

From the Foundations to the Crenellations

Essays on Temple Building
in the Ancient Near East
and Hebrew Bible

Edited by
Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny

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Temple Building in Assyria

Evidence from Royal Inscriptions

Jamie Novotny, Philadelphia

It is clear from the known corpus of royal inscriptions that the Assyrians were proud of their building and restoration projects, especially of work on temples in Assur and Nineveh. The deeds of governors of Assur, vice-regents of Aššur, and kings of Assyria are recorded on numerous objects that were displayed or deposited in the gods' earthly residences; in the case of texts written (or stamped) on bricks, records of the king's achievements were incorporated into the structure of the building. The sources, now in museums and private collections around the world, are testaments to the greatness that was Assyria and provide us only with information that royal image-makers considered important to their primary intended audience: the god or goddess whose temple or sanctuary was being built, expanded, renovated, or decorated.¹ The stage(s) of building deemed suitable to be recorded vary from reign to reign or project to project, and texts seldom provide a complete picture of a project from start to finish; in some cases, this is due to the fragmentary nature of the sources.

This chapter intends to provide an overview of temple building, enlargement, restoration, and decoration from the perspective of governors of Assur, vice-regents of Aššur, and kings of Assyria from the time of Zarriqum (Ur III Period) until the reign of Sîn-šarru-iškun (ca. 627–612). The aim of this preliminary research is to examine the various stages of building from the initiation of the project to the con-

¹ For editions and translations of Assyrian royal inscriptions, see D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (=Senn; OIP 2; Chicago 1924); D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols. (=ARAB; Chicago 1926–1927); R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (=Asarh.; AfO Beiheft 9; Graz 1956); RIMA 1; RIMA 2; A. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen 1994); H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria. Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* (Jerusalem 1994); RIMB 2 pp. 143–270; R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften* (=BIWA; Wiesbaden 1996); RIMA 3; E. Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sennacherib-Inschriften* (=Einleitung; AfO Beiheft 26; Vienna 1997); and A. Fuchs, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr. nach Prismenfragmenten aus Ninive und Assur* (=SAAS 8; Helsinki 1998). For studies on the genre, see A. K. Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," *Orientalia* 49 (1980) pp. 140–194; J. Renger, "Königsinschriften [B. Akkadisch]," *RLA* 6 pp. 71–76 §11; H. Tadmor, "Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* (=Assyria 1995; Helsinki 1997) pp. 325–338; and F. M. Fales, "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Newer Horizons," *SAAB* 13 (1999–2001) pp. 115–144.

cluding ceremonies. The present chapter, however, does not intend to be a complete study on the subject.²

Reasons for Building/Restoring

Before or after recording the details of a particular project, the scribes responsible for the king's *res gestae* often added a statement giving the reason(s) for building, renovating, enlarging, and/or decorating the temple, sanctuary, or shrine. This tradition was maintained until the reign of Sîn-šarru-iškun, the last king of Assyria to rule from Nineveh. From earliest to latest, some reasons for working on temples are:

- 1 For the life of oneself and/or the lives of others. It was common for Old Assyrian vice-regents to build a temple for the sake of their own life, (the life of) the temple's deity, and the life (or well-being) of the city Assur.³ On one occasion, a governor of Assur (Zarriqum) even constructed a building for the life of a king of Ur (Amar-Suena). Few Middle and Neo-Assyrian kings mention (re)building or renovating temples for these reasons: Aššur-uballiṭ I, Adad-nārārī III (810–783), Sennacherib (704–681), Esarhaddon (680–669), and Assurbanipal (668–631), however, make this claim.⁴
- 2 Divine request. Few rulers state that a deity requested work on a temple. The best known examples appear in inscriptions of the early Old Assyrian ruler Šalim-aḫum, the Middle Assyrian kings Tukultī-Ninurta I and Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076), and the Sargonid king Esarhaddon. Šalim-aḫum states that Aššur requested of him a temple.⁵ The scribes of Tukultī-Ninurta I claim the Assyrian

² For studies on Assyrian building projects (including temples), see G. van Driel, *The Cult of Aššur* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 13; Assen 1969); B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel* (Studia Pohl, Series Maior 10; Rome 1981); S. Lackenbacher, *Le roi bâtisseur. Les récits de construction assyriens des origines à Teglathphalasar III* (Paris 1982); V. (A.) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (=Exalted House; JSOTSup 115; Sheffield 1992); S. W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE 10; Leiden, Boston, and Köln 2002); and H. D. Galter, "Geschichte als Bauwerk: Der Aššurtempel und das assyrische Geschichtsbewusstsein," in G. Frame and L. Wilding (eds.), *From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea: Studies on the History of Assyria and Babylonia in Honour of A.K. Grayson* (PIHANS 101; Leiden 2004) pp. 117–135. Of course, R. S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (=Foundation Deposits; YNER 2; New Haven and London 1968) contains valuable information on the subject.

³ For example, RIMA 1 p. 9 A.O.1003.2001 (Zarriqum), p. 14 A.O.31.1 (Šalim-aḫum), p. 15 A.O.32.1:1–13 (Ilu-šūma), p. 22 A.O.33.2:1–14 (Ērišum I), p. 86 A.O.60.4:7 (Aššur-nārārī I), and p. 98 A.O.65.1:3 (Aššur-rabi I). After the time of Šamšī-Adad I and his sons, rulers state they built temples for "the well-being of his city" (*šalam ālišu*) rather than "the life of his city" (*balāt ālišu*).

⁴ Luckenbill, Senn. p. 150 no. I22:4–6; RIMA 1 p. 114 A.O.73.5:14 (Aššur-uballiṭ I); RIMA 3 p. 220 A.O.104.14:5–6 (Adad-nārārī III); and RIMB 2 p. 173 B.6.31.9:9 (Esarhaddon) and p. 209 B.6.32.7:4–9 (Assurbanipal).

⁵ RIMA 1 p. 14 A.O.31.1:7–8. An inscribed stone block of this ruler (VA 8835) was discovered in the oldest foundation of the Aššur temple. The passage gives the impression that no temple of this god existed prior to the tenure of this vice-regent. Inscriptions beginning with Shalmaneser I (RIMA 1 p. 185 A.O.77.1:113–115) record that a certain Ušpia was the founder of the Aššur temple.

Ištar requested a second temple, one holier than her present one, and Aššur commanded the king to build him a sanctuary in the new city of Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta.⁶ Tiglath-pileser I makes mention of the fact that Anu and Adad commanded him to rebuild their double-temple in Assur.⁷ Lastly, the scholars responsible for Esarhaddon's *res gestae* composed for Esagila in Babylon claim Marduk ordered the king to completely renovate his holy abode.⁸

- 3 The temple was dilapidated, sagged, in ruin, and/or old. Beginning with Šamši-Adad I, rulers mention that they rebuilt or renovated temples or sanctuaries for one or more of these reasons.⁹ Statements of this nature continue until the reign of Sîn-šarru-iškun. For example: Adad-nārārī I records that he rebuilt the Step Gate of the Aššur temple when it had become dilapidated, sagged, and shook; Tulkutī-Ninurta I claims to have restored temples that were dilapidated and old, and to have rebuilt a temple "that had been dilapidated, crumbled, and in ruins since the reign of Adad-nārārī (I)"; Tiglath-pileser I records the rebuilding of temples in Assur and Nineveh that had become dilapidated and were in ruin; and Ashurnasirpal II (883–859) states that he rebuilt the Kidmuri temple in Calah when it had "crumbled and turned into a ruin hill."¹⁰ One of the more interesting occurrences comes from an inscription of Sargon II (721–705) recording the renovation of the Ištar temple in Uruk (Eanna), principally since this king's report of the temple's state of deterioration may not be entirely accurate: his scribes copied verbatim many of the details from an inscription of Marduk-apla-iddina II that had been discovered in Eanna.¹¹ On numerous occasions, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal state that they renovated or rebuilt temples that had become old, dilapidated, and/or their walls had buckled.¹²

⁶ RIMA 1 p. 255 A.0.78.1:83–84 "Ištar, my lady, requested of me another temple, (one) that would be holier than her (present) shrine"; and p. 273 no. 23:90–91 "He (Aššur) commanded me to build his inner sanctum (in Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta)."

⁷ RIMA 2 p. 28 A.0.87.1 vii 71–75.

⁸ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 18 §11 (Bab. A) Episode 14a 41b–44.

⁹ For example, RIMA 1 p. 53 A.0.39.2 i 7–22 (Šamši-Adad I), p. 81 A.0.59.1001 ii' 1–iii' 2 (Šamši-Adad III?), and p. 196 A.0.77.7:6–13 (Shalmaneser I); RIMA 2 p. 154 A.0.99.2:128–129 (Adad-nārārī II) and p. 332 A.0.101.57:2–3 (Ashurnasirpal II); and RIMA 3 p. 116 A.0.102.39:6–9 (Shalmaneser III). Building reports often mention previous rulers who worked on the temple. References to foreign kings in these passages are rare and there are only three known occasions that a ruler of non-Assyrian descent is mentioned: Šamši-Adad I reports that he discovered inscriptions of Man-ištūšu of Agade when he rebuilt Emenue in Nineveh (RIMA 1 p. 53 A.0.39.2 i 10–13); Sargon II states that Šulgi was a previous builder of Eanna in Uruk (RIMB 2 p. 147 B.6.22.3 i 18–19); and Esarhaddon mentions that Nazi-Maruttaš (ca. 1307–1282) had originally built Ehiliana and that it had later been restored by Erība-Marduk (RIMB 2 p. 189 B.6.31.18:12–13).

¹⁰ RIMA 1 p. 140 A.0.76.7:38 (Adad-nārārī I), p. 254 A.0.78.11:30–32 (Tukultī-Ninurta I), and p. 260 no. 14:13–16; and RIMA 2 p. 29 A.0.87.1 viii 4 (Tiglath-pileser I) and p. 304 A.0.101.38:21–22 (Ashurnasirpal II).

¹¹ Compare RIMB 2 p. 147 B.6.22.3 i 18–25 (Sargon II) to p. 137 B.6.21.1:3–7 (Marduk-apla-iddina II).

¹² For example, RIMB 2 p. 177 B.6.31.11:15–16 (Ebaradurğara; Nippur), pp. 183–184 no. 15:30–33 (Eanna; Uruk), p. 187 no. 17:11–15 (Ehīlīana; Uruk), p. 214 B.6.32.12:16–18 (Ebabbar; Sippar), and p. 218 no. 14:33–34 (Ezida; Borsippa); and Borger, *BIWA* p. 144 T iii 18–35 (Sîn-Šamaš temple; Nineveh) and p. 169 K 2664+ v 14–20 (*akītu*-house; Ḫarrān).

- 4 For the prosperity of the land. This reason for (re)building a temple is mentioned infrequently and is known from an inscription of the Middle Assyrian ruler Arik-dīn-ili and texts of Esarhaddon from Assur. The former records that he rebuilt the Šamaš temple in Assur so that the harvest of the land might prosper and the latter states that he completely rebuilt the Aššur temple for “the prosperity of the harvest of Assyria (and) the well being of Assyria.”¹³
- 5 Destroyed or damaged by flood, earthquake, or fire. Several Middle and Neo-Assyrian kings mention renovating temples for one or more of these reasons. Adad-nārārī I rebuilt a wall of the Aššur temple that had been eroded by floods or from constant exposure to water from a drainage opening.¹⁴ Shalmaneser I reports that he constructed anew the Aššur temple after a fire had destroyed its sanctuary (*ešertu*), chapels (*sukkū*), shrines (*sāgū*), daises (*parakkū*), platforms (*nēmedū*), stools (*šupātu*), and other property.¹⁵ This king also rebuilt the Ištar temple in Nineveh and its *ziqqurra*t after an earthquake.¹⁶ Aššur-rēša-iši I claims to have renovated the same temple after it had been damaged in another earthquake (reign of Aššur-dān I).¹⁷ Aššur-bēl-kala rebuilt the Step Gate of the Aššur temple after a flood had destroyed/damaged it.¹⁸ Esarhaddon reports that he renovated part of the temple of Gula in Borsippa that had become weak due to destructive flooding.¹⁹
- 6 For a deity’s repose or seat. At least two Assyrian kings, Tukultī-Ninurta I and Ashurnasirpal II, are known to have worked on a building for this reason. The former rebuilt the Ištar temple in Assur for her repose and constructed a temple (name damaged) for Aššur in Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta for “the repose of Aššur.” The latter rebuilt Eku in Nineveh for “the abode of Ištar.”²⁰
- 7 Temple torn down by a previous ruler. This reason for rebuilding is infrequent and is known from an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I. Clay octagonal prisms of this king record that Aššur-dān I tore down the Anu-Adad temple (Assur) and that he did not rebuild it or even relay its foundations.²¹
- 8 For the admiration of future rulers. This reason for rebuilding is known from an inscription of Ashurnasirpal II. This king boasts that he built the temple of Šar-rat-nip̄i in Calah “for the eternal admiration of rulers and princes.”²²
- 9 Moved by one’s heart. Sennacherib records that his heart moved him to rebuild the *akītu*-house at Assur; he was deeply upset by the fact that the *akītu*-festival had been celebrated for a long time inside the city and that ceremonies were held

¹³ RIMA 1 p. 121 A.0.75.1:15–16; and Borger, *Asarh.* p. 7 §3 (Ass. B) 45–47.

¹⁴ RIMA 1 p. 155 A.0.76.19:6’ and 8’.

¹⁵ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:124–128; see also RIMA 1 pp. 189–190 no. 2:12–13 and no. 3:9–12.

¹⁶ RIMA 1 p. 206 A.0.77.17:7–8 “During an earthquake, (the structure of) that temple became weak and (it) fell in ruin.”

¹⁷ RIMA 1 p. 311 A.0.86.1:10.

¹⁸ RIMA 2 p. 94 A.0.89.3:11’.

¹⁹ RIMB 2 p. 174 B.6.31.10:18’–19’.

²⁰ RIMA 1 p. 257 A.0.78.12:21–23 and p. 276 no. 24:54–55; and RIMA 2 p. 309 A.0.101.40:36.

²¹ RIMA 2 p. 28 A.0.87.1 vii 68–70 “He tore down this temple, (but) he did not (re)build (it). For sixty years its foundations had not been (re)laid.”

²² RIMA 2 p. 296 A.0.101.32:10–11.

in an unsuitable building.²³ With the Aššur temple, this king was prompted by his heart to change the direction of a principal gateway; the gate was oriented to the east, instead of to the south.²⁴

- 10 The temple had become too small. The only certain attestation of this reason comes from a cylinder inscription of Esarhaddon from Nineveh. The site of one of the temples is reported to have become too small.²⁵
- 11 The appointed time for rebuilding designated by the gods had arrived. The best examples come from inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. The scholars responsible for Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions (and who successfully avoided naming Sennacherib as the destroyer of Esagila) elaborately described the circumstances in which Marduk (and other gods) determined that the rebuilding of Babylon's principal temple was to begin eleven years after its destruction. Babylon Prism A records:

Merciful Marduk wrote that the calculated time of its abandonment (should last) seventy years, (but) his heart was quickly soothed and he reversed the numbers and (thus) ordered its (re)occupation to be 11 years. ...

At the beginning of [my] kingship, at the start of my reign which [was] established by my sitting in majesty on my throne of my royal person, [there] were auspicious signs and [he (Marduk) regularly sent his] sign(s) in the heavens (and on) the earth. The angry [gods] were reconciled (and) repeatedly disclosed favourable signs concerning the (re)building of Babylon (and) the restoration of Esagila. Bright Jupiter, the one who renders decisions for Akkad, came near in Sivan (III) and stood in the place where the sun appears. It was exceptionally bright (and) its appearance was red. In the month of "Opening of the Door," it reached (its) hypsoma a second time and remained in place. He (Marduk) ordered me to complete (his) cult centre, to renew (its) shrines, (and) to organise the cultic rites of Esagila, the palace of the gods. Monthly, Šîn and Šamaš, at their appearance, together answered me with a "firm yes" concerning the avenging of Akkad. By means of the wide intelligence (and) broad understanding [that] the sage [of the gods], prince Nudimmud (Ea), gave to me, it occurred to me to (re)populate the city (Babylon), renew the shrines, (and) make [the cult centre shine] and my heart prompted me to undertake that work.²⁶

As for Assurbanipal, he boasts that he was chosen by the moon-god in the distant past to rebuild his temple in Ḫarrān (Eḫulḫul). The relevant passage reads:

Even before my father was born (and prior to) my own birth-mother being conceived in her mother's womb, Šîn, who created me for kingship, nominated me for (the task of re)building Eḫulḫul, saying: "Assurbanipal will [(re)build] this temple [and] he will make me sit therein upon [an] eternal

²³ Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 136–137 no. I2:24–28; and V. Donbaz and H. D. Galter, "Zwei Inschriften Sanheribs im Istanbul Museum," *ARRIM* 3 (1985) p. 5 EŞ 7847:13–23.

²⁴ Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 144–145 no. I7:8–13.

²⁵ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 66 §29 (Nin. G) 7.

²⁶ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 15–18 §11 (Bab. A) Episodes 10a, 12–13, 14a, 15a, and 16:7b–8a.

[dais.” He] now disclosed [the word of] Šîn, which [he uttered] in days long gone, [to] people of a later generation.”²⁷

Initiating the Project

Before projects could officially begin, rulers needed the support of the temple’s tutelary deity. References to the initiation of construction are rare in the Old and Middle Assyrian Periods and are known from inscriptions of only four rulers.²⁸ Šalim-aḫum states that Aššur requested of him a temple in Assur. Ērišum I records that Aššur stood by him when he decided to clear houses from the Sheep Gate to the People’s Gate; Adad did the same when he (re)built that god’s temple. Tukultī-Ninurta I claims the Assyrian Ištar requested of him another temple, one holier than her present one, and Aššur commanded him to build a sanctuary for him in Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta. Tiglath-pileser I states that Anu and Adad commanded him to rebuild their cellas. The means of communication between god and ruler are not mentioned, but it is possible that the requests/divine support were revealed in prognostic dreams, through prophecy, or by extispicy.²⁹

In the Sargonid period, particularly in the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbani-pal, inscriptions refer to this stage of building more often and in more detail. On occasion, the means of communication between god and king are mentioned; sometimes it is the god who initiates the project and other times it is the king. The literary craftsmen responsible for Esarhaddon’s *res gestae* composed for Esagila (Babylon) and Eḫursaġgalkurkurra (Assur) record that these projects began after: (1) the temple’s deity sent good omens and favourable signs; (2) auspicious planetary alignments and movements were observed; (3) Šîn and Šamaš gave positive responses to haruspical queries; (4) Nudimmud (Ea) put the idea in the king’s head; and (5) messages were received from ecstasies and in dreams.³⁰ Immediately before starting, haruspices verified divine sanction with Šamaš and Adad; the reconfirmation by “oracles of encouragement” (*šīrē tikilti*), a positive answer “in the diviner’s bowl” (*ina mākalī bārūte*), was necessary since the king was “(extremely) worried, afraid, and hesitant.”³¹

²⁷ Borger, BIWA pp. 141–142 T ii 29–38.

²⁸ RIMA 1 p. 14 A.0.31.1:7–8 (Šalim-aḫum), p. 23 A.0.33.2:33–34 (Ērišum I), p. 37 no. 33. 14:16–17, pp. 255–256 A.0.78.11:83–84 (Tukultī-Ninurta I), and p. 273 no. 78.23:90–91; and RIMA 2 p. 28 A.0.87.1 vii 71–75 (Tiglath-pileser I).

²⁹ For a detailed study of the means of communication between god and king, see B. Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. und 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (=SAAS 10; Helsinki 1999).

³⁰ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 2 §2 (Ass. A) i 31–ii 26 and pp. 17–18 §11 (Bab. A) Episodes 12–13, 14a, and 15a.

³¹ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 3 §2 (Ass. A) iii 42–iv 6 and p. 16 §11 (Bab. A) Episodes 16–17a. For references to *šīr talikilti*, see M. Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (=SAAS 7; Helsinki 1998) pp. 33–34 and 38. For the impact of oracular material on Sargonid inscriptions, see F. M. Fales and G. B. Lanfranchi, “The Impact of Oracular Material on the Political Utterances and Political Action in the Royal Inscriptions of the Sargonid Dynasty,” in J. -G. Heintz (ed.), *Oracles et Prophéties dans l’Antiquité: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 15–17 juin 1995* (Paris 1997) pp. 99–114. For a study of Esarhaddon’s and Assurbani-pal’s haruspices, see Pongratz-Leisten, SAAS 10 pp. 176–189 §2.5.3.3.

As for Assurbanipal, he states that Šarrat-Kidmuri constantly sent him messages in dreams and through ecstasies to renew her cult in Nineveh (or Calah) and to refurbish her image/statue; the project was initiated only after diviners received a “firm yes” (*annu kēnu*) from Šamaš and Adad. The passage describing the circumstances in which the king took action reads:

Šarrat-Kidmuri, who in her anger abandoned her inner sanctum (and) resided in a place not befitting her, relented during the favourable reign which Aššur bestowed upon me. She constantly sent me (orders) through dreams and messages from ecstasies to complete (the image of) her exalted divinity (and) to glorify her precious cultic rites. I asked Šamaš and Adad (for approval) and they gave me a positive answer. I refurbished the emblem of her great divinity (and) made her reside on (her) raised dais for eternity. I firmly (re)established her precious cultic ordinances and carried out her cultic rites properly.³²

Some reports of construction in Harrān mention that Sîn nominated the king in the distant past to rebuild Eḫulḫul. The “age-old prophecy” is formulated as direct speech of the moon-god and is likely a modified version of a haruspical query to which Assurbanipal received a favourable response.³³ Prior to the removal of the old, dilapidated temple, diviners reconfirmed Sîn’s sanction of the project.

Preparing the Building Site³⁴

Although Old Assyrian vice-regents constantly worked on the Aššur temple, few inscriptions refer to the preparation of the building site. Ērišum I records that he expanded the temple area and cleared houses from the Sheep Gate to the People’s Gate; it is unclear what was constructed in this newly acquired area.³⁵ Šamši-Adad I states that when the Enlil temple in Assur (Eamkurkurra = Aššur temple) became dilapidated, he removed the ruined superstructure.³⁶

Middle Assyrian kings referred to this stage of building more often. Arik-dīn-ili claims to have cleared away the Šamaš temple in Assur, which was a ruin heap in-

³² Borger, BIWA pp. 140–141 T ii 9–24. For a study of the relationship between temple building and prophecy (including the theme of divine alienation and reconciliation), see Nissinen, SAAS 7 pp. 35–42. Note also SAA 13 p. xvii: “It is clear that prophecy was an important vehicle for establishing the divine will during the late Neo-Assyrian period, and that priests and temple administrators were responsible for reporting prophetic messages to the king.”

³³ J. R. Novotny, Eḫulḫul, Egipar, Emelamana, and Sîn’s *Akītu*-House: A Study of Assyrian Building Activities at Harrān (=Eḫulḫul; Ph.D. diss. University of Toronto 2003) p. 219.

³⁴ For a study of the preparation of the building site of an earlier temple, see Ellis, Foundation Deposits pp. 12–17; and M. J. Boda, “From Dystopia to Myopia: Utopian (Re)visions in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8,” in E. Ben Zvi and M. Floyd (eds.), Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature (=Utopia and Dystopia; Helsinki and Göttingen 2006) pp. 221–226.

³⁵ RIMA 1 p. 20 A.0.33.1:8–12 and p. 23 no. 33.2:33–39.

³⁶ RIMA 1 p. 49 A.0.39.1:18–23. Puzur-Sîn accuses this ruler of destroying the shrines of Assur. He is referring to Šamši-Adad I dedicating the rebuilt Aššur temple to Enlil, instead of to Assur’s tutelary deity.

habited by squatters.³⁷ Before renovating the Step Gate of the Aššur temple, Adad-nārārī I had his workmen clear the site down to the bottom of the foundation pit.³⁸ With the Assyrian Ištar temple, this king felt it was not necessary to renovate the entire structure and he only had the damaged portions removed, including the roofing.³⁹ Shalmaneser I mentions this stage of building on numerous occasions, mostly in connection with the rebuilding and expansion of the Aššur temple, which had been destroyed in a fire. He states: “I cleared away (the debris of) that temple in its entirety, removed its earth, (and) reached (the bottom of) its foundation pit.”⁴⁰ To enlarge the temple, he destroyed what remained of the existing House of Beer Vats; after building the addition, he rebuilt and enlarged that part of the temple.⁴¹ When the Ištar temple in Nineveh was damaged in an earthquake, Shalmaneser’s workmen cleared away the debris in its entirety.⁴² Tukultī-Ninurta I refers to the removal of the dilapidated remains of the same temple in Nineveh; he records the same when he rebuilt the Dinitu (exact reading uncertain) shrine and the Šin-Šamaš temple in As-sur.⁴³

Few kings after Tukultī-Ninurta I refer to this stage of construction. Tiglath-pileser I, Adad-nārārī II, Ashurnasirpal II, and Shalmaneser III mention the preparation of building sites, but passages referring to this are generally formulaic and provide little information. For example: (1) “I demarcated its area/site (and) completed its foundation pit”; (2) “I demarcated its site”; and (3) “I removed its debris down to (the bottom of) its foundation pit (lit. ‘I reached its foundation pit’)”.⁴⁴ Two inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II do provide more detail. Although the passages refer to the construction of Calah, the scribes responsible for these texts clearly intended them to be associated with the temples in that city. The king states: “I cleared away the old ruin hill (and) dug down to water level. I sank (the foundation pit) down to a depth of one hundred twenty layers (of bricks).”⁴⁵

Sargonid kings often mentioned the preparation of the building site. Sargon II claims to have torn down the outer enclosure wall of Eanna (Uruk) from its parapets and exposed the foundations.⁴⁶ At Nineveh, Sennacherib demolished temples that had fallen into disrepair (the Šin-Šamaš and Šarrat-Ninūa temples) and removed the

³⁷ RIMA 1 p. 121 A.0.75.1:19–40 “I *destroyed* (the debris of) the shrine of Šamaš, ... which was becoming a heap of ruins (and) the shrines of the people alongside it, which they had taken and settled in.”

³⁸ RIMA 1 p. 140 A.0.76.7:40–41.

³⁹ RIMA 1 pp. 150–151 A.0.76.15:27–30 “I removed the dilapidated beams of the *šuḫūru*-room (and) the *supports*, lashings, and beams of the storeroom of Ištar.”

⁴⁰ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:129–132.

⁴¹ RIMA 1 p. 192 A.0.77.4:31–32.

⁴² RIMA 1 p. 206 A.0.77.17:8 and p. 208 no. 18:9.

⁴³ RIMA 1 pp. 254–255 A.0.78.11:35–38 and p. 258 no. 13:30–34 and 37–40, p. 260 no. 14:18–19, p. 261 no. 15:12–14, and p. 266 no. 18:32–33.

⁴⁴ For example, RIMA 2 pp. 28–29 A.0.87.1 vii 76–77 and viii 5 (Tiglath-pileser I), p. 154 A.0.99.2:129 (Adad-nārārī II), and p. 325 A.0.101.52 rev. 5’–6’ (Ashurnasirpal II); and RIMA 3 p. 120 A.0.102.41:3 (Shalmaneser III).

⁴⁵ RIMA 2 p. 295 A.0.101.31:11–12 and p. 296 no. 32:9.

⁴⁶ RIMB 2 p. 148 B.6.22.3 i 36. The scribes responsible for composing this inscription copied verbatim the wording of this passage from a text of Marduk-apla-iddina II that had been removed from Eanna while work was being carried out on the temple.

brickwork as far as the foundation pit.⁴⁷ With projects in Babylonia, Esarhaddon claims to have sought out original emplacements, carefully surveyed foundations, and measured ground plans so that new buildings did not deviate from their earlier design by even a single brick; specialists (including diviners) and the most-skilled of his work force ensured the work was accurate and to exact plan.⁴⁸ Some passages describing these activities read:

I sought out its (original) emplacement, removed its collapsed sections, (and) inspected its (entire) foundation.

I open up its accumulated (piles of) earth and surveyed and examined its ground plan. I (carefully) measured its platform according to its earlier plan and did not (even) add a single brick (to it).

I gathered together skilled craftsmen (and) capable master builders, who lay out (ground)plans, and I opened the ground where Esagila is located (and) inspected [its structure].⁴⁹

Although it is not stated in the inscriptions, it is during these careful surveys that specialists sought out a/the *libittu maḥrītu* (here “former brick”). The removal of this brick initiated the rebuilding process and served as a bridge between the old and new temples.⁵⁰

Assurbanipal also claims to have sought out original emplacements of Babylonian temples.⁵¹ He does not, however, mention doing this for Assyrian temples, but records only the removal of the old, dilapidating superstructure.⁵² The scholars responsible for the building report of the so-called “Large Egyptian Tablets” (=LET) provide some information about the preparation of the building site of an existing temple and that of a new temple. For Ḫarrān’s principal temple (Eḫulḫul), the workmen tore down the walls, exposed the foundations, and made the *durgu* (“the innermost part”; the “heart” of the structure) accessible for examination; specialists appear to have deemed the foundations suitable for reuse and may have located and

⁴⁷ E. Frahm, “Sanherib und die Tempel von Kuyunjik,” in S. M. Maul (ed.), *Festschrift für Rykle Borger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994: tikip santakki mala bašmu ...* (=Borger Festschrift; CM 10; Groningen 1998) p. 109 rev. 3’–8’.

⁴⁸ Projects include Esagila and Eniḡḡidrukalammasumma (*ḥarû*-temple of Nabû) in Babylon, Ekur (temple of Enlil) and Ebaradurḡarra (temple of Šarrat-Nippur) in Nippur, and Eanna and Eḫiliana (cella of Nanāia) in Uruk. For kings seeking out a structure’s original emplacement, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 13–14. Diviners (*bārû*) were responsible for seeking out original emplacements, surveying foundations, and measuring ground plans.

⁴⁹ Respectively RIMB 2 p. 177 B.6.31.11:16; N. al-Mutawalli, “A New Foundation Cylinder from the Temple of Nabû ša ḥarê,” *Iraq* 61 (1999) pp. 191–194 IM 142109:24–26; and Borger, *Asarh.* p. 21 §11 (Bab. A and C) Episodes 24–25.

⁵⁰ For further information, see below (Building the Structure) and pp. 227–228 of this volume. For details on a (Seleucid) ritual performed by lamentation-singers to preserve the continuity of a temple beyond demolition, see also pp. 227–228 of this volume. It is not certain if this particular ritual was practiced in Assyria during the Sargonid period.

⁵¹ RIMB 2 p. 214 B.6.32.12:17 and p. 226 no. 19:23.

⁵² For example, Borger, *BIWA* p. 142 T ii 44–45 (Eḫulḫul; Ḫarrān), p. 164 Kh (=CKalach) x 91 (Ezida; Calah), p. 169 T v 43 (an *akītu*-house; Nineveh), and p. 189 H1 i 15’ (Emeslam; Cutha).

removed a/the *libittu mahrītu*.⁵³ Before construction could begin on Emelamana (the temple of Nusku in Ḫarrān), workmen prepared the site of the new structure. His scribes record that an area approximately 175 m (350 cubits) long and 32.5 m (72 cubits) wide was cleared and that the area was raised 12 to 14 m (130 courses), bringing the ground level to the same height as the foundations of Sîn's temple.⁵⁴

Inscriptions do not record the removal of statues of the deities whose temples were being renovated or rebuilt. The king may have only had a god/goddess taken to a temporary residence when it was necessary, that is, when the most sacred rooms of the temple required renovation or rebuilding.⁵⁵

Preparing the Building Materials⁵⁶

Few Assyrian inscriptions provide information on the preparation of building materials. Prior to the Sargonid period, kings seldom mention this stage of a project. Ērišum I and Šamši-Adad I record that their workmen poured liquids into mortar; both did this for the mortar of the walls of the Aššur temple ("Wild Bull"; later Eamkurkurra).⁵⁷ The former ruler added ghee (*himētu*) and honey (*dišpu*), and the latter king mixed in cedar resin (*šaman erēnu*), fine oil (*šaman rūšti*), honey, and ghee.⁵⁸ Shalmaneser III, reporting on the rebuilding of part of Assur's city wall, mentions how some bricks were made: "using the large brick mould. I mixed its clay with honey, fine oil, cedar resin, beer (*šikaru*), (and) wine (*karānu*). I made its

⁵³ Novotny, Eḫulḫul p. 90 LET rev. 46. The exact meaning of *durgu* is uncertain since it is not generally used in building reports; it is used in descriptions of remote and inaccessible mountain regions and in references to royal origins (=pure descent); see AHw pp. 177–178 and CAD 3 (D) p. 191. *Durgu* probably has a similar meaning in its association with a building, that is, the innermost, most inaccessible part; it may refer to the lowest level of the building or perhaps even the heart of the building where a/the *libittu mahrītu* was placed.

⁵⁴ Novotny, Eḫulḫul p. 90 LET rev. 48–50. The only other building constructed during this time to receive this much attention was the king's palace in Nineveh, the House-of-Succession; see Borger, BIWA pp. 72–74 A x 51–108.

⁵⁵ For a reference to a god residing elsewhere during the time that his temple (or sanctuary) was under construction, see the letter of Ištar-šumu-ēreš to the king reporting on the statue of Amurrû in the Anu temple in Assur (SAA 10 p. 17 no. 21). The pertinent passage (rev. 9'–11') reads: "The king, my lord, knows that the temple of Amurrû collapsed in upon itself (and) the god Amurrû was placed in the temple of Anu."

⁵⁶ Ellis, Foundation Deposits pp. 17–31. Boda (Utopia and Dystopia pp. 226–230) combines this phase of project with the laying of the foundations, principally since the preparation of the bricks, especially the placement of the *libittu mahrītu* ("first brick") in the temple, is closely linked with the foundations. The Assyrian distinction between the stages of building is not always clear from the inscriptions.

⁵⁷ The name of Aššur's temple changed from "Wild Bull" (*rīnum*) to Eamkurkurra ("House, Wild Bull of the Lands") to Eḫursaḡkurkurra ("House, Mountain of the Lands") and finally to Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra ("House, Great Mountain of the Lands"); see A. R. George, House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia (MC 5; Winona Lake 1993) p. 66 no. 56, p. 100 no. 479, and pp. 101–102 no. 486.

⁵⁸ RIMA 1 pp. 22–23 A.0.33.2:27–32 and p. 32 no. 33.10 ii 4–10 "I mixed ghee and honey into (the mortar of) every wall and (then) I laid a single layer with bricks"; and p. 49 A.0.39.1:46–48 "I mixed into the mortar (of the walls) cedar resin, best oil, honey, and ghee." For further information on mixing liquids and aromatics into bricks, see Ellis, Foundation Deposits pp. 29–31.

bricks with trowels (*marrū*) (and) cedar moulds (*nalbanātu ša erēni*).⁵⁹ The technique and tools used may have applied to bricks for temples constructed or renovated during this king's reign. Bricks were probably made in the usual month, Sivan (III). Brick-making at this time of year seems to have been based on purely practical reasons: bricks need to be completely dry before they can be utilized and the best time to make them was immediately after the spring rains since they could have the entire summer to dry, if necessary.⁶⁰

Inscriptions of Sargonid kings provide interesting details about the preparation of bricks. In some instances, the texts describe/mention traditions in Assyria first mentioned in the Old Assyrian Period (reign of Ērišum I), while others include pieces of new information. Sargon II is the first known Assyrian king to attribute the excellence of the brickwork to Kulla, the brick-god and divine architect.⁶¹ He is also the first to mention the use of (ritually) pure bricks, which were fired in a special kiln (*kīru elletu*).⁶²

The most detailed information comes from inscriptions of Esarhaddon. For his projects in Babylonia, he had bricks baked in a special (ritually pure) kiln and made according to the techniques of Kulla.⁶³ Reports of the rebuilding of the principal temples of Assur and Babylon provide additional valuable information. During the first year of the project at Assur, people from conquered lands made bricks; the king comments on the festive atmosphere of the worksite.⁶⁴ The workmen mixed oil, honey, ghee, wine, and cedar resin into the mud and fashioned bricks in moulds of ivory (*šinnu*), boxwood (*taskarinnu*), ebony (*ušû*), *musukkannu*, cedar (*erēnu*), and cypress (*šurmēnu*). Esarhaddon himself participated in the work on Eḫursaġgalkurkurra. He records that he personally moulded bricks; added oil, fine oil, *pūru*-oil, honey, ghee, and cedar resin to the bricks; and, in a ceremony held with the workers in attendance, carried the *libittu maḥrītu* (here "first brick") to the temple grounds

⁵⁹ RIMA 3 p. 56 A.O.102.10:51–55.

⁶⁰ For a study of ITI SIG₄ (month : brick) = *simānu*, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 17–18; and M. E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (=Cultic Calendars; Bethesda 1993) pp. 314–315. Sivan (III) is characterized by Astrolabe B (KAV 1 p. 119 no. 218 i 26–37) as "the month of the king's brick mould; the king makes bricks in the brick mould."

⁶¹ For example, RIMB 2 p. 148 B.6.22.3 ii 1–6 "Through the technique of Kulla, the master builder, and (with the assistance of) artisans who know (their) craft, he (Sargon II) raised its top with (ritually) pure bricks and completed its construction. He made (it) superior to what had been there before and carried out (its) plans correctly." For some details about Kulla, see pp. 222–223 of this volume; Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 18–20; and W. G. Lambert, "Kulla," *RLA* 6 p. 305.

⁶² RIMB p. 145 B.6.22.1:12. For other references, see Luckenbill, *Senn.* p. 150 no. I20:3; and RIMB 2 p. 167 B.6.31.2:5–6 and p. 221 B.6.32.15:17.

⁶³ For example, RIMB 2 p. 177 B.6.31.11:16 (Ebaradurġara; Nippur), p. 184 no. 15:32–33 (Eanna; Uruk) and p. 187 no. 17:13 (Eḫiliana; Uruk).

⁶⁴ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 3–5 §2 (Ass. A) iv 7–v 26. References to labour forces appear in inscriptions of Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Naqī'a, Assurbanipal, and Sīn-šarru-iškun; for example, Borger, *Asarh.* p. 4 §2 (Ass. A) iv 14–15 and pp. 59–60 §27 (Nin. A) v 47–49; and S. Melville, *The Role of Naqia/Zakutu in Sargonid Politics* (SAAS 9; Helsinki 1999) p. 39 K 2745+ (and 81-2-4,173) ii 5'–14'.

and set it in its place, thus initiating the rebuilding process.⁶⁵ The brick (or bricks) carried by the king was likely the very one(s) he fashioned himself. Inscriptions record on one occasion that the brick(s) was (were) carried in a basket and on another occasion that the king carried the *libittu mahṛītu* (here “first brick”) on his neck; it is unclear if these two passages refer to the same event or to different ceremonies.⁶⁶

Esarhaddon makes most of the same claims for the rebuilding of Esagila; there are, however, minor differences in the details.⁶⁷ Craftsmen, Babylonians, and people from conquered lands are reported to have made bricks and said to have added oil, honey, ghee, *kurunnu*-wine, *muttinu*-wine, and pure mountain beer into the mud. He does not boast of having personally made bricks, but does claim to have carried a basket with brick(s) on his head; the *libittu mahṛītu* (here “first brick”) is not mentioned.

For his projects in Babylonia, Assurbanipal, like his father, is known to have moulded bricks in wooden moulds (ebony and *musukkannu*), added shavings of aromatic plants to the mud, baked bricks in a special (ritually pure) kiln, and had bricks made according to the techniques of Kulla.⁶⁸ Although no text mentions him participating physically in some of the manual labour, three steles depict him full frontal carrying a basket on his head.⁶⁹ The image likely depicts this king carrying the *libittu mahṛītu* (here “first brick”) and other specially made bricks to the temple, and may be a pictorial representation of the brick-laying ceremony performed by Esarhaddon for Eḫursaġgalkurkurra and Esagila.

For a section of Ezida (Calah), Assurbanipal not only mentions that beer and wine were added into the bricks, but also comments on the festive atmosphere of the worksite: “Basket-carriers playfully made bricks. With (cheerful) singing and joyous celebration, I completely (re)built (that part of the temple) from its foundations to its crenellations.”⁷⁰ Sîn-šarru-iškun makes a similar claim for the workmen rebuilding the Nabû temple in Assur.⁷¹

⁶⁵ For further information on the *libittu mahṛītu*, see pp. 227–228 of this volume; and Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 26–29. In this king’s inscriptions, *libittu mahṛītu* is generally translated as “the first brick”. See Luckenbill, *ARAB* 2 p. 276 §714; CAD 3 (D) p. 124 1.a.1’; Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 26–29; and Leichty (unpublished translation; *RINAP* 4). For information on royal participation, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 20–31.

⁶⁶ Compare Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 4–5 §2 (Ass. A) iv 27–40 with v 3–24.

⁶⁷ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 20–21 §11 (Bab. A) Episodes 19a and 20–22.

⁶⁸ For example, *RIMB* 2 p. 214 B.6.32.12:17–18 (Ebabbar; Sippar) and p. 221 no. 15:17–19 (Egigunû; Nippur); and Borger, *BIWA* p. 189 H1 i 16’–17’ (Emeslam; Cutha).

⁶⁹ BM 90864 (G. Frame, *Babylonia 689–627 B.C.: A Political History* [=Babylonia; PIHANS 69; Leiden 1992] cover) and BM 22533 (J. E. Reade and C. B. F. Walker, “Some Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” *AfO* 28 [1981–82] p. 119 no. 4 fig. 8) are said to have come from Babylon, and BM 90865 (Frame, *Babylonia* p. 352 fig. 2) was found at Borsippa in room C2 of Ezida; for further details, see *RIMB* 2 pp. 199–202 B.6.32.2 and pp. 217–219 no. 14. Similarly, there is a stele of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn depicting this king aiding in the restoration of Ezida (BM 90866; Frame, *Babylonia* p. 353 fig. 3).

⁷⁰ Borger, *BIWA* p. 165 Kh x 93–95. Compare his description of the work on the House-of-Succession in Nineveh (Borger, *BIWA* pp. 73–74 F vi 48–49 and A x 95–96).

⁷¹ *RIMS* 1 p. 56:9–10.

The Foundations⁷²

During the Old Assyrian Period, no ruler mentions work on the foundations of a temple, but only that they placed (inscribed) objects in walls or with/in the foundations. Šamši-Adad I states he placed “silver (*kaspu*), gold (*hurāšu*), lapis-lazuli (*uqnū*), (and) carnelian (*sāmtu*) (tablets) in the walls” of the Enlil temple (Assur; Eamkurkurra).⁷³ Aššur-rabi I mentions seeing clay cones (*sikkātu*) of previous vice-regents in this same temple deposited in the foundation.⁷⁴ Depositing inscribed objects (stone slabs, tablets [various materials], clay cone, bricks) in temples dates back to the earliest vice-regents. Rulers, however, did not begin recording this until the time of Aššur-nārārī I; after the reign of that ruler, it was fairly common to record this information.⁷⁵

Middle Assyrian inscriptions occasionally mention work on temple foundations. Arik-dīn-ili records that he laid the foundations (*išdū*) of the Šamaš temple (Assur), stating the work took place in the eponymy of Berūtu.⁷⁶ Adad-nārārī I is known to have worked on temple foundations (*uššū*): he strengthened the foundations of the Assyrian Ištar temple with limestone (*pīlu/pūlu*) and those of a wall of the Aššur temple which had been eroded by flooding with baked bricks (*agurrū*) and bitumen (*kupru*).⁷⁷ The instances when this king records that workmen cleared away a previous temple down to its foundations and then proceeded to rebuild the structure likely indicate that the foundations were deemed suitable for reuse and, therefore, no reference is made to them in building reports. For example: “I cleared that site (and when) I reached (the bottom of) its foundation pit I (re)built (it) with limestone and mortar from the city Ubašē.”⁷⁸

Shalmaneser I records on several occasions that he laid new foundations for the Aššur temple. He states: “At that time, I cleared away (the debris of) that temple in its entirety, removed its earth, (and) reached (the bottom of) its foundation pit. I laid its foundations in bedrock like the base of a mountain.”⁷⁹ Although it is not explicitly mentioned, it is certain that the previous foundations were deemed unsuitable for reuse and removed. This king is known to have deposited objects of stones, silver,

⁷² Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* pp. 31–32. Boda (*Utopia and Dystopia* pp. 226–230) combines this phase of project with the preparation of the building materials.

⁷³ RIMA 1 p. 49 A.0.39.1:43–45. Nine inscribed stone tablets were discovered in the Aššur temple: for example, EŠ 5223 was found in the Assyrian floor of the ante chamber of Temple A; Ass 17541 was uncovered in the room between the main and middle courts; and Ass 16423 comes from the cella of Aššur.

⁷⁴ RIMA 1 p. 98 A.0.65.1:6 “[*Their clay cone(s)*] which they had deposited [in the] foundations.”

⁷⁵ RIMA 1 p. 86 A.0.60.4:8? (Aššur-nārārī I), p. 86 no. 60.6:7, p. 90 A.0.61.1:10 (Puzur-Aššur III), and p. 107 A.0.72.1 rev. 1’–2’ (Erība-Adad I). It is possible that *si-kà-ti aš-ku-un* (“I deposited my clay cone”) appears in texts prior to Aššur-nārārī I, but textual material from Puzur-Sîn to Šamši-Adad III is almost nonexistent; x *x-šū aš-[ku-u]n* (“I deposited his ...”) is known from an inscription tentatively attributed to Šamši-Adad III (RIMA 1 p. 81 A.0.59.1001 iii’ 5–6).

⁷⁶ RIMA 1 p. 121 A.0.75.1:41–48.

⁷⁷ RIMA 1 p. 150 A.0.76.15:26 and p. 155 no. 19:13’–14’.

⁷⁸ RIMA 1 p. 140 A.0.76.7:40–43.

⁷⁹ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:129–133.

gold, iron, copper, tin, and aromatic plants at the foundations; the stone and metal objects are likely inscribed foundation tablets.⁸⁰

Although Tukultī-Ninurta I changed the site of the Assyrian Ištar temple, the scribes responsible for composing his inscriptions do not record the laying of the new foundations.⁸¹ From the time of Tukultī-Ninurta I until the Sargonid period, few royal inscriptions mention or allude to work on the foundations of temples. Tiglath-pileser I claims to have laid the foundations of the double Anu-Adad temple (Assur) upon bedrock and, after filling in the foundation pit with fifty layers of bricks, relaid new limestone foundations for the temple itself; he reports that sixty years earlier Aššur-dān I had removed the building and had torn up its foundations.⁸² Although Ashurnasirpal II does not specifically mention laying foundations of temples, he states that he founded and refounded numerous temples in Calah: for Adad and Šala, Ea-šarru and Damkina, Enlil, Gula, the Kidmuri, Nabû, Ninurta, the Sibitti, Sîn, and Šarrat-nip̄i.⁸³

Sargonid kings occasionally refer to the foundations of temples and provide interesting details about this stage of building. Sargon II mentions that the foundations of the outer enclosure wall of Eanna (Uruk) were relaid while the appropriate rituals and prayers were performed and recited: “With fervent entreaties, prayers, and expressions of humility, he (re)laid its foundations and fixed its foundations on the breast of the netherworld, (making it as secure) as a mountain.”⁸⁴ Although it is not stated explicitly, it is likely that the entreaties, prayers, and expressions of humility were made by a lamentation-singer (*kalû*), whose job was to appease the deity while the old temple was torn down and the new temple was being constructed.⁸⁵

Sennacherib, when laying the foundations of the *akītu*-house at Assur, records in detail the types and quantity of metal, stone, plants, and organic material deposited with the foundations. No less than six types of stone were placed in this temple’s foundations: *pappardilû*-stone, carnelian (*sāmtu/sāndu*), lapis-lazuli (*uqnû*), *hulālu*-stone, malachite (*muššāru*), and *papparmīnu*-stone.⁸⁶ *Igulû*-oil and fine oil were

⁸⁰ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:141–143. The stone objects referred to here may be the very stone tablets inscribed with this text describing work on the Aššur temple. At least twenty-two exemplars were discovered at Assur, including several found in the ruins of the Aššur temple; most of these tablets are in the collections of the Eski Şark Eserleri Müzesi (Istanbul). See RIMA 1 pp. 180–182 for further details.

⁸¹ For example, RIMA 1 p. 257 A.0.78.12:7–26. Changing the location/ground plan of a sanctuary is treated in the omen series *šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin* (“If a city is set on a height”). For further details (including a reference to an unsanctioned relocation of a sanctuary), see pp. 224–226 of this volume. Ištar, according to this king’s inscriptions, gave her approval prior to the project beginning.

⁸² RIMA 2 p. 28 A.0.87.1 vii 66–70 and 77–84.

⁸³ For example, RIMA 2 p. 291 A.0.101.30:53–60.

⁸⁴ RIMB 2 p. 148 B.6.22.3 i 37–40. The verbiage of lines 37 and 38 was copied from an inscription of Marduk-apla-iddina II; compare RIMB 2 p. 138 B.6.21.1:27.

⁸⁵ For some details about lamentation-singers in the first millennium and for rituals performed while working on foundations, see pp. 227–229 of this volume.

⁸⁶ Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 138–139 no. I2:48–60. For a translation, see p. 230 of this volume. Karib-ilu, king of Saba, presented the *pappardilû*-stone as a gift to Sennacherib; the king accepted the offering and acknowledged this ruler’s action in writing, a rare and unusual gesture for an Assyrian king.

poured out as if they were water from a river. The foundations of this temple were made from mountain limestone (*pīli aban šadī*) and laid at an auspicious time.⁸⁷

The scholars responsible for Esarhaddon's inscriptions describing the rebuilding of Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra (Assur) and Esagila (Babylon) took a great interest in this stage of building.⁸⁸ These texts record the placement of metals, stones, and organic materials with the foundations and state that the work was initiated in a favourable month, on an auspicious day; some of the foundation deposits were inscribed and were decorated with "hieroglyphs" or "astroglyphs" of the king's name.⁸⁹ Two pertinent passages read:

In a favourable month (and) on a auspicious day, over gold, silver, (precious) stones, antimony (*guhlu*), all kinds of aromatics, *pūru*-oil, fine oil, honey, ghee, beer, (and) wine, I laid its (Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra's) foundations with solid limestone (blocks) from the mountains (and) I set (them) in place on bedrock.

I made foundation [inscriptions] from silver, gold, bronze, [lapis-lazuli], alabaster, basalt, *pendū*-stone, *elallu*-[stone], (and) white limestone, (and) on inscriptions (that were written) on baked clay I incised hieroglyphs/astroglyphs representing the writing of my name. ... I placed (them) in the foundations (of Esagila) (and) left them (there) for the future.⁹⁰

Pure sacrifices were offered to the great gods and to Kulla, "the lord of foundations," just prior to relaying the foundations of Babylon's *zīqurrat* Etemenanki.⁹¹

Esarhaddon, as evident from his inscriptions concerning work in Assur and Babylon, was deeply concerned with demolishing and renovating temples only during propitious periods of time. Projects, especially the laying of foundations, are reported to have started on an auspicious day in a favourable month. Specialists in the king's inner circle certainly consulted the calendarical omen series *iqqur īpuš* ("He demolishes and rebuilds") for determining such propitious times; the dates are

⁸⁷ Luckenbill, Senn. p. 137 no. I2:30–31. He states that he did the same for Aššur's temple (Luckenbill, Senn. p. 150 no. I22:6–8).

⁸⁸ For evidence suggesting that members of a haruspex guild could have been involved in their composition, see H. Tadmor, B. Landsberger, and S. Parpola, "The Sin of Sargon and Sennacherib's Last Will," SAAB 3 (1989) pp. 50–51.

⁸⁹ On "Assyrian hieroglyphs," see I. L. Finkel and J. E. Reade, "Assyrian hieroglyphs," ZA 86 (1996) pp. 244–268. Copies of Babylon Prisms A, D, and F have these. For a study of the animal symbolism (lion and bull) associated with the king, see C. E. Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: A Contextual Approach* (=Animal Symbolism; WOO 1; Vienna 2002) pp. 42–68 (pp. 55–56 and 64 in this context).

⁹⁰ Respectively Borger, Asarh. p. 4 §2 (Ass. A) v 3–13 and pp. 27–28 §11 (Bab. A and C) Episode 40. Other inscriptions record that *kurunnu*-wine and *ḥašūru*-resin were deposited with the foundations; see Borger, Asarh. p. 7 §3 (Ass. B) 30–33 and pp. 84–85 §53 (AsBbA [K 2801+]) rev. 46. For reference to this ritual in royal correspondence, see SAA 13 no. 161:7–9. A letter to the king from Babylon records the sacrificing of a ram on seven foundation stones that were placed in the foundations of Esagila and Babylon (SAA 10 no. 354:15–18).

⁹¹ Borger, Asarh. p. 22 §11 (Bab. B) Episode 27 rev. 21–22.

not recorded in the inscriptions.⁹² Assurbanipal and Sîn-šarru-iškun occasionally mention that foundations were laid at an auspicious time.⁹³

Building the Structure⁹⁴

Early Old Assyrian inscriptions provide little information on (re)building the structure. Generally, a vice-regent states that he built a temple, mentioning occasionally a specific building, structure, or area.⁹⁵ No less than three inscriptions from this time provide additional details. Ērišum I claims to have mixed ghee and honey into the mortar of the walls of the Aššur temple (“Wild Bull”); the mixing of liquid into mortar took place during the preparation of the building materials (see above).⁹⁶ Ikūnum boasts only that his father made the structure of the Adad temple in Assur firm.⁹⁷

Assyrian inscriptions from Šamšī-Adad I to Erība-Adad I likewise provide little information.⁹⁸ The most detailed reports of temple restoration and rebuilding come from the reign of Šamšī-Adad I. When rebuilding the Enlil temple (=Aššur temple), this ruler boasts:

I constructed the temple of Enlil, my lord, the terrifying dais, the large shrine, the seat of Enlil, my lord, which was meticulously made using the skilled work of the building trade (which is) inside my city, Assur. ... I mixed into the mortar (of the walls) cedar resin, best oil, honey, and ghee. I meticulously made the temple of Enlil, my lord, and called it Eamkurkurra, “Temple, Wild Bull of the Lands,” the temple of Enlil, my lord, (which) is inside my city, Assur.⁹⁹

This passage provides some important information: (1) the superstructure was built by members of a skilled builder’s guild in Assur; (2) various liquids were mixed into mortar of the walls; and (3) the name of the temple was changed from “Wild Bull” to “Temple, Wild Bull of the Lands.” Šamšī-Adad’s description of the rebuild-

⁹² For some details about *lqqr ipuš*, see pp. 233–234 of this volume.

⁹³ Borger, BIWA p. 169 T v 44–45 (an *akitu*-house; Nineveh); and RIMS 1 p. 56:7–8 (Nabû temple; Assur).

⁹⁴ Ellis, Foundation Deposits pp. 32–33; and Boda, Utopia and Dystopia pp. 230–231. Both studies provide little detail about building the structure and later phases of construction. See the section on the Preparation of the Building Materials for a discussion of the moulding of bricks.

⁹⁵ For example, RIMA 1 p. 9 A.0.1003.2001 (Zarriqum), p. 14 A.0.31.1:7–24 (Šalim-aḫum), p. 15 A.0.32.1:1–13 (Ilu-šūma), p. 20 A.0.33.1:4–6 (Ērišum I), and p. 26 no. 33.4. Šalim-aḫum built the shrine (*kummu*), temple area/cattle pens (*isārū*), house of beer vats (*bīt ḫubūrē*), and storage area (*abūsu*) of Aššur’s temple, and Ērišum claims to have worked on the temple area/cattle pens (*isārū*), Step Gate (*mušlālum*), and cella (*watmanum*) of this temple.

⁹⁶ RIMA 1 pp. 22–23 A.0.33.2:26–32 and p. 32 no. 33.10 ii 4–10.

⁹⁷ RIMA 1 pp. 41–42 A.0.34.1:7–11.

⁹⁸ During this time and later on, vice-regents and kings begin referring to themselves in their titulary as “builder of the temple of DN.” For example, RIMA 1 p. 48 A.0.39.1:3–4 (Šamšī-Adad I), p. 85 A.0.60.3:4–5 (Aššur-nārārī I), p. 122 A.0.75.2:3 (Arik-dīn-ili), p. 193 A.0.77.5:5 (Shalmaneser I), and p. 318 A.0.86.8:2 (Aššur-rēša-iši I).

⁹⁹ RIMA 1 p. 49 A.0.39.1:24–36 and 46–58.

ing of Ištar's *ziqurrat* in Nineveh also provides some details about the construction of the superstructure and boasts also about the excellence of the workmanship:

I (re)built the *ziqurrat*, a great ..., whose workmanship was greater and more skilful than before. I erected the doorframes of that temple, the equal of which for perfection no king had ever built for Ištar in Nineveh. I raised its *ziqurrat*, completed it on a grand scale, and named it Ekituškuga, "Her Treasure House."¹⁰⁰

It is not entirely certain, but the structure may have been built by the same skilled builder's guild in Assur that worked on the Enlil temple; of course, there may have been an equally skilled guild in Nineveh at this time.

After Šamšī-Adad I, vice-regents reverted to the style of providing as little detail about the project as possible. For example, Puzur-Aššur III states: "The wall of the Step Gate had become dilapidated (and) I restored (it)."¹⁰¹ Beginning in the time of Enlil-nāšir I or Aššur-rabi I, vice-regents began boasting of (re)building a structure "from its foundations (*uššū*) to its parapets (*šaptū*)."¹⁰²

The scribes responsible for the composition of Middle Assyrian inscriptions continued using stock phrases (with variation in the wording) when reporting on the (re)building or restoration of a temple's structure. For example: (1) "I renovated and restored (it) from its foundations to its parapets"; (2) "I (re)built and restored (it) from its foundations to its crenellations"; (3) "I reconstructed the weakened (portions of) that temple"; (4) "I (re)built (it) from its foundations to its crenellations in its entirety"; and (5) "I (re)built (it)."¹⁰³ On other occasions, texts provide additional information. Adad-nārārī I claims to have rebuilt the Step Gate of the Aššur temple with stone and mortar from the city Ubasē and piled up earth for the core of one of the *ziqurrats* in Assur.¹⁰⁴ Shalmaneser I and Tiglath-pileser I, like Šamšī-Adad I, boast about the excellence of the workmanship of building projects in Assur, and also about the effort required to complete the work. The best examples read:

I (Shalmaneser) laboriously (re)built for Aššur, my lord, the holy temple (Eḫursaḡkurkurra), the high shrine, the lofty dais, the awesome shrine, which was constructed much more cunningly than before, which rises up gloriously, which is dedicated as befits his great divine person, (and) which is greatly appropriate for his lordly person.

I (Tiglath-pileser) constructed two large *ziqurrats* which were appropriate for their (Anu's and Adad's) great divine persons. I planned (and) laboriously (and) completely (re)built the pure temple, the holy shrine, their joyful

¹⁰⁰ RIMA 1 p. 53 A.0.39.2 ii 2–20.

¹⁰¹ RIMA 1 p. 90 A.0.61.1:7–9; see also p. 91 no. 61.2:5–10. The earliest reference to restoring (*edēšu*) a temple may come from the reign of Šamšī-Adad III; RIMA 1 p. 81 A.0.59.1001 iii' 3 "I restored their (the *ziqurrats* of the Anu-Adad temple) tops".

¹⁰² RIMA 1 p. 96 A.0.62.1001 (Enlil-nāšir I; attribution uncertain) and p. 98 A.0.65.1:7 (Aššur-rabi I). The scribes responsible for the inscriptions of Aššur-uballiṭ I changed *šaptu* ("parapet") to *gaba(n)dibbu* ("crenellation"); see RIMA 1 p. 110 A.0.73.1:22.

¹⁰³ RIMA 1 p. 113 A.0.73.4 rev. 3–4 (Aššur-uballiṭ I), p. 154 A.0.76.18:8'–10' (Adad-nārārī I), p. 190 A.0.77.3:32–34 (Shalmaneser I), and p. 255 A.0.78.11:49 (Tukulti-Ninurta I).

¹⁰⁴ Respectively RIMA 1 p. 140 A.0.76.7:42–43 and p. 159 no. 24:3'.

abode, their celebrated dwelling which stands out like the stars of the heavens and which represents the choicest skills of the building trade. ... I raised to the sky its towers and its *ziqurrats*, and I constructed its crenellations with baked bricks.¹⁰⁵

Shalmaneser I and Tukultī-Ninurta I record building additions or enlarging the temple. Several times, the former ruler boasts of greatly enlarging Eḫursaḡkurkurra (=Aššur temple) beyond its previous extent.¹⁰⁶ The latter king added to the Assyrian Ištar temple a *šuhūru*-room and several tall towers.¹⁰⁷

On a few occasions, inscriptions provide the number of layers of bricks and sometimes record the size difference between the old and new walls.¹⁰⁸ Shalmaneser I mentions that the inner and outer walls of the newly rebuilt and enlarged House of Beer Vats (Aššur temple) were respectively ten and five bricks wide. Tukultī-Ninurta I states that his father rebuilt the walls of the Ninuaītu temple in Assur seventy-five layers high and that he added to this another twenty courses of bricks. Aššur-rēša-iši I boasts of having raised a section of the Assyrian Ištar temple fifty layers of bricks, making it thirty-five courses higher than before.

Although early Neo-Assyrian kings often mention the (re)building of a temple's superstructure, inscriptions generally provide no information about this stage of a project, principally since the scribes relied on generic stock phrases (with variation in the wording). Examples include: (1) "I completed (it) from its foundations to its crenellations"; (2) "I constructed this temple in its entirety"; and (3) "I built (it) anew in its entirety."¹⁰⁹ On a few occasions, additional information is provided. Shalmaneser III states that he built the walls of the Aššur temple with a certain material or technique (*i-na si*-[...], "with ...").¹¹⁰

Inscriptions of Sargonid kings provide details about constructing temples' superstructures. Sargon II is the first ruler in a long time to record the skill of his workmen. An inscription recording the rebuilding of the outer enclosure wall of Eanna (Uruk) mentions both Kulla and the excellence of the king's workmen.¹¹¹ Sennacherib records that he rebuilt the entire structure of the *akītu*-house at Assur with mountain limestone (*pīli aban šadī*) and that its walls were raised as high as moun-

¹⁰⁵ Respectively RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:134–140; and RIMA 2 pp. 28–29 A.0.87.1 vii 87–104.

¹⁰⁶ The best example (RIMA 1 p. 190 A.0.77.3:19–31) reads: "I enlarged and expanded the temple of Aššur, my lord, beyond (its) previous extent. (As for) the towers of the Kalkal Gate and the towers (used) when entering from the Step Gate to the forecourt of Nunnamnir: as a (new) addition, I built these two (pairs of) towers which had not been built before. I enlarged the forecourt of Nunnamnir beyond (its) previous extent."

¹⁰⁷ RIMA 1 p. 258 A.0.78.13:37–40.

¹⁰⁸ RIMA 1 p. 192 A.0.77.4:34–35 (Shalmaneser I), pp. 264–265 A.0.78.17:11–21 (Tukultī-Ninurta I), and p. 313 A.0.86.2:7 (Aššur-rēša-iši I).

¹⁰⁹ RIMA 2 p. 154 A.0.99.2:130–131 (Adad-nārārī II), p. 295 A.0.101.31:16 (Ashurnasirpal II), and p. 309 no. 101.40:35; and RIMA 3 p. 116 A.0.102.39:9 (Shalmaneser III).

¹¹⁰ RIMA 3 p. 89 A.0.102.18:17'.

¹¹¹ RIMB 2 p. 148 B.6.22.3 ii 1–6.

tains.¹¹² At Nineveh, he claims to have rebuilt several dilapidated temples from their foundations to their crenellations.¹¹³

Esarhaddon is known to have had the structures of Babylonian temples built through the techniques of Kulla and to have had the summits of walls raised as high as a mountain.¹¹⁴ For the rebuilding of the structure of Esagila (Babylon), inscriptions record not only that it was completely rebuilt, but that it was constructed better than before and made as beautiful as the stars.¹¹⁵ He boasts also of building the temple in exact accordance to the former plan, not straying from the ground plan by even a half-cubit.¹¹⁶ No details, however, are given about the height or width of the walls.

Reports of the rebuilding of Aššur's temple likewise provide information about this stage of construction. In the second year of the project, the king claims to have had his workmen raise the tops of Eḫursaġgalkurkurra's walls to the heavens, making it tower majestically like a mountain; he claims also that the structure was "greatly made as an object of wonder for the people."¹¹⁷

Assurbanipal, like his father, states for his projects in Babylonia that he had structures built through the technique of Kulla and had the summits of walls raised as high as a mountain.¹¹⁸ For his projects in Assyria, he records that a few temples were built from the foundations to the crenellations.¹¹⁹ Sometimes, other details were included in building reports. For example, the walls of one of the *akītu*-houses at Nineveh are reported to have been constructed with baked bricks that were glazed with obsidian-coloured (green, black, white, or red) and lapis-lazuli-coloured (blue) glaze;¹²⁰ and the walls of Ḫarrān's principal temple (Eḫulḫul) are said to have been raised thirty courses of bricks (about 3.5–4 m high).¹²¹

¹¹² Luckenbill, Senn. p. 137 no. I2:32–33; and Frahm, Einleitung p. 176 no. T 144:4–6 and p. 177 no. T 145:8–10.

¹¹³ Frahm, *Borger Festschrift* p. 109 rev. 9'–10'.

¹¹⁴ For example, RIMB 2 p. 177 B.6.31.11:16 (Ebaradurġara; Nippur), p. 184 no. 15:32–33 (Eanna; Uruk) and p. 187 no. 17:13 (Eḫiliana; Uruk).

¹¹⁵ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 22 §11 (Bab. E) Episode 26c.

¹¹⁶ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 21 §11 (Bab. A) Episode 26a 43–45.

¹¹⁷ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 5 §2 (Ass. A) v 27–vi 3 and pp. 6–7 §3 (Ass. B) 36–37.

¹¹⁸ For example, RIMB 2 p. 214 B.6.32.12:17–18 (Ebabbar; Sippar) and p. 221 no. 15:17–19 (Egigunū; Nippur); and Borger, *BIWA* p. 189 H1 i 16'–17' (Emeslam; Cutha).

¹¹⁹ For example, Borger, *BIWA* p. 143 T ii 47–48 (Eḫulḫul; Ḫarrān), p. 144 T iii 23–24 (Sîn-Šamaš temple; Nineveh), and p. 169 K 2664+ v 18–19 (*akītu*-house; Ḫarrān).

¹²⁰ Borger, *BIWA* pp. 169–170 T v 46–49. For additional references, see CAD 1/1 (A) p. 162 l.e. NA₄.ZA.GÌN (*uqnū*) almost certainly refers to a blue-glaze rather than to lapis-lazuli itself since the latter cannot be employed as a glaze as it loses its colour when heated to high temperatures. NA₄.ZÛ (*šurru*) probably also refers to a glaze, and not to obsidian itself. For a brief discussion of its colour, see CAD 16 (§) pp. 257–259. For further information, see W. Röllig, "Lapislazuli [A. Philologisch]," *RLA* 6 pp. 488–489; G. Herrmann and P. R. S. Moorey, "Lapislazuli [B. Archäologisch]," *RLA* 6 pp. 489–492; and R. M. Boehmer, "Farben in der altorientalischen Malerei," *RLA* 3 pp. 21–24 §B.

¹²¹ Novotny, *Eḫulḫul* p. 90 LET rev. 47. The walls of the *akītu*-house at Isāna were also raised to a height of thirty courses (reign of Sargon II); see SAA 1 p. 202 no. 264:5'–rev. 1. During the time of Assurbanipal, the largest bricks were 37×37×10 cm (RIMB 2 p. 208 B.6.32.7.2); the average length and width of bricks are between 30 and 32 cm and the average height is between 7.5 and 8 cm. For full details on bricks of Assurbanipal, see RIMB 2 pp. 208–212

Roofing and Doors

The earliest reference to roofing a temple comes from the reign of Šamši-Adad I; he roofed the Enlil (=Aššur) temple with cedar.¹²² There is no mention of where the wood originated, but it is likely to have come from the Sea Coast (=Levant) or Anatolia, areas rich in cedar. Roofing is not mentioned again until the Middle Assyrian Period. Aššur-uballiṭ I provided the shrine of Ištar-*kudnītu* (reading of name uncertain) in Assur with beams (*gušūru*); Adad-nārārī I installed new beams for the *šu-ḥūru*-room and storeroom of the Assyrian Ištar temple after removing the old beams, supports (*šipšātu*), and lashings (*napdû*); Tukultī-Ninurta I installed the beams of the temple of Ninuaītu (“The Ninevite Goddess”); and Aššur-rēša-iši I may have roofed the Anu-Adad temple (Assur) with cedar beams.¹²³ Tiglath-pileser I boasts proudly of marching to Mount Lebanon to cut down cedar beams specifically for the Anu-Adad temple;¹²⁴ he mentions only once that he installed the beams.

Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III record the roofing of temples. The former ruler roofed numerous temples in Calah with cedar beams.¹²⁵ He mentions that he marched with 50,000 troops to the land Meḥru and cut down trees for the roofing of Emašmaš in Nineveh; the types of wood are not specified.¹²⁶ When working on the Mamu temple in Imgur-Enlil, he claims to have marched to Mount Lebanon to cut down beams of cedar (*erēnu*), cypress (*šurmēnu*), and juniper (*daprānu*); the temple was roofed with the cedar.¹²⁷ Shalmaneser III records several times (in his first, seventeenth, and nineteenth regnal years) the cutting down of cedar and juniper at Mount Amanus; he also received cedar beams as annual tribute from Qalparunda of Patinu (100 beams), Haiiānu of Bīt-Gabbari (200 beams), and Qatazilu of Kummuh (300 beams).¹²⁸ Some of the cedar was used to roof the Anu-Adad temple (Assur).¹²⁹

B.6.32.7–11 and pp. 221–224 nos. 16–18; and M. Sauvage, *Le brique et sa mise en oeuvre en Mésopotamie des origines à l'époque achéménide* (Paris 1998) p. 301 nos. 1988–1994 and p. 308 no. 2163.

¹²² RIMA 1 p. 49 A.0.39.1:37–38.

¹²³ RIMA 1 p. 113 A.0.73.4 rev. 1 (Aššur-uballiṭ I) “I roofed (it) with beams”; pp. 150–151 A.0.76.15:27–31 (Adad-nārārī I) “I removed the dilapidated beams of the *šuḥūru*-room (and) the supports, lashings, and beams of the storeroom of Ištar. I installed new beams”; p. 265 A.0.78.17:21–22 (Tukultī-Ninurta I) “I installed the beams and doors”; p. 324 A.0.86.1004:6’ (Aššur-rēša-iši I) “[...] cedar beams [...]”. See also p. 154 A.0.76.18:1’–7’, where Adad-nārārī I claims to have made the beams reach between the walls and gateways.

¹²⁴ RIMA 2 pp. 42 and 44 A.0.87.4:24–26 and 59–61.

¹²⁵ RIMA 2 p. 286 A.0.101.28:10 “I installed cedar beams over them (lit. ‘it’).” He records also that he transported cedar logs from Mount Amanus to the Aššur temple (Ešarra) and the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Assur), but does not state what the wood was used for. For a study of Assyrian activities in the Amanus and Sirāra region, see J. Elayi, “L’exploitation des Cèdres du Mont Liban par les rois assyriens et néo-babyloniens,” *JESHO* 31 (1988) pp. 14–41.

¹²⁶ RIMA 2 p. 309 A.0.101.40:28–30.

¹²⁷ RIMA 2 p. 320 A.0.101.50:25–27.

¹²⁸ For trips to Mount Amanus, see RIMA 3 pp. 74 and 77–78 A.0.102.16:10, 117’–118’, and 138’–139’; and for cedar beams received as tribute, see RIMA 3 pp. 18–19 no. 2 ii 23, 25, and 30.

¹²⁹ RIMA 3 p. 116 A.0.102.39:10.

Sargonid kings record that they used beams of cedar and cypress from the Levant to roof temples. Esarhaddon is known to have roofed Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra (Assur), the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Nineveh), and Esagila (Babylon) with wood from Mounts Amanus, Lebanon, and Sirāra.¹³⁰ Assurbanipal claims to have roofed Esagila, Emeslam (Dēr), Eḫulḫul and Emelamana (Ḫarrān), and the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Nineveh). A report of the rebuilding of Ḫarrān's principal temple provides details about the wood used in that project. The relevant passage reads:

[At] my command, kings of the Sea Coast, servants obedient to me, cut down lofty cedars, which were within the "city" Lebanon (and) which [are thick] (and) tall, (and) cypress, whose fragrance is pleasant, which were inside the "city" Sirāra, (and) which [were] watered by Adad. They hauled them from their mountains, where the terrain is extremely rugged, to Ḫarrān. I roofed Eḫulḫul, the "House of Joy," (and) [secured] (its) roofing.¹³¹

Although the names of the kings involved are not recorded, it is likely that Ba'alū of Tyre, Milki-ašapa of Byblos, Iakīn-Lû (Ikki-lû) of Arvad, and Abī-Ba'al of Samsimurruna supplied the wood for this project; they may have also provided men and supplies, including wood-working tools, pack animals, and carts.¹³² Inscriptions do not record, however, the number of beams used.¹³³

The earliest reference to doors in a temple dates to the time of Ērišum I. This viceroy states that he installed doors in the temples of Aššur and Adad in Assur.¹³⁴ The inscriptions provide no information about the type of wood used or whether or not the doors were plated with (decorative) metal bands. Šamši-Adad I had doors installed in temples. He hung cedar doors decorated with silver and gold stars in the gateways of the Enlil (=Aššur) temple and he set up doorframes in the Ištar temple (Emenue); there is no mention of the doors themselves in the second project.¹³⁵

References to doors are more common in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian Periods. Aššur-uballiṭ I placed doors in the shrine of Ištar-*kudnitu* (Assur); Shalmaneser I boasts of making bronze doors for the Kalkal Gate of the Aššur temple and of erecting architraves with bosses and emblems; and Tukultī-Ninurta I completed the Ninua-itu ("The Ninevite Goddess") temple by installing its roofing and doors.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 5 §2 (Ass. A) vi 6–10 and p. 22 §11 (Bab. A) Episode 28 and Borger, *BIWA* p. 135 Nineveh I:18.

¹³¹ Novotny, *Eḫulḫul* pp. 90–91 LET rev. 51–55.

¹³² For the kings mentioned above, see *PNA* 1/1 pp. 8–9 no. 1; *PNA* 1/2 pp. 242–243 no. 2; *PNA* 2/1 pp. 488–489; and *PNA* 2/2 pp. 750–751. See also J. Elayi, "Les cités phéniciennes et l'empire assyrien à l'époque d'Assurbanipal," *RA* 77 (1983) pp. 45–58.

¹³³ Several letters written by a certain Urdu-aḫḫēšu in Babylon (*SAA* 13 pp. 135–137 nos. 162–164) provide some rough figures. On one occasion, he reports that one hundred and thirty-eight cedars were transported to Babylon, thirty of which were used strictly for the outer ante-cella of Bēl in Esagila; and another time, he mentions that sixty-four roof beams and three hundred and sixty door posts were requested for work on Esagila.

¹³⁴ *RIMA* 1 p. 20 A.0.33.1:8, p. 37 no. 14:25–26, and p. 38 no. 15:13–14. He named the doors "Protective Goddess" and the locks "Be Strong!"

¹³⁵ *RIMA* 1 p. 49 A.0.39.1:40–42 and p. 53 no. 2 ii 13 respectively.

¹³⁶ Respectively *RIMA* 1 p. 113 A.0.73.4 rev. 2–3, p. 192 A.0.77.4:26, and p. 265 A.0.78.17:22.

Ashurnasirpal II is the only known early Neo-Assyrian ruler to mention the installation of doors. For temples in Calah, this king boasts: “I made cedar doors, fastened (them) with bronze knobbed nails, (and) hung (them) in their doorways.”¹³⁷ He states also that he made bronze-banded cedar doors for the Mamu temple in Imgur-Enlil; the wood for this project, and probably the timber used at Calah, came from Mount Lebanon.¹³⁸ Some of these bronze bands were discovered at Imgur-Enlil (modern Balawat); the bands have scenes in relief and short epigraphs.¹³⁹ Although no inscription of Shalmaneser III refers to bronze-banded doors in temples, a pair was discovered in the Mamu temple; the famous Balwat Gate is on display in the British Museum. The doors were made of cedar boards and decorated with a series of bronze bands, which were finely incised with inscriptions and scenes in relief.¹⁴⁰

Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal record that they had doors hung in temples and that they had them decorated with metal bands. Scribes used stock-phrases when mentioning the placement of door-leaves in gateways. For example: “I fitted (new) white cedar door leaves with bands of silver (and) hung (them) in their gateways.”¹⁴¹ The former king placed doors of cypress (*šurmēnu*) in Eḫursaġgalkurkurra, Esagila, and the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Nineveh); the decorative (and inscribed?) bands were made of gold (*hurāšu*), silver (*kaspu*), and bronze (*siparru*).¹⁴² The latter ruler had new doors set up in Esagila, Emeslam (Cutha), Eḫulḫul and Emelamana (Ḫarrān), and the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Nineveh); the doors were made from boxwood (*taskarinnu*), cedar, cypress, juniper (*burāšu*), *musukkannu*, and white cedar (*liāru*), and the bands were made from silver and *zaḫalû* (a silver alloy).¹⁴³ The bands fastened to the doors of the ante-cella of Emelamana were inscribed.

¹³⁷ RIMA 2 p. 286 A.O.101.28:10–11; see also pp. 287 and 291 nos. 29:16' and 30:62–64. The earliest textual reference to a king plating a door with bronze bands comes from the time of Adad-nārārī I (RIMA 1 p. 153 A.O.76.17:10).

¹³⁸ RIMA 2 p. 320 A.O.101.50:25–31.

¹³⁹ For the most recent publication, see J. E. Curtis and N. Tallis, *The Balawat Gates of Ashurnasirpal II* (London 2008). The inscriptions have been published in RIMA 2 pp. 321–323 and 345–351 A.O.101.51 and nos. 80–97. The modern reconstructed height of the Balawat Gate (British Museum) is about 7 m; see Curtis and Tallis, *The Balawat Gates of Ashurnasirpal II* pl. 6 for a good photograph. The height corresponds to the size of the doorposts and the door leaves mentioned by Nabû-pāšir (possibly the governor of Ḫarrān) on two tablets addressed to the king (Sargon II): 13 cubits = 6.5 m. For editions of the letters, see SAA 1 pp. 156–157 nos. 202–203.

¹⁴⁰ The texts have been published in RIMA 3 pp. 27–32 A.O.102.5 and pp. 140–148 nos. 63–86.

¹⁴¹ Borger, *BIWA* p. 143 T iii 2–4. The type of wood and metal varies from passage to passage.

¹⁴² Borger, *Asarh.* p. 5 §2 (Ass. A) vi 11–14 and p. 23 §11 (Bab. A) Episode 31; and *BIWA* p. 135 Nineveh I:19.

¹⁴³ RIMB 2 p. 201 B.6.32.2:61–63 (Babylon); and Borger, *BIWA* p. 143 T iii 2–4 (Ḫarrān), p. 144 T iii 27–29 (Nineveh), and p. 272 IIT:58–59 (Cutha). J. N. Postgate (“Trees and timber in the Assyrian texts,” *BSA* 6 [1992] p. 183) has recently supported the identification of *musukkannu*-wood with *Dalbergia sissoo*.

Decoration

From the Old Akkadian Period until the reign of Sîn-šarru-iškun, governors, vice-regents, and kings record that they decorated (lavishly) the temples and shrines they rebuilt or renovated. Ērišum I is the first vice-regent to mention objects made for a temple; he fashioned for the Aššur temple twin beer vats, bronze duck figures, a throne, two moons, and other ornaments.¹⁴⁴ Šamši-Adad I records that he dedicated a throne to Itūr-Mēr when he conquered Mari, gave a bronze kettledrum to Ištār-šarratum, and dedicated cult objects to Dagān in Terqa.¹⁴⁵

After Šamši-Adad I, no inscription until the time of Aššur-rēša-iši I mentions adding decorations; this king placed stone rosettes all around the battlements of the towers of the Ištār temple in Assur.¹⁴⁶ Tiglath-pileser I is known to have elaborately decorated the Anu-Adad temple (Assur), making its inner rooms “like the interior of the heavens” and its walls “as splendid as the brilliance of rising stars”; no information, however, is provided about the decorations.¹⁴⁷

Tukultī-Ninurta II and Ashurnasirpal II had their scribes include specific details about the objects commissioned for temples for the Aššur temple. The former ruler had tall (stone) steles and *kuribu*-genii fashioned, brought into the forecourt of Nunnamnir, and placed at the gate of the god Enpi.¹⁴⁸ The latter king makes the following boast for the temples he founded (or built anew) in Calah: “I made (statues of) beasts in shining bronze (and) stationed (them) in their towers. I made (statues of) lions in white limestone (and) *parūtu*-alabaster, (and) I stationed (them) in their gateways.”¹⁴⁹ Ashurnasirpal provides some additional information about the interior of the temple of Calah’s tutelary deity: “I adorned the inner sanctum of Ninurta, my lord, with gold (and) lapis-lazuli. I stationed bronze ... on his right and left, (and) placed wild ferocious gold dragons (*ušumgallū*) by his seat.”¹⁵⁰ For other building projects, Ashurnasirpal II claims to have decorated temples appropriately, but provides no details; his scribes used the stock expression “I decorated (it) more splen-

¹⁴⁴ RIMA 1 p. 20 A.0.33.1:6–8 and 12–16.

¹⁴⁵ RIMA 1 pp. 56–59 A.0.39.4–7. It is possible that he had two inscribed thrones presented to this god, one of light-coloured *medlar*-wood and one of ivory. A clay tablet discovered in the Old Babylonian palace in Mari (A 2231) contains two school exercise texts, one on the obverse (A.0.39.4) and one on the reverse (A.0.39.5); see D. Charpin, “Inscriptions votives d’époque assyrienne,” *MARI* 3 (1984) p. 67. Each text may have described a different throne.

¹⁴⁶ RIMA 1 p. 311 A.0.86.1:11.

¹⁴⁷ RIMA 2 pp. 28–29 A.0.87.1 vii 97–101.

¹⁴⁸ RIMA 2 p. 172 A.0.100.5:26–27. For a study of apotropaic statues, see B. J. Engel, *Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (=Dämonen; Mönchengladbach 1987). For animals used in architectural contexts, see also Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism* pp. 111–125.

¹⁴⁹ RIMA 2 p. 286 A.0.101.28:11–13. A pair of stone inscribed lions was discovered in the ruins of the Šarrat-nip̄i temple: one is in the British Museum (BM 118895) and the other is in the Mosul Museum. See RIMA 2 p. 283 for details. For additional information on lion statues, see Engel, *Dämonen* pp. 55–68; and Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism* pp. 112–116.

¹⁵⁰ RIMA 2 p. 291 A.0.101.30:69–73.

didly than before.”¹⁵¹ His son Shalmaneser III made this same boast on at least one occasion.¹⁵²

Sargonid kings frequently record that they decorated temples in Assyria and Babylonia, often boasting of surpassing the achievements of previous kings, both in quantity and quality. Inscriptions provide a wealth of information about which temples the kings lavishly outfitted, the types of objects refurbished or fashioned anew, and the placement of these decorative elements, which were sometimes apotropaic in nature. References to or descriptions of decorating temples in Sargonid inscriptions are numerous and deserve a more in-depth study than the one provided here.

Sargon II boasts of decorating temples in Assyria with silver and *zaḫalû* (a silver alloy): the shrine of Bēlet-Arbela (Arbela), Eḫursaġgalkurkurra (Assur), Eḫulḫul (Ḫarrān), and the shrine of Šarrat-Ninūa (Nineveh).¹⁵³ In the case of the work in Ḫarrān, the decorations were made from seven and a half minas of pure silver.

At Assur Sennacherib adorned the new extension to the Aššur temple and the *akitu*-house.¹⁵⁴ With regard to the *akitu*-house, he surrounded it with lush and well-irrigated gardens and fruit orchards; the types of plants and trees are not recorded. In a/the principal entrance, he had skilled metalworkers fashion an ornate gateway from reddish bronze (*siparru ruššû*).¹⁵⁵ This work of art depicted an epic battle between Aššur and his entourage and Tiāmat and her horde of monsters. Assyria's chief god is reportedly shown raising his bow and riding in a chariot with Amurrū and the king; at least twenty-five gods and goddess assisted him, on foot and in chariots.¹⁵⁶ As for the new addition to Eḫursaġgalkurkurra, he placed apotropaic statues in some of its gateways: four reddish bronze bison (*kusarikkū*) standing on bronze-plated daises decorated with images of fish-men (*kulilû/kulullû*) and a goat-fish (*suḫurmāšu*) were placed in an entrance to the *šaḫūru*-room, and statues of wild dogs (*uridimmū*) and scorpion-men (*girtablilû*) were set up in gateways of adjoining rooms.¹⁵⁷ In addition, some of the walls were decorated with exquisite friezes of (coloured?) stone bricks.

¹⁵¹ For example, RIMA 2 p. 332 A.O.101.57:3.

¹⁵² RIMA 3 p. 120 A.O.121.41:4. The passage describes work on the temple Adad in Tell al-Hawa (ancient name not known).

¹⁵³ R. C. Thompson, “A Selection from the Cuneiform Historical Texts From Nineveh (1927–32),” Iraq 7 (1940) pp. 86–89 and figs. 1–2 no. 1 BM 122614+3'–7'. With regard to *zaḫalû*, it is often described as *ebbu* (“bright, shiny, pure”), which may suggest it was a silver alloy of a specific shade or lustre. The word is late and is attested in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions. It appears to have been used in the same manner as another metal, *ešmarû*, but they are not the same since they are often mentioned together. For further details, see CAD 21 (Z) pp. 12–13.

¹⁵⁴ Luckenbill, Senn. p. 137 no. I2:33–36, p. 148 no. I16, and p. 149 no. I17.

¹⁵⁵ Luckenbill, Senn. pp. 139–142 no. I6.

¹⁵⁶ In other inscriptions from this temple (Frahm, Einleitung p. 176 no. T 144:1–2 and p. 177 no. T 145:2–8), Sennacherib refers to himself as the fashioner of the images of numerous deities: Aššur, Mullissu, Šērūa, Sîn, Nikkal, Šamaš, Aia, Anu, Antu, Adad, Šala, Ištar-of-the-Kidmuri, Dingirmah, Ḫaia, Kusu, Lumḫa, Dunga, and Egal-x. This epithet likely refers to the images of gods depicted on this bronze gate, and probably not to divine statues.

¹⁵⁷ Luckenbill, Senn. p. 145 no. I7:17–21. For a study of Sennacherib's addition, see M. Huxley, “The Gates and Guardians in Sennacherib's Addition to the Temple of Assur,” Iraq 62 (2000) pp. 109–137. For further information on protective statues, see Engel, Dämonen; and

Esarhaddon decorated temples in Assyria and Akkad (=Babylonia) with booty from conquered lands (including Egypt and Kush) and made these buildings shine like daylight with silver, gold, and precious stones.¹⁵⁸ Reports of work on Egašan-kalama (Arbela), Eḫursaġgalkurkurra, Esagila (Babylon), and Ezida (Borsippa) provide specific information on some of decorations. At Arbela, silver- and copper-plated statues of lions (*urmahḫū*), screaming lion-headed eagles (*anzû*), long-haired heroes (*laḫmū*), and *kuribu*-genii were stationed in principal entryways of Ištar's temple; the walls were overlaid with gold and silver.¹⁵⁹ For Assur's principal temple, this king had whatever was needed for the temple made and he exquisitely decorated its interior. A passage from an inscription written on an alabaster tablet discovered at Assur describes some of the decoration:

I overlaid with gold the inner sanctum of Aššur, my lord. I set up reddish *šāriru*-gold(-plated) long-haired heroes (and) *kuribu*-genii, side by side. (In the) ante-cella of Aššur, my lord, on the right and left I set up gold(-plated) statues of creatures from the watery abyss. I overlaid (its) walls with gold as if (this metal was) plaster.

(As for) the dais of fates—the lofty dais in whose midst Aššur lives (and where) they (the gods) decree the destinies of the heavens and netherworld, (and) which the kings, my predecessors, had made of baked-bricks and covered with *zaḫalû* (a silver alloy)—I (now) had (it) skilfully constructed with one hundred and eighty talents of cast *ešmarû* (a silver alloy). On its (surface), I fashioned an image of me as king praying to their divine persons (and) imploring (them) constantly to give me life, and an image of Assurbanipal, my successor.¹⁶⁰

He set up two bronze statues of bison (*kusarikkū*) in the Path-of-the-Enlil-Stars Gate and he stationed pairs of fierce Deluge monsters at the Royal Gate and at the Kamsu-Igīgū Gate; the statues were the creation of skilled metalworkers.¹⁶¹

In Babylon Esarhaddon claims to have made Esagila as beautiful as the stars and filled the temple with splendour, making it an object of wonder for the people; the furnishings and decorations were fashioned from gold and silver by skilful crafts-

F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (=Protective Spirits; CM 1; Groningen 1992).

¹⁵⁸ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 59 §27 (Nin. A) v 33–39 and p. 94 §64 (Smlt. [K 2711+]) 28'–33'.

¹⁵⁹ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 33 §21 (Klch. A and Trb. A) 8–11 and p. 95 Smlt. [K 2711+] rev. 16. The statues were probably made principally from wood or possibly even stone. For further details on long-haired heroes, lion-headed eagles, and *kuribu*-genii, see F. A. M. Wiggermann, "Exit *Talim*! Studies in Babylonian Demonology, I," *JEOL* 27 (1981–82) pp. 90–105; W. G. Lambert, "The Pair *Laḫmu*—*Laḫamu* in Cosmology," *Orientalia* 54 (1985) pp. 189–202; Engel, *Dämonen* pp. 77–84 and 87–89; Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits* pp. xi, 159–162, 164–166, 185, 187, 213, and 216; F. A. M. Wiggermann, "Mischwesen [A. Philologisch. Mesopotamien]," *RLA* 8 pp. 222–246; and Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism* pp. 126–136. For a discussion on the pronunciation and reading of *anzû*, see B. Alster, "Contributions to the Sumerian Lexicon," *RA* 85 (1991) pp. 1–5.

¹⁶⁰ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 87 §57 (AsBbE [EŠ 6262]) 23'–rev. 4.

¹⁶¹ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 87–88 §57 (AsBbE [EŠ 6262]) rev. 4–8. For additional information on and references to bison statues, see CAD 8 (K) p. 584 1; Engel, *Dämonen* pp. 90–95; and Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits* pp. 174–179.

men.¹⁶² Statues of *šēdus*, *lamassus*, and *rābišus* were stationed in gateways and wood panelling was placed around the outside of the temple to provide extra protection from the elements; *musukkannu*, cedar, and terebinth (*buṭnu*) were used.¹⁶³ For Borsippa's principal temple, he had a chariot built (or refurbished) for Nabû and had statues of at least two goat-fish (*suḥurmāšû*) and six wild bulls (*rīmû*) set up as gateway guardians.¹⁶⁴ The metalwork—which consisted of gold, silver, and bronze—was crafted according to techniques of Ninagal, Kusibanda, and Ninkurra; the methods used were likely those developed by Sennacherib's metalworkers.

Assurbanipal records many details about the decoration of temples. In Assur, he decorated the walls of Eḫursaġgalkurkurra with objects of reddish gold and silver, dedicated an inscribed processional carriage to Aššur, and set up tall (cedar) columns with (decorated) silver bands in the Gate-of-the-Abundance-of-the-Lands (location uncertain).¹⁶⁵ At Harrān, he boasts of lavishly decorating the interior of Eḫulḫul.¹⁶⁶ The walls of the inner sanctum and ante-cella were covered with objects made from seventy talents of *zaḫalû* (a silver alloy); skilfully crafted and inscribed statues of wild bulls, long-haired heroes, and lion-headed eagles were set up as gateway guardians; and some of the walls were decorated with friezes of baked bricks glazed with obsidian-coloured (green, black, white, or red) and lapis-lazuli-coloured (blue) glaze. He also had many objects fashioned anew for Emelamana, including inscribed lion-headed eagles, a reddish gold-plated arch, and possibly wild bulls and/or long-haired heroes. At Nineveh, he decorated the *akītu*-house of Ištar/Mullissu in the lower town.¹⁶⁷ Its superstructure was apparently rebuilt with baked bricks coloured with faux obsidian and lapis-lazuli, and the temple was filled with splendour (including pieces of booty?). With regard to Nergal's temple in Tarbiṣu (Egalmeslam), he placed divine emblems (*šurinnû*) and inscribed silver-plated lion-headed eagles in its gateways.¹⁶⁸

In Babylon, Assurbanipal records that he actively fashioned anew and refurbished ornately decorated objects and architectural features for Esagila, and lavishly decorated some of its principal rooms. He made Eumuša (cella of Marduk) “shine like the starry skies”; substantially enlarged Marduk's raised dais with bricks fash-

¹⁶² Borger, *Asarh.* p. 22 §11 (Bab. E) Episode 26c 27–30 and p. 24 §11 (Bab. C) Episode 33 4–11.

¹⁶³ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 22–24 §11 (Bab. C) Episodes 29 and 32b; see also p. 23 §11 (Bab. A) Episode 32a 18–19.

¹⁶⁴ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 95 §64 (Smlt. [K 2711+]) rev. 10–15. For additional information on and references to bull statues, see Engel, *Dämonen* pp. 75–76; CAD 14 (R) pp. 362–263 h; and Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism* pp. 117–118. For goat-fish, see CAD 15 (S) p. 351 1b; and Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits* pp. 184–185.

¹⁶⁵ T. Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* (Assyriologische Bibliothek, Neue Folge 1–2; Leipzig 1933) pls. 51–52 Sm 2124; and Borger, *BIWA* p. 138 T i 16–18 and p. 176 E Stück 6:4–5.

¹⁶⁶ Borger, *BIWA* p. 143 T iii 5–12, p. 169 Edition L (=TTaf1) v 20 and pp. 273–274 IIT:63–68; and Novotny, *Eḫulḫul* p. 91 LET rev. 57–66, p. 140 K 8759+:22–rev. 1, p. 175 K 9143 rev. 11'–13', pp. 176–177 K 2813+:24–27, and p. 181 Sm 530+:24–29.

¹⁶⁷ Borger, *BIWA* pp. 169–170 T v 46–49. There were two *akītu*-houses at Nineveh. One was in the lower town and the other (Esaḫulezenzagmukam) was constructed by Sennacherib in a botanical garden outside the city wall, to the north of the Nergal Gate. See E. Frahm, “Die Akītu-Häuser von Ninive,” *NABU* 2000 pp. 75–79 no. 66.

¹⁶⁸ Borger, *BIWA* p. 141 T ii 25–28 and Rm 406:8'–11'.

ioned from fifty talents of *zaḥalû*; constructed a *musukkannu*-wood canopy and plated it with thirty-four talents and twenty minas of reddish gold; completely refurbished the pleasure bed of Marduk and Zarpanitu that Sennacherib had taken to Assur; built anew an ornately decorated (and inscribed) chariot; and placed newly fashioned vessels of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and precious stones in the temple. At Borsippa, he stationed three pairs of silver-plated (and inscribed?) wild bulls in three of Ezida's principal gateways, decorated Kizalaga (the seat of Nūru) with eighty-three talents of *zaḥalû*, and set up two massive *pirku* (meaning uncertain) in Kamaḥ and Kanamtila.¹⁶⁹ With Nergal's temple in Cutha (Emeslam), he set up lion-headed eagles and decorated its interior with various imported woods (*musukkannu*-, KA-, *uṣû*-, *taskarinnu*-, *ḫilēpu*-, and UMBIN-wood).¹⁷⁰

Aššur-etel-ilāni had several ornate objects made for Marduk. He records that skilled craftsmen made a reddish gold sceptre and a *musukkannu*-wood offering table decorated with red *ṣāriru*-gold.¹⁷¹ Sîn-šarru-iškun had a silver-plated *musukkannu*-wood offering table, a reddish gold bowl, and a silver spoon fashioned for Antu, Nabû, and Tašmētu in Assur.¹⁷²

Concluding Ceremonies¹⁷³

It is not until the Middle Assyrian Period that royal inscriptions mention statues/images of deities or their daises. Aššur-uballiṭ I settled Ištar-*kudnittu* (reading of name uncertain) in her temple in Assur.¹⁷⁴ After completing the Aššur temple, Shalmaneser I boasts proudly that he “put stools (*šupātu*) and cultic platforms (*nēmedū*) in their sanctuaries (and) placed (statues of) all of the gods of Ekur therein.”¹⁷⁵ This king does not state that he returned Aššur to his dais, but alludes elsewhere to him taking his seat on his dais and rejoicing in his newly built and enlarged temple.¹⁷⁶

Tukultī-Ninurta I mentions building several daises and sanctuaries, but records only once that he placed a goddess back on her dais; according to one text the god-

¹⁶⁹ D. A. Foxvog, “Royal Inscriptions at Berkeley,” RA 72 (1978) pp. 44–45 UCLM 9-1773 i' 5'–11'; and Borger, BIWA p. 140 T ii 1–6 and p. 189 H1 i 4'–13'.

¹⁷⁰ Foxvog, RA 72 pp. 44–45 UCLM 9-1773 i' 14'–21'; and BIWA p. 85 Nergal-Laš In-schrift:78–89 and p. 190 H1 i 22'–23'.

¹⁷¹ RIMB 2 p. 263 B.6.35.1:10–rev. 15 and p. 264 no. 2:8–15.

¹⁷² PNA 3/1 p. 1144 b.3'.

¹⁷³ For information on rituals taking place immediately after the completion of the construction of a temple and the return of the deity to his/her temple (with the rite of the bringing in of the “keystone”, the *urubātu*-ritual), see p. 236. On taking the hands of cult images, see J. A. Black, “The New Year Ceremonies in Ancient Babylon: ‘Taking Bel by the Hand’ and a Cultic Picnic,” Religion 11 (1981) pp. 45–46; and J. Bidmead, The *Akītu* Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia (Piscataway 2002) pp. 154–162.

¹⁷⁴ RIMA 1 p. 113 A.0.73.4 rev. 5–7 “I made Ištar-*kudnittu*, my lady, reside inside that temple.” Deities were likely carried from/to the temple with carrying poles (*gišallū*). The best evidence for *gišallū* as carrying poles comes from BRM 4 no. 7, which describes the ritual procedures of Anu's procession from the *Rēš* Temple in Uruk to his *akītu*-house; see Cohen, Cultic Calendars pp. 429–430.

¹⁷⁵ RIMA 1 p. 189 A.0.77.2:19–21. The former stools and cultic platforms were destroyed in a fire.

¹⁷⁶ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:149–151.

dess Ninuaītu (“The Ninevite Goddess”), was escorted into her temple during a public festival.¹⁷⁷ A cult platform from this king’s reign was discovered at Assur, in room 6 of the Ištar temple; this cultic chair of Nusku is inscribed and depicts Tukulti-Ninurta praying before a god’s image.¹⁷⁸ Tiglath-pileser I boasts of bringing several deities back into their temples: Adad, Amurrū, Anu, the Assyrian Ištar, Bēlabira, and the Ten Gods.¹⁷⁹

Ashurnasirpal II is the only early Neo-Assyrian ruler to mention bringing deities into temples: Ištar into her cella Eku in Emašmaš (Nineveh), Mamu into his temple (Imgur-Enlil), and Sîn and Šamaš inside their temples (Assur).¹⁸⁰ He mentions having new statues made for temples in Calah, including images for Ninurta (Calah’s patron), Šarrat-nipḫi, and Šarrat-Kidmuri.¹⁸¹ For example: “With my understanding (of skilled trades), I created from the best mountain stone and reddish gold this statue of Ninurta, which had not existed previously, as *an icon* of his great divine person.”¹⁸² These images were placed on their daises after the temples were completed.

Sargonid kings frequently claim to have escorted statues of gods and goddesses into their temples. Sargon II installed numerous gods on their newly built daises in Dūr-Šarrukīn (Khorsabad) and brought the gods of the city Ḫarḫar into their temples.¹⁸³ Sennacherib placed the images of Aššur and other gods in their temples in Assur and he had the gods of the Sîn-Šamaš and Šarrat-Ninūa temples in Nineveh brought into their shrines (*kiššū*) and joyfully placed on their daises (*parakkū*).¹⁸⁴

Esarhaddon returned deities and placed them on their seats: Aššur and other gods (including Ninurta and Nusku) to Eḫursaġgalkurkurra (Assur), Great-Anu (=Ištar-

¹⁷⁷ RIMA 1 p. 257 A.0.78.12:21–23 (lofty dais for Ištar), p. 263 no. 16:51–56 (lofty dais and awesome cella for Dinitu), and p. 265 no. 17:25–28 “I set up a dais (and) I made Ninuaītu, my lady, sit on her dais in (the midst of) joy and rejoicing.”

¹⁷⁸ W. Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel in Assur* (WVDOG 58; Leipzig, 1935) pls. 30–31a; for the inscription, see RIMA 1 pp. 279–280 A.0.78.27.

¹⁷⁹ RIMA 2 pp. 26 and 29 A.0.87.1 vi 86–92 and vii 109–112.

¹⁸⁰ RIMA 2 p. 309 A.0.101.40:37 “I peacefully made [her] great divine person reside in her inner sanctum”; p. 320 no. 50:24–25 “I made the image of Mamu, my lord, live inside (it)”; and p. 325 no. 52 rev. 8’–9’ “I brought Sîn and [Šamaš inside (it)].” The statues were probably placed upon raised brick platforms at the far end of their sanctuaries. For example, Nabû’s and Tašmētu’s daises in Ezida (NT 4 and 5) at Calah were raised 90 cm above floor level and were accessed by two flights of stairs, each with three steps; see J. Oates and D. Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London 2001) pp. 112–114 and figs. 67 and 69.

¹⁸¹ RIMA 2 p. 291 A.0.101.30:65–68 “I made their divine persons resplendent with reddish gold (and) with sparkling stones. I gave to them gold jewellery (and) many of the possessions that I had captured.” The statues were for the temples of Adad, Damkina, Ea-šarru, Enlil, Gula, the Kidmuri, Nabû, Ninurta, Sibitti, Šala, and Šarrat-nipḫi.

¹⁸² RIMA 2 p. 295 A.0.101.31:13–14. See also RIMA 2 pp. 296–297 A.0.101.32:11–12 and pp. 304–305 no. 38:25–27.

¹⁸³ Thompson, *Iraq* 7 pp. 86–89 and figs. 1–2 no. 1 BM 122614+; 9’; and Fuchs, *SAAS* 8 p. 27 (and pl. 4) K 1673 ii’ 2–3. The first event is recorded also in the eponym chronicle (A. R. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 BC* [SAAS 2; Helsinki 1994] p. 48).

¹⁸⁴ Luckenbill, *Senn.* p. 136 no. 12:22–23 and p. 147 no. 18:19; and Frahm, *Borger Festschrift* p. 109 rev. 10’–12’. Sennacherib refers to himself as the fashioner of the images of numerous deities, but this epithet likely refers to the images of gods depicted on a bronze gate skilfully crafted for the *akītu*-house.

ān) to Edimgalkalama (Dēr), Ištar to Enirgāšana (Uruk), Marduk and his entourage (Zarpanitu, the Lady-of-Babylon, Ea, and Mandānu) to Esagila (Babylon), and Nanāia to Ehiliana (Uruk).¹⁸⁵ In two of these cases, it was his sons, Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, who brought the deity into the temple: the former placed Aššur on his dais and the latter escorted Marduk and his entourage from Baltil (Assur) to Šuanna (Babylon).

Assurbanipal boasts of returning the tutelary deities of Edimgalkalama (Dēr), Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra (Assur), Eḫulḫul and Emelamana (Ḫarrān), Emeslam (Cutha), Esagila (Babylon), and the Sîn-Šamaš temple (Nineveh).¹⁸⁶ In the case of the return of Marduk, it was the king's older brother Šamaš-šumu-ukīn who, amidst a large entourage, escorted the statue to Babylon and placed the god back on his dais.¹⁸⁷

References to ceremonies commemorating the completion of a temple are generally not mentioned in Old and Middle Assyrian inscriptions. The earliest known reference comes from the time of Shalmaneser I. After completing the Aššur temple, this king states: "I held a celebration for it."¹⁸⁸ Tukultī-Ninurta I had the statue of Ninuaītu ("The Ninevite Goddess") seated on her dais "in (the midst of) joy and rejoicing."¹⁸⁹ In both cases, no information is provided about the festivities. Tiglath-pileser I is the only other Middle Assyrian king to refer to ceremonies: he claims to have offered pure sacrifices to Adad inside his *ḫamru*-temple in Assur.¹⁹⁰

Sargonid kings mention holding ceremonies and presenting offerings and gifts when deities were brought into their temples. Sennacherib boasts of sacrificing fattened bulls and sheep, and presenting gifts to the tutelary gods of the Sîn-Šamaš and Šarrat-Ninūa temples in Nineveh.¹⁹¹ Esarhaddon held festivities in honour of the completion of Eḫursaḡgalkurkurra. One inscription from Assur describes the occasion:

¹⁸⁵ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 5 §2 (Ass. A) vi 28–36 and pp. 88–89 §57 (AsBbE [EŠ 6262]) rev. 17–24; and RIMB 2 p. 176 B.6.31.11:10, p. 185 no. 16:14, and p. 187 no. 17:14. For the return of other deities, see Borger, *Asarh.* p. 84 §53 (AsBbA [K 2801+]) rev. 42–44.

¹⁸⁶ Borger, *BIWA* p. 85 Nergal-Laš Inschrift:88, p. 138 T i 19–20 and i 23–26, p. 143 T iii 13–14, p. 144 T iii 32–35, and p. 274 IIT:69.

¹⁸⁷ The best account of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn escorting Marduk and the other gods of Babylonia from Baltil (Assur) to Esagila (Babylon) is in K 2694+ ii 26'–iii 30' (L⁴; C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Šamaššumukīn, König von Babylonien 668–648 v. Chr.* [Assyriologische Bibliothek 8; Leipzig 1892] pls. XXXVII–XXXIX); the description is very reminiscent of that of Esarhaddon when he claimed to have returned the same statue (Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 88–89 §57 AsBbE [EŠ 6262] rev. 17–24).

¹⁸⁸ RIMA 1 p. 185 A.0.77.1:147–148.

¹⁸⁹ RIMA 1 p. 265 A.0.78.17:25–28. Some ceremonies may have taken place in the inner sanctum, with the witnesses standing in the ante-cella. See M. E. Mallowan's description of Nabû's ante-cella at Calah: "The overall dimensions of the ante-cella at Calah are of interest; for there would not have been room for more than about 150 persons to witness the religious ceremonies which took place on the podium. Only the privileged therefore can have taken part in the proceedings—king, nobles and priests of the cult; but a much larger concourse of people could have been admitted to the courtyard outside the temple gates" (Nimrud and its Remains 1 [London 1966] p. 267).

¹⁹⁰ RIMA 2 p. 29 A.0.87.1 viii 9–10.

¹⁹¹ Frahm, *Borger Festschrift* p. 109 rev. 13'–14'.

I slaughtered a fattened bull (and) butchered a sheep, killed countless birds of the heavens and fish of the watery abyss, (and) heaped up the produce of the sea (and) the abundance of the mountains before them (the gods). The burning of incense, the fragrance of sweet resin, covered the surface of the wide heavens like a dense fog. I presented them (the gods) with gifts from inhabited settlements, (their) heavy audience gifts, and I gave (them other) presents. I blocked the feet of A.RI.A.TA.BAR, the foreign seed, from (entering) inside it and I appeased his (Aššur's) anger.¹⁹²

The king boasts that he, his nobles, and other Assyrians celebrated for three days in the courtyard of Aššur's temple.¹⁹³ Esarhaddon also planned on having a large public celebration in Babylon when Esagila was completed, but he died before the work was completed; this comes as no surprise as he had invested a great deal of time and effort into rebuilding and decorating the temple, and ornately refurbishing the divine statues.¹⁹⁴ On the road, piles of brushwood were to be lit every third of a league and at each league priests were to slaughter a fattened bull. Upon arrival in Babylon, the statues were to enter the orchards, groves, canals, and gardens of Ekarzagina, and exorcists (*āšipū*) were to perform "the washing of the mouth," "the opening of the mouth," "bathing," (and) "purification" rituals.¹⁹⁵

From time to time, Assurbanipal mentions festivities held to commemorate the completion of temples. Joyous festivals were held when the king finished Eḫursaḡ-galkurkurra (Assur), Eḫulḫul and Emelamana (Ḫarrān), and an *akītu*-house of Ištar/Mullissu (Nineveh); the king may have personally attended and participated in all of these events.¹⁹⁶ At Nineveh, the completion of the *akītu*-house was celebrated with a special *akītu*-festival:

I brought Aššur and Mullissu, the gods who support me (and) who fulfilled my every desire, inside and I made (them) celebrate an *akītu*-festival. I of-

¹⁹² Borger, *Asarh.* p. 5 §2 (Ass. A) vi 37–vii 16.

¹⁹³ Borger, *Asarh.* p. 6 §2 (Ass. A) vii 26–34. It is not absolutely certain that this festival took place as the temple was not finished while Esarhaddon was alive; Assurbanipal completed the project very early in his reign. This boast, like that of placing Šamaš-šumu-ukīn on the throne in Babylon and returning Marduk to Esagila, was likely premature. The festivities may have been planned, but never happened.

¹⁹⁴ Borger, *Asarh.* pp. 88–89 §57 (AsBbE [EŠ 6262]) rev. 17–24. For descriptions of the refurbishment of the statues of Marduk and his entourage, see Borger, *Asarh.* p. 81–84 §53 (AsBbA [K 2801+]) rev. 9–38 and p. 88 §57 (AsBbE [EŠ 6262]) rev. 11–16. For an English translation, see C. Walker and M. Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian Mīs Pī Ritual* (=SAALT 1; Helsinki 2001) pp. 25–27. The damaged statues were refurbished in a workshop (*bīt mummi*) in Assur.

¹⁹⁵ For further details, see pp. 235–236 in this volume; and Walker and Dick, *SAALT* 1 pp. 201–203 and 206. The rituals were performed before Ea, Šamaš, Asalluḫi, Bēlet-ilī, Kusu, Ninahakudu, Ninkurra, Ninagal, Kusibanda, Ninildu, and Ninzadim.

¹⁹⁶ Borger, *BIWA* p. 170 T v 50–vi 11 and pp. 176–177 E Stüick 6:8–9; and Novotny, *Eḫulḫul* p. 91 LET rev. 69. It is possible that he did not make the trip to Ḫarrān, but sent his *kuzippu*-garments to stand in for him. If this was the case, then Urdu-Ea (*kalū*-priest of Sīn) or his son Nabū-zēru-iddina may have attended this special religious occasion on the king's behalf. For the importance of the *kuzippu*-garments of the king in rituals, see B. Pongratz-Leisten, "The Interplay of Military Strategy and Cultic Practice in Assyrian Politics," in *Assyria* 1995 pp. 247–248.

fered sumptuous sacrifices before them (and) presented (them) with gifts. Aššur and Mullissu, who raised me from childhood (and) protected my kingship, will enter inside this *akītu*-house and celebrate a joyous festival (every year).¹⁹⁷

At Assur and Ḫarrān, priests offered sumptuous sacrifices and presented gifts. It is not known if the presentations occurred publicly, prior to the gods entering their temples, or if they took place in private, after the images had been reinstalled upon their daises.

Conclusion

Assyrian royal inscriptions provide a wealth of information about temple building and restoration projects. Rulers, from the third millennium until the end of the seventh century, proudly recorded their accomplishments on clay, stone, and metal objects displayed and deposited in newly built or renovated divine houses in principal Assyrian (and, in the first millennium, Babylonian) cities. Royal image-makers provided in the texts the information they considered important to their intended audience, the god or goddess whose temple or sanctuary was being built, expanded, renovated, or decorated. The details provided, that is the stage(s) of building deemed suitable to be incorporated into *res gestae*, vary and seldom provide a complete picture of a project from start to finish.

The inscriptions, as a corpus, do provide numerous reasons for (re)building or renovating temples, sanctuaries, or shrines and contain valuable information on all stages of construction: initiating the project, preparing the building site, preparing the building materials, working on the foundations, building the structure, installing the roofing and doors, decorating the interior, and returning deities in the midst of celebrations. Which stages of building were recorded in royal texts changed from reign to reign or from project to project. For example, Esarhaddon's inner circle was deeply concerned with initiating the project, carefully preparing the building site, inspecting the foundations, and rituals and rites of preparing and placing the first brick in the temple, that is, the stages most critical to appeasing the gods during the transition from the old to the new earthly residence. Some of the information included in texts can be confirmed by archaeological excavations, but other details provided will only ever be known from inscriptions; many, if not most, of the ornate decorations, whether purely decorative or functional, placed in the temples may never be recovered, but the stone foundations, deposited inscriptions, and brickwork of some of Assyria's principal temples can be seen today in Iraq or in museum collections around the world. Archaeological remains and passages in inscriptions provide us only with a glimpse of the grandeur of the earthly abodes of Assyria's gods and goddesses. Our knowledge of these buildings will undoubtedly increase as new inscribed objects are discovered, identified, and/or more closely examined.

¹⁹⁷ Borger, BIWA p. 170 T v 50–vi 11.

