IMPERIALISM AND RELIGION:

Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.

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3. ASSYRIAN IMPOSITIONS IN PROVINCES AND VASSAL STATES

THROUGHOUT A. T. Olmstead's *History of Assyria*, one can read statements based upon the author's *a priori* assumption that conquered nations were obliged to serve Assyrian gods. Thus, for example:

> When kings are set free they are forced to swear the oath of the great gods for servanthood forever, and a captive king on whom Tiglath-pileser has mercy is sent home to be a worshipper of the great gods (p. 67).
>
> Dur Tukulti-apal-esharra was built, and the captives settled in his "Wall" were commanded to worship the royal image which his lord Ashur had ordered him to set up "as a sign of victory and might" (p. 177).

Close study of the pertinent texts, however, will not confirm Olmstead's assumption. The following survey will show that Assyrian imperial authorities did not follow a thoroughgoing policy of religious coercion. While all nations were obliged to acknowledge Assyria's god, the extent of this obligation depended upon the extent of subjugation to Assyria.

Late Neo-Assyrian documents provide a fairly detailed picture of Assyrian imperial organization, which distinguished between vassal states, i.e., allied foreign countries which paid tribute but were independent; and Assyrian provinces, i.e., formerly independent countries annexed to and governed by Assyria.[1] H. W. F. Saggs refines these categories to include an intermediate stage: occasionally, Assyria "would intervene in the internal affairs of the state to replace the unreliable ruler" who had rebelled, by another prince "acceptable to Assyria." This pro-Assyrian ruler "would now be bound by oath . . . [and] an Assyrian official, probably backed by a small military force, would be left within his territory."[2]

Adū — *Political Oaths of Loyalty*

This inquiry into the obligations demanded by Assyria of its subjects will begin with the *adū* documents. The very name and nature of this widely used category of pacts have been the subject of renewed debate ever since the publi-

[1] Cf. Meissner, BuA I, p. 138.

[2] H. W. F. Saggs, *Greatness*, p. 242. Cf. the remarks of H. Donner, "Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Staates Moab in der zweiten Hälfte des 8. Jahr. v. Chr.," MIO 5 (1957), 163f.

cation of the Esarhaddon *adū* texts, the longest examples of *adū* unearthed to date in Mesopotamia.[3] The term *adū* was introduced in the NA period,[4] entering Akkadian, it seems, from the then current Aramaic usage.[5] *Adū* were not "vassal treaties," in the sense that they established vassalage, for the inferior status of the bound party was neither stressed nor indicated in the texts. During the NA era no party or power was equal to Assyria, and so every *adū* was by definition an imposition from above.[6] Furthermore, it needs to be emphasized that *adū* were imposed upon all administrative areas of the empire. Individuals and states,[7] both within Assyria and its provincial system and without, undertook *adū* obligations of loyalty to the sovereign.[8] Most often, recognition of the

[3] D. J. Wiseman, *Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon* [=VTE] (originally published as *Iraq* 20/1 [1958]). Texts of other *adū* include: Shamshi-adad — AfO 8 (1932-33), 28; Ashurnirari — AfO 8 (1932-33), 24ff.; Naqia — ABL 1105, 1239; Esarhaddon — Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 69; and Ashurbanipal — Or 37 (1968), 464ff.

[4] The two items listed by AHw, 14a, as evidence for MA usage have been re-interpreted by CAD A I, 134a. Although the same AHw entry indicates MB usage, no citations of such are given. Lambert, AfO 18 (1957-58), 48, would interpret *a-de-e* in the fragmentary BM 98731, rev. 8, as "oath," but throughout this text "oath" is rendered *māmītu* (obv. B 33; rev. B 29, 38, and 40) as expected in a MB text.

[5] Fitzmyer, JAOS 81 (1961), 187, reviews etymological difficulties in relating Aramaic ʿ*DY*ʾ to *adū* ("we normally expect the *a*-vowel to shift to *e* because of the ʿ*ayin* in Accadian"), and so proposes a "loanword from Northwest Semitic." To Fitzmyer's bibliography cited there, add D. B. Weisberg, *Guild Structure and Political Allegiance in Early Achaemenid Mesopotamia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 32-40; and J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (*Biblica et Orientalia* 19; Rome, 1967), pp. 23-24.

[6] Instructive in this regard is the unique passage in Ash. Rm.I.123ff., containing the message sent by the rebel Egyptian princes to Tarqu:

eli ᵐ*Tarqū šar māt Kūsi ana šakān*	They sent their messengers to Tarqu,
adē u salīme umaʾerū LÚ *rakbēšun umma*	king of Ethiopia to establish an *adū*
sulummu ina birinni liššakinma	of friendship: "Let friendly relations
nindaggara ahāmeš māta ahennā nizūzma	be established between us. Let us agree
ay ibbaši ina birinni šanūmma bēlum	to divide the country among ourselves.
	No foreigner should be lord over us."

In order to make the intent of the rebels clear, the Assyrian scribe had to gloss the term *adū*, which ordinarily signified implicit lordship, by the phrase "No foreigner should be lord over us." This was not to be a real *adū* agreement, for the Egyptian princes meant to remain equal, independent rulers. (This approach to the problem was suggested to me by Prof. H. Tadmor of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in an oral communication in November, 1968.)

Cf. identical terminology in Ash. B.VIII.59 — *ana šakān adē sulumme epēš ardūtīya*, "to establish an *adū* of friendship to do obeisance to me [i.e., Ashurbanipal]."

[7] ABL 33: 13 and 1239 contain listings of private persons, as well as state officials, obliged to *adū*. Cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27, ep. 2, 50ff., 80; Asb. Rm.I.18-22; and the comments by Klauber, *Assyrisches Beamtentum*, LSS 5/3 (1910), pp. 44-45; and Weidner, AfO 17 (1954-56), 4.

[8] Stressed by I. J. Gelb, [illegible] 19 (1962), 162.

Assyrian monarch as sole ruler and active support and cooperation with him and his descendants against all acts of treason, sedition, and rebellion constituted the stipulations of the *adū*.

Assyria on its part may have undertaken to protect certain state interests of its subjects — e.g., defending threatened loyal rulers. After his capture of Urartian fugitives hiding in Shupria, Esarhaddon asserts that as regards "Urartian fugitives, I did not keep (even) one; a single person did not remain (behind). I returned them to their country in keeping with the *adū* ([*aš*]*šu adē naṣārimma*)."[9]

These "pacts of loyalty," as I. J. Gelb termed the *adū*,[10] specified obligations of a wholly political nature. Nowhere do the *adū* documents ever include cultic impositions. NA historical inscriptions, as well, mention *adū* only in political contexts. While the inscriptions never detail the terms of the pacts, we can reconstruct these terms by collecting the historical references to *adū* violations. Table 2 sets out a catalog of *adū* violations, all of them considered treasonable acts which invariably prompted Assyrian military reprisals.[11]

This survey of *adū* violations as reported in NA historical inscriptions, in complement with the *adū* texts themselves, provides ample evidence of the political loyalties expected of Assyrian subjects. Nowhere in this survey is a sacrilegious act mentioned, for specific religious obligations were not part of these loyalty oaths. Nonetheless, D. J. Wiseman opined: "Occasionally, the religious obligations accompanying a treaty are detailed in a tablet other than that in which the main agreement between the two parties is outlined."[12] The proof text cited by Wiseman, however, is not an *adū* document, but an OB Alalakh text, containing otherwise unknown ritual instructions.[13] It is of little purport in a discussion of NA *adū* oath stipulations. Since *adū* were solely concerned with political matters, we neither expect nor find any NA *adū* or *adū*-related texts specifying religious obligations.

Yet one might argue that even though the *adū* texts specify no religious obligations, the very fact that they are termed *adē* ^{d}*Aššur u ilāni rabūti*, "the *adū* of Ashur and the great gods," implies obligatory recognition of Assyrian gods. No such claim, however, can be made simply on the basis of this expression. *Adē ša* DN, "the *adū* of DN," indicates that divine sanction had been invoked to back *adū* obligations. Non-performance would immediately move the wit-

[9] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 68, III, 32ff. Cf. Sefiré treaty III, 19, for similar stipulation of mutual return of refugees (see Fitzmyer, *CBQ* 20 [1958], 448). Other examples of obligations binding Assyria to action are unavailable from the present corpus of *adū* (cf. above, n. 3).

[10] Gelb, BiOr 19 (1962), 162.

[11] See below, pp. 122-25.

[12] Wiseman, VTE, p. 27 and n. 211.

[13] See D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (London: British Institute of Archeology at Ankara, 1953), text 126. In the original publication of AT 126, Wiseman held that Yarimlim undertook, in solemn oath (*niš* ^{d}IM [*Adad*] *u* ^{d}IŠDAR [*Išḫara* ?]), to deliver specified sacrifices upon "his installation as king of Alalakh (p. 63)." This still remains the most reasonable explanation of the text.

nessing gods to punish. Thus, for example, the gods moved against the Arab Uate' and his troops:

ina arrāti mala ina adēšunu šaṭra ina pitti išīmūšunūti[14]
As many curses as were written in their loyalty oaths, they (i.e., the gods) suddenly visited upon them.

The Assyrians regarded the acceptance by their subjects of the terms of *adū* oaths as tantamount to submission to Ashur. Ashurbanipal twice refers to the oaths of allegiance he imposed on Abiate, another Arab king. In a letter to the god Ashur,[15] he says:

Abiate māri ^{m}*Teri ana Ninua illikamma unaššiq šēpēya adē epēš ilūtīka rabīti ittīšu aškun*[16]
Abiate, son of Teri, came to Nineveh and kissed my feet. I had him take an oath in reverence of your great divinity.

While in the annal literature we read:

ana Ninua illikamma unaššiq šēṭēya adē epēš ardūtīya ittīšu aškun[17]
He came to Nineveh and kissed my feet. I had him take an oath in obeisance to me.

In an address to the gods, one expects phraseology which glorifies them; in the royal annals, the power and might of the king are streessed. The interchangeability of terms points to functional equivalence. Swearing to serve the king was at the same time acknowledging the rule of the Assyrian god.

In like manner Esarhaddon describes the plea of the recalictrant king of Shupria, who, hoping to save his life, admits to improprieties toward the Assyrian monarch. Here are the Shupnian's words as related in Esarhaddon's letter to the gods:

ana napšāti mušširannima tanitti
^{d}Aššur lušāpā ladlula qurdīka ša ana
^{d}Aššur šar ilāni ēgu amat Aššur-aḫu-idina
šar kiššāti hēlīšu lā išemmu ḫalqu munnabtu
ša māt Aššur ana bēlīšu lā utarru ina
qātēya lēmur . . . ḫiṭṭu dannu ana ^{d}Aššur
aḫṭīma amat šarri bēlīya ul ašme.[18]

Spare my life so that I may proclaim the praise of Ashur and glorify your valor. He who is neglectful toward Ashur, king of the gods, does not obey the order of Esarhaddon, king of the universe; he who does not return Assyrian runaway slaves and refugees to their owners, should learn by my example . . . . I have committed a great wrong against Ashur, when I did not obey the order of the king, my lord.

[14] Asb. Rm.IX.60.

[15] Text K.2802 (=Streck, VAB 7, pp. 197ff.) has been restored and reconstructed according to Bauer, IWA, p. 66, 4b, and Borger, *Or* 26 (1957), 1. Therefore, Streck's referral of this text to Ishtar, p. 197 n. 3, needs correction. ^{d}*Aššur* is addressed throughout.

[16] Streck VAB 7, 202, 5. 6ff. *Adē epēš* is written *a-di e-peš*; cf. Streck's comment, *ibid.*, 202 n. *f*.

[17] Asb. B.VIII.33f. Cf. Bauer, IWA, p. 18, X.31 (broken!) for C prism.

In this instance, according to Esarhaddon, the subject recognized his obligation to obey the royal word out of reverence for Ashur.

One wonders, however, whether this statement, reported in a letter to the gods, was in fact spoken by the Shuprian king. His words might be only the reverent musing of an Assyrian court scribe; and upon close reading of another Esarhaddon text, the *adū* with his eastern subjects, they turn out to be just that. That section of the *adū* document specifying the terms of support for Ashurbanipal's succession to the throne of Assyria speaks of *Aššur ilīkunu*, "Ashur, your god," and *Aššur-bāni-apli mār šarri rabū ša bīt rēdūti bēlkunu*, "Ashurbanipal, the crown prince, your lord," often in juxtaposition.[19] The use of such locutions, which present the recognition of the king and his god in a single breath, supports our view that by upholding the rule of the Assyrian king one automatically manifested acceptance of his god, Ashur. But, significantly, at the conclusion of this same *adū* document, in that section which purportedly contains a transcript of the oath ceremonies, the subjects themselves do not voice their submission to Ashur. Their first-person declaration makes no mention of Ashur or any Assyrian god.[20] Only a summary of the *adū* demands are sworn to.

Turning from questions of political loyalty, we note that three recent studies have examined the choice of deities called upon by Assyria to sanction *adū* oaths. Matitiahu Tsevat suggests that a dual policy was in effect; the oaths of eastern territories were enforced exclusively by Assyrian gods, while western territories were bound both by their native gods and those of Assyria.[21] This distinction, according to Tsevat, was determined by the extent of the Hittite rule, some five hundred years earlier. Since the Hittites recognized national deities other than their own in their treaty relations, Assyrian imperialism, in deference to this practice, followed the by-then standard procedure in western, one-time Hittite territories. Elsewhere, only Assyro-Babylonian gods were invoked.

McCarthy, on the other hand, hesitates to draw conclusions from the small amount of Assyrian material, where the evidence of one item, in a total body of three or four items, represents a deceptively significant percentage.[22] He notes in addition that even within its own cultural and chronological sphere, a single Hittite treaty pattern "did not impose itself rigidly,"[23] and omissions and variations are much in evidence. The general restriction of the god lists in the Assyrian *adū* is not the result "of simply arrogance or confidence in the universal sway of Ashur," but the belief that the gods of the enemy had abandoned their clients to join the Assyrian side.[24]

[19] Wiseman, VTE, 393-394, cf. 409.

[20] Wiseman, VTE, 494-512.

[21] Tsevat, "The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel," *JBL* 78 (1959), 199ff., especially n. 7.

[22] Dennis McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (AnBib 21, 1963), p. 79 n. 36.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 93 n. 50.

Frankena follows this line of reasoning and thinks that "in all likelihood, also the vassal treaties [of Esarhaddon] list native gods in their curse section."[25] Furthermore, he feels that "Assyrian scribes must have been often at a loss when they had to attribute curses to unknown gods of vassals," and so substituted familar gods in suitable sections of the treaty.[26]

What has been overlooked is the distinction which might be made between provinces administered directly by Assyria and independent vassal states. As will become evident[27] provinces were considered to be Assyrian in all matters, and it may not have been in place for their national deities to be accorded an official position. It has long been recognized that the inclusion of gods in individual lists was directly dependent upon the relative strength of the contracting parties; hence, e.g., the prominence given to the Babylonian Marduk to the seeming degradation of Ashur in the treaty of Shamshi-adad V with Marduk-zakir-shumi of Babylon.[28] In the Esarhaddon *adū*, of the seven extant names of territories with whom oaths were taken, three were provinces, one had recently surrendered to Esarhaddon, and the remaining three are otherwise unknown.[29] We suggest that these *adū* be viewed as having been concluded with provincial areas, and so no foreign gods need be mentioned. Those *adū* which include invocation of local gods, i.e., the Ashurnirari V and Esarhaddon-Ba'al oaths, were all executed with vassal states still maintaining a degree of independence.[30] So, too, the recently published, but very fragmentary, *adū* between Ashurbanipal and Uate', king of the Arabs, seems to include mention of the gods of Assyria and Qedar.[31]

[25] R. Frankena, "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *OTS* 14 (1965), 130, pointing to the broken lines in Wiseman, VTE, 466-471.

[26] Frankena, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[27] See below, pp. 50ff.

[28] Rm.2427 originally published by Peiser, MVAG 3/6 (1898), 240-43; re-edited by Weidner, "Der Staatsvertrag Aššurnirâris VI. von Assyrien mit Mati'ilu von Bīt-Agusi," *AfO* 8 (1932), 27ff. All scholars remark the prime place given to Marduk in the curse section, but fail to mention that the extant portion of the text does not include ^{d}*Aššur* at all. Weidner's speculation, that this *adū* text was a Babylonian copy of the treaty which made changes to accommodate Babylonian feelings, remains just that; for we have no evidence of two versions of a single *adū* ever being issued. Brinkman, in AnOr 43, pp. 204-205, treats the historical circumstances behind this treaty through which Marduk-zakir-shumi extended aid to the tottering Assyrian king.

[29] On identifications, see VTE, p. 82. Zamua, Elpa, and Sikrisu were all provinces. Urakazabana is noted among other tribute-bearing areas in Media in Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27, ep. 15, 32ff.

[30] Bīt-Agusi, with whom Ashumirari concluded his *adū*, was not incorporated until after the eastern campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III (cf. Forrer, *Provinzeinteilung*, 56f.). The Esarhaddon treaty with Ba'al probably reflects the mutually beneficial relations established between Tyre and Assyria, after Assyria's victory over Abdimilkutti of Sidon (cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27, ep. 5, 15-19) in *ca.* 677 B.C.E. See discussion in Weidner, AfO 8 (1932-33), 33f. Ba'al later joined Egypt in revolt and was conquered in 671 B.C.E.

[31] Deller and Parpola, "Ein Vertrag Assurbanipals mit dem arabischen Stamm Qedar,"

Support for the suggestion of wide Assyrian use of local gods in *adū* comes from the letter of one Kabtia to Ashurbanipal. Kabtia, reporting from the Babylonian front, explains his failure to take the oath of loyalty to the king at the designated time; others, in the meanwhile, were to proceed according to schedule:

sābē mārēšunu u aššātīšunu adi ilānīšunu ana libbi adē ša šarri bēlīya lirbū[32]

The men, their sons and their wives, along with their gods, should take the oaths of loyalty of the king, my lord.

Who exactly these people are—whether families of Nippur and Uruk,[33] from the district of Rashu,[34] or soldiers within the Assyrian army[35]—is unclear. At any rate, the expression "their gods" suggests non-Assyrian personal deities.[36] Are we to suppose that they were witnesses to the oaths, whose names were actually inscribed in the documents presented to both parties? Or was their mere presence sufficient to add their sanction to the solemnizing of the *adū*? We are not told whether their participation was freely accepted or imposed by Assyrian authorities. But one thing emerges clearly: foreign gods have a role in the *adū* in all areas of Assyrian domination, irrespective of geographic considerations,[37] and in vassal states the vassal's gods were formally invoked.

This Assyrian resort to a vassal's native gods is unambiguously set forth in the following episode from Sargon's eighth campaign. After a victorious march through eastern Urartu, Sargon rewards his vassal Ullusunu for handsomely receiving the Assyrian host.

ša Ullusunu šarri bēlīšunu paššur takbitti maḫaršu arkussuma eli ša Iranzi abi ālidīšu ušaqqi kussāšu

As for King Ullusunu, their lord, I set a rich table before him. I elevated his throne higher than that of Iranzi, his father and

[32] ABL 202, rev. 10-13.

[33] So A. J. Delattre, PSBA 23 (1901), 335.

[34] Note that Kabtia had just returned from Rashu (cf. Streck, VAB 7, p. 804). If so, the men may have been Elamites, still independent; for the Elamites of Rashu were not subdued until the first Elamite war, when they and their gods were captured (Asb. Rm. V.59ff.).

[35] Pfeiffer, in *State Letters of Assyria* (AOS 6, 1935), 212, translated "soldiers with their . . . ." Induction of skilled units from conquered territories into the Assyrian army is well attested (cf. Lie, *Sargon*, 75; Asb. Rm.VII.5; Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 68, III, 15). This would account for a possible foreign element spoken of in our text. See above, p. 29.

[36] Note the contrast in rev. 5-7 of the foreign gods with *ilānīka*, "your (i.e., the king's) gods."

[37] In passing, we note that in diplomatic correspondence, as well as in contractual agreements, national deities were not slighted. In a letter sent by Esarhaddon to the Elamite king Urtaku, the Elamite god Manzinir is mentioned at the end of a listing of Assyrian gods, all credited with rendering an oracular (?) decision (ABL 918, 9-11; on [d]*Manzinir*, cf. Streck, VAB 7, p. clxviii n. 1). Similarly, Tammaritu, a later Elamite king, greeted the Assyrian Ashurbanipal in the name of the gods of both countries (ABL 1400, obv. 4-5).

šašunu itti nīšē māt Aššur ina paššur bidāti ušēšibšunūti maḫar Aššur u ilāni mātīšunu ikrubū šarrūtī[38]

begetter. They, together with the soldiers of Assyria, I seated at a festive table, and before Ashur and the gods of their country, they blessed my rule.

Present at the state banquet, confirming the solemnity of the occasion and witnessing the reaffirmation of Sargon's rule—herein suggestive of *adū* oath ceremonies—were the Urartian gods, who had been accorded a place of honor beside the imperial Ashur.

Cultic Dues and Services

Though no trace of religious obligation can be found in the *adū* oaths of allegiance, it could be argued that such obligation may have never been formally committed to writing. Assyrian imperial administrators may have, as a matter of course, demanded compliance with Assyrian religious patterns. After all, NA historical inscriptions do refer to the payment of "the tribute of the god Ashur," and the dedication of "Ashur's weapon" in conquered cities. Olmstead, once again, saw these items as evidence of Assyrian religious coercion.

> It is Ashur who commands that the boundary of his land should be extended, the tax and tribute are of the lord Ashur, when the heavy yoke of the king's lordship is placed on newly conquered peoples, it is in reality to the lord Ashur they are made subject, to him they were not submissive, and when subdued they are numbered with those subject before the lord Ashur.[39]

But a re-examination of the available evidence shows that the facts ought to be otherwise construed. Only the populations of those lands permanently annexed to Assyria as provinces experienced partial religious dictation; residents of vassal states were free of any religious obligations toward their Assyrian master.

Provincial Territories.—The treatment of Samaria illustrates the administrative policies in provincial territories. The defeat of Israel in 722 B.C.E. by Shalmaneser V was followed, two years later, by Sargon's reconquest of its rebellious capital, Samaria.[40] It was Sargon who annexed Samaria to Assyria and made it the capital of a newly created province. Sargon's policies in Samaria can be wholly reconstructed from several inscriptions, each of which contains excerpts from a larger account no longer extant.[41]

[38] TCL 3, 63-64.

[39] *Assyria*, p. 614.

[40] On this dating and other details of Samaria's fall, See Tadmor, JCS 12 (1958), 37-38; and our discussion below, pp. 99f.

[41] The following is based upon Lie, *Sargon*, 15-17; Gadd, *Iraq* 16 (1954), 179, col. IV 35-36; and Winckler, *Sargon*, 100.24 (cf. the partial text reconstructed by Tadmor, JCS 12 [1958], 33-35). The words *sittatīšunu* to *Samerina* are represented in full only in the Gadd Prism. This same prism records variant statistics: 27,280 captives; 200

27,290 *nišē āšib libbīšu ašlula* 50 *narkabāti kiṣir šarrūtīya ina libbīšunu akṣurma / sittatīšunu ina qereb māt Aššur ušaṣbit āl Samerina / utīrma eli ša pāna ušēme nišē mātāti kišitti qātēya ina libbi ušērib* LÚ *šūt rēšīya* LÚ *šaknu elīšun aškunma biltu maddattu kī ša Aššurī ēmidsunūti[ma u] / inūšunu ušaḫiz /*

27,290 inhabitants, who live there, I took captive. From among them, I organized 50 chariots as a royal unit, and the rest of them I resettled within Assyria. The city of Samaria, I rebuilt and made it larger than before; and brought people there from the lands which I had conquered. I placed my functionary as *šaknu*[42] over them, and imposed tax and tribute upon them, just as if they were Assyrian. I also had them trained in proper conduct.[43]

This text records the standard procedure for reorganizing a territory into a province. The native population was deported to distant cities and replaced with captives from other areas of the empire.[44] The new residents of Samaria were regarded in every way as Assyrian; the phrase used to describe this status is in no way unique to this account:

kī ša Aššurī . . . ēmidsunūti[45]
I imposed upon them . . . just as if they were Assyrian.

In other inscriptions a parallel expression interchanges with this one with no change in meaning:

itti nišē māt Aššur amnušunūti[46]
I counted them with the people of Assyria.

Considering the diverse backgrounds of the new provincials, governmental concern was directed toward training them in "proper conduct." The particulars

chariots impressed into royal service (IV 31-33). The final two words are represented only in the Winckler Prunkinschrift.

[42] The term *šaknu* has been left untranslated, due to difficulty in determining the exact function of this official within the Assyrian hierarchy. The most recent treatment is by R. A. Henshaw, "The Office of *Šaknu* in Neo-Assyrian Times," JAOS 87 (1967), 517-24; JAOS 88 (1968), 461-82.

[43] *Inu* is translated by CAD I, 152 as "knowledge, technical lore," and AHw 383 as "Berufsarbeit." But such translations would involve the supposition of an Assyrian program of job-retraining of deportees, not at all the intent of Sargon's order. We learn from the Dūr-Sharruken text (cf. n. 49) that the masters of *inu* instruct in matters of behavior becoming to Assyrian citizens. Cf. renditions of Landsberger, *City Invincible*, ed. by Kraeling and Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 177, "culture, erudition," and Oppenheim in ANET, p. 285 (and n. 1), "(social) positions."

[44] Saggs (*Iraq* 18 [1956], 55) calls attention to the concern evidenced by the Assyrian bureaucracy for the needs of relocated populations, so as to forestall the confusion of dislodgement. Cf. texts ND.2449, 2643, and 2725 published by Saggs, *ibid.*, pp. 40-43; and *Greatness*, pp. 245f. 2 Kgs 17.6, 24 preserves record of Samaria transfers. See below, p. 101 n. 23.

[45] E.g., Lie, *Sargon*, 329-330.

[46] Citations in AHw 604, *s.v. manū*.

of such behavior are specified more fully in a similar account relating the settlement of Dūr-Sharruken.

mārē Aššur mūdūte ini kalama ana šūḫuz ṣibitte palāḫ ili u šarri aklī u šāpirī uma"iršunūti[49]

I commissioned natives of Assyria, as overseers and supervisors,[47] versed in all lore, to teach them correct behavior[48] — to revere god and king.

For the citizens of Assyria, to revere god and king meant bearing the burden of taxation for both royal and temple needs. Foreign provincial residents were no different. Hence, Sargon claims, e.g.,

nīr dAššur bēlīya ēmidsunūti[50]
I imposed the yoke of Ashur, my lord, upon them.

nīr bēlūtīya ēmidsunūti[51]
I imposed my royal yoke upon them.

The obligations incumbent upon the bearers of the yokes of Ashur and the king are sometimes specified:

ilku tupšikku kī ša Aššurī ēmidsunūti[52]
I imposed feudal duties[53] and corvée upon them as if they were Assyrian.

But corvée, even if termed "Ashur's yoke" and used to construct Assyrian temples and shrines,[54] is hardly equivalent to coercion of provincials to adopt Assyrian cults.

[47] The translation of this passage follows CAD A 1, 278, rather than the earlier CAD I, 152.

[48] On *ṣibittu*, see CAD Ṣ, 157. J. J. Finkelstein *apud* Shalom Paul (JBL 88 [1969], 73 n. 3) derives *ṣ.* from *ṣabātu*, "to teach" (CAD Ṣ, 34 *s.v. ussu*) and compares its semantic parallel *iḫzu-abāzu* (CAD A 1, 180f.; I, 47).

[49] Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargon's* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1883), 12.74.

[50] AHw, 794a, *s.v. nīru*; CAD A 1, 65, *s.v. abšanu*.

[51] *Ibid.* Since the usual expression is "I imposed my royal yoke upon them," Oppenheim (ANET, p. 285 n. 9) takes the "yoke of Ashur" to refer to a "special status of Assyrian" granted by Sargon to the settlers of Carchemish. But the phrase "yoke of Ashur" is only one of several interchangeable phrases used to describe the strength, valor and armies of the god and the king alike. E.g., *ummānāt dAššur*, "the troops of Ashur" (Lie, *Sargon*, 62; 200) and *mundaḫṣīya*, "my warriors" (Lie, *Sargon*, p. 54, 8; 408); *kakki dAššur*, "weapon of Ashur" (Lie, *Sargon*, 122) and *kakkēya dannūti*, "my mighty weapons" (Lie, *Sargon*, 280, p. 50, 13; 52, 6; 380). Moreover, the "yoke of Ashur" is imposed on cities other than Carchemish, without apparent distinction (cf. Lie, *Sargon*, 20; 189; p. 73, V 4, 13). We conclude that all colonists were treated alike, regardless of where they originated. K. Tallqvist, *Der Assyrische Gott* (StOr 4/3, 1932), p. 96, shows how the king and the god are equated in war contexts.

[52] E.g., TCL 3, 410; Lie, *Sargon*, 204; 205. See CAD E, 142f.

[53] Cf. CAD I, 73ff.; AHw, 371f.

[54] E.g., Lie, *Sargon*, p. 74, 8-11.

Out of the entire corpus of NA historical inscriptions, only three texts explicitly tell of cultic imposts:

(1) After capturing Ḫirimmu, on the Assyro-Babylonian border, Sennacherib specifies:

nagû šuātu ana eššūti aṣbat ištēn alpi 10 immerē 10 imēr karāna 20 imēr suluppī rēšētēšu ana ginê ilāni māt Aššur bēlēya ukīn dārišam[55]

I reorganized that district, and established one ox, ten sheep, ten homers of wine, twenty homers of its choicest dates as regular offerings for the gods of Assyria, my lords, for all times.

(2) Having subdued the Shamash-shum-ukin-led rebellion, Ashurbanipal reimposed upon Babylon

sattukkī ginê rēšūti ^{d}Aššur u ^{d}Ninlil u ilāni māt Aššur[56]

the finest regular sacrificial offerings for Ashur, Ninlil, and the gods of Assyria.

(3) Esarhaddon's reorganization and annexation of Egypt concludes with the statement:

sattukkī ginū ana Aššur u ilāni rabūti bēlēya ukīn dāri(-šam)[57]

I established regular sacrificial offerings for Ashur and the great gods, my lords, for all times.

Payments probably varied from area to area; the Ḫirimmu schedule may have been a daily due,[58] while in Egypt there is reason to believe that demands were more elaborate.[59] The central authorities in Nineveh are known to have kept watch over these provincial incomes; administrative documents in the Harper collection, dated to Esarhaddon, report no less than sixteen district governors, including two from provinces on the north Syrian coast, as being in arrears in remittance of sacrificial dues.[60]

The paucity of the sources, however, leaves several key questions unanswerable. We cannot tell whether all or part of the cultic dues were transferred to es-

[55] *OIP* 2, 55.59.

[56] Asb. Rm.IV.106-107.

[57] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 65, rev. 48-49. This same phraseology is used in the summary, Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 57, obv. 15-16, without an identifiable referent.

[58] Cf. H. Tadmor, "Temple City and Royal City in Babylonia and Assyria" [Hebrew], in *City and Community* (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1968), p. 185.

[59] See ANET, pp. 293-294 for suggested list of dues imposed on Egypt; cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 80.

[60] I.e., *ginê ša Aššur*, ABL 43, obv. 5, 24-25. (Collated text is now available in AOAT 5/1, no. 309.) Cf. ABL 724, 5-8. ABL 532 notes the non-delivery of the *ḫamussu*-tax from Barḫalza, occasioning interruption in the Ashur temple ritual.

Van Driel is of the opinion that these payments were contributions expected of Assyrian high officialdom, whether "on account of the offices that these persons were holding, or on account of the fact that they were possessors of vast estates in their own right." See his *Cult of Assur* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969), pp. 189f.

tablished Assyrian sanctuaries or if they were rendered at new cult places founded in the provinces.[61] Were payments made directly to cult installations, earmarked as their perquisites, or disbursed from general revenues as a permanent draft on local treasuries?[62] In all, the actual role required of provincial residents in Assyrian cults is unspecified, save perhaps what is inferable from the suggestive presence of "Ashur's weapon" in the province center.

To concretize the induction of new populations into Assyrian citizenship, the *kakki ^{d}Aššur*, "the weapon of Ashur," was erected in the province center. There seems little question that the weapon was the official military emblem of Assyria. The palace reliefs show it to have been present in the army camp during campaigns.[63] It was located beside the altar table upon which sacrificial meals were laid out.[64] Its form was that of a pointed lance topped by the symbolic representation of Ashur,[65] and is styled a *mulmullu parzilli*, "iron(-tipped) arrow,"[66] or perhaps even a *patar parzilli*, "iron dagger."[66a]

As the symbol of Ashur, the weapon is known to have been set up only in territories reorganized into Assyrian provinces by Tiglath-pileser III,[67] Sargon,[68] and Sennacherib.[69] During the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, on the other hand, scribes limited mention of the weapon to its portrayal as the effective agent in battle, leading both monarchs to victory,[70] thus neglecting, for example, to tell whether the weapon was deposited in Egypt after the final conquest of that country by Esarhaddon.

[61] The opening lines of Esarhaddon's Samal text (Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 65, obv. 18-27), which seem to bear on this problem, are too fragmentary to be of help.

[62] Sargon appears to have levied direct payments upon the subdued Aramaean tribes in the Gambulu region of Babylonia for the upkeep of Marduk and Nabu: *ṣibit alpēšunu ṣēnīšunu ana ^{d}Bēl (u) mār ^{d}Bēl ukīn šattišam* (Lie, *Sargon*, 331-332), "I established a tax on their cattle and flocks for Bel (and) the son of Bel annually." But in this instance, the levy was for local Babylonian, not Assyrian, cult needs. (Some time later, an Assyrian governor in Babylonia is known to have exacted a *ṣibtu*-tax on flocks consecrated to Marduk. See ABL 464, rev. 1ff.)

[63] See Barnett and Falkner, *Sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III*, plate LX; Paterson, *Palace of Sinacherib*, plates 38, 76, 85, 95; Botta, *Monument de Ninive* 2 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849), plate 146. See figure 1. Inscription reads: *ušmanu ša ^{m}LUGAL.[GI.NA]* "Camp of Sargon."

[64] ANEP, 625.

[65] See fig. 2 and other materials in F. Sarre, *Klio* 3 (1903), 333ff.; E. D. VanBuren, *Symbols of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamian Art* (AnOr 23, 1945), 162-65. On the winged disk occasionally associated with Ashur, cf. H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 66f.

[66] Compare Rost, *Tigl. III*, 160-61 and Thontafel, obv. 36.

[66a] Cf. ABL 292, 6; 350, rev. 6. E. Salonen, StOr 33 (1965), pp. 49-55, cites several passages in which *patru* might be better rendered "a dagger-shaped knife/sword;" see now, AHw 848, *s.v. patru*.

[67] Rost, *Tigl. III*, 10, 22 [180]; Thontafel, obv. 36, 44.

[68] Lie, *Sargon*, 94, 99.

[69] *OIP* 2, 62:89-91.

[70] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 68, I, 32; Asb. Rm.II.20-21; VI.53ff. VII.119ff.; IX.90ff.

Ashur's weapon may have been more than an "outward sign of political dominion."[71] The iron arrow erected in the Median district of Bahiannu was inscribed, noted Tiglath-pileser III, with the tale of *lītat* ^{d}*Aššur bēlīya* "the victories of Ashur, my lord."[71a] Sparse statements in Sargon's annals allude indeed to the weapon's religious significance, but only in general terms.

ilāni alikūt maḫrīya ina qerbīšu ušēšibma[72]
The gods, who march in front of me, I settled in it (i.e., Kishesim).

kakke ^{d}*Aššur bēlīya ana ilūtīšun ešk*[*un*][73]
The weapon of Ashur, my lord, I established as their god (i.e., in Ḫarḫar).

More information is available from older texts. As a divine emblem, the *patrum ša Aššur*, "the dagger of Ashur," is known to have been used in legal contexts in the Old Assyrian period. Assyrian colonists in Anatolia gave testimony, undertook obligations, dispensed judgments, and sealed documents in the presence of this weapon.[74] A *kakki ša Aššur*, also mentioned in the OA texts, was resorted to in ordeals. The defendant seems to have been required to "lift" or "draw out" the weapon of the god from its sheath — the culprit being unable to do so because of divine refusal to cooperate.[75] In these ordeal contexts the *kakki ša Aššur* is mentioned along with other divine symbols, the *patrum ša Aššur*, and the *šugarrium ša Aššur*, "the spear (?) of Ashur."[76]

The use of weapons in OA ordeals is suggestive for the NA period. Oppenheim has identified several ordeals in the Harper correspondence involving the "lifting of the *kalappu*-weapon."[77] Furthermore, a deified *kalappu* (^{d}*kalappu*) and a deified *kakku* (^{d}*kakku*) were among twelve other gods who would accompany the NA king to the Dagan temple during sacrificial rituals.[78]

Since these weapons played a part in the legal and cultic life of the NA period,

[71] So, Meissner, BuA 1, p. 141.

[71a] His MA predecessor, Tiglath-pileser I, had made use of an engraved bronze bolt (*birqi siparri*) to warn against rebuilding and resettling a site consigned to permanent desolation. See AKA, 79, 6.15-21.

[72] Lie, *Sargon*, 94. The variant in Sargon's Iranian stele reads:
[ ] ^{d}*Ištar bēlīya alikūt pānīya u*[ ] *ina qerbīšu ušarme*
[ ] Ishtar, my lords who march before me, [ ] I deposited within it.
See Levine, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran*, p. 38, line 39.

[73] Lie, *Sargon*, 99.

[74] See H. Hirsch, *Altassyrische Religion*, AfO Beiheft 13/14 (1961) 64-65. Use of divine weapons in legal proceedings during the Old Babylonian period can be compared in Walther, LSS 6/4-6, 192ff.; and R. Harris, "The Journey of the Divine Weapon," AS 16, 217-224.

[75] Oppenheim, "Lexikalische Untersuchungen zu den 'Kappadokischen' Briefen," AfO 12 (1937-39), 342-46.

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] Oppenheim, "Deux notes de lexicographie accadienne," Or 9 (1940), 219-21; Deller, Or 32 (1963), 474.

[78] Cf. Ebeling, "Kultische Texte aus Assur," Or 21 (1952), 139, 24; AHw 424a.

their display in new provinces probably served as more than just a reminder of reverence due Assyrian gods; a cult in their honor was likely instituted.[79] Once again, however, the role demanded of provincials in such a cult remains unknown.

At the same time, this installation of Assyrian cults within the provinces did not preclude the continued practice of local, native cults. Although outright statements to this effect are unavailable in the extant NA corpus, we may infer that such a policy was in force by juxtaposing two Sargonid texts discussed earlier. Sargon's postconquest dealings in the Ḫarḫar region of Media (*ca.* 716 B.C.E.) are described both in his annals and on the newly recovered Iranian stele. The annals report the establishment "of the weapon of Ashur, my lord, as their god" (see above, n. 73). The stele, at this point, omits all mention of Ashur's weapon, substituting instead a report of Assyria's rebuilding of temples and the return of Ḫarḫarite gods to their shrines (see above, p. 38, n. 101). While the reason for these disparate historical entries is unclear, their juxaposition warrants the conclusion that the introduction of imperial cults into the provinces in no way supplanted local cults. Indeed, Sargon's action abetted their continued observance.

Vassal States. — Assyrian treatment of independent vassal states was markedly different from that of the provinces. Such states were able to maintain a certain autonomy, although usually a pro-Assyrian force was in control. The circumspect ruler prevented the destruction and take-over of his homeland by appearing at the Assyrian court, along with other tribute-bearers, to proclaim his allegiance publicly. Tribute payments included fixed sums (*biltu u maddattu*),[80] occasion-

[79] K. Galling, *Der Altar in den Kulturen des alten Orient: Eine archäologische Studie* (Berlin: Curtius, 1925), p. 41, finds a cult honoring these weapons "easy to understand," but presents no evidence for one. He seems to follow H. Schäfer, "Assyrische und ägyptische Feldzeichen," *Klio* 6 (1906), 396ff., who paralleled Assyrian pictoral material to late Roman practice. On Roman standard worship, see, C. H. Kraeling, "The Episode of the Roman Standards at Jerusalem," *HTR* 35 (1942), 263-90.

I have left out of consideration the fragmentary passage in the Tiglath-pileser III Prism III R 10, no. 2, 10-11, because the references are insufficiently clear. The text, partially restored by ND. 4301 + 4305 (=*Iraq* 18 [1956], pl. 23, rev. 14′) and ND. 400 (=*Iraq* 13 [1951], pl. 11, 16), reads:

[*ṣalam ilāni rabūti bēlī*]*ya u ṣalam šarrūtīya* [*ša ḫurāṣi . . . ēp*]*uš ina qereb ekal ša āl ḫa*[*zutu . . .*] *x ilānīšunu amnūma*	[the image of the great gods,] my [lords] and my royal image [of gold . . . I ma]de, and in the palace of Ga[za . . .] x their gods, I appointed.

A divine symbol of some sort appointed as/with the gods of Gaza would not be out of place, since there is some suggestion that provincial status (?) may have been granted the city. Note that ND. 400, 18 reads: [*itti nīšē māt*] *Aššur amnu*. Cf. the remarks of Wiseman, *Iraq* 13 (1951), 22.

[80] A full treatment of tribute collection and distribution procedures is found in Wm. J. Martin, *Tribut und Tributleistungen bei den Assyrern*, (StOr 8/1, 1936). A convenient review of all taxes payable to Assyria is given by Tadmor in "Temple City," pp. 185-88 (see above, p. 53).

ally enhanced by special gifts in honor of state events (*tāmartu/nāmurtu, igisē*).[81] At times, vassal states had to supply a quota of men for the Assyrian army during campaigns in their region. In sum, wholly political demands were their lot.

NA sources tell of no religious impositions made upon vassals — neither of sacrificial dues nor of religious symbols erected in their territories. It is conceivable, however, that in the interest of good relations with the Assyrian suzerain, a vassal's occasional gifts might have included donations to the suzerain's gods. An interesting glimpse into the importance attached to religious gifts is found in ABL 268, a report by an official of Ashurbanipal. He has intercepted

3 *sīsē pišūti . . . u tillīšunu ša kaspi [ina] muḫḫi siparri munē'e [ša] tilli šaṭir [ištu ? Ta]mmariti [x]-il teppir šar māt Elamti [a]na dIštar Uruk*[85]

three white horses . . . and their silver trappings.[82] On the bronze "turner"[83] of the trappings was written: [From] Tammaritu [. . .] the *teppir*-official[84] of the king of Elam to Ishtar of Uruk.

Delivery of the horses sent by enemy Elamites to the goddess of Uruk was delayed, pending further instructions from Nineveh. Gifts to a god other than one's own apparently carried political overtones, and so the careful border guard intercepted the offensive horses and their trappings. Gifts to Assyria's gods, on the other hand, must have been warmly welcomed. But no specific demands for such gifts are known to have been made.

Vassal states were not without their symbolic reminders of Assyrian rule. In every land through which the Assyrian army marched, steles were set up to mark the limits of Assyrian domination.[86] The ubiquitous stele was not an innovation of Assyria, but was widely used by her to boast of victories and conquests.

It has been claimed that in the NA empire the stele belonged to the cult of a deified king.[87] In the palaces and temples of defeated states steles were erected, and the residents "commanded to worship the royal image . . . Ashur had ordered . . . set up 'as a sign of victory and might.'"[88]

[81] On *tāmartu/nāmurtu*, special gifts sent to curry favor with the overlord, see Martin, *Tribut* p. 24; and cf. AHw 730.

[82] On *illu*, see Borger, *Asarhaddon*, p. 59 n. 43, and the works cited.

[83] Cf. AHw 673a. Our translation follows that of Oppenheim in *Letters from Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 157.

[84] Oppenheim reads: "[Property (?) of] Tammariti, [a gift] of the *teppir*-official." On the Elamite *teppir*, see the remarks of Sollberger, *JCS* 22 (1968), 32, and the references cited there. Older translations parsed *ilteppir* as a I/3 of *šapāru*, "to send." But *šapāru* does not otherwise exhibit this tendency towards vowel harmony. Cf. Ylvisaker, *Zur Babylonischen und Assyrischen Grammatik*, LSS 5/6 (1912), p. 33, for examples, and GAG, 9f.

[85] ABL 268, obv. 13-rev. 1.

[86] Meissner, BuA 1, p. 141, spoke of both "Ashur's weapon" and the stele "as outward signs of dominion." He was followed by Lie, *Sargon*, p. 17 n. 8, and Schrade, *Verborgene Gott*, p. 76. But since the weapon did convey religious significance (cf. above, pp. 53-55), such broad statements must be qualified.

[87] See Olmstead, American Political Science Review 12 (1918), 67-72.

[88] Olmstead, *Assyria*, p. 177.

At first glance, the evidence supporting this view seems incontrovertible. Olmstead comments at some length on the activity depicted upon the engraved bronze gates of Balawat (reproduced in ANEP 364):

> A sculptor works in the water, mallet on chisel, at a representation of the king which is complete save that the surrounding cartouche is still to be incised. So perfect is the royal figure that an official already has taken his position on a platform erected among the rocks and adores his master's effigy. Other Assyrians lead up a ram for the sacrifices and drag on his back a reluctant bull destined to meet the same end.[89]

Furthermore, when excavations at Nimrud recovered the now famous stele of Ashurnasirpal, before it stood a "low triangular altar resting on lions feet and with a circular hollowed top. 'We are in the presence of the central fact of the empire, the worship of the deified ruler.'"[90]

Additional data to support this view were supplied by mid-seventh century B.C.E. documents from the province of Guzana (Tell-Halaf), which show that private oaths were sometimes taken before the gods and the *dṣalam šarri*, "the statue of the king," to which divine honor was due.[91] Ungnad noted that personal names of the type *Ṣalam-šarri-iqbi* "can only be translated 'the king's image has ordered,'" obviously crediting the statue with oracular powers.[92]

Hayim Tadmor has sought to circumscribe the extent to which worship of steles was practiced. In his discussion of Tiglath-pileser III's Philistine campaigns, he wrote:

> The clearest sign of enslavement was the royal Assyrian cult which was introduced there, i.e., the service of the stele of the king of Assyria in the central shrine of Gaza. Only those vassal states which were not annexed to Assyria were forced to practice this cult, whereas the people of Assyria proper and residents of Assyrian provinces were absolved from it.[93]

But these commonly held views have not met with universal acceptance, and with good reason. Kurt Galling raised several objections. His typological study of the altars found in proximity to steles — both those found *in situ* and those represented on palace reliefs — differentiated at least two distinct architectural styles: (1) peaked incense (?) altars, and (2) round table altars.[94] Peaked altars are usually shown stationed at temple gateways and entrances; their location

[89] Olmstead, *Assyria*, p. 115.

[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104; cf. also p. 87. See figure 3 for Layard's record of the original find-site of the stele and altar. Cf. also Layard, *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh* (London, 1853), pl. 4.

[91] A. Ungnad, AfO Beiheft 6 (1940) 63 n. 5.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 58 n. 21.

[93] H. Tadmor, "The Assyrian Campaigns to Philistia" *in Military History of the Land of Israel in Biblical Times* [Hebrew], ed. by J. Liver (Jerusalem: Maarachoth, 1964), p. 264.

[94] Galling, *Altar*, p. 45.

documentary evidence cited by Ungnad from the Guzana province is enough to undermine Tadmor's suggestion that only nonannexed vassal territories were forced to practice the royal cult.

In sum, we note that steles were placed throughout the Assyrian realm, as well as exported to vassal territories. They served to mark the farthest reaches of Assyrian influence and reminded all onlookers of the political loyalties expected of them. No textual statements are available which tell of demands for their worship or describe ritual instituted upon their erection. Within Assyria and its provinces the steles did take on a quasi-religious significance. But, again, this is far from deification or imposition of a cult of the king. The concluding lines of Sargon's Cyprus stele favor this interpretation. The words of this formulaic text, directing future rededication of the stele, are not wholly unique; they do, however, set forth the stele's unmistakable purpose — glorification of the gods, to whom all honor was due:

[ina ar]kat ūmi rubu arkū	In the future, when a later prince comes
[musarā]ya limurma liltasi	upon my [inscription], let him read it.
[. . .] ilāni rabūti litta''idma	Let him praise the [. . .] of the great gods.
[šamni] lipšuš niqā liqqi[105]	Let him anoint it, and offer a sacrifice.

Conclusions

Our re-examination of Assyrian imperial organization finds that we must reject conventional statements which view "the whole organization centered around the worship of Ashur, the deified state and the reigning king[106] fanatically imposing active worship of Assyrian gods upon defeated populations.[107] Assyria distinguished between territories annexed as provinces directly under her control and vassal lands under native rule. The latter were free of any cultic obligations toward their master. Only within annexed provinces was the cult of Ashur and the great gods seemingly required, inasmuch as their residents were counted as Assyrian citizens. But considering the inconclusiveness of Assyrian historical sources, we hesitate to specify those rituals imposed upon provincials beyond the rendering of taxes to palace and temple; the only sure sign of an

Frankfort's full discussion in *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 295-312.

[105] VAS 1, rev. 59-61. At the end, CAD Š, 83 reads "(to it)." But even if the sacrifices were offered "to the stele" (an unexampled notion), they seem clearly directed to the gods whose valor is praised, not to the king. Note that on the Sargon stele from Asharné (RA 30 [1933], 55), the concluding formula, similar to the one we have quoted, continues: *[nī]qā liqqi* ^{d}*Aššur*. . . Thureau-Dangin's suggested rendition was: "qu'il offre un sa[crifice]: Assur [exancera sa prière.]" Cf. the Sennacherib inscriptions, OIP 2, 147.35 and 148.26, which read: ^{d}*Aššur* (*u* ^{d}*Ištar*) *ikribīšu išemmi*.

[106] A. T. Olmstead, "Oriental Imperialism," American Historical Review 23 (1917-18), 758.

[107] So, Sidney Smith, CAH 3, p. 91.

Assyrian cult in the provinces is the oft-mentioned installation of "Ashur's weapon."

In the final analysis, Landsberger's suspicion may prove correct: Assyria "never forced conquered peoples to revere Ashur," but remained content to show Ashur's superiority to their own gods.[108]

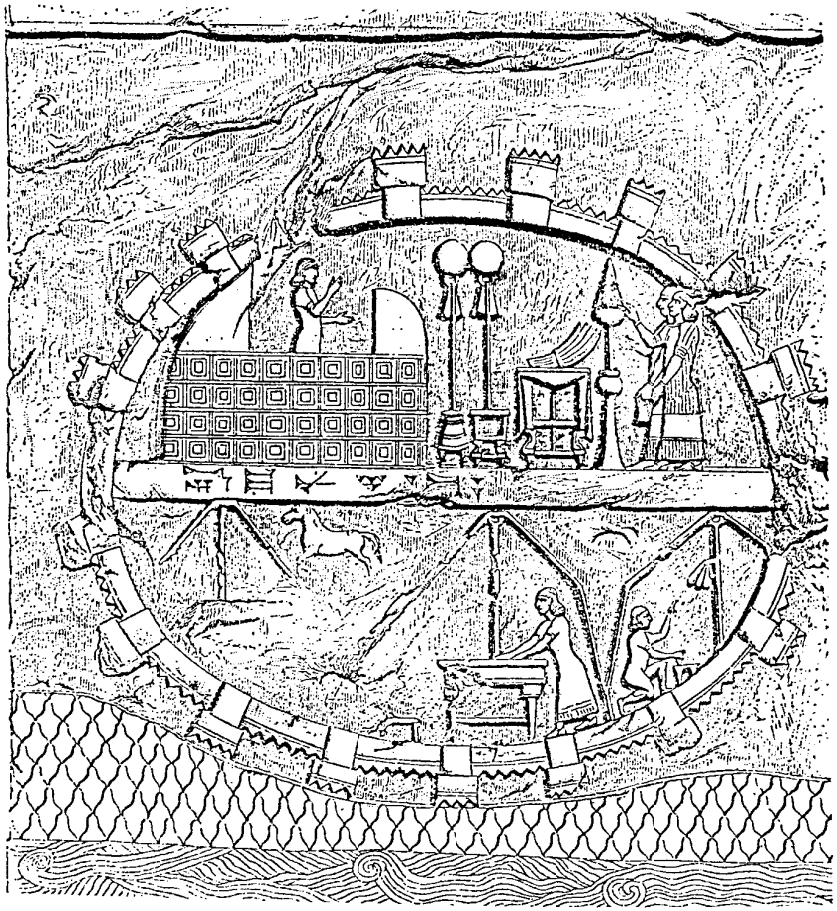

FIG. 1 Assyrian Military Camp

(See page 53)

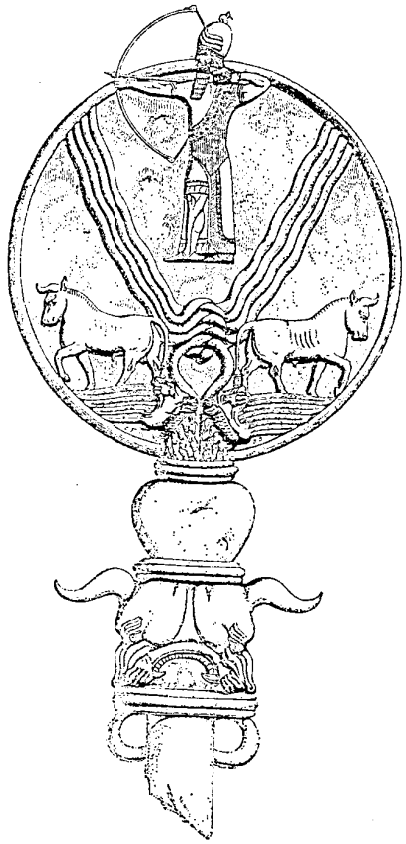

FIG. 2 "Ashur's weapon"

(See page 53)

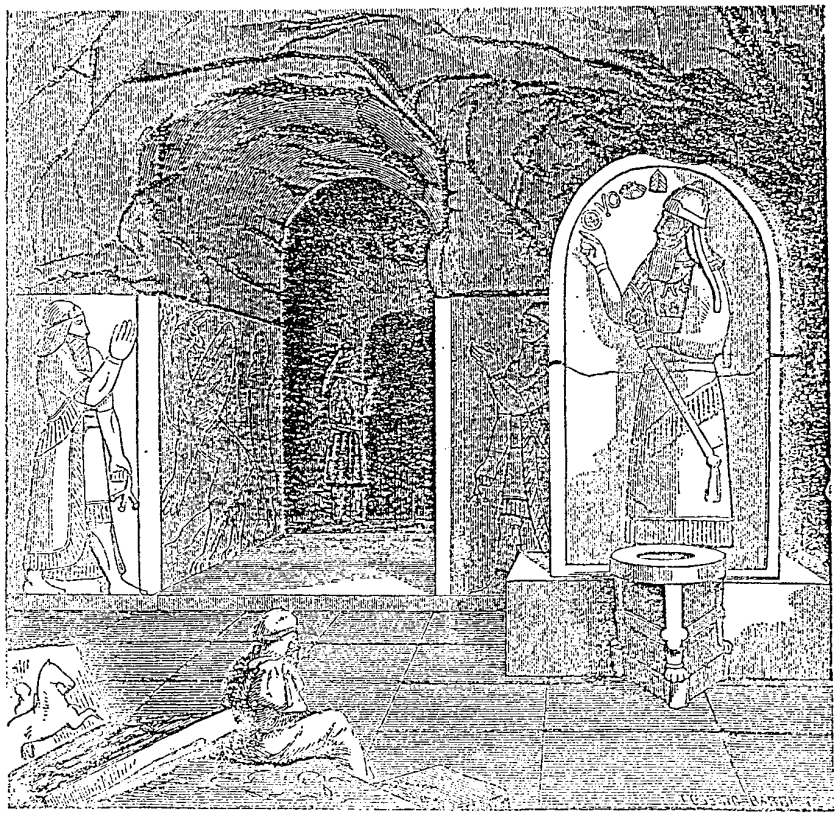

FIG. 3 Stele of Ashurnasirpal and altar at Calah

(See page 57)

4. JUDAH IN THE ORBIT OF ASSYRIA

HAVING established that Assyrian administrative policies distinguished between provincial and vassal territories, we are now prepared to re-examine the nature and source of those religious innovations within Judah and Israel often seen as impositions of Assyrian imperialism. Inasmuch as political status within the empire determined the degree of subserviance to the Assyrian master, we begin by tracing Judah's political history as currently reconstructable from biblical and Assyrian sources.

Judah — an Autonomous Vassal State

Throughout the entire century of Assyrian domination of Syria-Palestine (*ca.* 740-640 B.C.E.), Judah succeeded in retaining its nominal independence by consistently submitting to the political will of Assyria. It was never annexed to the empire, and so was spared the disastrous fate of northern Israel.

As early as 738, following his defeat at the head of the twelve-state Syrian coalition, Azaryahu of Judah recognized Assyrian suzerainty.[1] His grandson, Ahaz, later undertook tribute payments as vassal of Tiglath-pileser III, frightened, it seems, by the immediate presence of Assyrian forces engaged in their first Philistian campaign (734).[2] Despite direct military pressure to join the "Syro-

[1] Tadmor, "Azriyau of Yaudi," SH 8 (1961), 270f., suspects that the rout of Judah's armies probably ended with the payment of a separate war indemnity, thus explaining the absence of Judah from the list of tributary states in the Tiglath-pileser III annals.

[2] See M. Noth, *History*, pp. 258-59; Cf. Tadmor, "Azriyau," p. 265, and E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 130. Judah's weak military position, as evidenced by the attacks of Philistines and Edomites (cf. 2 Chr 28.16-18; 2 Kgs 16.6 [read according to the text as emended by Montgomery, *Kings*, pp. 458 and 462]), accounts for the ready acceptance by Ahaz of Assyrian authority. Cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns," pp. 263f. The letter ND. 2773 (=Saggs, *Iraq* 17 [1955], 131-33 and 151f.) may describe this period of disturbance in Trans-Jordan (?) prior to the Assyrian arrival. See the discussion of Hallo, Bib Arch *Reader* 2, p. 172; and B. Mazar, IEJ 7 (1957), 237f.

Just how close to Judah Assyria moved is shown by the Nimrud relief depicting the capture of Gezer, taken by Tiglath-pileser "to secure his flank while he moved south into Philistia." See H. D. Lance, BibArch 30 (1967), 44; cf. Hallo, BibArch *Reader* 2, p. 172; Kallai, VT 8 (1958), 153 n. 3; and the objections of W. F. Albright, BASOR 92 (1943), 17 n. 6. Tadmor, BibArch 29 (1966), 89, would date this event to the close of the 733/32 B.C.E. campaigns. The most recent publication of the Gezer relief is in Barnett and Falkner, *Sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III*, pl. LXII, and p. 24.

Ephramite" League in rebellion,[3] Ahaz remained loyal to Assyria.[4] In 732 he personally greeted the victorious Tiglath-pileser III after the Assyrian conquest of Damascus.[5]

This posture of submissiveness continued into the reign of the succeeding king, Hezekiah; the results of the summary treatment of Samaria at the hands of Sargon (720 B.C.E.) were apparently not lost on Jerusalem.[6] But by 712 Hezekiah became involved in rebellion against Sargon at the side of Ashdod. After the loss of the border fortress, Azekah, "Judah averted by some means the central Assyrian attack,"[7] resuming its vassal status.[8] A letter recently recovered at Nimrud notes the receipt of horses as part of the tribute from the subdued principals in this rebellion.[9]

Upon the death of Sargon, Hezekiah organized the southern Palestinian states in further revolt, occasioning a most serious threat to Judah's territorial integrity. In a single campaign (701 B.C.E.) Sennacherib stripped Judah of "46 walled cities and countless small towns in their environs"[10] to force its complete surrender. Apparently willing to accede to the continued autonomy of vassal Judah, Assyria withdrew.[11] The lost cities were annexed to Philistia,[12] and

[3] See 2 Kgs 16.5; Isa 7.1, 5-6. On the basis of ND. 4301 + 4305 (=*Iraq* 18 [1956], pl. XXII), rev. 5′, it seems that Hiram of Tyre joined with Rezin and Pekah in this anti-Assyrian alliance. Cf. Tadmor, "Azriyau," pp. 264f. n. *g*.

[4] See 2 Kgs 16.7-9. The Ahaz declaration: "I am your vassal, your son" disassociated Judah from the rebel cause, and reminded Assyria of its obligation to protect loyal vassals (cf. above, p. 44). On the formula of submission, see Loewenstamm, *Lĕšonénu* 34 (1969), 148.

[5] 2 Kgs 16:10. The mention of Ahaz (*Iauḫazi*) among Assyria's vassals in the building inscription II R 67 (= Rost, *Tigl. III*, pp. 54ff.; ANET 282) is associated by Noth (*History*, p. 261) with the events of 732 B.C.E., by Tadmor ("Campaigns," p. 264) with those of 734 B.C.E. Tadmor's dating is to be preferred. The absence of Samaria, along with the continued reference to Mitinti of Ashkelon, would indeed be peculiar in a list prepared after the 732 B.C.E. victories.

[6] See Nimrud Inscription (= Winckler, *Sargon*, 168.8, *mušakniš māt Iaudi ša ašaršu rūqu*, "(He, Sargon,) who subjugates far-off Judah." This inscription is dated *ca.* 720 B.C.E. Cf. comment by Tadmor, *JCS* 12 (1958), 38 n. 146.

[7] Tadmor, JCS 12, 83. See his full discussion of the Azekah battle, pp. 80-84. B. Oded holds that Azekah belonged to Ashdod (not Judah) in 712 B.C.E., since it had been occupied during the Philistine penetration reported in 2 Chr 28.18. See *Sefer Breslavi* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1970), 84 n. 19. Resolution of this geographical issue was earlier offered by Kallai, *The Tribes of Israel* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1967), 314-16.

[8] See Nineveh Prism A (= Winckler, *Sargon*, 188) 29-30 and comments by Tadmor, JCS 12, pp. 79ff.

[9] Text ND. 2765 is presented in full in Appendix II.

[10] Cf. 2 Kgs 18.7-8, 13; OIP 2, 32.18ff.

[11] Brevard Childs' monograph, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT 3, 1967), reviews the vast literature which has engulfed historical study of Sennacherib's 701 B.C.E. campaign to Judah (cf. pp. 11-19 and bibliographic citations) and presents a fresh form-critical analysis of the several biblical witnesses.

[12] The recent suggestion by M. Eilat ("On the Political Status of Judah after Sennacherib's Conquest of Lachish" [Hebrew], *Y^ediot* 31 [1967], 140-56) that "an Assyrian governor and garrison" were stationed at Lachish to keep watch over affairs in southern Palestine is untenable. As proof, Eilat cites ABL 218, which mentions a Philistine regiment located at URU *lu-qa-še*. This otherwise unknown town cannot be identified with biblical Lachish, which appears in Assyrian transcription as *la-ki-su* (OIP 2, 156.XXV, 3; cf. Amarna *la-ki-si/ši/ša* - VAB 2, 287, 288, 328, 329 and 335). Besides, the Sennacherib annals clearly state that captured Judahite territory was parcelled out between Ashod, Eqron, Gaza, and Ashkelon (OIP 2, 33.33-34; 70.29). A recollection of this expropriation was found in Ezek 16.26-27, by O. Eissfeldt. See "Ezechiel als Zeuge für Sanheribs Eingriff in Palästina," PJB 27 (1931), 58-66.

Likewise, the presence at Lachish of a large public building patterned on Assyrian blueprints in and of itself proves little concerning the political organization of the city (Aharoni, *Y^ediot* 31 [1967], 80-91; quoted by Eilat, *Y^ediot* 31, p. 145). Cf. A. Alt, "Die Territorialgeschichtliche Bedeutung von Sanheribs Eingriff in Palästina, in *Kleine Schriften* [= KS] *zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* 2 (München: C. H. Beck, 1953), pp. 245-58. On incorporation of native regiments into the Assyrian army, specifically with reference to Lachish, see R. D. Barnett, "The Siege of Lachish," *IEJ* 8 (1958), 161-64.

[13] Cf. 2 Kgs 18.14-16; OIP 2, 33.35-49.

[14] ABL 624. Translation of the text is given in ANET, p. 301. See discussions by R. H. Pfeiffer, JBL 47 (1928), 185-86, and Wm. Martin, *Tribut*, pp. 49-50.

[15] The original skepticism concerning the historicity of the Chronicles' account of Manasseh's imprisonment has now all but been forgotten. Wellhausen considered the verses an invention of the Chronicler, so that Manasseh "does not escape punishment, while on the other hand the length of his reign (55 years) is nevertheless explained" (*Prolegomena*, p. 207). The selfsame evaluation had been advanced earlier by K. H. Graf, "Die Gefangenschaft und Bekehrung Manasse's, 2 Chr. 33," ThStKr 32 (1859), 467-94. Later commentators were less harsh in their judgment: they regarded only the framework story of Manasseh's repentance as fictional; the capture, historical (e.g., Curtis, *Chronicles* [ICC, 1910], p. 498; Myers, *Chronicles* [AB, 1965], p. 199).

What has been left unexplained by these later writers is the absence from Kings of the historical "fact" of Manasseh's revolt and capture. We assume that the editor of Kings omitted from his work any event which might be interpreted as punishment, if only in some small way, of that king blamed for the loss of the kingdom (see 2 Kgs 23.26). Note that mention of Manasseh's building activities at Jerusalem was similarly overlooked (cf. 2 Chr 33.14). For the Chronicler, however, the story of Manasseh's capture confirmed a basic theological premise: each individual was adjudged during his own lifetime. Besides, the Chronicler did not make Manasseh out to be the sole cause of Judah's downfall, as had the editor of Kings before him (cf. 2 Kgs 24.3; 2 Chr 33.17, 23; 36.14-15). Cf. observations of E. L. Ehrlich, "Der Aufenthalt des Königs Manasse in Babylon," TZ 21 (1965), 285f.

Jerusalem alone was left to pay the oppressive war indemnity and the increased annual tribute.[13] A tax record from Nineveh reflects the impoverished conditions which must have prevailed for the next decades: Moab and Ammon delivered sums greater than the "ten minas of silver from the inhabitants of Judah."[14]

Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, ruled over the diminutive Judahite state for a lengthy fifty-five years. Throughout, he remained a loyal subject of Assyria, except for the short and questionable interval of his incarceration. 2 Chr 33.11-13 tells of the capture of Manasseh and his forced appearance before an Assyrian monarch in Babylon.[15] Had the incident been reported in Assyrian annals, it

would have indicated that he had been suspected of active rebellion. But the annals only mention Manasseh as a loyal vassal. He, "Manasseh, king of the city of Judah" (*Menasī šar āl Iaudi*), was among the twenty-two western kings summoned to the court of Esarhaddon to deliver materials for the reconstruction of the royal storehouse at Nineveh.[16] With minor variations in their ranks, these same rulers presented gifts to Ashurbanipal, who then proceeded with their help to conquer Egypt.[17] Neither Assyrian report can be connected with the Chronicles passage, lacking, as they do, any indication of arrest.[18]

Ever since E. Schrader's original suggestion,[19] most writers have found the appropriate occasion for Manasseh's revolt to be the civil war led by Shamash-shum-ukin against Ashurbanipal. The uprising in Babylon reportedly stirred revolt in other territories. With the main insurrection in hand by 648 B.C.E., Ashurbanipal moved to make reprisals as far west as Edom and Moab,[20] at which time he may have brought Manasseh into line "for possible involvement on the side of Babylon."[21]

[16] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27, ep. 21, 55. Esarhaddon's Nineveh inscriptions do not specify the year of Manasseh's tribute. Olmstead (*Assyria*, p. 368) supposed that the building projects were undertaken by Esarhaddon "at the beginning of his reign;" while Tadmor (En. Miq. 4, cols. 259. n. 9) associates the incident with the events of 677 B.C.E.; *viz.*, the defeat of Sidon and the building of Kar-Esarhaddon. See Borger, *Asarhaddon* § 27, ep. 5, 80-81. Cf. also, Tadmor, BibArch 29 (1966), 98.

[17] Asb. C.I.24-47. Only the "C" edition of the Ashurbanipal annals, compiled in *ca.* 647 B.C.E., saw fit to include by name the full list of 22 kings in its description of the events of 668/67 B.C.E.; while the contemporaneous accounts of the Egyptian campaign simply state that kings from "Trans-Euphrates" countries (*šarrāni eber nāri*; on *eber nāri*, see CAD E, 8; AHw 181) came to Assyria's aid (cf. K. 228 + [= Streck, VAB 7, pp. 158ff.], obv. 25; Asb. E.II.10). The "C" listing would be of little historical value were we to assume that it was compiled by the "C" editors, reflecting conditions in their own days; for it is unlikely that 20 out of 22 kings, who ruled in the days of Esarhaddon (*ca.* 676 B.C.E.), still ruled in 647 B.C.E. Nor would it be of value if the list was indiscriminately borrowed from the Esarhaddon inscriptions. A source, no longer extant, which listed western monarchs in 668/67 B.C.E., must have been available to the "C" editors, for in two cases the Esarhaddon list shows evidence of having been up-dated. Cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27, ep. 21, 60-62; Asb. C.I.32-34 — under kings of Arwad and Bīt-Ammon.

[18] Cf. the contrary view of John Gray, *Kings*[2], pp. 709f. According to his novel interpretation, the western kings "were either in command of units of their own nationals" in service to the Assyrian overlord "or were hostages for the loyalty of their subjects in the Assyrian rear." Neither suggestion, however, finds support in any Assyrian text. Kurt Galling (*Chronik* [ATD, 1954], p. 168) is able to synchronize 2 Chr 33 with the Esarhaddon reference only by assuming the present biblical account has been "re-written" by the Chronicler.

[19] Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* [=KAT[2]] (2nd ed; Giessen: J. Ricker, 1883), pp. 366-72.

[20] Asb. Rm.VII.108-116.

[21] W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), p. 79; Bright, *History*, p. 292; Hallo, BibArch *Reader* 2, p. 185 n. 153; MacLean, IDB 3, 254-55; Myers, *Chronicles*, pp. 189f.; Landersdorfer, *Könige* (HS, 1927), p. 224. Cf. also, early bibliography in Streck, VAB 7, pp. ccxcivf., and ccclxiii.

Serious objection to this reconstruction must be raised. Ashurbanipal's campaign to the west was concerned with maintaining control over the major Arabian trade routes. Action was, therefore, limited to territories east of the Jordan River. Moreover, the list of defeated towns and districts in the Ashurbanipal cylinder Rm.VII.108-116 shows neither geographical nor chronological order, suggesting that it is a late compilation of sporadic local army reports.[22] Judah was in no way implicated, being situated as she was, outside the area of concern.

Consequently, the alternate suggestion put forward by Hans Hirschberg, basing himself upon G. Smith, merits closer attention.[23] He noted that Esarhaddon's campaign to Egypt in 671 included punitive actions against cities along the Phoenician coast that had allied themselves with the Egyptian rebel, Tarqu. Tyre and Ashkelon are known to have come under serious attack. In addition, one very fragmentary inscription, in summary fashion, seems to record the pacification of all twenty-two western monarchs on this same occasion.[24] These circumstances account well not only for the "capture" of Manasseh, who had presumably sided with the anti-Assyrian coalition, but provide the background for the additional settlement of refugees in the Samaria province reported in Ezra 4.2.[25]

We can only imagine the terms under which Esarhaddon reinstalled Manasseh on the throne; but if similar reports from the annals are any indication, a renewed pledge of loyalty and increased tribute headed the list.[26] Not even at this junc-

[22] One of the clearest indications of the false historical impression created by the Asb. Rassam annal account — which is itself the result of intense editorial reworking — is its inclusion of Moab among the punished. The earlier "B" edition preserves another report of the initial battles, in which Kamashalta, king of Moab (read: *māt Ma'a-bi* [!] with *Iraq* 7 [1940], 99, 37) subdued the marauding Qedar tribes, sending prisoners to Nineveh (Asb. B.VIII.43ff.). An early attempt to date the several Arabian campaigns is given by Streck, VAB 7, pp. cclxxxiiiff. See now, Eph'al, *Nomads*, pp. 103-19.

[23] Hirschberg, *Studien zur Geschichte Esarhaddons*, pp. 62-66; George Smith, *The Assyrian Eponym Canon* (London, [1875], p. 169.) Cf. also, Olmstead, *Assyria*, pp. 380-84; and *idem*, *Palestine-Syria*, p. 486.

[24] See Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 67, 30-35, and Weidner, OLZ 27 (1924), 647f.

[25] That Samaria received new settlers need not necessarily mean that it had participated in revolt nor even suffered deportation itself. The very act of re-settlement must have had a disciplinary effect upon the residents of the reception center. E.g., Ashurbanipal's removal of Kirbitians to Egypt was not followed by transfers from the South (Asb. E.IV.1-10; now restored by *Iraq* 30 [1968], BM 134481 iii; 128305 ii). Cf. discussions of Samaria resettlements cited below, p. 101 n. 23. On the suggested co-ordination of Ezra 4.2 with the gloss in Isa 7.8, see G. B. Gray, *Isaiah* (ICC, 1912), pp. 119f.

[26] Cf. Asb. Rm.II.8-19, cited regularly in the commentaries ever since Schrader's original work (see n. 19). Note, as well, Sargon's pardon of Ullusunu (Lie, *Sargon*, 87-89) and the fear expressed by Babylon's residents during their revolt against Ashurbanipal: *enna ašša nittekiruš ana biltini itarra*, "Now because we have rebelled against him, it will be charged against us (lit. "returned/added to our burdens")," (ABL 301, rev. 1-5).

ture is there any ground for supposing a change in Judah's autonomous vassal status.[27]

Manasseh remained constrained for the next quarter century. But by the close of his reign Assyria seems to have permitted the building of Jerusalem's outer defenses and the restationing of Judahite forces in the countryside, perhaps to counter the increasingly hostile position of Pssametichus I in Egypt.[28]

Manasseh's son, Amon, ruled for but two short years (642-640 B.C.E.), assassinated by a court plot of unknown motivation. The "people of the land" promptly executed the conspirators and installed the minor Josiah, thus upholding the Davidic line of succession (2 Kgs 21.19-26).[29]

Current opinion favors viewing this episode as an attempt at revolt against Ashurbanipal by anti-Assyrian elements, with the "people of the land" representing "those forces in Judah who wished to prevent a military encounter with Assyria."[30] But the facts might be construed otherwise. The last record of Assyrian intervention in the affairs of southern Palestine dates to 643 B.C.E.[31]

[27] Y. Aharoni presumes that following the Manasseh revolt the royal store-cities, organized by Hezekiah to co-ordinate administrative efforts within Judah (cf. 2 Chr 32.27-29), were "finally disbanded by the Assyrian authorities who may have considered it a dangerous source of power" (*The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967], p. 346). This suggestion is based upon Aharoni's analysis of the royal (*lmlk*) stamp seals from seventh century B.C.E. Judahite sites. But his view would have us suppose the survival of Hezekiah's districting after the dismemberment of Judah which followed the 701 B.C.E. defeat (see above, p. 65). Further epigraphical and archaeological criticism of Aharoni's *lmlk* thesis can be found in P. W. Lapp, "Late Royal Seals from Judah," BASOR 158 (1960), 11-22; F. M. Cross, "Judean Stamps," EI 9 (1969), 20-23; and H. D. Lance, "The Royal Stamps and the Kingdom of Josiah," HTR 64 (1971), 315-22.

[28] 2 Chr 33.14. Cf. Sellin, *Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdische Volkes* 1 (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1924), p. 281; followed by W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT, 1955), p. 317; and Myers, *Chronicles*, p. 199. DeVaux noted that the "defense work undertaken at Jerusalem by Ezechia (2 Chr 32.5; cf. Isa 22.9-11) was continued by Manasseh" (*Ancient Israel* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961], p. 230). See the archaeological evidence now collected by E. Vogt, "Das Wachstum des alten Stadtgebietes von Jerusalem," *Biblica* 48 (1967), 338-43. Cf. below, n. 152.

[29] The "people of the land" as "a fairly loosely constituted power group . . . championing . . . the house of David" is discussed by S. Talmon, "The Judaean 'Am Ha'aretz in Historical Perspective," *Proceedings of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 1 (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 71-76. See also, H. Tadmor, JWH 11 (1968), 65-68.

[30] So, A. Malamat, "The Historical Background of the Assassination of Amon, King of Judah," IEJ 3 (1953), 27 (= *Tarbiz* 21 [1951], 126); followed by Bright, *History*, pp. 294f.; Myers, *Chronicles*, p. 200; cf. Noth, *History*, p. 272 (independent of Malamat ?).

[31] Malamat reconstructed a Palestine-wide revolt against Assyria in 640 B.C. by synchronizing Amon's assassination with the revolts of Tyre and Acre reported in Asb Rm. IX. 115-128, assuming "these events took place during the great revolt of Elam between the years 641-639 B.C.E." ("Assassination," 27 n. 3; following Streck's dating, VAB 7, p. cccIxi). But the Rassam cylinder edition of the annals must now be dated to 643 B.C.E. (cf. Tadmor, *The Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth International Convention of Orientalists* 1 [Moscow, 1962], p. 240), thus upsetting any possible coincidence.

Nomadic invasions, perhaps Scythian, kept Assyrian military forces occupied on the northern reaches of the empire, it now seems, as early as 640.[32] Consequently, at the time of Amon's assassination, fear of Assyrian reprisal would have been a minimal factor in Judahite politics.

Moreover, the political assertiveness of the "people of the land" had anything but restraining effects. As representatives of traditional Judahite values,[33] the "people of the land" must have planned and nurtured Josiah's regency, which ended in the overthrow of Judah's foreign alignments and far-reaching cultic reforms. Assyrian non-intervention in this nationalistic activity suggests that Judah, as early as 640, had begun to free itself of vassal restraints, long before the final disintegration of the empire which set in with the death of Ashurbanipal in 627.[34]

Beginning in his twelfth year, little more than a century after the first appearance of Tiglath-pileser III in Palestine, Josiah extended Judah's jurisdictional authority into northern Israel — i.e., the Assyrian province of Samaria — a move which earlier would have signaled open rebellion against Assyria.[35] That he was able to proceed unhindered implies that Nineveh had lost all effective control over its Palestinian provinces.[36]

[32] New details on the "Scythian" troubles which developed for Assyria in the four years between 643-639 B.C.E. are now available in additional fragments of the "H" prism, dated 639 B.C.E., published by Millard, *Iraq* 29 (1967), 106-10. H. Cazelles, "Sophonie, Jérémie, et les Scythes en Palestine," RB 74 (1967), 24-44, would remove the earliest battles with the northerners to 655 B.C.E. See especially, p. 32 n. 31 (contra Tadmor, above, n. 31).

[33] Cf. Talmon, "Am Ha'aretz," p. 76.

[34] Joan Oates' study, "Assyrian Chronology, 631-612 B.C.," *Iraq* 27 (1965), 135-59, contains the latest review of the chronological uncertainties of the close of the NA era. Cf. Borger's differing solutions in WZKM 55 (1959), 63-76; *JCS* 19 (1965), 59-78.

[35] Cf. 2 Kgs 23.15-20; 2 Chr 34.1-7. J. Liver, En. Miq. 3, col. 420, found the inclusion in the Ezra census lists of returnees from north Israel evidence of Josianic expansion. But, cf. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, pp. 356 and 362ff., and on Josiah, pp. 349ff. A new challenge to the theorists of a Josianic "empire" is now offered by H. D. Lance, *HTR* 64 (1971), 331f.: "If the [*lmlk*] stamps are Josianic in date, then the total absence of the stamps in the north can only mean that in the time of Josiah *not even trade was carried on with the territory of the former northern kingdom*" (italics *sic*). Lance correctly notes that the Biblical account lays claim to activity within north Israel only of a religious nature.

[36] It has become a commonplace among scholars to connect Josiah's cultic reforms with the wave of rebellion which swept the Assyrian empire after the death of Ashurbanipal (cf., e.g., Cross and Freedman, JNES 12 [1953], 57). But while Kings knows of revolts against Assyria and Babylonia by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18.7 — among other pious acts !), Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24.1), and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24.20), no such act is credited Josiah. This absence may be due, not to an oversight on the part of the Kings editor, but to his accurate reflection of the by-then non-existent Assyrian control in Palestine. Cf. T. H. Robinson, *History*, p. 417.

According to W. F. Albright (*The Biblical Period*, p. 80), Josiah may have remained

The course of Assyria's century-long domination emerges clearly: Judah was permitted to retain its national sovereignty in return for loyal submission to Assyrian political will. One is impressed by Assyria's apparent reluctance and/or inability to expend efforts on incorporation of Jerusalem — implying, thereby, the city's insignificance for imperial goals. Accordingly, as an independent vassal state Judah suffered none of the religious impositions known to Assyrian provinces. The genesis of foreign innovations in the Judahite cult during the NA era, often seen as impositions of the Assyrian empire, must now be sought in other areas.

Foreign Cults in Judah

Modern historians may still find occasion to debate the sources of Judahite idolatries during the Neo-Assyrian age, but for the biblical author the source was quite clear. Ahaz "followed the ways of Israel's kings" (2 Kgs 16.3), and Manasseh "erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done" (2 Kgs 21.3).

This sin of "following the ways of Israel's kings" is not the usual Judahite royal sin reported in Kings, viz., continued worship at rural sanctuaries after the completion of the Jerusalem temple.[37] It cannot be identified with "the sin of Jeroboam, son of Nebat," Israel's first king, who broke away from the Jerusalem temple and the Davidic house. Ahaz and Manasseh were guilty of reverting to those pagan practices against which the Israelites had been forewarned prior to their entry into Canaan. Note that Manasseh paganized Judah by imitating the nations round about, in flagrant disregard for Mosaic law (cf. 2 Kgs 21.6, somewhat abbreviated from Deut 18.10-11).

This description of late Judahite idolatry as a reversion to Canaanite practice is not to be judged mere schematic and non-historical rhetoric, the product of Deuteronomistic historiography.[38] Only twice in Judah's early history, during the reigns of Solomon-Rehoboam (1 Kgs 11.2ff.; 14.24) and Jehoram (2 Kgs 8.18) are Canaanite cults reported to have flourished. Moreover, certain of the pagan cults embraced by Ahaz and Manasseh were decidedly new. Ahaz was the first to "pass his son through fire" (2 Kgs 16.3). Manasseh, in addition to restoring Baal and Asherah, introduced the worship of the "heavenly host" into the Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs 21.3; cf. 23.12). Even if we assume that the

a "nominal vassal of the Assyrians," assuming the obligations of caretaker of north-Palestinian provinces during this period of upheaval (cf. Myers, *Chronicles*, p. 205).

Still to be considered by historians is the extent of Egyptian interest in Syrian affairs at this juncture. Might the Egyptian military assistance to Assyria in 616 B.C.E. have been proceeded by a ceding of Assyrian rights in Syria-Palestine? See provisionally, S. Smirin, *Josiah and His Age*, 21-22; Freedy and Redford, JAOS 90 (1970) 477f.; and J. Milgrom, Beth Mikra 44 (1971) 25, esp. n. 13.

[37] E.g. 1 Kgs 15.14; 22.44; 2 Kgs 12.4; 14.4; 15.4, 35.

[38] Such is the assessment which emerges from M. Noth's discussion in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967), pp. 85f.

description of events from the reigns of Hezekiah through Josiah was "a matter of personal reminiscence and interest within the Deuteronomic circle"[39] — thus the ready availability of detailed items — no schema is discernible which will explain the sporadic reference to early monarchic idolatry.

It may be supposed, therefore, that the Kings historiographer did record historically accurate information as to the period of public inauguration of certain cults,[40] even though he viewed all foreign cults under the general rubic *Canaanite idolatry*. Properly, only those foreign cults which can be isolated as late intrusions are of significance in assessing the Assyrian influence upon Judahite religion during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Thus, the following inquiry focuses on three select pagan innovations: the altar reform of Ahaz, the cult of Molech, and the astral cults.

Altar Reform of Ahaz. — During a visit to Damascus to greet Tiglath-pileser III after the Assyrian conquest of that city (732 B.C.E.), Ahaz observed an altar whose design he sent back to Jerusalem. The priest Uriah had an altar built according to the imported model, ready for use by the time the king returned. The new altar replaced the old Solomonic bronze altar, which was set aside for use by the king in his own private worship.[41]

Opinion is divided as to the ground for this innovation. The statement of Martin Noth may be cited as typical of a majority of scholars.

> When king Ahaz of Judah surrendered to Tiglath-Pileser, he had to make room for the Assyrian religion in the official sanctuary in Jerusalem. An altar, . . . modelled no doubt on an Assyrian altar which stood in the new provincial capital of Damascus,

[39] J. Gray, *Kings*[2], p. 34.

[40] We cannot positively rule out the presence of popular, unofficial pagan cults throughout the monarchic period simply on the basis of the Kings report alone (as would Kaufmann, *Tol[e]doi* 3, pp. 220-23; 233-36). Kings, rarely, if ever, tells of popular practice, in its focus upon monarchic guilt. (On 1 Kgs 14.22-24; 2 Kgs 17.19, cf. commentaries *ad loc.*) The possibility must be considered that certain idolatries were known from an early date, but only later became a matter of concern to official YHWHism. See further comments below, p. 89 n. 133. On the historicity of the cultic notices in Kings in general, see A. Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches* (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1956), pp. 72-76.

[41] 2 Kgs 16.10-18. John Bright (*History*, p. 259, following W. F. Albright, ARI[5], pp. 161f.) contends that the "time-honored" bronze altar "continued in ritual use as before (v. 15)." Bright's construing the text in this manner disregards the explicit statement in v. 15 that Ahaz ordered the regular offerings transferred to the new "large altar," leaving the old altar solely for his visitations (*l[e]baqqēr* — cf. Ps 27.4).

According to some, the service at the bronze altar henceforth included "examination of the sacrifice for omens . . . the intrusion of the vast Babylonian system of omen-sacrifices" (Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 461; cf. also Gray, *Kings*[2], p. 637; Snaith, *Kings* [IB, 1954], p. 277; DeVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 410; and Ehrlich, *Mikrâ ki-Pheschutô* 2 [Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1900], p. 368.) But this view can only be sustained through importing a meaning for the verb *l[e]baqqēr* (v. 15) and a method of divination otherwise unattested for the reign of Ahaz or any other king.

> . . . [and] the official Assyrian religion had a place alongside the traditional worship of Yahweh in the state sanctuary in Jerusalem.[42]

According to Olmstead, the impositions included "a throne for the new divine king, . . . set up in the house where once Yahweh had reigned in power, and the royal entry . . . turned about by Ahaz from before the face of the statue of the Assyrian king".[43]

Other commentators suppose that the model for the altar was Syrian, its importation prompted by "aesthetic reasons, intending to enrich the ritual of the Jerusalem temple."[44] Šanda noted that the account as related in 2 Kings contains no criticism of Ahaz,[44a] apparently having found nothing wrong with

[42] Noth, *History*, p. 266. Cf. Bright, *History*, p. 259; Montgomery, *Kings*, pp. 459ff.; Gray, *Kings*[2], p. 635; IDB 1, 64-66, *s.v.* "Ahaz;" and the previous studies quoted by them.

[43] *Assyria*, p. 198. Cf. Olmstead's later comment, *Palestine-Syria*, p. 452, in which he was somewhat less decided: "A throne for the divine king was built in the temple and the outer royal entry was turned to the house of Yahweh from before the face of the king of Assyria, presumably represented in stele form."

Olmstead's suggestion seems to be based, in part, on the Septuagint reading of the obscure wording in 2 Kgs 16.17-18. There, Ahaz stripped the temple of certain furnishings and altered two of its architectural features: the *msk hšbt* — the "Sabbath canopy" (cf. Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 464; otherwise Gray, *Kings*[2], p. 635, n.[a]) or "dais" (*Jerusalem Bible*, cf. LXX) and the king's entranceway. All this was done *mippnē melek ʾAššūr*, i.e., "because of" (KHAT, ICC) /"at the instance of" (OTL)/"in deference to" (*Jerusalem Bible*)/or "before" (Olmstead) the king of Assyria.

There is no indication whatsoever that any further innovations beyond the new altar were made at this juncture. Had a royal stele of Tiglath-pileser been erected, as Olmstead thought, we should expect a notice of it. Moreover, there is no reason to think that the Assyrian king would have taken offense at the continued display of royal prerogatives in Judah (i.e., a special entranceway for Ahaz symbolizing his sovereignty, cf. Gray, *Kings*[2], p. 638). Often loyal vassal kings were treated with honor — evidently no offense to Assyria's rule. See TCL 3, 62-63, for Sargon's treatment of Ullusunu.

Only Hugo Winckler's observation does justice to the sense and structure of this entire section. Comparing 2 Kgs 16.7-9 + 17-18 with 2 Kgs 18.13-15 + 16, he noted the same editing, with concluding verses that tell of removing precious metals to pay a heavy Assyrian tribute (*Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* [Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1892], pp. 48f). Cf. the earlier remarks of O. Thenius, *Die Bücher der Könige* (*Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament*; Leipzig: Weidemann, 1849), p. 362.

The rich adornment of the Sabbath covering and the king's private entranceway were apparently removed (*hēsēb* = 2 Kgs 16.18; cf. 2 Sam 20.12), and, along with the bronze oxen (16.17), sent as gifts to the king of Assyria. Cf. A. Šanda *Die Bücher der Könige* (Münster in West.: Aschendorffsche Verlag, 1911), *ad loc.* Bull figurines were received as tribute by Ashurnasirpal, cf. AKA, p. 366, 66.

[44] Snaith, *Kings*, p. 275; DeVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 410f.; and Landersdorfer, *Könige*, pp. 198f. Similarly, Thenius, *Könige*.

[44a] Šanda, *Könige* 2, p. 207. The neutrality of 2 Kgs 16.10-18 with respect to the Temple alterations is especially patent when we consider that Ahaz' encroachment upon the priestly prerogatives at the altar (2 Kgs 16.12) is noted without comment. Contrast the fate of Uzziah in 2 Chr 26.16-21. On the term *qārab* (*ʿal/ʾel*), "to encroach," see the exhaustive treatment by Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology* 1 (*Near Eastern Studies* 14; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 5-56.

Montgomery, *Kings*, pp. 459f., thought that the "objective non-moralizing narrative" was due to "the grandeur of the new altar (which) made greater popular impression than its contradiction to the native cult." Gray's suggestion, *Kings*[2], p. 631, to see in the "Deuteronomic introduction (vv. 3ff.)" condemning Ahaz sufficient reason for "the absence or supression of criticism of the king in vv. 10-18," is inadequate. For, at best, the editor's utilization of a non-critical account of the altar reform leaves the reader with mixed impressions of the king: Ahaz, the outright idolator, yet attends to the needs of the YHWH cult.

[45] Not so the editor of Kings. He must have quoted — verbatim? — this temple report to example Ahaz' apostasy, i.e., Ahaz dared modify traditional temple patterns.

[46] Snaith, *Kings*, p. 275.

[47] See the balanced remarks of R. J. Thompson, *Penitence and Sacrifice in Early Israel Outside the Levitical Law* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 132-34, on the ritual enjoined by the king.

Note the contrasting verbal forms of *qtr* in 2 Kgs 16.4, 13. Non-Israelite censing is generally represented by *qittēr*, Israelite censing by *hiqtīr* (cf. BDB, 882-83). On the use of *hiqtīr* in Chronicles, see S. Japhet, VT 18 (1968), 350f.; and on the anamolous form in 1 Sam 2.16, see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 31.

[48] 2 Kgs 18.4; 23.6, 11f. Kaufmann, *Tol[e]dot* 2, p. 234 n. 4, refers to 2 Kgs 23.12 as evidence of private pagan altars introduced by Ahaz after 732 B.C.E. Y. Yadin, as well, would connect this verse and the evidence of sun worship in vs. 11 with the "Dial of Ahaz" (2 Kgs 20.11), part of a "special structure with cultic character." See Yadin, EI 5 (1958), 92f. The altars destroyed by Josiah were located "on the roof of the upper-chamber of Ahaz," but there is no indication that Ahaz built them.

[49] See Cooke, *Ezekiel* (ICC, 1936), p. 105; and Fohrer, *Ezechiel* (HAT, 1955), p. 51.

[50] Cf. ANEP 451 with 624, 625, and 626.

[51] Galling, *Altar*, pp. 43, 44, and 54ff.

the new altar.[45] The priest Uriah, a loyal Yahwist according to Isaiah's testimony (cf. Isa 8.2), is not said to have resisted the installation order.[46]

This second view finds support in the altar's subsequent history. 2 Kgs 16.15 is careful to note that the new altar served only a legitimate YHWH cult, unlike other idolatries practiced by Ahaz.[47] Accordingly, it survived the cultic reforms of both Hezekiah and Josiah, which purged Judah of foreign practices.[48] The Ahaz altar must have still been in place during Jerusalem's last days, for the prophet Ezekiel reports seeing the original bronze altar by the temple's northern gate, where it had been moved by Ahaz in making room for his Damascene import (cf. Ezek 9.2).[49]

That the altar was of Syrian, not Assyrian, provenance emerges most clearly from Kurt Galling's comparative typological study of Near Eastern altars. Holocaust altars were wholly unknown in Mesopotamia; table altars, set with the prepared rations of the divine repast (not unlike royal banquets),[50] were in regular use.[51] As Oppenheim explains; ancient Israelite concepts of "burning of the offered food" and the accompanying "blood consciousness" are not paralleled in Mesopotamia:

> Deep-seated differences between the West — represented best by the Old Testament — and Mesopotamia with regard to the concept of sacrifice . . . separates the two sacrificial rituals in the two cultures.[52]

These considerations alone should have been enough to discourage any suggestion that Assyria influenced Ahaz to introduce a new altar for Israelite worship.[53]

Most recently, Saggs took note of the sacrificial dissimilarities which existed between Israel and Assyria and argued that the new altar is to be traced to Phoenicia. It was introduced by Ahaz in an "attempt to strengthen links with Tyre, the chief port of Phoenicia," thus breaking through the ring of enemies which had landlocked Judah.[54] But this reconstruction of events is patently erroneous. It goes against the textual evidence which sets the altar in Damascus. Moreover, Judah's enemies in 733-732 B.C.E. included Tyre, a participant, along with Aram and Israel, in the revolt against Tiglath-pileser.[55]

Finally, Judah's political status in 732 speaks against the liklihood of Assyrian cult impositions. The trip of Ahaz to Damascus was not Judah's first act of submission as a vassal kingdom to Assyria. Azaryahu, the king's grandfather, had paid an indemnity to Tiglath-pileser III in 738, and Ahaz himself had delivered tribute to Tiglath-pileser in 734.[56] As noted above, vassalage did not

[52] Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, p. 192; cf. pp. 186-92 for fuller description of temple ritual. Also, BibArch *Reader* 1, pp. 161-65. The absence of bloody sacrifice in Mesopotamia is noted by Meissner, BuA 2, p. 84; Blome, *Die Opfermaterie in Babylonian und Israel* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1934), p. 172; and Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, p. 365 n. 18, who observes: "The references to blood collected in CAD sub *damu* show clearly that blood was of no importance in Mesopotamian cult or magic." See further D. J. McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," JBL 88 (1969) 166-76, and *idem*, JBL 92 (1973) 205-10.

[53] Attempts at relating Ezekiel's visionary altar projected for the rebuilt sanctuary (Ezek 43.13-17) to the Ahaz "Assyrian" altar should be likewise abandoned. The Assyrian altar mentioned in Cooke's *Ezekiel*, p. 468 (cf. Haran, En. Miq. 4, cols. 774f.; reproduced in ANEP, 576, 577) is in reality not an altar at all, but a *nēmedu*, "support," as the inscription it bears indicates. Upon such "sockets" or "pedestals" cult objects were often displayed (cf. Opitz, AfO 7 [1931], 83-90). The style and dimensions of the pedestals resemble those of more mundane 'footstools,' also termed *nēmedu*. A. Salonen, *Die Möbel des Alten Mesopotamien* (AASF B 127, 1963), pp. 144ff., generally renders "divan;" cf. AHw, 776.

"Round-topped altars" of the type represented in ANEP 580 may also have served *nēmedu*-functions. The antecella of Khorsabad's Sibitti temple was lined with no less than fourteen such "altars" (cf. above, p. 58), suggesting their use as cult socles (that is, if this site was not the temple storeroom). See Safar, *Sumer* 13 (1957), fig. 3 (Arabic section).

[54] H. W. F. Saggs, *Assyriology and the Study of the Old Testament* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), pp. 19-22. Saggs did not deny the Assyrian practice of enforcing a vassal's recognition of the overlord's gods (p. 21 n. 2); rather in this instance, he was led to seek political motives outside the Assyrian sphere.

[55] See above, p. 66 n. 3.

[56] These chronological facts expose yet another incongruency in the usual reconstruction (cf. n. 42 above); no one bothers to explain why cult impositions began only in 732 B.C.E. and not at the start of Judah's vassalage some years earlier.

entail the introduction of Assyrian cults in place of or alongside native cults. The Ahaz altar, fashioned after Syrian models and located in the Jerusalem temple — itself styled after Phoenician prototypes[57] — must have been a voluntary adoption, part of a general pattern of cultural accommodation, the full dimensions of which will emerge below.

Cult of Molech. — One of the most vexing problems of late Judahite religion is the notorious cult of Molech. Due to the inconsistent biblical accounts of the cult, opinion is divided as to its nature and extent. It is well to begin, therefore, with an analysis of the separate legal, historical, and prophetic texts.

Legal texts are unequivocal in their descriptions of the prohibited cult. The priestly "Holiness Code" outlaws "dedicating" (*nātan*) and "transferring" (*he*^{ca}*bīr*)[58] offspring to the god Molech, without indications of the procedure (Lev 18.21; 20.1-5). The context implies that the Molech rite was sexually and/or magically offensive. Deuteronomic law, too, employing analogous terms, prohibits the "transfer by fire/passing through fire"[59] of sons or daughters (no god is mentioned) — this in a list of traditional Canaanite divinatory practices (Deut 18.10).[60]

The terms of Deut 12.31, enjoining Israel from "burning (*śārap*) their sons and their daughters in fire" in service of YHWH as do the Canaanite nations in service of their gods, are entirely different. Not only is Molech absent, but the usage of *śārap* contrasts with priestly technical terminology, which never uses that verb in sacrificial contexts. In priestly texts, *śārap* is always extra-ritual: it refers to disposal of refuse and invariably takes place outside the camp.[61] These verbal distinctions, coupled with contextual considerations, point to two separate rituals identifiable within legal literature: (1) a divinatory fire cult of Molech that did not involve child sacrifice, and (2) a common Canaanite cult of child sacrifice.

Historical accounts record similar distinctions. Of both kings Ahaz and Manasseh it is said: "He passed his son through fire" (2 Kgs 16.3; 21.6). An end to this royal observance of Molech ritual came with the Josianic reforms; according to 2 Kgs 23.10, the Molech cult site — Tophet[62] — in the ben-Hinnom

[57] See G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Phila.: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 136-42, and the bibliography cited there, p. 145.

[58] The verb *l*^{e}*ha*^{ca}*bīr* in Exod 13.12 is used as a semantic parallel to *qaddēš*, "consecrate," in 13.2. See Driver, *Exodus* (Camb. B., 1953), *ad* 13.12; BDB, 718. The priestly term for "sacrifice" of dedicated creatures, *zābaḥ* (cf. Exod 13.15), is conspicuously absent from Lev 18 and 20.

[59] Cf. usage in Num 31.23.

[60] Note that soothsaying (*'ōb, yidd*^{c}*onī*) as described in Deut 18.11, also adjoins the Molech text in Lev 20.1-5, i.e., 20.6.

[61] Citations are gathered in BDB, 977.

[62] According to W. R. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (repr. New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 377 n. 2 (adopted in BDB, 1075), Tophet "is properly an Aramaic name for fireplace, or for the framework set on the fire to support the victim." Cf. the reservations of Gray, *Kings*^{2}, pp. 735-36.

Older rabbinic etymologies connect Tophet with the Hebrew *pātaḥ*, "entice," see

valley was defiled at that time. On the other hand, child sacrifice is reported among the foreign Sepharvites, settled in Samaria after the Assyrian annexation: "They burned (*śārap*) their children in fire to Adrammelek and Anammelek, gods of Sepharvaim" (2 Kgs 17.31).

It is in the denunciations of Jeremiah and Ezekiel that the terminological distinctions are lost. The verbs "transfer/pass through fire" and "burn" are freely interchanged, and new vocables — "sacrifice" (*zābaḥ*) and "slaughter" (*šāḥaṭ*) — are introduced (cf. Ezek 16.20-21; 23.29).[63] Jeremiah accuses the Jerusalemites of child sacrifice to Baal and Molech, which the people seem to regard as legitimate dedications to Israel's YHWH (e.g., Jer 7.31; 19.5; 32.35). These broad denunciations clearly do not discriminate between the burning of children as "offerings to Baal" (19.5) and the "transfer to Molech" of sons and daughters at "Baal cult sites in the ben-Hinnom valley" (32.35).[64]

The thrust of prophetic polemics resulted in a literary fusing of the two separate rituals distinguished in legal contexts.[65] At the same time, items common to both the divinatory Molech and the child sacrifice cults advanced this prophetic amalgam. Both cults ritually employed fire, and both were at some time associated with the Tophet site.[66] Defiled by Josiah, the Tophet may have been rededicated after his death to serve a popular sacrificial cult in which royalty no longer had a part.[67] Finally, both cults addressed deities who

T. B. Erubin 19a; and *tāpap*, "drum, play the timbrel," see Abarbanel at Lev 20.1ff.: "The children, as they expired, cried out loudly due to the intensity of the fire. In order not to arouse the compassion of father and mother at the wailing and crying of their sons, the pagan priests sounded the 'tophet,' to confuse the listeners and prevent the screams of the children from being heard." Cf. also Rashi at Jer 7.31, and Radak at 2 Kgs 23.10.

(On the attestation of 2 Kgs 17.17, and late Israelite cult in Samaria in general, see below, pp. 105ff.)

[63] Are these terms part of the prophetic rhetoric or was the victim "first slain and then burnt?" So, Cooke, *Ezekiel*, p. 169; Šanda, *Könige* 2, p. 195. Note the singular reading in 2 Chr 28.3, with reference to Ahaz: "He burnt (*hibʿīr*) his sons." If the verb in question is the Chronicler's own explication, and not a late scribal product, then it may have originated with the prophetic remarks on Molech. Cf. Rudolph, *Chronik, ad loc.*

[64] Cf. now the analysis by M. Weinfeld, independent of the one presented here, also touching upon the literary distinctiveness of the several Molech traditions, in "The Cult of Molech and Its Background" [Hebrew], *Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1972) 45-47.

[65] Further examples of Jeremiah's tendency to generalize in his judgment of Judahite morality are discussed by Kaufmann, *Tolᵉdot* 3, pp. 448f.

[66] The expansive note of the Chronicler at 2 Chr 28.3, "He [i.e., Ahaz] censed in the ben-Hinnom valley," must certainly mean that the Chronicler visualized the Tophet as the site of rituals other than just child sacrifice.

[67] Consider that the threat leveled at the Tophet site (Jer 7.32f.; 19.11f.) can only have had substance if the prophet's audience still held the Tophet sacred. The Jeremiah passages on child sacrifice are here understood to include eye-witness accounts of late unofficial cults. Kaufmann, on the other hand, argued (*Tolᵉdot* 3, pp. 388f.) that their context suggests description of "past sin" from Manasseh's age. But inasmuch as the passages in question are undated, our interpreting them as evidence of aberrant post-

shared the common epithet *melek*, "king" — all in all, circumstances noxious to prophetic teachings.[68]

The inaccuracies of the prophetic picture have been maintained in nearly all subsequent scholarly studies. The one difference which separates investigators is the question, Which of the two rituals, the divinatory or the sacrificial, is to be read into all texts?[69]

John Gray argues the case of a sacrificial Molech ritual. The god name Molech derived from the divine title *melek*, "king," and was associated throughout the entire Canaanite cultural sphere with various manifestations of the astral god of desert origin *Aṯtr.[70] From early times, Molech was worshiped in Judah; note the presence of a cult to the Ammonite god Milcom in Solomon's Jerusalem (1 Kgs 11.7).[71] Samaritan children were sacrificed to gods whose names exhibit the same *melek* element (2 Kgs 17.31).[72] Still open to question, notes Gray, is the possibility that certain biblical passages which mention Molech in reality describe a "votive offering," just as late Punic inscriptions studied by Otto

Josianic revivals is also tenable. Note that Kaufmann did admit to Ezekiel's witnessing "decadent wild roots" in Jerusalem during this same period (see pp. 502, and 447f.).

[68] If the Jeremiah texts in question prove to be the product of Deuteronomistic annotators, then our construction might be re-worded: The literary fusing in prophetic texts of the two separate Molech rites derives from Exilic conditions, when specific points of ritual were no longer remembered or considered important.

[69] Nachmanides at Lev 18.21 does mention an anonymous attempt at separating "sorcery" (i.e., passing through fire) from "sacrifice of little ones" to Molech.

[70] J. Gray, "The Desert God 'Aṯtr in the Literature and Religion of Canaan," JNES 8 (1949), 72-83; *idem*, IDB 3, *s.v.* "Molech."

[71] Gray (JNES 8 [1949], 79) identifies the Ammonite Milcom with the Moabite god Kemosh-Ishtar (cf. Mesha Inscription 17 in KAI 181) on the basis of Judg 11.24, where the god of Ammon is named Kemosh. Ibn Ezra and Nachmanides anticipated Gray's identification, cf. *ad* Lev 18.21. But the collocation of 2 Kgs 23.10 and 13 militates against this identification; the author of this narrative evidently considered Molech and Milcom as two separate deities.

[72] The identification of Adrammelek and Anammelek with gods known in Syrian and/or Assyro-Babylonian pantheons remains disputed. The Hebrew text, unemended, takes the element *ʾdr* as a divine epithet meaning "mighty." For examples, cf. Harris, *A Grammar of the Phoenician Language* (*AOS* 8, 1936), p. 75; KAI 258, 2 (?); and Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 476. Ungnad's original suggestion (AfO Beiheft 6, p. 58), emending *ʾdr* to *ʾdd* (Adad) on the basis of Assyrian personal names (e.g., *Adad-milki-ilaya*) attested in the Tell-Halaf archive, is widely accepted. See A. Pohl's popularization in *Biblica* 22 (1941), 35; and W. F. Albright, ARI[5], pp. 157f. Cf. the earlier remarks, Eb. Schrader, KAT[3], p. 84 nn. 2 and 3.

Deller's involuted recovery of Assyrian names types which translate Hebrew *DN-*mlk* as *DN-*šarru* (*Or* 34 [1965], 382-83) is wholly gratuitous. The writing **Adad-mlk* shows that the Hebrew is not a translation but a transliteration of an Assyrian name; for the Hebrew form of *ᵈAdad* would have appeared as Hadad. Consequently, we do not have, nor do we expect lexical evidence supporting Deller's equation MAN/*šarru* = UMUN = *milki*. See Mazar, En. Miq. 1, cols. 117f. On Anammelek, see Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 476.

Eissfeldt use *mlk* as a sacrificial term.[73] Albright agreed: *Malik*, "king," or its derivative *Muluk*, "kingship," ought to be regarded "as the patron of vows and solemn promises and children might be sacrificed to him as the harshest and most binding pledge of the sanctity of a promise."[74]

Pedersen affirms that the Israelites adopted the Canaanite custom of "sanctification of the first-born" by sacrifice to God (cf. Exod 22.28).[75] But at the same time, biblical religion "shrank from fully accepting" this demand for holiness by restricting human sacrifice to times of disaster; normally, consecrated children could be redeemed through animal substitution (Exod 34.20). Without regular staff or site, says Kaufmann, the child sacrifice remained primarily a private devotion.[76] Not until the days of Manasseh, in an hour of national distress, did people publicly sacrifice children to appease an angered YHWH (cf. Mic 6.7).[77] But such gruesomeness was soon discouraged by Judah's prophets, who denounced this practice as an idolatrous abomination (cf. Jer 7.30; Ezek 20.25).[78]

The several non-sacrificial conceptions of the Molech cult must also be surveyed. According to an account recorded in the Babylonian Talmud, the term "transfer to Molech" refers to a ceremony of induction during which youthful initiates were delivered by their parents to pagan priests, who, in turn, passed them between two large bonfires.[79] S. R. Driver was convinced that the

[73] Originally published by Otto Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch* (Halle: Max Neimeyer Varlag, 1935). Subsequent Punic studies are summarized in Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1969), pp. 226-44. The somewhat cavalier approach to biblical evidence exhibited by the proponents of Eissfeldt's view was recently exemplified by M. Noth's note on Lev 20.5: "We should see in *mlk*, even in the Old Testament passages, a sacrificial term, and translate *lmlk* "as a *mlk*-sacrifice." Admittedly, Lev 20.5 would be against this, for . . . *ham-molek* must be understood as the name of a god. Now vv. 2b-5 certainly contain secondary detailed additions . . . (which) rest on a thorough misunderstanding of the expression *lmlk*" (*Leviticus* [OTL, 1965], p. 148.) Criticism is fully mustered by W. Kornfeld, "Der Moloch, eine Untersuchung zur Theorie O. Eissfeldts'," WZKM 51 (1948-1952), 287-313.

[74] Albright, *ARI*[5], p. 157; DeVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 444-46.

[75] Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* 3-4 (London: H. Milford, 1926), pp. 318-22.

[76] Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 2, pp. 267f. Lev 20.5 threatens punishment for only the violator and his family.

[77] Cf. the desperate sacrifice by the king of Moab of his first-born son during the enemy siege of his capital (2 Kgs 3.27). A novel attempt to interpret this sacrifice as a "magical act" designed to put a curse upon Israel is offered by Kaufmann, *Collected Works* [Hebrew] (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1966), pp. 205-207.

[78] Kaufmann, *Tol'dot, loc. cit.* Cf. Bright, *Jeremiah* (*AB*; 1965), p. 57. M. Greenberg, *'Oz L'David: Studies Presented to David Ben-Gurion*, (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1964) p. 437 n. 3, notes that the juxaposition of the Deut 12.31 prohibition of child sacrifice to the command in 13.1: "neither to add to nor to take away from" the Mosaic law suggests the currency of a view in certain circles that YHWH demanded such sacrifices of Israel. (The Massoretic division of the text after 13.1 was apparently based on this interpretation.)

[79] T.B. Sanhedrin 64a. This account and other Midrashic expansions were traced by

"peculiar and characteristic expression 'to cause to pass through the fire'" meant

> that the rite in question was a kind of *ordeal*, in which for instance, an omen was derived from observing whether the victim passed through the flames unscathed or not, or which was resorted to for the purpose of securing good fortune.[80]

Basing himself on classical examples, T. H. Gaster wrote:

> It is possible also that the Israelite writers have confused with human sacrifice a more innocuous practice, widely attested, of passing children rapidly through a flame as a means of absorbing immortality or giving them extra strength.[81]

Finally, N. H. Snaith, in a recent note reviving the Talmudic account,[82] argued that since Lev 18.21 is embedded in a list of illicit sex relationships, the law must have forbidden cultic prostitution in the name of Molech.[83]

These two opposing scholarly views of the Molech cult need not necessarily be considered mutually exclusive. For, as we have demonstrated, a distinction does in fact exist between the legal-historical and prophetic traditions. Priestly law prohibiting Molech divination in no way discredits Jeremiah's eye-witness report of child sacrifice. But neither can the prophet's sweeping denunciation invalidate the legal evidence of Molech divination, unfortunately only paralleled in extra-biblical observations.

One question remains: If Israelite religion frowned upon the adoption of Canaanite cults, especially immolation, how is the public revival of diverse Molech cults in eighth century B.C.E. Judah to be explained? Other critical moments had passed without stimulating interest in child sacrifice.[84]

Albright's widely accepted explanation is this:

> A new Aramaic culture, composed of Canaanite and Neo-Assyrian elements with the latter dominant, was spreading rapidly over the West, strongly supported by Assyrian military power.[85]

While child sacrifice seems to have been discontinued in Phoenicia by the seventh century B.C.E. at the latest,[86] in Aramaic-speaking areas it lingered on.

G. F. Moore to classical reports of Carthaginian ritual ("The Image of Moloch," JBL 16 [1897], 161-65).

[80] *Deuteronomy* (ICC, 1902), p. 222.

[81] Gaster, IDB 4, p. 154; cf. Barnett, EI 9 (1969), 8.

[82] Snaith, "The Cult of Molech," VT 16 (1966), 123-24.

[83] Contrast M. Noth, *Leviticus*, pp. 136 and 146, for whom the verses in question are "very loosely fitted in with the list of sexual transgressions;" cf. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 234.

[84] Alternately, the absence of an attested Molech cult before Ahaz may mean that early biblical writers regarded such practice, where present, as insignificant, and so, left it unreported.

[85] Albright, *ARI*[5], p. 156.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 158; see O. Eissfeldt, *Ras Schamra und Sanchunjaton* (Halle: Max Neimeyer Verlag, 1939), pp. 69-71.

> Human sacrifice to the god Adad is attested among the Aramaeans of Gozan at the source of the Khabur in northern Mesopotamia (late tenth century), in Late-Assyrian economic texts under Aramaean influence, and in the North-Syrian cult of Sepharvaim . . ., where children were sacrificed (II Kings 17:31) to the god Adrammelech.[87]

This broad attribution of Molech-type sacrifices to Aramaic culture must be modified, for the extra-biblical documentation is at best inconclusive regarding the actual or intended performance of sacrifice. In a tenth century B.C.E. dedicatory text from Gozan, the Aramaean prince Kapara warns the violator of his stele:

7 mārēšu maḫar Adad lišširupu[88] *7 mārātēšu ana* ^{d}*Ištar ḫarimātu luramme*[89]
May he burn seven of his sons before Adad. May he release seven of his daughters to be cult prostitutes for Ishtar.

The schematic formulation of this imprecation suggests that old traditional terms of divine sanction have been preserved.

Likewise, a small number of late NA economic texts specify sacrifice of children as a penalty for initiating future litigation of contracts.

māršu rabū ina (^{d})*ḫamri ša* ^{d}*Adad išarrap*[90]
He will burn his eldest son in the sacred precinct of Adad.

māršu ana ^{d}*Sin išarrap mārassu rabīte itti 2 sūtu dam erēni ana* ^{d}*Bēlet-ṣēri išarrap*[91]
He will burn his son to Sin.[92] He will burn his eldest daughter with 20 silas of cedar balsam to Bēlet-ṣēri.

lū māršu rabū lū mārassu rabītu itti 2 imēr riqqē tābūte ana Bēlatu-ṣēri iš[*arrap*][93]
He will b[urn] either his eldest son or his eldest daughter with 2 homers of sweet-smelling spices to Bēlet-ṣēri.

In addition to human sacrifice, some of these same contracts specify the

[87] Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, pp. 240-41.

[88] I.e., *li*$_{8}$*-ši-ru-pu* = *lišrupu* (cf. CAD Ḫ, 101). Albright (AnSt 6 [1956], 81f.) suggested reading *lit-taš'-ru-pu* (a IV/2 verbal form — cf. *GAG* 81e) so as to eliminate the unique *li*$_{8}$ reading. But another Gozan text reads the verb *li-ši-ru-pu* (AfO Beiheft 1, p. 75, 5).

[89] AfO Beiheft 1, p. 72, II.4-7.

[90] ARU 41.18; cf. *ibid.* 161.2, 160.8. On *ḫamru*, see CAD Ḫ, 70. On the reading *māru* for DUMU.UŠ, rather than *aplu*, see CAD A 2, 176.

[91] ARU 163.20-22; cf. *ibid.* 96a.17-18 (which contains only the second clause of this unit). Our reading, where different from ARU, is based on CAD E, 278.

[92] ND. 496, 25 (=*Iraq* 13 [1951], pl. 16) reads: *māršu rabū ina pan* ^{d}*Sin*, "his eldest son before Sin." In this Nimrud text, GIBIL = *šarāpu* is written ÁŠ; which must be a scribal or copyist's error. Deller, Or 34 (1965), 383f., maintains this unusual ÁŠ reading, though it gives no verbal equivalent. Deller also suggests that GIBIL-*u* be read *iqallu*, synonymous with *išarrap*.

[93] ARU 158.27-30 (cf. CAD I, 114). On the lacuna, see below, n. 98.

presentation of gifts (e.g., white horses,[94] large bow, hierodules) to sundry gods and/or strange ordeals[95] as further penalties. In the vast majority of cases, however, monetary fines replace ritualistic punishments.[96]

Because NA contracts unrealistically heap up penalty clauses, together with stiff fines well beyond the means of the average citizen, most Assyriologists concur with Meissner's assertion that these penalties could never have been actualized. They were intended as solemn formulae — "a kind of oath . . . that the contracting party fulfilled in fear of the gods as avengers of contract violations."[97] Nevertheless, the very utilization of these clauses is evidence of Neo-Assyrian esteem for ancient ceremonial, and suggests that under certain circumstances a defendant might legally claim literal reprisal, even of sometimes harsh penalties.[98]

At best, therefore, the evidence tells of vestigial human sacrifice amidst eighth century B.C.E. Assyro-Aramaean cultural traditions. Increased contact with Aramaeans during the Neo-Assyrian age may have awakened dormant superstitions among Judahites, though child sacrifice need have been no more prevalent in Judah than it seems to have been in Assyria proper. For loyal YHWHists, however, even this sporadic cult was a sign of unwelcome acculturation to pagan norms,[99] whose impetus we must yet investigate.

[94] Cf. below, pp. 86f.

[95] The descriptions of these ordeals remain shrouded in linguistic difficulties, only one being relatively clear. The accused is forced to eat one mina of "plucked wool" followed by a "quick gulp" of water or beer, apparently intended to cause painful expansion of his stomach. Cf. von Soden, Or 26 (1957), 135-36; CAD A 1, 143.

[96] Did these sums represent equivalent values, as at Nuzi where ceremonial fines were payable in kind? See E. A. Speiser, "Nuzi Marginalia," Or 25 (1956), 9-15.

[97] Meissner, BuA 1, p. 182. A summary of early discussion is found in Fr. Blome, *Opfermaterie*, pp. 407-10.

[98] In the original publication of these contracts, ADD 3, pp. 345-56, Johns was "inclined to suppose" that *šarāpu* merely meant "to dedicate" a child to the service of a god. He based himself on a reading of ARU 158.30 = *i-rak-*[*kas*], for the more frequent *išarrap*. The lacuna was subsequently read in ARU, *i-š*[*ar-rap*]; by Deller, Or 34 (1965), 383, *i*-SAL-[ ]. Overlooked by Johns were the terms of dedication of persons to temple service: *šarāku*, "present" (ARU 44.9); *šūlū*, "devote" (ARU 45.6). In these texts *rakāsu* is used solely for the "binding" of horses. (ND. 496.32 now provides another dedication term, *nadānu*.)

No less speculative is Deller's suggestion (*op. cit.*, pp. 385f.) that children were spared sacrifice by becoming cult personnel, and only the burning of spices was actually performed. His entire argument rests on the collocation of child sacrifice and cult prostitution penalties in several contracts; e.g., the Gozan text quoted above (cf. n. 89). No textual evidence is available for either the figurative interpretation of the verb *šarāpu* or the substitution of punishments.

[99] The vehemence with which Jeremiah and Ezekiel attack "Molech" does not necessarily testify to the frequency of child sacrifice. Both prophets would have seized upon this "abhorrent act" (cf. Deut 12.31), however infrequent, in bolstering their claim to the justness of YHWH's decision to destroy Judah. See Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 3, pp. 383ff.; 446ff., for a discussion of prophetic theodicy from the days of Judah's fall.

That such feelings were indeed known in Judah can be shown. 2 Kgs 18.22 preserves a negative evaluation of Hezekiah's reform as delivered by the Assyrian Rabshakeh, in his challenge to Jerusalem's defenders: "But if you say to me, 'We trust in YHWH our God,' is it not he whose cult sites and altars Hezekiah removed, ordering Judah and Jerusalem, 'Before this altar in Jerusalem you shall worship'?" It would seem that the Kings historian utilized the Rabshakeh's remarks — reflective of a "blatant pagan point of view"[170] — to broadcast his evaluation of Manasseh's restoration of rural cult sites: a willful rejection of YHWHistic tradition as interpreted by the Deuteronomists.[171]

This unprecedented demoralization threatened Judah's unique cultural and religious identity; only with the return of national self-confidence, which was to follow upon the decline of Assyria, could the assimilation of Manasseh's age be halted.

[170] So, B. Childs in *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, p. 82: "Only someone completely removed from the Hebrew religion could have interpreted Hezekiah's reform as an insult to Israel's deity." M. Weinfeld, *JNES* 23 (1963), 208ff., connects the Rabshakeh passage with the prophetic school of Isaiah, who, in this "veiled protest" expressed its disapproval of Hezekiah's reform. But it is hard to conceive of Isaiah supporting the rural sanctuaries, laced as they were with vestigal pagan accouterments (cf. 2 Kgs 18.4); albeit accommodated by some within YHWHism (on which, see, Kaufmann, *Tol^edot* 2, pp. 126f., 262, and 266). Rabshakeh's remarks, if not "genuinely historical" (so, Childs, *loc cit.*), are then likely the veiled Deuteronomic polemic against those who would reinstate the rural sanctuaries in the name of YHWHism.

[171] Spearheading the opposition to the Hezekian reforms may well have been the personnel of the rural sanctuaries, displaced by the centralization of worship within Jerusalem. It has been argued that Manasseh early came under the influence of the Judahite "people of the land" and the rural priesthood, who had allied against the economic and religious monopoly of the Jerusalem sanctuary. (Note that 2 Chr 31.19 records the dependent status of the "Aaronide priests [who lived] on the pasture lands of their cities.") This speculation is contained in the discussion on the rise of Jerusalem as a "cosmopolitan and hieropolitan" center in M. H. Ben-Shalosh [pseud.], "History in the Times of the First Temple" [Hebrew], *Sepher Yerushalayim*, ed. by M. Avi-Yonah (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Mosad Bialik and Dvir, 1956), pp. 120-31.

5. ISRAEL UNDER ASSYRIAN RULE

From Vassal State to Province

NORTH Israel's political history contrasts markedly with Judah's successful avoidance of Assyrian annexation. The main routes to Egypt and Arabia, connecting with the port cities on the Philistian coast, traversed Israelite territory, so that Assyria's ambitions at economic hegemony over Mediterranean commerce inevitably encroached upon the Israelite territories. Contact with the revitalized Neo-Assyrian empire of Tiglath-pileser III proved fatal almost from the start, and within just twelve years of the first outbreak of hostilities, Israel lost its independence.

The brief period of anarchy which followed the lengthy and successful rule of Jeroboam II (789-748 B.C.E.) ended with the emergence of Menahem the Gadite as king in Samaria (2 Kgs 15.8-15).[1] He did not join the ill-fated Azaryahu rebellion of 738,[2] but chose to secure his throne by paying a heavy tribute to Pul, i.e., Tiglath-pileser III.[3] Payment was met by a levy upon "all *gibbōrē haḥayil*[4] — 50 silver shekels per man."[5]

[1] According to Thiele, "a rival reign of Pekah in Gilead which began the same year that Menahem slew Shallum" explains the lengthy 20 years of Pekah noted in 2 Kgs 15:27 (*Mysterious Numbers*, pp. 124ff.). This difficult chronology notwithstanding, M. Haran considers Menahem's early years (*ca.* 748-738 B.C.E.) to have been free of internal strife and Assyrian interference, evidence the Israelite attack on distant Tipsah on the Euphrates — 2 Kgs 15:16 (see VT 17 [1967], 284-90; and J. Liver, En. Miq. 5 cols. 31-32). Tadmor (see "Azriyau," p. 249) observed that Assyrian sources uniquely refer to Menahem as *Menihimme āl Samerināya*, "Menahem, the Samaritan" (Rost, *Tigl. III*, 150), rather than the "Omride," reflecting perhaps the weakening internal conditions after the appearance of Tiglath-pileser III in the West (post-743 B.C.E.). But the term "Samerina" may be no more than a variant designation for Israel, as is now evident from the Adad-nirari III stele from Tell-Rimah, wherein Joash is named *Ia'asu māt Samerināya*. See *Iraq* 30 (1968), 142, 8.

[2] Probably a sign of continued weakness, rather than political astuteness. So, Tadmor, "Azriyau," pp. 248ff.

[3] Rost, *Tigl. III*, 150; 2 Kgs 15:19. The widely accepted view that Pul was Tiglath-pileser's Babylonian throne name is newly disputed by J. A. Brinkman on the basis of a source distribution study, which produced "no evidence that 'Pulu' was ever used as a contemporary name for the king in Babylonia or anywhere else." See his full treatment in AnOr 43, pp. 61-62 and n. 1544. As Brinkman conjectures, perhaps Pul "was his name in Assyria before he came to the throne or . . . it was employed as a quasi-hypocoristic for the second element of the name Tiglath-pileser" (n. 317).

[4] Best interpreted as a technical term indicating Israelite freeholders, owing military service to the crown. Cf. S. E. Loewenstamm, En. Miq. 2, cols. 387f.; Tadmor, JWH 11 (1968), 63 n. 33. Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 451, considered this "ancient military expression

Anti-Assyrian forces in Israel, led by Pekah, soon renewed the confrontation with Assyria by assassinating Menahem's son, Pekahya, in order to align Samaria with Damascus in revolt.[6] Tiglath-pileser retaliated with two campaigns to Damascus in 733 and 732 B.C.E., at the same time wresting extensive territories from Israel.[7] From these, he carved out three Assyrian provinces, following traditional geopolitical lines:[8] Du'ru, on the Mediterranean coast;[9] Magidu, in

— lit. 'men of valour' — had changed its meaning to one of economic significance," and rendered it "magnates of wealth."

[5] 2 Kgs 15:20. Wiseman, *Iraq* 15 (1953), 135 n. 1, conjectures that the 50 shekel levy corresponded to the worth of each man "as a slave at current Assyrian values." On the basis of a new study of the numerical symbols, the paleography and archaeological data, Y. Yadin dates the Samaria ostraca to Menahem's ninth and tenth years, suggesting that the Assyrian tax was payable in naturalia, assessed at silver value. See "Ancient Judaean Weights and the Date of the Samaria Ostraca," SH 8 (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 17-25; cf. the concurring remarks of F. M. Cross, BASOR 165 (1962), 35, and the alternate proposal of Y. Aharoni, BASOR 184 (1966), 16-19; and *idem, The Land of the Bible*, pp. 315ff.

[6] Cf. 2 Kgs 15:23-26. On the participants in the "Syro-Ephramite League," see above, p. 66 n. 3. An interpretation of these hostilities as an attempt "to dislodge Judah from Transjordania" is now set out by B. Oded in "The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite War Reconsidered," CBQ 34 (1972), 153-65.

[7] See 2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:6, 25-26. The most recent treatments of the Assyrian march through "the land of Naphtali" are by Y. Aharoni, *The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Upper Galilee*, pp. 129-32, and H. Tadmor, "The Conquest of the Galilee by Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria" [Hebrew] *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Convention of the Israel Exploration Society* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 62-67.

Israelite holdings in northern Trans-Jordan had already been greatly reduced as a result of Aramaean incursions prior to 733 B.C.E., according to Tadmor's reconstruction of Assyrian border lists; see "The Southern Border of Aram," IEJ 12 (1962), 114-22.

[8] This point is stressed by A. Alt in "Das System der Assyrischen Provinzen auf dem Boden des Reiches Israel," KS 2, pp. 188-205. Cf. Forrer, *Provinzeinteilung*, pp. 60ff., and 64.

[9] A. Alt claims that Tiglath-pileser had already annexed part of Israel's coastal plain during the 734 B.C.E. Philistine campaign ("Tiglath-pileser III. Erster Feldzug nach Palästina," KS 2, pp. 150-62; adopted by Noth, *History*, p. 258). He argues from the scant information related on the recently recovered Nimrud annal ND. 400, 10-13 (=*Iraq* 13 [1951], 23), which reads:

[*kīma ur*]*qīti ṭagrē mun*[*daḫ*]*ṣēšunu umalla* [*ṣēri* . . .] [*maʾršītīšunu alpēšunu ṣēnīšunu immerīšunu* [. . . .] *ina qereb ekallīšu* [ ]x-*dīšunu amḫuršunūtima mātsunu u*[x]	I filled the [steppe like gr]ass with the corpses of his warriors . . . [I carried off] his flocks: cattle, goats, and sheep. Inside his palace [I erected . . .] I received their [ ]. Their land I [ ].

This victory over an unknown territory is sandwiched in between battles in northern Phoenicia, by the city of Ṣi[mirra] and the Philistian Gaza. If Alt is correct and this broken section does refer to Israel (cf. already Wiseman, *Iraq* 13 [1951], 22), then we must assume an Assyrian invasion of Israelite hinterland in order to accomplish some action (the erection of a stele ?) in the palace of Samaria. Such a detour is highly unlikely in view of the goals of the 734 B.C.E. campaign — the control of Philistian maritime

the Galilee and Jezreel valley; and Gal'aza, in Gilead.[10]

This first Assyrian annexation did not include widespread population exchanges, typical of imperial incorporation. Prisoners taken from Galilean towns were not replaced by foreign settlers, thus leaving many areas substantially Israelite.[11] It seems that Assyria was ready to accede to the continued existence of a vassal Israelite state, confined to the Ephramite hills around its capital, Samaria, as long as that state would not become burdensome to the empire. So, the rebel king Pekah having already been ousted, Tiglath-pileser III confirmed the pro-Assyrian Hoshea as Israel's last king.[12]

Sometime after 725,[13] Hoshea broke faith with his Assyrian overlord, Shalmaneser V, by concluding a rebellious alliance with the Egyptian court.[14] Despite

centers. Tadmor, "Campaigns," p. 264, reasons that these lines relate a further attack in the vicinity of Ṣimirra. If so, then in 734 B.C.E., Tiglath-pileser marched unmolestingly through Israel's coastal holdings, directly to Gaza. (A new conjecture on the involvement of Hiram of Tyre in these battles was put forward by this writer in JCS 25 [1973], 97 n. 11.)

[10] A new study by B. Oded, "Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordania after the Palestine Campaign of Tiglath-pileser III," JNES 29 (1970), 177-86, posits the division of Gilead into "four Assyrian administrative units:" Gal'aza, Ṭab'el, Gidir, and Hamat (pp. 179ff.). This idea, an elaboration of Forrer's suggestion in *Provinzeinteilung*, pp. 64f., of a split-up of "the enlarged Gal'aza province" after 690 B.C.E., appears tenuous both textually and geographically. No "province of Ṭab'el" or "territorial administrative unit" named Gidir is known from Assyrian sources, Nimrud letter ND. 2773 notwithstanding. This undated document speaks of Ṭab'el and Gidir in the most general terms; both locations are defined merely by the logographic determinative KUR *mātu*, "land." Besides, Oded's geographic definitions would have us draw overlapping borders, especially with reference to Hamat and Gidir. If Hamat "covered roughly the same area as Solomon's district of Mahanaim" (p. 181), then it would have included both Gidir and Ṭab'el. See Kallai, *Tribes of Israel*, pp. 55f.

It seems better to maintain the traditional view of Assyrian administration in Israelite Trans-Jordan: one province, Gal'aza, with its capital at Ramoth-Gilead or Hamath. Cf. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, p. 331 n. 114 and especially the critique of A. Alt, KS 2, p. 204.

[11] Cf. works of Aharoni and Tadmor, cited in n. 7, for elaboration.

[12] Cf. 2 Kgs 15:30; Rost, *Tigl. III*, III R 10, 2, 17-18; ND. 4301 +, rev. 10'-12' (=*Iraq* 18 [1956], 126.) Oppenheim, ANET, p. 283b, incorrectly supplies the name [Menahem] in this Assyrian inscription, rather than that of Hanno, the Gazaite. Cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns," p. 264, and Wiseman in D. Winton Thomas, *Documents from Old Testament Times* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1958), p. 55.

[13] The chronology in this section follows that of H. Tadmor in his comprehensive study of the fall of Samaria in *JCS* 12 (1958) 33-40.

[14] 2 Kgs 17:4 tells of messengers sent by Hoshea to "So, king of Egypt." The identification of So with Sib'u, the Egyptian military commander mentioned in inscriptions from Sargon's reign, long acknowledged by historians (e.g., Noth, *History*, 262 n. 3; Bright, *History*, 258; Tadmor, in *JCS* 12 [1958] 38 n. 144, summarized the pertinent literature), has been recently subject to criticism.

Borger, *JNES* 19 (1960) 49-53, proved that the name Sib'u should be read Re'e (=SIB-*'e*), the logographic writing reflecting a scribal pun on the commander's behavior in battle. We are told that: *kī rē'u* (LÚ.SÍB) *ša ṣēnāšu ḫabṭa ēdānuššu ipparšidma* (Lie.

Hoshea's early capture during the ensuing Assyrian reprisals, Samaria did not surrender until the fall of 722, after a three-year siege.[15] Shalmaneser's death shortly thereafter left matters in Samaria unsettled. The new Assyrian king, Sargon II, determined to put an end to Samaria's continuing insurrection.[16] In 720 he retook the city, deported 27,290 of its residents,[17] and reorganized it as a royal provincial center.[18]

Only scattered details are known of Samaria's history under Assyrian rule. Assyria's holdings in Israel may have been consolidated around the new Samerina province,[19] from which foreign governors[20] and administrators[21] exacted "tax and tribute"[22] from the mixed population resettled in Israel. After Sargon's

Sargon, 55), "like a shepherd whose flock had been stolen, he fled alone." Cf. ANET, p. 285 n. 7. Following this demise of Sib'u, Goedicke, BASOR 171 (1963) 64-66, identified the Egyptian conspirator who aided Hoshea as Tefnakhte, whose residence was the city of Sais, in Egyptian *S 3 w* and in Hebrew *So*ʾ. W. F. Albright wrapped up these discussions in a small note, *BASOR* 171 (1963) 66, in which he reconstructs the Hebrew text behind the present one: 2 Kgs 17:4 — *ʾl sʾ* <*ʾl*> *mlk mṣrym*, "to So <to> the king of Egypt."

[15] Cf. 2 Kgs 17:4-5, 18:9-10. According to Tadmor (En. Miq. 4, cols. 287-89, *s.v.* "Chronology"), the seige lasted two calendar years.

[16] Samaria, "governed by the generals of the army or by the city elders" between 724/3-720 B.C.E. (so, Tadmor, *JCS* 12 [1958] 37), joined the Assyrian provinces in north Syria in rebellion upon Sargon's accession. See Nimrud Prism D, col. 4:25-29 (= Gadd, *Iraq* 16 [1954] 179).

[17] Variant: 27,280.

[18] The full text of Sargon's re-organization is discussed above, pp. 49-51.

[19] Y. Aharoni thinks that the Du'ru-Dor province was re-united with Samaria after 720 B.C.E., since no independent eponym from Dor is known. Moreover, a fragmentary Esarhaddon inscription (Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 76, 16) associates the coastal territories with Samaria, as was the case in pre-Assyrian times. The mention of Dor in a late list of imperial centers (cf. Forrer, *Provinzeinteilung*, pp. 52ff.) may mean that Dor continued to serve as a secondary administrative district within the larger Samerina province. These speculations are developed in Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 334. The Esarhaddon text, at the base of Aharoni's study, reads, in Borger's edition: *āl Apqu ša paṭi māt Samen*[*a* • x (?)], "Aphek, which belongs to the territory of Samen[a] (Simeon ?? Samaria ??)" The designation Simeon must be excluded from consideration; the tribal territory of Simeon in the Negev (at some distance from Aphek) was absorbed by the Judah tribe at an early date (cf. Kallai, *Tribes of Israel*, p. 295). Tadmor collated the line in question (November, 1963) and kindly informs me that the reading, in this "badly written draft of an inscription," is definitely: *sa-me* <*ri-*> ⌜*na*.⌝

[20] Two Samaritan governors appear as eponyms: Nabû-kīna-uṣur in 690 B.C.E. (cf. *RLA* 2, 451) and Nabû-šar-aḫḫēšu in 646 B.C.E. (cf. M. Falkner, "Die Eponymen der spätassyrischen Zeit," AfO 17 [1954-55] 113-14, 118).

[21] In addition to the *šaknu*-official appointed by Sargon (see above, p. 50), a Samarian LÚ.GAL.URU.MEŠ, *rab ālāni*, "overseer of several cities or estates" (cf. CAD A 1, 389f.) named Aya-aḫḫē is known from a tablet fragment discovered at Samaria. See, G. A. Reisner, C. S. Fisher, and D. G. Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria* 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), p. 247, and vol. 2, pl. 56b. Alt speculated on the nature of the transaction recorded on this payment note in "Briefe aus der assyrischen Kolonie in Samaria," *PJB* 37 (1941) 103f.

[22] The Sargon annals record: *hilṭu mandattu kī ša Aššurī ēmidsunūti* (Lie, *Sargon*, 17; cf. above, p. 50), "I imposed tax and tribute upon them just as if they were Assyrians." The Sargon Display Inscription refers to the impost as *biltu šarri maḫrē ēmidsunūti* (Winckler, *Sargon*, 100.24-25), "I imposed the tax of the(ir) former king upon them." Of the two formulaic expressions, the former annal remark is no doubt historically more reliable. Reorganization of Samaria must have included revision of the former tax structure, so as to assess both new and foreign settlers and those Israelites not deported.

initial colonization in 720, new refugees were periodically transferred to Samaria,[23] either in replacement of men impressed into military service[24] or in an attempt to discipline restive colonists.[25] The upshot of these incessant transfers was a shift in the ethnic make-up of north Israel in favor of the foreign settlers. While our sources do not tell of a systematic Assyrian depopulation of the Ephraimite hill country, it seems clear that the native Israelites left on the land were not, as Noth contended, "numerically much greater" than the "foreign upper class" settlers.[26] The opposite was the case. Sargon's exile of 27,290 Israelites from Samaria was but the final stage in a bitter four-year struggle to subdue the rebellious city.[27] This extended engagement of the Assyrian army, meanwhile, must have had a devastating effect on the Samarian countryside — a fact inferable from the annal report of Sennacherib's campaign, of shorter duration, against

[23] Assyrian annals tell of one additional deportation to Samaria in Sargon's seventh year of "Tamudi, Ibadidi, Marsimani, and Hayapa — distant, steppe-dwelling Arabs" (Lie, *Sargon*, 120-123).

Biblical sources record that both Esarhaddon (Ezra 4:2) and Asnappar–Ashurbanipal (4:9f) brought additional settlers (on the identification of Asnappar, see B. Mazar, En. Miq. 1, cols. 480-81). Likewise, an anonymous "king of Assyria" settled people from Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim in Samaria (cf. 2 Kgs 17:24). This king cannot be identified with Sargon, considering that Sargon styled himself a patron of Babylonian culture. See Tadmor, in *History of the Jewish People* 1 (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1969), p. 137. Either Sennacherib (so, Tadmor, *loc. cit.*) or Ashurbanipal (so, Winckler, *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, 98-101; Olmstead, *Western Asia*, 73 n. 39; and Streck, VAB 7, cccIxiv and cccIxviii) may be the Biblical "king of Assyria," both monarchs having exiled Babylonians in large numbers after their respective conquests in 689 B.C.E. and 648 B.C.E. Other views are given by Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (reprint; New York: *KTAV*, 1970) 333ff.; and Montgomery, *Kings*, 472.

That settlers were brought to Samaria from scattered locations throughout Assyria's domain, including southern Babylonia, Elam (?) (cf. G. R. Driver, EI 5 [1958] 19*ff.; and En. Miq. 5, col. 739, *s.v.* "Nibḥaz"), and Syria (on the identification of Sepharvaim with Sibra'in in Ezek 47:16, cf. Albright, *ARI*[5], 222 n. 116; Mazar, *Y*edot* 12 [1945] 99 n. 63), suggests that the deportations listed in 2 Kgs 17:24 resulted from several Assyrian campaigns during the reigns of more than one monarch. On other signs of this listing being part of a late composition, see discussion below, p. 109 n. 75.

[24] ABL 1009, in what looks to be an Assyrian army personnel report, mentions: 4 LÚ.BAN *Samernāya* [m][ ] 1 LÚ.BAN *Samernāya* . . . (rev. 3f.), "4 Samarian archers . . . 1 Samarian archer" among the army units.

[25] See our remarks above, p. 69 n. 25.

[26] Noth, *History*, 262. Noth followed, in part, Alt's formulation (KS 2, 320-23): the Samarian community, a closed political, social and economic unit, was composed solely of foreign upper class elements.

[27] See Kaufmann's earlier observations, to similar effect, *Tol*dot* 4, 187 n. 43.

Judah, which claims over 200,150 (!) persons displaced.[28] Furthermore, that the Samarian province served as the reception center for countless deportees — including persons other than "foreign upper classes," as, e.g., Arab tribesmen[29] — means that areas outside the capital city were availible for resettlement, i.e., cleared of their former residents.[30]

With the last stage of its incorporation into the Assyrian empire accomplished in 720 B.C.E., Israel perished as an independent state, not to be restored even after the withdrawal of Assyria a century later. Whether Israelite territory was actually annexed to Judah during Josiah's rule or not,[31] the impress of Assyria's long rule in Samaria persisted; a Samarian satrapy was established in the territory of the old Neo-Assyrian Samerina province during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.[32]

Accordingly, two distinct phases in Israel's political relations with Assyria are distinguishable: (1) a short period of vassalage, 745-720 B.C.E., during which Israel suffered substantial territorial losses, followed by (2) a century of provincial incorporation which effected the demise of the Israelite polity. If the policies of Assyrian administration executed in Judah were followed in Israel, then vassal Israel should have been free from imperial interference in its cultic

[28] OIP 2, 33:24-27. This remarkable number of exiles was explained away by Ungnad as an attempt by an Assyrian scribe to express "2,150." This smaller number, in turn, supported Ungnad's contention that Sennacherib's campaign to Judah was "seemingly unsuccessful." See, "Die Zahl der von Sanherib deportierten Judäer," ZAW 18 (1942-43), 199-202. But this fails to explain the occasion for such unusual numerical notation, unexampled in other Assyrian annals. While some exaggeration may be suspected at this point, that Sennacherib deported vast numbers of people to perform forced labor on his new capital at Nineveh is creditable. See the remarks of D. Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* (London: British Academy, 1968), 57.

[29] Lie, *Sargon*, 120-123. Cf. above, n. 23. Eph'al doubts that this transfer was accomplished by means of an extensive campaign to the desert reaches, a feat nowhere claimed by Sargon. Rather, a mutually beneficial agreement, re-routing part of the Arabian spice trade to the inner-mountain roads of Palestine, brought nomadic tribesmen to settle the new Assyrian colony. See, *Nomads*, 77f., for the detailed case.

[30] Note that in the Sargon cylinder inscription, the area of resettlement is not limited to the city of Samaria alone (see above, n. 23); *māt bīt Ḫumria*, "Omriland" in its entirety was open to the nomads. See Lyon, *Sargon*, p. 4, line 20. See further Kaufmann's thoroughgoing critique of both Alt and Noth, *Tol'dot* 4, 172-74. Alt had failed to consider the Assyrian reports of mass exiles, from sundry locations, set to constructing new ports and cities, often for their own resettlement. Cf. von Soden's remarks, AO 37 (1938) 38, attributing the eventual downfall of the empire to this extensive deportation policy.

[31] See above, p. 71.

[32] Neo-Babylonian administration in Palestine as discussed by A. Alt, in "Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums," KS 2, 327-31, posits Samarian control of large areas of Judah, so as to explain the friction between Samaria and Jerusalem in the Persian period. Cf. also Noth, *History*, 288f.; and Bright, *History*, 324 and 347; and the criticism of Y. Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 4, 177ff. Samaria under Persian rule may have experienced some revisions in its local autonomy; see K. Galling, "Syrien in der Politik der Achämeniden," AO 36/3-4 (1937), 9-27.

life, while provincial Samaria should have experienced the introduction of foreign cults. We proceed to investigate these suppositions.

Religion in North Israel

Little information concerning Israelite religion during the quarter century of Israel's Assyrian vassalage is available from the data reported in 2 Kings. The editor of Kings relentlessly rehearsed the historic "sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat," i.e., rebellion against the Davidic dynasty and abandonment of the Jerusalem sanctuary (cf. 1 Kgs 12.25-33), as the sin of all of Israel's kings, save the last one, Hoshea, son of Elah. Of him alone are we told: "He did what was displeasing to YHWH, but not as the kings of Israel who preceded him (2 Kgs 17.2)." The basis for this lenient evaluation of Hoshea can no longer be determined;[33] information on Hoshea's religious activities has apparently been suppressed by the editor.[34] Significantly, however, tradition did record that Hoshea, despite subjection to the Assyrian aegis, exhibited YHWHistic loyalties, however measured.

There is no evidence of Assyrian interference in the Israelite cult prior to the 720 B.C.E. annexation of Samaria. John Gray claims that the service of the heavenly host recorded in 2 Kgs 17.16 is an Assyrian astral cult imposed upon Menahem and Hoshea as a token of Israel's subjection to Assyria.[35] But 17.16, part of an exhaustive Deuteronomistic indictment of Israel (2 Kgs 17.7-23), cannot be considered a true reflection of Israelite practice prior to annexation. The catalog of offenses bears little relation to what is narrated about north Israel throughout Kings. Several of Israel's sins (e.g., 17.17) appear here for the first time and resemble the offenses of Judah's Ahaz and Manasseh. The parallel developments in Judah (17.13), leading to its destruction (17.19-20), are cited as another example of YHWH's justifiable wrath. Finally, unlike other sections of the Deuteronomistic history in which the monarchy bears exclusive responsibility for Israel's doom, these verses denounce popular faithlessness in tones reminiscent of late prophecies. In all, this long passage stands out as an exilic addition to Kings,[36] questionable evidence for pre-720 B.C.E. Israelite practice.

[33] According to T. B. Gittin 68a, "Hoshea abolished those guard-posts which Jeroboam (1) had placed on the roads (to Jerusalem) to prevent Israel from making pilgrimage." Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 2, 266, conjectures that the verse refers to the removal of the Beth-el calves, since they were absent from their shrines at the time of the Josianic reforms (cf. 2 Kgs 23:15). On the whereabouts of the calves, cf. our alternate suggestions below, pp. 104f.

[34] Cf. Montgomery, *Kings*, 464i. Gray's supposition that this "mitigation of regular criticism" stems from Hoshea's neglect of cultic matters due to his over-involvement in politics, can hardly be correct (*Kings*², 641). The Kings historian would not have excused inattention to religious duties, one of his criteria for evaluating a monarch's reign.

[35] J. Gray, *Kings*², 648.

[36] Similar conclusions are reached by Montgomery, *Kings*, 470; Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 6 and 85; Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 301; and Gray, *Kings*², 649f.

But even if we were to allow that the allusion to astral cults in Israel (2 Kgs 17.16) derived from reliable information, Assyrian imposition would still not be its source. Prior to Assyria's move into Syria-Palestine under Tiglath-pileser III, the prophet Amos had already inveighed against Israelite veneration of Mesopotamian stellar deities, Sakkut and Kaiwan (Amos 5.26).[37] The Amos citation has been unjustly suspect of being "either very late, i.e., after 722 B.C., or a late redaction of an earlier text which had become unintelligible."[38] Israel's reassertion of political dominion over Damascus and Hamath during the final years of Jeroboam II (cf. 2 Kgs 14.28)[39] exposed Israel anew[40] to mid-eighth century B.C.E. Aramaean culture, a culture suffused with Mesopotamian elements.[41] We suspect that astral cults popular in north Syria penetrated Israelite practice through Aramaean mediation,[42] as was the case a century later in Judah.[43] Consequently, as an independent vassal state, Israel was free of any cultic obligations.

The first direct cultic influence exerted by Assyria upon Israel can be noted after Samaria's capture and occupation. As with other localities, Sargon reports that in Samaria:

ilāni tiklīšun šalla[tiš] amnu[44]
I counted the gods in whom they trusted as spoil.

Gadd, in his publication of the Nimrud annal text, found these words to be "interesting evidence for the polytheism of Israel."[45] One need not wonder, however, at Sargon's presuming that some of the images removed from Samaria were gods of the city. Certainly the prized calves of the Beth-el sanctuary, considered by Israel to be "the visible pedestal on which the invisible Yahweh

It would appear that in formulating this passage on Israel's sins, the exilic editor was inspired by his own description of Judah's (i.e., Manasseh's) sins.

[37] Early discussion on the identification of these gods is summarized in Harper, *Amos and Hoshea* (ICC, 1905) 139-41; cf. also E. A. Speiser, "A Note on Amos 5:25," BASOR 108 (1947) 5-6; and T. L. Fenton, En. Miq. 5, col. 1037, *s.v.* "Sikkut." The earliest identification of Kaiwan as an astral deity is found in Ibn Ezra's comment, *ad loc.*

[38] Harper, *Amos-Hosea*, 138; similar evaluations in Fenton (see preceeding note); and Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 3, 73 n. 27.

[39] On dating this event, see M. Haran, "Rise and Fall of the Empire of Jeroboam Ben Joash," VT 17 (1967), 278-84.

[40] Benjamin Mazar briefly touches upon "the influence of the eclectic culture of the Armaean empire" in Israel during the last half of the ninth century B.C.E. in Bib Arch *Reader* 2, 143; see his citations in n. 30.

[41] E.g., the parties to the Aramaic Sefiré treaty invoke at least five pairs of Mesopotamian deities, along with other West-Semitic deities. Cf. KAI 222 A, 8-10; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, 33-38, for identifications of deities and literature.

[42] See H. Tadmor, En. Miq. 3, col. 777.

[43] Cf. above, p. 87. As in Judah, Israel's newly-imported star-gods were probably incorporated into native astral cults. See above, pp. 85f.

[44] *Iraq* 16 (1954) 179, col. 4:32-33.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

stood,"[46] could easily have been mistaken by the Assyrians for Israelite gods.[47] The routine Assyrian annal remark might be better interpreted as the realization of Hosea's dire prediction:

The dwellers of Samaria will fear for
the calves of Beth-aven. . . .
Even as it is carried off as tribute
to Assyria, to the "great" king.[48]

Cultic changes, beyond the pillage of the Beth-el sanctuary, were especially felt in Israel with Sargon's reorganization of Samaria as a royal center. Expert supervisors trained the new provincials in the duties of Assyrian citizenship—the payment of tax and tribute and the "reverence of god and king."[49] But lest we suppose that the Samaritans henceforth undertook the exclusive worship of "Ashur and the great gods," the biblical narrative in 2 Kgs 17.24ff. shows otherwise. Even though the account exhibits a late Judahite disdain for Samaritan practice, we have no reason to doubt that its description of the religious situation in the Samarian province is "essentially correct."[50]

> Now the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the towns of Samaria in place of the Israelites. They took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns. At the start of their settlement there, they did not revere YHWH, so YHWH sent lions against them, killing a number of them. They sent word[51] to the king of Assyria: The nations whom you have deported and settled in the towns of Samaria are not acquainted with the customs of the local god.[52] So, he sent lions against them, and now they are killing a number of them; because they are not acquainted with the customs of the local god.
>
> So the king of Assyria ordered: Transfer one of the priests whom you deported

[46] See W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), 299 and discussion there; cf. also, Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 2, 260-61.

[47] Inasmuch as excavations at Beth-el have uncovered no eighth and seventh century B.C.E. destruction, the city must have peacefully surrendered to Sargon. Cf. Kelso, "The Second Campaign at Bethel, BASOR 137 (1955) 5-9, and IDB 1, 392. Nonetheless, earlier statements concerning the violent Assyrian takeover of Beth-el, e.g., Albright, *ARI*[5], 165f., are now incorporated in the final excavation report. See AASOR 39 (1968) 37; cf. p. 51. The archaeological evidence is apparently capable of equivocal interpretation.

[48] Hos 10:5-6. On Beth-aven as a pejorative for Beth-el, cf. Medieval commentaries *ad loc.* and Harper, *Amos-Hosea*, 263. On rendering *mlk yrb* as "'Great' king," a title of Assyrian royalty, cf. Harper, 277f.; and H. W. Wolff, *Hosea* (BK, 1961) 222, who points to *mlk rb* in Sefiré. See Fitzmyer, *Sefiré Inscriptions*, 61.

[49] The full Sargon text concerning Samaria is presented and discussed above, pp. 49-51. (Gray's revised commentary *Kings*[2], 644, still presents the dated translation of this passage found in older textbooks.)

[50] So James D. Purvis, *The Samaritan Pentateuch and The Origin of the Samaritan Sect* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 94. Purvis' study contains a comprehensive survey of the conflicting Samaritan and Jewish claims relating to the sect's origins. See, especially, pp. 8 n. 12, and 88-118. For suggested date of composition of 2 Kgs 17:24ff., cf. n. 75 below.

[51] Lit. "they said;" cf. Burney, *Notes on Kings*, p. 336, "Impersonal; 'it was told.'"

[52] Lit. "god of [illegible]"

from there. Let him[53] go and live there, and instruct them in the ways of the local god. Accordingly, one of the priests who had been deported from Samaria came to live in Beth-el; he instructed[54] them how to revere YHWH.

Now each nation made its own gods. They set (them) up in the shrines of the cult sites which the Samaritans had built, each nation in the towns in which they lived. The people of Babylon made Succothbenot; the people of Cutha made Nergal; the people of Hamath made Ashema. The Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burn their children in fire to Adrammelek and Anammelek, gods of Sepharvaim. They (also) revered YHWH; so they made some of their number[55] priests who sacrificed for them at the shrines of the cult sites. Thus, they revered YHWH and (at the same time) worshiped their own gods after the custom of the countries from where they had been deported.

Early in the Assyrian occupation of north Israel,[56] the foreign settlers in Samaria, made fearful by the ravages of wild beasts in the desolated countryside, which they ascribed to the anger of the local god, set out to adopt the cult of the Israelite YHWH. Under royal mandate, a former Israelite priest re-established the sanctuary at Beth-el,[57] which was to survive Assyria's rule in Israel.[58] As Paul recently pointed out, the language of the royal order repatriating the Beth-el priest — "let him go . . . and instruct them in the ways of the local god" (2 Kgs 17.27) — is strikingly reminiscent of the original Assyrian decree concerning the city's resettlement — "I had them trained in proper conduct," i.e., "to revere god and king" — and argues for the credibility of the biblical narrative.[59] But this terminological similarity will not support Paul's suggestion that the biblical order shows that Sargon was "effecting a religious homogenization of the disparate elements of the populace" based upon "the correct cult of the native gods."[60] If anything, it was the original Assyrian resettlement order charging

[53] Hebrew: "them." On the alternation in numbers in the Hebrew text and the versions, cf. Montgomery, *Kings*, 473 and 479.

[54] Cf. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1923), § 121, gN for the paraphrastic verbal constructions in vss. 25, 28, 29, 32, 33 (a feature of late Hebrew).

[55] For this rendering of *miqsōtām*, cf. Gen 47:2; and E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB, 1964), *ad loc.*; A. Ehrlich, *Mikrâ* 1, 125.

[56] As pointed out above, n. 23, the list of deportees in 2 Kgs 17:24 is a composite record, reflecting the activities of several Assyrian kings. In the post-Sennacherib age, Esarhaddon exhibited particular toleration for foreign cults. See above, pp. 38-39. If the responsive Assyrian king referred to in 2 Kgs 17:26 be Esarhaddon, then the indeterminate wording "at the start of their settlement" (17:25) would refer to the period between 689-680 B.C.E.

[57] Did this restoration at Beth-el include the return of pillaged images (e.g., the calves), as was the practice of Assyrian kings in so many instances? Cf. above, pp. 74ff. It is certain that Josiah, a half-century later, did not encounter the calves; had they been in place, a notice in 2 Kgs 23:19 would have been in order. Cf. the remarks of H. W. Wolff, "Das Ende des Heiligtums in Bethel," in *Archäologie und Altes Testament, Festschrift für Kurt Galling* (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr: 1970), 289.

[58] See 2 Kgs 23:15.

[59] S. M. Paul, "Sargon's Administrative Diction in 2 Kings 17:27," JBL 88 (1969), 73.

disciplined Assyrian citizenship (i.e., "proper conduct") which attempted this kind of homogeneity.[61] Rather, the biblical passage accords with liberal Assyrian religious policies, which demanded of deportees acknowledgment of the superiority of Ashur but which, all the while, took little or no offense at private or public worship of other deities.[62]

Once granted leave by the Nineveh authorities, a motley of Assyrian, Aramaean, and Israelite cults sprang up among the settlers in Samaria,[63] though only the activities of strict YHWHists merit the attention of the biblical historians from this point on. We hear of north Israelites from the Galilean tribes of Asher, Manasseh, Zebulun, and Issachar — "the remnant that has escaped from the hands of the Assyrian kings" — accepting Hezekiah's invitation to join in the passover ceremonies in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30.1-11, 18).[64] Ephramite

of the Jewish People 1, 137. We have dealt with the problem of identifying the "Assyrian king" in 2 Kgs 17:24, assumed by Paul to be Sargon, above in n. 23.

[61] Paul's discussion overlooked the Assyrian text concerning Samaria altogether, relying solely upon the Dūr-Sharruken passage; see above, pp. 49ff.

[62] Our interpretation of 2 Kgs 17:24ff. obviates Albright's suggestion (*ARI*[5], 166) that the Assyrians saw the restored Beth-el sanctuary "as a check" to revived interest in the Jerusalem Temple. Cf. Albright, *Biblical Period*, 77 and 80; and adoptions by Bright, *History*, 266; J. Myers, *II Chronicles*, xxf. This view would have us assume that Assyria considered Hezekiah's cultic reforms (2 Kgs 18:3-6) a threat to its rule in Samaria. But Assyrian texts evidence no antagonism towards foreign cults, and political activity hostile to the empire was always countered with military force, not religious activism. Besides, in 2 Kgs 17:24ff., the initiative for a YHWH cult proceeded from the local residents, not the king.

[63] Perhaps we should include local Canaanite cults in this listing; note the reported presence of an Asherah pole in Beth-el, 2 Kgs 23:15.

Porten summarizes the scholarly attempts at identification of the gods worshipped at Samaria in *Archives from Elephantine*, 171-73. To his bibliography add, G. R. Driver, "Geographical Problems," *EI* 5 (1958) 18*-20*; J. T. Milik, *Biblica* 48 (1967) 556ff.

[64] Myers, *II Chronicles*, 177f., points to Sargon's preoccupation with rebels to the north and east as providing the opportune time for Hezekiah's appeal to Israel. E. W. Todd, in "The Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah," *SJTh* 9 (1956) 288f., justifies Hezekiah's move into Israel by reviving T. H. Robinson's earlier suggestion (*History*, 380 and 398) that Sargon had ceded parts of Israel's southern territory to Judah after 720 B.C.E. as reward for "the fidelity of Ahaz" to the empire.

Explications of this sort labor under the assumption that Assyria would have taken offense at native religious activities. On the contrary, so long as Hezekiah remained a loyal vassal and with Samaria firmly under Assyrian control (note the settlement of Arab tribes in Samaria in Sargon's seventh year; Lie, *Sargon*, 120), there is no reason to suppose that Assyria would have shown concern. Moreover, Robinson's conjecture in unfounded. He found evidence for Judah's northern expansion in the large number of cities — 46 — taken by Sennacherib from Hezekiah in 701 B.C.E. But we know little concerning the tally procedures of Assyrian scribes. The number of cities captured in Urartu during Sargon's eighth campaign are no less startling. E.g., cf. TCL 3, 239, 272, 286, 305. Cf. additional remarks of Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*[2], 150-52.

On the unusual one-month postponement in celebrating the passover, see Talmon's suggestive remarks concerning Hezekiah's "concession" to north Israelite cult traditions in "Divergencies in Calendar-Reckoning in

contributions count in the financing of the temple repairs undertaken in Josiah's eighteenth year (2 Chr 34.9; cf. 2 Kgs 22.4). Josiah carries his cultic reforms to Samaria and its towns (cf. 2 Kgs 23.15, 19-20; 2 Chr 34.6).[65] Even after Jerusalem's fall, eighty mourning men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria set out to offer gifts at the site of the destroyed YHWH temple (Jer 41.5).[66] Nowhere is the suggestion made that the Israelite remnant adopted foreign cults during the Assyrian occupation,[67] nor do we hear anything further as to the development of syncretistic Samaritanism.

This silence is astonishing considering the friction which developed in the fifth century B.C.E. between the returning Judahite exiles and their Samaritan neighbors. The Samaritans present themselves as religiously akin to the Judahites, but are rebuffed in their efforts to join in rebuilding the YHWH temple (cf. Ezra 4.1-3). Scholars explain this rejection of the Samaritans as based upon the returnees' religious antagonism toward the "mixed breed" (cf. 2 Kgs 17.24-41) who were "not true worshipers of Yahweh."[68] Passages in Chronicles critical of northern Israel before the exile allegedly reflect the same postexilic antagonism.[69] But the foreign cults of 2 Kings 17 never become an issue for rejection in the Ezra-Nehemiah documents; that the Samaritans "look to" YHWH as their God is never disputed. Moreover, the Chronicler addresses north Israelites as "brothers" of the Judahites (cf. 2 Chr 11.4; 28.8), who, having strayed from "the god of their fathers" (30.7), are called upon to return to YHWH. How can fifth century B.C.E. Samaritans, considered "outsiders" excluded from Israel's community, be thought to be lurking behind the Chronicler's account?[70]

Martin Noth's explanation for the Samaritan repulse proves to be equally unfounded. Noth postulated:

> The old antithesis between north (Israel) and south (Judah) continued below the surface (throughout the exilic period) and broke out again when plans were made for the rebuilding of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. . . . The inhabitants of the neighboring provinces, in which the foreign upper classes had gradually been absorbed or were in the process of being absorbed by the local Israelite population, were regarded by the Judaeans, who had had no foreign upper class imposed on them, as cultically unclean.[71]

[65] H. W. Wolff would see 2 Kgs 23:4 as evidence for the desecration of the Beth-el altar among the earliest acts of Josiah in the North. See Wolff, *Das Ende des Heiligtums in Bethel*, 289f. But Wolff pays insufficient attention to the verbal peculiarities in clause 4b; on which see GKC § 112 pp. and n. 3, and the comments of Montgomery, *Kings*, 529 and Gray, *Kings*[2], 732.

[66] M. Noth observes (*The Laws in The Pentateuch and Other Studies* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967] 264) that this passage "surely implies that even before the catastrophe" Israelites considered "the Jerusalem sanctuary as the official central sanctuary," thus authenticating the Chronicler's information.

[67] Josiah's purge in Samaria was directed at established Israelite heterodoxies; e.g., Jeroboam's altar (2 Kgs 23:15); rural cult sites "built by Israel's kings (23:19)," not newly-imported cults.

[68] So, J. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (AB, 1965) 35; cf. also Galling, *Chronik*, 194.

[69] Cf., for example, Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 300; Galling, *Chronik*, 160; Bright, *History*, 266; and von Rad, *OT Theology* 1, 348 n. 3: "It is a very obvious assumption that Chronicles was interested in the delimitation of the community from the Samaritans, and that it wanted to prove that the cultic community at the Jerusalem Temple was the true Israel."

But the Samaritans did not present themselves to Zerubbabel as descendants of the old indigenous Israelite population. By their own admission, they were foreigners (cf. Ezra 4.2). The Samaritan sect ultimately did lay claim to an ancient pedigree dating back to premonarchic Israel; but nothing in Samaritan tradition points to its acquaintance with or development from pre-exilic north Israelite traditions.[72] After all, Israel's majority status, along with the hegemony of the Israelite cult, effectively had come to an end with the Assyrian occupation,[73] leaving the hodge-podge of foreign settlers in Samaria[74] to come upon YHWH-ism in a most unconventional manner.

Yehezkel Kaufmann explains the disappearance of pagan Samaritanism as the effect of two hundred years of settlement in the land of Israel which led to the "Judaization" of the Assyrian deportees' formal cultic practices. That they were nonetheless rejected by the returnees Kaufmann accounts for by the fact that with respect to their national-historical identity, the Samaritans remained non-Israelites (cf. Ezra 4.2). As religious converts, the Samaritans appeared on the scene with their demand for equal recognition within the Jerusalem cult community prior to Israel's systemization of a procedure for religious conversion.[75] Alternatively, M. Weinfeld[76] has argued that the rejection of the Samar-

[71] Noth, *History*, 353, cf. 291-92.

[72] See the independent, complementary analyses of Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 4, 188, and Purvis, *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect*, 92-94.

[73] The hostile reception Hezekiah's Passover call received in Ephraim (cf. 2 Chr 30:10-11) may reflect the predominantly foreign ethnic make-up of the Samarian province. The Galilean Israelites, left intact by Tiglath-pileser III (cf. above, p. 99), looked to Jerusalem to provide the cultic continuity upset by the loss of Beth-el; while the Israelite minority left in Samaria responded with scorn to the Judahite invitation — apparently an indication of their prompt absorption by the more numerous colonists.

[74] Cf. our remarks above, p. 101. Alt's attempt to identify the *'am hā'āreṣ* in the post-exilic documents as foreign "ruling classes" (KS 2, 321 n. 2; followed by Bright, *History*, 349 and 354; and Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, xxvii), is refuted by Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 4, 184f., 519f.; and now, Tadmor, *JWH* 11 (1968) 66-68.

[75] Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 4, 197-207. At this point, we would venture a date for the 2 Kgs 17:24-33 account. The last Assyrian settlement noted is that of Ashurbanipal, *ca.* 643 B.C.E. (see above, p. 101 n. 23); while the latest date for the presence of a syncretistic cult in Samaria must be set prior to the return of the exiles, *ca.* 538 B.C.E. Only one occasion during this hundred-year period seems appropriate for expressing the animus towards Samaritanism as found in 2 Kgs 17:24ff. — the reforms of Josiah. The exceptional slaughter of north Israelite rural priests (contrast 2 Kgs 23:5 and 19) may indicate an intemperate handling of pagan Samaritans after the manner of the *herem* extirpation of the aboriginal Cannanites. 2 Kgs 17:24ff. precedes Josiah's purge, but not by much. On 2 Kgs 23:19, cf. Montgomery, *Kings*, p. 534; and Kaufmann, *Collected Works*, pp. 165f.

[76] M. Weinfeld, "Universalism and Particularism in the Period of Exile and Restora-

itans (and Ezra's later expulsion of foreign wives)[77] stemmed not from Israel's unpreparedness to receive converts, but from the exclusivist ideology of strict "Torahists," who laid stress upon Israel's election as YHWH's "holy people."[78]

For our purposes, the adoption by the Samaritans of the Israelite cultus to the ultimate exclusion of both private and state pagan cults is significant, for it indirectly confirms what we have described as liberal Assyrian religious policies. Samaria's provincial annexation and century-long occupation successfully dismembered the Israelite body politic, so that Israel as an independent state did not reappear even after the withdrawal of Assyrian troops and the collapse of the empire. The rump Israelite cult, on the other hand, reintroduced into Samaria to serve the needs of the Assyrian colonists and unhampered by imperial structures, endured the occupation, eventually supplanting diverse pagan cults.[79]

[77] Cf. Ezra 9-10; Neh 13:1-3.

[78] Weinfeld, "Universalism," 237-38. Weinfeld identified a second ideological party within post-Exilic Judaism: prophetic universalists, who anxiously announced salvation to all pagan converts. But the demarcation between the exclusivists and the universalists apparently was not as sharp as Weinfeld would have us believe. Some priests and levites did not hesitate marrying foreign women (cf. Ezra 9:1, 10:18ff.), and at least one prophet, Malachi, urged their expulsion (cf. Mal 2:11; see the remarks of Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 4, 370-71).

Note, too, that the exclusivist demands all issued from recent repatriates to Judah, e.g., Zerubbabel (Ezra 4:3), Ezra and Nehemiah. Perhaps the rigors of the exilic experience engendered a degree of ethnicism among these early "Zionists," which, however, seems to have dissipated once restoration was accomplished.

[79] No small part in converting the Samarians to YHWHism is due to the continued presence of the Jerusalem sanctuary and Judah's royal interest in the affairs of the former Israelite state.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A new picture of Neo-Assyrian imperial policy concerning religion and cult emerges from this investigation, superseding the older one drawn from the juxtaposition of Assyria and the manner of imperial Rome: *cuius regio eius religio* ("as to the master, so to his religion") (see above, pp. 2-4).

"Ashur and the great gods" were not the only divine authors of Assyria's victories; the Assyrian conqueror acknowledged that local foreign gods, in control of the destinies of their adherents, were also active in Assyria's behalf. The traditional Mesopotamian literary motif of divine abandonment was incorporated in annalistic boasts that disaffected gods of the enemy had stopped protecting their devotees, thus exposing them to the onslaught of Assyrian armies.[1] Rather than vaunt the impotence of foreign gods before the might of Ashur — to the additional discomfiture of defeated populations — Assyria was satisfied with the political submission of its subjects; it did not interfere with the continued performance of local cults (see above, pp. 11-21).

The literary motif of divine abandonment was translated into reality by the transfer of the divine images of defeated nations to Assyria.[2] Such transfer did not effect an abrogation of local cults; for once the native priesthood managed to rationalize the destruction and take-over of its homeland, the interrupted cult was resumed, with or without the exiled cult statue (see above, pp. 33-34). Public recognition of Assyria's political suzerainty by the vanquished, which took the form of ceremonious surrender and the avowal of subject status, was usually sufficient to obtain the restoration of the exiled statues to their shrines (see above, pp. 34-37).

[1] Biblical tradition recounts a striking illustration of the Assyrian utilization of the abandonment motif in the first of Rabshakeh's speeches to the men of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:25): "Moreover, is it without YHWH that I have come up against this place to destroy it? YHWH said to me: Go up against this land and destroy it." Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 84, finds the Rabshakeh's argument reflective of a theology "so peculiar to Isaiah and so foreign to any Near-Eastern pattern that the issue of dependency upon Isaianic tradition cannot be avoided." However, our identification of Assyrian propagandistic use of native rationalizations of defeat furnishes an adequate Assyrian background to this speech.

The biblical citation is the only example known so far of the abandonment motif employed in Assyrian diplomatic disputation. But then, our knowledge of the disputation pattern is limited to a single cuneiform reference; cf. Saggs, *Iraq* 17 (1955) 23ff. (cited by Childs, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81).

[2] See above, pp. 22-25. Capture of statues was evidently selective, affecting only the enemy's principal shrines.

There is no evidence, textual or pictorial, to suggest that Assyria subjected native cults to regulation or that it interfered in any way with customary rites. On the contrary, Esarhaddon boasted of housing numerous divine statues in comfortable quarters "befitting their divinity," until he could complete plans for their repatriation. Only in the case of the Arab statues did we find cuneiform inscriptions, proclaiming the might of Assyria's god and king, engraved on foreign cult objects (above, pp. 35-37). But these very same Arab gods were the beneficiaries of handsome gifts from both Essarhaddon and Ashurbanipal — "studded red-gold stars" sent in gratitude to the Arabian Ishtar, Atarsamain. There are even suggestions that Assyria's rulers endowed sacrifices to non-Assyrian gods, to be offered by local rulers in the name of the overlord, in all likelihood accompanied by invocations of divine blessing upon Assyria (see above, pp. 39-40).

While Nineveh extended official recognition to foreign gods (above, pp. 46-49, esp. nn. 37-38), it also required subject peoples to acknowledge the majesty of Assyria's "great gods." However, only in territories formally annexed as provinces was an Assyrian cult introduced, the planting of "Ashur's weapon" in the provincial center serving as its focal point (above, pp. 53-55). Provincials were expected to bear the tax burdens for the upkeep of palace and temple, just as if they were native-born Assyrians. Unfortunately, our sources give no indication of the role provincials played in the imported Assyrian cults; though whatever that role may have been, native cults seem to have remained unaffected (above, pp. 55, 105-107). We may suppose that with the expansion of the Assyrian empire, Ashur's domain expanded as well, so that in areas "made over into Assyria," Ashur became the recognized head of a pantheon that now encompassed new foreign gods.[3]

Such cultic impositions obtained only within the territorial confines of the Assyrian state; vassal states bore no cultic obligations whatsoever (see above, pp. 55-56). Alliance with Assyria demanded of vassals unwavering loyalty in political and economic matters, and any trespass of loyalty oaths (*adû*) incurred immediate punishment. But there is no record of the imposition of Assyrian cults upon vassal states. The occasional presence of the royal stele in these territories merely served to mark the outer reaches of Assyria's political influence and did not signify the inauguration of a royal cult, an idea itself foreign to Assyria (see above, pp. 56-60).

[3] Whether foreign gods were identified as manifestations of Assyrian gods is not certain. See our remarks above, p. 20 n. 52 and p. 40 n. 110.

Earlier, New Kingdom Egypt had not only experienced the penetration of cults of Syrian gods who had "supported" its Asiatic conquests, but also identified Asiatic gods with their Egyptian counterparts. After several centuries of contact, even mythical concepts freely cross-fertilized the two distinct divine realms. See the latest survey discussion by Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten, Probleme der Ägyptologie* 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967).

The Neo-Assyrian empire, on the other hand, may have been too short-lived for such divine fusion to have fully developed

Biblical narratives of the Neo-Assyrian age provide complementary evidence of the tolerant Assyrian religious policies, both in the provinces and in vassal states. Judah, for the better part of a century (*ca.* 740-640 B.C.E.), bore the onerous yoke of Assyrian vassalage (see above, pp. 65-72), but never experienced the imposition of Assyrian cults. The foreign innovations reported of the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh are attributable to the voluntary adoption by Judah's ruling classes of the prevailing Assyro-Aramaean culture. Pagan cults, whether of Mesopotamian origin (as, e.g., horse dedications to the sun; see above, pp. 86-87) or of Aramaean derivation (as, e.g., Molech child sacrifice; above, pp. 77-83), seem to have reached Palestine through Aramaean mediation, where they were then wedded to local pagan practice. In Judah, disenchantment with YHWHistic tradition, which apparently could not account for the grievous state of affairs after Hezekiah's defeat in 701, abetted the assimilation of such foreign ritual (see above, pp. 94-96).

North Israel was not much different. As with Judah, Israel's short term as an Assyrian vassal passed without the imposition of foreign cults. Even before Assyria's arrival in Palestine, Mesopotamian deities had found their way to Israel's shrines, following upon renewed Israelite contact with the Aramaeans of north Syria during the early eighth century B.C.E. (above, pp. 103-104).

All this changed with the annexation of Samaria in 720 and its transformation into an Assyrian province. The penetration of foreign cults was accelerated, this time at the hands of the Assyrian colonists resettled in Samaria, though once again we found evidence of the non-coercive imperial policy. In addition to displaying the habits of good Assyrian citizenship — "reverence of god and king" — the Samaritans continued to worship their native gods alongside the local YHWH (see above, pp. 105-110).

Once the contention that Assyrian imposition of state cults was the source of Israelite idolatry falls, then several other popular notions are likewise discredited:

(1) The cult reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah can no longer be thought of as expressions of political rebellion directed against Assyrian rule.[4] Nor can Manasseh's reform, according to the Chronicler's report (in itself spurious), be characterized as a "nationalistic revolt . . . accompanied by nationalistic religion."[4a] We may, therefore, reconsider their stated intent as "religious reform," and look for their motivation in what Kaufmann has termed "the spirit of repentance and soulsearching" which took hold in Judah during the recurring crises of the eighth century B.C.E.[5]

[4] Cf., e.g., the remarks of M. Noth, quoted above, p. 4, and the earlier observations of Olmstead, *Assyria*, 214 and 632; *Palestine-Syria*, 464 and 500; and Bright, *History*, 265 and 298.

[4a] So Olmstead, *Palestine-Syria*, 485. Olmstead paid no attention to the literary and historical problems of this episode (2 Chr 33.15-16), and, by inverting the given order of events, re-wrote his source to serve his case. Cf. above, p. 67 n. 15.

[5] See Kaufmann, *Tol'dot* 2, 265-67. This is not to deny that political events had an effect upon religious movements. E.g., Samaria's fall served as an object lesson for the

(2) The assumption of Neo-Babylonian cultic impositions on the analogy of supposed Assyrian models[6] is no longer tenable. A cursory reading of NB historical documents turned up no evidence of such impositions, but a separate study is in order.

Finally, our investigation calls into question critical discounting of the Deuteronomist's charge that Manasseh alone was responsible for Judah's fall. Von Rad, following the earlier formulations of Martin Noth, put it succinctly:

> The Deuteronomist's sole concern is a theological interpretation of the catastrophes which befell the two kingdoms. Consequently, he examined past history page by page with that in view, and the result was quite unambiguous: the fault was not Jahweh's; but for generations Israel had been piling up an ever-increasing burden of guilt and faithlessness, so that in the end Jahweh had had to reject his people.[7]

Manasseh appears, therefore, as merely that Judahite king who, culminating "an almost unbroken series of breaches of the revealed will of God," tipped the scales in favor of the "long-due judgment."[8]

Frank M. Cross rejects this view of the Deuteronomistic historian:

> Before the pericope of Manasseh there is no hint in the Deuteronomic history that hope in the Davidic house and in ultimate salvation is futile. The very persistence of this theme of hope in the promises to David and his house requires that . . . the Deuteronomist . . . was writing a sermon to rally God's people to the new possibility of salvation, obedience to the ancient covenant of Yahweh, and hope in the new David, Josiah.[9]

Cross contends (p. 18) that "the attribution of Judah's demise to the unforgivable sins of Manasseh" is the product of an exilic editor (*ca.* 550 B.C.E.), "tacked on and not integral to the original structure of the [Kings] history."

But are the passages condemning Manasseh really "tacked on?" Or was Manasseh merely the most recent and therefore the best remembered idolator in Judah's past? I think not. The Deuteronomistic historian viewed the age of Manasseh as unprecedented both in the nature and scope of its "apostasy." Our literary and archaeological study has confirmed this evaluation; it was indeed an age of unprecedented abandonment of Israelite tradition. Heretofore royal "apostates" had been blamed for straying from the Mosaic law for known causes; foreign wives instigated both Solomon and Jehoram to idolatry.[10] But all previous idolators had been punished.[11] Only Manasseh's apostasy was "groundless" and unexpiated. The feeling that such enormities as described in 2 Kgs 21:1-16 could only be expiated through destruction and exile need not be late exilic rationalization. After Israel's collapse in 720 B.C.E., the threat of exile hung over Judah. When the hopes for YHWH's grace were dashed by Josiah's untimely death in 609, the presentiment of doom may have set in (cf. Jer 15:4). Manasseh's dubious distinction, therefore, need not be ascribed to schematized historiography, nor is it peripheral to the Deuteronomistic history. It expresses the resignation of those Judahites who, having sponsored the Josianic reforms, now anticipated YHWH's final judgment.[12]

reform-minded Hezekiah (cf. 2 Chr 30:7); and the decline of Assyria during Josiah's regency must have certainly encouraged a national revival.

[6] E.g., A. Weiser, *Jeremia* (ATD, 1956), 75, has claimed that the astral cults in Jeremiah refer to the honoring of "Babylonian . . . state gods" introduced after the 605 B.C.E. Babylonian take-over of Judah. (On the non-official, popular character of these cults, see our discussion, pp. 84-86).

[7] Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (SBT 9, 1961) 77.

[8] Von Rad, *OT Theology* 1, 340f.

[9] Cross, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic History," in *Perspectives in Jewish Learning* 3 (Chicago: College of Jewish Studies Press, 1967), 17.

[10] Cf. 1 Kgs 11:4-5; 2 Kgs 8:18, and our comments above, p. 84 n. 103, and p. 91.

[11] The juxtaposition of the accounts of idolatry during the reigns of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1-6), Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:18), and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:1-4) and the accounts of the successive diminution of the David empire (cf. 1 Kgs 11:11-13; 2 Kgs 8:20-22, 16:6) points to their causal relationship, *viz.*, trespass leads to YHWH's punishment. Note the Chronicler's express linking of two of these events; cf. 2 Chr 21:10, 28:19.

[12] The formulaic criticism levelled at all post-Josianic kings (see 2 Kgs 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19) may be the Deuteronomist's way of saying that no justification could be found to stave off the divine sentence. On the question of the witness of these verses to the religious state of affairs after 609 B.C.E., see now M. Greenberg, "Prolegomenon" to C. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Ph*...