovates in Assur what he calls a long neglected shrine for the celebration of the New Year's festival, a bit *akiti*. Intended for Assur-Ansar, it is re-established, apparently in Babylonian fashion, on the outskirts of the city; and in it, Sennacherib affirms, he places some of the »dust« from the destroyed Babylon."
- 7) Connected with the establishment of this *bit akiti* are several compositions, two of which are particularly informative: a) a document dedicating persons to service in the shrine, and confirming that the center of the cult there is the god Assur-Ansar, whose statue Sennacherib has fashioned and who is »the king of the totality of the gods, who creates himself, the father of the great gods ... «;¹² and b) the description of the reliefs on the gate of the *bit akiti*, which depict the dramatic battle between chaos and order known from the Babylonian myth of *En ûma ells*, except that here the forces of order are led not by the Babylonian Marduk, but by the Babylonized Assyrian Assur-Ansar.¹³
- 8) These gate descriptions clearly presume a knowledge not simply of *Enlîma ells*, but of *Enûma ells* in the version recovered from the city of Assur, which likewise substitutes Assur-Ansar for Marduk.¹⁴ (The version from Nineveh follows the Babylonian original and retains Marduk.) It may even be that this Assur version was created at the same time as the *bit akiti* of Sennacherib, though this cannot be proved. At the least, its use and elaboration of the Assur-Ansar equation point to a date somewhere in the Sargonid period.
- 9) One more composition may fit here as well: a fragmentary and difficult cultic commentary, which describes some kind of captivity of Marduk under the direction of Assur and other gods.¹⁵ It is extant in versions from Assur and Kalhu, and from Nineveh; and a Sargonid date, after Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon, is indicated by references to Assur as Ansar and to the recent removal of Marduk from the New Year's festivities in Babylon.

Whether the composition in fact belongs to Sennacherib in his post-Babylon years is disputed. Frymer-Kensky has lately argued for a date at the beginning of the reigns of Assurbanipal and Samassumukin, when the Marduk statue was reinstated in Babylon.¹⁶ But the final lines of the text, which she holds to reflect that event, are obscure, and do not readily fit with it.

10) A letter addressed to Esarhaddon, shortly after his assumption of power as Sennacherib's successor. It recalls to him the omen of kingship which he received while still the crown prince: »Esarhaddon will rebuild Babylon and reconstruct Esagila (= the sanctuary of Marduk in Babylon).«¹⁷

11) As noted *sub* 3) and 4), Esarhaddon, followed by Assurbanipal, resumes the use of various Babylonian royal titles in his inscriptions, as well as the mention, rather frequent, of Marduk and Nabu.

12) Esarhaddon has numerous inscriptions composed dealing with Babylon, and they are deposited in Assur and Nineveh as well as in Babylon itself.¹⁸ These emphasize Esarhaddon's elaborate reconstruction of Babylon and its temples, and his restoration of its divine statues and its people, now with all their rights and honors. But in the process several counterpoints appear: a) the prior destruction of Babylon is explained by reference not to Sennacherib, but to the sins of the Babylonians and the willing abandonment of them by Marduk; b) restoration occurs only when the omens become favorable and the Babylonian gods friendly again to their people; c) before the divine statues, especially of Marduk, are returned, they must be fashioned or refashioned - or »born«, in the language of the texts - in the city Assur, in the temple of »the father of gods, Aggur(Angar)«. ¹⁹ Marduk is, in fact, said to be in Assur as the son of Asšur-Ansar, or, as a later inscription, from Aggurbanipal, explains: he »took his seat ... at the feet of the father who begot him.«²⁰

13) Finally, there is the establishment by Esarhaddon's successor, Aggurbanipal, of his monumental library collections in Nineveh, intended to group the bulk of Babylonian literature with the bulk of Assyrian in one setting. Much of the collecting effort, as Parpola's recent work has made clear, occurs in the wake of Aggurbanipal's siege of Babylon and defeat of the Babylonian insurrection led by Samaggumukin.²¹

The actions and expressions we have reviewed all involve the reaction of the Assyrian monarch, and his associated elites, to Babylonian cultural traditions, especially religion. In assessing such actions and expressions historically, we must avoid several extremes. On the one hand, we cannot trivialize them as merely the inconsequential *Spielerei* of isolated court scribes and priests. To do so would not explain, for example, the abrupt changes in the uses of Babylonian royal titles and in the mention of Marduk and Nabu, or the establishment of the *bit akiti* and its rites outside of Assur, all of which bespeak the direct hand of the king. We also cannot assume that even if the king was involved, these actions and expressions were only cynical gestures on his part to placate some kind of public opinion, and reflected no real concern with the effects of Babylonian culture.²² Such cynicism seems incompatible, again, with the effort expended by Sennacherib on the *bit akin*, a central element in the major religious festival of the year, or with the omen of kingship emphasizing the rebuilding of the Esagila temple of Marduk - an omen given to Esarhaddon, whose correspondence and inscriptions are flooded with references attesting to the importance of omens for him.

These actions and expressions, thus, should be taken seriously, as manifestations of the impact of Babylonian culture on the elites of Sargonid Assyria. Yet we cannot overdraw the significance involved. For example, to judge Babylonian culture as *the* factor determining Sargonid policies would be to ignore other, perhaps even more pervasive issues: the practical challenges of governing Babylonia, described earlier; the simple desire to wreak vengeance on the south for killing Assyrian deputies and so refusing to remain a loyal, quiet vassal; the rivalries among the Assyrian royal princes for succession to the throne; etc. We also cannot say that the Babylonian cultural impact was such as to divide the Sargonid elites neatly into »pro-Babylonian« and »anti-Babylonian/nationalist« parties which alternated in power: Sargon II being pro-; Sennacherib, nationalist; Esarhaddon pro-again; and Assurbanipal, nationalist.²³ For while Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, for instance, act differently toward Babylonia, it is plain, as their actions and expressions show, that the first did not avoid nor the second prefer everything Babylonian. Sennacherib's Bavian inscription, after all, affirms the destruction of the Babylonian divine statues at one point and invokes Marduk and Nabu at another.²⁴ And in the texts where Esarhaddon talks about the return of the statues to Babylonia, he makes it clear that they must first be »born« under the aegis of Assur-Ansar.

How, then, should we understand the actions and expressions we have been discussing and the cultural impact they reflect? I should like to propose

that they are the manifestations of a particularly Assyrian ideology, consciously playing upon its Babylonian foundation. In promoting this, the key figure among the Sargonid kings appears to have been Sennacherib, and the basic thesis to be advanced, that Assyria was to be the new center of Mesopotamian culture, built literally upon the ruins of the old center in Babylonia. In other words, Sargonid policy toward Babylonia had as one of its aims to »out-Babylonize« - but with an Assyrian twist - the Babylonians.

Perhaps »ideology« is too rigid a term for what I am suggesting, since the actions and expressions at issue do not fit together into a perfect system, indeed exhibit different emphases and tensions. But if we think at least of a compelling ideological tendency, our phenomena begin to make sense and even to reveal an underlying coherence. For one thing, we can understand why the Sargonids did not simply equate their national god, Assur, with the principal Babylonian deity, Marduk, but instead with Ansar, the deity who was older in the Babylonian reckoning of divine descent. The point was not to show Assur's *interchangeability* with Marduk, but his *superiority* - older is better - and yet to do so within the Babylonian system of theogony.

The textual or what might be called the »scriptural« side of this argument appears in various texts we have surveyed. Thus, in the Assur version of the Babylonian *Enûma êlls*, Assur-Ansar's place in the divine order is laid out. Significantly, the Assur reviser leaves intact the opening section of Tablet I, which presents the primordial genealogy:

Apsu = Tiamat

Lahmu = Lahamu

Ansar = Kisar

Anu

Ea (= Damkina)²⁵

It is not until I: 81-84, when the Babylonian text introduces Marduk, the son of Ea and Damkina, that the reviser substitutes Assur, written Ansar, the son of Lahmu and Lahamu.²⁶ Assur appears, in short, as Ansar *redivivus*; and the effect is to call up the beginning of the text and to make us see that Assur has not merely replaced Marduk, but is, indeed, superior to him as well as to Anu, Ea, and Damkina - i. e., to all the gods in the list who are actually worshipped in Babylonia. In this new scheme, Assur's only superiors are the cultically otiose deities, Apsu, Tiamat, Lahmu, and Lahamu.

Two other texts we have noted demote even these deities, putting Assur at the head of the genealogy. Thus, in the document dedicating personnel to the Assur *bit akiti*, Assur-Ansar is said to be the god »who creates himself, the father of the great gods«,²⁷ while in the captivity of Marduk commentary, the opening lines of *Enûma êlls* are quoted, but here in a version that substitutes Assur-Ansar for Apsu and Tiamat as the original deity: »When heaven and earth were not yet created, Assur (ANSAR) (already)

existed.«²⁸ As for Marduk, whether or not the captivity text alludes to his return to Babylon, what is central in it is that he is held prisoner under Assur's direction, before whom, it appears, he has to answer charges.

These texts, then, form the »scriptural« side of the argument for Assur's superiority within the Babylonian divine order. The practical or »ritual« steps, as others of our sources indicate, are taken by Sennacherib in two stages:

1) The destruction of Babylon. The unusual emphasis in Sennacherib's inscriptions on the utter rooting out of the city's foundations and the smashing of its gods (statues) and temples, signals that this is no routine conquest, but an effort to neutralize, on its own soli, the imperium of Babylon and its gods. Consistent with this intent is Sennacherib's avoidance of Babylonian royal titles and infrequent mention of Marduk and Nabu. And the fact that one of the few mentions of the two gods comes in the Bavian account of the destruction of Babylon, where they appear among Sennacherib's divine guardians, may be meant to show their own acquiescence in the loss of their home base.

2) The transfer of the Babylonian imperium to Assyria, especially to the city of Assur. Here we should understand a) Sennacherib's removal of the throne and bed of Marduk and Sarpanitu to Assur for Assur-Ansar and Ninlil; and b) his reactivation, in Babylonian fashion, of the *bit akiti* outside of Assur, with its several new features: the »dust« of the destroyed Babylon, whose deposit in the shrine, as we may now suggest, serves to consecrate it; a place for the statue of Assur-Ansar; and the gate reliefs, which put on public display, as it were, the new »scripture« created by the Assur version of *En ima elii*. In none of these projects, significantly, does Marduk play an active role. Indeed, whatever the real fate of his statue in the destruction of Babylon, he apparently enjoys no worship in Assyrian official circles during the latter part of Sennacherib's reign. Ideologically, thus, he remains neutralized, even as the traditions of and around him are absorbed into the new Babylonized Assyrian realm.

The ideology we have been discussing must have been aimed primarily at the Assyrian ruling elites. But within these, it will have been noticed, Sennacherib's activities assumed a special role for the city of Assur, not for Nineveh or Kalah. This is no accident. As the oldest Assyrian capital and still its ultimate center, Assur was the ultimate conservator of the Assyrian past and so formed the counterpoint to Babylon's well-known venerability. But more was involved. The elites in Assur, as other sources intimate,²⁹ appear not to have liked being displaced by the newer capitals of Nineveh, Kalah, and (briefly) Dur-garrukin, and to have had doubts about certain excesses com-

mitted in the realization of the policy of imperial expansion. Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon may have been seen as one of those excesses; and Sennacherib, accordingly, may have been anxious to demonstrate that the destruction meant a revived place for Assur in the new order.

In any case, some kind of uneasiness over the fate of Babylon and its cultural traditions must have developed in Assyria as well as, of course, in Babylon. Otherwise we cannot explain the concern and effort with which Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal sought to restore the southern capital and its shrines, and to proclaim this restoration - both to the Assyrian and to the Babylonian elites - in official inscriptions, in the resumption of Babylonian royal titles, and in the renewed mention of Marduk and Nabu. Yet in turning away from Sennacherib's policy of neutralizing Babylon, his successors never condemn him for it officially,³⁰ and do not abandon the other focus on Assyria as the *Kulturzentrum*. Thus, the references in their texts to Marduk as the son of A sur-Angar, under whose aegis he and the other Babylonian gods are »born«. And thus, the building up of the Assurbanipal library in Nineveh - the fact that much of it comes as war booty from Babylon is especially significant in this context³¹ - as the greatest collection in Assyria and Babylonia.



There is, in sum, a certain continuity to the ideology we have been examining, despite its various twists and turns. What is equally important is that it did not appear only in the Sargonid period. Something of the same set of problems and responses surfaces at an earlier phase of the Assyrian-Babylonian encounter, when our sources are also rather full: the high Middle Assyrian period, especially the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I in the second half of the thirteenth century B.C.³³ Here, too, the god Aggur is exalted over the Babylonian Marduk in Babylonian theogonic terms, though as the »Assyrian Enlil« (71111 *assurû*), not as Aasgar. Here, too, Babylon the city is sacked, its Marduk statue removed (though not destroyed or disposed of), and a Babylonian-style *akitu* festival instituted in the old capital at Assur (in honor of Marduk, however, whose worship is not avoided). Here, too, is a proliferation of Assyrian literary compositions, commenting on the events of the day and built on, but creatively reworking Babylonian themes and structures from an Assyrian perspective, the most notable of which is the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. And finally, here, too, is an effort to create a centralized literary collection in Assyria, by gathering up - also in the wake of the sack of Babylon - the principal tablets in the Babylonian libraries.

The parallels just enumerated seem too close to be fortuitous, and that

suspicion is happily confirmed by one last fact that we may note: among the booty taken by Sennacherib in his destruction of Babylon was a Babylonian (Kassite) royal seal, which, he indicates, he brought out because it had been removed 600 years before by Tukulti-Ninurta I in his sack of the city, but then returned in the interim.

The point, I hope, is clear: Tukulti-Ninurta's response to Babylonia and its culture, and that of the Neo-Assyrian Sargonid kings are not merely parallel; they are, at the most, crests in a centuries-long continuum of confrontation between Assyria and Babylonia. The very reappearance of the cultural issue in that confrontation suggests that it was an intimate part of it, not an isolated fantasy of a few native scholars or a cynical, propagandistic excrescence of the official documents. The Assyrian ruling elites, thus, had to deal with Babylonia not only politically and militarily in the narrower sense, but also culturally - to find a way to neutralize and appropriate what they evidently felt was a Babylonian cultural superiority. Indeed, in the final analysis, it is artificial to keep political, military, and cultural issues separate. They interpenetrated; and it was precisely the fact that the Babylonian problem was not merely a technical, administrative one, but challenged on so many levels, going straight to the heart of the self-understanding of the Assyrian elites, that made it so pressing and so intractable 35

Notes

Abbreviations follow those in R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur I-III* (Berlin: 1967-1975).

1 Quoted from R. Labat, *CRAIB* 1972, 670.

2 E. g., J.A. Brinkman, *JCS* 25 (1973), 89-95; G. Frame, *Babylonia 689-627 B.C.: A Political History* (Ph.D., Chicago, 1981); L.D. Levine, *JCS* 34 (1982), 28-58.

3 The following list is not meant to be exhaustive. See generally H. Tadmor, *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958), 150-163; B. Landsberger, *BBEA*. I am also most grateful to Prof. H. Tadmor for a number of illuminating discussions of these phenomena, especially for bringing to my attention and explicating the two *bit akiti* texts described below as No. 7: cf. his paper »Monarchy and Elites in Assyria and Babylonia,« forthcoming in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (State University of New York Press). I should note, however, that the connections between these two texts and the Assur version of *Enûma ellû*, proposed later in the present paper, are my own responsibility.

4 Tadmor, *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958), 159-160; *idem*, *JCS* 12 (1958), 82.

5 D.D. Luckenbill, *Senn.*, 83-84:48-54.

6 *Ibid.*, 137:36-37.

7 *Ibid.*, 78:1.

- 8 R. Borger, *BiOr* 29 (1972), 34.
- 9 J.A. Brinkmann, *JAOS* 103 (1983), 35.
- 10 Landsberger, *BBEA*, 25-26.
- 11 Luckenbill, *Senn.*, 135-139; E. Ebeling, *SPAT*, 3-5; G. van Driel, *Cult*, 57-58, 163.
- 12 Ebeling, *SPAT*, 4-5:7-8.
- 13 Luckenbill, *Senn.*, 139-142.
- 14 H. Zimmern, *MVAG* 21 (1916), 213-225.
- 15 T. Frymer-Kensky, *JAOS* 103 (1983), 131-141, with review of previous studies.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 140-141.
- 17 The letter is *ABL* 1216. See, e. g., R. Labat, *RA* 53 (1959), 113-118 and S. Parpola, in B. Alster (ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (Copenhagen, 1980), 179-180: n. 41.
- 18 R. Borger, *Asarh.*; Brinkman, *JAOS* 103 (1983), 35-42.
- 19 Borger, *Asarh.*, 83:24, 35.
- 20 M. Streck, *Assurb.* II, 242-243:23-25; 244-245:36-41.
- 21 S. Parpola, *JNES* 42 (1983), especially 10-12.
- 22 Landsberger, *BBEA*, 15-16, *passim*; less extremely, P. Garelli, in A. Finet (ed.), *La voix de l'opposition en Mésopotamie* (Brussels, 1973), 193-197. For a reaction to Landsberger, see Borger, *BiOr* 29 (1972), especially 35-36.
- 23 Discussion of representative opinions in Landsberger, *BBEA*, 14-16. Tadmor, *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958), 150-163, tends in this direction, but is more careful and nuanced, *pace* some of the criticisms of Garelli, in *La voix* (above n. 22), 193-197.
- 24 Garelli, in *La voix* (above n. 22), 197-198, though he draws different conclusions.
- 25 E. Ebeling, *KAR* No. 118: obv.
- 26 *Ibid.*, No. 117: rev 3-6 (= I: 81-84).
- 27 Ebeling, *SPAT*, 4-5: 7-8.
- 28 Frymer-Kensky, *JAOS* 103 (1983), 134, 136:53*-54.
- 29 Garelli, in *La voix* (above n. 22), 191, 209-210; A.L. Oppenheim, in H.D. Lasswell *et al.* (eds.), *Propaganda and Communication in World History* (Honolulu, 1979), 123-133.
- 30 A possible exception may occur in a psalm to Nabu, *STT I*: No. 65, as interpreted by I.M. Diakonoff and E. Reiner (I.M. Diakonoff, in *AS* 16 [Chicago, 1965], 344: n. 9).
- 31 Even so, A1i;urbanipal's siege of Babylon in 648 had neither the goal nor the result of obliterating the city, as in Sennacherib's case.
- 32 One is tempted to include here as well the fact that despite Esarhaddon's claims or promises of doing so, the main statue of Marduk was not returned to Babylon until the reigns of his sons, Allurbanipal and S.ama ,Iumukin. Many reasons probably were involved in this, but could not one of them have been Esarhaddon's hesitancy to give back to the citizens of Babylon their central cultural symbol, which might prove a rallying point for new trouble, both from them and from discontented Assyrian elites? In other words, would not Marduk's continued residence in Assur have been »living« proof of the ideology of Assyria as cultural - and political - center? On this possibility, it becomes significant that the Marduk statue is returned only at the accession of an *Assyrian* royal son, SamaSIumukin, as Babylonian king..

33 P. Machinist, *CBQ* 38 (1976), 455-477, with references to other studies.

34 E.F. Weidner, *ITN*, 37-38: n. 29.

35 What we have been describing was not, of course, unique to Assyria. Potentially illuminating analogies can be observed, for example, in the history of the Roman advance into the eastern Greek world during the second and first centuries B.C. For a concise orientation, see M. Crawford, *The Roman Republic* (London, 1984), 74, 84-89, 112-113.