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The titles ‘King of Sumer and Akkad’ and ‘King of Karduniaš’, and the Assyro-Babylonian relationship during the Sargonid Period*

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Abstract:

From the earliest Mesopotamian literature, royal inscriptions were written with the need to commemorate and preserve the king’s deeds. Along with several literary devices, titles and epithets were denotative elements bounded together on an archetypal approach to Near Eastern kingship. Despite the biasness of their contents, they were still part of a geopolitical and sociocultural environment. The references to both Tukultī-ninurta I and Šamšī-adad V (who ruled during the Middle and Early Neo-Assyrian periods, respectively) provide a theoretical framework on the incorporation of Southern royal titles among Assyrian royal inscriptions. These include titles such as ‘King of Sumer and Akkad’, ‘King of Karduniaš’, among others. However, the rise of the Sargonids (VIII-VII BC) accentuates the malleability of these titles.

Keywords: Neo-Assyrian Empire; Royal Inscriptions; Assyro-Babylonian relationship; Titles; Epithets.

*All the abbreviations (unless otherwise stated) follow the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/abbreviations_for_assyriology. Accessed December 2016).

Introduction

Sociocultural factors play an important role on how narratives are interpreted. Concerning Near Eastern literature, specifically Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, titles and epithets are a key element on how these theories were applied to Assyriology. Regardless of the difficulty to pose a single definition for these terms both are presented as qualifiers of the king's cosmic position.¹

These texts are, along with other literary devices, part of a whole set of ideas that are built upon the need to perpetuate and commemorate the kings' deeds. The compound expressions '(...) great king, mighty king, king of the world' and 'destructive weapon of the great gods'² are part of an archetypal approach to Neo-Assyrian royal ideology. Besides 'the god Aššur [...] gave me the power to let cities fall into ruins [...] and to enlarge Assyrian territory (...)'³, they stress the idea of the Assyrian monarch as a military leader, and war as a divinely ordained issue related to the idea of universal control.

From a different perspective, despite the ideological approach to royal inscriptions, they were still part of a sociocultural and political milieu. So, along with the importance of RINAPs 4.20 and 4.68 (Esarhaddon's reign), Tukultī-ninurta I's Babylonian campaigns (Middle Assyria Period), and later on Šamšī-adad V's provide a theoretical background for understanding how southern titles and epithets were adapted by the Neo-Assyrian kings to express their political control over the alluvial plain.⁴

The title MAN KUR *šu-me-ri ù ak-ka-di* ('King of Sumer and Akkad') goes back to the Third Dynasty of Ur⁵ and allows the Assyrian king to bound himself to both Sumerian and Akkadian culture. From this point of view, it can be seen on a double perspective.

¹ Seux 1967: 12-13. According to Seux a title is seen as an expression that bounds its carrier to a hierarchical position. An epithet can be seen as an adjective or an expression that qualifies its carrier.

² RINAP 4.77, 1; RIMA 2.101.1, 11.

³ RINAP 4.1, i 30-31.

⁴ Cifola 2004: 14 – 'Far from pure rhetoric or bombast, titles are not claimed without some basis and must be substantiated by a real accomplishment or, at least, some kind of justification'.

⁵ Hallo 1957: 77-83. Among Ur III's inscriptions, Ur-nammu (ca. 2112-2095 BC) is presented as 'mighty man, Lord of Uruk, King of Ur, King of the lands of Sumer and Akkad [*lugal ki-en-gi-ki-uri-ke₄*]' (RIME 3/2 1.12, 9).

In terms of its cultural value, it is a twofold analysis. Firstly, long after early Sumerian cities (IV millennium BC) were built and the “rebirth” of the Sumerian culture (Ur III), their memory was perpetuated through ages as part of Mesopotamia’s sociocultural milieu.⁶ Secondly, Akkad’s charismatic kingship and ability to control a large territorial area were assimilated into Assyria’s cultural system.⁷ Geographically, by dividing the alluvial plain into Sumer (the Southern regions up to the Gulf) and Akkad (the Northern regions), it may be seen as a figurative way to describe lower Mesopotamia.⁸ The last title is part of the Bronze Age lexicon: among Amarna’s letters, ‘Karduniaš’ is a Kassite word used to describe the Babylonian territory. So, besides ‘King of the Upper and Lower Seas’, the inclusion of MAN KUR *kar-du-ni-aš* (‘King of Karduniaš’) allowed Tukultī-ninurta I to celebrate his victory over Kaštiliašu IV. Hence, in its aftermath, he is presented as the one that:

(...) *ú-bi-la KUR šu-me-ri ù ak-ka-di-i a-na ZAG gim-ri-šá a-bél i-na A.AB.BA KI.TA šá šá ši-i dUTU-ši mi-šir KUR-ia aš-ku-un*

‘became lord of Sumer and Akkad in its entirety and fixed the boundary of my land as the Lower Sea in the east’.⁹

After this phase, two Elamite raids and the political instability threatening Assyrian authority over the South led to a second campaign.¹⁰ Babylonia’s merger into Assyria’s provincial system led to a readjustment of Assyria’s royal titles in order to adapt itself to the new circumstance. This event is not known from the inscriptions, but instead from one Assyrian-Babylonian chronicle (named *P*). Accordingly, Tukultī-ninurta I’s title

⁶ Kramer 1963: 289. Together with the myths and legendary heroes (spread along the literature), Aššurbanipal’s inscriptions highlight how prestigious Sumerian culture still was. In one of them, he is said to be able to ‘read the artistic script of Sumer and the dark Akkadian, which is hard to master’ (ARAB 2, 986).

⁷ Liverani 1993: 48-49; Michalowski 1993: 70-71. Early in Mesopotamian literature, both Sargon’s birth and Naram-Sin’s legends provide an example on how Akkad’s memory was perpetuated throughout Mesopotamian History. First, beside Sargon’s predestination (II. 1-13), it adds that ‘whatsoever king who shall arise after, / let him rule as king fifty-years, / let him become lord over and rule the black-headed folk. / let his [] hard mountains with picks of copper, / let him be wont to ascend high mountains, / let him be wont to cross over low mountains’ (II. 21-27). The second one points to his militarism, but also to the idea of memory: I. 175 – ‘let expert scholars tell you my stela’ (Foster 1995: 165-177).

⁸ Curtis 2007: 42.

⁹ RIMA 1.78.5, 4-6; 64-69.

¹⁰ Yamada 2003: 166-167 (ABC 22, iv 14-21).

MAN URU *Si-ip-par*₅ ù KÁ.DINGIR¹¹ ('King of Sippar and Babylon') is added after the city's destruction and plunder (Marduk's paraphernalia was carried as booty to Assyria) and the nomination of governors.¹²

These three different ways to describe the control of Babylonia: King of Karduniaš; King of Sumer and Akkad, and King of Babylon (and Sippar), are adapted to the political transformations in the territory. The first two expressions point to the territory as a whole, while the third embraces the alluvial plain and the political control over its cities.¹³

During Early Neo-Assyrian Period, Šamšī-adad V's 'King of Sumer and Akkad' was the product of three campaigns against the Babylonians. The first two resulted in the defeat of both Marduk-balāṣu-iqbi and his allies, and also the takeover of his goods.¹⁴ In the final one, the Babylonian monarch (Baba-aḥa-iddina) was defeated and deported (along with some members of his household and royal possessions).¹⁵ However, in the aftermath of his reign, though Adad-nārārī III's inscriptions point to Chaldeans as Assyrian 'vassals',¹⁶ other data, such as the chronicles, provide a different angle. Contrary to his Middle Assyrian counterpart, early Neo-Assyrian control over the plain would be more subtler. Besides a kingless period (mentioned only by the *Eclectic Chronicle*),¹⁷ two other chronicles (*Dynastic* and *Synchronistic*) mention both an agreement between Assyrian and Babylonian kings, and the rise of a minor dynasty.¹⁸ It is therefore plausible to consider that until the rise of Tiglath-pileser III and the Sargonids, these Southern powers took advantage of this period to stay outside the Neo-Assyrian sphere of influence.

So, even if recognize the importance of royal inscriptions for the study of Assyrian royal ideology, the existence of several readjustments until their 'final' version points to their adaptability to a geopolitical environment. Nevertheless, though Tukultī-ninurta I and

¹¹ RIMA 1.78.24, 14.

¹² ABC 22, iv 4-8.

¹³ Rivaroli & Verdame 2005: 294-295.

¹⁴ RIMA 3.103.1, iv 37-45.

¹⁵ RIMA 3.103.2, iv 11.29a.

¹⁶ RIMA 3.104.8, 22-24.

¹⁷ ABC 24, rev. 8.

¹⁸ ABC 18, vi c3-8; ABC 21, v 15-22.

Šamšī-adad V were relevant for the study of 'King of Karduniaš' and 'King of Sumer and Akkad', it is under the Sargonid Dynasty that their adaptability to geopolitical circumstances is seen.

1) The Neo-Assyrian Empire from Tiglath-pileser III to Sennacherib

A) Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II

Between the VIII and VII centuries BC, the occurrence of political changes in both Upper and Lower Mesopotamia influenced Assyria's Southern expansion.

In the North, the expression 'I reorganized those cities [...] I placed a eunuch of mine as provincial governor over them and thereby I annexed those areas to Assyria'¹⁹ highlights the change on the empire's mechanics. Along with an Assyria revival, it sheds light on the transition from a hegemonic empire to a territorial one.²⁰ In the South, the Babylonian world did not lose its cultural prestige or its wealth, but the absence of a strong dynasty interfered with local politics. Firstly, it allowed the rise of the Chaldeans and their consolidation of power. When combining several features, including the economic and political ones, their chieftains managed to ascend the Babylonian throne, becoming instigators of rebellions against the Assyrians. Secondly, apart from those communities, Elam was Assyria's main opponent, either directly or indirectly, their monarchs participated in most of the uprisings.²¹

Tiglath-pileser III, by ruling in a time of political turmoil, confirms the importance of the performative and symbolic aspect of the Near Eastern monarchies.²² Along with '(...) King of of Assyria, King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad', his participation in the *Akitu* bound him symbolically to Babylonian customs.²³ Concerning Sargon II, he is said to have participated in the New Years' Festival,²⁴ but the analysis to his

¹⁹ RINAP 1.37, 43b-45a.

²⁰ May 2015: 109-110.

²¹ Larsen 2000: 118-119.

²² Khurt 1992: 44-45. As stated by an Achaemenid chronicle, his second campaign was to crush a rebellion by a Chaldean leader named Nabû-mukin-zeri (ABC 1, i 18-23).

²³ RINAP 1.24, 5b-7; 39, 1 and 14b-15a; 40, 1-2. Before Tiglath-pileser III, Šalmanasar III (IX century BC) also participated in local festivals. However, Šalmanasar III's approach to them was an attempt to establish peace between him and his Babylonian counterpart (RIMA 3.102.5, iv5b-vi5a).

²⁴ ARAB 2.54, 66-70.

Babylonian inscriptions suggests that his policies were taken further. Simultaneously with the return of the abducted statues, his public works in Babylonian temples, such as the Eanna,²⁵ associated him with local traditions. Consequently, the compound title 'Viceroy of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad' contributed to mitigate his non-Babylonian status and, by doing so, presented him as a legitimate Babylonian king.²⁶

B) Sennacherib

In his inscriptions, Sennacherib is presented as as the one to whom '[the god Aššur] made all of the black-headed people from the Upper Sea of the Setting Sun to the Lower Sea of the Rising Sun bow down'.²⁷ Regarding his Babylonian issue, this ruler contrasted with his predecessors, particularly Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. The constant uprisings against his authority (by both Chaldeans and Elamites²⁸), as well as the death of Assyria's crown prince Aššur-nadin-šumi, led to several campaigns and readjustments of Babylonia's administrative status until its final capture. Along with the absence of Southern titles and epithets from his inscriptions, the harshness of the Assyrian account about the city's destruction can be seen both as a display of the king's military might and a process of *Damnatio Memoriae* against the territory and its memory.²⁹

Later on the argument of divine wrath will be used by Esarhaddon's scribes to justify these past events. Due to the Babylonians' misdeeds (neglecting their religiosity, and³⁰ the use of Esagila's goods to ensure the support of the Elamites), the gods abandoned their places and Marduk ordered 'an angry wave [...] a huge flood like the

²⁵ RIMB 2.22.4.

²⁶ Porter 1993: 80.

²⁷ RINAP 3/1 15, i 14-22.

²⁸ It is observable from Sargonid political correspondence that, despite the importance of the Chaldean and Aramean tribes settled in the alluvial plain, there were loyalty issues among the urban elites. On one hand, a letter from Šamaš-šumu-ukin to his father (SAA 16, 21) highlights these factions: according to the prince, Aplaya (a haruspex) and Bel-eṭir and Šamaš-zero-iqša (two astrologers), were not only reporting their observations to the Assyrian king, but they also made agreements with the people involved in the capture and deliver of Aššur-nadin-šumi to Elam. On the other, Hinnumu's accusations (SAA 18, 125) are symptomatic on how Babylonians and Elamites interacted with each other. Accordingly, he is said to have sent gifts (gold, chariots and horses) to the elamite ruler.

²⁹ Brinkman 1973: 93-94.

³⁰ We understand 'religiosity' in a broader sense: '[...] religiosity as individual preferences, emotions, beliefs, and actions that refer to an existing (or self-made) religion. 'Religion' then denotes the whole of cultural symbol-systems that respond to problems of meaning and contingency by alluding to a transcendent reality which influences everyday life but cannot be directly controlled'. (Stolz 2008: 3).

deluge' to fall upon the city and its territory.³¹ Concerning Sennacherib's account, the Bavian Inscription gives further details about this episode. Firstly, besides the deportation of the Babylonian king (Mušezib-Marduk), the Sargonid ruler is said to have 'captured [...] and plundered the city' and to have 'filled the city squares with their corpses'. Secondly, together with the references to gold, precious stones and silver, the gods' statues (and their paraphernalia) were taken to Assyria as booty. Lastly, even if the absence of souther titles and epithets is symptomatic of Sennacherib's hardening attitude toward Babylonia, the outcome of the campaign completes the idea of *Damnatio Memoriae*: he 'made its destruction surpass that of the Deluge [...] dissolved it in water and annihilated, like a meadow'.³²

At the same time that we have contemporary accounts about the siege and its aftermath, the episode highlights the idea of memory as a source for history.³³ As a matter of fact, the vividness of the previous accounts (both Sennacherib's and Esarhaddon's) is resembled in some late texts (Mesopotamian, but not exclusively) long after the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. So, one can conclude that the harshness of Sennacherib's last Babylonian campaign might have been kept in the memory of the elites, particularly the literate ones.

While mentioning the fall of Nineveh's walls and the return of Marduk's paraphernalia, a text from the early stages of Nabonidu's reign makes a reference to this episode. On one hand, the Assyrian king is called 'conqueror of Babylon, plunderer of Akkad'. On the other, the scribe (or scribes) highlights the destructiveness of the attack (later in Esarhaddon's reign, Ubaru's letter sheds light upon it): along with the death of the city's elders, he devastated the territory and 'sent the property of the Esagila and Babylon [...] to Nineveh' as booty.³⁴ Less detailed than these descriptions, both chronicles and royal lists provide further insights about this episode. Comparing either an account from Darius *the Great's* reign or the *Royal Canon* by Ptolemy (a list from the AD II century), this period is presented as a 'kingless' one.³⁵ So, contrasting with

³¹ RINAP 4 104, i18b-ii1.

³² RINAP 3/2 224, 43-54.

³³ Smith 2012: xiv. Accordingly, 'It not only forms the database of all information (a mere systematic and passive archive of data), but also is the active necessary element for the elaborations and connections of information' (*vide*: Nadali 2016: 41).

³⁴ Gerardi 1986: 31.

³⁵ ABC 1, iii 28; Depuydt 1995: 98.

his predecessors, it is plausible to consider that Sennacherib adopted a more aggressive policy towards the Babylonians.

2) Late Sargonid Dynasty (from Esarhaddon to Aššurbanipal)

During the Late Sargonid Period, Esarhaddon's reign was characterised by a change in the relationship between Assyria and Babylonia. After having defeated his brothers (and their supporters) and both the Aramean and Chaldean tribes,³⁶ the new monarch promoted a diplomatic approach that allowed him to mitigate the constant uprisings against Assyrian authority.³⁷ In a letter by Ubaru the Chaldeans are said to be in peace with Assyria, but most importantly, the Sargonid ruler is presented as 'the one who returned Babylon's captives and booty [...] the one who resettled Babylon'.³⁸ The prophecies shed light on the restoration of Babylonian temples, particularly the Esagila. Besides a reference by Nabû-hussanni, La-dagil-ili mentions both the 'exile' of the Babylonian gods and the need to be sent 'two burnt offerings' to 'the gods of Esagil'.³⁹ As for Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions, together with the one that justifies the city's fate as a result of the Babylonians' misdeeds against their main god, titles and epithets were symptomatic of his awareness on how the divine forces and performativity played an important role in Mesopotamian royal ideology.

At first, his sympathetic portrait was related to his embodiment of several metaphors and analogies concerning an archetypal approach to Mesopotamian Royal ideology, particularly the ones about the relationship between the king and the restoration of local cults and sanctuaries. So, besides the inscriptions that emphasise his role in the reconstruction of the city after his father's reign, they also commemorate him as

³⁶ During his early years, Esarhaddon's inscriptions mention that he transformed Ša-pī-Bēl into a fortress (and placed it under the authority of Bēl-iqiša). As for the Chaldeans, he is said to have placed the Sealand under the authority of Na'id-Marduk and to have 'plundered the land Bīt-Dakkūri', and to have placed the Sealand under the authority of Na'id-Marduk (RINAP 4.1, ii 40-64 and iii 71-83;).

³⁷ Along with the references mentioned earlier (note 28 and Esarhaddon's 'justification' for the city's destruction), Sennacherib's inscriptions provide further insights on how Babylonian goods were used to ensure the military support of Elam. When describing his campaign against Mušeziḫ-Marduk (RINAP 3/1 23), the scribe adds that "the Babylonians opened the treasury of Esagil and took the gold and silver of the god Bēl and the goddess Zarpanītu [...] They sent it as a bribe to Umman-menanu, the king of the Elam Elam [...] "Gather your army, muster your forces, hurry to Babylon, and align yourself with us! Let us put our trust in you" (v 23-28).

³⁸ SAA 18, 14.

³⁹ SAA 9, 2.

restorer of Babylonia's religious calendar. Together with his presentation as the basket carrier, he is defined as the one that 'returned the plundered gods of the lands to their proper place, and made them dwell (...) in the shrines of all the cult centres', but also that he 'rebuilt Esagil and Babylon'.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, this phraseology was used in order to express Assyria's dominion over foreign lands.

The epithets 'chosen by the god Marduk and the goddess Zarpanītu' and 'favourite of the god Aššur and the goddess Mullissu'⁴¹, play an important role on his political legitimacy. In doing so, he connects himself to a double tradition: while the reference to Aššur/Mullissu points to his Assyrian background, the divine couple Marduk/Šarpanitu allows him to be presented as a true Babylonian king.

So, both RINAP 4.68 and 4.20 are illustrative of how specific titles were used to describe both the length of the empire, and Esarhaddon's legitimacy to be characterized as the one that 'marched from the rising sun to the setting sun and had no equal'.⁴² The second one, by being written after his Egyptian campaign,⁴³ emphasizes his dominion over Egypt and Lower Mesopotamia ('Governor of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad' – GÌR.NÍTA KÁ.DINGIR.KI MAN KUR EME.GI₇ u URI.KI).⁴⁴ The first, alongside the references to his African campaigns, adds further details on the alluvial plain. It presents Esarhaddon as 'Governor of Babylon, King of all of Karduniaš' (GÌR.NITA KÁ.DINGIR MAN KUR.*Kar-dun-ía-aš* DÙ-šú).⁴⁵

The transition from Esarhaddon's reign to the ones of his sons reinforces the political importance of the *adē* ('treaties'). Firstly, they were one of the mechanisms used by the Assyrian crown to stabilise the political relationships within the empire. Secondly, concerning Aššurbanipal's and Šamaš-šumu-ukin's royal titles, they might have been influenced by these political strategies.

⁴⁰ RINAP 4 1, i 22-23.

⁴¹ RINAP 4 113, 2-3.

⁴² RINAP 4 2, 10-13.

⁴³ In both inscriptions, the Assyrian king is entitled '(...) King of the kings of Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Kush' (RINAP 4 20, 4-5 and RINAP 4 68, 4-5, respectively).

⁴⁴ RINAP 4 20.

⁴⁵ RINAP 4 68, 1-3.

Still in Esarhaddon's reign, his Succession Treaty conceptualized a division between Assyria and Babylonia.⁴⁶ In order to avoid crown disputes between his heirs and their supporters, he divided his power by his two sons. While Aššurbanipal would be designated crown prince of Assyria, his brother would be his Babylonian counterpart. After his death, Zakutu's Treaty confirmed his son's "political testament".⁴⁷ By being signed by the Queen-Mother and other members of the imperial elites (including the ones from the king's household), one can come to a conclusion about Assyria's hierarchical position. Hierarchically, though Šamaš-šumu-ukin is presented as 'mighty king, King of Babylon, King of the land of Sumer and Akkad',⁴⁸ the Assyrian monarch would have a higher and a more prominent status when compared to the Babylonian one.

Henceforth, despite Šamaš-šumu-ukin's patronage to Babylonian temples, his brother took advantage of his hierarchical position – Aššurbanipal 'appointed Šamaš-šumu-ukin, my favourite brother to the kingship of Babylon'⁴⁹ –, to interfere with local policies. In this perspective, together with the return of Marduk's paraphernalia to Babylonia, there was a continuity of his father's approach toward foreign temples and gods. One of his Babylonian inscriptions mentions him as the one 'who established [...] protection over all cult centres' and 'whose deeds are pleasing to all the gods'.⁵⁰ Ultimately, from an ideological and political point of view, Babylonia's religiosity was restored under Assyria's 'permission'.

The war between the siblings influenced how Aššurbanipal's inscriptions were written. The unbalanced view of the world changed Šamaš-šumu-ukin's portrait. The expression 'my favourite brother' (which was mentioned earlier) was replaced by a whole set of ideas that described his hostility towards the Assyrian king. Besides 'my hostile brother' and 'faithless brother' (Aššurbanipal's Prism *B*⁵¹), Aššur's response describes him as '(...) the one who did not keep my treaty but sinned against the

⁴⁶ SAA 2, 6. In one of Esarhaddon's inscriptions, Šamaš-šumu-ukin is given 'as a present to the god Marduk and the goddess Zarpanītu' (RINAP 4.53, 10-11).

⁴⁷ SAA 2, 8.

⁴⁸ RIMB 2.33.4, 11.

⁴⁹ RIMB 2.32.1, 13-14.

⁵⁰ RIMB 2.32.2, 14-19.

⁵¹ AS 5, vii 27-28, 49-50.

charity of Assurbanipal my beloved king'.⁵² The Assyrian data for the study of the aftermath of Aššurbanipal's victory does not shine much light on this topic, but it is plausible to consider that the outcome of the conflict might have had an impact on how both 'King of Sumer and Akkad' and 'King of Babylonia' were perceived by his contemporaries.

As a consequence of his victory, Aššurbanipal's dominion was established after the nomination of governors and the imposition of taxes, tributes, and revenues over the inhabitants. In terms of governability, it can be postulated that Kandālanu and Aššurbanipal as two different individuals. On one hand, SAA 14, 197 is a bidding process that mentions Kandālanu and other members of his household. On the other, CT 53 966,⁵³ by mentioning him and both Aššurbanipal's and Šamaš-šumu-ukin's sister (Šērū'a-ēṭirat), suggests that he would be related to the Neo-Assyrian royal household. In this case, they would have an unequal status. Though some Babylonian economic texts mention Kandālanu as "King of Babylonia", it is acceptable to think about him as a puppet king that ruled Babylonia on behalf of Assyria's interests.⁵⁴

As for titles and epithets, the Assyrian inscriptions provide only sparse information about this issue. Still in his reign, an inscription from Nippur mentions Aššurbanipal as "King of Sumer and Akkad".⁵⁵ In the late period, in which Assyria tries to defend itself against both Babylonians (under the aegis of Nabopolassar) and Medes, Sin-šar-iškun adds Southern elements to his inscriptions. Firstly, his epithets include 'beloved of Marduk and Sarpanitum' and 'the sure choice of the heart of Nabû and Marduk'. Secondly, another one binds him to a genealogy (until Sargon II, 'King of Assyria, Viceroy of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad'), in which Aššurbanipal is presented as 'Viceroy of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad'.⁵⁶ Therefore, by considering both Nippur's and Late Assyrian inscriptions, it is plausible to believe that somewhere in Aššurbanipal's reign he might have used Southern titles to express his achievements against his rebellious brother.

⁵² SAA 3, 44, ll. 7-10.

⁵³ Frame 2007: 195.

⁵⁴ Na'aman 2005: 315. Among others, the idea of Kandālanu as Aššurbanipal's throne name is seen in both Reade (1970) and Zawadzki (1988).

⁵⁵ RIMB 2.32.15, 10.

⁵⁶ ARAB 2, 1138 and 1153.

Conclusion

Among Neo-Assyrian data, besides royal correspondence, royal inscriptions are fundamental to the study of the empire. Regardless the importance of titles and epithets for an archetypal approach to royal ideology, they are part of the Mesopotamian political history. So, from a diachronic analysis to the use of “King of Sumer and Akkad”, “King of Karduniaš”, and their variations, one can conclude that they are related to shifts on the political relationship between the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the Babylonian plain. Along with the references to both Middle and Early Neo-Assyrian periods, the heterogeneity of political measures applied by the Sargonid Dynasty concerning the Babylonians led to several changes on how these elements were used/disused by the Northern monarchs.

Under Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib, despite their importance for the reconstruction of the empire after Assyria’s demise, we find different ways to approach Babylonia.

By combining military, symbolic, and performative aspects of Neo-Assyrian policies, the first two monarchs incorporated the territory into Assyria’s administrative structure. After having defeated local powers (in most of the cases the Chaldeans formed an alliance with the Elamites), they used titles and epithets, as well as their participation in local rituals as a way to mitigate their “foreignness”. Sennacherib kept Babylonia under Assyria’s control. He, however, was influenced by several changes during his reign, including both uprisings and the death of his first born. Therefore, it is plausible to consider that there was an attempt to lessen the city’s memory. Taking into account the symbolic aspect of writing, the non-reference to the territory among titles, epithets and other references was a way to minimise its status.

During the Late Assyrian Empire, the need to stabilise the relationship between the Neo-Assyrian crown and the powers within the empire posed not only new challenges, but also influenced how these titles and epithets were used.

The reigns of Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal (and his relationship with his brother) shared some similarities on how their diplomatic approach to the Babylonians interfered with both titles and epithets. In order to ensure the support of local clerical elites (among others), most of those references were related to their patronage to Babylonian temples and rituals.

During the early years of Aššurbanipal's reign, along with the interaction between him and the local elites, the *adē* were important in defining how the Assyrian and Babylonian kings would interact with each other. The symbolic aspect of his rule over the South (*de iure*), together with the actual presence of a Babylonian monarch (bounded both by an oath) would raise legitimacy issues concerning Aššurbanipal's use of Southern titles. The conflict between siblings affected both his brother's portrait and Babylonia's administration, but it is difficult to understand how it influenced the titles. Nevertheless, by comparing Aššurbanipal's Babylonian inscriptions with Late Assyrian data, it is plausible to think that his victory (both ideological and political) might have had an impact on how he used either the title of 'King of Sumer and Akkad' or its variations.

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