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HOSTAGES IN ASSYRIAN ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS

The revival of Assyria in the second half of the 14th century B.C. gave way to an endless series of wars resulting in the captivity of civilians from the seized fortresses, towns, and villages, more or less massive resettlements as well as the incorporation into the Assyrian army of soldiers from the conquered countries. In short, the consequence of these wars was the transfer of large segments of population. Using such methods, the Assyrians were strengthening (or, at least, that was their objective) their military position and authority among the subdued peoples, and an improvement in their economy.

The taking of hostages, known also in other countries of the Ancient Near East, was one of the means employed to achieve such effects[1]. The Assyrians adopted this method too[2].

As the term for "hostage", the Assyrian royal inscriptions contain the words *līṭu*[3] or *līṭūtu*, "being in a condition of a hostage"[4], derived from the verb *lâṭu*, "to confine, to keep in check, to curb, to control"[5]. In his translations of the Assyrian royal inscriptions in *ARI* I-II and in their complete edition in *RIMA* 1-2 A.K. Grayson has assumed that in exceptional situations[6] the word šallatu should also be translated as "hostages" instead of the commonly accepted "captives, prisoners of war"[7]. However, this argument is very doubtful; the large numbers of captives (4000 and 3000 people respectively), especially when compared to the small

[1] In Bible, cf. 2 Kings 14:14; 2 Chronicles 25:24 and Book of Maccabees 1:10; 8:7; 9:53; 10:6, 9,11,62; 13:16. The extortion of hostages by Rusa I from Ullusunu, the king of Mana, is mentioned in the annals of Sargon II — cf. A.G. Lie, *Inscriptions of Sargon II King of Assyria* Part I. *The Annals*, Paris 1929, p. 16-18 lines 101-102. Cf. also H. Otten, *RIA* II, p. 196 (in Hittite Empire)

[2] Cf. E. Ebeling, *Geisel*, *RIA* II, p. 195-96. According to Assyrian criteria the example of Jehoiachin quoted by Ebeling corresponds to the status of prisoner of war, not of hostage. Only a few members of royal families taken away to Assyria were given the latter status; others were treated as prisoners of war.

[3] *CAD* I/J, p. 223 b; *AHw*, p. 558: "(Umgeschlosener), Geisel".

[4] *CAD* I/J, p. 224a; Cf. *AHw*, p. 558a: "Geiselstellung".

[5] *CAD* I/J, p. 113a; cf. *AHw*, p. 540b: "umspannen".

[6] In the "Broken Obelisk" of Ašur-bēl-kala, cf. *ARI* 2, p. 52 § 230 (=*RIMA* 2, A.O.89.7 col. II 2) and p. 54 § 241 (=*RIMA* 2, A.O.8-9.7 col. III 17 where *šallatu* already was translated as *captives*.

[7] *CAD* Š I 248.

numbers of hostages mentioned in other texts, seem to undermine Grayson's suggestion. Still, the word "hostage" may be legitimately used in translation wherever the term *līṭu* is replaced by *šaprūtu*, "sending"[8]. The noun *līṭu* appears in connection with the verb *ṣabātu*, which means "to take hostage(s)", or with the verb *mahāru*, "to receive hostage(s)". It seems that those verbs were not chosen accidentally, but that each time they were selected to describe a particular situation precisely. The connection of *līṭu* with the verb *ṣabātu* emphasized the aspect of coercion, while the use of the verb *mahāru* seems to suggest that the hostages were taken, at least to some extent, at their own will[9]. The expression *ana šaprūtu mahāru* might have been used to stress the purpose of giving hostages, i.e. "for sending" them together with the spoils[10].

The Assyrian sources which mention hostages come from the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian periods. A more detailed analysis of the phenomenon will be preceded by a presentation of the available material.

Middle Assyrian References

The earliest known attestations occur in the annals of Tukulti-Ninurta I in the description of the struggles on the north-eastern border of Assyria. In combat the Assyrians seized 4 strongholds of Ehli-Tešub, the ruler of the land Alzi, and 6 fortified towns of the land of Amadanu. Facing a hopeless situation, the king and his court left the land and went to Nairi. Without their commander, the soldiers fled from the battlefield. In the defenseless land, the Assyrians destroyed and looted 180 fortified settlements, and then the territories of Alzi, Amadanu, Nihanu, Alaya, Tepurzu, and Purulumzi were incorporated into Assyria. That, however, did not mean their full incorporation in the Assyrian provincial system. Tukulti-Ninurta imposed on them corvee and took hostages from them[11], i. e. most probably from the above mentioned territories.

Again, a relatively large number of references occur in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I. The first opportunity was provided by an expedition against the land of Katmuhi. In its first stage, the Assyrians defeated Kili-Tešub, the son of Kali-Tešub, looted the land and destroyed

[8] *RIMA* 2, A.O.101.1 col. II 99 and cf. A.O.101.19:65.

[9] The writers may have wished to stress here that the defeated themselves took the initiative to give hostages.

[10] Cf. below, where we suggest that not all hostages were meant to be sent to Assyria.

[11] *RIMA* 1, A.O.78.1 col. IV 22-24: *li-ṭí-šú-nu aṣ-bat ana GÌR-ia ú-šék-niš 'ù' ſtup-šikka] e-mi-id.*

the city and the palace, taking into captivity almost all the king's family. The residents of a neighboring town Urattinaš, the capital of the land of Panaru, left their abodes and fled to the mountains together with the deities and the most valuable belongings. Their king, Šadi-Tešub, the son of Hattuhu, did not want to share the fate of Kili-Tešub, therefore he surrendered, paid a rich tribute, and threw himself upon the mercy of the Assyrians. Consequently, the towns of Panaru were not destroyed, but the sons of the king and the rest of his family were taken hostage, and the country was obliged to pay a regular tax (*madattu*)[12]. The fate of the inhabitants of the land of Išdiš who were trying to defend themselves was incomparably worse: the land was looted and the obligation to provide hostages was imposed as well as a tribute and taxes[13].

Hostages were also mentioned in the report from the famous fourth expedition to the land of Nairi. The Assyrians had to fight the joint armies of 23 kings of the lands of Nairi, reinforced by their allies - 60 rulers altogether. Tiglath-pileser "captured all the kings of the lands of Nairi alive" (V 8-10), but in Ashur he showed mercy to them, setting them free from the ties and chains before the god Shamash, and then forced them to take "an oath of eternal vassaldom" and sent them back to their lands, on condition that they would provide a tribute of 1200 horses and 2000 cattle. Their sons, however, were kept in Ashur as hostages (V 10-15). During the same expedition, Melid, considered a part of Hanigalbat, surrendered without any resistance and had to give hostages as well (V 33-41).

Hostages are mentioned in the texts by Tiglath-pileser two more times and they refer to the land of Qumanu giving aid to the land of Muṣri. Two towns, Arinu at the feet of the Aisa mountain, and Kipšuna, the capital of the country, which surrendered without fighting were spared by the Assyrians and only had to pay a tribute and taxes as well as to give hostages (V 80-81 and VI 33-36).

Neo-Assyrian References

The earliest attestation comes from the time of Adad-nirari II and, in addition, is very difficult to interpret. It is impossible to decide who in fact was obliged to give hostages: the cities of Nairi, Habhu, or only Alzi, mentioned as the last of them[14].

[12] *RIMA* 2, A.O.87.1 col II 36-57, lines 47-48: DUMU.MEŠ *nab-nit lib-bi-šu ù kim-ti-šu ana li-ṭu-ut-te aṣ-bat*.

[13] Ibid. col II 63-84.

[14] A.O. 99.2: 32.

Most information about hostages comes from the inscriptions of Ašurnasirpal II; the expression *ṣābit līṭi*, "conqueror of hostages", which appears 11 times among the king's titles, is completely new[15]. Seven of those texts come from Kalhu, A.O. 101. 51 from Balawat, A.O. 1010. 56 from Nineveh, and A.O. 101.33 from Nineveh or Kalhu. That means that the title *ṣābit līṭi* was used above all in Kalhu and that it was probably coined by the local writer. Also concrete information about taking hostages occurs solely in the texts of that ruler from Kalhu, six instances in three texts altogether. The earliest attestation from 882 concerns the hostages from Nirbu in the area of the Kašiari mountains. The report seems to distinguish several stages of action in that land: the conquest and destruction of its cities (col. I 111-II 1), their resettlement and hostage-taking (II 9-12), another rebellion and destruction (col. II 15-19)[16]. If the writer did not distort the course of action, it implies that taking hostages had not prevented the anti-Assyrian rebellion.

In the area of the Kašiari mountains fighting started again in 879 B.C. One of the purposes was to defeat an enemy of Assyria, Labṭuru, the son of Ṭupušu. One may infer from the report[17] that only after the Assyrians conquered 60 fortified settlements and approached the central city of Madara, its inhabitants[18] resolved to surrender, pay tribute and voluntarily to consent that their "sons" *ana šaprūte*, i.e. be sent as hostages to Assyria.

Hostages were taken most frequently — as many as four times — during the famous expedition in 675[19]. The expedition, which was mainly directed against Karkemiš, crossed the territories of Bit Bahiani and Azallu towards the area of Bit Adini. Facing practically no resistance, the Assyrians on their way took rich tribute and incorporated into their army enemy chariots, cavalry, and infantry. As one may infer from lines 55-56[20], from the territory of Til Abni (south of Bit Adini), the Assyrians additionally took hostages. Having left Bit Adini, the Assyrian army

[15] A.O.101.1 col I 16-17 and col III 117; A.O.101.2: 7; A.O.101.3: 28; A.O.101.23: 5; A.O.101.26: 13; A.O.101.28 col III 7; A.O.101.30: 9; A.O.101.33: 14';A.O.101.51: 11; A.O.101.56: 5-6.

[16] As regards the routes and dates of the expeditions of Ašurnasirapli, cf. M. LIVERANI, *The Growth of the Assyrian Empire in the Habur/ Middle Euphrates Area: A New Paradigma*, in *SAAB* II/2 (1988), p. 81-98 with fig. 2-6 (the route of the campaigns).

[17] A.O.101.1 col II 97-100 = A.O. 101.19: 63-69.

[18] The text does not mention Labturu, which makes one suppose that the ruler managed to escape the Assyrians.

[19] Cf. A.O.101.1 col III 55-91. LIVERANI, *op. cit.* (n. 16), p. 96 (fig. 5).

[20] These lines should be treated as quite atypical, short information about the expedition and its effects, described in details in lines 60-64.

crossed the Euphrates and proceeded directly to Karkemiš. Sangara, the ruler of Karkemiš, holding the title of the "king of the land of Hatti" acted exactly as his predecessors. For the small countries of Syria it was a signal to give up any thought of resistance. Their rulers (*šarrāni mātāte kališunu*) arrived at Karkemiš and paid homage to Ašurnasirpal. The king took hostages and continued the march to the Mediterranean[21]. The final destination was the state of Patinu[22] on the Orontes, since its king Lubarna had not shown up at Karkemiš. Having conquered the city of Hazazu and crossed the Apre river, the Assyrians approached the city of Kunulua. Only then Lubarna realized that resistance was hopeless, surrendered, and paid the biggest tribute of all. Apart from that, Lubarna had to send the daughters of his brothers with a rich dowry to the harem of the king of Assyria; like other rulers, he lost a part of his army which was incorporated into the Assyrian army; and finally, he gave hostages[23]. In another case, a report from the 883 expedition to the Kašiari mountains additionally stresses that after the fall of the town of Kinabu all of its residents were annihilated: "I did not leave one of them alive as a hostage"[24].

The annals of Shalmaneser III provide only one attestation: in the 26th year of his rule hostages were given by Tulli, the ruler of the royal city Tanakun in Cilicia[25]. After that, until the times of Sargon II, hostages are not mentioned at all. That does not mean that hostages were not being taken — the best evidence is included in the famous "letter to the god Ašur". Having heard that the Assyrian army was approaching the country of Mana, Ullusunu went to meet it with a group of the highest military and civilian dignitaries *ba-lu li-i-ṭi*, "without hostages". Since the context does not imply even a bit of rebuke for Ullusunu, it seems that the intention of the writer was to emphasize the fact that the king of Mana came to meet Sargon in the company of his dignitaries even though the Assyrian monarch did not demand from him any hostages[26].

[21] A.O. 101.1 col III 69-70

[22] As regards this reading, see H. TADMOR, *Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and Its Aftermath*, in *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, ed. by H. GOEDICKE and J.J.M. ROBERTS. Baltimore and London 1975, p. 44, Note 10.

[23] A.O.101.1 col III 70-77; cf. A.O.101.2: 46-51.

[24] A.O.101.1 col I 108: *ki-i li-ṭu-te* 1-*en ina* ŠÀ-*šú-nu* TI.LA *ul e-zib*.

[25] The "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III, cf. *ARAB* I 583 and E. MICHEL, *WdO* 2 (1956), p. 222: 122-134.

[26] W. MAYER, *Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu - 714 v. Chr. Text und Übersetzung*, in *MDOG* 115 (1983), p. 65-132, line 34.

The last piece of information comes from 710. During the Babylonian expedition in that year, four sheiks of the Hindaru tribe paid homage at Dur-Athara and Sargon took hostages[27].

Even a glimpse at the data allows us to realize that until the times of Sargon II all the reports about hostages refer to the territories north and west of Assyria. Inasmuch as both in the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian periods those areas were most often penetrated by Assyrian expeditions, taking hostages only there or reporting such cases only in those regions would be incomprehensible and inexplicable. It is somewhat easier to explain why certain countries had to give hostages, while others did not have to do so. It seems significant that none of the countries which, in one way or another, were forced to provide hostages was strong and had a stable power structure. The only exceptions are Bit Adini and Karkemiš located on the Euphrates at the points where the Assyrians were crossing the river on their way to Syria. The hostages from those countries, coming probably from the local royal families, must have been considered a guarantee of the Assyrian control over the strategically important countries. Such was also the case with the country of Patinu on the Orontes and the Kašiari mountains — hostages were taken from both areas as well. The 675 expedition did not end the autonomy of the state of Lubarna, separated from Assyria by territories which were totally independent, but only resulted in the establishment of an Assyrian colony with a military garrison in Aribua to secure Assyrian interests[28]. The numerous examples discussed above clearly indicate that the Assyrians rarely demanded hostages from the whole territory of the state against which they were currently fighting. In most cases, the hostages were taken from one or a few centers with or even without a local dynasty. Such a strategy — as long as the sources speak the truth — seems to be, as regards the Assyrian interest, quite reasonable. The enforcement of homage and taking hostages from one small center was, on the one hand, much easier, and on the other, it could give rise to local conflicts advantageous to the Assyrians as well as the fear of those who gave hostages that in case of rebellion Assyrian revenge would be directed against them and their compatriots. The choice of small centers unable to defend themselves for long, which in case of rebellion might be totally destroyed, guaranteed that Assyrian policy was more effective in comparison with a uniform approach to the whole area.

[27] LIE, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 48: 329.
[28] Cf. H. TADMOR, *art. cit.* (n. 22), p. 37.

The expedition of Tiglath-pileser against Nairi shows that the institution of hostages was used to cease hostilities on conditions acceptable to both conflicting parties. The text describes the expedition as a success accomplished by military means, but in this respect the report provokes many doubts. A suggestion that the Assyrians simultaneously captured all the 30 "kings of Nairi" is not very plausible — it seems more probable that the kings surrendered after previous negotiations concluded with precisely specified conditions. One may infer that as a result of the negotiations the kings of Nairi arrived at the Assyrian court, paid homage, and left their sons there as hostages to guarantee that the agreement would hold good. The ceremony during which Tiglath-pileser freed the "kings of Nairi" from their (symbolic?) chains was probably performed in public in the temple of Samaš. Such a hypothetical agreement including a clause about hostages was advantageous to both parties — the Assyrians could avoid difficult combat in the mountains, while the local rulers prevented an inevitable final defeat if the war were continued.

It is not clear whether defeated rulers were obliged to give hostages only once or at regular intervals. The second possibility which would in practice mean exchanging one group of hostages for another is also quite possible. Characterizing the obligations imposed on Melid, the writer separates the capitulation of the city and the taking of hostages from information about the annual maddatu[29]. Yet in the same text in two other passages all the three obligations are mentioned together[30]. Thus, it is impossible to rule out that in some cases the supply of hostages was supposed to be as regular as the paying of tribute and taxes.

Taking hostages had both its military — the enforcement of obedience to Assyria — and economic aspects: the regular fulfillment of the imposed obligations. At times, the purpose could be narrower: to prevent helping a neighbouring country with which they conducted a war. That was the case during the 875 B.C. expedition when, having accepted in Karkemiš the homage of the rulers of Syria, Ašurnasirpal "took from them hostages (and) they were kept in my presence on the march to Mount Liban"[31].

[29] A.O.87.1 col V 38-41: *li-i-ṭí-šu-nu aṣ-bat* 1 ANŠE *kur-ba-ni ša a-ba-ri ma-da-at-ta* MU-*šàm-ma a-na la šu-pár-ke-e* UGU-*šu-nu ú-kin* "I took hostages. I imposed upon them uninterrupted annual tribute of one homer of lead ore".

[30] Ibid. vol II 83-84: *li-i-ṭí.*MEŠ GUN *ù ma-da-ta* UGU- *šu-nu ú-kin* "I imposed upon them (the obligations to provide) hostages, tribut, and taxes". Cf. also col V 80-81.

[31] A.O.101.1 col. III 69-70: *li-ṭí-šú-nu aṣ-bat pa-na-tu-ia uk-ti-lu a-na* KUR *lab-na-na* DU-*ku*.

The significant fact is that the texts make a distinct differentiation between hostages and prisoners of war[32]. Quite often information about taking hostages was preceded by information about prisoners of war, including the defeated rulers and their families. Captive kings are never referred to with the term *līṭu*. From the Assyrian point of view a king could only be a prisoner of war, even when he received special treatment. The objective of taking hostages was to make HIM obedient to Assyria and serve as a guarantee of regular payments. Probably for that reason a defeated and captive king was not considered a hostage but a prisoner of war. For the same reasons, hostages were usually members of king's sons, in particular successors to the throne, and other royal familles. Exceptional was the situation of the daughters who were sent "with dowry" to the Assyrian court where they would acquire the status of king's concubines. Sometimes, most probably whenever there was no distinct local center of power, hostages were chosen from the aristocracy or from rich burghers. These data imply that only a small group of people were accorded the status of hostage.

The status of hostage was certainly a guarantee of personal safety[33] and an indispensable means of subsistence at least as long as the inhabitants of the hostage's country were meeting the imposed obligations towards Assyria[34]. A prisoner of war, whether a member of a royal family or a king himself, had no such guarantees; the Assyrian annals are full of examples of brutal murders of defeated rebel rulers of the vassal countries. The fate of the prisoner depended entirely on the will of the Assyrian monarch. Hostages were treated with honors due to the sons of "friendly" courts: they were given expensive clothes and rings, and had the right to contact with the king[35]. One cannot exclude the possibility that only those hostages or rulers who were considered residents had the right to participate in the royal meals, which was considered a special honor. This, however,

[32] Cf. A.O.87.1 col VI 31-34 (report from the battle over Kipšuna in the land of Musri) where the distinction between prisoners of war and hostages is very clear: 5 *šu-ši qi-in-na-a-te* EN.MEŠ *hi-i-ṭí ša lib-bi-šu ša a-na* (d)*a-šur* EN-*ia la-a ka-an-šu is-su-ha am-hur-šu li-i-ṭí*. MEŠ-*šu aṣ-bat* "He departed (and) I received from him 300 families, rebels in his midst who were not submissive to the god Aššur, my lord. I took hostages from him".

[33] Contrary to the case of the defeated rulers, who were quite often cruelly murdered.

[34] We do not know whether hostages ran the risk of punishment in case of a revolt in their own country. Sometimes such circumstances gave them a chance of promotion over and of taking the throne from the rebellious predecessor conquered by the Assyrians.

[35] STRECK, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's*, Teil II, Leipzig 1916, p. 20, col II 93-94: *lu-buš-te bir-me ú-lab-biš semerē*.MEŠ *hurāṣi ú-rak-ki-sa rit-te-e-šu-un ina mah-ri-ia ul-ziz-zu-nu-ti* "I gave him a garment with multicolored trimming (and) a golden rings I put on their arms and they stood in front of me".

confirmed not by the Assyrian texts but by the biblical narrative about Jehoiachin the king of Judah. Taken in captivity in 598 during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II, Jehoiachin, his sons and other dependents were regularly given maintenance[36]. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar II, his successor Amel-Marduk "did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison. And he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; and he changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him for all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life"[37]. However, the above mentioned documents say that Jehoiachin had been given necessary maintenance long before the throne was taken by Amel-Marduk. The only real change in his situation could consist not in his release from prison but in a change in status from prisoner to hostage, which guaranteed the right to common meals with the Babylonian monarch. A similar custom could have been observed at the Assyrian court.

The last issue to be considered is the disappearance of the term *līṭu* after the moment when Sennacherib ascended to the throne. Does it mean that afterwards no hostages were taken? Such a conclusion seems too hasty though, as certain indirect data seem to indicate that the custom did not disappear. This is how Sennacherib describes the appointed successor to the Babylonian throne, Bel-ibni: "like a young hound he had grown in my palace"[38]. Similarly, according to the annals of Assarhaddon, Tabua, the appointed queen of Arabs, was the "scion of my father's palace"[39]. One may infer that they were both the members of families detained in Assyria as hostages. Moreover, one ought to realize that sometimes the term *līṭu* was not used, even though the hostage status of the individuals taken to Assyria seems extremely probable. For instance, a text from the times of Shalmaneser I says that after conquering certain territories in the area occupied by the tribal association Uruatri, "I (Shalamenser I) took a selection of their young men (and) I chose them to enter my service"[40]. Most certainly, Erisinni, the son and successor of Ualli, the king of Mana, stayed at the court of Ašurbanipal as a

[36] E. WEIDNER, *Jojachin, König von Juda, in Babylonischen Keilschrifttexte*, in *Mélanges Syriens offerts à Mounsieur René Dussaud*, Paris 1939, p. 925 ff.

[37] 2 Kings 25:27 ff.

[38] *ki-ma mi-ra-ni ṣa-ah-ri qí-rib ekalli-ia ir-bu-u*, cf. LUCKENBILL, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, Chicago 1927, p. 54: 54 and 57: 13.

[39] R. BORGER, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, König von Assyrien*, Graz 1956, p. 55, Ep. 14:15: *tar-bit ēkalli abi-ia*.

[40] A.O.77.1: 42-44: *at-me-šu-nu ú-né-siq aṣ-bat a-na ar-du-ti ù pa-la-hi-ia ú-ta-šu-nu-ti*.

hostage, though in that case the term *līṭu* was not used either. Sent by his father to be granted forgiveness for the rebellion of Ahšeri, Erisinni was detained at the Assyrian court. Continuing his report, the writer claims that Ašurbanipal showed mercy towards Ualli and sent him a messenger with greetings[41]. It means that Erisinni was detained at the Assyrian court! An opportunity to keep hostages was also afforded by the situation in Arwad. After the death of Jakinlu, his sons went to the court of Ašurbanipal who granted the throne to Azibaal, probably the oldest of the 10 sons of Jakinlu, while all the others were detained in Assyria[42]. The decision of Ašurbanipal to send back Jahimilki, the son of Baal, the defeated king of Tyre, was cited as an example of unusual magnanimity[43].

The most probable reason why the term *līṭu* disappeared was that it may have been replaced by other expressions. As is common knowledge, in Mesopotamia the term *līṭu* is known only from the Assyrian royal inscriptions. The sending of hostages was a manifestation of a new kind of relationship with Assyria; a recognition of its sovereignty and an acceptance of the new relationship between Assyria and vasal state. That relationship was best expressed by the word *ardūtu* or the idiom *ana epeš ardūti*[44]. The latter expression appears in the report about the despatch to the court of Ašurbanipal the oldest son (i.e. the heir to the throne) of Cyrus I after Ašurbanipal had crushed Elam[45]. The usage of such expressions, as an example from Ugarit indicates, extended far beyond the frontiers of Mesopotamia. According to that text, "Mursili removed the king of Siyannu and his sons (from the vasallage of) the king of Ugarit and gave him as a vassal to the King of Carchemish"[46]. The use of that idiom with its primary connotation of "being a member of the slavery class" was a strong demonstration of a new Assyrian imperial ideology with the Assyrian king as a master of vassals treated as the kings' personal servants.

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[41] M. STRECK, *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 24, col III 11 ff.
[42] Ibid. p. 19-21, col II 81-94.
[43] Ibid. p. 18 col II 58-62.
[44] *CAD* A II, p. 252 f. and *CAD* E, p. 203.
[45] E. WEIDNER, *AfO* 7 (1931-32), p. 3-4, col II 7-13.
[46] RN...,RN, *u mārīšu ištu muhhi šar Ugarit uttekkiršunūti u ana šar māt* GN *ina* ARAD.MEŠ-*ti-šu ittadinšu*, *MRS* 80 Rs 17.382: 13 (cited after *CAD* A II, p. 252/3).