Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Faculty of History

Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Mediaeval History

Summary
of the Dissertation

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

with subject:

Authority and Ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire
(934–745 B.C.)

PhD Candidate: Zozan M. Tarhan

Academic Supervisor: Prof. Dr.Dr.Sc. Dilyana V. Boteva

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The dissertation was discussed and proposed for defense for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" at an extended meeting of the primary unit – Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Mediaeval History at the Faculty of History of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski on October 27th 2021.

The dissertation contains an introduction, four parts, each with its own internal structure of thematic chapters, conclusion, bibliography and application with a glossary of terms, table, maps, plans and images. The total volume of the study is 342 pages.

The defense of the dissertation will take place at a meeting of the Scholarly Jury on January 24th 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

The materials of the defense are available in room 38, Faculty of History, II floor, South wing, Rectorate of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

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Introduction

The present investigation examines the royal authority and ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–745 B.C.). On account of the state of studies nowadays, the development of a dissertation on the topic is necessary and would contribute to Ancient Near Eastern studies and ancient history in general.

The reasons for the need for this work can be summarized as follows: 1) the lack of a synthesized and detailed study to trace the reign of the Assyrian rulers of the early Neo-Assyrian period in the light of the new studies and published sources; 2) the presence of mainly short historical essays, focusing only on some major events from the reign of most rulers; 3) the need for further research on the ideology of the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire to consider its various aspects from different angles and proposals for possible solutions to debatable issues; 4) the lack of and the need for a study that combines in one complete text the issues of the reign and the factor supporting its realization – the ideology.

The term "authority" has many meanings, but the present text refers to the very rule exercised under the scepter and crown of the Neo-Assyrian kings of the defined age. In order to understand the dynamics of relations and control in the empire better, some offices and institutions, that also have power, are briefly presented. Speaking of "ideology" here, it refers to the Assyrian royal ideology – clearly documented in various sources with the ideas, beliefs, and messages it carries.

Regarding the **methodology of the work** a complex approach is used, combining philological work with cuneiform texts, analysis of iconographic sources, bringing archaeological data about the building activities of the kings, concerning the construction of the relevant palaces and their structure. This approach allows the implementation of an in-depth historical analysis of the reign of the rulers (Part III), as well as a cultural-historical analysis on the ideology of the kingship (Part IV).

The necessary **base** for commiting this methodology is available in: published volumes of the cuneiform sources; the historiographical literature from the beginning of the Assyriological studies to the present day; digital libraries; electronic collections of the monuments.

According to the aforementioned, **the aims of the dissertation** can be summarized as follows:

1. Study of the reign of each Assyrian king of the period, his military and political

actions, including the dynamics of contacts with the countries of the region, the goals pursued by him; and – for whom applicable – the relevant internal affairs and building activities.

2. Study of the Assyrian royal ideology in the context of certain motives, beliefs, and suggestions attested in the sources, which it uses.

3. Concluding observations on and synthesis of the exercise of authority, which led to the historical processes and political contacts in combination with the motives, beliefs, and suggestions of the Assyrian royal ideology.

The tasks for implementation are outlined specifically and in details in the introductory words to each chapter of the dissertation. Briefly they can be summarized as follows:

1. Translation of the written sources on the topic, as in the present study only key passages are presented in particular places, accompanied by transcription and philological commentary.

2. Clarification of the terminology used in the sources – indicated in the dissertation by logograms, transcribed Akkadian terms, and others.

3. Commentary on the relevant concepts on the topic in contemporary literature and their (additional) clarification.

4. Analysis of the written and iconographic material on the topic and its study regarding the authority in the context of historical events and decisions made by the rulers in the period:

- tracing and analysis of military and political events from the reign of the kings;

- tracing the route of the military campaigns of those rulers to whom it is applicable;

- marking the historical processes and the configuration of the powers in the region as a result of the Assyrian expansion;

- clarification of the chronology of the events and proposal for dating some chronologically debatable events;

- presenting aspects of the internal affairs of those kings whose sources offer such information;

- presenting the building activity of the rulers to whom it is applicable;

- marking the main problems concerning the reign of the rulers, taking part in the relevant discussions, and/or arguing new proposals.

5. Synthesis of the certain information regarding the functioning of the state apparatus with its institutions and officials.

6. Analysis of the written and iconographic sources on the topic of the Assyrian royal ideology from the defined period:

- study of the motive for the choice and appointment of the king by the great gods in the context of the information provided in the titulary and epithets, the call to rule in the royal inscriptions and the text of the so-called *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual*, as well as considering their various messages;

- study of the priestly role of the Assyrian king, the context in which it is attested, and the message sent through the information on the subject;

- presentation and analysis of various motives in the royal ideology, giving rise to the realization of the imperial mission and conquest policy of the Assyrian rulers;

- illustrating and exploring the various motives for the "uniqueness" of the Assyrian ruler and the messages that are put in them;

- study of the question of the functions of the personal palace and the iconographic sources as markers for the reign and ideology.

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This section of the introduction provides an overview of major titles on the subject of the kings' reign and ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–745 B.C.), in order to trace the current state of the studies. First of all, the scientific works related to the topic of authority are presented, and then the attention is focused on those that are dedicated to the ideology. It is noteworthy that the period of rule of the respective kings and the historical development of the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire in general have not been studied in detail. There are several brief historical essays that aim to summarize information about Assyria in the early Neo-Assyrian period. During the defined period in the present work, Assyria was ruled by a total of ten rulers, but only to some of them were dedicated specific works. The reign of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III have been relatively well researched, as well as

many particular titles have been devoted to various aspects of their rule. Even in these cases, however, there are fields for development. A number of publications are also dedicated to the monuments associated with both kings, such as their palaces and reliefs. Basically, the reign of Adad-nērārī III is also examined in detail. Part of the foreign policy of some Assyrian kings is concerned by studies on Urartu, the Aramaic and Neo-Hittite states, because they present and discuss the established contacts with Assyria. With regard to the study of ideology, one must mention that most of them refer to the whole Neo-Assyrian period or cover the entire Assyrian chronology in general.

I. Sources

This part presents the condition of the source material in two chapters. Chapter **I.1 "Written Sources"** discusses the existence and character of written sources that serve to the aims of the dissertation. Chapter **I.2 "Archaeological and Iconographic Sources"** presents the monuments with figurative narratives that are relevant to both parts – that of the authority of and that of ideology.

II. Historical Expose of Assyria before Neo-Assyrian Period: Some marks on the Development of the Royal Authority and Ideology

Part II is included because of the need to consider the historical picture of Assyria before the Neo-Assyrian period. It provides an overview of the main events before the Neo-Assyrian period in two chapters – **II.1 "Assyria during the Old Assyrian Period (ca. 2004–1736 B.C.)"** and **II.2 "Assyria during the Old Assyrian Period (1353–935 B.C.)".** The inclusion of these historical essays is justified in order to understand the mechanisms of functioning of the Assyrian royal authority better, and also in order to consider the royal ideology and trace its "upgrade" over time better.

III. The Authority in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire

Part III consists of nine chapters in total. The first seven of them bear the name of each successive king of the period, and due to the scarcity of the source material, chapter III.8 traces the reign of Shalmaneser IV (782–773 B.C.), Aššur-dān III (772–755 B.C.) and Aššur-nērārī V (754–745 B.C.). Each chapter deals with topics such as the military and political activity carried out by the respective king, as well as other characteristics of the reign of those

for who it is applicable – internal affairs and building activity. The section ends with a chapter about some key institutions and officials.

III.1 Aššur-dān II (934–912 B.C.)

The overview of the source base shows that the reign of Aššur-dān II is relatively well attested in terms of events, but in terms of the internal chronology of his reign, there are serious omissions. Although it is not clear exactly when the specific events took place within his reign, the dissertation proposes a reconstruction of the sequence of events and the king's military campaigns.

The carried set of written sources and the accompanying analysis allow us to define the rule of Aššur-dān II as a marker for a new phase in Assyrian history, respectively the policy undertaken by him gives us the reason to talk about the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian period. At the beginning of his reign, the king found a destabilized state, extending only within its core area and whose name as a military hegemon in the region is only a memory. Under pressure, the Assyrian ruler was forced to end the period in which Assyria was in a defensive position. The turning point came in the year of his accession and the first year of his reign when the king responded to the Aramaean attack on the country of Iausaya. The outcome of this event, i.e. the Assyrian victory, gave impetus to the chosen one by the god Aššur to continue his work for the restoration of the land, as some of the mentioned Aramaean countries became the main target of his militaristic policy. After the military action against Iausaya, the dating of the following events is problematic. Based on a detailed analysis of the available sources in the dissertation the sequence of events and the route of the military campaigns are reconstructed. Written records reveal that the ruler regained lost territories and detached Assyrians, managed to defeat the allied Aramaean forces, and even exercised deportations on their populations. This one part of the king's military policy can be summarized in this way, but the other which directed to the north/northeast, definitely does not speak of seeking retribution, but rather of exploring the old ways to economic gain, accumulate valuable goods through plunder and somehow to impose sovereignty over vassal states. The beginning of regular military campaigns and the exercise of a foreign policy, in which the Assyrian ruler is in a position to dictate, expresses not only the stabilized state of Assyria but also the role of a rising military hegemon in the region, which it will gradually defend this position.

The king's internal affairs are not so well documented, except the building work he undertook. His intervention included remarkable buildings and monuments, which once again

demonstrates that Assyria was stable enough to take action on the complete renovation of the described monuments.

III.2 Adad-nērārī II (911–891 B.C.)

The analysis of the sources shows that the rule of Adad-nērārī II was a successful continuation of Aššur-dān II. Thanks to the foundation on which he stepped, the ruler did not have to work so much on the question of rebuilding the state as on making it a regional power. Unlike Aššur-dān II, whose targets are mainly the Aramaean states, as well as several reconnaissance campaigns to the east, Adad-nērārī II carried out military campaigns of conquest, punishment, reconnaissance and surveillance in various geographical directions with higher intensity. From the very beginning of his reign, the Assyrian king undertook important military campaigns in the far north of the ancient Assyrian territories (the land Qumānu and later cities around the upper stream of the Tigris River). Most likely, the choice of the initial interventions to cover this area was provoked by the possibility of clearing the perimeter of rebellious states near the Assyrian heartland and thus to open the roads mostly to Assyrian troops, but also to merchants and others.

Gradually, Adad-nērārī II undertook military attacks in the east, and for the period from 909 to 901 B.C. Even many important cities were conquered (including Babylonian cities around the Diyala River), the mentioned lands were subjected to vassalage and the lands to the north and east were invaded in order to study the roads and the available local goods.

From 901 to 894 B.C. the main target of the Assyrian attacks became the Aramaean states of the Ḫanigalbat region, with many campaigns especially dedicated to the land Temannaya. The reason for the attacks was not because of seeking a revenge for the damage caused to Assyria from previous times, but information about forms of disobedience. These were, in fact, convenient occasions to allow the Assyrian ruler to conduct his army against the forces of apparently smaller and weaker lands. The clashes led to the Assyrian victory, and it brought not only booty, regular tributes and other forms of duty, but also opened the main routes to the west and northwest. The latter is certainly much more valuable than any plunder and tax, because it gives long-lasting control over the people and goods passing by.

For the period after 894 B.C. no military campaigns have been reported, which may mean that such campaigns did not take place anymore. Instead, the king announced important construction and organizational activities he had undertaken – the construction of residences in various parts of the land, the care of fields and horses, as well as the restoration and expansion of the temple of Gula. Before these construction commitments, Adad-nērārī II also

took care of the quay wall in Aššur, as well as the complete renovation of the city Apqu.

The lands in the east, in particular the land Ḫabḫu, also became one of the main targets of Assyrian expansion. Finding various reasons, such as aiding another land or demonstrated disobedience, Adad-nērārī II seized the opportune moments to attack Ḫabḫu. Thus, in fact, he worked for the implementation of Assyrian authority in this area, as well as for its further acquaitance.

III.3 Tukultī-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.)

The study of the sources of Tukultī-Ninurta II'reign allows his rule to be defined as a natural continuation of the policy of Adad-nērārī II, whose main feature is the conduction of regular campaigns of various kinds. The main purpose of some of them is to preserve the conquered lands by his predecessor.

At the beginning of his rule, Tukultī-Ninurta II concentrated his campaigns in a northern direction – against the lands Nairi, gradually moved from north to east to the area of the Lower Zab River. The king's choice to begin his military engagements by advancing in these latitudes was due to the fact that Assyria did not permanently impose its control there.

Based on the information about the long campaign, the receiving of tributes and supervision on the conquered lands should be considered as its main goal, and to a lesser extent it can be defined as seeking conquests. The treaty with Babylonia from the time of Adad-nērārī II put Assyria in an advantageous position, but by no means Babylonia in a vassal state. Tracing the route of the march, namely advancing south to the Babylonian lands and abruptly turning north, there is a reason to express the opinion that Tukultī-Ninurta II intended to set in action his expansionist policy towards his southern neighbor, but this plan failed. Mušku was not considered a vassal until the time of the long campaign, which led to the demonstration of Assyrian power. In the chapter for Tukultī-Ninurta II, arguments were made in favour of the opinion (p. 75), that the end of the long campaign should be put in Mušku. Respectively, the Assyrians are moving from Mušku back to Assyria, and the military actions after Mušku should not be considered a part of the long campaign.

Towards the end of his reign, Tukultī-Ninurta II directed his campaigns in a northern and northeastern direction. The last (registered) military intervention of the king dates back to 885 B.C. and is directed to the lands of Nairi, Gilzānu and the area around the lake Urmia. The military endeavours of Tukultī-Ninurta II and its two predecessors in this geographical area were a very ephemeral beginning in comparison with the policy that will be developed by Ashurnasirpal II.

The successful maintenance of the old conquests and the accumulated funds during king's rule allowed Tukultī-Ninurta II to reveal himself as a builder who dedicated his efforts to build new residences within the empire and renovating the palace wall from the large terrace, the wall of Baltil and parts of the Enpi temple.

III.4 Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.)

In the chapter devoted to Ashurnasirpal II (*Aššur-nāṣir-apli*) is noted that his period is one of the best attested in Mesopotamian history. This is undoubtedly related to one of the innovative decisions of the ruler, namely the compilation of royal inscriptions on stone slabs. The royal inscriptions continued to be composed on their traditional material carrier – the clay tablet, but for the purposes of propaganda the erection of stone slabs being part of the walls of palaces, residences, temples and other buildings becomes a priority; free-standing stone stelae; and last but not least – the rock inscriptions. In any case, the stone has the ability to reach us in a more preserved form than the clay tablet, which caused the availability of a great legacy with knowledge of the reign of the Assyrian king. In addition, the many copies of the inscriptions supplement those missing pieces of information which were "kept in silence" by some texts or where the cuneiform signs were damaged.

In the first years of his reign, Ashurnasirpal II focused his foreign policy and military campaigns mainly on the east, and also to a significant extent on the north. His interventions in the east are directed to the lands of Tummu, Ḫabḫu-ša-bētānî and Zamua, as well as in the area of the Mount Ḫabruru. There had been interventions in the Ḫabruru area since the time of Aššur-dān II, which had ended with the capture of three cities, and Adad-nērārī II had also attained some conquests in Ḫabḫu-ša-bētānî. That was a good start, as Ashurnasirpal II did not enter completely unknown lands. As a final result, he captured a number of cities.

The subjugation of the land Tummu is a merit of Ashurnasirpal II, which he attained only in one campaign. After his victories in Tummu and the Ḫabruru area, the Assyrian ruler announced that the lands Gilzānu and Ḫubuškia paid their tribute voluntarily. If the circumstances were indeed so, then the reputation of Assyria was sufficient to subdue some countries without any military clash, or at least the suggestion is so.

The other great conquest of Ashurnasirpal II in the eastern direction turned out to be the subjugation of the tribal units of the land Zamua, which was realized through three campaigns. The control of these lands provided not only the benefit from the reception of tributes, but also access to strategic routes to the lands of Iran.

In the first years, the northern campaigns of the Assyrian ruler were directed to the

area of the Mounts Nipur and Paṣate, the land Nirbu, the land Urumu, the land Nirdun, the lands Nairi and others. The engagements of the Assyrian king in these lands are mainly of a conquering nature. Particularly in Nirbu, both campaigns are of a punitive nature, which led to the complete subordination of the land and the following absence of the toponym in the written sources.

The numerous sources made it possible to trace the routes of the ruler's military campaigns. At the same time, suggestions were made regarding the location of some of the toponyms. For example, the probability of Mount Paṣate being north of the Tigris River and west of Mount Nipur was pointed out (p. 82). The organizational character of some of the toponyms - Laqû (p. 84), Nairi and Urarṭu (pp. 86–88) and Zamua (pp. 92–93) was commented and analyzed. In addition, a distinction was made between some toponyms, for which there is a misconception in historiography that they are synonymous with each other. Thus, according to the analysis, there are two different cities – Bāra and Baraya (pp. 94–95), two different cities of Sūru (p. 98), and the lands of Nirbu and Urumu should definitely not be considered one and the same land (p. 91).

The invasion of the lands Nairi, which included the rising power of the future territorial country Urarṭu, was successful. The fact that the Assyrians knew the routes to the north, which were studied much earlier during the campaigns of the Middle Assyrian kings and again at the beginning of the early Neo-Assyrian period, as well as the fact that they faced tribal units that were not in one alliance, was one of the reasons for Ashurnasirpal II's victories. As a result, he managed to permanently subdue many territories of the lands Nairi. The establishment of the Assyrian base in the north of Tušḫa was also among the good decisions made by the king, which gave him easier access to both the north and the northwest. However, his expansion will cause a very strong effect on Urarṭian history. In the dissertation the opinion of P. Zimansky is supported – the emergence of the Urarṭian state, as a result of the challenge of the Assyrian campaigns in the lands of Nairi, leading to the consolidation of tribal units under the rule of one ruler. This big change with regard to Urarṭu was evident from the very beginning of the reign of Shalmeneser III.

In the first years of Ashurnasirpal's reign, campaigns to the west were not common. The attested ones were of a supervisory nature, for the purpose of collecting tribute and of a punitive nature, as the case with the city of Sūru in the land Bīt-Ḫalupe was. From 878 B.C. contrary to his initial foreign policy, Ashurnasirpal directed his last campaigns to the west. Some of them were deployed in vassal lands of Assyria, in order to collect the expected goods, and also of a punitive nature due to the two cases of uprisings - the first in 878 B.C. in

the city of Sūru of the land Suḫu, and then in 877 B.C. in the lands Laqû, Ḫindānu and Suḫu. The vassals were quickly pacified and the guilty ones were punished.

Such acts of disobedience gave the Assyrian king a reason, whether well-grounded or sought, to deploy his expansionist intentions in lands that were not yet subordinate to Assyria. Due to the military support of the Babylonians in the first manifested disobedience in the land Suḫu, Ashurnasirpal took the right not only to punish Babylonia on the battlefield in the lands of the Middle Euphrates, but also subsequently to seize two of its cities – Ḫirimu and Ḫarutu.

The second uprising of the three vassal lands opened the way of Ashurnasirpal II to the Aramaic kingdom of Bīt-Adini, as the apparent goal was a punitive campaign against the asylum of one of the guilty rebels – Azi-ili. The subjugation of the land was an achievement of Ashurnasirpal II.

Having already crossed the borders of the western lands subordinated by the previous Assyrian kings, Ashurnasirpal II was ready to direct his army even to some of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms – Carchemish, Patinu and Kummuḫu. The lists of tributes from the parties spoke for themselves. Their geographical location also fell within the scope of the main roads, which was a determining factor for the Assyrian intervention. If they impose their authority over them and their neighboring lands, the Assyrian kings would gain control over the routes between Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Syro-Palestine. Also an important aspect was the resources available in the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, which are well-known as rich iron-mining and iron-processing centers.

Ashurnasirpal II mentioned that he had destroyed some of the newly conquered cities, but the analysis made in this chapter shows that some of them were definitely not (fully) destroyed, and the king decided to use such claims to cause fear. One could even notice that Ashurnasirpal II rebuilt many settlements and urbanized them in a way that was typical for Assyria. The Assyrian model was set in this way through architecture and everything that accompanies it, i.e. the material culture, as examples of which could be at least Tušḫa, Dūr-Aššur, Kār-Ashurnasirpal and Nēbarti-Aššur. Through the urbanization of old towns, the settlement of Assyrians in them and the presence of Assyrian power in the vassal lands, it gave Assyria a strategic advantage. The appointment of regional governors in vassal states was also extremely important, a policy that had its own traditions in the past. In this way the king could be informed about the events taking place far from him, and also could exercise his control.

Among the most important political decisions that Ashurnasirpal II took was the move of the capital city from Aššur to Kalḫu in 879 B.C. This in turn created the need for large-

scale construction activities, which the king began in the same year. It could probably because he wanted to devote himself to the finishing stages of the palace, Ashurnasirpal stopped his military campaigns after 866 B.C. In the same 866 B.C. or the years after it began the building of the city of Imgur-Ellil with the royal residence, the temple of the god Mamu and other architectural monuments in it.

III.5 Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.)

Sources record that at the very beginning of his reign, Shalmaneser III (*Šalmānu-ašarēd*) directed his army to the region of the Mount Ḫabruru, where he captured the city of Aridu and received tributes from local state formations. As soon as the actions were over, the ruler headed to Ḫubuškia, where he achieved military success and imposed suzerainty over the land. The imposition of Assyrian control over Ḫubuškia was a new conquest for the empire under Shalmaneser's reign. The success over there provided the Assyrian ruler with quick access to the land Urartu. The policy of the previous Assyrian kings in the north against Nairi, in particular that of Ashurnasirpal II, in which Urarṭu was not yet a territorial and centralized state, but part of the Nairi lands (settled with various tribal unitis) was reflected during the reign of Shalmaneser III – the emergence of the territorial and centralized state Urarṭu.

According to the analysis of the sources, despite the many campaigns against Urarṭu during the reign of Shalmaneser III, the result sought by Assyria is not fully achieved. In the context of these campaign the battle of Sugunia took place at the very beginning of the reign, as well as the attack over the Urarṭian capital Arṣašku in 856 B.C. The analyzed texts do not mention that the Urarṭian rulers recognized the Assyrian kings as their suzerains. Even in a situation where the Assyrians overwhelmed them in a battle, the Urarṭian kings did not bend the knee, but preferred to resist with all possible forces, such as the escape of Aramu (Arramu) and the movement of the battle to the mountain. There is a vague reference to a tribute sent by Nairi, but it is not specified what it consists of. It is notable that precious and raw materials are listed when they came with a military victory. It may be argued that the Empire imposed some kind of vassal status on only part of the Urarṭian territories.

Shalmaneser III's policy failed to weaken Urarṭu, although the mountainous land had recently become centralized. On the contrary, after the reign of Aramu, the ruler Sarduri I ascended the political scene, under whom the first royal inscriptions appeared. The appearance of the Urarṭian royal inscriptions is connected with the borrowing of the cuneiform, the title and elements of the Assyrian royal ideology. Through this innovation, it

can be assumed that the Urarṭian state was truly matured and strengthened, since the king spoke on his own behalf through his inscriptions.

After the campaigns in the lands of Urarṭu in 859/858 B.C. and 856 B.C. the Assyrian ruler went to the land Gilzānu, where he was well greeted and received the goods due. It seems that Shalmaneser III managed to maintain the control imposed by Ashurnasirpal II over the land Gilzānu, and at least until the 31st *palû* inclusive, the payment of a tribute to Assyria was reported.

During the first four years of Shalmaneser III's rule, the Aramaean state Bīt-Adini became the object of his active attacks. As an effect of the actions there, the Assyrian king imposed full control over the land, reorganized some of the cities there, settled Assyrians among the local population, and renamed the cities with Assyrian names, including the capital Tīl-Barsip, which was named Kār-Shalmaneser.

During the reign of Shalmaneser III, the intensity and spread of the campaigns against the Neo-Hittite kingdoms increased. Due to the losses and defeats caused by Ashurnasirpal II, as well as the impending threat of Shalmaneser III, the rulers of these states formed an alliance with each other, in which they drew some Aramean and other kingdoms aside to form a strong anti-Assyrian coalition. Despite their alliance, they did not achieve to prevail the Assyrian army. In fact, despite the failure of this policy, local rulers joined such a coalition more than once. As a result of their defeat, Assyrian ruler imposed suzerainty over them. Some Neo-Hittite states, such as Gurgum, were aware of the impossibility of successfully confronting an adversary such as Assyria. In the present text the opinion is expressed that Gurgum entered into diplomatic relations with Assyria and set the beginning of a peaceful policy between the two countries, to which the necessary arguments were given (pp. 122–123). At the same time, the situation in Patinu was commented in the dissertation and it was expressed that within one year (until 857 B.C.) the three successive rulers were registered – Sapalulme, Lubarna II and Qalparunda (pp. 126–127). Accordingly, in the dissertation the documented Lubarna in the 28th *palû* of Shalmaneser III is considered not Lubarna II, but Lubarna III.

Among the states in the Syro-Palestinian region, Shalmaneser III entered into contact with the Phoenician coastal cities, with Damascus, Ḫamat, and Israel, with which he confronted. From 853 B.C. Assyria and these lands were fighting against each other, as the latter formed an anti-Assyrian coalition, drew even Gindibu of the Arabs and Egypt aside. In the first two battles between the coalition and the Assyrian army, the small states with united efforts probably managed to hold the front or at least not allowed the Assyrians to win the

battle easily. In the events of 841 and 838 B.C. Shalmaneser finally managed to impose control over their lands.

The riot of 851 B.C. in Babylon provided a favourable environment for Shalmaneser III, in which he launched his policy toward Babylon. Once assisting the Babylonian king Marduk-zākir-šumi in 851 B.C., the Assyrian ruler waited for an appropriate moment to make the next skillful strategic move involving the repeated call for help in 850 B.C. by the Babylonian ruler. Having already eliminated all threats of usurpation of the Babylonian throne, Shalmaneser III demanded the signing of an international treaty between him and Marduk-zākir-šumi, in which the victorious side was Assyria. The conclusion of the treaty that fixed the borders between the two countries was another achievement for the time of that Assyrian king.

The campaign in 843 B.C. in the lands of modern Iran was not in vain penetration eastwards. The Assyrians obtained a large amount of booty from the lands of Allabria, Parsua, Abdadānu, Ḫaban and Tugliaš, and the picture found by Shalmaneser III prompted him to work to establish control over the lands, respectively over the roads from and to them. Thus the Assyrian ruler managed to partially impose his authority over the tribal units in the mentioned areas. By the campaign in 835 B.C., which also covered the lands of Amadāya (Media) – likewise the two in 829 and 828 B.C., led by *turtānu* Daiiān-Aššur, Shalmaneser III achieved a satisfactory result.

Although Shalmaneser III was not satisfied with conquering many territories, he continued to work for their lasting subordination – by using the Assyrian tradition. The means of Assyrian propaganda were used to achieve the goals. Shalmaneser III erected his statues and created rock reliefs with his image, accompanied by inscriptions about his deeds and success. Particularly one could mark the case of the erection of his statue in the capital of Patinu, in the temple of the gods. As in Gilzānu, he introduced his personality to the world of the gods. In addition, Shalmaneser III ordered his image to be sculptured to that of the ancient king who ruled the lands of Mama – Anum-ḫirbe. Thus, he declared to those who observe the monument that he has the right to occupy the place next to him, i.e. to rule in the newly conquered territories. The other way to the direct control of the events in the vassal land was by applying the good practice with the appointment of governors in them. The king also launched a number of urbanization programs, including elements of Assyrian culture. Of particular importance is the direct appointment of sovereigns over the local population: Kirrî, brother of Katea - the king of Que and Sāsi, king of Kuruṣṣâ, appointed sovereign of Patinu, after ending the palace revolt of Surri and the elite. The existence of interactions between

Assyria and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms in view of the above was the final result. The cultural influences between them began to be noticed during the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, but it will be remained and develop long after that.

At the end of his reign, Shalmaneser III left to his successor Šamšī-Adad V the difficult task of quelling the rebellion led by Aššur-da''in-apla, but also the vast legacy of the Empire.

III.6 Šamšī-Adad V (823–811 B.C.)

Šamšī-Adad V inherited the Assyrian throne, while a rebellion that began in 826 B.C. broke out in the land. The new ruler managed to response the rebellion appropriately and eventually could quelled it in 820 B.C.

The source shows that the reign of Šamšī-Adad V is clearly outlined in general, but the archaic style of the royal inscriptions, namely the specific dating of the events in the monuments, which is carried out in the order of the campaigns (*gerru*), causes chronological challenges. After all, it is managed to trace the events on the basis of correlations with the short messages and dates indicated in the *Eponym Chronicle*. Due to king's commitment to quell the rebellion, Šamšī-Adad V was not able to launch military campaigns, but in the same 820 B.C. that had changed. According to the analysis in this chapter, Assyria even directed two campaigns. The first is led personally by Šamšī-Adad V and is aimed at Nairi, it has a rather supervisory character. Due to the very recent suppression of the rebellion and the damages it left, Šamšī-Adad V could not conduct a military campaign by conquering nature, so he entrusted it to his eunuch Mutarriṣ-Aššur. As a result of the second campaign, the territories of Šarṣina, Ušpina and the land Sunbu, which are reported as part of Nairi, were subordinated. In the text is marked the different semantic meaning of the toponym Nairi in the inscriptions of Šamšī-Adad V with its previous (p. 156).

After the obliteration of the rebellion's traces from the third campaign (819 B.C.) on, the king personally led the military interventions. The third campaign covered the lands of the Iranian tribes and aimed at their permanent subordination. As a result of the campaign, military success was achieved over many smaller state formations or tribal units, and the notorious Media and Persia even paid tribute to Assyria.

The analysis of the sources shows that in the period 818–816 B.C. the king did not undertake military campaigns, but he rather visited various parts of the empire. Regarding the years 817–816 B.C. the opinion of some authors about a rebellion in Tillê was rejected, and the necessary arguments were delivered for that (pp. 161–162).

In the period 815–811 B.C. Šamšī-Adad V directed his expansionist policy in a southern direction – towards Babylonia. The military campaigns against the southern kingdom were mainly aimed at regaining territories on which the Babylonians put their hands during the rebellion, including the fortified city of Dēr, having a key position among these acquisitions. The military success over the Babylonian ruler Marduk-balāssu-iqbi and the alliance he formed, as well as over the next ruler Baba-aḫa-iddina, was outstanding. Eventually, Šamšī-Adad V retook the city of Dēr in Assyria, removed the temporary control of Babylonia, which the southern land had gained in its peripheral areas to the east, punished the boldness of Namri and the Chaldaean elite for their participation in the anti-Assyrian coalition, and imposed a new treaty that fixes the borders between Assyria and Babylonia. In the present study the inconsistencies in the claims of the Assyrian king are pointed out, such as the location of Marduk-balāssu-iqbi in Gannanāte and the actions taken by him.

Undoubtedly, Šamšī-Adad V had his achievements in his policy against Babylonia. However, he did not accomplish more than what Assyria had already imposed on Babylon in the period before the rebellion broke out. Entering unfamiliar territories to the east, achieving military success, and imposing some initial form of control over the local elite is, in fact, the newer one which is offered by Šamšī-Adad V's time. However, all of these would be impossible without the repression of the rebellion and the revival of stability in the land. The latter should be considered the greatest merit in the reign of the Assyrian king.

III.7 Adad-nērārī III (810–783 B.C.)

In terms of sources, the reign of Adad-nērārī III is relatively well documented, but it also has its unknowns. This is due to the small quantity of royal inscriptions. The lack of an analytical text leads to a challenge in the (detailed) illustration of the ruler's reign, and also makes it difficult to date the few cases to be described. The *Synchronistic History* presents some of the data on the relations between Assyria and Babylonia. The personal inscriptions of some officials from the period, which present detailed information in connection with the campaigns led by them, have a contributing part in the study of the foreign policy. Their presence itself is a special phenomenon that is discussed in the course of the work. Based on the correlation between the data from the *Eponym Chronicle* with the other sources, suggestions are made regarding the internal chronology of the ruler, the sequence of events and the route of his campaigns.

In connection with the king's accession, some modern authors support the thesis that until his fifth *palû* Adad-nērārī III was a minor, which required coregency or regency headed

by his mother Sammu-ramat. According to the sources, the position of the authors who reject the thesis of underage, regency and coregency with Sammu-ramat is supported (p. 170).

Adad-nērārī III concentrated his foreign policy on the east – mainly to Media, and to some extent to the north, where he achieved some success. The policy in the western direction is probably realized from 808 to 796 B.C. For the years 795, 794, 785, and probably in 790, 783 and 782 B.C. (because of the announcement of the departure to Ituʾa), part of his foreign policy Adad-nērārī III directed to Babylonia and Chaldaea. A short passage from a royal inscription states that all the kings of the Chaldaeans became vassals of Assyria and tributes and taxes were imposed on them. According to this information, one could suggest that during the reign of the king in the southern lands there had been a form of disobedience to Assyria, which was later suppressed, and the *Synchronistic History* clearly states that the border between Assyria and Babylonia was fixed again.

Despite the success presented from the time of Adad-nērārī III, some scholars tend to speak of a weakened royal authority due to the influence of the high officials. By the way, the discussion in the part of historiography about the weakened royal power or the shaking crisis in the empire does not only concern the period of the king discussed here, but is placed from the time of Šamšī-Adad V to that of Aššur-nērārī V. I bring this discussion here, because for the mentioned circle of researchers the magnates' strongest manifestation of power was set in motion during the time of Adad-nērārī III. The reasons for such opinion are different – the presence of a few royal inscriptions; the presence of personal inscriptions of some high officials, such as Nergal-ēriš, Šamšī-ilu and Bēl-Ḫarrān-bēlī-uṣur, in which they narrated their military campaigns; the long period in which they hold the office; the existence of grants and decrees, through which some rights are delegated to high officials; the rebellions in the empire from the last quarter of the ninth century B.C. reported in the *Eponym Chronicle* until the end of the early Neo-Assyrian period. Of course, there are opponents of the thesis of weakened royal power and decline in the empire. Positions are highlighted such as: attaching too much importance to the topic regarding the influence of the magnates of the period, as a matter of fact there were even more curious cases in the Middle Assyrian period; the merit of the provincial governors, especially of the western provinces, in tightening the positions of Assyria among the vassal kingdoms; the argument that if Assyria had indeed been in decline, Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 B.C.) would have been unable to expand the empire as quickly as he did during his reign; pointing out an important feature – in some of the officials' inscriptions from the discussion period they indicated the name of the king, in others they do not mention it, but none of them called himself a king, but they were mentioned by the

position that actually had and given to them by the ruler.

I personally would not express an opinion about new zenith in the empire in the period 823–745 B.C. but would remain skeptical about the view of the decline and weakened or "grabbed" royal authority. The idea that the period is characterized by stagnation and difficulties is acceptable, especially in terms of maintaining the control over the conquered lands. The view was expressed that the Assyrian kings therefore deliberately delegated more rights to the governors and field marshals, leaving them the opportunity to react in a timely manner in situations of disobedience. Accordingly, it should be asked the question whether the royal inscriptions and decrees in which is set out the transfer of lands under the authority of some governor does not illustrate exactly that, as part of the desire to apply a more functional administrative system to the significantly expanded territory of the empire. An appropriate example for that is when Nergal-ēriš, the governor of Raṣappa, received Ḫindānu. The delegation of more rights and power is in fact a delegation of more responsibilities, respectively we must consider whether the features, that are discussed, were not just a temporary solution and a transition to the new and completely necessary system, which was established at the beginning of the late Neo-Assyrian period. Here, in addition to the difficulty of maintaining control due to the relatively fast growth of the empire, the spread of which was probably not particularly applicable administratively, the data from the *Eponym Chronicle* of a raging epidemic in the years 802, 765 and 759 B.C. should be mentioned. Since such data was recorded in the chronicle, it seems like the epidemic caused a serious damage to the Assyria. Such events must also be taken into account when someone discusses the difficulties and trials for the Assyrian kings, and at least in this respect no responsibility can be sought among the high officials.

III.8 The Heirs of Adad-nērārī III (782–745 B.C.)

After the reign of Adad-nērārī III, the Assyrian throne was successively occupied by his sons – Shalmaneser IV (782–773 B.C.), Aššur-dān III (772–755 B.C.) and Aššur-nērārī V (754–745 B.C.). The sources are silent on the question of what necessitated this relatively frequent change of rulers and, more curious in this case, the transfer of kingship from brother to brother. According to some authors, these circumstances are a marker of the crisis and decline of the empire. There are two hypothetical possibilities – an internal fight for the throne between the heirs of Adad-nērārī III or the absence of an (adult) heir under Shalmaneser IV and Aššur-nērārī V, which required the transfer of the kingship to the respective brother. Regarding the first possibility, it should be explicitly pointed out that there

is no data that allows thinking in this direction. As can be seen from the chapter on Šamši-Adad V, in Assyrian history there was no practice of concealing such conflicts, respectively, the statements about fight and palace conspiracies between the heirs of Adad-nērārī III should be considered a speculation. In view of the above, I would rather assume that Shalmaneser IV and Aššur-dān III have no heirs, and the throne is inherited by the brother.

The situation with the royal inscriptions is not very propitious. There are several surviving texts from the time of Shalmaneser IV, only two of which bring more information about the reign he realizied. A particularly large lack of sources is observed by Aššur-dān III and Aššur-nērārī V – their individual inscriptions are in extremely bad condition, and the little that one can read on them does not bring much concreteness about the committed policy. Accordingly, the most informative source for the foreign policy of the rulers remains the *Eponym Chronicle*. In summary, the following observations can be made about the last three rulers of the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire. It is noteworthy that their foreign policy did not exceed the area of control that Assyria has already gained. This leads to the conclusion that Assyrian kings were forced to carry out military operations in these lands or to remind them of the control they exercise through supervisory visits. To the greater extent, the policy of the three rulers was directed to the west and to a lesser extent to the east to Namri, isolated cases to Gannanāte and Media, to the north to Urarṭu and to the south to Itu'a. In the dissertation it is assumed that the reason for the concentration of activity in the west, in order to maintain the gained positions, it was due to the fact that administratively the western lands were best administered. It could be suggested that it has something to do with the fact that influential high officials had administrative power exactly in the western lands. In this line of thought, I would like to highlight the opinion once again that the magnates in question exercised great influence and power, but their authority was delegated by the Assyrian rulers in order to maintain the control in the vassal land. On the other hand, as far as the policy of the north and east is concerned, it was not so much with supervisory functions as with a real intention to retain Assyrian power there. So far, the presented analysis of Assyria's policy towards Urarṭu and the peoples of the East shows that they tended far more to disobedience to Assyria than the rulers of Asia Minor and Syro-Palestine. Undoubtedly, Assyria had success and imposed some form of control in the north and east, but in a contrary the success was not very long-lasting. That forced the Assyrian rulers to work constantly to impose long-term control there.

Another part of the reign of the successors of Adad-nērārī III passed in years when Assyria did not conducted military campaigns and there was a lack of new conquests and booty. In the present text, the opinion was expressed that possibly this fact, as well as the

solar eclipse, provoked the uprising in the interior of the empire, which also reflected on the vassal lands. Despite the stagnation of campaigns in new lands and uprisings, which were suppressed, the land generally kept its integrity and stability. That is why at the very beginning of the late Neo-Assyrian period (744-609 B.C.) Assyria experienced a new zenith and it can undoubtedly be spoken of the empire as a hegemon in the region.

III.9 Institutions and officials

This chapter presents some of the main institutions and officials in the early Neo-Assyrian period that play a role in the functioning of the state apparatus. The question is important in view of understanding the mechanisms for the exercise of royal authority and the implementation of the policy planned by the Assyrian rulers. In general, the chapter deals with the functions of the palace and its administration, the composition and responsibilities of the *rabāni*, the army, the territorial administration (provinces, cities, villages) and the temple institution.

IV. The Ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire

Part IV is devoted to a variety of topics, including certain ideological motives and ideas, which are presented and analyzed on the basis of written and iconographic information. Since the Assyrian king followed the same line of royal ideology, part IV is not structured in the order of the rulers, but it is divided according to some important topics that are incorporated in the ideology kingship. Whether certain differences are observed or more importance is given to specific motives and ideas of the royal ideology by particular kings – it is traced within the relevant topics that are set for the investigation.

IV.1 What Is an (Assyrian) Ideology?

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study of ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire. It illustrates some of the authors' definitions and understandings of ideology as a phenomenon, as well as that supported in the dissertation, and also how some researchers study or see the Assyrian royal ideology.

IV.2 The King, Chosen by the Gods

Chapter IV.2 deals with the figure of the king as the chosen one of the gods, his destiny and appointment to rule through the prism of the titulary and epithets in the royal

inscriptions, the call in them and of particular importance – the coronation ritual. Regarding the latter, important discussion issues, opinions of modern researchers are presented, including some suggestions that were made.

According to the accumulated data of the titulary and epithets, showing that the king was chosen and elevated by the gods, it seems that the traditional titles *šakin Ellil* and *iššiak/iššak Aššur* are the most constant and could even be defined as an integral part of the royal inscriptions of the Assyrian rulers from the period. Among some rulers, there are more general titles such as "appointed by the great gods" or those that emphasized the participation of the god Aššur in the appointment of the king – *šakkanak Aššur pitqudu.* The epithets are diverse, with a preference for the use of specific epithets by individual rulers. What they have in common is that the king was most often named as a favourite or a loved one by the respective god or gods – *migru*, *namaddu* и *narāmu*. In this line of thought, it should be noted that the greatest variety of used titles and epithets relevant to the subject is observed by Ashurnasirpal II. However here, it is not meant the most in the number, which one would otherwise explain with the many copied inscriptions, following to a large extent the so-called *Annals of Ashurnasirpal II*, but the fact that all titles and epithets discussed here, except *šakkanak Aššur pitqudu,* appear in his inscriptions. After all, the constant presence of the ancient titles *šakin Ellil* and *iššiak/iššak Aššur* shows the ancient roots of Assyrian state organization and ideology; and the presence of new expressions and variations by individual ruler – their personal contribution to the development of royal inscriptions and ideology of the kingship.

The idea of appointing the king by the gods was developed by presenting the call in a solemn form traditionally in the introductions of the royal inscriptions. They were used by the Assyrian rulers formally to dedicate their inscriptions and deeds to a deity, but in fact they aimed to acquaint the reader with the personality, qualities of the Assyrian king and his connection with the world of the gods. The proclamations of the call in the royal inscriptions were the result of centuries of Assyrian history, the adoption of the old Mesopotamian tradition, which gradually from the time of Šamšī-Adad I and especially during the Middle Assyrian period was remodeled, so that it could reach a more complete form in the early Neo-Assyrian period. The calls of the rulers from the defined time testify that all of them, being part of the ideology of kingship, revolved around one axis – the suggestion that the supreme god in the Assyrian pantheon and the other great gods chose the Assyrian king even before his appearance to take the fallen authority into his own hands and thus to be the earthly representative of the gods. The model, which combines key positions such as "distant times",

the choice of the gods, receiving the authority and the reign of the ruler, which is characterized by serving according to gods' will, aimed to achieve a sense of dictated prophecy – until the conferment of the authority, as well as a fulfilled testament – through the messages about the achieved request of the respective deities or deity. By each subsequent ruler this "axis" had different nuances of load – among the first three rulers the older model is followed – the king, called by the great gods; by Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III also the great gods called the king, but in the central position is the god Aššur among them. While in the case of the five rulers the messages of predestination are unfolded in a solemn form, in the case of Šamšī-Adad V and Adad-nērārī III they are only marked – the first one mentioned the calling of his name by the gods from ancient times, and the latter pointed the calling of his name by Aššur and the gods Igigi. As already noted, despite this restraint in the inscriptions of Šamšī-Adad V, Adad-nērārī III and the lack of such passages by the last three rulers, it did not bother the general feeling of the belief that the king was chosen by the gods.

In the context of the theme of the call, the scene on wall panel 23 of the *Throneroom* in the *Northwest Palace* (**Fig.40**), placed behind the throne itself, was examined. In the historiography the two male characters around the tree have been identified as Ashurnasirpal II, depicted twice. Due to the lack of argumentation for its double depiction, as well as careful consideration of the details in the scene – as a difference in dresses and jewelry between the two characters, as well as the hand gestures, in the dissertation the idea that Ashurnasirpal II is depicted twice in the scene is not accepted (pp. 207–208). A new interpretation has been proposed, allowing the vision that the scene represents the transmission of the kingship, as the god Aššur delivers it from the leaving the political scene Tukultī-Ninurta II to the new king – Ashurnasirpal II. The reason why the previous and new kings look so similar is because that is the iconographic manner to represent the Assyrian king.

The modern Assyriological community is fortunate to touch the knowledge of the practical moment of the delivering the authority by the god Aššur to the earthly king, i.e. the ceremony of enthronement. It is known mainly from the so-called *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual* and from the later *Ashurbanipal's Coronation Hymn*. Although the text of the *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual* is not fully preserved, it is mostly thanks to it that we have a clearer idea of what ritual steps the "chosen one of the god Aššur" must go through in order to receive the crown. However, the fragmented state of the monument raises the question of how the individual fragments connect to each other, or more precisely whether the fragment VAT 10113 is part of the text of the ritual, which is undoubtedly composed by VAT 9583, VAT 9936 and VAT 9978. With a view of the data presented from the complex

analysis of H. Schaudig, in the dissertation the position of the researcher, that the fragment VAT 10113 should not be considered a part of the text of the *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual*, is supported.

In chapter IV.2 it is taken a stand on the main issue posed by the *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual*, namely the lack of information on when the ceremony took place. It was not written whether the ritual is performed only once during the accession year and/or regularly during some cultic festival. Some of the examined positions of the researchers were rejected or supported by the relevant arguments (pp. 212–216). Some additional data, that give reasons to believe that the coronation ritual was held in the accession year as well as reaffirmed each subsequent, are provided (pp. 216–217).

In summary, the titulary together with the epithets in the royal inscriptions, the call in them and the text of the *Middle Assyrian Coronation Ritual* emphasize the origin of Assyrian royal power – given by the god Aššur and the great gods to their chosen earthly ruler. However, these three "categories" mark different aspects and forms of communication. The titulary and epithets mentioned at the very beginning of the royal inscriptions or in the introduction emphasize the "completed act" – the king who has already been appointed by the gods. While the titulary and epithets reveal the "positions" of the king he hold, from which gods he was elevated and from which he was perceived as a favourite one, on the other hand the calls are quite more descriptive. Accordingly, they answer the questions of who, how, when, and even why the Assyrian king was called to rule. In other words, it can be expressed the opinion that the titulary and epithets inform the readers better about that who and what kind of king has achieved the described deeds or "stands" before them. The call, in addition to informing, aims to convince the audience at: the predestination of the choice concerning the appointment of the gods; as well as the assigned deeds of the king – the fulfilled prophecy and testament. By the calls, as well as many other passages in the royal inscriptions and other written texts, it is suggested that the Assyrian king is the guardian and the shepherd who can preserve the foundations of the world. As for the coronation ritual – it aims to reveal the very moment of the investiture. Of a great importance is the emphasis in the text of the ritual, pointing out clearly and unequivocally that the real king is the god Aššur, by whose choice his crown is given to the Assyrian ruler. This key ideological moment did not weaken at all the power of the earthly king, but even strengthened it. The connection with the gods is also emphasized in the priestly role of the Assyrian king – being already a king, he is also a high priest (see Chapter IV.3). Thus, whatever decisions the Assyrian kind made, it was achieved the sense that he acted by the will and with the support of the supreme god, which in fact

avoided portraying his image as an oppressive ruler. And that is why it was important to remind, especially the elite, the origin of royal power, which in this case was best achieved through the coronation ritual. According to the observations and analyzes on the subject presented above and in chapter IV.2, it is stated in the chapter that the coronation ritual was performed during the king's accession year; but due to the ideological motives of the kingship discussed, the desired influence and in order to propagate them, it was necessary to reaffirm the delivering the crown and other insignia by the god Aššur to the earthly/Assyrian king every year.

IV.3 The Role of the King as a Priest

Chapter IV.3 deals with the priestly role of the king, represented in the royal inscriptions, iconographic sources and ritual texts. The study casts light on this aspect of the king's personifications in order to understand better the Assyrian kingship and the ideology behind it. It traces how the priesthood of the Assyrian ruler was perceived and in what context it was attested. At the same time, the ritual activities performed by the Assyrian king are marked, under what circumstances they were performed with the active participation of the king, how they took place and to what extent they were recorded in the source base.

Written and iconographic sources are examined and analyzed for the paper's purposes. Royal inscriptions and ritual texts are included in the first group. The iconographic group comprises the scenes of the palace reliefs, especially those from the *Northwest palace* in Kalḫu, and scenes from the city of Imgur-Ellil. Regarding the royal inscriptions one can say that they present more of the ideological part of the Assyrian ruler's priestly role and less the practical execution of his sacerdotal functions. There are a few groups of mentions that are referred to the king's priestly personification (**Table**): the establishment of the king's priesthood by the gods; the gods who love his priesthood; the king as an exalted priest *(šangû ṣīru)*, a supreme priest *(šabrû Aššur šurruḫu)*, an attentive purification priest *(išippu na'du/na'ādu)*, a pure/holy priest *(šangû ellu)*; the king who wishes a successful priesthood for himself. In addition, the royal inscriptions' references to the offerings and sacrifices made by the king are considered activities, which represents his priestly authority. In reference to the reliefs, one could conclude that ideological motifs and scenes of practical expressions are involved. The reliefs represent the ruler during libation or offering of sacrificial animals. In the context of the scenes, some specific attributes held by the royal officials during the ritual activities are discussed, and on the basis of the ritual texts, suggestions are made regarding their names and function (pp. 226–227). The ritual texts are more objective and aim to inform

about the sequence of the ritual steps performed by the king, also including the other priests and participants.

The cited sources and analysis on them give the reason to conclude that the priestly role of the Assyrian king is not fictitious, but completely real. In their inscriptions, the rulers reported that they had received both royal and priestly authority directly from the gods, that is why they were expected to reveal and to carry out the divine will. This could be done best through the actual exercise of the authority which was sent down. But in addition to being instructed by the gods, kings were protected and assisted by them in various initiatives, which is a way for the gods to express their gratitude for the attention that was received.

IV.4 The King as a Conqueror. The Imperial Mission

Chapter IV.4 investigates the various situations in which the king is presented as a conqueror and in which his imperial mission is evident. For this purpose, written and iconographic sources are examined. In addition, the positions of the authors who have devoted research on the topic are taken into account and at the same time relevant formula expressions are also presented and analyzed, which are used in the context of the realization of the expansionist policy of the Assyrian rulers.

Based on the investigation of the source material and the analysis of the individual aspects of the imperial mission of the king, there is a reason to conclude that the conquest policy of the Assyrian rulers was conceived or rather presented as a commitment made by the great gods. This is how those military campaigns, which the kings claimed to have been conducted by divine command, can be considered. The analysis presented the observation that such "orders" are issued mainly in cases when the Assyrians spoke of a specific offense or disobedience of some land. Under the circumstances in which the king directed his troops against a country without showing any disobedience to Assyria, the rulers did not apply the divine command, but claimed to have the support of their gods. At these moments, the campaigns were presented as conquests, although it is clear in part III that a large part of them should be considered as studying the unfamiliar land and routes or for the purpose of plundering. The expressed phrases and subjects are also visualized in the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III. Accordingly, there is a synchronicity in the semantic messages between the image and the word, with the only difference that in the reliefs the only represented deity who renders his help to the particular king was the supreme god of the land – Aššur.

IV.5 The King, Who Has No Rival

Chapter IV.5 deals with the many roles of the Assyrian ruler, the suggestion of the sources of his uniqueness and superiority to other people and foreign rulers. The use of various formulae on the topic is presented and analyzed. Based on the analysis, it should be concluded that the concept of the uniqueness and superiority of the Assyrian king is represented in the royal ideology in various forms and occasions. In terms of the fact that the king is presented as a chosen one of the gods, the thesis about his superiority over the others is quite understandable. To the greatest extent such motives are developed in the introduction of the royal inscriptions in the form of messages, which list all the qualities and values of the ruler. Some of them are also presented in the accounts of the ruler's military campaigns. The written and iconographic sources, describing the various functions and roles that he combined in himself, also stand by the idea of uniqueness. On the one hand, the idea of the uniqueness of the Assyrian ruler grew into a deep conviction, which was motivated mainly by some of the fundamental points in Assyrian royal ideology, namely the appointment of the king by the gods themselves, the close connection with them and the many gifts, such as the personal qualities and abilities he had received from them. On the other hand, it is observed that the use of expressions such as *šar lā šanān* or *ina malkī ša kibrāt erbetta šāniššu lā īšû* aimed to transfer the conviction to the reader or observer, turning it into a suggestion. Here one can talk about a propaganda move of the Assyrian state authority, through which in the case of the concept of the king who has no rival, the intention was more to achieve the desired impact than to inform.

IV.6 The Personal Palace and Iconographic Sources as a Mark of the Kingship

Chapter IV.6 presents sources out of the written ones, which were expressions of the kingship and its ideology. In this regard, some archaeological and iconographic sources contribute to the development of the topic. The private royal palaces could be considered a marker of authority, ideology and the relevant king's reign, and in addition to the monumental architectural monuments, the iconographic sources, which are being or not being part of palaces, were also deeply loaded with ideological motives.

In summary, it can be noted that the Assyiran kings found different ways to emphasize their role as builders. Since the time of Aššurnasirpal II, the personal palace has become a marker of the ruler's authority and reign. The decision to move the capital to Kalḫu and build such a monumental structure as the *Northwest palace* reflected on some of the next rulers of the period – the so-called *Shalmaneser Building* in the citadel, *Fort Shalmaneser*, even the

Upper Chambers of Adad-nērārī III can be attributed to this circle, and in the late Neo-Assyrian period the construction of a personal royal palace became a standard manifestation. The semantic load around the function, the transition from the rooms and the structure of the palaces are discussed. In addition, significant differences at the semantic and ideological level between them are noted (pp. 262–263).

Iconographic sources, whether or not part of the palace, are also an important source for the reign and ideology of the rulers. The reliefs from the *Northwest Palace* in Kalḫu are especially important, because the various motifs and messages from the royal ideology are attested to them. Consciously and for purely propaganda purposes, the most informative part of the reliefs was exhibited in the *Throneroom*, as the key scene from wall panel 23 is placed exactly behind the throne. The disadvantage of the scenes is that they cannot be related to specific military events. In terms of relating certain image narratives to real events in concrete countries and years, the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneserr III from Imgur-Ellil, including the *Throne Base* and the *Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III*, surpass the scenes of the *Northwest Palace* in Kalḫu. They mostly document the military and political activity of the kings, the receiving of tributes, the conclusion of agreements with other lands and, exceptionally, the presenting of the priestly functions of Shalmaneser III on the bronze reliefs from Imgur-Ellil. However, they do not expose more of the beliefs and messages of ideology than the reliefs of the *Northwest Palace*. Common to all monuments, including the reliefs from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II, is the harmony between the written sources and the pictorial narratives on them. The connection between the image and the word is harmonious with regard to the beliefs and messages conveyed by the royal ideology. The primary distinction between the written and iconographic sources, is that in the reliefs in a contrary to the texts the only deity being part of the great gods who only renders his help to the king is the supreme god of the land – Aššur.

Conclusion

The synthesis and concluding observations are presented in here, based on the sources and analysis from parts III and IV, which are respectively the exercise of authority, which led to the historical processes and political contacts between the lands, combined with the motives, beliefs and suggestions of Assyrian royal ideology. In addition, key conclusions are made regarding the political clashes between the countries, the moves they took and the appeared political and historical processes. Apart from the emerging processes, observations

on the cultural innovations are summarized as a form of interactions and influences.

On the question of the realized reign of the kings in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire, it should be summarized that to a much greater extent the sources present their foreign policy, and only some of them offer information about the internal affairs and building activities. With regard to the foreign policy of the Assyrian kings, it can be concluded that the main methods of political contact are those of confrontation – through a direct military confrontation and unequal relations of a vassal type imposed after it. Central to this nature of political relations is the fact that, unlike most countries against which the expansionist policy of the Assyrian kings was directed, Assyria already had a long state tradition and a tradition of military expansion, giving it an advantage over the other regions. Here we must also take into account the knowledge of the roads in the different directions, which had been studied by their predecessors, who had acted in some of the affected lands during the Old and Middle Assyrian periods. These advantages were realized and used by the Neo-Assyrian rulers. Despite the crisis in which Assyria found itself before the accession of Aššur-dān II, the mentioned historical advantages of the Assyrian state system allowed it to overcome the difficult situation from the time of the Aramaean migration. The stability achieved by Ashur-dan II and his successful expansionist policy gradually enabled Adad-nērārī II to continue establishing Assyria as a hegemon in the region. The solid foundations inherited by Ashurnasirpal II allowed him to upgrade the structure of the Assyrian empire and expand its borders. The work of expanding the empire was successfully continued by Shalmaneser III. However, the next Assyrian rulers faced the challenge of maintaining control in the conquered lands, and this was especially evident in the period 782–745 BC. Through the introduction of new practices, the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire generally kept its integrity and stability.

A key role in the successful functioning of the kings' authority is the ideology that supported it. One of the key beliefs, according to it, is that the ruler is called by the great gods to rule – a predestination that was resolved before the appearance of the king himself. By supporting the idea of appointment by the gods, the Assyrian kingship used a skillful move to build a close connection between the otherwise incompatible in human imagination earthly/secular/palace and heavenly/religious/temple. The desire to unite them under one authority is also evident in the communication of the Assyrian ruler with the gods, and especially much through his priestly role. To the king's relationship with the gods must be added the imperial mission. Based on the investigation of the source material and the analysis of the individual aspects of the topic, there is every reason to conclude that the conquest

policy of the Assyrian rulers was conceived or rather presented as a commitment made by the great gods. With a view of the Assyrian king's connection with the gods, the concept of his uniqueness and superiority was unavoidable. All these beliefs and messages of the Assyrian royal authority are incorporated in the palace architecture and the representative monuments with scenes depicted on them.

The analysis showed that royal authority and ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire worked in complete symbiosis. It is the royal authority that had created the ideology in the reality of its time and place in a way that it could work for the realization of its interests. What we perceive as ideas, beliefs, and suggestions from a common ideological framework were, in fact, presented by the Assyrian rulers as the unchanging foundations of the total balance. This suggested that the actions of the Assyrian rulers were defined precisely due to these foundations. The formula that the royal propaganda presented was "rule because of and according to the "foundations". However, knowing what and by whom these foundations were made, the formula of the implementation was "creation of "foundations" in favour of kingship." Perhaps the best example in this regard is the belief or suggestion that the real king was the god Aššur, who gave his power to an earthly man to rule at his will. Hence, the Assyrian king was presented as the successor and representative of the divine authority. In practical terms, however, the absolute monarch was not the god Aššur, but the earthly king. There are numerous reasons to believe that the kingship in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire operated with a complex and well-thought-out ideological framework that played a key role in pursuing a successful policy that continued throughout the late Neo-Assyrian period.

Reference to the Contributions of the Dissertation

1. The topic "Authority and Ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–745 B.C.)" is investigated for the first time in the scientific literature.

2. In the dissertation translation of passages is presented from written sources on the topic from Akkadian in Bulgarian, accompanied by transliteration, transcription and philological commentary. These passages are a small part of the accomplished translation of the cuneiform sources on the topic, which is actually realized for the first time in Bulgarian language.

3. Clarification of the terminology used in the sources. Commentary on the relevant concepts on the topic in the scientific literature and their clarification.

4. Analysis of the written and iconographic sources on the topic of the authority of the Assyrian rulers in the context of historical events (foreign policy, military campaign, internal affairs and building activities). Analysis of the historical processes and the configuration of forces due to the Assyrian expansion. Synthesis of the certain information about key institutions and officials with regard to functioning kings' authority.

5. Tracing the route of the military campaigns from Aššur-dān II to Adad-nērārī III. Suggestions on the identification of some toponyms, the distinction between individual local names with similar designation, as well as a comment on the nature of some of them in terms of their state structure.

6. Clarification of the chronology of the events and a suggestion for dating some problematic in chronological terms events.

7. Analysis of the written and iconographic sources of the Assyrian royal ideology from the defined period.

8. Studying the topic of the appointment of the king by the gods and marking the various messages in the different sources. Arguing of new interpretations of some aspects in the written and iconographic sources.

9. Investigation of the priestly role of the Assyrian king, the context of its documentation and the various messages that were sent.

10. Analysis of various motives in the royal ideology, giving rise to the realization of the imperial mission and expansionist policy of the Assyrian rulers.

11. Exploring the various motives for the "uniqueness" of the Assyrian ruler and the messages that were put in them.

12. Study of the question of the functions of the personal palace and the iconographic sources as a marker for the kingship, ideology and the relevant kings' reign.

List of the author's publications on the topic of the dissertation

Тархан 2021а: З. Тархан. Отношения и взаимодействия между Асирия и Урарту в епохата на Ашурназирпал II и Салманасар III. – В: „Jubilaeus VIII: Завръщане към изворите", част 1: История и епиграфика. София: Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски", 2021, с. 237–253/ Tarhan 2021a: Z. Tarhan. Relations and Interactions between Assyria and Urartu during the Reign of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III. – In: Jubilaeus VIII. Sofia: The Sofia University Press, 2021, pp. 237–253. (in Bulgarian with a summary in English; under press).

Тархан 2021б: З. Тархан. Ролята на царя като жрец в Ранната новоасирийска епоха. – В: Societas Classica XI. Велико Търново: Университетско издателство „Св. Св. Кирил и Методий", 2021. (под печат)/ Tarhan 2021b: Z. Tarhan. The Role of the King as Priest in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire. – In: Societas Classica XI. Veliko Turnovo: The Saints Cyril and Metodius University Press, 2021. (in Bulgarian with a summary in English; under press).

Тархан 2018: З. Тархан. Отношения и взаимодействия между Асирия и Новохетските царства в епохата на Ашурназирпал II. – В: Thracia XXIII. София: Издателство на Българска академия на науките, 2018, с. 249–265 (преди зачисляването в докторантската програма)/Tarhan 2018: Z. Tarhan. Relations and Interactions between Assyria and Neo-Hittite Kingdoms during the Reign of Ashurnasirpal II. – In: Thracia XXIII. Sofia: The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Press, 2018, pp. 249–265. (in Bulgarian with a summary in English; before the enrolment in the PhD program).

Tarhan 2021: Z. Tarhan. Secular and Cultic Feasts Provided by the Neo-Assyrian King. – In: DUBSAR, Eating and Drinking in the Ancient Near East. Proceeding of the 67th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Turin July 12–16 2021. Münster: Zaphon, 2021. (under press).