Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit

herausgegeben von

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Assur's "Second Temple Period"
The Restoration of the Cult of Aššur, c. 538 BCE[1]

Karen Radner

After the city of Assur had regained wealth and prominence as a trading centre in the kingdom of Hatra in the 1st century AD, the shrine of the god Aššur (whose name was now pronounced Assor) was rebuilt on monumental scale (Fig. 1). The new sanctuary was designed in the contemporary Iranian architectural style as an iwan building,[2] emphasizing Hatra's close political and cultural connections with the Parthian Empire. Otherwise, however, there was a considerable degree of continuity in the way the cult of Aššur was practiced, hundreds of years after the imperial sanctuary of Aššur had been destroyed and looted in 614 BCE.

The new temple's pavement stones were inscribed with private inscriptions in Aramaic script and language,[3] commemorating worshippers whose names often invoke the god Aššur. The texts date to specific days in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD and demonstrate the continuing importance of two particular periods: the first twelve days of the first month (Nisan; March–April) and the fourth week of the eleventh month (Shebat; January–February), the two most sacred periods of the cultic calendar of the Assyrian imperial age.[4] The latter occasion is that of the Dais-of-Destiny (*parak šimāti*) festival[5] whereas the first is the time of the New Year (*akītu*) festival, for whose celebration a new chapel had been rebuilt on top of the ruins of the festival house of the imperial period.[6]

But how are we to explain this remarkable cultic continuity across seven centuries? In my opinion, the missing link is "Temple A" which, as I shall argue in this paper, was created by members of Aššur's congregation who returned from Babylonia after Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, permitted the religious restoration of Assur c. 538 BCE, shortly after he had taken control of Babylon. This paper therefore seeks to es-

[1] I first presented the central thesis of this paper as part of my (long delayed) Inaugural Lecture "A godforsaken country: Assyria after 614 BC" at UCL on 4 March 2014 and included it in the chapter "Assyrian history after the empire" in RADNER, Ancient Assyria, 6–7. I am grateful to Christoph Levin and Reinhard Müller who, when planning the workshop "Herrschaftslegitimation und königliche Selbstdarstellung" in August 2014, kindly allowed me to extend the scope of my contribution beyond the Assyrian imperial period to the time when the monarchy was gone.

[2] ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, 73–88; HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 138–40.

[3] Editions: ANDRAE/JENSEN, Aramäische Inschriften; AGGOULA, Inscriptions; BEYER, Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, 12–25 (all texts labeled "Gedächnisinschrift"); photos: ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, pl. 57.

[4] HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 140–41; LIVINGSTONE, Remembrance in Assur, 152–55.

[5] COHEN, Cultic Calendars, 337–40.

[6] ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, 89–90.

tablish Assur's "Second Temple Period" as a distinct phase of its history when the city and its cult existed within the Persian and then the Seleucid Empire.

To this end, we will first discuss certain aspects in the worship of the god Aššur in imperial times, namely the interaction with his congregation and the function of sacred text. We will then turn to the loss of the Aššur temple at Assur and the extinction of Assyrian kingship at the end of the 7th century BCE and explore how the cult of Aššur survived these catastrophic events before discussing the Second Temple erected above the imperial ruins and the sacred texts which played a very prominent role in the shrine's very make-up – in a new context where the cult had to function without the Assyrian king in the key roles of high priest and patron.

1. The Worship of Aššur in Imperial Times

As the god's chosen representative and human agent, the Assyrian king provided a direct link between the god Aššur and his community of worshippers. In contrast to contemporary rulers such as the king of Babylon, for example, the Assyrian king was the god's high priest and therefore the supreme religious authority in his realm. This aspect of Assyrian kingship is publicised prominently, especially in the royal inscriptions and in the imagery of the royal steles, which show him as a worshipper.[7]

On one such stele,[8] erected in 671 BCE in the provincial capital Sam'al (Zincirli in Turkey), king Esarhaddon's (r. 680–669 BCE) inscription stresses the close and transcendent nature of the relationship between his house and the city of Assur (known also under the sacred name Baltil), seat of the only temple of the god Aššur, despite the fact that his ancestor Aššurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BCE) had removed the royal residence from Assur some 200 years before: "Royal descendant of the eternal line of Bel-bani son of Adasi, founder of the Assyrian monarchy, whose origin is in Baltil."[9]

1.1 The God and his Congregation

But the prominence of the Assyrian king and his essential role in the most important religious festivals in Aššur's cultic calendar notwithstanding, he was not his people's only conduit to the god. First and foremost, the subjects of the Assyrian state were envisaged as a congregation whose contribution to Aššur's worship was a prominent part of their civic duty. The most obvious manifestation of this principle was the daily feast served to the god at his temple in Assur,[10] whose ingredients were supplied from all over the empire, meticulously documented by the temple authorities charged with the supervision of the elaborate exercise.[11]

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[7] MAGEN, Assyrische Königsdarstellungen.

[8] BÖRKER-KLÄHN, Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen, no. 222.

[9] LEICHTY, Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, no. 98: r. 16–18: NUMUN LUGAL-*u-ti da-ru-u ša* ^{PNd}EN–*ba-ni* DUMU ^{PN}*A-da-si mu-kin* LUGAL-*u-ti* KUR–*Aš-šur*^{KI} *šá du-ru-ug-*[*šu*] *Bal-til*^{KI}.

[10] GASPA, Alimenti.

[11] MAUL, Die tägliche Speisung.

The daily feast for Aššur consisted of mutton, beef, poultry, cereals such as barley, wheat, emmer and sesame, honey and fruit such as apples and figs. These ingredients were periodically delivered from all regions of his dominion to the sanctuary although they were not rare and could easily have been procured by other means. Yet that they had to be provided, in relatively small quantities but regularly, from all across the realm was of paramount ideological importance. In this way, all subjects of Aššur participated jointly in the worship of the god whose care was their privilege and duty.

Once the ingredients arrived at Aššur, the temple's butchers, bakers, confectioners, brewers and oil-pressers processed the materials and prepared the dishes that were then served to Aššur. In a context where the ritual preparation and celebration of a daily feast in honour of the deity was at the core of temple worship, these culinary specialists – all male – were naturally considered priestly personnel[12] and had to be ritually pure in order to interact so intimately with the deity,[13] just like the craftsmen who created and maintained the divine images and the cult paraphernalia.[14]

The god, in the form of his statue, consumed the feast by absorbing its essence in the form of its smell. When this had happened, the meal was distributed back to the community of worshippers. Once the dishes had been removed from the offering table, they were called "leftovers".[15] A strict protocol governed who received which parts of the leftovers of Aššur's feast, with cuts of meat being considered the most prestigious. The Assyrian ruler topped the list of recipients that included temple staff and dignitaries from across the realm, including the provincial governors who ate the leftovers as representatives of their people. The leftovers were transported over considerable distances in order to reach their rightful recipients, just like before the ingredients from which the dishes had been prepared. It was not an issue that the food was no longer fresh, as to eat leftovers from the divine feast was a blessing rather than a culinary experience. Partaking in Aššur's meal in this manner bound the Assyrian state together and to the god, no matter how far away from his temple in Assur the worshippers were based.

The importance of communal partaking in the feast for Aššur highlights that although the king's role in the cult of Aššur was prominent, he was not the sole conduit between the community of worshippers and the deity. The cult of Aššur could survive without the king as patron and high priest. This is an important point, worth considering when faced with the continuity of the worship of Aššur long after the collapse of the Assyrian monarchy in 612 BCE. The Aramaic inscriptions of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (see above) commemorated ceremonies at Assur that were conducted by ordinary citizens of Assur whereas in the imperial age, these same rites belonged to the royal and state cult.[16]

[12] DELLER, Köche und Küche; WAERZEGGERS, Ezida.
[13] LÖHNERT, Installation of priests; WAERZEGGERS, Ezida, 51–53.
[14] BERLEJUNG, Theologie der Bilder, 112–34.
[15] PARPOLA, Leftovers.
[16] As emphasized also by LIVINGSTONE, Remembrance in Assur, 155.

1.2 Sacred Text

Presumably due to the close identification of the deity with his homonymous city, the temple cult of Aššur was exclusive to Assur during the imperial period: the city of Assur was the seat of the only sanctuary dedicated to the god Aššur.

However, the recent discovery of a copy of Esarhaddon's succession covenant (*adê*) in the provincial capital city of Kullania (Tell Tayinat in Turkey) highlights the prominence of text in the manifestation and worship of Aššur outside of Assur. The Kullania manuscript of Esarhaddon's covenant was found inside a small temple, next to a pedestal that seems to have served for its formal presentation.[17] Like the other manuscripts of the covenant found at Kalhu (Fig. 2), the large tablet in portrait format is inscribed in such a way that, when stood on its shorter side, the text on the obverse and the reverse can be read.[18] This is unique to the covenant manuscripts as all other Neo-Assyrian clay tablets require to be turned around along their horizontal axis in order to read their reverse.[19]

Esarhaddon had imposed this covenant of loyalty on all his subjects, in the provinces and the client states alike, on the occasion of the appointment of his son Assurbanipal (r. 668–c. 631) as crown prince in 672 BCE. The Kullania manuscript[20] is the first known version of the covenant as sworn in the provinces that make up the kingdom of Assyria – over 70 at the time.[21] The manuscripts from Kalhu, of which there are at least nine,[22] document the covenant as imposed on the rulers of the client states of the Assyrian Empire on behalf of their people. There is also a small fragment of a manuscript from Assur[23] that is too incomplete to allow more than its identification as a version of the covenant; we will discuss it again below.

While the treaty was conducted between Esarhaddon and a provincial governor or a client ruler, respectively, who acted on behalf of themselves and all their subordinates, the Assyrian king did so as the representative of the god Aššur whose three seals were impressed on all manuscripts.[24] They were identified as such in a caption inscribed above the seal impressions that was designed to emphasise their powerfully binding nature: "Sealing of the god Aššur, king of the gods, lord of the lands – not to be altered; sealing of the great ruler, father of the gods – not to be disputed."[25]

How integral the connection between the covenant tablets, their sealings and the god Aššur was is made explicit in a clause that is best preserved in the new manuscript

[17] HARRISON/OSBORNE, Building XVI.

[18] As first recognized by WATANABE, Anordnung.

[19] RADNER, Format and content, 63.

[20] LAUINGER, Esarhaddon's succession treaty.

[21] RADNER, Provinz.

[22] WATANABE, Die *adê*-Vereidigung, 45–142; PARPOLA/WATANABE, Treaties and Loyalty Oaths, no. 6.

[23] WEIDNER, Assurbânipal in Assur, 215, pl. XIV (VAT 11534); WATANABE, Die *adê*-Vereidigung, 52 text 92; FRAHM, Historische Texte, 135–26.

[24] WATANABE, Siegelung.

[25] PARPOLA/WATANABE, Treaties and Loyalty Oaths, no. 6: i–iv: NA_4.KIŠIB ^{d}A-*šur*$_4$ LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ EN KUR.KUR *ša la šu-un-né-e* NA_4.KIŠIB NUN-*e* GAL-*e* AD DINGIR.MEŠ *ša la pa-qa-a-ri.*

from Kullania: "You shall guard this seal(ed tablet) of the great ruler on which is written the covenant of Assurbanipal, the great crown prince designate, the son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, which is sealed with the seal of Aššur, king of the gods, and which is set up before you, like your god."[26] That the tablets were indeed meant to be displayed and even considered the object of worship is demonstrated forcefully by the already mentioned architectural context, in which the Kullania manuscript was found.

The covenant bound together god, king and subjects through a holy oath, and each tablet on which it was inscribed, sealed with the divine seals, was meant to serve the local community as a visual reminder of this fundamental relationship. But beyond that, the covenant tablets – sealed with the god's seals – were considered divine and exhibited and worshipped in local shrines. It is not clear whether this was an innovation of Esarhaddon's reign or whether this was practiced already earlier.[27] What is certain, however, is that at least from 672 BCE onwards, the god Aššur was made manifest across the empire in the form of sacred text, transcending the confines of his temple in Assur. Due to the extensive and deliberate dissemination of the covenant tablets, the concept that the god Aššur was present in these texts must have been widely familiar in the Assyrian influence sphere. We must therefore acknowledge this element of Assyrian theology as one of the most important and recognizable features of the empire's religious policy, designed to reinforce the identity of all subjects – inside the provincial borders and in the client states – as the congregation of Aššur. Outside of the Assyrian heartland, his worshippers encountered Aššur in the physical form of sacred text.

2. After the Loss of the First Temple

As related in the Babylonian chronicle dubbed "Fall of Nineveh Chronicle", Assur was conquered and sacked in 614 BCE by Median forces.[28] The archaeological exploration of the city has demonstrated that the Aššur temple was destroyed in the process.[29] The gigantic sanctuary had been extensively renovated and redesigned only some 70 years

[26] LAUINGER, Esarhaddon's succession treaty, 98–99, 112: T v 68–72: NA_4.KIŠIB <NUN> GAL-*e an-ni-e šá a-de-e šá* ^{m}*Aš-šur*–DÙ–A DUMU MAN GAL *šá* É UŠ-*te* DUMU ^{m}*Aš-šur*–PAP–AŠ MAN KUR–*Aš-šur* EN-*ku-nu ina* ŠÀ *šá-tir-u-ni ina* NA_4.KIŠIB *šá Aš-šur* LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ *ka-nik-u-ni ina* IGI-*ku-nu šá-kín-u-ni ki* DINGIR-*ku-nu la ta-na-sar-a-ni.* The sign NUN, which is amended here, has been omitted by mistake. It is present in the parallel passages in other manuscripts.

[27] Unless one accepts the identification of FRAHM, Historische Texte, 129–30 of a very fragmentary text as a covenant tablet of Assurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BCE) and the tradition is therefore considerably older, then it may have been an innovation of Sennacherib (r. 704–681 BCE) who conducted a covenant on behalf of his crown prince Esarhaddon (PARPOLA/WATANABE, Treaties and Loyalty Oaths, no. 3; FRAHM, Historische Texte, 130–35) and had a new seal of the god Aššur fashioned, called "Seal of Destinies" (GEORGE, Sennacherib, 140–41): it is one of the three seals used on Esarhaddon's covenant tablets.

[28] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 93 no. 3: 24–30.

[29] MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage von Assur, 87.

earlier, in a project masterminded and funded by king Sennacherib (r. 704–681 BCE)[30] who had begun the project late in 689 BCE.

The last king to be crowned in the sanctuary, as ancient custom required, was Sin-šarru-iškun (r. 622–612 BCE) who died in 612 BCE during the capture of Nineveh.[31] He was succeeded by Aššur-uballiṭ. He was called the king of Assyria[32] in the Babylonian chronicle, which, however, related how he ascended to the Assyrian throne in Harran,[33] rather than in Assur. Evidence from private legal document from Guzana (Tell Halaf in Syria) and Dur-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad in Syria) suggests that from an Assyrian perspective, this ruler was not thought of as king, presumably as he had yet to be formally crowned in the Aššur temple.[34] Nevertheless, Aššur-uballiṭ's legitimate claim to the Assyrian throne was not in doubt and he was referred to as "crown prince", in the usual style of the heir apparent to the Assyrian throne, officially appointed by having the subjects swear a covenant (*adê*) accepting the succession arrangements (see above).

A legal document from Dur-Katlimmu from the time after 612 BCE protected a business transection with a singular variant of an otherwise common guarantee clause: "Whoever contests (the agreement), [various gods] will be his legal adversaries; the covenant of the crown prince will seek vengeance."[35] In all other attestations of the clause,[36] the "covenant of the king" is invoked. That the crown prince is mentioned instead of the king suggests that there was no king and that the crown prince filled the vacant role. This scenario is also apparent from the name used by the last Assyrian commander-in-chief. As befitted his position as one of the highest officials of the realm,[37] he lent his name to a year in the Assyrian calendar[38] and as a consequence, is mentioned in the dates of four documents from Guzana.[39] The commander-in-chief's name was Nabû-mar-šarri-uṣur, "O Nabû, protect the crown prince!" Names of this type were very common among the Assyrian state officials but normally invoked their master the king,[40] rather than the crown prince. Like the scribe from Dur-Katlimmu who modified a familiar clause, the commander-in-chief seems to have adapted his

[30] FRAHM, Einleitung, 170–73; HUXLEY, Gates and guardians, 109–10; GRAYSON/NOVOTNY, Inscriptions of Sennacherib, Part 2, 20–22.

[31] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 94 no. 3: 38–46.

[32] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 96 no. 3: 66.

[33] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 95 no. 3: 50.

[34] RADNER, Die neuassyrischen Texte, 17–19.

[35] RADNER, Die neuassyrischen Texte, no. 199: 9–10: *man-nu šá* GIL-*u-ni* [x x x x] EN–*de-ni-šú a-de-e* A–MAN *ina* ŠU-*šú l*[*u-ba-'i-ú*]. The document is dated to the otherwise unattested eponym year of Se'-ila'i. The first witness is the city lord Iadi'-il, a title not attested inside the Assyrian administrative system during the imperial period. This fact as well as the text's archival connections allow its dating to the period after 612 BCE.

[36] Listed in RADNER, Die neuassyrischen Texte, 19.

[37] MATTILA, Magnates, 107–25.

[38] MILLARD, Eponyms, 105.

[39] UNGNAD, Privaturkunden, nos. 101, 103, 104, 105.

[40] E.g. RADNER, Prosopography, Volume 1, Part I, 218–21 (Aššur-šarru-uṣur); BAKER, Prosopography, Volume 2, Part II, 874–79 (Nabû-šarru-uṣur); BAKER, Prosopography, Volume 3, Part II, 1211–13 (Šamaš-šarru-uṣur).

name to suit the unusual circumstances of Assyria having a ruler, but not a proper king, caused by the destruction of the Aššur temple and the inaccessibility of the city of Assur.

In the turbulent years following the fall of the Assyrian heartland, when powerful allies like Saite Egypt and the Iranian kingdom of Mannea rallied to lend their support to the Assyrian cause, reclaiming Assur must have still seemed possible – and with it the reconstruction of the Aššur temple and the proper coronation of Aššur-uballiṭ. But this never came to pass. With his defeat at a final battle at Harran in 609 BCE,[41] the Assyrian monarchy came to an end, never to be reinstated. With the loss of the king, the cult of Aššur had now also lost its high priest and, importantly, its patron. The rebuilding of the ruined shrine would have to wait for others to take on this costly undertaking.

2.1 A Temple in Exile: The Aššur Cult at Uruk in the 6th Century BCE

When Aššur-uballiṭ lost his last battle at Harran in 609 BCE, the chance of restoring the Assyrian monarchy was gone. But despite losing his representative on earth, the cult of Aššur survived. It continued in exile, albeit on a much more modest scale than practiced previously in Assur. In the southern Babylonian city of Uruk, a group of expatriates from Assur maintained a small shrine (*ekurrātu*) devoted to the god Aššur. We know about the temple from various mid-6th century BCE documents,[42] but about its congregation mainly because of an administrative text[43] from the archive of the Eanna, Uruk's main sanctuary (Fig. 3). The fragmentary document lists the following people, many with names invoking the god Aššur and in Assyrian language rather than in Babylonian:[44]

> [These are] brewers of the Aššur shrine: Ahu-lumur son of Ina-qibi-[…, PN] son of Aššur-zeru-ibni; […]-šuma son of Abu-[…]; Remanni-Aššur son of Mannu-aki-bet-Aššur; Iddina-[…]; Pan-Aššur-lamur; Rib-Aššur. These are butchers [of the Aššur shrine]: Aššur-dayyan, the overseer of Aššur; Aššur-aplu-iddina […]; Mušallim-Aššur. These are craftsmen of the Aššur shrine: [PN], the potter; Balatu and Marduk sons of Na[…]; Aššur-uballit and Nadin sons of Nabu-zeru-edu-ibni […]; Aššur-eriba son of Marduk-mudammiq; Iddiya son of Pan-[…; PN] son of Gula-šumu-ibni. These are craftsmen of Aššur who live on the estates of Aššur: Pan-Bel-lamur son of Guriya; Bel-[…]; men from the city of Assur; merchants of […].[45]

With brewers and butchers attested in the fragmentary text, it is clear that also at Uruk, the cult of Aššur concentrated on the daily feast of the deity. As this was also at the core of temple worship in Babylonia,[46] the activities of the Aššur congregation would have been culturally and socially acceptable in a Babylonian environment, provided

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[41] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 96 no. 3: 66–69.

[42] BEAULIEU, Cult, 57–58; BEAULIEU, Pantheon of Uruk, 333.

[43] Hearst Museum of Anthropology (HEA) 9–2532; edition: LUTZ, Neo-Babylonian Documents, no. 57; Beaulieu, Cult, 59–60; BEAULIEU, Pantheon of Uruk, 331–32.

[44] This can be demonstrated for the names Pan-Aššur-lamur and Pan-Bel-lamur as they contain a distinctively Assyrian verbal form; cf. also BEAULIEU, Cult, 60.

[45] HEARST Museum of Anthropology 9–2532: ll. 5–16.

[46] WAERZEGGERS, Ezida.

that the focus of the cult on Aššur was inoffensive. It is unknown when the Aššur shrine at Uruk was established. Paul-Alain Beaulieu assumed that the cult was introduced in the 7th century when Uruk was part of the Assyrian Empire,[47] but his reasoning relies entirely on the fact that the name of a high-ranking functionary (*qēpu,* "trustee") of the Eanna temple, active sometimes during the years 665 and 648 BCE because of his association with the governor of Uruk of that period, Nabû-ušabši, was called Aššur-belu-uṣur.[48] Beaulieu thinks it likely that this man "belonged to one of the patrician families whose members staffed the upper administration of the Eanna."[49] However, a *qēpu* was appointed directly by the king[50] and generally considered an outsider by the local community.[51] Assuming local roots for Aššur-belu-uṣur is therefore highly problematic. The official was simply Assyrian, one of many imperial officials dispatched from the heartland to keep tabs on the client states. His presence in Uruk offers no evidence whatsoever for an Aššur cult in Uruk during the 7th century BCE.

In the general absence of any indication that establishing a temple for Aššur was even an option during imperial times and as the known texts all date to the 6th century BCE, the most likely scenario is that the Aššur sanctuary at Uruk was founded only after the end of the Assyrian Empire, by refugees or deportees from Assur. Men from that place are mentioned explicitly in our text,[52] highlighting that there was still a direct connection with the god's native city. Although the Babylonian kings of the 6th century BCE accepted the cult of Aššur at Uruk, as brief references to royal involvement in some texts indicate,[53] they certainly did not play the eminent role that the Assyrian king had held in the imperial Aššur cult at Assur. The cult at Uruk was community-based and community-oriented, contributing greatly to the sense of identity of the congregation, as indicated by their members' frequent choice of names invoking Aššur. Especially poignant in the context of exile and loss of the original shrine at Assur is the name Mannu-aki-bet-Aššur "Who is like the Aššur temple?"[54] In imperial times, the name Mannu-ki-Ešarra[55] is well attested, invoking the Aššur temple at Assur by its ceremonial name. The name variant of the member of the Urukian Aššur congregation bears remembrance to the lost temple in the homeland as well as homage to its replacement in Uruk.

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[47] BEAULIEU, Cult, 61–62; Beaulieu, Pantheon of Uruk, 332. Tacitly accepted by DA RIVA, Assyrians, 115: "Already in the times of Assurbanipal, the god Aššur, equated with the local god AN.ŠÁR/Anu, was worshipped in the city of Uruk" (with reference to BEAULIEU, Cult).

[48] BEUALIEU, Cult, 54–55.

[49] BEAULIEU, Cult, 55.

[50] DUBOVSKY, King's Direct Control.

[51] JURSA, Landwirtschaft, 3; BONGENAAR, Ebabbar, 34; KLEBER, Tempel und Palast, 26.

[52] HEA 9–2532: 16: LÚ.ŠÀ-*bi*–URU^{KI}.MEŠ, "Men from Libbi-Ali", using the colloquial name of the city of Assur.

[53] References: BEAULIEU, Cult, 57–58; brief summary in BEAULIEU, Pantheon of Uruk, 333.

[54] HEA 9–2532: 7: ^{PN}*Mann-nu–a-ki-i*–É–AN.ŠÁR.

[55] BAKER, Prosopography, Volume 2, Part II, 690 s.v.

2.2 The Second Temple at Assur

At Assur, the cult of Aššur was re-established only after Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, conquered Babylonia, according to the testimony of the Cyrus Cylinder, a building inscription from Babylon:[56]

> From [Šuanna (= Babylon)] I sent back to their places, to the sanctuaries across the river Tigris whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein: to Assur, Susa, Akkad, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turan, Der, as far as the border of Gutium (i.e., the Zagros mountain range). I made permanent sanctuaries for them. I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements.[57]

The chronology of Cyrus' reign suggests that this happened soon after he took the Babylonian crown, presumably in 539 or 538 BCE. That Cyrus sent back not only the exiled congregations but also "the gods" to their ruined temples would seem to imply that divine statues had previously been brought to Babylon from these north-eastern regions of the Babylonian Empire, most probably during their conquest by Nabopolassar (r. 626–605 BCE) in the late 7th century BCE. The return of these abducted gods would have been essential for any attempt to restore the local cults.

With the destruction of the Aššur sanctuary, the temple workshop, where statues and cult instruments had been created on holy ground and with divine inspiration,[58] was lost as well. As a consequence, replacing what had been looted or ruined would have been impossible on site. It is difficult to speculate what objects from the Aššur temple might have ended up in Babylon, given that the city had been looted in 614 BCE by Median troops before the Babylonian forces even approached the city.[59] One should therefore be open to the possibility that the images returned by Cyrus had been fashioned anew in Babylon, just like Esarhaddon had the divine statues for the Babylonian deities created in the temple workshop at Assur, when restoring the Babylonian cults.[60] But whatever Cyrus allowed to return to Assur would have provided focus for the renewed worship of Aššur.

The Cyrus Cylinder is surely one of the best known Akkadian texts and this specific passage is quoted very often in order to stress the Persian ruler's supposed religious tolerance[61] and also to provide a context for the re-establishing of the Yahweh cult at

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[56] TAYLOR, Cyrus Cylinder, 56–59, 62.

[57] Cyrus Cylinder, ll. 30–32: *iš-tu* [*Šu-an-na*.K]I *a-di* URU.*Aš-šur*.KI *ù* MÙŠ.EREN.KI *A-kà-dè*.KI KUR.*Èš-nu-nak* URU.*Za-am-ba-an* URU.*Me-túr-nu* BÀD.DINGIR.KI *a-di pa-aṭ* KUR.*Qu-ti-i ma-ha-z*[*a e-be*]*r-ti* ÍD.IDIGNA *ša iš-tu pa-na-ma na-du-ú šu-bat-su-un* DINGIR.MEŠ *a-ši-ib* ŠÀ-*bi-šú-nu a-na áš-ri-šu-nu ú-tir-ma ú-šar-ma-a šu-bat da-rí-a-ta kul-lat* UN.MEŠ-*šú-nu ú-pa-ah-hi-ra-am-ma ú-te-er da-ád-mi-šú-un.* Edition: FINKEL, Cyrus Cylinder, 6–7; FINKEL, Transliteration, 132; VAN DER SPEK, Cyrus the Great, 263.

[58] BERLEJUNG, Theologie der Bilder, 89–93.

[59] GRAYSON, Chronicles, 93 no. 3: 24–30.

[60] BERLEJUNG, Theologie der Bilder, 158–71. Assyrian instances of "godnapping" and subsequent return are the subject of ZAIA, State-Sponsored Sacrilege.

[61] For a review of the ample literature on the subject see most recently VAN DER SPEK, Cyrus the Great, 233–34 with n. 1.

Jerusalem with Cyrus' permission, as reported in the Bible.[62] But this reference has, at least to the best of my knowledge, never been connected with the archaeology of the Aššur temple – despite the fact that there is a suitable building to be identified with the restored shrine. Erected on top of the rubble of the imperial Aššur temple and, in a later stage of its existence, eventually integrated into the grand iwan complex of the 1st century AD, its excavator Walther Andrae called this shrine merely "Temple A",[63] as he hesitated to see it connected in any way to the cult of Aššur: "We do not know whose temple it was. It is doubtful that its owner was the god Aššur. He had been utterly vanquished and the victor would not have wanted to revive his cult."[64] Later commentators tended to tacitly accept this cautious position or did not discuss the temple's resident deity.[65]

But in my opinion, there is no reason to reject such an association, given that the previous and the later temple on the same site belonged without any doubt to Aššur. This view was shared by Ernst Heinrich who wrote about "Temple A" and nearby "Temple N", which was constructed during a later building phase, in the context of his survey of Mesopotamian temple architecture: "It cannot be established to whom the two temples were dedicated. But I think it very likely that the surviving inhabitants of Assur bear here in remembrance their city god and perhaps his consort. Name and cult must have been preserved as a new temple for 'Assor' was built almost in its old position in the Parthian period."[66] Andrae was of course aware of this, but attributed the continuity to the lasting memory of Aššur despite the Babylonian attempt to introduce another deity.[67]

"Temple A" certainly postdates the destruction of the imperial Aššur shrine, as it was built directly above the ruins of the south-eastern corner of the temple enclosure. But when exactly the building was constructed has been debated controversially: its excavator Walter Andrae identified it as "a foundation of the Neo-Babylonian conquerors of Assyria," citing close parallels with Babylonian shrines of that period.[68]

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[62] VAN DER SPEK, Cyrus the Great, 236 (literature review), 257 (discussion).

[63] ANDRAE, Das wiedererstandene Assur, 238–39, 313 n. 213; ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, 71–72; HALLER/ANDRAE, Heiligtümer des Gottes Assur, 81.

[64] ANDRAE, Das wiedererstandene Assur, 238: "Wem der Tempel A damals zugeeignet war, wissen wir nicht. Daß es der Gott Assur war, ist zweifelhaft. Er lag besiegt am Boden, und der Sieger wird seinen Kult nicht wieder haben aufleben lassen."

[65] E.g. MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage, 90 (regarding Temple A and Temple N: "Welche Götter dort verehrt wurden, ist nicht bekannt."); CURTIS, Achaemenid Period, 187; HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 122–25 (discusses Temple A's architecture but not its owner).

[66] HEINRICH, Tempel, 318: "Wem die beiden Tempel geweiht waren, ist nicht festzustellen, doch scheint es mir sehr wahrscheinlich, dass die überlebenden Bewohner von Assur hier die Erinnerung an ihren Stadtgott und vielleicht die an seine Gemahlin … gepflegt haben. Name und Kult müssen sich erhalten haben, den in parthischer Zeit wurde dem 'Assor' fast an der alten Stelle ein neuer Tempel gebaut."

[67] ANDRAE, Das wiedererstandene Assur, 238: "So wird es dem Babylonier hier wenig genutzt haben, wenn er den Kult eines assurfremden Gottes einsetzte; das Volk wird doch immer nur an Assur gedacht haben, wenn es diese Kultstätte betrat."

[68] ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, 71: "Wir halten ihn für eine Gründung der neubabylonischen Eroberer Assyriens; den er hat genau die Richtung von Esagila in Babylon und eine Einrich-

Heinrich agreed with this dating,[69] but also pointed out idiosyncrasies. Stefan Hauser stressed that the closest comparisons for its layout are shrines in Uruk, Dura-Europos and Aï Khanoum of the Seleucid period,[70] stating that "an early dating of the post-Assyrian Temple A which relies only on Babylonian echoes in its plan is therefore dubious"[71] but leaving the question of its foundation date undecided.[72] Susan Downey, on the other hand, decidedly excluded a late dating with reference to the Neo-Babylonian design of the façade.[73] As we shall discuss later, Peter Miglus considered the temple a foundation of the period between 614 and 612 BCE,[74] that is, established in the short period immediately after the destruction of the imperial temple and before the conquest of the entire Assyrian heartland. But none of these authors take the passage in the Cyrus Cylinder into consideration when discussing the building date of the sanctuary.

I propose that "Temple A" was the shrine resulting from Cyrus' permission for the exiles and gods to return from Babylonia and to re-establish the local cults in north-eastern Mesopotamia. This date and the historical context can be easily reconciled with the distinct Babylonian influences in the shrine's architecture while its comparative modesty illustrates the fact that Cyrus' permission to re-establish the cult did not mean that the Persian ruler assumed patronage and sponsorship for the temple in the way the Assyrian king had. The members of the congregation would have had to sponsor the temple themselves. The resultant shrine is Aššur's Second Temple.

Established after a the gap of around 70 years since the destruction of Sennacherib's huge structure, the Second Temple's foundation provides the missing link to account for the otherwise surprising continuity in the Aššur cult in evidence from the Assyrian imperial period to the prosperous times under the rule of the kingdom of Hatra, when the ambitious iwan structure was constructed in the 1st century BCE and "Temple A" seamlessly integrated into the grand building complex.[75] In that new architectural context, the building served as an entrance shrine under the protection of deified Good Fortune (*Gad*),[76] as represented by a stone sculpture of a naked, bearded man with lion skin and club.[77]

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tung wie die kleinen neubabylonischen Tempel in Babylon und Babylonien, nämlich in Gestalt eines innen zugemauerten Stadttores mit Fronttürmen, Vorraum, Kultraum mit flacher Nische an der Rückwand und niedrigem Postament, das fast die ganze Raumtiefe einnimmt." Similarly in HALLER/ANDRAE, Heiligtümer des Gottes Assur, 81.

[69] HEINRICH, Tempel, 317 ("spätbabylonisch").

[70] HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 123–25 with Abb. 5. These shrines had not yet been excavated when Andrae was excavating at Assur.

[71] HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 123: "Eine Frühdatierung des nachassyrischen Tempels 'A', die sich nur auf babylonische Anklänge im Grundriss bezieht, bleibt daher fragwürdig."

[72] HAUSER, Assur und sein Umland, 125 n. 28: "Das Baudatum des nachassyrischen Tempel 'A' muss daher offen bleiben."

[73] DOWNEY, Mesopotamian Religious Architecture, 149–150.

[74] MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage, 92.

[75] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, 136.

[76] For the identification of Good Fortune (*Gad*) with the depictions of the Heracles type on the basis of contemporary material from Hatra see KAIZER, 'Heracles Figure', 230–31.

[77] ANDRAE, Das wiedererstandene Assur, 253 fig. 229.

In its original design (Fig. 4), however, the Second Temple stood in its own walled enclosure, as Peter Miglus was able to establish through the meticulous study of Andrae's excavation documentation.[78] The new structure was created above the southern parts of the imperial sanctuary, integrating the position of the original south gate and enclosure wall of the previous building into its layout.[79] Despite the new "Babylonian" design of the central building, continuity with the older structure was therefore prominently emphasised by the temple's position towards the rest of the city. When approaching the shrine from the south, as the congregation had done for centuries, the worshipper in the late 6th century BCE would have entered the Second Temple in the exact same spot where also his ancestors had stepped into the imperial sanctuary. The size of the new temple was of course much smaller. The enclosure covered c. 800 square metres and the central building of 18 × 19 metres, with thick mudbrick walls of a width of 2.5 metres, extended over c. 340 square metres, but this seems modest only when compared to the gigantic dimensions of the imperial Aššur temple. Judged on its own merits, the scale is respectable enough for a communal shrine that had to be maintained with local funding.

About 70 years had passed since the destruction of the imperial temple in 614 BCE. This corresponded to the lifetime of three generations, and that the rebuilding of the shrine coincided with the return of the exile congregation from Babylonia, as mentioned in the Cyrus Cylinder, is therefore important. The homecoming of the exiles accounts for the influence of Babylonian temple architecture on the central structure, as this would have been the type of space in which the congregation had operated in the meantime. If we consider the Urukean community representative, the repatriates would have included educated people with an understanding and an appreciation of the Aššur cult. The desire to reconnect with the old homeland and its history explains also the apparent fervour with which texts from the imperial period were collected in the new shrine.

As Peter Miglus' ground-breaking study of Andrae's documentation of his excavations showed, a great number of old texts were moved into the Second Temple, most importantly 82 stone tablets and 24 clay prisms and cylinders with royal inscriptions as well as clay tablets with royal decrees and religious texts.[80] These documents all relate directly to the god Aššur and Assyrian history, from Erišum I in the early 2nd millennium to Sin-šarru-iškun at the very end of the imperial period.[81] Importantly, the texts do not only concern the Aššur temple; records were assembled from the city's other temples, palaces and walls as well as sites outside of Assur.[82] Miglus stressed the impossibility of these documents having been retrieved from all these buildings in

[78] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, 136, Taf. 56; MIGLUS, Wohngebiet, 120–123, Plan 112; MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage, 90.

[79] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, 136.

[80] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv; also PEDERSÉN, Archives, Part II, 13 n. 9. For details of these texts see the entries for excavation areas iB4V, iB5I, iC4V, iC5I, iD4V and iD5I and the adjoining areas in PEDERSÉN, Katalog, 63–66 (stone tablets), 152–54 (clay prisms) and PEDERSÉN, Archives, Part II, 19–28 (clay tablets).

[81] For the chronological scope of the inscriptions: GALTER, Geschichte als Bauwerk, 131–32.

[82] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, Tf. 59 for a table with the texts' provenance.

order to be housed at the Second Temple and his resulting interpretation of the text collections as an older archive that was relocated *in toto* is convincing. Miglus suggested that this archive had formerly been stored in the imperial Aššur temple and, drawing also on observations by Ernst Weidner and Olof Pedersén, proposed rooms adjoining its southwest courtyard as the most likely point of origin: parts of two specific text groups were excavated by Andrae both there and in the Second Temple, which strongly suggests that they were once stored together.[83]

Clearly, the transfer to the new location had not been without complications. This is of course due to the fact that by the time it happened, the imperial Aššur temple was a ruin. But the documents were so important to the congregation that the effort to retrieve them was made nevertheless, despite the obvious time, cost and danger involved. Miglus therefore saw this as the act of the survivors of the 614 BCE assault.[84] But in addition to the arguments derived from the Babylonian architectural influences, I find it improbable that a building constructed immediately after 614 BCE would have survived the sack of the Assyrian heartland in 612 BCE. And yet, the Second Temple lasted until its eventual integration into the *iwan* structure of the 1st century BCE. However, Miglus' position that the interests of the congregation in the texts necessitates the assumption that they were Assyrian can of course easily be reconciled with my proposal that the Second Temple was the creation of the remainder of the local community[85] and the influx of Assyrian exiles, repatriated from Babylonia with the permission of Cyrus the Great after 539 BCE.

While the temple archives evidently held great attraction, it remains unclear whether their recovery was the result of purposeful exploration or a happy chance find in the course of building work. However, the texts' accumulation in the Second Temple demonstrates a keen awareness and appreciation of Assur's and Assyria's glorious past.[86] Their appreciation as reading matter of course required knowledge of cuneiform and the Akkadian language. Even if one imagines the local survivors as dispossessed, impoverished and uneducated, especially once the deportations to Babylonia had taken place, at least the exiles would have lived in an environment where they were exposed to cuneiform. That some of the Urukean members of the Aššur congregation bore names in the Assyrian variety of Akkadian, as we have seen above, demonstrates that they continued to use their distinctive language to some extent in exile. The congregation evidently saw the texts as highly significant for the new shrine and its future. They included, for example, decrees issued by Adad-nerari III (r. 810–783 BCE) with detailed instructions for the preparation of the god's feast and other ceremonies.[87] The great continuity in the cult of Aššur that we have stressed at the start of this paper will have owed much to the Second Temple's collection of ancient texts.

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[83] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, 139–140.

[84] MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage, 92.

[85] For the insular continuation of the city's inhabitation in some of its parts: MIGLUS, Wohnquartiere, 65; MIGLUS, Die letzten Tage, 90–91.

[86] Similarly FRAHM, Historische Texte, 9: "Wer immer Zugang zu den fraglichen Texten hatte, dürfte in der Lage gewesen sein, sich ein zwar einseitiges, zugleich jedoch bemerkenswert detailliertes Bild von der Geschichte des assyrischen Staates zu verschaffen."

[87] KATAJA/WHITING, Grants, no. 69–74.

Moreover, in a context where sacred texts were themselves the object of worship (see above), they had obvious meaning beyond their value as reading matter. Some of the clay tablets, namely land grants to the Aššur temple from the reign of Adad-nerari III,[88] were certainly sealed with Aššur's seal and therefore imbued with the same divine quality as the covenant tablets of Esarhaddon. Indeed, although the find spot of the already mentioned fragment of the Assur copy of that covenant[89] has not been properly recorded (or at least was not documented in such a way that it was still known when the text was eventually published) it is quite likely that it came from this context, too. We must assume that the ancient texts were thought not only to represent a very real connection to god Aššur, having been part of the destroyed temple's archive, but that at least some of them were considered actual manifestations of the deity. The special significance of the sealed, sacred tablets may even have been transferred to all texts regained from the ruined shrine.

The "Second Temple Period" of Assur can perhaps serve as a contemporary and comparatively well-documented case study for Second Temple Judaism. Conceivably, the texts assembled in Aššur's Second Temple could even have provided the raw material for an Assyrian Bible – but as far as we can tell, this never happened. By the 1st century AD when the Second Temple was turned into the gate shrine for the newly created, grand *iwan* complex that now constituted the Aššur temple, the ancient cult traditions were still followed but the Aramaic script and the Aramaic language had replaced cuneiform and Assyrian entirely, as the evidence of the already discussed memorial inscriptions incised on the sanctuary's pavement slabs illustrates best. But already before the construction of the *iwan* complex, the ancient cuneiform texts served no longer as reading material – and yet, they were not considered obsolete either. Instead, in an earlier building phase of unknown date when the Second Temple still functioned as its own, self-contained sanctuary, the texts were integrated into the very fabric of the shrine. Hence, six stone tablets with inscriptions of the 13th century BCE kings Adad-nerari I, Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I[90] were carefully laid in place to form a step leading into the inner chamber of the Second Temple, three further stone tablets of Shalmaneser I and Assurbanipal served as door sockets[91] and many other texts were bricked into the walls and the pavement.[92] They ceased entirely to function as written information and instead were physically merged with the Second Temple. It may have been this infusion with holy text that guaranteed the building's survival, even when the central building of the grand *iwan* structure took over its function as the focus of Aššur's cult.

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[88] KATAJA/WHITING, Grants, no. 1–5.

[89] WEIDNER, Assurbânipal in Assur, 215, pl. XIV (VAT 11534); WATANABE, Die *adê*-Vereidigung, 52 text 92; FRAHM, Historische Texte, 135–26.

[90] GRAYSON, Assyrian Rulers, 139: A.0.76.7 ex. 3 = Ass. 781; 151: A.0.76.16 ex. 2 = Ass. 781 (Adad-nerari I); 181 A.0.77.1 ex. 5 = Ass. 785, ex. 6 = Ass. 783 and ex. 17 = Ass. 784 (Shalmaneser I); 246 A.0.78.6 ex. 1 = Ass. 782 (Tukulti-Ninurta I).

[91] GRAYSON, Assyrian Rulers, 181 A.0.77.1 ex. 8 = Ass 890+894 and ex. 11 = Ass. 908 (Shalmaneser I); WEIDNER, Assurbânipal in Assur, 204–207, Tf. XI–XII = Ass. 877+ (Assurbanipal).

[92] MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, 137.

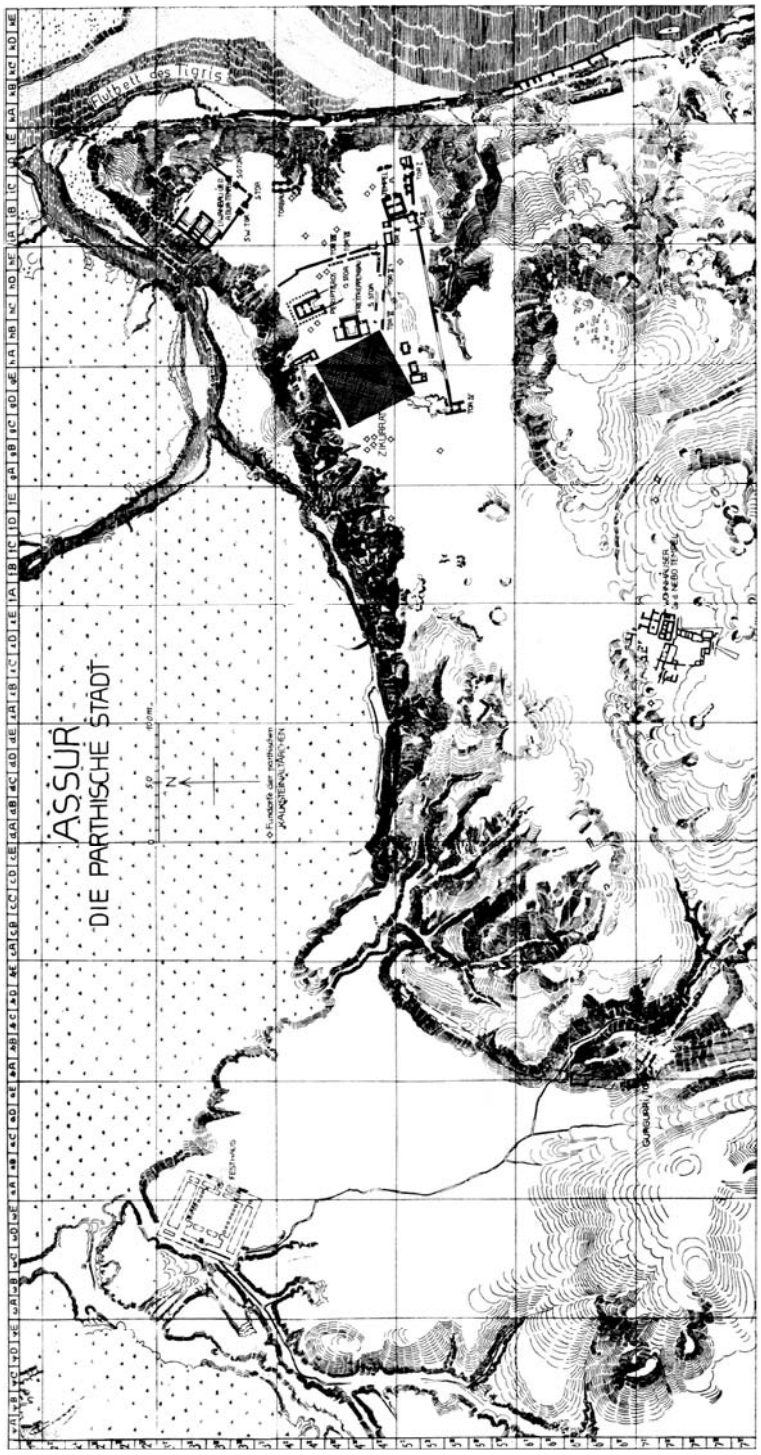

Fig. 1: The Aššur sanctuary in the 2nd century AD, with "Temple A" protecting the south entrance to the temple precinct. The New Year festival house lies to the west of the city, above the ruins of its predecessor of the imperial period. Detail of ANDRAE/LENZEN, Partherstadt Assur, Tf. 2.

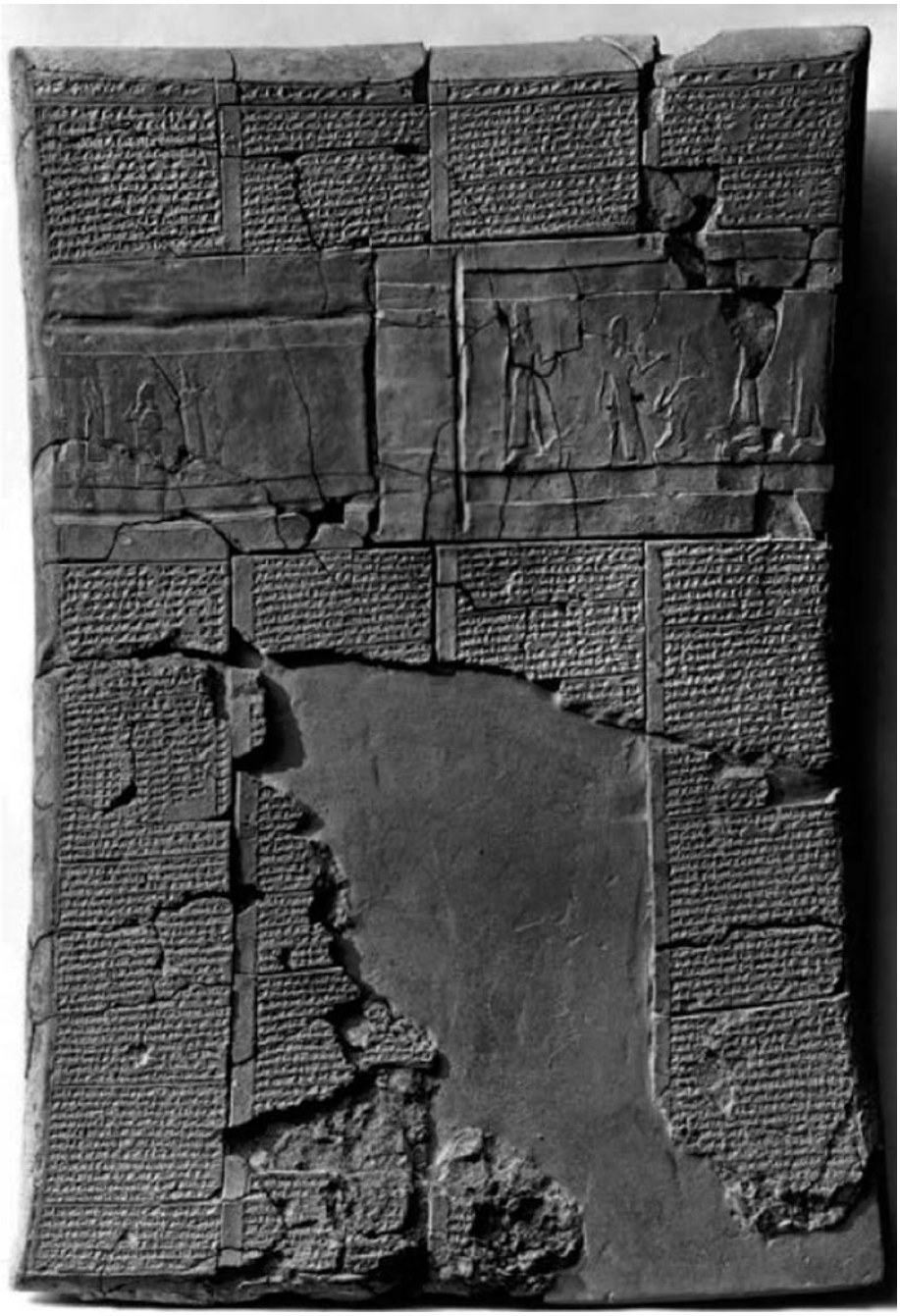

Fig. 2: The covenant of Esarhaddon as sworn by his client, Ramataya of Urakazabanu, found at the Nabû temple in Kalhu (ND 4327). Iraq Museum, Baghdad, IM 64188. British Museum photograph. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

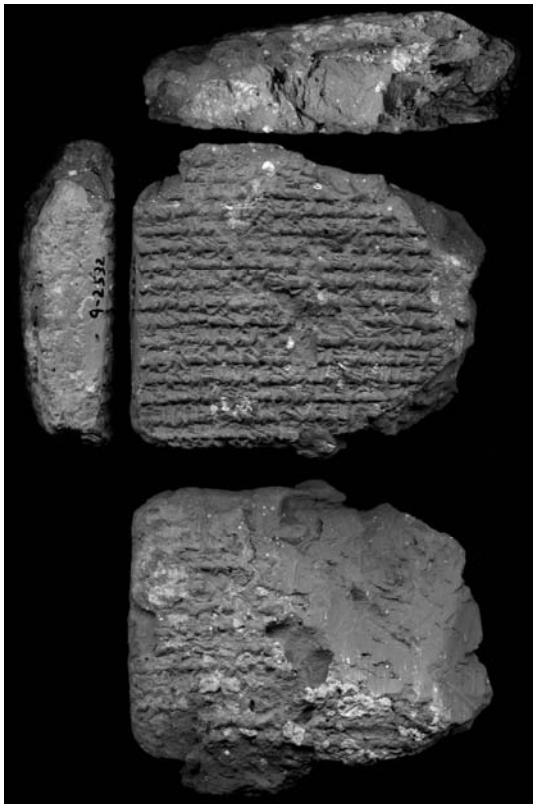

Fig. 3: Administrative text from Uruk concerning the congregation of the local Aššur temple. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley, HMA 9-02532. Photo: Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/P248259).

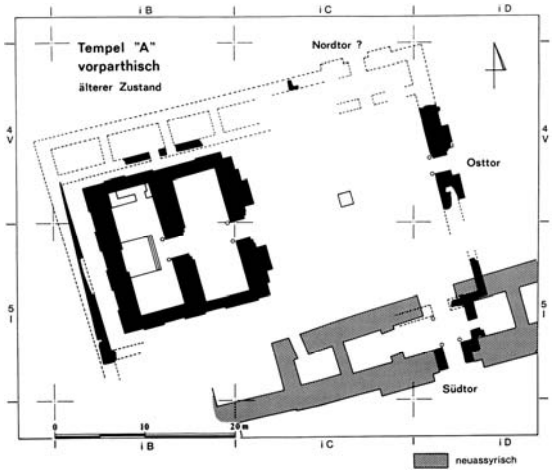

Fig. 4: "Temple A" in its first building phase. Reproduced from MIGLUS, Staatsarchiv, pl. 56.

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