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GOING NATIVE: ŠAMAŠ-ŠUMA-UKĪN, ASSYRIAN KING OF BABYLON

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Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is a unique case in the Neo-Assyrian Empire: he was a member of the Assyrian royal family who was installed as king of Babylonia but never of Assyria. Previous Assyrian rulers who had control over Babylonia were recognized as kings of both polities, but Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's father, Esarhaddon, had decided to split the empire between two of his sons, giving Ashurbanipal kingship over Assyria and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn the throne of Babylonia. As a result, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is an intriguing case-study for how political, familial, and cultural identities were constructed in texts and interacted with each other as part of royal self-presentation. This paper shows that, despite Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's familial and cultural identity as an Assyrian, he presents himself as a quintessentially Babylonian king to a greater extent than any of his predecessors. To do so successfully, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn uses Babylonian motifs and titles while ignoring the Assyrian tropes his brother Ashurbanipal retains even in his Babylonian royal inscriptions.

Introduction

Assyrian kings were recognized as rulers in Babylonia starting in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE), who was named as such in several Babylonian sources including a king list, a chronicle, and in the Ptolemaic Canon.[2] Assyrian control of the region was occasionally lost, such as from the beginning until the later years of Sargon II's reign (721–705 BCE) and briefly towards the beginning of Sennacherib's reign (704–681 BCE), but otherwise an Assyrian king occupying the Babylonian throne as well as the Assyrian one was no novelty by the time of Esarhaddon's kingship (680–669 BCE). Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, however, would be the first—and final—Assyrian ruler to sit on the Babylonian throne but not the Assyrian one. The only close parallel is Aššur-nādin-šumi, Sennacherib's eldest son and initial crown prince, who had been appointed king of Babylon during his father's reign but with the intention that he become king of Assyria as well upon his father's death.[3] In contrast, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is the only ruler to have been made crown prince of Babylonia alone, with no expectation that he would succeed to the Assyrian throne. This unique circumstance can give modern scholars an insight into how Assyrian regents and their scribes constructed and portrayed their political identities, which, in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's case, was one that was not congruent with the ruler's ethnic, familial, or cultural background.[4]

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[2] RIMB 2: 133, though he was not called "king of Babylon" in the year names of Babylonian texts that mention him; Tukultī-Ninurta I was the first Assyrian king to conquer Babylonia but he was not recognized as a regent there. See Brinkman 1979: 229–31 for an overview of Assyrian kings and their Babylonian involvement starting in the 8th century BCE.

[3] Aššur-nādin-šumi was deposed and deported to Elam in 694 BCE, where he was probably executed (see Frahm 2014: 193). This paper considers only legitimately installed members of the royal family; Sîn-šum-līšir, an Assyrian official who may have been considered king, is excluded as he unseated the royal heir Sîn-šar-iškun (see Da Riva 2017: 81 and fn. 43).

[4] Earlier studies have argued that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was born to an ethnically Babylonian mother, but this has been convincingly dismissed, see Novotny and Singletary 2009: 174–76. Ethnicity is a complicated term when applied to the ancient Near East and has been subject to debate. In the case of Assyria, many different ethnic groups lived in the empire under the political identity of "Assyrian" (see Machinist 1993: 89–90), further complicating the matter. Ethnic identity, as used in this study, is taken to be in line with Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's (and his family's) geographic origins in Assyria, and can be placed in conversation with his cultural identity, which was formed through his upbringing in Assyria; his familial identity is also Assyrian by virtue of being part of the Assyrian royal family. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is then an ethnic minority in Babylonia, while his political identity becomes "Babylonian," as does his royal self-presentation. Studies of ethnicity in the ancient Near East and Assyrian ethnicity in particular include Emberling and Yoffee 1999, Alon, Gruenwald, and Singer 1994, Bahrani 2006, Emberling 1997, Wäfler 1975, Machinist 1993, Van Soldt 2005, Parpola 2004b. For an overview of foreigners in cuneiform sources from the third through the first millennium, see Beckman 2013 and for Aramaean and Chaldean ethnicity in Babylon, see Fales 2011. On the topic of language and cultural diversity, see Beaulieu 2003.

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This paper explores the complicated politics of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's identity as an Assyrian sitting exclusively on the Babylonian throne to understand whether being an Assyrian factored into his performance as the Babylonian king and what this case can reveal about the construction of royal ideology, what effects ethnic or cultural identity may have had on it, and the boundaries of the various identities involved. Related to these identities is Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's status as a member of the Assyrian royal family, and so familial identity becomes a factor in his self-presentation as well. Moreover, as brothers, the two regents presumably had a common upbringing and shared cultural values. To explore these issues, this study focuses on official texts such as the royal correspondence and royal inscriptions, particularly the Babylonian royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. These texts, especially the royal inscriptions, contain a number of scribal conventions, including invocations of deities, titulary, and building reports, that can be directly compared between the kings' corpora.[5] The Babylonian royal inscriptions are especially useful because one can trace the similarities and differences in how the king of Assyria and the king of Babylon, respectively, portrayed themselves to what was theoretically the same (foreign) Babylonian audience. Overall, this study demonstrates how Šamaš-šuma-ukīn dealt with his "Assyrian-ness" in his royal ideology and self-portrayal and the ways in which he adopted Babylonian characteristics, even in contexts in which Ashurbanipal retains them in his own Babylonian inscriptions.[6] This paper will demonstrate that the ethnic, familial, and cultural identity of the king of Babylon was less important than his successful performance of core characteristics expected of the Babylonian king, his assimilation into the Babylonian idiom, and his (or his scribes') cultural fluency.

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as Regent; Or, How Important was a Babylonian King in Babylon?

From the Assyrian perspective, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was the embodiment of the Assyrian hegemonic presence in Babylonia during his reign (667–648 BCE), but an effort was made to portray him as the independent king of Babylon. His accession to the throne paralleled his brother's rise to the Assyrian throne: Esarhaddon made the decision to designate Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as the future ruler of Babylon at the same time as he made Ashurbanipal heir to the Assyrian Empire.[7] The occasion was marked with ceremonies for both crown princes and the swearing of loyalty oaths, and the way in which texts and images depict the two men suggests that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was intended to be (at least in appearance) Ashurbanipal's equal, although it is not certain if he was actually meant to act as a favored vassal.[8] Esarhaddon's inscriptions largely treat the two as equivalent heirs of different areas: one of Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions asks Nabû, not incidentally invoked in his aspect as a son,[9] to bless the crown princes with equally positive fates and successful reigns in the standard language the Assyrian kings use for blessing their descendants, despite the

[5] On Assyrian royal inscriptions, see Fales 1981 and 1999–2001.

[6] It is not clear whether Šamaš-šuma-ukīn had Assyrian or Babylonian scribes (or both), or to what extent these scribes were well-versed in the conventions of the others, but it is apparent from the distinct differences in how Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and Ashurbanipal depict themselves to the same audience that an attempt to be more Babylonian was undertaken for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. One would imagine that the king himself would be consenting to these depictions, if not actively involved. There is evidence for the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods that the kings deliberately excavated and collected inscriptions of the earlier Babylonian rulers, particularly in order to imitate the acts of the earlier kings, and these would have provided the contemporary scribes with common idioms and conventions expected for a traditional Babylonian king (Waerzeggers 2011: 729, Jursa 2007a: 78), so one could postulate a similar phenomenon happening here. On this topic, see Schaudig 2003.

[7] Frame 2007: 93–95.

[8] RIMB 2: 248, Novotny and Singletary 2009: 167–68, Frame 2007: 94–95, including their depictions on the stelae from Zinçirli and Til Barsip. As will be discussed below, Ashurbanipal later portrays his brother as essentially a vassal, despite Šamaš-šuma-ukīn being the elder son, claiming responsibility for placing Šamaš-šuma-ukīn on his throne and exercising some jurisdiction over Babylonia himself. A number of Babylonian officials also reported to Ashurbanipal (Frame 2007: 109–10).

[9] That is, son and heir of Marduk, king of the gods. Nabû is a god who grants kingship in the Neo-Babylonian period as he, along with his father Marduk, are closely associated with the royal family and sit at the top of the Neo-Babylonian official pantheon. A text demonstrative of this phenomenon is the acrostic *Nebuchadnezzar Hymn to Nabû* (BM 55469), which is dedicated to Nabû, who is also named in the acrostic, and linked with Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE). The *Hymn* describes Nabû's role in the royal investiture after Marduk creates Nebuchadnezzar II for kingship. A discussion about the rise of Nabû and a recent edition of the *Hymn* can be found in Oshima 2014: 473–80.

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Babylonian context.[10] In general, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's appointment as crown prince was subject to similar phraseology as Ashurbanipal's but with the specification of Babylonia as his future territory.[11] Assyria's throne may have been more prestigious, but gaining or maintaining control over Babylonia was consistently an important goal for Assyrian kings for reasons of political ideology, religion, military strategy, and wealth, so Šamaš-šuma-ukīn wielded considerable responsibility and power.[12] Because of Babylonia's significance, it was possibly also a strategic move to depict Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as a full king in his own right—even if Ashurbanipal also had logistical oversight of Babylonia—to appease the Babylonians somewhat by giving them their own ruler, who was at least portrayed as equal to but separate from the king of Assyria.

But would it have been important for the local population to have a Babylonian ruler in Babylon? Babylonia itself had contained a diverse population for generations, and so it is likely that a homogenizing category like "Babylonian" was only really possible from an outsider—in this case Assyrian—perspective.[13] Indeed, Waerzeggers has argued for the Persian period that only residents of Babylon would have called themselves "Babylonian" and that there was no automatic prejudice against foreign-born kings.[14] This was probably true during the period of Assyrian domination as well. Waerzeggers has described the ideal performance of Babylonian kings as consisting of the following:[15]

> Babylonian kings derived their legitimacy from divine appointment, particularly by Marduk, and from normative consecration, *in concreto* by priests. They were expected to be pro-active in a number of domains: the ideal king upheld justice and established peace and security, maintained cultic order and respected religious traditions, honored civil rights and refrained from unlawful taxation. Multiple texts and ceremonies assume a triangular relationship between king, gods, and temples: the king extended his generosity towards the gods through the patronage of their temples; the gods in turn lent him their authority and empowered his rule; the priests, finally, intermediated between these two levels of sovereignty by taking care of the gods' needs, by means of regular temple worship under royal protection, and by installing the king on behalf of the gods. The protection of citizen's rights, *kidinnūtu*, provided a fourth dimension to this triangular relationship.

These features are not exclusive to those contenders to the throne who were ethnically or culturally Babylonian and could theoretically have been adopted by any outsider who could familiarize himself

[10] RINAP 4 113: 28–35.

[11] Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is called the "prince of the House of Succession of Babylon," on analogy with Ashurbanipal as "great prince of the House of Succession of Assyria" in the loyalty oaths, see Frame 2007: 95, see also parallel constructions in SAA II 6: 86–89, 668–69. Differences in the installation and coronation of the brothers are otherwise invisible besides the mention of what may have been the Babylonian House of Succession, the Edadihegal (RINAP 4 53: 10′–13′). Pongratz-Leisten has argued for distinct characteristics, such as humiliation, that are part of the Assyrian installation ritual but not the Babylonian one, and also points to the *Ashurbanipal Coronation Hymn* as evidence for the Assyrian coronation rite, which Da Riva contrasts to the *Nabopolassar Epic*'s coronation scene (Da Riva 2017: 85–86, Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 438, Waerzeggers 2011: 733). The naming and investiture of the king in the *Nebuchadnezzar Hymn to Nabû* may also be styled after a coronation ceremony since it shows Marduk and Nabû designating Nebuchadnezzar II as king and bestowing upon him royal symbols such as the mace and scepter. Oshima (2014: 474) has suggested that "one may speculate that this hymn of Nebuchadnezzar to Nabû was recited on the occasion of [the specific] investiture ceremony" that would take place in Nabû's temple, in which the god gave the king the royal scepter.

[12] Brinkman 1979: 228–30.

[13] Brinkman (1979: 225), however, writes that "the population of Babylonia in the late eighth century was an unevenly blended mixture. The older stratum, usually identified simply as 'Babylonian', was itself an amalgam of such earlier groups as Sumerians and Akkadians with an admixture of later assimilated invaders such as Amorites and Kassites. By 750 B.C., these peoples had lost their political and ethnic identity and shared a common Babylonian culture … relative newcomers to Babylonia were the Chaldeans and Arameans." Regarding Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy, Porter (1993: 36) writes "it was to the third powerful group in Babylonian politics, the citizens of the ancient city-centers, that Esarhaddon now turned his attentions, and it was this group which was to become the focus of his public relations program throughout the reign. The citizens of the long-established cities, who constituted the older Babylonian native stock—if one can use the term 'native' for any people in such a melting pot—were a complex ethnic mixture, blended by centuries of intermarriage within the cities; in the Assyrians' eyes, however, they were a distinctive sociopolitical group, distinct from other groups more recently settled in the cities." For further studies on Babylonian identity and the term "Babylonian," see Alstola 2018: 26–28 and Frame 2013.

[14] Waerzeggers 2015: 181–83, noting that "there was no straightforward connection between foreign and improper kingship: some Assyrians who ruled as king of Babylon were recognised as fully legitimate holders of this office, others were not."

[15] Waerzeggers 2015: 187–88.

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with Babylonian royal customs and expectations, presumably with the assistance of native scribes and priests.[16]

Nonetheless, it seems that there was some perception on the part of the Assyrians that a "native Babylonian" king might be more successful with the southern population, given the case of Bēl-ibni.[17] At lower levels of government, the Assyrian kings often appointed local rulers, so the selection of Bēl-ibni, a native Babylonian who was raised in Assyria, might have seemed like a natural step.[18] Sennacherib is the king who installed the Babylonian, writing that "I appointed over them Bēl-ibni, a son of a *rab bānî* (and) a scion of Šuanna (Babylon) who had grown up like a young puppy in my palace, as king of the land of Sumer and Akkad."[19] Bēl-ibni's identification as Babylonian is primarily expressed as *per'i šuanna*^{KI} "scion of Šuanna," a district or alternate name of Babylon that is also used in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's titulary.[20] But the case can also be made that Bēl-ibni was culturally Assyrian, since he was raised in the Assyrian palace, which Sennacherib may have seen as strategically useful in appealing to the Babylonians while ensuring loyalty to the Assyrian crown.[21] What must have seemed to Sennacherib as the best of both worlds unfortunately ended in failure, however, as Bēl-ibni was deposed by Sennacherib himself and returned to Assyria after three years as king.[22] The failure of Bēl-ibni lends support to the idea that Babylonians did not recognize a homogenous cultural identity (nor was it central to their conceptions of kingship) but that the Assyrians thought they did. Whatever Sennacherib's hopes for Bēl-ibni had been, the regent's ethnic identity was clearly not sufficient for success in Babylonia and he was repatriated to his cultural homeland.

When Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is nominated for the Babylonian throne, another attempt is made at bridging Assyrian and Babylonian identities, although this time by endeavoring to assimilate an ethnic Assyrian into Babylonian culture. But how did Assyrians conceive of Babylonian identity? An unusual letter from an unidentified Assyrian king suggests that the Assyrians perceived the god of Babylon, Marduk, as having some role in determining Babylonian identity, accusing a group labeled as *lā* LU_2.TIN.TIR.KI.MEŠ "not Babylonians" that they "are pretending to be Babylonians against the command of the god (of the city of Babylon)."[23] Indeed, Assyrians may have projected a homogenizing identity on Babylonians due to how they themselves conceived of Assyrian identity and citizenship:[24] Aššur had an impact on who (or where) was considered

[16] This is certainly true of kings of Babylon who had Chaldean or Aramaean origins, such as Neriglissar, Nabopolassar, and Nabonidus. These kings were also subject to the same need for assimilation into the Babylonian idiom, which in turn affected how their reigns were remembered (see Waerzeggers 2015: 213–19 and Beaulieu 2003).

[17] This was not a traditional method of Assyrian rule in Babylonia, however, and Brinkman (1979: 233) calls Bēl-ibni an "experiment."

[18] Brinkman 1979: 233.

[19] RINAP 3/1 1: 54, with similar statements in 2: 13; 3: 13, and RINAP 3/2 213: 53. Two inscriptions omit his ethnic background, though, and read "I placed Bēl-ibni, a son of a *rab bānî,* on his royal throne (and) entrusted him with the people of Akkad" (RINAP 3/1 4: 11; 8: 11). There is still some confusion regarding whether *rab bānî* refers to an official title, a prebend, or a specific family. For the *rab bānî* as a family designation, see Brinkman and Dalley 1988: 90–91 and Bongenaar 1997: 541.

[20] See George 1992: 241–42, where he writes "as [the name] occurs in the royal inscriptions of the Sargonid and Chaldaean kings … *šu-an-na*$^{(ki)}$ may however be no more than an ornamental writing for *bābilu*." This part of Babylon is likely used on analogy with Baltil in Assur, but this requires further inquiry. "Babylon" is generally written TIN.TIR.KI or KA_2.DINGIR.RA.KI (as *pars pro toto*).

[21] The description of Bēl-ibni growing up in the Assyrian royal sphere like a "young puppy" or "young cub" may not be mocking (contra Van de Mieroop 1999: 46) or meant to speak to Bēl-ibni's dog-like loyalty but might play on uses of *mīrānu* to mean the cubs of lions and the association of the Assyrian king with lions, which ranged from hunting them to displaying fearsome characteristics like those of raging lions (CAD M II *s.v. mīrānu* and see for example RINAP 3/1 23: v 57).

[22] Frame (RIMB 2: 157) suggests that Bēl-ibni's control over southern Babylonia was lost to the Chaldean tribes, but notes that it is still unknown whether this was the basis for Sennacherib's decision to remove the ruler.

[23] ABL 403, see Frame 2007: 80.

[24] MacGinnis (2012: 145) writes "certainly the Assyrian kings strove to unify the lands under their rule by promoting a uniform Assyrian culture. This was achieved through a multifaceted programme, the elements of which included allegiance to the Assyrian king, recognition of the state god Aššur, use of the Aramaic *lingua franca*, taxation, conscription, a common calendar, a unified judicial system, and standardized weights and measures." See Oded 1979: 81–83 for "counting" subjects as Assyrian between the reigns of Tiglath-pileser I and Sargon II, and Pongratz-Leisten (2001: 223), who writes that that Tiglath-pileser I used the phrase "I … reckoned them as subjects of the god Aššur, my lord" but notes that "already in the Middle Assyrian period this phrase can be replaced by the phraseology *turru ana* or *ruddû eli miṣir māt Aššur* which during the first millennium in turn is combined with the political reorganization of the Assyrian empire, namely by setting a governor over the newly annexed territory." Compare also Esarhaddon's repatriation of Babylonians,

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Assyrian, with peoples and polities placed under the god's yoke as lands were added to his domain.[25] The Assyrian king, in particular, needed to have the endorsement of the Assyrian god *par excellence* to take the throne, which gave him dominion over the Assyrian territory.[26] The Assyrian approach to Babylonian identity was not entirely misguided, as the Babylonians themselves (as seen above) considered their kings to be endorsed by Marduk. Indeed, this idiom is used in the only extant royal inscription possibly from the reign of Bēl-ibni, in which the cursing formula is directed to "anyone in the future — whether a king, or a son of a king, or a prince, or a governor, or a judge, or anyone else who is appointed by the god Marduk, the great lord, and (who) exercises lordship over the land," demonstrating that, whoever is in control of Babylonia, whether he holds a royal office or not, must be placed in this role by Marduk.[27]

The idea that Marduk could determine "Babylonian-ness" may help to illuminate an unusual feature in the process by which Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was designated for the throne. When Esarhaddon names Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as his successor in Babylon, he makes the conventional offerings to the gods and performs the expected ceremonies but makes an unorthodox inclusion: "I gave [Šamaš]-šuma-ukīn, (my) son, my offspring, as a present (*ana širikti*) to the god Marduk and the goddess Zarpanītu."[28] Assyrian royal succession does not typically include the dedication of an heir as a gift to the gods, and it is conspicuously not how Esarhaddon designates Ashurbanipal, for whom divine support comes from the more typical Neo-Assyrian endorsers of the king: Aššur and Ištar.[29] Dedicating the crown prince to the patron deities of Babylon, in a male-female pair to mirror the Assyrian equivalents, goes beyond standard divine endorsement and may have coded Šamaš-šuma-ukīn himself as properly "Babylonian" in accordance with one of the criteria for Babylonian kingship.[30] Presumably this is the reason why Ashurbanipal, who takes credit for the nomination of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as king of Babylon, claims that he had dedicated his brother to Marduk as well.[31] No other rulers are given to Marduk in this way in the royal inscriptions.[32] It is likely that the Assyrians realized (especially after the failure of Bēl-ibni) that actual Babylonian ethnic identity was less important than the appropriate performance of Babylonian kingship.

which draws from the same terminology: "I gathered the bought people who had become slaves (and) who had been distributed among the (foreign) riffraff and counted (them once again) as Babylonians" (RINAP 4 104: v 15–20; 105: vii 18–24). Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty gives some insight into how the Assyrians thought of the Babylonian territory, as Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is meant "to ascend the throne of Babylon. You will reserve for him the kingship over the whole of Sumer, Akkad, and Karduniaš" (SAA II 6: 86–89).

[25] There is no evidence that non-Assyrians were forced to worship Aššur, but taxes and tribute from conquered territories often went in support of his temple and cult. Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty includes a provision about rebellions started by "an Assyrian or a vassal of Assyria, or a bearded (courtier) or a eunuch, or a citizen of Assyria or a citizen of any other country," which also provides an intriguing glimpse at an official division between Assyrians and citizens of Assyria (SAA II 6: 162–64). See also the note above about the Succession Treaty's description of Babylonia.

[26] As is well known, the territory of Assyria also bore the name Aššur, further binding together god and land.

[27] RIMB 2 B.6.26.1: 21′–23′, with the problems of reading "Bēl-ibni" in the text. Also of interest from this text is the colophon that suggests that the king collaborated with the scribe, though in somewhat broken lines: "official [document] which the king *cleared* […] of the palace scribe" (RIMB 2 B.6.26.1: 35′–36′).

[28] RINAP 4 53: 10′–13′, with a mention of what may have been the Babylonian House of Succession, the Edadihegal.

[29] A Babylonian parallel is found in Nabopolassar's Etemenanki Inscription from Babylon, which describes Nabopolassar's reconstruction of Marduk's ziggurat. The king mentions specific tasks he gave to two of his sons, an unusual addition, writing that Nebuchadnezzar, his firstborn, had to carry soil while he "had Nabû-šum-līšir, his close brother (*talīmšu*), the infant, my own offspring, the younger brother, my darling, seize mattock and spade. I made him bear a *tupšikku*-basket of gold and silver and dedicated him (i.e. gave him as a present, *ana širiktim*) to my lord Marduk" (II 49-III 24, the edition of this text is found in Da Riva 2013: 77–92). It is notable that this inscription calls Nabû-šum-līšir Nebuchadnezzar's *talīmu*, the term that Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn use to describe their (friendly) relationship to one another in their own inscriptions, and that the phrase for giving Nabû-šum-līšir as a present to Marduk is identical to that in Esarhaddon's inscription about Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.

[30] Perhaps the primary distinctions between the Assyrian and Babylonian coronation rites are the gods and temples in which the ceremonies were probably undertaken: Aššur and the Ešarra in the former case, Marduk and the Esagil in the latter (Da Riva 2017: 85–86), which then parallels the two Houses of Succession.

[31] RINAP 5 Asbpl 73/Assyrian Tablet 2: iii 1′-iii 6′ (*šarāku ana Marduk*).

[32] Ashurbanipal claims to have consecrated (literally "shaved") two younger brothers as *šešgallu*-priests of Aššur and Sîn of Harran, respectively, but this links to a different tradition in which royal family members become cultic officials, see RINAP 5: Asbpl 72/Assyrian Tablet 1: 10–13 and Löhnert 2007 on the installation of priests.

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A later example, from the reign of the Persian king Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE), provides a point of comparison for the performance of Babylonian kingship, particularly the issue of whether a Babylonian origin was a necessary or even desired criterion. While Cyrus was clearly not the first foreign ruler of Babylonia when he conquered the polity in 539 BCE, there is a distinction in how he performed the Babylonian kingship as compared to his Neo-Babylonian predecessors, despite the Persian king taking on the title "king of Babylon" just as they did.[33] Like other foreign rulers in Babylonia, including Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and Ashurbanipal, Cyrus left behind inscriptions in Babylonian and using Babylonian forms and genres; the Cyrus Cylinder is one such example of an inscription that mimics a traditional Babylonian building report, and it appears to have been widely circulated.[34] Cyrus' non-Babylonian identity, however, leaks through the Babylonian veneer in his inscriptions and his royal acts; for instance, Waerzeggers explains that[35]

> in all these inscriptions, imperial titles and foreign genealogies were used: by listing three Anšanite ancestors, the *Cylinder* appeals to a process of legitimation foreign to the Babylonian tradition; in the Uruk bricks 'king of the lands' was put before the more traditional title 'lover of the Esagil and the Ezida' and followed by the military title 'strong king'; in the Ur bricks Cyrus' Anšanite roots and his conquest and pacification of the lands were emphasized without using any of the traditional Babylonian royal titles … In short, while the bricks respect the *format* of Babylonian brick inscriptions, neither of these texts can really be said to be true to the Babylonian spirit of piety. They rather celebrate Cyrus' imperial program and drive home Babylonia's submission.

Cyrus thus does not fully adopt Babylonian royal conventions such as established titulary, native deities that endorse his kingship, or the support of local cults, but instead highlights his own gods, genealogy, and imperial ideology. It is possible that he even wore traditional Elamite clothing to perform the *akītu* festival rituals, which may have been quite shocking to a Babylonian audience, though this story is not certain.[36] Nonetheless, it is clear from other texts that Cyrus did not regularly take part in state rituals, which meant that the *akītu* festival was not routinely celebrated, and he did not perform his duties towards Babylonian cults in the traditional methods of temple reconstruction and presenting the gods with cultic gifts or sacrifices.[37] With Cyrus undermining or even severing his ties to the Babylonian gods through this neglect, the Babylonians may have considered that he did not have the divine endorsement necessary to be king of Babylonia.[38]

[33] "The transfer of the institution and symbols of Babylonian kingship to the Persian rulers is considered a satisfactory arrangement for both parties, as it enabled the accommodation of existing (Babylonian) and recently gained (Persian) prerogatives in a mutually supported political framework and symbolic system. However, the institutional, ethnic and geopolitical conditions under which Persian rulers exercised Babylonian kingship did not compare to those that prevailed under Nabonidus and his predecessors who ruled an independent state" (Waerzeggers 2015: 187). On the image of Cyrus, especially in later sources, see Kuhrt 2007.

[34] Waerzeggers 2015: 190, see also Jursa 2007a: 74–75, including similar motifs and motivations in the *Verse Account of Nabonidus*. See van der Spek 2014 for a comparison of Assyrian and Persian policies in Babylonia, including an edition of the Cyrus Cylinder. A document from the reign of Cambyses, Cyrus' successor, preserves the royal request for all inscribed stelae of the earlier Babylonian kings from the Eanna temple archives, and Jursa (2007a: 78) claims that "the obvious inference from this is that the new rulers adopted a conscious policy towards these old royal acts."

[35] Warzeggers 2015: 195–196.

[36] However, the source for this story may have instead been referring to Cambyses (Waerzeggers 2015: 201). Van der Spek (2014: 250) writes that it is during Cambyses' investiture that Cyrus or Cambyses wore Elamite clothing.

[37] Waerzeggers 2015: 196–201. On the ideological importance of performing the *akītu* festival as Babylonian king, see Waerzeggers 2011: 731. There are some indications that Cyrus may have worked on cultic buildings in Uruk (see Jursa 2007a: 77–78), though one should note the modifications to the Babylonian idiom in these brick inscriptions as discussed by Waerzeggers, above.

[38] One can also compare to the text *The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun*, as Waerzeggers (2011: 740) writes that "more interesting than the historical truth behind the text is *how* the king is depicted: his portrait basically inverts the conventional role of the Babylonian king … Instead of protecting the continuity of the cult, he disrupts it: he changes rituals [a], dislocates the statues of the gods [c], and spends resources on unprecedented gods [e]. Instead of protecting the priests, he usurps their role [b]: by entering the inner sanctuary of Bel to perform sacrifice, he acts as a 'temple-enterer', while his unshaven status and wrong garb clearly should forbid his entry," and he also removes the traditional protections of Babylon, Borsippa, and Cutha, demonstrating how powerful and well-defined the incorrect performance of Babylonian kingship was in cultural consciousness. In addition, the literary letter *Declaring War* (BM 55467), an Achaemenid or Seleucid-period text, portrays Nabopolassar accusing an Assyrian king (who scholars have identified as likely Sîn-šar-iškun) of grievous crimes against Babylonia. Da Riva (2017: 80) writes that, "the Assyrian's criminal record contains the worst atrocities that one might imagine: the seizure of booty, burglary in the Esagil temple, the stealing of city property, the murder of the city's highest representatives, and further outrages such as imprisoning rebels, filling the

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Adding insult to injury, Cyrus also associated himself with Ashurbanipal, both explicitly and implicitly through imitating his inscriptions, aligning himself with another non-Babylonian ruler of Babylon.[39]

The chronicle corpus also speaks to the question of the importance of a Babylonian king in Babylonia, as historical literature tended to use the trope of "pairing of two rivals–the one an unwanted and foreign oppressor, the other a liberator-king of Babylon," which did label two Assyrian kings—Tukultī-Ninurta I and Sîn-šarra-iškun—as foreign oppressors.[40] Waerzeggers has suggested that one could argue that "the long sequence of royal pairs, constructed in each other's mirror image (oppressor/liberator, foreign/internal) and going back to the Kassite period, offers a long prelude to the predictable restitution of the Babylonian throne to a 'seed of Babylon.'"[41] One chronicle demonstrates a further problematic characteristic of some non-Babylonian kings through the example of Nabonidus: several years are recorded in which Nabonidus is based in Teima and, consequently, the *akītu* festival does not take place.[42] One major critique of Cyrus and part of why he did not participate in state rituals is that Babylon was not his main seat of power, so one can argue that the king having his primary residence in Babylonia was a central component to Babylonian kingship. Mounting dissatisfaction resulted in revolts as Cyrus and his successors failed to uphold the Babylonian king's duties to the land and its gods and thus did not perform Babylonian kingship correctly.[43]

What is consistent among the aforementioned examples is not the "true" ethnic identity of the king but the ruler's ability to execute the characteristics of a Babylonian king properly and according to established tradition.[44] Letters that were likely composed in the late Achaemenid period or later are more clearly opposed to non-Babylonian kingship, particularly Elamite rule, and the native statuses of such kings as the Neo-Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar are retroactively elevated in importance.[45] These letters, however, may have been a specific reaction to the Persian kings (perhaps to Cyrus in particular) and may not be representative of earlier attitudes. While Cyrus was not contemporary to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, his reign provides a blueprint of how non-Babylonian kings could fail to perform the Babylonian royal identity properly, in particular due to their non-Babylonian identity showing through the Babylonian conventions either by accident or by design. Cyrus' case also demonstrates that a truly "native" Babylonian might not have been a priority for Babylonians until after his reign, and that foreign ethnic or cultural identity was not an automatic disqualification for the Babylonian throne. Nonetheless, a certain cultural fluency and ability (and desire) to assimilate fully into the established royal conventions was clearly necessary for one to act as the proper Babylonian king, and a native Babylonian may simply have had an easier time of it.

land with disorder, inciting unrest and rebellion, and so on. These scenes of utter disorder and chaos represent the exact opposite of the Babylonian idea of a prosperous and successful reign, and anticipate Nabopolassar's intention to restore order and normality." Like *The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun*, the letter enumerates failures of performing Babylonian kingship ideals in order to cast the accused king as a villain. An edition of *Declaring War* can be found in Gerardi 1986 and, for more recent editions and discussion of Akkadian literary letters including *Declaring War*, see Frazer 2015.

[39] Waerzeggers 2015: 196 and Michalowski 2014.

[40] Waerzeggers 2015: 215–16. See also Waerzeggers 2012 on the contexts and classifications of the chronicles.

[41] Waerzeggers 2015: 221.

[42] See Chronicle 7 in Grayson 1975. Finn (2017: 166) writes that "the (non-)performance of the *akītu* festival would be an ever-important gauge by which to judge the legitimacy of kingship in Mesopotamia." Nabonidus' ethnic identity is still unknown, but there has been speculation that he was or Aramaean or Assyrian origin, though the question of whether his mother Adad-guppi was from Harran or Babylon is also complicated and significant to the debate (Beaulieu 1989: 67–78). Beaulieu (1989: 86) concludes only that he was "not a member of the Babylonian oligarchy." For Adad-Guppi's biographical stele, see Schaudig 2001: 500–513.

[43] Waerzeggers 2015: 194–95.

[44] One might also compare to the fact that "the deep hatred for Sin-šuma-lešir exhibited in the Nabopolassar Epic, which celebrates Babylonia's eventual emancipation from Assyria's overlordship … seems to have been rooted not so much in the fact that he was a representative of Assyrian power but that he had assumed authority illegitimately. Instead of contenting himself with an advisory role, he had taken on the executive function customarily reserved for the monarch, to the extent that at some point Babylonian documents were dated according to regnal years in Sin-šuma-lešir's name" (Radner 2011: 375). Da Riva (2017: 81) notes that, in the Nabopolassar Epic, "Sîn-šum-līšir is never mentioned by name; perhaps in an attempt to denigrate his figure, he appears as 'the almighty chief eunuch' … or simply 'the Assyrian.'"

[45] Waerzeggers 2015: 215.

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Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's Methods of Babylonian Self-Presentation

Royal Titulary

Unlike his predecessors, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn ruled solely over Babylonia, presumably living there full-time.[46] Most of his royal inscriptions are consistent with the economic texts dated to his reign in that he is properly called the *šar Babili* "king of Babylon."[47] Sîn-šarru-uṣur, the governor (*šakkanakku*) of Ur, recognizes him as such as well in a dedication to Ištar and Nanāya on behalf of the king.[48] Ironically, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn seems to have assimilated into his office much better than Bēl-ibni had, based on his inscriptions. For instance, the titulary he takes on in his royal inscriptions is firmly Babylonian, including the quite traditional Babylonian titles "king of the land of Sumer and Akkad" and, perhaps more significantly, "king of the Amnānu."[49] The latter was used exclusively by kings of the Old Babylonian period, showing an antiquarian approach in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's Babylonian self-presentation.[50] That he commissioned Sumerian and Sumerian-Akkadian bilingual inscriptions also indicates an interest in antiquarianism.[51] He shares the title "viceroy (*šakkanakku*) of Šuanna" with Bēl-ibni while "viceroy of Babylon" is attested only in one royal inscription.[52] In contrast, Ashurbanipal calls himself "viceroy of Babylon" more frequently, but only in his Assyrian inscriptions; his Babylonian inscriptions attribute the title to his predecessor Esarhaddon, but not to himself.[53] Moreover, Ashurbanipal does not take the title "king of Babylon" in any Babylonian inscription. This seems to indicate an acknowledgement of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's regency of the area, though Ashurbanipal skirts the issue in his Babylonian inscriptions by preferring generalizing (and superior) titles such as "king of the world" and "king of the land."[54] In general, there is little overlap between Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's and Ashurbanipal's titulary. Other scholars have demonstrated the calculated importance Assyrian kings gave to their titulary, and a parallel to Ashurbanipal's careful avoidance of traditional Babylonian titles can be found from the reign of Sennacherib.[55] After Sennacherib's devastation of Babylon in 689 BCE, Frame argues that Sennacherib "did not pretend to be a true 'king of Babylonia.' He assumed

[46] There are instances in which Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was clearly in Assyria, such as in order to bring back the Marduk statue and in one case when he was unwell, but there is no reason to believe that he lived in Assyria full time (see Frame 2007: 96–97 on this issue).

[47] See for instance the bilingual inscription RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 1–5, as well as B.6.33.3: 1–4, B.6.33.4: 11–15, and Frame's (2007: 107) summation: "in economic texts, Šamaš-šuma-ukin was given the title 'king of Babylon,' or occasionally just 'king.' In his royal inscriptions, he was called 'king of Babylon,' 'viceroy of Babylon,' 'king of Sumer and Akkad,' and 'king of Amnanu.'" Interestingly, the preserved writings suggest MAN TIN.TIR.KI except for in a dedication to the king by the governor of Ur, which calls him LUGAL E.KI (RIMB 2 B.6.33.2001: 2).

[48] RIMB 2 B.6.33.2001; the Babylonian context is underscored with Nanāya's identification as "beloved of the gods Nabû and Marduk."

[49] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 2, 5; B.6.33.2: 5–6; B.6.33.3: 1–4, B.6.33.4: 11–15, and Frame 2007: 107 for a summary of epithets and the note that several descriptors parallel ones used already by Esarhaddon or Merodach-Baladan II. One title that Frame identifies as new in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's reign is "the one who settled [*the gods who*] are in Esagila."

[50] Frame 2007: 107, and fn. 23 where he writes that Yaḫdun-Lim titled Baḫlu-kulim as "king of Tutul and Amnanu." Tutul is in Syria so one might suggest that Amnanu should be nearby, and Bryce (2009: 774) identifies the Amnanu with the Awnan as a sub-group of the Amorite tribes. Regarding the Old Babylonian kings and these Amorite tribes, Beaulieu (2017: 67) writes that "the Mari archives mention five Benjaminite tribes: the Ubrabum, the Yarihum, the Rababum, the Amnanum and the Yahrurum. Members of these last two tribes settled further south around Sippar, northwest of Babylon, where they gave their names to the twin agglomerations of Sippar-Amnanum … and Sippar-Yahrurum … Amnanum and Yahrurum also appear as ancestors of the First Dynasty of Babylon in a very important administrative tablet from the reign of Ammisaduqa." It is unlikely that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn seeks through this title to claim Amorite origins but rather that the exact meaning is less important for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn than the fact of its historical use among Old Babylonian kings, thus aligning him with their dynastic origins and antiquity. One can compare this to the title "king of the Sealand," given to Nabopolassar in a Seleucid-period colophon: Da Riva (2017: 78–79) notes that "the assignation of the title 'king of the Sealand' for Nabopolassar has no historical basis, for at the end of the seventh century this area belonged to the administrative realm of Uruk and was no longer an independent kingdom, but it coincides with the tradition that points to a 'southern' origin for Nabopolassar's dynasty. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that Nabopolassar came from a royal dynasty" but that "the use of anachronisms (especially toponyms) and other fictional elements in the compositions to give the impression of a remote historical past."

[51] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1 (bilingual), B.6.33.2 (Sumerian). On antiquarianism, especially under Nabonidus, see Rubio 2009.

[52] RIMB 2 B.6.33.2: 5–6, RIMB 2 B.6.33.5: 14. As mentioned above, only one royal inscription is extant that may potentially come from Bēl-ibni's reign and calls him *šarru* "king."

[53] RIMB 2: 194.

[54] RIMB 2: 194.

[55] There are several studies that discuss the importance and design of Assyrian titulary, though none of them cover the late Neo-Assyrian period: Cifola 1995, Karlsson 2015, Sazonov 2016.

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neither the title 'king of Babylon' nor 'king of the land of Sumer and Akkad'" even though he maintained direct rulership of Babylonia until his death.[56] Babylonian sources corroborate the rejection of this identity, recording that there was no king of Babylonia during these years, with the Ptolemaic Canon and one of the Babylonian chronicles calling Babylon "kingless" for the duration of Sennacherib's reign.[57] Thus, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is distinctive in his use of Babylonian titulary when compared to his co-regent.

While a Babylonian ethnic identity is not critical for performing Babylonian kingship, neither is the total suppression of Assyrian ethnic or cultural identity. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's Assyrian identity is expressed in his inscriptions in the royal genealogies that are built into his titulary, which clearly associate him with forefathers who carry the title "king of Assyria," naming at least Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Sargon II, generally ending with Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's relationship to his brother Ashurbanipal.[58] One text has a genealogy that replaces the mention of Ashurbanipal with "Bēl-bāni, son of Adasi, scion of Baltil (Aššur)," an ancient ancestor that Ashurbanipal and Esarhaddon also invoke.[59] The genealogical lists in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions are surprisingly sensitive to the legacy of Assyrian kings in Babylonia, omitting "king of Babylon" for Sennacherib, as he did not adopt the title, and are quite similar to the ones in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. These passages are the most clear statements of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's Assyrian origins and his fraternal relationship to Assyria's king; it is possible that the insult to his ancestors or questions of legitimacy that would have been caused by ignoring his genealogy may have been a factor in the decision to include it in his inscriptions.[60] Missing, however, are the traditional descriptions of Assyrian kings as representatives or priests of Aššur—a significant omission, as the concept is central to the ideology of Assyrian kingship.[61] If it were not for this genealogy, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's case would perhaps be closer to that of Neriglissar, who was Aramaean but whose cultural identity was only revealed by what Waerzeggers calls "the careful detective work of modern scholars" and was not a reason for judgment against the Neo-Babylonian king.[62] Šamaš-šuma-ukīn did not seem to worry that his cultural identity would affect the Babylonians' loyalty to him as king of Babylon as long as he embodied his political titulary.

[56] RIMB 2: 163. Later, a similar situation occurs under Xerxes, whose response to Babylonian rebellions includes that he "symbolically removed the component 'King of Babylon' from his official royal title" (Waerzeggers 2003/4: 150).

[57] Frame 2007: 54, 61.

[58] RIMB 2 B.6.33.3: 9–12, B.6.33.6: 5′–8′, for instance.

[59] RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 18–23. The title "scion of Baltil" seems to work essentially on analogy with "scion of Šuenna," further suggesting that the latter was part of the Assyrian conceptualization of a Babylonian identity. There are, however, some differences in writing between the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Esarhaddon uses NUNUZ or *per'u* ("bud") Baltil in his Babylonian inscriptions to describe Bēl-bāni in his genealogy, see RIMB 2 B.6.31.10: 17′; B.6.31.11: 14; B.6.31.12: 28 (reconstructed), B.6.31.15: 29. A Babylonian king, possibly Nebuchadnezzar I, calls himself "scion of Šuanna" as well but writes it NUMUN (*zēru*) "seed" (RIMB B.2.4.10: 9). Esarhaddon's writing is replicated under Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, who writes that Adasi is scion (NUNUZ) of Baltil (RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 23). Sennacherib likewise calls Bēl-ibni "scion of Šuenna" with the writing *per'u*, (RINAP 3 1: 54; 2: 13; 3: 13; 213: 53) suggesting that NUNUZ/*per'u* perhaps indicates an Assyrian-trained scribe, which then means that one (or more) was writing at least some of the Babylonian inscriptions of Assyrian kings, but this is quite speculative. Shibata (2014: 86) remarks that Baltil is written BAL KI in the Akkadian line in the bilingual cylinder B.6.33.1: 14–15 and might be a purposeful writing to parallel the exegetical translation of Tintir in the Sumerian with "Seat of Life" in the Akkadian. He suggests that the exegetical translation of Baltil in this case is *māt nukurti* 'enemy land' and that "if this is the case, the present inscription describes the return of the Marduk statue in a tone much like that of the erstwhile return of his statue from Elam to Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I" (Shibata 2014: 87–88).

[60] The few letters that are known from Šamaš-šuma-ukīn to Esarhaddon show nothing unusual in the crown prince's loyalty to his father and Assyria at that time, see Parpola 1972. Porter (1997: 255) has suggested that the order of Nabû before Marduk in deity sequences is particularly Assyrian, and this is certainly consistent with the letter edited in Parpola's article, hinting that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn did use Assyrian scribal conventions before becoming the official king of Babylonia and within Assyrian-only contexts, which may also have to do with the scribes involved. In support of this are Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's letters to Ashurbanipal, at a point when the brothers are sitting on their respective thrones, which use a more openly Babylonian greeting formula of Marduk, Zarpanītum, Nabû, Tašmetu, and Nanāya (ABL 809 and ABL 1385, ABL 426 has the same sequence but uses the bynames Bēl and Bēltiya for the first two deities), see SAA XXI: 86–87.

[61] On the king's relationship with Aššur, see Parker 2011: 365 (with further references) and Maul 2017.

[62] Waerzeggers 2015: 183.

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Deities and Their Epithets

Furthermore, while taking on the appropriate political titulary is perhaps expected, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's self-portrayal as a proper Babylonian king goes beyond those of the other Assyrian rulers, even those of Sargon II and Esarhaddon, who were quite interested in portraying themselves effectively as kings of Babylonia. If one considers the geographic affiliations of the gods that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn invokes in his royal inscriptions, it is clear that he has "gone native," appearing as Babylonian with only the genealogies discussed above identifying him as Assyrian in origin. The choice of gods that are mentioned in these inscriptions is not incidental, as the gods are ultimately responsible for ensuring the king's successful reign with their presence on the battlefield, in his capital city, and everywhere in between. As noted above, the god Marduk seems to have had a role in determining who the "genuine" Babylonians were, and Aššur was similarly associated with Assyrian identity. These two gods were also responsible for designating their respective mortal representatives, the kings. Consequently, an exploration into the religious conventions of the king's inscriptions gives a clear insight into the way the ruler's identity was constructed and how he combined Babylonianisms with Assyrianisms that were modified to look more Babylonian.

Perhaps the most obvious difference in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's corpus is the complete absence of Aššur, with an emphasis on Marduk as the head of the Babylonian pantheon instead. No other Assyrian ruler omits Aššur from his royal inscriptions. Of course, a heavy emphasis on Marduk is to be expected from the king of Babylon, and, indeed, the Assyrian kings, including Ashurbanipal, venerate Marduk more prominently in their Babylonian inscriptions. However, Ashurbanipal and the previous Assyrian rulers of Babylon do still invoke Aššur in these inscriptions, even if in a somewhat more muted manner.[63] Moreover, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn does not use the Assyrian royal seals, which feature Aššur quite prominently, opting instead to imitate a Babylonian seal for his royal use, as evidenced by a tablet that records his patronage of the cult of Bēlet-Ninua (Ištar of Nineveh) in Babylon, herself an Assyrian goddess transplanted into a thoroughly Babylonian context, the capital city.[64] The text identifies the "pseudo-seal" as belonging to the king (*kunuk šarrūtišu*) and depicts the Babylonian king smiting what appears to be an antelope or other caprine animal.[65] While the king's garments and cap are Babylonian, Da Riva and Frahm argue that the image is nonetheless an imitation of Assyrian iconography, demonstrating a modification of Assyrian tropes that will be a recurring theme in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions.[66] The total

[63] Many of Esarhaddon's inscriptions do not mention Aššur and Ashurbanipal tends to limit invocations of Aššur to his titulary, see RIMB 2 B.6.32.2: 7–10, B.6.32.14: 4–6, and B.6.32.15: 10.

[64] This is a surprisingly profound glimpse into the identity crisis, given the relationship between identity (particularly family or dynastic affiliation) and cylinder seals, which were quite personal. The Assyrian royal seals can be found on the exemplar of Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty from Calah, which preserves a caption that reads "seal of the god Aššur, king of the gods, lord of the lands—not to be altered; seal of the great ruler, father of the gods—not to be disputed" (SAA II 6 i-iv), explicitly linking the seal with the supreme Assyrian god. The use of three Assyrian seals, dating to the Old, Middle, and Neo-Assyrian periods, respectively, suggests that the continuity of tradition was an important feature. The Neo-Assyrian seal, also partially preserved on the Tell Tayinat manuscript (Lauinger 2012: 90), belonged to Sennacherib, which might provide an additional reason why Šamaš-šuma-ukīn would reject the family seal in Babylon, the city Sennacherib had infamously destroyed. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's seal is apparently original. For the text edition and discussion, including a drawing of the seal, see Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 156–82. Aššur-nādin-šumi is mentioned with the title "king of Babylon" in the text, apparently as a predecessor of the king making the decree, which renews the former Assyrian crown prince's stipulations and allowances (Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 160), but a familial relationship is not mentioned. As discussed below, Ištar of Nineveh was strongly associated with Assyrian kingship especially during the reign of Ashurbanipal. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn does not venerate the goddess in his royal inscriptions but the movement of her cult to Babylonia may indeed be another subtle nod at Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's origins as part of the Assyrian royal family.

[65] Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 159–60, 163–64, 166–69. The partially-preserved description of the royal seal as being "without rival" is common in Babylonian *kudurru*s, Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 167.

[66] Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 166–68, including the iconography that identifies the figure as a Babylonian king, especially the hat, which Aššur-nādin-šumi also wears on his *kudurru*, and Ashurbanipal receives from his soldiers after the fall of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. They (1999/2000: 168) write that "bei der Gestaltung des neuen Siegels scheint, wie von verschiedenen Autoren angedeutet worden ist, als leitender Gedanke das Bestreben gewirkt zu haben, ein für Babylonien gültiges königliches Siegel zu schaffen, das vom Motiv her dem assyrischen Königssiegel ähneln sollte. Denn die Abbildung auf unserer Tafel weist ganz offensichtlich Parallelen mit dem Siegel der assyrischen Herrscher auf: Hier wie dort ist der König dargestellt, jeweils im landesüblichen Ornat, wie er im Begriffe ist, ein aufrechtstehendes Tier, im Falle des assyrischen Siegels einen Löwen, im Falle des babylonischen einen Capriden,

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lack of Aššur in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions, even in the titulary of his predecessors who are listed as kings of Assyria, leads to the remarkable implication that, despite Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's ethnic identity as an Assyrian, he does not publicly venerate the Assyrian god *par excellence*.[67] Because Aššur is so intrinsically linked to the land and people of Assyria, his absence has implications for how Šamaš-šuma-ukīn portrays his cultural affiliations.

Likewise, the ways in which Marduk and the other gods are invoked in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions are distinct, not only because the deities themselves are geographically coded as Babylonian, but also because of the conventions that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn uses.[68] As mentioned above, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn modifies the expected Assyrian conventions so that they read as Babylonian, and these conventions are interspersed with more traditionally Babylonian language.[69] The boundaries between an Assyrian and Babylonian convention sometimes blur, however, as when changes made to an Assyrianism is actually a return to an older Babylonian tradition that was itself appropriated by the Assyrians at some point. The category of modified conventions includes such typically fixed forms as the descriptions of gods, the relationship between god and king, and construction reports. In general, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn gives the major gods shared between the Assyrian and Babylonian panthea exclusively Babylonian by-names, genealogies, or geographical epithets. These parallel conventions are perhaps the most telling for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's ideology and identity construction, especially in contrast to Ashurbanipal's inscriptions.

The other Sargonid kings, for instance, invoke the tropes of gods creating them, goddesses raising them like a mother, or deities designating them for kingship while they were still in the womb.[70] For the Assyrian kings, these roles are fulfilled by a number of deities, including Aššur,[71] Bēlet-ilī,[72] Ištar[73] and Sîn.[74] Ashurbanipal portrays Mullissu and Ištar of Nineveh in particular as his divine mother figures in his royal inscriptions; prophetic texts include Ištar of Arbela in the same capacity.[75]

mit einem Schwert zu töten. Unter der Voraussetzung, daß es Šamaš-šuma-ukīn war, der das auf unserer Tafel kopierte Siegel in Auftrag gab, wird man ihm wohl unterstellen dürfen, daß ihm daran gelegen war, ein Siegel zu besitzen, auf dem in assyrischer Tradition der König im Mittelpunkt stand, und nicht eines, das wie das oben erwähnte Königssiegel AO 4793 nur Göttersymbole und Tierdarstellungen aufwies." Da Riva draws a comparison between Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's robe and that of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus, writing that, despite an earlier identification as an Assyrian-type robe, "this was the royal garment which, with minor variants, was worn by the Babylonian monarchs in the middle of the I millennium BC," adding that Nebuchadnezzar "also wears the typical I millennium BC Babylonian crown, a high conical pointed cap with a long tassel hanging down the back, as did Šamaš-šuma-ukīn before him and Nabonidus was to do after him" (Da Riva 2010: 180–81). Already in his depiction on Esarhaddon's Sam'al stele, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn wears Babylonian garments that are identical to those of Marduk-zakir-šumi and Marduk-apla-iddina II (Da Riva 2010: 181 fn 85).

[67] Compare to Ashurbanipal's *Hymn to Assur* (SAA III 1), in which Aššur is venerated above all other gods, including Marduk, perhaps reemphasizing Ashurbanipal's divine endorsement and ultimate supremacy (see Foster 2007: 83–84).

[68] Letters from Šamaš-šuma-ukīn to his father, Esarhaddon, show that he invoked Nabû and Marduk, in that order, in his greeting formulae to the king, as does Ashurbanipal on occasion, although the latter more commonly uses the sequence Aššur, Bēl, Nabû (see SAA XVI 14, 15, 17, 18 for Ashurbanipal and SAA XVI 22, 23, and 24 for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn). As noted above, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn switches to a more Babylonian sequence in his greeting formula (Marduk, Zarpanītum, Nabû, Tašmetu, and Nanāya) when he is king of Babylon and writing to Ashurbanipal.

[69] This might suggest that he was working with a combination of Assyrian- and Babylonian-trained scribes, or ones who were trying to accommodate both traditions. It should be noted that both Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn have bilingual Akkadian-Sumerian or Sumerian-only inscriptions in their Babylonian corpora. See Shibata 2014 for the argument that the scribe of at least Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's bilingual inscription was highly educated in an elaborate and archaizing script.

[70] See, for example, the literary text *The Myth of the Creation of Man and King,* in which the role of creating the king goes to Bēlet-ilī, with assistance by Ea (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 208–209).

[71] For instance, RINAP 5 Asbpl 73/Assyrian Tablet 2: i 5′–6′, and Ashurbanipal's Coronation Hymn, which reads "Aššur is king — indeed Aššur is king! Assurbanipal is the [representative] of Aššur, the creation of his hands" (SAA III 11: 15).

[72] RINAP 3/1 43: 3, 49: 3, 50: 3.

[73] RINAP 4 43: obv. 12, RINAP 5 Asbpl 10: v 33, RINAP 5 Asbpl 3: v 51, 4: v 4″, 7: v 130, 6: vi 34 (partially preserved).

[74] Sîn is also a god that creates kings in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, though when he is invoked alone in this role it is specifically in the context of designating the king to renew the Eḫulḫul temple (see, for instance, RINAP 5 Asbpl 10: ii 29-ii 35). Sîn-šarru-iškun also claims that the gods "guided me like a father and a mother" in several inscriptions but in a broad sense, as specific deities are not always mentioned in this role.

[75] SAACT X 18 i 2, 11; RINAP 5 Asbpl 2: i 4; 8: viii 29‴; 9: i 1; 11: i 1. Mullissu takes on maternal epithets under Ashurbanipal, for example "the great mother" in SAACT X 18: i 11. See also the combination "may Mullissu and the Lady of Arbela keep Assurbanipal, the creation of their

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Ashurbanipal writes that "the goddess Mullissu, the mother of the great gods, raised me like my (own) birth mother in the benevolent (crook of) her arm."[76] Similarly, the poetic work *Dialogue between Ashurbanipal and Nabû* depicts the god Nabû telling the king that "you were a child, Assurbanipal, when I left you with the Queen of Nineveh; you were a baby, Assurbanipal, when you sat in the lap of the Queen of Nineveh! Her four teats are placed in your mouth; two you suck, and two you milk to your face."[77] The Queen of Nineveh—that is, Ištar of Nineveh—acts essentially as a wet nurse for the king in his childhood. As noted above, Aššur occasionally appears in this context as well, such as when Ashurbanipal calls himself "the creation of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Mullissu … the one whom (the god) Aššur and the god Sîn, the lord of the (lunar) crown … created in the womb of his mother for shepherding Assyria."[78] Here, Aššur and Mullissu and then Aššur and Sîn are conceptualized as divine parental figures.

Although he thus has a number of gods to choose from based on the Assyrian idiom, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn instead invokes Erua as his divine maternal figure and endorser: "in the womb of (my) mother who bore me (lit. 'in the place of creating of the mother who bore me'), the queen of the gods, the goddess Erua, gladly appointed me to be lord of the people."[79] Erua is a name of Zarpanītu that is explicitly tied to Marduk as Asari in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's corpus; the names Erua and Asari are not used in Assyrian texts for these deities, thereby demonstrating Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's emendations of an Assyrian convention through the use of not only a traditionally Babylonian goddess—indeed, the consort of the patron of Babylon—but also an exclusively Babylonian name that would be foreign to an Assyrian audience.[80] In his Babylonian inscriptions, in contrast, Ashurbanipal invokes Bēltiya as the consort of Bēl, a name of Marduk more characteristic of Assyrian inscriptions, and she is not connected to the king's divine selection.[81] Indeed, only Esarhaddon otherwise mentions a goddess protecting him like a mother in the corpus of Babylonian inscriptions of the Assyrian kings, as part of a dedication to the goddess Queen of Nippur, who is the "supreme lady who always cares like a mother for the king, her favorite."[82] The Queen of Nippur is a localized form of Ištar, meaning that Esarhaddon is using the appropriate Assyrian motif with the veneer of Babylonian identity, whereas Šamaš-šuma-ukīn goes a step further and actually selects Babylonian deities.

Like Zarpanītu, a number of gods that are frequently invoked in the Assyrian royal inscriptions are modified to be more Babylonian in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions, particularly through epithets and names not used in the Assyrian corpus. For instance, Nabû is called by the bynames Šiḫṭu (Mercury), Mudugasâ, Imdudu, and Šiddukišarra, and he is given a number of epithets otherwise unattested in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, including "son (*bukur*) of Asari," which uses the Babylonian name for Marduk.[83] Another dedication includes the descriptions "most important son of the god Asari (Marduk), offspring of the goddess Erua—queen (and) goddess of ladies—who dwells in Ezida—the true house, (located) in [Bor]sippa, the cult centre which is worthy of

hands, alive for ever!" (SAA IX 9 r. 1′–3′). During the late Neo-Assyrian period, Mullissu and Ištar of Nineveh are increasingly closely identified with one another.

[76] RINAP 5 Asbpl 75/Assyrian Tablet 4: 5.

[77] SAA III 13 r. 6–8.

[78] RINAP 5 Asbpl 11: i 1-i 5.

[79] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 6–8. This line has been interpreted as identifying Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's mother as Babylonian but Frame (2007: 96) notes that "the idea that an individual could [be] chosen by the gods before his birth is well attested in Mesopotamian tradition. While it would seem logical that Esarhaddon might have decided to entrust the future rulership of Babylonia to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn because the latter's mother came from that land, there is in fact no other evidence that she did so." Unfortunately, nothing else is known about Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's childhood or how and where he was raised, see Bock 2012: 230, 242 fn. 187, 280.

[80] RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 9. Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar I makes the claim that Marduk created his features, while Nabonidus chooses to say the same of Sîn, who was particularly important to him (CAD N I *s.v. nabnītu* with further references).

[81] The relevant passages are blessing and cursing formulae, see RIMB 2 B.6.32.3: 1′–3′; B.6.32.4: 13–24; B.6.32.5: 14–24. The name Bēl is not exclusive to Assyrian royal inscriptions, but certainly more prominent, and Assyrian kings' Babylonian inscriptions tend to use Marduk instead. For the motif of "GN beruft PN im Mutterlieb zu einem bestimmten Zweck" and how it applies to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and Ashurbanipal, respectively, see Bock 2012: 24–27.

[82] RIMB 2 B.6.31.11: 2.

[83] RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 1–10. For "son of Asari," "star of Marduk," Šiḫṭu, Imdudu, Šiddukišarra and Mudugasâ, see also B.6.33.5: 6–13, 18-r. 21. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn refers in another inscription to Marduk as Asari, discussed below, which was earlier attested in Sargon II's Babylonian inscriptions. Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal also refer to Marduk as Asari but in Babylonian dedications, only Sargon II refers to Asari as selecting him for kingship (RIMB B.6.22.3: 27–28).

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honour," giving the god a fully Babylonian genealogy and geographical association.[84] That the texts qualify the god as living in the Ezida in Borsippa, the god's patron city in Babylonia, underscores the geographic associations.

In a similar vein, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's theophoric titulary demonstrates a "Babylonization" of Assyrian conventions. Quite often, Assyrian and Babylonian kings call themselves *migir* "favorite of" one or more deities but, instead of selecting an existing version of the title, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn calls himself *migir* Enlil, Šamaš, and Marduk, gods that represent important Babylonian religious, cultural, and political centers: Nippur, Sippar, and Babylon respectively.[85] Ashurbanipal's titulary in his Babylonian inscriptions, in contrast, is also modified to look more Babylonian but still invokes Aššur first, as in "who at the command of the gods Aššur, Šamaš, and Marduk rules from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea."[86] The deity sequences are strikingly similar, with the difference based on the fact that each king recognizes the traditional religious center of his territory: Nippur and its patron god Enlil versus Assur and its patron god Aššur, symbolizing Babylonia and Assyria, respectively.[87]

Construction Works

Royal inscriptions often include records of royal building programs, and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's are no exception. The king's construction projects are focused exclusively on Babylonian sites and, as discussed below, construction works were an integral part of Babylonian kingship to an even greater extent than in Assyrian kingship, which gave primacy to military campaigns. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn did not patronize temples in Assyria, even though his brother Ashurbanipal was involved with numerous Babylonian cults during his reign.[88] Šamaš-šuma-ukīn situates himself as having the divine commission to "gather the scattered people of Akkad (i.e. Babylonia)" and to "carry out the forgotten rites and rituals," including specifically renewing the cults of the gods who had shrines and cellas in the Ekur, Enlil's temple in Nippur, showing his patronage of some of the oldest religious traditions in Babylonia.[89] In particular, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn describes his

[84] RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 9–10.

[85] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 4–5. Frame (2007: 107) identifies this epithet as an innovation of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's. Interestingly, this triad is used in the royal inscriptions again only under Nabopolassar when he is rebuilding Imgur-Enlil, the wall of Babylon, and the Ninurta temple of Babylon: "I called up the workers of the Enlil, Šamaš, and Marduk, I made them carry hoe, I laid (on them) the *tupšikku*-basket" (Da Riva 2013: 62, 96). Nabopolassar himself is an intriguing figure; he refers to himself as "son of nobody" (see Jursa 2007b), though his origins seem to have been in Uruk (Da Riva 2017: 78, Jursa 2007b), and he performs Babylonian kingship similarly well as the founder of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, as Da Riva (2017: 77) notes that later texts remember him as "a model of a just and pious king, a man who, by means of his profound piety and reverence of Marduk, had liberated Babylonia from the Assyrians … the avenger of Akkad, a symbol of resistance to foreign domination. The language of vengeance and divine providence that we encounter in these compositions was probably inspired by the king's original inscriptions, which scholars of the Esagil consulted and in all probability were on display in the city."

[86] RIMB 2 B.6.32.2: 7–11. Aššur always appears at the beginning of deity sequences in which he is invoked.

[87] Ashurbanipal invokes Enlil in a title in a dedication to the god; even then, the title reads "vice-regent for the gods Aššur, Enlil, and Ninurta," keeping the Assyrian god elevated over the others (RIMB 2 B.6.32.15: 10).

[88] Ashurbanipal carried out construction work in his own name at Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Uruk, and possibly several other cities. The governor of Ur, Sîn-balāssu-iqbi, dedicated his building works to Ashurbanipal as the "king of kings" and entirely omits the Babylonian king from his inscriptions, though there is no unequivocal evidence for poor relations between Sîn-balāssu-iqbi and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (Frame 2007: 110, RlA XI: 619).

[89] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 9–13, B.6.33.1: 19–22. Nippur was not particularly central but its political significance at this time was as a periodic Assyrian stronghold. There is evidence that revolts against Esarhaddon had taken place there and a number of city governors were removed and executed by the Assyrians (Frame 2007: 66). As Cole (SAAS IV: 73) writes, "Nippur vacillated sharply and frequently between pro- and anti-Assyrian sentiment during the period of intensive Assyrian involvement in Babylonia from 745 to 612" and that, after Esarhaddon became king, "Nippur became Babylonia's most persistently rebellious city." It was only in 664 that Ashurbanipal was able to take control of Nippur, giving over rule to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn from 660 to 651 before taking the city back during the civil war (SAAS IV: 74). Regarding Assyrian efforts to control the city, Frame (2007: 48 fn 100, 49) writes that there were many different groups in Nippur and that "the heterogeneous nature of the population at Nippur may help explain why this city frequently gave trouble to the Assyrians and was placed under direct Assyrian control during the second half of the reign of Ashurbanipal," adding that it was "during and after the time of Kandalānu when [Nippur] was directly controlled by the Assyrians and served as their base of operations in the south." Most importantly for the performance of Babylonian kingship, Nippur had a strong tradition of being symbolically and culturally important due to Enlil's temple there, and there is some evidence that Nippur joined Šamaš-šuma-ukīn in his revolt against Ashurbanipal (Frame 2007: 134). On Nippur generally in the Neo-Assyrian period, see SAAS IV.

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construction efforts on the major Babylonian cities of Borsippa, Sippar, and Babylon, renovating Nabû's Ezida temple in the god's patron city of Borsippa and the Ebabbar temple of Šamaš in his city, Sippar.[90] In the building accounts, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn adds touches specific to Babylonian conceptions of religion and culture, such as identifying Šamaš and Nabû as *šar Sippar* "king of Sippar" and *ṭupšar Esagil* "scribe of the Esagila," respectively, epithets that were not used in Assyrian contexts.[91] The Babylonian king's renovations on Sippar's city wall are particularly noteworthy: "at that time, I (re-)erected the dilapidated parts of Badullisâ ('wall named in ancient times'), the (city) wall of Sippar, which had become weak and buckled because of enemy disturbances."[92] The reference to the ancient name includes Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as one link in a long tradition and the reference to "enemies" aligns Šamaš-šuma-ukīn with the Babylonians against outside aggressors—including possibly the Assyrians as well. Furthermore, the blessing formula, invoking Šamaš and Aya, does not conform to the standard Assyrian "hearing god" tradition.[93]

Marduk's Return to Babylon

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's close association with Marduk as the head of the Babylonian pantheon is particularly visible in the king's restoration work. Cultic involvement mentioned in the titulary focuses on the Esagila and Ezida as Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is the king who "(re)built Esagila, (and) provides for Ezida" and "who (re)confirmed the regular offerings (in) Esagila (for) the gods of Sumer and Akkad."[94] The cultic restoration's high point was the return of the Marduk cult image to its rightful place in the Esagil and one can directly compare the episode in which the statue was returned from Assyria between the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, since both kings take responsibility for this feat.[95] Esarhaddon was the one who claimed to renew the statue of Marduk and the other Babylonian gods, but the return of the Marduk statue to Babylon was not successfully completed until the reign of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, since attempts during Esarhaddon's reign had failed.[96] The return of Marduk also signaled the resumption of the *akītu* festival, which had been suspended during Marduk's "exile" in Assyria and was central to the religious duties of the Babylonian king.[97] Most importantly, Marduk's return was significant to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's legitimacy as Babylonian king because it indicated the god's approval of his regency.[98] Notably, when the civil war breaks out, Ashurbanipal refers to his brother in a letter to the Babylonians as "this man whom Marduk hates," condemning his brother and undermining his legitimacy as Babylonian king.[99]

In Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's accounts, the descriptions of Marduk's return to Babylon are steeped in Babylonian theological ideals. The king's titulary identifies him as "the one during [who]se reign the Enlil of the gods, the god Marduk, had pity, entered Babylon amidst rejoicing, and took up his residence in Esagila forevermore," drawing upon the epithet *Enlil ilānī* "Enlil of the gods," a statement of ultimate supremacy that Ashurbanipal uses for Aššur in his Assyrian inscriptions.[100]

[90] RlA XI: 619, RIMB 2 B.6.33.3: 13–16 (the Ezida enclosure wall), B.6.33.4: 26–27 (the Ezida storehouses). The king also dedicates a cultic object to the god in B.6.33.5; Frame suggests that it is a boat or part of one, see RIMB 2: 256–57. As a result of these works, Nabû is particularly prominent in the king's corpus since he is invoked in the dedications, blessings, and curses that are part of construction reports. For the renovation of Šamaš's Ebabbar temple in Sippar and the city wall, see RIMB 2 B.6.33.1 and B.6.33.2.

[91] RIMB 2 B.6.33.2: 1–14 (a Sumerian inscription, so the title is written LUGAL ZIBBIR^{KI}), B.6.33.3: 22 (note that Nabû's name is written syllabically here, which is quite unusual).

[92] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 23–26. Frame (2007: 129) suggests that this could have been part of a plan to fortify the city for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's rebellion against his brother, but this is speculative.

[93] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 30–35. On the Assyrian convention, see Greenwood 2010: 211–18.

[94] RIMB 2 B.6.33.4: 14, 17.

[95] The return of the Marduk statue seems to also have affected the timing of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's ascension, as Ashurbanipal took the Assyrian throne immediately after Esarhaddon's death but Šamaš-šuma-ukīn only took the Babylonian throne a year later (RlA XI: 619).

[96] Frame 2007: 77–78.

[97] For an overview of Assyrian ideological strategies around this event, see Finn 2017: 39–40.

[98] The timing of the return was also determined by prophecy, see Finn 2017: 40 fn. 100 and 101.

[99] For a full discussion on how Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's complicated identity affected the civil war between him and Ashurbanipal, see Zaia (ahead of print).

[100] RIMB 2 B.6.33.3: 5–7, B.6.33.4: 15–17. Ashurbanipal does not use *Enlil ilānī* in his Babylonian royal inscriptions but does use the epithet almost exclusively for Aššur in his

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Another title often associated with Aššur in Assyrian inscriptions is *šar ilānī* "king of the gods," which is attributed to Marduk in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions.[101] The use of Marduk's bynames is also reflective of what seems to be the conscious avoidance of typical tropes in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Since Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's inscriptions do not invoke the common Assyrianism of calling Marduk "Bēl," the name "Asari" is used instead, an appellation that is exclusive to Babylonian traditions and thus absent from Assyrian royal inscriptions. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn writes, for example, "the king of the gods, the god Asari, came happily with me from Baltil unto 'the Seat of Life.'"[102] Unlike in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn does not attempt to explain why Marduk was in Assur, focusing more on his return: "the great lord (and) hero, the god Marduk, gladly took up his holy residence in Esagila, the palace of heaven and netherworld."[103] Assyrian involvement is largely bypassed, with only the mention of Baltil, a district of Assur, betraying the cult image's point of origin.

Ashurbanipal's titulary, in contrast, does not mention the return of Marduk in the Babylonian inscriptions. A number of Ashurbanipal's Babylonian inscriptions include what are essentially stock passages about the return of Marduk and how Ashurbanipal benevolently finished the Esagil temple's construction, made offerings, reestablished the earlier privileges granted to Babylon, and set his brother as their king. Marduk's reentrance into his patron city is expressed as "during my reign, the great lord, the god Marduk, entered Babylon amidst rejoicing," with a few inscriptions mentioning indirectly Marduk's residence in Aššur's temple as "who during the reign of a previous king had resided in Baltil in the presence of the father (i.e. Aššur) who created him," providing more detail than Šamaš-šuma-ukīn though still without mentioning Assyria or Aššur explicitly.[104] As mentioned, the epithet *šar ilānī* "king of the gods" refers more often to Aššur than to Marduk in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, though it is otherwise almost exclusively given to Enlil, and *Enlil ilānī* is not used in the Babylonian inscriptions. Most often, Marduk is called by standard epithets such as *bēlu rabû* "the great lord" or *bēlu'a* "my lord."[105] Even in dedications, which usually include numerous descriptors for the divine recipient, the epithets for Marduk are not extensive.[106] Ashurbanipal does not mention Marduk's return to Babylon in his Assyrian inscriptions frequently either; there is essentially only one tablet from Nineveh that describes the return in great detail, focusing on Marduk's agency in leaving, Ashurbanipal's role in beseeching him to take back his proper seat in Babylon, and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn taking the god by the hand and leading him on the journey.[107] Ashurbanipal, unable or unwilling to take direct credit for the physical return of the god to his cult city, instead claims responsibility for persuading the god to take up his rightful seat.

Assyrian inscriptions (RINAP 5 Asbpl 75/Assyrian Tablet 4: 4; SAACT X 18 ii 32′, which mentions Marduk with this epithet, Weippert 1973: 81, SAAS X: 241–245), consistent with the Assyrian inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III and Sennacherib (RINAP 1 Tp III 35 col. i 1, 34–35; 37: 1; RINAP 3/2 159: 5). One should note that, overall, this particular epithet is rarely attested in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Esarhaddon's inscriptions suggest that this epithet was instead more closely associated with Babylonia, since he uses *Enlil ilānī* almost exclusively for Marduk and essentially only in his Babylonian inscriptions, with the exception of Aššur-Babylon A, which was found in Nineveh: see RINAP 4 48: 8; 50 (Aššur-Babylon A): 2′; 104: i 34, vii 35; 105: i 38, x 22; 106: v 3; 107: x 26′–27′; 108: ii 3′; 111: i 12′; 114: i 19; 116: obv. 9′.

[101] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 14–15; B.6.33.3: 25. Esarhaddon uses this epithet for Marduk mostly in his Babylonian inscriptions and Ashurbanipal in some of his Assyrian inscriptions, but not in his Babylonian ones, in which he attributes the epithet to Enlil instead. Nonetheless, *šar ilānī* is used in the Assyrian inscriptions much more frequently with Aššur in all of the Sargonid kings' official corpora.

[102] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 14–15. The Sumerian line has Tintir (i.e. Babylon) for "Seat of Life."

[103] RIMB 2 B.6.33.1: 16–18.

[104] RIMB 2 B.6.32.1: 10–16; B.6.32.2: 36–50; B.6.32.6: 7–17; B.6.32.12: 8–15; B.6.32.13: 13–18; B.6.32.14: 23–32; B.6.32.19: 16–22. A theological reform had taken place under Sennacherib in which Aššur was identified with the primordial AN.ŠÁR and the creation epic *Enūma eliš* was rewritten to promote the Assyrian god over Marduk; as part of this reworking, Aššur also becomes Marduk's ancestor, AN.ŠÁR's role in the epic.

[105] The more basic titles are on brick inscriptions, see RIMB 2 B.6.32.7–11, and in the narrative of Marduk's return in RIMB 2 B.6.32.13–15. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn also uses these epithets but features more elaborate ones as well.

[106] RINAP 5 Asbpl 76/Babylonian 1 (RIMB 2 B.6.32.1) contains the most (and most flowery) epithets, giving the god the titles such as *šar* ^{d}*Igigu u* ^{d}*Anunnaku* "king of the Igigu and Anunnaku gods," *bēlu rabû* "the great lord," and *šar gimri* "king of everything," the first of which is included in the opening dedication.

[107] RINAP 5 Asbpl 73/Assyrian Tablet 2; RINAP 5 Asbpl 61: 13–33 also describes Ashurbanipal's renovation of the Esagil and the return of Marduk to his rightful place, but is somewhat fragmentary.

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Overall, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn depicts himself as a Babylonian king through his choices in utilizing or modifying established scribal conventions, from his titulary, to the named deities and their epithets, to his construction projects, to his close relationship with Marduk and omission of Aššur. But it is important to note that neither the Babylonian audience for these inscriptions nor the possibility of Babylonian scribes writing them is enough to explain these trends. It is clear that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn presents himself as a native Babylonian even when compared to Ashurbanipal's Babylonian inscriptions, which were contemporary and themselves strategically modified for a Babylonian context. Perhaps most tellingly, the letters that Ashurbanipal sent to the Babylonians to try and secure their loyalty against his brother reveal an important modification to the swearing formula: the addition of Marduk, while nonetheless maintaining Aššur's primacy. Parpola observes that these letters "are the only letters where Assurbanipal (or for that matter any Assyrian king) swears by Aššur and Marduk together. In *all* other letters of Assurbanipal the relevant formula is … 'I swear by Aššur (and) my gods,'" which Parpola sees as a strategic attempt to appeal to the Babylonians.[108] Indeed, these are powerful entreaties to Babylonian sensibilities, attempting to undermine Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's rhetoric against him: "I swear by Aššur (and) Marduk, my gods, that I have never thought in my heart or said by my mouth any of the detestable things that he has spoken against me"[109] and "I swear by Aššur (and) Marduk, my gods, that I did not know nor have said a word of what he has spoken to you, nor has anybody given me such advice! They are all but lies and vain words which he has invented and spoken for his own purposes."[110] It is not only in this context that Ashurbanipal invokes this pair; in one letter, Ashurbanipal asks the loyal Babylonians to warn their brethren that they have the choice of either peace or war when he sends the message that "if Marduk wants to keep them alive, let them open [the city gate] in friendly terms; if n[ot], I have prayed to Aššur and Marduk, my gods, and [my] gods […]."[111] Parpola's observation is strengthened by the unusual *ilānū'a* "my gods" epithet that Ashurbanipal adds after Aššur and Marduk, an epithet more commonly applied to Aššur alone in the king's Assyrian inscriptions and one that indicates a close, personal relationship to the deity(s) in question. Thus, even when appealing to Babylonians directly, from letters to royal inscriptions, Ashurbanipal still invokes Aššur before Marduk.[112]

Babylonian Self-Presentation under Esarhaddon

Finally, one might also compare Šamaš-šuma-ukīn with how his predecessor Esarhaddon depicted himself as a Babylonian king, though the latter was simultaneously the sitting king of Assyria. Nonetheless, while Esarhaddon was not the first Assyrian king to portray himself as a Babylonian king in Babylonia, he was the first to expand significantly on the strategies of his predecessors.[113] Therefore, Esarhaddon was an ideal model for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn in terms of embodying the role of the proper Babylonian king as an Assyrian outsider. After all, Esarhaddon's predecessor, Sennacherib, had famously destroyed Babylon and had rejected acting as the king of Babylon but, despite the memory of these events, Esarhaddon was able to establish himself as the king of Babylonia so effectively that there was relative peace between the two polities for much of his reign.[114] As Porter argues[115] Esarhaddon's

> statements and activities in Babylonia seem designed to present Esarhaddon to the Babylonians not so much as an individual ruler, but rather as a type, a personification of the Babylonian concept of kingship, a traditional emblem of their identity as a nation. Through symbolic action (the performance of the Babylonian royal ritual of basket-bearing), through figuratively charged language (the adoption of

[108] Parpola 2004a: 232–33 (emphasis his).

[109] Ashurbanipal adds that "it is nothing but a scheme that he has devised in order to make the name of the Babylonians, who love me, detestable along with him," further aligning himself with the Babylonians and driving a wedge between them and their king (Parpola 2004a: 227).

[110] Parpola 2004a: 231.

[111] Parpola 2004a: 229.

[112] This is even despite some of the letters being written in Neo-Babylonian dialect (Parpola 2004a: 228).

[113] Porter 1993: 79. Sargon II's inscriptions, in particular, were probably the foundation for Esarhaddon's strategies.

[114] Porter 1993: 3–6, including the argument that of the many factors that led to Esarhaddon's success, "of central importance, however, was Esarhaddon's use of images and symbols associated with kingship and nation as tools to help him develop support for his rule of Babylonia."

[115] Porter 1993: 7

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traditional Babylonian royal titles which not only reflected practical political realities but also represented each successive Babylonian king as the personification of ancient Babylonian traditions of rule), and finally through the rhetoric of his texts for Babylonia and the image of the king they presented, Esarhaddon presented himself publicly in Babylonia as the very type of a Babylonian ruler.

Porter calls Esarhaddon's rebuilding program in Babylonia, especially in Babylon itself, the "keystone" of his strategy, particularly since Babylonian royal self-presentation centered on the king as a builder, while Assyrian inscriptions combined this motif with the king as a military leader.[116] Porter's analysis of the Esarhaddon inscriptions that had different versions for Babylonia and Assyria show careful modifications depending on the intended audience.[117] For instance, in the Assur A and Babylon A inscriptions, the Babylon A version leaves out Esarhaddon's Assyrian genealogy but includes Babylonian titles and cites Marduk and Zarpanītu as his divine sponsors,[118] while the Assur A version has the standard Assyrian titulary with Aššur as the king's patron deity.[119]

This may have provided a model for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, who, as demonstrated, would end up surpassing his father in Babylonian self-presentation, especially in their respective titulary and how the Babylonian gods supporting him were portrayed, even when they were the same gods that his father invoked.[120] In particular, it is clear that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn rejects Esarhaddon's Assyrianization of Marduk as the son of Aššur, as this idea is not represented in any of his inscriptions and Marduk is the unequivocal head of the pantheon.[121] Esarhaddon also retained many typically Assyrian characteristics in his royal inscriptions that were intended for both Assyrians and Babylonians, mixing Assyrian and Babylonian motifs in an attempt to unify the two traditions.[122] In contrast, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was not as focused on uniting the Assyrian and Babylonian peoples beyond the alliance with his brother, nor did he or Ashurbanipal attempt to balance the number of building projects they personally supported in Assyria and Babylonia, which Esarhaddon did.[123] The brothers did, however, take up one of the motifs Esarhaddon revived: Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn were both portrayed as "basket bearers."[124] Esarhaddon was the first to claim this visual motif for Assyrian kings reigning in Babylonia, even though it was last attested for Rim-Sîn (Larsa Dynasty, 1822–1763 BCE), which made it quite an ancient (and southern) ritual and royal motif.[125] In this tradition, the king carrying the *tupšikku* basket was an important part of the ceremony of breaking ground on a temple, and Esarhaddon significantly performed this ritual for the Esagil as well as for the Ešarra, though there was no

[116] Porter 1993: 39, 44, noting that the Assyrian king presenting his building activities in Babylonia is a trend that began with Sargon II. See Waerzeggers (2011: 726–29) on this distinction between Assyrian and Babylonian kingship, particularly noting that, in Babylonian royal texts, "it is a common trait of all these inscriptions to focus heavily on the king as principal donor in three areas of religious patronage: the erection and renovation of temple buildings, the provision of regular sacrifices, and the supply of objects for use in the daily worship and at festivals."

[117] According to Porter (1993: 77), "this public relations program took a variety of forms; in Babylonia it included, for example, the king's adoption of certain Babylonian royal titles, his personal enactment of an ancient Babylonian royal ceremony, and his use in Babylonian settings of statements carefully shaped to appeal to Babylonian audiences. At the same time that messages of reconciliation were being presented in Babylonia, a different message was being presented to Assyrian audiences to reassure them of their king's continuing commitment to their needs and traditions, despite his attentions to Babylonia; this message was presented through a different building program for Assyria, as we have seen, and also through different, Assyrianized versions of the royal inscriptions commemorating Esarhaddon's restoration work in Babylon." For questions of the audience and dissemination of these texts, see Porter 1993: 112.

[118] See Porter 1993: 95–96.

[119] See Porter 1993: 98–104.

[120] Esarhaddon revived titles such as "king of Sumer and Akkad" and "governor of Babylon" (Porter 1993: 79–80).

[121] Porter 1993: 152.

[122] Porter 1993: 122–24.

[123] Porter 1993: 71. Also according to Porter (1993: 7), the latter half of Esarhaddon's reign is concerned with uniting the Assyrians and Babylonians, including through his attempt to restore Marduk's statue to its rightful place.

[124] Porter 2003: 57–58.

[125] Porter 1993: 86. Nabonidus' Etemenanki inscription features the "basket bearing" quite prominently, and the king even mentions that he "made (foundation) figurines (representing) me as king, bearing the *tupšikku*-basket, and deposited (them) variously in the foundation platform" (Da Riva 2013: 89) and Da Riva (2013: 91) writes that "according to Ellis (1968: 26, 151) this *ṣalmu* was probably not a figure in the round, but rather similar to the small stelae of Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukīn carrying soil-baskets (*tupšikku*)." There is some evidence that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's stele was purposefully defaced during or after the civil war, which may have been an act of *damnatio memoriae* (RlA XII: 620; Porter 1993: 89 shows the image, which has a destroyed face; Ashurbanipal's stele shows no purposeful damage).

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Assyrian tradition of the king carrying the labor basket before building a temple.[126] Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn were depicted carrying baskets as well, on steles in the Nabû temple of Borsippa (and possibly Babylon, where another such stele of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn was found). That they were displayed side-by-side invites comparison between the two, and Ashurbanipal is noticeably portrayed in his traditional Assyrian dress and elaborate crown, while Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's stele is smaller and he is depicted with a simple robe and hat.[127] Thus, Ashurbanipal conspicuously performs a Babylonian ritual to a Babylonian audience in his Assyrian royal attire, while Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is portrayed doing the same action but not overtly as Assyrian royalty, and the juxtaposition makes the different modes of self-presentation clear.

Conclusion

In sum, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's selection of deities and conventions coded as Babylonian constructs a Babylonian identity for him that largely overrides his actual Assyrian identity. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's royal inscriptions depict him as the quintessential Babylonian ruler to an extent that is unprecedented for Assyrian rulers in Babylon, though it was likely inspired by Esarhaddon's own Babylonian strategies. Whether Šamaš-šuma-ukīn saw himself as tactically attempting to win over his Babylonian subjects, or if he was bound to Babylonian inscriptional conventions, or if he simply wished to reject his Assyrian cultural background, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's ethnic and cultural identity was successfully downplayed in favor of a constructed, Babylonian political identity. Nonetheless, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn did not entirely suppress his Assyrian heritage, though he actively avoided markers of Assyrian kingship such as the royal relationship with Aššur. He seems to have been largely successful in performing Babylonian kingship, especially considering that he united much of Babylonia against the Assyrians during his revolt. His assimilation was strong enough that he did not attempt to take the Assyrian throne but rather sought to expel the Assyrian presence from Babylonia.[128] This act, likely a bid for independence rather than the rebellion that Ashurbanipal's perspective necessarily interprets it as, ultimately resulted in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's demise.[129] Interestingly, Ashurbanipal attacked both of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's identities as a result of this war, not only by branding his brother in a letter to the Babylonians as being hated by Marduk but also through a letter from Aššur that depicts the god as essentially disowning the unfortunate brother and condemning him to death.[130] Overall, it seems that actual Babylonian cultural and ethnic identity was less important to the Babylonians than Assyrian identity was to the Assyrians, and that a proper and successful Babylonian king was one who was able to navigate the conventions and expectations of Babylonian tradition. Therefore, one can argue that the various identity categories—ethnicity, culture, familial, and so forth—were malleable but significant in the ancient Near East, especially when it came to the performance of kingship and scribal conventions.

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[126] Porter 1993: 67, 82–87. Concerning the scribes and artists involved in depicting these motifs, Porter (1993: 90) has suggested that Babylonian priests in the Assyrian court may have been the source for knowledge about the basket-carrying ritual. In general, Babylonian experts in Assyria may have facilitated the use of Babylonian tropes in Assyrian inscriptions.

[127] Porter 1993: 87, BM 90865 and BM 90866, respectively. For more on Assyrian headdresses and crowns, see Reade 2009 and for Babylonian garments, Da Riva 2010: 180–81.

[128] Ashurbanipal "involved himself actively in Babylonian affairs while his brother sat on the throne of Babylon. It was probably this interference in Babylonia's affairs which eventually caused Šamaš-šuma-ukīn to rebel against Assyrian overlordship" (RIMB 2: 248).

[129] How the civil war and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's death are depicted in the official Assyrian record, however, become complicated by the identity politics taking place in the background, see Zaia (ahead of print) for a full discussion.

[130] Parpola 2004a: 228, SAA 3 44.

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Abbreviations

CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 1956- Chicago: The Oriental Institute.
RIMB 2	Frame, Grant. 1995. *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
RINAP 1	Tadmor, Hayim and Shigeo Yamada. 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
RINAP 3/1	Grayson, A. Kirk and Jamie Novotny. 2012. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
RINAP 3/2	Grayson, A. Kirk and Jamie Novotny. 2012. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 2*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
RINAP 4	Leichty, Erle. 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
RINAP 5	Jeffers, Joshua and Jamie Novotny. "The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal, Aššur-etel-ilāni, and Sîn-šarra-iškun." Online Resource. http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/rinap5/. Editions as of February 2019.
RlA	Ebeling, Erich, Bruno Meissner, Ernst F. Weidner, Wolfram von Soden, Dietz Otto Edzard, and Peter Calmeyer. 1928-. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. Berlin: W. De Gruyter.
SAA II	Parpola, Simo and Kazuko Watanabe. 1988. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAA III	Livingstone, Alasdair. 1989. *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAA IX	Parpola, Simo. 1997. *Assyrian Prophecies*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki
SAA XVI	Luukko, Mikko and Greta Van Buylaere. 2002. *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAA XXI	Parpola, Simo. 2018. *The Correspondence of Assurbanipal, Part 1: Letters from Assyria, Babylonia, and Vassal States*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAACT X	Novotny, Jamie. 2014. *Selected Royal Inscriptions of Assurbanipal: L3, L4, LET, Prism I, Prism T, and Related Texts*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAAS IV	Cole, Steven W. 1996. *Nippur in Late Assyrian Times c. 755–612 BC*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
SAAS X	Pongratz-Leisten, Beate. 1999. *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. und 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

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تقمص شخصية محلية: شمش-شوما-أوكين، ملك بابل الآشوري

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يمثل شمش-شوما-أوكين حالة فريدة في الامبراطورية الآشورية الجديدة: فهو عضو من اعضاء العائلة الملكية الآشورية تم تنصيبه ملكا على بابل ولكن ليس على آشور على الاطلاق. كان حكام آشور السابقين الذين كانت بابل تحت إمرتهم يعتبرون ملوكا فوق كلا النظامين السياسيين، ولكن أبا شمش-شوما-أوكين، الملك إيسارحدون، كان قد قرر ان يشق الإمبراطورية الى قسمين توزع بين إبنيه الإثنين، فيأخذ آشوربانيبال عرش آشور ويأخذ شمش-شوما-أوكين عرش بابل. نتيجة لذلك اصبح شمش-شوما-أوكين حالة دراسية مثيرة للاهتمام حول كيف تم تركيب شخصيته السياسية والعائلية والثقافية في نصوص ومن ثم مفاعلتها مع بعضها لتمثل الشخصية الملكية المعروضة على السكان.
تبين هذه الدراسة بأن رغم من كون هوية شمش-شوما-أوكين العائلية والثقافية هي هوية آشورية، فهو يقدم نفسه بأنه جوهرا ملك بابلي أكثر بابلية من أي ملك بابلي جاء من قبله. لتحقيق هذه الغاية قام شمش-شوما-أوكين باستخدام زخارف وألقاب بابلية متجاهلا الألقاب الآشورية التي استخدمها أخوه آشوربانيبال حتى في النقوش الملكية البابلية.

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